

**A SPRING DAY,
AND OTHER POEMS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649065196

A Spring Day, and Other Poems by E. Stevens

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BY

E. STEVENS.



LONDON:

W. POOLE, 12A, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

—
1878.

280 . 0 . 289

PRINTED BY
W. N. AND I. COLLINGRIDGE,
128 AND 129, ALDERGATE STREET, LONDON, E.C.

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I Spring Day,



OUR home is not in Eden, but it hath
Some sweets of Eden in it.

It is like

A town-grown rose with smoke-smutched outer leaves,
But, in its innermost heart, daintily pure
As any sister rose, that blushing blooms
Beside some country home in country air.

Our home is in Mid-England, where the earth
Mourns the lost charms of her once glorious face,
Spoiled of her beauty by man's greed of gain.
'T was Earth's misfortune to be wealthy here,
And hold in her great heart those carbon stores,
Whose worth outvies the purer diamond:
And that rich ore, which, smelted by fierce fires,
Yields the most useful metal unto man,
Of which he makes those instruments and tools,
By which he works such wonders in the world,
By which, alas! he also works such woe.

The ancient Seer spake of a time to come
When War shall be no more, and gentle Peace
Shall bend the spear into a pruning-hook,
And take the sword, and make of it a share.

As yet, the Seer's sweet words seem but a dream :
God speed the time of their reality !
For hitherto, through each succeeding age,
War oft hath stol'n the treasured stores of Peace ;
And, spite of her entreaties and her tears,
Hath turned her workshops into arsenals,
And in her furnace made the metal glow,
And in her foundries cast and grooved his guns,
And on her anvils shaped the sword and spear ;
And in one year wasted a century's gains,
And in one year blasted a century's growth,
Filling the world with want and deathful woe.

To know Earth shrined, within herself, these stores,
Was lure sufficient to excite man's greed.
Intent on gain, the glory of Earth's face
Held him not back from piercing her great heart.
He delved his way full many a fathom down,
And found, at length, the treasures that he sought ;
And, reckless of her many facial charms,
Threw over them vast heaps of slaty shale,
Blurring her beauty, far and wide, for leagues.

Then, to complete the ravage thus begun,
All trades that scatter dust, and vomit smoke,

And breathe out sulphurous flame, soon settle here,
And fill the region with a ceaseless din.
The smutty smoke trails over all the land,
And soon destroys what loveliness is left ;
And almost veils from sight the sky of day.
And lurid fires rob night of half her stars,
And fill the air with fitful gleams and glooms.

Happy for us, we live not in the midst
Of this strange territory of fire and smoke ;
For there, look where you may, the smoke o' th' land
Goes up like one wide furnace everywhere.
Nature's fresh face can nowhere there be seen,
And her sweet voices there are never heard.

Not in the midst, but on the marge, we live,
Belted about with furnace, forge, mill, mine ;
We hear huge hammers thudding day and night,
And the harsh grinding of the ponderous rolls
That shoot the metal out in ribbon bands.
And night with us hath other lights than stars,
Which bicker into brightness and then die,
Flash into view, then, ghost-like, fleet away.

South-west and west, this belt that rings us in
Is but few furlongs broad. When this is past,
Fair Nature soon begins to smile again,
And show herself in all her wealth of charms.