

MAZZINI

1867

(FROM A SONG OF ITALY)

PRAISE be with him from earth and heaven ; for he,
Father of Italy,
Upbore in holy hands the babe new-born
Through loss and sorrow and scorn,
Of no man led, of many men reviled ;
Till lo, the new-born child
Gone from between his hands, and in its place,
Lo, the fair mother's face.
Blessed is he of all men, being in one
As father to her and son,
Blessed of all men living, that he found
Her weak limbs bared and bound,
And in his arms and in his bosom bore,
And as a garment wore
Her weight of want, and as a royal dress
Put on her weariness.
As in faith's hoariest histories men read,
The strong man bore at need

Through roaring rapids when all heaven was wild
The likeness of a child
That still waxed greater and heavier as he trod,
And altered, and was God.
Praise him, O winds that move the molten air,
O light of days that were,
And light of days that shall be; land and sea,
And heaven and Italy:
Praise him, O storm and summer, shore and wave,
O skies and every grave;
O weeping hopes, O memories beyond tears,
O many and murmuring years,
O sounds far off in time and visions far,
O sorrow with thy star,
And joy with all thy beacons; ye that mourn,
And ye whose light is born;
O fallen faces, and O souls arisen,
Praise him from tomb and prison,
Praise him from heaven and sunlight; and ye floods,
And windy waves of woods;
Ye valleys and wild vineyards, ye lit lakes
And happier hillside brakes,
Untrampled by the accursed feet that trod
Fields golden from their god,
Fields of their god forsaken, whereof none
Sees his face in the sun,
Hears his voice from the floweriest wildernesses;
And, barren of his tresses,

Ye bays unplucked and laurels unentwined,
That no men break or bind,
And myrtles long forgetful of the sword,
And olives unadored,
Wisdom and love, white hands that save and slay,
Praise him; and ye as they,
Praise him, O gracious might of dew and rains
That feed the purple plains,
O sacred sunbeams bright as bare steel drawn,
O cloud and fire and dawn;
Red hills of flame, white Alps, green Apennines,
Banners of blowing pines,
Standards of stormy snows, flags of light leaves,
Three wherewith Freedom weaves
One ensign that once woven and once unfurled
Makes day of all a world,
Makes blind their eyes who knew not, and out-
braves
The waste of iron waves;
Ye fields of yellow fullness, ye fresh fountains,
And mists of many mountains;
Ye moons and seasons, and ye days and nights;
Ye starry-headed heights,
And gorges melting sunward from the snow,
And all strong streams that flow,
Tender as tears, and fair as faith, and pure
As hearts made sad and sure
At once by many sufferings and one love;
O mystic deathless dove

Held to the heart of earth and in her hands
Cherished, O lily of lands,
White rose of time, dear dream of praises past—
For such as these thou wast,
That art as eagles setting to the sun,
As fawns that leap and run,
As a sword carven with keen floral gold,
Sword for an armed god's hold,
Flower for a crowned god's forehead—O our land,
Reach forth thine holiest hand,
O mother of many sons and memories,
Stretch out thine hand to his
That raised and gave thee life to run and leap
When thou wast full of sleep,
That touched and stung thee with young blood and
breath
When thou wast hard on death.
Praise him, O all her cities and her crowns,
Her towers and thrones of towns;
O noblest Brescia, scarred from foot to head
And breast-deep in thy dead,
Praise him from all the glories of thy graves
That yellow Mela laves
With gentle and golden water, whose fair flood
Ran wider with thy blood:
Praise him, O born of that heroic breast,
O nursed thereat and blest,
Verona, fairer than thy mother fair,
But not more brave to bear:

Praise him, O Milan, whose imperial tread
Bruised once the German head ;
Whose might, by northern swords left desolate,
Set foot on fear and fate :
Praise him, O long mute mouth of melodies,
Mantua, with louder keys,
With mightier chords of music even than rolled
From the large harps of old,
When thy sweet singer of golden throat and tongue,
Praising his tyrant, sung ;
Though now thou sing not as of other days,
Learn late a better praise.
Not with the sick sweet lips of slaves that sing,
Praise thou no priest or king,
No brow-bound laurel of discoloured leaf,
But him, the crownless chief.
Praise him, O star of sun-forgotten times,
Among their creeds and crimes
That wast a fire of witness in the night,
Padua, the wise men's light :
Praise him, O sacred Venice, and the sea
That now exults through thee,
Full of the mighty morning and the sun,
Free of things dead and done ;
Praise him from all the years of thy great grief,
That shook thee like a leaf
With winds and snows of torment, rain that fell
Red as the rains of hell,

Storms of black thunder and of yellow flame,
And all ill things but shame ;
Praise him with all thy holy heart and strength ;
Through thy walls' breadth and length
Praise him with all thy people, that their voice
Bid the strong soul rejoice,
The fair clear supreme spirit beyond stain,
Pure as the depth of pain,
High as the head of suffering, and secure
As all things that endure.
More than thy blind lord of an hundred years
Whose name our memory hears,
Home-bound from harbours of the Byzantine
Made tributary of thine,
Praise him who gave no gifts from oversea,
But gave thyself to thee.
O mother Genoa, through all years that run,
More than that other son,
Who first beyond the seals of sunset prest
Even to the unfooted west,
Whose back-blown flag scared from their sheltering seas
The unknown Atlantides,
And as flame climbs through cloud and vapour clomb
Through streams of storm and foam,
Till half in sight they saw land heave and swim—
More than this man praise him.
One found a world new-born from virgin sea ;
And one found Italy.

O heavenliest Florence, from the mouths of flowers
Fed by melodious hours,
From each sweet mouth that kisses light and air,
Thou whom thy fate made fair,
As a bound vine or any flowering tree,
Praise him who made thee free.
For no grape-gatherers trampling out the wine
Tread thee, the fairest vine ;
For no man binds thee, no man bruises, none
Does with thee as these have done.
From where spring hears loud through her long lit vales
Triumphant nightingales,
In many a fold of fiery foliage hidden,
Withheld as things forbidden,
But clamorous with innumerable delight
In May's red, green, and white,
In the far-floated standard of the spring,
That bids men also sing,
Our flower of flags, our witness that we are free,
Our lamp for land and sea ;
From where Majano feels through corn and vine
Spring move and melt as wine,
And Fiesole's embracing arms enclose
The immeasurable rose ;
From hillsides plumed with pine, and heights wind-worn
That feel the reflux morn,
Or where the moon's face warm and passionate
Burns, and men's hearts grow great,

And the swoln eyelids labour with sweet tears,
And in their burning ears
Sound throbs like flame, and in their eyes new light
Kindles the trembling night ;
From faint illumined fields and starry valleys
Wherefrom the hill-wind sallies,
From Vallombrosa, from Valdarno raise
One Tuscan tune of praise.
O lordly city of the field of death,
Praise him with equal breath,
From sleeping streets and gardens, and the stream
That threads them as a dream
Threads without light the untravelled ways of sleep
With eyes that smile or weep ;
From the sweet sombre beauty of wave and wall
That fades and does not fall ;
From coloured domes and cloisters fair with fame,
Praise thou and thine his name.
Thou too, O little laurelled town of towers,
Clothed with the flame of flowers,
From windy ramparts girdled with young gold,
From thy sweet hillside fold
Of wallflowers and the acacia's belted bloom
And every blowing plume,
Halls that saw Dante speaking, chapels fair
As the outer hills and air,
Praise him who feeds the fire that Dante fed,
Our highest heroic head,

Whose eyes behold through floated cloud and flame
The maiden face of fame
Like April's in Valdelsa ; fair as flowers,
And patient as the hours ;
Sad with slow sense of time, and bright with faith
That levels life and death ;
The final fame, that with a foot sublime
Treads down reluctant time ;
The fame that waits and watches and is wise,
A virgin with chaste eyes,
A goddess who takes hands with great men's grief ;
Praise her, and him, our chief.
Praise him, O Siena, and thou her deep green spring,
O Fonte Branda, sing :
Shout from the red clefts of thy fiery crags,
Shake out thy flying flags
In the long wind that streams from hill to hill ;
Bid thy full music fill
The desolate red waste of sunset air
And fields the old time saw fair,
But now the hours ring void through ruined lands,
Wild work of mortal hands ;
Yet through thy dead Maremma let his name
Take flight and pass in flame,
And the red ruin of disastrous hours
Shall quicken into flowers.
Praise him, O fiery child of sun and sea,
Naples, who bade thee be ;

For till he sent the swords that scourge and save,
Thou wast not, but thy grave.
But more than all these praise him and give thanks,
Thou, from thy Tiber's banks,
From all thine hills and from thy supreme dome,
Praise him, O risen Rome.
Let all thy children cities at thy knee
Lift up their voice with thee,
Saying 'for thy love's sake and our perished grief
We laud thee, O our chief ;'
Saying 'for thine hand and help when hope was dead
We thank thee, O our head ;'
Saying 'for thy voice and face within our sight
We bless thee, O our light ;
For waters cleansing us from days defiled
We praise thee, O our child.'