

**WHAT OF THE NIGHT? A
GLANCE AT THE PAST, THE
PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE. A
POEM, IN FOUR ACTS, PP. 2-122**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649732906

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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THOMAS BODEN

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A GLANCE AT

THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE.

A Poem.

IN FOUR PARTS.

BY THOMAS BODEN.

LONDON :

JACKSON & WALFORD, 18, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

W. & W. PIKE, DERBY.

1852.

280. r. 69.

TO
MY HIGHLY ESTEEMED RELATIVE
AND FRIEND,
JAMES HILTON HULME, ESQ.

This Form

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

His deadly poison, venomous, and vile,
Which made it like a boiling caldron fill'd
With every noxious thing, nightshade and roots
Of every deadly name, and reptiles vile,
Whose steam ascending in the tainted air,
Blighted all nature with its deadly fumes.

The family of the first man, reveal'd
In lines of blood, that Innocence had left
The changèd world : her robe of purest white
Was seen no more, her charming voice had fled ;
That voice that fell like music on the ear,
And fill'd even holy angels with delight,
Was heard no more—'twas gone, for ever gone.
Oh ! how changèd the scene, since from above
Pure seraphs came, fill'd with immortal joy,
And peace, and love, to visit the first pair
In Paradise. There in the lovely bowers
The balmy breeze, with spicy odours fill'd,
Such as Arabian groves can never boast,
Fann'd with its balmy wings the happy pair ;
While at a distance sweetest notes were heard
From angel harps, tuned by the hand of love,
Intent to visit man's primeval home.
What holy, happy converse there was held
'Twixt God and man, and holy angels, sent
With messages of love, the matchless bard
Of Paradise hath sung, in numbers such
As 'twere presumptuous, in a humbler bard
With humble lyre, to emulate or sing.

But sin, alas ! soon changèd the happy scene,
And night ensues ; while Death in horrid shapes
Stalks forth, and with his deadly barbèd darts,

Dipp'd in rank poison from the burning lake,
Makes awful havoc 'mongst earth's fallen sons.

Thou Great Supreme, Almighty, Sovereign Lord !
Assist the humble Muse, and her restrain
From flights presumptuous, and teach her how
To lie submissive at her Saviour's feet,
And pray for His Almighty Spirit's aid
To guide her thoughts along the paths of truth,
As in His word and providence reveal'd.
Enough He hath reveal'd, for us to know
While here, and often in few words we find
Great truths unfolded, and so plain, that he
Who runs may read. But often He sees good
To try those powers which He hath given us ;
That by close research and lowly prayer,
And fair comparison with the several parts
And genius of the unerring Word,
We may attain to truth and knowledge fair.
Oh, Wisdom Infinite ! what heights, what depths,
Can fathom thy vast stores ! Archangels here
Are lost in awe profound, and prostrate gaze
In silence : while from the beginning to
The end, all things to Thee transparent stand,
Thou givest no account to men below,
Nor angels pure of Thy profound affairs ;
Eternal holiness and wisdom give
Sufficient pledge that " Thou dost all things well."
Graved by the eternal hand of Love divine,
Deep in the rock of His Omnipotence,
His purposes are hid, and who shall dare
To ask " What dost thou ?" Whatever He

Permits of good or ill, shall all combine
To bring about His purposes of love.

'Tis sometimes ask'd by presumptuous men,
Why the Almighty first permitted sin
In heaven, or earth ? Deep in the archives of
Eternity, a volume lies, hid from
The gaze and knowledge of all finite minds,
Which, as eternal ages roll along, will page
By page unfold its vast contents, writ by
The Eternal Hand. Then in bright characters
Of dazzling light and love divine, it will
Declare, that God is holy, just, and true.

Oh ! how shall we describe an awful scene
In man's first family ? Assist the Muse,
Ye dark and doleful thoughts that hover o'er
The borders of despair ! Two sons are born
To our first parents ; and they both grow up
To manhood ; the elder of a bearing high and proud,
And fill'd with self-importance, as if he
Were born to achieve something of vast import :
But he was sullen, distant and reserved,
Full of revenge and envy. But, alas !
A parent's eyes are often blind to faults,
And Fancy thinks she sometimes can discern
Even in failings something to admire.
So our first parents, groaning 'neath the load
Of misery and guilt, the fruit of sin,
Indulged the pleasing hope that this their son
Would be the promised seed, and bring relief ;
Delusive hope ! as his sad history proves.
The younger son was gentle, true, and kind,

The Spirit of the living God had touch'd
His throbbing heart, and turn'd the stone to flesh.

Cain brought his offering of fruits and flowers,
Deck'd out with all the pomp and circumstance
That pharisaic pride could well devise,
Thinking to make the Almighty One his debtor ;
He was rejected, as 'twas right he should.

Abel, his offering brought with humble mind ;
The choicest of his flock ; but he was taught,
That his best offerings could not profit God.
'Twas faith divine, the principle of light
And life, that taught him to look up and through
The vista of futurity, to that
Atoning sacrifice, the Lamb of God,
The Promised Seed, of which he oft had heard.
He was accepted ; and his holy soul,
Humbled beneath a sense of his own sins,
Would triumph in his Saviour and his God.

Mysterious change ensues ; how soon the night
In its dark shades the doting parents folds !
How soon was realized what God foretold,
That enmity intense should hence exist,
Between the Woman's Seed, and that of their
Dread foe, the fiend and father of all sin.
The angry winds long pent in caverns deep
Sent forth a moan that shook the trembling earth,
And ravens croak'd upon the wither'd branch
Of some tall tree ; while Satan, stung with rage
Against the righteous Abel, now stirr'd up
The deadly venom in Cain's sullen heart ;
His countenance is fallen ; the purpose dire
To spill his brother's blood no longer waits :

'Tis done; the dreadful blow has fallen upon
The righteous Abel's head, and there he lies,
A bleeding corse, upon the parchèd ground.

Oh, ye fond parents! who shall tell the tale
To your distracted minds? But soon, alas!
You see the awful fact, in streams of blood.
The sire of men beheld the awful scene,
And down his careworn cheeks the big round tears
In quick succession roll; but tears, alas!
Cannot wash out the dark and deadly stain.
And there the mother stands in grief absorb'd,
Grief such as man cannot attempt to paint;
Nor can an angel paint a mother's heart.
Ye favour'd mothers of Britannia's isle,
Adorn'd with every virtue, every grace,
'Tis you, if any, must the grief unfold.
But Eve had griefs which you could never know;
For then before her face her own first sin,
Like a pale spectre stood, with outstretch'd hand,
In which it held a sable scroll, on which
Was writ, in crimson characters, these words:—
"Ye ceased to trust the words of Truth and Love;
And took His deadly foe to be your guide:
And now you see the fruit of your own sin."
Oh! 'twas an awful crime to disbelieve
What their Creator, Benefactor, Friend
Had said; and lend an ear to Satan's base
Advice. Sceptics may sneer, and call the sin
A trifling fault, but Justice proves it vile.
Oh, what remorse must then their bosom sting!
Repentance, deeper than they felt before,
Wrings their poor fainting agonizing hearts;