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**WITH A ROSE, THAT BLOOMED ON THE DAY OF JOHN BROWN'S MARTYRDOM**

Louisa May Alcott

In the long silence of the night,  
Nature's benignant power  
Woke aspirations for the light  
Within the folded flower.  
Its presence and the gracious day [5]  
Made summer in the room.  
But woman's eyes shed tender dew  
On the little rose in bloom.

Then blossomed forth a grander flower,  
In the wilderness of wrong. [10]  
Untouched by Slavery's bitter frost,  
A soul devout and strong.  
God-watched, that century plant uprose,  
Far shining through the gloom.  
Filling a nation with the breath [15]  
Of a noble life in bloom.

A life so powerful in its truth,  
A nature so complete;  
It conquered ruler, judge and priest,  
And held them at its feet. [20]  
Death seemed proud to take a soul  
So beautifully given,  
And the gallows only proved to him  
A stepping-stone to heaven.

Each cheerful word, each valiant act, [25]  
So simple, so sublime,  
Spoke to us through the reverent hush  
Which sanctified that time.  
That moment when the brave old man  
Went so serenely forth [30]  
With footsteps whose unfaltering tread  
Re-echoed through the North.

The sword he wielded for the right  
Turns to a victor's palm;

His memory sounds forever more, [35]  
A spirit-stirring psalm.

No breath of shame can touch his shield,  
Nor ages dim its shine;  
Living, he made life beautiful,—  
Dying, made death divine. [40]

No monument of quarried stone,  
No eloquence of speech  
Can grave the lessons on the land  
His martyrdom will teach.  
No eulogy like his own words, [45]  
With hero-spirit rife,  
"I truly serve the cause I love,  
By yielding up my life."