

A MARTYR OF THE MOHAWK VALLEY, AND OTHER POEMS

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A Martyr of the Mohawk Valley, and Other Poems by P. J. Coleman

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P. J. COLEMAN

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MOHAWK VALLEY,
AND OTHER POEMS**

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OF THE
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P. J. COLEMAN

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
A Harp Aeolian	5
A Martyr of the Mohawk Valley	6
The Rose	15
To Joan in Heaven	20
Shamrock Time	26
The Mendicant	29
The Dream of Colossus	30
The Widow's Mite	34
Joubert	36
Off Picket	39
A Spring-time Prayer	40
The Madonna of the Angel	41
Mustered Out	45
To the Sea-wind	47
The Sister of Charity	49
The Paschal Joy	52
In Memoriam—Sara Trainer Smith	54
Fragment	55
Afield	56
Coeli Enarrant Gloriam Dei	59
Noon	60
Sunset	61
Thermopylae to Spion Kop	62
The Rifles of DeWet	63
The Cricket	65
What Answer?	66
Ghosts	67
Hic Jacet	68
Change	69
The Festival of Blood	70
Harvest Home	72

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Autumnal	75
The Swallows	78
Saint Nathy's Land	80
Bethlehem	82
Christ With Us	83
Winter	85
Love's Gift	86
Adrift	87
The Vespers of the Slain	88
May Eve	93
The Old Boreen	97
Lullaby	99
Brian Bwee	100
The Dead Mother	102
The Cry of the Gael	104
The Dream-Tryst	106
My Saint	107
The Soldiers of the Celt	109
The Test	111
The Irish Brigade	112
Rochambeau	113
Gettysburg	114
Potter's Field	115
Inspiration	116
Miriam	117
Love's Sweet Petitioner	118
Pan or Christ	119
In Memoriam—Rev. Stephen Joseph Perry, S.J., F.R.S.,	
F.R.A.S.	121
Ireland—1902	122
The Bridal of Michaelmas Eve	124
Homeward	129
Katherine Tegakwita—The Lily of the Mohawks	132

A HARP AEOLIAN.

Lord! let Thy spirit breathe on me,
And I, a harp Aeolian,
Shall murmur with the praise of Thee
And hymn Thy mercies unto man.

Sweep Thou the chords of life and thrill
With lauds of Thee my spirit's lute,
To sing Thy love, to do Thy will;
Or else let me be wholly mute!

A MARTYR OF THE MOHAWK VALLEY.

(FATHER ISAAC JOGUES, S.J., THE MARTYR MISSIONARY
OF THE MOHAWKS, SLAIN OCTOBER 18, 1646,
AT THE INDIAN CASTLE OF OSSERNEON,
NOW AURIESVILLE, ON THE MOHAWK.)

I.

THE sunset dwindles in the darkening West,
Empurpling shadows mantle hill and vale;
A soft light haloës Ossernenon's crest,
Where mounts the moonrise pale.

The land is lulled save for the night-owl's flight,
The torrent moaning in the deep ravine,
The multitudinous murmur of the night
From grass and forest green.

The palisaded village lies in peace,
The swarthy brave dreams not of war's alarms.
When shall I taste, O Jesu! sweet surcease
From sorrow in Thine arms?

When shall I find the solace that I seek?
For howsoe'er the spirit, Lord, be fain
To suffer for Thy sake, the flesh is weak
And, shuddering, shrinks from pain.

II.

Thou knowest, Lord, I have not scorned to bear
The bitter burden of Thy chastening cross,
Nor shirked of all that men hold sweet and dear
The sacrifice and loss:

Friends, fortune, fame, my country and my kin,
Ambition's dream, the beckoning hopes of youth,
To lead this nation from the night of sin
To the bright morn of truth.

So sweet it is to suffer for Thy sake,
So sweet to win one pagan soul to Thee,
One bondsman's chains of ignorance to break,
To set one captive free;

To lead one sinner to salvation's goal,
Tho' thrice ten thousand suffered sacrifice
Of life itself, of that one pagan soul
It were not worth the price.

III.

For this I sought the savage Iroquois;
For, so we rest, O Lord of love, in Thee,
Thy heart our home, Thy will our sovran law,
What matter where we be?