

The Wreck of the Atlantic *

Ah ye stupendous waves that lash and roar,
With frantic fury on this iron shore!
Here sleep thy victims safe from all alarms,
Enfolded in the everlasting arms!

Rage on! Rage on! thou wild and angry sea;
Wail in your caves ye winds, wail mournfully
With solemn cadence sounding in my ear,
A requiem meets for those that slumber here.

Born on the rapid wings of thought I stand
On England's shore, and view a pensive band
Bidding farewell to home and kindred dear,
Wiping from manly eyes the falling tear.

Close by the pier a gallant vessel rides,
The mimic waves rippling along her sides;
Her throbbing engines soon shall cleave her way,
Through currents swift and flying ocean spray.

West! Westward ho! Hope tells a flattering tale,
But what to them shall hope, alas, avail!
Though tears are dried and high each bosom swells,
With joy responsive to the tale she tells.

How smiling homes seem rising to their view,
And meadows fair with virgin soil and new
And well stored barns and wood embowered cot
Whose lowly portals bailiff enters not.

'Tis midnight and in thought I stand again,
On yon tall cliff that beetles o'er the main,
And see, appalled, a stately vessel glide
Straight on the rocks that lurk beneath the tide.

In vain the warning beacon gleams in view!
A slumbering captain and a sluggard crew,
Reck not of danger, nor of precious freight
Of human lives fast rushing to their fate.

A moment—and that courser of the deep
Which nobly braved the raging tempest's sweep,
Staggers and trembles through her ponderous length
Like a strong warrior stricken in his strength.

A crash—a shriek—a plunge—and all is o'er!
Save a few struggling forms that reach the shore,
Swift sinking to a deep and watery grave,
Three hundred lives are quenched beneath the wave.

* The ocean steamship Atlantic, carrying a large number of passengers, was wrecked near Prospect, N.S., every women and child perished; saved was one boy. Numberless bodies washed ashore and were buried in a common grave near the scene of the catastrophe.