

THE SAN MARCOS RIVER.

Mysterious river! whence thy hidden source?
The rain drops from far-distant field and fell,
Urging through countless paths their darkling course,
Combine their tiny gifts thy flood to swell.
What secrets hath thy subterranean stream
Beheld; as it has bathed the deepest feet
Of everlasting hills, which never beam
Of sun or star or lightning's flash did greet?
Over what cliffs rushed thou in headlong fall
Into some gulf of Erebus so deep
Thy very foam was black as midnight's pall;
And massive roof of rock and mountain steep
Suppressed thy thunders, so that the quick ears
Of fauns recumbent on its lofty side
Heard not; and grass blades, laden with the tears
Of night dews, felt no quiver from thy tide?
Through days and weeks, uncounted by the sun,
Thy waters in abysmal caves have lain
In slow lustration, ere they sought to run
Forth to the day, purged from earth's least stain.
Pallas-Athene of the rivers, thou!
Who leapest adult in thy glittering might
From yonder hoary mountain, Zeus' brow,
Whose cloven crags parted to give thee light.
Thou teachest us, wise virgin; as through caves,
Sad and tear-dropping, steal thy sobbing waves,
Then flash to day; so virtue's weeping night
Shall surely break into the dawn's delight.

Emblem, thou, of maiden's love,
Buried deep in modest heart;
Growing there to secret strength,
Hiding, swelling, till at length
Its Lord's caresses bid it start
To life and joy! Then forth it springs,
Circling glad in radiant rings;
Bliss and fruitfulness it brings.
Nalad bright, so deckest thou
With wedding wreaths thy shining brow,
Trailing ever verdant bands
Of fern and lily; as the lands
Thou weddest with thy close embrace,
In thy laughing, seaward race.

Or dost thou tell us of a sterner theme?

How souls of heroes, like thy forceful stream,
Are bred and nursed in silence and the night.

Fed from the rills of secret prayer; their might
Recruited in grim strife with foes concealed;

Until, in fearful hour, the earthquake shock,
Of war, or civic crisis, cleave the rock.

Then, startling foe and friend, they move revealed
In beauty terrible, as pure as strong;

But seek the ocean of eternity
(Too soon, alas!) to which their names belong.

Oh, flood! though earth-born, thou dost seek the sky,
And this is thy prime lesson: On our tomb

Our resurrection waits; our souls shall fly
To heaven's sunlight from its blackest gloom.

This is the highest, this the noblest hope,
To publish which thy secret caverns ope.