

NOCTURNES AND OTHER POEMS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649197750

Nocturnes and Other Poems by William Moore

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

WILLIAM MOORE

**NOCTURNES AND
OTHER POEMS**

An Excursion

But land mists, shot with silvery beams,
And azure of the night
Awhile have veiled it, ere it gleams
In its own chalky white.

O breeze, that wistest living things
• So swiftly and so well !
Naught hast thou in thy whisperings
Of yon great hill to tell ?

When quivering died the sunset flames
Downward, thou camest so
To fan the rushes of the Thames
A thousand years ago.

Ah ! thou art weak, and hidden there
Lie memories of death,
Of beacon fires, and battle blare,
Too clamorous for thy breath.

One comes—her brows are gemmed with light—
Who is she, whose strong car
Shall on the storied slopes to-night
Climb where the ancients are ?

Not History : she cannot move
A mistress on that way.

Not Fancy : for, content to rove,
She drives her steeds astray.

But one she is who fares full well
With second-sighted eyes ;
Casts on the path her rainbow light,
Yet sees realities.

Men call her, if a name be aught,
Imagination now :
Yet once no other Pindar brought
To Castaly's green brow.

Forward o'er lea and stream and wood !
Her lightning-pacèd steeds
Shall show where British Muses stood,
And legends turned to deeds.

Already on the darkened wold !
Just hushed, o'er yonder plain,
A thousand springs now backward rolled,
The war-cry of the Dane !

An Excursion

How thick and far the woodlands lie,
How their dark fringes creep,
Black-crested waves of greenery,
To hollows of this steep !

Yet here and there a Saxon light
Is glimmering on the fell,
Where some rude-timbered tower in sight
Has stilled its vesper bell ;

There, freed at last by Alfred's bond,
The carl is on his bed ;
There, Alfred's holy horn-book coned,
Rests many a flaxen head.

Young spirits resolute to pore
O'er lessons on that page
Which deeper sink than all the lore
Taught in this newer age.

And haply, too, their sleeping sire
Hath hands that grasp the plough,
The scythe, the flail, with cheerier fire
Than hands which grasp them now.

“Thou art not here to moralize
On good that is or was ;
But turn and read, with opened eyes,
This record on the grass.”

So spake my Guide, and ill restrained
Her steeds, impatient still :
Her sister witch had sudden rained
A glory o'er the hill.

And lo ! a horse, in outline pale
Against the western slope,
Spreads a vast flank and world of tail,
And upward to the cope

Rears an outlandish neck or mane,
And head of artless round ;
And prancing seems to paw the inane
Above a gulf profound,

Where the west sides in channels deep
And swathes abrupt descend,
And the green pillars of the steep
In clustered darkness end.

But lo! to northward, where it turns
A gentler slope again,
With hinder feet the monster spurns
A little thorn-set plain ;

And, where the bushes thickest are,
White with its chalky seams
And gashed with many a moonlit scar,
A hillock ghost-like gleams :

Pendragon's hill, the mound of kings !
What bones of Britain's best,
What names that woke the bardic strings,
In its dim chambers rest !

And springing from the ancient tomb
The horse yet seems to stay,
As angel over catacomb,
To bear some soul away.

O let not prying History come
To tear that mystic horse
From its own place and proper home
By Arthur's royal corse,

An Excursion

7

Where dying in the ranks of war

He shed the Saxon blood.

Avalon surely is not far,

Nor far its ambient flood.

To-night at Wantage Alfred sleeps

After his long day's toil ;

His draughtsmen never on these steeps

For trophy trenched the soil.

His victory rang away to east,

Beyond yon hazy hill :

And since this giant first was cast

'Tis three fierce centuries still.

" Wilt thou, then, measure hence," she says

(My Guide, who reins the car),

" One more millennial of days,

Now thou hast fared so far ?

" Thine ears shall drink the harpers' dirge

O'er Arthur's funeral.

Forward ! Four scarlet legions surge

At dawn through yonder val :

“ Their blazing camp-fires brown the sward
And solitary firs
Of cromlech groves, which seer nor bard,
Naught but the night breeze stirs.

“ They march to the rebellious Usk,
Their moving column dread
Shall scare the bosky plains till dusk
With clangours of their tread.

“ Forward! For me 'tis e'er the same,
To reach the founts of time.
I'll show thee forms, ere Julius came,
Gay in a misty clime:

And white-robed gazers on the stars
Fix days of fight and fate;
And warriors blue and scythèd cars
Pour through yon grassy gate.

“ Forward; e'en yet another race,
Another garb is now:
Two mount, midsummer morn, to face
The orient crimson glow;