

POEMS.

THE BLESSED HAND.

For you and me, who love the light
Of God's uncloistered day,
It were, indeed, a dreary lot,
To shut ourselves away
From every glad and sunny thing
And pleasant sight and sound,
And pass, from out a silent cell,
Into the silent ground.

Not so the good monk, Anselm, thought,
For, in his cloister's shade,
The cheerful faith that lit his heart
Its own sweet sunshine made ;
And in its glow he prayed and wrote,
From matin-song till even,
And trusted, in the Book of Life,
To read his name in Heaven.

What holy books his gentle art
 Filled full of saintly lore !
 What pages, brightened by his hand,
 The splendid missals bore !
 What blossoms, almost fragrant, twined
 Around each blessed name,
 And how his Saviour's cross and crown
 Shone out, from cloud and flame !

But, unto clerk as unto clown,
 One summons comes, always,
 And Brother Anselm heard the call,
 At vesper-chime, one day.
 His busy pen was in his hand,
 His parchment by his side—
 He bent him o'er the half-writ prayer,
 Kissed Jesu's name, and died !

They laid him where a window's blaze
 Flashed o'er the graven stone,
 And seemed to touch his simple name
 With pencil like his own ;
 And there he slept, and, one by one,
 His brethren died the while,
 And trooping years went by and trod
 His name from off the aisle.

And lifting up the pavement, then,
 An Abbot's couch to spread,
 They let the jewelled sunlight in
 Where once lay Anselm's head.

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No crumbling bone was there, no trace
Of human dust that told,
But, all alone, a warm right hand
Lay, fresh, upon the mould.

It was not stiff, as dead men's are,
But, with a tender clasp,
It seemed to hold an unseen hand
Within its living grasp ;
And ere the trembling monks could turn
To hide their dazzled eyes,
It rose, as with a sound of wings,
Right up into the skies !

Oh loving, open hands, that give ;
Soft hands, the tear that dry ;
Oh patient hands, that toil to bless ;
How can ye ever die !
Ten thousand vows from yearning hearts
To Heaven's own gates shall soar,
And bear you up, as Anselm's hand
Those unseen angels bore !

Kind hands ! oh never near to you
May come the woes ye heal !
Oh never may the hearts ye guard
The griefs ye comfort, feel !
May He, in whose sweet name ye build,
So crown the work ye rear,
That ye may never clasped be,
In one unanswered prayer !

NOTES.

[The following notes are the author's own, except where inclosed in brackets.]

Page 255. *The Blessed Hand.* There is a legend of an English monk who died at the monastery of Aremberg, where he had copied and illuminated many books, hoping to be rewarded in Heaven. Long after his death his tomb was opened, and nothing could be seen of his remains but the right hand with which he had done his pious work, and which had been miraculously preserved from decay.

[From a personal friend of Mr. Wallis we have the following account of the circumstances under which "The Blessed Hand" was written :

"After the war ended, it was found that there was so much want and destitution throughout the South, as well as an entire lack of seeds and implements with which to start in life, that some ladies in Baltimore conceived the idea of holding a Fair for the purpose of raising a sum of money which should be applied to relieving the great want known to be widespread throughout the South. The result was the 'Southern Relief Fair,' which proved a great success, as the expenses were almost nothing, while all found something to give for the Fair. The amount realised was about \$165,000.

"Among those who entered into the work of the Fair with great enthusiasm, was Mr. Wallis; and

soon after the opening, when he had seen the way in which the ladies worked, and how true and earnest was their desire to help those who were suffering, the legend of 'The Blessed Hand' came to his mind, and he wrote the poem here given. He had it printed and sent to the Fair for sale. So perfectly did the lines agree with the feeling that filled every heart, and so beautiful were they in themselves, that great numbers of the printed copies were sold."

Ælfric relates a similar miracle in the case of King Oswald of Northumbria.]

Page 261. *The Last of the Hours.* In the famous fresco, known as the Aurora, by Guido Reni, in the Rospigliosi palace at Rome, the last of the Hours—the farthest from the chariot of the Sun—wears a darker robe than her companions, and is the only one whose head is covered. Her face is by far the most beautiful in the group, though its expression is pensive.

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" 263. *Truth and Reason.* Fabricius, in his *Bibliotheca Graeca*, mentions the theory of the universe propounded by Cosmas Indicopleustes, who, among other things, accounted for the motion of the heavenly bodies by the assertion that they were carried round in their orbits by celestial spirits. August 20, 1849.

" 265. *Beauty and Faith.* "Guido was so distinguished by his passionate enthusiasm for the Madonna that he was supposed to have been favored by a particular vision which enabled him the more readily to represent her divine beauty. . . . But, though he painted lovely Virgins, he went every Saturday to pray before the little black Madonna della Guardia, and, as we are assured, held this ancient Eastern relic in devout veneration." Mrs. Jameson's *Legends of the Madonna.*

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