

These poems were written by
my great-grandfather, James
McNeill. He went to the Gold Rush
~~on~~ Some of the poetry is about
his travels to California. He and
his wife were very interested in
trying to contact the dead. They
had seances at their home. Many
of his poems are about death,

[Mary Alice McNeill Tolle]

The Rambler

BY
JAMES McNEILL

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THE RAMBLER

PART I

Long years have passed, full fifty years or more,
Since first I wandered from my native shore,
To cross the seas, in foreign lands to roam,
To seek my fortune and to dream of home.
Aye, lonely then, but I was not alone,
An aged comrade heard with me the moan
Of those soft winds that sweep the southern seas
And fill the soul with softest melodies.
With me he braved the ocean's treach'rous tide;
We climbed the rugged mountains side by side.
In sun and rain, in wind and bitter cold,
We delved into the earth in search of gold.
Our day's work done, the lagging sun gone down,
We laid us weary on the sun-parched ground,
And far into the night with wondrous ken,
My aged friend discoursed of times and men.
Not learned he, yet he possessed a mind,
Well stored with knowledge of a useful kind.
A bookish rambler from his earliest days,
He knew by heart all countries and their ways.

From Puget Sound to distant Hindoostan,
From London's port to Patagonia's land,
He knew the routes, which ships are wont to sail,
What kinds of traffic in each port prevail.
The Indian's wigwam, the Arabian's tent,
The trapper's hut, the houseless Orient.
In fact the homes and haunts of all mankind,
Were things familiar to his fruitful mind;
Of history, ancient, modern, mediæval,
He knew full more than any one can tell.
He'd talk for hours of Roman pride and guile,
Then fill your soul with wonders of the Nile;
Would quote from Homer, Virgil — long and well
And wondrous stories of the Trojans tell;
How Grecian treachery, not arms, at length
Robbed Priam's city of her pride and strength.



The world's religions were his favorite themes.
Of these, their founders and the fitful gleams
Of truth across man's inner vision thrown
By some intelligence of the Great Unknown,
With more than usual eloquence and force,
He would, for hours, most learnedly discourse.

'Gainst idols and their worship naught of blame,
Nor word of censure from his lips e'er came.
These object lessons for a childish race
He deemed but right and in their rightful place.
To him no form of worship was so rude
But must contain some element of good,
Some force or principle, of spiritual kind
To move, direct or sooth the savage mind;
Something to rouse the sluggish, dormant soul,
And wake in man the sense of self control,
To set aglow the inner spark divine,
His thoughts of crime to thoughts of love incline.
For slowly thus, but every step a gain,
The race is lifted to a higher plane.
The savage leaves his instincts and his clan,
And mounts by stages into peaceful man.



“ Religions differ as men's faces, minds,
Such difference as in winds and clouds one finds,
In minor points, expression, movement, form,
A zephyr now, and now a raging storm.
Alike in source, in origin and aim,
In object, end, in all except the name.

No doubt, that God has from remotest time,
In every country and in every clime,
By signs and omens, or mysterious force,
Directed man in his religious course.
Nay more; religion is the thing that binds
All earthly creatures and all human kinds,
Chains man to man and soul to living soul,
And these to God, the great, eternal whole.



“Why, then,” he asked, “for any form contend?
Why draw the sword mere dogmas to defend?
Why cause the earth and sea to blush for shame
At man’s foul deeds, committed for a name?
And yet the fairest lands beneath the stars
Have known the horrors of religious wars.
In Europe, Asia, and the darker lands,
Which lie beyond Sahara’s burning sands,
In sea-girt isles, the Western World new-found,
Where greatest industry and thrift abound,
In lands made drear by winter’s sleet and snow,
In lands where always softest breezes blow,
In every land o’erspread with human life
Has been, or is, the curse of creedal strife.

“If all mankind were drifting to one place
From which no traveler can his steps retrace,
We might expect they’d wrangle by the way,
Dispute and quarrel and one another slay.
Were mortal death what once it seemed to be,
A long, long sleep in vast eternity,
A peaceful, painless and a dreamless sleep,
On earth’s soft lap, or in the ocean deep,
’Twould be a blessing rather than a crime,
If life were shorn of more than half its time.

“But let that pass. The world is still at sea,
About what Heaven is, or Hell may be.
One class affirm and stoutly hold the ground,
That both are places, strongly walled around,
That mortals, judged and sent to either place,
Can by no means their footsteps e’er retrace.
Another class, and this of thoughtful men,
Strong-minded, and, perhaps, of broader ken,
In council modest and in friendship true,
Of all such subjects hold a different view.
To these, indeed, there is no Heaven, no Hell,
No joy nor sorrow, where the dead must dwell;
There is no life when fails the mortal breath,
And hope, fear, consciousness, all end in death.

They scorn the thought that on some far-off day,
When earth is old and mouldering in decay,
From out the depths a messenger shall come
To break Death's spell and raise man from the tomb;
That man once dead shall ever live again,
On earth renewed or on some other plane;
That mortals may arise from earth's dank mould,
And turn again to memories of old,
They count but groundless, nay, most senseless themes,
The airy nothings of delusion's dreams.

“ But down the silent ages past and gone,
We read of vict'ries o'er this monster won,
Of voices coming from the great unknown,
Which tell of death defeated, overthrown.
We talk with angels, from their home above,
Who bring to earth sweet messages of love,
Of life unending, life more blissful, free,
Beyond what seems the end of life to be.
Hence then, however great the poet's fame,
These later facts disprove his boasted claim;
Nay, more; clear proof affirms that from Death's bourne,
Our friends and kindred may and do return.



“ The snow lies deep on bold Nevada's crest,
Foreboding clouds and winds from out the West,
With moisture freighted from the storm-tossed sea
Sweep round the base of famed Yosemite.
Sure warning this that in the hills below
Lies greater safety from the coming snow.
Tis never wise to trifle much with Fate,
An hour thus spent may be an hour too late.
So, with our treasure, scant and hardly won,
We turned our faces toward the noonday sun,
And down the steep through canyons wild and weird,
And gorges dark and meadows brown and seared,
We hastened on nor loitered by the way,
Till night came on and prudence bade us stay.

“ For many years in visions clear and bright,
I've seen our bivouac on that lonely night:
A lovely spot, a gem-like mountain dell,
Behind, great cliffs, each side, dense chaparral;
An open front looks down and far away,
To the blue hills around Francisco Bay.
A lovely sight, a most enchanting view,
Of hills and valleys robed in somber hue.
A fairer land the eye hath never seen
Than restful, flowery, sun-kissed San Joaquin.

“ Year after year for ages past and gone
Man comes and goes and comes again. Anon
In other lands he leaves some mark or name;
Here change is not; these scenes remain the same.
Here lived the Redman, lived and loved and died,
The Spaniard came, in hordes from o'er the tide.
A change was wrought in language, customs, moods,
But still remained these valleys and these woods,
Unmarred by plowman's or by woodman's skill,
As nature made them, woods and valleys still.
Spain lost her hold. Her child, young Mexico
Waxed strong and said that parent rule must go.
So, from the land of ancient Aztec power,
Betrayed by Cortez in an evil hour,
From Montezuma and the plains far east,
The shepherd came, the herdsman and the priest.
Long time the shepherd drove his flocks afield,
The herdsman's traffics goodly income yield;
The priest of God, by lawful power given,
Prepares the Redman for the white man's heaven.
Peace, quiet reigned. The Indian laid aside
His murd'rous thoughts and like a Christian died.
But yet these groves, to Nature ever dear,
Still lent their echoes to the songbird's cheer.



“ Another war, and lo, these peaceful lands
Another victor, as his spoil, demands.
Now o'er yon cliff that guards the Golden Gate,
A name far known, but only known of late,
The flag we love, the Stars and Stripes, unfurled,
Waves joyful welcome, yes, to all the world.
They come by hundreds, thousands, young and old,
The weak, the strong, the timid and the bold;
For word has gone to regions far around,
That in these mountains stores of gold are found.
From over seas in ships of every kind,
Propelled by steam or driven by the wind,
Of every nation, color, race or creed,
From darkest African, to fairest Swede,
They come in hope vast fortunes here to win,
And then return to country and to kin.
But Fate decrees. Man wills but never knows
The time or place his earthly life must close.
In many a home beyond the surging tide,
Is waiting now a mother, sister, bride,
In whose sad heart the flames of hope still burn,
For some brave youth who never shall return.

“ 'Tis strange that man of innate worth untold,
Should wed himself to such a thing as gold!

Become a tramp and roam from year to year
Without one comfort, one sweet, homelike cheer!



“ But time moves on, yes, other men shall come
With wives and children here to make a home,
Shall fell these woods, and plow these fertile plains,
Grow rich and prosperous from their yearly gains;
Build schools and colleges, great cities found,
And scatter knowledge all the world around.
Through these fair valleys, rich in golden grain,
Shall come and go the heavy freighted train,
Bring trav’lers from the North, the South, the East,
To bask in sunshine and mid flowers to feast.
O, land of beauty, land of fruits and flowers,
Of waving grains, of vines and rosy bowers!
Who shall predict what fortune shall be thine,
From richest culture of the tree and vine?

“ But we must on. The sun is mounting high
Towards the bright zenith of a cloudless sky,
The birds of song have ceased their morning raid,
And, mute, retired to the deeper shade.
Still southward o’er yon brown hills, far away
Must lead our footsteps ere the close of day.



“ Man builds and glories in his building’s strength;
Time looks upon his work, and lo, at length,
Another comes to view the wreck-strewn place
And read the records of a vanished race.”

Thus spoke my friend as on a wide plateau,
The wonder land of proud, old Mexico,
We stood and gazed, our being lost in thought,
Upon the ruin in this fair land wrought.
“ Of ruins such as these,” then said my friend,
“ In all this region ’round there is no end.
On hill, in lowlands, and upon plateaus,
From Yucatan to where Columbia flows,
A thousand once proud cities buried lie
In the deep silence of the long-gone-by.
And further still. In truth it may be said
This land surpassing all is of the dead;
In all these mountains, all these desert lands,
Lived men once numerous as the drifting sands.
In yonder forest, deep beneath the mould,
On yon high cliffs, a hundred centuries old
Are foot-prints of a race that builded well,
Ere Rome was old or great Pompeii fell.
A race who dwelt in proud, palatial homes,
Built lofty temples, and were laid in tombs.

A race in science, art, in commerce schooled,
By wise men taught, no doubt, by great men ruled.

“ Whence came this race? The mortal does not live,
Who, from their records, may this knowledge give.
Some think the ten lost tribes of Israel,
On whom the curse of great Jehovah fell,
Through Asia wandered and the Aleutian Isles,
To find a foothold in these rugged wilds.
But others, with more reason on their side,
To trace these people, other means provide.
Long ages since, they say, time must have been,
When no sea rolled the continents between;
That where the great Atlantic now holds sway,
Stood proud Atlantis in that early day,
Once mistress of the world, a continent
Of vast resources and of wide extent;
A wisdom-land, the cradle of the race,
Whence wandered men to every land apace.



“ Of this enough. The origin of man,
The time, the place where earthly life began,
Is veiled from us, and must forever be,
To mortal man an unsolved mystery.

Toward pure invention is the rude mind's trend,
And of its fable you may find no end.
But whether Edens were, but one, or more,
'Tis certain that when Cortez reached this shore,
He found it peopled, not by lawless hordes,
But kindly persons, ruled by kings and lords,
Not treacherous, else every Spaniard brave,
Instead of conquest would have found a grave.
Nay, more. Had Montezuma then been dead,
And wiser Guatemozin ruled instead,
No ill-starred Spanish conquest could have been
To blot the fame of Aztec's noble queen.
But here as in the old world, everywhere,
Great men are ruled by superstitious fear,
And while they on their worthless gods depend,
A shrewder foe allures them to their end.



“ The world is older now and wiser grown,
And fewer gods are lounging round the throne.
Men realize that in themselves reside
The power to do, the wisdom to decide.

“ But Tenocitlan fell, and in her fall,
Went swiftly down Anahuac, and all

Her dreamy splendor fled. But who shall say
That ill resulted to mankind that day?
All cities, nations, races, every one,
Has each its day, its measured course to run,
Each lives and thrives and glories in its might,
Then fades and sinks into oblivious night;
To-day, this city stands in beauteous sheen,
Tomorrow, mark the place where it hath been.
A gloomy forest, thick in shade, and wild,
Springs from the ashes of this earth-born child.
But each succeeding race brings higher aims,
And greater skill and more refinement claims.
Mounts higher, reaches further out and on,
And leaves a richer world when it is gone."

Thus spoke the seer and, turning to me said,
"I, too, shall soon be numbered with these dead.
I feel my sands of life are almost run,
My strengths, like leaves, are falling, one by one.
I'm weary of this tramp, and long to lay
This worn-out body with its kindred clay.
I've had my day, a long one it hath been,
And I confess, not always free from sin.
But I have lived according to my light,
The light which birth-right gave, and day and night

With all my strength, I've studied, willed and prayed
That when this body in its tomb is laid,
I may be free. I have no fear of death,
Nor dread that when shall fail this mortal breath,
That I shall cease to live. Not so; right here
I feel and know there is another sphere
Of glorious life, a life not unlike this
Save for its broader sweep and greater bliss.
One weakness I confess. I always thought
That ere I died I'd wander to the spot,
Where lies the body of my early love,
The mother of my child, both long above.
But why regret? To her 'tis just as near
From this lone spot as from my Scotland dear.
Besides, she's here. My angel wife has come
To sooth my grief and take me to her home.
Ah! see! She beckons. Yes, I know the end.
Tonight I go and *thou must lose thy friend*.
God knows, my dear young friend, it rends my heart,
To feel that thou and I so soon must part.
'Tis double grief to leave thee thus alone
In this strange land; for ever since my own
Dear wife and boy lay buried by the sea
My withered heart has turned to none but thee.



“ Now let us hence. Just o'er yon hill we'll find
A shepherd's hut, its inmates true and kind,
And, if my inner sense divines aright,
Sweet rest for thee, for me, a last good night.”

We found the hut, the shepherd and his mate,
A noble pair, of kindness innate,
A welcome and a feast before us spread,
And homely comfort in a shepherd's bed.

That night I dreamed, in some mysterious way
I'd wandered from the earth. 'Twas brilliant day,
And yet no sun appeared to mount on high,
Or moon or star to light the snow-white sky,
Which near me drew, and seemed a solid wall,
Built out of folded clouds, sides, roof and all.
A temple this, I thought, and I within,
To do meet penance for some earthly sin.
Perhaps a prison! This my final doom
To live forever in this vaulted room!
But no. I'm strong and feel within no fear,
That any force shall long detain me here.
By power of will I'll rend this wall in twain,
And thus my freedom and my right maintain.
For I am mind, and mind o'er matter rules,
However scoffed at by some earth-wise fools.

I willed, and lo, a rent from dome to floor
And all was gone, the white sky as before,
Save far away it seemed, and to inclose
Vast plains and streams, and in the distance rose
A rugged mountain, broad and reaching high,
Its summit lost within the snow white sky.
I looked around, and near this mountain's base
Three human forms, distinctly I could trace.
A woman one, tall, graceful, wondrous fair;
The other two were men, a stately pair.
A father, mother, son, it came to me,
And one, my good old friend! O, can it be?
While thus I stood, bewildered, half in fright,
My thought was answered. Yes, a last good night.
With this I woke and hastened to his bed,
And wildly felt his hands, his heart, his head.
The light streamed in, the light of early dawn,
And lay upon his corpse. My *friend* had gone.

How fast time flies! How swift the years go by!
But yesterday, it seems, and I stood nigh
His new made grave. Yet fifty years or more,
With all their freightage for that unknown shore,
Have swept us by. And now I'm growing old,
My body worn, and I shall soon be told

My work is done. Like him, I have no dread;
For well I know there is no death, no dead.
For death is but a change, and God is love,
And in all Nature lives. His rule above
Is Nature's, there as here and always just,
And in this fact I place my greatest trust.
I do not hope, that I'll at once be blessed
With perfect peace, or from my labors rest.
I know that I may pay a debt of sin
Before I shall be free and feel within
That conscious power and happiness divine,
Which some time in God's wisdom shall be mine.
I claim no more than for each child of earth,
No matter where or in what clime his birth.
Though born a king or doomed to slavish strife,
There is a purpose in each earth-born life,
An occult wisdom, guiding to an end,
Which neither you nor I may comprehend.
At least not now. Perhaps, long ages hence,
We may know all things, through some God-like sense.



But now our work is here. The time is ours.
Within our souls are great, but sleeping powers.

There's always something for our hands to do,
Some higher course our minds may well pursue.
A deed of kindness or a word of cheer,
A helping hand when danger hovers near
Are little things, too small 'twould seem to note,
But mighty in their sequence, far remote.
Yes, humane deeds like little seedlets grow,
And form great trees, which spread their branches low,
And scatter leaves and flowers far and wide
The moral nakedness of earth to hide.

We're kindred all. One God, our Father lives
In every human soul, and to each gives
His earthly work to do. Then leaves him free
To build for time or for Eternity.
Then let us strive that all this work is done,
And the last victory over evil won.
So let us live that when our time shall come
To leave this mortal for a higher home,
Our deeds of virtue, workmen sent before
Shall build us homes upon that other shore.

THE RAMBLER.

PART II.

I told you how and where my old friend died,
And how we found his corse at morning-tide,
A pulseless thing, devoid of warmth and breath,
A lifeless form but stately still in death.
My grief I did not tell, the weight of woe
That crushed me to the earth; nor do I know
What things were said and done; I only felt
That strangers came, and round his body knelt
And crossed themselves and muttered words of prayer,
Then carried it away, I knew not where.
Nor was I conscious that my friend had gone,
But thought him present still, and looked upon
His noble form and marked the kindly smile
That played upon his countenance the while
He spoke of those he loved, his wife and son,
So long the lost, so recently the won.
Methought he gently clasped my outstretched hand
And quickly led me forth into a land,
Which I had never seen, and yet it seemed
Not all unknown, for as child I'd dreamed

Of such a place, and in my visions fair
My inner self, I knew, had wandered there.

Through flow'ry fields we slowly strolled along,
And ever in my heart there was a song
Of gladness; and a sea of endless light
Was in my soul and filled my being quite.
I seemed to pass beyond the bounds of time,
And space was not; the Infinite Sublime
Caught up my sense of sight, and ages past,
With all their teeming millions, and the vast
Array of man's achievements, and the fame
Of his great deeds, all present things became.
I saw man in his cave, a savage beast
Of prey, then hunter, warrior, king, — a priest
In gorgeous robes of state, at whose command
The nations knelt and prayed; then o'er the land,
By superstition led, in every clime,
Spread savage warfare, cruelty and crime.
Then, from the cave came energy and will
And manhood brave, and the swift hand of skill
Was over all, and art and science grew
In strength and comeliness, and healed anew
The wounds of war, and hid the scars of strife,
And spread upon the earth a gladder life.

Then, cities rose, and palaces and homes
Of lordly wealth, and upward pointing domes
For temple worship, and on every side
Were crowded marts, and traffic's surging tide
Rolled ever out and on, and everywhere
Were crowds of busy men and women fair
On life's affairs intent. Some sought for fame,
Some hoarded wealth, whereon to found a name
That time might not destroy. But most, intent
On pleasure, all their daily earnings spent
In its pursuit. Hence feasting, song and dance,
Alluring sports, bewildering games of chance,
And wine and wassail, and the great display
Of jeweled wealth, chased darkness into day.
Few thought of life save as a present boon,
A thing to be enjoyed, but all too soon,
Like earthly fame, or youth or beauty bright
To fade and sink into oblivious night.

Again I saw, and this in human guise,
Another being from this cave arise.
And He was clothed in light, and on His brow
Sat Wisdom, and He taught the millions how
To live; and from the mind of man made drear
Because of death, He took away all fear.

Then knowledge rose and grew apace and spread
Throughout the land, and superstition fled
Before its light; then through the realms that be
Mind was the only power and man was free.

Then as I wondering gazed, my old friend said:
"We've crossed the bounds of time. Behold the dead,
Or those whom we called dead, of ages past
And eons yet to come, a wondrous, vast
And boundless sea of life, of ever potent mind,
The essence, soul and spirit of mankind.
An atom of this all-prevailing sea,
Do as he will, man cannot cease to be;
In some condition, be it Heaven or Hell
In happiness supreme, or torment fell,
Sun, moon and stars may cease their light to give,
He, greater than them all, must ever live.
In some condition, be it high or low,
Of grateful progress, of regret and woe,
Lord of himself, he lives to choose a way,
And shape a course that must remain for aye.

"I hold it true that in ourselves doth dwell
What'er there may be of a Heaven or Hell.
Conditions these that in earth life begin,
The sure results of righteousness or sin.

Man chooses for himself; there's no restraint;
One law obtains for sinner or for saint.
The king, the courtier, subject, master, slave,
The honest toiler and the worthless knave,
Are of one source, are destined to one end,
And on one law, the law of growth depend.



“ There is no truth in any storied fall
Of Satan or of man; God's laws are all
As changeless as himself; His perfect mind
Makes no mistakes, is not to err inclined.
Our punishments are self-inflicted, too,
And these for all; there are no favored few.
Our earthly lives are by the Father given
To fit our souls for greater joys of Heaven.
But law is first and as there is no change
In all the sweep of its supernal range,
Our thoughts and deeds must be within its scope,
Else all is lost, peace, happiness and hope.



“ Man's life-boat rides upon a shoreless sea,
He shapes its course; his will and thought are free.

The boat is sound, its cast of perfect mould,
The crew's his own and by his choice enrolled.
Though sands and shoals and hidden rocks abound,
And undercurrents everywhere are found,
Though strong armed winds and storm-tossed waves
prevail,

And uncouth monsters of the deep assail,
Though mortal weakness may within provide,
Or bold ambition o'er the crew preside,
No deadly danger can his boat o'erwhelm,
While Truth commands and Wisdom holds the helm.

“ In yonder cave, the first rude home of man,
Dwelt life immortal; when that life began,
Or rather when it rose in form divine,
'Twere vain to ask; the knowledge is not mine.
But this I know, that death to all of earth
Is but a change of state, another birth,
The entrance to life's higher broader plane,
An incident in being's endless chain.
Behold how from the first, man, savage, rude,
Concealed within an element of good,
A principle divine, — creative force,
Which urged him forward in an upward course.

“ Through centuries of toil in patience wrought,
He climbed from cave to unpretentious cot,

Then by the use of wood and earth and stone
And metals of the earth before unknown,
He reared aloft with skill and strength combined
Those grander homes, where Pleasure lives enshrined.
He brought from out the bowels of the earth
The wealth of bygone years and gave new birth
To elements, which nature had confined
For human use when earth was first designed.
Nay, more, in time, by intuition's aid,
He greater inroads into secrets made.
From drifting clouds he called the lightning down,
And harnessed it to use, and swift renown
From great inventions rose and filled the land,
And he was master; and at his command,
The earth and sea their treasured forces gave
To him, and matter was his servant, slave.
And yet they call him humble, worm of dust,
A fallen creature, who forever must
With sighs and groans and useless pleadings, sore
Affliction and dire punishment endure,
Because with no volition of his own,
He found himself within earth's influence thrown.
They say he disobeyed Divine Command,
And ate forbidden fruit; hence all the land

For this, his act was cursed, and he from grace
Divine did fall and with him all his race.
They further tell that from his Eden fair
He wandered forth in darkness and despair,
And ever down to deeper depths of woe
He plunged, his Eden lost and God his foe.



“ ’Twas thus they say till wrath Divine was passed
And God repented, and, forsooth at last
With sorrow worn, He sent His only Son
To mend the mischief that Himself had done.

“ O! Wondrous tale and fable most absurd,
This monkish tale paraded as God's word!
Man never fell; was never tempted he
By his Creator, but was always free
To choose from out her full and varied store
What nature of her bounty set before.

“ Insidious priest! Oh! curse of human kind,
Imposter, base, blind leader of the blind!
For disregard of law and Truth Divine
A fearful reckoning shall, at last be thine!
Hadst thou but used the power given thee
To raise man up and help to set him free

From grosser passions and a barb'rous will,
Thou might'st have been his honored leader still.
But thou didst put to shame the inner light,
Which knowledge set aflame, and by thy might,
Thy overweening power, through intrigue gained
Thou mad'st him slave and to thyself enchained.

“ But neither thou nor any earthly power
Can master his career. Each day and hour
But mark his upward growth, and eons hence,
When earth has ceased to bear, and change immense
Has written “ Death ” o'er all the universe,
Man shall continue in his onward course.

“ O glorious Life! No sad decay, no end!
In all thy attributes, thou dost transcend
The powers of mind. The Infinite alone
Hath set thy course and claimed thee as his own.



“ But we must on. Yes, love has conquered me,
Still binds my new born spirit close to thee.
Fain would I have thee as in days of yore,
With me this great, this wonderland explore.
This higher, grander world to mortals given,
The spirit's home, the true, the just man's heaven.

But still I know that now this cannot be,
For Earth, thy mother still has use for thee.
For three score years, with all their weight of care,
Of hope, of joy, of sorrow and despair,
Thou must remain an humble child of earth,
And ignorant of that glorious second birth.
For three score years to think, to plan, to do,
To shape the course thy spirit must pursue,
Thou build'st the house wherein thou must reside
When Charon's boat has brought thee o'er the tide.

“ I warn thee not, nor would I dare advise,
'Tis through thyself alone that thou must rise
To usefulness, distinction, manhood, fame,
And leaving, leave behind an honest claim
To services performed, to honor won,
And kind remembrance for the things thou'st done.
But this thou know'st and nobly hast thou striven
To plant within thy soul the flowers of Heaven.
I see thy earthly course, an humble one,
But open as the day, fair as the sun,
A course among the useful ones of earth,
Known mainly for their honest work and worth.

“ But I'm admonished that the time has come
For thy return. Within yon shepherd's home

Where late thou didst receive a mother's care,
Thy body lies entranced, and unaware
Of this, thy noble friend, the shepherdess,
Is plunged in deepest grief, and sore distress
Of mind, because of thy untimely sleep.
She fears thee dead, and therefore doth she weep
As for her own first born, a warrior brave,
Who all too early found a soldier's grave."

He said, and midnight darkness, like the pall
Of death, encompassed me about, then all
Was blank.



"From lone Sierra's untrod snow,
With moisture laden, to the plains below,
The winds crept down and kissed with dewy breath
The sun-parched soil, and lo, where all was death,
Result of drouth prolonged, life came again,
And green abundance filled the cloud-drenched plain.
Amid this life renewed, this glorious wealth
Of life, strength came to me again, and health
And cheerfulness, and love of earth returned,
And I was wiser for the things I'd learned.
I missed my friend, 'tis true, his smile, his cheer,
His words of wisdom and his love sincere;

I missed the music of his voice so sweet
And homeward tramping of his tireless feet.

But what was all of this to that great light,
Which knowing gives, the sense of power and might
That comes into the soul that once hath seen
The mysteries of life beyond Death's screen?
I knew myself no more a thing of time
But man immortal, part of that Sublime
Creative Power, that ever potent force,
Which recks not time but rules the universe.
I missed my kind old friend, but those were there
Who gave me still a fathers', mother's care,
Who loved me well and thought to fill the place
Of one to me the noblest of his race.

So, far removed from worldly care and strife,
I learned to love the simple shepherd life,
A life of peace and quiet, and to me
Who Nature loves, the opportunity
In mountains, plains and century planted woods,
To study her in all her grandest moods.



But not the life, perhaps, so much as those with whom
My lot was cast, found amplest room

In my young heart, for I was fond of both
The shepherd and his lovely mate, was loth
From them to part, though I well knew,
That far from them a life I must pursue.
But charmed with these new friends and their bright
 clime

I loitered long and took no note of time.
From day to day I played the student's role
With book in hand would o'er the brown hills stroll,
Intent the language of my friends to learn;
For they were Spanish born, and each in turn
Would guide my speech and lead my awkward tongue
To use the accents they weré taught when young.
For in their native land, the far Castile,
Don Pedro and his wife the fair Lucile
Were both of noble birth and not unknown
Among the greater near the Spanish throne.

For many years, in council and in war,
Don Pedro served his king; then from afar,
An evil influence came and factions rose,
And once firm friends were numbered with his foes.
Then followed swift the loss of fortune, fame,
A blighted honor and a proscribed name.

Don Pedro fled his home, his native Spain
To find sweet peace on this benighted plain,

And here in after years joined by his wife,
He thought no more of royalty and strife.



Such then, were those to whom my good old friend
Aware of death's approach, of earth-life's end,
Would fain his charge confide; for years before
While rambling o'er these plains, in need most sore,
Of rest and comfort and that kindly cheer,
Which man from man should meet with everywhere,
He came across this hut, the ideal home
Of peace and sweet content, a lovely poem
Of cultured harmony, and in it found
The rest he sought, and gratitude profound
And love for those who gave him comfort, cheer,
Filled all his soul and grew from year to year.



When months had passed and I had learned to speak
The language of my friends, I oft would seek
To call forth from the Don or from Lucile
Some wondrous story of their lost Castile.
And many a tale I learned of knightly fame,
And story heard of lord and courtly dame,

Of love and war and courtship fair and free
 In the old days of Spain and chivalry.
 Here, too, I learned of Saracen and Moor
 The Arab's dream to plant upon this shore
 The faith of Islam, and to see unfurled
 The Panim's banner, master of the world.
 But Fate once more decrees: "This cannot be,"
 And Islam's home is still beyond the sea.
 'Twere vain to strive, for there shall come a day,
 When Islam's strength shall moulder and decay,
 When once again the cross of Christ shall rise
 And drive the crescent from these Western skies,
 When thou, Cordova, and Granada, thou
 In all thy pride before the Cross shall bow,
 When, in thy halls where Calif, Emir prayed,
 The monk shall loiter and the priest, arrayed
 In stately robes of purple and of gold,
 Shall dictate to the nations as of old.



But days pass on. How very swift they go,
 When one is entertained. Yes, Mexico,
 In thy soft winds and ever glorious clime,
 One finds an antidote for lagging Time.

Again upon the sea, O moaning, restless sea,
 And great reminder of Eternity;
 Again upon thy waves and homeward bound,
 The stars above, beneath thy depths profound,
 O'er which I'm drifting, drifting toward that goal
 I long to reach, the loadstone of my soul!
 My home, my native home, land of my birth,
 To me the fairest spot of all the earth!
 'Tis true I grieve for those I've left behind,
 Whose loves with mine are ever more entwined.
 But well I know this parting's not for aye,
 For sometime in God's world there'll come a day,
 On this sad earth or on another plane,
 When I shall meet and greet these friends again.



O, what were life without a friend, a home!
 What dreariness this wide world through to roam,
 And know no sacred spot, no genial heart,
 From which my soul would never wish to part.
 Ah! Friendless, homeless! Rather would I crave
 Unconscious sleep within the voiceless grave,
 Than chain my thoughts to selfish things and feel
 There's none in all the world to seek my weal,

No one with whom the joys of life to share,
No one to sympathize when broods despair,
No kindly soul on whom I may depend,
As life sweeps onward to its mortal end.
Yes, homeward bound! O, how these soft words thrill
My longing soul! How all my being fill
With mem'ries of the dead and buried past,
Sad memories of smiles and tears, the last
Brave words of cheer from lips of deathless love,
"I'll wait your coming in the home above."