

**A HALF YEAR'S
POEMS OF
JAMES HENRY**

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A Half Year's Poems of James Henry by James Henry

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15708

OF

JAMES HENRY, M. D.

CRITIC.

In vain through all your pages
For one good thought I look;
I'd say but for politeness,
You've written a worthless book.

AUTHOR.

The judgment a man utters
Does but himself reveal;
The flint to lead refuses
The spark it yields to steel.

Trompeter-Schlösschen, Dresden, April 8, 1854.

DRESDEN.

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1854.

THANKSGIVING.

I thank thee, Muse, for pleasures three —
"Póet, what pleasures may those be?"
I thank thee first for the delight
I take myself in all I write;
I thank thee next and thank thee more
Fór the delight with which I store
Cellfuls of honied poesie
For those who shall come after me;
And last and most for the delight
I thank thee, Muse, with which I write
Póems my friends from morn to night
And night to morn read with delight.

TROMPETER-SCHLÖSSCHEN, DRESDEN, Febr. 28, 1854.

ÓFT 'twixt sleep and waking
I behóld a figure
Airy light and handsome
Flitting right before me,

Right before me flitting
Like Italian firefly
On a July evening
Just at daylight-going,

Or like planet rising
From the ocean's clear edge,
And revealed alternate
And hid by the billows.

When intent I wake up
To embrace my lost Love,
Ah! the vision 's vanished
And all 's blank around me;

Whén I láy my heáð down
Ónce more ón the pillow,
Thére again 's the vision
Flitting right befóre me,

Like refléction pláying
Ón a smóóth white ceiling
Fróm a gláss of wáter
Sháken in the súnligh.

Íf, instead of wáking,
Í sleep ónly deéper,
Óther visions máy come
Bút I lóse the figure.

Néver cómes that figure
Óut of deáð and góne times,
Flitting thére befóre me
Aíry líght and gráceful

Like Itálian firefly
Ón a still damp évening
Ín the mónth of Júly
Áfter thé sun 's góne down,

Like a plánet rising
Ón the édge of ócean
Ánd reveáled altérnate
Ánd hid bý the billows,

Like the sún's refléction
Ón a white-washed ceiling
Fróm a gláss of wáter
Sháken in the window,

Bút when I 'm too hánging,
Hálf asleép half wáking,
Équipoised betweén
The deáð world ánd the living.

Composed during the night in bed, TROMPETER-SCHLÖSSCHEN, DRESDEN,
Febr. 8—9, 1854.

BELISARIUS.

NOVEMBER's clouds are gathering fast;
The woods are whistling in the blast;
It is a rugged old oak tree
That spreads between the sky and me
His wrinkled arms, with here and there
A leaf upon his fingers bare.
About his feet lie sere and red
The honors of his once green head.
Hère make my grave, there 's sympathy
Between this ancient oak and me;
Like him I grew and florished fair;
Like him I 'm withered old and bare;
O'er me like him life's stórms have passed;
Like him I 've shivered in the blast;
We both draw near our end at last.
Hère lay me down, here let me die;
No need of stone or verse have I;
Write Belisarius on the tree;
My name tells all my history.

Written while walking in BADEN, from WALDWIMMERSBACH to MOSBACH,
Nov. 25, 1853.

AWAKE him not; look at him if thou wilt,
But let no touch or sound or stir disturb him
Out of his slumber; see his mighty chine,
His firm-set shoulder muscular and brawny;
In what thick ringlets hangs his shaggy mane
Enveloping as with a wiry muff
Withers and neck and ears and half his forehead.
From the one paw thou see'st there, somewhat thrust out
From underneath the superincumbent weight
Of that huge bony head, judge of the others.
If from those dark, drooped lids, and those closed jaws,
That quiet, slow, and scarce perceptible
Swelling and falling of those nostril edges,
Thou turn'st away with an instinctive horror,
How wilt thou face the uncovered eyeballs' glare,
The wide-dilated nostril, the curled lip,
Tusks gnashing, muttered growl, and rising mane,
And tail indignant lashing both his sides,
And claws erect and ready for the spring?
Nay, nay; if thou art wise, thou 'lt not molest
The lion peaceful sleeping in his lair —
Thou 'lt not with deed or word or thought aggressive
Stir in its placid light repose thy conscience.

TROMPETER-SCHLÖSSEN, DRESDEN, Febr. 17, 1854.

ARRIA.

TAKE the knife, Petus; fear not it will hurt thee;
Or if it hurt thee, it is but a hurt,
One friendly hurt that saves thee from a thousand.
Thou 'rt pale; afraid; give me the knife; see there,
That 's my blood on it, yet I 'm nothing frightened.
I 'm sore where it has cut me; what of that?
A little deeper, I were sore no longer;
No knife, no Cesar, more, had power to hurt me.
Take the knife, Petus; and bid loud defiance
To all who with the knife would terrify thee.
No man with knife in hand 's the slave of Cesar.

TROMPETER-SCHLÖSSCHEN, DRESDEN, Febr. 5. 1854.

SHE lies below;
These roses grow
On Ellen's grave;
Sigh, nightwinds, sigh
As ye pass by,
Ye willows, wave.

One month ago,
We loved as though . . .
Never to part;
And now — Alas!
All flesh is grass;
Break, break, my heart.

TROMPETER-SCHLÖSSCHEN, DRESDEN, Febr. 28, 1854.