

Not in T.P.L.
Not in Webster

2072

P E T R A ,

A Poem, read at the Convocation of Trinity College, Toronto, on the 18th December, 1862;
to which was awarded the Prize for English Verse, presented by the
Archdeacon of York.

"Oh! death in life, the days that are no more!"

The wave of life bore high its crested top;
Then sank, and fell into a lower deep,
And passed away, and left an azure calm.
The winds of Heaven raised the sands of Time,
And formed a monument, a mighty Fame,
A glorious city, strongest of the earth;
And then these blasts rushed on, and hurled
it down,
And 'neath the sands of Time it lay concealed.

Before the weary feet of Israel
Trod the hot sands that bound their promised
rest,

Petra was seated, rock-throned as a queen.
And now when Israel's sole can find no rest,
Petra rock-buried is no more a queen,
Is but a name, a shadow of the past
Left by God's light upon the mountain side.

Power sought a home, and hovered o'er her
vale,

And built an eyry on the hanging cliff
Commerce brought sea-worn, and brown-
dusted men

Over the billows of cerulean depths,
And o'er the waveless seas of Araby,
To wreath a golden crown for Petra's brow,
And pour their jewels at her sandalled feet.

The busy sounds of bardy labour rose,
When rose the song of early-singing bird;
And when blue night put forth her dewy lamps
The voice of tuneful mirth was heard around.
Art came and smiled on Toil; and Beauty grew
Amid their homes, unnoticed; as a child
That plays unheeded in the house he glads.
Here, first, welled forth the crystal stream
that bathes

In glowing power the reason of the world,
And understanding gleamed within their eyes.
Pomp had its throne, proud pageants swelled
their hearts,

And victory clothed with fame their mighty
Kings.

The proudest blossom on the bush of Time,
A full-blown rose, it bloomed in crimson pride,
And centred on itself the praise of men,
And scorned the root and sap which gave it
being.

And where is now that rose? Scentless and
dead,

Its withered leaves lie scattered on the ground;
For God's wrath spoken, and the proud are low.
Blank ruin calls to the past, and solitude
Wakens a death-like echo. The sad air
Breathes but of death. The heavy, storm-
born cloud

Of wrath has hung low in the burdened sky;
As hangs the veath of gloom above the burnt,
And blackened ground where once a city stood.
The sculptured homes of living and of dead,
Left of their tenants by the hand of Time!

A lifeless statue of the life that was,
Blackened with the dust and cobwebs of decay!
An empty nest that once was sweet with song!
The homes where love let in the summer sun;
The homes which hate made dark with winter's
gloom;

The cot where bright-eyed hunger was at
home;

The gold-built castle where her kings were fed;
The balckwed temple where her gods were
praised:

All—are the homes of dragon and of beasts,
And shrieking owls, and ravens gloomy-
plumed.

Silent the voice of power that scorned the
world;

Silent the eager shouts of those who came
With treasures of that world, far-gathered from
The dusky East, the golden grained glebes
Of sunny Egypt, and the farther west:

Silent the tollful sounds of horny hands,
The manifold rich sounds of cheerful work;
Silent the songs of those who plucked the
grapes

Purpling the ripened vineyard, and of those
Who trod the wine-press, with light purpled
feet;

Silent are they who quaffed the goblet's
stream,

While harpist singer sang his olden lay,
And every eye was like a well of mirth;

Silent the temple and the priests' proud chants;
And silent King, and all who swelled the
pomp

Of Golden glory, and were loud with pride.

The Eternal Voice that speaks in history
spake:—

"When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make,
"Thee desolate." And Petra knows 'twas God.