THE PARADISE OF MARTYRS: A FIFTH RHUME; PART FIRST.- IN FIFE BOOK

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649667239

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd. Cover @ 2017

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THOMAS COOPER

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PART FIRST .-- IN FIVE BOOKS.

BY

THOMAS COOPER,

AUTHOR OF "THE FORGATORY OF SUICIDES: A PRISON RHYME," ETC., BTC., ETC.



HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 97, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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Watson and Hazell, Printers, London and Aylesbury.

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PREFACE.

BEFORE my Prison-Rhyme, "The Purgatory of Suicides," was finished—thirty years ago—I promised myself to write "The Paradise of Martyrs." A busy life has prevented me from trying to fulfil my promise, in any shape, until very lately. And, even now, I offer but half of my purposed Faith-Rhyme to the world—I mean to the kind people who care to read it. If I do not live to write the other half, these five books are complete in themselves, and will serve to shew what my purpose was; and, perhaps, to over-satisfy many who have, for years, urged me to the fulfilment of my promise.

At sixty-eight, one ccases to be sanguine, if not to care, about literary success. I quite expect the critics will cry out, "What tame stuff is this compared with 'the Purgatory'!" But I shall take no

PREFACE.

offence, nor fret with chagrin. My quiet consolation will be that my "Paradise" is *happier* than my "Purgatory." It is the fruit, not of a mind struggling with doubt in a gloomy prison; but of a heart, thank God! throbbing with gratitude to Him for restoration to Christian faith and Christian life, and daily intent on spreading that faith and life in the hearts of others.

I have not burthened my poem with numerous Notes, because people do not read pages of Notes now-a-days. The few I have added to each Book seemed to be necessary; and that is the only reason why they appear.

THOMAS COOPER.

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TO WILLIAM EDWARD FORSTER.

I DEDICATE this book to you who sought Mc out, when you had read my Prison-Rhyme— Disdainful of what cowards and serviles thought Of one who had worn the fetters for no crime— But only had lived and striven before his time, And let his heart impel him to the deed Of championship defiant for the Poor, Their right to live by labour, and be freed Indeed—not mocked with freedom—on the shore Where Freedom hath her boast.

Kindness doth breed Grateful remembrance in the inmost core Of true men's hearts, when done to them in need. Let me be named with those who ne'er forget A kindness : reckoning it a great life-debt.

My friend, our lot in stormful time is cast ; And who to God and Conscience, reverent, own Inviolable fealty should hold fast Each other's hands, in spite of peasants' frown Or nobles'. Your great path of Duty strown With difficulty may be for many a day ; And, sometimes, you may have to strive alone ; But shoulder to shoulder with you, in the fray,

viii · TO WILLIAM EDWARD FORSTER.

Shall stand the good and true, when heat is gone, And party spleen,—and all perceive dismay At scrried foes doth never cast you down, Nor difficulty your patient courage allay ; But your consistent course to all men shews What you are now you will be to Life's close.

I shall not live to see your toil complete ; But know your steady aim to the end will be Still to preserve Old England the firm seat Of grandest freedom, and to give the key Of knowledge unto all. Felicity The highest that our fatherland can share You wish to see her win : that every child Be trained so wisely and well, it may with care The laws which freemen love kccp undefiled, Nor heedless be of holier laws that bear The Maker's fiat. Toiling, unbeguiled

By smiles, unquelled by frowns, the pearl still wear Of an unsullied conscience, and your joy, Throughout Life's path, no censure shall destroy !