

**THE CLOCK OF
ARBA: A ROMANCE**

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The Clock of Arba: A Romance by Marcus S. C. Rickards

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MARCUS S. C. RICKARDS

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THE CLOCK OF ARBA

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MUSIC FROM THE MAZE

GLEAMS THROUGH THE GLOOM

THE CLOCK OF ARBA

A ROMANCE

BY

MARCUS S. C. RICKARDS

AUTHOR OF

'CREATION'S HOPE,' 'THE EXILES,' ETC.



J. BAKER AND SON
CLIFTON AND LONDON

1901

THE story, told in a variety of metres, is printed in large type throughout. The poems in small type at the beginning or end of many of the sections are mostly independent of the narrative, although they generally bear upon the subject-matter of the section which they either head or finish.

THE CLOCK OF ARBA

A ROMANCE

PRELUDE.

BEHOLD the Clock of Arba rise,
From the green earth and sunlit sea
In grandeur to the solemn Skies
Wherewith it claims affinity!
'Tis rumoured that it wears a glow
Which some affirm will come and go,
As if a hidden spirit shone
And faded, ever and anon.

The hands that mark each wingèd hour
Oft glance with an unearthly light,
Nor ever fail, as tho' a power
Unerring set, and keeps them, right.
And curious eyes have watched the disc
Round which they move, and, at the risk
Of contradiction flat, have sworn
That all a human look hath worn.

And oft a peal rings out, as tho'
The accents of a human voice

THE CLOCK OF ARBA

From deep emotion's ebb and flow
Bade men now wail, and now rejoice.
At first, they say, two bells alone
Rang out the hours in doubtful tone ;
But now that strange, melodious chime
Would make all know the worth of Time.

How, where, and why the change was wrought
This poem shall relate to you ;
But to enjoy the tale, ye ought
To picture up the Clock to view.
Save for the glow, and altered sound,
And sculptured ornaments around,
It is as it hath been of old,
Both in machinery and mould.

'Tis tabernacled in a Tower
Of weird and even ghostly form,
And yet of massive make, whose power
Could weather an eternal storm.
Its age no human being knows,
Or why 'twas built, or when it rose.
If planned Above, 'twas surely fixed
When giants with mere mortals mixed.

So say the men of Arba, since
'Twas built long ere the Town began ;
Nor could you one of them convince
That aught of it arose from man.