

SONNETS AND OTHER POEMS

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GEORGE BRAITHWAITE

**SONNETS AND
OTHER POEMS**

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BY THE LATE

REV. GEORGE BRAITHWAITE, M.A.,

Formerly of Queen's College, Oxford, and
Vicar of the Parish Church of St. Peter the Great, otherwise Subdenery,
in the City of Winchester.

SECOND EDITION, ENLARGED.

LONDON:
GEORGE BELL & SONS, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.
1875.

Elizabeth A Griffiths
in affectionate remembrance
of the Author—

Lehigh 4th from M^{rs} B^{te}
1876. PREFACE.

953

B8145

1875

THE lamented author of the following Poems had left his manuscripts and a revised copy of his "Sonnets and other Poems" (published in 1851), almost in a state of readiness for the printer; and had expressed a wish that the present Editor should peruse them with a view to publication. Such a desire of course remained sacredly binding after Mr. Braithwaite's sudden and unexpected removal. The editor has placed the poems not contained in Mr. Braithwaite's former book at the beginning of this volume. There are, however, two variations from this arrangement. The verses printed first of all, "Come see the place," have been taken from the middle of the previous volume, as they appeared to form a suitable introduction to the poems—in keeping with the feelings of many who will read this little book. Some of the more recent shorter pieces have been interspersed throughout the volume. The Sonnet on "Spring," p. 24, marks the commencement of the first edition.

Mr. Braithwaite found in Poetry a delightful refreshment from the graver duties to which his useful life was devoted. It was a bye-work, to which in his leisure moments he turned with alacrity. He had the feeling of a true poet, and not the feeling only, but the power of expression also in no ordinary degree. But his life-work, as an evangelical Clergyman of the Church of England, which he so faithfully fulfilled in various important positions, did not leave him the time to do justice to his poetical abilities. He might have been better known as a poet, if he had not laboured so arduously as a Minister of Christ.

The reader will find many sacred thoughts sweetly versified in this volume, and here and there a touch of originality and beauty of a striking kind. For example, in the description of Dean Chandler's Grave, p. 7, after speaking of the "anthems of thanksgiving" which

"Sweep
Along thine aisles and arches, till they seem
Subdued to whispers for thy holy dream,"

there follows this fine simile,

"So have I known within some beechen grove
A breeze more soft than pinions of a dove
Feel the sweet way to where the last leaf grows,
Just raise the branch, then sink into repose."

Then in the description of the dying words of the Rev. Carns Wilson, p. 8:—

"So spake this champion of the living Lord,
Ere yet his hand had sheathed the Spirit's sword,
Ere from the surface of his polished shield
Had faded objects of the battle-field."

In p. 11, mark the contrast between the tides

"whose ebbings make
Recession, for succession's sake,"

and the skylark's upward flight—

"But might I choose, I'd rather be
The skylark than the mighty sea—
And make each flapping of the wing
A motion to an upward spring."

We have not space to quote other passages, but would draw attention to the Sonnet on the Mountain—Ingleborough, which formed a grand object in the distance from our poet's study window at Beechfield, Yealand Conyers. Mr. Braithwaite, it may

be observed, was an excellent classical scholar, and hence his apposite reference to "my own Socrates."

The Editor cannot forbear alluding to the Sonnet addressed to himself, p. 23, as it was the last composition of his dear friend, and was actually received and read after the death of its author; and thus came like a sweet communication from the bowers of Paradise and the "Upper Springs" of Heaven.

The following interesting obituary notice appeared in the *Record*, April, 1875, and many other newspapers:—

"Mr. Braithwaite was born at Kendal on the 15th. of April, 1818; though from early manhood his life had been chiefly spent in the south of England, till failing health compelled him to relinquish active labour, and he retired to end his days among his native hills. As a boy he was taught by the late Samuel Marshall, of Kendal, with whom he was a great favourite to his dying day; he then went to Sedbergh Grammar School, where his moral courage in every sense of the word, as testified by old and valued school-mates, gained for him the respect and esteem of the whole school. From Sedbergh he proceeded to Queen's College, Oxford, where he graduated as B.A. in 1840, and M.A. in 1843; and from which he removed to the Theological College, Chichester. He was ordained deacon in 1841 by the late Bishop Shuttleworth, of Chichester, when he became curate of St. Peter-the-Less and St. Paul's, Chichester, from 1841 to 1843. He was ordained priest, by the late Bishop Gilbert, in 1842. He then left Chichester, and served as curate at Worsborough, Yorkshire; Easton, in Hampshire; and Perry Barr, Staffordshire, from 1843 to 1851; after which he returned to Chichester on being, through the influence of the late Dean Chandler, appointed to the vicarage of St. Peter-the-Great, and Sub-deanery of Chichester, by the Dean and Chapter. This living he held till 1868, when, on account of uncertain health, he retired from his charge, to the regret of his parishioners, and with a handsome testimonial presented to him as a mark of their esteem and regard. He was married, at Sefton, near Liverpool, in 1842, to Margaret, daughter of the late Rev. William Rawson, who was

for fifty-six years incumbent of Seaforth, and in whose affection and society he found the greatest delight. Mr. Braithwaite was not only distinguished from his earliest years by his integrity and moral worth, but became through grace a faithful witness and earnest preacher of 'the Truth as it is in Jesus.' Amidst the distracting and increasing errors of the day—amidst corruptions in the Church, 'opposition of science falsely so called,' and the prevailing worldly indifference to all religion; the Gospel trumpet gave forth no uncertain sound from his pulpit, while Gospel purity and holiness were illustrated in his life. He was truly a burning and a shining light; and while he faithfully and fearlessly 'testified repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,' his Christian consistency and Godly example were a standing though silent rebuke of immorality and irreligion wherever his lot in life was cast. Of him it may be truly said that 'he being dead yet speaketh.' And some indeed there are who would be startled by the announcement of his sudden death, almost while the sound of his voice was still ringing in their ears, who had heard from his own lips in the church of Over Kellett, on Easter Sunday—only five days before his lamented removal—the solemn words of warning,—'Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.'—Phil. iv. 8."

SONNET,

On visiting Beechfield, Yealand Conyers, after the Death of my Friend,
The Rev. G. Braithwaite.

I muse beneath the shadow of his beech,
Which sadly welcomes me with drooping spray;
Alas! its owner is not here to day
The promised hand of greeting to outreach.
The warmth of his bright smile and genial speech
From this sweet home of love has passed away;

Amid his flowers, neglected now, I stray,
 Pondering the pensive lessons which they teach.
 How different was the visit I had plann'd;
 I thought to meet his sympathetic eye,
 I thought to grasp his hospitable hand;
 But lo! he bids us follow him on high,
 And commune with him in that fairer land,
 Where flowers of love and friendship never die!

RICHARD WILTON.

June, 1875.

SONNET.

In Memory of the Rev. G. Braithwaite, M.A., formerly Sub-Dean of Chichester, Author of "Sonnets and Other Poems," "The Gospel Scheme of Man's Salvation, and Other Sermons," etc.; who died at his seat, Beechfield, Yealand Conyers, Lancashire, April 2nd., 1875, aged 66.

Ah! we have lost a Friend, Divine and Bard,
 One of our trio went to interchange
 Poetic musings and a varied range
 Of graver lore. How sad to feel debarred
 From his congenial converse and regard!
 In him were ripe for the celestial grange
 Faith's holy fruits; then should we not deem strange
 Such timely summons to his bright reward.
 Lamented Braithwaite: Wilson's* verse, and mine,
 Warm welcome met from thee, as thine from us,
 Who now fond joys to Heaven's blest will resign,
 Which severs dearest human friendships thus.
 Yet may we mournful chant, on our behalf,
 A mutual theme, a dual epitaph.

T. S. HOLLAND.

Poynings Rectory,
 June, 1875.

Author of "Dryburgh Abbey, and Other Poems."

* The Rev. Richard Wilton, M.A., Rector of Lonsborough, Yorkshire, Author of "Wood-Notes and Church-Bells," etc.

The following Sonnet is alluded to by Mr. Braithwaite at page 98. It was a special favourite of his:—

PRAYER.

A SONNET BY HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

Be not afraid to pray—to pray is right.
Pray, if thou canst, with hope; but ever pray,
Though hope be weak, or sick with long delay;
Pray in the darkness, if thou hast no light—
Far is the time, remote from human sight,
When war and discord from the earth shall cease;
Yet every prayer for universal peace
Avalis the blessed time to expedite.
Whate'er is good to wish, ask that of Heaven,
Though it be what thou canst not hope to see;
Pray to be perfect, though material heaven
Forbid the spirit so on earth to be;
But if for any wish thou darest not pray,
Then pray to God to cast that wish away.