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THE SCARLET THREAD

With scarlet threads she hung her house,
That Israel's hosts might know
Where dwelt the harlot, Rahab, on
The walls of Jericho.

The foeman came with sword and spear,
The ram's horn blew a blast,
And o'er the fallen parapets
The tribes exultant passed.

Their red fires laid the city low,
Their red swords drank its blood;
But when they passed the harlot's house
They looked and understood.

For she had shared with Israel's spies
Her roof and flaxen bed,
And fire and sword passed by the house
Where hung the scarlet thread.

Poor Rahab! Up and down the world
Your outcast daughters go,
With lives to sell like yours upon
The walls of Jericho.

And though the world shall know them not
As mother, maid or wife,
Their scarlet threads shall cling for aye
Unto the House of Life.

Charles Hamilton Musgrove