THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LOVERS; WITH POEMS OF NATURE AND TRADITION

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The mountain of the lovers; with poems of nature and tradition by Paul Hamilton Hayne

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PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE

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WITH

POEMS OF NATURE AND TRADITION.

PAUL IL\HAYNE.

NEW YORK:

E. J. HALE & SON, PUBLISHERS, MURBAY STREET. 1875.

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Dedication.

TO.

MARGARET J. PRESTON,

OF VIRGINIA

Mine eyes have nover gazed in thine, Our hands are strangers; yet divine The deathless sympathy which binds Our hearts and minds!

Thou singest along the mountain side;
Thy golden songs are justified
By the rich music of their flow;
I sing below,

Where the lone pine-land airs are stirred By notes of thrush and mocking bird;— The heights befit thy loftier strain; Mine courts the plain.



DEDICATION.

And now, with joyous sylvan things
All round me, 'mid the flash of wings,
The rivulet's lapse, the breeze's play,
On this bright day,

Flushed like a Dryad's tender face
With early spring-time's happiest grace,
This day of soft harmonious hours,
Made awout with flowers,

My lowland Muse is blitbe to send

Fair greeting to her mountain friend,

And—yearning more for love than praise—

These wild-wood lays!

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The Mountain of the Lovers.

The most important feature in the landscape of this poem the old Chronicler persists in designating as a mountain of "steep" and "terrible" ascent : but that it could not have been a mountain, and, despite certain obstacles which made it dangerous for men on horseback, it might not even have been a very "terrible" bill, is shown by the fact, that among the growd who reached the summit soon after the cutastrophs, were "old men," whom the excitement of the time and scepe would hardly have sufficed to bear sufely up were the Chronicler's expressions to be literally accepted. To gay man loaded as Oswald was, the ascent of a comparatively moderate height would prove a fearful trial; but in his case the atrocious cruelty of the experiment, and the life and death issues involved, became so closely associated in the spectators' minds with the material scene of the tragedy, that the latter was not unnaturally beheld through the magnifying medium of pity and terror. Thus the bill was elevated into a mountain ! The old Chronicler celebrates it as such. We follow the old Chronicler-to the death!

1.

Love scorns degrees! the low he lifteth high,
The high he draweth down to that fair plain
Whereon, in his divine equality,
Two loving hearts may meet, nor meet in vain;
'Gainst such sweet levelling Custom cries amain,
But o'er its harshest utterance one bland sigh,
Breathed passion-wise, doth mount victorious still,
For Love, earth's lord, must have his lordly will.

II.

But ah! this sovereign will oft works at last
The deadliest bane, as happed erewhile to her,
Earl Godolf's daughter, many a century past:
She loved her father's low born Forester,
About whose manful grace did breathe and stir
So clear a radiance by soul-virtues cast,
He moved untouched of social blight or ban—
Nature's serene, true-hearted gentleman.

III.

Yet she alone of all the household saw
That lofty soul beneath his serf's attire;
But of the ruthless Earl so great her awe,
Close, close she kept her spirit's veiled desire,
Nor outward shone one spark of hidden fire.
Too well she knew to what stern feudal law
She and her hapless Love perforce must yield,
If once this tender secret were revealed.

IV.

Yea! even by Oswald's self her covert flame Undreamed of burned; proud stood she, coldly fair, When, to report of woodcraft lore, he came To the Earl's hall, and she was lingering there.