

**VERSES ON
VARIOUS
OCCASIONS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649758142

Verses on Various Occasions by John Henry Newman

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

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VERSES

ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

"cui pauca relictis

*Jugera ruris erant ; nec fertilis illa juvenca
Nec pecori opportuna seges, nec commoda Baccho.
Hic rarum tamen in dumis olus, albaque circum
Lilia, verbenasque premens, vescu[m]que papaver,
Regum sequabat opes animis."*

London :

BURNS, OATES, & CO.,

17 & 18, PORTMAN STREET, AND 63, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCLXVIII.

VERSES
ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

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I.

SOLITUDE.

THERE is in stillness oft a magic power
To calm the breast, when struggling passions lower;
Touch'd by its influence, in the soul arise
Diviner feelings, kindred with the skies.
By this the Arab's kindling thoughts expand,
When circling skies inclose the desert sand ;
For this the hermit seeks the thickest grove,
To catch th' inspiring glow of heavenly love.
It is not solely in the freedom given
To purify and fix the heart on heaven ;
There is a Spirit singing aye in air,
That lifts us high above all mortal care.
No mortal measure swells that mystic sound.
No mortal minstrel breathes such tones around,—
The Angels' hymn,—the sovereign harmony
That guides the rolling orbs along the sky,—

And hence perchance the tales of saints who view'd
And heard Angelic choirs in solitude.
By most unheard,—because the earthly din
Of toil or mirth has charms their ears to win.
Alas for man! he knows not of the bliss,
The heaven that brightens such a life as this.

Oxford.

Michaelmas Term, 1818.

II.

PARAPHRASE

OF ISAIAH, CHAP. LXIV.

O THAT Thou wouldest rend the breadth of sky,
That veils Thy presence from the sons of men !
O that, as erst Thou camest from on high
Sudden in strength, Thou so would'st come again !
Track'd out by judgments was Thy fiery path,
Ocean and mountain withering in Thy wrath !

Then would Thy name—the Just, the Merciful—
Strange dubious attributes to human mind,
Appal Thy foes ; and, kings, who spurn Thy rule,
Then, then would quake to hopeless doom
consign'd.
See, the stout bows, and totters the secure,
While pleasure's bondsman hides his head impure !

Come down ! for then shall from its seven bright
springs

To him who thirsts the draught of life be given ;
Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard the things

Which He hath purposed for the heirs of heaven,—
A God of love, guiding with gracious ray
Each meek rejoicing pilgrim on his way.

Yea, though we err, and Thine averted face
Rebukes the folly in Thine Israel done,
Will not that hour of chastisement give place
To beams, the pledge of an eternal sun ?

Yes ! for His counsels to the end endure ;
We shall be saved, our rest abideth sure.

Lord, Lord ! our sins . . . our sins . . . unclean are we,
Gross and corrupt ; our seeming-virtuous deeds
Are but abominate ; all, dead to Thee,

Shrivel, like leaves when summer's green recedes ;
While, like the autumn blast, our lusts arise,
And sweep their prey where the fell serpent lies.

None, there is none to plead with God in prayer,
Bracing his laggart spirit to the work
Of intercession ; conscience-sprung despair,
Sin-loving still, doth in each bosom lurk.