

**QUORSUM? THE
CRY OF HUMAN
SUFFERING; A POEM**

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Quorsum? The cry of human suffering; a poem by Frederick W. Ragg

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FREDERICK W. RAGG

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THE CRY OF HUMAN SUFFERING

A Poem

BY

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VICAR OF MASWORTH

FORMERLY OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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To

THE LADY ROTHSCHILD

AND

THE HON. ALFRED AND MRS. TALBOT

YOU WHO HAVE 'KNOWN MY SOUL IN ADVERSITY'

ADD THIS

TO MY MANY REASONS FOR AFFECTION AND ESTEEM

THAT YOU PERMIT ME

THE HONOUR OF DEDICATING TO YOU

THIS BOOK

FREDERICK W. RAGG

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PREFACE

'**W**HEREFORE?' the question asked by Reason, after the heart in anguish wakes from its first dumbness, is followed by 'Whereunto?' a question that if less passionate is perhaps reiterated more. The answer to both questions is given by a Voice that utters from the dark something as in an unknown tongue the meaning of which we can guess at only, but cannot fully know. Ever since man's first rude cogitations in Philosophy these questions have sought but have not found a clear reply, nor does there seem in our present limits of existence a likelihood of answer that we can fully understand; though, as is the case with Science, it may very well be possible to obtain approximations nearer and nearer to the meaning of that tongue unknown.

But our emotions as well as our Reason have their own way of asking these supreme questions,

and of seeking answer to them. And our emotions have contact with Nature different from Reason's and more mysterious, but not the less real contact. And so have also Instinct and Belief. To examine the mystery of the meaning and destiny of human suffering as if it were a matter of Intellectual Cognition only, and with Reason only as the means of search, is surely like sailing in search of a far polar strand with insufficient supplies, and with means effectual only for warmer seas, and not for the one long alternation of day and night. When at the very best we can gain only partial glimpses of the shore we seek, it must be a mistake to leave behind what may give aid where Reason fails—human instinct, emotions, faith. Whatever may have been the origin of these, they have their point to press. Man is not Intellect only, man is more.

Where arguments appear in the succeeding pages I do not put them forward as claiming to be final: few arguments probably can have such claim. But I intend them to speak with cogency those thoughts which the heart's hunger feels as pangs, and to speak them in the way in which

they present themselves to Poesy. To Philosophy they come in somewhat different garb. The characters pourtrayed will as I trust be found modelled with reference to the truth of natural form, but yet their clay I also trust has felt the impress of the Ideality which ennobles fiction as it ennobles sculpture; Ideality which only consents to give shape to evil in so far as it is needed to bring out or to bring forth good; scorning as she does to mould the unregenerate mud of the worst human passions into shapes whose repulsiveness no trickery of garb improves, no attitude ever dignifies, and no large mouthing of tragic or heroic mask can make exalted; and then to leave them for one only apparent purpose—the exciting of a vulgar stare.

πίστις . . . πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων.
Πεβ. χί. 1.

PROLOGUE

LOVE grief and love and grief and love and grief,
The fugue that through the changeful lives of men
In all the generations ceaseless rings,
And raises up to heaven its complex chords,
Not to one time, nor to one melody set,
But wrought in millioned changeful staves and keys
To diapason like a voice of storm ;
A diapason which perhaps afar
May, entering some new medium's marge, be turned,
Through its refractive change of beat or note,
To one long harmony in which despair
Assumes the timbre hope, and sorrow joy.

Love grief and love and grief and love and grief—
The fugue that *may* to other strain be changed,
Nay, *will* be changed—as held the faith of Him
Whose faith endured the bitterest assault
Of all that goads the hearts of men to grief—
And changing melt, as clouds melt bathed in light,
To love and joy and love and joy and love ;
Though it hereafter change to mellowed strain