

THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR.

("Prenez garde à ce petit être.")

[LAUS PUER: POEM V.]

Take heed of this small child of earth;

He is great: in him is God most high.

Children before their fleshly birth

Are lights in the blue sky.

In our brief bitter world of wrong

They come; God gives us them awhile.

His speech is in their stammering tongue,

And His forgiveness in their smile.

Their sweet light rests upon our eyes:

Alas! their right to joy is plain.

If they are hungry, Paradise

Weeps, and if cold, Heaven thrills with pain.

The want that saps their sinless flower

Speaks judgment on Sin's ministers.

Man holds an angel in his power.

Ah! deep in Heaven what thunder stirs.

When God seeks out these tender things,
Whom in the shadow where we keep,
He sends them clothed about with wings,
And finds them ragged babes that weep!

Dublin University Magazine.

THE EPIC OF THE LION.

("Un lion avait pris un enfant.")

[XIII.]

A Lion in his jaws caught up a child--
Not harming it--and to the woodland, wild
With secret streams and lairs, bore off his prey--
The beast, as one might cull a bud in May.
It was a rosy boy, a king's own pride,
A ten-year lad, with bright eyes shining wide,
And save this son his majesty beside
Had but one girl, two years of age, and so
The monarch suffered, being old, much woe;
His heir the monster's prey, while the whole land
In dread both of the beast and king did stand;
Sore terrified were all.

By came a knight
That road, who halted, asking, "What's the fright?"
They told him, and he spurred straight for the site!
The beast was seen to smile ere joined they fight,
The man and monster, in most desperate duel,
Like warring giants, angry, huge, and cruel.

Stout though the knight, the lion stronger was,
And tore that brave breast under its cuirass,
Scrunching that hero, till he sprawled, alas!
Beneath his shield, all blood and mud and mess:
Whereat the lion feasted: then it went
Back to its rocky couch and slept content.
Sudden, loud cries and clamors! striking out
Qualm to the heart of the quiet, horn and shout
Causing the solemn wood to reel with rout.
Terrific was this noise that rolled before;
It seemed a squadron; nay, 'twas something more--
A whole battalion, sent by that sad king
With force of arms his little prince to bring,
Together with the lion's bleeding hide.

Which here was right or wrong? Who can decide?
Have beasts or men most claim to live? God wots!
He is the unit, we the cipher-dots.
Ranged in the order a great hunt should have,
They soon between the trunks espy the cave.
"Yes, that is it! the very mouth of the den!"
The trees all round it muttered, warning men;
Still they kept step and neared it. Look you now,
Company's pleasant, and there were a thou--
Good Lord! all in a moment, there's its face!
Frightful! they saw the lion! Not one pace

Further stirred any man; but bolt and dart
Made target of the beast. He, on his part,
As calm as Pelion in the rain or hail,
Bristled majestic from the teeth to tail,
And shook full fifty missiles from his hide,
But no heed took he; steadfastly he eyed,
And roared a roar, hoarse, vibrant, vengeful, dread,
A rolling, raging peal of wrath, which spread,
Making the half-awakened thunder cry,
"Who thunders there?" from its black bed of sky.
This ended all! Sheer horror cleared the coast;
As fogs are driven by the wind, that valorous host
Melted, dispersed to all the quarters four,
Clean panic-stricken by that monstrous roar.
Then quoth the lion, "Woods and mountains, see,
A thousand men, enslaved, fear one beast free!"
He followed towards the hill, climbed high above,
Lifted his voice, and, as the sowers sow
The seed down wind, thus did that lion throw
His message far enough the town to reach:
"King! your behavior really passes speech!
Thus far no harm I've wrought to him your son;
But now I give you notice--when night's done,
I will make entry at your city-gate,
Bringing the prince alive; and those who wait
To see him in my jaws--your lackey-crew--

Shall see me eat him in your palace, too!"
Next morning, this is what was viewed in town:
Dawn coming--people going--some adown
Praying, some crying; pallid cheeks, swift feet,
And a huge lion stalking through the street.
It seemed scarce short of rash impiety
To cross its path as the fierce beast went by.
So to the palace and its gilded dome
With stately steps unchallenged did he roam;
He enters it--within those walls he leapt!
No man!

For certes, though he raged and wept,
His majesty, like all, close shelter kept,
Solicitous to live, holding his breath
Specially precious to the realm. Now death
Is not thus viewed by honest beasts of prey;
And when the lion found him fled away,
Ashamed to be so grand, man being so base,
He muttered to himself, "A wretched king!
'Tis well; I'll eat his boy!" Then, wandering,
Lordly he traversed courts and corridors,
Paced beneath vaults of gold on shining floors,
Glanced at the throne deserted, stalked from hall
To hall--green, yellow, crimson--empty all!
Rich couches void, soft seats unoccupied!

And as he walked he looked from side to side
To find some pleasant nook for his repast,
Since appetite was come to munch at last
The princely morsel!--Ah! what sight astounds
That grisly lounge?

In the palace grounds

An alcove on a garden gives, and there
A tiny thing--forgot in the general fear,
Lulled in the flower-sweet dreams of infancy,
Bathed with soft sunlight falling brokenly
Through leaf and lattice--was at that moment waking;
A little lovely maid, most dear and taking,
The prince's sister--all alone, undressed--
She sat up singing: children sing so best.
Charming this beautiful baby-maid; and so
The beast caught sight of her and stopped--

And then

Entered--the floor creaked as he stalked straight in.
Above the playthings by the little bed
The lion put his shaggy, massive head,
Dreadful with savage might and lordly scorn,
More dreadful with that princely prey so borne;
Which she, quick spying, "Brother, brother!" cried,
"Oh, my own brother!" and, unterrified,

She gazed upon that monster of the wood,
Whose yellow balls not Typhon had withstood,
And--well! who knows what thoughts these small heads hold?
She rose up in her cot--full height, and bold,
And shook her pink fist angrily at him.
Whereon--close to the little bed's white rim,
All dainty silk and laces--this huge brute
Set down her brother gently at her foot,
Just as a mother might, and said to her,
"Don't be put out, now! There he is, dear, there!"

EDWIN ARNOLD, C.S.I.

LES QUATRE VENTS DE L'ESPRIT.

ON HEARING THE PRINCESS ROYAL[1] SING.

("Dans ta haute demeure.")

[Bk. III. ix., 1881.]

In thine abode so high
Where yet one scarce can breathe,
Dear child, most tenderly
A soft song thou dost wreathe.

Thou singest, little girl--
Thy sire, the King is he:
Around thee glories whirl,
But all things sigh in thee.

Thy thought may seek not wings
Of speech; dear love's forbidden;
Thy smiles, those heavenly things,
Being faintly born, are chidden.

Thou feel'st, poor little Bride,
A hand unknown and chill
Clasp thine from out the wide
Deep shade so deathly still.

Thy sad heart, wingless, weak,
Is sunk in this black shade
So deep, thy small hands seek,
Vainly, the pulse God made.

Thou art yet but highness, thou
That shaft be majesty:

Though still on thy fair brow
Some faint dawn-flush may be,

Child, unto armies dear,
Even now we mark heaven's light
Dimmed with the fume and fear
And glory of battle-might.

Thy godfather is he,
Earth's Pope,--he hails thee, child!
Passing, armed men you see
Like unarmed women, mild.

As saint all worship thee;
Thyself even hast the strong
Thrill of divinity
Mingled with thy small song.

Each grand old warrior
Guards thee, submissive, proud;
Mute thunders at thy door
Sleep, that shall wake most loud.

Around thee foams the wild

Bright sea, the lot of kings.
Happier wert thou, my child,
I' the woods a bird that sings!

NELSON R. TYERMAN.

[Footnote 1: Marie, daughter of King Louis Philippe, afterwards Princess
of Würtemberg.]