

not really; for his prison life, except just at first, when he was more closely confined, was practically a life of liberty. His incarceration was never combined with severity; on the contrary, he was treated by the prison authorities with the greatest possible indulgence, if not actually allowed the full enjoyment of his freedom. He could come in and go out pretty much as he liked. And, strange as it may seem, it does not appear that he was hindered even from preaching. 'I followed,' says he, 'my wonted course of preaching, taking all occasions that were put into my hand to visit the people of God, exhorting them to be steadfast in the faith of Jesus Christ, and to take heed that they touched not the Common Prayer.' He also informs us how, after this, he had got more liberty allowed him, and 'did go to see Christians at London!'" "He had time allowed him for roaming abroad, time for preaching, time for reading and study, time for storing his mind with biblical information, time for familiarizing himself with the Book of Martyrs, time for making—such was his industry—"many hundred gross of long-tagged laces to fill up the vacancies of his time." He had, it seems, time for all this; and above all—for that is of chief consequence to the world now—time for writing books. It were mere exaggeration to assert, then, that John Bunyan was the victim of any terrible severities during the days of his detention in the gaol. The reverse has been shown to be nearer the truth."

Yours, etc.,

T. W. P.

THE LEGEND OF THE EARTH.

BY JEAN RAMEAU.

(The Prize Poem in the Christmas Number of the Paris *Figaro*, translated for THE WEEK.

WHEN the Creator had laid out the deeps,
The great illimitable fields of sad-eyed space,
A weighty bag upon His neck he threw,
Whence issued sound confused of huddled stars;

And, plunging in the sack His mighty hand,
He traversed all the ether's wondrous plain
With slow and measured step, as doth a sower,
Sowing the gloomy void with many suns.

He tossed them—tossed them, some in fantastic groups,
And some in luminous; some terrible.
And 'neath the Sower's steps, whose grain was stars,
The furrows of the sky, ecstatic, smoked.

He tossed them—tossed them, out of His whirling hand,
Plenteous in every place, by full broad casts
Measured to rhythmic beat; and golden stars
Flew o'er the wide expanse like firefly swarms.

"Away! away!" cried He of worlds the Sower:
"Away, ye stars! spring in the wastes of heaven;
Broder its purple fields with your fair gems;
Tuneful, elated, gladsome, take your course.

"Go, wave of fire, into a darksome night,
And there make joy, and there the pleasant day!
And launch into the depths immeasurable
Quick, quivering darts of glowing light and love!

"I will that all within your bounds shall shine,
Be glad, be prosperous, happy, blest, content,
Shall sing for ever 'Glory be to Thee!
Creator, Father, Sower, who with suns
Hast filled infinity!'"

Thus He dismissed the stars, weighted with life,
Careering round their calm Creator's feet
As, in a desert place July has scorched,
The grains of sand may cloud the traveller's steps.

And glittered all, and sang; and, hindered not,
Upon their axes turned, constant and sure;
Their million million voices, strong and deep,
Bursting in great hosannas to the skies.

And all was happiness and right, beauty and strength;
And every star heard all her radiant sons
With songs of love ensphere her mother-breast;
And all blessed Life! and blessed the Highest Heaven!

* * * *

Now, when His bag of stars He had deplete,
When all the dark with orbs of fire was strown,
The Sower found at bottom, 'twixt two folds,
A little bit of shining sun, chipped off.

And wondering, knowing not what sphere unknown
Revolved in crimson space all incomplete,
The great Creator, at a puff, spun off
This tiny bit of sun far into space;

Then, mounting high up to His scarlet throne,
Beyond the mist of thickly-scattered worlds,
Like a great crowned king whose proud eye burns
At hearing from afar his people's voice,

He listens,

And He hears

The mighty Alleluia of the stars,
The choirs of glowing spheres in whirling flood
Of song and high apotheosis,
All surging to His feet in incense clouds.

He sees eternity with rapture thrilled;
He sees in one prolonged diapason
The organ of the universe, vehement, roll
For ever songs of praise to Him, the Sower.

But suddenly He pales. From starry seas
A smothered cry mounts to the upper skies;
It rises, swells, grows strong; prevailing o'er
All the ovation of the joyful spheres.

From that dim atom of the chipped orb
It comes; from wretches left forsaken, sad,
Who weep the Mother-star, incessant sought
And never found from that gray point of sky.

And the cry said "Cursed! Cursed are we, the lost
By misery led, a wretched pallid flock,
Made for the light and tossed into the dark!

"We are the banished ones; the exile band;
The only race whose eyes are filled with tears.
And if the waters of our seas be salt,
'Twas our forefathers' tears that made them so.

"Be He Anathema, the Sower of Light!
Be He Anathema whom worlds adore!
If to our native star He join us not
Be He accursed, through all creation cursed, for aye!"

Then rose the God from His great scarlet throne,
And gentle, moved, weeping as we, He stretched
His two bright arms over the flat expanse,
And in a voice of thunder launched reply:—

"Morsel of Sun, calling thyself the Earth:—
Chrysalides who on her borders sigh:—
Humanity—sing! for I give you Death,
The Comforter, he who shall lead you back
Safe to your Star of Light."

* * * *

And this is why—lofty, above mishap,
The Poet, made for stars of molten gold,
Spurns earth; his eyes fixed on the glowing heavens
Toward which he soon shall take his freer flight.

S. A. C.

THE TOMB OF THEODORIC.

THE sun of Theodoric, which for thirty years had shone in mild splendour over the Italian land, set in lurid storm-clouds. Boethius slain, Symmachus slain, Pope John dead in prison, these were the events which every tongue at Rome and Ravenna was discussing with fear, with anger, or with lawless hope, and assuredly the dying king, though he might say few words concerning them, thought of little else; and all his thoughts about them were bitter. According to a story which was told to Procopius (perhaps by one of the lacqueys of the court whom he may have met at Ravenna), one day at the banquet a large fish's head was set before Theodoric. To the king's excited fancy, the object in the dish assumed the semblance of the pallid face and hoary head of Symmachus, newly slain. Then, as he thought, the teeth began to gnaw the lower lip, the eyes rolled askance, and shot glances of fury and menace at his murderer. Theodoric, who, if there be any truth in the story at all, was evidently already delirious, was seized with a violent shivering-fit, and hurried to his bed, where the chamberlains could hardly heap clothes enough upon him to restore his warmth. At length he slept, and when he woke he told the whole circumstance to Elyudius his physician, bewailing with many tears his unrighteous deed to Symmachus and Boethius. In this agony of mind, says Procopius, he died not long after, this being the first and last act of injustice which he had committed against any of his subjects, "and the cause of it was that he had not sufficiently examined into the proofs before he pronounced judgment upon these men."

The ecclesiastical tradition as to the death of Theodoric, preserved for us by the anonymous Valecii, makes the cause of it dysentery, a form of disease which, ever since the opportune death of the arch-heretic, Arius, seemed peculiarly appropriate for heterodox disturbers of the Church. For the secular historian it is enough to remember that Theodoric was now