

**JOHN MASTERSON; OR,
PASSION AND THE PRIEST;
A METRICAL NARRATIVE**

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John Masterson; or, Passion and the priest; a metrical narrative by Kenneth Campbell

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KENNETH CAMPBELL

**JOHN MASTERSON; OR,
PASSION AND THE PRIEST;
A METRICAL NARRATIVE**

TO MR
ALFRED

Class of 1887

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SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

DEDICATION
—
TO MY MOTHER

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FOREWORD

Since Time began, one of man's most heart-bleeding, sternest wars has been the conflict between the love instinct, the mating of the sexes, and the interference of parental and other outside adjustment; between the laws of convention and rebellious native instincts. John Masterson was a victim of both, and it is his soul struggle in this world-old strife that I have sought to portray in terms of emotion.

THE AUTHOR.

Sacramento, California.

I.

LA JOLLA—1913

MAY

Forgetfulness, ah that is more
Than Memory; the Gone Before,
The Lost to lose—that were a power
To gild with bliss the bleakest hour.—
In work I cannot sink the past:
The dreams of Night must lower at last.
I sleep, but day for me begins
And preying Thought, vampirish, wins!—

Aileen! A name that lives like myrrh
In Urns of Memory; I may not star
My lady lost, of gentle will;
Too strange her love—I love her still!
Her beauty is my nocturne's wraith!
I fight, I fight, to hold my faith:
For if I lose that, I am lost,
A cynic soul, in self engrossed.—

I sit within the gloomed embrasure
Of the cliff; the surf's erasure
Blots out each message on the sand
Below, with paced recurrence bland.
The Moon hath laid her Rug of Flame
Across the Sea; 'twas so she came
Into my life, too soon away,
In Beauty as Dian astray.

Her father with his millions heaped
Where weaklings at his bidding leaped,
With domination overbore
My landless love—to me his door

Was locked with triple links of steel;
 His lackeys' arrogance I feel
 Unto this night. My scorned dismissal
 Was followed by Aileen's epistle:

" 'Tis best we never meet again;
 I fight my father's will in vain."—

This ring that binds my smallest finger
 She sent; our first embraces linger
 In visions when my day is done,
 But she, my love, my life, is gone!

II.

JUNE

1.

A green cove all a pulsing blur
 Of lightless sound by night,
 Save when the lunar breezes stir
 From depths of soundless light,
 By day a blaze of beryl and of blue;
 The sounding surf, the fiving mew.

2.

The waves, the breezes, sing "Aileen"
 To one who can't forget;
 The crinkling swells in fitful sheen
 Are pens that write it yet.
 To me, to me they spell "A-i-l-e-e-n,"
 My first, my last, my joy, my teen!

3.

The bathers lance the bellowing foam
 With spear-point hands, or lie
 In sands, or idly cliffward roam,
 Where spume-tossed opals fly
 And shatter to a futile spray
 As broke a dream of mine one day.

4.

One of the gay and one apart
Idly I plied the sand,
Which shifted as a woman's heart,
I thought, and with my hand
Destroyed the fabrics that I wrought—
When far-flung fear seaward I caught.

5.

A woman's agony can pierce
The sentient ear of man
And nerve him with a spirit fierce
As moved the primal clan
To meet the monsters of the cave—
Responding, swift I fought the wave.

6.

It seemed the rigor of my soul
Resolved in lenient joy;
'Twas not I sought the hero's role,
That egoist's alloy
Of selfish aim and Gascon pride:
'Twas that I hungered to be tried.

7.

My hands locked strands of gold-wet hair;
The face was pallid under;
And lo! There lay that Aileen there!
Again must dull Fate blunder?
The weird three sisters mix the cards
And oddly heap the human shards?

8.

I swam with my lax love ashore,
The clamor of the throng
Unheard, and to the lee I bore
Her from the wild surf-song
Below a rock; her eyelids stirred:
"Aileen!" I cried—that fateful word!

9.

And ere the prattling gossips came,

She smiled and sighed with me:
 Precluded passion leaped to flame—
 And only I was free!—
 " beloved," was all she said,
 Ere memory again had fled.

10.

They bore her to the bungalow,
 Her sumptuous Summer eyrie;
 And That has intervened, I know,
 Will make my lot less dreary:
 These barriers of the social laws
 Are reared to give the timid pause.

11.

For she is mated with a pang
 Encarnalized, a thorn,
 That pierces as the serpent's fang;
 Where love lives not, the scorn
 Of her pure mind for such as he
 Who purchased her, turns inwardly.

12.

She scorns herself as one of those
 Nomads of the street,
 Who never bask in love's repose,
 Nor learn its duties sweet—
 Incarnate sacrifice to pride,
 The Vestal flame within her died.

13.

Convention ever stones to death
 The unsafeguarded Phryne:
 But wedded goods is spared foul breath—
 As though the guilt were tiny
 That welds two lives where love is not
 And one remembers—unforgott!

14.

What barrier should there be to love
 Such as binds her to me?