

W D Lighthall Esq  
with E. B. G.'s Compliments  
30 Oct 1908

# A FORGOTTEN POET

BY

E. B. GREENSHIELDS

---

Reprinted from The University Magazine

OCTOBER, 1908

GREENSHIELDS, EDWARD BLACK 1850-

A forgotten poet.

Canadian  
pamphlets

## A FORGOTTEN POET

**F**ORTY YEARS ago might have been seen walking along the streets of Montreal to his daily task of drudgery at the journalist's desk, a man slightly over middle age, with stooping shoulders and not very noticeable physique—an ordinary enough figure to the casual looker-on. But the careful observer would have noted the expressive gray-blue eye, the clean cut features, the lofty intellectual forehead, and would have known the poet and the dreamer of dreams.

"He walked our streets and no one knew  
That something of celestial hue  
Had passed along."

So, pondering on the tragic stories of the Old Testament, for that was the bent of his mind, and deeply impressed with those wonderful tales of events in the dim dawn of history, weaving his weird fancies about them into poems of great imagination and charm, Charles Heavysege spent the quiet years of a life of toil in the City of Montreal, unknown except to a few appreciative friends.

His writings were at first published anonymously and they were received in silence. Then, after a few years, they attracted some notice and were favourably reviewed by Coventry Patmore in the *North American Review*, by Charles Lanman in the *New York Evening Post*, by Bayard Taylor in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and in other magazines, and Longfellow and Emerson wrote praising them. But this interest died down and his works never became known to the reading public. The best and fullest account of them is to be found in Mr. Burpee's essay, read before the Royal Society of Canada in 1901. But this and the inclusion of some extracts, and a few of the

shorter poems in W. D. Lighthall's "Songs of the Great Dominion," and the Anthologies of E. C. Stedman and William Sharp, and in other collections are the only references in years to one whose name should be well known all over Canada and familiar to every reader of English poetry. Yet it is true that if his name be mentioned in any gathering, most of the people know it not, and only a few are aware that he was the author of a drama called "Saul," of which they only remember the name. And how can it well be otherwise when his books have not been republished and cannot be purchased at any booksellers? "Almost unread in this country and very little known in America," writes William Sharp. Surely this general neglect warrants our calling him a forgotten poet!

"What is the boasted bubble, reputation?  
To-day it is the world's loud cry  
Which may to-morrow die,  
Or roll from generation unto generation  
And magnify and grow to fame,  
That quenchless glory round a great man's name."

So he sings in his sonnet on "Good Deeds," and if to-day that cry sounds far off and faint, we feel sure that the future holds in store an abiding fame for the most imaginative poet that has ever lived in Canada. It is much to be hoped that a new edition of his poems will be published, so that they may be accessible to every one.

Charles Heavyside was born in England in 1816 and came to Canada with his family in 1853. He says in one of his letters that from the age of nine, except for a short period spent at school, it had been his lot to labour from ten to thirteen hours daily. He was always thoughtful and observant of man and nature and from childhood felt the stirrings of poetry within him. His occupation for some time was that of a wood carver in a furniture factory. While working he was able to think over his subjects and compose his poems. He regretted afterwards that he gave this up, but he thought

journalism would suit him better and he joined the staff of the Montreal *Witness*. He was not trained, however, for this work nor was he rapid in writing out reports, and he found it all very laborious. The only time he had for poetry was in the evening at home, surrounded by his family. His reading was not varied, and to acquire general culture he never had the leisure. His favourite studies were the Bible and Shakespeare. His recreation was taken on Mount Royal, where he never tired of watching the varying sunshine and storm passing over the distant stretches of the landscape around him. So passed until his death in 1876, his, to all appearance, uneventful life. Hard work he had by day, but evening brought his favourite pursuit, "the prouder pleasures of the mind." The account of his life and works in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada mentions 1869, 1876 and 1878 in different passages as the date of his death. But I am assured that Mr. John Reade's statement that it was 1876 is to be relied on.

The reputation of Heavysege as a poet rests on the drama "Saul," "Jephthah's Daughter," and a few sonnets. He wrote some other pieces, "Jezebel," "Count Filippo," "The Owl," and "The Dark Huntsman;" but those already mentioned are his best. "Saul" shows at once his greatness and his limitations; the beauty of his imaginative thought, often expressed in haunting lines, on the one hand, his prolixity, anachronisms, and want of dramatic form on the other. Bayard Taylor says of it: "It cannot be measured by dramatic laws. It is an epic in dialogue, and its chief charm lies in the march of the story and the detailed individual monologues, rather than in contrast of characters or exciting situations. The breath of a lofty purpose has been breathed upon every page. The language is fresh, racy, and vigorous, and utterly free from the impress of modern masters; much of it might have been written by a contemporary of Shakespeare."

The story of "Saul," as told in the Bible, is that of a man whose magnificent physique, great stature, and striking

appearance made him a noticeable figure in a young nation which had to depend for its existence on the bravery of individuals who could lead its armies triumphantly against its numerous foes. "There was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he." For these qualities he was chosen the first king.

"Warriors and Chiefs! should the shaft or the sword  
Pierce me in leading the hosts of the Lord,  
Heed not the corse, though a king's, in your path:  
Bury your steel in the bosoms of Gath."<sup>1</sup>

Young, brave, handsome and enthusiastic, he led Israel to victory, and promised to fulfil the eager hopes of the people. In these earlier years he appeared destined to become one of the great rulers of his country. The world and its glories seemed to lie at his feet.

"Thou art grown to a monarch; a people is thine;  
And all gifts that the world offers singly, on one head combine;  
High ambition and deeds that surpass it, fame crowning them—all,  
Brought to blaze on the head of one creature—King Saul."<sup>2</sup>

But a mental weakness was inherent in his constitution, and under repeated attacks of the malady, his mind and body failed. The reputation he had won, and the power he had wielded, were gradually lost and he was finally defeated and slain by the enemy on Mount Gilboa. A sad and tragic end to a career that opened with such brilliant promise for himself and his house, Saul and his sons dead and dishonoured on their last battlefield. "How are the mighty fallen and the weapons of war perished."

Samuel says that his ruin was the judgment of the Lord, because he offered sacrifice and did not exterminate every individual of the Amalekites. But the reasons already given seem to be sufficient to account for his failure. And so his dream of life vanished in night without one ray of light to illumine the darkness.

"A meteor  
That crossed the welkin ere the break of day,  
And then went out forever."

<sup>1</sup> Lord Byron.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Browning.

Four very interesting people occupy the stage during this period. Three of them are typical examples for all time; the devout Samuel, the fearless and fervent David and the loving Jonathan. These epithets attach themselves to them, but all sides of their varied characters are given in the Scriptures. Samuel, who listened to the inner voice in his youth and tried to follow its counsel through his life, erred when old, in promoting his unworthy sons, and in being unnecessarily cruel to the Amalekites. David often sinned grievously. Against Jonathan only the Chroniclers have nothing to record. An affectionate son, a brave soldier, with no feeling of jealousy for his rival, he stands out against the fierce background of his day, a man without reproach, and with a nature so loveable that his very name has become the synonym of pure unselfish friendship. Far different is Saul. The outward events of his life are dramatic enough, his meteoric rise, his victories, his illness, his death. But in studying his career we cannot fail to see that no great soul inhabited his splendid frame. His is not a weighty character. No forceful magnetic personality impressed his people. His successor David, might sink to lower depths, but he reached at times to heights unimagined by Saul. His remorse and penitence rise above his sins, and like a mist gathering over the earth, hide the frailties of humanity. The poetic temperament and deep religious feeling with which he was endowed by nature were combined with great practical capacity, and his life has enriched the domain of literature, and the world of action. Saul was not of this race of great men. His home was not on the mountain top, but on the lower levels of life, where he could be head and shoulders above the common crowd and attract its noisy admiration. Though in the youthful flush of feeling, when informed that he was chosen to be the first king, he is said to have experienced a change of heart, and even to have joined the company of the prophets, we hear no more of this after his accession to power. Saul belongs to the class of fighting rulers, and not to the race of thoughtful statesmen. One misses completely, in his case, the literary charm that en-

velops the nobler characters in the Bible. Interwoven as it is with the lives of Samuel, David and Jonathan, his life has always evoked great interest, and each generation, though dismayed at what seems to be the inevitable outcome, has watched with intense eagerness the lonely figure of Saul in his struggle against Fate, with all the chances against him.

In his drama *Heavysége* follows the Bible narrative closely, in describing the varied events in the life of Saul. With great imaginative power he introduces good and evil spirits with whom he peoples the air. These strive together for Saul's salvation, and Gloriel tells the good angels to guard Saul, and sets this task specially to Zoe, who says:

"I must attend him who to me is given  
To guard from hell and to assist to heaven."

Here, however, the logic of the situation seems to fail. For after waiting the prescribed time, and Samuel not appearing, Saul decides to offer sacrifice himself, saying with truth, "It is the heart God looks at." Then Zoe helplessly cries out:

"He will not listen  
Whilst I dissuade him from impiety,"

and finally takes leave of him with the words:

"On Saul himself resides the blame.  
His fault was found in his own heart,  
Faith lacking all his works fell short."

And Saul is left in the hands of the evil spirit Malzah, who is the most remarkable creation in the drama. To the author, he became the most real of all the characters. He is introduced as,

"The facetious spirit who with mirth  
Infectious can at times provoke half hell  
To snap their fingers at both it and heaven."

And a cheery spirit he is, light-hearted and full of humour, until he is sent on his distasteful mission of driving Saul into gloom and despondency. While he seems a spirit of the air

in very truth, still he is very human. He says to the companion spirit he loves,

"The scents of heaven yet hover round thy lips,  
That are a garden of well watered sweets,  
Which I must leave now for the arid desert  
Of vexing Saul."

And later,

"What hath Saul done to me that I should plague him?  
It goes against my heart and conscience, thus  
To rack his body and deprave his mind.  
Nay, by the pith of goodness left in me,  
It me unfiends to see and listen to him."

But vex him he does according to the instructions he must follow, until Saul cries out: "The King's most lawless subject is himself." Hating what he has to do, Malzah still must obey his orders, and he does so to the end. After the last battle with the enemy he cries sadly:

"Here lies the man I could have wished for friend!  
How shall I atone for injuring him of old."

It will be seen from the speech of Zoe, already quoted, that Heavysege follows the Bible statement that Saul's troubles arose from his lack of faith, in not fulfilling to the letter the command of Samuel, speaking for his Master, to destroy every individual among the Amalekites. But, that he sympathizes with Saul in his view of the unmercifulness of this order is evident.

SAUL

"Tis Heaven requires  
This rigorous execution at my hand,  
Or I could not have given such fell command.

ABNER:

"Oh, let us cover us with the cowl of night  
When we perform it."

Yet, though he feels the rule of the "eternal laws of iron," he will still struggle on:

SAUL:

"Yea, Heaven is unjust too. Oh, peace, my tongue,  
And yet I am indubitably changed.  
I have no God-ward movings now; no God  
Now, from his genial seat of life remote,  
Sends down to me a ray. Yet I'll endure.  
Though now 'tis night, 'twill break again to day."

And the idea of the total extermination of his enemies appals him:

**SAUL:** "I did not crave my making; did not solicit  
To be a ruler - - - What have I done  
Since then? What left undone? I've sacrificed;—  
And had I not apology? I spared the King  
Of Amalek."

**ABNER:** "He had made women childless, Samuel said,  
And so his mother should that day be childless.

**SAUL:** "Have not we all who draw the sword so done?  
Shall not Philistia's mothers curse again  
Our arms that shall bereave them? Shall  
Not Israel's nations do the like and howl  
By hill and valley their young darlings slain?  
Thrice helm thy head, for soon will at it beat  
Such storm of curses, both from sires and mothers  
As thou has never seen the counterfeit of,  
Not even when darts came at thee thick as hail."

Saul's chief offence then in the opinion of those of his own day, consisted in what to most men of a kindly disposition seems the exercise of his one redeeming virtue, his clemency in sparing the king. Otherwise his works were strenuous enough to satisfy the most exacting. Cruelty in plenty there was, but it was warfare in the open, and certainly not so repelling as the treatment of Saul's seven descendants, and of Uriah, by his great successor. But Saul in the midst of this had glimpses of the truth that, if a mere man can be merciful, a God might be more so than his own handiwork.

**SAUL:** "Too late! Is there no pardon in the world?  
Why I myself dispense forgiveness, even  
To culprits who have forfeited their lives.  
Is not thy God as merciful as his creatures?"

**SAMUEL:** "He mercy shews to thousands who do keep  
His great commandments."

**SAUL:** "They who keep them need  
No mercy."

Even those on whom the rich gift of faith is not bestowed, and who only see the carrying out of hard unchangeable laws

in the working of the universe, would yet fain hope that there does exist that love that passes understanding and tempers justice with mercy.

But in these ideas Saul would seem to have been in advance of his day, and like every man so situated he suffered for his opinion. The later and more evenly balanced view of the Apostle James, for which he has almost incurred the "odium theologicum," as to the relative value of faith and works, suggesting the inference that each has a value of its own, and that the presence of works, not necessarily complete, is a strong indication of the existence of faith, not necessarily perfect; this view would seem to differ from the strongly expressed belief of Samuel. Yet it may well be that his opinion about this was an error of judgment on his part. He was at this time an old man, and his late years were disgraced by the behaviour of his sons. On account of his age and the actions of his sons, he was asked by the people to retire in favour of a king. Very few are the men who can surrender power gracefully, even when the proper time is at hand. Samuel's enforced abdication and his being compelled to appoint Saul as his successor, and the early victories of the king, may have biased his mind and led him unconsciously to misinterpret the Divine will. Certainly, his action is at variance with his whole career. The motives that actuate men in moments of spiritual enthusiasm need to be very carefully looked into. They often are not what the actors imagine them to be. The conduct of Samuel is opposed to that idea of mercy which runs like a golden thread through the Old Testament, guiding to the fuller light of the New, always present though often unseen when hidden by the passions of men. And down the history of the ages this idea of mercifulness in the Ruler of the World has grown in intensity until it has become the chief characteristic, and covers with a mantle of charity, the efforts of man to keep the law, failures though they be at best. It might be considered that the arrival of Saul's evil spirit and the loss of his kingdom were severe punishments, considering that he obeyed

what he thought to be the commandment to so large an extent as he did.

In the present day one cannot believe that this difficulty about the Amalekites was the real cause of the troubles that befell Saul. It can only be the explanation given by his generation of the development of the mental weakness that was inherent in his nature, and which, as has been already suggested, incapacitated him from being a successful leader of men. We may charitably suppose that the reasons given only echo the ideas held in these early times about the government of the world;

"Nor is it possible to thought  
A greater than itself to know."

The modern theory of the gradual revelation of God from the dawn of history, each age being only able to appreciate his character as far as its mental capacity in spiritual matters permitted it, is a very instructive one. It enables us to understand how certain ideas and motives in different circumstances came to be attributed to the Deity. They were but the reflection of the opinions of the society of the day, about Jehovah, projected into the skies and coming back as the voice of God.

Far indeed were these ideas in the days of Saul from the belief of an earlier age, and it is refreshing as a breath of pure air to turn from them and read of the noble faith of Abraham in a just and merciful God. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" asks Abraham in the memorable interview with a God so merciful as to promise to spare the whole city of Sodom for the sake of even ten righteous men, if this small number can be found. But the long years of the captivity had borne their fruit in the degeneration of body and spirit. The people, led by Moses out of Egypt, could not escape from the dark shadow cast by slavery and sacerdotalism into the pure light that shone on the path of their wandering founder.

"Such a veil  
 "Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth,  
 "And dark in things divine."

Nor did Israel for very many generations regain the early purity of their faith.

Such is the character of Saul and such the times, and the problems incident to them, that had such a fascination for Heavysage, and he tells the story with a wealth of simile and inexhaustible fund of ideas that make it full of interest. Though the drama as a whole is too prolix and lacks dramatic power, it contains many passages of remarkable imagination and great poetic beauty.

No quotations can give any adequate idea of the poem, but the following passages, with those already given, show the imaginative quality of the work, and the beautiful similes that abound in it.

SAUL:

"Fail?"

Let the morn fail the East; I'll not fail you;  
 But swift and silent as the streaming wind,  
 At dawning sweep on Ammon, as night's blast  
 Sweeps down from Carmel on the dusky sea."

\* \* \* \*

SAUL:

"Oh Prince of Flatterers but Beggar of Doctors  
 How poor thou art to him who truly needs.  
 . . . . . Ye are imposters,  
 All said, ye are imposters; fleas; skin deep  
 Is deep with you; you only prick the flesh  
 When you should probe the overwhelmed heart,  
 And lance the horny wounds of old despair.  
 Away, Death is worth all the doctors."

\* \* \* \*

ABNER:

"Jehovah's ways are dark."

SAUL:

"If they be just I care not  
 I can endure till death relieves me; ay,  
 And not complain: but doubt enfeebles me,  
 And my strong heart that gladdeth to endure  
 Falters neath its misgivings, and vexed, beats  
 Into the speed of fever, when it thinks  
 That the Almighty greater is than good."

\* \* \* \*

**SAUL:** "To hunt and to be hunted make existence;  
 For we are all or chasers or the chased;  
 And some weak luckless wretches ever seem  
 Flying before the hounds of circumstance  
 Adown the windy gullies of this life,  
 Till, toppling over death's uncertain verge,  
 We see of them no more. I'm sad as evening.  
 Surely this day is life's epitome!  
 For life is merely a protracted chase,  
 Yea life itself is only a long day,  
 And death arrives like sundown."

The following speech of the romantic and affectionate Jonathan to his more than brother is a very beautiful passage with its reminiscence of Milton's well-known repetition:

"Thou art fairer than the kindling firmament,  
 Art fairer than the young empurpling dawn.  
 Thou with thy flinty pebble of the brook  
 Hast from the Giant's mail struck out a flash,  
 That plays on thee as doth the lightning on  
 A marble idol, making it resplendent.  
 We shall, I fear, an idol make of thee,  
 I fear we shall be tempted thee to worship,  
 Who hast already found a golden shrine  
 And ruby temple in our hearts' affections.  
 Oh do not wonder that I thus extol thee,  
 Oh do not wonder that I deem thee fair.  
 Fair late was Phosphor as I saw him shining  
 Alone e'er daybreak o'er a verdant hill;  
 And fair was Hesper as I lately saw her,  
 At evening lone above the Dead Sea shore;  
 But neither Phosphor as I lately saw him,  
 E'er daybreak shining o'er a verdant hill,  
 Nor Hesper as at eve I lately saw her,  
 All lonely shining o'er the Dead Sea shore,  
 Pleased me as thou dost now."

"Jephthah's Daughter" shows an advance in technical skill in the composition of the blank verse, and it has a smoother flow than that of "Saul." In the opening lines it makes a comparison between the tragedy of Agamemnon's daughter and Jephthah's.

"Two songs with but one burden twin-like tales,  
 Sad tales! but this the sadder of the twain;  
 This song, a wail more desolately wild;  
 Nor with less ghastly grandeur opening,  
 Amid the blaze and blazonry of war."

After the meeting with his daughter Jephthah relates the circumstances connected with his vow. Then he appeals directly to God, and prays to be released from his vow, or that a substitute may be provided.

"He said and stood awaiting for the sign,  
 And hears above the hoarse bough-bending wind,  
 The hill-wolf howling on the neighbouring height,  
 And bittern booming in the pool below."

The cruel answer that he imagines he has received, the priests later confirm, and declare that the vow cannot be broken; hiring shepherds truly that will not protect the lambs of the flock.

In a stormy interview with his wife, Jephthah cries out:

"Not all thy sex's choir of Babel tongues  
 Could reach the top of this high-towering grief,  
 Whose summit soars athwart the brazen heavens,  
 And piercing to Jehovah's sacred seat,  
 Pleads with him, pleads, but pleads, alas! in vain."

Then follows the lament of the daughter, who never more,

"May from my lattice see the brooding East  
 Bearing the solemn dawn.  
 . . . . . Nor twilight dim,  
 Sickening through shadows of mysterious eve,  
 Die midst the starry watches of the night."

There are many fine passages in this poem, but though it is in form superior to Saul, it cannot compare with that poem in sublimity of thought and in imaginative power. The subject of the one, the results that follow from a man not having the strength of mind to disregard a foolish vow, is local and not inevitable. That of the other, Saul beating in vain against the bars of his environment and

feeling the power of inexorable law is universal. The unavoidable tragedies of life are harrowing enough, but they occur in despite of man's efforts. The reader resents the tale of wilful and useless infliction of sorrow, and the low idea held by Jephthah of his God, and the repellent action of the priests.

While these two poems have great merit, and are full of grand and beautiful thoughts, and will always be held in high regard, it is not likely that they will ever be widely read. In the first place, and little is it to be wondered at, the great majority of people are not fond of tragedy. Alexander Smith in "Dreamthorpe," a delightful book of essays, describes the shelf in his library within easy reach where his favourite authors are placed. He is on easy terms with them and loves to read them often. But he will have none of the great tragedies there. They are in a place apart. The sadness inherent in life is a different matter. This is common, alas! to all mankind and it properly finds a place in the poems we make our intimate companions. Then in addition to the nature of the subjects of these dramas of Heavysége, the lyrical passages, for which there were splendid opportunities in "Saul", such as his song about Canaan, and David's victory over Goliath, and his singing peace into the mind of the wearied king, are failures.

But, fortunately for Heavysége's popularity, he has left some sonnets, which must, and most deservedly, find their way into all anthologies. And to these people more and more turn as a convenient way of keeping the poems they are fond of. When a fine poem once gets its place in an anthology its reputation is secure. Some of his sonnets show Heavysége at his highest point, and combine all his best qualities, and the thought is condensed, a necessity in this form of poetry, but not sufficiently considered in his longer poems. They have great imagination, beautiful similes, an apt choice of words, and poetic power and musical rhythm. In structure they do not comply with the strict rules of sonnet composition, though some of them

approach closely to the Shakespearian form. But this is not after all the important matter. It is the beauty of idea that is essential. "Yes," said the artist, to the critic who wanted the painting improved, "but don't you see that I might make it so good that it would be good for nothing?" That is the true point of view. Technical skill, certainly, but it must not interfere with the spirit.

William Sharp, himself a true poet, yet when he writes about the sonnet, inclined like most artists to place too much importance on technique, in his "American Sonnets" speaks of Heavyside as "the poet who had the potentiality of becoming one of the greatest sonnet writers on either side of the Atlantic." Strong words, when he tells us elsewhere that Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, and Rossetti are the greatest of the English sonnet writers! And he praises highly the sonnets quoted below on "Annihilation," on "The Dead," and the "powerful Night" which contains the lovely quatrain in which the comparison is made of night to a nude Ethiop.

## ANNIHILATION

"Up from the deep Annihilation came  
 And shook the shore of nature with his frame;  
 Vulcan nor Polyphemus of one eye,  
 For size or strength could with the monster vie;  
 Who, landed, round his sudden eyeballs rolled,  
 While dripped the ooze from limbs of mighty mould.  
 But who the bard that shall in song express  
 (For he was clad) the more than Anarch's dress?  
 All round about him hanging were decays,  
 And ever-dropping remnants of the past;—  
 But how shall I recite my great amaze  
 As down the abyss I saw him coolly cast  
 Slowly but constantly, some lofty name,  
 Men thought secure in bright, eternal fame?"

## THE DEAD

"How great unto the living seem the dead!  
 How sacred, solemn; how heroic grown,  
 How vast and vague, as they obscurely tread

The shadowy confines of the dim unknown!—  
 For they have met the monster that we dread,  
 Have learned the secret not to mortal shown,  
 E'en as gigantic shadows on the wall  
 The spirit of the daunted child amaze,  
 So on us thoughts of the departed fall.  
 And with phantasma fill our gloomy gaze,  
 Awe and deep wonder lend the living lines,  
 And hope and ecstasy the borrowed beams;  
 While fitful fancy the full form divines,  
 And all is what imagination dreams."

## THE STARS

"The day was lingering in the pale North West,  
 And night was hanging o'er my head,—  
 Night where a myriad stars were spread,  
 While down in the East, where the light was least,  
 Seemed the home of the quiet dead.  
 And, as I gazed on the field sublime,  
 To watch the bright pulsating stars,  
 Adown the deep where the Angels sleep,  
 Came drawn the golden chime  
 Of those great spheres that sound the years  
 For the horologe of time.  
 Millenniums numberless they told,  
 Millenniums a millionfold  
 From the ancient hour of prime."

## NIGHT

"Tis solemn darkness; the sublime of Shade;  
 Night, by no stars nor rising moon relieved;  
 The awful blank of nothingness arrayed,  
 O'er which my eyeballs roll in vain, deceived.  
 Upward, around and downward I explore,  
 E'en to the frontiers of the ebon air;  
 But cannot, though I strive, discover more  
 Than what seems one huge cavern of despair.  
 Oh, Night, art thou so grim, when, black and bare  
 Of moonbeams, and no cloudlets to adorn,  
 Like a nude Ethiop, 'twixt two hours fair,  
 Thou stand'st between the evening and the morn?  
 I took thee for an angel, but have wooed  
 An evil spirit in mine ignorant mood."

The last of these is almost pure Shakespearian in form. The others are irregular in structure, especially the one on "The Stars." Yet this is one of the most beautiful in idea, with its insistence on the endless beginning of time. The words have the very sound of music in them, and there is a haunting charm about it all that will not away. The occasional change to the anapestic metre gives a feeling of downward movement and restfulness.

Taking everything into consideration, the sonnet "Night" is the most complete poem Heavysege wrote. The solemnity and awfulness of the darkness of night unlit by a single star have never been more splendidly set forth than in this condensed telling of its dread power.

While the drama of "Saul" remains from its importance his masterpiece, yet these sonnets and some of the others we have not space to quote are the very flower of Charles Heavysege's genius. There is condensed power and lyric beauty in them, and they have the charm of musical rhythm and rhyme that we miss in his longer poems. Yet they have also his lofty imaginative thought, and dignity of expression, and they will ensure forgetfulness for his name:

Poet! who passed thy years of ceaseless toil,  
 Earning but scantily thy simple fare,  
 Amid the world's rough work and sad turmoil,  
 Its daily tasks and many an irksome care;  
 Still hadst thou quiet evenings of delight  
 With thy dear muse, reviving the dim years  
 Of olden time, or peopling mystic night  
 With angel forms and music of the spheres.  
 Wrapped in the Hebrew lore, the gloomy maze  
 Around the path of Israel's first king,  
 'Tis thy desire to tread, and trace the ways  
 Of fate, that to his hopeless footsteps cling.  
 Dreamer! is there no clue to that dire fall?  
 Darkness but deepens o'er the name of Saul!

E. B. GREENSHIELDS