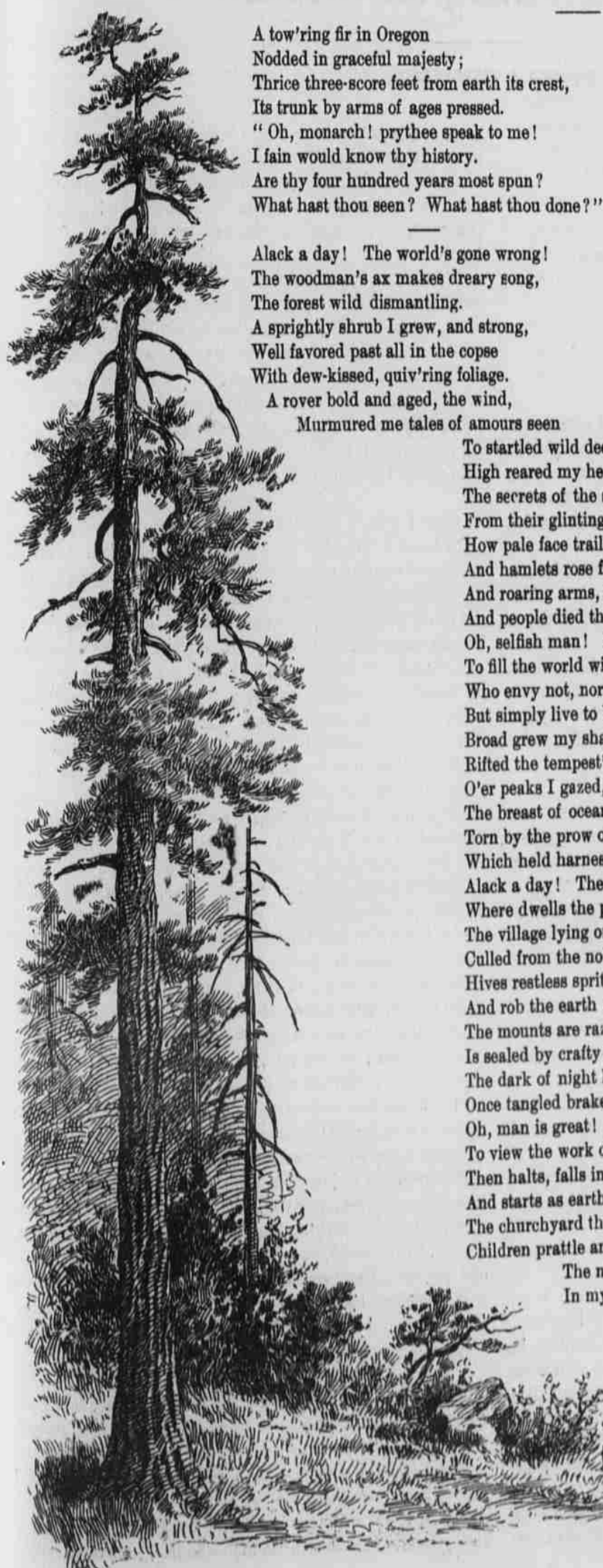


## THE TALE OF THE FIR.



A tow'ring fir in Oregon  
Nodded in graceful majesty;  
Thrice three-score feet from earth its crest,  
Its trunk by arms of ages pressed.  
"Oh, monarch! prythee speak to me!  
I fain would know thy history.  
Are thy four hundred years most spun?  
What hast thou seen? What hast thou done?"

Alack a day! The world's gone wrong!  
The woodman's ax makes dreary song,  
The forest wild dismantling.  
A sprightly shrub I grew, and strong,  
Well favored past all in the copse  
With dew-kissed, quiv'ring foliage.  
A rover bold and aged, the wind,  
Murmured me tales of amours seen

To startled wild deer's panting breast;  
High reared my head. At eventide  
The secrets of the stars I guessed  
From their glintings and their glistenings—  
How pale face trailed our distant hearth,  
And hamlets rose from smoking wolds,  
And roaring arms, and blood-reaked earth,  
And people died that others live.  
Oh, selfish man! Far better 'twere  
To fill the world with trees like me,  
Who envy not, nor love, nor hate,  
But simply live to beautify.  
Broad grew my shade. My lofty form  
Rifted the tempest's whirling blast.  
O'er peaks I gazed, when, lo! I saw  
The breast of ocean cruelly torn—  
Torn by the prow of the looter's barque  
Which held harnessed the fretting breeze.  
Alack a day! The world's gone wrong!  
Where dwells the peace that once has been?  
The village lying on the plain,  
Culled from the noblest of my kin,  
Hives restless sprites who hew and delve  
And rob the earth of clothing green.  
The mounts are razed. The canyon's yawn  
Is sealed by crafty hand of man;  
The dark of night has silence lost;  
Once tangled brakes, now fields of grain.  
Oh, man is great! Amazed he stands  
To view the work of ripened brain,  
Then halts, falls in the gaping grave.  
And starts as earth again.  
The churchyard thrives; but in my shade  
Children prattle and lovers sigh.  
The night and morn of life are linked  
In my invincibility.

'Twixt Roman ruler and Egypt's queen,  
'Twixt courtly dames and British king,  
Till drooped my tender shoots abashed,  
For this thing called humanity.  
When my rings counted half a score,  
A cloud—my god fere sailing by—  
Sighed tidings of a far-off land  
Where wicked men were warring.  
A scheming, heartless, misshaped knave  
Had murderously usurped a crown,  
And headless trunks and broken hearts  
were direful signs of shifting yoke.  
Ah, me! Ah, me! 'Tis passing wise  
Men do not flourish as the tree;  
That knaves come dust—and kings—  
While shackling earth with misery.  
Broad grew my shade, a soothing balm

Oh, boastful fir, thou, too, must die!  
E'en now Time's clutching at thy heart.  
Centuries lived, yet thou hast known  
No hour of bliss as man enjoys.

Anon thou'lt tremble,  
totter, fall;  
Thou, too, dost only  
play thy part.

C. J. M.