

**PRIZE POEMS  
AND OTHERS**

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Prize Poems and Others by Harry Sayers & Henry Twells

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**HARRY SAYERS & HENRY TWELLS**

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# PRIZE POEMS

AND OTHERS

BY

HARRY SAYERS

## *PREFACE*

BY THE

REV. HENRY TWELLS

HAMMERSMITH

ANDREW CHURCHMAN, 16, KING STREET

—  
1890

APK0543

## PREFACE.

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MANY years ago the writer of the following verses was a pupil of mine at the Godolphin School, Hammersmith, of which I was Head Master. At that time I had a number of promising boys under my charge, and I often used to spend odd moments in anticipating their future. It was my dream that HARRY SAYERS would win the Newdigate, the well-known prize for English Verse at Oxford, and would afterwards distinguish himself as an author and preacher. To some such destiny he seemed to be marked out, not only by his unusual powers of composition and elocution, but by the truthfulness and reverence of his character, and by his apparent possession of that priceless gift of boyhood, a pure mind.

The merit of these compositions is, as might be expected, very unequal. Even the early ones, however, show considerable facility of expression in one so young, while the later ones are certainly remarkable both for their vigour of thought and smoothness of rhythm. I venture to draw special attention to the spirited rendering of St. Paul's speech at Athens, and of the glowing prophecies of Isaiah and the Apocalypse.

HARRY SAYERS was a youth who spent much time in

dreamland, but who did not therefore shut his eyes to the stern duties and realities of life.

"Anon I heard  
In tones most thrillingly distinct and clear,  
That shook and echoed through my transcend soul,  
'Mortal! thou hast God's work on earth to do;  
Linger not idly gazing—dream no more!'"

Like so many earthly forecasts, this was doomed to disappointment. HARRY SAYERS had not long been in residence at Worcester College, Oxford, and had but partially drafted a copy of verses in competition for the Newdigate, when he was seized with a virulent fever, to which he presently succumbed. The possibility of such a fate seems to be shadowed forth in several of his compositions. In common with a large circle of friends I was startled and distressed; and yet who can say that this young life was lived in vain? Even at this distance of time his memory is so fresh and green, that a desire to possess his verses in print has given rise to the present publication. Doubtless He who does all things well, and who holds the keys of death, opened the gates of Paradise at the right time, however mysterious and inscrutable such a dispensation must always appear to by-standers.

And as I trace these words, those other lines of his recur to my thoughts:—

"I saw them weeping o'er my tomb,  
Their sorrow touched my breast;  
I grieved, and wish'd their tearful gloom  
Could see me calm at rest."

*Thornleigh, Bournemouth,  
Michaelmas, 1890.*

AT THE AGE OF 15.



## ISRAEL.

## I.

O faithless Israel! in thy blindness vain,  
 Headlong presumptuous in thy tott'ring sway,  
 Think'st thou to tower to heaven, to rule the plain,  
 Or dazzle nations with thy fading ray?  
 Lost 'mid thy guilt and in thy pride astray,  
 Soon! soon! the earth shall in thy ruin quake—  
 And Judah weep upon her last decay,  
 Submissive then her sinful eyes awake,—  
 To see her Salem totter and her kingdom shake.

## II.

Alas, in vain! thy sacred prophets spake,—  
 To warn thee in thy headlong guilty course,  
 Could nought thy nature, or thy conscience shake,  
 Not e'en the threat'nings of prophetic force,  
 To tinge thy soul with grief or rouse remorse,  
 To drop the tear, to weep upon the shrine,  
 Of some respected seer to mourn the loss,  
 And seek with joy the Saviour's welcome sign?  
 No—in thy guilt o'erwhelmed thy heart did ne'er repine.

## III.

Let fancy ope the scene of gliding time,  
 Unfold the curtain of forgotten days,  
 And sorrow touch thee with a grief sublime,  
 Or paint thy conscience with her plaintive lays;  
 Then slow thy weeping eyes with fervour raise,  
 To view the phantasy of days long fled,  
 Now rolls from time o'erwhelmed the misty haze;  
 Lo! Israel toils, lo! now from bondage led,  
 In darkness, conquered Egypt wails her first born dead.

## IV.

On that first passover the heavenly ray  
 Did shower celestial light when all was gloom,  
 And led thee from that midnight far away.  
 But now—how diff'rent the impending doom,  
 Descends like chaos with her sable gloom !  
 Thou art in darkness and the world in light :  
 Such deeds are thine, thou art a living tomb  
 Where vice and murder walk bedecked with white  
 As if to hide their guilty crimes from mortal sight.

## V.

Lo! at the outstretched rod the heaving main,  
 High surging, rolls its waves, a passage free  
 Amid the whirling gulf now rent in twain ;  
 Like mountains tower to heaven, so this vast sea  
 Heaves up, the abyss black as obscurity.  
 Now Israel mounts the stern yet welcome shore,  
 While Egypt trembles and attempts to flee ;  
 When o'er the deep with one loud fearful roar  
 Confusion, death, descend, and Pharoah is no more.

## VI.

With flame transplendent did the fiery cloud,  
 Heaven's bright shechinah lead the weary way ;  
 Yet still to idol gods thy knee was bowed,  
 Still led by sinfulness from heaven away.  
 Fierce murmurs rose, yea you even cursed the day  
 On which you left the fell Egyptian shore ;  
 Rebelled against the leader's lenient sway,  
 Despised his counsels and defied his law :  
 The cries of murmur rose like ocean's rising roar,

## VII.

When led to Canaan's land by power divine,  
 With evil thoughts thy mind was roused to ire,  
 To plot each other's fall with base design,  
 And worship Satan, that ungodly one,  
 Who lost heaven's kingdom, hurled to endless fire,  
 Mid countless legions fell with terror riven—  
 A judgment upon him who dared conspire  
 Against the ethereal dome : such power is given  
 To crush with hideous ruin those who rise 'gainst heaven.

## VIII.

Borne through the weeping air the tearful wail  
 Did load the mournful wind with sorrow deep ;  
 And echoed far above fair Kinnom's vale,  
 Where Israel did the rights of Moloch keep.  
 Such hellish deeds were theirs, they seemed asleep  
 'Mid one vast dream of Devilry and shame :  
 E'en nature seemed to tremble o'er and weep  
 While Judah's children passed the idol flame,  
 'Twould take all Heaven's tears to wash that off thy name.

## IX.

Repent thee Israel ! vain the prophet cried,  
 Repent thee ! for thy fall now draweth nigh,  
 Thy sins are swollen like the rolling tide,  
 Destruction hovers in the lowering sky,  
 As when a cloud that slowly moves on high  
 To burst with fury on the outstretched plain,  
 Soon ! soon in desolation thou shalt sigh  
 Amid thy ruin and amid thy slain,  
 Mark'd with the vengeful brand of guilt, a deadly stain.