

Arthur Cleveland Coxe



*Halloween,
A Romaunt with
Lays, Meditative
and Devotional*

Arthur Cleveland Coxe

Halloween, A Romaunt with Lays, Meditative and Devotional



Published by Good Press, 2022

goodpress@okpublishing.info

EAN 4064066369842

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE.

May, 1844.

HALLOWEEN.

LAYS, MEDITATIVE AND DEVOTIONAL.

PREFACE.

LAYS.

GIVE ME THE HOUR.

HYMN OF THE WREATH.

STAR THAT HAST.

STANZAS.

CANZONET.

THOU ART GONE TO THE LAND.

SONG.

CANZONET.

CAUTION.

OH WHERE'S THE HOPE.

CANZONET.

I'VE LEFT THE GIDDY THROG.

MARCH.

LAKE BYROM,

STANZAS.

LAMENT.

THE ZENaida DOVE.

REMEMBER.

CHRISTMAS.

OH WOULD I WERE HAPPY.

THE MIRAGE.

MEDITATION.

LINES.

HYMN.

HYMN.

HOME MUSIC.

TO ALL THAT'S GLORIOUS AND BRIGHT.

THERE IS A LAND.

THE HEART'S SONG.

LAMENT.

IN RADIANCE HE CAME.

LAMENT OF THE VIRGINS.

THE LAST PLAGUE OF EGYPT.

HYMN TO THE REDEEMER.

STANZAS.

STANZAS.

BUT THOU OH LORD.

VERSES.

STILL AS OUR DAY.

THERE'S NOT A CLOUD.

OH WALK WITH GOD.

THE LAND OF BEULAH.

HYMN IN HOLY WEEK.

HYMN.

MARINER'S HYMN.

LITTLE HYMN.

THY GLORY, LORD.

HYMN FOR THE DEAD.

THE FIRST PSALM.

OUR GOD IN GLORY.

WHEN ISRAEL FROM THE LAND OF NILE.

RIGHT GLAD WAS I.

ORISONS.

ADVENT HYMN.

NOT UNTO US.

THEE, GOD, WE PRAISE.

A LENT HYMN.

A LENT HYMN.

HYMN FOR HOLY THURSDAY.

HYMN FOR TRINITY SUNDAY.

LET OUT THY SOUL.

LET OUT THY SOUL.

HOLY ORDERS.

PREFACE.

[Table of Contents](#)

HALLOWEEN has been printed, though never published before. In the winter of 1842 I had a private edition, of fifty copies, struck off for my friends. These have been freely loaned and circulated, till the book has been enquired for by strangers, at my bookseller's; and at his instance, I now allow it to appear. Though I had not intended this, and for many private reasons rather disliked the idea of making it public; I suppose, on the whole, that it will be better to publish it now, than in after life, and to edit it myself, than to leave it to a survivor.

A curious incident suggested this little poem. It was written when I was but twenty. The same theme would now inspire a very different strain; and I can approve it only as a true exhibition of the manifold emotions at work, in a mind disposed to be religious, at that period of life when the world entices most, and character is yet fervid and unstamped. I am willing to make it public, therefore, if the gentle few, who have heretofore been my public, will vouchsafe to consider it only in reference to its place, between the trifles I have written before and after it. In its proper position I think its effect will be happy; for it is a favorite habit of mine to regard all that an author publishes, as his only complete work; in which, if he be a poet, the several parts will bear but the proportion of a stanza or a canto. I think this is an ennobling view to take of any writer; but a profitable one especially, where authors have written

much, and ventured often before the world, while their opinions were in a state of progress and transition. By such a rule, I hope my own friends will judge whatever I have already, or may hereafter, put forth. I should be sorry if Politiano's experience were not always mine, with regard to all I have yet published:

Dum relego scripsisse pudet; quia plurima
cerno,

Me quoque, qui feci, judice, digna lini.

A. C. C.

St. John's Rectory, Hartford,

May, 1844.

[Table of Contents](#)

HALLOWEEN.

Table of Contents

TO A LADY.

I.

If souls, once more, to these their haunts on earth,
Can come, dear Lady, from the Spirit-land,
I ask'd thee,—would it spoil thine hour of mirth,
To see some sudden shape before thee stand!
And a cold shudder told me, and thine hand
Press'd dearer to mine own. But then said I,
Oh! if thy friend were dead, and could command
Some midnight hour to visit thee; reply,
Say, would it grieve thee, Love, if love could never
die!

II.

I have been roaming in that Spirit-world,
And still my deathless love return'd to thee:
And still thy brow, thy locks in lustre curl'd,
And thy dear eye of beauty shone on me:
And thou, my guardian angel, changelessly,
Though all abandon'd, still wouldst leave me not!
And then I thought, if e'er an hour should be,
When my poor soul might leave that rayless spot,
Thee would my spirit seek, forgetless, unforgot.

III.

Fear not, dear Lady, if my voice to thee,
Sounds then thus sadly, from the Spirit-land;
The dream is o'er that then unheated me,

And I in living shape before thee stand.
But take my story in thy lily hand,
And in some hour when sadness were not sad,
Let these loose numbers by thine eye be
scann'd.
Learn what deep sorrows in my heart I had,
When I was far from thee, and all that's bright and
glad.

ἀθανάτας ἰδεας ἐπιδώμεθα
τηλεσκόπῳ ὄμματι γαῖαν.

Aristophanes. Clouds. 286.

I.

I have been near the gates of death,
And thought I passed them thro';
Ev'n now my spirit quivereth,
To think of where it flew!
Oh it was hard to yield my breath;
'Twas hard to breathe anew;
It was hard to come to life again,
And Earth once more to view!
To wake, and find 'twas all in vain,
The death-pang and adieu!

II.

Many there be who die in throes,
And groans, and fearful anguish:
And there be those, who waste in woes;
And many there be who languish;

But few there be, who die like me,
Then wake again to sorrow;
Who strive with death, and feel them free,
But are bound again to-morrow;
Who wrestle through all its agony,
And strive no more in its chains to be,
But are born again to misery,
In the dying years they borrow.

III.

I have been near the gates of death,
And know 'tis hard to die;
That the mortal flesh it shuddereth
In the spell of death to lie:
That fearful it is—the ebbing breath;
And awful—the closing eye,
When powerless all, it curtaineth
The soul, from its loved ones by;
When it closeth slow o'er the leaden gaze,
That wraps, like the mariner's home, in a haze,
The dear ones that comfort us nigh.

IV.

'Tis awful,—the hour when death comes on,
When the voice of cheer or wail is gone;
To feel the lip o'er the dry tooth ope,
To catch half a ray through the eyelid's scope,
Then shudder, though powerless all, to feel
The frost o'er the glazing orbs congeal,
When the breath grows low, and the heart is chill,
Though the blood creeps ghostlike around it still,
And to gasp a moment, and struggle, and try

To yield the starved spirit,—and groan,—and die,
And still to flicker a dying hour,
When life still hovers, and seems to lower,
Though voice hath no spell, and the pulse no
power!

V.

I tell ye the story this chill Halloween,
For it suiteth the Spirit-eve;
But my trance was in Spring-time, when trees
were green,
And the hedgerows began to leave:
When the blossom put forth, and the year was
new:
When Earth was so lovely—to bid it adieu
Seem'd doubly to die!—and I thought while I drew
My death gasp, I scarcely could grieve
To die in the Autumn, when leaves come down;
When the shadows are gone from the wilderness
brown,
When the flowret droops, and the glories that
crown
The hill-top, like hopes that deceive:
But to die in Spring,—the joyous Spring!
The dear young year, when Hope hath a wing!
To die amid blossoms,—the season's sweet prime;
To go ere the summer; to fade in the time
When Earth waketh up at the Easter-bell's chime,
And dresseth her green, and decketh her sward,
Like virgins, that early awaited the Lord,
On the morn of his waking sublime!

Oh, to die in the Spring-time,—the young joyous
Spring,

When scarce have outbudded the sprigs that they
fling

In the cold bed they hallow:—when forest birds
sing

Their wood-notes too gaily for requiem due:

Oh, this did appal me, as soulless I grew!

VI.

The Autumn wind—oh hear it howl!

Without—October's tempests scowl,

As he troops away on the raving wind!

And leaveth dry leaves in his path behind!

Without—without,

Oh hear him shout,

He is making the old trees bare;

Oh cruel, he,

To the old oak tree,

And the garden hedge so fair!

Oh, a wild and tyrannous king is he,

When he playeth his frolic in every tree,

And maketh the forest bare!

VII.

I know that a tyrannous rod is his,

When he maketh the forest bow;

But worse, far worse are his tyrannies,

For he tameth the spirit now!

Without—without,

Oh hear him shout,

October is going away!

'Tis the night—the night
Of the grave's delight,
 And the warlocks are at their play!
Ye think that without,
The wild winds shout,
 But no, it is they—it is they!

VIII.

The spirits are pulling the sere dry leaves,
 Of the shadowy forest, down;
And howl the gaunt reapers that gather the
sheaves,
 With the moon, o'er their revels, to frown:
To-morrow ye'll find all their spoils in your path,
 And ye'll speak of the wind and the sky;
But oh could ye see them to-night, in their wrath,
 I ween ye'd be frenzied of eye!

IX.

There is a world in which we dwell;
And yet a world invisible!
And do not think that naught can be,
Save only what with eyes ye see;
I tell ye, that, this very hour,
Had but your sight a spirit's power,
Ye would be looking, eye to eye,
At a terrific company!
A thousand shapes are at your side,
A thousand by your bed abide,
A thousand, hellish demon sprites,
That bend ye to their foul delights;
And ye are, every day, the hand,

The tool of an infernal band,
That with you dwell,—are one with you,
And govern ye in all ye do,
Save, when ye live in prayer, or hear
A silent whisper in your ear,
From one,—your friend in heav'n and earth,
The guardian angel of your birth.

X.

Bear with me, while in sooth I tell
How mine own eye was purged, to see
A strange and awful miracle,
The haunted deep of Destiny.
Ah me, I know the story well!
And I was once as blithe as ye;
But one whose soul hath been in Hell,
Ev'n in a dream, must sadden'd be.

XI.

I have been near the gates of death,
And I, once more, must there appear;
But, Lord, make sure thy servant's faith,
To walk that shadow-vale of fear!
For thou hast spoil'd the pang, the sting
Of death and hell so fierce before,
Led captive in thy triumphing,
Thy conquest of the Conqueror;
And Faith but waits thy bidding word,
Thy spirit walking on the sea,
To leap, like Peter to his Lord,
And pass the roaring floods to Thee;
For raging waves can never tame,

Nor midnight dark, nor storms, confound
The soul that burns like naptha-flame,
The brighter for the waters round.

XII.

Oh Death! they do thee cruel wrong,
Who call thee fearful names in song,
Or on the blackened canvas, throw
Thy shape, in awfulness and woe.
They sin, who paint thee fearful shade,
A devil-shape, in shroud array'd,
With arrows in thy bony hand,
And shaking aye the sinner's sand,
With felon grin, and demon leer,
Till Nature feels thy venom'd spear.

XIII.

For oft, as with a seraph's smile,
Thou dost the happy soul beguile,
And charm away, from darkest scene,
To homes of endless day serene,
Above the world,—no more to sigh
For realms where never more they die;
In worlds, to us poor earthlings, known
By thee, kind Death,—by death alone.

XIV.

But not to me came death so bright,
For I had lov'd the world's delight;
And oh to leave what only charm'd me,
To go with Death—that had disarm'd me,
And dragg'd me, loth to part, and fain
To struggle back to bonds again;

'Twas very hard—'twas very dread!
But from my couch, I rais'd my head,
And op'd mine eyes, to look once more
On what, for me, should soon be o'er,
And then I said—or thought, or seem'd
To be repeating, while I dream'd
Away my ebbing hour of breath—
To leave this all, oh this is death!

XV.

My couch was by a lattic'd door,
With diamond panes, of olden making,
That open'd on a garden floor
Of pebbled paths, and flower-beds, waking
Bright as the year, to glad the Earth
And glory in their brilliant birth.

XVI.

I cast mine eye athwart the scene,
And blest the soul-reviving green;
And must I go away, and must
This eye that doateth turn to dust?
Ye pleasant flowers, I said, when ye
Have turn'd to fruit, oh where shall be
The sight that sees ye, loves you, now,
And blesses ye with fervent vow!
Though all the while 'tis growing dim,
And blooms your beauty—not for him!

XVII.

This eye hath but an hour to serve,
And its fine work is broke forever;
The worm shall gnaw its tender nerve,

And blessed light illumine it never.
A moment more—and all is dark;
This orb, that beauteous shapes have
brighten'd,
And lighted like a diamond spark,
Shall palsy, ne'er to be enlighten'd!

XVIII.

Then my last look shall be at you,
Ye blessed things that still I cherish;
'Tis well the latest things I view,
Should charm me, even as I perish!
Farewell, farewell; life's dream is going;
And I shall wake to deathless years:
But oh ye flowers, so sweetly blowing,
How can I leave you but with tears!

XIX.

I learn'd to love ye on the knee
Of a fair nurse, in infancy,
Who taught me, with a lip as sweet
As rose-buds, your perfume to greet,
And clap my little hands with joy,
When she gave lilies to her boy.
Oh little flowers! in boyhood too
I held sweet dalliance with you,
And in my earliest passion's hour,
Could only call my love a flower.
Oh then the starry jessamine,
I pull'd the garden walks within,
And romp'd around, from plot to plot,
Reaping, where I had strewed not,

All hues and odours; wild with glee,
So boldly mischievous to be;
And laughing when they strove to catch,
Or failing, begg'd me not to snatch;
For I had e'er a lover's eye,
And flowers were lovely company!
A very bacchanal of heart;
And nature-taught in pleasure's art,
A young Anacreon in my glee,
Beneath the rose-bush tossing me,
And more,—a very rogue, was I,
A pig from Epicurus' sty;
And so my bosom would I fill
With lily, pink, and daffodil,
And gallop back, my treasures folding,
And bold of heart to bear a scolding,
My head enwreath'd from ear to ear,
And Duke, my spaniel, prancing near.

XX.

Dear happy days, forever fled,
I too must wither, and be dead.
I too must droop; oh bear me up!
A look shall be my cordial cup!
Ah this is my last glance:—nay, this!
I feel an awful dizziness!
Fling wide the casement—let me see
The last dear day-light fade on me!
Oh—and the breezes let me smell;
I know the scent of Spring-time well!
And there's a little songster winging;