

POEMS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649545469

Poems by Cynthia Taggart

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CYNTHIA TAGGART

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POEMS,

BY

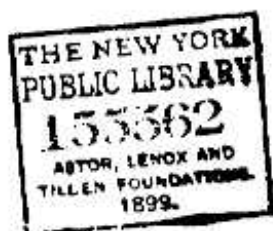
CYNTHIA TAGGART.

Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.—*Lev. 24. 32, 33.*

THIRD EDITION.

NEW YORK:
PRINTED BY B. R. BARLOW.

1848.



TO THE
REV. JAMES COOK RICHMOND,
HER STEADFAST FRIEND,
NOW IN LONDON,

This Volume, . . .

IS MOST GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.

MIDDLETOWN, *Rhode Island*, July, 1848.

P R E F A C E

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

It is believed that the Poems in this volume, composed as they were under circumstances of unusual affliction, will be read with a peculiar interest. They are the record of a secluded sufferer; yet surely, in a world like this, of vicissitude and sorrow, they cannot fail to touch some chord of sympathetic feeling. We are not fitted for the condition of human life,—we are not cultivated to the extent of the capabilities of our nature, if to us the genuine expressions of sorrow are not eloquent. It is for a benevolent purpose, that God has wrought into our souls a capacity of receiving the impression of another's joys or sorrows. It is this capacity which unites us most truly to our fellow-beings. Without it, we should be solitary and sad in any part of God's universe. Without it, knowledge would lose half its value, prosperity its highest charm, and suffering its most grateful alleviation. The scriptures make their appeal to us through this principle of our nature. Without this power of sympathy, we can hold no communion with Prophets and Apostles; and without it, the subduing narrative of a Saviour's sufferings would have been given to us in vain. Imagination was bestowed upon us, that we might place ourselves in

the situation of others, and be excited by it to a congenial sympathy. This is, at least, one of the highest moral purposes of that noble faculty. When allied with benevolence and truth, it brings within our view a wider range of human interests than reason alone can apprehend. Why is it so seldom consecrated either to the sacred charities of life, or to the anticipation of the untold glories of heaven!

From the Christian who has held intimate communion with the spirit of his crucified Master, and whose tenderness is kept alive by the highest motives and the most touching remembrances, we may expect a just appreciation of the productions in this little volume. He solemnly realizes that every human being is placed under the government of God; and he views with deep interest the dispensations of his Providence toward individuals, as well as toward nations. To him, an immortal being, striving for submission to the will of God, in the midst of calamity and accumulated suffering, is an object of sublime interest. The pathos and the poetry of *truth*, as exhibited in these productions, will be felt by the Christian. To the medical man and the philosopher, desirous of contemplating the human intellect and character under every variety of circumstance, productions indicating so much thought, imagination, and feeling, and composed under the weight of the most oppressive disease, may furnish an interesting subject of reflection and inquiry. We cannot expect that those who are too much engrossed by their own personal welfare, and with the conveniences and pleasures which surround them, to think often of others, or to feel for them, will peruse this volume. Their sphere is too limited for the enlarged and generous sympathies of a rational spirit. But it is hoped that there are few who can peruse it, and remain unaffected by it.

In confirmation of our opinion, that these Poems

are not without power to interest, we offer some remarks introductory to one of the pieces, "An Ode to the Poppy," published in the Providence Literary Journal.

"The author of the following Ode is one of those whom Misery has long since marked for her own, and exercised with the severest form of physical suffering. Afflicted with a chronic disease of many years' duration (in the seat of thought itself), for which there is no remedy, and which must fatally terminate through slow and protracted degrees of pain and distress; never wholly losing her consciousness of present evil, in the balm of *sleep*, the author has yet been able briefly to forget her condition, and to find momentary consolation, in dictating to her friends several poetical effusions; from which the present has been selected as one of the most finished. Though secluded from the face of Nature, the memory of its various and beautiful forms is quickened, in her solitude, by a poet's imagination. There is a pathos in some of her pieces, a strength of soul struggling against the doom of its decaying tenement, in the agony of deferred and expiring hope, that excite in us, as we lay them down, a feeling of melancholy regret, that another mind is destined to pass away, and leave so imperfect a record of its origin;—a regret that is but partially alleviated by the conviction, however sincere, that, as well in the universe of mind, as of matter, through all their endless changes, nothing is lost, and all is safe in the hands of its Maker.

"The subject of this brief notice is little improved by *education*, and owes nothing to *circumstances*: thus adding another to the thousand proofs that *genius*, in its different degrees and kinds, is a *gift*, native in the soul, irrepressible in its growth by the greatest weight of calamity, and flourishing even in the cold shadow of Death.

"The author's story disarms criticism, and makes its way at once to the charity of the heart."

Jour. for Nov. 2d, 1833.

The eloquent observations of the Editor of the *Literary Journal* are to the same purpose.

"We solicit the attention of the reader to the preceding columns, containing the Memoir of William Taggart, and to the communications by which it is accompanied. His unstudied and unpretending narrative would repay perusal, were it merely for the fine exhibition of personal character which it contains. It, moreover, affords information respecting important events in the war of our Independence, and particularly illustrates some of the most interesting passages in the history of our own State.

"But these are not the strongest circumstances which recommend it to attention. We refer to it, not so much on account of its connexion with the memory of the dead, as with the fate of the living; with the condition of the surviving daughter, whose story, though brief, is terrible, and which cannot be repeated or heard without emotion. It has already been told in the introductory remarks accompanying one of her poetical effusions which we inserted a few weeks since. The victim of a lingering and incurable malady, under which she has suffered for years; never losing the sense of physical pain, and perfectly conscious of the hopelessness of her condition; although possessing but slight advantages of education, and owing little to the influence of society, she has sent forth compositions which contain the emanations of a mind rich in endowment, fraught with beautiful and delicate conceptions, embodied in a style of language, the correctness and purity of which, under all these adverse circumstances, is scarcely less remarkable than the thoughts which it contains.