

THE CITY OF THE SILENT.*

Simms, William Gilmore, 1806-1870

** Delivered at the Dedication of the Grounds of Magnolia Cemetery, near the city of Charleston, on the 19th day of November, 1850.*

WHEN, in the twilight hour and pensive mood,
Thought seeks repose, and Passion sleeps subdued,
Why doth the eye with mournful fondness rest,
On the dark shadows gathering in the west?
Why doth the soul delight to follow fast,
O'er that dim realm from which the sun hath pass'd?
No more his smiles persuade the upward eye,
No more his glories gladden in the sky;
The rainbow tints, the children of his beams,
Dear to our sight as music to our dreams,
That hung around, pavilioning his throne
With hues and gleams more lovely than his own,--
That closed his eyes, that caught their dying sign,
And soothed, with office sweet, his sad decline,--
Themselves, in shadowy folds of cloud and dun,
Depart, like mourners, following still the sun;
Forego the glorious empire which, awhile,
Glow'd in the sweetness of his dying smile,
And all their happy heritage of light
Yield to dusk eve and pall-enshrining night.

Yet, still we gaze,--and, through the gloomy waste,
Pore, with fond search, for all the realm they graced;
Our living cares and purposes forgot,
Our wealth unvalued, or remember'd not,
Why do we thus, with eager vision strain,
And strive with thoughts themselves that strive in vain?
Why grasp at each bright mirage that no more
Can cheer the fancy which it charm'd before?

'Tis that an image from the heart is cast,
That shows how rich our empire in the past!
There, twins of rapture, Hope and Memory strive
Our skies to brighten, and our joys revive;
These, when the clouds about our vision roll,
Bestow the beauteous prospect on the soul,--
There still we grasp the beings loved and lost,

There shield our flowers, uninjured, from the frost,--
There shrine each feature in whose smile we felt
The fancies kindle, and the feelings melt,
The hope grow warm, the impulsive passion rise
That caught its sunlight from the loved-one's eyes,--
And still, in dreamy consciousness of bliss,
Feel Love's last hour of rapture sweetening this.
Thus link we still, with shadows that depart,
Dear aspects always shining in the heart,
Soothe the keen sorrow which their loss deplores,
By fondest search through memory's haunted stores,--
By dreams, that freshen to the soul, by night,
What day and care would ever take from sight.
These paint them, sweet and smiling as of yore,
And all the virtues teach they taught before;
Their forms unseen, with memory's help we trace,
Still fresh, the beauties of each well-known face,
The genial blessings which their presence brought,
And all the dear delights they yielded thought;--
Thus do they soothe the pangs their parting gave,
And, through their memories, gladden from the grave,
Even as the flowers their odors still unfold,
Where long before they perish'd, through the mould;--
Thus still they bloom around the silent hearth,
Thus make a sacred altar-place of earth,
Thus help us shrine the dear ones pass'd from day,
And catch their smiles long after their decay.

The thoughtful wanderer thus, while musing lone,
O'er realms whose ruins speak for empires gone,
With reverent search the temple still explores,
Copan re-peoples, and Palenque restores;
Bends, in mute homage, at each mouldering shrine,
And broods o'er altars once believed divine!--
No sun-shaft kindles now the sacred height,
Where spake the Prophet once in words of might;
No holy chant ascends from virgin choirs,
From golden censer, now, no cloud aspires;
The song is hush'd--the prayer is dumb,--and still
That heart whose humbler faith survived its will;
No passion strives, no virtue lifts its eye,
And all is fled that might have told us why!
Silence, alone, with finger on cold lips,
But shows the nation through its drear eclipse,--
Eclipse that smote, with power decreed to crush,

Pride's mighty heart, and all its voices hush!
Vainly the Pilgrim, from the Past implores
The curious legend of these speechless shores,
What races fill'd their cities,--what the Fate,
That found them weak, and left them desolate?--
What deeds were theirs--what mighty works they wrought?
What Faith they cherish'd?--what their toils of Thought?
From the bleak ruin comes no answering tone:
Realms of the silent! still they sleep unknown!

Yet, not the less, with reverent awe we glide
Through each dark portal, once of power and pride;
A human sense and sympathy, with spell
Of thought and worship still, the soul compel:
With what a speech these crumbling piles declare,
How stern the rule,--the realm how rich and fair!--
What various fortunes sped their march of state,--
How Wealth grew prodigal and Genius great;
What ages pass'd, of virtues crown'd with sway,
How slow their steps from conquest to decay;
How subtly stole the conqueror on their sleep--
Their dream how soothing, and their doom how deep!
Here man hath been Heaven's minister--and foe!
Hath felt, like us, the tides of joy and woe;
Hath, like our living races, known his hour
Of hope and triumph, and strode on to power;
In fond fruition of each earthly bliss,
Hath found his sole sufficient world in this;
Scorn'd the sage counsels of the reverend sire
That taught the moderate aim and meet desire,
Defied the seer who show'd the scourge and yoke,
Nor fear'd the danger, till he felt the stroke;
In pride of place hath mock'd the blessings given,
And lost Earth's gifts, despising those of Heaven!

In these memorials, silent though they stand,
We read the dangers of each living land;
They teach the moral to our shrinking hearts,
That, with our virtue's loss, our strength departs;
That the proud empire, wallowing still in crime,
Must lose, at last, the power to cope with Time;
Must drink the dregs of bitterness and blight,
And veil its glories all in gloom and night!

'Tis even for this, with reverent sense we tread
These silent dwellings of the unknown dead;
'Tis that the echo from their lonely towers,
Speaks for the fate that yet may fall on ours;
Recalls such histories as we feel our own,
And shows the skeleton behind the throne!--
Their homes are ruins, but they once were bright,
With living beauty bursting on the sight;
Here, in the dance, while music gush'd in air,
Swam the gay groups insensible to care;
These groves, now silent, heard each whispering voice,
Whose low fond accents bade some heart rejoice;
And song, that seem'd to bring the heaven it sought,
Was here to soothe the wearied brain of Thought!
The purple trophies of their golden state,
'Tis ours, in fancy, thus to re-create;
Evoke their hero-aspects, chiefs of fame,
And point old morals with each new-born name;
Their Bards arouse,--their Sages,--as they speak,
With voices wise and powerful, like the Greek,
And strain all senses, gazing into night,
Still, for the glorious phantoms gone from sight!

Yes! here they toil'd--here triumph'd--here they won
A glorious height of empire like the sun,
Here set, like him, in clouds--perchance, to rise,
With him, triumphant still, in other skies!
Even through the shroud about their empire cast,
We catch faint glimpses of their wondrous past;
The spirit of ancient days, if good or great,
Gilds even the ruins of its former state;
With pleasing sadness we explore each shrine
Our kindred races once esteem'd divine;
The horizon dark, still keeps some sacred gleams
That all our living instinct crowds with dreams,--
Dreams that to human consciousness appeal,
And teach those truths Time never can reveal!
Here, living, breathing, burning souls, in strife
That led to mightiest conquests, sprang to life,
With fierce ambition pluck'd the crown of Fame,
And left a monument, without a name!--
Their altars sacred, though obscure their faith,
Their labors living, though themselves in death,
We bend in awe beneath each mournful shade,
And yield our worship where the God hath sway'd.

We know their might, their faith, the soul, the will,
In the great shrines their Fate hath left us still.
These were their temples,--noble, vast, and high,--
They honor'd thus no lowly Deity!
For sure, the ambition which can nobly raise,
Must crave a sovereign worthy all its praise,
And each conception greatly born of Thought,
Finds still a kindred God for him who wrought.
The grand achievement thus declares a flight,
That seeks its ideal on the loftiest height,
And where, of worship, it avows the need,
Demands a God superior to its deed.
Thus the Egyptian Magian, working well
To make his temples grand and durable,
With sleepless aim and subtle hope aspires
To a far future worthy such desires,
And taught his soul, with eager sense, to lift
The wing and eye to her immortal gift!
So the Athenian, exquisite in taste,
In wisdom strong, in great conception chaste,
Still felt that earth was not alone the sphere
To his soul's want compatible and dear.
Each virtue found its God, each fancy grace,
Each Deity his fitting shrine and place:
But *one* was wanting yet, superior still
To all that soothed his sense, or sway'd his will:
His mind, unsatisfied by all below.
He raised one shrine to HIM he did not know;*
Taught by ethereal Plato still to crave,
That hope, o'er all, which soars but from the grave.

[*]Acts xvii. 23: "To the unknown God."

The vast but ruin'd piles of these unknown,
Demand meet temples for the state and throne;
And not in vain our search--around us start
The halls of learning, and the homes of art.
This was the Senate House--the Forum there,
Where plebeian thousands came to feel and hear;
And still, on fancy's ear, the living swell
Of eloquence, omnipotent to spell,
Shakes with electric fires that thrill and dart,
With seraph-mission, through the nation's heart.
With patriot prescience it declares the fate--
That last, perchance, which left them desolate!--

Still summoning up, the State to save at last,
All that was glorious in the grateful Past!--
Their prophets well foresaw the approaching storm,
And bade their revels cease, their warriors arm;
Show'd the dark speck, no larger than a hand,
Destined to shroud in blackness all the land,
Yet show'd in vain;--Cassandra-like, decreed
To speak the truth, with none the truth to heed:
They danced, they slept--untimely slept--and woke
To feel the ruin, and to wear the yoke,
To fly their homes, to crouch in them as slaves,
Or find--last hope of freemen--freemen's graves!

The truth that teaches nothing of the race,
Which, in its ruins, shows how proud its place,--
That writes no record on its mighty towers,
At least assures us of a life like ours:--
Shows us the very yearnings that we know,
Still to achieve, and leave a name below:
A fond ambition, struggling 'gainst decay,
To wrench from Time the sceptre of his sway,
Still to assert, though we no more may see,
O'er future souls, the soul's proud sovereignty,
To challenge worship, though our sun be set,
And win that homage that pursues us yet!

Thus build we shrines of marble--towers, whose height
Declare our pride of aim and people's might,
Rear temples, columns, and inscribe on each,
Names that shall yet lend eloquence to speech,
And life to language,--with a voice sublime,
Peeling, through wrecks of years, o'er tracts of Time!
All nations feel this yearning--thus they raise
The tower and tomb for future love and praise,
Heedful of memories that shall fondly keep
A filial watch o'er their ancestral sleep,
Recall each virtue precious as their own,
And make with pride the sire's great actions known.

That fond solicitude that makes them strive
Their names and triumphs thus to keep alive,
Moves still a care more sacred, at the close,
Which shrines their ashes in supreme repose.
The frail, decaying form which once enshrined
The immortal spirit, the imperial mind,

Thus, by its trust, made sacred, too, we store
As the dear casket which the jewel bore:--
Not worthless now, because no more we hear
Its voice of soul and sweetness on the ear;
Not honor'd less, because no more our sight
Glows in the beauty of its kindred light;--
But cherish'd still, and treasured to the last,
For its dear memories in the haunted past.

With eyes that weep to see, yet weep to lose,
We yield the loved one to his long repose;
With reverent hands the kindred dust we bear,
To sacred shadows of the wood repair,
Far from the crowded mart, the world whose strife
Still mocks at death, and seldom honors life,
There lay we down the form that cannot know
How fond our homage, and how great our woe.
With tender love,--with tearful eyes,--we trace
For his last dwelling some selected place,
Some shady copse, or isle--some spot of green,
By oak and elm secure with leafy screen;
Where the Magnolia towers--where tribute vines
Steal up to clamber o'er supporting pines;--
Some spot most precious to the musing hour
Of him whose relics cold we thus embower;--
Some sunny bank, whence, gazing on the west,
His living eye with all the landscape blest,
It was his wont, from friendship still to crave,
The spot he couch'd on might be made his grave;--
A spot to heart subdued, and cheer'd by faith,
To make the spirit half "in love with death,"--
Peace in the prospect, peace upon the sea,
And sunny smiles about each guardian tree,
No voice of man to vex the solitude,
But breezes softly whispering through the wood.

The filial love that honors thus the dead,
And shrines the form from which the soul hath fled,
Wide as the world, and various as the race,
Howe'er remote the time, or far the place,
Alike in all, acknowledges the same,
How dear to love the loved-one's precious frame;--
How dear to pride the ashes once so bright,
With all that hope could warm, or joy delight.--
To natural instincts true, the heart requires

Meet shrines and emblems for departed sires;
Feels well the alliance 'twixt the soul and clay,
That makes us shrink to see the last decay,--
Moves us to cherish the delusive thought,
That, with the one, the other still is fraught--
That, of the living spirit, lately ours,
With sense so keen, and will of wondrous powers,
So quick to feel and glow, so prompt to hear
Love's wooing accent, and bewitching prayer,--
All is not lost, and we shall yet behold
The form arise, the eye grow bright and bold,
The soul return and fold its wandering wing,
And the cold arms embrace us while we cling.

Even with such dream, so vague but precious still,
The ancients honor'd death with pomp and skill,
Forgot no rite to pride or worship dear,
And spread meet flowers and emblems on the bier;
Bade music sound, with dirge-becoming woe,
And lighten'd Death's sad brow with state and show;
The grave became a temple, grand in gloom,
And lamps sepulchral shone within the tomb,
Symbols of that pure element of light
That Earth may dim, but not extinguish quite!
Back, through the vista of five thousand years,
How simply sad each varied rite appears;
How strangely same, yet multiplied, the plan
Which shrined and honor'd the remains of man!
The Egyptian rear'd his pyramid, which shows
At once his monarch's pride, and people's woes;
With precious unguents pluck'd from Time his prey,
And kept the loved-one's features from decay;
Through plates of glass the unconscious visage show'd,
And framed, in mightiest cells, the last abode;
Circl'd the sleeper with the pomps of art,
Dear to his fame, or grateful to his heart:
Thus, o'er the gloomy walls, the painter spread
The storied progress of the conqueror-dead;
Each great achievement of his pride or might,
His towers of state, his triumphs won in fight;
How, with keen lust, he tore, with savage hand,
His bloody trophies from each neighboring land;
What myriads march'd to swell his despot train,
What nations battled, and what hosts were slain!
Lofty in chariot, arm'd with wrath, we see

His onward stride to death or victory;
Trace him, with Fire and Famine in his wake,
Through the red surges which his battles make;
Behold the tower go down, the city flame,
And join the rabble shout that calls it fame;
For one wild moment, reckless still of life,
Share in the wild delirium of the strife;
The rush of steeds, the wreck of spears, the dread
Lock of the victor-living with the dead!
So well, portraying all the powers of ill,
The servile painter shows the courtier's skill;
Enslaved by power, and scarcely true to art,
Heedless of all that's precious to the heart,
On brows of Guilt, the laurel crown bestows,
And makes us glory still in human woes;
These, following fast upon his march appear,
But neither wake the pang, nor force the tear;
Though, in procession sad, the captive crowd
Leash'd at his heels, still cry their griefs aloud,
We yield no pity, but in pride elate,
Turn, where the conqueror sits and sways in state.

With ruder pomp, in more barbaric taste,
His burial rites the Abyssinian graced;
Like the Egyptian, striving 'gainst the worm,
With costly balms preserved the mortal form;
But not with numerous swathings wrapt the dead,
His fancy counsell'd to unveil instead:
Most heedless, in his vanity, of shame,
Transparent amber clothed the naked frame;
Thus, to all eyes reveal'd, his farther rite,
Raised on high pillars, placed the corse in sight;
Thus, mocking Life with Death, and Time with Fate,
He left the loved one in his hideous state,
The sun still daily shining, but in vain,
On eyes that never smile on sun again!

In better taste, with tribute more refined,
The Etrurian chief his sepulchre design'd;
That wondrous race, of whom the little shown,
Reveals such promise in the vast unknown;
Kin to the Egyptian, father to the Greek--
If true the legend and conjecture speak--
In arts and arms that gloriously achieved,
And still survive the worship they believed;

That left to Rome their gods, without their faith,
And live in marble, though they sleep in death;
A night of twenty centuries, like a spell,
Oppressing Genius that achieved so well,
Denying History, curious still to pierce
The purple pall that hangs about her hearse,
And, hush'd on every theme that might have taught,
Still speaking vaguely, wondrously, to Thought!

How, as with pick and axe, exploring deep
In vaults that shelter well their ancient sleep,
We break through caves of marble that reveal
What pride hath wrought, and Time would still conceal--
How do we start, as on our vision rise,
Perfect as when their children closed their eyes,
Stately in helm and armor, robes and gold,
Their Lucumones as they sway'd of old!--
Princes and chiefs, whose deeds of answering fame
Thrill'd through their world, yet have for ours no name!
The weight of earth, for near three thousand years,
Press'd on the marble vault that hides their biers,
Preserving well from touch, and rude decay,
The haughty forms of manhood and of sway.

There he reclines,* as when he sought the strife,
Clad in bright armor, looking as in life,
The proud Lucumo!--They have scarcely gone,--
'Twould seem--who laid and seal'd him up in stone!
What awe pervades the soul, as thus we gaze
On this life-seeming state of ancient days!
No cunning effigy, the work of art,
Wrought in the marble, wanting sense and heart,
But the once powerful chieftain as he shone,
By nations honor'd, and to thousands known;--
Himself, at length, his limbs composed, his breast
Expanding, as with happiest slumbers bless'd.
Even as we gaze, life seems to stir beneath,
The bosom heaves as with returning breath;
We look to see him rise,--we pause to hear
His trumpet peal of battle from the bier!
But death is in the movement;--'tis the light
That heaves the frame, and stirs him to the sight;
Smote by the insidious air, the unwelcome day,
The crumbling corse sinks sudden to decay;
Time, mock'd so long, upon his subject darts,

The clay dissolves, the linkéd armor parts;--
The sceptre-grasping hand, the helméd brow,
And the mail'd breast that perfect seem'd but now,
Subside to dust, and mock the fond surprise,
That hail'd the vision late with awe-struck eyes.

* See the "*Sepulchres of Etruria*," by Mrs. Hamilton Gray.

We glide below: with curious search we gaze
On these proud mansions of ancestral days;
Here wealth and care have vainly striven to prove
How proud their homage, and how fond their love;
What toils they used, what precious unguents brought,
With what sad skill the funeral garments wrought;
What sacrifice of gold and pomp was made,
For the great chief whose relics here they laid!
Art spared no service! On the walls behold,
How fresh the colors twenty centuries old;
How rich the painting--with what free design,
Warm in each tint, and bold in every line;
A wondrous story, which reveals a faith
That sees the soul escaped, surviving death;
Shows the group'd forms, in long procession led,
Surrounding fond, or following slow, the dead.--
There, stately still, the enfranchised ghost survey,
Led, by the rival Genii, into day--
The day that lets in judgment on the past,
Bright with great joys, or dread with clouds o'ercast.
There the good Angel, seeking still to save,
Receives and guides the freed one from the grave;
Beckons with smiling hope that soothes the fear,
And shows his "Esar"* merciful and near.
Not so the Evil Genii, who withstand
The gentle guidance of his guardian hand;
They bar the way to mercy, and, with thirst
Of eager malice, hoping still the worst,
Declare, of evil deeds, the dark account,
That should deny the ambitious soul to mount.
The painter leaves in doubt the fearful strife,
Whose issue broods with doom or glorious life,
But, of his aim and hope enough are shown,
To prove his promise not unlike our own,

Show that his faith still sought an upward goal,
And challenged wings for each immortal soul!

** Esar;--the Supreme Being of the ancient Etrurians.*

The Greek! The Roman! At each mighty name,
How glow the great stars on the towers of Fame!
What triumphs crown'd their arms, their arts refined,
And lifted theirs o'er all the works of mind;
To gods raised mortals--for the mortal wrought
A refuge sure in deathless realms of thought--
From thought evoked philosophy, and wove
Bright laurels for the academy and grove!
That *they* should perish, should succumb, at length,
Spite of their ardent souls and matchless strength,
Perhaps was needful, lest, defying Fate,
They should forget how mortal was their state,--
Forget their subject destiny, and prove
Ungrateful rebels to the power of Jove!

Their arts, their subtle tastes, refined and proud,
Still mock'd the worm, and shudder'd at the shroud:
Still strove against corruption, and decreed
The fire their flesh, and not the grave, should feed.
Should earth, o'er which, in matchless might, they trod,
Lords of the world that trembled at their nod--
Should earth, the lowly, hide, as if in shame,
The imperial aspect and majestic frame?--
Should filial homage so forget the sire,
His pride, his fame, each deed and each desire,
Nor seek to cherish still, with ceaseless care,
The dust of one so precious, proud and fair?--
Preserve each vestige of the great, and shrine
In during gold the relics deem'd divine?

They dress the pyre with frankincense and spice,
Woods of rich perfume, and of rare device;
Slay the white oxen on the pile, and spread
With fat of sheep and lambs, the honor'd dead;
Gather the slaughter'd victims to the pile,
With flagons crown'd of honey and of oil;
Libations red, from golden bowls they pour,
Then from their brows the amber tresses shore;
These strew the dead. The corpse upon the pyre,--
They light the scented torch, and feed the fire;

Watch through the night until it sinks from view,
Then, with ambrosial wines, the flames subdue.
This duty done, with reverent hands and care
They take the sacred ashes from the bier;
These, in a golden vase inurn'd, they hide,
By household love and worship deified;--
Nor kept in vain, since destined to receive,
In time, the ashes of the fond who grieve;
All, at the last, each honor'd one in turn,
May hope to mingle in the self-same urn,
In death unite the hearts, which, true in life,
Kept faith, unbroken still, by storm or strife!

These rites, barbarian still, with all their state,
Were but false tributes to the good and great.
Better our Christian rule, whose simple trust
Confides the dust, with tears, to kindred dust;
Holds in meet reverence still, the sacred clay,
The soul's fair mansion in its mortal day;
But builds its home from human homes apart,
Nor mocks corruption with the toys of art;
To the fresh earth, with meek and holy rite,
Conveys the shrouded clay from common light;
Midst sacred gloom of trees, midst shadows meet,
That mingle well the solemn with the sweet;
Where banks of thyme and daisy scent the ground,
While waters murmur nigh with slumberous sound;
Where the light hangs with mild autumnal ray,
And makes a sabbath of the livelong day;
As sacred here, by Etiwando's wave,*
As Mamre's plain, or old Machpelah's cave.

* *Etiwando, the Indian name of Ashley River.*

Even as we watch, with sad and wistful eye,
Where each gay phantom leaves the twilight sky,--
Through glooms material seeking still to trace
Each sweet expression, and beguiling grace;
From "cold obstruction" striving still to wrest
The features once so precious to the breast;
So, through the shadowy doubt of mortal gloom,
Through the grave's shroud, and through the marble tomb,
We trace the immortal spirit in its flight,
And hail its shining progress through the night;
Glow with new life, as on each rising wing,

We mark the colors of eternal spring,
And, for ourselves, find better strength to rise,
As thus we trace its passage through the skies!

Even as we muse, with homage that is prayer,
O'er each gray ruin once a temple fair,
And read the tale of empires through the shroud
That wraps the Genius once so strong and proud--
Grove through their vaults, explore with awe the rite
That makes their dead still sacred in our sight;--
The past grows subject to our present need,
And all the future blossoms as we read!--
If precious thus the nation's grave, unknown,
How, to our children, dearer still our own!
How fit the care that guards the holy place,
Crowns it with trees, and shapes its walks with grace;
Removes each noxious weed,--with tracts of green,
Soothes the sad eye, and solaces the scene;
Decrees, that hallowing peace shall still persuade
The living hearts that loved us, to its shade!

Here will they come, when wearied in the strife,
And gain, from walks of death, the strength for life;
Here fondly read each record that declares
To what bright virtues they become the heirs;
What patriot sires have done, to crown with fame,
The son's, the citizen's, the nation's name;
How Moultrie fought,--the scene beneath our glance,--*
In our first struggle for deliverance;--
Trace, with sweet tears of homage, mix'd with pain.
The mournful legend of the martyr'd Hayne;†
Turn, still obedient to the patriot spell,
To read how, rashly brave, young Laurens fell;‡
And, field and forum, equally in sight,
The shrine of Rutledge hail on loftiest height!
How, from the sea, returning to our shores,
Each kindred eye this sacred realm explores;
Reads at a glance, and reading still, reveres
Our State's proud record of two hundred years;
Sees, in each tomb, a tale of generous strife,
That crown'd our name with pride, our land with life;
And, from each shaft that rises o'er the steep,
Tells where the hero and the statesman sleep;
Cries, breathless, to his comrades, as he sees
There rest the Pinckneys, Gadsdens, Rutledges;*

Yon column honors Marion,*--and the spire,
White-shafted, 'neath the sun that glows like fire,
Our city rear'd in sadness, but in pride,
To one who, battling, in his harness died,
Late for *his* glory,--for *our* peace too soon,
The wondrous man of statesmen, our Calhoun!

** At Magnolia Cemetery, you look out and see Fort Moultrie, whence the British were beaten in the Revolution.*

† Executed by the British in the war of the Revolution.

‡ John Laurens, the Bayard of the Revolution.

** Well-known patriots of the Revolution.*

Yet, not to these alone, the gifted, great,
Our sacred shrines and shades we consecrate;
Their tombs, the landmarks to the patriot eye,
With great historic names that cannot die,
Command the homage justly due to fame:--
But other loved and lost ones have their claim.
Not to our wonder, but our love, they plead,
With quiet virtues and unwritten deed;
This realm a city, where the humblest stand,
In place with those, the loftiest of the land;
Not great, but good; not raised to glory's height,
But dear to love, and precious in its sight;
By memory cherish'd when their toils are done,--
In hearts still warm, though hidden from the sun;
Bewept with tears, that soften as they fall,
And sought with prayers, though still beyond recall.
Their lowlier tombs in sacred groves shall rise,
Where Grief, unwatch'd, may watch with shrouded eyes!
Hither shall Love repair, in future hours
To dress and deck the cherish'd turf with flowers;
Here linger fond, while slowly sinks the day,
And fancy still a voice that pleads to stay.
Hither shall Reverence come,--the son, the friend,--
Mute with dear memories, and devoutly bend;
Here Contemplation veil her lofty brow,
Passion deplore, and meek Repentance bow;
Hope, from old ashes, light her torch anew,
And Duty learn what pathways to pursue.
The Sire, decreed to see his first-born fail,
Stricken, like the flower in wild autumnal gale,
Here, by the fractured column which he rears,
Find still a soothing virtue in his tears.
Hither, the Mother, widow'd in the hour

When Love was joyous most in bloom and flower,
Her orphan brood shall bring; and, by the sod
Where sleeps the Sire, describe the ways of God;
Train their young hearts to tenderness, and chide,
By sense of mortal loss, their mortal pride.

All, from the shrines of grief shall strengthen faith,
All gather lessons from the lips of death;
In fields of silence, find best gifts of speech;
Through worlds of darkness, worlds of brightness reach;
Grow strong with wrestling at the tomb with Thought,
And there win triumphs never won unsought!
Arm'd with the Cross, and glad beneath its weight,
There matchless Love shall conquer matchless Hate;
From sin the victim pluck, from wrath the doom,
From death the living--glory from the gloom!--
Grave, where thy victory now?--O Death, thy sting?--
Lo! the freed spirit on triumphant wing!
Joyous in conquest, hark! the white-robed train,
The Prince of Peace that welcome to his reign:
His trump of victory sounds--his legions rise,
Myriads of might, in congregated skies;
By Mercy led, they gather fast to save,
Time has no sway, no prison now the grave;
Glad eyes uncloset, the bonds of Death are riven,
And white-wing'd Faith, with Love, ascends to Heaven!

Funding from the University of North Carolina Library supported the electronic publication of this title.

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First edition, 2006
ca. 620K
University Library, UNC-Chapel Hill
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the South; IV. The City of the Silent
(spine) Simms' Poetical Works Vol. I
William Gilmore Simms, Esq. [1], 348 p., ill.
Charleston, S.C.
John Russell
1853

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