

POEMS

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Poems by Edward Hind

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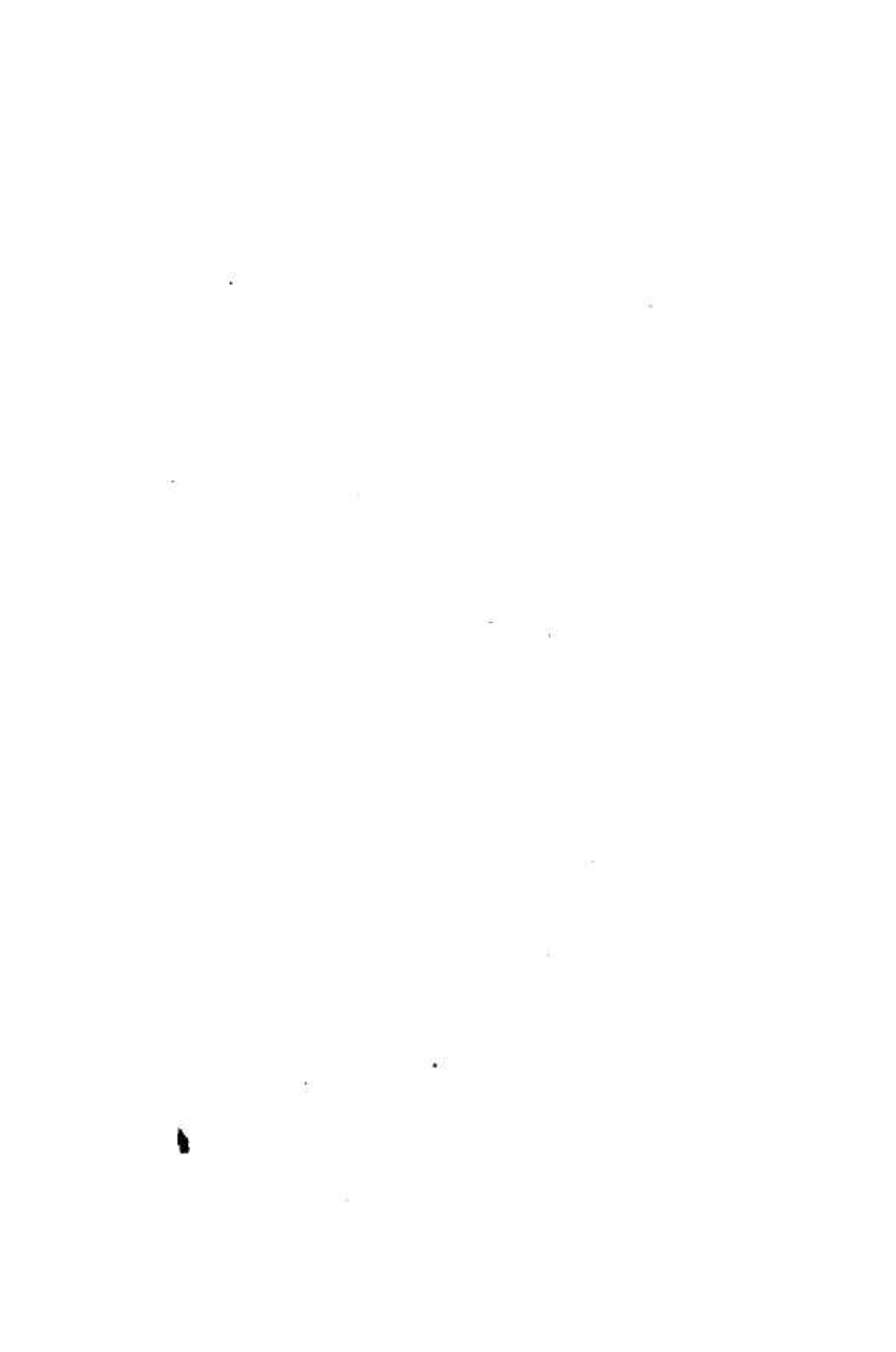
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INTRODUCTION.

BY SPENCER T. HALL, "THE SHERWOOD FORESTER."

It is almost as natural for some men to think in metaphor and write in rhyme, as it is for mankind in general to eat and drink. It often happens, too, that this propensity is associated with a most warm, susceptible, and impulsive soul, peculiarly alive to sympathy, and perpetually craving, but seldom in an adequate degree receiving it. Hence, a man thus constituted soon feels more isolated among the common crowd than in the wildest solitudes. He walks the human world as one not of it; and, disappointed of genial communion with his kind, extends his love to the aggregate beauties of creation, finding in every object there the embodiment or symbol of some glowing and exalted ideal. And as large-heartedness is not unfrequently the accompaniment of enthusiasm, in so much as such an one feels himself inducted to the inner meaning of things,—in proportion as he *feels the throbbing of a star* as well as *sees its brightness*, or rejoices in the sentiment as well as in the bloom of flowers, and learns by the emotions they awaken to interpret their analogues in the arcana of his own being,—the more intense becomes his desire to give

others a share in all his ecstasies; and he turns again towards society with their record in his hands—to be received or rejected according to the taste or humour of the times.

But in an age when three aspirants of every four can write very respectable verses—when pieces that half a century ago would have made a reputation will hardly obtain admittance into a common magazine—some good qualification, either in the character of a book or the history of its author, is demanded before a welcome can be freely given. Hence the occasional value of a word of introduction. Not that EDWARD HIND needs the patronage of this poor pen, even if the man who holds it felt no dislike of such pedantry; yet, for once, a word, not in patronage, but in brotherly sympathy, may be a word in season, and help to a right appreciation of one of the most sensitive and unsophisticated sons of song our native county has produced. Would it were possible to add, also, one of the most fortunate! But such at present is not the case.

It was in the spring of the passing year, and at the distance of a hundred miles or more from Nottingham, that a literary friend put into my hands a poem entitled "Prometheus Bound," and asked if I were at all acquainted with its author—EDWARD HIND. Replying that I knew his name only through the local newspapers, and looking over the lines before me, I soon observed that, notwithstanding considerable hyperbole, and what the majority of readers would regard as great irregularity in the rhythm, they contained passages of wondrous power, and presented for the psychologist a study of remarkable interest. In truth, it was the very ecstasy of grief, uttered in some of the intensest language I had ever read; and even the rhythmical irregularity alluded to was the result of a peculiar method which the author had adopted, of sometimes giving greater emphasis to a single thought, by allowing it to occupy the space of a whole line, without attenuating the verbiage to the wonted length. On the other hand, and for a converse reason, some of the lines (as also in

the following pages) were disproportionately long to the eye and ear—but had evidently their harmony in the author's mind. Making allowance for this mental idiosyncrasy, it was impossible to avoid becoming deeply interested in him. "Prometheus Bound" was a history of sufferings, not his own merely, however peculiar they might seem to him, but of thousands, who, lacking the power, the courage, or the opportunity for utterance, have

"Dropt into the grave, unpitied and unknown."

In the present case, metaphorically speaking, cold water by one party, and oil by another, had been severally employed to quench the spirit's fires; but too strong for the former, they were aggravated by the latter, and thus at length broke forth in the "Life-Drama" I was reading, and which led to our correspondence, and ultimately to personal intimacy. Here, then, is one of the chief reasons why, during the poet's temporary retirement, for his health's sake, from scenes too saddened by misunderstanding and wrong, I have ventured to take this mediatory part between him and the public—gladly, if but with advantage to the one and satisfaction to the other.

According to WILLIAM H. WYLIE'S "Old and New Nottingham," EDWARD HIND was born in that town, on the 7th of November, 1817; and, while yet very young, published much, both of prose and verse, through the metropolitan and local journals. In 1848, he sent to the press a pamphlet entitled "Reason's Remonstrance," which was pronounced by PHILIP J. BAILEY "a very powerfully written appeal in favour of the greatest happiness principle." The warm-hearted, bright-thoughted author of "*Festus*" added, that it set forth "the evils of war, and the pure and holy fruits which spring from love and good-will towards men, with much force and beauty of expression." After this quotation, MR. WYLIE proceeds:—"His local sketches abound in curious, out-of-the-way knowledge, acquired in his rambles round the borough. Though he has made some

flights in a higher sphere, as in his address to 'The Stars,' still he excels chiefly in transferring to his page the characteristics of the life and scenery by which he is surrounded, and he will be long remembered as a successful member of the Sherwood school. In one of his rambles by his favourite Trent, some years ago, Mr. HIND was the happy instrument of saving a young man from being drowned, though he accomplished the task only at the risk of his own life." Some passages of "Prometheus Bound" are then introduced, and one or two of them will, perhaps, not be out of place here. Speaking of his own boyhood, in the third person, he thus beautifully says:—

"In the soft sunshine of departed days,
I see him roaming o'er the gold-flowered fields,
Referring every thought to Deity!
Trained by the Hebrew bards, by Milton Addison,
Burns, Fenslon, Goldsmith, Shakspeare, Paley—all
Who've writ in stars upon the night of time,
His mind reflects the beauty of the earth,
And glory of the heavens, as a clear mirror
Reflects the face of morn.
He gazes hopefully on the years to come,
Anticipating happiness to be—
Radiant as love, and joy, and fame, and fortune.
Child of imagination! see him stand
With aspect open as a cloudless sky;
Heart full of youth, as is the rose of fragrance;
Thought lighting up his brain like summer sunshine;
Sending the music of his praise from earth,
As happy as the lark that sings in heaven."

Then we learn that he was

"Sent to pursuits, for which he was as fit
As Pascal for a prize-fight, Cowper for a crowd;
Life's beauty faded; health, its glory, went,
Snoless, moonless, starless grew his sky;
The brightness of his morn became a night
Of festering thoughts, and blistering strange sensations,
The choruses of life 'gan playing discords, not
The harmonies they should;
And, in the darkness of despair, his soul
Wept fire, and none consoled him.
He felt the glory of his spring eclipsed;
He watched the beauty of his youth depart;
Starr'd with irradiant hopes as thick as heaven—
Fraught with all noblest aspirations—gentle as
The tears of summer, wept o'er sleeping flowers.

He felt health go—he felt his peace depart,
 Despite his tears, his efforts, and his prayers,
 Which shook his breast, as earthquakes shake the world.
 He could not stay them.
 Oh! this story
 Should utterance have—like Nature's thunder-throes,
 When, with volcanic voice, she speaks in groans,
 Affrighting nations,
 And writes her pangs in mountains on the world!"

I will not here quote further from the sad story thus indicated. Though printed, it has never been formally published; nor is it very desirable, perhaps, that it should be. And yet, as the remonstrance of Agony with Ignorance and Wantonness, in reference to a class of sorrows for which the world has too little sympathy, it might not be without its some time use—even to those who could be so hardened and reckless as recently to make it the very occasion of an additional infliction upon him from whose fevered heart and over-wrought brain it had emanated.*

A few words now, more especially, touching the poems in this volume. It will be obvious to every discriminating reader, that many of them need much allowance, as juvenile effusions, when taken in comparison with others that accompany them, some of which have passages not unworthy a GOLDSMITH or a CAMPBELL. Had circumstances been favourable, there can be no doubt that the whole collection might have benefited by a deliberate revision, and some pruning. Nor is the punctuation in every instance a facility to the author's meaning. But with all these drawbacks, or any others that hypercriticism may urge, there are scattered throughout such charms as will, I feel assured, touch many a soul, and secure some toleration for what might have been better done, or undone, with sincere admiration for much that few—perhaps no authors of the same school, have ever surpassed. And, in conclusion, let us hope, that, whilst the little volume obtains a wel-

* Rather, a thousand times rather, would I be its author, than embody the "spirit" that lately delighted in burlesquing him on the walls of his native town—a spirit which I trust is now "laid," no more to appear.