

**VITAL THOUGHTS,
AND
OTHERS POEMS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649445714

Vital Thoughts, and Others Poems by John Chick Murray

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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OTHER POEMS

BY

JOHN CHICK MURRAY



THE GORHAM PRESS
BOSTON

1904

PROEM.

Now, to the mighty literary sea,
Whose tides so long have grandly ebb'd and flow'd
On the far-stretching shores of time and change,—
Now agitated by a tidal swell
Of some great heart and nobly stirring mind,
Surging in potent splendor far and wide,
And casting on the sands of centuries,
Its shining gems and pearls of hallowed worth;
Now by some lesser, yet a worthy force,
Whose billows move in measured majesty
In all directions o'er the throbbing deep,
Until along the divers' distant shores,
Forever broke against the rocks of time;
And now by a still lesser influence
'Tis moved, and on its ample surface bears
The little ripples, sparkling sweetly through,
And, least of all, its bubbles and its foam—
To this I add my contribution now,
And if it's but a bubble, soon 'twill burst
And vanish on the surface where it formed,
Nor reaching the contending sands and rocks.
Not in the shadow of academies,
Not in the shade of laurels and diplomas,
Were formed the trifles that I now submit,
But they were framed beneath the heavenly dome
Of Nature's blesséd school and theatre;
Here in this mighty temple and divine,
I found the pith and passion of my song:

Amid her sacred and unnumbered scenes,
Whence God illustrates to the world his love;
Amid her earth, her ocean and her skies,
Her firm-based rocks below, her stars above,
Her mighty voices and her sweetest hush,
Her flooding mornings and her fading eves,
Her noontide glory and her midnight awe,
Her babbling waters and her blooming flowers,
Her rural voices and her stately plows,
Her ever varying seasons and their hues—
Soul-painting hues and heaven-ordain'd wealth :
Amid her aspirations in my soul,
Her deathless memories and darling hopes,
Her wing'ed fancies, raptures and her tears,
Her brother love and sympathy divine,
Her disappointments and her sore defeats,
The kindred circles and the sacred ties,
The swaddling raiment and the winding robe ;
'Mid ruminations on this present sphere
And anxious visions of the world to come—
Here woven was the texture of my lay.

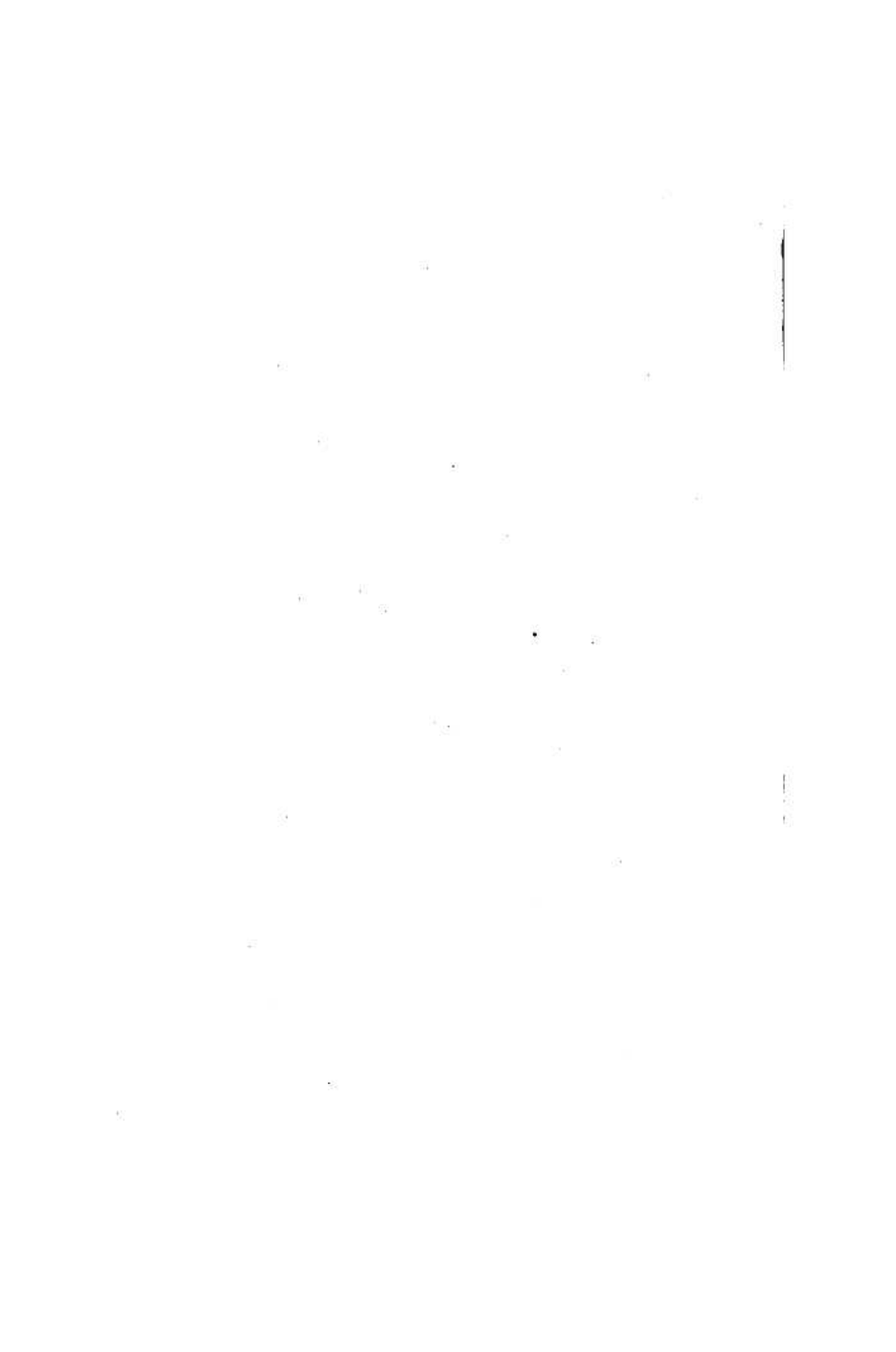
And of this great preceptress 'twere my aim
That ever my endeavors worthy prove;
True to her thoughts and pictures in my brain,
True to her noble passions in my breast.
And it has been my proud ambition, too,
To sing as worthy of the land I love—
The land of glory, Washington, renown ;
To sing as worthy of its blazing past,
Its present pride and future infinite ;
Worthy the patriots and heroes who
Drove vaunting Tyranny from all our shores,
Framed the grand structure of our liberty,

PROEM

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And guard the portals of our glory now;
To sing as worthy of the many homes,
Whose underpinning holds our nation's pride,
Whose light alone can people Freedom's world;
To make the light of my poor pencil's fire
Peer the affections and the hopes of friends—
For this my brain has ached, my heart has thrilled.

But if in all these worthy aims I fail,
After so many holy truths and blessings
Are scattered at my feet, and on the walls
Of Nature's galleries such splendors hung;
And after God has planted in my soul
The noble yearning and the thrill of love,
And every passion to adore his works—
If my achievements still unworthy be,
No apology I dare or deign to give,
No pitying favor or dissembling smile
Of strangers, friends or kindred I implore,
But urge you censure as the heart may feel,
And boldly too—not like the flattering morn,
To guild my failure with excusing light,
Not in the frowning phase of scorning clouds,
Not in the shrinking gaze of parting suns,
But in the manly guise of noble storms
And purifying lightnings, that ye purge
The dross, and keep your country's music pure.



VITAL THOUGHTS
BOOK FIRST

