

HIS QUEST

CONSTANTIUS La MORE, O.P.

Lo, Love and Fancy led him in his quest
Of that rare happiness
Of soul wherein alone from life's unrest
Is found contentedness.
He sought it in the void of night, in mart,
In hamlet, lowly vale;
He sought it where thru shame it dwelt apart,
Against the sun's betrayal.
But where he sought, his seeking was in vain,
And he the more deceived;
No happiness was his; nought save the stain
Of sin 'gainst which he grieved.
But Love and Fancy led him ever on,
Life's craggy mountains o'er;
And wraith-like fled before him swiftly on,
E'en to its lowly shore.
Thru flow'ring mead, past humble fens, they hem
Close to the waters bright,
Which, as Aurora blushed and kissed them,
Danced, laughing with delight.

While yet this rapture was enthralling him,
And e'er he was aware,
Descried he on the sands ahead of him
A maiden wond'rous fair:
As fair a one as ever nature fashioned,
So pure he thought he dreamed;
She stood a miracle of grace, creationed
In his vision, so it seemed.
Snow-white her tunic, 'neath a mantle blue,
Gold cords her waist confined;
A jeweled crown with stones of dazzling hue
Her modest brow enshrined.
O fairest maid! When lo, she did look where
He thought himself to hide;
And beckoning, in silence waited there
For him to come beside.

She bade him welcome; he no closer drew,
 But in fear and trembling stood;
 Then she drew near, e'er he his courage knew,
 Smiling she understood.
 And gently she, the while she smiled, her hand
 As she bends low, unfurls,
 Selecting from among the watery sands
 Three glist'ning, dripping pearls;
 Which, rising, in her palm were clustered,
 Soft sparkling every one,
 Like tears of night in rosebud gathered,
 Undried by the morning sun.
 Entranced he stood; nor speak nor move could he,
 Whilst they gleamed upon his sight;
 He started, and his hungry soul drank deeply
 Of their angelic light.

"See, child, (and taking one, she held it upwards,
 Betwixt him and the sun,)

See thou the image that is pictured inwards?"
 (And so to every one.)

"I see a man divinely born, fast nailed,
 A thief upon a tree,
 Because in this His Father's will prevailed."

"So must thou, too." (Saith she).

"I see a man of wealth, of courtly pleasures,
 Heir to paternal fame,
 Don mean attire, and giving else to beggars."
 (And she) "Do thou the same."

"I see a youth in holy contemplation,
 The while two angels tie,
 And gird his loins against the flesh's temptations.
 Live thou as he, and die."

"Take them," (and gently she closed his trembling hand
 Holding the precious three),
 "For they will bring thee happiness where man
 Can bring but sin to thee."

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Her words like echoes, dying, fainter grew;
 She seemed a mist thru tears;
 What holy peace of soul, dear Lord, he knew
 For once in many years.