

OUR LADY'S EPITAPH.

1)  
When God designed her in His loom  
He wove her well.  
Has never sprung from Nature's womb  
Her parallel.  
Such flower as she will scarcely bloom  
Again in earthly dell.  
Her aura fills this Slumber-room;  
Her radiance pervades its gloom.  
Her prayers avert the final doom.  
And all that tarry near her tomb  
Are captive to her spell.

2)  
Since Death her latest breath has mown  
He fain would quit  
His scythe, as nought by Life now grown  
Is fit for it.  
Her body, up to Heaven flown,  
Was wholly exquisite,  
And served the law of God alone,  
And did a character enthrone  
By whose tall flame her depth was known,  
Her varied excellence was shown,  
And all her sphere was lit.

3)  
And now above the highest star  
On God's own hill  
She sheds from her triumphal car  
Rich blessings still.  
To tell her dazzling praise is far  
Beyond a mortal's will;  
For who would scale the planets' bar, —  
Where flashes Michael's scimeter,  
Where jewels of creation are —,  
And paint the scene, and yet not mar,  
Must have a Godlike skill.

4)  
To fashion her the Maker took  
His fairest dream.  
She was in Nature's wonder-book  
The grandest theme.  
Her every gesture, word, and look  
Received divine esteem.  
Her feet the banal path forsook.  
And from herself the world she shook.  
Her life was not a shallow brook  
With here and there a garish nook,  
But was a mighty stream.

5)  
A glory of the human race  
She was from birth,  
In her, with Heaven's gifts, found place  
The gifts of earth,  
And timely gravity kept pace  
With kindly wit and mirth.  
Her being harboured nothing base.  
Her soul was made without a trace  
Of any sin. Her glowing grace  
And tranquil mien and noble face  
Proclaimed her peerless worth.

*E. Lawp,*  
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- 6) By Truth and Beauty's reckoning  
    She set her course,  
And held to it unfaltering  
    Without remorse,  
In gentleness enveloping  
    Her splendid inner force;  
Her spirit soared where angels sing.  
Her mind was borne on Wisdom's wing,  
And garnered every choicest thing.  
And for the beggar and the king  
    Her heart was Bounty's source.
- 7) It was her joy the sick to cure,  
    The weak defend.  
All things unjust she did abjure  
    And strive to mend.  
Her perfect taste could not endure  
    That false with true should blend.  
Her light made clear the most obscure.  
Her lofty soul disdained the lure  
Of selfish ease. Her love was pure  
And strong and limitless and sure  
    And ardent till the end.
- 8) She knew distress could strike as though  
    To maim and slay,  
And when it struck she bore its blow  
    Without dismay;  
For, while our Lord was forced to go  
    The way of shame that day,  
The rabble gloated o'er the show,  
His thankless friends became His foe,  
The priests and rulers mocked His woe,  
God's help it seemed had ceased to flow,  
    But she was true for aye.
- 9) The while her full-sailed years drew nigher  
    The final port  
She suffered not her will to tire,  
    But ever wrought  
To lead the way to their desire  
    For those who bravely fought  
To wake the strings of Freedom's lyre,  
And rescue man from Magic's mire  
And urge him on to summits higher,  
And feed the sacred saving fire  
    Of Faith and Peace and Thought.
- 10) Her smile was like the fabled gold;  
    Her touch was balm;  
Her lustrous eyes enthralled would hold;  
    Her voice brought calm;  
Her presence made the timid bold,  
    And banned the shade of harm.  
And now, in Paradise enrolled,  
By Saints and Seraphim extolled  
For everything of rarest mould,  
Beside her Son and o'er His fold  
    She reigns, the Queen of Charm.

Ernest Eugene Laws.

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