

POEMS

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Poems by William Leighton

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WILLIAM LEIGHTON

POEMS

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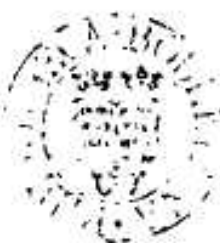
P O E M S

BY THE LATE

WILLIAM LEIGHTON.

'Gone in the bloom of youth, the flower of life,
Ere yet his morning hours had wholly shone:
Gone from a world of promises how rife!
With all our bright hopes, gone!'

SECOND EDITION.



LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1870.

280. n. 114.

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PREFACE.

THE FOLLOWING POEMS are the productions of a young writer of great promise, whose sudden death in the spring of last year, at the early age of twenty-eight, cast a gloom over a large circle of friends and acquaintances, by whom he was greatly beloved and esteemed. His inherent modesty caused him to hide from most of these his poetical powers, but the few who had knowledge of them anticipated for him a distinguished career. Composed during the leisure hours of an active commercial life, the poems now before the reader, as well as many others not inserted in this edition, betoken the workings and growth of a genius which would assuredly have produced 'better things' had the author's life been spared.

William Leighton was born at Dundee in 1841. In his seventh year, however, his family removed to Liverpool, where he received his education and where the remainder of his life was spent. At the age of thirteen he was placed in a merchant's office, and in the course of time he attained the position of managing and confidential clerk to an eminent Liverpool firm engaged in the Brazil trade. An assiduous attention to business left him but little leisure for the cultivation of his natural taste for literature, but the greater portion of his spare time was devoted to study and composition. Poetry was his passion, and he was exceedingly well acquainted with the writings of the poets, amongst whom Shakespeare, Tennyson, and Longfellow were his favourite authors.

Mr. Leighton commenced writing verses at a very early age, and the majority of the poems in the present volume were composed before he had completed his twenty-third year. The pieces have been arranged, as nearly as possible, in their chronological order—the first one in the book having been written at the age of fifteen, and the last ('At Death's Door') only the week before he died. Many of the poems have appeared since his death in the 'St. James,' 'New Monthly,' 'United Service,' 'Churchman's Shilling,' 'Church of England,' 'Once a Week,' and other magazines, while some of those which refer to national events (such as the death of the Prince Consort, the celebration of the Shakespeare tercentenary, the marriage of the Prince of Wales, &c.), were, when written, inserted anonymously in the 'Liverpool Mercury.' In addition to the poems, he wrote a considerable number of essays and sketches, which may at some future time be given to the public. A few of these have already appeared in well-known periodicals.

Often pressed by his friends to publish a volume of his poems, Mr. Leighton at length consented to do so, and it was while engaged in preparing them for the press that he met with the severe attack of typhoid fever which caused his death. After an illness which lasted only ten days, he died April 22, 1869.

During his short but useful and virtuous life he exercised a marked and happy influence over all around him: his manners were most gentle, his sympathies tender, his affections deep and lasting, his disposition cheerful and happy, and he was always distinguished by that thoughtfulness and earnestness which spring from deep religious feelings and convictions.

He was a nephew of Mr. Robert Leighton, who died a few days after him, and whose poems have been well received both in this country and in America.

LONDON: *March, 1870.*

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY STANZAS	1
SUMMERS LONG AGO	2
'JESUS WEPT'	5
THOU ART GONE, MY BROTHER	6
TOLL THE BELL	8
ELLA	10
AN INTRODUCTION FOR AN ALBUM	12
SONG	13
BEAUTY	14
IN ABSENCE	15
INTRODUCTION FOR A MANUSCRIPT MAGAZINE	16
THE RIVER OF LIFE	17
SHE CAME—AND WENT	19
WRITTEN IN MY SISTER'S ALBUM	21
A DREAM	23
WHAT SHALL I SING?	27
A THOUGHT	28
FAREWELL TO THE YEAR 1861	28
ON MY TWENTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY	31
THE CARRIER PIGEON	32
A HUNDRED YEARS AGO	34
STARVED	36
AN OLD MAN'S LOVE SONG	38
MAY DAY, 1862	40
WHITBY ABBEY	42
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-TWO	44
LOVELY IN DEATH	48
THE TRYSTING TREE	50
THE SEA	53
'HOW WILT THOU DO IN THE SWELLING OF JORDAN?'	54
GOD IS EVERYWHERE	55
CALM AND STORM	58
AWAKE	59
'COR UNUM, VIA UNA'	61
MARCH 10TH, 1863	62
THE LEAF OF WOODRUFF	65

	PAGE
MINE	67
THE CLOUD	69
GLENCOE	71
THE SEASONS	75
PEACE, BE STILL	77
LIFE AND DEATH	78
THE DEAD YEAR, 1863	79
A NATION'S NEW YEAR'S GIFT	81
APRIL	83
SHAKESPEARE	84
A HAUNT OF DREAMLAND	89
BABY DIED TO-DAY	92
OUR ANGEL KINDRED	94
THE FALL OF FOYERS	96
IN THE AUTUMN	97
MIDNIGHT	98
REQUIESCAT IN PACE	100
WHEN YOU ARE FAR AWAY, LOVE	102
THE BIRDIES	103
ABRAHAM LINCOLN	104
THY LOVE	105
ON THE BRIDGE	106
PALMERSTON	107
A WHISPER OF THE SPRING	108
GREEN LEAVES	110
FAITH	111
THE LOVERS	112
THE OLD YEAR, 1866	124
THE CUCKOO	126
THOU ART THE LODGE-STAR OF MY LIFE	126
OUR LOST ONE	127
SABBATH CALM	130
TO A CAGED NIGHTINGALE	131
ROSE	132
THE NIGHT COMETH	141
THE GUIDING STAR	142
DREAMS	143
LOVE'S DESPAIR	144
ON THE SHORE	145
MY NEST	146
AT DEATH'S DOOR	147