

**THE MARTYRS'
IDYL, AND SHORTER
POEMS**

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The martyrs' idyl, and shorter poems by Louise Imogen Guiney

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LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY

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IDYL, AND SHORTER
POEMS**

The Martyrs' Idyl
And Shorter Poems

BY LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY



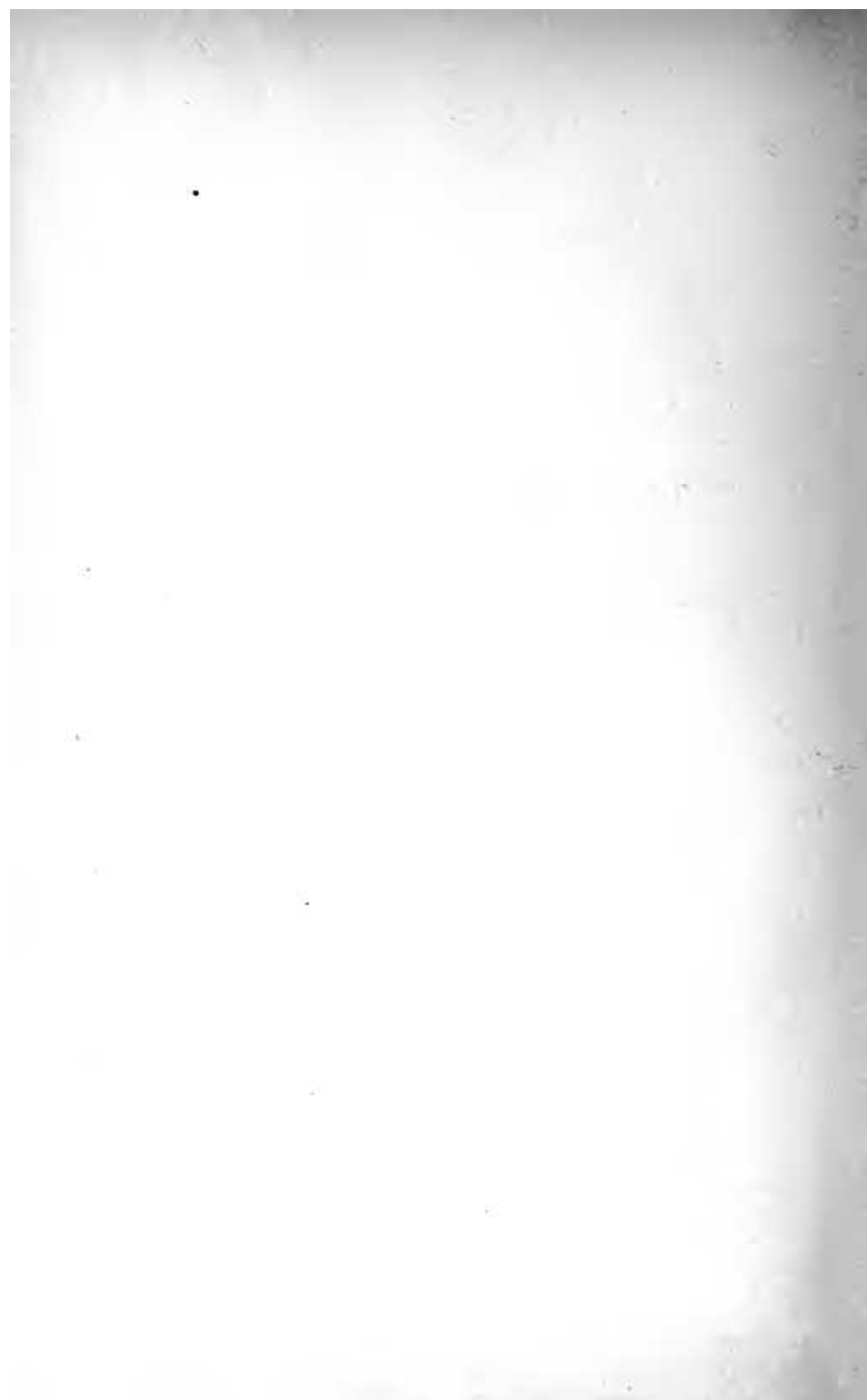
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THE MARTYRS' IDYL

TO KATHARINE AND GILES



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THE MARTYRS' IDYL¹

I

Sunset. A high rocky pasture above Alexandria. In the year of Our Lord 304.

Didymus, a young soldier, enters and throws himself down.

Didymus.

THIS mound is sweet to me. All my
blood aches,
Since driven onward like a dark hill-
cloud,

Dizzy with secret lightnings nowhere spent,
I chase yon happy sun to his bright death,
Alas, I know not whither: but I know
I shall not see the myriad shields uphung
In camp to-night, nor on our cypresses
Smoke rise and sink in loath blue fountain spray.
So far, so far I drift from even them
Who fill one gourd with me, who cheer my heart,
Who come in, warm and singing, to the tent,
And miss me who am gone away, I think,
Forever, though a day; out of their world,

¹ The outlines of this story, and much of the dialogue, in Scenes II., IV. and V., are taken from the Acta Sanctorum and S. Ambrose.

Though over a few leagues of upland grass !
 Why hast Thou laid on me magic of pain,
 God unrevealèd ? Was I drawn from sleep,
 Man's duty, body's health, to be mere wind,
 Wind undirected over fallow wastes ?
 What wouldst Thou ask of me, no sword of Thine,
 No ark of service ? Yet aware of Thee
 I am and shall be. All my thought, outspread,
 Is open unto Thee : a lonely beach
 Where the wide sobbing surf ebbs everywhere,
 And, hard upon each dawn-colored wave,
 Flutters the wavy line of drying sand
 Back to the verge : the white line, shadow-quick,
 Thrilling there in the dark : an earthen gleam,
 Vain huntress of the sea. Suffer me now
 To follow and attain Thee, fugitive,
 And be my rest, who hast, my whole life long,
 Been mine unrest : implored, immortal Love !

*A Child enters, with a reed, wearing a wreath of
 thorns in his hair.*

The Child. Soldier, pipe up for me, a herd-boy,
 glad
 Because his flocks are folded.

Didymus. Ah, not I !
 My star is withered ; I am man no more.
 Sigh after sigh the builder Grief takes up,
 To heighten over me her gradual arch.