

POEMS,

BY

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OF VIRGINIA.

— if — had oftener the courage to write from their own impressions,
and had less fear of the laugh or wonder — of their readers.

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POCAHONTAS.



“—————i; secundo

Omine; et nostri memorem sepulcro

Sculpe querelas.”

POCAHONTAS.



THOUGH ON Pierius' heights wert born,
Sweet Muse! and epic wreaths hath worn,
And crowns imperial still embrace
Thy Mnemosynian brows with bays,
And great Apollo's power gleams
O'er shapes immortal gilded beams,
That all Ephesus' temples hold
Thy filial forms in sculptured gold,
Or Tyrian purple mantles grace
Whate'er Thou art, or Grecia was ;

Po.

B

Descend, bright Muse ! and grant thy lays
To wilds where Pocahontas strays,
A sun's new Priestess ! but whose name,
No god Delphinian gives to fame,
And for the griefs her bosom mourns,
Instruct, and strike the lyre by turns,
'Till all thy sacred mountain brings
An heart of echos on the strings
For she no greater kingdom sways
Than that her fleeting form surveys,
When whooping for the woodland throng,
She streams the dell or brake along ;
Or stays to list the linnet's note
Of wedding in his leafy cot,
Or redbreast's measured mournful song
That calls her mate the woods among—
For whom, no other vassals move,
Than just the vassal of her love,

That only He her frown to rue,
The warlike Opechankanough !
For whom, no other minstrels bring
The sounding harp or lyre string,
Than just the Mock-bird's varied lay
That warbles from the bending spray,
As though by turns each Muse were there,
To prompt the enamoured chorister,
Or changed her to his plumage gay,
To hymn an evening roundelay,
Or chant of Philomela's love,
With all the voices of the grove—
For she no thought of ill presumed,
Her God, the Sun, her heart illumed,
Rapt in that blazing orb's display
Of lunar light, or solar ray—
Who cowers beneath the thunder's drift,
Or stops the wild deer at the clift,

At e'en, for rest, whose moss is meet,
At morn, who breathes the woodbine's sweet,
Whom, now her trained fawns caress,
Now playful mocks the Muckawiss ;
To great Powhatan wails adieu,
Or weeps that Opechankanough,
To save the fallen foe is come,
Or light her wandering warrior home !

The stars of night had deck'd the sky,
Or gems had flash'd from ocean's eye ;
The Sun his earliest beams had spread,
O'er distant bourne of Ocean's bed,
And reeking from the foamy tide,
The ships in calmer waters ride,
When opening to the noisy crew,
Just o'er that western line of blue,
The gray mists on the mountains swim,
And lock the charm'd horizon in,

Where great Columbus' long-woo'd bride
Smiles to the skies incumbent, wide,
Her veil of kindling æther gleams
O'er all her wond'rous beauty's beams;
As though Golconda's envied strand
With golden lights had lit the land,
Or Coromandel's diamond rays
Were melted in the lambent sprays,
That lave her with their silver tide
Unfolding, swept from side to side—

And now the seamen greet the shore,
And cannons ruder tidings pour,
And onward Arethusa moves,
And Ocean's tranquil bosom loves;
But oft her varying form displays
To court the cape, or coast, or bays.

As inward still her way to keep,
She glides upon the dimpling deep,
And faithful to her plighted cares,
The grateful crew in triumph bears ;
Though 'neath the swelling lawn conceals
The pang her aching bosom feels,
As though her heart of pride were broke,
Beneath the tyrant Tempest's shock—
But soon the heaving lead to sound
Her station in the road is found,
And then, a wearied Hope, would sleep
Upon her careful anchor's keep,
And dream how fortune from the wave
Of Ocean's storm her bark did save ;
Or slumber to the musing chord,
That 'wakes the winds with mournful word—
As though Æolian harps were hung
In every shroud, to dirges strung.

To mourn the din of mortal feuds,
Or mortal life's vicissitudes—
Or though some minstrel bard had rung
That harp, and then 'twere anthem-string,
To waft the soul's elysium moods
Among her kindred solitudes—
Or where she seeks her idol'd Muse,
To pray her rosy palms to use,
And, with their tender touch, diffuse
The balm of soft Castalian dews,
To bathe recorded pangs that glow,
Unpitied on the burning brow—

But lo! on Potowomac grand,
Or famed Pamunkey's briny strand,
At falling Rappahannock's roar,
Or proud Powhatan's lordly shore,

Or from the desert trackless wood,
Of Nature nursed, with simple food
And raiment, which their toils supply,
'Neath Heaven's concaved canopy,
Behold ! how Terror rides the storm
Of savage fears, in frantic form ;
Behold ! how struck the appalled soul,
And hark ! O hark the affrighted howl !
When from the deep the navies near,
And magic foemen in appear ;
'That fell Despair ! though first decoyed
By faithless baubles—then destroyed
By mimic thunders after hurl'd,
When baubles fail to win a world !
As though on besom-wings did sweep
The Spirit of the stormy deep,
Or drove his noisy Tritons on,
To fight the soul of Powhatan,

And Host, who all did pale and wan,
To see the moving Barbacan

They flee and fall ! nor durst arise,
That incense to the unconscious skies,
Which other heroes oft acclaim
From chapel'd or from altar'd fame—
No work of art their glory gilds,
Nor monumental marble smiles,
To tell barbarian Patriot's name,
Or dauntless Opachisco's fame—
But moss-grown mound in secret dale,
O ! let no circling walls empale !
Nor sculptured fabric there be laid,
To cold the sweetly slumbering shade
Of Nature, whose loved mourning keeps
At morn or e'en—and wailing weeps ;

Po.

Or plains with sighs the freighted air,
Or dews the verdure with her tear—

Though slept that foe, and cased thy sword,
And now no more the war-whoop heard,
O Albion! nor that lurking harm
That fill'd Thee erst with dread alarm,
Yet was her sire's brow in hate
Wrapt ruthless—ready minions wait,
And all but one brave chief did flee,
Dreading the death so momentarily—
But, O how passing tenderly,
O'er him, her bosom's panoply
The sweet Matoax kindly threw,
As from her crowding host she flew,
To guard the guardian of the crew!
As though some saint from blest abodes,
Had brought an Ægis of the gods,

Or lit a Christian temple there,
Where gleam'd the flames of Pagan war—

Autumnal storms the heath had laid,
Or roam'd the woodland glen or glade
O'er boundless realms of Earth had prow'd,
And through her templed caverns howl'd;
From mountain heights had ta'en their sweep,
Or eddied on the trident deep;
And torn the wreath from every brow,
Though oak, or bays, or laurels grow,
And laid their leafy honors low—
But made that haunt of Virtue's child,
The inhospitable houseless wild,
Less drear than was her father's home,
Since votaries of the cross were come,
And Templars brought, and Malta's too,
To make her knights of Nature rue,

And fill'd each bow-man's eye with tears,
His wigwams made his sepulchres !
And Phœbus now with beamless head,
Late shorn on Virgo's gilded bed,
Or by Calisto past in Heaven,
To whom his golden curls had given,
With fainter ray, the western limb
Illumes, of spheres his heights that climb,
Until that hour of darkness come,
To drape the mansions of the tomb—