

Poetry.

TO SPRING.

Blest hope of man, enchanting Spring !
Thy throne is made of budding flowers—
Thy voice is with the birds that sing
Among the leaves of thy green bowers—

Thy breath is of that sweet perfume
Which comes where violets make their bed—
Thy cheek is of the mellow bloom
That's sprinkled on the daisy's head.

Thine eye is like the sky's deep blue—
Thy robe is of the grassy mound—
Thy gems are of the morning dew—
Thy footsteps make a fairy ground.

THE MECHANISM OF MAN.

"I am fearfully and wonderfully made."—

Psalm cxxxix. v. 14.

FOOD atheist ! could a giddy dance
Of atoms blindly hurled
Produce so regular, so fair,
So harmonized a world ?

Why do not Lybia's driving sands,
The sport of every storm,
A palace here, the child of chance,
Or there a temple form ?

Presumptuous wretch ! thyself survey ;
That lesser fabric scan ;
Tell me, from whence the immortal dust,
The God, the reptile man ?

Where wast thou, when the embryo earth
From chaos burst its way,
When stars exulting sang the morn,
And hailed the new-born day ?

What fingers brace the tender nerves,
The twisting fibres spin ?
Who clothes in flesh the hardened bone,
And weaves the silken skin ?

How came the brain and beating heart,
Life's more immediate throne,
(Where fatal every touch) to dwell
Immailed in solid bone ?

Who taught the wandering tides of blood
To leave the vital urn,
Visit each limb in purple streams,
And faithfully return ?

How know the nerves to hear the will,
The heavy limbs to wield ?
The tongue ten thousand trades discern,
Ten thousand accents yield ?

How know the lungs to heave and pant ?
Or how the fringed lid
To guard the fearful eye, or brush
The sullied ball unbid ?

The delicate, the winding ear
To image every sound,
The eye to catch the pleasing view,
And tell the senses round ?

Who bids the babe, new launched in life,
The milky draught arrest,
And with its eager fingers press
The nectar-streaming breast ?

Who, with a love too big for words,
The mother's bosom warms,
Along the rugged paths of life
To bear it in her arms ?

A God ! a God ! creation shouts,
A God each insect cries !
He moulded in his palm the earth,
And hung it in the skies.

"Let us make man (O voice divine)
And stamp a God on clay,
To govern nature's humbler births,
To bear an earthly sway."

He said : with strength and beauty clad,
Young health in every vein,
With thought enthroned upon his brow,
Walked forth majestic MAN.

Around he turns his wandering eye,
All nature's works surveys,
Admires the earth, the skies, himself,
And tunes his tongue to praise.

THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE AT LISBON, IN 1755.

NEVER was a finer morning seen than the first of November, 1755. The sun shone in his full lustre, and the whole face of the sky was perfectly serene and clear. Not the least signal or warning was afforded of that approaching event, which in a few minutes, rendered the flourishing, opulent and populous City of Lisbon, a scene of general horror and desolation.

On the morning of that fatal day, between the hours of nine and ten, I was, says the writer, sitting in my apartment, and had just finished a letter, when the table I was writing on began to tremble with a gentle motion ; which surprised me, as I could not perceive a breath of wind stirring. Whilst I was reflecting on what could be the cause, the whole house began to shake from the very foundation, which at first I imputed to the rattling of coaches in the streets ; but on listening more attentively, I found it was owing to a frightful noise underground, resembling the rumbling of distant thunder. All this passed in less than a minute. I now began to be alarmed, as it occurred to me, that the noise might possibly be the presage of an approaching earthquake.

I threw down my pen, and started upon my feet, remaining for a moment in suspense, whether I should stay in the apartment, or run into the street ; but in a moment I was roused from my dream, being stunned with a most horrid crash, as though every edifice in the City had tumbled down at once. The house I was in shook with such violence, that the upper stories immediately fell in ; and though my apartment (which was the first floor) did not immediately share the same fate, yet every thing was thrown out of its place, and it was with difficulty I kept my feet.

I expected nothing less than to be crushed to death ; as the walls continued rocking to and fro in the most frightful manner, and opening in several places : large stones fell down on every side from the cracks, and the ends of most of the rafters started at the same time from the wall. The sky in a moment became so gloomy that I could distinguish no particular object. It was an Egyptian darkness, such as might be felt owing to the prodigious clouds of dust and lime raised from so violent a concussion, and from the overthrow of so many buildings, and, as some reported, from sulphurous exhalations. However it is certain that I found myself almost choked for nearly ten minutes.

As soon as the gloom began to disperse, and the violence of the shock to abate, the first object I perceived in my room was a woman sitting on the floor, with an infant in her arms, covered with dust, pale and trembling. I asked how she came there ; but her consternation was so great that she could give me no account. She asked me in the utmost agony, if I did not think the world was at an end : at the same time she complained of being choked, and begged I would procure her a little drink. I told her she must not think of quenching her thirst, but of saving her life ; as the house was just falling on our heads, and a second shock would certainly bury us.

I hurried down stairs, the woman with me, holding by my arm, and made directly to that end of the street which opens to the river Tagus ; but finding the passage entirely blocked up by the fallen houses, I turned back ; having helped the woman over a vast heap of ruins, with no small hazard to my own life. Just as we were going into the street, there was one part that I could not climb over without the assistance of my hands as well as feet : I therefore desired her to let go her hold, which she did, remaining two or three feet behind me ; and at this moment there fell a vast stone from a tottering wall, and crushed both her and the child to pieces !

I had now a long narrow street to pass, in which the houses on each side were four or five stories high, all very old ; and the greater part already thrown down, or continually falling, and threatening the passengers with death at every step ; numbers of whom lay killed before me, or, what was more deplorable, so bruised and wounded, that they could not move so as to escape the destruction which impended over them.

As self-preservation, however, is the first law of nature, I proceeded on as fast as I could ; and having got clear of the narrow street I found myself in safety in a large open space before St. Paul's church, which had been thrown down a few minutes before, and had buried a great part of a numerous congregation ! Here I stood some time, considering what I should do ; but not thinking myself safe, I climbed over the ruins of the west end of the Church, to get, to the river-side, that I might be removed as far as possible from the tottering houses, in the dreaded event of a second shock.

This with some difficulty I accomplished ; and by the river-side I found a prodigious concourse of both sexes, and of all ranks and conditions. All these, whom their mutual dangers had here assembled as to a place of safety, were on their knees at prayers, with the terrors of death in their countenances ; every one striking his breast, and crying out incessantly to Heaven for mercy and protection.

In the midst of our devotions, the second great shock came with little less violence than the first ; and completed the ruin of those buildings which had already been much shattered. The consternation now became so universal, that shrieks and cries could be distinctly heard from a considerable distance : at the same time we heard the fall of the parish-church, whereby many were killed on the spot. The force of this shock was so great, that I could scarcely support myself on my knees : and it was attended with some circumstances still more dreadful than the former.

On a sudden I heard a general cry, "The sea is coming in ; we shall all be lost." Upon this, turning my eyes towards the river Tagus, which in that place is nearly four miles broad, I perceived it heaving and swelling in a most unaccountable manner, for no wind was stirring. In an instant there appeared, at a small distance, a large body of water, raising like a mountain. It approached foaming and roaring, and rushed toward the shore with such rapidity, that we all ran for our lives as fast as possible. Many were actually swept

away ; for my own part I had a narrow escape, and should certainly have been lost, had I not grasped a large beam that lay on the ground, till the water returned again to its channel, which it did almost at the same instant with equal rapidity.

As there now appeared at least as much danger from the sea as the land, I scarcely knew whither to retire for safety ; I therefore took a sudden resolution to return back to the area of St. Paul's. Here I stood some time, and observed the ships tumbling and tossing about, as in a violent storm. Some had broken their cables, and were carried to the other side of the Tagus ; others were whirled round with incredible swiftness ; several large boats were turned keel upwards ; and all this without any wind. It was at this moment that the new quay, built of rough marble, was entirely swallowed up, with all the people on it, who had fled there for safety, and had reason to consider themselves out of danger. At the same time a great number of boats and small vessels, which were anchored near it, all full of people (who had retired to them for the same purpose) were all swallowed up as in a whirlpool, and never more appeared.

I did not see this last dreadful incident with my own eyes, as it occurred a quarter of a mile from the spot where I was ; but I had the account from several masters of ships, who were anchored near the quay, and who saw the whole catastrophe. One of them informed me, that during the second shock he perceived the whole city waving backward and forward, like the sea when the wind first begins to rise ; and that the agitation of the earth was so great, even under the river, that it threw up his large anchor from the mooring, which seemed to swim on the surface of the water ; that immediately on this extraordinary concussion, the river rose at once near twenty feet, and in a moment subsided ; at which instant he saw the quay, with the immense concourse of people upon it, sink down ; and at the same time the boats and vessels, which instantly closed, inasmuch as no sign of a wreck was ever afterwards seen. I went myself in a few days, but could not find even the ruins of a place where I had taken so many agreeable walks ; I found it all deep water, and in some parts so deep as scarcely to be fathomed.

I had not been long in the area of St. Paul's churchyard, when I felt the third shock ; at which, though not less violent than the two former, the sea rushed in again, but retired in like manner. I took notice that the waters retired so impetuously, as to leave some vessels quite dry, which rode in seven fathom water.

Perhaps you may think the subject concluded ; but alas ! the horrors of this day are sufficient to fill a volume. As soon as it grew dark in the evening, another scene presented itself, little less shocking than those already described. The whole city appeared in a blaze, so bright that I could see to read. It was without exaggeration, on fire in a hundred different places at once ; and it continued burning for six days together, without intermission, or without the least attempt being made to stop its progress, such were the distress and consternation of the survivors.

I could never learn that this terrible fire was owing to any subterraneous eruption. The first of November being All Saints' day, every altar, and every church and chapel (some of them having more than twenty,) was illuminated with a number of wax-tapers and lamps ; which setting fire to the curtains and timber-work that fell with the shock, the conflagration soon spread to the neighbouring houses. The fire, in consequence, destroyed the whole city, at least every thing that was grand or valuable.

The number of persons that perished, including those who were burnt, or who were afterwards crushed to death while digging in the ruins, is supposed on the lowest calculation, to have amounted to more than sixty thousand. This extensive and opulent city is now nothing but a vast heap of ruins ; the rich and the poor are at present upon a level ; and some thousands of families who but the day before had been easy in their circumstances, were this day scattered in the fields, in want of every convenience, while none were able to relieve them.

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GEO. K. LUGRIN.

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