

**THE EASTER SONG:
BEING THE FIRST EPIC
OF CHRISTENDOM**

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The Easter song: being the first epic of Christendom by Sedulius & George Sigerson

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SEDULIUS & GEORGE SIGERSON

**THE EASTER SONG:
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OF CHRISTENDOM**

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BEING
THE FIRST EPIC OF
CHRISTENDOM

BY
SEDULIUS

THE FIRST SCHOLAR-SAINT OF BRINN

WITH INTRODUCTION, VERSE-TRANSLATION AND APPENDICES
INCLUDING A SCHEDULE OF MILTON'S "DEBTS"

BY
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OF LA SOCIÉTÉ DE PSYCHOLOGIE PHYSIOLOGIQUE DE PARIS

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PREFACE

THE Easter Song of Sedulius takes rank as the First Epic of Christendom, and may be regarded as the Morning Hymn of the Christian World. Juvenecus, who preceded him, produced but a metrical and amplified version of the text of the New Testament. Sedulius conceived the Great Epic. Beginning with the expulsion of the First of Man from Paradise, and the intrusion of Death because of disobedience, he describes the consequences of the Fall—the darkness of the World illumined by one only hope—and the coming, the sufferings and the sublime triumph of the Redeemer of Mankind.

Few works have been held in so high honour, or have commanded a great audience through so many generations.

Its earliest Editor was a Roman Consul ; an Emperor, Theodosius, declared himself grateful for its dedication ; the First Council of the Church welcomed it with distinguished praise. From its appearance in the middle of the fifth century it became the Christian classic. Before the invention of printing the Scriptoria distributed

innumerable copies, many exquisitely illumined on vellum. After that epoch, the presses of almost every country of Europe were busy printing it for the Scholars and Colleges of Christendom. Since then over seventy-five editions could be reckoned in 1886, being at the rate of one edition in every five and a half years. There have been many more.

In this work appears the first attempt to present any part of the poem in a modern language.

Chilperic, King of the Franks, paid it the homage of an imitation, in accentual verse. Petrararch, and other true poets acknowledged their peer and crowned him with the noble laurel. Not the least, though not the greatest of his glories is that Milton, adopting his exordium, his style, and many striking passages, so obscured Sedulius with the splendour of alien robes that the great original is forgotten and the creator ignored.

The nationality of Sedulius has been questioned. But by evidence indisputable, it is here shown that he bordered each Book of his Five Books, with a couplet wrought with Irish art, so complex and so fine that his Latin poem may be likened to a toga decorated with a band of interlaced embroidery and not with the *latus clavus* or plain purple stripe of the Roman Senator.

A secret of centuries has been revealed, and Ireland is shown to have produced an Epic Poem—the First of Christendom.

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INTRODUCTION