

Classic Poetry Series

Ebenezer Jones
- poems -

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Ebenezer Jones(10 January 1820 - 14 September 1860)

Ebenezer Jones, British poet, was born in Islington, London, on the 10th of January 1820. His father, who was of Welsh extraction, was a strict Calvinist, and Ebenezer was educated at a dull, middle-class school. The death of his father obliged him to become a clerk in the office of a tea merchant.

Shelley and Carlyle were his spiritual masters, and he spent all his spare time in reading and writing; but he developed an exaggerated style of thought and expression, due partly to a defective education. The unkind reception of his *Studies of Sensation and Event* (1843) seemed to be the last drop in his bitter cup of life. Baffled and disheartened, he destroyed his manuscripts. He earned his living as an accountant and by literary hack work, and it was not until he was rapidly dying of consumption that he wrote his three remarkable poems, "Winter Hymn to the Snow," "When the World is Burning" and "To Death." The fame that these and some of the pieces in the early volume brought to their author came too late. He died on the 14th of September 1860.

It was not till 1870 that Dante Gabriel Rossetti praised his work in *Notes and Queries*. Rossetti's example was followed by W. B. Scott, Theodore Watts-Dunton, who contributed some papers on the subject to the *Athenaeum* (September and October 1878), and R. H. Sheppard, who edited *Studies of Sensation and Event* in 1879.

The Hand

Lone o'er the moors I stray'd;
With basely timid mind,
Because by some betray'd
Denouncing human-kind;
I heard the lonely wind,
And wickedly did mourn
I could not share its loneliness,
And all things human scorn.

And bitter were the tears,
I cursed as they fell;
And bitterer the sneers
I strove not to repel:
With blindly mutter'd yell,
I cried unto mine heart,--
'Thou shalt beat the world in falsehood
And stab it ere we part.'

My hand I backward drave
As one who seeks a knife;
When startingly did crave
To quell that hand's wild strife
Some other hand; all rife
With kindness, clasp'd it hard
On mine, quick frequent claspings
That would not be debarr'd.

I dared not turn my gaze
To the creature of the hand
And no sound did it raise,
Its nature to disband
Of mystery; vast, and grand,
The moors around me spread,
And I thought, some angel message
Perchance their God may have sped.

But it press'd another press,
So full of earnest prayer,
While o'er it fell a tress

Of cool soft human hair,
I fear'd not;--I did dare
Turn round, 'twas Hannah there!
Oh! to no one out of heaven
Could I what pass'd declare.

We wander'd o'er the moor
Through all that blessed day
And we drank its waters pure,
And felt the world away;
In many a dell we lay,
And we twined flower-crowns bright;
And I fed her with moor-berries
And bless'd her glad eye-light.

And still that earnest prayer
That saved me many stings,
Was oft a silent sayer
Of countless loving things;--
I'll ring it all with rings,
Each ring a jewell'd band;
For heaven shouldn't purchase
That little sister hand.

Ebenezer Jones

