

[Verse]

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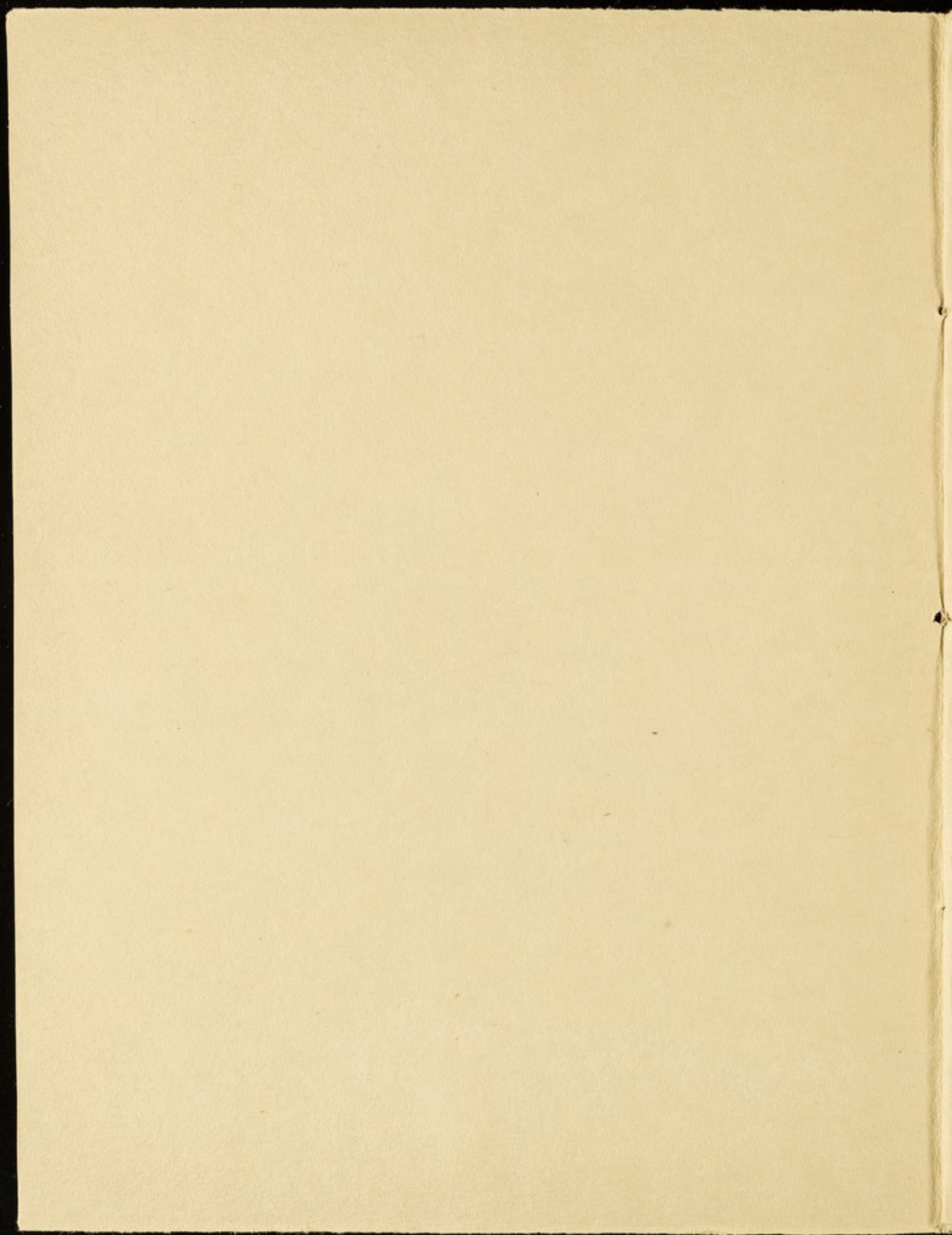
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A CHAPELET
OF VERIE
PRESYOUS FLOWERS.

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1883.

[Privately Printed.]



THE THORN.

On Calvary's mount there stood a cross on which a Figure hung
In sorrow, pain and agony,
For cruel hands had nailed Him to that tree of shame, and
round it stood deriding
Him, who was to die and save mankind from worse than death.
O! direful tragedy.
With unrelenting hate they pierced His quivering flesh, from
which the crimson blood flowed fast,
While on His drooping brow a crown of thorns they pressed,
And hailed him, mocking, as their King.
O! dreadful night. O! night of shame.

Yet in that agony, and ere life closed His trembling lips,
He only cried "Forgive!
They know not what they do."

The awful hour was past.
The King was dead, and gentle hands received His body to bear
it to the tomb;
And when from His brow they drew that mocking crown,
Lo! a strange thing was revealed:
For o'er the sharp and pointed thorns, soft blossoms shed their
sheltering petals,
And strove to hide those cruel spines red with that sacred blood.
So strange a thing had ne'er been seen before.
For the flowers blushed in shame, for they knew the Master
loved them.

"Whence come ye?" cried the contrite thorns.
To this there came reply,
"We bloomed to-night to shield a Kingly brow, and hide ye
from the face of Him
Whose head ye crowned and wounded."

THE AMARANTH.

Eden's fair garden was bathed in golden light. Flowers of rare and surpassing beauty blossomed there, and shone resplendent in tint of every hue, like jewels in a regal crown. The air was filled with gladness and the perfume of the flowers.

In the trees the birds carolled a joyous song, and sang of Peace, of Purity and Love; for Peace abode there, and Purity spread its spotless robes in its midst.

It was indeed a royal garden, and planted by the King of kings.

There on the greensward, which glistened like an emerald in the noonday sun, a great tree stood and spread abroad its branches, from which hung rich and tempting fruit. It was called the Tree of Knowledge.

Nigh the tree a beauteous flower grew, with petals of royal purple, fit to breathe the ether of realms incorruptible.

Alone it stood, arrayed in mystic dignity. When the raindrops fell and the early dew gleamed like diamonds on its petals, the flower raised its head in thankfulness.

Autumn came, and touched the leaves with russet and with gold. Other flowers withered, but the Amaranth still bloomed.

Symbol of Eternity.

'Twas e'en untouched by icy frost and winter's snow, when the trees stood stript and bare,

Emblem of Immortality.

Sin entered that garden, care and sorrow came. Mortal fell, and, cursed, went forth into the world's wide waste to bear the fruits thereof. Peace folded her wings, and Purity fled its gates. The Amaranth bloomed there no longer, for the King of kings transplanted it to heaven to form the diadem of angels. Perfected, it grows in regal beauty in the light of everlasting Day, full meet to deck an angel's brow.

Symbol of Immortality.

THE LILY.

Far away in an Eastern garden there grew a lily. The lily was very fair and of exceeding beauty. Tall and stately, she lifted her head in pride and glory above her sisters that grew around, and filled the air with sweetest fragrance.

And the lily was so beautiful, that she raised her full lips to meet the sunbeam's kiss, and e'en gazed unblushingly and full into the flashing eye of the great orb of day.

The lily grew tall in her spotless purity. The sunbeams loved to play with her shimmering petals, and oft would fling a tint of palest gold on their unsullied whiteness.

When Venus hung her lamp in vault of blue, the lily folded herself to rest. But when the sun shone forth in royal splendour, she op'd wide her white arms again to heaven, in all her pride and beauty.

Her silken petals bending outward gleamed like purest silver: an Imperial crown, meet to deck an Emperor's brow.

One day the Man of Sorrows walked in that garden—
They call it Gethsemane—He who bore the sins and carried
the sorrows of the whole world,

He was acquainted with grief, and oft passed along its
paths, sore distressed and troubled.

The presence and fragrance of the flowers which could
not sin brought Him comfort, and He loved them. As He
passed too and fro, He touched the lily fair and stately,
and the lily grew erect in all her pride.

He who took thought of the flowers of the field considered
the lily, and her glory in His eyes far exceeded in grandeur
the greatest of all monarchs in costliest array.

It was eventide.

The hour drew nigh for His betrayal, and He whom sin
knew not, came into the garden and passed in silence along
its paths in agony, alone but for the flowers.

In that agony, the like of which no mortal man had suffered, when blood dropped from His brow and stained the brown earth, e'en the flowers bowed their heads in deepest grief and adoration,

But the lily in her pride stood alone, unbent and stately.

Not long did she remain unbowed.

Ere the dawn appeared, when the sun was tinting the Eastern sky with roseate hue of morn, and the hill-tops were reflecting its radiance in purple and gold,

The lily bowed her proud head.

Sorrow took the place of pride, and a blush of shame stained her silver petals.

And the Man of Sorrows considered the lily; and lo, deep down in the midst of the spotless flower lay drops of clear shining water, which gleamed fair as Orient pearls in the morning light.

The lily wept.

THE NARCISSUS.

A nymph both coy and beauteous once loved a youth with
unrequited passion,
Her name was Echo.
A thing impossible thou sayest? But list her story.
The youth Narcissus, who 'tis said was cast in beauty's mould,
And though endowed with Nature's choicest gifts,
His heart had ne'er been touched by Cupid's fiery dart.
Echo sighed in vain, for he knew not love.
His heart was dead, nor could she wake it,
Or with her sweetest smiles bring love-light to his eyes ;
And thus it was in grief she pined away,
Till nothing but her voice remained,
To haunt the fountain where they oft had lingered.

One day, the youth Narcissus, with passion still unstirred,
Threw himself down beside the fountain's brim,
And gazed into its crystal depths.
His mirrored face he scanned, and lo, as by some magic
transformation,
His heart was thawed.
Love came at last, but only for himself.
Warmed with the fire he gazed, estatic rapture, at his own
fair image.
'Alas!' he sighed, and sighed again.
Echo answered each refrain,
Too late !
Stirred in anguish, for he saw 'twas all in vain.
'Farewell!' he faltered.
And Echo answered each refrain.
With that sad parting word upon his lips
He sighed his life away.

And there on the greensward whereon he lay,
Just by the fountain's brim,
A flower sprang up of spotless white ;
'Twas but a fragrant memory of him
To whom Love came too late.

THE SNOWDROP.

Arcturus gripped the earth in icy grasp, and the frozen plain lay desolate; pathless and wild. The wintry blast swept keen and fierce o'er the snow-clad land, and souged in the leafless branches of the trees, as they waved their gaunt arms in defiance at the storm.

Across the waste a weary traveller toiled through the furrowed snow. Battling with the wind he drew his scanty cloak around him and sought for shelter, but alas! he found it not.

Worn and spent, he sank at length exhausted to the ground. His blood seemed frozen in his icy veins, as if death itself was near.

With half dazed eyes he looked around and saw an icicle, that seemed to glisten as it fringed a bank of drifted snow.

He looked to Heaven, and as he gazed the leaden clouds were riven by a beam of golden light that fell upon the snowdrift.

The beam waxed brighter, and the friendless wind lulled itself to rest. And as the traveller raised his head a warm breath fell upon his cheek and gave him hope.

With eyes transfixed he gazed upon the icicle, when lo! as with some magic power it changed, and from it drooped a pure white flower.

THE HYACINTH.

Beloved by gods of Sun and Wind,
Hyacinth, a youth of noble mein, was 'dowed with more than
passing beauty.
Fleet of limb, he vied with Zephyr in the race ;
A very Spartan, yet with heart as tender as a woman's ;
He awoke Apollo's love, which fired Zephyr's soul with jealousy,
For he too loved the youth.

Together they went forth to play
A game of quoits upon the sandy plain,
Zephyr matched against Apollo, whose skill was great,
Which Zephyr knew, and longed to rival ;
For Hyacinth stood marker, and held the balance with
impartial hand.
The well-fought game progressed, and needed but a final throw
And Apollo should be conqueror.
With steady arm the Sun-god poised the disc, then threw ;
Straight to the goal it went,
But as Hyacinth stooped low to call the mark
The jealous Wind-god blew it from its course ;
It struck the youth and felled him to the earth.

Apollo ran and raised the stricken lad,
But life had fled ;
The cruel disc had hit a vital spot,
The loving heart was stilled.

From out the sandy plain whereon his life-blood ebbed,
A tender azure flower grew, and drooped its bell-like head
In grief for beauteous Hyacinth.

THE ROSE.

A long day ago, in a far-off city on Euphrates' banks, there
lived a maid ;
And the maid was sweet and fair to look upon.
Lithe as a willow, and blest with every grace that charms,
She was like some beauteous flower that springs from the
dark earth, and perfumes the air with fragrance.
Pure as an angel, she walked unscathed through evil and
through wrong.
For her soul was white as the riven snow.

At length, foul slander, like some noisome reptile, raised its
head and breathed foul breath upon her ;
And she, like a stricken hily, whose silken petals have been
withered by the icy blast,
Was adjudged to die.

But she feared not fire nor death itself,
For her soul was white as the riven snow.

Then she cried to Him who alone can help in hour of direst
need.
For He who knows all hearts saw her guiltless of that sin,
and gave the maiden Peace.

When they led her to the place of burning,
And lit the brands that circled her fair form,
She but raised her eyes to Heaven ;
And lo ; the sparks were quenched.
And as they who stood by looked in awe,
The kindled brands became red roses ;
On those untouched by fire there blossomed white,
White as the riven snow and the maid's unsullied soul.

THE VIOLET.

Once on a day a charming maid of gentle mien was woo'd by
mighty Phœbus.
Her name was Ia.
And well might he have loved a face so witching to the eye.
With tresses like to molten gold her comely head was crowned.
A mouth like bow of Eros, and skin as softest down with tint
of rose ;
Sweet violet eyes with lashes long—
I dar'st not tell thee more, lest thou as well should'st fall in love
With modest winning Ia.

But she shunned the Sun-god's gaze,
And when he would have sought her,
She fled into Arcadia's woods.
And strove to hide her beauty amidst its sylvan glades.

When of her flight proud Phœbus heard,
Impinged by love's dart he quickly sought her midst the
groves.

Crouched in a dell the timid Ia lay amongst the flowers.
She heard the Sun-god's voice, and trembled in dismay ;
For to her, death was thrice more welcome than the arms of
Phœbus.

And from her heart a prayer went up :
O, Diana ! Ia craves thy help !

Diana heard, for as the burly Sun-god, with panting breath,
Burst through the emerald glade,
He saw her fair form fade away,
And as he stooped in anguish o'er the spot,
A modest violet rose from bed of softest moss—
Fit emblem of sweet Ia.

THE ANEMONE.

Across an emerald dale the hunter's cry resounded,
And scarce had died away than, with an angry grunt, and
 crack of branch and twig,
A great wild boar, with vicious fangs and cruel tusks protruding,
Sprang from the cover and bounded o'er the open.

Foremost in the chase a youth did run of graceful form,
Swift as a hart, his face resplendent with the glow of health.
His golden curls outlying in the summer wind,
He had outdistanced all.
It was in truth Adonis.

With arm upraised he flung his dart which struck the prey,
Who, maddened by the pain, with foaming mouth now turned,
And, e'er the youth could spring aside,
Plunged his sharp tusks into his tender frame.
With scarce a groan he fell.

From out the wood fair Venus came with hastening step,
And flung her arms about his prostrate form,
She strove to stem the ebbing tide of life ;
But all too late.
Love came, but scarce in time to snatch a last fond kiss.

From out the crimson greensward whereon Adonis lay,
A gentle flower of purple hue uplifts its head,
Raised by the breath of love,
An everlasting memory.

THE DAISY.

Malvina wept for the loss of her firstborn,
Stricken with grief, she mourned as one bereft ;
Her infant boy lay dead, and the mother's arms were
 cold, and yearned
For the flower of her bosom that had faded and lay dead.

But list ; what strains are those that rise and fall in softest
 cadence on the still night air ?
A melody of Heaven.
'Tis the virgins of Morven, who chaunt to soothe her sorrow.
O ! Malvina, who hast drained Death's bitter cup,
List ! for the daughters of Morven sing ;
"We have seen him. We have seen him,
O ! Malvina, reclining in a misty light.
It drew near us, and lo, our fields were gemmed with tiny
 flowers.

Look, O Malvina, look !
We see one with a golden disc and silver petals round,
A blush of crimson stains their shimmering tips,
Like rays of setting sun on Velta's height,
Stirred by the gentle wind.
'Tis a tiny babe playing in a green meadow.
A flower of innocence.
Look, O Malvina, for 'tis thy son ;
The flower of thy bosom has given us a new jewel to deck
 the hills of Cromla."

THE CORNFLOWER.

Crimson and gold. Crimson and gold.
The ripe corn gleamed in the morning sun,
As the warm wind played with their drooping ears,
And the poppies quivered and seemed to sigh,
For the field was ripe for the harvest.
Fair it waved in the radiant light,
All crimson and gold.

Silent and sad *Cyanthus* sat midst the tall and yellow
sheaves,
Weaving a garland of ruby red from the poppies strewn
around,
For he loved their silken petals.

Clad in blue like the azure sky,
He stretched himself on the crimson couch,
And thought of the stricken flowers ;
And as he mused the poppies' breath
Soothed him to slumber deep.
And so he slept his life away
Among the corn and the poppies gay,
He loved so well.

Crimson and blue. Crimson and blue.
Amidst the poppies *Cyanthus* lay,
Till *Flora* espied him and quickly flew
From her lofty height to the earth beneath ;
And folding her arms around his slumbering form,
She bore him away to his own fair realm,
Where the flowers bloom and never fade.
And since in the cornfields for ever and aye,
A blue flower grows with the poppy gay,
Raised by the Goddess *Flora's* hand,
In remembrance of *Cyanthus*.

THE SUNFLOWER.

In a quaint old garden a tall flower grew, till it reached to
the top of the crumbling wall.
Upright it stood, like a sentinel proud, and lifted its head in
disdain.
As it grew in its height, so its pride increased.
Looking down at the flowers that grew at its feet,
It would open its gold petals and in haughtiness call,
Pay homage to me !
I am the Sun and King of you all.

Now the Sun when it heard of this gold flower's pride
(That looked o'er the top of the old red wall),
Thought to teach it a lesson in self-vanity ;
For all flowers he loves in equal degree, and scatters his
radiance on all

So casting a dazzling ray on the bloom,
He cried, "Look at me, haughty one, and humble thy pride.
For though tall and erect thou may'st be,
I am thy King, and thou art my flower,
Fix for ever thine eye upon me."

And ever since then the proud sunflower's disc
To the fiery sun has been turned ;
And from East to West he follows his ray across the cloud-
flecked sky.

But when the orb sets, the sunflower's head bends humbly to
the ground,
And the small flowers murmur, "Now where is thy pride,
For although thou art straight and tall,
Thou must follow the Sun wherever he goes,
For he is the King of us all."

