





[1829--1867]

R. E. BLACKWELL

**H**ENRY TIMROD was born in Charleston, South Carolina, December 8, 1829, and died of consumption in Columbia, South Carolina, October 6, 1867, the last of his name in America. When told that he could not recover, he exclaimed: "And this is to be the end of all—so soon, so soon!—and I have achieved so little. I thought to have done so much." "Timrod," says Hamilton W. McBie, "is one of the most attractive figures and most pathetic in the brief history of our literature—one of the truest lyric poets that has yet appeared in this country, the most characteristic Southern poet." He left a small volume of verses, of between four thousand and five thousand lines, chiefly lyrics of love' nature, and war. Timrod's grandfather, Henry Timrod, the founder of the family in America, was of German birth. Before the American Revolution, he had established himself in Charleston, as one of its prominent citizens. He volunteered for the war, and his name stands first on the roll of the German Fusiliers. He married a Miss Graham, an accomplished woman from the north of Ireland. Their son, William Henry Timrod, served in the Seminole War, as captain of the German Fusiliers, and died from the effects of disease contracted in that war. He left his family in straitened circumstances. Thus the poet was early made acquainted with the effects of war—poverty, disease, and death.

Henry Timrod had a rich spiritual inheritance from his parents. His father possessed a strong character and a vigorous and versatile intellect; he was the editor of a literary periodical in Charleston and the author of a volume of verse. His mother, a Miss Prince, of Charleston, whose mother was of Swiss origin, was a woman of remarkable beauty and of great goodness and purity of character, with a poet's sensitiveness to all the beauties of nature.

Timrod had among his school-fellows in Charleston the great Greek scholar, Basil L. Gildersleeve, and the poet, Paul H. Hayne, who was to be his lifelong friend and the guardian of his name and reputation. "I well remember," says Hayne, "the exultation with which he showed me one morning his earliest consecutive attempt at



verse-making. . . . Our 'down East' schoolmaster, however . . . could boast of no turn for sentiment, and having remarked us hobnobbing meanly assaulted us in the rear, effectually quenching, for the time, all æsthetic enthusiasm." It was to Hayne that Timrod sent from his deathbed his last poem, "Tell me what you think of it, be sure."

As a boy, Timrod is described as "modest and diffident, with a nervous utterance"; "full of quick impulse, and with an eager ambition, insatiable in his thirst for books, yet mingling freely in all sports, and rejoicing unspeakably in the weekly holiday and its long rambles through wood and field." "He delighted in every sort of rough outdoor sport, in leaping, running, wrestling, swimming, and even in fighting."

His college education was received at the University of Georgia, but owing to illness and to the lack of means he was not graduated. But he carried away from college a wide experience in reading. Of the classics, his favorites were Vergil, Horace, and Catullus. Of Catullus he made a poetic translation, and, as his own verses show, he certainly caught some of the charm of that author. But it was with English song that he chiefly fed his muse—with Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Burns, Wordsworth, and Tennyson. To Wordsworth, we are told, he looked up as his poetical guide and exemplar; he caught Wordsworth's spirit of simplicity and truth and shows his influence both in his style and in his attitude toward nature. Some of his early poems are marred by a too evident suggestion of Tennyson's influence; but he wrought out a style peculiarly his own, and in his treatment of nature he is often truly original, and is nowhere a mere imitator.

While at college he spent a large part of his leisure time in composing love-songs, some of which were published in the *Charleston Evening News*, and one of which, to his great gratification, was set to music.

On leaving college, he returned to Charleston, and, like so many other Southerners with literary aspirations, entered upon the study of law. He was taken into the office of the distinguished jurist, the Honorable J. L. Petigru. But to a man of Timrod's unworldly, poetic temperament, "slow of speech and effeminate in his gentleness," who "shrank from noisy debate and the wordy clash of argument as from a blow," success in the law was an impossibility. After some failure to execute a commission, Mr. Petigru said to him, frankly, "Why, Harry, you are a fool!" "I would have been a fool," said Timrod, "to Mr. Petigru to the end of my days, even had I revealed in after-life the genius of a Milton or a Shakespeare."

Failing at the law, he sought a professorship in some college, but



as no situation was available he became a private tutor in several Carolina families, and continued in this work for ten years. Whenever opportunity offered, he returned to Charleston, where he was one of a literary coterie, over which William Gilmore Simms presided. Among his friends were Judge George S. Bryan, Dr. J. Dickson Bruns and Paul H. Hayne. These literary friends started *Russell's Magazine*, with Hayne as editor, and to it Timrod contributed some of his best pieces, as "Præceptor Amat," a charming poem; "The Arctic Voyager," and "A Rhapsody of a Southern Winter's Night." From 1848 to 1853 he was a contributor to the *Southern Literary Messenger*, under the pen-name of Agläus. "The Past," a poem which received the hearty admiration of the poet Longfellow, was contributed to the *Messenger*.

In 1859-60 a volume of his poetry was published by Ticknor and Fields, of Boston. It contained, besides thirteen sonnets, thirty poems, many of them his most characteristic love and nature poems. Twelve out of his fifteen "well-nigh perfect sonnets," as Henry Austin calls them, appear in this early volume. Here, too, is "A Vision of Poesy," his longest and most ambitious poem, tracing the growth and development of a poetic soul, and giving his conception of the mission of genius on earth as being "to uplift, purify, and confirm, by his own gracious gift, the world." His passionate love of nature and his interpretative treatment of it is shown in such poems as "The Sonnet," "At Last, Beloved, I Have Met," and in "The Summer Bower." And could there be any more charmingly sweet and delicate love poem, with its dainty playfulness, than "The Lily Confidante"? Hayne is amply justified in saying, "A fitter first volume of the kind has seldom appeared anywhere." But 1860 was not an auspicious time for a volume of poetry on love and nature, though Hayne tells us that it was welcomed by a few Southern editors. The *New York Tribune*, too, spoke favorably of the work, with moderation, but with real discernment:

"These poems are worthy of a wide audience. They form a welcome offering to the common literature of our country. The author, whose name promises to be better known from this specimen of his powers, betrays a genuine poetic instinct in the selection of his themes, and has treated them with a lively, delicate fancy and graceful beauty of expression."

This is surely high and well-merited praise. But these qualities, and even more and greater ones than might have been truthfully attributed to Timrod's poetry, would not have been sufficient to make the poet's voice heard above the coming tempest of war.

When the storm finally broke, Timrod helped to arouse the war spirit among his fellow countrymen by his martial poems. "Ethno-



genesis" was written during the meeting of the first Southern Congress at Montgomery, and part of it was read before that body. It expresses the high hopes of the Southerners at the time, and on that account will live as a part of the history of the times. It is, to use Hamilton W. Mabie's phrase, "the prelude, as Lowell's 'Commemoration Ode' is the epilogue, to the Civil War." Henry Austin speaks of it as perhaps the greatest of Timrod's poems, and predicts that it will rank in English literature next to Dryden's "Alexander's Feast." "A Cry to Arms," "Charleston," "Carmen Triumphale," "Christmas," "Ripley," "Carolina," and "The Cotton-Boll," all belong to this time. In these he spoke for his people, and reached their hearts. To give him a wider audience, it was proposed by some of his friends to have an edition of his poems issued in England, and illustrations by an English artist had been promised for the work. But this plan failed, as might have been expected. "An unspeakable disappointment," Timrod writes, "but I try to bear my lot—the lot of every impecunious poet." After the war, the plan was again revived, and he was editing his poems when death came to dash his hopes.

But Timrod did not confine himself to writing war poems. He went to the front, and when the physicians sent him back he tried being a war correspondent. But this also was too much for his constitution, which had already been undermined by the disease which was finally fatal. He then returned home, and on January 12, 1864, he became the associate editor of the *Columbia South Carolinian*. On February sixteenth of that year he married the "Katie" of his love-poems, Miss Kate Goodwin, an English lady, whose brother had married Timrod's sister. A short year of happiness was vouchsafed to him. A son, the subject of "A Mother's Wail," and "Our Willie," was born Christmas Eve, 1864. On February 17, 1865, a year and a day after his marriage Sherman destroyed Columbia. Then all the waters of affliction swept over him and his people. Thenceforth he was to see nothing but sorrow and disappointment. In October of that year his son died. "Beggary, starvation, death, bitter grief, utter want of hope," is his summing up of the story of his life for that year. Is it surprising that though he lived more than two years after the war he wrote only three or four poems? "A great poet," he had written in *Russell's Magazine* the year before, "has defined poetry to be 'emotion recollected in tranquillity.' No man with grief in his heart could sit straightway down to strain that grief through iambics." There was no tranquillity for Timrod in his last years, and grief was always in his heart. In March, 1866, he writes to Hayne: "Both my sister and myself are completely impoverished. We have lived for a long period, and are still living, on the proceeds of the gradual sale of furniture and plate. We have—let me see—



Yes, we have eaten two silver pitchers, one or two dozen silver forks, several sofas, innumerable chairs, and a huge bedstead.

"Until December I had no employment. Mr. ——— passed through Columbia in November . . . informed me that he was going to reestablish his paper in Charleston, and promised that I should have my old interest in it . . . offering a salary of fifteen dollars a week for daily editorials. I have now hacked on for four months, and have as yet failed to receive a single month's pay. The plain truth is, Mr. ——— can't pay. . . .

"As for supporting myself and a large family—wife, mother, sister and nieces—by literary work, 'tis utterly preposterous. . . . I forwarded some poems in my best style to certain Northern periodicals, and in every instance they were coldly declined. . . . To confess the truth, my dear P., I not only feel that I can write no more verses, but I am perfectly indifferent to the fate of what I have already composed. I would consign every line of it to eternal oblivion for one hundred dollars in hand!"

In October of the same year William Gilmore Simms writes to Hayne: "Poor Timrod is swallowed up in disaster. He now contemplates separation from his wife, that she may go forth as a governess, and he as a tutor, in private families." The pity of it all was that his friends were almost as much impoverished by the war as he, and could not come to his assistance. About this time, Mr. Richardson, a Northern publisher, invited him to be his guest in New York, and had he been able to accept it he would have doubtless made friends among literary men who could have helped him; but poverty prevented his accepting the invitation. But all that his friend Hayne could do was to invite him to visit him in his "crazy wooden shanty" in the Georgia pines near Augusta, where he himself was struggling against misfortune and barely eking out a subsistence. Urged by his physician, Timrod paid Hayne a visit in April, where, in the delightful companionship of his friend, and in sweet communion with nature, his health seemed improved, and his spirits were somewhat revived. He paid a second visit in August. On his return home, he had in September a severe hemorrhage of the lungs. From this time, the disease moved swiftly in its destructive course. In a few short weeks he was on his deathbed, but to the last he was the poet and the painstaking artist, correcting his poems for the press; and when he died he left his manuscript stained with his life's blood. Often during his sickness, he would fold his arms and quote lines from his favorite hymn: "Jesus, lover of my soul." The last Sunday morning before his death, the sacrament was administered to him. As his last moments drew near he said: "And this is death. The struggle has come at last. It appears like two



tides—two tides advancing and retreating. . . . Now the power of death recedes, but wait, it will advance again, triumphant." He quoted Milton's "Death Rides Triumphant." "Do you remember," he asked, "that little poem of mine:

"Somewhere on this earthly planet,  
In the dust of flowers to be,  
In the dew-drop and the sunshine,  
Sleeps a solemn hour for me?" "

In one of his last agonizing struggles his sister said to him: "You will soon be at rest now." "Yes, my sister, but love is sweeter than rest."

An unquenchable thirst consumed him, and he recalled a passage in Shakespeare's "King John":

"And none of you will let the winter come  
To thrust his icy fingers in my maw?"

The last spoonful of water his wife gave him he could not swallow. "Never mind," he said, "I shall soon drink at the river of eternal life." In a few minutes, as the day was "purpling in the zenith," at the hour he had predicted, the watchers whispered, "He is gone."

On October 7, 1867, he was buried in the cemetery of Trinity Church, Columbia. Years afterward a small shaft was erected over his grave, and on October 7, 1901, a boulder of gray granite was placed on it by the Timrod Memorial Association which has done so much for his memory.

For years after Timrod's death, he was little known, even among Southern people. The edition of 1859-'60 had fallen, still-born, from the press, and only a few of his songs could be found in the books of war poetry. In 1872-'73, his friend, Paul H. Hayne, even before he issued an edition of his own poems, edited an edition of Timrod's, which was published by E. J. Hale and Son, of New York. This, to the surprise of the publishers, was quickly sold, and a new and revised edition was issued in 1873, which, in its turn, was soon exhausted. The Hayne edition contained the thirty-four poems and the twelve sonnets of the edition of 1859-'60, besides the ten war poems: "Spring," "The Cotton-Boll," "Serenade," "Dedication," "Katie," "Why Silent?" "Two Portraits," "La Belle Juive," "An Exotic," "The Rosebuds," "A Mother's Wail," "Our Willie," "Address at the Opening of the Richmond Theatre," "A Summer Shower," "1866—Address to the Old Year," "Hymn sung at a Sacred Concert," "Lines to R. L.," "Storm and Calm," and Sonnets III and IX. We learn from Hayne's introduction to the second edition that he rejected fourteen poems of those we have, when preparing his works for the press in 1862.



Hayne wrote for this edition a very full and sympathetic Memoir of sixty-two pages, in which he gives specimens of Timrod's criticism on poetry, especially the sonnet, and several of his editorials.

In 1864 "Katie" was brought out in an illustrated edition by Hale and Son, New York. When all these editions were exhausted the Timrod Memorial Association undertook to issue the Memorial Edition to Timrod, which appeared in 1899. It is now published by B. F. Johnson Company, Richmond, Virginia. This has an unsigned introduction of thirty-two pages, with a portrait of Timrod "reproduced from the oil portrait in the Honorable William A. Courtney's library, Innisfallen, South Carolina." This edition claims to contain the poems of all the former editions, and also some earlier poems not hitherto published. There are, however, three pieces in the edition of 1860 that are not found in it: "Song, When I Bade Thee Adieu" (six stanzas), "Florabell, I Know Thee Well" (five double stanzas), and a sonnet, "Fate, Seek Me Out Some Lake Far Off and Lone"; and two of the poems given as "Now first collected," "Dedication to Fairy," and the sonnet, "If I Have Graced No Single Song of Mine," were also in the edition of 1860. On the appearance of the Memorial Edition, a Timrod revival followed, which helped to give the poet an assured place with the lovers of poetry in our country.

Timrod is not one of the greater gods of song. Neither his range nor the body of his work would justify us in classing him among the great poets; but, by the verdict of his fellow poets and of the critics, he takes rank among the genuine lyrical poets of America. "I was," says Whittier, "one of the very first to recognize the rare gift of the Carolina poet, Timrod"; and he wrote to Hayne, warmly praising Timrod's poems. Longfellow made the prediction: "The day will surely come when his poems will have a place in every home of culture in our country." L. Frank Tooker says of him: "He was a true poet, and worthy to stand in the narrow space that belongs to our best." Hamilton W. Mabie speaks of him as "one of the truest lyric poets that have yet appeared in this country." "America," says Professor Stockton Axson, of Princeton, "has produced no poet with a truer feeling for the outward beauty and inner mystery of the natural world", and again: "His love poetry was never on stilts, but is simple, sincere, and grandly spontaneous. This spontaneity is under the restraint of a well considered art." In the estimation of Henry Austin: "He is the most masterly Southern poet our civilization has produced. . . . In his war poetry there is a fervor and fire lacking in Tennyson. . . . Read it," he says, in speaking of "Carolina," "and say whether anything in English or Greek battle-poetry surpasses this in fervor and in form."

These are but a few of many equally favorable criticisms. If,



therefore, a poet's position in literature is defined by authority, it seems that Timrod has an assured place in the roll of our American singers. A reading of his poems by any lover of poetry will confirm this verdict.

Timrod's style is a reflection of the man. It is simple, refined, elevated, yet restrained. It adapts itself with perfect naturalness to his highest themes. There is never the feeling of straining to produce an effect. He was a master of the phrase and the line. His sonnets—a form of verse that most severely tests the skill of a poet—are among the very finest in our American literature, and at least one of his poems, the "Ode for Decoration Day in Magnolia Cemetery," is, by common consent of critics, well-nigh faultless. He possessed an archness and gay sportiveness of fancy and humor, and a genuine imagination, though not of wide range. His philosophy of life was thoroughly wholesome and sound. In spite of his sorrows and afflictions, there is no morbid note in all his poetry. In the pathetic wail over his dead son, there is no cursing of God.

But the reader should not judge Timrod by a few poems, especially by his war songs, but by the whole body of his work. For, though such poems as "Carolina" and "Charleston" deserve the high praise that has been bestowed upon them, Timrod's genius was for love and nature. Even in most of his martial poems, his heart pants for peace; and in "Spring," which is one of his most characteristic pieces, and in "The Cotton-Boll"—in which, as Hamilton Mabie says, "in depth of thought, in comprehensiveness of imagination, and in beauty of style, Timrod touched his high-water mark"—even in these poems the war-notes are the least pleasing, and do not add to their imaginative beauty and charm.

When contemplating his rich endowments, his artistic skill, and his acknowledged successes, who does not echo his cry at the approach of death, "So soon, so soon!" If fate had only been less cruel to him, and he could have lived to sing out his song, or if he could only have had some of the wine of praises and triumph, what might he not have accomplished for American letters?

In personal appearance, Timrod, as described by his friend, Dr. Bruns, was below medium height, slightly built, but with unusual breadth of shoulders, rather stooping in gait, quick and nervous in his movements. The jaw was square, almost stern, the mouth large, the lips exquisitely sensitive, the eyes gray and "deeply set under massive brows, and full of a pleading tenderness and melancholy, which attracted attention to his face at once as the face of one who had thought and suffered much."

*Robert B. Timrod*



SPRING

All selections are from 'Poems of Henry Timrod,' published by B. F. Johnson Publishing Company and used here by permission.

Spring, with that nameless pathos in the air  
Which dwells with all things fair,  
Spring, with her golden suns and silver rain,  
Is with us once again.

Out in the lonely woods the jasmine burns  
Its fragrant lamps, and turns  
Into a royal court with green festoons  
The banks of dark lagoons.

In the deep heart of every forest tree  
The blood is all aglee,  
'And there's a look about the leafless bowers  
As if they dreamed of flowers.

Yet still on every side we trace the hand  
Of Winter in the land,  
Save where the maple reddens on the lawn,  
Flushed by the season's dawn;

Or where, like those strange semblances we find  
That age to childhood bind,  
The elm puts on, as if in Nature's scorn,  
The brown of Autumn corn.

As yet the turf is dark, although you know  
That, not a span below,  
A thousand germs are groping through the gloom,  
And soon will burst their tomb.

Already, here and there, on frailest stems  
Appear some azure gems,  
Small as might deck, upon a gala day,  
The forehead of a fay.

In gardens you may note amid the dearth  
The crocus breaking earth;  
And near the snowdrop's tender white and green,  
The violet in its screen.



But many gleams and shadows need must pass  
Along the budding grass,  
And weeks go by, before the enamored South  
Shall kiss the rose's mouth.

Still there's a sense of blossoms yet unborn  
In the sweet airs of morn;  
One almost looks to see the very street  
Grow purple at his feet.

At times a fragrant breeze comes floating by,  
And brings, you know not why,  
A feeling as when eager crowds await  
Before a palace gate

Some wondrous pageant; and you scarce would start,  
If from a beech's heart,  
A blue-eyed Dryad, stepping forth, should say,  
"Behold me! I am May!"

Ah! who would couple thoughts of war and crime  
With such a blessed time!  
Who in the west wind's aromatic breath  
Could hear the call of Death!

Yet not more surely shall the Spring awake  
The voice of wood and brake,  
Than she shall rouse, for all her tranquil charms,  
A million men to arms.

There shall be deeper hues upon her plains  
Than all her sunlit rains,  
And every gladdening influence around,  
Can summon from the ground.

Oh! standing on this desecrated mould,  
Methinks that I behold,  
Lifting her bloody daisies up to God,  
Spring kneeling on the sod,

And calling, with the voice of all her rills,  
Upon the ancient hills  
To fall and crush the tyrants and the slaves  
Who turn her meads to graves.



THE COTTON-BOLL

While I recline  
At ease beneath  
This immemorial pine,  
Small sphere!  
(By dusky fingers brought this morning here  
And shown with boastful smiles),  
I turn thy cloven sheath,  
Through which the soft white fibres peer,  
That, with their gossamer bands,  
Unite, like love, the sea-divided lands,  
And slowly, thread by thread,  
Draw forth the folded strands,  
Than which the trembling line,  
By whose frail help yon startled spider fled  
Down the tall spear-grass from his swinging bed,  
Is scarce more fine;  
And as the tangled skein  
Unravels in my hands,  
Betwixt me and the noonday light,  
A veil seems lifted, and for miles and miles  
The landscape broadens on my sight,  
As, in the little boll, there lurked a spell  
Like that which, in the ocean shell,  
With mystic sound,  
Breaks down the narrow walls that hem us round,  
And turns some city lane  
Into the restless main,  
With all his capes and isles!

Yonder bird,  
Which floats, as if at rest,  
In those blue tracts above the thunder, where  
No vapors cloud the stainless air,  
And never sound is heard,  
Unless at such rare time  
When, from the City of the Blest,  
Rings down some golden chime,



Sees not from his high place  
So vast a cirque of summer space  
As widens round me in one mighty field,  
Which, rimmed by seas and sands,  
Doth hail its earliest daylight in the beams  
Of gray Atlantic dawns;  
And, broad as realms made up of many lands,  
Is lost afar  
Behind the crimson hills and purple lawns  
Of sunset, among plains which roll their streams  
Against the Evening Star!  
And lo!  
To the remotest point of sight,  
Although I gaze upon no waste of snow,  
The endless field is white;  
And the whole landscape glows,  
For many a shining league away,  
With such accumulated light  
As Polar lands would flash beneath a tropic day!  
Nor lack there (for the vision grows,  
And the small charm within my hands—  
More potent even than the fabled one,  
Which oped whatever golden mystery  
Lay hid in fairy wood or magic vale,  
The curious ointment of the Arabian tale—  
Beyond all mortal sense  
Doth stretch my sight's horizon, and I see,  
Beneath its simple influence,  
As if with Uriel's crown,  
I stood in some great temple of the Sun,  
And looked, as Uriel, down!)  
Nor lack there pastures rich and fields all green  
With all the common gifts of God,  
For temperate airs and torrid sheen  
Weave Edens of the sod;  
Through lands which look one sea of billowy gold  
Broad rivers wind their devious ways;  
A hundred isles in their embraces fold  
A hundred luminous bays;  
And through yon purple haze



Vast mountains lift their plumed peaks cloud-crowned;  
And, save where up their sides the ploughman creeps,  
An unhewn forest girds them grandly round,  
In whose dark shades a future navy sleeps!  
Ye Stars, which, though unseen, yet with me gaze  
Upon this loveliest fragment of the earth!  
Thou Sun, that kindlest all thy gentlest rays  
Above it, as to light a favorite hearth!  
Ye Clouds, that in your temples in the West  
See nothing brighter than its humblest flowers!  
And you, ye Winds, that on the ocean's breast  
Are kissed to coolness ere ye reach its bowers!  
Bear witness with me in my song of praise,  
And tell the world that, since the world began,  
No fairer land hath fired a poet's lays,  
Or given a home to man!

But these are charms already widely blown!  
His be the meed whose pencil's trace  
Hath touched our very swamps with grace,  
And round whose tuneful way  
All Southern laurels bloom;  
The Poet of "The Woodlands," unto whom  
Alike are known  
The flute's low breathing and the trumpet's tone,  
And the soft west wind's sighs;  
But who shall utter all the debt,  
O Land wherein all powers are met  
That bind a people's heart,  
The world doth owe thee at this day,  
And which it never can repay,  
Yet scarcely deigns to own!  
Where sleeps the poet who shall fitly sing  
The source wherefrom doth spring  
That mighty commerce which, confined  
To the mean channels of no selfish mart,  
Goes out to every shore  
Of this broad earth, and throngs the sea with ships  
That bear no thunders; hushes hungry lips  
In alien lands;



## SOUTHERN LITERATURE

Joins with a delicate web remotest strands;  
And gladdening rich and poor,  
Doth gild Parisian domes,  
Or feed the cottage-smoke of English homes,  
And only bounds its blessings by mankind!  
In offices likes these, thy mission lies,  
My Country! and it shall not end  
As long as rain shall fall and Heaven bend  
In blue above thee; though thy foes be hard  
And cruel as their weapons, it shall guard  
Thy hearth-stones as a bulwark; make thee great  
In white and bloodless state;  
And haply, as the years increase—  
Still working through its humbler reach  
With that large wisdom which the ages teach—  
Revive the half-dead dream of universal peace!  
As men who labor in that mine  
Of Cornwall, hollowed out beneath the bed  
Of ocean, when a storm rolls overhead,  
Hear the dull booming of the world of brine  
Above them, and a mighty muffled roar  
Of winds and waters, yet toil calmly on,  
And split the rock, and pile the massive ore,  
Or carve a niche, or shape the arch'd roof;  
So I, as calmly, weave my woof  
Of song, chanting the days to come,  
Unsilenced, though the quiet summer air  
Stirs with the bruit of battles, and each dawn  
Wakes from its starry silence to the hum  
Of many gathering armies. Still,  
In that we sometimes hear,  
Upon the Northern winds, the voice of woe  
Not wholly drowned in triumph, though I know  
The end must crown us, and a few brief years  
Dry all our tears,  
I may not sing too gladly. To Thy will  
Resigned, O Lord! we cannot all forget  
That there is much even Victory must regret.  
And, therefore, not too long  
From the great burthen of our country's wrong



Delay our just release!  
And, if it may be, save  
These sacred fields of peace  
From stain of patriot or of hostile blood!  
Oh, help us, Lord! to roll the crimson flood  
Back on its course, and, while our banners wing  
Northward, strike with us! till the Goth shall cling  
To his own blasted altar-stones, and crave  
Mercy; and we shall grant it, and dictate  
The lenient future of his fate  
There, where some rotting ships and crumbling quays  
Shall one day mark the Port which ruled the Western seas.

### TOO LONG, O SPIRIT OF STORM

Too long, O Spirit of Storm,  
Thy lightning sleeps in its sheath!  
I am sick to the soul of yon pallid sky,  
And the moveless sea beneath.

Come down in thy strength on the deep!  
Worse dangers there are in life,  
When the waves are still, and the skies look fair,  
Than in their wildest strife.

A friend I knew, whose days  
Were as calm as this sky overhead;  
But one blue morn that was fairest of all,  
The heart in his bosom fell dead.

And they thought him alive while he walked  
The streets that he walked in youth—  
Ah! little they guessed the seeming man  
Was a soulless corpse in sooth.

Come down in thy strength, O Storm!  
And lash the deep till it raves!  
I am sick to the soul of that quiet sea,  
Which hides ten thousand graves.



## THE LILY CONFIDANTE

Lily! lady of the garden!  
Let me press my lip to thine!  
Love must tell its story, Lily!  
Listen thou to mine.

Two I choose to know the secret—  
Thee, and yonder wordless flute;  
Dragons watch me, tender Lily,  
And thou must be mute.

There 's a maiden, and her name is . . .  
Hist! was that a rose-leaf fell?  
See, the rose is listening, Lily,  
And the rose may tell.

Lily-browed and lily-hearted,  
She is very dear to me;  
Lovely? yes, if being lovely  
Is—resembling thee.

Six to half a score of summers  
Make the sweetest of the "teens"—  
Not too young to guess, dear Lily,  
What a lover means.

Laughing girl, and thoughtful woman,  
I am puzzled how to woo—  
Shall I praise, or pique her, Lily?  
Tell me what to do.

"Silly lover, if thy Lily  
Like her sister lilies be,  
Thou must woo, if thou wouldest wear her,  
With a simple plea.

"Love 's the lover's only magic,  
Truth the very subtlest art;  
Love that feigns, and lips that flatter,  
Win no modest heart.



Her beauty, perhaps, were all too bright,  
But about her there broods some delicate spell,  
Whence the wondrous charm of the girl grows soft  
As the light in an English dell.

There is not a story of faith and truth  
On the starry scroll of her country's fame,  
But has helped to shape her stately mien,  
And to touch her soul with flame.

I sometimes forget, as she sweeps me a bow,  
That I gaze on a simple English maid,  
And I bend my head, as if to a queen  
Who is courting my lance and blade.

Once, as we read, in a curtained niche,  
A poet who sang of her sea-throned isle,  
There was something of Albion's mighty Bess  
In the flash of her haughty smile.

She seemed to gather from every age  
All the greatness of England about her there,  
And my fancy wove a royal crown  
Of the dusky gold of her hair.

But it was no queen to whom that day,  
In the dim green shade of a trellised vine,  
I whispered a hope that had somewhat to do  
With a small white hand in mine.

The Tudor had vanished, and, as I spoke,  
'T was herself looked out of her frank brown eye,  
And an answer was burning upon her face,  
Ere I caught the low reply.

What was it! Nothing the world need know—  
The stars saw our parting! Enough, that then  
I walked from the porch with the tread of a king,  
And she was a queen again!



## SOUTHERN LITERATURE

### A COMMON THOUGHT

Somewhere on this earthly planet  
In the dust of flowers to be,  
In the dewdrop, in the sunshine,  
Sleeps a solemn day for me.

At this wakeful hour of midnight  
I behold it dawn in mist,  
And I hear a sound of sobbing  
Through the darkness—hist! oh, hist!

In a dim and murky chamber,  
I am breathing life away;  
Some one draws a curtain softly,  
And I watch the broadening day.

As it purples in the zenith,  
As it brightens on the lawn,  
There's a hush of death about me,  
And a whisper, "He is gone!"

### CAROLINA

#### I

The despot treads thy sacred sands,  
Thy pines give shelter to his bands,  
Thy sons stand by with idle hands,  
Carolina!

He breathes at ease thy airs of balm,  
He scorns the lances of thy palm;  
Oh! who shall break thy craven calm,  
Carolina!

Thy ancient fame is growing dim,  
A spot is on thy garment's rim;  
Give to the winds thy battle hymn,  
Carolina!



## II

Call on thy children of the hill,  
Wake swamp and river, coast and rill,  
Rouse all thy strength and all thy skill,  
Carolina!

Cite wealth and science, trade and art,  
Touch with thy fire the cautious mart,  
And pour thee through the people's heart,  
Carolina!

Till even the coward spurns his fears,  
And all thy fields and fens and meres  
Shall bristle like thy palm with spears,  
Carolina!

## III

Hold up the glories of thy dead;  
Say how thy elder children bled,  
And point to Eutaw's battle-bed,  
Carolina!

Tell how the patriot's soul was tried,  
And what his dauntless breast defied;  
How Rutledge ruled and Laurens died,  
Carolina!

Cry! till thy summons, heard at last,  
Shall fall like Marion's bugle-blast  
Re-echoed from the haunted Past,  
Carolina!

## IV

I hear a murmur as of waves  
That grope their way through sunless caves,  
Like bodies struggling in their graves,  
Carolina!

And now it deepens; slow and grand  
It swells, as, rolling to the land,  
An ocean broke upon thy strand,  
Carolina!

Shout! let it reach the startled Huns!  
And roar with all thy festal guns!  
It is the answer of thy sons,  
Carolina!



V

They will not wait to hear thee call;  
From Sachem's Head to Sumter's wall  
Resounds the voice of hut and hall,  
Carolina!

No! thou hast not a stain, they say,  
Or none save what the battle-day  
Shall wash in seas of blood away,  
Carolina!

Thy skirts indeed the foe may part,  
Thy robe be pierced with sword and dart,  
They shall not touch thy noble heart,  
Carolina!

VI

Ere thou shalt own the tyrant's thrall  
Ten times ten thousand men must fall;  
Thy corpse may hearken to his call,  
Carolina!

When, by thy bier, in mournful throngs  
The women chant thy mortal wrongs,  
'T will be their own funereal songs,  
Carolina!

From thy dead breast by ruffians trod  
No helpless child shall look to God;  
All shall be safe beneath thy sod,  
Carolina!

VII

Girt with such wills to do and bear,  
Assured in right, and mailed in prayer,  
Thou wilt not bow thee to despair,  
Carolina!

Throw thy bold banner to the breeze!  
Front with thy ranks the threatening seas  
Like thine own proud armorial trees,  
Carolina!

Fling down thy gauntlet to the Huns,  
And roar the challenge from thy guns;  
Then leave the future to thy sons,  
Carolina!



V

Stoop, angels, hither from the skies!  
There is no holier spot of ground  
Than where defeated valor lies,  
By mourning beauty crowned!

SONNETS

I

Poet! if on a lasting fame be bent  
Thy unperturbing hopes, thou wilt not roam  
Too far from thine own happy heart and home;  
Cling to the lowly earth, and be content!  
So shall thy name be dear to many a heart;  
So shall the noblest truths by thee be taught;  
The flower and fruit of wholesome human thought  
Bless the sweet labors of thy gentle art.  
The brightest stars are nearest to the earth,  
And we may track the mighty sun above,  
Even by the shadow of a slender flower.  
Always, O bard, humility is power!  
And thou mayst draw from matters of the hearth  
Truths wide as nations, and as deep as love.

II

Most men know love but as a part of life;  
They hide it in some corner of the breast,  
Even from themselves; and only when they rest  
In the brief pauses of that daily strife,  
Wherewith the world might else be not so rife,  
They draw it forth (as one draws forth a toy  
To soothe some ardent, kiss-exacting boy)  
And hold it up to sister, child, or wife.  
Ah me! why may not love and life be one?  
Why walk we thus alone, when by our side,  
Love, like a visible God, might be our guide?  
How would the marts grow noble! and the street,  
Worn like a dungeon-floor by weary feet,  
Seem then a golden court-way of the Sun!



But still, along yon dim Atlantic line,  
The only hostile smoke  
Creeps like a harmless mist above the brine,  
From some frail, floating oak.

Shall the Spring dawn, and she still clad in smiles,  
And with an unscathed brow,  
Rest in the strong arms of her palm-crowned isles,  
As fair and free as now?

We know not; in the temple of the Fates  
God has inscribed her doom;  
And, all untroubled in her faith, she waits  
The triumph or the tomb.

## ODE

Sung on the occasion of decorating the graves of the Confederate Dead, at Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston, South Carolina, 1867.

### I

Sleep sweetly in your humble graves,  
Sleep, martyrs of a fallen cause;  
Though yet no marble column craves  
The pilgrim here to pause.

### II

In seeds of laurel in the earth  
The blossom of your fame is blown,  
And somewhere, waiting for its birth,  
The shaft is in the stone!

### III

Meanwhile, behalf the tardy years  
Which keep in trust your storied tombs,  
Behold! your sisters bring their tears,  
And these memorial blooms.

### IV

Small tributes! but your shades will smile  
More proudly on these wreaths to-day,  
Than when some cannon-moulded pile  
Shall overlook this bay.



## CHARLESTON

Calm as that second summer which precedes  
The first fall of the snow,  
In the broad sunlight of heroic deeds,  
The City bides the foe.

As yet, behind their ramparts stern and proud,  
Her bolted thunders sleep—  
Dark Sumter, like a battlemented cloud,  
Looms o'er the solemn deep.

No Calpe frowns from lofty cliff or scar  
To guard the holy strand;  
But Moultrie holds in leash her dogs of war  
Above the level sand.

And down the dunes a thousand guns lie couched,  
Unseen, beside the flood—  
Like tigers in some Orient jungle crouched  
That wait and watch for blood.

Meanwhile, through streets still echoing with trade,  
Walk grave and thoughtful men,  
Whose hands may one day wield the patriot's blade  
As lightly as the pen.

And maidens, with such eyes as would grow dim  
Over a bleeding hound,  
Seem each one to have caught the strength of him  
Whose sword she sadly bound.

Thus girt without and garrisoned at home,  
Day patient following day,  
Old Charleston looks from roof, and spire, and dome,  
Across her tranquil bay.

Ships, through a hundred foes, from Saxon lands  
And spicy Indian ports,  
Bring Saxon steel and iron to her hands,  
And Summer to her courts.