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bу

ALFRED AUSTIN

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WITH

INCIDENTAL MUSIC

bу

LUCILLE MERLE.

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Recitation Music to

"AVE MARIA".

Words by ALFRED AUSTIN. (By permission of Messrs. Macmillan & C?, Ltd.)

Incidental Music by LUCILLE MERLE.







In the age of faith, before the day When men were too



proud to weep or pray,

There stood in a red-roofed Breton town, Snugly nestled 'twixt deep and down, A chapel for simple souls to meet Nightly and sing with voices sweet:-

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There was an idiot, palsied, bleared,
With unkempt locks and a matted beard;
Hunched from the cradle, vacant-eyed,
And whose head kept rolling from side to side,
Yet who, when the sunset glow grew dim,
Joined with the rest in the twilight hymn:—



But when they upgot and wended home,
These to the hillside, those to the foam,
He hobbled along in the narrowing dusk,
Like a thing that is only hull and husk;
On as he hobbled, chanting still,
Now to himself, now loud and shrill.

Ave Maria, etc.

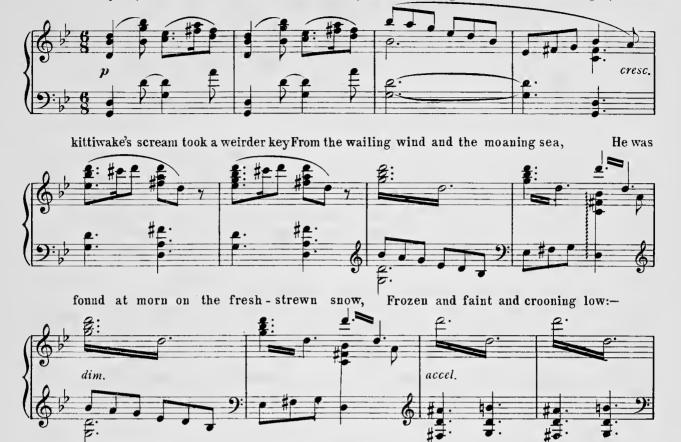


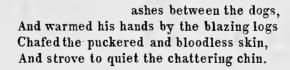
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Children mocked and mimicked his feet,
As he slouched and sidled along the street;
Maidens shrank as he passed them by,
And timid women eschewed his eye,
Though half in pity, half in scorn;
The folk christened him from the words he spoke,
"Ave Maria."

One year, when the harvest feasts were done, And the mending of tatter'd nets had begun, And the





Ave Maria

They

stirred

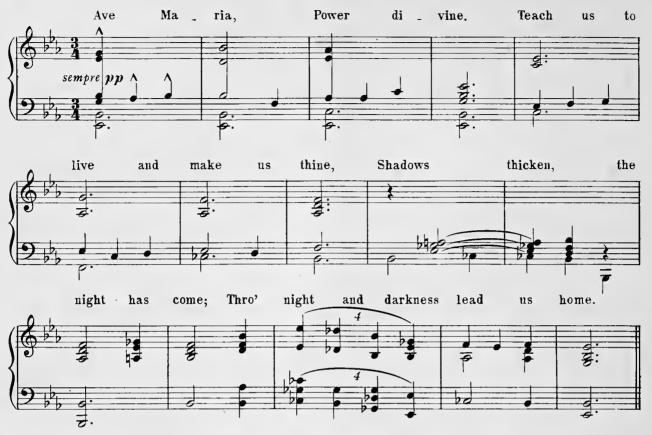
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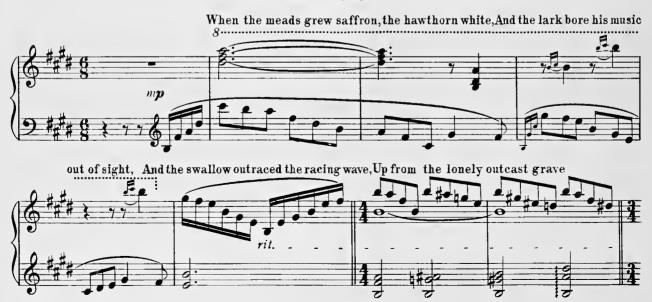
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Ave Maria,





Idiot, soulless brute from birth,
He could not be buried in sacred earth;
So they laid him afar, apart, alone,
Without a cross, or turf, or stone—
Senseless clay unto senseless clay,
To which none ever came to say,
"Ave Maria."





Over the lily they built a shrine,
Where are mingled the mystic bread and wine;
Shrine you may see in the little town,
That is snugly nestled 'twixt deep and down.
Thro' the Breton land it has wondrous fame,
And it bears the outcast idiot's name,
"Ave Maria."

Hunch-backed, gibbering, blear-eyed, halt; From forehead to footstep one foul fault; Crazy, contorted, mindless-born,



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