

# Golden Days on the Oklawaha

By

George E. Merrick

One day as I walked through the woodland  
And along by the banks of the stream,  
—I surprised—in the depths of the gleam—  
The Spirit that governs the woodland  
In the midst of a wonderful dream.

So still was the heart of the forest,  
And so faintly I felt of its breath,  
—'Twas hushed as one holding her breath—  
That I feared in my musings—for lest  
—The dream be the dreaming of death.

But as the breath of life on a mirror  
Of one deemed to be passing away,  
O'er the stream—as faint flushing of gray—  
Moved the spirit, ebbing nearer and nearer  
To its death through the autumn day.

And I gained to the heart of its being;  
E'en the innermost place of its dream:  
And as souls in communion may seem

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The owners of fancies together,— so seeing,  
I passed midst the golden-hazed gleam.

The dream was ablaze of the gladness  
Of days that were long-ago fled:  
Of Spring-time,— of Youth,— and of Hope-led  
Rosy-tinged fancies,— such, e'er the shadow of sadness  
Throws over it's mantle of dread.

All aglow with the roseate beaming,  
And a-flare in the dight of the bold,  
All the flames that stirred youth from of old—  
Were the visions I glimpsed as the dreamings  
Were imaged in scarlet and gold.

The blood-dyes of the sun-sets of summer;—  
The purple-blent floods o'er the sea;—  
The flash and the riot of flower spread lea—  
All the heart-gloves of the vanished summer;—  
Were pictured from memory.

The pulsings of departed pleasures;  
And the achings of inspired pain  
As though throbbing in essence again—  
Seemed blending with the exquisite measures  
Of a music of longing so vain.

An impulse of unknown stirring,  
Like echoes of prophecy  
A shadow of eternity—  
Seemed to bring o'er the visions a blurring,  
And the calling of memory;—  
As whispers are blent in the murmuring  
Of the fathomless irrepressible sea.

So sadly I left Nature a-dreaming  
There in the golden-hazed gleam;  
The joyous—sad wonderful dream—  
For the visions I had glimpsed held the seeming  
Of thought deeper that dreamer may dream.