

**THE POEMS OF  
CHARLOTTE BRONTE  
(CURRER BELL)**

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The Poems of Charlotte Bronte (Curren Bell) by Charlotte Brontë

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POEMS OF CHARLOTTE  
BRONTË.

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PILATE'S WIFE'S DREAM.

I'VE quenched my lamp, I struck it in  
that start  
Which every limb convulsed, I heard  
it fall—  
The crash blent with my sleep, I saw  
depart  
Its light, even as I woke, on yonder  
wall :  
Over against my bed, there shone a  
gleam  
Strange, faint, and mingling also with  
my dream.

6 POEMS OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

It sank, and I am wrapt in utter  
gloom ;  
How far is night advanced, and when  
will day  
Re-tinge the dusk and livid air with  
bloom,  
And fill this void with warm, creative  
ray ?  
Would I could sleep again till, clear and  
red,  
Morning shall on the mountain-tops be  
spread !

I'd call my women, but to break their  
sleep,  
Because my own is broken, were un-  
just ;  
They've wrought all day, and well-earn'd  
slumbers steep  
Their labours in forgetfulness, I  
trust :  
Let me my feverish watch with patience  
bear,  
Thankful that none with me its suffer-  
ings share.

PILATE'S WIFE'S DREAM. 7

Yet Oh, for light! One ray would tranquillize  
My nerves, my pulses, more than effort can ;  
I'll draw my curtain, and consult the  
skies :  
These trembling stars at dead of night  
look wan,  
Wild, restless, strange, yet cannot be  
more drear  
Than this my couch, shared by a nameless  
fear.

All black—one great cloud, drawn from  
east to west,  
Conceals the heavens, but there are  
lights below ;  
Torches burn in Jerusalem, and cast  
On yonder stony mount a lurid glow.  
I see men station'd there, and gleaming  
spears ;  
A sound, too, from afar, invades my  
ears.



8 POEMS OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

Dull, measured strokes of axe and hammer ring  
From street to street, not loud, but through the night  
Distinctly heard—and some strange spectral thing  
Is now uprear'd—and, fix'd against the light  
Of the pale lamps, defined upon that sky,  
It stands up like a column, straight and high.

I see it all—I know the dusky sign—  
A cross on Calvary, which Jews uprear  
While Romans watch; and when the dawn shall shine  
Pilate, to judge the victim, will appear—  
Pass sentence—yield Him up to crucify;  
And on that cross the spotless Christ must die.

PILATE'S WIFE'S DREAM. 9

Dreams, then, are true—for thus my  
vision ran ;  
Surely some oracle has been with  
me,  
The gods have chosen me to reveal their  
plan,  
To warn an unjust judge of destiny :  
I, slumbering, heard and saw ; awake I  
know,  
Christ's coming death, and Pilate's life  
of woe.

I do not weep for Pilate—who could  
prove  
Regret for him whose cold and crush-  
ing sway  
No prayer can soften, no appeal can  
move ;  
Who tramples hearts as others tram-  
ple clay,  
Yet with a faltering, an uncertain  
tread,  
That might stir up reprisal in the  
dead.

10 POEMS OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

Forced to sit by his side and see his  
deeds ;

Forced to behold that visage, hour by  
hour,

In whose gaunt lines the abhorrent gazer  
reads

A triple lust of gold, and blood, and  
power ;

A soul whom motives fierce, yet abject,  
urge—

Rome's servile slave, and Judah's ty-  
rant scourge ;

How can I love, or mourn, or pity  
him ?

I, who so long my fetter'd hands have  
wrung ;

I, who for grief have wept my eyesight  
dim ;

Because, while life for me was bright  
and young,

He robb'd my youth—he quench'd my  
life's fair ray—

He crush'd my mind, and did my free-  
dom slay.