

The
Poets and Verse-Writers
OF *Maryland.*

With Selections From Their Works.

BY

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REV. JOHN N. M'JILTON, D. D.

(1805-1875).

JOHAN NELSON M'JILTON, the son of Daniel M'Jilton, a local preacher in the Methodist Church, was born in Baltimore in 1805. He learned the trade of cabinet-making, and while following this business was a local preacher in the Methodist Church. He subsequently prepared himself for orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and was, in 1840, ordained deacon by Bishop Whittingham, and a year later was ordained priest. Soon afterward he was made assistant to the rector of Christ Church, then on Gay Street, (now known as the Church of the Messiah), remaining until the end of the year; he was rector of St. James' (African) Church, and in 1844, became rector of St. Stephen's. The former charge he resigned in 1848 and the latter in 1853. Since 1847 he was chaplain of the Maryland Hospital for the insane. He was treasurer of the Board of Public School Commissioners of Baltimore from 1849 to 1866, when the duties of this office were transferred to the City Register. He was then elected superintendent of the Public Schools. This position he held until February, 1868, when he removed to New York. He went there to assist Mr. John Hecker in his various religious, educational, and benevolent enterprises, and was made rector of the Madison Street Protestant Episcopal Mission Chapel, but soon had to retire from this work on account of failing health. Dr. M'Jilton died in New York on the 13th of April, 1875, in the seventieth year of his age. His remains were brought to Baltimore and interred in the family lot in Greenmount Cemetery.

His marriage to Miss Sarah Davie, in 1835, was blessed with nine children, of whom four daughters still survive.

Dr. M'Jilton was a prominent member of the Masonic order, occupying all the positions it can confer, having been a Mason

of the thirty-third degree and, in 1862, Grand Master and Grand High Priest, also Eminent Commander of the Maryland Commandery, Knights Templar, from 1860 to 1865.

He was prominently identified with many charitable as well as scientific and literary societies; was one of the incorporators of the Maryland Blind Asylum in 1853, and chancellor of the Newton University for a number of years.

He had a long connection with the press, being a ready and voluminous writer. He with others edited several literary publications, as *The Baltimore Young Men's Paper*, a weekly journal (June 7, 1834, to Nov. 14, 1835), and for a brief period was editorially connected with the *Baltimore Patriot*. He sometimes used in signing his contributions to these periodicals the pseudonym of "Giles M'Quiggen." He also edited the Poetical and Prose writings of Dr. John Lofland, the Milford Bard (Baltimore and Wilmington, 1852), and with the aid of John F. Monmonier, M. D., he compiled a reader for the higher classes of schools, entitled "High-School Literature" (New York, Baltimore and Cincinnati, 1852).

Of his own writings he published a number of sermons and addresses, a volume of verse entitled "Poems" (Boston, 1840), and "The Sovereignty of Mind, a Poem delivered before the Philomathian Society of Pennsylvania College, Feb. 16, 1841" (Baltimore, 1841). Most of his poems were written before 1850, and many of the most touching ones are about members of his family.

THE HEART'S CHANGES.

"There is something mysterious in the feeling that often passes like a dark cloud over the spirits. With the flitting of a single thought, it comes over the mind, and even in the midst of the social circle overshadows every sunny feeling of the heart."

I've mingled with the mirthful throng,
 When every heart was light as air;
 I've joined the dance and joined the song,
 And felt as gay as any there.

I've sported with the playful crowd,
 Rejoicing in their giddiest glee;
 I've talked and laughed and sung as loud
 As any 'mid the revelry.

A word—a look has touched the string,
 That started thoughts of other years,
 To which the treasured memories cling,
 Still rich in pleasure, and in tears.

The cloud upon my spirit passed,
 Its shadow o'er my heart was spread;
 Too faithfully had memory glassed
 The hopes with happier days that fled.

I stood and gazed in sorrow, while
 Full rapidly the revel swept;
 I heard the joy, and saw the smile,
 And turned in gloom away and wept.

—o—

TO THE POTOMAC.

Beautiful river! on thy bouyant waves,
 How many fleets have floated, and how oft
 The loud "Yo heave!" has echoed from thy shores,
 As the old sailor neared his happy home,
 That like a bower rested on thy banks,
 And sung for very gladness at the thought
 Of hailing those he loved—his wife—his child—
 From whom the waves had parted him so long.

—o—

THE PILGRIM'S REST.

"The pioneers of Christianity among the American wilds in the early period of its history, had many difficulties to encounter; frequently sleeping at night upon the leaves, while the stars twinkled through the foliage above them as if to watch them during their rest."

Sleep weary pilgrim on thy leafy couch,—
 Sleep while the moon shall watch thee, and the stars
 Hymn Nature's music in their vigil hours,
 Above thy lowly pillow; far away,
 Beyond the billows of the deep blue sea,
 Thou hadst, in other years, a father-land,
 And happy friends and friendships clustered there;
 The memory of those years is pleasant now,
 Far down the shaded avenue of life,

Ev'n to those delightful—sunny vales,
 Now dim before thee, when thou wert a child;
 And she, that called thee by that tender name,—
 And taught thy infant lips to lisp the praise,
 At morn—at sultry noon, and in the night,
 Of that eternal Being at whose will
 Worlds find existence, or forever fade,—
 That bathed thy temples in the morning's light
 And told thee of its beauty,—she is there.

—o—

JOY.

Joy comes to man like some lone stranger,
 Turns in and tarries for the night;
 And like a restless, homeless ranger,
 Passes, with the morning's light.

—o—

STANZAS.

I saw a brilliant meteor sweep
 Across the evening's tranquil sky;
 Majestic through the upper deep,
 It sped, all beautiful and high.
 I turned a sudden glance upon
 The moon, just verging from the sea:
 I turned again, the flame was gone—
 Had faded in immensity.

Thus, often hath Hope's meteor gleamed
 Athwart the changing sky of life;
 So vivid have its beauties seemed—
 With such resplendent colors rife—
 That I had thought it might not fade,
 But in increasing lustre bloom;
 Vain thought—in disappointment's shade
 The glowing thing was lost in gloom.