

Classic Poetry Series

Jones Very

- poems -

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Enoch

I looked to find a man who walked with God,
Like the translated patriarch of old;--
Though gladdened millions on His footstool trod,
Yet none with him did such sweet converse hold;
I heard the wind in low complaint go by
That none his melodies like him could hear;
Day unto day spoke wisdom from on high,
Yet none like David turned a willing ear;
God walked alone unhonored through the earth;
For Him no heart-built temple open stood,
The soul forgetful of her nobler birth
Had hewn him lofty shrines of stone and wood,
And left unfinished and in ruins still
The only temple he delights to fill.

Jones Very

HOW many of the body's health complain,

HOW many of the body's health complain,
When they some deeper malady conceal;
Some unrest of the souled, some secret pain,
Which thus its presence doth to them reveal.
Vain would we seek, by the physician's aid,
A name for this soul-sickness e'er to find;
A remedy for health and strength decayed,
Whose cause and cure are wholly of the mind
To higher nature is the soul allied,
And restless seeks its being's Source to know;
Finding not health nor strength in aught beside;
How often vainly sought in things below,
Whether in sunny clime, or sacred stream,
Or plant of wondrous powers of which we dream!

Jones Very

Life

IT is not life upon Thy gifts to live,
But, to grow fixed with deeper roots in Thee;
And when the sun and shower their bounties give,
To send out thick-leaved limbs; a fruitful tree,
Whose green head meets the eye for many a mile,
Whose moss-grown arms their rigid branches rear,
And full-faced fruits their blushing welcome smile
As to its goodly shade our feet draw near;
Who tastes its gifts shall never hunger more,
For 'tis the Father spreads the pure repast,
Who, while we eat, renews the ready store,
Which at his bounteous board must ever last;
For none the bridegroom's supper shall attend,
Who will not hear and make his word their friend.

Jones Very

Nature

The bubbling brook doth leap when I come by,
Because my feet find measure with its call;
The birds know when the friend they love is nigh,
For I am known to them, both great and small.
The flower that on the lonely hillside grows
Expects me there when spring its bloom has given;
And many a tree and bush my wanderings knows,
And e'en the clouds and silent stars of heaven;
For he who with his Maker walks aright,
Shall be their lord as Adam was before;
His ear shall catch each sound with new delight,
Each object wear the dress that then it wore;
And he, as when erect in soul he stood,
Hear from his Father's lips that all is good

Jones Very

Psyche

I SAW a worm, with many a fold;
It spun itself a sliken tomb;
And there in winter time enrolled,
It heeded not the cold or gloom.

Within a small, snug nook it lay,
Nor snow nor sleet could reach it there,
Nor wind was felt in gusty day,
Nor biting cold of frosty air.

Spring comes with bursting buds and grass,
Around him stirs a warmer breeze;
The chirping insects by him pass,
His hiding place not yet he leaves.

But summer came; its fervid breath
Was felt within the sleeper's cell;
And, waking from his sleep of death,
I saw him crawl from out his shell

Slow and with pain he first moved on,
And of the day he seemed to be;
A day passed by; the worm was gone,
It soared on golden pinions free!

Jones Very

The Clouded Morning

The morning comes, and thickening clouds prevail,
Hanging like curtains all the horizon round,
Or overhead in heavy stillness sail;
So still is day, it seems like night profound;
Scarce by the city's din the air is stirred,
And dull and deadened comes its every sound;
The cock's shrill, piercing voice subdued is heard,
By the thick folds of muffling vapors drowned.
Dissolved in mists the hills and trees appear,
Their outlines lost and blended with the sky;
And well-known objects, that to all are near,
No longer seem familiar to the eye,
But with fantastic forms they mock the sight,
As when we grope amid the gloom of night.

Jones Very

The Columbine

Still, still my eye will gaze long fixed on thee,
Till I forget that I am called a man,
And at thy side fast-rooted seem to be,
And the breeze comes my cheek with thine to fan.
Upon this craggy hill our life shall pass,
A life of summer days and summer joys,
Nodding our honey-bells mid pliant grass
In which the bee half hid his time employs;
And here we'll drink with thirsty pores the rain,
And turn dew-sprinkled to the rising sun,
And look when in the flaming west again
His orb across the heaven its path has run;
Here left in darkness on the rocky steep,
My weary eyes shall close like folding flowers in sleep.

Jones Very

The Dead

I see them crowd on crowd they walk the earth
Dry, leafless trees no Autumn wind laid bare,
And in their nakedness find cause for mirth,
And all unclad would winter's rudeness dare;
No sap doth through their clattering branches flow,
Whence springing leaves and blossoms bright appear;
Their hearts the living God have ceased to know,
Who gives the spring time to th'expectant year;
They mimic life, as if from him to steal
His glow of health to paint the livid cheek;
They borrow words for thoughts they cannot feel,
That with a seeming heart their tongue may speak;
And in their show of life more dead they live
Than those that to the earth with many tears they give.

Jones Very

The Eagles

THE eagles gather on the place of death
So thick the ground is spotted with their wings,
The air is tainted with the noisome breath
The wind from off the field of slaughter brings;
Alas! no mourners weep them for the slain,
But all unburied lies the naked soul;
The whitening bones of thousands strew the plain,
Yet none can now the pestilence control;
The eagles gathering on the carcass feed,
In every heart behold their half-formed prey;
The battened wills beneath their talons bleed,
Their iron beaks without remorse must slay;
Till by the sun no more the place is seen,
Where they who worshipped idol gods have been.

Jones Very

The Fair Morning

The clear bright morning, with its scented air
And gaily waving flowers, is here again;
Man's heart is lifted with the voice of prayer,
And peace descends, as falls the gentle rain;
The tuneful birds, that all the night have slept,
Take up at dawn the evening's dying lay,
When sleep upon their eyelids gently crept
And stole with stealthy craft their song away.
High overhead the forest's swaying boughs
Sprinkle with drops the traveler on his way;
He hears far off the tinkling bells of cows
Driven to pasture at the break of day;
With vigorous step he passes swift along,
Making the woods reecho with his song.

Jones Very

The Garden

I saw the spot where our first parents dwelt;
And yet it wore to me no face of change,
For while amid its fields and groves I felt
As if I had not sinned, nor thought it strange;
My eye seemed but a part of every sight,
My ear heard music in each sound that rose,
Each sense forever found a new delight,
Such as the spirit's vision only knows;
Each act some new and ever-varying joy
Did by my Father's love for me prepare;
To dress the spot my ever fresh employ,
And in the glorious whole with Him to share;
No more without the flaming gate to stray,
No more for sin's dark stain the debt of death to pay.

Jones Very

The Latter Rain

THE latter rain, it falls in anxious haste
Upon the sun-dried fields and branches bare,
Loosening with searching drops the rigid waste
As if it would each root's lost strength repair;
But not a blade grows green as in the spring,
No swelling twig puts forth its thickening leaves;
The robins only mid the harvests sing
Pecking the grain that scatters from the sheaves;
The rain falls still--the fruit all ripened drops,
It pierces chestnut burr and walnut shell,
The furrowed fields disclose the yellow crops,
Each bursting pod of talents used can tell,
And all that once received the early rain
Declare to man it was not sent in vain.

Jones Very

The New Birth

a new life;--thoughts move not as they did
With slow uncertain steps across my mind,
In thronging haste fast pressing on they bid
The portals open to the viewless wind
That comes not save when in the dust is laid
The crown of pride that gilds each mortal brow,
And from before man's vision melting fade
The heavens and earth;--their walls are falling now.--
Fast crowding on, each thought asks utterance strong;
Storm-lifted waves swift rushing to the shore,
On from the sea they send their shouts along,
Back through the cave-worn rocks their thunders roar;
And I a child of God by Christ made free
Start from death's slumbers to Eternity.

Jones Very

The New Man

THE hands must touch and handle many things,
The eyes long waste their glances all in vain;
The feet course still in idle, mazy rings,
E'er man himself, the lost, shall back regain;
The hand that ever moves, the eyes that see,
While day holds out his shining lamp on high,
And strait as flies the honey-seeking bee,
Direct the feet to unseen flowers they spy,
These, when they come, the man revealed from heaven,
Shall labor all the day in quiet rest,
And find at eve the covert duly given,
Where with the bird they find sweet sleep and rest;
That shall their wasted strength to health restore,
And bid them seek the morn the hills and fields once more.

Jones Very

The Song

When I would sing of crooked streams and fields,
On, on from me they stretch too far and wide,
And at their look my song all powerless yields,
And down the river bears me with its tide;
Amid the fields I am a child again,
The spots that then I loved I love the more,
My fingers drop the strangely scrawling pen,
And I remember nought but nature's lore,
I plunge me in the river's cooling wave,
Or on the embroidered bank admiring lean,
Now some endangered insect life to save,
Now watch the pictured flowers and grasses green;
Forever playing where a boy I played,
By hill and grove, by field and stream delayed.

Jones Very

Thy Better Self

I AM thy other self, what thou wilt be,
When thou art I, the one seest now;
In finding thy true self thou wilt find me,
The springing blade, where now thou dost but plough.
I am thy neighbor, a new house I've built,
Which thou as yet hast never entered in;
I come to call thee; come in when thou wilt,
The feast is always ready to begin.
Thou should'st love me, as thou dost love thyself,
For I am but another self beside;
To show thee him thou lov'st in better health,
What thou would'st be, when thou to him hast died;
Then visit me, I make thee many a call;
Nor live I near to thee alone, but all.

Jones Very