

TO A MAPLE LEAF

Leaflet of bright crimson hue,
Fallen to the sward,
Why dost thou blush so rosily,
With Autumn's beauty stored,
As did the conscious water when it saw the Lord?

As a bird of Paradise,
Piercèd in the sky,
Doth crimsoned flutter through the air,
Upon the grass to die,
So dost thou in thy death upon the heather lie.

Like a lofty oriflamme
In the sunshine clear,
Or like the rainbow scarlet-gold
Defeating flood and fear,
Thy radiant coloring has not a sylvan peer.

Tell me, pray, what artisan
E'er such tinges made?
Upon what canvas e'er was limned
So fair an auburn shade?
And yet 'tis nature's law that thou art doomed to fade.

Beautiful vermillion leaf,
To the ground now flung,
The story of all earthly life,
Though mute, thou well hast sung:
Alas! thou shalt return to dust whence thou art sprung.

Ere the frost comes and the snow,
Leaf of deep maroon,
Battalions of thy like shall fall;
Then will the paling moon
Reveal the snow-clad maples with their leaves turf-strewn.

Near thee in the summer hours
Sang a feathered choir;
Nor wonder if the merry birds
To tunes thou didst inspire
That in thy presence poets string a grateful lyre.

—Bro. Chrysostom Kearns, O. P.