

**JASPER, THE MAN WHO NEVER
FEARED WHAT PEOPLE
SAID; APRICOT GOLDING OF
SUNNYSIDE; AND SHORT POEMS**

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Jasper, the Man Who Never Feared What People Said; Apricot Golding of Sunnyside; And
Short Poems by Miss Stapleton

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MISS STAPLETON

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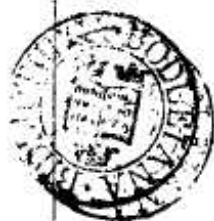
SHORT POEMS.

BY

MISS STAPLETON,

*Author of "THE PASTOR OF SILVERDALE," "THE
FISHERMAN'S FAMILY," &c.*

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Jasper;

THE MAN WHO NEVER FEARED WHAT PEOPLE SAID.

THE Sea, the Sea, the glorious Sea!
So full of life and hope to me;
I gaze upon its changing wave,
Now fiercely dashing foam to lave
The rocks, that boldly bound its course,
Forbid its huge gigantic force;
Now rippling as the summer lake,
And sparkling as the diamond flake.

I view it from a terraced walk,
Where silv'ry pines and fir-trees talk
In language known but to themselves,
And to those fair bewitching elves,
In whom we all have faint belief,
Although we mingle it with grief,—
And tell you Superstition's born,
A graceless rose, a worthless thorn.

The sky-lark, though his nest is low,
Soars in the earliest sunlight glow!
The golden summer skies appear,
One cloudless hope without a fear;
The blue below, the blue above,
Speak of that perfect world of love,
Where pain and sorrow are unknown,
And SATISFACTION reigns alone!

I gazed in lingering reverie,
Upon this sight of sky and sea!
And then my steps I upwards traced
Towards a fair Lodge, where interlaced,
The rose and honeysuckle twine,
In grace and loveliness divine;
Fresh as the early morning dew,
Which, though the same, is ever new.

Within I sought a lovely flower,
Perfecting fast for Eden's bower;
A flower that often seemed to say,
" I long have bloomed to cheer your way,—
But wintry days of changing sky,
Warn me to stretch my wings and fly
Where Spring and Sunshine never cease,
And Joy hath an eternal lease!"

The cottage-door I open found,
And heard the old familiar sound
Of Fire-Fly's bark,—a dog of fame,
Whose character was as his name.
And Zebee's Mother came to greet
Me in her spotless gown, so neat;
A fragile creature, never made
To dwell with chill or gloomy shade!

Her husband lived at Harkworth Hall,
Where peace and plenty shone on all;
The prettiest Lodge the Master gave
His Butler's wife, expense to save.
But e'en in this bright sunny spot,
Death would an arrow vile have shot;
For long his ruthless hand was stayed,
But now its with'ring power must fade!

The Mother led me to a room,
Where dancing sunbeams banished gloom ;
While Zebec watched the sparkling sea,
And thought of Immortality.
Too weak to rise up from her chair,
Reclining, she enjoyed the air ;
Longing to pierce the azure blue,
To gain of Crystal Sea a view.

Is there a mind of priceless worth,
Whose teachings are not those of earth ?
Is there a face and form whose dower,
Speaketh of Eden's perfect bower ?
That form, that mind, we surely see,
The first on Heaven-born wing to flee,
Where ev'ry sight and sound is blest,
And nought can jar th' all-perfect rest !

And Zebec's lustrous deep blue eye,
Seemed made for Eden's brighter sky ;
At times it shone with fiery hue,
At times it pierced a sightless view ;
'Twas lit as with a brilliant spark,
She watched the gay, the happy lark,
Higher and higher wing its flight,
Floating in rich ethereal light !

'Twas calm and placid as a lake,
Soft as the falling snowy flake,—
While listening to those words of peace,
"My love to you can never cease.
In the dark valley you will find,
That I illuminate the mind ;
I am your Sun, your Shield, your Stay,
Fear nothing, for I lead the way."

Her wavy hair, which shone as gold,
Brought to our mind the nymphs of old;
The rose and lily vied with grace,
To paint their hues upon her face;
And yet this loveliness was not
That which sustains an earthly lot;
The spirit rarified the shell,
Impatient up above to dwell.

A little boy sat at her feet,
Who rose to offer me a seat;
He placed a chair with weirdish grace,
And viewed me with a solemn face.
I ne'er beheld so strange a child,
Witching his tones, his manners mild;
A babe in years, a man in thought,
His spirit seemed with wonder fraught.

Upright and motionless he stood,
Gazing anon upon the wood
That skirted the bright sunny bay,
The fairy haunts where children play;
Anon upon the book I read,
To soothe his sister's dying bed;
Anon upon that sister fair,
Whose solitude he loved to share.

The child perplexed me,—but the power
That circumscribes a dying hour,
Hushed every thought with *life* allied,—
Zebec and Death were side by side!
“Are you,” I asked, “content to go,
And leave all worldly ties below?
So young, are you prepared to die,
And meet your Maker in the sky?”

"Oh, yes!" she sweetly smiled and said,
 "With roses fair my bed is spread;
 I often long to fly away,
 And leave grim suffering and decay:
 But though without a single fear,
 I'd stay my parents' heart to cheer,—
 I'd linger on a little space,
 To see dear Jasper take my place!

But when this sorrow is o'erpast,
 And I have reached my home at last,
 I feel we never can be twain,—
 Jasper and I will meet again.
 We often speak of that bright land
 We would have marched to hand in hand,—
 But I must cross the stream ere noon,
 Though Jasper will be crossing soon."

We parted,—ne'er to meet again,
 In scene of sunshine or of rain;
Her spirit winged its upward flight
 To regions of eternal light!
 The Father, absent all the day,
 At night would sometimes wend his way,
 To gaze upon her quiet grave,
 Lulled by the rippling of the wave.

Jasper would strew the grassy mound,
 With flow'rets bright which grew around;
 And there he'd sit with tearful eye,
 And ask himself, "When shall *I* die?"
 But Jasper's time had not yet come,
 The desert lay 'twixt him and home;
 His Mother first descried the hand
 Which pointed *him* to yonder land.

The little boy was eight years old,—
 Cast in a strange, mysterious mould ;
 Brave as a lion, nought could fear,
 And much could bear without a tear.
 Taciturn and laconic, he
 Seemed often in a reverie,
 His countenance so fair to view,
 His honest eyes so brightly blue.

His Mother faded day by day,
 As lovely roses pass away ;
 While Jasper's grave and solemn care,
 Made every fleeting hour seem fair.
 The old, by sharp experience taught,
 Know how life's battle should be fought ;
 But early youth rarely imbibes
 The truths to which old age subscribes.

One day the Mother softly said,
 " Dear Jasper, when I'm gone, am dead,
 I wish to leave one rule behind,
 Which you must ever bear in mind :
 COURT NOT APPLAUSE, AND FEAR NOT MAN,
 BUT WORK UPON THIS SINGLE PLAN,—
 DO ONLY RIGHT, COST WHAT IT MAY,
 AND NEVER FEAR WHAT PEOPLE SAY !

God's word will teach you all you need,
 To that, and *that alone*, give heed ;
 God cannot change,—but fitful man
 Changes with every changing plan.
 MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, AND BE WISE
 FOR SELF, THEREIN YOUR WISDOM LIES ;
 AND THEREFORE LET YOUR MOTTO BE,
 ' I DO ALL FOR ETERNITY ! ' "