

**RED LEAVES AND  
ROSES: POEMS**

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Red leaves and roses: poems by Madison Cawein

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**MADISON CAWEIN**

**RED LEAVES AND  
ROSES: POEMS**



# RED LEAVES AND ROSES

## Poems

BY

MADISON CAWEIN

AUTHOR OF "LYRICS AND IDYLS," "DAYS AND DREAMS,"  
"SIDDONS AND MEMORIES," ETC.



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PROEM.

*O*H, shall I sing of joy I only  
Remember as departed joy?  
Of life once glad that now is lonely?  
Of love a treasure, now a toy?  
Of grief, regret but makes the keener,  
Of longing disappointment wars?—  
These will I sing, and sit serene  
Than song among the stars.

Or shall I sing of faith once spoken?  
Of vows heart-happy once with tears?  
Of promised faith and vows long broken . . .  
One hath remembered many years?  
Of truth, the false but leaves the true,  
Of trust, the doubt makes doubly sure?—  
These will I sing, the noble doer  
Whose dauntless heart is pure.

I will not sing of time made hateful,  
Of hope that only clings to hate;  
Of charity now grown ungrateful,  
And pride that cannot stand and wait.—  
Of humbleness care hath imparted,  
Of resignation born of ills,  
These will I sing, and stand high-hearted  
As hope upon the hills.

Once on a throne of gold and scarlet  
I touched a chord and felt it break;  
I dreamed I was a king—a varlet  
A king's amusement left to wake.—  
Now on a star my longing lingers,  
While on a tomb I lean and read,  
And write with eager soul and fingers  
That life may give me heed.

## CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
Red Leaves and Roses . . . . .	1
Wild-Thorn and Lily . . . . .	7
The Idyl of the Standing-Stone . . . . .	38
Some Summer Days . . . . .	47
An Epic of South-Fork . . . . .	55
A Niello . . . . .	66
Wreckage . . . . .	70
Hieroglyphs . . . . .	76
Siren Sands . . . . .	87
At the Lane's End . . . . .	93
Deep in the Forest . . . . .	101
One Night . . . . .	115
The Elixir of Love . . . . .	119
The Spell . . . . .	123
The Return . . . . .	125
The Letter . . . . .	127
Wounded . . . . .	129
The Parting . . . . .	131
The Daughter of the Snow . . . . .	133
Hildegard . . . . .	136
Urganda . . . . .	139
The Son of Ewrawc . . . . .	143
Torquemada . . . . .	157
An Episode . . . . .	163
The Mameluke . . . . .	166
The Slave . . . . .	168

	PAGE
The Seven Devils of Mahomet . . . . .	170
John Davis, Boucanier . . . . .	172
Thamus . . . . .	176
Adventurers . . . . .	179
Voyagers . . . . .	180
America . . . . .	182
The Ocklawaha . . . . .	184
The Minorcan . . . . .	187
The Spring in Florida . . . . .	189
Strategy . . . . .	191
The Whippoorwill . . . . .	193
Satan . . . . .	195
Sic Vos Non Vobis . . . . .	196
Once . . . . .	198
Resignation . . . . .	200
After Rain . . . . .	202
Peace . . . . .	205





## RED LEAVES AND ROSES.

### I.

AND he had lived such loveless years  
That suffering had made him wise ;  
And she had known no truer tears  
Than those of girlhood's eyes.

And he, perhaps, had loved before—  
One who had wed? one who had died?  
So life for him had been but poor  
In love for which he sighed.

In years and love she was so young  
Youth paused and beckoned at the gate,  
And bade her list love's birds that sung ;  
She said that love should wait.

One understood. One only knew  
The fields were faded, skies were gray,  
Nor saw the sad rose autumn blew  
There in her heedless way.

## II.

If he had come to her when May  
Danced down the wildwood,—every way  
Marked with white flowers, as if her gown  
Had torn and fallen,—it might be  
She had not met him with a frown,  
Nor used such love so bitterly.

Or if he had but come when June  
Set stars and roses to one tune,  
And breathed in honeysuckle throats  
Clove-honey of her spicy mouth,  
His soul had found some sunny notes  
In hers to cheer the cloudy South.

He came when Fall made mad the sky,  
And on the hills leapt like a cry  
Of battle; when the leaves were dead;  
To find a dreamy blonde in white,  
Thrust in whose hair one rose, blood-red,  
Glowed like the Summer's heart of light.

He might have known, since leaves were blown,  
And in the woods great weeds were grown;  
Since nearing Winter wrecked the world,  
How love like his would seem absurd  
To her whose sinless lip had curled,  
Yet heard him to his latest word.

Still he was humble, and denied  
His tongue that instant's flush of pride,  
For he remembered how the gray  
    Held heaven and earth, alas ! and knew  
She wore the colors of the May,  
    And to the May her heart was true.

And so he left her : and the bud  
In her deep hair—one drop of blood  
Out of his life to weaken him :—  
    Again (the poison of his pain),  
Poppy, for her to crush and brim  
    A goblet with, that he must drain.

## III.

“ Such days as these,” one said, and bent  
    Among the marigolds, all dew,  
And dripping zinnia stems, “ are sent  
    Out of the days our childhood knew ;  
And it is these endearing those,  
    So dearer now they are grown old ;  
Days, once imperfect with the rose,  
    Sufficient with the marigold.”

“ Such days as these,” one said, and gazed  
    Long with unlifted eyes that held  
Sad autumn nights, “ our hopes have raised  
    In futures that are mist-enspelled.