

The Tamiami Trail

By

George E. Merrick

“Oh! East is East: and West is West:”
—And though on magic feet—
(As was sung by poet of wisdom blest)
“Never the twain shall meet.”

But here ‘twixt gulf and ocean strand;
Where Nature lowers a mystic veil;
Is a wondrous fair and a magic land
—Here the twain do really meet!

For it is her: by the wise men planned:
—(Where the Old does not avail)—
That the Gulf ebbs east: and the Sea wends west—
By the Tam-i-am-i Trail.

Oh! Bronze is Bronze: and White is White:
—(Yet Bronze the first was here!)...
But Bronze seems wrong: and White seems right:
...Through thrice a hundred year!

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Through the grass-grown ‘glades,—high froned blades
O’er channels’ flow, drop lotus bloom...
The bronze man fades—
—As the petals from their plume.
In gloom—the cypress tower...
—And somber guard his tomb.
And it is here—where the White has pressed!
—(Where the Old did not avail)—
That the Gulf ebbs east: and the Sea wends west:—
By the Tam-i-am-i Trail.

The broad white road;—to dazzled sight—
Cleaves clean the em’rald sod.
A long keen sword,—that flashes bright
To the Heart of a Hermit God!
So His life-blood drains to the waterway
Where the Gulf and Ocean greet.—
And much of his wealth will be borne away
On that channel between his feet!
For a God’s a God!—But Man is blest
That the Old can not prevail.
Thus—the Gulf ebbs east: and the Sea wends west:
By the Tam-i-am-i Trail.

A God’s a God! And Man is Man!
But One rules over each.

And through all Life there’s but One Plan:
We learn — but never teach.

And so He laid in earth’s young days
— The ‘glades’ great treasure store. —
To yield more praise — who found His Ways:
— He locked o’er the ‘glades a door.

He said: “The last shall be the best:” —
— (Though the doubters still do rail) —
E’er the Gulf ebbed east: and the Sea went west
By the Tam-i-am-i Trail.

A million of years have sped and gone!
At last it had to be —
In the mind of man there came a dawn:
And they now have found the key.

For by dredge and scoop — in vaunting dare:
They are drawing aside the door. —
In the Everglades — will lay all bare
A fabulous treasure store!
“As far as the East is from the West.”
(So flows the Psalmist’s lore)
— But God Himself did so prevail: —

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That the Gulf ebb east: and the Sea wend west
By the Tam-i-am-i Trail.