

Flowers of the Valley



By
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ALTRINCHAM
CHARLES LEFLAIVE
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Preface.

ALL who have enjoyed the rare charm of “*The Contrast*” will welcome the appearance of a few more verses by the same author.

These little “*Flowers of the Valley*” are fragrant with the praises of Him whose Name is as ointment poured forth. May they awaken in each heart a fuller and more distinct response to every fresh manifestation of His love, so that the “fruits of the valley” (*Song of Solomon* vi. 11) may be brought forth abundantly, for His pleasure and refreshment.

C.L.

ALTRINCHAM,

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Eventide.*

"Are there not twelve hours in the day?"—(*John xi. 9.*)

"The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day."—
(*2 Tim. i. 18.*)

IN the red West declines the sun,
The vesper bell is slowly ringing;
With voices hushed the birds are singing,
Their evening anthem has begun.

How swiftly has the hour-glass run!
The shades of night will soon be falling:
Of moments gone without recalling,
How many lost, how few were won!

What hast thou wrought or what provided
From talent to thy care confided,
Now life's last colours fade away?
Alas! no box of alabaster!
Yet confident, O Lord and Master,
To find Thy mercy, in that day.

*This was suggested as the red light of evening faded in a southern landscape.

Adonai.*

(*Isaiah vi.*)

WHEN sovereign Adonai sat on the throne,
His train filled the temple, His majesty shone:
Hark! hark to the Seraphim, angels of flame,
Repeating the praise of the terrible Name!

“ O Holy, thrice Holy, of infinite might,
The Lord of Sabaoth, who dwells in the light!
The whole wide creation His splendour shall fill—
Every land, every nation shall bow to His will! ”

At the thundering voice to and fro rocked the posts,
And smoke filled the house of Jehovah of hosts.
“ Woe is me! I am lost, for my lips are unclean,
Mine eyes the great Monarch of glory have seen! ”

Then swift flew the Seraph and stretched forth his hand
Where, red as a ruby, there glowed a hot brand;
From the great brazen altar the coal was brought nigh,
That told of the Sacrifice, wafted on high.

O wonderful remedy, clearing from sin;
For the lips from without, for the conscience within,
A captive delivered; O Lord, here am I!
For freedom's the service of great Adonai.

*“Adonai” (not here “Adon” or “Adoni” merely) can only be used for the Supreme Lord, a Divine Person. It is a plural of excellence. This makes the whole of *Isaiah vi.* interesting as to personal service (see verses 7, 8 and 11).

The One Pearl.

ONE single pearl the merchant sought,
The rarest of the rare;
One peerless jewel filled his thought,
With sheen beyond compare.

He found the pearl that satisfied
His very heart's desire;
None other with its beauty vied,
He must the gem acquire.

And ne'er was such a merchant known,
(As men the past recall);
To make the precious pearl his own
He sold and gave his all.

* * *

One single pearl the merchant sought;
But who the price can tell
Of her, by Him so dearly bought,
The bride He loved so well?

“Lord Jesus, come!” to Thee we cry,
And long Thy face to see;
And: “Glory in the church for aye
Unto the Father be.”

The Obstacle.

THEY sought the living midst the dead
That morning ere the break of day,
And, whispering to themselves, they said:
“O, who shall roll the stone away?”

Then, as the dawn pierced through the gloom
(The night from black had worn to grey),
Again they saw the rocky tomb—
But O! the stone was rolled away!

“Where is the Holy One, who died,
Celestial stranger, tell us, pray!”
“Risen—not here—the Crucified,
Behold the place where Jesus lay!”

Take heart, faint pilgrims, God shall clear
All obstacles from off your way;
His mighty love expels all fear,
Who rolled the monster stone away!

“In the Cave.”

(1 *Kings* xix.)

THE whirlwind tore the rocks; the mountain side
Seemed rent, as by a fissure deep and wide;
Loud yelled the tempest round Elijah's grot,
But in that howling wind—the Lord was not!

The wind had ceased—a tremor filled the cave!
The land heaved, sea-like, and the rolling wave
Shook Ahab's palace and the peasant's cot,
But in that earthquake dire—the Lord was not!

As when a glowing brand, in autumn days,
Sets the dry branches in one ruddy blaze,
So rushed the torrent onward, fierce and hot,
Yet in the roaring fire—the Lord was not!

Wind, shock and flame have passed, yet list! a sound
As of the Zephyr* over hallowed ground!
The still small voice, in notes distinct and clear,
Speaks to our inmost soul—the Lord is there!

* Φωνή αὔρας λεπτῆς (1 *Kings* xix. 12.)

The Everlasting Arms.

WEEP not, when friends forsake or ties must
sever;

When for thee life has lost its earlier charms,
One heart divine still loves thee, now as ever,
And underneath are everlasting arms.

Fear not the lightning nor the dreadful thunder,
Nor tremble 'mid the din of dire alarms;
Calm shalt thou rest, alone, while nations wonder,
For underneath are everlasting arms.

As among ravening wolves the lamb so tender,
If cruel calumny thine honour harms,
Fear not! Be still, for One is thy defender,
And underneath are everlasting arms.

Strong, soft protection in the clasp maternal,
That, in the ruthless wind, its darling warms;
But stronger, softer still the Love eternal
That holds thee in its everlasting arms!

The Tith.

(*Luke xvii. 11-19.*)

NOT one returned except this man,
A poor Samaritan,
Gained by the power of love divine,—
Where are the nine?

Clean and alert the ten went, free
From hideous leprosy!
One heart alone answered to Thine,—
Where are the nine?

One happy soul returning, trod
The way that leads to God,
To Thee, where love and light combine,—
Where are the nine?

Adoring, Lord, then may we be
Nearer, in love, to Thee!
Where all the Father's glories shine,*—
Unlike the nine!

**John xiv. 9.*

The Hope.

“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

WE think of Thee, when in meridian shining
The welkin glows;
Or when o'er us soft night, the day declining,
Her mantle throws.

Thy voice we hear, when fierce the waves are rolling,
Above their roar;
Or in dead calm, like distant belfry tolling
Along the shore.

To Thee we cry above the din and clamour
Of war below—
Above the glittering pageant and the glamour
Of earth's vain show.

We look for Thee, with trimmèd lamps still burning,
And hail Thy day;
O teach us, while we wait Thy blest returning,
To watch and pray!

The Reply.

(Cant. iv.)

HOW fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse,
Thy grace is far better than wine;
Far sweeter than honey thy words and thy vows,
Thy garments than Lebanon's pine!

A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse,
Where pomegranates blush round the wall,
The saffron and spikenard my senses arouse,
And frankincense sweeter than all.

Then answered the fair one, the sister and spouse:
"Wake Zaphon and Teiman,* awake!
Blow gales on my garden and shake all my boughs;
Blow breezes, for Solomon's sake!

Blow gales on the garden, on fruit tree and flower,
That odours and spices may flow;
Then let my Belovèd come down to His bower,
And all its fertility know!"

* * * * *

Should winds of affliction blow down from above,
And scatter the fruit on the soil,
Then let the blest Saviour draw near in His love
And gather the meed of His toil.

*Zaphon and Teiman are the North and South Winds.

The Triumph.

SEE! He comes, the Lord of glory!
Heavenly notes His march proclaim;
Bright as stars, His following myriads
Shout aloud His deeds of fame!
Love and power in Him combine,
Human splendour, light divine!
Voices, flood-like, swell the song,
As the Triumph rolls along!

Lift your heads, eternal portals,
Gates upon your hinges swing!
Open wide the city's entrance,
Royal honours to the King!
All His enemies are slain
On Megiddo's dusky plain!
Sing, O sing the joyful song,
Let the Triumph roll along!

“ Who is He, this Lord of glory?
Tell the mighty Monarch's Name? ”
“ Of Sabaoth hosts, Jehovah,
'Tis the great I AM. . . THE SAME!
When to war at length He rose,
His red lightning pierced His foes!
Join, O join the lofty song,
As the Triumph rolls along! ”

“Kiss the Son!”

TO Simon's house she came with hopes and fears,
Weeping, she knelt before the Holy One;
She washed His weary feet with her hot tears,
She kissed the Son! *

Firstfruits of those, who, pre-ordained to bliss,
In guilty Zion where the deed was done,
Confessed their sins and, with obedient kiss,
Adored the Son! †

Be wise, O Kings! ye judges of the land,
Ere grace divine its present course have run,
And in fierce anger He shall raise His hand,
O kiss the Son!

For all must perish by the wrath of God,
When Armageddon shall be fought and won;
Like vessels shivered by the potent rod
Of Christ, the Son!

“Thrice blessed they who on His grace depend,”
So myriad voices sing in unison,
Where willing knees in adoration bend
To kiss the Son!

**Luke* vii. †*Acts* ii.

Talitha Koumi!

HER gentle soul had flown away,
Tranquil upon the couch she lay:
"Too late; our little maid is dead,
Trouble no more the Lord!" they said.

A touching sight to gaze upon
For silent Peter, James and John!
Alone with Him, whose quickening breath
Brings life into the place of death.

Talitha Koumi! "Maid, arise!"
Then opened wide the sleeping eyes,
And light seemed to dispel the gloom
That tinged the curtains of the room.

Talitha Koumi! Rise, O maid!
Rise, all who in the graves are laid!
To heavenly splendour wake from clay,
All charnel dust be swept away!

Talitha Koumi! Lord divine,
That resurrection word is Thine!
Teach us to know its conquering power,
From day to day, from hour to hour!

The Contrast.

THE glory of the kingdom spread
Over the mountain's lofty head
Lighting the rocky steeps;
And Jesu's robes were glistening white,
His face—the sun in all its might—
And Peter sleeps!

* * *

'Tis night, and in Gethsemane
A prostrate form in agony
With bitter crying, weeps;
The darkness deepens at His groan,
The darkest night this earth has known*—
And Peter sleeps!

* * *

He lies upon the dungeon floor;
The guard, quadrupled, round the door
Its midnight vigil keeps; †
Two chains of iron bind him fast,
To-morrow's morn shall be his last—
And Peter sleeps!

**Luke* xxii. 53. †*Acts* xii.

The Storm.

SEE'ST thou that dim majestic Form,
Walking amid the spray and storm?
His voice shall calm the troubled sea,
The rolling waves of Galilee.

" 'Tis pleasant from the shore to view
A sea-tossed craft and weary crew,
Security feels doubly sure!"
So sang the Roman epicure. *

No! far from land in patient toil,
Where sea-mews shriek and eddies boil,
'Tis better far with Him to be,
Whose word can tame the raging sea.

Abandon not the labouring oar,
Our lessons are not learnt ashore;
There's teaching of a wondrous kind
In sounding wave and wailing wind.

His voice is sov'reign: "Peace, be still!"
All elements obey His will.
His might divine shall calm the sea,
As once the waves of Galilee!

*See Lucretius: "Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis, etc."
(De rerum natura ii. 1-6.)