

**BEAR EDITION; JOAQUIN
MILLER'S POEMS. IN SIX
VOLUMES, VOLUME SIX,
POETIC PLAYS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649765591

Bear Edition; Joaquin Miller's Poems. In Six Volumes, Volume Six, Poetic Plays by Joaquin Miller

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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JOAQUIN MILLER

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MILLER'S POEMS. IN SIX
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POETIC PLAYS**



JOAQUIN MILLER AT THE TIME OF WRITING THE DANITES. FROM AN OIL PORTRAIT IN THE POSSESSION OF MRS. FRANK LESLIE (THE BARONESS DE BAZUS)

Bear Edition

Joaquin Miller's *poetical*
Poems *of the*

[in six volumes]

Volume Six
Poetic Plays



San Francisco
The Whitaker & Ray Company
1910

TO
MY PARENTS
HULINGS
AND MARGARET WITT MILLER

PREFACE

Years ago when the "Songs of the Sierras" had made some stir in London, an alert actor there, liking the new and musical name "Sierras," helped me put two of my magazine sketches together, "The First Woman in the Forks" and "The Last Man of Mexican Camp," as a play, called the first "Families of the Sierras." Then I put it into book form and published it in London and Chicago under this name. Soon after a retired actor, Fitzgerald of Philadelphia, put it again into a play for Kittie Blanchard, a deserving actress who produced it in New York. She paid me the better part of ten thousand dollars royalties, and as she was very capable and popular, she was allowed all sorts of liberties in the story. For example, having a child she wished to put on the stage, the little tot is shot to death in the first act by the Danites; thrilling! And then the Chinaman, intended as comedy, is made almost a villain, simply to please the gallery. But all this sort of thing, as in the other plays here published, must be brushed aside, and the better strains must be told on the stage hereafter, if told at all, as here set down.

The Chinese are not thieves; nor are the Mormons murderers. True, some of their fanatics led the Mountain Meadow massacre, but they were no worse, and certainly not better, than the Missouri mob that butchered Joseph Smith and his brother, Hiram, founders of the Mormon Church.

But it is not likely they will see the footlights soon again. For we are fast forgetting open and honest nature. The wild woods, the mountains,

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the robust, sincere and half wild men of the open air we have put aside for clothes and "curled darlings"; while the play of today must not only smell of the lamp but smell of something even more "shady," and poetic truth earns only a French shrug of the shoulders.

The play "Forty Nine" was also a book and play together. It has much the same setting as the Danites, but is a better play with a higher purpose. An illustrated story of the patient Argonaut, a modern Ulysses struggling to again see his wife, babe and dog.

An "Oregon Idyl" was likewise a story and book together. I like it the best of all my plays; maybe because I love the woods and loved nearly all the characters herein.

"Tally-Ho" was founded on Horace Greeley's spirited sketch of his crossing the Sierras with Hank Monk, the dashing stage driver. This play started off with great promise. Joe Jefferson was its godfather; John Sousa wrote the music, and the present leading member of Congress from San Francisco played a part. Hank Monk was a most lovable man, but he went all to pieces, as you see him in the play. In fact, the bottle, the bowie knife and the rope are most monstrously conspicuous in these few plays I have chosen to preserve. But this is literally the truth of those stormy old days; "the brief and abstract chronicle of the time."

However all these hard and tempestuous days are well behind us and we may hope soon to see a drunken man as seldom on the stage as on the street. The fact is there has long been too many men on the stage; too many men, both drunk and

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sober. The stage is really and truly no place for a manly man. As for the "matinee idol," he ought to be put with the extinct animals.

As the Greeks never allowed a woman on the stage, so we of today should never allow a man on the stage save perhaps as the "heavy villain."

With more women and fewer men on the stage we surely would have far less drunkenness there, either real or affected, and the demand for "cloves" would not be nearly so great in front as now.

You and I may not live to see it, but I venture the prophecy and should like to write it down in red, that the next generation will see the stage almost exclusively in the hands of women. And women, who are so much finer and far seeing than men, will begin to write our plays; as they should have done long since. The hope and possible salvation of the Stage is Woman.

*"There were giants in the earth in those days . . .
. . . the same become mighty men which were of old;
men of renown."*

BIBLE.