

**AHASUERUS:
A POEM**

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Ahasuerus: A Poem by A. Virginian

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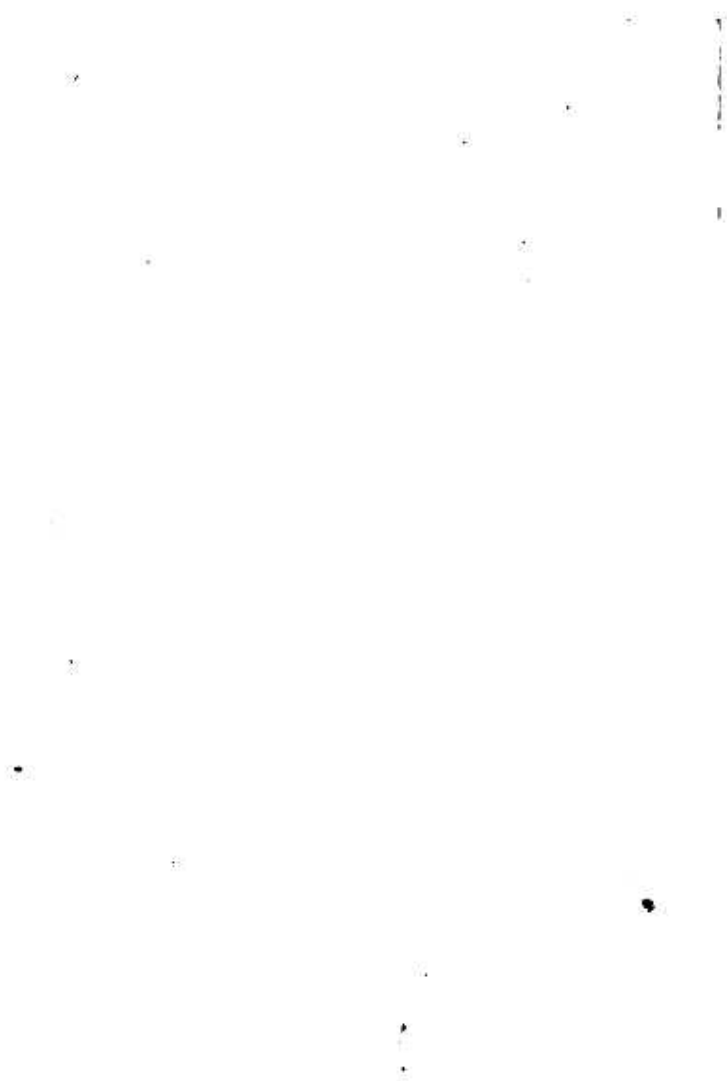
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P R E F A C E.

THE author of "Ahasuerus" lays no claim to originality in the conception of the subject of his poem. It is as old as the time of the Crucifixion, and is, he believes, to be found recorded in Scriptural history. It seemed, however, to present to his mind a good material out of which to construct a poem of some interest. How he has succeeded in his undertaking the public will decide. He hopes, however, that the inexperience of a first effort (of so public a character) will excuse many of its numerous imperfections. It is certainly in a state of mind vacillating between hope and fear that the author has determined, at the solicitation of some friends, to publish a poem that he flatters himself may not prove to be entirely unworthy perusal by his countrymen. If it be condemned, he has at least the consolation to know that it is not the first foolish book which has been issued from the press.

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A H A S U E R U S.

Now in the East the Star of Beth'lem rose
That saw Messiah's birth, and o'er the earth,
When eve with dews and summer twilight came,
From where the Orb of Promise sat on high,
A flood of pearly light stream'd softly down.
This was the sign the wise man spake of old,
When to his vision Time unveil'd was shown,
And by the power of prophecy he read,
While thunders shook the trembling universe,
The wondrous birth of Christ and man redeem'd.

Amid their snowy flocks on Chaldee plain,
The shepherds watch'd with astronomic gaze
That holy orb roll slowly up the sky ;
And when at last, full blazing in its sphere,
It paused upon its way, and glitter'd there,

A silver flame, that paled the Morning Star,
 They knew the portent, and upraised their eyes
 In thanks to great Jehovah; then arose,
 And, singing songs of gladness, went them forth,
 And following straight the-heaven-directing guide,
 And drinking in its radiance as they gazed,
 They came unto the place where Jesus lay,
 The newborn God! sweet Saviour of the world!
 There by the manger rude Saint Mary sat,
 Her dovelike eyes upon the baby cast
 In holy pride; and as the infant slept,
 Beth'lem's bright star shone o'er his smiling face,
 And by its light they hail'd the infant God!

• • • • •

LIST how those soft, persuasive accents steal
 Through the hush'd heart of yon awe-stricken
 throng:
 And mark that brow in light celestial clad,
 Where Meekness, Charity, and Love enthroned,
 Sit in their circle with angelic grace.

There, as the evening's zephyr gently breathes
His freshest incense through those olive groves,
While every leaf makes music to the ear :
There, as the rich beams of the western sun
Shower gold and jewels o'er those verdant hills,
Till every rustling branch and mossy trunk
Reflect the glories of abounding wealth ;
Till every yellow weed, that long hath lost
The little life that nature portions it
(Its shrivell'd finger pointing to the sky,
A witness still for Him who never dies),
Obtains in that effulgent ray a life
More lovely than the softest tints of spring ;
As though some spirit, wandering through the skies,
Had shed a light from his o'ershadowing wings,
By pity moved, on its neglected form,
And lent to this unhappy thing of time
The splendour and the joy that angels own :
There, where the sacred city's distant sounds
Musically mingle with the song of birds,
Till the rapt ear, sooth'd by those pleasing notes,
Gives to the happy heart a dream of peace,
Where love may muse, love taught by God to man :