

The Other "Saints and Sinners' Corner"

Beyond the Dread River and Hard by the Lake
That burneth with Brimstone & Fire,
There standeth an Edifice built for the sake
Of Mortals of bookish desire.

'Tis not in high Heaven, this Book-hunter's haunt
Nor lies it in Satan's Domains,
But midway between them—a moderate juant
By slow Purgatorial Trains.

Here "Sinners" & "Saints" too, are wont to repair,
When stints for the morning are o'er,
Their bibliognostical notes to compare
And over their Treasures to pore.

Queer Bibliomaniac spirits are some;
Some miserly Bibliotaphs;
Some Bibliopoles with a golden Thumb;
Some near-sighted Bibliographs.

And here through the long Labyrinthian aisles,
That open on book-scented bowers,
There wander, abstracted, these Bibliophiles
As bees 'mid Hymettus's flowers.

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The "Saints" of these Bookmen one Sunday in Lent
Their souls to Church did betake
To get them forgiveness for hours they had spent
With "Sinners"—down by the Lake.

The "Sinners," the meanwhile, with many a sigh
Sad penance were practicing, too;—
Each telling, for beads, the Books he would buy
Had he only shilling or sou.

When, suddenly, startling both "Sinner & Saint,"
'Twixt Wail and Chant of the Choir,
There came a terrestrial cry far and faint
Of "Fire, Fire, McClurg's is on fire."

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Then, straightway there entered, with fluttering leaves,
The Souls of incinerate Books,
That long had reposed 'neath McClurgian eaves,
In sacred Millardian nooks.