SWITZERLAND AND OTHER POEMS

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Switzerland and Other Poems by J. F. Hone

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J. F. HONE

SWITZERLAND AND OTHER POEMS



SWITZERLAND 26436

OTHER POEMS,

BY THE

REV. J. F. HONE,

VICAR OF TIRLEY, GLOUCESTERSHINE.

E. NEST, 165, WESTGATE STREET,

1878.

CONTENTS.

									PAGE
SWITZEBLAND		25	8	2.5	800	100	53	*	1 ro 84
THIS LOVELY	WORLD	9.8		3999	53	25	**	*	86
THE SUN .	-5				50	•	•	*	87
THE SONG OF	THE 1	ORRE	er.		1350	*	*3	*	89
MONTE BOSA	BY NIG	HT	10	0.5	30766	10	10	*	92
THE SEA .	٠			•	%	107	1.20	*	97
THISTLE DOWN	LIKE	FLAK	Ka OI	BNO	W	1	9	(*)	101
LUMINOUS TRA	1118, SE	LEUBS,	AND	BIRD	8.			٠	108
LINES SUGGES	TED B	Y A 81	INSEA		<u>;</u>		4	•	118
PREE TRANSLA	TION	IN EP	C VE	RRE	52	97	86	-50	117

類 <u>155</u> 8 22 14 3.



SWITZERLAND.

A POEM.

BOOK I.

HERE is a land I often have in mind,
Best loved, save one, of any that I know,
A gem of thought, in memory kept enshrined
As in a casket poor but safe—true show
Brought out and looked at in a vacant time—
Prism with many coloured rays, the prime
Of summer and of joy, of flowers and green,
'Mid winter's cloud, is thus as vision seen,
A merry song is sung, heart's bells begin to chime.

And yet how small a realm gives depth and height,
Length too, and breadth to joy, when thus it shines
O'er memory's housetop, and like very sprite,
Takes a lone thinker up through waves and lines
Of snow and light aloft, in sky's expanse,
Where rings of Alpine elves and fairies dance.
Eye microscopic scarce the land can see
On Europe's map, that fables this to me.
Yet wide the outline runs, on memory's backward glance.

And so of snow-clad mountain land I sing,
Which wakes calm memories 'mid great sea of strife,
Lays out paths real, nought imagining,
And colours each bright year of summer life.
O what an oil of calm o'er waters rough,
And light o'er dark and then e'en not enough,
Flows in, when mental or material eye
Enjoys the vision, be it far or nigh—
Oh, how it softens quick ill rancour's harder stuff!

1

Great Nature, greatest in that scant domain
Of man, because thou mak'st it throne of state
For all thy other realms in Europe's plain—
Sitting in greatness there o'er all that's great!
How is my love of thee presiding thought,
When not thy name, thyself before me brought,
In dream, or sight, or quickened memory,
Or pencils truthful touch, Thou floatest by,
With every line of grace, and power of beauty fraught!

Sublime or beautiful, mysterious
In any way, not only as a whole,
But in each separate part, and shewing use
In all, as well as beauty, and not sole
One sameness, not one uniform sublime,
And beautiful the same in every clime,
But rich in shades of each, thou dost invite
Search, though unsearchable and out of sight;
Like thy Great Cause, though keen we searched
through years of time.

And so I search thee, dearest Nature, still,
Though taking not one lesson in as yet—
Poor learners we, though having all the will
To know thee better, and at length to get
Power e'en of one fair thing to analyse
Low depths, closed ever to mere outer eyes.
Content to love, e'en though we cannot know
All that we might, or ought, yet loving so,
That not one joy of earth with such pure pleasure vies!

But most I love thee in abode of snow,
In mountain house, in glacier depth profound—
Enter I cannot, yet 'tis wondrous show,
To look at, and to watch, all sights around
Kindred and homogeneous, oft to note
The falling snowflakes, and then clouds that float
Around thy roofs and chimneys in high air—
Then sometimes fain to climb thy icy stair,
And share my stony couch with chamois and with
goat!