

But in the chorus one voice was mute,
One smooth brow ruffled at Frieda's praise;
Two black eyes flashed, 'as our maiden tript
Through the town on the long bright summer
days.

Until, on the bland and balmy air,
There was a whisper of calumny,
That grew and spread till it swelled and rolled
Like a rill-fed river that seeks the sea.

And the lips that had hailed our Frieda queen,
Now held their peace, said never a word;
While the welcome died out of eyes once fond,
So soon as her blythe young step was heard.

Father and mother had long been dead;
And now in the midst of her cold, changed world,
The young heart drooped like a lily crushed,
Or a tender leaf by the frost-wind curled.

Wherever she went the songs were hushed,
Speech did but wound her, and smiles deride;
And where she lingered the folk passed by,
Like Levite and priest, on the other side.

Until her sorrow and passion grew
Too grievous and heavy for her to bear;
And she bent her steps to a distant place,
Where none could know her, and none need care

What was the terrible lie that scared,
With its scorching breath, that trusting heart,
And none would shout in her shrinking ears
The cruel and hopeless word "Depart!"

And here she toiled for her daily bread;
And brooding, mused on her wrong and woe,
And from the depths of a wounded soul
Vowed revenge on her dastard foe.

"Some day," she said, "I shall see her again,
Some day, some hour, my turn will come;
And my heart and hand shall be hard, nor spare
The malice that drove me from love and home."

But it chanced one day that a preacher passed
On his northward way through the little town,
And just outside, on a smooth, green sward,
With a book in his hand, he sat him down.

And soon from the streets and the country side,
Men, wives, and children came pressing round;
Then the preacher rose with his grey head bared,
While the eager listeners sat on the ground.

And 'mong the listeners was one, still young,
Who had come with a heart so bitter and hard
With wounded memories, hate, and woe,
That her very face was changed and marred.

And now as the preacher opened his book,
She wondered blankly what he would say,
But started and flushed as the clear tones read,
"Vengeance is Mine! I will repay."

Then, with a voice grown hushed and low,
He spoke of the mighty work of One
Who had loved His own with a changeless love,
And for their redemption a battle won.

No thoughts of vengeance were His on earth,
Though the world refused to greet her Lord;
Though the rich took counsel against His life,
And turned deaf ears to His gracious word.

No thoughts of vengeance were His, e'en when
Death's pangs were piercing Him thro' and thro';
His gentle prayer was, "Father, forgive,
Forgive them, they know not what they do!"

And the preacher's eyes were full of tears,
As he pleaded on for the Lord's dear sake;
Till the Spirit strove with Frieda's soul,
And her stricken heart seemed like to break.

That very night, ere she fell asleep,
She carried to Christ her grief and sin,
And gave up all; and, renouncing self,
She let the love of the Saviour in.

The months passed on. But one stormy night
Frieda was wending her homeward way,
When she spied a figure, tattered, forlorn,
Blown by the winds like a bark astray.

"Charity!" shrilled out the homeless wretch,
And stretched a tremulous, fleshless hand!
She looked like death on the shores of life,
Or a ghost from out the forgotten land.

And in that moment the wan March moon
Peered forth from the clouds like a tearful eye,
And showed to our maiden the form, though changed,
And the face—of her one great enemy.

A quick deep sob she gave, as she seized
The poor thin hand in her strong young clasp,
And her warm heart murmured, "Now heaven be
praised

That vengeance at length is in my grasp "

She led the wanderer's faltering steps
To her lowly dwelling, and took her in;
Fed and warmed her, and soothed her pain,
And heard her story of deep-dyed sin;

Heard, and whispered of Him who came
To cure the sick, and the lost to save;
Of pardon and peace through His dear name
Who died, but rose from a conqueror's grave.

So, coals of fire with their sacred heat,
Were heaped on the head now lying low,
And from that poor couch there came, new-born,
A soul, a gem for the Master's brow.

And Frieda, blessed as never before,
From the depths of a satisfied spirit said,
"I thank Thee, Lord, that vengeance was Thine
And in Thy good time Thou hast repaid."

M. E. R.