

Robert Murray M'Cheyne:

"Whatever way I turned, nothing appeared but danger and difficulty. I saw myself in the midst of a vast wilderness, in the depth of the rainy season, naked and alone, surrounded by savage animals, and men still more savage. I was five hundred miles from the nearest European settlement. At this moment, painful as my reflections were, the extraordinary beauty of a small moss in fructification irresistibly caught my eye. I mention this to show from what trifling circumstances the mind will sometimes derive consolation; for though the whole plant was not larger than the top of one of my fingers, I could not contemplate the delicate conformation of its roots, leaves, and capsule, without admiration. Can that Being, thought I, who planted, watered, and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which appears of so small importance, look with unconcern upon the situation and sufferings of creatures formed after his own image? Surely not. I started up, and, disregarding both hunger and fatigue, travelled forward, assured that relief was at hand, and I was not disappointed."

--PARK'S TRAVELS.

The sun had reached his mid-day height,
And poured down floods of burning light
On Afric's barren land;
No cloudy veil obscured the sky,
And the hot breeze that struggled by
Was filled with glowing sand.

No mighty rock upreared its head,
To bless the wanderer with its shade,
In all the weary plain;
No palm-trees with refreshing green,
To glad the dazzled eye, were seen,
But one wide sandy main.

Dauntless and daring was the mind
That left all home-born joys behind
These deserts to explore --
To trace the mighty Niger's course,
And find it bubbling from its source,
In wilds untrod before.

And ah! shall we less daring show,
Who nobler ends and motives know
Than ever heroes dream --
Who seek to lead the savage mind
The precious fountain-head to find
Whence flows salvation's stream?

Let peril, nakedness, and sword,
Hot barren sands, and despot's word
Our burning zeal oppose --
Yet, Martyn-like, we'll lift the voice,
Bidding the wilderness rejoice
And blossom as the rose.

Sad, faint, and weary on the sand
Our traveller sat him down; his hand
Covered his burning head.
Above, beneath, behind, around, --
No resting for the eye he found;
All nature seemed as dead.

One tiny tuft of moss alone,
Mantling with freshest green a stone,
Fixed his delighted gaze:
Through bursting tears of joy he smiled,
And while he raised the tendril wild,
His lips o'erflowed with praise.

"Oh, shall not He who keeps thee green
Here in the waste, unknown, unseen,
Thy fellow-exile save?
He who commands the dew to feed
Thy gentle flower, can surely lead
Me from a scorching grave!"

The heaven-sent plant new hope inspired --
New courage all his bosom fired,
And bore him safe along;
Till with the evening's cooling shade
He slept within the verdant glade,
Lulled by the negro's song.

Thus, we in this world's wilderness,
Where sin and sorrow, guilt, distress,
Seem undisturbed to reign,
May faint because we feel alone,
With none to strike our favourite tone
And join our homeward strain.

Yet often in the bleakest wild
Of this dark world, some heaven-born child,
Expectant of the skies,
Amid the low and vicious crowd,
Or in the dwellings of the proud,
Meets our admiring eyes.

From gazing on the tender flower,
We lift our eyes to Him whose power
Hath all it's beauty given;
Who, in this atmosphere of death,
Hath given it life, and form, and breath,
And brilliant hues of heaven.

Our drooping faith, revived by sight,
Anew her pinion plumes for flight.
New hope distends the breast;
With joy we mount on eagle wing,
With bolder tone our anthem sing,
And seek the pilgrim's rest.

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