MAE MADDEN, WITH AN INTRODUCTORY POEM

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Mae Madden, with an Introductory Poem by Mary Murdoch Mason & Joaquin Miller

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MARY MURDOCH MASON & JOAQUIN MILLER

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MAE MADDEN,

BY MARY MURDOCH MASON.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY POEM,

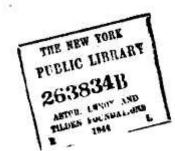
BY

JOAQUIN MILLER.

The wheel of fortune guide you.
The boy with the bow beside you
Run aye in the way, ill the dawn of day
And a luckier lot betide you.

Hen Jonson.

CHICAGO: JANSEN, McCLURG & CO. 1876. P



JANSEN, McCLURG & CO., A. D. 1875.

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A DREAM OF ITALY.

AN ALLEGORY INTRODUCING "MAE MADDEN."

I.

We two had been parted, God pity us, when
The stars were unnamed and when heaven was dim;
We two had been parted far back on the rim
And the outermost border of heaven's red bars;
We two had been parted ere the meeting of men
Or God had set compass on spaces as yet.
We two had been parted ere God had set
His finger to spinning the spaces with stars,—
And now, at the last in the gold and set
Of the sun of Venice, we two had met.

II.

Where the lion of Venice, with brows afrown,
With tossed mane tumbled, and teeth in air,
Looks out in his watch o'er the watery town,
With a paw half lifted, with his claws half bare,
By the blue Adriatic, in the edge of the sea,
I saw her. I knew her, but she knew not me.
I had found her at last! Why, I had sailed
The antipodes through, had sought, had hailed
All flags, had climbed where the storm clouds curled,
And called from the awful arched dome of the world.

III.

I saw her one moment, then fell back abashed And filled full to the throat. . . . Then I turned me once more

So glad to the sea, while the level sun flashed
On the far, snowy Alps. . . . Her breast! Why,
her breast

Was white as twin pillows that allure you to rest; Her sloping limbs moved like to melodies, told As she rose from the sea, and she threw back the gold Of her glory of hair, and set face to the shore. . . . I knew her! I knew her, though we had not met Since the far stars sang to the sun's first set.

IV.

How long I had sought her! I had hungered, nor ate Of any sweet fruits. I had tasted not one Of all the fair glories grown under the sun. I had sought only her. Yea, I knew that she Had come upon earth and stood waiting for me Somewhere by my way. But the pathways of fate They had led otherwhere. The round world round, The far North seas and the near profound Had failed me for aye. Now I stood by that sea While a ship drove by, and all dreamily.

v

I had turned from the lion a time, and when I looked tow'rd the tide and out on the lea Of the town where the warm sea tumbled and teemed With beauty, I saw her. I knew her then, The tallest, the fairest fair daughter of men.

O, Venice stood full in her glory. She gleamed
In the splendor of sunset and sensuous sea;
Yet I saw but my bride, my affinity,
While the doves hurried home to the dome of Saint Mark
And the brass horses plunged their high manes in the
dark.

VI.

Was it well with my love? Was she true? Was she brave

With virtue's own valor? Was she waiting for me? O, how fared my love! Had she home? Had she bread? Had she known but the touch of the warm-tempered wave?

Was she born upon earth with a crown on her head;
Or born like myself, but a dreamer, instead?
So long it had been! So long! Why the sea,
That wrinkled and surly old time-tempered slave,
Had been born, had his revels, grown wrinkled and hoar
Since I last saw my love on that uttermost shore.

VII.

O, how fared my love? Once I lifted my face
And I shook back my hair and looked out on the sea;
I pressed my hot palms as I stood in my place
And cried, "O, I come like a king to your side
Though all hell intervene." . . . "Hist! she may be
a bride!

A mother at peace, with sweet babes on her knee!

A babe at her breast and a spouse at her side!

Have I wandered too long, and has destiny

Set mortal between us?" I buried my face

In my hands, and I moaned as I stood in my place.

VIII.

'Twas her year to be young. She was tall, she was fair Was she pure as the snow on the Alps over there? 'Twas her year to be young. She was fair, she was tall And I knew she was true as I lifted my face. And saw her press down her rich robe to its place. With a hand white and small as a babe's with a doll. And her feet—why, her feet, in the white shining sand, Were so small they might nest in my one brawny hand. Then she pushed back her hair with a round hand that shone.

And flashed in the light with a white starry stone.

IX.

Then, my love she was rich. My love she was fair.

Was she pure as the snow on the Alps over there?

She was gorgeous with wealth. "Thank God, she has bread,"

I said to myself. Then I humbled my head
In gratitude. Then I questioned me where
Was her palace? her parents? What name did she bear?
What mortal on earth came nearest her heart?
Who touched the small hand till it thrilled to a smart?
'Twas her day to be young. She was proud, she was fair.
Was she pure as the snow on the Alps over there?

v

Now she turned, reached a hand; then a tall gondolier That had leaned on his oar, like a long lifted spear, Shot sudden and swift and all silently And drew to her side as she turned from the tide. . . It was odd, such a thing, and I counted it queer That a princess like this, whether virgin or bride, Should abide thus apart, and should bathe in that sea; And I shook back my hair, and so unsatisfied. Then I fluttered the doves that were perched close about, As I strode up and down in dismay and in doubt.

XI.

Then she stood in the boat on the borders of night
As a goddess might stand on that far wonder land
Of eternal sweet life, which men have named Death.
I turned to the sea and I caught at my breath,
As she drew from the boat through her white baby hand
Her vestment of purple imperial, and white.
Then the gondola shot! swift, sharp from the shore.
There was never the sound of a song or of oar
But the doves hurried home in white clouds to Saint
Mark,

And the lion loomed high o'er the sea in the dark.

XII.

Then I cried, "Quick! Follow her. Follow her. Fast!

Come! Thrice double fare if you follow her true
To her own palace door." There was plashing of oar
And rattle of rowlock. . . . I sat leaning low
Looking far in the dark, looking out as we sped
With my soul all alert, bending down, leaning low.
But only the oaths of the men as we passed
When we jostied them sharp as we sudden shot thro'
The watery town. Then a deep, distant roar—
The rattle of rowlock, the rush of the oar.