

**THE LILY AND THE BEE: AN
APOLOGUE OF THE
CRYSTAL PALACE OF 1851**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649428854

The Lily and the Bee: An Apologue of the Crystal Palace of 1851 by Samuel Warren

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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LILY AND THE BEE

AN APOLOGUE OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE OF 1851

A NEW EDITION, CAREFULLY REVISED, WITH NOTES, AND
A
PRELIMINARY EXPOSITION

BY

SAMUEL WARREN

D. C. L. F. R. S.



HUNC CIRCUM INFUMERUM ORTES POPULINIS VOLABANT.
AC VULVI IN FRATRE, UBI APES SUAVATE HEREDA
SIBILITUS SIBILITUS VARIIS, ET CANGIDA CIRCUM
LILLA PUDIBUNTUS, STRATIT OMBIS MURMURE CANFUS.
—*Enchir.* vi. 706-710.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCLIV

270. b. 188.



TO
RICHARD OWEN,
D.C.L. F.R.S. ETC.

A MAN OF TRUE PHILOSOPHIC SPIRIT,
WHOSE UNWEARIED AND PROFOUND RESEARCHES REFLECT

LUSTRE ON THE SCIENCE OF HIS COUNTRY,

THIS WORK IS INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR,

AS A MEMORIAL OF CORDIAL FRIENDSHIP.

INNER TEMPLE,
July 1854.

PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

THE Lily and the Bee is an attempt, in a humble and reverent spirit, to interpret that which its Author conceived to be the true spiritual significance, the hidden teaching, of the Temple of Wonder and Worship, of 1851. With the motives and objects by which he was influenced, it is impossible for him to feel anything like resentment, on account of certain fierce criticisms which this little book has been fated to encounter, and may yet encounter. Few works, indeed, of modern days, have occasioned such a contrariety of critical judgment, as *The Lily and the Bee*: for while it has been characterised, by persons of undoubted competency, as totally unworthy of the occasion, or even the Author, it is certain that a widely different estimate has been formed of it by many, some of whom stand foremost in the ranks of criticism, scholarship, and philosophy; while it has also had a very large sale in this country, been reprinted in America and on the Continent, and translated into German and Italian, if not also other languages. The singular conflict of opinion respecting it, cannot be better illustrated, than by the circumstance, that while one of the Reviews stated that the Author 'had earned a title to be regarded as the Milton of the Exhibition,' another pronounced *The Lily and the Bee* to be 'the raving of a madman in the Crystal Palace.' This marvellous diversity of opinion in England, is thus noticed by the Italian translator, in his expository Preface. '*The Lily and the Bee* is a work which, on account of its originality, has been exposed to the extremes of criticism, by the eminent men of a great nation. By some it has been extolled to the skies, by others utterly condemned. Such a work vindicates its claim to be judged of by nations at large: to whom it belongs to award to it those sublime attributes which triumph over time, or consign it to oblivion, as the extravagant creation of a distempered brain.'¹

¹ Un' opera infine, che per la sua originalità destò così varie e contraddittorie opinioni fra i sommi di una nazione, che è grande; in quale esaltata con frenesia di ammirazione al cielo, da quale sprofondata negli abissi. Un' opera tale deve essere a dritto giudicata dalle nazioni; e che le nazioni le vedano il pregio di sublimità che trionfa dei secoli, e del tempo, o la dannino all' oblio, come una stravaganza e delirio. — *Il Giglio e l'Ape*, Prefazione, x.

A work thus spoken of by an accomplished foreigner, who has deemed it worthy of being exquisitely rendered into the lovely language of his country, the Author hopes he may venture to regard as not entirely beneath the notice of his own countrymen. While grateful for the reception with which it has been already favoured, he sincerely defers to any adverse judgment pronounced by candid and competent critics. *Quot homines, tot sententia.*

Whatever its merits or demerits, and whatever may be the cause, this work remains the only record, of its kind, of the Crystal Palace of 1851, and the wonderful assemblage of mankind which it attracted from all parts of the earth.

The present edition, which has been carefully revised, is intended for a far larger class of readers than was contemplated on the original publication of the work, and is accompanied by numerous Notes; and the ensuing Exposition contains all that the Author wishes to say on the subject. It is, moreover, so full, that it may be regarded almost as a prose version of the Poem itself.

LEVER TEMPLE, LONDON, July 1854.

THE
EXPOSITION
OF
THE LILY AND THE BEE.

When Spenser first published his immortal *Faery Queen*, he felt it necessary to prefix to it a clue to 'the continued allegory, or dark conceit,' of which it consisted, in the form of a Letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, which he said 'expounded his general intention and meaning; as well for avoiding of jealous opinions and misconstructions, as for Sir Walter's 'better light in reading thereof: from which he might gather the whole intention of the conceit; and, as in a handful, gripe all the discourse, which otherwise might seem tedious and confused.' He owned that 'the beginning of the whole work seemed abrupt;' but asserted his right, as a Poet, 'to thrust into the midst, even where it most concerned him: and there recouring to the things forepast, and divining of things to come, make a pleasing analysis of all.'¹

Walking in the light of this precedent, though at an immeasurable distance from the illustrious One that set it, the author of *The Lily and the Bee* here offers some account of a performance more deeply considered than it has been given credit for, by some who have written and spoken about it with confident contempt.

Though the main object of the Book is by no means to be sought in a commemoration of the Crystal Palace of 1851, its pages seek to reflect, however faintly, some of the splendours of that magnificent and majestic spectacle which will ever remain peerless, and alone, in its moral glory, however great may be the merits and attractiveness of its successors, here or elsewhere. That is, however, altogether a subordinate purpose of the author; who sought to seize an occasion for setting forth great Truths affecting the eternal welfare of mankind: for he thought that those Truths, of a high and holy import, spoke

¹ The letter is dated the 23d January 1599, and is prefixed to the first edition, that of 1590.