

THE ARTIST MONK.

I read a legend of a monk who painted
In an old convent-cell in days by-gone
Pictures of martyrs and of virgins sainted,
And the sweet Christ-face with the crown of thorn.

Poor daubs! Not fit to be a chapel's treasure!
Full many a taunting word upon them fell.
But the good abbot let him, for his pleasure,
Adorn with them his solitary cell.

One night the poor monk mused: "Could I but render
Honor to Christ as other painters do,
Were but my skill as great as is the tender
Love that inspires me when His Cross I view!

"But no—'tis vain I toil and strive in sorrow;
What man so scorns still less can he admire;
My life's work is all valueless—to-morrow
I'll cast my ill-wrought pictures on the fire."

He raised his eyes, within his cell—oh, wonder!
There stood a Visitor—thorn-crowned was He,
And a sweet voice the silence rent asunder—
"I scorn no work that's done for love of Me."

And round the walls the paintings shone resplendent
With lights and colors to this world unknown,
A perfect beauty, and a hue transcendent
That never yet on mortal canvas shone.

There is a meaning in the strange old story—
Let none dare judge his brother's worth nor meed:
The pure intent gives to the act its glory,
The noblest purpose makes the grandest deed.

—Selected.