

# POEMS

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Poems by Arthur Christopher Benson

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**ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON**

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# P O E M S

BY

ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON

ἦν τι καὶ πάσχητε, πάσχειν τοῖς  
σοφοῖς δοκίματε

L O N D O N

ELKIN MATHEWS AND

JOHN LANE

1893

953

B474

1893

*TO MY FATHER*

*O loved and honoured, truest, best  
Of friends and fathers, mine though death  
Divide us, mine through toil and rest,  
Since first I drew uncertain breath,*

*There, where the desert bloomed with towers,  
Subdued, replenished, starred with praise,  
With memories of diviner hours,  
When thou, through glad laborious days,*

*Didst nurse and kindle generous fires,  
That, as the old earth forward runs,  
May fit the sons of hero sires  
To be the sires of hero sons.*

v

*From that grey choir, whose purer lines  
Are fair above the humming town,  
A western land of ports and mines,  
The watered vale, the bleaker down,*

*Desired thee, welcomed us her own,  
Till fateful voices, surely heard,  
Constrained thee to an ancient throne,  
A larger, more majestic word ;*

*What though the years grow loud and late,  
Though spoiling hands seem overbold,  
Though thunders of a troubled state  
About Augustine's chair are rolled,*

*True sire, true son of Aaron's line,  
Still, as the sacred burden grew,  
'Mid pomp and policy divine,  
A fonder, gentler father too.*

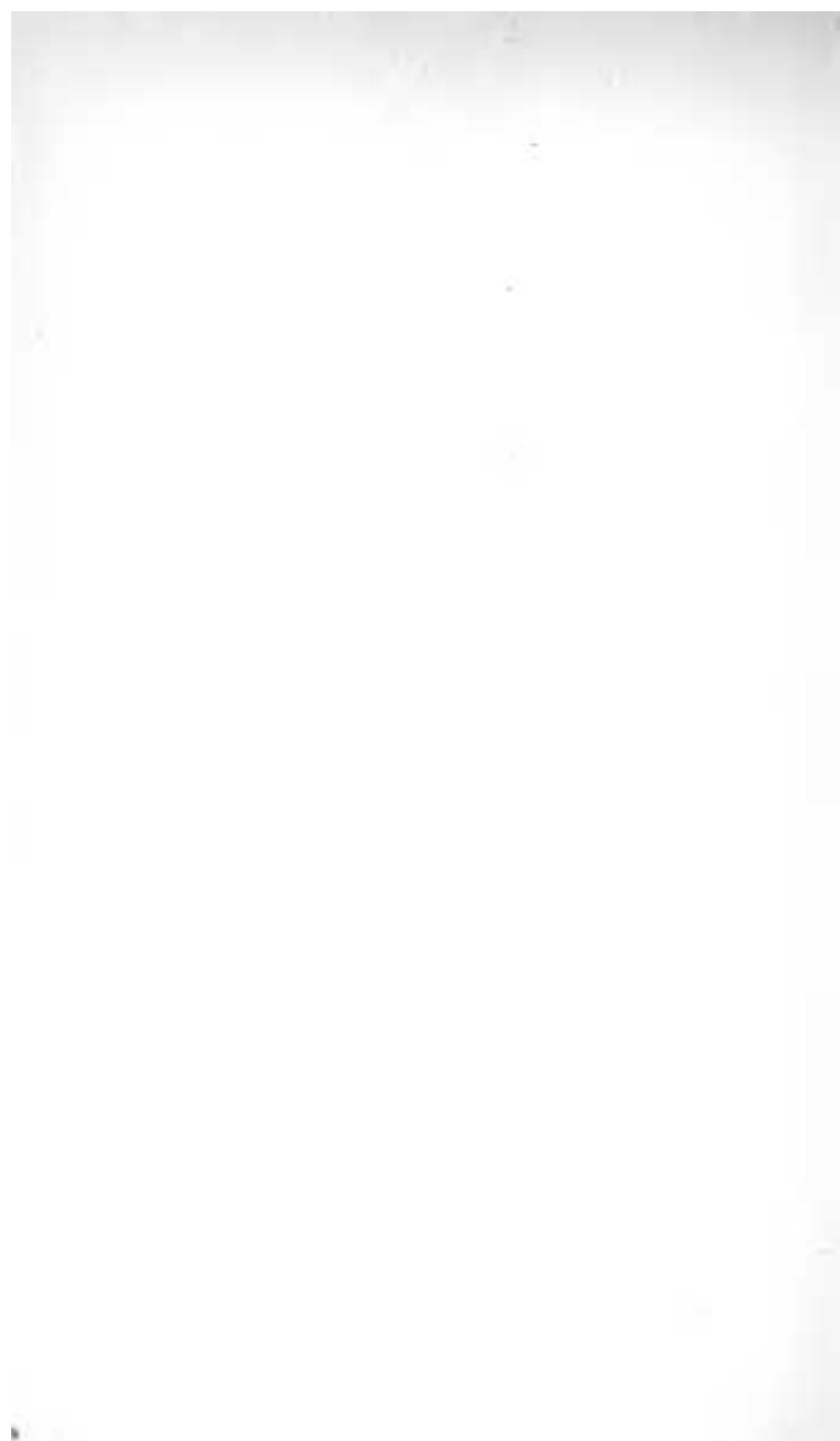


*I need your patient trust, I need  
Your fond forgiving welcome ; hear  
Your son who loves his childhood's creed  
Because you loved it, made it dear.*

*For we have fared by hills and waves,  
And paced by many a hallowed site,  
And bent together over graves  
That first estrange, and then unite :*

*So shall the Lord of Life, who sets  
On faithful hearts His seal of fire,  
Make music of our weak regrets,  
And crown our impotent desire.*

ETON, April 1893.



## P R E F A C E

*THERE is a feverish tendency at the present day among writers, to be artist first, and man afterwards with such shreds of time as are left ; if a reputation is to be made, it cannot be made at leisure. Such was not the way of the old masters, the norma veterum. Æschylus had his bald pate broken by a dropped tortoise, as he sate in the sun. Sophocles as a stripling danced in processions, and was a general in middle age. Dante was a violent political schemer. Shakespeare, when he had realised a competence, wrote no more than he was obliged : he planted his wand and it became a mulberry tree : he drowned his book in the reedy Avon : Dr. Johnson loved to stretch his legs and have his talk out : Byron, in his*