

PRAETERITA.

Should you ask me whence this story,
 Whence this tale of days long gone by,
 Coupled with the thoughts of loved ones
 Who have long since gone forth boldly
 From the walls of Alma Mater,
 From the care of those they loved so ?
 I should answer thus your question:
 'Tis a history I tell you,
 Interesting not to many,
 Interesting but to students
 Who have passed from college struggles
 To the world, to there do battle
 For their God's and country's service.
 Thus 'twill serve to wake remembrance
 Of the days that were but are not,
 Of the times when future glory
 Was their end, ere they had tasted
 Of the bitter-sweets of glory.
 'Tis a tale well worth the telling,
 For 'tis joined to deep affection
 For our well-loved Alma Mater,
 That the heroes now who struggle
 "In the world's broad field of battle"
 May again for one short moment
 Pause amidst their occupations,
 And returning in their spirit,
 Will again as college students
 Live the past, and thus remember
 Friends and teachers who have long since
 Passed to distant fields of labor.
 Once again they will be comrades
 Of the happy days of college.
 And if thus one fond remembrance
 Of the days that were but are not
 Is awakened in their bosoms,
 My poor pen has done its mission.
 From the sunny land of vineyards,
 From the fair land of the lily.
 Leaving all the fond endearments,
 Father, mother, brother, sister,
 To the land where dreary winter
 Long delays to give to spring-time
 Her bright place among the seasons,
 Came the Oblates, came the Fathers,
 Who to plant the noble standard
 Of the Cross left all behind them :
 Who to teach the rising nation
 Of the means to gain salvation,
 Left their own dear land to come here
 As our fathers, guides and teachers.
 Foremost in this band of champions
 Came the founder of our college,
 Came our friend, the mighty teacher
 Who had e'er for all his children
 All the love of fondest mother
 Joined unto a father's prudence.
 Small indeed was the beginning ;
 Few indeed, and far from brilliant
 Were the prospects of the Father
 Who from sunny France had come here
 As the guide and friend of young men.

But he prospered, and ere ten years
 Had passed by he saw his college
 Rise and take a place conspicuous
 Midst the greatest of the nation,
 And his fame spread far around him,
 And he saw a goodly number
 Cluster round him as their model,
 And he called them his dear children,
 And they loved him as their father.
 Midst the number of his children
 Who had gathered thus around him,
 Some have risen high in power.
 One, to-day, "Your Grace" is titled,
 Other some are called "Your Honor."
 Many serve Christ's holy altar,
 While 'midst loudest acclamation
 In the halls of legislation
 Senators are heard appealing
 For their country's right and honor.
 Some are doctors, others lawyers,
 While the busy life of commerce
 Claims some as its brave defenders.
 These are men who thus were moulded
 By the Father whom they loved so,
 Who to teach the hope of nations
 Left his home and friends behind him.
 And the places they left vacant
 Were refilled by ardent aspirants,
 Who succeeded in their labors,
 And success crowned their endeavours.
 'Twas a pleasing sight to witness
 In the busy hall of study,
 When preoccupied with duty
 Each one labored there in silence,
 With a ready zeal to gather
 Fruits from off the tree of knowledge ;
 Or to see them on the playground,
 When the study time was over,
 Sporting 'neath the trees so stately
 Which the founder there had planted.
 Ah ! how well each one remembers
 How the father was accustomed
 In the early spring and summer,
 And again in golden autumn,
 To, each day, his trees revisit,
 Which he loved to see there flourish
 For his children, whom he cherished.
 And because he loved them greatly,
 We, too, always took a pleasure
 In their welfare, for we ever
 Loved what was beloved by father.
 In the evening, when the daylight
 Yielded had to dusky twilight,
 Then began the "children's hour,"
 Which recalls thoughts sweet and tender.
 'Twas the time to us the dearest,
 When the great man, when our father
 Entered and, with eyes all beaming,
 Gazed around upon his children ;
 And we said to him with gladness,
 While our hearts were full of true love,