

DEVOTIONAL POEMS

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Devotional poems by R. T. Conrad

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R. T. CONRAD

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POEMS**



Engraved by John Johnston, Phila.

R. J. Conrad

DEVOTIONAL POEMS.

BY

R. T. CONRAD.

"JOY AND GLADNESS SHALL BE FOUND THEREIN, THANKSGIVING, AND THE
VOICE OF MELODY."—*Isa. li. 3.*

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TO MRS. ELIZA CONRAD.

FROM thee, pure source of Conrad's birth,
Arose his virtues; through thee ran
Whatever heavenly gleams of worth
Above us dignified the man.

By thee his childish soul was taught,
His nobler instincts brought in play,
That, while with darkened days he fought,
Flashed outward through his mortal clay.

What if they cry, who pry and probe,
"Lo! here a speck, or there a flaw!"
He scorned the dust upon his robe
Far more than any one who saw.

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The dust he gathered on his path
Was common dust,—what skirt is clear?—
He shook it off, in holy wrath,
Ere to God's presence he drew near.

O merciful and patient God,
We trust these songs of faith and love,
Pleading for him beneath the sod,
Have moved as only song can move!

And that the soul Thy bounteous hands
Gave to his mother, free from stain,
Before Thy face transfigured stands,
From tainting earth washed pure again;

So that she too may come before
Thy mercy-seat quite reconciled,
And to her bosom take once more
The early memory of her child!

I, as he wished, and in his name,
To thee, whose love o'erruled his fate,
This last, best chaplet of his fame
Thus solemnly do dedicate.

G. H. B.

P R E F A C E.

THE poems contained in this volume need neither preface nor apology. A word of explanation, however, may be due to the reader for the unfinished condition of some of them. My lamented friend, Conrad, left behind him a mass of manuscript poems, which, fortunately, fell into the possession of one who cherished his memory with filial affection and the relics of his genius with commendable pride. Among many fragmentary works, which were carefully examined and arranged by the hands to which they were committed, was found the present volume of devotional poems. The manuscript was submitted to me for such revision as might better adapt it for publication. I found little to criticize, and nothing that I presumed to amend. It is placed before the reader in the precise

state in which it was left by its author. I have interfered in no way with the original design. In my opinion, it would be something like sacrilege to retouch, however lightly, a work that addresses itself more directly to the religious than to the artistic sense.

I can but regret that the author was not spared to finish a labour thus admirably begun, and whose purpose is so thoroughly interwoven with the holiest aspirations of the mind. Those who knew Conrad, and were admitted to the privilege of his unselfish friendship, will pause over these memorials of his solitary hours with thoughtful reverence, and will recognize in them the hidden motives that influenced his social relations and gave birth to the lofty sentiments that inspired his oratory and won deserved applause for his dramatic writings.

God has more secret worshippers than are known to the world. It is well for us to understand that one whose whole life was apparently passed in the bustling ambition of public affairs, had yet in his inmost heart a sanctuary which was devoted to the purer service of heaven, into whose solemn recesses nothing worldly intruded, and before whose shrine his troubled spirit found rest and consolation. I confess that I cannot look upon these poems with dry eyes. I pity the friend of Conrad who can. I see in these upward struggles of his soul the workings of a nature that sought to purify itself before its