

SONGS FROM PRUDENTIUS

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Songs from Prudentius by Ernest Gilliat Smith

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ERNEST GILLIAT SMITH

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PRUDENTIUS**

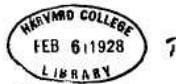
Songs from Prudentius

BY

ERNEST GILLIAT SMITH

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Songs from Prudentius

And we have cross'd the mist-clad vale,
(All numb'd with chilling fear) of still Death's frozen shade,
And Time's stern dial hath ceas'd to mark the hours of
winter's blight,

And God's own Spring blooms ev'rywhere,
And Hope's fair fruit is ripe, that we, still hand in hand,
May sun ourselves in thy bright smile and His, our Master's—
Jesus Christ.

SONGS FROM PRUDENTIUS

PROLOGUE

UNLESS memory faileth me,
Since I first saw the light, 'tis seven and fifty years.
For seven and fifty years glad summer's sun hath yearly
gladdened me.

And now my course is almost run,
And death, the kinsman of old age, sits close to me.
Throughout all these long years, what have I done worthy of
blessedness ?

That time of tears and chastisement,
My childhood, I recall once more, and then 'tis youth,
And youth's vain joys, and youth's false follies which rise up
before mine eyes.

It shameth me to to think of them—
Those reckless bygone days replete with luxury—
Those days mis-spent which stained mine innocence with strife
and wantonness,

Then, to distract my troubled soul,
 I set myself to learn the art of government,
 And, straightway, emulation strewed my path with thorns and
 jagged stones.

And then, I knew the sweets of power.
 Twice these frail fingers grasped the reins which rule great
 towns,
 Twice I held sovereign sway, and gave men laws, and settled
 their disputes.

And then, I mounted higher still,
 For fortune smiled on me, and I found favour with
 My Lord the Emperor, who placed me at his court e'en next
 himself.

And whilst these things were happening
 The white locks of old age stole on me unawares,
 And bade me call to mind that I was born when Salias and
 Philip reigned.

The snow upon my brow doth show
 How many winter storms have since swept over me,
 How many times since then soft Spring hath passed strewing
 her rose blossoms.

What profit 's there in earthly things—
 Or good or ill—since death must have this earthen vase
 And break its feebleness, all which remains of a once noble
 form?