

**ADVENT:
A MYSTERY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649475971

Advent: A Mystery by Arthur Cleveland Cox

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

ARTHUR CLEVELAND COX

**ADVENT:
A MYSTERY**

A D. V E N T,

A MYSTERY.

iv

ARTHUR CLEVELAND COX.

NEW-YORK:

JOHN S. TAYLOR.

1837. ✓
A. S.

(0-2)

—

TO MY FATHER.

FATHER, as he of old who reap'd the field,
The first young sheaves to Him did dedi-
cate

Whose bounty gave whate'er the glebe did
yield,

Whose smile the pleasant harvest might
create —

So I to thee these numbers consecrate,
Thou who didst lead to Silo's pearly spring;
And if of hours well saved from revels
late

And youthful riot, I these fruits do bring,
Accept my early vow, nor frown on what
I sing.

P R E F A C E.

THE poem thus submitted with diffidence to the public, was commenced without any idea that it would ever assume its present form, or indeed that it would at all extend beyond the limits of a proper pastoral eclogue. It was originally designed for the ear of a few friends alone, and as part of an entertainment for a Christmas Eve; and this plan has been exceeded without any intention of making a book, only because the subject itself interested me, and I had the leisure to pursue it.

Since its completion I have been invited, by circumstances equally favourable and unforeseen, to lay it before the public; and in yielding to such inducements I have only to regret — what may not prove so disadvantageous in the issue — that my first ap-

pearance as a candidate for popular approbation, should be in a style of poetry but little adapted to popular demand. New poetry is in itself but little desirable or desired. And yet this is the case, not so much because as students of old English lore we justly feel that the "old is better," as because these latter days have already so largely contributed to the stock that was rich before. We feel as if there should now be an end of verse-making. Poetry is itself unpalatable to our satiety; and since the public taste has been so surfeited with the racy romance of the later British writers, there is in particular but little relish for the austerer forms of beauty, in which the muse was accustomed to present her moral before these dazzling days. Yet if, as I am led to believe, there still be those who can stoop from highest fancy, and leave the storms of passion, to tread the quiet walks

where Poesy was wont to lead her votaries of old, I trust that my humble attempt to plant a new pleasure in their pathway, will not fail to find those who will at least appreciate the endeavour, whatever may be their opinion as to the advantage gained by it to the scenes that their spirit loves.

I suppose I may be pardoned a few words with regard to the work itself. Owing to the circumstances of its composition, and the straitness of my original design, the poem, though written in a dramatic form, can scarcely be designated by any one of the titles which are usually applied to works of that description. There are parts of it which partake much of the character of the idyl, others which belong more to the oratorio than to the regular drama, and others again which are more conformed to the manner of the old masques of Ben Jonson's time. Yet on the whole,

as the subject is one so intimately connected with the Scripture narrative, I trust I have not erred in giving it the old monkish title of *a mystery*—a kind of play which, although of little repute in its original form, has of late assumed a dignity to which I am conscious nothing may be added by my own contribution, however well intended.

I am well aware that a poem written in dialogue, and divided into scenes, generally raises the expectation of an intricate plot, and that if such be the anticipation with which this may be read, I shall entirely fail to give that satisfaction which I certainly desire to afford. I would therefore embrace the opportunity of confessing beforehand, that—although I hope there will be found in it *a beginning, a middle, and an end*, of its own kind—there is nothing of a catastrophe properly so called, nor is the poem in any way calculated for stage effect,

or even for ideal representation. As it professes to employ the *dramatis persona* only to avoid the historical form, I trust it will be deemed sufficient, if the parts be found naturally linked together, and the *unities* in no way very grossly violated.

In conclusion, it may not be improper to remark, as some palliation of the errors and imperfections that may be discoverable by the critic not only, but also by the general reader, that the work was ready for the press before the author had completed his nineteenth year, and has not received the benefit of older or more experienced supervisal. And though youth as an apology, for what itself should have prevented from coming into cognizance, is like the plea of him who adduces his inebriety as an excuse for his crime, I cannot resist the feeling which nature's self has given me, that very possibly that