

**MAXIMILIAN, AND
OTHER POEMS**

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Maximilian, and other poems by John Charles Earle

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JOHN CHARLES EARLE

**MAXIMILIAN, AND
OTHER POEMS**

MAXIMILIAN,

AND OTHER POEMS:

BY

JOHN CHARLES EARLE, B.A.,

AUTHOR OF "ENGLISH PREMIERS," ETC.

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Seven of the following pieces have already appeared
in print, and one of them, "Pulchrina," has
been recited in a public lecture.

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The Death of Maximilian.

If I had listened while thy voice had power still to save,
If I had followed thee, my wife, across the eastern wave,
If I had left a barbarous race to reap the seeds they sow,
I should not wait to-morrow's morn, their shots to lay me low.

There is a freshness in that fount, a fragrance from those limes,
And musical at evenfall break forth the convent chimes ;
But, ah ! the peaceful cloister now is made the haunt and lair
Of beings treacherous as snakes, and fiercer than the bear.

I will not wreak my wrath on them: the altar there inspires
Far other thoughts than vengeful ones, far holier desires ;
For through the canopy of leaves and tendrils I can see
The symbol of my only Hope—the Man Who died for me.

And thy dear face, my youthful bride—I wear it next my heart,
The last remains I have of thee, from which I ne'er shall part.
Oh, face that I have loved so well, oh, gentle—shattered—brain,
When shall our severed lives unite, when, when be one again ?

How little, in those golden days when first I made thee mine
And linked the House of Hapsburg with thy father's royal line,
How little could I then foresee the destiny in store —
The rebel's fate succeed the crown which Montezuma wore !

The slave sold in the market-place is rich compared with me,
Of all the Aztecs held I leave not one bequest to thee—
Not one but this light lock of hair, which to my lips I press
And steep in these fast-falling tears of manly tenderness.

Yes, manly, for I will not let the ruffians bind my eyes:
 I mean to look on Death, nor shall he take me by surprise.
 I mean to bare my bosom to Juarez' murderous fire;
 I mean to fall as Kings should fall, and as I lived expire.

Forgive them all, O God, nor let this land for me be curs'd;
 Forgive the wretch that sold his lord—of all my foes the worst:
 Forgive them as I too forgive and hope to be forgiven—
 The victim of disunion here seeks unity in Heaven.

Now as he spake it came to pass; and at the dawn of day
 The Emperor, shriven, knelt at Mass, then calmly led the way,
 And to the Generals with him doomed, in accents nowise sad,
 Said, "Come now, Gentlemen, *vamos nos a la libertad!*"

The friars came with cross in hand, and groups of Indians bore
 Three coffins up the mournful steep, the lancers rode before;
 The heavy death-bell tolled the while a funeral march was played;
 And where three sable crosses crown'd the height the cortége stay'd.

The Emperor marked the rising sun; he clasp'd in warm embrace
 His Generals* and the Bishop, then he gazed on Charlotte's face,
 And with her miniature in hand—his arms cross'd on his breast—
 He gave the sign, and, pierced with balls, he entered into rest.



* Miramon, and the faithful Indian, Mejia.



Pulchrina.

WHEN the Church was in her cradle, rocked by Persecution's storm,
Signs and judgments sent in mercy kept the faith of Christians warm ;

Hearts of unbelief were cloven by the Spirit's sudden fire,
And the heathen, wroth with idols, trod them piecemeal in the mire.

Beauteous as the moon when rising, or snow mountain tinged with rose,
Stood Pulchrina, maid of Gnatia, pure as any star that glows,

Meekly waiting for the moment when her torturers would try
All their fiendish arts to make her God the only True deny.

Golden-tresséd was Pulchrina, and her hair dishevelled fell,
Like a mantle wove of sunbeams, o'er her figure moulded well.

Never yet in any region failed such loveliness to sway
Human breasts, however barbarous, and incline to pity's way.

Therefore with a mien less Gentle, and in milder suasive tone,
To Pulchrina, maid of Gnatia, spake the Prefect from his throne—

“ Though the Emperor's mandate binds me thus to judge thy lawless crime,
Fain my clemency would spare thee ;—break thy stubborn will in time.

“ For one act of recognition of the immortal gods of Rome,
Still thy father's arms shall clasp thee, and conduct thee scathless home.

“ Mark the effulgent godhead yonder of Apollo, lord of day ;
Point but to his genial disk, then free and joyful go thy way.”

Then Pulchrina, blest confessor, pointed downward to the dust ;
“ Cursed be all they,” she cried, “ who in such idols place their trust.