

“MARRIAGE INDISSOLUBLE.”

“I had a few fragmentary ideas on the events immediately connected with Christ and his Bride when we are called to the judgment, and I began to transfer them to paper under the title of ‘ESPOUSALS.’ But I felt that the subject could not be suitably rendered in prose: it was too leaden for such a theme. So I attempted a metrical rendering. It is only an attempt: still, I will send it, although I shall not be at all surprised if you either do not use it or alter it. The theme is delightful. I have revelled in its contemplation.”—THE WRITER.

Bride.—Hark! ’Tis the voice of my loved. Yes, ’tis he.

Bridegroom.—My Fairest one, come forth. The wintry clouds are past,
Night’s shadows flee. Come forth, my dove,
That I thy face may see. The storm subsides,
The morning dawns. Arise thou and come away.

Bride.—Is this a vision that I see? It is the Lord.
A sweet reality. My heart be still,
Await his will.

My Lord, I see thee face to face and know
E’en as I’m known. My joy is full, and faith is lost in sight.
When summoned to thy presence, the tension of
Expectancy relaxed so quick, that for
The moment, I was almost stunned, and then
The angel gave me strength and sweet assurance
Of his mission. Fear, joy, suspense held me
Entranced. With strange precision my life stood out
Before me, like some bold promontory
At sunset, with rugged outline, sterile heights,
Seams, chasms, all disclosed. Flashes of duty done
Gave place to thoughts of waywardness
And oft repeated failures, and these in turn
Dimm’d off before the hope of mercy and forgiveness.
I thought of all thy sweetness and compassion.
And then again I loved thee so. And with this thought
I girded up my loins and felt that I could stand.

Bridegroom.—My heart was ever with thee. I longed
With strong desire the day of thy perfection.
Thy love and loyalty to me, are now
Thy Bridal robes, and ornaments most costly.
Orient gems, fit emblem of thy purity,
Circle thy brow, while chains of beaten gold
Entwine our hearts to throb in unison.

How fair thou art, my love! How passing fair!
Bride.—My lord, ’tis but the reflex of thy auty.
Thou art resplendent. A sun dismantled
Of his storm clouds, whose beams have found
A resting place in me.

Bridegroom.—Clear as the sun. Fair as the moon
Effulgent with one light.

Bridge.—My Lord, what means this transformation scene?

When I arrived at Sinai, it was a desert
Great and terrible.
With scorching rocks and arid plains,
Whose silence was disturbed by noises
Weird and horrible.
And when the eye sought out some object, to
Relieve the stern sublimity of solitude,
Some dismal creature stalked abroad
With piteous moan that made the dreary
Scene more drear. Or dancing satyr held
Nocturnal revelry. Or beast of prey
Howled over ravin wolfishly.
And hill tops far and near caught up
The hideous wail. Such gloom. Such horror.
I stood awaiting thine approach
With phalanx right and left, an angel guard.
Somehow, I seemed adjusted to the
Splendid scene of terror.
I could not utter what I felt, but still
I did not faint. I waited. Then I saw
'Midst retinue of angels bright and fair,
Thy Majesty.
My soul, the moment was supreme,
I sought some token of thy mind,
And then gave audience to thy words.
Ne'er mortal ear was greeted with such love
And admiration. The angels grew
Exultant, and with glad acclaim declared
That thou and I were altogether lovely,
When lo! as if to emphasize the charm
Dread Sinai became a smiling Eden.
What meaneth it?

Bridegroom.—The earnest of the Father's bridal gift is this,
Which, emblematic of thine own transition,
I changed into a floral paradise.

Bride.—'Tis like thyself to weave for me this Eden
Of enchantment. What can I offer thee
Of value rare enough?

Bridegroom.—The dear delight thy presence yields
Exceeds all other gifts. Thy love to me
Is sweeter far than thy love's token.
But now new scenes await us.

Tell me, O thou in whom my soul delights,
What thinkest thou of this thy garden?

Bride.—The solitary place is glad for us,
The desert blossoms like the rose.
What ecstasy! What bliss is mine
That thou shouldst weave into our
Wedding day this bridal gift?

Not Sharon's fertile plains nor Carmel's
 Fruitful hill can vie with it in
 Graceful loveliness.
 There seems to come from everywhere
 A fragrant breath. The gentle zephyr of
 The south is perfume laden. Spicery flows forth
 Like spikenard or the costly myrrh.
 The air is redolent of odours from
 The clustering vines, and far and near I see
 Profusion of ripened fruit on stately trees.
 The Citron's golden fruit provides
 Refreshment. Pomegranates fair
 Are also here and fig trees too.
 Commingling with them all I see
 The lofty Palm, the Cedar, and the Shittah tree,
 The Cypress, Fir and Myrtle.
 And here and there the branches interlace
 With overhanging leaves to form
 Enchanting bowers
 Listen! I hear the murmur of the water brook.
 Ah, yes. I see the little rills flow down
 The mountain's sides o'erleaping rocks
 And sparkling in miniature cascades.
 And here I see a stately stream
 And there a graceful fountain,
 And over all the minstrels of the wood
 Give forth their melody, while shy
 Gazelles and tim'rous roes bound
 Over hill and valley. This is a day of
 Sweet surprise where all is fair and lovely.
Bridegroom.—That thou art mine and I thine
 Completes the glory.
 Thou art the Father's gift. Through him
 Alone I've won thee. His power sustained
 Me in the travail of my soul,
 And gave me title,
 To present unto myself a glorious bride
 With neither spot nor wrinkle.
Bride.—Such lofty praise! And since I have begun
 To taste love's potent draught, I would
 More deeply drink, and ask thee just
 One question. What didst thou see in me
 So wondrous sweet?
 Rough I was, and black, as Kedar's tents.
 A vessel coarse, unhewn, and unsymmetrical.
 Why didst thou not "despise me"—
Bridegroom.—And *now* a vessel bright yond compare.
 I saw thee as thou *art*, my finished work.
 I wrought and fashioned thee, that

I might have thee share my joy and honour
In the service of Jehovah.

My Helpmeet, and my Queen.

Bride—What depths of joy and high nobility
Those words involve. It was a theme I always
Loved to ponder, that thou and I should be,
To serve one Father. His will was my delight.
I ever bowed before that shrine in thought,
But when I came to practise it, and follow
Thine example, I trembled in the fight.
'Twas not the Father's fault. My
Weakness was to blame.

High rocks and tumbling boulders frightened
Me, I shivered in the dank, cold mist.
And then again grew faint with sudden heat,
And, O, the little spars! What pain they gave,
What bleeding feet!

Bridegroom.—I watched thine every footstep.
No danger of the way befel thee, but I gave
My angels charge, lest thou shouldst slip.
By night, by day, unseen they compassed thee.
I grieved for all thy pain and agony,
For I had suffered too,
And knowing in myself that trial is
The wellspring of eternal joy,
I did the only thing I could—
I helped thee through.

Bride.—Through Thy compassion, Lord, I tread
This goodly, peaceful land.
For when I could not see my way,
I took the light thou gavest me,
And seemed to hold thine hand.
Indeed, sometimes in grief's dark cell,
I trimmed and oiled my lamp so well,
I felt to *see* thee near;
And then I almost feared to breathe,
Lest I should break the spell.
But, O! how sweet to realise that in
Thy calm retreat, thy thoughts should
Fix themselves on me.
And didst thou really grieve?

Bridegroom.—The Head must ever feel the motions
Of the body. 'Twas through thine agony
That I could be compacted, and fitly
Joined to thee. Thy sufferings formed
The union. And where the motions of *my*
Sorrow were expressed, that part declared itself
In sweet communion.

Bride.—My Lord, the change from sore distress to this

Transcendent joy, is bliss unspeakable.
If I would have this good to last
I must remember evil.
Those shadows of the night to me are wings,
By which I soar unmeasured heights
Of thy pure joy.
Relief so sweet should be perennial,
Then let the memory abide.
Bridegroom.—Mem'ry is a flower which never fades
In this fair garden. All pleasures here
Are inexhaustible, none turn to ashes;
All are incorruptible.
Come forth, beloved, come, and taste
A fresh delight.
'Tis meet that joy so full as ours
Should have some token.
That love so great as mine for thee
Should be expressed in other form
Than merely spoken.
Or even in the presentation
Of this fair Eden.
And so I take thee through this avenue
To where, 'midst clustering vine,
And Cyprus flowers, and roses
White and red
Stands beauty's shrine,
Within its cloistered walls
Of interlacing boughs, a festal
Board is spread for thee, my Queen,
And I will place upon thine head
A royal diadem,
And courtly honours shall attend
A courtly Queen.
Ten thousand voices of an angel choir
Shall make this changéd desert ring
With acclamation of thy praise.
And I will summon to my side
An angel band of servitors
To wait on me,
While I, a King will gird myself come forth
And wait on thee.
Aught else desirest thou?
Bride.—In regal purple I would see thee robed
And thine imperial brow adorned
With that rich crown of victory
Thine own by right divine.
Then let me be, yet more than helpmeet
More than Queen. O, let me be
A loyal subject at thy feet

To worship thee.
Bridegroom.—Thou art my crown of victory,
My trophy of the fight. Let heaven above
Break forth in praise, and let the
Earth rejoice
That Truth and Mercy now are met
In sweet embrace,
A marriage indissoluble
Of Love celestial, with Hope terrestrial.
These are the world's true nuptials
This is the entrance into Life.
Bride.—Glory, honour, incorruptibility
Are mine. My enraptured soul!
The spirit coursing through my veins
Gives life a new momentum.
I'm quickened to perceive a thousand
Things, undreamt of in my days of flesh
I feel myself a power in this great
Universal spirit, as in my days
Of dust, I used to feel myself a part
Of dust, with senses and perceptions
Built out of it and into it.
And ever moving with it in
One unvarying cycle of decay.
But now, how changed! I am a new creation
Fixed, joyous, incorruptible.
I feel a thousand pleasures welling
Up within my heart, each one with
Energy attended. My impulses
Are all in one direction, self-inciting
To obey Jehovah's will.
And intellectually intent upon His wisdom
With long experience of His love,
I *cannot* feel amiss. All is supernal.
I know I am an element
In Yaweh's happiness,
And this is Life Eternal.

Mary G. Brabyn.