

And last of the Nazarene friends, With Jesus, called the Nazarene, death pray

Heard the Lady Miriam. He comes, By eight hard months, from India to this sea

Of serving men and beasts captained, Came and riding away—to her door

Clasped meekly, palm to palm, before his breast— The Indian way. Upon the pavement there

Whose name is born to us with name of Him That was the teacher here, and wrought great

And died at last the death upon the cross Three springtimes back, thyself beholding this!

Who, many winters past, came to thy land Led by a strange white star, burst suddenly

That this beamed token of a Teacher born Illuminating the World, as that great Star

Shot its fair splendor far. But, loving Light, And always seeking Light—as taught of Buddha—

Word of this wonder grown; and, to our minds, The gold and silk and myrrh of all their baies

Of loftiest wisdom and large doctrines given To mend the old. But those who came with me

And I myself die soon—which is not feared By such as follow great Lord Buddha's Law;

And I will unrepentant learn The setting of the star of men, whose rise

Drar this weary way my steps have passed, To bear before I die. And, when men said

She dwelleth, who did love and serve Him most, My face I turned, sweet Lady! to thy gate

And, by thy graciousness emboldened now, I make my prayer—"What prayer?" soft she replied,

Lifting, and leading him with tender hand, As daughter doth her sire, to that raised seat

Upon the lowan. Then he said:—"Mine ears Hunger to know, what thou canst best impart,

The deeds thy Jesus did, the words He spoke, The ways He walked, the manner of His days,

And of their close, and what it is they tell, Strange and unheard before, how, after death,

A thousand pearls up from thy Arab Sea One would gleam brightest, best! The queenliest

The choicest bloom, would happen suddenly: Unlooked for. What hath made them perfect, none

Woe, no more than where the fount will rise Amid a hundred hollows of the grass

Whence the stream starts; no more than which shall be— Of clear-applies shed by myriads

When sea-winds shake the groves of Lebanon— The chosen one to shoot, and grow, and spread

A roof of dark green glory o'er the hill. In such wise, as I dare to deem, He came

Of purest Mother, Perfect Child, begot Divinest, surely, than we know; arrived

In this world—of His many worlds—by path Leading to birth as now, as sweet, as strange

As what His dear feet opened past the Tomb. If we should strive to say in mortal speech

Where He was Man, and why much more than Man, The earthly words would mar the Heavenly truth.

Love tells it best in her simplicity; And worship in his deepest silences."

"Nary ten tells of Jesus' birth and many traditions of His childhood, the story closely following the Gospel narratives."

"Aye!"—she went on—"Thither each year, at time of Passover, He wended with his parents; and would see

Gannim and Sichoem—where the lowland creeps, Under the uplands, into narrowed green

Like lake made river, with those crests for coasts Ebal, Gerizim, and by Gibeah

And Bethel and the Valley of the Thorns, To Succoth—to the brow where, white and gold,

Under sloped Olivet, the Temple rears Her stately glory. And the child would pass

Into the city's midst, and mingle there With Jew and Gentile, in the thronged bazaar;

Mark above, above the Sanctuary gate, Herod's great eagle, and the keen steel spear

Of Roman Annulus, or Coponius, Glitter round the black Praetorium.

And ever in the spirit, sage and calm, That which we name not habit, the sense

Of an abiding Presence, Fatherly, Motherly, Friendlike, Loverlike; more dear

Than dearest ones on earth, more near than blood To the beating heart or neck vein to the neck;

More boundless than the immeasurable Blue, More mighty than a thousand bolted Jove

Throned on some new Olympus, whose vast head Smiled the stars; more sweet to love and serve

Than truest-speaking Mistress; more to trust Than dustiest Friend; more tender than the arms

Of nursing Mother; more forgiving, fond, Kindred, and kind, than Father;—yea! Great God

Making us Gods and taking us to Him. Winds plain and easy through the illumined land.

Also I saw them bring the sick to Him. The maimed and miserable, and wretches torn

With plucking devils—how to dread that time! Whom all he healed, comforting them with words

Of sovereign power, calming their cries and griefs; As when the Mother's bosom charms to smiles,

Before its tears are dry, an infant's wail. A woman lay in Simon's house, aghast

With fever's fire. I saw him take her hand, Quiet the leaping blood, still the hot heart,

And lift her, cool and whole. I heard him teach,— Stung in Simon's boat, moored by those sands

Which fringe Bethesda,—making plain and known That farther Kingdom, high unto us all,

Yes, at our very gates." And when He passed At nightfall to the Mountain, communing

With Heaven, which loved Him, and His own high soul, Under the stars—less touched by taint than they!

It was as though another golden Sun Set, from our eyes; till darkness fell again

And brought back Dawn, and that divinest light Shed from Him.

"Ah, the Kingdom!—We of old, Being the people of this land, had served— If service were—that God of Abraham

By troops and companies, on bank and mead, Till all the grass was blotted with great bands

Of gladsome people, clad for holiday, Like divers-colored flowers; and, all around,

Dark, eager faces of ten thousand folk— Men, women, children—made a sunlit throng

So thick, so tall-folk, on the asphalt, The frightened eagles fled their crags; the snake

Slid to his hole; the wolf and panther hid Ashamed of blood. But gentle things of Earth,—

The crowned lark, and the dove, and mountain hare,— 'Was of some new good word thro' man to them—

Listened to them through thickets, And the morning dawned

Amice of summer gold—her loveliest— To meet His holy footsteps on the Hill.

And there, from that fair Sinai, with Voice Sweeter than Morning's breath, He gave to us

The New Commandments. "Eight are blest—He taught— Of that dim Kingdom,—which men thought would

March In worldly pomp, bringing Messiah's gift With the Lord's sword, triumphant; his right

hand Teaching him terrible things; all Earth to hail Israel, re-throned with scepter and with gold;

The Sea to pour her pearls and corals forth At foot of David's Hill! And, lo! the truth!— The Kingdom came on that soft mountain-slope,

Not with the battle-trumpets, not with neigh Of war-horse, floored with purple-foam, and neck

Clothed with the thunder; but by this mild Voice Telling how lowly souls shall be the Lords

Of the New Kingdom, and the Sorrowful, The meek, the seekers after righteousness.

The merciful, the just, the peace-makers, And they who for their brothers' sake, and Right,

Have suffered persecutions. Oh, sir! think; In that one mountain morning—at one word— All our world changed! Poverty rich! sick hearts

Comforted! Those who weep to laugh and sing, The earth the Ante-room to neighboring Heaven;

Was souls its salt; pure souls its lamps; set high Like cities upon hills, like candlesticks

Lighting the house! Then I knew My Master and my Lord; and, all my heart

Burned so with worship that the blessed flame Purged it of sin, and shame, and sorrow—left,

Only the gold behind of grateful ache To praise and thank and love and honor Him;

To follow Him with humblest service still Through life and death. That night he lay at meat

In Simon's house, in my own city here. It stands there yonder with the three white domes—

And, midst the others, I, too, entered in, Hearing my boy, the coolest thing I owned,

Holding much precious spikenard, which I pressed From flower and root of dearest growth

By some far river in thy distant Hind." "I know"—the Buddhist said—"that sumpal-

tree, The 'jatamani.' And our Indian Bee Stays in her flight, full-laden, but to plunge—

Honey-drunk—in the perfumed wealth of it." "Sir! It is sweet as were all flowers from Him;

The pity of Heaven made fragrance! When I stood Unnoticed at His feet, dropping hot tears

Which ran on them, wiping my tears away With these unbraided hairs, ashamed to moist

Such sacred palms with water from such source; I would not merely lift the seal of silk

That shut the casket's lid, and spill the spices; Lest somewhere, afterward, some other use

My box,—His box,—for something ill again. But on the stones I broke the dainty work.

Over these ruined fragments poured forth all Adoring, and anointing. Then, there spread

The long-impregnated spirit of that balm To every quickened nostril at the feast;

And he that was its master, spake—half heard—"My guest, the prophet, being such, should wist

Who and what manner of a wench it is Which toucheth Him, for she is Miriam!

And I,—who in my pride and sin of old Had cursed the Pharisee; grown wiser now,

BOOK III THE ALABASTER BOX

Next morn, upon the marble leucine met— Soft salutations paid, and praise, and thanks— "What hast thou in thy hand?" the Indian asked,

"Which hath those rivers with the sands of gold, And hills of lazulite, and fancies

Whence the great pearls are gotten,—could not buy With all its precious store of Orient wealth

The treasure of this broken box from me! Sweeter than spikenard odors, lingering still

On each white remnant of the wondrous toil, Hangs the dear memory of a day more sad,

More glad, more proud, more shameful—more to mourn. More to rejoice in—than all other days

BOOK IV THE PARABLES AT TYRE

Heaving them hip and thigh, for Israel; That Lord of Moses, awful on the Mount

With thunders and red lightnings, and the Law; Seen in the Burning Bush; riding the storm;

A jealous, dreadful, dread God. We lived Obeying—if we did obey—for fruit

Of earthly goods; or, if in after time, Then for our children's children. But He taught;

And, lo! ourselves to share! Another world Hidden within, without, beyond! He took

Terrors away, and showed us Life for Death, Mercy or Sacrifice, and Love for Law.



HEALING THE SICK.

Of all thy handmaid's years. Nay, but my life Rather began when this far thing found end!

"Two an Egyptian labor, cut with pains From the streaked stone, and wrought, as thou

shalt see, By matchless mastercraft, to make a gift For Caesar,—since the Emperor owned it first,

And next it fell to Rufus, but he gave To one that sold it for a hundred slaves;

To one that sold it for a hundred slaves; So came it to Pandara. Did they tell—

Sending the thither—these so gray and grave— What Miriam once had been!" The Indian sage

Gave gentle answer,—if mine ears have heard Evil of thee, my heart would quite forget,

Which hath no room to-day for any thought Not good or grateful of my lady's grace."

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