

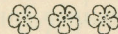
MATER DOLOROSA

How slow the lonely hours. No faintest breath
Moves in the cypress tree, or stirs the gloom.
Deep silence falls, as chaste and still as Death,—
For Death is near within the hollowed Tomb,
Where faithful watchers anxiously had sought
The broken Body of their uncrowned King,
And bore it gently to the mountain grot,
Laved in the love of their last minist'ring.
And over the grey hill-road above the town,
Mary the Mother,—faltering and slow,
Walks in the half-light, slowly,—slowly,—down,
Turns, and in anguish sees against the glow
Of opalescent fire lingering still
Along the mingling line of earth and sky,—
Naked and stark, black etched above the Hill,
The shadow of three gibbets clear and high.
And in Her Mother-heart there is a thought
Of other days, far back, when happily
She watched Her Son with Joseph as they wrought
The fresh-cut timber into carpentry,
The scented cedar, and the mountain pine.
Or as He passed beneath the lintelled door,
His questing face smiled in the golden shine
Of sun-light falling on the rush-strewn floor.
And there was laughter, and sweet songs to sing,
Fond Hopes,—and visions fair,—that She might plan
The future,—and the pride the years would bring
To Her,—when He would grow to be a Man.
But now She sees through blinding and hot tears,
The surge of soldiers in the narrow street,
The sunlight flashing on their slanting spears,
The blood upon the stones from His poor Feet,—
The ruddy Brow beneath the thorny crown,—
The weighted Tree to which His Hands are tied,
Face to the pavement, cruelly bears Him down,
While jostling soldiers mockingly deride.
Hears the loud mouthings of the mob afresh,
Reviling Him beneath the Cross's goad,
As on,—and up,—they whip His quivering Flesh
Far out along the dusty wind-swept road.
Hoarse shouts around the "Hill of Skulls" of men,
The thud of hammers on the rough-hewn Tree,

Her very Heart transpierced,—She lives again
 The Bitter Suffering of His Agony.
 The Royal Head hangs low upon His Chest,
 The water from His wounded Side still drips,
 The Heart grows quiet in the heaving Breast,
 The last word passes from His thirst-caked Lips.
 She shudders as in piteous misery
 Comes soft, above the evening's faintest sigh
 "My God, My God, Hast Thou Forsaken Me?"
 The echo of that lone despairing Cry.

.....
 The sombre night drops down. A powdery gleam
 Of star-fire filters through the deepening blue.
 Darkness descends, and quickly draws between
 Mary the Mother, and Golgotha's view.
 She does not lift again Her Sacred Head,
 To that stark Body, hung with Arms stretched wide.
 Her torn Heart is buried with Her Dead,
 Flesh of Her Flesh, Her Son,—Christ Crucified.

F.J.M. '09



From toil he wins his spirits light,
 From busy day the peaceful night;
 Rich, from the very want of wealth,
 In heaven's best treasures, peace and health.

—Gray

