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For the Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, &c.

"HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS."—SCRIPTURE.

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Original Poetry.

BETHLEHEM.

The evening star had risen with brilliant light,
A gem of beauty on the brow of night,
And proudly sitting on the star-lit throne
Night's silvery Queen in soften'd lustre shone,
On Bethlehem's plains; where quiet flocks repose
The faithful Shepherd's pious thoughts disclose:
A thousand objects in the heavens above,
Attuned their hearts to piety and love;
Jehovah's praises now their tongues employ,
And fill their hearts with ecstasies of joy.
To Revelation's pages now they turn,
And from the sacred songs of Zion learn
The promise of Messiah's holy birth,
And all the glory of his saints on earth:
When war's rude tumults shall forever cease,
And ev'ry nation know the Prince of Peace;
Their richest offerings bring to Judah's Lord—
By a saved world, and ardent heaven adored:
Whose miracles of mercy, widely shown,
Shall make the glories of the God-head known,—
And pour on men such blessings as disclose
The sacred source from whence his goodness flows.—
The sightless eye shall know his sov'reign will,
And on the deafen'd ear shall joyous words distil;
The lame and weak his words of pity know,
And start to meet him like the bounding roe:
The dead and buried shall his accents hear,
And from the dreary grave with wond'ring looks appear.—
The wounded soul, by poisonous sin oppress'd,
Shall find a shelter in his pitying breast;
Shall hear his lips pronounce its sorrows o'er,
And healed by him, shall learn to sin no more.
Tormenting passions mildly he'll reprove,—
Expelling hatred by the power of love:
Pride, rage, and envy, all the baneful train
Of vice and misery, no longer reign:
Changed by His word that shakes the gates of hell,
The humbled sinner can no more rebel—
The war and tumult of his passions cease,
And in his bosom dwell the joys of peace:—

Such was the theme the happy shepherds knew,
Tending their flocks amidst fields of pearly dew:
Such was the theme that kept their eyes unclosed
When thousands in the arms of sleep reposed,
When lo! from heav'n a sudden glory's seen,
Outshining ev'ry star, and night's fair Queen;
Above their heads the radiant glory threw
Ten thousand beams of mild and benedictive hue.
As if a lovely star had come to move,
From distant worlds the sons of men to love,
And prompt their hearts to raise melodious song
To Him who rolls innumerable orbs along.—
A fearful awe the trembling shepherds feel,
And on the ground with strong devotion kneel:
When lo! an Angel, in the form of love,
Descending gently from the light above,—
With accents sweeter than the tongue can tell,
And words of joy that all their fears dispel,
He proves himself a messenger from heav'n,
To Bethlehem's favoured shepherds giv'n:—

To lift from sorrow's path their weeping eye,
And point their hopes where fadeless pastures lie;
And lead their souls beneath a Shepherd's care,
Whose fields of bliss perennial blossoms bear,—
Where peaceful rivers always gently glide,
Whose fertile banks a plenteous store provide
Where, 'midst cloudless skies a sun refulgent reigns,
And decks with fadeless flow'rs the everlasting plains—
"Fear not," he said, "on this auspicious morn
To you, of David's line, a Prince is born—
A Saviour who is Christ the glorious Lord,
By principities and pow'r's in adord:
In David's native city you shall find
The royal babe, in swaddling clothes confind.—
"Though in a manger you the Saviour meet
Pour your heart offerings at his infant feet."

And as the Angel spake behold a throng
Of bright celestials join—and lo! a song
Of melody, more grand, and rich, and clear,
Than ever burst upon the raptur'd ear
Of saint, or prophet, favoured to behold
Celestial shepherds from the heavenly fold.—
"Glory to God who reigns enthroned above—
To man on earth be peace, and angels' love;
Good will to those whose nature Jesus wears,
And for whose sake the form of mortal bears.
Eternal praises be to Christ the King,
Eternal honours let all creatures bring."
The song is hush'd—the shades of night retreat,
And morn's first beams conduct the shepherds' feet
To Bethlehem's village—there the child they see,
And bow with grateful heart and willing knee.
To Him, whose lips shall all their sorrows end—
Their Brother! Saviour, Advocate, and Friend!—
Lord of the worlds above—whose hand shall guide
Their souls through death, and living streams provide:
Forever flowing from Jehovah's throne,
With joys that mortals here have never known.—

Fill'd with the thoughts of God's redeeming love
The happy shepherds from the scene remove;
Again rejoicing on the plains they guide
Their fleecy charge, and think of much beside—
The Angel visitants,—their beauty and their song,
Full oft their sorrows hush—their joys prolong;
And when the storms of life around them beat,
Point up to heaven,—the saints' secure retreat—
Where, raised in bliss, they'll tune their hearts to praise,
And emulate the songs that angels raise;
While listening seraphs shall the strain prolong,
And learn from Man, Devotion's loftiest song.

Prince Edward Island, 22nd Sept., 1839.

T. H. D.

Biographical.

MEMOIR OF THE REV. JOHN FLETCHER, VICAR OF MADELEY, SHROPSHIRE.

THE REV. JOHN FLETCHER was born at Nyon, in the Canton of Berne, in Switzerland, on September 12, 1729. In his infancy he discovered a lively genius, and great tenderness of heart. One day, having of-