

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER.

("Ma fille, va prier!")

[XXXVII., June, 1830.]

I.

Come, child, to prayer; the busy day is done,
A golden star gleams through the dusk of night;
The hills are trembling in the rising mist,
The rumbling wain looms dim upon the sight;
All things wend home to rest; the roadside trees
Shake off their dust, stirred by the evening breeze.

The sparkling stars gush forth in sudden blaze,
As twilight open flings the doors of night;
The fringe of carmine narrows in the west,
The rippling waves are tipped with silver light;
The bush, the path--all blend in one dull gray;
The doubtful traveller gropes his anxious way.

Oh, day! with toil, with wrong, with hatred rife;
Oh, blessed night! with sober calmness sweet,
The sad winds moaning through the ruined tower,

The age-worn hind, the sheep's sad broken bleat--
All nature groans opprest with toil and care,
And wearied craves for rest, and love, and prayer.

At eve the babes with angels converse hold,
While we to our strange pleasures wend our way,
Each with its little face upraised to heaven,
With folded hands, barefoot kneels down to pray,
At selfsame hour with selfsame words they call
On God, the common Father of them all.

And then they sleep, and golden dreams anon,
Born as the busy day's last murmurs die,
In swarms tumultuous flitting through the gloom
Their breathing lips and golden locks descry.
And as the bees o'er bright flowers joyous roam,
Around their curtained cradles clustering come.

Oh, prayer of childhood! simple, innocent;
Oh, infant slumbers! peaceful, pure, and light;
Oh, happy worship! ever gay with smiles,
Meet prelude to the harmonies of night;
As birds beneath the wing enfold their head,
Nestled in prayer the infant seeks its bed.

HENRY HIGHTON, M.A.

II.

To prayer, my child! and O, be thy first prayer
For her who, many nights, with anxious care,
 Rocked thy first cradle; who took thy infant soul
From heaven and gave it to the world; then rife
 With love, still drank herself the gall of life,
And left for thy young lips the honeyed bowl.

And then--I need it more--then pray for me!
For she is gentle, artless, true like thee;--
 She has a guileless heart, brow placid still;
Pity she has for all, envy for none;
Gentle and wise, she patiently lives on;
 And she endures, nor knows who does the ill.

In culling flowers, her novice hand has ne'er
Touched e'en the outer rind of vice; no snare
 With smiling show has lured her steps aside:
On her the past has left no staining mark;
Nor knows she aught of those bad thoughts which, dark
 Like shade on waters, o'er the spirit glide.

She knows not--nor mayest thou--the miseries
In which our spirits mingle: vanities,
Remorse, soul-gnawing cares, Pleasure's false show:
Passions which float upon the heart like foam,
Bitter remembrances which o'er us come,
And Shame's red spot spread sudden o'er the brow.

I know life better! when thou'rt older grown
I'll tell thee--it is needful to be known--
Of the pursuit of wealth--art, power; the cost.
That it is folly, nothingness: that shame
For glory is oft thrown us in the game
Of Fortune; chances where the soul is lost.

The soul will change. Although of everything
The cause and end be clear, yet wildering
We roam through life (of vice and error full).
We wander as we go; we feel the load
Of doubt; and to the briars upon the road
Man leaves his virtue, as the sheep its wool.

Then go, go pray for me! And as the prayer
Gushes in words, be this the form they bear:--
"Lord, Lord, our Father! God, my prayer attend;
Pardon! Thou art good! Pardon--Thou art great!"
Let them go freely forth, fear not their fate!

Where thy soul sends them, thitherward they tend.

There's nothing here below which does not find
Its tendency. O'er plains the rivers wind,
And reach the sea; the bee, by instinct driven,
Finds out the honeyed flowers; the eagle flies
To seek the sun; the vulture where death lies;
The swallow to the spring; the prayer to Heaven!

And when thy voice is raised to God for me,
I'm like the slave whom in the vale we see
Seated to rest, his heavy load laid by;
I feel refreshed--the load of faults and woe
Which, groaning, I drag with me as I go,
Thy wingèd prayer bears off rejoicingly!

Pray for thy father! that his dreams be bright
With visitings of angel forms of light,
And his soul burn as incense flaming wide,
Let thy pure breath all his dark sins efface,
So that his heart be like that holy place,
An altar pavement each eve purified!

C., Tait's Magazine

LES CHANTS DU CRÉPUSCULE.--1849.

PRELUDE TO "THE SONGS OF TWILIGHT."

("De quel non te nommer?")

[PRELUDE, a, Oct. 20, 1835.]

How shall I note thee, line of troubled years,
Which mark existence in our little span?
One constant twilight in the heaven appears--
One constant twilight in the mind of man!

Creed, hope, anticipation and despair,
Are but a mingling, as of day and night;
The globe, surrounded by deceptive air,
Is all enveloped in the same half-light.

And voice is deadened by the evening breeze,
The shepherd's song, or maiden's in her bower,
Mix with the rustling of the neighboring trees,

Within whose foliage is lulled the power.

Yet all unites! The winding path that leads

Thro' fields where verdure meets the trav'ler's eye.

The river's margin, blurred with wavy reeds,

The muffled anthem, echoing to the sky!

The ivy smothering the armèd tower;

The dying wind that mocks the pilot's ear;

The lordly equipage at midnight hour,

Draws into danger in a fog the peer;

The votaries of Satan or of Jove;

The wretched mendicant absorbed in woe;

The din of multitudes that onward move;

The voice of conscience in the heart below;

The waves, which Thou, O Lord, alone canst still;

Th' elastic air; the streamlet on its way;

And all that man projects, or sovereigns will;

Or things inanimate might seem to say;

The strain of gondolier slow streaming by;

The lively barks that o'er the waters bound;

The trees that shake their foliage to the sky;

The wailing voice that fills the cots around;

And man, who studies with an aching heart--
For now, when smiles are rarely deemed sincere,
In vain the sceptic bids his doubts depart--
Those doubts at length will arguments appear!

Hence, reader, know the subject of my song--
A mystic age, resembling twilight gloom,
Wherein we smile at birth, or bear along,
With noiseless steps, a victim to the tomb!

G.W.M. REYNOLDS

THE LAND OF FABLE.

("L'Orient! qu'y voyez-vous, poëtes?")

[PRELUDE, b.]

Now, vot'ries of the Muses, turn your eyes,
Unto the East, and say what there appears!
"Alas!" the voice of Poesy replies,
"Mystic's that light between the hemispheres!"

"Yes, dread's the mystic light in yonder heaven--

Dull is the gleam behind the distant hill;

Like feeble flashes in the welkin driven,

When the far thunder seems as it were still!

"But who can tell if that uncertain glare

Be Phoebus' self, adorned with glowing vest;

Or, if illusions, pregnant in the air,

Have drawn our glances to the radiant west?

"Haply the sunset has deceived the sight--

Perchance 'tis evening, while we look for morning;

Bewildered in the mazes of twilight,

That lucid sunset may appear a dawning!"

G.W.M. REYNOLDS

THE THREE GLORIOUS DAYS.

("Frères, vous avez vos journées.")

[I., July, 1830.]

Youth of France, sons of the bold,
Your oak-leaf victor-wreaths behold!
Our civic-laurels--honored dead!
 So bright your triumphs in life's morn,
 Your maiden-standards hacked and torn,
On Austerlitz might lustre shed.

All that your fathers did re-done--
A people's rights all nobly won--
Ye tore them living from the shroud!
 Three glorious days bright July's gift,
 The Bastiles off our hearts ye lift!
Oh! of such deeds be ever proud!

Of patriot sires ye lineage claim,
Their souls shone in your eye of flame;
Commencing the great work was theirs;
 On you the task to finish laid
 Your fruitful mother, France, who bade
Flow in one day a hundred years.

E'en chilly Albion admires,
The grand example Europe fires;
America shall clap her hands,
 When swiftly o'er the Atlantic wave,

Fame sounds the news of how the brave,
In three bright days, have burst their bands!

With tyrant dead your fathers traced
A circle wide, with battles graced;
Victorious garland, red and vast!
Which blooming out from home did go
To Cadiz, Cairo, Rome, Moscow,
From Jemappes to Montmirail passed!

Of warlike Lyceums[1] ye are
The favored sons; there, deeds of war
Formed e'en your plays, while o'er you shook
The battle-flags in air aloft!
Passing your lines, Napoleon oft
Electrified you with a look!

Eagle of France! whose vivid wing
Did in a hundred places fling
A bloody feather, till one night
The arrow whelmed thee 'neath the wave!
Look up--rejoice--for now thy brave
And worthy eaglets dare the light.

ELIZABETH COLLINS.

[Footnote 1: The pupils of the Polytechnic Military School distinguished themselves by their patriotic zeal and military skill, through all the troubles.]