

THE YOUTH OF MESSIAH

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The youth of Messiah by Edward Farquhar

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EDWARD FARQUHAR

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OF MESSIAH**

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The Youth of Messiah

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Author of "Poems"



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*Material supposed to have been found in an
ancient manuscript, newly discovered*

I

Of all things worshipful, scarce a breath
Had graced the village of Nazareth;
Too far from Zion for Judah's mould,
By heathen tainted but not controlled;
Yet even those clouds that her skies confuse,
Might robe them after in tenderer hues.
But Joseph and Mary there unblamed
Had dwelt, nor them had their offspring shamed;
And least their firstborn, patriot-named;
Whom, yearning over his tribe enthralled,
The sire, high-aiming, had Jesus called,
As a prayer for return of ancient fame,
Renewing the primal conqueror's name,
Who wrested the land from usurpers old.

And he grew before them, bright and bold;
They watched and wondered, as year led year,
If mind or hand were to cast his sphere.
To thought and teaching, none like him bent,
But endeavor no less was element.
No young unfolding of spirit bloom
More deep of the glory drank and gloom
That psalmist or prophet's hallowed page
With tempest shadow, with Heaven illumed;

8 THE YOUTH OF MESSIAH

Yet was it Joshua's zealot rage,
Whose deeds were to fire his opening soul,
That swayed his passion with more control,
Or Job's low moaning, and vision high?
All kindled, or moistened, the quick, deep eye.
And in all, one lode-star beacons clear:
The nearer to God, to him more near.
Then, all receding another day,
Consigned his ardors to work or play,
And in either his leading hand was felt;
He foremost in youthful pastime ranged,
At his father's bench apprentice dwelt,
But guided soon the mechanic toil
Of others who knew but the daily toil;
And again, transmuted and unestranged,
Alone he haunted sequestered shades,
Untrodden wilds and serenest glades,
Hung over the Abib-wakening flower,
With the fervor that glowed in the Seer's hour,
With the joy that his eagerest sports could yield,
With the pains that his axe and mallet wield;
The mountain knew him, its pant and rest;
Of his friends, the dumb grew oft the best.
Next day, perhaps, to a peering crowd,
Occasion lifted his voice aloud
In counsel and exhortation true;
All centred the sunflower glance thereto;
The languishing, quickened before his touch,
Gave hint for a life consigned to such.

And we guess the hours, though their stroke be
mute,

Of plantings that fixed yet deeper root:
Of the strifes to which all without was peace,
The traces rest, but the records cease.
So rich a being, no child of one
He seemed, but humanity's chosen son;
Yet sole in himself, as other none.
So deep the mark that his nature graved,
None called him changeful, or mocked or braved,
But marvelled of what the man would do
Whose youth in its powers so diverse grew.
It is strange, in the lines of that dusty roll
How I fix the feature, how frame the soul!
That face is with me, in clearer sight
Than those I have parted from tonight;
Were the pencil mine, I could brand it fast;
Far other, than late-day art has cast!
No pallors thin, and pathetics dim;
Great Karl was liker than these to him.

The traits that awaked such gaze and doubt,
A thread within and a chain without,
Combining and ordering, shaped one whole.
This purpose axled the burning soul:
What yet he would do, himself not knew,
But somewhat, surely, and large and true.
Let others be what they may, breathed he,
No common lot, nor in vain, for me.
And sundry the aims that coursed his youth,

But still ascending in strength and truth.
 Yet ever a softer motive stirred;
 Where accent of human grief was heard,
 All other scope of the great heart fell,
 All turned to succor, till that were well.
 With the folk, this rated all gifts above;
 The rest were for wonder, this for love:
 While many a high-bound scheme lay slacked,
 Where pity, as with an edge had hacked.
 There was scorn in his thought for creeping mind;
 But pain remanded all scorn behind.

For the rest, the torrent of life and will,
 Its banks o'erbearing, some tracks of ill
 Disclosed on the surface it watered still;
 Imperious, doubtless, among the crowd
 That mated him not, unsharing, proud,
 To the simple burghers he oft appeared;
 No mode he followed, no name he feared.
 Not loud at presumption's vaunt he laughed,
 But pierced the tumor with satire's shaft;
 Not always unharmed dullness won
 Forbearing of him, where its like was none.
 Nor solemn nor tender lines could hide
 The lava-core of ascendant pride;
 Not wronging the meanest, but yielding nought
 To power or to wealth, to creed or thought;
 Or Jew or Roman, or prince or priest,
 Earth-greatest weighed in the scale with least;
 A pride too high, ye have well divined,

THE YOUTH OF MESSIAH 11

For aught of baseness or gain to blind;
A pride too just, to withhold the due
Of homage to parent good and true.
And over his acts one band must fall,
Not forming each, but conforming all;
With the truth of his heartstrings, true he clave
To the claims of his birth-land, free or slave.
Far borne from those annals his spirit drank,
The splendor and shame of Israel sank;
And ever the fountain of dream and plan
Deliverance flowed, for the stricken clan.