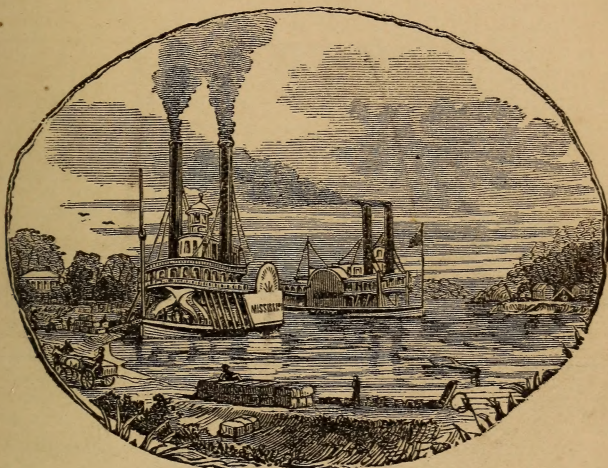


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STERLING'S

# SOUTHERN ORATOR:

CONTAINING

STANDARD LECTURES IN PROSE AND POETRY FOR DECLAMATION  
AND RECITATION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.



BY  
✓  
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New-York:

OWENS AND AGAR, 110 WILLIAM ST.

GREENSBORO, N. C.:

R. STERLING & SON.

1867.

Library of Congress

1867

City of Washington

PN 4217  
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**RICHARD STERLING,**

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the District of  
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'Tis said a lovely humming-bird,  
 That in a fragrant lily lay,  
 And dreamed the summer morn away,  
 Was killed but by the gun's *report*,  
 Some idle boy had fired in sport!  
 The very SOUND—a death-blow came!

And thus her happy heart, that beat  
 With love and hope so fast and sweet,  
 When first that word  
 Her light heart heard,  
 It fluttered like the frightened bird,  
 Then shut its wings and sighed,  
 And with a silent shudder—died.

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THE ONLY SON OF HIS MOTHER.—MRS. MARGARET J. PRESTON.

“OH, must he perish?—must his breath  
 Grow faint and fainter, and his eye  
 Film over, till the mists of death  
 Glaze it forever?—must he die—  
 My boy—my beauty! When the blow,  
 That struck me dumb, and laid me low,  
 Descended through the stunning pain,  
 That numbed my senses—crazed my brain,  
 I felt his kisses on my brow;  
 I knew I was not all bereft,  
 While only he, my boy was left:  
 But who—but what is left me now!”

Thus sat she—watching, waiting, till  
 The latest long-drawn sigh was past,  
 Her grief restrained, quick to fulfil  
 Each loving office to the last.  
 And when it all was over;—when  
 He did not kiss her back again,  
 Nor lift his heavy eyelids up,  
 In wistful tenderness,—her cup

Could hold no drop of anguish more :  
 And very bitter was her cry ;—  
 “ A widowed, childless mother, I,  
 With not one gleam of hope before,  
 Beseech Thee, Father, let me die !”

They stretched the sleeper on his bier,  
 And full of tender ruth for her,  
 The neighbors came with many a tear,  
 To bear him to the sepulchre.  
 Out through the city's gates they went,  
 One lonely mourner following, bent  
 With ashen brow and garments rent.  
 A wild despair was in her eye,  
 A hopeless languor marked her tread ;  
 And still the iterated cry  
 Rang like a dirge : “ My boy is dead !”

Without the gates stood Jesus : He,  
 At far Capernaum heard her prayer,  
 And, touched with human sympathy,  
 Had come to meet the sufferer there.  
 Divinest pity filled the gaze  
 That rested on that tear-dimmed face,  
 And His own eye grew moistened too :  
 Then, with a tone that thrilled her through,  
 “ Nay, woman, weep no more !” He said :  
 And while the awe-struck bearers stood,  
 On through the wondering multitude  
 He came, and touched the silent dead.

“ Young man, I say to thee arise !”  
 The cerecloth stirred upon the brow,  
 A tremor flushed the fast shut eyes,  
 And see ! the lips are moving now !  
 “ Mother, wipe off that ashy stain ;  
 He moves—he breathes—he lives again !  
 Thou art not childless, lone, undone,  
 Take to thy widowed arms thy son :  
 And know that He who conquers death,  
 Reclaims the flesh, and makes it whole,  
 And fills anew the ruined soul  
 With life, is Christ of Nazareth !”