

**SMITH COLLEGE.
COMMENCEMENT
POEMS, '79-'86**

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Smith College. Commencement Poems, 79-'86 by Various

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VARIOUS

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Commencement Poems

'79-'86

*These Poems, reprinted with the consent of the Authors, are
published for the benefit of the Gymnasium Fund.*

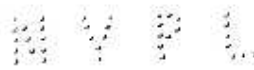


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VICTURÆ SALUTAMUS.

ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS.

Shall we who are about to live
Cry like a clarion on a battle-field?
Or weep before 'tis fought, the fight to yield?
Thou that hast been and yet that art to be
Named by our name, that art the First and Last!
Womanhood of the future and the past!
Thee we salute below the breath. Oh! give
To us the courage of our mystery.
. Pealing the clock of Time
Has struck the Woman's hour.
We hear it on our knees. For ah! no power
Is ours to trip too lightly to the rhyme
Of bounding words that leap the years
Ideal of ourselves! We dream and dare.
Victuræ Salutamus. Thou art dumb.



'80.

VALDEMAR.

JULIA C. R. DORR.

Within a city quaint and old,
When reigned King Alcinor, the Bold,
There dwelt a sculptor whose renown
With pride and wonder filled the town.
And yet he had not reached his prime ;
The first warm glow of summer time
Had but just touched his radiant face,
And moulded to a statelier grace
The stalwart form that trod the earth
As it had been of princely birth.
So fair, so strong, so brave was he,
With such a sense of mastery,
That Alcinor upon his throne
No kinglier gifts from life could own
Than those it brought from near and far
To the young sculptor, Valdemar !

Mayhap he was not rich—for Fame,
To lend its magic to his name,

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Had outrun Fortune's swiftest pace
And conquered in the friendly race.
But a fair home was his, where bees
Hummed in the laden mulberry trees ;
Where cyclamens, with rosy flush,
Brightened the lingering twilight hush,
And the *gladiolus*' fiery plume
Mocked the red rose's brilliant bloom ;
Where violet and wind-flower hid
The acacia's golden gloom amid ;
Where starry jasmynes climbed, and where,
Serenely calm, divinely fair,
Like a white lily, straight and tall,
The loveliest flower among them all,
His sweet young wife, Hermione,
Sang to the child upon her knee !

Here beauteous visions haunted him,
Peopling the shadows soft and dim ;
Here the old gods around him cast
The glamour of their splendors past.
Jove thundered from the awful sky ;
Proud Juno trod the earth once more ;
Pale Isis, veiled in mystery,
Her smile of mystic meaning wore ;
Apollo joyed in youth divine,
And Bacchus wreathed the fragrant vine ;
Here chaste Diana, crescent-crowned,
With virgin footsteps spurned the ground ;

Here rose fair Venus from the sea,
And that sad ghost, Persephone,
Wandered, a very shade of shades,
Amid the moonlit myrtle glades.
Nor they alone. The Heavenly Child,
The Holy Mother, meek and mild,
Angels on glad wing soaring free,
Pale, praying saints on bended knee,
Martyrs with palms, and heroes brave,
Who for their guerdon won a grave,
Earth's laughing children, rosy sweet,
And the soul's phantoms, fair and fleet—
All these were with him night and day,
Charming the happy hours away!

Oh, who so rich as Valdemar?
What ill his joyous life can mar?
With home and glorious visions blest,
Glad in the work he loveth best!

But Love's clear eyes are quick to see;
And one fair spring, Hermione,
Sitting beneath her mulberry tree
With her young children at her knee,
Saw Valdemar, from day to day,
As one whose thoughts were far away,
With folded arms and drooping head
Pace the green aisles with silent tread;
Saw him stand moodily apart

With idle hands and brooding heart ;
Or gaze at his still forms of clay,
Himself as motionless as they !
"O Valdemar !" she cried, "you bear
Some burden that I do not share !
I am your wife, your own true wife ;
Shut me not out from heart and life !
Why brood you thus in silent pain ?"
As shifts the changing weather-vane,
So came the old smile to his face,
Saluting her with courtly grace.
"Nay, nay, Hermione, not so !
No secret, bitter grief I know ;
But, haunting all my dreams by night
And thoughts by day, one vision bright,
One nameless wonder, near me stands,
Claiming its birthright at my hands.
It hath your eyes, Hermione,
Your tender lips that smile for me ;
It hath your perfect, stately grace,
The matchless beauty of your face.
But it hath more !—for never yet
On brow of earthly mould was set
Such splendor and such light as streams
From this rare phantom of my dreams !"
Lightly she turned, and led him through
Under the jasmynes wet with dew,
Into a wide, cool room, shut in
From the great city's whirl and din—

Then, smiling, touched a heap of clay.
"Dear idler, do thy work, I pray!
Thy radiant phantom lieth hid.
The mould of centuries amid,
Waiting till thou shalt bid it rise
And live beneath the wondering skies!"

Then rose a hot flush to his cheek;
His stammering lips were slow to speak.
"Hermione," he said, at length,
As one who gathers up his strength,
"Hermione, my wife, I go
Far from thee on a journey slow
And long and perilous; for I know
Somewhere upon the earth there is
A finer, purer clay than this,
From which I'll mould a shape more fair
Than ever breathed in earthly air!
I go to seek it!"

"Ah!" she said,
With smiling lips, but tearful eyes,
Half lifted in a grieved surprise,
"How shall I then be comforted?
Not always do we find afar
The good we seek, my Valdemar!
This common, wayside clay thy hand
Hath been most potent to command,