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## INTRODUCTION

This Bulletin is issued to commemorate the centenary of Chartism, which reached its peak in 1839. It consists of a collection of poems written roughly between 1830 and 1850, which have a direct or indirect connection with the politics of the period. Additional poems by some of the authors here represented may be found in the recently published "Poems of Revolt."

The poems of Ebenezer Elliott (1781-1849) belong to the period of the Corn Law agitation and of the Reform Bill of 1832. His later poems are mostly inferior to his Corn Law Rhymes. Many of them are sentimental, dull and even ridiculous. But when he was writing about social conditions or political questions he could be both eloquent and moving. He declared in one of his prefaces that there was nothing unnatural in the union of poetry and politics. "All genuine poets," he said, "are fervid politicians". And he hoped that his "Corn Law Hymns" would "induce the mothers of the future to educate their children politically."

It may be of interest to quote a passage about the failure of the Churches to interest themselves in political questions:

"Posterity will scarce believe, that a nation which calls itself the most religious and enlightened on earth, has endured for seventeen years a law, which sacrifices the interests of all the productive classes to the rapacity of a few haughty drones, who run no risk, but of setting fire to everything in the country, except the Thames. Have our holy men objected to this law? They never heard of it. It will be time enough for solemn triflers to ask what are the causes of distress in England when the corn bill is written in blood and fire over every parish. While millions of Hindoos die of famine, the Clives and Clivelings of splendid Calcutta could not believe that there was distress in India. But we are not Hindoos; we may die, but not by millions... Oh we must exert ourselves! And why must we exert ourselves, if increase of profits will not buy an increase of bread? To seek substitutes for bread were equally idle. There is no escape. If

rather than pay the price of wheat for potatoes, we resolve to eat salt and sand, the monopolists will tax the desert, and lay an interdict on Sahara."

Towards the end of his life, Elliott lost a good deal of his ardour; and he defined a communist as

"one who was willing  
To fork out a penny and pocket your shilling."

Ebenezer Jones (1820-60) was born in London, the son of a Calvinist dissenter. His Studies of Sensation and Event was published in 1845, and reprinted with some additions after his death. He wrote pamphlets on the Condition of England and on the Land Monopoly, and he numbered several Chartists among his friends. After his death his brother tried to show that Jones himself was not really a Chartist, but in this attempt he was governed a desire to shield his brother's reputation.

Ebenezer Jones dedicated his poems to the memory of Shelley, whose influence on Alton Locke is rightly stressed by Kingsley. Thomas Wade, who is represented here by a sonnet, was a disciple of Keats and Shelley.

Gerald Massey (b. 1828) is said to have been the model for George Eliot's Felix Holt. At the age of eight he began work in a silk factory. He was paid from 9d to 1/6 for a 72-hour week. Later he spent several years at straw-plaiting. At the age of 21, he edited a paper called "The Spirit of Freedom." He met Kingsley and Maurice and in 1850 became one of the secretaries of the Christian Socialists. In the same year he published Voices of Freedom and Lyrics of Love (containing "Crises of '48" from which the present selection is mostly taken). His love poems are mawkish, and his patriotic verses jingoistic; but in later years he wrote an interesting book on Shakespeare's Sonnets.

Ernest Charles Jones (1819-69), one of the Chartist leaders who advocated an insurrection in 1848, was born in Berlin, the son of a major in the British Army. At the age of 11, he set out to fight for the Poles, but he was found in the Black Forest and taken home. He was presented at Court in 1841, and three years later he was called to the Bar. In 1848 he was sent to prison for two years for his Chartist activities. He was forbidden books and paper; but he made pens from rooks' feathers picked up in the prison yard and sharpened with his razor. For ink he sometimes used a supply he had secreted in a bar of soap, and, when this failed, his own blood. He fell ill, and was offered his liberty if he would renounce politics. He refused; as he likewise refused a legacy of £2000 a year offered him by his uncle on the same conditions. During the last eight years of

his life, he practised successfully as a barrister in Manchester, specialising in the defence of political prisoners. He was a friend of Marx and Engels, but they were estranged from him by his alliance with the Liberals. It was not until after his death that Engels realized that the alliance had been merely tactical, and that he had not thrown over his former political beliefs.

There were several other poets with Chartist sympathies. One of them, Thomas Cooper, wrote a fine autobiography as well as poems. Another, William Linton, the famous wood-engraver, was sent to Paris in 1848 to present a congratulatory address from the London Working Men's Association to the French Republicans. He founded The Leader and The English Republic (printed first at Leeds) and in 1852 he published a poem entitled The Plaint of Freedom. In 1867 he went to America and there wrote a memoir of James Watson, the Chartist.

It cannot be said that the poems collected here have any great literary merit, though Elliott at moments and Ebenezer Jones in "Ways of Rogard" wrote moving protests at the injustice of the social system, and all these poets wrote verses which effectively served its purpose of sustaining the political consciousness of its readers. For the same reason it is worth while to collect the poems here from the rare volumes in which they first appeared. It was not possible to give all the poems in full.

(I) EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1.

The Jacobin's Prayer.

Avenge the plunder'd poor. O Lord!  
But not with fire, but not with sword;  
Not as at Peterloo they died,  
Beneath the hoofs of coward pride;  
Avenge our rags, our chains, our sighs,  
The famine in our children's eyes!  
But not with sword - no, not with fire  
Chastise thou Britain's locustry!  
Lord, let them feel thy heavier ire;  
Whip them, O Lord! with poverty!  
Then cold in soul as coffin'd dust,  
Their hearts as tearless, dead, and dry,  
Let them in outrag'd mercy trust,  
And find that mercy they deny!

11.

Others march in freedom's van;  
Canst not thou what others can?  
Thou a Briton! thou a man!  
What are worms, if human thou?  
Still shall paltry tyrants tell  
Freemen when to buy and sell?  
Spurn the coward thought to hell!  
Toll the miscreants what they are.  
Wilt thou still feed palaced knaves?  
Shall thy sons be traitors' slaves?  
Shall they sleep in workhouse-graves?  
Shall they toil for parish pay?  
Wherefore didst thou woo and wed?  
Why a bride was Mary led?  
Shall she, dying, curse thy bed?  
Tyrants! tyrants! no, by heaven!

III.

Oh Lord, How Long?

Up, widow, up and swing the fly;  
Or push the grating file!  
Our bread is taxed, and rents are high,  
That wolves may burst with bile.  
Sire of the hopeless! can'st thou sleep?  
Up, up, and toil for gains, -  
Who drink our tears, but never weep,  
And soulless, eat our souls!

Child, what hast thou with sleep to do?  
Awake, and dry thine eyes!  
Thy tiny hands must labour too;  
Our bread is tax'd - arise!  
Arise, and toil long hours twice seven,  
For pennies two or three;  
Thy woes make angels weep in heaven,-  
But England still is free.

Up, weary man of eighty-five,  
And toil in hopeless woe!  
Our bread is tax'd, our rivals thrive,  
Our gods will have it so.  
Yet God is undethron'd on high,  
And undethron'd will be:  
Father of all hear thou our cry,  
And England shall be free!

They smite in vain who smite with swords,  
And scourge with vollied fire;  
Our weapon is the whip of words,  
And truth's all-teaching ire;  
The blow it gives, the wound it makes,  
Life yet unborn shall see,  
And shake it, like a whip of snakes,  
At unborn villainy.

IV.

What is Bad Government?

What is bad government, thou slave?  
Whom robbers represent?  
What is bad government, thou knave,  
Who lov'st bad government?

It is the deadly will, that takes  
What labour ought to keep;  
It is the deadly Power, that makes  
Bread dear, and labour cheap.

V.

Preston Mills.

The day was fair, the cannon roar'd,  
Cold blew the bracing north,  
And Preston's mills by thousands poured  
Their little captives forth.

All in their best they paced the street,  
All glad that they were free;  
And sung a song with voices sweet -  
They sung of Liberty!

But from their lips the rose had fled  
Like "death-in-life" they smiled;  
And still as each passed by, I said,  
Alas! is that a child?

Flags waved, and men - a ghastly crew -  
Marched with them, side by side:  
While hand in hand, and two by two,  
They moved - a living tide;

Thousands and thousands - all so white!  
With eyes so glazed and dull!  
Oh, God! it was indeed a sight  
Too sadly beautiful!

And, oh, the pang their voices gave  
Refuses to depart!  
"This is a wailing for the grave!"  
I whisper'd to my heart.

It was as if, where roses blush'd,  
A sudden blasting gale  
O'er fields of bloom had rudely rush'd  
And turned the roses pale.

It was as if, in glen and grove,  
The wild birds sadly sung,  
And every linnets mourn'd its love,  
And every thrush its young.

It was as if, in dungeon gloom,  
Where chain'd despair reclined,  
A sound came from the living tomb,  
And hymned the passing wind.

And, while they sang, and though they smiled,  
My soul groaned heavily,-  
Oh, who would be or have a child?  
A mother who would be?

VI.

Hymn written for the Sheffield Political Union.

Hands and hearts, and minds are ours;  
Shall we bow to bestial powers?  
Tyrants, vaunt your swords and towers!  
Reason is our citadel.

With what arms will ye surprise  
Knowledge of the million eyes?  
What is mightier than the wise? -  
Not the might of wickedness.

Trust in force! - So tyrants trust!  
Words shall crush ye into dust;  
Yet we fight, if fight we must -  
Thou didst, Man of Huntingdon!

What were they who prostrate laid  
Far-fam'd hosts, whom despots bade  
Gaul's enfranchis'd coil invade?  
Answer, proudest history!



Heirs of Pym! can ye be base?  
Locke! shall Frenchmen scorn a race  
Born in Hampden's dwelling-place?  
Blush to write it, Infamy!

What we are, our fathers were;  
What they dar'd, their sons can dare;  
Vulgar tyrants! hush! beware!  
Bring not down the avalanche.

By the death which Hampden died!  
By oppression, mind defied!  
Despots, we will tame your pride -  
Stormily, or tranquilly!

VII.

If he who kills the body  
A murderer's death shall die;  
If he who slays the human soul  
Would hurl God from on high;  
Then they who make our hopes, our lives,  
Our children's souls their prey,  
Unforgiven  
Loath'd of heaven  
In life and death are they;  
Who kill the body and the soul,  
But first the spirit slay!

VIII.

Epitaph on Thomas Muir.

Thy earth, Chantilly, boasts the grave of Muir,  
The wise, the lov'd the murdered, and the pure!  
While in his native land the murderers sleep,  
Where marble forms in mockery o'er them weep;-  
His sad memorial's, telling future times  
How Scotchmen honour worth, and gibbet crimes.

IX.

The Triumph of Reform.

O could the wise, the brave, the just,  
Who suffered - died - to break our chains;  
Could Muir, could Palmer, from the dust,  
Could murdered Gerald hear our strains;  
Then would martyrs thron'd in bliss  
See all ages blessed in this.

X.  
Judae.

While retribution o'er thee hangs,  
Tory, thou com'st - but bid'st thy fangs -  
To aid, with hollow, base harangues,  
The hated cause of Liberty.  
But nevermore pale Freedom's rout,  
Slaves, Peterlood with shriek and shout,  
Or whipt till drop their bowels out,  
Shalt thou behold in ecstasy!  
Of Freedom's champions now are thine  
No shipments o'er the burning line;  
O'er trampled rights no yell divine;  
No hangings, burnings, massacres!  
Thy scourge is dry, but stiff with blood;  
It drinks no more, though fain it would;  
No gibbet waits the wise and good;  
Thy prison ship is victimless!  
Australis o'er the deep complains  
That patriots come not now in chains,  
To tell amid her woods and plains,  
The tale of British Liberty.  
Then praise be thine, Iscariot's son,  
Who, when our fight was fought and won,  
With water in a sieve didst run,  
To cheer the victor veteran!  
But let the patriot's memory rot!  
Long sufferings - woes are best forgot:  
With Gerald, Muir, and Margarot,  
(Insulted miscreant!) bury them.

2. EBENEZER JONES

From Days of Regard.

Slaves! brothers! are we  
Already thus curs'd? Darned are we to endurance,  
To acquiescence, to contentment? Oh! not so!  
The habit of obedience hath not slain ye!  
Arise! Shake out the fetters from your souls,

And they will leave your limbs! All is not lost.  
Hear me, oh hear me! We no more are slaves:-  
Have we not hearts like men? do we not feel  
The voice of kindness, contemplate with pleasure  
The joys of life? are not our senses human?  
Own we no love; can we not love return?  
Oh! being men, they who would hold you slaves,  
Do murder you alive! They blind your minds  
With writhing toil, and say you have no sight;  
They break you from the majesty of man  
Into gaunt monsters, crooked miseries,  
And call you brute-like,- trample down your hearts,  
And say you have none,- banish from your souls  
The light of knowledge, and proclaim you soulless,-  
Rend you from God, saying you are not men....

Not that they violate our wives for sport,  
And laugh at our unnatural endurance,-  
Not that they tear our children from their mothers,  
Crippling their limbs, extinguishing their minds  
With endless toil,- the only things that love us,-  
Not that our food is garbage; that our babes  
Droop at the milkless teat.....  
But because that they have so damned us  
That we've endured these shames!

Man is eternal; tyrants and slavery  
Are but the tricks of time....All their boasted order,  
Their laws unbroken, all the deep submission  
Of their whipped slaves,- is terrible disorder;  
Disorder of the universe and of the heart.  
They shall know anarchy is abroad, more dread  
That her wild step is noiseless, that her form  
Is undistinguishable, save at times  
By the red fires that in the yards of law  
Curl round rebellious serfs; while then her bearing  
Hath not the noble fierceness of a storm-god,  
But with assassin calmness her cold smile  
Measures a secret dagger. They outcry,  
"The nation flourishes, its power is vast,  
Its wealth supreme." Oh idiot knaves and liars!  
Say, is a flag a nation? is an army?

Do half a million traders make an nation?  
A thousand lords? The people is the nation;  
If they be slaves, if they be suffering,  
The power, the majesty, the wealth you boast,  
Is tinsel hiding the rottenness you ordain....  
They counsel - if your slave seem fond of freedom,  
Starve him, till he be glad to lick your foot  
And then get crumbs; if he would fain be wise,  
Work him until the writhing of his body  
Shall suffocate his mind; if he would love,  
And husband womanhood, let famished children  
Of others terrify; even from his birth  
Palsy his heart with fear, darken his soul,  
Defile his body. Yea! this mutilation  
They do advise, when smilingly they say,  
Be slaves so educate, that to their stations  
Their natures may be fitted. "Educate!"  
Ye villains sacrilegious, who would rob  
God's human temple of its majesty,  
That ye may stabe there in barbarous pomp!  
Mistake not thus your murderous reduction  
Of beauty into baseness, man to brute.  
Man has no station; he must upward soar  
Towards bright-winged deities, or sink down towards fiends;  
Man cannot pause.-  
Go bid the sun to rot within its heavens!  
Arrest the marching melodies of stars!  
Chill every river into stagnancy!  
Deracinate the fruitful earth of growth!  
Though infinite space grow dark, the soul of man:  
Shall soar triumphantly. Within this cavern  
Are thousands, sworn to rise from out the mire,  
Whereto you damn them; they will rise,- will rise  
Though war may hew their pathway, though their march  
Be in blood to the armpite! Oh that it were mine  
To lead them bloodless conquerors!...

## II.

### A Coming Cry.

The few to whom the law hath given the earth God gives to all  
Do tell us that for them alone its fruits increase and fall;  
They tell us that by labour we may earn our daily bread,  
But they take the labour for their engines that work on unfed;  
And so we starve; and now the few have published a decree,-  
Starve on, or eat in workhouses the crumbs of charity;

Perhaps it's better than starvation,- once we'll pray, and then  
We'll all go building workhouses, million, million men!

III.

Song of the Gold-Getters.

Oh! truth may have suited the knights of old,  
And have royally crowned the barbarian's brow;  
And the Hottentot's mother his grave may have scolded  
With "He never once lied"; but Utopia now,  
In our civilised world, is the only land  
Where truth could be worshipped, where truth could live;...  
Truth now starves in garrets, or rots in a gaol,  
Whatever may have been in the times gone by...

3. THOMAS WADE.

To My Country, 1835.

England! that in thy confidence of power  
Dost lie like guarded sleep - keep wide thine eyes!  
Time on his grey wing bears a whirlwind hour,  
That shall make chaff of all thy vanities:  
But of that scattering, whether smiles or sighs  
Shall be the issue, doth depend on thee--  
Awake, old Country! from thine apathy;  
And, gentle Mother! make thine offspring blost  
With more of equal plenty and sweet rest  
Than is their dowry now, that they may feel  
A filial heart-beat for their Parent's weal:  
Let not a few wax gross with luxury,  
While thousands famish on one scanty meal --  
Old Parent, wake! and hear thy Children's cry.

4. GERALD MASSEY

I.

Little Willie.

In the day we wandered foodless,  
Little Willie cried for bread;  
In the night we wandered homeless,  
Little Willie cried for bed.  
Parted at the workhouse door,  
Not a word we said:  
Ah, so tired was poor Willie,  
And so sweetly sleep the dead.

'Twas in the dead of winter,  
We laid him in the earth;  
The world brought in the new year,  
Mocking us with mirth;  
But for lost little Willie,  
Not a tear we crave;  
Cold and hunger cannot wake him  
In his workhouse grave.

II.

Our Land.

What do we lack, that the ruffian Wrong  
Should starve us 'mid heaps of gold!  
We have brains as broad, we have arms as strong,  
We have hearts as big and bold!  
Will a thousand years more of neck suffering school  
Our lives to a sterner bravery?  
Not down and down with their robber rule,  
And up from the land of slavery!  
For our rare old Land, our dear old land,  
With its memories bright and brave!  
And sing hey for the hour its sons  
To free it of Tyrant and Slave.

III.

The Cry of the Unemployed.

Heaven droppeth dew with manna still in many a golden shower,  
And feeds the leaves with fragrant breath, with silver dew the flower.  
There's honeyed fruit for bee and bird, with bloom laughs out the tree,  
And food for all God's happy things; but none gives food to me.

Earth, decked with Plenty's garland-crown smiles on my aching eye,  
The purse-proud, swathed in luxury, disdainful pass me by:  
I've eager hands, and earnest heart - but may not work for bread!  
God of the wretched hear my prayer: I would that I were dead!

Lord! what right have the poor to wed? Love's for the gilded great:  
Are they not formed of nobler clay, who dine off' golden plate?  
'Tis the worst curse of Poverty to have a feeling heart:  
Why can I not, with iron-grasp, tear out the tender part?  
I cannot slave in yon Bastille! ah no, 'twere bitterer pain,  
To wear the Pauper's iron within, than drag the Convict's chain.  
I'd work but cannot, starve I may, but will not beg for bread:  
God of the wretched, hear my prayer: I would that I were dead!

IV.

Song of the Red Republican.

Fling out the red banner in mountain and valley!  
Let earth feel the tread of the frog once again;  
Now soldiers of Freedom, for love of God, rally,  
Old Earth yearns to know that her children are Men.  
We are nerved by a thousand wrongs, burning and bleeding,  
Bold Thoughts leap to birth, but the bold Deeds must come;  
And wherever Humanity's yearning and pleading,  
One battle for Liberty strike wo heart-home.

Fling out the red banner! achievements immortal  
Have yet to be won by the hands labour-brown;  
And few, few may enter the proud promise-portal,  
Yet wear it in thought like a glorious crown!  
O joy of the onset! sound trumpet, array us;  
True hearts would leap up were all hell in our path;  
Up, up from the Slave-land; who stirreth to stay us,  
Shall fall, as of old, in the Red Sea of wrath.

Fling out the red banner, O sons of the morning!  
Young spirits abiding to burst into wings, -  
We stand shadow-crowned, but sublime is the warning,  
All heaven's grimly husht, and the Bird of Storm sings!  
"All's well", saith the sentry on Tyranny's tower,  
While Hope by his watch-fire is grey and tear-blind;  
Ay all's well! Freedom's altar burns, hour by hour,  
Live brands for the fire damp with which ye are mined.

Fling out the red banner! the patriots perish,  
But where their bones whiten the seed striketh root:  
Their blood hath run red the great harvest to cherish:  
Then gather ye, reapers, and garner the fruit.  
Victory! victory! Tyrants are quaking!  
The Titan of Toil from the bloody thrall starts;  
The slaves are awaking, the dawn-light is breaking,  
The foot-fall of Freedom beats quick at our hearts!

V.

The Famine-smitten.

They heard not, nor heeded  
The sounds of life o'er them!  
They felt not, nor needed  
The hot tears wept for them!  
But earth-flowers were springing  
O'er human flowers' grave,  
And, O God, what heart-wringing  
Their tender looks gave!  
They died! died of hunger--  
By bitter want blanted!  
While wealth for the Wronger  
Ran over untasted...  
They died while men hoarded  
The free gifts of God:  
They died! 'tis recorded  
In letters of blood...  
Hark now! hall and palace,  
Ring out, dome and rafter!  
Ay, laugh on, ye callous!  
In Hell there'll be laughter:  
But tremble, hell-makers  
The shorn among men --  
The world's image-breakers  
Grew mighty again ...  
On heaven, blood shall call,  
Earth quake with pent thunder,  
And shackle and thrall  
Shall be given a number.  
It will come, it shall come,  
Impede it what may:  
Up, People! and welcome  
Your glorious day.



VI.

The Men of Forty-Eight.

They rose in Freedom's rare sunrise,  
Like Giants roused from wine;  
And in their hearts and in their eyes  
The God leapt up divine!  
Their souls flasht out naked as swords  
Unsheathed for fiery fate!  
Strength went like battle with their words—  
The Men of Forty-Eight,  
Hurrah!  
For the Men of Forty-Eight.

Dark days have fallen, yet in the strife  
They bate no hope sublime,  
And bravely work the exultant life,  
Their hearts pulse through the time:  
As grass is greenest trodden down,  
So suffering makes us great,  
And this dark tide shall richly crown  
The work of Forty-Eight.

O when the world wakes up to worst  
The Tyrants once again,  
And Freedom's summons-shout shall burst,  
Rare music on the brain,—  
All Truehearts still, in many a land,  
Ye'll find them all elate —  
Brave remnant of that Spartan-band,  
The Men of Forty-Eight....

VII.

To-Day and To-Morrow.

Our birds of song are silent now,  
Few are the flowers blooming,  
Yet life is in the frozen bough,  
And Freedom's spring is coming;  
And Freedom's tide creeps up alway,  
Though we may sit in sorrow;  
And our good bark aground today  
Shall float again tomorrow.

'Tis weary watching wave by wave  
And yet the tide heaves onward;  
We climb, like corals, grave by grave,  
That pave a pathway sunward;

We are driven back, for our next fray  
A newer strength to borrow,  
And where the Vanguard camps to-day,  
The Rear shall rest to-morrow!

Through the long, dark night of years  
The people's cry ascendeth,  
And earth is wet with blood and tears;  
But our meek sufferance endeth!  
The few shall not for ever sway—  
The many moil in sorrow;  
The powers of hell are strong to-day,  
The Christ shall rise to-morrow!

Though hearts brood o'er the past, our eyes  
With smiling futures glisten!  
For lo! our day bursts up the skies,  
Lean out your souls and listen!  
The world is rolling Freedom's way  
And ripening with her sorrow;  
Take heart! who bears the Cross to-day,  
Shall wear the Crown to-morrow.

Build up heroic lives, and all  
Be like a sheathen sabre,  
Ready to flash out at God's call—  
O chivalry of labour!  
Triumph and toil are twine; though they  
Be singly born in sorrow,  
And 'tis the martyrdom to-day  
Brings victory to-morrow!

VIII.  
The Patriot.

Wail for the hopes that have gone down! the young life vainly spilt!  
Th'eternal Murder still sits crowned and throned in damning guilt;  
Still in God's golden sun the Tyrant's bloody banners burn,  
And Priests, Hell's midnight Thugs, to their soul-strangling work return!  
See how the oppressors of the poor with serpents hunt our blood;  
Hear, from the dark, the groan and curse go maddening up to God.

O! brothers of the bounding heart, I look through tears and smile,  
The World is rife with scound of fetters snapping 'neath the file;  
I lay my hand on England's heart, and in each life-throb mark  
The pealing thought of freedom ring its tocsin in the dark.

The spirit of Cromwellian might is stirring at this hour,  
And thought is burning in men's eyes with more than speechful power:

Old England, cease the mummer's part! wake, Starveling, Serf, and Slave!  
Rouse in the majesty of wrong, great kindred of the brave!  
Speak, and the world shall answer, with her voices myriad-fold,  
And men, like Gods, shall grapple with the giant-wrongs of old.  
The people's heart, with pulse of cannon, panteth for the fray,  
And brothers, gallant brothers, we'll be with you in that day.

IX.

They are but Giants while we kneel.

Trust not the Priests, whose tears are lies, and hearts are hard and cold;  
Who lead ye to sweet pastures, where they fleece the foolish fold!  
The Church and State seem linkt and sworn to desolate the land.  
Good people, 'twixt these Foxes' tails, we'll fling a fiery brand!  
Your bent-knee is half-way to hell! Up, Serviles, from the dust!  
The harvest of the free red-ripcens for the sickle thrust.  
They're quaking now, and shaking now, who've wrought the hurtling sorrow,  
To-day the desolators, but the desolate to-morrow!  
Loud o'er their murder's merace wakes the watchword of the free:  
They are but Giants while we kneel: One leap, and up go We!

X.

Our Fathers are Praying.

The tearless are drunk with our tears: have they driven  
The God of the poor man mad?  
For we weary of waiting the help of Heaven,  
And the battle goes still with the bad...  
Fearless and few were the heroes of old,  
Who played the peerless part:  
We are fifty-fold, but the gangrene Gold  
Hath eaten out Hampden's heart.

For our Fathers are praying for Pauper-pay,  
Our Mothers with Death's kiss are white;  
Our sons are the rich man's Serfs by day,  
And our Daughters his Slaves by night.

XI.

It will end in the Right.

What, though the Martyrs and Prophets have perisht?  
The Angel of Life rolls the stone from their graves:  
Immortal's the faith, and the freedom they cherish,  
Their lone Triumph-cry stirs the spirits of slaves!

They are gone— but a glory is left in our life,  
Like the day-god's last kiss on the darkness of Even—  
Gone down on the desolate seas of their strife,  
To climb as star-beacons up Liberty's heaven.  
Hold on — still hold on — in the world's despite,  
Nurse the Faith in thy heart, keep the lamp of God bright,  
And, my life for thine! It shall end in the Right.

Think of the wrongs that have ground us for ages,  
Think of the wrongs we have still to endure!  
Think of our blood, red on History's pages;  
Then work that our reck'ning be speedy and sure.  
Slaves! cry unto God! but be our God reveal'd  
In our lives, in our works, in our warfare for man;  
And bearing — or borne upon — Victory's shield,  
Let us fight battle harness'd, and fall in the van  
Hold on—still hold on—in the world's despite  
Nurse the faith in thy heart, keep the lamp of God bright,  
And, my life for thine! It shall end in the Right.

XII.

Peace.

Yes, Peace is beautiful; and I do yearn  
For her to clasp the world's poor tortured heart,  
As sweet spring warmth doth brood o'er coming flowers.  
But peace with these Leviathans of blood —  
Who pirate crimson seas devouring men?  
Give them the hand of brotherhood — whose fangs  
Are in our hearts with the grim bloodhound's grip?  
Wouldst see Peace, idiot-like, with smirk and smile,  
A-planting flowers to coronal Truth's grave?  
Peace, merry-making round the funeral pyre  
Where Freedom, fiery-curtained, weds with death?  
Peace with oppression, which doth tear dear friends  
And brothers from our side today and comes  
To cut OUR hearts and drink OUR blood to-morrow?  
Out, out! It is the Tyrant's cunning cast,  
The robe of sleek pling o'er its deadly daggers,  
Which start to life, whene'er it hugs to death.  
I answer, War! — war with the cause of war —  
War with our misery, want, and wretchedness—  
War with curst Gold, which is an endless war  
On Love, on God, and our Humanity!

S. ERNEST JONES

I.

Earth's Burdens

"Why groaning so, thou solid earth,  
Though sprightly summer cheers?  
Or is thine old heart dead to mirth?  
Or art thou bowed by years?"

"Nor am I cold to summer's prime,  
Nor knows my heart decay;  
Nor am I bowed by countless time,  
Thou atom of a day!

I loved to list when tree and tide  
Their gentle music made,  
And lightly on my sunny side  
To feel the plough and spade.

I loved to hold my liquid way  
Through floods of living light;  
To kiss the sun's bright hand by day,  
And count the stars by night.

I loved to hear the children's glee  
Around the cottage door,  
And peasant's song right merrily  
The glebe come ringing o'er.

But man upon my back has rolled  
Such heavy loads of stone,  
I scarce can grow the harvest gold;  
'Tis therefore that I groan.

And when the evening dew sinks mild  
Upon my quiet breast,  
I feel the tear of the houseless child  
Break burning on my rest.

Oh! where are all the hallowed sweets,  
The harmless joys I gave?  
The pavement of your sordid streets  
Are stones on Virtue's grave.

And thick and fast as autumn leaves  
My children drop away--  
A gathering of unripened sheaves  
By premature decay.

Gaunt misery holds the cottage door,  
And olden honour's flown;  
And slaves are slavish more and more;  
'Tis therefore that I groan."

II.

Song of the Day-Labourers.

Sharpen the sickle, the fields are white;  
'Tis the time of the harvest at last.  
Reapers, be up with the morning-light,  
Ere the blush of its youth be past.  
Why stand on the highway and lounge at the gate,  
With a summer day's work to perform?  
If you wait for the living, 'tis long you may wait--  
Till the hour of the night and the storm.

Sharpen the sickle; how proud they stand  
In the pomp of their golden grain!  
But I'm thinking, ere noon 'neath the sweep of my hand  
How many will lie on the plain!  
Though the ditch be wide, the fence be high,  
There's a spirit to carry us o'er,  
For God never meant his people to die  
In sight of so rich a store.

Sharpen the sickle; how full the ears!  
Our children are crying for bread!  
And the field has been watered with orphans' tears  
And enriched with their fathers dead;  
And hopes that are buried, and hearts that broke,  
Lie deep in the treasuring sod:  
Then sweep down the grain with a thunderstroke,  
In the name of humanity's God!

III.

Song of the Factory Slave

The land it is the landlords';  
The traders' is the sea;  
The ore the usurers' coffer fills,  
But what remains for me?

The engine whirls for master's craft,  
 The steel shines to defend,  
 With labour's arms, what labour raised,  
 For labour's foe to spend.  
 The camp, the pulpit and the law,  
 For rich men's sons are free;  
 Theirs, theirs are learning, art and arms;  
 But what remains for me?  
 The coming hope, the future day,  
 When wrong to right shall bow,  
 And hearts that have the courage, man,  
 To make that future NOW.

I pay for all their learning,  
 I toil for all their ease;  
 They render back, in coin for coin,  
 "Art, ignorance, disease:-  
 Toil— toil—and then, a cheerless home,  
 Where hungry passions cross;  
 Eternal gain to them that give,  
 To me eternal loss!  
 The hour of leisure happiness  
 The rich alone may see;  
 The playful child, the smiling wife —  
 But what remains for me?  
 The coming hope, the future day  
 When wrong to right shall bow,  
 And hearts that have the courage, man,  
 To make that future NOW.

They render back, those rich men,  
 A pauper's niggard fee,  
 Mayhap a prison— then a grave,  
 And think they're quite with me;  
 But not a fond wife's heart that breaks—  
 A poor man's child that dies,  
 We score not on our hollow cheeks  
 And in our sunken eyes;  
 We read it there —whenever we meet,  
 And as the sun we see,  
 Each asks — "The rich have got the earth,  
 And what remains for me?"  
 The coming hope, the future day,  
 When wrong to right shall bow,  
 And hearts that have the courage, man,  
 To make that future NOW.

We bear the wrong in silence;  
We store it in our brain;  
They think us dull — they think us dead:  
But we shall rise again:  
A trumpet through the lands will ring;  
A heaving through the mass;  
A trampling through their palaces,  
Until they break like glass:  
We'll cease to weep by cherished graves,  
From lonely homes to flee,  
And still as rolls our million-march,  
Its watchword brave shall be:-  
The coming hope — the future day,  
When wrong to right shall bow,  
And hearts that have the courage, man,  
To make that future NOW.

IV.  
In Prison.

They told me that my veins would flag,  
My ardour would decay;  
Heavily their fetters drag  
My blood's young strength away.

But never a wish of base retreat  
Or thought of recent part,  
While yet a single pulse shall beat  
Proud marches in my heart.

They'll find me still unchanged and strong  
When breaks their puny thrall;  
With hate for not one living soul —  
And pity for them all.

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