

Sister Marian



The Lost Muse

A Poem

By Douglas Arthur Teed



THIS little poem is an early "fragment" written among the ruins of Old Rome some time during the year 1890, and soon after the writer arrived at this locality for his first visit.

*A son takes pleasure in dedicating this little fancy
to his father*

Dr. Cyrus R. Teed, (Koresh)

*on the occasion of
his sixty-sixth birthday
with a wish for the continued felicities of a ripe age
and great work done.*

THE LOST MUSE

WHILE yet unformed, and in the lap of youth,
With loving hands to smooth my childhood's way,
Came glowing Hope, and ever-growing Love
For that exalted force which men call Truth;
Something within (although I could not name)
Spurring to action presumptuous thought—
Ay, whispering, with piercing breath, "On! on!"
No heights in earth, in all that classic path
Where centuries of fame by mortals wrought
Are draped in wreaths and bear the costly urns,
Too high for thee to climb where honor leads!

So spake my soul in oft recurring speech—
Though blind belief replied in smiling faith,
Reflection, that endless plain where Reason feeds,
Bore fruit of most peculiar pith.
Reason, of youth's credulity questioned oft,
How master Art outside her classic halls?
How grow a plum in soil prepared for sage?
Draw strength, of ripeness full, from fiber soft?

So yearned my soul for Athenian bread,
Ay, hungered it for Cæsar's resting-place—
Where Plutarch's fame and Angelo's angels stand
With faces wrapt beneath the Alban range—
Where genius sleeps and every gentle grace.

Years passed by in prayer, a new day came,
My steps I found, indeed, where Tiber flows;
Beside the shrines of ancient art,
Through arches wasted by devouring time,
O'er mounds and tombs (inscribed by whom, who
 knows?)
By shattered pillar and encrusted urn,
Walked on and pondered in the after-glow.

'Thou temple of earlier times,' I cried—
'Where empire sat enthroned, and heroes died!
Thou seven holy mounts where fountains flow
Amid a thousand forms from marble hewn;
Where are the gifts my earnest prayers did claim?
The tongue inspired, the pencil charmed to limn
The rarer glories of transcendent day,
The slanting shadows on the Roman plain,
The winged thought of man or flight of bird?'

O! now I wend and falter on the way
Where, in fond visions, ardent footsteps flew!
My thoughts are vague, my pencil's lines are dim
Beside the wonders of this rich decay—
The Muse so courted now hath flown away!

