

**THE MARBLE
PROPHECY:
AND OTHER POEMS**

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The Marble Prophecy: And Other Poems by J. G. Holland

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J. G. HOLLAND

**THE MARBLE
PROPHECY:
AND OTHER POEMS**

THE MARBLE PROPHECY,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

J. G. HOLLAND,

AUTHOR OF "BITTER SWEET," "KATHRINA," ETC., ETC.



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THE MARBLE PROPHECY.

The harlequins are out in force to-day—
The piebald Swiss—and in the vestibule
Of great St. Peter's rings the rhythmic tread
Of Roman nobles, uniformed and armed
As the Pope's Guard; and while their double
line

With faultless curve enters the open door,
And sways and sparkles up the splendid
nave,

Between the walls of humbler soldiery,
And parts to pass the altar—keeping step
To the proud beating of their Roman
hearts—

A breeze of whispered admiration sweeps
The crowds that gaze, and dies within the
dome.

TO VINU
AMBROUJAO

2

THE MARBLE PROPHECY.

St. Peter's toe (the stump of it) was cold
An hour ago, but waxes warm apace
With rub of handkerchiefs, and dainty touch
Of lips and foreheads.

Smug behind their screen
Sit the Pope's Choir. No woman enters
there;

For woman is impure, and makes impure
By voice and presence! Mary, mother of
God!

Not thy own sex may sing thee in the
courts

Of The All-Holy!—Only man, pure man!
Doubt not the purity of some of these—
Angels before their time—nor doubt
That they will sing like angels, when
Papa,

Borne on the shoulders of his stalwart men
(The master rode an ass), and canopied
By golden tapestries—the triple crown

Upon his brow, the nodding peacock plumes
Far heralding his way—shall come to take
His incense and his homage.

I will go.

'Tis a brave pageant, to be seen just
once.

'Tis a brave pageant, but one does not
like

To smutch his trousers kneeling to a man,
Or bide the stare that follows if he fail:
So, having seen it once, one needs not
wait.

What is the feast? Let's see: ah! I re-
call:

St. Peter's chair was brought from An-
tioch

So many years ago;—the worse for wear
No doubt, and never quite luxurious,