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## Selected Poetry.

### SONG BY THE MYSTIC.

BY FATHER RYAN.

I walked down the valley of Silence—  
Down the deep voiceless valley—alone;  
And I heard not the sound of a footstep  
Around me, save God's and my own;  
And the hush of my heart was as holy  
As love is where angels have flown.

Long ago was I weary of voices  
Whose music my heart could not win;  
Long ago was I weary of noises  
That fretted my soul with their din;  
Long ago was I weary of places  
Where I met but the human and sin.

I walked through the world with the worldly;  
I craved what the world never gave,  
And I said,—“In the world each Ideal,  
That shines like a star on life's wave,  
Is toned on the shores of the Real,  
And sleeps like a dream in a grave.”

And still did I pine for the Perfect,  
And still found the False with the True;  
I sought 'mid the Human for Heaven,  
But caught a mere glimpse of its blue;  
And I wept when the clouds of the Mortal  
Veiled even that glimpse from my view.

And I toiled on,—heart-tired of the Human,  
And I moaned 'mid the mazes of men;  
Till I knelt long ago at an altar,  
And heard a voice call me:—“since then,  
I walk down the valley of Silence  
That lies far beyond mortal ken.

Do you ask what I found in the valley?  
'Tis my trysting-place with the Divine;  
And I fell at the feet of the Holy,  
And about me a voice cried,—“Be mine.”  
And there rose from the depths of my spirit  
An echo:—“My heart shall be thine.”

Do you ask how I live in the valley?  
I weep and I dream and I pray;  
But my tears are as sweet as the dew-drops  
That fall on the roses of May;  
And my prayer, like a perfume from censer,  
Ascendeth to God night and day.

In the hush of the valley of Silence  
I dream all the songs that I sing,  
And the music floats down the deep valley,  
Till each finds a word for a wing,  
That to men, like the Dove of the Deluge,  
The message of Peace they may bring.

But far on the deep there are billows  
That never shall break on the beach;  
And I have heard songs in the Silence  
That never shall float into speech;  
And I have had dreams in the valley  
Too lofty for language to reach.

And I have seen thoughts in the valley,  
Ah me! how my spirit was stirred!  
And they wear holy veils on their faces,—  
Their footsteps can scarcely be heard;  
They pass through the valley, like virgins  
Too pure for the touch of a word.

Do you ask me the place of the valley,—  
Ye hearts that are sorrowed by care?  
It lieth afar between mountains,  
And God and his Angels are there;  
And one is the dark mountain of Sorrow,  
And one the bright mountain of Prayer.

### THE GREEK CHORUS.

#### AN ORATION.

BY W. G. PARSONS.

WE seek in vain 'mid the annals of the  
past for the origin of poetry and music.  
No research has disclosed their incep-  
tion,—no line of thought certainly reach-  
ed back to that point at which the two  
spirits, linked in a holy wedlock, announ-  
ced their first born to the responsive world  
of the emotions.

The indefiniteness of our information  
on this point is however trivially insigni-  
ficant when compared with the certainty  
of our knowledge regarding the marvel-  
lous sway which these grand harmonic  
forces have ever exerted on the impressible  
human race. Mighty in positive influ-  
ence, they alternately inhale and breathe  
out the spirit of the age in which they  
are produced; and thus present the truest  
social dial on which we recognize the  
minute hand of advancement.

The thoughtful student of History can  
indeed better afford to be ignorant of the  
legal enactments and penal codes of that  
nation whose inner life he would under-  
stand, than of the warblings of its min-  
strels, or the spontaneous, gushing effusions  
of its men of song.

What should we know of the true  
character of the primitive Celt, roaming  
in wild freedom among his Highland Hills,  
but for the florid, tender and expressive  
strains of the memorable Ossian?—What  
of the spirit of the hardy old Norsemen  
sweeping the seas in triumph, were it not  
for the soul-stirring productions of their  
Scalds, or the enchanting rhapsodies of  
their Eddas, which, penned in their God-  
given runic rhyme, have floated down in  
safety to us through the channels of the  
years?

We must not, however, look to these  
boreal regions chiefly for the highest lyric  
developments, rather let us turn to the  
proverbial land of love and song—the

balmy clime of the South. There amid  
the purple ranges and under the genial  
sky of Greece, the poetic principle was  
nurtured with a watchful care. The ex-  
quisite beauty of the country,—its rich  
and picturesque variety of hill and dale,—  
the spontaneous fertility of its soil,—the  
sweetness of its temperature,—the almost  
unbroken serenity of its skies, and the  
smooth and glassy sea that bathed the  
heated shore,—harmonized all the ruder  
passions of the people and called forth the  
noblest and finest feelings of the soul.  
They soon became enamoured of the ele-  
gant and the beautiful, and employed all  
the melody and grace of their language  
in ascriptions of praise to the recognized  
divinities of flood and field.

The fullest notes of the matchless poesy  
of Greece were struck in the morn of her  
life by the Muse's most gifted son, whose  
deep melodeous strains rang out, not  
alone for the few scattered isles of Ionia,  
but for an enchanted world, as the tide  
of his song sweeps down the stream of  
time.

“In swelling and limitless billows.”

Yet long anterior to the production of  
this unique Iliad, the choral song, after-  
ward so elaborately and brilliantly devel-  
oped, prevailed in that classic land. It  
were as impossible to ascertain the exact  
period of its origin, as to discover when  
the idea of the Pan Hellenian Zeus arose—  
both secrets are locked in the secure Treas-  
ury of Time. It is however evident  
that its rise was in connection with the  
worship of the Greeks. As their altar fires  
sprang heavenward consuming the propi-  
tiationary sacrifice offered by suppliant  
votaries of Apollo the choric song of joy  
arose, an ardent accompaniment to the  
lightening play of flame. In the praise  
accorded to Dionysus as controller of the  
seasonal changes, this rudimentary dithy-  
ramb was improved by its union with  
measured movement as expressed in the  
rhythmic dances. Subsequently the  
inventive genius of Thespis, the renowned  
father of Tragedy, introduced an actor who  
should hold converse with the chorus  
and thus relieve them from continuous  
concerted actions. It was not, however,  
until the golden age of Pericles arrived,  
when all that was grand and imposing in