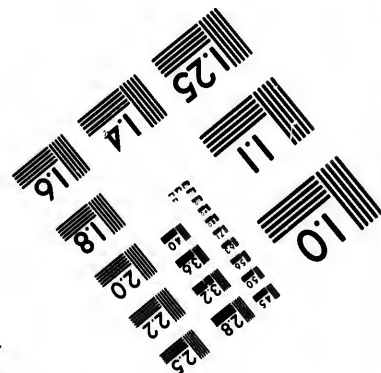
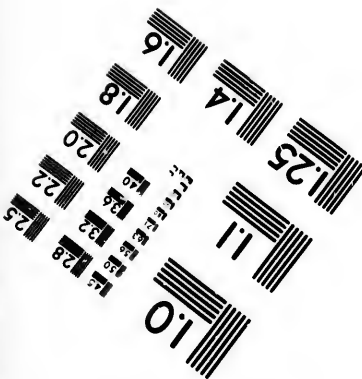
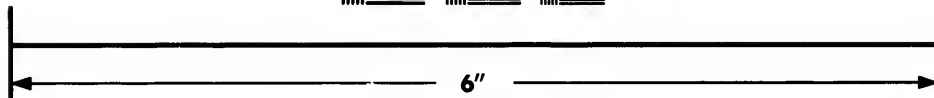
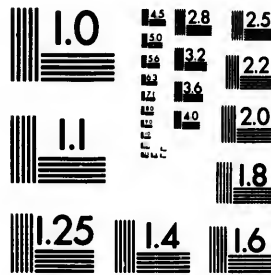


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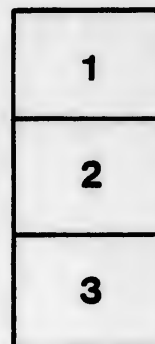
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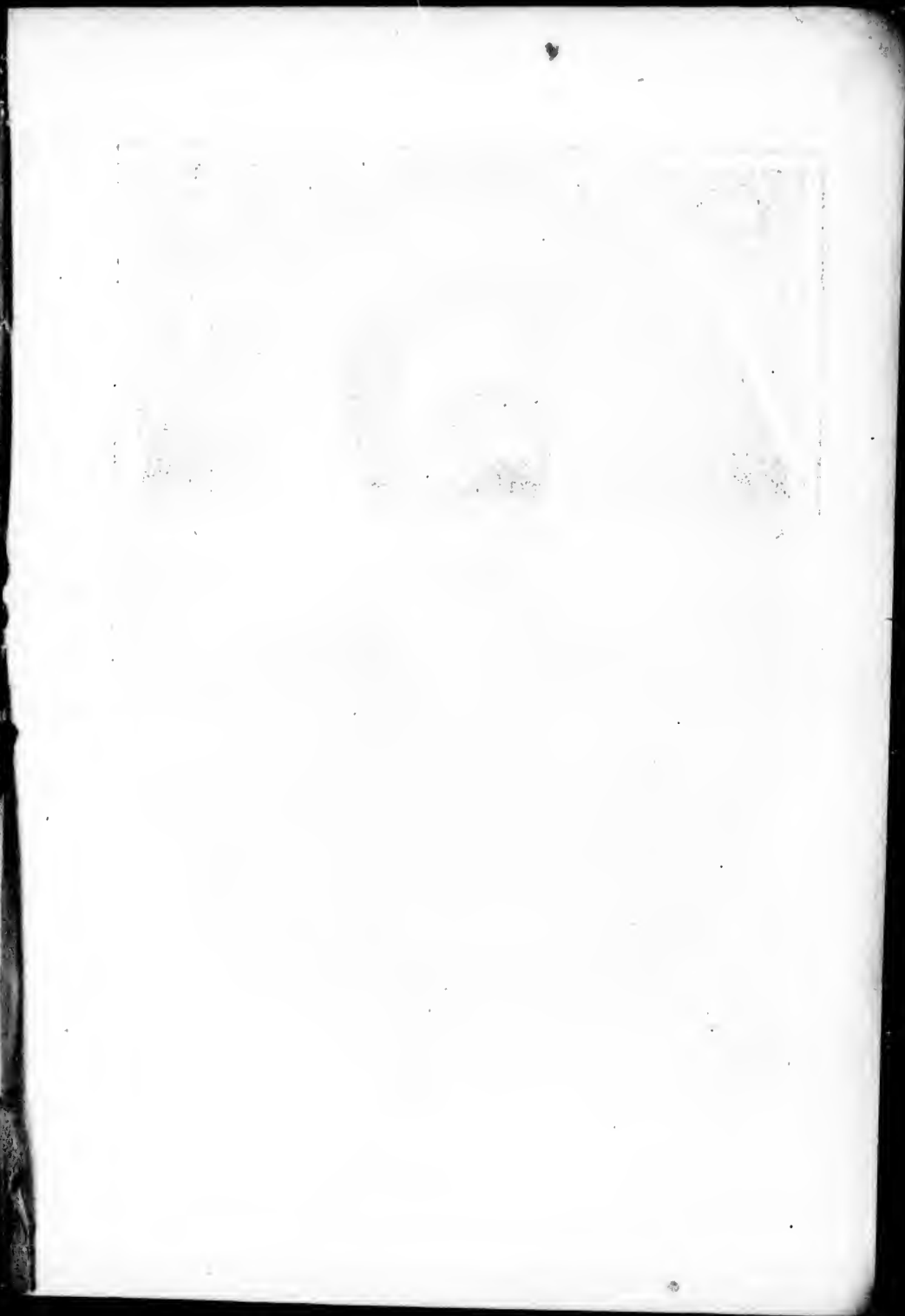
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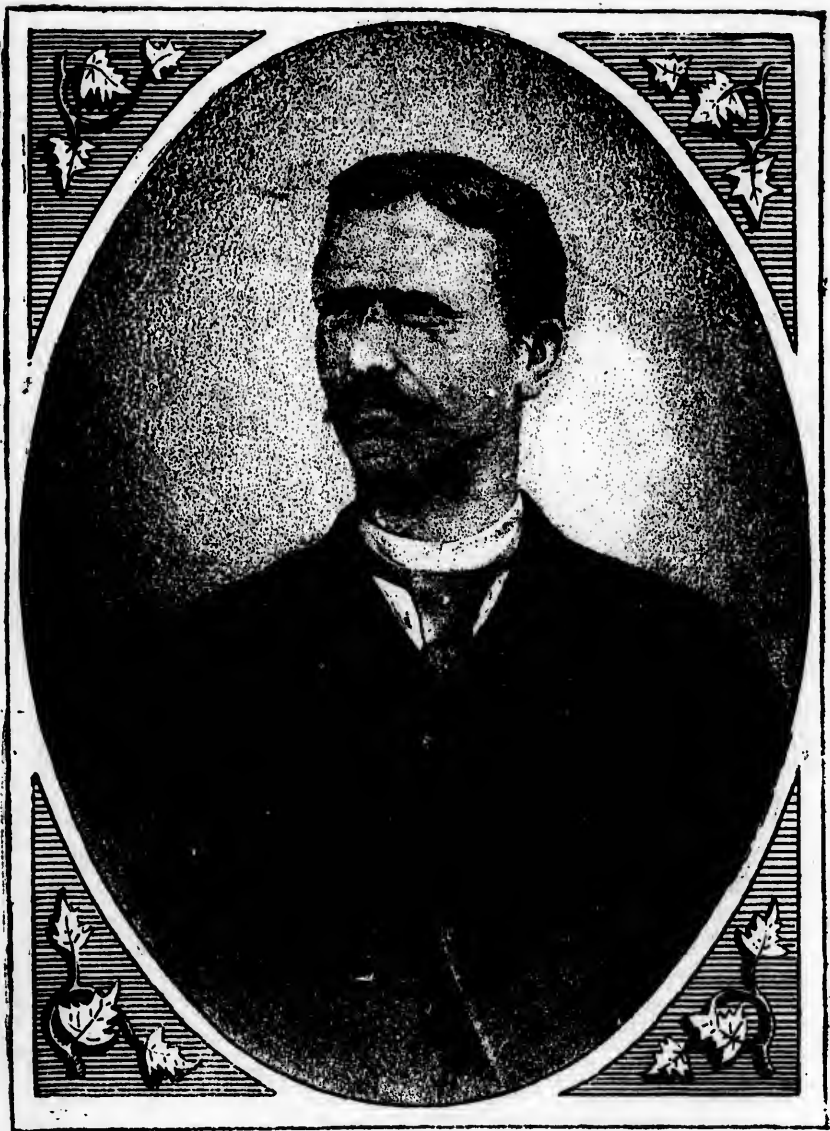
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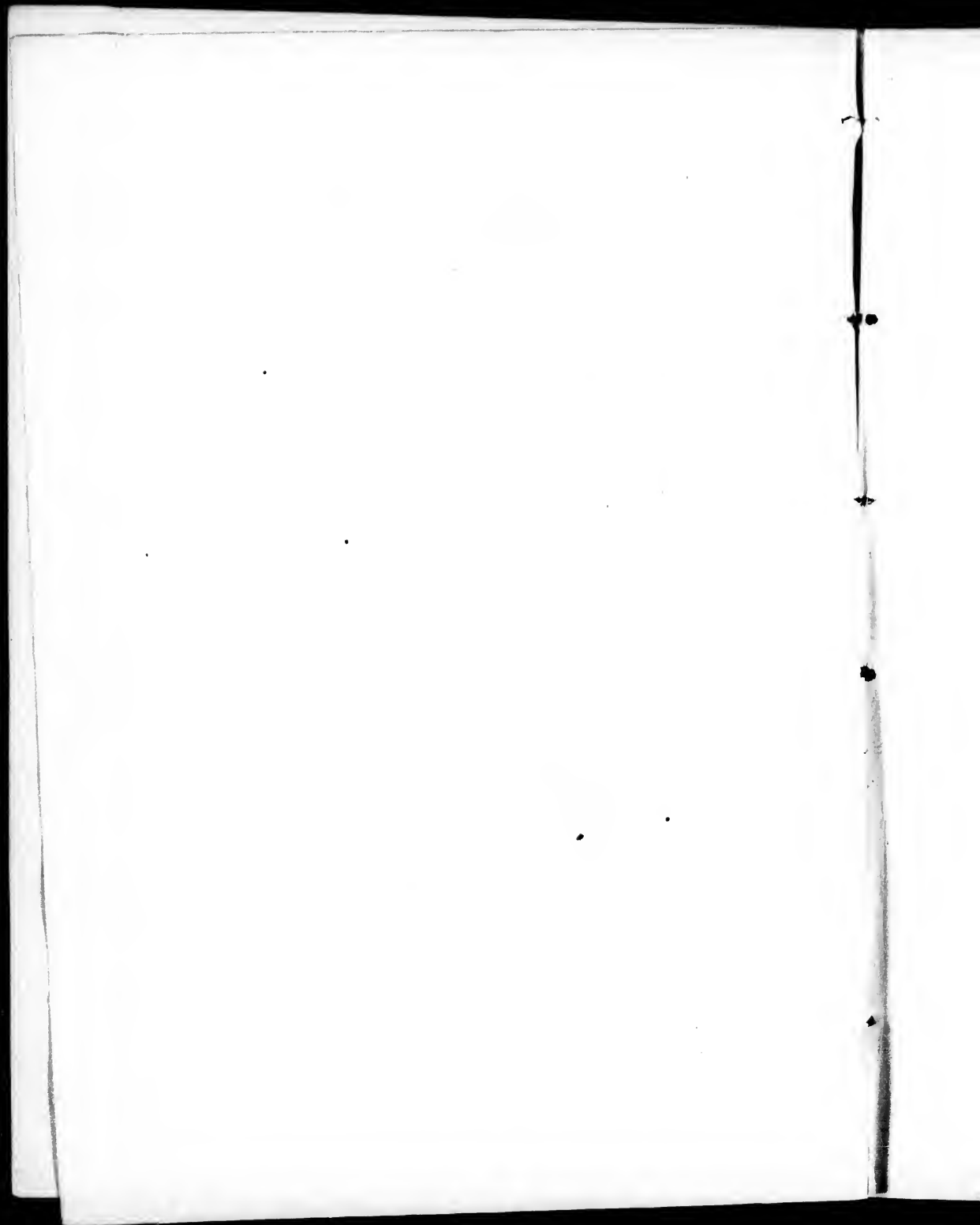
A PICTURE OF
PARADISE.

In Two Parts.

BY
MATTHEW McMASTER,
ORANGEVILLE.



Toronto:
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1883,



A PICTURE OF

PARADISE.

Part First.



WHEN God had formed the human mind,
It was unto all good inclined ;
Not only free from sin and care,
But also did God's image bear.
Man lived in holiness and peace
In a heavenly Paradise,
In which a garden God did plant,
Of trees to suit his every want.
Of all the trees the man may eat
The fruit delicious and sweet.
But one which in the garden stood—
Knowledge of evil and of good,—
To which, said God, do not come nigh,
Lest if you touch it you shall die.

And all to Adam's good was blest,
Who also kept the garden drest.

When God had all creation viewed,
And all His works pronouncèd good,
He sanctified a day of rest,
Which should to all mankind be blest ;
A day of rest from toil and care,
A day of holy work and prayer,
A day devoted to the Lord,
In every action, thought and word.
God also said of this His son,
It is not good to be alone.
Although the garden yields him fruit
Of every kind, his wants to suit,
And furnishes his daily food,
To be alone it is not good.
His custom was, on certain hours,
To lay him down 'mong scented flowers—
And with delight to sing and pray ;
And thus he did from day to day.

While once he thus communed with God,
Unconsciously began to nod,
And soon was found to be asleep,
Unusually sound and deep.
Now, God had said of this His son,
It is not good to be alone.
I'll take a rib now from his side,
And make for him a lovely bride,
Who shall with him choice blessings share—
In Paradise a happy pair.

While thus he slept so deep and sound,
He dreamt of wonders all around ;

And shining angels that adored
And sang sweet praises to their Lord.
And one who seemed most wondrous fair—
A lovely form with flowing hair,
Who seemed of all to stand most nigh
To where the sleeping form did lie.
And now his slumbers all were broke,
And he to consciousness awoke ;
When vanished all that heavenly band,
But she who nearest him did stand.
He with delight rejoiced to see
A maid so beautiful as she,
Remain of all that heavenly host,
Who in his dream he loved the most.
He now arose, at God's command,
And softly took her by the hand,
In presence of their Sovereign King,
To whom they did sweet praises sing,
While choicest blessings on them poured
From Him whom they so much adored.
It now drew near the close of day,
And both retire to sing and pray.

And now they both began to pray
That God would keep them, night and day,
Out of temptation's fatal road,
Lest they should turn aside from God.
And give them grace from day to day,
That they might ever watch and pray,
And keep their hearts, for God's command
Was written there by God's own hand.
This was their evening prayer always,
And now they sing their song of praise :

“To Thee, O God, our voice we raise,
While our heavenly song we sing ;
Now tune our hearts to sing Thy praise,
O, our God and Heavenly King.

May all praise to Thee be given,
Ever hallowed be Thy name ;
And as Thy will is done in Heaven,
So may it be on earth the same.”

Soon as the day began to dawn
On blooming Eden's flowery lawn,
Then Adam and his wife arose
Much refreshed by the night's repose,
And offered up their praise and prayer
To Him, whose Providential care
Kept them through the previous night,
To see again the morning light.
And long before the sun did rise
The heavenly birds of Paradise,
In sweetest notes poured forth their lays,
Singing their Great Creator's praise ;
And seemed to greet with joyfulness
Their master and their mistress,
Who now enjoy a rich repast
Of fruit, on which they break their fast,
Beneath a tree of fragrance sweet—
A heavenly, hallowed, blest retreat,
They thank their God (source of all good)
And carefully select their food,
Lest they should ever, unawares,
Eat of the tree that poison bears ;
To which, said God, do not come nigh
Lest if you touch it you shall die.

Now, at a distance, lo, they hear
The sound of footsteps drawing near ;
Their Lord is come, and with Him brings,
Of birds and beasts and creeping things,
A vast, innumerable host,
He now has formed out of the dust,
Of animals, both wild and tame,
To Adam to receive their name ;
What name soever Adam gave,
That was the name they all should have.
One creature first to Adam came,
That he might first receive his name,
Which he did closely scrutinize
Because he seemed most wondrous wise ;
He also is more mild and tame
Than any which to Adam came.
Now see him closely by him stand
And kindly lick his master's hand ;
He also is of craft possess'd,
In this exceeding all the rest
Of the creatures that now were made—
The gift of speech he also had.
He call'd him first by every name
Which his mild nature seemed to claim ;
Yet e're his judgment all was spent,
He called him the crooked serpent,
Who now of Adam takes his leave
To make a friendly call on Eve,
Whom he address'd in accents mild,
As meek and gentle as a child :
“ With joy I now congratulate
You in this holy, happy state ;
Yet had it been your maker's will,
You might have been more happy still—
It is desirable that you
Should also be much wiser, too.”

Then answered Eve, " God is all wise,
And He no good thing us denies ;
Our God to us is kind and good,
Providing us abundant food—
Of all the trees we freely eat
The fruit delicious and sweet,
But one, which in the garden stands,
Regarding which our God commands
That we to it should not come nigh,
Yet neither touch it lest we die."
The serpent now with all his art
Strives to deceive the woman's heart.
" Your God " you say " is kind and good,
And yet restricts you in your food."
And now he in the woman's sight
Did satisfy his appetite
On fruit from this forbidden tree,
And yet received no injury.
Of all the fruit so rich and good
This proved to be his choicest food ;
That he might better press his suit,
He now presents her with such fruit
As in the garden anywhere
She never saw so rich and fair.
He says, " Does God presume to say
That you shall die upon the day
That you should taste this dainty food,
Which I have proved to be so good ?
Now God doth know (who is all wise)
That then shall opened be your eyes
To know as Gods, evil and good,
The day you eat this wholesome food."
(Now at this moment Adam came
With many creatures, mild and tame,

And much attached unto their lord—
Prepared to serve him at his word.
The lamb and lion now are seen
To gambol on the garden green,
The leopard and the tender fawn
Together graze upon the lawn,
Also the calf and grisly bear
Do make a mild and gentle pair ;
They all together feed and play
In innocence and harmony.)

The woman saw the fruit was good,
Not only as delicious food
But also pleasant to the eyes
To be desired to make one wise.
(Alas for that unhallowed hour
When Satan rose to kingly power,
A free admittance now he's gained,
Where peace and love to God had reigned.)





Part Second.

A revolution now comes in—
The woman's heart is black with sin ;
She now received the fatal bait,
Of which she also freely ate.
Her husband, who was standing by,
Rejoiced to know she did not die,
And of her hand received the food
He also now believed was good,
(Against the knowledge of the right),
To please his carnal appetite.

The serpent now ascends the tree,
To know what the result should be,
Beholding this once happy pair
Standing alone in blank despair.
Their guardian angel seeks the skies,
The bloom of Eden fades and dies.
What once to man was heaven below
Is now a spectacle of woe ;
The trees all once so green and fair,
Are now fast turning brown and bare,
But two which yet retain their bloom—
The tree of man's unhappy doom,
Also the tree of life is seen
Yet to retain its lively green.

The leopard ceased to graze the lawn
And preys upon the tender fawn.
The lamb and lion ceas'd to play,
And this furious beast of prey
That grazed upon the garden green,
To tear the tender lamb is seen ;
The calf too, feeds the grizzly bear,
For all is now confusion there.

The man and woman, now too late,
Do understand their sinful state ;
By which they see their nakedness,
For neither yet wore any dress ;
And now the work is surely Eve's
To sew together withered leaves,
From off the fig tree, bare and brown,
And make them each a morning gown.
When, hark ! before her work is done,
And near the setting of the sun,
They hear a gentle, rustling breeze,
The voice of God among the trees,
From whom they seek to hide their shame,
When now He calls the man by name,
Saying to Adam, " Where art thou ? "
When Adam did in reverence bow
Before his Lord and Sovereign King,
Whose praise he heretofore did sing ;
Conscious of my guilt and shame,
" I fear'd to hear Thee call my name ;
I also sought to hide my face
In presence of Thy holiness. "
God now demands to know his case,
Why he desires to wear a dress.
" Have you now eaten of the tree
Regarding which I said to thee

That you to it should not come nigh,
Yet neither touch it lest you die ?”
The man now knows his sinful case,
Yet casts all back in God’s own face ;
“ The woman whom you gave to me
Did eat of the forbidden tree,
And gave to me of that same food,
Which, also, I believed was good. ”
God also now demands of Eve
Why she her husband did deceive.
“ The serpent which appear’d so mild,
Through his deceit has me beguiled,
And I did eat of that same food,
He represented to be good. ”

The serpent next in judgment stands,
And strictly God of him demands
Why he so used his fiendish art
As to deceive the woman’s heart.
“ Above all creatures I have made
My curse is ever on thy head ;
An object of contempt and woe,
Upon thy belly thou shalt go,
And walk no more upon thy feet ;
Also, the dust shall be thy meat ;
There also shall be enmity
Between the woman’s seed and thee ;
Thy guilty head his power shall feel,
And thou shalt also bruise his heel. ”

God also now to Adam said :
“ Because my word you disobeyed,
This fruitful earth which I did make
Is also cursèd for your sake ;
From henceforth you must till the earth,

From whence you also had your birth ;
(And as of dust you have been born,
So to the dust you shall return);
And when you till, the stubborn soil
Shall have a discount on your toil ;
The earth shall not yield her increase,
As when with God you lived in peace ;
Thistles and thorns shall still abound,
And curse the labors of the ground." Gen. iii. 17.
With deep conviction of their sin,
To turn to God they now begin ;
An offering for sin they bring
Unto God, their heavenly King.
Of creatures that are clean and tame,
An offering in their Saviour's name,
And God, who pities now their case,
Makes of the skins for each a dress.

God, seeing how they understood
Knowledge of evil and of good,
In mercy guards the tree of life,
Lest ever Adam and his wife
Should also of that fruit be given,
And so should never get to Heaven.
And now an Angel takes his stand,
A flaming sword is in his hand,
And safely guards the tree of life
From guilty Adam and his wife,
Whose daily labor has begun,—
They toil beneath the burning sun,
Are day by day fatigued and worn,
And gladly hail the Sabbath morn :
A day of rest from toil and care,
A day of holy work and prayer,

A day devoted to the Lord
In every action, thought and word.

At length their toils and cares do cease,
And now they lay them down in peace ;
Their dust to dust does now return,
Waiting the resurrection morn,
When all mankind at last shall stand
On the Judge's right and left hand,
And give account as each has done
While living here beneath the sun.

MATTHEW McMASTER,

Orangeville.



