

FLORENCE

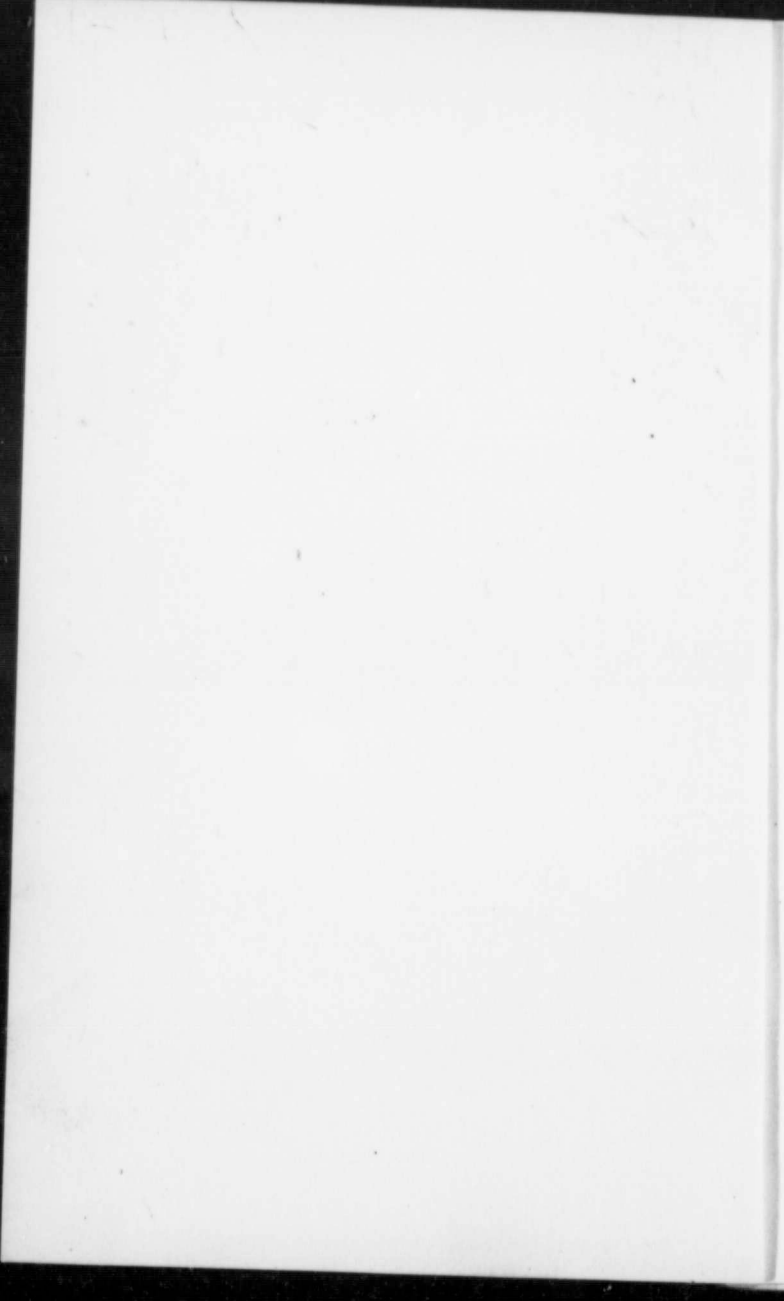
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FLORENCE MAY LOWREY

# FLORENCE

BY

DAVID LOWREY, M.B.

TORONTO

1904



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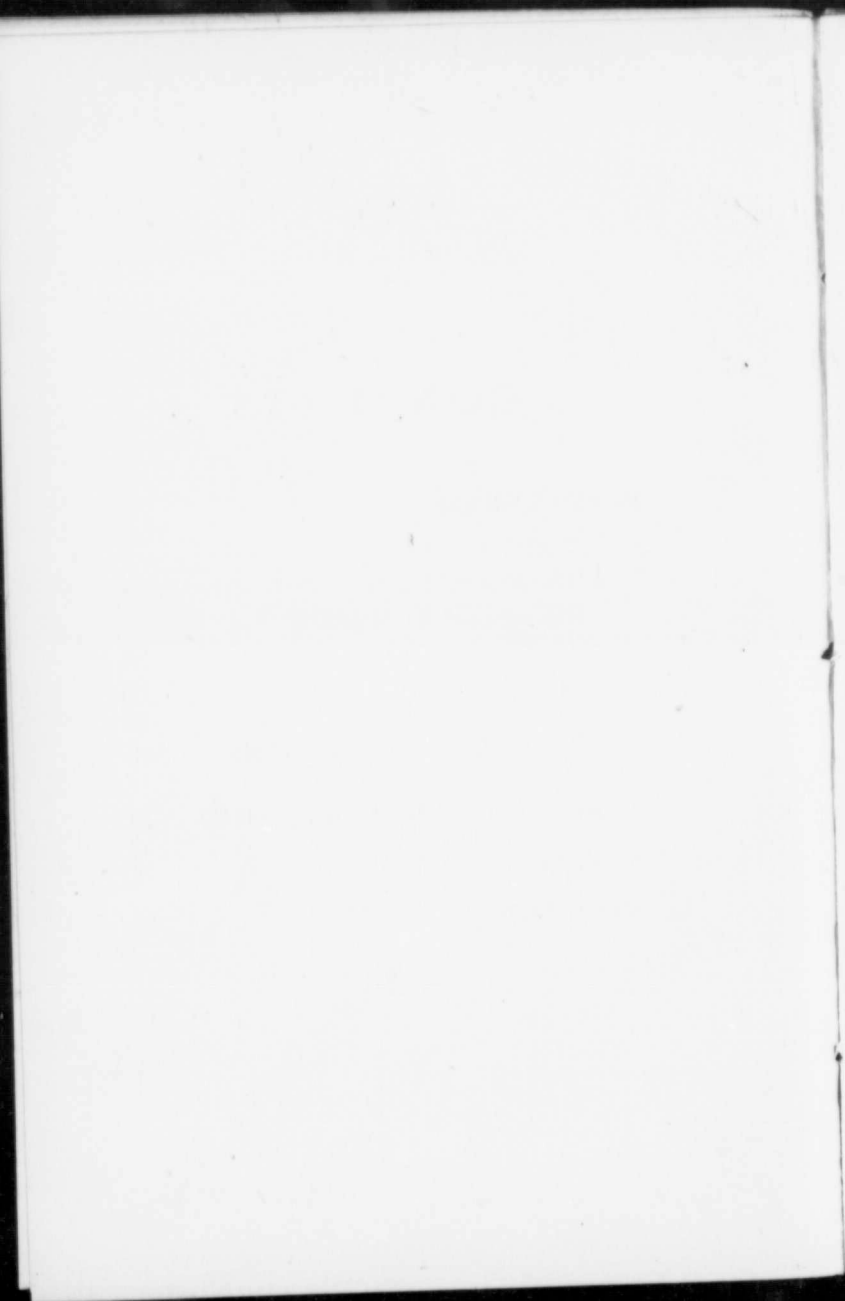
DAVID W. BRYANT

THE BRYANT PRESS, LIMITED  
PRINTERS  
PUBLISHERS

# CONTENTS

## IN MEMORIAM

	PAGE
STORM . . . . .	5
THE MURMUR . . . . .	8
THE CREEPING SHADOW . . . . .	10
ECLIPSE . . . . .	12
CALLED BACK . . . . .	15
MINISTERING SPIRITS . . . . .	19
THE LURE OF THE HEAVENS . . . . .	20
WHAT DO THE ANGELS CALL HER? . . . . .	23
ILLUSIONS . . . . .	25
GIVEN BACK . . . . .	29



STORM.

I.

**W**INDS from the East that rave across  
The farmstead and the city,  
The latest leaves ye pluck and toss—  
Winter's unleashed banditti—  
Ye bring reminders of our loss,  
With plaint, if not with pity !

Ye bear me back a clear decade  
To such another day  
When, resolute and unafraid,  
To school she took her way;  
A rosy, red-lipped, little maid,  
Whom never storm could stay.

*Florence*

---

STORM .

When winds were loud, and wintry rime  
Lay white on street and square,  
She far'd forth again; this time  
To seek a sunnier air,  
To find a constant summer clime,  
Unflecked with cloud or care.

“ Mother, o'er suff'ner's couch low-bending,  
What phantom haunteth thee ?”

“ I see, afar, a wraith ascending,  
A spirit from the sea;  
Quick pulse, flushed cheek, swol'n limb portend-  
ing  
The agony to be.”

*Florence*

---

STORM.

Through days of stress and nights of start,  
Her anxious vigil keeping,  
The nursing mother waits apart—  
A sentinel unsleeping—  
Guarding the treasure of her heart  
With watch too tense for weeping.

The crisis reached, at length, and passed,  
We bowed on grateful knee  
To Him who tamed the angry blast  
On wind-blown Galilee.  
The clouds on the horizon massed  
Drifted far out to sea.

THE MURMUR.

II.

**B**ACK to her books—a little saint  
With love of lore inspired—  
She went; but soon the weary plaint  
"O mother, I'm so tired!"  
Brought to our souls a new constraint  
In drear forecast attired.

As sojourner in summer woods  
In dappled shadow resting,  
Where not a vexing voice intrudes  
The solemn calm molesting,  
Hears, through the leafy solitudes,  
Where happy birds are nesting

*Florence*

---

THE MURMUR.

A note unrecognized before,  
The burden of the air  
Breathing its love the leaflets o'er  
In passionate despair;  
So heard we with foreboding sore  
The murmur sinister

That bluntly told us of the check  
To the life current's flow,  
Murmur presaging loss and wreck,  
Where vital forces go—  
Murmur significant—the speck  
Of cloud ordained to grow.



THE CREEPING SHADOW.

III.

**T**O SWEEP the beauty from the sky,  
The brilliance from the day  
That creeping shadow silently  
But surely made its way;  
First on the hills that bound the eye  
The boding darkness lay.

Slowly it moved across the plain,  
The atmosphere grew chill.  
'Twould lift at times, and light again  
Upon the distant hill  
Would rest, and in our hearts the pain  
Would cease a spell, until

*Florence*

---

THE CREEPING SHADOW.

The warning murmur had its way,  
Illusive hope forbidding.  
Shorter and darker grew each day;  
Deeper the twilight shading.  
We thought, "Conceal it as we may  
Our flower is surely fading!"

What angel in our darling's breast  
Kept youthful fires aglow?  
New books, new plans, with hungry zest  
New problems she must know.  
'T was well for Here; for There 't was best,  
Seed scattered thus will grow

THE CREEPING SHADOW.

Through long, long cycles in the school  
To which her steps were bending,  
Where Teacher, wise, with gentle rule,  
From height to height ascending  
Leadeth to fountains ever full,  
All knowledge comprehending.

THE ECLIPSE.

IV.

**I** SAID the Autumn days grew short,  
And chillier the air;  
With falling leaves the winds made sport,  
And shadows everywhere  
Were mustering; and every fort  
Surrendered to despair

Save one; at midnight's darkest hour,  
At height of keen distress  
Were you to ope that chamber door  
The greeting smile would bless  
Your coming; pain had not the power  
To dim the loveliness

THE ECLIPSE.

Of those bright orbs that now began  
The river to explore.  
Deeper the chilly waters ran,  
And farther from the shore  
Our loved one drifted, worn and wan,  
But smiling evermore.

That constant smile, that deathless smile !  
It beams upon us yet.  
From some far continent or isle,  
In wide spread ocean set ?  
Nay, sweet and near, if Faith unveil  
The eyes with sorrow wet.

CALLED BACK.

V.

**F**LORENCE, in distant region vast,  
We do not think of thee,  
But near the place we saw thee last,  
A charming maiden, free  
From all the ills that held thee fast  
In brief life's agony.

In your old room, among your books—  
Treasures your heart held dear—  
Wearing your old familiar looks  
Still holding interest here,  
Come, sit as erst in quiet nooks,  
No lurking peril near.

CALLED BACK.

O child, if we, for one brief day,  
By lure or loving wile  
Could charm you to resume the clay,  
And see your wonted smile ;  
Could look into your eyes, and say  
"The passing hour beguile

With tales of all that you have seen  
In that dim other world;  
The songs that fill, the Empyrean,  
Great thoughts, like stars, impearled,  
O tell us, darling, where you've been,  
And what to you unfurled !"

CALLED BACK.

And you should say "The heavenly scroll  
May not be yet unrolled."  
'T would ease the hunger of the soul,  
Though words passed not, to hold  
Your warm and clinging hand, and stroll  
An hour adown the wold.

Not yet, not yet, in God's great plan  
May we with spirits hold  
The converse of the past, or scan  
Their features manifold.  
But we, till death complete the span,  
With faith not overbold



*Florence*

---

CALLED BACK.

May list to catch the light foot-fall  
On grassy lawn or stair;  
May touch the spirits, crowned and tall,  
That sweep the winged air;  
More real to our hearts than pall,  
Or grave, or vacant chair.

MINISTERING SPIRITS.

VI.

“**B**LESSED are those that have not seen,  
Yet have believed.” Lord, grant  
The faith that holds its way serene  
Though death our flowers transplant.  
The loved who quit this earthly scene  
Are spirits ministrant

Sent everywhere, on pulsing wing—  
To homes, to crowded marts—  
Heaven's restful solaces to bring  
To palpitating hearts;  
To draw with gentle hand the sting  
Of death's unwelcome darts.

THE LURE OF THE HEAVENS.

VII.

**I**F, to our home, a worthy youth  
Come from the distant West  
To claim a bride—is 't not the truth  
We grudge, though 't is the best,  
To let her go? Yet without ruth  
She leaves the parent nest.

But, from that hour, that Western land  
Has charms we could not know  
Before. Its lofty mountains stand  
And call; its rivers sing and flow  
For us. The fingers of its hand  
Clutch us where'er we go.

*Florence*

THE LURE OF THE HEAVENS.

So the much loved, a while concealed  
From sight—the brave, the pure—  
To faith's intenser light revealed,  
Draw us with patient lure,  
Homeland of fadeless flower and field  
It holds our treasures sure.

We catch the music of its choirs,  
The murmur of its streams;  
And from its distant mountain spires  
A softened radiance beams,  
Higher than loftiest desires,  
Sweeter than sweetest dreams.

*Florence*

---

THE LURE OF THE HEAVENS.

And often to its radiant gates  
    There comes a maiden fair,  
Peering adown earth's dusty streets,  
    Through nameless leagues of air,  
With homesick eyes watching she waits  
    If haply, here or there,

From her high outlook she may see  
    Some tired wayfarer coming,  
Some loved one of the group that she  
    Flew forth from in her homing.  
Wait on, dear one, as patiently  
As here, for surely some there be  
    Whose day draws to its gloaming.

WHAT DO THE ANGELS CALL  
HER ?

**S**HE came to us in May  
When the gardens were all abloom,  
When lilac and peach, the long Spring day,  
Were prodigal of perfume;  
When the birds sang their rarest roundelay,  
So we called our baby Florence May.

She stayed with us some while,  
And the months grew into years.  
The dearest thing in life was her smile,  
The saddest thing her tears.  
Beauty and pain and patience blent  
As the seasons came and went.

WHAT DO THE ANGELS CALL HER?

She left us one wintry day,  
    When the winds came out of the East.  
With sharpest reluctance we let her away,  
    Though we knew that a Royal feast  
Awaited her coming that day,  
And we mourned our Florence May.

The angels took her that day,  
    What name do they know her by  
In that land that has flowers always—  
    In the summer land of the sky—  
Where the month is always May  
    And the blossoms never die?  
Oh, we hope that the angels say  
When they call her "*Florence May!*"

ILLUSIONS

I.

**S**EE yonder height of land  
Where o'er the yellow sand  
The laughing waters ripple in the light;  
See those green, grassy slopes,  
And feathery palms; what hopes  
Throng to the spirit at the welcome sight!

II.

Toiling o'er deserts drear,  
No cooling brooklet near  
Where we may slake our thirst, or bathe our limbs  
When such a land of shade  
And shine, and leaf, and blade  
Appears, lo! every sense in rapture swims.



*Florence*

ILLUSIONS.

III.

Thus, in their weary way,  
The desert travellers say  
When the false mirage cheats the straining eye.  
Hopeful they hasten on  
Until the spot is won,  
Then on the desert bare they fall and die.

IV.

Not they deceived alone;  
For most have seen that zone  
Where guileful rays through flashing raindrops  
    peering  
Have hung the alluring bow  
With seven-fold hues aglow  
That draws the seeker on, yet mocks his nearing.

ILLUSIONS.

V.

Sad, sad to labor on  
Till many a year be gone,  
Each day filled up with nervous, strong endeavor;  
Sowing the seed mid fears,  
Sowing mid blinding tears,  
But reaping the long looked for harvest never!

VI.

The red fire o'er the plains  
Leaps madly. What remains?  
A blackened landscape where ripe harvests waved  
The lurid lightning falls  
And scathes the hoary halls  
Where optimistic hope beheld engraved

ILLUSIONS.

VII.

The record of our deeds;  
Leaning on wav'ring reeds  
We totter to a certain resting place.  
To find beyond the grave  
Alone the good we crave,  
The Grail the object of an age-long quest.

*Florence*

---

GIVEN BACK,  
A SISTER'S TRIBUTE.

**T**HE Angels in Heaven are singing  
A sweet and joyous lay;  
"There has arrived at the pearly gate  
A child of God to-day.

One who was worn with the journey  
Has entered eternal rest,  
Has flown from all earth's sorrows  
Like a tired bird to its nest."

Her earthly days were weary  
And full of pain and care;  
But she bravely and patiently went her way  
Till she reached the City fair.

Did we refuse the Lord our darling?  
Nay we laid her beneath the sod,  
Knowing she was not lost to us,  
But given back to God.

MARY.