

## FOREWORD

It is with a sense of sadness and regret that this book, written by one who universally has endeared himself to lovers of nature through his revelation of her mysteries, must be prefaced as containing the last songs of this exquisite singer of the South.

When the final word is spoken it is fitting that it be by one of authority. William Dean Howells, in the pages of *The North American Review*, offers this tribute:

"I had read his poetry and loved it from the beginning, and in each successive expression of it, I had delighted in its expanding and maturing beauty. Between the earliest and the latest thing there may have been a hundred different things in the swan-like life of a singer . . . but we take the latest as if it summed him up in motive and range and tendency. . . . Not one of his lovely landscapes but thrilled with a human presence penetrating to it from his most sensitive and subtle spirit until it was all but painfully alive with memories, with regrets, with longings, with hopes, with all that from time to time mutably constitutes us men and women, and yet keeps us children. He has the gift, in a measure, that I do not think surpassed in any poet, of touching some commonest thing in nature, and making it live, from the manifold associations in which we have our being, and glow thereafter with an indistinguishable beauty. . . . No other poet can outword this poet when it comes to choosing some epithet fresh from the earth and air, and with the morning sun and light upon it, for an emotion or an experience in which the race renews its youth from generation to generation. . . . His touch leaves everything that was dull to the sense before glowing in the light of joyful recognition."

With a tone of conviction Edwin Markham says: