

**THE GUERDON OF  
SIN AND  
OTHER POEMS**

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The guerdon of sin and other poems by Edward Emery

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**EDWARD EMERY**

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By  
EDWARD EMERY

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## THE GUERDON OF SIN

WITHIN the bracken on the moor I lie.  
Meanwhile, across the clear autumnal sky  
The grey clouds chase each other constantly,  
Upon the hillside casting down  
Swift moving islands in a purple sea  
Of heather, where the mind could drown  
All thought, and the soul on wings outspread  
Could travel to the portals of the dead.

Apparently at hand, yet far beneath,  
Upon the margin of the holt and heath,  
A village nestles in a dale, wherein  
No breath of air doth stir, for see  
The smoke from homesteads rises faint and thin,  
Like grey wands casting silently  
A spell of slumberous peace upon the dell,  
And all that in its fir-crowned circle dwell.

Thus to the outward eye the landscape seems;  
Above, a strange unrest—fast fleeting dreams  
Wherein the elements are never still—  
Below, so calm and tranquil, ne'er  
Could aught of human passion, aught of ill  
Obtain a moment's refuge there:  
And yet withal how different is the truth;  
Here all is peace, and there is sin and ruth!

Amid the village memories, this page  
I found, scarce legible for dust and age;  
Which first a record indistinct and blurred,  
A common oft-told story seemed,  
As when a far-off mountain stream is heard  
To murmur; but ere long it gleamed  
Blood-red, and I could hear the roar and hiss  
Of cataracts in some unknown abyss.

I

He was young, she was younger, by only as much as  
the blossom  
Forestalleth the full ripened fruit that is ready to fall,  
He was strong, and as dark as the patriarch yew of the  
village,  
She was white, and as slight as the moss-rose that clad  
the church wall.

From a smoke-begrimed town, all ablaze with the torches  
of progress,  
He had come to this nest in the hills, as a shepherd of  
souls,  
A nature all eager for change, for reform, for do-  
minion,  
A being of contrasts, a warring of opposite poles.