

27
Second Edition, with the Last Scene of the Tragedy.

DR. PRITCHARD

TURNED INTO A

PILLAR OF SALT.

A POEM.

"Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
But *this* most foul, strange, and unnatural."

SHAKESPEARE.

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MDCCLXV.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

DR. PRITCHARD, &C.

SURELY the harvest of the earth is near,
 When such atrocious crimes are in the ear,—
 Inhuman crimes, whose voices reach the Sky,
 And for the sickle of destruction cry.

If ere the world's deceiver, prince of hell,
 Did in the bosom of poor mortal dwell,—
 Obtain entire possession of the soul,—
 And bring it under his abhorr'd control,—
 An abject slave, to execute his will,
 Seduce, dissemble, falsify, and kill,—
 A wretched tool to work his vilest plan,—
 That foul, cold-blooded poisoner is the man!
 No mortal could have acted such a part
 Unless the devil had been in his heart.

How long, O gracious Heaven! wilt thou permit
 Foul spirits from the dark, infernal pit,
 To enter men, take up possession strong,
 And to destruction hurry them along!

O thou fair looking, but sin-blighted earth,
 How long wilt thou continue to give birth
 To horrid monsters in the form of man,
 Who sell themselves to mischief, and who can,
 With fiendish subtlety, torment and slay
 The very wives that in their bosoms lay!

When earnal feelings leap their proper bound,
 And seek for pleasures in forbidden ground,
 Offended, purer feelings flee away,
 And leave the heart to wither and decay.

Yet O how sweet is bread in secret eaten,
 Until the fool is eanght and soundly beaten!
 See Pritchard, that great murderer and thief—
 Of bloody criminals the very chief,—
 See how he steals the water from that well,
 Sweet then to him, but bitter now as hell!
 Would that the foolish girl had kept the key,
 And saved herself from shame and misery!

When fleshly lusts their wicked work begin,
 They pave the way for every kind of sin.
 Adult'ry now, as in King David's day,
 For treachery and murder soon make way.

Of every murder Satan is the root;
 But seldom do his branches bear such fruit
 As that brought forth by Pritchard in these days.
 How ripe the grapes this hellish branch displays!

When 'one, enkindled by unholy rage,
 Drives some poor fellow-mortal from life's stage,
 The deed draws down the vengeance of the Sky,
 And men condemn the murderer to die.
 But when a wretch, in secret hate and guile,
 A foul, cold-blooded human-crocodile!
 Plots calmly on for months, from day to day,
 To take his fellow-creature's life away—
 (And that the wife that in his bosom lay);

Counts out the grains of poison it requires
To do the deed his hellish heart desires ;
Sees that the deadly drug works grief and pain,
And yet administers the same again ;
Deals out the poisoned cheese, egg-slip, and wine,
And, smiling, says, "My darling, it is fine!"
And, when at last he has deprived his wife
Of precious health and all the joys of life,
And thinks that now the sitting time has come,
He sends her to her everlasting home ;
And then declares, his murd'rous deed to hide,
It was of gastric fever that she died !
Compared with this, the other crime is light,—
This is a mighty mountain—that a mite.
Against this deed the Heavens indignant frown,
And Hell opes wide to let the monster down,
While Earth, surcharged with horror and dismay,
Employs a rope to swing the wretch away !

But, first, the lion of the British law
Secures the culprit with his mighty claw ;
And, when assured that he is lawful prey,
Squeezes the convict till he turns to clay !

It wins the admiration of the mind
To see the learning, skill, and truth combined,
In dealing with this most notorious case,
To clothe the guilty with deserved disgrace,
And turn the poisoner, with his every fault,
Into a pillar of preserving salt,
That others, warned from those vile ways he trod,
May flee temptation, through the grace of God.

Ah who can tell the anguish of that heart
 In which is fixed the Judge's vengeful dart,—
 The speechless horror that must fill that soul
 O'er which the fiery waves of conscience roll;
 Who knows that in a few short hours at most
 He must ingloriously give up the ghost,
 With all his miserable hopes destroyed,
 And with a multitude of fears annoyed;
 And, if unpardoned when deprived of breath,
 Doomed to endure the dreadful second death!

Yet what is Pritchard, after all we've said,
 But just one stream from that same fountainhead
 Whence all the offspring of old Adam flow,—
 A poor, deluded child of sin and woe.
 Since Satan poisoned that great fountainhead,
 Its streams have all been spiritually dead.

There are more suicides than men suppose,—
 Each sin administers a deadly dose.
 "Thou hast destroyed thyself," the Lord declares,—
 A condemnation every mortal shares.
 There are more murderers than men suppose,—
 All sinners are their neighbours' deadly foes.
 How many a husband poisons his poor wife,—
 By his ill-treatment takes away her life;
 And many a wife—alas! it must be said—
 Has thus consigned her husband to the dead.
 Strong drink has weakened love in many a heart,
 And made it play the murd'rer's horrid part.
 And love of gold, that root of every ill,
 Brings forth its suicides and murd'ers still,

Who, though untouch'd by law of mortals here,
Must all before the Righteous Judge appear.

The life of fallen man, where'er you go,
Is like the river of famed Jericho ;
With evil thoughts his wicked heart is fraught,
And all the river of his life is naught ;
And, till the salt of Truth Divine is given,
Man is obnoxious in the sight of Heaven.
'Tis that alone can make his life appear
Like that same river when made sweet and clear.

Now, Reader, let me turn thine earnest gaze
On thine own nature, thoughts, and words, and ways.
Thy nature, man, whoever thou mayst be,
Is just as bad as Pritchard's ere could be.
Like him, thou wert conceived and born in sin, (Ps. li. 5.)
And hast a most deceitful heart within. (Ezek. xvii. 9.)
Thy thoughts, He tells thee who alone can see,
Are only ill, and that continually. (Gen. vi. 5.)
Thy words and ways are filthy every one, (Ps. liii. 3.)
And there is nothing good that thou hast done.

As in the waters of the famous Clyde
Which through the giant heart of Glasgow glide,
Myriads of minnows may be seen to play,
Which hungry seagulls fish for all the day,
So, in the waters of humanity,
Swim countless thoughts of vice and vanity,
Which, often, some infernal fowl succeeds
To draw forth into diabolic deeds.
And these, when seen to violate man's law,
Upon the guilty condemnation draw.

But all are manifest to God alone,
 And He will judge them on His great white throne.

Has learning's golden store to thee been given?
 'Tis very good, when sanetified by Heaven;
 But, if thou dost not use thy knowledge well,
 'Twill sink thee lower in the pit of hell!
 Hast thou thy name upon some church's roll?
 What will that profit, if thou lose thy soul?
 For if thy name is not enrolled above,
 Thou canst not taste the sweetness of God's love.
 Thou mayst appear most lovely here below,—
 So does a graveyard covered o'er with snow;
 But thou art ugly in the sight of Heaven,
 Like some foul sepulchre by earthquake riven.
 Or hast thou no religion, great nor small?
 Or is't thy creed, religion to blackball?
 Perhaps thou'rt one of those who think it wise
 To cast away the Truth, and trust in lies.
 Or dost thou occupy the scorner's chair,
 And all that's holy into tatters tear?
 Or is it so that thou art one of those
 Whom Satan with strong drink leads by the nose?
 Or, to conclude, art thou among the swine
 Who eat the devil's husks, and think them fine?

Whatever state or station thou art in,
 Thou hast been bitten by the serpent sin,
 Whose poison is so deadly to thy soul,
 That none but God himself can make thee whole.
 And, from this poison wretched men to free,
 Behold God's Lamb on Calvary's cursed tree.

The man who looks with an adult'rous eye,
 Is guilty in the sight of the Most High; (Matt. v. 28.)
 And he who hates his brother in his heart,
 Has acted there a murderer's guilty part. (1 John iii. 15.)
 There's powder in thy heart that would explode,
 If not prevented by the grace of God.
 The seas would overflow our native land,
 But for the mighty walls of rocks and sand;
 And thy wild thoughts to wicked deeds would rise,
 If not controlled by Him who rules the Skies.

O fellow-mortal, be entreated now,
 To this most solemn truth of God to bow,
 That *sinner* is thy most ignoble name,
 And thy inheritance, eternal shame,
 Because that sin has been thy wretched choice,
 And in it still thy wicked powers rejoice.
 Just as the duck, or speckled, black, or white,
 In dirty water has its great delight,
 So man, in station high, or mid, or low,
 To sin's foul puddle will be sure to go. (Job xv. 16.)

Now while thy powers of contemplation dwell
 On that poor convict in yon dismal cell,
 I pray thee to bestow a thought on one,—
 A wretched convict few ere think upon,—
 I mean thyself, O thou condemned of Heaven!
 Thy trial's past, thy sentence has been given; (Jn. iii. 18.)
 For God has said, "The soul that sins shall die,"
 And righteousness and truth for vengeance cry.
 The attributes of God like jury sit,
 And all consign the sinner to the pit;

And Justice, as the counsel for Heaven's Crown,
 Demands that they should cut the rebel down.
 Does not the law condemn thee to thy face,
 And is not thine an aggravated case?
 "Thou hast destroyed thyself," the Judge declares;
 This is one charge which thy indictment bears.
 Hast thou not dozed thy precious soul with sin,
 And poisoned every noble power within?
 Bad words and deeds, those poisons given by thee,
 Have they not wrought both death and misery?
 Hast thou not sinned in thought, and word, and deed?
 And wilt thou stand and impudently plead,
 "Not guilty," in the sight of that Great Lord,
 Who knows thy every thought, and deed, and word?
 Or wilt thou let the devil plead thy cause,
 And try to show that thou hast kept God's laws?
 A web of falsehood he will quickly weave,
 To flatter his poor victim, and deceive;
 Pretending that he'll save thee from the pit,
 He blinds thine eyes, and leads thee down to it.
 And when with him thou art compelled to go
 Down to that place of everlasting woe,
 Thou must confess it, and it will be seen,
 How much deceived thy foolish heart has been.

Now, since I've warned thee to beware of hell,
 I'll ring aloud the glorious Gospel bell.
 Sing, O ye Heavens! and let the Earth rejoice!
 For God has spoken with Love's melting voice;
 He has declared his great salvation plan,
 And there is hope, sweet hope for sinful man!

God, in His love, sent forth His own dear Son
To do the glorious work, and it is done ;
The Holy Lamb for guilty sinners died,
God is well pleased, His justice satisfied.

When in God's sight the trembling sinner stands,
Condemned for breaking His most just commands,
Sees Justice, with his sharp and glitt'ring sword,
Prepared to deal the vengeance of the Lord,
And feels that it is hopeless to get free,
His heart is filled with speechless misery,
But when he calls upon the Blessed Name
Of Him who bore the sinner's curse and shame,
Behold how quickly God's dear Lamb appears,
To save his soul, and drive away his fears.
Since Justice plunged the sword into His side,
He lets all free for whom the Saviour died.
So Truth commands the sinner's fears to cease,
And Mercy smiles him into joy and peace,
While all the Attributes of God unite
To sooth his soul and fill him with delight.

O great expedient ! wondrous, blessed scheme,
The guilty sons of Adam to redeem !
O precious Lamb ! what virtue is in Thee !
Thy blood can make the foulest clean—even me !
None need despair, since thou for sinners died,
O Lamb of God, the Glorious Crucified !

THE LAST SCENE IN THE TRAGEDY.

THE horrid tragedy at last is o'er,
And the notorious poisoner is no more!
Justice has driven the murderer's soul away,
And turned his wretched casket into clay.
Where *now* his soul?—in Heaven?—or in hell?
My humble Muse does not pretend to tell.
But, if that dark infernal pit should be
His prison-house throughout eternity,
His hopeless cries, and howlings of despair
Must drown the wail of common wretches there.
But if, ere from the tenement of clay
His poor misguided soul was driven away,
The God of Mercy should have seized the brand,
And pluck'd him from the fire with his own hand,
The grateful songs his joyful heart would sing,
Would sound aloud and make Heaven's arches ring;
And purest praises from his ransom'd soul,
Like mighty rivers would for ever roll.
But here the veil of mystery intervenes,
And hides from mortal eye all future scenes.

O fellow-mortal! by this fearful ease,
Be warned from paths which lead to such disgrace.
Fall on the Lord, and seek to be forgiven,
Through Him who is the only "way" to Heaven.
And, if in glory Pritchard now should be,
May he be joined, O fellow-man, by thee!
But, if tormented in the place of woe,
May thy poor soul to Pritchard never go!