

**CURIOSITY: A POEM, DELIVERED
AT CAMBRIDGE, BEFORE THE PHI
BETA KAPPA SOCIETY . AN ODE:
PRONOUNCED BEFORE THE
INHABITANTS OF BOSTON**

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Curiosity: A Poem, Delivered at Cambridge, Before the Phi Beta Kappa Society . An ode:
pronounced before the inhabitants of boston by Charles Sprague

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CHARLES SPRAGUE

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CURIOSITY.



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CURIOSITY

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A POEM,

DELIVERED AT CAMBRIDGE,

BEFORE THE

PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY,

AUGUST 27, 1829.

BY CHARLES SPRAGUE.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY J. T. BUCKINGHAM.

1829.

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, *in aid.*

District Clerk's Office.

Be it remembered, that on the fourth day of September, A. D. 1869, in the fifty-fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America, J. T. Buckingham, of the said district, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

"*Curiosity: A Poem, delivered at Cambridge, before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, August 27, 1868. By Charles Sprague.*"

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned;" and also to an act, entitled, "An act supplementary to an act, entitled, 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned;' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

JNO. W. DAVIS,

Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.

CAMBRIDGE:

E. W. METCALF AND COMPANY,

Printers to the University.

CURIOSITY.

It came from Heaven — its power archangels knew,
When this fair globe first rounded to their view ;
When the young sun revealed the glorious scene
Where oceans gathered and where lands grew green ;
When the dead dust in joyful myriads swarmed,
And map, the clod, with God's own breath was warmed :
It reigned in Eden — when that man first woke,
Its kindling influence from his eyeballs spoke ;
No roving childhood, no exploring youth
Led him along, till wonder chilled to truth ;
Full-formed at once, his subject world he trod,
And gazed upon the labours of his God ;
On all by turns his chartered glance was cast,
While each pleased best as each appeared the last ;
But when She came, in nature's blameless pride,
Bone of his bone, his heaven-anointed bride,
All meaner objects faded from his sight,
And sense turned giddy with the new delight ;
Those charmed his eye, but this entranced his soul,
Another self, queen-wonder of the whole !

Rapt at the view, in ecstasy he stood,
 And, like his Maker, saw that all was good.

It reigned in Edén — in that heavy hour
 When the arch-tempter sought our mother's tower,
 Its thrilling charm her yielding heart assailed,
 And even o'er dread Jehovah's word prevailed.
 There the fair tree in fatal beauty grew,
 And hung its mystic apples to her view :
 " Eat," breathed the fiend, beneath his serpent guise,
 " Ye shall know all things, gather, and be wise !"
 Sweet on her ear the wily falsehood stole,
 And roused the Ruling Passion of her soul.
 " Ye shall become like God " — transcendent fate !
 That God's command forgot, she plucked and ate ;
 Ate, and her partner lured to share the crime,
 Whose wo, the legend saith, must live through time.
 For this they shrank before the Avenger's face,
 For this He drove them from the sacred place ;
 For this came down the universal lot,
 To weep, to wander, die, and be forgot.

It came from Heaven — it reigned in Eden's shades —
 It roves on earth — and every walk invades :
 Childhood and age alike its influence own,
 It haunts the beggar's nook, the monarch's throne ;
 Hangs o'er the cradle, leans above the bier,
 Gazed on old Babel's tower — and lingers here.

To all that 's lofty, all that 's low it turns,
 With terror curdles and with rapture burns ;
 Now feels a seraph's throb, now, less than man's,
 A reptile tortures and a planet scans ;
 Now idly joins in life's poor, passing jars,
 Now shakes creation off, and soars beyond the stars.

'T is CURIOSITY — who hath not felt
 Its spirit, and before its altar knelt ?
 In the pleased infant see its power expand,
 When first the coral fills his little hand ;
 Throned in his mother's lap, it dries each tear,
 As her sweet legend falls upon his ear ;
 Next it assails him in his top's strange hum,
 Breathes in his whistle, echoes in his drum ;
 Each gilded toy, that doting love bestows,
 He longs to break and every spring exposc.
 Placed by your hearth, with what delight he pores
 O'er the bright pages of his pictured stores ;
 How oft he steals upon your graver task,
 Of this to tell you and of that to ask ;
 And, when the waning hour to-bedward bids,
 Though gentle sleep sit waiting on his lids,
 How winningly he pleads to gain you o'er,
 That he may read one little story more.

Nor yet alone to toys and tales confined,
 It sits, dark brooding, o'er his embryo mind :
 Take him between your knees, peruse his face,