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## LYVRIC ANB OTHER

## POEMS.



# LVYRIC ANB OTHER 

## POEMS.

BY
S.J. MACKNIGHT.

HALIFAX, N. S.
Printed by James Bowes \& Sons, 125 Hollis Street.
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## POEFAS.

## VOLUNTARY TO THE SEA.

Sing to me of the limpid sea
A song that may a comfort be, And let me hear the distant surge Croon from far points where breakers merge

And meet upon the ear, -
A sound like falling bells to purge
And drive away sad care;
And let me hear the ocean's bell
Which tolls upon the sounding shore-
A peal, a reminiscent knell
Which vibrates for the days of yore.

Meseems that I have heard before Those echoes on this sounding shore, That I have heard this ocean urge His waters in this boiling surge Upon the passive strand;
There seems upon the hoary sea
Where meets the ancient land
A threnody of days gone by
A listening for the sounds that be
Inter preted by the raging sea
Of thoughts that over centuries fly.

## THE SPIRIT OF POETRY:

Parnassus, temple of those gods
Who for their empire may choose song ;
Lilies grow up from out the sods
That to thy dewy sides belong.
Colossal in thy arm of might
Thou like.a person, rulest kings;
Or walkest vast in spectral night ;
Or like a priest whose censor swings.
O mountain! swept with wandering wings That err and wander in a dream ;
Or come like comets, or in rings
Of circuit vast, in concourse seem.
Thou in thy skirts with patterned flowers Art drest and garnished like a rose ; And from about thy glorious bowers The savour of a sweet scent goes.

In stiffly gorgeous robes bedecked, Sewn o'er with jewels to thy feet, Thou mong thy lictors walk'st erect ; Gay peacock plumes above thee meet.

Weird in thy whistling, shrieking winds Gray shapes of twilight seem to move, Or ghosts of whiteness, or black fiends, Or forms which vision cannot prove.

Or rather angels fraught with good, Or muses, ministers of art ; A company, or solitude, According to the pilgrim's heart.

Abysmal smoke veils thy ascents, A column mounting higher and higher ; To speak ideally; and through thy rents, (In figure) glares volcanic fire.

And on thy high slopes there drive mists, Over thy woods, on summits wild;
And in the blue day there persists
Or drifts a cloudland o'er thee piled.
And in the blue day there come harps Twanging beneath the fleecy clouds Or twittering from the skyey scarps Or from the drifting heavenly shrouds.

And in the sombre hours nocturne Lanterns of night o'erhang thy steeps ; They the same stars which elsewhere burn Glistening afar from stilly deeps.

Askest thou of the clouds of fleece,
Their harper where? or where their flute?
They answer not, but aye decrease Moving like smoke, and still are mute.

Dun and demure, a vacant hue,
Vasty and hollow is the night,
Sable and ebon, blackest blue Rueful its pensive hours of flight.

And yet resplendent with bright stars
In clusters sewn upon its vest ;
Or marshalling, mid flakes and bars, The white moon in the cloudy west.

Or in thy southern land so fair
Perhaps no clouds approach thy throne Thou livest in thy tranquil air

And reignest in thy sphere alone.
The eye that views thee from afar
Sees the look reverend in thy seat, And traces thee by shade and scar

An azure shape with grandeur meet.
Upon the hoar head of thy dome
Gleams forth a coronal of snows;
Also thy shoulders white their home; From them the stream Castalia flows.

Thee, 'mid the tropic torrid heats
The traveller through the desert sees; They on their camels sail like fleets, But plod without a helping breeze.

Seen through the hot air of the South Amid the twinkling hum of bees Thou figurest quiet through the drouth, And picturest ancient sleeping Ease.

Thou picturest with thy ambient air An azure monument of Peace, The fane-the sanctuary there Of Quiet, where all conflicts cease.

The camels toiling through the sands Are like a progeny of time,
Like patriarchs, pilgrims, pustoral bands Told in some story or some rhyme;

Or in some rhymeless song or book, A generation born of Eld, A people with some staff or crook, Felled like the forest trees are felled.

Philosophy finds her desire Where stray the wild bees round thy feet, And brings her incense and her fire, And from the foolish makes retreat.

Silent through all thy sloping fane Thou nursest silence like a child. When lo-some rock is loosed in twain And rushes down with clangor wild.

## L'envoi.

Amid the thickets of the South Birds build their nests and flit between.

## THE PRODIGALSON.

A SCRIPTURAL POEM.
Here are my silent mansion towers Waiting the word of heavenly powers.

Here in my field repose the flock; The light of noon glares from the rock.

The news of east, the tales of west Reach hither as they reach the rest.

Regret and disappointment pace
My inansion's vaulted rooms and place.
Forgi veness also has its time For me; I weary in this clime.

Bring from the field the fattest calf And kill it in my son's behalf.

I hear the dripping of the fount; All else is quiet on this ground.

The parched grass entwines the pale Mossed from decay. My spirits fail.

Bring forth a dress, a robe, a ring ; Shout in my palace, dance and sing.

The richest garment and best dress Bring from the store before me. Yes.

As creeps the hour on of the feast
The calf's life from all lives has ceased.
The jocund board resounds with mirth, And pictures forth the fruitful earth.

The penitent shall sup this wine, Who fed upon the husks of swine.

So sinners may return to God Who deserts dark and wastes have trod.

In the far land arose his voice ; The swine around him heard his choice.

Lo, at this gate he did arrive To-day, one from the dead alive.

## ODE TO THE SEA.

There is a pleasure in the woods, There is a rapture on the shore, There is a charm in interludes Of music, when the breakers roar ; From thence I reverence Nature more, From these wild interviews I feel Friendship not human. I adore And mingle with the scene with zeal.

Roll, everlasting, onward roll ;
The ships encompass thee in vain.
Man fells the forests : his control Is landward; on thy watery plain
He leaves no traces that remain,
No shadows--but the wrecks are thine;
He and his ships like drops of rain
Sink bubbling in thy depths of brine.
His steps are on thy paths-thy fields He traverses with merchandize;
Also a spoil thy bosom yields,
But then in wrath thou dost arise
And shaks't him from thee towards the skies,
And sends't him quivering in thy spray
Till on the earth again he lies
Driven to some petty port or bay.
The armaments which dare the walls Of sea-port cities, and which break With flashes and with iron balls

And cause beleaguered souls to quake,

The wood leviathans which make Their builders to be lords of war, These are thy toys, which thou dost shake Like foam which melting shows no more.

Thy shores are empires, continents ; Subject to civil change are they; The ancient tyrant forced relents, The suppliant ceases to obey ; Empires of Eld have passed away, Kingdoms have fallen to disgrace,
But thy waves all unchanging play, Time writes no impress on thy face.

Mirror where the Almighty's form Glasses itself in storms sublime, Also in peace as in the storm In arctic or in torrid clime, Image of endless space and time Thou hast a seryant in each zone, The monsters wallow in thy slime, Thou goest forth unmatched-alone.

The poet loves thee; and his joy, He says, was on thy breast to be, Borne like thy bubbles; form a boy Borne as thy bubbles on ward flee ; He wantoned with the angry sea; The terror was a pleasing fear ; He knew himself a child of theeTrusted thy billows far and near.

## THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

O Queen of Sheba, who could see,So far off was thy land,-
Thy realm, thy state, thy polity, The bound of thy command?
And the hoary ocean ceaselessly
Thundered upon thy strand.
O rich, O fortunate, endowed With ransoms and with spoils.
Before whom trembling realms are cowed And craft caught in its coils,
And before whom kneel a mighty crowd Of kindreds, peoples, soils.

Ah! from the South thy caravan Came through the desert heat.
Nearing the land of Canaan I h ard thy camels' feet;
Thy long procession's line I scan Laden with odours sweet.

Thou sent'st thy fleets forth on thy seas In mission to far shores,
And they returning home from these
Bring tribute to thy stores,
And landward plies the caravan
As the ship the sea explores.
Ah! from the farthest Araby
Thy people's loud acclaim
Greets thee with pomp and sovereignty
And shouts thy regal name,
And thy vesture is a panoply
Bright as a burning flame.

Thou didst the wand of pilgrimage Seize in thy firm right hand, And ledst thy councillors most sage Forth in a pilgrim band, A war 'gainst ignorance to wage, And see the far off land.

Inquiry led thee to the north, Nor were thy schemes at fault, To where the Jordan issues forth Into the drear sea salt ; A retinue encompassed thee Wide as the heavenly vault.

From out the darkness of the South Emergent to the day
History records thee with her mouth ; Thy courage made its way
Into the land of fame, where tongues Undying hold their sway.

Then thou returnedst to thy home With all thy glorious train,
Assured that in some storied tome After thy mortal pain
Thou after mixing with the loam Of Earth wouldst live again.

## EGYPT.

" Gebir, this land of ligypt is a land Of incantations; demons rule these waves."
-W. S. Jandor.

O Land of Egypt, sacred land
Of frowning wizards, who command
Dim apparitions, and who change
The air-the winds-that onward range,
Or upward, downward, outward, through
Thy breadth, thy fields, thy cities strange-
Change them to shapes, to forms, to shows,
Where the sweet stream of Nilus flows.
O Land of Egypt, amber land
Of yellow evening, filled with sand ;
Long lie thy acres of expanse;
Sweet lies thy Nilus in its weeds;
The bird of Ibis also breeds,
To hover and to sweep thy sky, Perhaps among the flocks that fly Like herds on heaven's pasture by.

Or Ibis is not, having gone
Too sacred to survive. At dawn
Thou hast thy Memnon cut in stone
Sitting severely in thy fields ;
Thou hast thy Sphinx, whose base, sand-strewn
Lies buried; and whose massy head, Her riddle yet reluctant yields, While fate her from destruction shields.

The air seems drowsy; and the vale, The scoopy vale which holds the Nile Seems bounded by a distant pile Of hills and mountains, frowning rocks,

Which seem a pearly azure blue Grand in their outline, soft in hue, A faintly seeming hue which mocks, While the vast valley still it locks.

A sail, a stick, a camel's stride I see not; yet my eyes are wide ; But only to the second view Of incantation's mystic force : My eye-lids I have formed anew ; I see the seasons in their course, The floods which whelm another Nile, Another Egypt-from their source.

I see thy slowly-tapering tombs
Of kings antique who met their dooms. Or doomed their peoples; tombs that rise In lessening hugeurss to the skies
A vast solidity of strength ;
The times of Eld from them look down ; The Sphinx may smile ; the temples frown With portals dark and shadows brown.

## VERSION OF THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

My guiding shepherd is the Lord, I have no want nor care ;
His pastures he doth me accord To walk by waters there.

Still waters, pastures green, and he Restores my soul and guides
Me in those righteous paths which are Calm like the river tides.

So for his own name's sake; and though
In the gray vale of death
Adown its darkening glooms I go I have no fear of scaith.

In death's dark shadow's valley I Walk fearless through the midst,
For thou art with me and thy rod Bringest and comfort bidst.

Thy rod and staff a solacement Seem ; and among my foes,
Where hostile forms their ire present Thy presence cures my woes.

A table is before me spread E'en where the foeman stands;
With oil thou dost anoint my head, A cup putst in my hands.

A brimming cup and mercy kind And goodness shall for aye
Follow me, and within God's house I evermore shall stay.

## VERSION OF PSALM SEVENTY-SIX.

In Judah is God known, His name in Israel great ; In Salem is His throne, On Zion's hill of state
Stands the great dwelling-place where he abides;
There did he break the arrows of the bow;
Marching to battle did confound the shield;
There did he break the sword and lay it low.
The valorous men are spoiled,
They cannot find their hands, Without a stroke are foiled

Even at thy mere commands.
At thy rebuke, O Jacob's mighty God
The chariot and the horse have faln asleep.
Thou to be dreaded art, and when in wrath,
Who in thy sight a standing-place could keep.
To judge thou didst arise,
And judgment spakst from heaven
To save the meek; earth lies
Still when thy hest is given.
Surely the wrath of man shall be made praise.
God will restrain. Vow to the Lord and pay ;
Let all bring presents unto him in fear,
Whom kings must fear-cuts princes from his way.

## PARAPHRASE OF EZEKIEL, CHAPS. I. AND II.

Ezekiel, son of Buzi, priest, By the lone banks of far Chebar', By the lone river of the East, In land of the Chaldeans far.

Seated among my kin who take
The smartings of the exile's rod ;
I saw the heavens above me break
And in their opening, visions of God.

The Lord's hand was upon me; he
His word expressly sent; the time
Fixed and appointed; unto me
Looking, appeared this great sublime.
Behold a whirlwind from the north, A great cloud, and a mighty fire,
And from the folding flame came forth
Bightness of Chasmal, $\dagger$ lower, higher.
The likeness of four living things
In the fierce brilliance undissolved
Human in aspect, wielding wings
Oherubic, from the fire evolved.
Each had four faces; towards the East, North, South, and West, might view, nor pass ; Straight feet; soles like the bovine beast, Which sparkled like to burnished brass.
$\dagger$ Chasmal, the Hebrew word translated in the English Bible " amber,' admittedly at random.

# Each had four wings ; beneath their wings <br> Were human hands, and in their flight They did not turn; the living things Went forward in the radiance bright. 

Their wings were joined, and every face As follows-one was leonine,
One human ; in the other place An ox, and the bird aquiline.

Each of the living creatures showed The contradiction of four shapes Regarding head; the human glowed ; Behind, the ox, the eagle gapes.

Two wings joined upwards; two the loins Hid of this human-aquiline;
A nd far above where wing-tip joins, I saw the face of Whom Divine.

The creatures went straight forward, went Whither the spirit led them they; And in their course turned not not bent, But winged themselves the spirit's way.

Their likeness was like coals of fire, Like lamps; the burning brightness dashed
Among the creatures, lower, higher, And from the fire the lightning flashed.

The creatures ran and then returned Like the appearance of a flash
Of lightning; so this spectre burned With movement of this sudden dash.

Now I beholding these four things Beheld one wheel upon the earth Beside the living forms with wings, A semblance of a lower birth,

Yea four wheels; and their semblance was And work, as hue of chrysolite;
I saw their motion and their laws :
The four were like; turned not in flight.
Their semblance was a wheel in volved Within a wheel ; and when they went They went on four sides, and thus solved Their motion, wheel within wheel blent.

As for their felloes-mighty rings-
Their height was dread, their look sublime;
When the four living shapes with wings
Went, the wheels went, to run, to climb.
When the four creatures rise from earth The wheels rise with them: full of eyes The mighty rings through all their girth ; In unison they run, they rise.

Whither the spirit bade they went ;
And the wheels with them ran, stood, rose;
The spirit of the creatures blent
Was in the wheels; these followed those.
Thus for the wheels. The vault on high Over the living creatures' heads
Was crystal hue to terrify,
Was terrible, which o'er them spreads.
Under this dreadful firmament
The living creatures' wings were straight
One toward the other; two wings went
To meet two others, each his mate.
I heard their winging when they rushed,
Like noise of waters, like the voice
Of the Almighty : the sound gushed
Like speech, even like an army's noise.

They stopped and stood with wiags depressed, And from the upper firmament,
They standing with their wings down dressed, A dread celestial voice forthwent.

Thus for the vault : and looking higher I saw the likeness of a throne Above the vault; the eyes aspire ; Its likeness as a saphire-stone.

And on this semblant regal seat I saw the likeness of a form As of a man : these visions meet Mine eye out of this whirling storm.

I saw what hue of Chasmal seemed Within, around, and shape of fire ;
From the loins upward, downward, beamed A fiery semblance-lower, higher.

And brightness round about like bow In cloud in day of rain appeared
Which hemmed around that radiant glow Of Chasmal, where the throne upreared.

This was a glory quite divine, The dreadful visage of the Lord.
I fell upon my face. This sign O'erwhelmed me. Prostrate I adored.

I heard a voice of one that spake, And then he said unto me, Son
Of man, stand upright; from me take My words; I speak; I have begun.

The spirit entered when he spake Into me, and set me on my feet,
So that I heard the words that brake From his dread lips with audience meet.

And then he said unto me: Son
Of man, I send thee to the stock
Of rebel Israel, send thee one
Against a nation who me mock.
I send thee : and so thou shalt say
Thus saith the Lord, and they shall know, Whether they heed, or say thee nay

A prophet hath been sent them so.
Be not afraid though thorns and briers Be with thee, nor of scorpions fear ; Fear not their words; they and their sires Are rebel; nor their looks; yet hear.

Hear what I say : be not like them Rebellious; ope thy mouth and eat;
Be not like those who me contemn, He ceased. I saw a hand, a sheet.

He spread the scroll before me, lo O'erwritten with its dread contents ;
And there was written in it woe, And awful mournings and laments.

## CHRIST BAPTIZED IN JORDAN.

O mighty stream! O plenteous flood!
O mighty Jordan ! breathing peace, Descending with thy waters good, And bearing on thy calm increase.

O holy banks! O peaceful shores !
O quiet fields! O pebbly brink!
O'er fields, o'er stream the eye explores, And in the water turmoils sink.

Messiah hastens; speaks he " John, Baptize me ;" him the Baptist spake :
"Thou rather me." Messiah said " Nay, 'tis ordained thou undertake."

Him he baptized, and lo from heaven Came floating downwards from above With outstretched wings, a symbol given, Upon Messiah's head, a dove.

The dove flew off. A voice was heard Which from the zenith spake and ceased,
The voice of God "This is my Son Beloved; in him I am well pleased."

## PALLAS.

Genius of prudence and of war,
Pallas looks westward towards the deep,
Breathing the high abstracted air
Of Athens, o'er her structured steep.
Towering from the Acropolis,
She thrills her marble self with thought,
Gazing as far as Salamis-
Wisdom is e'er unsold, unbought ;
Wisdom of virtues is most meet ;
Wisdom of graces is most sweet.
The city's streets and roofs are given
To avocations of man's life.
Higher and nearer to the heaven
And guardian of this toil and strife
The goddess stands; but does her mind Move with those things at all? her heart
A wisdom of its own may find,
Not dealing with the street or mart, A wisdom to herself most meet,
The wisdom in itself most sweet.

Genius of prudence and of war,
Stands Pallas on the structured steep ;
The wisdom of the near and far,
The new and old doth she not keep?
And centres in her spear and shield
A monumental wisdom's might ;
All wisdom's puissance she doth wield,
And wisdom's power ; and wisdom's sight
Is hers; and seem her marble eyes Full of the secrets of the wise.

## TO-MORROW .

To-morrow ye will walk and ye will play,
On this old earth I leave with you till when? Or soberly will wander through the day,

And in the future we shall meet again.
The works of life noise round about your ways;
Retirement finds you; summer's light and heat;
The palpable wind whistles; the earth stays ;-
And me, I hear the echoes of your feet.
To-morrow the same rose will bloom again
That blooms to-day; nor will its red abate;
With roses of this kind ye shall remain ;
And you the bright sun dawning will await.
Like memory does faith, in present gloom
Bring a respondent climate from afar ;
And when through rains all visual objects loom, The mind thinks of the blue vault of the air.

So have the lost a strong thought of the saved; , has the slave a deep dream of the free ;
Along this dust, this measured way and paved, Fleets the dim hope of immortality.

## TO THE SEA.

Thou blowest soft, O sea, In even's mantle clad; What vespers come from thee Faint wearily and fade.

The headland scenteth night, And fadeth with thy main; One early star his light Trails in thy vasty plain.

Thou sendst thy waves from thee Trooping forth in the glooms; Thou ripplest low, O sea, Like grasses grown near tombs.

To be like thee! $O$ sea, Neath even's dusky cloud ; Untangled, calm, and free, Thou mild pacific flood.

No chains thy waves defeat, Nor slings nor arrows thee ; Immeasurably great

Thy deeps and billows be.

## OTTAWA FROM THE CHAUDIERE FALLS BRIDGE.

This voice of waters leads thee on ;
And this white sea, rock'd with unrest, Tinged through with yellow-from the west Guides us to yonder house of stone.

This yellow flood advancing east
Dies into white, with flakes of foam ;
These waves, like time transmuting, roam, And lo-their turbulence has ceased.

A streak of calm beneath yon hill
Leads up the eye in green retreat;
Above, heavens with the verdure meet;
With palace towers serene and still.
Methinks on yonder leafy mount Someone has built yon ordered house, And slightly gilded, like a mouse, With tips of brass its roofs high-crowned.

Perhaps beyond those tower-crowned shores, (If one may study the unseen, If one ignores what comes between)-
The flood again boils on and roars,
Roaring in thunders, sprayed in mist.
Perhaps it glides in verdant bays
Silently treading peaceful ways
Which with this Sabbath calm consist.


