ROSSETTER G. COLE

OP. 22

King Robert of Sicily

For Recitation and Pianoforte (or Pianoforte with Organ) or Orchestra

Poem from Long fellow's "Tales of a Wayside Inn"

New York : G. Schirmer

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PREFATORY NOTE

In order that the unity of the musical and poetic thought may be more perfectly brought out in the interpretation, it is necessary that certain moments in the music and the poetic text should exactly coincide. Where this is essential, the bur-line (]) has been used to indicate it, as on page 8 measure 9, page 9 measures 4 and 12, and elsewhere. The beginning and end of each stanza, or smaller thought-group, are indicated by the position of the words over their respective musical measures; this should be observed, and with due reference to the indicated tempo of the music. Within these larger groupings, however, much freedom of rhetorical utterance is possible without disturbing the unity.

The rhetorical pauses, at times, will necessarily be somewhat longer than when the poem is read by itself, the music acting as interpreter when the reader is silent.

When both organ and piano are available, the effectiveness of the music can be greatly enhanced by playing some parts (as indicated in the score) on the organ. In a few places the organ can be judiciously used, with the piano, to add orchestral coloring.

R. *G*. *C*.

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KING ROBERT OF SICILY

OBERT of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine, Apparelled in magnificent attire, With retinue of many a knight and squire, On St. John's eve, at vespers, proudly sat And heard the priests chant the Magnificat. And as he listened, o'er and o'er again Repeated, like a burden or refrain, He caught the words, "Deposuit potentes De sede, et exaltavit humiles." And slowly lifting up his kingly head, He to a learned clerk beside him said, "What mean these words?" The clerk made answer meet, "He has put down the mighty from their seat, And has exalted them of low degree." Thereat King Robert muttered scornfully, "'T is well that such seditious words are sung Only by priests and in the Latin tongue; For unto priests and people be it known, There is no power can push me from my throne!" And leaning back, he yawned and fell asleep, Lulled by the chant monotonous and deep.

When he awoke, it was already night; The church was empty, and there was no light, Save where the lamps, that glimmered few and faint, Lighted a little space before some saint. He started from his seat and gazed around, But saw no living thing and heard no sound. He groped towards the door, but it was locked; He cried aloud, and listened, and then knocked, And uttered awful threatenings and complaints, And imprecations upon men and saints. The sounds reëchoed from the roof and walls As if dead priests were laughing in their stalls.

At length the sexton, hearing from without The tumult of the knocking and the shout, And thinking thieves were in the house of prayer, Came with his lantern, asking, "Who is there?" Half choked with rage, King Robert fiercely said, "Open: 'tis I, the King! Art thou afraid?"

The frightened sexton, muttering, with a curse, "This is some drunken vagabond, or worse!" Turned the great key and flung the portal wide; A man rushed by him at a single stride, Haggard, half-naked, without hat or cloak, Who neither turned, nor looked at him, nor spoke, But leaped into the blackness of the night, And vanished like a spectre from his sight.

Robert of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine, Despoiled of his magnificent attire, Bareheaded, breathless, and besprent with mire, With sense of wrong and outrage desperate, Strode on and thundered at the palace gate; Rushed through the courtyard, thrusting in his rage To right and left each seneschal and page, And hurried up the broad and sounding stair, His white face ghastly in the torches' glare. From hall to hall he passed with breathless speed: Voices and cries he heard, but did not heed, Until at last he reached the banquet-room, Blazing with light, and breathing with perfume.

There on the dais sat another king, Wearing his robes, his crown, his signet-ring, King Robert's self in features, form and height, But all transfigured with angelic light! It was an Angel; and his presence there With a divine effulgence filled the air, An exaltation, piercing the disguise, Though none the hidden Angel recognize. A moment speechless, motionless, amazed, The throneless monarch on the Angel gazed, Who met his look of anger and surprise With the divine compassion of his eyes; Then said, "Who art thou? and why com'st thou here?" To which King Robert answered, with a sneer, "I am the King, and come to claim my own From an impostor, who usurps my throne!" And suddenly, at these audacious words, Up sprang the angry guests, and drew their swords; The Angel answered, with unruffied brow, "Nay, not the King, but the King's Jester, thou

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Henceforth shalt wear the bells and scalloped cape, And for thy counsellor shalt lead an ape; Thou shalt obey my servants when they call, And wait upon my henchmen in the hall!"

Deaf to King Robert's threats and cries and prayers, They thrust him from the hall and down the stairs; A group of tittering pages ran before, And as they opened wide the folding-door, His heart failed, for he heard, with strange alarms, The boisterous laughter of the men-at-arms, And all the vaulted chamber roar and ring With the mock plaudits of "Long live the King!"

Next morning, waking with the day's first beam, He said within himself, "It was a dream!" But the straw rustled as he turned his head, There were the cap and bells beside his bed, Around him rose the bare, discolored walls, Close by, the steeds were champing in their stalls, And in the corner, a revolting shape, Shivering and chattering sat the wretched ape. It was no dream; the world he loved so much Had turned to dust and ashes at his touch!

Days came and went; and now returned again To Sicily the old Saturnian reign; Under the Angel's governance benign The happy island danced with corn and wine, And deep within the mountain's burning breast Enceladus, the giant, was at rest. Meanwhile King Robert yielded to his fate, Sullen and silent and disconsolate. Dressed in the motley garb that jesters wear, With look bewildered and a vacant stare, Close shaven above the ears, as monks are shorn, By courtiers mocked, by pages laughed to scorn, His only friend, the ape, his only food What others left, --- he still was unsubdued. And when the Angel met him on his way, And half in earnest, half in jest, would say, Sternly, though tenderly, that he might feel The velvet scabbard held a sword of steel, "Art thou the King?" the passion of his woe

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Burst from him in resistless overflow, And, lifting high his forehead, he would fling The haughty answer back, "I am, I am the King!"

Almost three years were ended; when there came Ambassadors of great repute and name From Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine, Unto King Robert, saying that Pope Urbane By letter summoned them forthwith to come On Holy Thursday to his city of Rome. The Angel with great joy received his guests, And gave them presents of embroidered vests, And velvet mantles with rich ermine lined, And rings and jewels of the rarest kind. Then he departed with them o'er the sea Into the lovely land of Italy, Whose loveliness was more resplendent made By the mere passing of that cavalcade, With plumes, and cloaks, and housings, and the stir Of jewelled bridle and of golden spur.

And lo! among the menials, in mock state, Upon a piebald steed, with shambling gait, His cloak of foxtails flapping in the wind, The solemn ape demurely perched behind, King Robert rode, making huge merriment In all the country towns through which they went.

The Pope received them with great pomp and blare Of bannered trumpets, on St. Peter's square, Giving his benediction and embrace, Fervent, and full of apostolic grace. While with congratulations and with prayers He entertained the Angel unawares, Robert, the Jester, bursting through the crowd, Into their presence rushed, and cried aloud, "I am the King! Look, and behold in me Robert, your brother, King of Sicily! This man, who wears my semblance to your eyes, Is an impostor in a king's disguise. Do you not know me? does no voice within Answer my cry, and say we are akin?" The Pope in silence, but with troubled mien, Gazed at the Angel's countenance serene;

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The Emperor, laughing, said, "It is strange sport To keep a madman for thy Fool at court!" And the poor, baffled Jester in disgrace Was hustled back among the populace.

In solemn state the Holy Week went by, And Easter Sunday gleamed upon the sky; The presence of the Angel, with its light, Before the sun rose, made the city bright, And with new fervor filled the hearts of men, Who felt that Christ indeed had risen again. Even the Jester, on his bed of straw, With haggard eyes the unwonted splendor saw; He felt within a power unfelt before, And, kneeling humbly on his chamber-floor, He heard the rushing garments of the Lord Sweep through the silent air, ascending heavenward.

And now the visit ending, and once more Valmond returning to the Danube's shore, Homeward the Angel journeyed, and again The land was made resplendent with his train, Flashing along the towns of Italy Unto Salerno, and from thence by sea. And when once more within Palermo's wall, And, seated on the throne in his great hall, He heard the Angelus from convent towers, As if the better world conversed with ours, He beckoned to King Robert to draw nigher, And with a gesture, bade the rest retire; And when they were alone, the Angel said, "Art thou the King?" Then, bowing down his head King Robert crossed both hands upon his breast, And meekly answered him: "Thou knowest best! My sins as scarlet are; let me go hence, And in some cloister's school of penitence, Across those stones, that pave the way to heaven, Walk barefoot, till my guilty soul be shriven!" The Angel smiled, and from his radiant face A holy light illumined all the place, And through the open window, loud and clear, They heard the monks chant in the chapel near, Above the stir and tumult of the street: "He has put down the mighty from their seat,

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And has exalted them of low degree!" And through the chant a second melody Rose like the throbbing of a single string: "I am an Angel, and thou art the King!"

King Robert, who was standing near the throne, Lifted his eyes, and lo! he was alone! But all apparelled as in days of old, With ermined mantle and with cloth of gold; And when his courtiers came, they found him there, Kneeling upon the floor, absorbed in silent prayer.

LONGFELLOW

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King Robert of Sicily

From "Tales of a Wayside Inn" Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Rossetter G. Cole. Op. 22



Orchestral parts, also an arrangement for String Instruments and Piano, are to be had of the Publishers * Organ continues from here to foot of page 7. Copyright, 1906, by G. Schirmer 18902 c













Robert of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,



Apparelled in magnificent attire, With retinue of many a knight and squire, On St. John's eve, at vespers,



proudly sat And heard the priests chant the Magnificat. And as he listened, o'er and o'er again Repeated,





* The rhythmical notation of this chant (Tone VI) as here given is not to be followed literally, for of course the freedom of the chant does not admit of reduction to exact measure-forms. It is merely approximate – a suggestive guide to those who may not be familiar with the chant in its pure form. Should it be desired to *read* the words of the chant, rather than to sing them, the accompanist will omit the five measures following the chord marked \frown , holding this chord until the sixth measure. 18902



Thereat King Robert muttered scornfully, "Tis well that such seditious words are sung Only by priests and in the Latin





When he awoke, it was already night; The church was empty, and there was no light, Save where the lamps, that glimmered few and faint, Lighted a little space before some saint. He started from his seat and gazed around, But saw no living thing and heard no sound.



sounds reëchoed from the roof and walls As if dead priests were laughing in their stalls. At length the













half-naked, without hat or cloak, Who neither turned, nor looked at him, nor spoke, But |









palace gate; Rushed thro' the courtyard, thrusting in his rage To right and left each











 \star) The following ten measures (to +) can be effectively taken on the Organ (Swell), with soft 8-foot tone.



throneless monarch on the Angel gazed, Who met his look of anger and surprise With the divine com-



























turned his head, There were the cap and bells beside his bed, Around him rose the bare, discolored walls,









and now returned again To Sicily the old Saturnian reign; Under the Angel's governance benign The























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The Pope received them with great pomp and blare Of bannered trumpets, on St. Peter's square, Allegro con moto (d=116)





































Flashing along the towns of Italy Unto Salerno, and from thence by sea. And when once

more within Palermo's wall,



















The Angel smiled, and from his radiant face. A holy light illumined all the









* To be freely intoned, though preserving the general measure outlines as indicated. If this and the following ("I am an Angel", etc.) are spoken, not sung, the measures marked A and B respectively may be omitted, if necessary.











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