TO HON. JEFFERSON DAVIS
By
M. B. Wharton

Such was the joy thy greeting gave,
High leap'd my heart beyond control;
Thy kindly wish, like ocean's wave
Singing amid the storms that rave,
Bright o'er my flood of years shall roll,
And waft soft music to my soul.

Fair leaf from the majestic tree
From whence our Southland glory springs,
Thy letter e'er shall treasured be,--
Pressed in the book of memory,
And shrined among the sacred things,
More prized that autographs of kings.

He who the world's applause has won,
Whose fame shall gild remotest days,
Is thankful for my service done,
Oh, 'tis as if the lustrous sun,
That floods our fields with kindly rays,
Had thanked some plant that drank his rays!

To thy quiet seaside home,
Where tall magnolias wave their crowns,
And skies cerulean life their dome,
With generous quest thou bidst me come.
Oh, sweet to tread those flowery downs,
And catch the inspiring ocean sounds!

But sweeter far to see again
The noble form that first I viewed
Careering to Manassas' plain,
'Mid wilder sounds than sweep the main,--
Where trees stood bared and bullet-strewed.

I saw thee oft with rank and file,
Gazed on thee in thy chair of state,
They great Inaugural heard, the while,
Thou stood'st upon the sacred pile
Upreared to Washington the Great,
And Deemed thee linked with him in Fate.

Shone, through the dark and bitter gale,
Thy martial form, thy eagle eye,
One hand sure guiding at the wheel
And one directed to the steel
That flashed above the battle's cry
And nerved thy hosts to do or die.

But Fate thy dauntless spirit mocks,
The hopes of millions quick are fled;
Our ship succumbs to ruthless shocks
And sinks dismantled on the rocks,
While grim Monroe with menace dread
Frowns o'er our prisoned chieftain's head.

Brave victors e'er must generous be
Unto a brave and fallen foe;
The hand that plucked the sword from Lee
Is raised to set the captive free,
Who ne'er recoiled from martial blow
Nor triumph'd in brother's woe.

Nor can the spangled flag disdain
The star that flamed at Monterey;
Its crimson stripe must speak the vein
That streamed on Buena Vista's plain,--
Those memories bright can ne'er decay
While breezes round that banner play.

The world, full conscious of thy worth,
Rejoiced then at thy just release.
Untrammeled by a cruel oath,
Thou from the cell didst wander forth,
To seek in quiet walks of peace
From patriot woes a calm surcease.

Majestic silence sat enthroned
Upon thy great and lofty brow,
And while the past was sore bemoaned,
The conquering Power was loyal owned;
The bright peace Angel sealed the vow—
Defeat grander than victory now!

But stars are never long concealed;
The darksome clouds that hang before,
Soon drifting from the nightly field,
Unwonted splendors are revealed.
Lo! Thus our days of darkness o'er,
Thou loom'st thy country's cynosure