

**SMILES AND TEARS:  
IN VERSE  
AND PROSE**

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Smiles and Tears: In Verse and Prose by E. E. Cothran

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**E. E. COTHRAN**

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IN VERSE AND PROSE.



BY E. E. COTHRAN.

SAN FRANCISCO:  
THE SAN FRANCISCO NEWS COMPANY:  
1882.



## P R E F A C E .

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A preface is generally too hackney to contain anything very fine; yet it is a thing which every one expects to read in a new book, as much as an American audience expects its orator to begin with "Ladies and Gentlemen."

In spite of the affectations of the kid-gloved gentleman, whom to attempt to educate with good effect is as vain as plowing furrows in sand; in spite of the imbecile exclamations of the fashionable lady from her sofa—we still acknowledge that what now appears to the public in this little volume was mostly composed on a farm in the "vulgar country."

The author, laboring in common with all classes of men, necessarily added to his vocabulary of words a certain coarseness, which he fears must be only too clear to the really cultured and classical mind. Whether he should have kept silent, and drawn his cap over his eyes in the presence of such genuine illuminators as Bret Harte, Joaquin Miller, Hugh Bancroft, and Ida Coolbrith, or done as he has done, is not for him to declare.

The writer would repel the accusation that he has ever willfully assailed any true religious principle, though he would wish to be understood as desiring the destruction of superstition and hypocritical cant; for without religion, life is altogether a curse, and death is contemplated with un-

speakable terror. When we see our fellow-creatures, or when we ourselves, lay away dear loved ones in the mute earth, to an unknown eternity, we then most feel the sweetness and comfort of religious consolation; nor would we exchange this feeling anywhere short of what appeared to us a positive mathematical negation: much less for what is now but a sneering doubt of its truth. Though the writer holds that all theological beliefs have in them much absurdity and dross, he yet believes them to be a manifestation of the human soul toward some ideal of purity and happiness—a seeking after something higher and nobler; and he further claims that either mere skepticism or mere belief is no criterion of a moral or an immoral life.

Inviting honest criticism, which he believes to be as applicable to the advancement of thought as trimming to the outgrowth of trees, the author briefly submits his labor for a respectful perusal: after which, if it be thought a production of merit, let it be treated as such; but if proven otherwise, let it be cast—as it should be—to the still sea of oblivion.

THE AUTHOR.



# SMILES AND TEARS.

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## AN IDEAL.

To be with nobler minds and purer hearts,  
Than some beneath these skies ;  
To live in worlds where the tear never starts  
In love's deep, tender eyes ;  
Where the forms and faces of those we love  
Their beauty aye retain,  
Where the seraph of peace flies not above,  
Nor hope nor joy is vain.

## CALIFORNIA IN NATURE.

Sun-kissed mountains of gold and snow,  
Where sweetest airs 'neath heaven blow ;  
Of bright flowers, trees, and grasses green,  
Where joy is heard and beauty's seen ;



Shaded waters, glass-clear and cold,  
 That only birds and beasts behold ;  
 Vales fair and useful as they smile,  
 Rich as the soil on Egypt's Nile ;  
 Streams and rivers murmuring low—  
 Love's music when love's heart doth glow ;  
 Near heaved the sea, solemn and deep,  
 And every ship was free to sweep ;—  
 O'er all there ruled a savage race,  
 Of cruel soul and painted face,  
 Asleep in earth, their graves none know,  
 Hushed in oblivion long ago.

#### **BABY'S SLEEPING ON HER LITTLE BED.**

Baby's sleeping on her little bed,  
 Her blue eyes closed in dreamless rest ;  
 Soft around her move the angel dead,  
 Companionship their subtle quest.

But she wists not of their mission,  
 Though smiles of love and beauty wreath her face ;  
 She'll stay to be my moral Titian,  
 Conducting me to holiness and grace.

**MYSTERIES FOREVER UNKNOWABLE.**

O, ever-changing brain of thought! thou art  
 At best the toy of fickle circumstance:—  
 O, heart! aching and bleeding with sorrow,  
 Or pulsing high with joy; strange the things which  
 Build or break thee. Ah, mighty marble will,  
 How oft erecting fame o'er crime and death!  
 O, endless love! queen of philosophy,  
 So sad, debased by crowned ambition vile;  
 And fancy all absorbed, swift flying through  
 The airless climes of space. What shall we know?  
 Shall we not seek for wisdom yet, but strive  
 To catch the secrets of eternity,  
 Though on our ears an awful bell doth ring  
 Mysteries forever unknowable?

**TO A YOUNG FRIEND STUDYING FOR THE  
 CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD.**

“It is not good that man should be alone,”  
 So we read an ancient Man-maker spake;  
 Another God now occupies his throne,  
 Who would make men “eunuchs for the Lord's sake.”

### THE WORTH OF HUMAN LIFE.

Gold, power, place, or fame, can ye satisfy  
     The deep, strong craving of a human heart?  
 Love sometime, but none now, thus breathe and die,  
     And fail to live most men; better to dart  
 A carrion buzzard in the sunlight air,  
     Change death to life from love of self and kind—  
 Ah, sweetest all when join some youthful pair  
     In joy! heart linked to heart, and mind to mind;  
 Though flowers shall hide their hut, and poor their fare,  
     And their dress be the peasants' plain attire,  
 Yet will they scorn foul wealth and tyrants dare—  
     In life or death shall burn love's quenchless fire.

### BURNS AND JEAN ARMOUR.

"O, never fear, my Jeanie dear,  
     I will na' leave thee in thy shame;  
 So wipe away that bitter tear.

My Jean, I love thee just the same,  
     Howe'er the cruel world may sneer:  
 Come to my hame—I'll take thy name."