

To the one who, reading, may fancy –
With a kindly thought for me –
There's a grain of gold in its driftings,
I dedicate this "Debris."

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PREFACE.

The waif is born of emergency, and timidly launched on the rough sea of opinion. Critic, touch it gently; it assumes nothing—has nothing to assume; and your scalpel can only pain its

AUTHOR.

MYSTERY OF CARMEL

The Mission floor was with weeds o'ergrown, And crumbling and shaky its walls of stone; Its roof of tiles, in tiers and tiers, Had stood the storms of a hundred years. An olden, weird, medieval style Clung to the mouldering, gloomy pile, And the rhythmic voice of the breaking waves Sang a lonesome dirge in its land of graves. As I walked in the Mission old and gray – The Mission Carmel at Monterey.

An ancient owl went fluttering by, Scared from his haunt. His mournful cry Wakened the echoes, till roof and wall Caught and re-echoed the dismal call Again and again, till it seemed to me Some Jesuit soul, in mockery – Stripped of rosary, gown, and cow! – Haunted the place, in this dreary owl. Surely I shivered with fright that day, Alone in the Mission, old and gray – The Mission Carmel at Monterey.

Near the chapel vault was a dungeon grim, And they say that many a chanted hymn Has rung a knell on the moldy air For luckless errant prisoned there, As kneeling monk and pious nun Sang orison at set of sun. A single window, dark and small, Showed opening in the heavy wall, Nor other entrance seemed attained That erst had human footstep gained. I paused before the uncanny place And peered me into its darksome space. Had it of secret aught to tell, That locked up darkness kept it well. I turned, and lo! by my side there stood A being of strangest naturehood. Startled, I glanced him o'er and o'er, Wondering I noted him not before. His form was stooped with the weight of years, And on his cheek was a trace of tears; Over all his face a shade of pain That deepened and vanished, and came again. Fixed he his woeful eyes on me – Through my very soul they seemed to see. And lightly he laid his hand on mine – His hand was cold as the vestal shrine. "'Tis haunted," he said, "haunted, and he Who dares at night-noon go with me To this cursed place, by phantoms trod, Must fear not devil, man, nor God." "Tell me the story," I cried, "tell me!" And frightened was I at my bravery. A cu-

rious smile his thin lips curved, That well had my bravery
unnerved. And this is the story he told that day To me in the
Mission old and gray — The Mission Carmel at Monterey.

"Each midnight, since have seventy years Begun their cycle
around the spheres, Two faces have looked from that win-
dow there. One is a woman's, young and fair, With tender
eyes and floating hair. Love, and regret, and dumb despair,
Are told in each tint of the fair sweet face. The other is
crowned with a courtly grace, Gazing, with all a lover's
pride, On the beautiful woman by his side. Anon! a change
flits o'er his mien, And baffled rage in his glance is seen. Pal-
er they grow as the hours go by, With the pallor that comes
with the summons to die. Slowly fading, and shrinking
away, Clutched in the grasp of a gaunt decay, Till the herald
of morn on the sky is thrown; Then a shriek, a curse, and a
dying moan, Comes from that death-black window there. A
mocking laugh rings out on the air, From that darkful place,
in the nascent dawn, And the faces that looked from the
window are gone. Seventy years, when the Spanish flag
Floated above yon beetling crag, And this dearthful mission
place was rife With the panoply of busy life; Hard by, where
yon canyon, deep and wide, Sweeps it adown the mountain
side, A cavalier dwelt with his beautiful bride. Oft to the
priestal shrive went she; As often, stealthily, followed he. The
padre Sanson absolved and blessed The penitent, and the sin-
distressed, Nor ever before won devotee So wondrous a rever-
ence as he. A-night, when the winds played wild and high,
And the ocean rocked it to the sky, An earthquake trembled
the shore along, Hushing on lip of praise its song, And jarred
to its center this Mission strong. When the morning broke
with a summer sun, The earth was at rest, the storm was
done. Still the Mission tower'd in its stately pride; Still the
cottage smiled by the canyon-side; But never the priest was
there to bless, And the cottage roof was tenantless. Vainly
they sought for the padre, dead, For the cottage dwellers;
amazed, they said 'Twas a miracle; but since that day There's
a ghost in the Mission old and gray — The Mission Carmel of
Monterey

"A sequel there is to that tale," said he, "Of the way and the truth I hold the key." "Show me the way," I cried, "Show me To the depth of this curious mystery!" He waved me to follow; my heart stood still Under the ban of a mightier will Than mine. A terror of icy chill O'er-shivered my being from hand to brain, Freezing the blood in each pulsing vein, As I followed this most mysterious guide Through the solid floor at the chancel side, Into a passage whose stifling breath Reeked with the pestilence of death. Down through a subterranean vault, Over broken steps with never a halt, Till we stood in the midst of a spacious room, A charnel-house in its shroud of gloom. Only a window, narrow and small, Left in the build of the heavy wall, Through which the flickering sunbeams died, Showed passway to the world outside. Slowly my eyes to the darkness grew, And I saw in the gloom, or rather knew, That my feet had touched two skeleton forms, One closely clasped in the other's arms. Recoiling, I shuddered and turned my face From the fleshless mockery of embrace. Again o'er a heap of rubbish and rust, I stumbled and caught in the moth and dust What hardly a sense of my soul believes — A mold-stained package of parchment leaves! A hideous bat flapped into my face! O'ercome with horror, I fled the place, And stood again with my curious guide On the solid floor, at the chancel's side. But, lo! in a moment the age-bowed seer Was a darkly frowning cavalier, Gazing no longer in woeful trance, Vengeance blazed in his every glance. Then a mocking laugh rang the Mission o'er, And I stood alone by the chapel door; And, save for the mold-stained parchment leaves, I had thought it the vision that night-mare weaves. Hardly a sense of my soul believes, Yet I held in my hand the parchment leaves. Careful I noted them, one by one, Each was a letter in rhyming run, Written over and over, in tenderest strain, By fingers that never will write again. I strung them together, a tale to tell, And named it "The Mystery of Carmel." And these are the letters I found that day, In the mission ruin, old and gray — The Mission Carmel of Monterey:

TO THE HOLY FATHER SANSON

Oh, holy father, list thee to my prayer! I may not kneel to thee as others kneel, And tell my heart-aches with the suppliant's air, But fiercer burns the fire I must conceal.

My soul is groping in the mists of doubt, The sunlight and the shadows all are gone, Only a cold, gray cloud my life's about, Nor ever vision of a fairer dawn.

A father ne'er my brow in loving smoothed, Nor taught my baby tongue to lisp his name; No mother's voice my childish sorrows soothed, Nor sought my wild, imperious will to tame.

Yet ran my life, like some bright bubbling spring, Too full of thoughtless happiness to care If that the future might more gladness bring, Or might its skies be clouded or be fair.

Afar upon the purple hills of Spain— Since waned the moons of half a year ago— I sported, reckless as the laughing main, Nor dreamed in life a thought of grief to know.

To-day I pine here in a chain whose gall Is bitterer than drop of wormwood brought From that salt sea where nothing lives, and all The recompense my willfulness has brought.

Oh, holy father, list thee to my prayer! And though I may not kneel as others kneel, And tell my heart-aches with a suppliant air, I crave they grace a sickened soul to heal.

Here, close beside this sacred font of gold, My humble prayer, oh, father, I will lay, With all its weight of misery untold; And wait impatient that which thou wilt say REVENITA.

TO REVENITA

When to the font, this morn, my lips I pressed, A fairy's gift my fingers trembled o'er; A sweeter prayer ne'er smile of angel blessed, Nor gemmed a tiar that the priesthood wore.

The secret of thy grief I may not know, Since that thy lips refuse the tale to tell; Methinks, dear child, it was the sound of woe That woke an echo in my heart's deep well.

The wail of a spirit that a-yearning gropes In darkness for the sunlight that is fled; A broken idol in secret wept, and hopes – Crushed hopes – that are to thee as are the dead.

A tender memory ling'ring yet of when Each bounding pulse beat faster with its joy; A something that allured, and won, and then With waking fled, and years may not destroy

The impress which it left upon thy brain But seek thee, child, grief's ravaging to stay? Thy tears might fall as falls the show'ring rain, They could not wash the heart's deep scars away.

Repine thee not; shroud not thy faith in gloom; Shrink not to meet a disappointment's frown; Away beyond the narrow bordered tomb, Who here have borne the cross may wear the crown. SANSON.

TO SANSON

Whisper to him, fairies, whisper – Whisper softly in his ear That some one is waiting, waiting, Listening his step to hear.

Fairies, if he knew his presence Would a demon's spell allay, Would he heed your timid whisperings? Would he – will he come to-day? REVENITA.

TO REVENITA

Fairies whisper, every whisper, In the silence of the night, And he catches the soft murmurs Floating in the starry light.

And they tell him; yes, they tell him, All in accents sweet and clear, Of the beautiful Hereafter That is ever drawing near.

There are loved ones, waiting, waiting, For his footfall on the shore; They will welcome his appearing— They will greet him o'er and o'er. SANSON.

TO SANSON

Oh, would the fairies to her whisper The truths which they to him impart, Teach her a beautiful hereafter, A Heaven to bless a tired heart.

Yet thinks she that the dear ones waiting Would envy not the boon she craves— To rear fair friendship's sacred altar Where love and hope sleep in their graves.

She knows not that a loving welcome Will wait her in a realm of light, Nought of a future meeting whispers, No faith illumines her soul's dark night.

But oh! she knows, has by experience, The saddest of all lessons learned; Knows that she gathered dead-sea apples, Which in her hands to ashes turned.

She knows into a trammelled torrent, Is changed her life's free flowing tide; Knows that her hand no oar is holding, With which her drifting bark to guide.

She knows, yes, knows that, like the mirage, Which for the thirsty traveler gleamed, The sweet ideal she fondly cherished Was never there; it only seemed.

If what she knows is to her proven A false, deluding, fleeting show, Can she, generous spirit, can she Trust blindly what she does not know?

But if for this he shuts against her The heart that's shining in his eyes, She'll bring the gift that for the Peri Unbarred the gate of paradise. REVENITA.

TO REVENITA

If she'll left him be her teacher In the mysteries of life, In the spirit's grand unfoldment Far beyond this world of strife,

A sacred altar he will build her, And dedicate to friendship true, And this shall be their bond of union, More constant that all others knew. SANSON.

TO SANSON

Kind teacher, henceforth be it mine, To kneel at friendship's sacred shrine, And hope's bright budding flowers entwine Into a garland for they brow. And thou shalt wait not for the hours That gem creation's radiant towers, To woo thee to elysian bowers, But wear it now.

Too long a dreamer have I been, Too long life's dark side only seen; And if thou canst, while thus I kneel, The mystery of life reveal, Then gladly will I learn of thee. For as on flowers the dewdrops fall, As sunbeams break the storm-cloud's pall, As pardon comes to lives which blame Has crushed beneath its weight, so came Thy sympathy to me. REVENITA.

TO REVENITA

Life is love, and only love, Love that had its source above. It wreathes with flowers the chastening rod, And diamond decks the throne of God. SANSON.

TO SANSON

If "life is love, and only love," Then never have I lived before; But for love's sack I'll sit me down And careful con the lesson o'er.

I fain would win the shining goal, So far away, so seeming fair, But could not reach its hights alone; Then, teacher, take me, take me there. REVENITA.

TO REVENITA

Thy teacher, then, will take thee there, And ever watch with
tender care, To guard they way to loftiest aim, And his re-
ward thy love shall claim. SANSON.

TO SANSON

O, inconsistent teacher, He'd knowledge give away; Fill head
and heart, from tome of art, Then take me for his pay.

He'd kindly lead me to the realm Where joyous freedom
reigns, He'd teach my soul love's sweet control, Then claim it
for his pains. REVENITA.

TO REVENITA

Ah! Reyenita, do not charge To selfishness thy teacher's plea,
He seeks thine every wish to bless, His deepest fault is loving
thee. "Heaven's kingdom," said the Nazerene, "Is in the
heart;" sweet fairy queen Thou rulest along this realm of
mine, Canst say I have no place in thine? SANSON.

TO SANSON

They boast of Ormuz's milk-white pearls, The ruby's magic
art, And proudly wear the crystal drop That fires the dia-
mond's heart.

And these may admiration claim, And countless wealth may
sway, But rarer gem was given to me, One golden summer
day.

Its wondrous tints, a brilliant glow, Emit in darkest gloom, A
sweeter fragrance 'round it clings, Than breath of eastern
bloom.

Were all earth's costly jewels thrown In one great glittering
heap, They could not buy for ev'n a day The gem I'd selfish
keep.

Yet 'twas not won from pearly depths, Nor gleaned from di-
amond mine, Nor all the chemist's subtlety Its substance
could define.

It ne'er was set in band of fold Some dainty hand to grace,
Ne'er shone in diadem to deck A brow of kingly race.

For me alone, a wizard spell Lies prisoned in its beams,
Hours of enchanted ecstasy And days of Eden dreams.

Wouldst know the precious gift with which For worlds I
would not part? The priceless jewel is they love, Its setting is
my heart. REVENITA.

TO REVENITA

Oh, in the hush of midnight's hour, When darkness sleeps on
land and sea, How oft in dreams, sweet fragile flower,
Thou'st come to bless and comfort me.

O, in the hush of midnight's hour, How oft from taunting
dreams I start, To find thee but a fancy flower – Thou cher-
ished idol of my heart. SANSON.

TO SANSON

I've a beautiful home, where I live in my dreams, So joyous and
happy – an Eden it seems; All beautiful things in nature and are
Are blending to rapture the mind and the heart; No discords to jar, no
dissensions arise, 'Tis calm as Italia's ever blue skies, When kissed
by the bright rosy blush of the morn; And a voice of the spheres on
the breezes is borne, Soft as the murmur of sea-tinted shells, Sweet
as the chiming of far away bells; And grief cannot enter, nor trouble
nor care, And the proud peerless prince of my soul, he is there.

In my beautiful home from the cold world apart, He holds
me so close to his fast beating heart; More enchanting his
voice than the syren-wrapt song, O'er the wind-dimpled
ocean soft floating along, As he whispers his love in love's

low passionate tone, Such home, and such lover, no other has known. REVENITA.

TO REVENITA

O, let us leave this world behind— Its gains, its loss, its praise, its blame— Not seeking fame, nor fearing shame, Some far secluded land we'll find, And build thy dream-home, you and I, And let this foolish world go by.

A paradise of love and bliss! Delicious draughts in Eden bowers, Of peace, and rest, and quiet hours, We'll drink, for what we've missed in this. The shafts of malice we'll defy, And let this foolish world go by. SANSON.

TO SANSON

Life of my life, my soul's best part, I could not live without thee now; And yet this love must break my heart, Or break a sacred vow.

Which shall it be? an answer oft From puzzling doubts I've sought to wake; Must joy, or misery, hence be mine, Must heart or promise break?

Alone, Heaven's highest court would prove A desolated land to me; Earth's barest, barren desert wild, A paradise with thee. REVENITA.

TO REVENITA

Thou hast beamed on my pathway, a vision of light, To guide and to bless from afar; To illumine with thy smile the dead chill of night, My star, my bright, beautiful star.

The sun pales before thee, the moon is a blot On the sky where thine own splendors are; And dark is the day where thy presence is not, My star, my bright, beautiful star. SANSON.