

ILLUSTRATED

COLLECTED WORKS OF  
**FRANCIS THOMPSON**  
**THE POEMS,  
THE PROSE:  
THE HOUND OF HEAVEN  
AND OTHERS**

**The complete works of Francis  
Thompson**

**The Poems, The Prose: The  
Hound of Heaven and others**

**Illustrated**

*Francis was an English poet and Catholic mystic.*

*He spent three years on the streets of London, supporting himself with menial labour, becoming addicted to opium which he took to relieve a nervous problem.*

*During this period from 1888 - 1897, after which he turned to writing prose.*

*Francis' poem The Hound of Heaven was called by the Bishop of London "one of the most tremendous poems ever written".*

*In 1897, he began writing prose, drawing inspiration from life in the countryside, Wales and Storrington.*

*Notable among his prose works are an essay on Shelley, "The Life of St. Ignatius", and "Health and Holiness".*

*Poems on Children*

*Sister Songs*

*Love in Dian's Lap.*

*The Hound of Heaven*

*Ode to the Setting Sun*

*A Corymbus for Autumn*

*To the Dead Cardinal of Westminster*

*Ecclesiastical Ballads*

*Translations*

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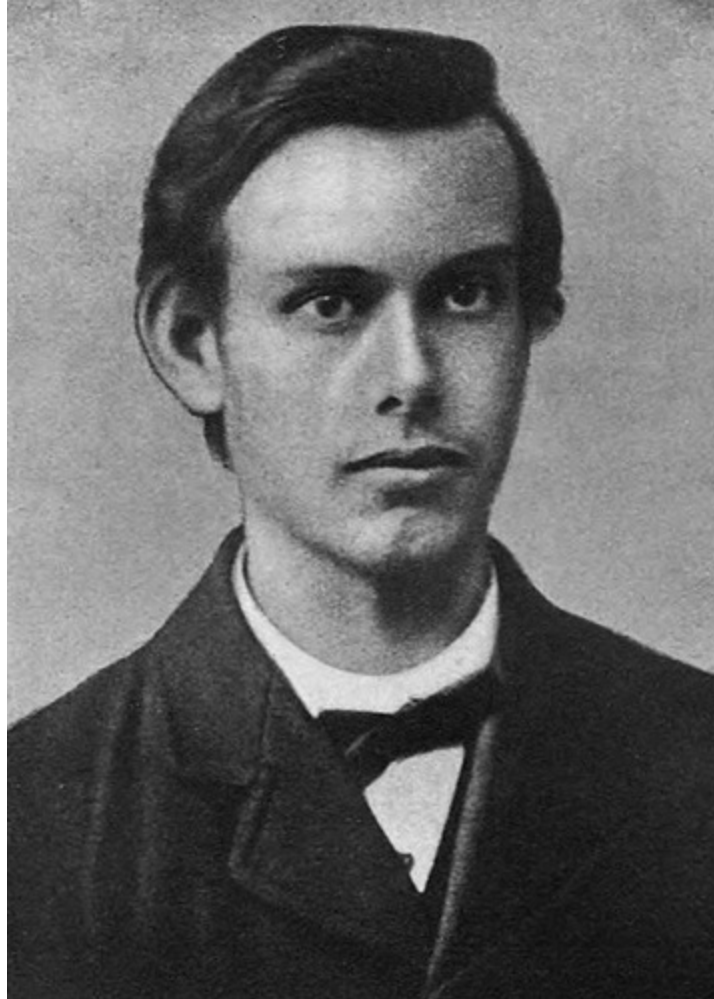


JAMES THOMSON  
THOMAS DE QUINCEY  
MACAULAY  
EMERSON  
DANTE  
THE 'NIBELUNGEN LIED'  
HEALTH AND HOLINESS

# Poems on Children

## DAISY.

Where the thistle lifts a purple crown  
Six foot out of the turf,  
And the harebell shakes on the windy hill —  
O the breath of the distant surf! —  
The hills look over on the South,  
And southward dreams the sea;  
And, with the sea-breeze hand in hand,  
Came innocence and she.  
Where 'mid the gorse the raspberry  
Red for the gatherer springs,  
Two children did we stray and talk  
Wise, idle, childish things.  
She listened with big-lipped surprise,  
Breast-deep mid flower and spine:  
Her skin was like a grape, whose veins  
Run snow instead of wine.  
She knew not those sweet words she spake,  
Nor knew her own sweet way;  
But there's never a bird, so sweet a song  
Thronged in whose throat that day!  
Oh, there were flowers in Storrington  
On the turf and on the spray;  
But the sweetest flower on Sussex hills  
Was the Daisy-flower that day!  
Her beauty smoothed earth's furrowed face!  
She gave me tokens three: —  
A look, a word of her winsome mouth,  
And a wild raspberry.



A berry red, a guileless look,  
A still word, — strings of sand!  
And yet they made my wild, wild heart  
Fly down to her little hand.  
For standing artless as the air,  
And candid as the skies,  
She took the berries with her hand,  
And the love with her sweet eyes.  
The fairest things have fleetest end:  
Their scent survives their close,  
But the rose's scent is bitterness  
To him that loved the rose!  
She looked a little wistfully,  
Then went her sunshine way: —

The sea's eye had a mist on it,  
And the leaves fell from the day.  
She went her unremembering way,  
She went and left in me  
The pang of all the partings gone,  
And partings yet to be.  
She left me marvelling why my soul  
Was sad that she was glad;  
At all the sadness in the sweet,  
The sweetness in the sad.  
Still, still I seemed to see her, still  
Look up with soft replies,  
And take the berries with her hand,  
And the love with her lovely eyes.  
Nothing begins, and nothing ends,  
That is not paid with moan;  
For we are born in other's pain,  
And perish in our own.

## THE MAKING OF VIOLA.

### I.

*The Father of Heaven.*

Spin, daughter Mary, spin,  
Twirl your wheel with silver din;  
Spin, daughter Mary, spin,  
Spin a tress for Viola.

*Angels.*

Spin, Queen Mary, a  
Brown tress for Viola!

### II.

*The Father of Heaven.*

Weave, hands angelical,  
Weave a woof of flesh to pall —  
Weave, hands angelical —  
Flesh to pall our Viola.

*Angels.*

Weave, singing brothers, a  
Velvet flesh for Viola!

### III.

*The Father of Heaven.*

Scoop, young Jesus, for her eyes,  
Wood-browned pools of Paradise —  
Young Jesus, for the eyes,  
For the eyes of Viola.

*Angels.*

Tint, Prince Jesus, a  
Duskèd eye for Viola!

### IV.

*The Father of Heaven.*

Cast a star therein to drown,  
Like a torch in cavern brown,  
Sink a burning star to drown  
Whelmed in eyes of Viola.

*Angels.*

Lave, Prince Jesus, a  
Star in eyes of Viola!

**V.**

*The Father of Heaven.*

Breathe, Lord Paraclete,  
To a bubbled crystal meet —  
Breathe, Lord Paraclete —  
Crystal soul for Viola.

*Angels.*

Breathe, Regal Spirit, a  
Flashing soul for Viola!

**VI.**

*The Father of Heaven.*

Child-angels, from your wings  
Fall the roseal hoverings,  
Child-angels, from your wings,  
On the cheeks of Viola.

*Angels.*

Linger, rosy reflex, a  
Quenchless stain, on Viola!

**VII**

*All things being accomplished, saith the Father of  
Heaven.*

Bear her down, and bearing, sing,  
Bear her down on spyleless wing,  
Bear her down, and bearing, sing,

With a sound of viola.  
*Angels.*  
Music as her name is, a  
Sweet sound of Viola!

**VIII.**

Wheeling angels, past espial,  
Danced her down with sound of viol;  
Wheeling angels, past espial,  
Descanting on "Viola."  
Angels.  
Sing, in our footing, a  
Lovely lilt of "Viola!"

**IX.**

Baby smiled, mother wailed,  
Earthward while the sweetling sailed;  
Mother smiled, baby wailed,  
When to earth came Viola.  
And her elders shall say: —  
So soon have we taught you a  
Way to weep, poor Viola!

**X.**

Smile, sweet baby, smile,  
For you will have weeping-while;  
Native in your Heaven is smile, —  
But your weeping, Viola?  
Whence your smiles we know, but ah?  
Whence your weeping, Viola? —  
Our first gift to you is a  
Gift of tears, my Viola!



## TO MY GODCHILD FRANCIS M. W. M.

This labouring, vast, Tellurian galleon,  
Riding at anchor off the orient sun,  
Had broken its cable, and stood out to space  
Down some frore Arctic of the aërial ways:  
And now, back warping from the inclement main,  
Its vaporous shroudage drenched with icy rain,  
It swung into its azure roads again;  
When, floated on the prosperous sun-gale, you  
Lit, a white halcyon auspice, 'mid our frozen crew.  
To the Sun, stranger, surely you belong,  
Giver of golden days and golden song;  
Nor is it by an all-unhappy plan  
You bear the name of me, his constant Magian.  
Yet ah! from any other that it came,  
Lest fated to my fate you be, as to my name.  
When at the first those tidings did they bring,  
My heart turned troubled at the ominous thing:  
Though well may such a title him endower,  
For whom a poet's prayer implores a poet's power.  
The Assisian, who kept plighted faith to three,  
To Song, to Sanctitude, and Poverty,  
(In two alone of whom most singers prove  
A fatal faithfulness of during love!);  
He the sweet Sales, of whom we scarcely ken  
How God he could love more, he so loved men;  
The crown and crowned of Laura and Italy;  
And Fletcher's fellow — from these, and not from me,  
Take you your name, and take your legacy!  
Or, if a right successive you declare  
When worms, for ivies, intertwine my hair,  
Take but this Poesy that now followeth  
My clayey hest with sullen servile breath,  
Made then your happy freedman by testating death.

My song I do but hold for you in trust,  
I ask you but to blossom from my dust.  
When you have compassed all weak I began,  
Diviner poet, and ah! diviner man;  
The man at feud with the perduring child  
In you before song's altar nobly reconciled;  
From the wise heavens I half shall smile to see  
How little a world, which owned you, needed me.  
If, while you keep the vigils of the night,  
For your wild tears make darkness all too bright,  
Some lone orb through your lonely window peeps,  
As it played lover over your sweet sleeps;  
Think it a golden crevice in the sky,  
Which I have pierced but to behold you by!  
And when, immortal mortal, droops your head,  
And you, the child of deathless song, are dead;  
Then, as you search with unaccustomed glance  
The ranks of Paradise for my countenance,  
Turn not your tread along the Uranian sod  
Among the bearded counsellors of God;  
For if in Eden as on earth are we,  
I sure shall keep a younger company:  
Pass where beneath their rangèd gonfalons  
The starry cohorts shake their shielded suns,  
The dreadful mass of their enridgèd spears;  
Pass where majestic the eternal peers,  
The stately choice of the great Saintdom, meet —  
A silvern segregation, globed complete  
In sandalled shadow of the Triune feet;  
Pass by where wait, young poet-wayfarer,  
Your cousined clusters, emulous to share  
With you the roseal lightnings burning 'mid their hair;  
Pass the crystalline sea, the Lampads seven: —  
Look for me in the nurseries of Heaven.

## THE POPPY.

*To Monica.*

Summer set lip to earth's bosom bare.  
And left the flushed print in a poppy there:  
Like a yawn of fire from the grass it came,  
And the fanning wind puffed it to flapping flame.  
With burnt mouth red like a lion's it drank  
The blood of the sun as he slaughtered sank,  
And dipped its cup in the purpurate shine  
When the eastern conduits ran with wine.  
Till it grew lethargied with fierce bliss,  
And hot as a swinked gipsy is,  
And drowsed in sleepy savageries,  
With mouth wide a-pout for a sultry kiss.  
A child and man paced side by side,  
Treading the skirts of eventide;  
But between the clasp of his hand and hers  
Lay, felt not, twenty withered years.  
She turned, with the rout of her dusk South hair,  
And saw the sleeping gipsy there;  
And snatched and snapped it in swift child's whim,  
With— "Keep it, long as you live!" — to him.  
And his smile, as nymphs from their laving meres,  
Trembled up from a bath of tears;  
And joy, like a mew sea-rocked apart,  
Tossed on the wave of his troubled heart.  
For *he* saw what she did not see,  
That — as kindled by its own fervency —  
The verge shrivelled inward smoulderingly:  
And suddenly 'twixt his hand and hers  
He knew the twenty withered years —  
No flower, but twenty shrivelled years.  
"Was never such thing until this hour,"

Low to his heart he said; “the flower  
Of sleep brings wakening to me,  
And of oblivion memory.”  
“Was never this thing to me,” he said,  
“Though with bruisedèd poppies my feet are red!”  
And again to his own heart very low:  
“O child! I love, for I love and know;  
“But you, who love nor know at all  
The diverse chambers in Love’s guest-hall,  
Where some rise early, few sit long:  
In how differing accents hear the throng  
His great Pentecostal tongue;  
“Who know not love from amity,  
Nor my reported self from me;  
A fair fit gift is this, meseems,  
You give — this withering flower of dreams.  
“O frankly fickle, and fickle true,  
Do you know what the days will do to you?  
To your Love and you what the days will do,  
O frankly fickle, and fickle true?  
“You have loved me, Fair, three lives — or days:  
‘Twill pass with the passing of my face.  
But where / go, your face goes too,  
To watch lest I play false to you.  
“I am but, my sweet, your foster-lover,  
Knowing well when certain years are over  
You vanish from me to another;  
Yet I know, and love, like the foster-mother.  
“So, frankly fickle, and fickle true!  
For my brief life — while I take from you  
This token, fair and fit, meseems,  
For me — this withering flower of dreams.”

\* \* \* \* \*

The sleep-flower sways in the wheat its head,

Heavy with dreams, as that with bread:  
The goodly grain and the sun-flushed sleeper  
The reaper reaps, and Time the reaper.  
I hang 'mid men my needless head,  
And my fruit is dreams, as theirs is bread:  
The goodly men and the sun-hazed sleeper  
Time shall reap, but after the reaper  
The world shall glean of me, me the sleeper!  
Love! love! your flower of withered dream  
In leavèd rhyme lies safe, I deem,  
Sheltered and shut in a nook of rhyme,  
From the reaper man, and his reaper Time.  
Love! / fall into the claws of Time:  
But lasts within a leavèd rhyme  
All that the world of me esteems —  
My withered dreams, my withered dreams.

## TO MONICA THOUGHT DYING.

You, O the piteous you!  
Who all the long night through  
Anticipatedly  
Disclose yourself to me  
Already in the ways  
Beyond our human comfortable days;  
How can you deem what Death  
Impitiably saith  
To me, who listening wake  
For your poor sake?  
When a grown woman dies  
You know we think unceasingly  
What things she said, how sweet, how wise;  
And these do make our misery.  
But you were (you to me  
The dead anticipatedly!)  
You — eleven years, was't not, or so? —  
Were just a child, you know;  
And so you never said  
Things sweet immeditatably and wise  
To interdict from closure my wet eyes:  
But foolish things, my dead, my dead!  
Little and laughable,  
Your age that fitted well.  
And was it such things all unmemorable,  
Was it such things could make  
Me sob all night for your implacable sake?  
Yet, as you said to me,  
In pretty make-believe of revelry,  
So the night long said Death  
With his magniloquent breath;  
(And that remembered laughter  
Which in our daily uses followed after,

Was all untuned to pity and to awe):  
*"A cup of chocolate,  
One farthing is the rate,  
You drink it through a straw."*  
How could I know, how know  
Those laughing words when drenched with sobbing so?  
Another voice than yours, than yours, he hath!  
My dear, was't worth his breath,  
His mighty utterance? — yet he saith, and saith!  
This dreadful Death to his own dreadfulness  
Doth dreadful wrong,  
This dreadful childish babble on his tongue!  
That iron tongue made to speak sentences,  
And wisdom insupportably complete,  
Why should it only say the long night through,  
In mimicry of you, —  
*"A cup of chocolate,  
One farthing is the rate,  
You drink it through a straw, a straw, a straw!"*  
Oh, of all sentences,  
Piercingly incomplete!  
Why did you teach that fatal mouth to draw,  
Child, impermissible awe,  
From your old trivialness?  
Why have you done me this  
Most unsustainable wrong,  
And into Death's control  
Betrayed the secret places of my soul?  
Teaching him that his lips,  
Uttering their native earthquake and eclipse,  
Could never so avail  
To rend from hem to hem the ultimate veil  
Of this most desolate  
Spirit, and leave it stripped and desecrate, —  
Nay, never so have wrung  
From eyes and speech weakness unmanned, unmeet;

As when his terrible dotage to repeat  
Its little lesson learneth at your feet;  
As when he sits among  
His sepulchres, to play  
With broken toys your hand has cast away,  
With derelict trinkets of the darling young.  
Why have you taught — that he might so complete  
His awful panoply  
From your cast playthings — why,  
This dreadful childish babble to his tongue,  
Dreadful and sweet?



## TO OLIVIA

I fear to love thee, Sweet, because  
Love's the ambassador of loss;  
White flake of childhood, clinging so  
To my soiled raiment, thy shy snow  
At tenderest touch will shrink and go.  
Love me not, delightful child.  
My heart, by many snares beguiled,  
Has grown timorous and wild.  
It would fear thee not at all,  
Wert thou not so harmless-small.  
Because thy arrows, not yet dire,  
Are still unbarbed with destined fire,  
I fear thee more than hadst thou stood  
Full-panoplied in womanhood.

## LITTLE JESUS

'Ex Ore Infantium'

LITTLE Jesus, wast Thou shy  
Once, and just so small as I?  
And what did it feel like to be  
Out of Heaven, and just like  
me? Didst Thou sometimes think of there,  
And ask where all the angels were?  
I should think that I would cry  
For my house all made of sky;  
I would look about the air,  
And wonder where my angels were;  
And at waking 'twould distress me — Not an  
angel there to dress me!

Hadst Thou ever any toys,  
Like us little girls and boys?  
And didst Thou play in Heaven with all  
The angels that were not too tall,  
With stars for marbles? Did the things  
Play Can you see me? through their wings?  
And did thy Mother let Thee  
spoil Thy robes, with playing on our soil?  
How nice to have them always new  
In Heaven, because 'twas quite clean blue!

Didst Thou kneel at night to pray,  
And didst Thou join thy hands, this way?  
And did they tire sometimes, being young,  
And make the prayer seem very long?  
And dost Thou like it best, that we  
Should join our hands to pray to Thee?  
I used to think, before I knew,  
The prayer not said unless we do.  
And did thy Mother at the night  
Kiss Thee, and fold the clothes in right?  
And didst Thou feel quite good in bed,  
Kiss'd, and sweet, and thy prayers said?

Thou canst not have forgotten all  
That it feels like to be small:  
And Thou know'st I cannot pray  
To Thee in my father's way —  
When Thou wast so little, say,  
Couldst Thou talk thy Father's way?  
So, a little Child, come down  
And hear a child's tongue like thy own;  
Take me by the hand and walk,  
And listen to my baby-talk.  
To thy Father show my prayer  
(He will look, Thou art so fair),  
And say: 'O Father, I, thy Son,  
Bring the prayer of a little one.'

And He will smile, that children's tongue  
Has not changed since Thou wast young!

# **Sister Songs**

An Offering to Two Sisters

## PREFACE

This poem, though new in the sense of being now for the first time printed, was written some four years ago, about the same date as the *Hound of Heaven* in my former volume.

One image in the *Proem* was an unconscious plagiarism from the beautiful image in Mr. Patmore's *St. Valentine's Day*: —

“O baby Spring,  
That flutter'st sudden 'neath the breast of Earth,  
A month before the birth!”

Finding I could not disengage it without injury to the passage in which it is embedded, I have preferred to leave it, with this acknowledgment to a Poet rich enough to lend to the poor.

FRANCIS THOMPSON.  
1895.

*To  
Monica and Madeline (Sylvia) Meynell*

# SISTER SONGS: AN OFFERING TO TWO SISTERS

## THE PROEM

Shrewd winds and shrill — were these the speech of  
May?

A ragged, slag-grey sky — invested so,  
Mary's spoilt nursling! wert thou wont to go?  
Or *thou*, Sun-god and song-god, say  
Could singer pipe one tiniest linnèt-lay,  
While Song did turn away his face from song?  
Or who could be

In spirit or in body hale for long, —  
Old Æsculap's best Master! — lacking thee?  
At length, then, thou art here!

On the earth's lethèd ear  
Thy voice of light rings out exultant, strong;  
Through dreams she stirs and murmurs at that summons  
dear:

From its red leash my heart strains tamelessly,  
For Spring leaps in the womb of the young year!  
Nay, was it not brought forth before,  
And we waited, to behold it,  
Till the sun's hand should unfold it,  
What the year's young bosom bore?  
Even so; it came, nor knew we that it came,  
In the sun's eclipse.

Yet the birds have plighted vows,  
And from the branches pipe each other's name;  
Yet the season all the boughs  
Has kindled to the finger-tips, —  
Mark yonder, how the long laburnum drips  
Its jocund spilth of fire, its honey of wild flame!