

DREAM OF

GERONTIUS

CARDINAL

NEWMAN





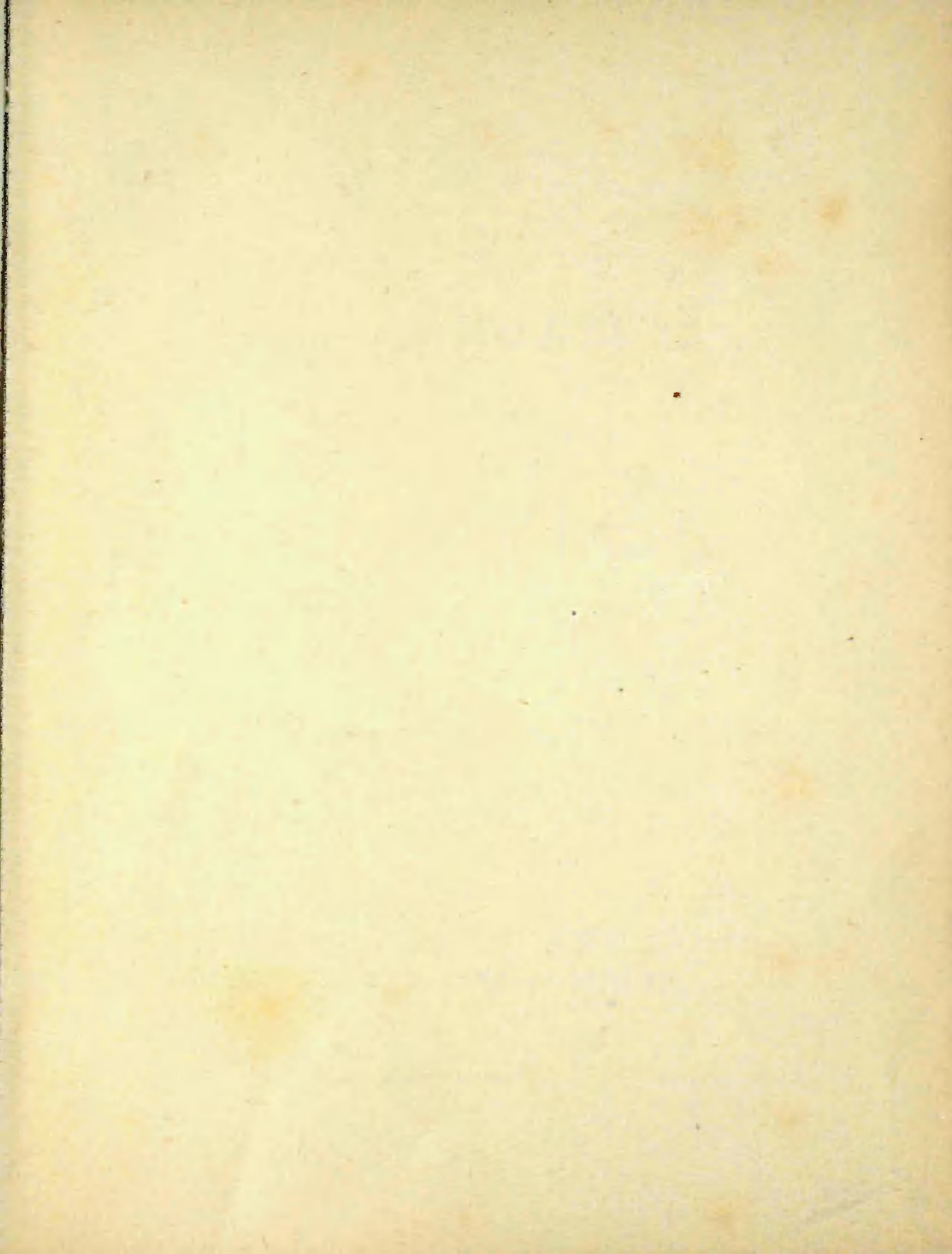
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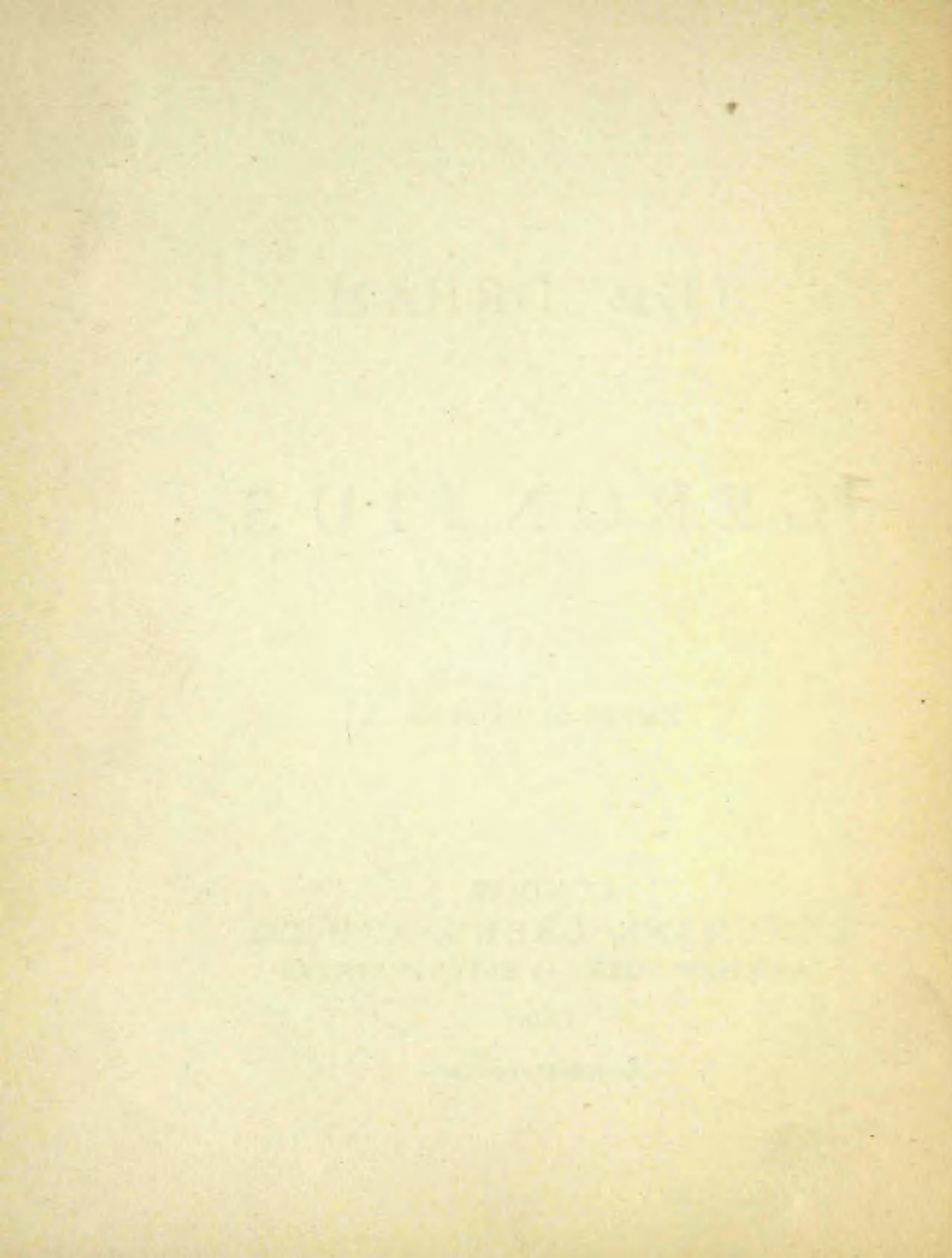
THE DREAM  
OF  
GERONTIUS.

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FRATRI DESIDERATISSIMO,  
JOANNI JOSEPH GORDON,  
ORATORII S.P.N. PRESBYTERO,  
CUJUS ANIMA IN REFRIGERIUM.

J. H. N.

*In die Comm.*

*Omn. Fid. Def.*

1865.





§ I.

GERONTIUS.

JESU, MARIA—I am near to death,  
And Thou art calling me ; I know it now.  
Not by the token of this faltering breath,  
This chill at heart, this dampness on my brow,—  
(Jesu, have mercy ! Mary, pray for me !)  
'Tis this new feeling, never felt before,  
(Be with me, Lord, in my extremity !)  
That I am going, that I am no more.  
'Tis this strange innermost abandonment,  
(Lover of souls ! great God ! I look to Thee,)  
This emptying out of each constituent  
And natural force, by which I come to be.  
Pray for me, O my friends ; a visitant  
Is knocking his dire summons at my door,

The like of whom, to scare me and to daunt,  
Has never, never come to me before ;  
'Tis death,—O loving friends, your prayers !—'tis  
he ! . . .  
As though my very being had given way,  
As though I was no more a substance now,  
And could fall back on nought to be my stay,  
(Help, loving Lord ! Thou my sole Refuge, Thou,)  
And turn no whither, but must needs decay  
And drop from out this universal frame  
Into that shapeless, scopeless, blank abyss,  
That utter nothingness, of which I came :  
This is it that has come to pass in me ;  
O horror ! this it is, my dearest, this ;  
So pray for me, my friends, who have not strength to  
pray.

## ASSISTANTS.

Kyrie eleïson, Christe eleïson. Kyrie eleïson.  
Holy Mary, pray for him.  
All holy Angels, pray for him.



Choirs of the righteous, pray for him.

Holy Abraham, pray for him.

St. John Baptist, St. Joseph, pray for him.

St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Andrew, St. John,

All Apostles, all Evangelists, pray for him.

All holy Disciples of the Lord, pray for him.

All holy Innocents, pray for him.

All holy Martyrs, all holy Confessors,

All holy Hermits, all holy Virgins,

All ye Saints of God, pray for him.

GERONTIUS.

Rouse thee, my fainting soul, and play the man ;

And through such waning span

Of life and thought as still has to be trod,

Prepare to meet thy God.

And while the storm of that bewilderment

Is for a season spent,

And, ere afresh the ruin on thee fall,

Use well the interval.

## ASSISTANTS.

Be merciful, be gracious ; spare him, Lord.  
Be merciful, be gracious ; Lord, deliver him.  
From the sins that are past ;  
    From Thy frown and Thine ire ;  
        From the perils of dying ;  
        From any complying  
        With sin, or denying  
        His God, or relying  
On self, at the last ;  
    From the nethermost fire ;  
From all that is evil ;  
From power of the devil ;  
Thy servant deliver,  
For once and for ever.

By Thy birth, and by Thy Cross,  
Rescue him from endless loss ;  
By Thy death and burial,  
Save him from a final fall ;

By Thy rising from the tomb,  
By Thy mounting up above,  
By the Spirit's gracious love,  
Save him in the day of doom.

GERONTIUS.

Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,  
De profundis oro te,  
Miserere, Judex meus,  
Parce mihi, Domine.  
Firmly I believe and truly  
God is Three, and God is One ;  
And I next acknowledge duly  
Manhood taken by the Son.  
And I trust and hope most fully  
In that Manhood crucified ;  
And each thought and deed unruly  
Do to death, as He has died.  
Simply to His grace and wholly  
Light and life and strength belong



And I love, supremely, solely,  
Him the holy, Him the strong.  
Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,  
De profundis oro te,  
Miserere, Judex meus,  
Parce mihi, Domine.  
And I hold in veneration,  
For the love of Him alone,  
Holy Church, as His creation,  
And her teachings, as His own.  
And I take with joy whatever  
Now besets me, pain or fear,  
And with a strong will I sever  
All the ties which bind me here.  
Adoration aye be given,  
With and through the angelic host,  
To the God of earth and heaven,  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,  
De profundis oro te,

Miserere, Judex meus,  
Mortis in discrimine.

I can no more ; for now it comes again,  
That sense of ruin, which is worse than pain,  
That masterful negation and collapse  
Of all that makes me man ; as though I bent  
Over the dizzy brink  
Of some sheer infinite descent ;  
Or worse, as though  
Down, down for ever I was falling through  
The solid framework of created things,  
And needs must sink and sink  
Into the vast abyss. And, crueller still,  
A fierce and restless fright begins to fill  
The mansion of my soul. And, worse and worse,  
Some bodily form of ill  
Floats on the wind, with many a loathsome curse  
Tainting the hallowed air, and laughs, and flaps  
Its hideous wings,  
And makes me wild with horror and dismay.

O Jesu, help ! pray for me, Mary, pray !  
Some Angel, Jesu ! such as came to Thee  
In Thine own agony. . . .  
Mary, pray for me. Joseph, pray for me.  
Mary, pray for me.

## ASSISTANTS.

Rescue him, O Lord, in this his evil hour,  
As of old so many by Thy gracious power :—(Amen.)  
Enoch and Elias from the common doom ; (Amen.)  
Noe from the waters in a saving home ; (Amen.)  
Abraham from th' abounding guilt of Heathenesse ;  
(Amen.)  
Job from all his multiform and fell distress ; (Amen.)  
Isaac, when his father's knife was raised to slay ;  
(Amen.)  
Lot from burning Sodom on its judgment-day ; (Amen.)  
Moses from the land of bondage and despair ; (Amen.)  
Daniel from the hungry lions in their lair ; (Amen.)  
And the Children Three amid the furnace-flame ;  
(Amen.)



Chaste Susanna from the slander and the shame ;  
(Amen.)

David from Golia and the wrath of Saul ; (Amen.)

And the two Apostles from their prison-thrall ; (Amen.)

Thecla from her torments ; (Amen.)

—so, to show Thy power,

Rescue this Thy servant in his evil hour.

GERONTIUS.

Novissima hora est ; and I fain would sleep,  
The pain has wearied me. . . . Into thy hands,  
O Lord, into thy hands. . . .

THE PRIEST.

Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo !  
Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul !  
Go from this world ! Go, in the Name of God  
The Omnipotent Father, who created thee !  
Go, in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,  
Son of the Living God, who bled for thee !  
Go, in the Name of the Holy Spirit, who  
Hath been poured out on thee ! Go, in the name

Of Angels and Archangels ; in the name  
Of Thrones and Dominations ; in the name  
Of Princedoms and of Powers ; and in the name  
Of Cherubim and Seraphim, go forth !  
Go, in the name of Patriarchs and Prophets ;  
And of Apostles and Evangelists,  
Of Martyrs and Confessors ; in the name  
Of holy Monks and Hermits ; in the name  
Of holy Virgins ; and all Saints of God,  
Both men and women, go ! Go on thy course ;  
And may thy place to-day be found in peace,  
And may thy dwelling be the Holy Mount  
Of Sion :—through the Same, through Christ, our Lord.

## § 2.

## SOUL OF GERONTIUS.

I went to sleep ; and now I am refreshed.  
A strange refreshment : for I feel in me  
An inexpressive lightness, and a sense  
Of freedom, as I were at length myself,  
And ne'er had been before. How still it is !

I hear no more the busy beat of time,  
No, nor my fluttering breath, nor struggling pulse ;  
Nor does one moment differ from the next.  
I had a dream ; yes :—some one softly said  
“He’s gone ;” and then a sigh went round the room.  
And then I surely heard a priestly voice  
Cry “Subvenite ;” and they knelt in prayer.  
I seem to hear him still ; but thin and low,  
And fainter and more faint the accents come,  
As at an ever-widening interval.  
Ah ! whence is this ? What is this severance ?  
This silence pours a solitariness  
Into the very essence of my soul ;  
And the deep rest, so soothing and so sweet,  
Hath something too of sternness and of pain.  
For it drives back my thoughts upon their spring  
By a strange introversion, and perforce  
I now begin to feed upon myself,  
Because I have nought else to feed upon.—

Am I alive or dead ? I am not dead

But in the body still ; for I possess  
A sort of confidence, which clings to me,  
That each particular organ holds its place  
As heretofore, combining with the rest  
Into one symmetry, that wraps me round,  
And makes me man ; and surely I could move,  
Did I but will it, every part of me.  
And yet I cannot to my sense bring home,  
By very trial, that I have the power.  
'Tis strange ; I cannot stir a hand or foot,  
I cannot make my fingers or my lips  
By mutual pressure witness each to each,  
Nor by the eyelid's instantaneous stroke  
Assure myself I have a body still.  
Nor do I know my very attitude,  
Nor if I stand, or lie, or sit, or kneel.

So much I know, not knowing how I know,  
That the vast universe, where I have dwelt,  
Is quitting me, or I am quitting it.  
Or I or it is rushing on the wings



Of light or lightning on an onward course,  
And we e'en now are million miles apart.  
Yet . . . is this peremptory severance  
Wrought out in lengthening measurements of  
    space,  
Which grow and multiply by speed and time ?  
Or am I traversing infinity  
By endless subdivision, hurrying back  
From finite towards infinitesimal,  
Thus dying out of the expansive world ?

Another marvel : some one has me fast  
Within his ample palm ; 'tis not a grasp  
Such as they use on earth, but all around  
Over the surface of my subtle being,  
As though I were a sphere, and capable  
To be accosted thus, a uniform  
And gentle pressure tells me I am not  
Self-moving, but borne forward on my way.  
And hark ! I hear a singing ; yet in sooth  
I cannot of that music rightly say

Whether I hear or touch or taste the tones.  
O what a heart-subduing melody !

ANGEL.

My work is done,  
My task is o'er,  
And so I come,  
Taking it home,  
For the crown is won,  
Alleluia,  
For evermore.

My Father gave  
In charge to me  
This child of earth  
E'en from its birth,  
To serve and save,  
Alleluia,  
And saved is he,  
This child of clay  
To me was given,

To rear and train  
By sorrow and pain  
In the narrow way,  
Alleluia,  
From earth to heaven.

SOUL.

It is a member of that family  
Of wondrous beings, who, ere the worlds were  
made,  
Millions of ages back, have stood around  
The throne of God :—he never has known sin ;  
But through those cycles all but infinite,  
Has had a strong and pure celestial life,  
And bore to gaze on th' unveiled face of God,  
And drank from the eternal Fount of truth,  
And served Him with a keen ecstatic love.  
Hark ! he begins again.

ANGEL.

O Lord, how wonderful in depth and height,  
But most in man, how wonderful Thou art !

With what a love, what soft persuasive might  
Victorious o'er the stubborn fleshly heart,  
Thy tale complete of saints Thou dost provide,  
To fill the thrones which angels lost through pride !

He lay a grovelling babe upon the ground,  
Polluted in the blood of his first sire,  
With his whole essence shattered and unsound,  
And coiled around his heart a demon dire,  
Which was not of his nature, but had skill  
To bind and form his opening mind to ill.

Then was I sent from heaven to set right  
The balance in his soul of truth and sin,  
And I have waged a long relentless fight,  
Resolved that death-environed spirit to win,  
Which from its fallen state, when all was lost,  
Had been repurchased at so dread a cost.

O what a shifting parti-coloured scene  
Of hope and fear, of triumph and dismay,



Of recklessness and penitence, has been

The history of that dreary, lifelong fray !  
And O the grace to nerve him and to lead,  
How patient, prompt, and lavish at his need !

O man, strange composite of heaven and earth !

Majesty dwarfed to baseness ! fragrant flower  
Running to poisonous seed ! and seeming worth  
Cloaking corruption ! weakness mastering power !  
Who never art so near to crime and shame,  
As when thou hast achieved some deed of name ;—

How should ethereal natures comprehend

A thing made up of spirit and of clay,  
Were we not tasked to nurse it and to tend,  
Linked one to one throughout its mortal day ?  
More than the Seraph in his height of place,  
The Angel-guardian knows and loves the ransomed  
race.

SOUL.

Now know I surely that I am at length  
Out of the body : had I part with earth,

I never could have drunk those accents in,  
And not have worshipped as a god the voice  
That was so musical ; but now I am  
So whole of heart, so calm, so self-possessed,  
With such a full content, and with a sense  
So apprehensive and discriminant,  
As no temptation can intoxicate.  
Nor have I even terror at the thought  
That I am clasped by such a saintliness.

ANGEL.

All praise to Him, at whose sublime decree  
The last are first, the first become the last ;  
By whom the suppliant prisoner is set free,  
By whom proud first-borns from their thrones are  
cast ;  
Who raises Mary to be Queen of heaven,  
While Lucifer is left, condemned and unforgiven.

§ 3.

SOUL.

I will address him. Mighty one, my Lord,  
My Guardian Spirit, all hail !

ANGEL.

All hail, my child !  
My child and brother, hail ! what wouldest thou ?

SOUL.

I would have nothing but to speak with thee  
For speaking's sake. I wish to hold with thee  
Conscious communion ; though I fain would know  
A maze of things, were it but meet to ask,  
And not a curiousness.

ANGEL.

You cannot now  
Cherish a wish which ought not to be wished.

## SOUL.

Then I will speak. I ever had believed  
That on the moment when the struggling soul  
Quitted its mortal case, forthwith it fell  
Under the awful Presence of its God,  
There to be judged and sent to its own place.  
What lets me now from going to my Lord ?

## ANGEL.

Thou art not let ; but with extremest speed  
Art hurrying to the Just and Holy Judge :  
For scarcely art thou disembodied yet.  
Divide a moment, as men measure time,  
Into its million-million-millionth part,  
Yet even less than that the interval  
Since thou didst leave the body ; and the priest  
Cried "Subvenite," and they fell to prayer ;  
Nay, scarcely yet have they begun to pray.

For spirits and men by different standards mete



The less and greater in the flow of time.  
By sun and moon, primeval ordinances—  
By stars which rise and set harmoniously—  
By the recurring seasons, and the swing,  
This way and that, of the suspended rod  
Precise and punctual, men divide the hours,  
Equal, continuous, for their common use.  
Not so with us in th' immaterial world ;  
But intervals in their succession  
Are measured by the living thought alone,  
And grow or wane with its intensity.  
And time is not a common property ;  
But what is long is short, and swift is slow,  
And near is distant, as received and grasped  
By this mind and by that, and every one  
Is standard of his own chronology.  
And memory lacks its natural resting-points  
Of years, and centuries, and periods.  
It is thy very energy of thought  
Which keeps thee from thy God.

## SOUL.

Dear Angel, say,  
Why have I now no fear at meeting Him ?  
Along my earthly life, the thought of death  
And judgment was to me most terrible.  
I had it aye before me, and I saw  
The Judge severe e'en in the Crucifix.  
Now that the hour is come, my fear is fled ;  
And at this balance of my destiny,  
Now close upon me, I can forward look  
With a serenest joy.

## ANGEL.

It is because  
Then thou didst fear, that now thou dost not fear.  
Thou hast forestalled the agony, and so  
For thee the bitterness of death is past.  
Also, because already in thy soul  
The judgment is begun. That day of doom,

One and the same for the collected world—  
That solemn consummation for all flesh,  
Is, in the case of each, anticipate  
Upon his death ; and, as the last great day  
In the particular judgment is rehearsed,  
So now too, ere thou comest to the Throne,  
A presage falls upon thee, as a ray  
Straight from the Judge, expressive of thy lot.  
That calm and joy uprising in thy soul  
Is first-fruit to thee of thy recompense,  
And heaven begun.

## § 4.

SOUL.

But hark ! upon my sense  
Comes a fierce hubbub, which would make me fear  
Could I be frightened.

ANGEL.

We are now arrived  
Close on the judgment-court ; that sullen howl

Is from the demons who assemble there.  
It is the middle region, where of old  
Satan appeared among the sons of God,  
To cast his jibes and scoffs at holy Job.  
So now his legions throng the vestibule,  
Hungry and wild, to claim their property,  
And gather souls for hell. Hist to their cry.

## SOUL.

How sour and how uncouth a dissonance !

## DEMONS.

Low-born clods  
Of brute earth,  
They aspire  
To become gods,  
By a new birth,  
And an extra grace,  
And a score of merits  
As if aught



Could stand in place  
    Of the high thought,  
    And the glance of fire  
    Of the great spirits,  
The powers blest,  
    The lords by right,  
    The primal owners,  
    Of the proud dwelling  
    And realm of light,—  
Dispossessed,  
Aside thrust,  
    Chuck'd down,  
By the sheer might  
Of a despot's will,  
    Of a tyrant's frown,  
    Who after expelling  
    Their hosts, gave,  
Triumphant still,  
And still unjust,  
    Each forfeit crown  
    To psalm-droners

And canting groaners,  
To every slave,  
And pious cheat,  
And crawling knave,  
Who licked the dust  
Under his feet.

## ANGEL.

It is the restless panting of their being ;  
Like beasts of prey, who, caged within their bars,  
In a deep hideous purring have their life,  
And an incessant pacing to and fro.

## DEMONS.

The mind bold  
And independent,  
The purpose free,  
So we are told,  
Must not think  
To have the ascendant.

What's a saint ?

One whose breath

Doth the air taint

Before his death ;

A bundle of bones,

Which fools adore,

Ha ! ha !

When life is o'er,

Which rattle and stink,

E'en in the flesh.

We cry his pardon !

No flesh hath he ;

Ha ! ha !

For it hath died,

'Tis crucified,

Day by day,

Afresh, afresh,

Ha ! ha !

That holy clay,

Ha ! ha !

This gains guerdon,

So priestlings prate,  
Ha ! ha !  
Before the Judge,  
And pleads and atones  
For spite and grudge,  
And bigot mood,  
And envy and hate,  
And greed of blood.

SOUL.

How impotent they are ! and yet on earth  
They have repute for wondrous power and skill ;  
And books describe, how that the very face  
Of the Evil One, if seen, would have a force  
Even to freeze the blood, and choke the life  
Of him who saw it.

ANGEL.

In thy trial state  
Thou hadst a traitor nestling close at home,



Connatural, who with the powers of hell  
Was leagued, and of thy senses kept the keys,  
And to that deadliest foe unlocked thy heart.  
And therefore is it, in respect of man,  
Those fallen ones show so majestic.  
But, when some child of grace, Angel or Saint,  
Pure and upright in his integrity  
Of nature, meets the demons on their raid,  
They scud away as cowards from the fight.  
Nay, oft hath holy hermit in his cell,  
Not yet disburdened of mortality,  
Mocked at their threats and warlike overtures ;  
Or, dying, when they swarmed, like flies, around,  
Defied them, and departed to his Judge.

DEMONS.

Virtue and vice,  
A knave's pretence.  
'Tis all the same ;  
Ha ! ha !

Dread of hell-fire,  
Of the venomous flame,  
A coward's plea,  
Give him his price,  
Saint though he be,  
Ha ! ha !  
From shrewd good sense  
He'll slave for hire ;  
Ha ! ha !  
And does but aspire  
To the heaven above  
With sordid aim,  
And not from love.  
Ha ! ha !

SOUL.

I see not those false spirits ; shall I see  
My dearest Master, when I reach His throne ?  
Or hear, at least His awful judgment-word  
With personal intonation as I now

Hear thee, not see thee, Angel? Hitherto  
All has been darkness since I left the earth ;  
Shall I remain thus sight-bereft all through  
My penance time? If so, how comes it then  
That I have hearing still, and taste, and touch,  
Yet not a glimmer of that princely sense  
Which binds ideas in one, and makes them live?

## ANGEL.

Nor touch, nor taste, nor hearing hast thou now ;  
Thou livest in a world of signs and types,  
The presentations of most holy truths,  
Living and strong, which now encompass thee.  
A disembodied soul, thou hast by right  
No converse with aught else beside thyself ;  
But, lest so stern a solitude should load  
And break thy being, in mercy are vouchsafed  
Some lower measures of perception,  
Which seem to thee, as though through channels  
brought,

Through ear, or nerves, or palate, which are gone.  
And thou art wrapped and swathed around in  
dreams,  
Dreams that are true, yet enigmatical ;  
For the belongings of thy present state,  
Save through such symbols, come not home to thee.  
And thus thou tell'st of space and time and size,  
Of fragrant, solid, bitter, musical,  
Of fire, and of refreshment after fire ;  
As (let me use similitude of earth,  
To aid thee in the knowledge thou dost ask)—  
As ice which blisters may be said to burn.  
Nor hast thou now extension, with its parts  
Correlative,—long habit cozens thee,—  
Nor power to move thyself, nor limbs to move.  
Hast thou not heard of those, who, after loss  
Of hand or foot, still cried that they had pains  
In hand or foot, as though they had it still ?  
So is it now with thee, who hast not lost  
Thy hand or foot, but all which made up man ;  
So will it be, until the joyous day



Of resurrection, when thou wilt regain  
All thou hast lost, new-made and glorified.  
How, even now, the consummated Saints  
See God in heaven, I may not explicate ;  
Meanwhiile let it suffice thee to possess  
Such means of converse as are granted thee,  
Though till that Beatific Vision thou art blind ;  
For e'en thy purgatory, which comes like fire,  
Is fire without its light.

## SOUL.

His will be done !  
I am not worthy e'er to see again  
The face of day ; far less His countenance,  
Who is the very sun. Natheless, in life  
When I looked forward to my purgatory,  
It ever was my solace to believe,  
That, ere I plunged amid th' avenging flame,  
I had one sight of Him to strengthen me.

## ANGEL.

Nor rash nor vain is that presentiment ;  
Yes,—for one moment thou shalt see thy Lord.  
Thus will it be : what time thou art arraigned  
Before the dread tribunal, and thy lot  
Is cast for ever, should it be to sit  
On His right hand among His pure elect,  
Then sight, or that which to the soul is sight,  
As by a lightning-flash, will come to thee,  
And thou shalt see, amid the dark profound,  
Whom thy soul loveth, and would fain approach,—  
One moment ; but thou knowest not, my child,  
What thou dost ask : that sight of the Most Fair  
Will gladden thee, but it will pierce thee too.

## SOUL.

Thou speakest darkly, Angel ; and an awe  
Falls on me, and a fear lest I be rash.

ANGEL.

There was a mortal, who is now above  
In the mid glory : he, when near to die,  
Was given communion with the Crucified,—  
Such, that the Master's very wounds were stamped  
Upon his flesh ; and, from the agony  
Which thrilled through body and soul in that embrace,  
Learn that the flame of the Everlasting Love  
Doth burn, ere it transform. . . .

§ 5.

. . . Hark to those sounds !  
They come of tender beings angelical,  
Least and most childlike of the sons of God.

FIRST CHOIR OF ANGELICALS.

Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
And in the depth be praise :

In all His words most wonderful ;  
Most sure in all His ways !

To us His elder race He gave  
To battle and to win,  
Without the chastisement of pain,  
Without the soil of sin.

The younger son He willed to be  
A marvel in his birth :  
Spirit and flesh his parents were ;  
His home was heaven and earth.

The Eternal blessed His child, and armed,  
And sent him hence afar,  
To serve as champion in the field  
Of elemental war.

To be His Viceroy in the world  
Of matter, and of sense ;  
Upon the frontier, towards the foe,  
A resolute defence



ANGEL.

We now have passed the gate, and are within  
The House of Judgment ; and whereas on earth  
Temples and palaces are formed of parts  
Costly and rare, but all material,  
So in the world of spirits nought is found,  
To mould withal and form into a whole,  
But what is immaterial ; and thus  
The smallest portions of this edifice,  
Cornice, or frieze, or balustrade, or stair,  
The very pavement is made up of life—  
Of holy, blessed, and immortal beings,  
Who hymn their Maker's praise continually.

SECOND CHOIR OF ANGELICALS.

Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
And in the depth be praise ;  
In all His words most wonderful ;  
Most sure in all His ways !

Woe to thee, man ! for he was found  
A recreant in the fight ;  
And lost his heritage of heaven,  
And fellowship with light.

Above him now the angry sky,  
Around the tempest's din ;  
Who once had angels for his friends,  
Had but the brutes for kin.

O man ! a savage kindred they ;  
To flee that monster brood  
He scaled the seaside cave, and clomb  
The giants of the wood.

With now a fear, and now a hope,  
With aids which chance supplied,  
From youth to eld, from sire to son,  
He lived, and toiled, and died.

He dreed his penance age by age ;  
And step by step began

Slowly to doff his savage garb,  
And be again a man.

And quickened by the Almighty's breath,  
And chastened by His rod,  
And taught by Angel-visitings,  
At length he sought his God ;

And learned to call upon His Name,  
And in His faith create  
A household and a fatherland,  
A city and a state.

Glory to Him who from the mire,  
In patient length of days,  
Elaborated into life  
A people to His praise !

SOUL.

The sound is like the rushing of the wind—  
The summer wind—among the lofty pines ;

Swelling and dying, echoing round about,  
Now here, now distant, wild and beautiful ;  
While, scattered from the branches it has stirred,  
Descend ecstatic odours.

THIRD CHOIR OF ANGELICALS.

Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
And in the depth be praise :  
In all His words most wonderful ;  
Most sure in all His ways !

The Angels, as beseemingly  
To spirit-kind was given,  
At once were tried and perfected,  
And took their seats in heaven.

For them no twilight or eclipse ;  
No growth and no decay :  
'Twas hopeless, all-ingulfing night,  
Or beatific day.



But to the younger race there rose  
    A hope upon its fall ;  
And slowly, surely, gracefully,  
    The morning dawned on all.

And ages, opening out, divide  
    The precious and the base,  
And from the hard and sullen mass,  
    Mature the heirs of grace.

O man ! albeit the quickening ray,  
    Lit from his second birth,  
Makes him at length what once he was,  
    And heaven grows out of earth ;

Yet still between that earth and heaven—  
    His journey and his goal—  
A double agony awaits  
    His body and his soul.

A double debt he has to pay—  
    The forfeit of his sins

The chill of death is past, and now  
The penance-fire begins.

Glory to Him, who evermore  
By truth and justice reigns ;  
Who tears the soul from out its case,  
And burns away its stains !

ANGEL.

They sing of thy approaching agony,  
Which thou so eagerly didst question of :  
It is the face of the Incarnate God  
Shall smite thee with that keen and subtle pain ;  
And yet the memory which it leaves will be  
A sovereign febrifuge to heal the wound ;  
And yet withal it will the wound provoke,  
And aggravate and widen it the more.

SOUL.

Thou speakest mysteries ; still methinks I know  
To disengage the tangle of thy words :

Yet rather would I hear thy angel voice,  
Than for myself be thy interpreter.

ANGEL.

When then—if such thy lot—thou seest thy Judge,  
The sight of Him will kindle in thy heart  
All tender, gracious, reverential thoughts.  
Thou wilt be sick with love, and yearn for Him.  
And feel as though thou couldst but pity Him,  
That one so sweet should e'er have placed Himself  
At disadvantage such, as to be used  
So vilely by a being so vile as thee.  
There is a pleading in His pensive eyes  
Will pierce thee to the quick, and trouble thee,  
And thou wilt hate and loathe thyself ; for, though  
Now sinless, thou wilt feel that thou hast sinned,  
As never thou didst feel ; and wilt desire  
To slink away, and hide thee from His sight ;  
And yet wilt have a longing eye to dwell  
Within the beauty of His countenance.

And these two pains, so counter and so keen,—  
The longing for Him, when thou seest Him not ;  
The shame of self at thought of seeing Him,—  
Will be thy veriest, sharpest purgatory.

## SOUL.

My soul is in my hand : I have no fear,—  
In His dear might prepared for weal or woe.  
But hark ! a grand, mysterious harmony :  
It floods me, like the deep and solemn sound  
Of many waters.

## ANGEL.

We have gained the stairs  
Which rise towards the Presence-chamber ; there  
A band of mighty Angels keep the way  
On either side, and hymn the Incarnate God.

## ANGELS OF THE SACRED STAIR.

Father, whose goodness none can know, but they  
Who see Thee face to face,



By man hath come the infinite display  
Of Thy victorious grace ;  
But fallen man—the creature of a day—  
Skills not that love to trace.  
It needs, to tell the triumph Thou hast wrought,  
An Angel's deathless fire, an Angel's reach of thought.

It needs that very Angel, who with awe,  
Amid the garden shade,  
The Great Creator in His sickness saw,  
Soothed by a creature's aid,  
And agonized, as victim of the Law  
Which He Himself had made ;  
For who can praise Him in His depth and height,  
But he who saw Him reel amid that solitary fight ?

SOUL.

Hark ! for the lintels of the presence-gate  
Are vibrating and echoing back the strain.

## FOURTH CHOIR OF ANGELICALS.

Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
And in the depth be praise :  
In all His words most wonderful ;  
Most sure in all His ways !

The foe blasphemed the Holy Lord,  
As if He reckoned ill,  
In that He placed His puppet man  
The frontier place to fill.

For, even in his best estate,  
With amplest gifts endued,  
A sorry sentinel was he,  
A being of flesh and blood.

As though a thing, who for his help  
Must needs possess a wife,  
Could cope with those proud rebel hosts,  
Who had angelic life.

And when, by blandishment of Eve,  
That earth-born Adam fell,  
He shrieked in triumph, and he cried,  
“ A sorry sentinel ;

The Maker by His word is bound,  
Escape or cure is none ;  
He must abandon to his doom,  
And slay His darling son.”

ANGEL.

And now the threshold, as we traverse it,  
Utters aloud its glad responsive chant.

FIFTH CHOIR OF ANGELICALS.

Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
And in the depth be praise :  
In all His words most wonderful ;  
Most sure in all His ways !

O loving wisdom of our God !

When all was sin and shame,  
A second Adam to the fight  
And to the rescue came.

O wisest love ! that flesh and blood

Which did in Adam fail,  
Should strive afresh against the foe,  
Should strive and should prevail ;

And that a higher gift than grace

Should flesh and blood refine,  
God's Presence and His very Self,  
And Essence all-divine.

O generous love ! that He who smote

In man for man the foe,  
The double agony in man  
For man should undergo ;



And in the garden secretly,  
And on the cross on high,  
Should teach His brethren and inspire  
To suffer and to die.

§ 6.

ANGEL.

Thy judgment now is near, for we are come  
Into the veiled presence of our God.

SOUL.

I hear the voices that I left on earth.

ANGEL.

It is the voice of friends around thy bed,  
Who say the "Subvenite" with the priest.  
Hither the echoes come: before the Throne

Stands the great Angel of the Agony  
The same who strengthened Him, what time He knelt  
Lone in the garden shade, bedewed with blood.  
That Angel best can plead with Him for all  
Tormented souls, the dying and the dead.

ANGEL OF THE AGONY.

Jesu ! by that shuddering dread which fell on Thee ;  
Jesu ! by that cold dismay which sickened Thee ;  
Jesu ! by that pang of heart which thrilled in Thee ;  
Jesu ! by that mount of sins which crippled Thee ;  
Jesu ! by that sense of guilt which stifled Thee ;  
Jesu ! by that innocence which girdled Thee ;  
Jesu ! by that sanctity which reigned in Thee ;  
Jesu ! by that Godhead which was one with Thee ;  
Jesu ! spare these souls which are so dear to Thee,  
Souls, who in prison, calm and patient, wait for Thee ;  
Hasten, Lord, their hour, and bid them come to Thee,  
To that glorious Home, where they shall ever gaze on  
Thee.

SOUL.

I go before my Judge. Ah! . . .

ANGEL.

. . . Praise to His Name !

The eager spirit has darted from my hold,  
And, with the intemperate energy of love  
Flies to the dear feet of Emmanuel ;  
But, ere it reach them, the keen sanctity,  
Which with its effluence, like a glory, clothes  
And circles round the Crucified, has seized,  
And scorched, and shrivelled it ; and now it lies  
Passive and still before the awful Throne.  
O happy, suffering soul ! for it is safe,  
Consumed, yet quickened, by the glance of God.

SOUL.

Take me away, and in the lowest deep  
There let me be,

And there in hope the lone night-watches keep,  
Told out for me.

There, motionless and happy in my pain,  
Lone, not forlorn,—

There will I sing my sad perpetual strain,  
Until the morn.

There will I sing, and soothe my stricken breast,  
Which ne'er can cease

To throb, and pine, and languish, till possess  
Of its Sole Peace.

There will I sing my absent Lord and Love :  
Take me away,

That sooner I may rise, and go above,  
And see Him in the truth of everlasting day.

## § 7.

ANGEL.

Now let the golden prison ope its gates,  
Making sweet music, as each fold revolves



Upon its ready hinge. And ye, great powers,  
Angels of Purgatory, receive from me  
My charge, a precious soul, until the day,  
When, from all bond and forfeiture released,  
I shall reclaim it for the courts of light.

SOULS IN PURGATORY.

1. Lord, Thou hast been our refuge : in every  
generation ;
2. Before the hills were born, and the world was :  
from age to age Thou art God.
3. Bring us not, Lord, very low : for Thou hast said,  
Come back again, ye sons of Adam.
4. A thousand years before Thine eyes are but as  
yesterday : and as a watch of the night which is  
come and gone.

5. The grass springs up in the morning : at evening-tide it shrivels up and dies.
6. So we fail in Thine anger : and in Thy wrath are we troubled.
7. Thou hast set our sins in Thy sight : and our round of days in the light of Thy countenance.
8. Come back, O Lord ! how long : and be entreated for Thy servants.
9. In Thy morning we shall be filled with Thy mercy : we shall rejoice and be in pleasure all our days.
10. We shall be glad according to the days of our humiliation : and the years in which we have seen evil.
11. Look, O Lord, upon Thy servants and on Thy work : and direct their children.

12. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon  
us : and the work of our hands establish Thou it.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son : and to the  
Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :  
world without end. Amen.

ANGEL.

Softly and gently, dearly-ransomed soul,  
In my most loving arms I now enfold thee,  
And, o'er the penal waters, as they roll,  
I poise thee, and I lower thee, and hold thee.

And carefully I dip thee in the lake,  
And thou, without a sob or a resistance,  
Dost through the flood thy rapid passage take,  
Sinking deep, deeper, into the dim distance.

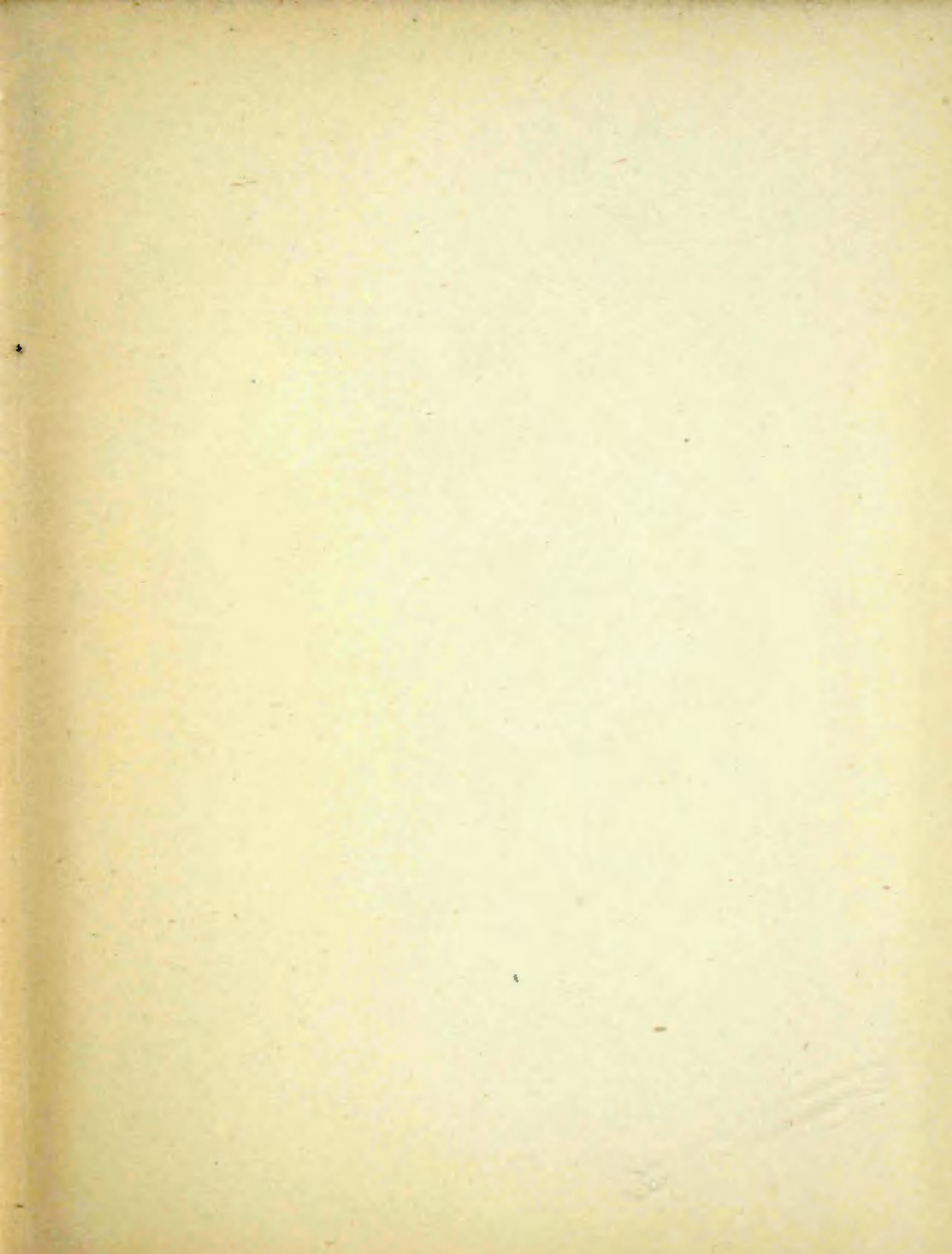
Angels, to whom the willing task is given,  
Shall tend, and nurse, and lull thee, as thou liest ;

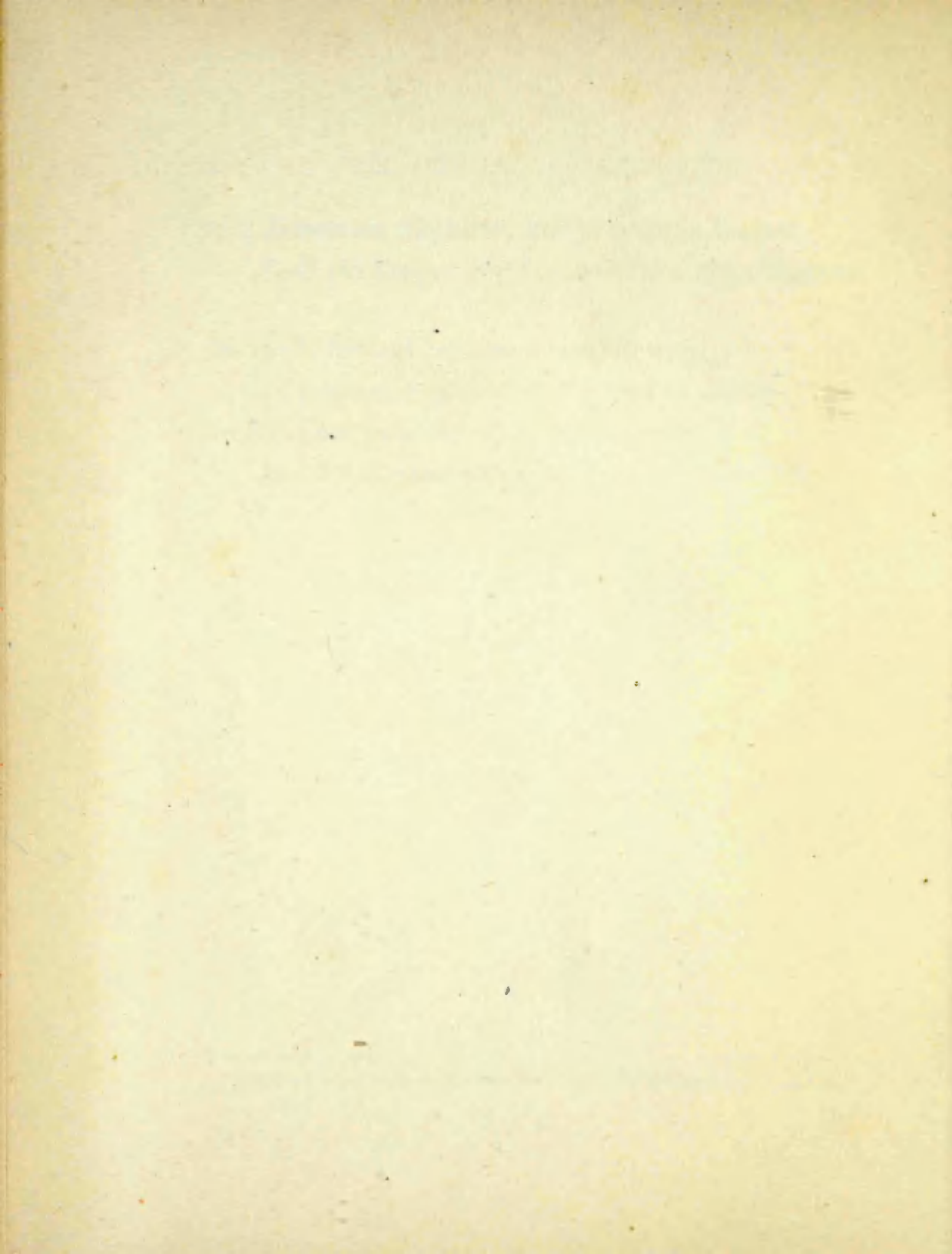
And Masses on the earth, and prayers in heaven,  
Shall aid thee at the Throne of the Most Highest.

Farewell, but not for ever ! brother dear,  
Be brave and patient on thy bed of sorrow ;  
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,  
And I will come and wake thee on the morrow.

THE END.









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# THE ARCHIVE

