

# Exiles

By

George E. Merrick

Comes slumb'rous haze to cloudless sky;  
Come Northern birds—that hither fly  
Autmnally!  
—Naught else—comes here, 'midst tropic dream  
That might to heart-sick North-man seem  
—As used to be.

My yellowed fruit' midst glossy leaves;  
My orchid bloom!—Each prize receives  
Cold care from me.  
For autumn comes!—Of all the year  
One time that tropics fail to cheer,  
And heaven be.

The bamboos' spell;—palms' siren song;—  
All green hot things—just now seem wrong!  
...Cold-gleaming star!  
Rare tangs—rich glows—rush back to me!  
And dully now, I feel to be  
—Exiled a-far.

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Within a cypress jungle near  
Barbaric palms proud tufts uprear  
Through strangling vine.  
And, strangely, here sparse maple trees  
Despondent,—breathe an alien breeze.  
—I call them mine.

If borne on birds south-winging flight;  
Or Nature-sown,—to mock their plight:—  
No one can know...  
To keep from them dank growths away  
That, reptile-armed, reach out to slay,—  
—I often go.

The pilgrim flocks are 'lighting now  
At far-sought goal by jungle slough;  
—November's sign!  
...From growth that but one colour know,  
I turn—to my brave maples' glow  
—As to a shrine!

And now to me those maples seem  
As friendly door to far-off dream  
—No more to be.  
Now, as I dabble in their leaves

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I feel with me a spirit grieves  
—In sympathy.

They seem to draw themselves apart  
From Leavage cursed with savage art  
Of Greenery!  
In allen land of unknown speech—  
My maples now a lesson teach  
—Of canstancy.

For, when the birds in jungle trees  
Shed norther speech on tropic breeze  
—My maples know!  
...And do a brave and honest thing!  
...Though savage-clutched in green-fraught ring,—  
—They strive to glow!

And gumbo-limbo, palm, and bay;—  
The reptile vines—the moss green-gray;  
The wonder see!  
And as my maples bravely flare,—  
I fancy, now, the live-oaks stare  
—In jealousy!

The breeze that liltis their starving reds

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Stirs murm’ring, deep-despondent heads  
To memory.

...And then I’m sure my maples dream  
Of far ancestral woods;— a-gleam  
Like golden sea.

Of kindred trees by rushing run  
Where flashing trout greet cooper sun ’Mongst mighty mounds.  
—Of brother leaves—like painted ship—  
That down Canadian rivers slip  
To’wards roaring sounds!

Of sister rows;—by quiet street  
Where homeward children yelling greet  
Fresh garment-heaps!  
And grandly plunge through flaming mounds,  
In engines huge—propelled by sounds,  
Up fancied steeps!

Of kindly kin by trysting lane;  
Where glowing Jack, and star-eyed Jane  
Stroll Happily.

...My maples then as spinsters seem,—  
When hope is fled,—yet helpless dream  
Maternally....

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Now, poignant night comes rushing down,  
In green-gray mauve my maples drown;  
—As flaming star.  
...Like leaving dead,—I turn away...  
Ah! Deeply, now, I feel today  
—Exiled a-far.