



ROSALIE W. KERCHEVAL

Poems

THE COMPLETE 1883 COLLECTION AND ARCHIVAL RECORD

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

A TEXT-TECH PAPERS PROJECT

Extremes and Moderations

Early Southern California Poetry

Extremes and Moderations is a Text-Tech Papers project devoted to recovering poetry written, published, and circulated in Los Angeles and Southern California. Each volume brings neglected books and poems back into view through carefully prepared texts, archival images, biographical context, and a clear record of the surviving sources.

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

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ROSALIE W. KERCHEVAL

Poems

A CRITICAL READING EDITION

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Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry

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ARCHIVAL IMAGES

The source book, early reception, addresses, and public advocacy

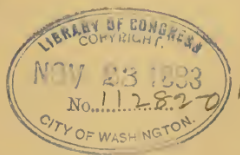
DOLORES;

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

ALBERT F. KERCHEVAL.



SAN FRANCISCO:

A. L. BANCROFT & Co., PUBLISHERS, 721 MARKET STREET.

1883.

Main title page of Dolores: And Other Poems (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), naming Albert F. Kercheval.

"Kercheval's Poems. A desire has been expressed, by a large number of the people of Los Angeles, that our esteemed fellow-citizen, Albert F. Kercheval, would allow the publication of a volume of his poems for the pleasure of his numerous friends, and for the purpose of putting in permanent form his many beautiful gems that have been floating about in a fragmentary form for several years. We are happy to state that Mr. Kercheval will probably accede to this earnest desire on the part of his numerous friends, and publish in the near future a duodecimo volume of his poetical writings. Such a publication would be warmly welcomed by the people of our great Commonwealth, among whom Mr. Kercheval has resided for more than a quarter of a century."—*Republican*.

"Mr. Albert F. Kercheval, the sweet poet of Los Angeles, another of whose meritorious productions we reprint to-day, is shortly to publish his many beautiful poems in book form."—*Santa Barbara Press*.

"The granger-poet, Albert F. Kercheval, of Los Angeles, has been solicited to publish a volume of his poems and has consented. All his poems are readable, while some are really gems, and we are pleased to find that a prophet may be honored in his own country."—*Colton Semi-Tropic*.

"Mr. A. F. Kercheval favors us to-day with an exquisitely sweet little poem. It breathes of verdure and flowers and velvety growth, and ripples as smoothly as the lucid waters of a brook over a bed of marble pebbles,—'Come Again, Gentle Rain.'"—*Express*.

"The Gods love good poetry. Kercheval's sweet lines, 'Come Again, Gentle Rain,' which we published Saturday afternoon, bore almost instant fruit. As lovely and beneficent a rain visitation as we ever had, followed swift in the train of the gentle invocation."—[Same.]

"We publish on this page a little gem of poetry by Albert F. Kercheval, of Los Angeles. We cannot now recall the name of any poet in whose fertile brain the Muses have woven sweeter fancies."—*Santa Monica Outlook*.

"Mr. A. F. Kercheval tries his master-hand in a new line of poetry to-day. In 'Mr. McPherson' he has given us a very finished production, in which satire and humor are exquisitely blended."—*Express*.

"Mr. A. F. Kercheval contributes a most exquisite little poem entitled 'Eve.' Its tones are as dreamy and shadowy and poetic as the soft-fading lines of a Los Angeles twilight. The author has shown the perfection of his art in the ethereal glamour and repose which he throws around his delightful picture."—*Express*.

"We commend to our readers the perusal of Mr. Kercheval's poem 'Cetawayo.' It has two striking merits—one its easy, musical flow; the other, poetic inspiration from a subject so unpoetic as the savage King of the Zulus. But Mr. Kercheval is not only master of the art in poetry, but has the power to infuse into the most prosy and uninspiring subjects, the fire and magnetism of his own poetic nature."—*Express*.

[ROSALIE W. KERCHEVAL.]

"Our readers who have often been delighted with the poems of our songster, A. F. Kercheval, will be still more pleased to see that his young daughter, Rosalie, has entered the lists as a competitor for poetic honors with her talented father."—*Republican*.

"The conductor of the *Commercial* is not in the habit of publishing original poetry in its columns, but when a composition of so much sweetness, and so full of poetic sentiment as 'A Day Dream,' which appears in our columns to-day, from the graceful pen of Miss Rosalie Kercheval is offered, we take pleasure in publishing the same. Miss Rosie is a young daughter of Mr. A. F. Kercheval, the poet, and is in no way inferior to her father in delicacy of thought and smoothness of rhythm."—*Commercial*.

"Miss Rosalie Kercheval furnishes us a very cleverly written poem, which we publish on our fourth page. Miss Kercheval successfully maintains her right to the name she bears, and her verses show that poetry is a hereditary gift in the Kercheval family."—*Express*.

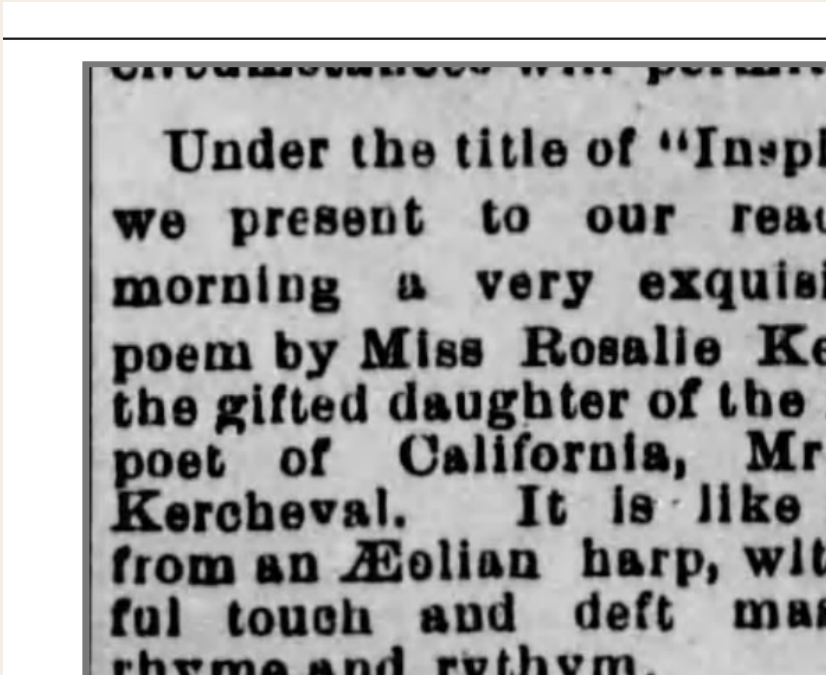
"Miss Rosalie Kercheval, daughter of A. F. Kercheval, contributes a beautiful poem, entitled 'Summer Time,' to the June number of the *Horticulturist*."—*Commercial*.

"Under the title of 'Inspiration,' we present to our readers this morning a very exquisite little poem by Miss Rosalie Kercheval, the gifted daughter of the foremost poet of California, Mr. A. F. Kercheval. It is like a strain from an Æolian harp, with fanciful touch and deft mastery of rhyme and rhythm."—*Los Angeles Herald*.

The press-notice page bound into Dolores, preserving early reviews and publication leads for "A Day Dream," "Summer Time," "Inspiration," and an unidentified poem.

POEMS
BY
ROSALIE W. KERCHEVAL.

The independent divisional title page, "Poems / Rosalie W. Kercheval," in the 1883 source volume.



The Los Angeles Herald notice and text of "Inspiration," December 24, 1881, the earliest directly recovered publication.

human devising, is of the smallest value as an argument on what the unknown hereafter will be; it is hardly to be considered even as a conjecture—certainly not in detail, and, we should say, not even in its most general features. It is simply an imaginary picture of a conceivable hereafter, and one that seems to us likely to affect the human imagination more alluringly than any similar attempt has yet done.

Dolores and other Poems¹.

ONLY three or four Californians have ever published better volumes of verse than the one under review; and those three or four are the ones whose reputations are more than local. Among those who may be called local poets of California, we have seen no one's work that compared with Mr. Kercheval's. Much of it has appeared in the daily and weekly papers, chiefly of Los Angeles, and has been copied quite generally by the press of the State; frequently these fugitive verses have been such as to catch the eye of the critical reader quite beyond the wont of newspaper verse. The poems are all flowing, faultless in versification, intelligent in manner, and poetic in feeling; their most marked characteristic is an approach to that high lyricism in rhythm which, in the songs of the few poets who attain it, seems to convey the idea more by a direct appeal to the feelings through the ear, than by address to the brain: such, for instance, as Shelley's "When the lamp is shattered," or any of Swinburne's lyrics. This music-like quality of the great lyricists is, it is true, nowhere attained; but one catches echoes of it everywhere; as, for instance, in the following:

"Wither, when roses are fading,
Fleeth their mystic perfume?
Whither when storms are o'ershading,
Fleeth their glory and bloom?
Fading and flying they scatter
Wide, when the autumn winds call,
Ruthlessly, what does it matter
Where the pale petals may fall?
Over the mountain or meadow,
Over the desert or glade,
Into the glimmer or shadow,
Into the sunshine or shade.
* * * * *

"Chasing life's bright, gleaming bubble,
Some in the East and the West,
Why should we sigh with a trouble,
Where our cold ashes may rest?
Lulled by the soft-cooing turtle,
Watched by the sentries of God—
Under the cypress or myrtle,
Under the marble or sod."

There is not great originality in any of these poems, as far as thought or workmanship goes (if such a word as "workmanship" may be used of verse so spontaneous and free from self-consciousness). In sub-

¹Dolores and other Poems. By Albert F. Kercheval. San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Co. 1883.

jects, however, there is much originality. The leading poem, "Dolores," is a legend of San Gabriel; and a very large proportion of those following are legends or descriptions of Semi-tropic California. In the ballad and narrative verse, no one except Bret Harte has ever done as well by California. Of the "rough," humorous poems, two or three are excellent, ranking higher in their line than the serious poems in theirs; eminently the one on the "Debris Question," and the one upon the "Coronation of the Czar"; others, however, fall far below the grade.

Mr. Kercheval's poetic reputation has suffered from his local popularity. A large number of occasional poems—Fourth of July poems, poems written for military reunions, school dedications, etc., are a draw-back to any collection—Dr. Holmes's always excepted. In like manner, the very natural desire to see all his fugitives together between covers has led him to put in everything, good, bad, and indifferent—always the most satisfactory way to make a collection for those to read who are already a writer's admirers, but the way least likely to win new admirers. The result is, a heavy volume of over five hundred pages, containing more than two hundred poems, many of which are merely repetitions of each other. The best of these, in a volume of half the size, would have attracted wider attention. Notwithstanding these points of criticism, however, we are prepared to give a very cordial welcome to Mr. Kercheval's book, and are not surprised at the pride with which his poems are regarded in his own section. No one has done a tithe of what he has to make Southern California known to song. One more quotation will help to give a fair conception of the quality of the poetry: the description is of Pasadena.

"Behind, the mountain walls!
Deep shade and waterfalls!
A sense of mystery brooding o'er,
A spell the soul entralls."
"Beyond, the dreamy vale!
Afar, a shadowy sail,
O'er slumbering seas, 'mid quivering haze,
Flits like a phantom pale,
"And vague and spectral isles,
Like brides through tears and smiles,
Half hidden by the trembling veil,
Gaze o'er the watery miles,
"Soft, longing toward the land,
Where skyward, blue and grand,
Far glancing o'er the sleeping seas
The tall Sierras stand."

At the end of the volume are added a smaller number of poems, by Mr. Kercheval's daughter, Rosalie W. Kercheval. They resemble his quite closely in most respects, but have somewhat less vigor or spontaneity; and much more finish, and equality of merit. We quote one:

The January 1884 Overland Monthly review, which distinguishes Rosalie's collection from her father's and praises its finish.

Another Plea for the Bird
LOS ANGELES, Feb. 18.-
the Editor of The Times:] I
today's letter of Rosalie Kerch
in behalf of the birds ke
cramped quarters in tiny cag
cafeteria windows and some
places. I, too, feel that it
cruel injustice to keep these
singers who so willingly give
much happiness in those
cages.
Here's hoping that Miss Ke

Rosamond Ewing's February 24, 1919 response supporting Kercheval's protest against birds confined in tiny public cages.

- Goodrich, June—Verses (Redding).
 Granger, Grace—"The Light of the Gods" (New York, 1911).
 Greenwood, May S.—"The Mother Pioneers" (Petaluma, 1913).
 Gunnison, Charles A.—"In the San Benito Hills," 1891.
 Guiterman, Arthur—"Betel Nuts, Rhymed in English" (Elder).
 Hall, Caroline Pettinos—Poems, 1865-1870.
 Hall, John T.—(Sacramento.)
 Hall-Wood, Mrs.—(See Von Kirn.)
 Hamilton, Marion Ethel—Verses.
 Harris, Lawrence W.—"The Damnedest Finest Ruins."
 Hart, A.—Poems, 1873.
 Harvey, Margaret—"The National Flower and Other Poems," "The Trailing Arbutus."
 Hawley, Margaret May—
 Heath, T.—"Ellen Seymour and Other Poems," 1868.
 Hebbard, Judge J. C. B.—Two volumes of verse.
 Herron, Ralph—"Bathsheba" (published in Stanford University "Se-qouia").
 Hibbard, Grace—Poems.
 Higginson, Ella—"The Voice of April Land," "When the Birds Go North Again" (Macmillan, 1909).
 Hill, A. F.—"Sonnets of the Sanctum."
 Hillis, Delia M.—"Whisperings of Time."
 Hoffman, Elwyn—(Sunset, Overland, Town Talk, etc.)
 Hogg, H.—"California," 1857-1878.
 Holloway, Elvira H.—"Gleanings from the Golden State" (1893, S. F.)
 Howe, Harriet—"Along the Way."
 Hughes, Glenn—"Souls" (Elder).
 Hyde, Mabel Helen—"Jingles from Japan."
 Irwin, Wallace—"Love Sonnets of a Hoodlum" (see Authors).
 Izod, Dr. Kevin—(See O'Doherty.)
 Jenney, Charles Elmer—"California Nights Entertainment" (Edinburgh)
 Josaphare, Lionel—"The Lion at the Well," "Turquoise and Iron," etc. (see Authors).
 Jury, John G.—San Jose's Author of Verses, "Omar Fitzgerald and Other Poems."
 Keeler, Charles—"A Light Through the Storm," "Bird Notes Afield," etc., etc.
 Kemp, G.—"Shadows."
 Kendall, W. S.—
 Kercheval, Rosalie—Poems.
 Kewen, J. C.—"Idealism and Other Poems" (San Francisco, 1853).
 King, P. M.—Verses (San Francisco, 1890).
 Kleckner, Thomas—Soldier-Poet.
 Knox, Jessie Juliet—"Little Almond Blossom," "Poems," 1904.
 Krebs, Florence Kellogg—"Army Goose Melodies" (Elder).
 Lambert, Mary—"Cogitots."
 Lampson, Merle Robbins—"On Reaching Sixteen and Other Poems."
 Laroche, G. A.—"Fables in French Verse" (San Francisco, 1869).
 Lawrence, Elizabeth A.—"Poem on Southern California" (booklet).
 Lezinsky, David Lesser—Poems.

The California Birthday Book

KERCHEVAL, ROSALIE

Born Nov. 8, San Antonio, Texas.

Came to California when a few months old.

Wrote poems for papers and magazines.

Joint author with her father of a book of poems, 1883.

Address: 1817 N. Rosetta St., Los Angeles.

*Documentary setting of George Wharton James's 1909 entry.
The saved Project Gutenberg HTML is retained in Research / Online Sources.*

George Wharton James's 1909 entry: the primary source correcting Kercheval's birthplace and documenting her continued identity as a writer.

Los Angeles City Directory, 1916

KERCHEVAL

Mary E., nurse, 344 S. Grand Ave.

Rosalie W., householder, 1749 N. Alexandria Ave.

Venia A., resident, 1749 N. Alexandria Ave.

Documentary setting from page 1154.

The complete saved source page is retained in Research / Online Sources.

The 1916 directory places Rosalie and her sister Venia in the same North Alexandria Avenue household.

INTRODUCTION

A complete collection restored

Rosalie W. Kercheval grew up in the first generation of an American Los Angeles, the Texas-born daughter of poet, farmer, and 1849 overland migrant Albert Fenner Kercheval. At seventeen she was already publishing in the *Los Angeles Herald*; two years later A. L. Bancroft printed her own separately titled seventy-page sequence inside her father's *Dolores: And Other Poems*. Its forty poems range from flowers, moonlight, memory, and the Southern California coast to Napoleon, Cleopatra, the Crusades, yellow fever, the San Juan Capistrano earthquake, and a captive tiger whose hunger for freedom overtakes the observer. A contemporary reviewer found less vigor than in her father's poems but "much more finish, and equality of merit." Kercheval continued to identify herself as a writer, shared a Los Angeles home with her sister Venia, and in 1919 protested the confinement of birds in tiny public cages. This edition restores all forty poems—not the four represented in an earlier project file—preserves the original order, lineation, stanzas, epigraphs, and authorial notes, and corrects only unmistakable typographical and OCR damage.

BIOGRAPHY

Rosalie Wilson Kercheval and the recovered record

A record recovered from fragments

Rosalie Wilson Kercheval left a substantial book of poetry but a thin conventional life record. The surviving evidence is dispersed among her father's family history, the 1883 volume they shared, newspaper notices, a literary birthday book, city directories, a brief act of animal-welfare advocacy, and death indexes. No diary, correspondence file, school record, employment file, will, probate packet, obituary, grave marker, or authenticated portrait has yet been located. The absence is especially striking because her father, Albert Fenner Kercheval, became a recognizable pioneer poet of Los Angeles and because Rosalie's own sequence fills seventy printed pages. Reconstructing her life therefore requires keeping proof, probability, and inference visibly separate.

Earlier project copy stated that Kercheval was born in Los Angeles and treated only four poems as extant. Both claims collapse under the primary sources. George Wharton James's *California Birthday Book* records that she was born on November 8 in San Antonio, Texas, and came to California when only a few months old. The original *Dolores: And Other Poems* contains a distinct title leaf, "Poems / Rosalie W. Kercheval," followed by forty poems on printed pages 463–532. The correction is not minor: it relocates her birth, restores thirty-six poems, and changes a fugitive-poem profile into the record of a young woman who published a coherent book-length collection.

The year 1864 and the death date September 21, 1934 are carried in project and genealogical records and accord with the age implied by the 1881 publication of "Inspiration." The newly recovered birthday-book entry confirms the month, day, place, infant migration, authorship, and later address, but not the printed year. Until a civil birth record, baptismal entry, census image, or death certificate is added to the file, 1864 should be treated as

established by converging secondary and index evidence rather than by the birthday book alone.

The Kercheval family and the move west

Rosalie's father, Albert Fenner Kercheval, was born in Preble County, Ohio, in 1829. He crossed the plains to California in 1849, participated in the Gold Rush migration, and eventually made his life in Southern California as a farmer, horticulturist, public figure, and poet. His verse repeatedly translated pioneer experience, regional landscape, war memory, civic ceremony, and domestic life into the broad public idiom of the nineteenth-century newspaper poem. Rosalie's mother, Sarah Adelaide Wilson Kercheval, supplied the middle name by which Rosalie appears in the book and directories. Sarah died at the family residence on Lemon Street in Los Angeles on April 13, 1892.

Rosalie was born in San Antonio during a Texas interval in the family's history. James's statement that she reached California "when a few months old" places the move in late 1864 or early 1865. By 1870 the family was in Los Angeles, which was then changing rapidly from a small, Spanish-speaking regional town into an American city linked to national migration, rail, real-estate, and print networks. Rosalie's surviving siblings include Leland Nelson Kercheval and Venia Alice Kercheval; an authorial note to "In Memoriam—Eugenia" identifies another, elder sister who died young. The poem remembers Southern skies and a grave far from the adult speaker, making the family's Texas origin emotionally present without converting the lyric into a complete genealogical document.

The household joined cultural ambition to practical labor. Albert cultivated land and fruit while writing poems for public occasions and newspapers. His example gave Rosalie both access and a burden: editors introduced her through his name, and the book placed her work after more than four hundred pages of his. Yet her section was not anonymous juvenilia or an appendix assembled by a later editor. It received its own authorial title page, independent pagination sequence within the volume, and a contemporary review that compared two identifiable writers.

A seventeen-year-old poet in the *Los Angeles Herald*

The earliest located publication by Rosalie is “Inspiration,” printed in the *Los Angeles Herald* on December 24, 1881. The accompanying notice calls it “a very exquisite little poem” and identifies its writer as the gifted daughter of A. F. Kercheval. It hears in the poem the effect of an Æolian harp, praises her command of rhyme and rhythm, and presents the work as evidence of unusual promise. At approximately seventeen, Kercheval was therefore not merely writing privately: she was entering the public literary economy of Los Angeles through a daily newspaper.

“Inspiration” is also a compact statement of poetic vocation. Its speaker catches music from unseen singers across unknown seas, receives passion from a source beyond conscious command, and joins individual fancy to a larger throne of song. The poem’s later placement in the 1883 sequence confirms that the newspaper text was not an isolated exercise. It belongs to a collection repeatedly concerned with inspiration, historical memory, distant geographies, and the pressure of unseen forces on an alert mind.

The newspaper’s introduction inevitably made kinship part of authorship. Being Albert Kercheval’s daughter probably helped the poem reach print, but the notice judges her technique in her own right. Its emphasis on finish anticipates the *Overland Monthly* review two years later. Together the two notices supply the closest thing yet found to contemporary critical reception during her youth.

The press-notice pages bound into *Dolores* preserve three more early publication leads. The *Commercial* said it normally avoided original verse but made an exception for “A Day Dream,” praising the sweetness, poetic feeling, delicacy of thought, and smooth rhythm of “Miss Rusie.” The *Express* reported an otherwise unidentified poem on its fourth page and described poetry as hereditary in the family. A second *Commercial* item says “Summer Time” appeared in the June number of the *Horticulturist*. Exact issue dates and independent copies of these three appearances remain to be located, but the notices show a wider pre-book periodical record than the surviving “Inspiration” clipping alone.

The 1883 book

A. L. Bancroft & Co. published *Dolores: And Other Poems* in San Francisco in 1883. Library cataloguing can make the volume look like Albert's alone because his name dominates the main title page and his poems occupy most of it. The physical book is more complicated. After his long sequence closes, a new divisional leaf announces "Poems / Rosalie W. Kercheval," and the running heads identify her poems through printed page 532. Modern reprints sometimes commit the opposite error, marketing the entire title under Rosalie's name. Neither simplification is accurate. It is a shared volume containing a separately titled, individually authored collection by the daughter.

Rosalie's forty poems are ambitious in scale and range. "A Tropic Memory," the twenty-nine-stanza opening, imagines a caged tiger remembering jungle freedom until the observing speaker enters the animal's consciousness. "Among the Flowers," "Night," "A Day Dream," "Sunset," "Dawning," "Summer Time," and "To a Rose" use familiar nineteenth-century floral and twilight materials, but they repeatedly turn decoration toward mortality, captivity, memory, or the instability of perception. "To the Ocean Tide" makes the sea a witness to Carthage, Athens, Tyre, vanished empires, and human pride. The historical monologues and tableaux take in Napoleon, the Crusaders, Cleopatra and Antony, Rome, Elizabeth I, and the siege of Monterey.

California enters not as a generic paradise but as history and disaster. "The Feast of La Purissima" remembers the 1812 earthquake that brought down the stone church at Mission San Juan Capistrano during the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Its account is written through the racial and religious vocabulary of its era, treating Indigenous neophytes within a mission narrative while also recognizing coercion, forced labor, and the remembered condition of freedom. "The Fort on the Hill," "The Siege of Monterey," the Pacific setting of "To the Ocean Tide," and the coastal weather of several lyrics make the region a place layered with conquest, ruin, and natural power.

The collection's geographic reach reflects nineteenth-century reading as much as travel. Nothing in the present evidence proves that Rosalie visited Egypt, Italy, the Caribbean, Britain, or the Mediterranean sites she imagined. Classical and imperial subjects would have been available through histories, school readers, periodicals, paintings, lectures, and her father's library. The

poems should therefore be read as acts of historical imagination unless independent travel documents are found.

Contemporary reception and literary placement

The anonymous reviewer of *Dolores* in the January 1884 *Overland Monthly* noticed Rosalie as a second poet rather than ignoring the final section. The review says that her poems resemble her father's but possess less vigor and spontaneity, balanced by "much more finish, and equality of merit." It quotes "From the Past," a poised lyric about music releasing an old grief. The judgment is shaped by gendered and familial comparison, but it also recognizes craft and consistency—the same qualities the *Herald* had heard in "Inspiration."

Later regional bibliographies kept the book faintly visible. George Wharton James's 1914 *Syllabus of California Literature* lists both Albert and Rosalie and singles out "Along the Shore." Ella Sterling Mighels's *Literary California* (1918) includes "Kercheval, Rosalie—Poems." These references did not create a sustained critical tradition, but they show that she survived for several decades as a named California poet and book author rather than solely as a pioneer's daughter.

No second book, national magazine career, collected edition, literary prize, or professional authors' organization has been located. Nor has research yet found poems published after 1883 under Rosalie W. Kercheval, Rosalie Wilson Kercheval, or plausible initials. That negative result may describe an early end to publication, but it can also reflect incomplete newspaper indexing, unscanned local periodicals, a private manuscript record, or miscataloguing. It should not be converted into a claim that she stopped writing.

Addresses, household, and adult life

James's 1909 birthday book gives Kercheval's address as 1817 North Rosetta Street, Los Angeles, calls her a writer of poems for papers and magazines, and describes her as joint author with her father of the 1883 book. The notice is unusually valuable because it is concise, contemporary, and apparently supplied by or near its subject. It corrects the birthplace and shows that Rosalie still claimed a literary identity more than twenty-five years after *Dolores*.

The 1916 Los Angeles city directory lists “Rosalie W” at 1749 North Alexandria Avenue and Venia A. Kercheval at the same address. The notation for Rosalie identifies the householder; Venia is recorded as residing there. The sisters’ shared household gives adult continuity to the family record after both parents had died. It also offers a practical route for deeper research: deeds, tax assessments, enumeration districts, voter registrations, and later directories tied to the Rosetta and Alexandria addresses may establish occupation, property, household members, and movements.

No marriage has been located, and Rosalie continued using Kercheval in 1909, 1916, 1919, and the death record. It is reasonable to say that she appears not to have married, but the absence of a marriage record is not proof. No children are identified. The present record also does not establish paid employment, formal education, church membership, political party, club office, income, or travel. Those silences should remain explicit rather than being filled by assumptions about an unmarried woman writer in Los Angeles.

The 1919 bird-cage protest

Rosalie reappears in the public record in February 1919 through a small but revealing controversy over caged birds. Her own letter has not yet been recovered, but Rosamond Ewing’s response in the *Los Angeles Times* summarizes it. Kercheval had protested birds displayed in extremely small cages in cafeteria windows and other public places. Ewing endorses “Miss Kercheval,” hopes she will help secure the birds’ freedom, and broadens the objection to the cruelty of ornamental confinement.

The episode cannot support a complete political portrait, but it resonates strongly with the poetry. The opening collection enters the body of a captive tiger pacing behind bars; throughout the sequence, freedom is tested against cages, conquest, empire, slavery, mission discipline, and social memory. The 1919 letter shows at minimum that captivity remained an ethical concern in Kercheval’s mature life and that she was willing to address the newspaper as an advocate.

The response also fixes the social form of her intervention: not a private remark, but participation in the metropolitan letters page. It places her in the Progressive Era culture of animal welfare and urban reform without proving

membership in a specific humane society. Locating her original letter, and any replies that followed, remains a high research priority.

Death, survival, and the work still to be done

Rosalie Wilson Kercheval died in Los Angeles on September 21, 1934, at about sixty-nine. No obituary, funeral notice, cemetery record, or probate file has been added to the project, and the location of her burial is unresolved. Venia's later history may help identify the family plot or estate. County death certificates, coroner and funeral-home records, probate calendars, and local cemetery registers should be checked under the full name and the two known addresses.

Her literary afterlife has been distorted by the shape of the archive. Albert's pioneer reputation and the main title page absorbed the daughter's separate collection; later digitization produced noisy text; a project reader then reduced the surviving corpus to four poems. At the same time, print-on-demand catalogues sometimes reassigned the whole shared volume to Rosalie. The original book corrects both errors. Her securely attributable corpus is the forty-poem section reproduced here, together with the 1881 newspaper witness of "Inspiration."

Future research should proceed from records, not keyword accumulation: obtain the 1870–1930 census pages for the family and known addresses; inspect California voter registers; search San Antonio church and civil records for November 1864; request the 1934 death certificate and probate file; trace property at North Rosetta and North Alexandria; search Los Angeles club columns and women's pages; locate the missing 1919 letter; and examine Albert and Venia Kercheval family collections for manuscripts or photographs. The present edition establishes a reliable floor: a Texas-born California poet, publishing by seventeen, author of a forty-poem collection at nineteen, still publicly identified as a writer in 1909, and an advocate against the caging of birds in 1919.

CONTEMPORARY RECEPTION

Notices and criticism preserved with the original book

Press Notices Bound into the Original Volume

Dolores: And Other Poems (1883), preliminary p. vi.

Our readers who have often been delighted with the poems of our songster, A. F. Kercheval, will be still more pleased to see that his young daughter, Rosalie, has entered the lists as a competitor for poetic honors with her talented father.—*Republican*.

The conductor of the *Commercial* is not in the habit of publishing original poetry in its columns, but when a composition of so much sweetness, and so full of poetic sentiment as ‘A Day Dream,’ which appears in our columns to-day, from the graceful pen of Miss Rosalie Kercheval is offered, we take pleasure in publishing the same. Miss Rosie is a young daughter of Mr. A. F. Kercheval, the poet, and is in no way inferior to her father in delicacy of thought and smoothness of rhythm.—*Commercial*.

Miss Rosalie Kercheval furnishes us a very cleverly written poem, which we publish on our fourth page. Miss Kercheval successfully maintains her right to the name she bears, and her verses show that poetry is a hereditary gift in the Kercheval family.—*Express*.

Miss Rosalie Kercheval, daughter of A. F. Kercheval, contributes a beautiful poem, entitled ‘Summer Time,’ to the June number of the *Horticulturist*.—*Commercial*.

Under the title of ‘Inspiration,’ we present to our readers this morning a very exquisite little poem by Miss Rosalie Kercheval, the gifted daughter of the foremost poet of California, Mr. A. F. Kercheval. It is like a strain from an Æolian harp, with fanciful touch and deft mastery of rhyme and rhythm.—*Los Angeles Herald*.

The Overland Monthly Review

"Dolores, and Other Poems," *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine* 3, no. 13 (January 1884): 110–11.

At the end of the volume are added a smaller number of poems, by Mr. Kercheval's daughter, Rosalie W. Kercheval. They resemble his quite closely in most respects, but have somewhat less vigor and spontaneity and much more finish, and equality of merit. We quote one:

*She saw the far-off gleaming
Of moonlight-silvered swords;
And half in absent dreaming
She touched the sounding chords;
Whose vibrant echoes firmer,
Gave back some haunting tone,
With every strain a murmur,
And every note a moan.*

*What weary heart-confession,
What dream of other days,
In all its olden passion,
Crept down the shining ways!
The restless hands moved slower,
As fraught with memories;
The bended head bowed lower
Before the ivory keys.*

*What though the low winds listened,
Or dimmed the dusky eyes;
Perchance but dewdrops glistened
Without, from starry skies.*

The workmanship of the volume is excellent, well-nigh the best that we have seen on this coast, falling only short of the best grade of Eastern book-making work.

EDITORIAL NOTE AND SOURCES

Corpus, witnesses, and reading-text policy

This edition resets all forty poems in Rosalie W. Kercheval's separately titled section of *Dolores: And Other Poems* (1883), in original order. The complete Internet Archive page images are the base witness. The inherited DOCX, the archive full text, and a new Tesseract pass were comparison witnesses only.

Verse lineation, stanza divisions, epigraphs, and the author's five explanatory notes are retained. Narrow-page wraps are rejoined. Running heads, folios, scan marks, and OCR noise are removed. Unmistakable errors are corrected against the photographs; archaic diction and historical spellings remain. Every poem opens on a new page and may continue naturally across pages.

"Inspiration" is not duplicated: its earlier *Los Angeles Herald* appearance is recorded in the publication note. Three further pre-book appearances—"A Day Dream," "Summer Time," and an unidentified *Los Angeles Express* poem—are documented by press notices bound into the 1883 volume, but the original issues have not been found. No later poem has been securely recovered.

The original book's racial, colonial, religious, and imperial vocabulary is preserved as historical text. In particular, "The Feast of La Purissima" is printed without modernization; the biography and apparatus identify the mission system and the poem's own recognition of coercion rather than silently neutralizing its language.

POEMS

The complete 1883 sequence

A Tropic Memory

Before the eager faces
That gaze in awe complete,
Within the narrow spaces,
A tiger ever paces
With wild, impatient feet.

By thronging gazers taunted,
Still pacing to and fro,
Though captive, still undaunted,
By wild, fierce, memories haunted,
And scenes of long ago.

What dreams of life elysian
Within those burning eyes!
What fitful, wandering vision
Beyond an iron-barred prison,
Of other lands and skies!

I watched the changes stealing,
Till some wild, wayward strain,
With its dark, restless feeling,
And kindred strife appealing,
Crept into every vein,

Through all my soul pervaded
With longing to be free,
By mystic glamour shaded,
The dim surroundings faded
In fitful phantasy.

Where marsh and jungle cover,
And flower-crowned rivers pour,
A wild, impassioned rover
I lived its free life over,
That faded long before.

On o'er the desert fleeting,
And like a flash away,
Where o'er dim levels meeting,
The tropic sun rays beating
Upon the white wastes play;

On to the Indian jungle
Led by some wizard power,
Through tropic wild, and tangle,
Where stairies blooms bespangle
Dark grove and woodland bower—

No thing of life resisted
Our path as on we came;
But chattering monkeys listed,
And writhing serpents twisted
Above with tongues of flame.

The ripe nuts' ceaseless patter,
Swift fell the leaves among;
The parrots' noisy clatter,
And magpies' song and chatter,
Above us swayed and swung;

And tropic birds swift circling,
That started in affright,
With rainbow plumage sparkling,
Against the sunsets darkling,
Sailed far to meet the night.

Through dark recesses dimmer,
Through pathways vague and gray,
Where never one faint glimmer,
Or ray of sunlight's shimmer,
Might creep athwart the way;

Through twining tendrils trailing,
That clutched us as we passed,
With tireless strength unfailing,
Through silence dim prevailing,
We followed far and fast.

Strange eyes like tapers, peering
Looked on us through the gloom;
Strange crested heads uprearing,
That shrank before us fearing,
And swiftly gave us room.

With quenchless thirst unsated,
Watched low the midnight fires,
Where travelers worn, belated,

Slept by the embers fated,
That flashed in fitful spires.

Our purpose ne'er relented —
Their efforts all were vain;
Their blood afar we scented,
And traced them where they tented
Upon the sleeping plain.

No treacherous echo sounding
Betrayed our stealthy track;
With one wild cry resounding,
We sprang upon them bounding,
And bore them fiercely back.

Ah! maddening dream forever,
The memories of that time!
We felt them shrink and shiver,
The faint flesh throb and quiver,
Their blood was sweet as wine!

And sated then with slaughter,
Crept low where moonbeams fling,
Upon the banks to loiter,
And watch the sleeping water
Of some sequestered spring;

Where swift gazelles came stealing,
And bending softly o'er,
Scarce saw the forms revealing,
That flung them darkly reeling,
And gasping on the shore.

Or through the branches parting,
Looked out upon their play,
Till in swift terror starting,
Through field and forest darting,
They fled in wild dismay.

Oh! weird, unbroken splendor
Of moonlight on the glade,
Where waving branches slender
Their fitful changes render
Of shifting light and shade!

White gleams of desert panting
 Beneath the blaze of noon;
 Red-rifted splendors flaunting,
 O'er western shadows slanting,
 When day began to swoon,

And through the silence gazing,
 We watched o'er hill-tops brown,
 The splendid sunsets blazing,
 Through lurid distance raising,
 The desert's fiery crown.

And started at the clangor
 Of some wild feathered train,
 From treacherous tropic languor,
 That stirs to sudden anger,
 Then softly melts again.

With one wild impulse thrilling,
 Then like the chainless wind,
 Through deeper silence stilling
 The purple spaces filling,
 And fading far behind,

On where the mirage dances,
 And beckoning lures alway,
 Fleet as the light that glances
 Across the dim expanses,
 And like a flash away;

'Neath brighter dawns revealing,
 Beyond blue uplands borne,
 Through fragrant odors stealing,
 With spell-bound silence sealing
 The faint-breathed Indian morn.

Then writhing, gasping, wounded,
 Lay dying on the plain;
 Wild eager voices sounded,
 Strange human foes surrounded,
 That scourged with lash and chain.

□

Dull skies and narrow places,

The darkening changes fall;
Blue reach of fading spaces,
Strange speech and human faces
Close pressing over all.

Once more in fancy roaming
Beneath the tropic stars;
Then waking in the gloaming,
To spring in passion foaming
Against the prison bars.

Ah! with its passing fleetness,
For one short transient hour,
With all its full completeness,
To roam the jungle's sweetness
In all our olden power!

Some strain in discord blending,
The trance of passion broke;
And with its influence ending,
The Present o'er me bending,
I started and awoke.

The wild weird fancy faded,
As lights fade on the sea;
And realms so long invaded,
With all. their glamour shaded,
Drew back in mystery.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 463.

Among the Flowers

Red rose early dying
In thy splendid bloom,
Do the night winds sighing
Whisper of the tomb?

Where the lilies grieving
Half expectant wait, 7
Do the shadows weaving
Cast the webs of fate?

Through the chambers haunted
By the revels dim,
Through the hours undaunted,
Of sweet insect hymn,

Ever through their sweetness,
Mingling with their mirth,
Whispers of the fleetness
Of this life on earth.

Ever upward gazing
As in yearning fond,
Where the planets blazing
Light the dim beyond,

Wherefore soft and tender
'Neath the jeweled skies
Arched in solemn splendor,
Lift the tearful eyes?

Doth the day's completeness,
Now forever fled,
Bring regrets for sweetness
By the wild winds shed?'

Do the mournful measures
Of the night winds' strain,
Sigh for nectared treasures
Lavished on the plain?

Or perchance ye caring
Grieve for brighter things—
Truant zephyrs bearing

Faithless jeweled wings;

Wings that woo forever
In the golden light;
Wings that shrink and shiver,
Fleeing from the night.

Where the air grows crisper
O'er each drooping bloom,
Does the night wind whisper
Of a blossom's doom?

Of a glory shaded
Whence no light is shed—
Of a fragrance faded,
Petals pale and dead?

Sighing that it misses
Bud or blossom rare,
Nestling 'mid the tresses
Of some beauty fair?

Still the moonlight lingers
Mystical and dim,
Where weird elfin fingers —
Glance o'er leaf and limb,

Low the south winds listen—
Ah! what wizard hand
Sets the gems aglisten
O'er the sleeping land?

Wondrous and transcendent
In their glory bright,
Dewdrops blaze resplendent,
Touched with mystic light.

And the odors holden
In each chalice rare,
Fall like perfumes olden
On the pulsing air.

But the night winds tender,
With their secrets flee,
When the dawn in splendor

Lights the southern sea.
And the night's strange story
With its shadows gray,
Pales before the glory
Of the perfect day.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 468.

Night

Thin fleeting vapors veil the moon
In filmy robes of mist,
And folded petals faintly swoon,
By murmurous night winds kissed.

The fitful broken splendors creep
In weird illumined waves,
Where death and twin-born mystery keep
Their watch o'er new made graves.

The moonbeams fall o'er mourners' lips,
Who kneel to count the hours;
And lightly touch the crimson tips
Of folded sleeping flowers.

The mocking jests that mask the heart
To meet the glare of day,
Fade dimly from life's nobler part,
Like garments cast away.

For Purpose craves a grander aim,
Of higher instincts born,
Whose teachings set with secret shame,
Life's sordid schemes to scorn.

As voiceless vapors drifted past
Sweep southward to the sea,
Life's ceaseless currents quicken fast
Before Eternity;

Where dimly seen as in a glass,
The fleeting changes swoon,
Of human lives that flit and pass,
As mists before the moon.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 471.

A Day Dream

Over the mountains bending,
Softly the dream-light falls;
Fancy and vision blending,
Faint on the purple walls.

Wavelets of fragrance quiver,
Flung to the wandering breeze,
Borne by its fleet wings ever
Over the shining seas,

Violets, sweet and tender,
Lifting of dreamful eyes,
Flushed with the noon-tide splendor,
Soft with the sunset skies,

Rapt in a dreamy wonder,
Watching the cloudlets glide;
Meeting to drift asunder,
Lost in the misty tide;

Glories of cloud-land ever,
Column and castle rise
Only to fade and sever
Under the azure skies.

Over the blossoms dreaming,
Held in their mystic thrall,
Bound by the glamour gleaming
Ever above it all.

Fancies still flushing, fading,
Over it all to-day,
Dim as the distance shading
Faintly the far away.)

Faintness and fragrance lifting
Softly their scented breath;
Stir of the petals drifting,
Dying their splendid death.

Closer the odors sweeping,
Silence and fragrance deep;
Softly the south wind creeping,
Husheth it all to sleep.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 472.

Sunset

Now softly the wild bird calling
To his mate from bush and tree,
While the shadows dark are falling
Far over the boundless sea.

And over the sunset splendor
That burns in the crimson west,
Steals the twilight soft and tender,
A prayer o'er the soul's unrest.

Still over the billows leaping
With their crested waves of flame,
Come darkly the shadows creeping,
Till the splendid light grows tame.

And softly the shadows sever,
That in darkness steal apart,
Like the fitful fancies ever,
That creep to a restless heart.

While lowly the zephyrs bending
To kiss each sleeping flower,
With our life's sweet dreamings ending,
In the mystic twilight hour.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 473.

In Memoriam—Eugenia

The death of an elder sister.

Some faint enraptured splendor lies
To-day o'er all the earth,
Of those far sunny Southern skies.
That smiled above my birth.

Some glory of the shimmering flood
Whose mighty pulses beat,
That thrills the warmer Southern blood,
With all its rapture sweet.

But while o'er all, the splendor bends,
The shadow falls of doom,
A darker memory meets and blends
With light of wave and bloom.

It thrills some silent chord of pain,
With its deep passion fraught,
And stirs the sense of longing vain,
For something that is not.

It whispers how the shadows deep,
Lie long upon the wave;
How lingering odors thrill and creep
Around thy lowly grave.

I stand enrapt before that face—
A mocking promise dim,
Of all the glory and the grace,
That should have surely been.

And sad and strange when all is past,
That this should still endure;
Than Life itself—a shadow cast,
More lasting and more sure.

A face smile from some golden lid,
That long has pressed the mold;
When lustrous eyes are veiled and hid,
And crimson lips are cold.

How dark and deep death's mystery lies—

O, fairest of a race!—
That dust should darken o'er those eyes,
And dim that glorious face!

What fiat of relentless doom,
That bade thee sleep for aye,
Through all the rosy hush and bloom
Thy young sweet life away?

The crimson petals faintly stir
Beneath the fragrant South;
As red the crimson roses were
That clung around thy mouth.

Sweet be thy sleep amid the hush
Of those far distant bowers,
As in the silent crimson flush
Of purple vanished hours;

Where lightly as the pulsing breath
Of fitful odors blown,
The messengers of Life and Death,
Came each to claim his own.

For me, the restless, feverish heat,
The passion and the pain;
But thine, a rest eternal, sweet,
Enclasped by sea and plain.

And there beneath the Southern sky,
Each day succeeding borne,
The purple splendors fade and die,
The glories flush the morn.

And fanned by fragrant odors fleet,
The blossoms bloom and blow,
And lift their wild flower faces sweet—
But sweeter sleep below!

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 474.

Dawning

Dimmer wane the tapers
O'er the Orient world;
Softer wreath the vapors
Through the silence curled.

Distant, dim, uncertain,,
Pale and gray and wan,
Lifts the misty curtain
O'er the rising dawn.

Far and faint and tender,
Tinged with golden light,
Breaks the tide of splendor
On the shores of night.

Fading farther onward,
Still the shadows flee;
Crests of crimson dawnward
Fleck the silver sea.

Where the roses clamber
O'er each crested height,
Like a wave of amber
Breaks the yellow light,

Through the silence solemn
In its splendor rolled,
Over spire and column,
In a flood of gold.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 476.

To the Ocean Tide

Pale tide from the fount of ages!
Baptized in thy primal flow,
The secrets of seers and sages,
Dark volumes of unwrit pages,
White lips of the long ago!

In haunted unrest, inherent,
Still chafing Earth's shifting sands;
Unstable, unchanged, and errant,
Pale strains of the same dim current
That laved the far olden strands;

Where Carthage in peerless splendor
Upbuilt, rose dome and spire;
Proud Athens in glory tender,
Where nations once knelt to render
Their homages low; and Tyre—

The song of her sons from slaughters,
A glory beside the sands;
A ripple that stirred thy waters,
A cry from her red-lipped daughters,
And rending of jeweled hands!

Fair cities of old undaunted—
Proud rulers beside the seas!
Where once the brave banners flaunted—
But sighing of waves long haunted,
And burdened with memories!

Oblivion's mantle raven,
Falls o'er the cold, dreamless dust
Of hero and white-lipped craven,
Of scoffer and priest unshaven,
Suspicion, and faith, and trust.

Where graves of dim legions cumber,
Low-lulled by the lapsing waves;
All heedless of hostile number,
Rapt, still, the white sentries slumber
Within their dim, time-worn graves.

Above the proud purple nations,
Whose warring so vexed the lands;
Whose crimes and their expiations,
Whose pride and humiliations,
Lie buried beneath earth's sands.

The idols of old are broken,
And Temples lie prone in dust;
Where nevermore word or token,
By oracle's lips once spoken,
Falls burdened with fear or trust.

Up spring the pale human races
That flourish their short decade!
A fading of fainter traces—
Then silence and vacant spaces,
Where memories recede and fade;

Where monuments dim and hoary,
O'er battle plains crumbling meet;
What matters the fading story—
Pale vaunt of a perished glory,
Twin records of pride—defeat!

Still changeless through change revolving,
Thou rollest as on that morn,
When sinking, upheaved, dissolving,
From chaos and strife evolving,
Creation had: light and form!

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 477.

Tête D'Armée

The last words of Napoleon, as, an exile, he lay dying in a tropic thunder storm.

An alien from all kindred lands
Forever banned and barred,
Still lone Helena silent stands
Where sullen seas keep guard;

That held the heart of high desire
Within its keeping cast,
Till burned with its consuming fire
To ashes dim at last.

But to the dying exile lone,
Came other scenes than these;
Nor recked the tropic tempest's moan,
That scourged the writhing seas.

What glamour'd reflex of the past,
Bent with its luring thrall,
Whose fitful fancies mocking cast
Their mirage light o'er all?

Low bends above, the gloomy arch,
And hark! upon the breeze
The fateful tread—the hurried march;—
Or was it murmuring seas?

Upon the vision dim across,
A glimpse of serried lines,
Where stormy branches wave and toss,
As thrilled with martial signs.

What matters where he lowly lies,
Beneath the clouds low hung,
And sees with those dim, failing eyes
The battle standards flung—

The memory of the past recedes—
The years of exile pain,—
Before the conquering hosts, he leads
To victory once again.

The ranks in combat toss and sway,
The tropic thunders thrill!
And once again—Ah! “Tête d’ Armée!”
Head of the army still.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 479.

From the Past

She saw the far-off gleaming
Of moonlight-silvered swords;
And half in absent dreaming
She touched the sounding chords;

Whose vibrant echoes firmer,
Gave back some haunting tone,
With every strain a murmur,
And every note a moan.

What weary heart confession—
What dream of other days,
In all its olden passion,
Crept down the shining ways!

The restless hands moved slower,
As fraught with memories;
The bended head bowed lower
Before the ivory keys.

What though the low winds listened
Or dimmed the dusky eyes;;
Perchance but dewdrops glistened
Without, from stairway skies,

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 480.

The Crusaders

Swift sprang the faithful numbers
To wrest that land of old,
Where Christ's sweet memory slumbers,
From out the Pagan's hold.

The land where hearts kept turning,
With sacred memories fraught,
That with their spirits yearning,
The pilgrims long had sought;

When faint with sin and passion,
To press the rocky floor,
And kneel in faint confession,
Where oft He knelt before.

To feel each breeze that loiters,
Touched with some spell divine;
To watch above the waters,
The stars of heaven shine;

That seemed to bring them nearer,
In that far land He trod,
And holier still and dearer,
The memory of their God.

But now the dark-browed stranger
Held keeping of the land,
And awed with threatening danger
Each lonely pilgrim band.

And weary palmers taunted,
Turned from the holy gate,
Where insolent, undaunted,
The scornful Moslem sate;

With insults sore reviling,
Spurned Christians 'neath his feet;
Strange banners waved, defiling
Each olden spire and street.

The Christian light burned dimly,
The sacred glory waned
Over crypt and altar grimly,

By heathen hands profaned.

And o'er the deserts dreary,
» 9 That lengthening lay between,
Came pilgrims worn and weary,
Disheartened from the scene.

Proud kingly hearts swift leaping,
Roused at the Hermit's call;
O'er king and peasant sweeping,
Alike o'er one and all,

Wild indignation filling
The hearts of high and low;
With one wild impulse thrilling,
The cry "God wills it so!"

Like ocean billows drifted,
The human surges toss;
E'en childhood's arm is lifted
To bear the sacred Cross.

Through countless dangers thronging,
*Mid desert heat and sand,
Faint hearts were turned with longing
Unto that cherished land.

Through midnight darkness groping,
Through burning noontide heat,
Still ever praying, hoping,
His hand upheld their feet.

What though they fell and perished
Beside the weary way;
The holy cause they cherished,
Should live for all and aye.

With mingled joy and pity,
With prayers, and tears, and sighs,
They saw the Holy City
Upon their vision rise.

With tears of wild thanksgiving,
What fervent prayers were said!
What fond hopes for the living!

What memories of their dead!

What rapture of devotion,
As there they knelt and wept!
Then on with one emotion,
The tide impetuous swept.

Across red fields of slaughter,
O'er dark defenders slain,
Where never foe gave quarter
That beat to earth again,

With frenzied strength assailing,
Prevailing day by day,
Until exhausted, failing,
The Moslem ranks give way.

The surging tides are drifted
Upon the city's walls!
The Cross triumphant lifted—
The Moslem's Crescent falls!

On through the conflict dashing
When Othman's dark hosts fly,
'Neath blood-stained sabres flashing,
"God wills it!" rings the cry!

With zealous, swift endeavor,
Lay low each Mosque and Fane,
The last faint trace forever,
Of bigot Pagan's reign!

Regardless, heedless, whether
The strife be swift or slow, '
Pale Christians heaped together
With many a Moslem foe!:

The trump of victory pealing
Its joyful glad surprise,
The dawn of triumph stealing,
Lit not their darkened eyes!;

No strife their dreams encumber
Beneath those alien skies,
Where evermore they slumber
With life's great sacrifice.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 481.

Transformation

Softly the zephyr roaming,
Wandereth through each bower;
Faintly the twilight gloaming
Settleth above each flower.

Soft 'neath the distance shading,
Stealeth the twilight gray;
Over the mountains fading
Fleeth the light of day;

Dimly the glamour cloudeth
Faint o'er the night-wreaths dun;
Weirdly the twilight shroudeth
Lily and rose in one.

Silence alone repositeth
Over the solemn space;
Dimly the nightfall closeth
Over each flower apace.

Far o'er the distant ranges, =
Down through the vales below,
Presage of fitful changes—
Glimmer and golden glow.

Brighter the dewdrops glisten,
Rays from a jewel flung;
Drooping of heads to listen
Songs by the night wind sung.

Glory of gleam and glitter
Over Earth's silver breast;
Faintly the night birds twitter
Far from a distant nest.

Waving of jeweled grasses
Crowned with a star-lit gleam;
Fainter the fragrance passes,
Dim as an Orient dream,

Over the splendor laving
Softly the sleeping lands,
Glimpses of pampas waving

Weirdly their mystic hands.

Wandering star-beams quiver

Lost in a dim repose;

Lilies that sigh and shiver,

Petals that faintly close

Soft through the silence tender

Over their hearts of gold;

Under the midnight splendor,

Mystery all untold.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 484.

Summer Time

Oh, sweet perfume of bud and bloom,
On west winds faintly winging,
I almost hear the voices clear
Of blue-bells softly ringing!

Of elfin hands that break the bands
Around each floweret closing,
That spring to life, with visions rife,
Their glory all disclosing;

Of voices fleet, as swift and sweet
As fairy echoes ringing,
That softly breathe where blossoms wreath,
Their balmy odors flinging.

The wild bees cling where garlands swing
In dreamy fragrance sighing,
Within each cell, where echoes dwell,
To list their low replying.

The tendrils twine in shade and shine,
*Mid leafy coverts gleaming,
And redly turn where blossoms burn,
Like crimson banners streaming.

A brighter gleam o'er hill and stream,
And on the shining river,
Whose pulses thrill the petals still,
That idly dance and quiver.

By fragrance stirred, each fleet-winged bird
Sends from its free heart welling,:
A wild, sweet song that lingers long
Above the blossoms swelling.

The zephyrs stray o'er bloom and spray,
In tender silence grieving,
And linger yet, as in regret,
With wayward footsteps leaving,

And over all, the splendors fall
Of sunset glories dying,
And shadows creep where flowerets sleep,
Beneath the south winds sighing.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 486.

To a Dead Dove

At rest with wings extended
As if to soar away —
Thy flight at last is ended —
Thou mayst not rise to-day.

O nevermore at morning,
To chase the fleeting hours,
O'er dewdrops bright adorning.
The folded, sleeping flowers.

Nor yet to seek the meadow,
Beneath the sunset skies—
Upon thy breast a shadow,
And in thy darkened eyes.

Before the footsteps ranging,
Thou liest strangely tame;
And day or nightfall changing,
To thee are but the same.

Within the grassy hollow,
Thy rest is deep and long;
Too deep and dark, to follow
Such short, sweet life of song.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 487.

Italy

Madonna faces saintly,
From dim historic walls,
Gaze o'er the waters faintly,
When twilight softly falls.

And dying Saviours sadly,
Whose brows the thorns entwine,
Look down when mirth rings madly,
Look over song and wine.

The subtle spirit lingers
In molten glory rolled,
That moved the Masters' fingers,
And stirred their souls of old.

O, Land of sleeping ages!
Of splendors rich and strong,
That lighteth History's pages
* With poetry and song.

Venetia's far-famed story,
Italia's southern sea,
Of streets in shining glory
That mirror tower and tree;

Where sweet song swells and loiters
In silvery accents clear,
Sung on the shining waters
By many a gondolier.

Where ruins dim encumber,
Rome's Coliseum lies;
Her gladiators slumber
Beneath thine ancient skies.

Here Cæsar's voice hath faded
With false ambition's fire,
'Neath dust and darkness shaded
With Carthage and with Tyre.

And Antony's strange story,
Who counted death but sweet,
And lost his crown and glory

At dark-eyed Egypt's feet.

Proud purple Kings in splendor,
Lie with plebeian dust;
Pride must at last surrender
The grave its crown and trust.

The Tiber's waves are haunted
By memories dim of yore,
When armies stood undaunted,
Upon its sighing shore.

'Neath Adriatic's water,
Upon earth's war-worn breast,
From rapine dark and slaughter,
The Roman Legions rest.

Proud footsteps echo never
Through Veii's ancient halls;
O'er King and Crown forever
The solemn silence falls.

O'er buried fleet and treasure,
The sea waves beat as slow,
The same dark, ceaseless measure,
As in the long ago.

But war's dread strife and wonder
Shall thrill the land no more;
The echoes of its thunder
Have died along the shore.

By every breeze borne drifting
Above the lifeless sands,
Pale ghosts of Empire lifting
Their shadowy spectral hands.

The moonbeams pale and tender,
Look still as calmly down,
As in their olden splendor,
O'er glory and renown.

O'er crumbling tower and column
That moulder in decay;
Strange spectres, weird and solemn,

Of greatness passed away.

O, birthplace of a Nation,
Whose glory history thrills,
Thou sitt'st in desolation
Upon thy seven hills!

The tides of life have drifted
From out thy palsied hands;
Thy haggard face is lifted
Above the sleeping lands.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 488.

Independence Day

With martial tread and gleam of steel,
And echoing thunders peal on peal,
Till dewy eve from break of morn,
We keep the day that thou wast born.
We keep this day, a Nation's pride,
In honored trust; full far and wide

The volleyed thunders darkly break,
And bid the sleeping echoes wake,
While loudly still each towering steep
In muffled tones makes answer deep.
Through lowly vale and lofty hill,
The throbbing thunders crash and thrill,

As bidding with a mighty voice
A glorious Nation still rejoice.
Thy bannered squadrons float afar
'Neath tropic heat and polar star;
And ready yet to conquer still,
Who dares oppose thy sovereign will,

Together sail the oceans o'er,
To seek the earth's remotest shore.
In Summer's heat and Winter's storm,
Thy brave defenders still will form,
And conquering armies in their pride,
Triumphant still stand side by side;

With dauntless will to do and dare,
They guard thy fame with jealous care.
In every land and every zone
Thou reachest forth to claim thine own.
Thy shining emblem is unfurled
In peace above a smiling world.

Thy stately flag floats on the breeze,
O'er distant lands and distant seas;
Its gleaming stars are flung on high
To meet their kindred in the sky,
And every breath the canvas fills,
A Nation's heart exultant thrills.

O, Thou who holdest sea and land
Responsive to Thy dread command,
Oh! keep us still secure from thrall,
Though kingdoms quake and empires fall;
Still may our flag in triumph just,
Wave o'er the Union and its trust!

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 490.

The Leader's Fame

Where the lightnings leap with their lurid death,
And the gory ranks lie strown,
And the banners lift with a fitful breath,
To the blare of the bugles blown;

Where the smoke-wreaths pall like a cloud o'er all,
And the dark ranks break and close,
Ah, the few shall stand, where the many fall
With each face to the flying foes!

With a martial stride and a glance of pride,
Lo! the Leader comes to-day!
And the bugles call over roof and wall,
And the garlands bestrew the way;

With the witching wile of proud beauty's smile,
And the plaudits of the brave,
While the wild cheers float from each lusty throat,
And the banners of triumph wave.

Do no echoes come from the fields hard won,
Where the hosts sleep side by side,
That the garnered sum in the fame of one,
Should be sung over mount and tide?

For the red floods poured with their life wealth stored,
That the brimming cup of fame
With its priceless draught should be proudly quaffed,
By the one with an honored name.

Lo! the soldiers sleep through the silence deep
Of the dim unhonored hours—
But it must be sweet, that a Leader's feet
Should be fondled and clasped with flowers!

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 492.

Cleopatra's Last Soliloquy

In an inner chamber hidden, in a recess lies
 A quaint casket—carved and graven fruits of paradise;
 There I keep a priceless jewel, till this hour unworn—
 Till I meet that conquering Cæsar with his own proud scorn.

Such a wondrous jewel, that the magic of its charm
 Lifts forevermore the wearer from all strife and harm.
 Bring the casket here before me; place it by the throne!
 Iras, I have need no longer—leave me now alone!

Fling the window wider! I would dream once more again,
 For a mystic scroll the river reaches o'er the plain,
 Where so oft upon its bosom, 'neath soft perfumed gales,
 Have the golden galleys borne me with their silken sails;

Fled those days forever! Ah! that life half understood—
 Like a chain of lustrous Summers lost beneath its flood!
 Ah! the deep delicious pleasure of life's charmed draught
 With its sweet intoxication eagerly I quaffed;

But the priceless sweet elixir sinks into the sands,
 As the golden goblet, shattered, falls from out my hands!
 Yet again, O Egypt! falls the morning's crimson glow
 O'er the fruitful fields whose reaping I shall never know!

Still the Sphinx unmoved looks onward, and his vigil keeps,
 Where the centuries drift around him sands from out the deeps;
 But no hint or sign of passion stirs those stony lids,
 That beyond the desert gazing watch the pyramids!

How the hot breeze, scarcely stirring through the sultry calms,
 Faintly o'er the languid lotus lifts the low-leaved palms!
 Silence dim, oppressive, till my heart in its wild strife,
 Seems the only thing that vibrates to the thrill of life!

Oh! if only thus forever, bound as by a spell,
 Lotus-thralled and lapped in languor—then would it be well!
 But the gleaming waters glisten, rising far and wide,
 As a boding symbol, higher creeps the swelling tide;

What to me the mocking promise—plenty once again,
 Bended sheaves and ripened harvests burdening all the plain?
 If but now forever at the cursed Roman tread

Might the sunken waters leave the land all parched and dead!

But to think the ceaseless seasons shall go on and on,
Each in its abundance, though I perish and am gone—
Higher rise, O Nilus! higher, higher over all—
If for once, the waters might forget to ebb and fall!

How unchanged seems still all nature; here but erst the while
Where the hostile hosts of Empire faded at my smile;
When the victor was the vanquished, with his martial bands,
In the bloodless warfare wielded by a woman's hands.

Ah! Rome's wrath unbounded, as she watched the white moons burn,
And her wayward Consul lingered heedless of return!
But this passionless pale Caesar cold to beauty's charms—
Thinks he then, I shrink and tremble at his dread alarms?

Let him come with double vengeance—since my feet are set
In dim paths he fears to follow; aye, unconquered yet!
Longer still most valiant Cæsar, seek for captives fair!
Longer still, O pale Octavia, wait with vengeful air!

Would those fading eyes rekindle with triumphant light,
But to see thy haughty rival humbled in thy sight?
Dream ye then in madness, that I grace a captive train—
Meekly at some conqueror's bidding clank a gilded chain?

Not by all the powers above me—though Fate's floods outpoured!
Though the Angel stood before me with his flaming sword!
Ah! gaze on, my Roman matron, till your eyes are dim;
E'en as once you gazed in wonder, waiting long for him—

Him who came not back unto you! came not back to Rome!
Him to whom across the ocean, all was as its foam!
Ah! I dream forgetful—come my eunuchs pallid faced—
But I know too well the tidings that they bring in haste!

Lo! come forth my fiery captive—patience still to thee!
But a few more fleeting moments and we both are free.
Cease thy foolish struggles—why this aimless frenzy vain?
What knowest thou of weary longing, or of captive pain?

Thou hast never reigned o'er empire—gained or lost a throne!
Pride's fierce fires thy soul consume not, as they do mine own!
Lo! the Fates before me linger; nobler this and best!

Be the fateful sign and symbol clasped unto my breast!.

Speed! thy mission ended, swiftly glide 'neath arch and vine,
Free to seek sweet freedom; go! since ye insure me mine!
How the deadly currents quicken, and the tremors start,
Hasting now with each pulsation to my waiting heart!

Farther from the distance seem the murmurs in the street;
On the heavy air—in faintness, how the odors beat!
Ah! the lethargy—that deadens, dulling heart—and brain—
Cæsar comes—with all—his legions—Ah! not yet—in vain!

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 493.

Along the Shore

The gray tide that loiters,
Creeps outward and in,
While billows swell far
Beyond the white bar
Where strange sea-gulls skim;
Day's light o'er the waters
Broods cheerless and dim.

The sea-weed that lingers
All clammy and cold,
Convulsively clasps,
With faint, nerveless grasp,
When billows are rolled,
Like clutch of dead fingers
That seek for some hold.

And darkly resisted
By rude billow shocks,
That circle and swing,
The faint mosses cling,
Like pale, yellow locks
All tangled and twisted,
Around the dark rocks.

Then back with each token
The dark current slips,
That sobbing sinks lower
Along the far shore,
That oozes and drips -
Through silence unbroken,
Of cold, clammy lips.

From caverns long buried,
Pale sea-shells are tossed,
Like white spectral hands
Across the dark sands
In penitence crossed,
Then outward are hurried
Forever, and lost.

And when the wild surges

In passion are flung,
And treach'rous hands reach
Along the far beach—
With strange, mournful tongue,
The dark moaning dirges
Are chanted and sung.

Through swift billows breaking,
When wild murmurs swell,
What dazzling tints bright
Swift leap to the light
From sea-weed and shell,
Till waters forsaking
Dissolve the bright spell?

With wild longings tender
For phantoms as frail,
Still o'er the dim lands
We lift our faint hands,
Then murmur and wail,
To find that their splendor
Is worthless and pale.

Still colder and firmer ~
Around their pale graves,
What secrets untold,
Thy dark waters hold
Within their far caves,
Faint swept by the murmur
Of low distant waves?

Cold, colder and cruel,
Unmeasured, unknown,
What phantoms unfold,
Within thy dark hold
Through silent depths lone,
With treasure and jewel
And mystery strown?

And o'er the far spaces
In solitude spread,
Where waters sink low
With faint, sobbing flow,
Like wild words unsaid,

O'er white, solemn faces
In secrecy dread,

What bright lives unclouded
Here ended as one,
Within thy dark tide
Laid low in their pride;
What laurels unwon,
What fond hopes enshrouded,
Forever undone!

With no dream elating
Thy dark memories,
In restless regret
Thou wouldst not forget,
Make moaning for these;—
For fond hearts still waiting
Beyond the dark seas.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 495.

A Golden Summer

What though life last a hundred years,
A hundred Summers come,
If missed from all its shining peers
The perfectness of one!

The mountains stand as long they stood,
The Summer seems divine;
And over all the fragrant flood
The crimson petals shine.

The golden-girdled light steals on
O'er opal-tided seas,
As in the early crimson dawn
Of earth's first memories.

Perchance, some song through all the years
Thrills o'er the gladdened earth,
Since first the shining silver spheres
Sung at Creation's birth.

And still, by every season told,
Through all its changing hues,
Each cycle that succeeds the old
Its promise sweet renews.,

Through bending bloom and insect hum
A whispered promise low,
Of golden Summers still to come,
Like those of long ago.

And yet, o'er all the sweet perfume
There creeps some haunting strain,
Some fear, lest nevermore the bloom
Might seem so sweet again.

With less of harmony than this,
Some discord in the strain;
Or still the subtler instinct miss
Some link from out the chain.

Some sense of loss that sweeps across
The Summer's fire and gold,
For those to come, when all undone,

The heart lies still and cold.

Oh, soul forget! let no regret
Find place within the dream;
For far again o'er hill and plain
The Summer reigns supreme;

Like some proud queen, forever set
Upon a throne divine,
Within whose fabled coronet
The countless jewels shine,

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 498.

Memphis

Upon the cessation of the Yellow Fever scourge.

The moonbeams in splendor are resting to-night,
And folding the city in mantles of light;
Seems resting forever on court and on hall;
Seems grieving in terror o'er each darkened door
For voices and footsteps returning no more;
For grimly the phantom of horror and woe
Rests under the glory of moonlight below.
The breezes bear ever a moan and a prayer
From Southern hearts sinking in grief and despair;
And grimly and coldly from tower and wall
The quivering moonbeams so fitfully fall,
While weirdly the shadow of tree and of leaf,
Rests over the pavement in darker relief.
A phantom lurks ever unseen in each street;
Though silent its footsteps with swift, flying feet;
And darkly despairing away from its breath
The fairest and bravest are sinking in death.
The festal halls echo no more to the tread
Of footsteps whose fleetness has faded and fled.
The singer's voice silent, while never a song
Sounds, breaking the stillness so deep and so long;
The voice's rich passion that held in its thrall:
The pulses of thousands, is hushed 'neath the pall;
Those silently listening while sweet accents fell,
In silence still deeper are wrapped by a spell.
And burning lips madly in moanings repeat
The memories of moments so fleeting and sweet;
The memories of moments, ere fever's fierce pain
Like darkness swept surging o'er heart and o'er brain.
The breezes creep softly through silence and gloom

Like shadowy whisperings afar from the tomb;
But never the moontide with wondrous calm

In pity comes bearing the stricken a balm.
And casting all passion forever aside,

Forgetting all triumph, forgotten all pride,
The servant and master together now stand

With footsteps close pressing Eternity's strand.
x * # % %

Though risen from darkness in strength and in pride,
With beauty and splendor again at thy side,

Still humbled by sorrow, and chastened by pain,
The memory of darkness shall ever remain;

And lonely hearths waiting, and lonelier hearts
In silence bear ever their desolate parts.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 499.

Dying

Dying, still dying, dying,
To-night in dimness gray;
Mocked by the shadows flying,
Folding of white hands lying
Wearily now to-day.

Life with its fevered dreaming
Far in the misty Past;
A Fled with its mirage gleaming,
Only a misty seeming—
Naught in his need at last.

Fading and growing dimmer
Far in the distance deep;
Fled with its shine and shimmer,
Gone with its gleam and glimmer,
Closer the shadows creep.

What of it all availing—
What when it all is done 2—
Only the life-light failing,
Only a white face paling,
Dying at set of sun.

Mists of the darkening river,.
Death and its waters chill; r
Only a moan and shiver,
Faintly the pulses quiver,
Settling of features still.

Softly the shadows sever,
Merging at last in rest;
Life with its strife forever,
Naught but a vain endeavor,
Fitful and weak at best.

Tossed by the tempests shifting,

Beaten and cast aside;
Borne by the breakers lifting,
Helpless, resistless, drifting
Out with the ebbing tide.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 501.

The Flight of Night

The fading light grew dimmer
Beyond the mountain chain—
She watched the first star glimmer:
Above the misty main—
Then drew her robe of shimmer;
And fled across the plain.

And faint o'er feast and revel,
Where mirthful accents rung—
In drooping, wild dishevel
Her dusky tresses flung,
That darkened hill and level,
Like sable draperies hung.

The faint breath of her sighing,
Swept low through Summer bowers;
And glistening tear-drops lying,
Blazed o'er the sleeping flowers—
As still with footsteps flying,
She swept the circling hours;

Where sable hosts surrender,
And crimson banners sway—. .
She sank in silence tender,
And white, and solemn lay
Within the glistening splendor,
Before the gates of Day.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 502.

Weariness

By the stillness and shadow surrounded,
I lie in the mystical light,
Where the limits of vision are bounded
Alone by the confines of night.

O'er the silence of city and river
Night's scintillant splendors blaze still,
Like far beacon fires kindled forever
O'er ramparts of mountain and hill.

Through the infinite spaces upleading,
Faint silvered and circled with light,
Still I watch the white pathways receding
That traverse the kingdom of night.

And o'er hamlets and far sleeping meadows,
The silence of slumber is set;
But O, Sovereign of darkness and shadows!
It haunts me—I cannot forget!

Though the night-wind's low mystical sobbing
May still the long grass o'er the plains,
It but quickens the fever that throbbing
Still lingers and burns in my veins.

For the embers of higher hopes nameless,
Still through the dull ashes of life,
At times unextinguished and tameless
Will quicken and kindle to strife.

I have followed far mirages fleeting,
That ever eluded my grasp;
I have reached for each phantom retreating,
And shadows remained in my clasp.

But soft let the vine leaves low thrilling,
Bring never a tone of regret,
As with shadow and silence soft stilling,
To-night let me only forget;

' Of all life with its luring draughts proffered,
That surfeit with gladness or pain;
As forgetful that ever I suffered,

Or reached for a phantom in vain.

But to rest in the star-beams' faint sparkle,
Unconscious, oblivious to all,
But as one of the shadows that circle,
And darkle, and over me fall.

But as one of the night-leaves that shiver
Beneath its dark mystery rolled;
Or but as the far star-beams that quiver,
As all unimpassioned and cold.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 503.

A Song of the Tropic Seas

O, quaint are the jeweled isles half hidden,
Set in the heart of the restless seas;
Thrilled by their harmonies all unbidden,
Wrapped in their marvelous mysteries.

Soft and white in the gleaming splendor
Faintly rolled to the shining strand,
With a tranquil motion white and tender,
Soft as the touch of a jeweled hand.

□

Morning and evening the listless waters
Lift to the kiss of the tropic breeze,
Sweet as the dreams of their brown-skinned daughters,
Lulled by the song of the long, low seas;

Or when the dusk barks dancing, whiten
Far on their phosphorent trails of light,
And the stars of the tropics blaze and brighten
Under the arch of the vaulted night.

And the round earth still turns on and over,
Filled with its song and faint with fire;
As ever the heart of a restless rover
Turns again to the soul's desire.

Oh, what of the world's strife onward ranging,
And what though the great dim sea divides!
And what of it all, while kept unchanging
Still are the moons and the strange white tides!

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 504.

Inspiration

She heard strange sweet-voiced singers
Across the unseen seas;
And caught with fitful fingers
The mystic melodies;

The tide of rich expression
From some strange source unknown;
The boundless fire and passion,
As from some central throne.

And followed phantoms fleeting
O'er fancy's purple seas,
Where mirages retreating
Melt into mysteries.

She turned and left the schemer
Forever to his schemes—
And stood henceforth a dreamer
Within a land of dreams.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 505. Earlier appearance: *Los Angeles Herald*, December 24, 1881, 3.

Antony After the Defeat

What matters now,
My heart and brow,
What thunders beat the shore?
I lie, O Sweet,
Before thy feet,
And would forevermore!

So weak and strange—
What woeful change?
Thy tears should give me strength,
To sweep the foe,
And lay them low,
Beyond thine Empire's length!

Too late! too late!
From fields of fate
The wandering bugles peal;
And faint and far
O'er bond and bar,
The dying thunders reel;

As rifted back
O'er wrath and wrack,
The cloud-mist drifts away—
And in a maze
With its dim haze,
My life and thoughts to-day.

Once more thy face
Bend down apace!
The mists between us rise—
I only know
That here below,
I go from Paradise;

I drift—I pass
For aye, alas!
Nor Heaven's deep rapture thrilled,
Might give such bliss
As only this,
My dream of earth fulfilled!

Hark! soft and low,
 The Nile's far flow
Is sounding in my ears,
 Like some dim dream,
 Adown the stream
Of long, forgotten years.

Dark legions wait
 At Egypt's gate,
Their galleys throng the shore;
 Oh Gods! to wake
 For thy sweet sake—
To live and die once more!

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 506.

The Sunset Palace

I watched the sunset splendors wake
When day's last glory falls,
And crimson surges rise and break
Through all the rifted halls,
Until their changes seemed to make
A glory as of walls,

Whose pillars caught the crimson stain,
And white as marble some;
«And as o'er all the sunset plain
I watched the cloud shapes come,
Dim, lingering legends in the brain,
Were woven into one.

I dreamed and slept; a hundred years'
Had wrought their changes o'er,
And still the children's children kept
Their revels as before;
And silken raiments softly swept
The polished marble floor.

And then upon my idle gaze,
Beyond the gathering night,
And down through all the winding ways
Upon my wondering sight,
The towers and turrets were ablaze
In one long flood of light.

Swift as a poniard from its sheath
Might cleave the startled air,
I saw without the jasmine wreath
Gleam white as some despair;
And hollow chambers glowed beneath
With an unearthly glare.

Where all the dead were laid to rest
With funeral rite and urn,
And ghostly footfalls never pressed
The paths that backward turn,
I saw close clasped each honored guest—
The cold, small, writhing worm.

And when above within the lull
I saw the red floods shine,
And all the brimming goblets full
Were raised and flashed in line,
Beneath from out each grinning skull
Death's cold guests sipped their wine.

And undermined were tower and wall,
And all the space about;
A deadly faintness swept o'er all,
A mist o'er mirth and rout;
I heard the dim foundations fall,
And all the lights were out!

And at the echo long and loud
That crashed from tower and steep,
I started—for the crimson cloud
Had drifted o'er the deep,
And paled like some white, winding shroud
With its long westward sweep.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 507.

To a Rose

Rose with thy kindred clinging
Unto the same green stem,
How shall the wild winds flinging,
Drift thee apart from them!

Fair as a dreamer bending
Unto each zephyr low;
Sweet with thy dreaming ending,
Under the sunset's glow.

Still with a sigh forever,
Jeweled and blazed with light,
Faint with a crimson shiver
Under the stary night.

Brightness and breath of morning;
Closer the petals cling;
Pallor and hush of warning,
Thrilled by each wandering wing,

Only the old, old story!
Blossom, and bud, and bloom;
Fading of light and glory,
Faintness and dead perfume.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 509.

The Eddystone

A celebrated light-house situated in the English Channel in the midst of what an emphatic writer has called a "Hell of Waters."

In ceaseless eddies swirling,
The rising tides make moan,
With scornful white lips curling,
Their giant forces hurling
Around the Eddystone.

Long years wild waters taunted
And crushed all in their clasp,
Till fearless hearts undaunted,
With skillful hands have planted
Thee in their very grasp.

Mad billows clash and sever,
And lash themselves in wrath,
With futile vain endeavor,
In wild fierce passion ever,
Would sweep thee from their path;

Far spring in sullen wonder
Unto thine upturned face,
Then madly dash asunder,
And break in muffled thunder
Around thy rock-bound base.

Thy beacon flashes cheery,
When bitter tempests rave,
Stream o'er the waters dreary
To snatch weak sailors weary,
From wind and rock and wave.

Strange sea-birds wildly shrieking,
With faint wings beat thy breast;
From wrathful tempests wreaking
Their awful vengeance, seeking
Thy welcome kindly rest.

The long pent wrath of heaven
In wild dark anger falls;
The shattered tempest riven,

In fury fiercely driven,
Bursts on thy frowning walls.

Through midnight dark still waking,
Thou keepest watch alone;
When maddened tides are breaking,
Their ocean bed forsaking,
Thou hearest their sullen moan.

Long stand through storms assailing,
O, watcher of the wave!
When hope and strength are failing,
When life itself is paling,
Reach forth thy hand to save!

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 510.

Daybreak

A dread, deeper gloom o'er the meadows,
Low lifted o'er mountain and sea;
A strange, solemn shiver of shadows,
That whisper, and linger, and flee;

As soft through the sable gloom rifted
Creep slowly the tremulous thrills,
And faint crimson curtains uplifted
Afar o'er the sentinel hills;

As morn from her Orient chamber
All burnished in crimson and gold,
Looks forth from the glory of amber
O'er Earth in its silence still rolled,

That waits in the 'raptured hush tender,
As bound by enchantment's dark wile,
To break into brightness and splendor
Beneath the glad light of her smile.,

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 511.

The Feast of La Purissima

On a morning of December, 1812, while the solemn services of the Feast of La Purissima were being celebrated in the Mission of San Juan Capistrano, a violent earthquake precipitated the vast walls over the entire assemblage of kneeling worshipers.

A sacred feast;
A blessed day;
From West and East,
The throng increased,
As great and least
Came forth to pray.

O'er mountains worn,
Soft fell the glow,
In splendor born,
O'er flower and thorn,
On that fair morn A
Of long ago.

The Mission bell
Called far and wide;
And like a spell,
O'er hill and dell
The stillness fell
That morning-tide;

Save 'neath the glow,
A stifled breeze
That hushed the flow,
And whispered low
Of wrath and woe
Unto the seas.

What white lips pressed
The shining shore,
That lulled to rest
Each foamy crest
And troubled breast
With whispered lore!

□

The waters sighed -

With softer flow,
And far and wide,
Upon the tide
The accents died
In murmurs low.

Sweet echoes roam
Through winding ways;
From arch and dome,
Above each home,
Across the foam,
Sweet hymns of praise,

What peace the while
That morning saw,
Whose lingering smile
Touched tower and tile,
And flushed the aisle
In silent awe!

Saw Padres stand,
Who fondly deemed
Their convert band
Snatched as a brand
From Satan's hand;
Perchance few dreamed—

Dreamed of that time
When they were free;
No church regime—
Their vesper chime
The ceaseless rhyme
Sung by the sea.

To be again
Not slaves, but men;
No galling pain
Of serfdom's chain,
Nor labor vain;
No priesthood then.

For hearts would turn
To memory;
And longing yearn,

Though forced to learn
Life's lesson stern—,
Necessity.

And kneeling low
In faith and prayer,
Or in the glow
Of long ago—
What cry below
That smote the air!

What madness crept!
With awful roar
Fierce upward swept
Unchained, unkept,
The wild seas leapt
Upon the shore!

The dark towers bent
And reeled again,
As fiercely sent
The tremors rent
The firmament,
And shook the plain.

A crash! A knell!
A mighty fall!
Like some dark spell,
The swaying bell
And vast walls fell
Far over all.

O'er dreamer white
At last released;
In gloom of night
Beneath its site:
Prone neophyte,
And trembling priest.

The waters fled
And backward rolled;
In silence dread,
All white and dead,
Within their bed

Lay still and cold.

Wild wandering calls
Faint in suspense;
O'er riven halls,
And reeling walls,
A stillness falls
Dread and intense.

From out that storm
Of ruin dim,
Slow outward borne
Each mangled form,
Whose lips that morn
Sang praise to Him.

The granite chain
Looms dim and gray;
But on the plain
No scars remain,
No trace of pain
Or strife to-day.

A mystic sign
In faint repose,
The waters shine
A gleaming line
Of foamy brine
Where billows close.

The Mission stands
Again to-day;
But other bands
From other lands
With folded hands
Kneel there to pray.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 512.

The Fort on the Hill

O, grimly and gray in the gloaming,
When zephyrs at twilight are roaming,
Still frowns the dark fort on the hill!

But dust is on banner and pennon,
And rust is on sabre and cannon,
The echoes of thunder are still.

All silent, unguarded of entry,
And foeman, or soldier, or sentry
May come and may go as they will—

But whisper and stir of the grasses
That sigh as the faint zephyr passes,
Around the dark fort on the hill;

But tangle of blossom and creepers
Above the still ranks of the sleepers
That lie by the fort on the hill;

But silence and ruin prevailing,
Slow crumbling, and fading, and failing,
For aye the dark fort on the hill.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 516.

Phantasy

Strange gleaming fingers faintly lift
The veil of fancy wide;
The shining pinions softly drift
Adown the stairway tide.

An instant sweep of unseen wings,
A light beyond the stars;
Where heaven's burning censer swings,
The flash of golden bars,

Beyond the far Plutonian night
With star-gemmed sable pall,
O'er shining worlds enthroned in light,
What gleaming girdles fall!

From what far misty kingdom sent,
Yon shining tidings came,
That o'er the distant firmament
Across the zenith flame?

Beyond the far horizon's rim
The secret splendors steal;
A shining band of distance dim
Athwart the solemn seal.

A flash—a sweep across the sky—
Some courier speeds alone;
Like countless tapers flung on high,
The shining lights are strown.

Then o'er the dim divergent ways,
A mist steals upward o'er;
And faint the constellations blaze,
Like lights from some far shore.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 517.

The Siege of Monterey

Through barred windows quaintly
The soft shadows lay,
Where fair figures saintly
Low kneeling to pray,
Looked up in dismay—
As bugles called faintly
O'er far Monterey.

Anon through the spaces
O'er archway and stair,
From out the far places,
Through casement and square,
From festa and prayer,
Looked-down the dark faces—
Ah! dark, but so fair.

In splendor adorning
Far yucca and oak,
A brighter gleam woke—
But silent in scorning
No oracle spoke,
Till over the morning
With never a warning
The battle-storm broke;

Swift riven asunder
That darkened the grass,
And blent its deep thunder
With revel and Mass—
So rudely, alas!
As startled in wonder
They saw the ranks pass.

What wild pulses beating
Swift thrilled Monterey!
From farther plains fleeting,
In hostile array
They dash to the fray,
In passionate meeting
That darkens the day.

And fitfully shifted,
And blown by a breath,
The red tides are drifted
Of carnage and death;
Whose cannon-palled wreath
Is rifted beneath,
Where sabres are lifted—
A flash from each sheath.

All shrouded and shriven,
The weary hours show,
Where rended and riven
The deadly lights glow
O'er dark lines below,
That backward are driven
Before the dread foe.

On madly upbounding
Where spaces reveal,
And crashing, resounding,
The parapets reel,
With peal upon peal;
Through corridors sounding
The clashing of steel.

With curses that taunted,
And death over all,
Though bravely undaunted,
Beneath the dark pall
They fight to the fall,
Strange banners are flaunted
O'er bastion and wall.

The conflict is over
With all its red sway;
The smoke-wreaths that hover,
Slow circle away;
Through distances gray,
And twilight shades cover
Doomed, lost Monterey;

The vanquished surrender,
The last note is pealed;
Night's glory falls tender—

Though never revealed
To those on the field,
Who gaze to its splendor
With eyes all unsealed.

And o'er the soft waters
By tropic airs fanned,
The night breeze that loiters
Above the dim strand,
Sweeps over the land
The moan of her daughters,
O'er far Rio Grande.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 518.

In Memoriam

Henry W. Longfellow.

When splendors of sunset were cloven
And kindled o'er steeple and plain,
What visions of glory were woven,
Reflected again in the brain!

Illumined by far fitful flashes
When sunset's red splendors were cast,
What embers faint blazed 'mid the ashes,
Then darkened and paled to the past!

The sun with no presage of sorrow
Sank low in a glory of gold,
With never a hint of the morrow—
The dreamer all pulseless and cold.

The closing of lips pallor-tinted,
Where murmurous echoes still clung;
All faint with the glory half hinted—
The rapture no poet hath sung.

Ah! silent, deserted and shattered,
Earth's image shall nevermore thrill;
A casket whose jewels are scattered,
But priceless and dear to us still!

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 520.

The Prophecy

“And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him.”

I read those words of warning—
And harsh and cold and strange,
Across thy life’s young morning
They fall as if in scorning,
With all their world of change.

The shining leaves are drifted
By Syrian winds in play;
A child’s bright eyes uplifted
’Neath sheen and shadow shifted,
With heart as light as they.

I see swift birds of passage ‘
With faint wings circling slow;
They bring with them no message,
The breezes bear no presage
Upon their murmurs low.

And distant shepherds minding
Their flocks upon the plain;
Beyond the river’s winding,
The song of reapers binding
The gleaming golden grain.

What dream of some dark rover!
O, Ishmael lift thy hand!
But sunbeams bright glance over
To kiss the blooms that cover
The wild sweet fragrant land.

The shining leaves go drifting,
And well it is to-day!;
Thy dimpled hands uplifting,
’Neath sheen and shadow shifting,
Thou seest but them in play!

The golden moments Leaving,
Go drifting toward the gate,
Through mirage lands deceiving,

Where Destiny sits weaving
The tangled webs of fate.

I close my eyes regretting,
And dream of that most fair;
All after years forgetting—
Enshrined like some bright setting
The sweetest memory there.

A glimpse of clouds low sweeping
Across the crimsoned west;
A softer silence creeping,
A careless infant sleeping
Upon its other's breast.

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 521.

The Coliseum

Thou stand'st athwart the solemn space,
A spectre weird and ghast,
That look'st with pallid stricken face
Back to the fleeting Past!

A mighty ruin grand and lone,
High looming over all,
That watched o'er wreck and ruin strown,
Earth's proudest Empire fall.

The ceaseless sands of ages drift
Around thee sad and lone;
Thy vast foundations grandly lift
Their massive walls of stone.

What silent secrets, century-sealed,
Beneath that sunken rim!
What mystic anthems swelled and pealed
Along those arches dim!

Within the far recesses set
A strange sepulchral tone;
Perchance thy dark walls echo yet
Some gladiator's groan.

Strange spectral shadows linger long
Within thy dim repose,
That once again, dark-limbed and strong
In mortal combat close.

But naught save vine leaves, whispering stirred,
Their fitful changes fling,
Where oft the vast walls listening heard
The Roman plaudits ring.

And gazing on forevermore
Through distance dim and wide,
Beyond the silent sluggish shore
O'er Tiber's yellow tide,

What seest thou 'neath those olden skies
Adown the aisle of Time?
What vanished visions grandly rise

Of Empires in their prime

Of strength supreme in that proud hour
When white fleets thronged the sea
Dread monarchs in despotic power,
And slaves with bended knee!

All laurel crowned the victor's head,
The glittering pageant train,
And royal captives conquered, led
Beneath each jeweled chain.

Forever vanished now, alas!
Do they not still to-day,
Before thy misty memory pass
In spectral dim array?

And stirred in dark unrestful scorn
A voice comes from the seas;
Flow back through gateways old and worn,
Oh, tide of memories!

The thronging whispers faintly haunt
Each crumbling wall and dome,
Like clinging echoes creep to taunt
Thy fallen mistress—Rome.

“O, phantom of the days gone by!
In conquest's fierce desire,
Doth not again thy heart beat high
With all its olden fire?

“And humbled Carthage, suppliant, low;
Doth not remembrance still,
Of that proud, haughty, fallen foe,
Thy lifeless pulses thrill?

“Ah! yet the bitter memory!
That desolation strown,
In after years came back to thee,
Full measure of thine own!”

Still o'er Time's fateful changes cast,
The mournful echoes sigh,
But nevermore from out the Past

Comes message or reply.

Though deeds of strife that vexed the land
Are lost in Time's dark flood,
The silent witnesses still stand,
To carnivals of blood!

What surging billows from Life's sea
Pressed through thy portals wide!
The flower of Roman chivalry,
* That thronged the midnight tide.

The savage, fierce, barbaric show
Of human strife and pain;
Beneath the brilliant jeweled glow
The dim arena's stain.

And high above and over all,
What brows of beauty shone,
With hearts as deaf to pity's call
As were thy walls of stone!

What jewels flashed; what splendors blazed
O'er each relentless line,
Where oft the glazing eyes were raised
In vain for mercy's sign!

Far fiercer than the crimson tide,
Than all the lions' roar,
That human cry unsatisfied,
That still demanded more!

What souls were red with human blood,
Whose hands had scorned the stain
Of all that cruel crimson flood
That sank on Tiber's plain!

But hearts and hands have long been dust,
Life's passions still and cold;
Proud kingly swords and sceptres rust
Within the ages old.

And through thy ruins dim and hoar
The sunbeams seek the plain,
Now knowing, haply nevermore,

The olden crimson stain.

Yet ever still through time and age,
Stand forth though years recede,
A record dim—a crimson page— =,
That all who will may read!

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 523.

A Wish of the Summer

Oh, once and to all surrender
With never a task or care!
But to flaunt and bask in its splendor,
As yon bright-winged insect there;

And never to count or reckon:
The hours we might lose and dream;
But to follow where still it might beckon,
The mirage o'er hill and stream;

But to watch from the blue skies under,
The marvel of sea and plain;
With never a doubt or wonder
To trouble the heart or brain;

For a day of the fleet life fearless,
To linger and loiter on,
As brilliant and bright and careless
Of all that has come and gone;

But to watch each gay, wandering comer—
Type of our own human life—
Still seeking through soft skies of Summer
Each fancy with mirages rife!

To-day, with the heart of the rover,
We seek for the sweets of each bower;
To-morrow—for aye it is over,
Hushed pinions and pale drooping flower!

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 526.

Unforgiven

Scarce a whisper trembled
Through the silent room,
Where proud forms assembled
Stood in awe and gloom.

Dim, ancestral faces
Gazed adown the walls,
From their silent places,
Through the stately halls.

Through the silence tender
Fell the tapers' glow,
In their shrouded splendor,
O'er the faint face low.

Spake the dying woman,
Faint her breath between:
"Haste! I pray you, summon
To my side the Queen;

"In God's mercy speeding,
Lest it be too late,
Bear the message, pleading
That she will not wait."

□

Bent the courtiers lowly
With obedient mien,
As before them, slowly,
Stately came the Queen.

Thronged the mourners pressing,
As in queenly pride
Low she bent caressing,
At her favorite's side.

White, uncomprehending,
Seemed she past all strife,
Till that presence bending,
Roused again faint life.

Struggling toward the guerdon

On that unseen track,
Still the spirit's burden
Lured it faintly back.

Wandering, growing dimmer
Where life's pale lamp burned,
With its last faint glimmer
Reason's ray returned,

As the soft hands parted
The dark tresses by,
Wild the dreamer started
With a gasping cry.

"Through the dark hours lonely
I have prayed to live,
O, my Sovereign! only
Till thou shouldst forgive!

"With a message bidden,
With a precious prize,
I have kept it hidden
From thy gracious eyes.

"One with hope receding,
Trusting all to me,
Gave this token, pleading
It be sent to thee.

"That some promise spoken
Ere misfortune's thrall,
This fond shining token
Surely must recall.

"Counsel strong prevailing
Wrought upon my will;
Lest thy purpose failing,
Thou shouldst save him still."

From her place half raising
In her swift surprise,
Stood the Queen, still gazing
With wild, startled eyes.

Suppliant hands in meekness,

Faint appealing clutch
“Human hearts are weakness
Blame me not too much!”

Came no look of rancor
For a moment’s space;
Came no sound or answer
From the Queen’s white face.

Thoughts like shadows flying,
Borne on memory’s tide,
Of young Essex dying
In his manhood’s pride.

So untimely perished,
By her will decreed;
He so fondly cherished,
Brave in word and deed;

Till false tongues abusing—
Schemers came between;
Traitors all accusing,
Thronged around their Queen.

Till convinced, believing,
Sad she sealed his fate;
Still in secret grieving,
Penitent too late.

Oh! the late unfolding
Of that secret lost!
Oh! the base withholding,
And the fearful cost!

Moaned the suppliant slower
Ere she ceased to live;
Faint the cry sank lower—
“Oh! my God, forgive!”

In wild passion crying,
Bitter words she said;
Fiercely shook the dying
Countess in her bed.

“Darest thou tell me, craven,

With thy failing breath,
Of that promise given,
When he sleeps in death!

“Be the gates of Heaven
Banned and barred to thee,
If that word ‘forgiven’
Needs must come from me!

“How hast thou still daring
Stood before my face,
’ High in favor, sharing
Fortune through my grace—

“Still thine intrigues weaving,
Scheming all the while,
Traitor vile, deceiving
With thy Judas smile 2”

But on ears unheeding
Fell the words she said;
Ne’er reproach or pleading
Wake again the dead.

Through the hush unbroken,
With quick, nervous grasp,
Swift she drew the token
From death’s rigid clasp.

And her proud heart throbbing
With each burning thought,
Turned, in passion sobbing,
Darkly from the spot.

Nine long days in anguish
And repentance sore,
Did the proud queen languish
On the palace floor;

In her sorrow choosing
Solitude and grief;
Steadfastly refusing
Comfort or relief.

When the tenth morn drifted

On its laggard race,
Wearily she lifted
Faint her haggard face.

And, already dying,
Gave her last commands;
Then sank backward, lying
With pale folded hands.

Did she, too, pray dumbly
In that last dread hour,
With her hands clasped humbly
Over their earthly power?

At the last dread fiat,
In eternal rest
Lay in solemn quiet
That long troubled breast.

Subject unforgiven,
Unforgiving Queen—
Let the God of Heaven,
Only, judge between!

Publication. *Dolores: And Other Poems* (A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883), 527.

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Stefans, Brian Kim. “Rosalie W. Kercheval: Biography, Bibliography, and Research Dossier.” *Extremes and Moderations*, 2026.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Open scans, discovery routes, and saved research

Internet Archive: Dolores: And Other Poems

Complete scan of the 1883 source volume; Rosalie's separate section occupies printed pages 461–532.

Wikimedia Commons: Dolores and Other Poems.pdf)

Public-domain mirror and structured rights metadata for the source scan.

Project Gutenberg: The California Birthday Book

Searchable 1909 source containing the decisive birth-place, migration, authorship, and address entry.

California Digital Newspaper Collection

Primary search route for the 1881 *Los Angeles Herald* publication and additional California newspaper appearances.

Internet Archive full-text search

Discovery route for catalogues, regional literary histories, and future digitized witnesses.

WorldCat

Library holdings and cataloguing variants for the shared 1883 volume.

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