

DAY, John W.

A Galaxy of progressive poems
Boston, 1890.

A WOMAN OF HUNGARY. 29

A WOMAN OF HUNGARY.

O'er

O'er the broad moor, white with its wreaths of
snow —

Flanked on each side by shadowy forests deep —

The sun's last rays in softened luster glow,

Or, halting on the pine-tree summits steep,

Seem waiting for an hour that soon must come,

And Nature thrills through all her trembling
frame —

For lo! with scream of fife, and rolling drum,

And charger's tramp, and cannon's breath of flame,

Proud Hapsburg's legions march the Magyar land
to tame!

Forth from the forest's darkening aisles they wheel —

The Croatian bold, the Tyrol's heart of fire!

Up leaps the sunlight from their gleaming steel —

And trumpets hoarse each warrior soul inspire!

And Hungary — so soon to weep —

Forth from the further shade thy patriots pour;

The blood-stained page the circling years shall keep,

Writ with the sword, mid Hist'ry's magic lore,

Till slumbering Europe wake, and kings shall be no
more!

"*Eljehi el Magyar!*" swift the war-cry rolls
 In reading echoes down the leveled line.
 The volleying musket Freedom's tocsin tolls —
 Low, cannon-smitten, sinks the rocking pine;
 Still Hungary's banner flings defiant scorn
 Still from her front war's crimson currents veer,
 Till like a tempest on the Danube born,
 Downward, with bugle-blast and charging cheer,
 Bursts through her death-thinned flank the thun-
 dering Cuirassier!

Shout, Austrian legions! lo, the field is won!
 Back reels the Magyar to his forest lair!
 Sheathe the dulled sword, the day's red work is done,
 And shriek and groan swell through the twilight
 air.

But who art thou that on this fearful spot
 Crimsonest with life's warm tide the shot-ploughed
 snow?

Thou art a *maiden* — nay, deny it not —
 Thine eyes are radiant with that mystic glow
 That speaks a nearer heaven, man's soul doth never
 know!

What brought thee to this field of strife and gloom?
 Frail woman's arm avails not in the fray,
 When o'er the plain the trembling cannon boom,
 And round the reeking lines the war-clouds play!
 Thou fliest in death — not in the homestead hall,
 Where love's soft tears distill in gentle rain —



A WOMAN OF HUNGARY.

31

Alone thou liest, where, at fancy's call,
The fainting foe hears, 'mid his deathful pain,
The Drave's low murmuring song — the Moldau's
home-like strain!

Oh soul! thou art a stranger to this land!
Didst steer thy bark in ages lang ago —
Like the bold Genoese — through some ocean grand,
Where bright star-islands in their beauty glow,
Seeking some new world's glory for thine own?
And wrecked where time's remorseless surges pour,
Was't bound by savage hands, a prisoner lone,
As Afric's sons, on wild Sahara's shore,
Seize on the storm-tossed wretch who 'scapes th'
Atlantic's roar?

So doth it seem; for oft against the bars
Thy pinions to the angel choir keep time,
And oft as twilight brings the marching stars,
Thou hear'st the watchword from their ranks sub-
lime!

Oft dost thou see thy duty high unrolled,
And rising grandly, by thy fetters stayed,
Then shak'st earth's prison through its confines old,
As when the lightning's quiv'ring flag's displayed,
And heaven's fierce cohorts pour the storm-king's
fusillade!

