

THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS



CARDINAL NEWMAN

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THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS



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THE FOULIS BOOKS



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*"A visitant . . .
Is knocking . . . at my door."*

*From a water-colour drawing by
R. T. ROSE.*

The DREAM of
GERONTIUS



BY
CARDINAL
NEWMAN

ILLUSTRATIONS

From Water-Colour Drawings

By ROBERT T. ROSE.

‘ A Visitant

Is knocking his dire summons at my door.’

frontispiece

‘ Flies to the dear feet of Emmanuel.’

title-page

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And needs must sink and sink

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THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

I

GERONTIUS

JESU, Maria—I am near to death.

And Thou art calling me ; I know it
now.

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Not by the token of this faltering breath,
This chill at heart, this dampness on
my brow.—

(Jesu, have mercy ! Mary, pray for me !)

'Tis this new feeling, never felt before,
(Be with me, Lord, in my extremity !)

That I am going, that I am no more.

'Tis this strange innermost abandon-
ment,

A

I

(Lover of Souls! Great God! I look
to Thee.)

This emptying out of each constituent
And natural force, by which I come to
be.

Pray for me, O my friends; a visitant
Is knocking his dire summons at my
door.

The like of whom, to scare me and to
daunt,

Has never, never come to me before.

'Tis death,—O loving friends, your
prayers!—'tis he! . . .

As though my very being had given way,
As though I was no more a substance
now,

And could fall back on aught to be my
stay,

(Help, loving Lord! Thou my sole
Refuge, Thou,)

And turn no whither, but must needs
decay

The
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Gerontius

And drop from out this universal
frame

Into that shapeless, scopeless, blank
abyss,

That utter nothingness, of which I
came :

This is it that has come to pass in me ;

O horror ! this it is, my dearest, this ;

So pray for me, my friends, who have not
strength to pray.

ASSISTANTS

Kyrie eleïson, Christe eleïson, Kyrie
eleïson.

Holy Mary, pray for him.

All holy Angels, pray for him.

Choirs of the righteous, pray for him.

Holy Abraham, pray for him.

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St. John Baptist, St. Joseph, pray for him.
St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Andrew, St. John,
All Apostles, all Evangelists, pray for
him.

All holy Disciples of the Lord, pray for
him.

All holy Innocents, pray for him.

All holy Martyrs, all holy Confessors,
All holy Hermits, all holy Virgins,
All ye Saints of God, pray for him.

GERONTIUS

Rouse thee, my fainting soul, and play
the man ;

And through such waning span
Of life and thought as still has to be trod,
Prepare to meet thy God.

And while the storm of that bewilder-
ment

Is for a season spent,

And, ere afresh the ruin on thee fall
Use well the interval.

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ASSISTANTS

Be merciful, be gracious ; spare him,
Lord.

Be merciful, be gracious ; Lord, deliver
him.

From the sins that are past ;
From Thy frown and Thine ire ;
From the perils of dying ;
From any complying
With sin, or denying
His God, or relying

On self, at the last ;
From the nethermost fire ;
From all that is evil ;
From power of the devil ;
Thy servant deliver,
For once and for ever.

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By Thy birth, and by Thy Cross,
Rescue him from endless loss ;
By Thy death and burial,
Save him from a final fall ;
By Thy rising, from the tomb,
By Thy mounting up above,
By the Spirit's gracious love,
Save him in the day of doom.

GERONTIUS

Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,
De profundis oro te,
Miserere, Judex meus,
Parce mihi, Domine.

Firmly I believe and truly
God is Three, and God is One ;
And I next acknowledge duly
— Manhood taken by the Son.
And I trust and hope most fully
In that Manhood crucified ;

And each thought and deed unruly
Do to death, as He has died.
Simply to His grace and wholly
Light and life and strength belong.
And I love supremely, solely,
Him the holy, Him the strong.
Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,
De profundis oro te,
Miserere, Judex meus,
Parce mihi, Domine.
And I hold in veneration,
For the love of Him alone,
Holy Church, as His creation,
And her teachings, as His own.
And I take with joy whatever
Now besets me pain or fear,
And with a strong will I sever
All the ties that bind me here.
Adoration aye be given,
With and through the angelic host,

To the God of earth and heaven,
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,
De profundis, oro te,
Miserere, Judex meus,
Mortis in discrimine.

I can no more ; for now it comes again,
That sense of ruin, which is worse than
pain.

That masterful negation and collapse
Of all that makes me man ; as though I
bent

Over the dizzy brink
Of some sheer infinite descent ;
Or worse, as though
Down, down for ever I was falling
through

The solid framework of created things,
And needs must sink and sink

*“ Down, down for ever I was falling through
the fond framework of created things, and
needs must sink and sink into the vast
abyss.”*

*From a water-colour drawing by
R. T. ROSE.*



Into the vast abyss. And, crueller still, The
A fierce and restless fright begins to Dream of
fill Gerontius

The mansion of my soul. And worse
and worse,

Some bodily form of ill

Floats on the wind, with many a loath-
some curse

Tainting the hallowed air, and laughs,
and flaps

Its hideous wings.

And makes me wild with horror and
dismay,

O Jesu, help! pray for me, Mary,
pray!

Some angel, Jesu! such as came to
Thee

In thine own agony

Mary, pray for me, Joseph, pray for me,
Mary, pray for me.

Rescue him, O Lord, in this his evil
hour,

As of old so many by Thy gracious
power:—Amen.

Enoch and Elias from the common
doom; Amen.

Noe from the waters in a saving home;
Amen.

Abraham from th' abounding guilt of
Heathenesse; Amen.

Job from all his multiform and fell
distress; Amen.

Isaac when his father's knife was raised
to slay; Amen.

Lot from burning Sodom on its judg-
ment-day; Amen.

Moses from the land of bondage and
despair; Amen.

Daniel from the hungry lions in their
lair; Amen.

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And the children Three amid the furnace-
flame; Amen.

Chaste Susanna from the slander and the
shame; Amen.

David from Golia and the wrath of Saul;
Amen.

And the two Apostles from their prison-
thrall; Amen.

Thecla from her torments; Amen.

—so, to show Thy power,
Rescue this Thy servant in his evil hour.

GERONTIUS

Novissima hora est; and I fain would
sleep.

The pain has wearied me . . . Into Thy
hands,

O Lord, into Thy hands . . .

The
Dream of
Gerontius

THE PRIEST

Proficiscere, anima Christiana de hoc
mundo!

Go forth upon thy journey, Christian
soul!

Go from this world! Go, in the name
of God,

The omnipotent Father, who created
thee!

Go, in the name of Jesus Christ, our
Lord,

Son of the Living God, who bled for
thee!

Go, in the Name of th' Holy Spirit,
who

Hath poured upon thee! Go, in the
name

Of Angels and Archangels! in the
name

Of Thrones and Dominations; in the
name

The
Dream of
Gerontius

Of Princedoms and of Powers; and in
the name

Of Cherubim and Seraphim, go forth!

Go, in the name of Patriarchs and
Prophets;

And of Apostles and Evangelists,

Of Martyrs and Confessors; in the name

Of holy Monks and Hermits; in the
name

Of holy Virgins; and all saints of God,

Both men and women, go! Go on thy
course,

And may thy place to-day be found in
peace,

And may thy dwelling be the Holy
Mount

Of Sion:—through the Same, through
Christ, our Lord.

SOUL OF GERONTIUS

I went to sleep; and now I am refreshed.
A strange refreshment: for I feel in me
An inexpressive lightness, and a sense
Of freedom, as I were at length myself,
And ne'er had been before. How still it
is!

I hear no more the busy beat of time,
No, nor my fluttering breath, nor strug-
gling pulse;
Nor does one moment differ from the
next.

I had a dream; yes:—some one softly said
'He's gone'; and then a sigh went round
the room.

And then I surely heard a priestly voice
Cry 'Subvenite'; and they knelt in
prayer.

I seem to hear him still ; but thin and low, The
And fainter and more faint the accents Dream of
Gerontius

come,

As at an ever-widening interval.

Ah ! whence is this ? What is this sever-
ance ?

This silence pours a solitariness

Into the very essence of my soul ;

And the deep rest, so soothing and so
sweet,

Hath something too of sternness and of
pain.

For it drives back my thoughts upon
their spring

By a strange introversion, and perforce

I now begin to feed upon myself,

Because I have nought else to feed upon.

Am I alive or dead ? I am not dead,

But in the body still ; for I possess

The
Dream of
Gerontius

A sort of confidence, which clings to
me,

That each particular organ holds its
place

As heretofore, combining with the rest
Into onesymmetry, that wraps me round,
And makes me man ; and surely I could
move,

Did I but will it, every part of me.

And yet I cannot to my sense bring
home,

By very trial, that I have the power.

'Tis strange; I cannot stir a hand or
foot,

I cannot make my fingers or my lips
By mutual pressure witness each to each.
Nor by the eyelids' instantaneous stroke
Assure myself I have a body still.

Nor do I know my very attitude,
Nor if I stand, or lie, or sit, or kneel.





*“Another marvel: some one has
me fast
.
As though I were a sphere.”*

*From a water-colour drawing by
R. T. ROSE.*

So much I know, not knowing how I know,
The
Dream of
Gerontius

That the vast universe, where I have
dwelt,

Is quitting me, or I am quitting it.
Or I or it is rushing on the wings
Of flight or lightning on an onward
course.

And we e'en now are million miles
apart.

Yet . . . is this peremptory severance
Wrought out in lengthening measure-
ments of space,
Which grow and multiply by speed and
time ?

Or am I traversing infinity
By endless subdivision, hurrying back
From finite towards infinitesimal,
Thus dying out of the expanded
world ?

The
Dream of
Gerontius

Another marvel : some one has me
fast

Within his ample palm ; 'tis not a grasp
Such as they use on earth, but all around
Over the surface of my subtle being,
As though I were a sphere, and capable
To be accosted thus, a uniform
And gentle pressure tells me I am not
Self-moving, but borne forward on my
way.

And hark ! I hear a singing ; yet in sooth
I cannot of that music rightly say
Whether I hear or touch or taste the
tones.

O what a heart-subduing melody !

ANGEL

My work is done,
My task is o'er,
And so I come,

Taking it home,
For the crown is won.

Alleluia,
For evermore.

The
Dream of
Gerontius

My Father gave
In charge to me
This child of earth
E'en from its birth,
To serve and save,
Alleluia,
And saved is he.

This child of clay
To me was given,
To rear and train
By sorrow and pain
In the narrow way,
Alleluia,
From earth to heaven.

The
Dream of
Gerontius

SOUL

It is a member of that family
Of wondrous beings, who, ere the worlds
were made,
Millions of ages back, have stood around
The throne of God : — he never has
known sin ;
But through those cycles all but infinite,
Has had a strong and pure celestial life,
And bore to gaze on th' unveiled face of
God,
And drank from the eternal Fount of
truth,
And served him with a keen ecstatic love.
Hark ! he begins again.

ANGEL

O Lord, how wonderful in depth and
height,

But most in man, how wonderful
Thou art !

The
Dream of
Gerontius

With what a love, what soft persuasive
might,
Victorious o'er the stubborn fleshly
heart,
Thy tale complete of saints Thou dost
provide
To fill the throne which angels lost
through pride !

He lay a grovelling babe upon the
ground,
Polluted in the blood of his first sire,
With his whole essence shattered and
unsound,
And, coiled around his heart, a
demon dire,
Which was not of his nature, but had
skill

To bind and form his opening mind to
ill.

Then was I sent from heaven to set right
The balance in his soul of truth and
sin,
And I have waged a long relentless fight,
Resolved that death-environed spirit
to win,
Which from its fallen state, when all
was lost,
Had been repurchased at so dread a
cost.

O what a shifting parti-coloured scene
Of hope and fear, of triumph and
dismay,
Of recklessness and penitence, has been
The history of that dreary, lifelong
fray !

And O the grace to nerve him and to
lead,

The
Dream of
Gerontius

How patient, prompt, and lavish at his
need !

O man, strange composite of heaven and
earth !

Majesty dwarfed to baseness ! frag-
rant flower

Running to poisonous seed ! and seeming
worth

Cloaking corruption ! weakness
mastering power !

Who never art so near to crime and
shame,

As when thou hast achieved some deed
of name ;

How should ethereal natures comprehend

A thing made up of spirit and of
clay,

The
Dream of
Gerontius

Were we not tasked to nurse it and to
tend,
Linked one to one throughout its
mortal day ?
More than the Seraph in his height of
place,
The Angel-guardian knows and loves
the ransomed race.

SOUL

Now know I surely that I am at length
Out of the body : had I part with
earth,
I never could have drunk those accents
in,
And not have worshipped as a god the
voice
That was so musical ; but now I am
So whole of heart, so calm, so self-
possessed,

With such a full content, and with a sense
So apprehensive and discriminant,
As no temptation can intoxicate.
Nor have I even terror at the thought
That I am clasped by such a saintliness.

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ANGEL

All praise to Him, at whose sublime de-
cree

The last are first, the first become
the last ;

By whom the suppliant prisoner is set
free,

By whom proud first-borns from
their thrones are cast ;

Who raises Mary to be Queen of
heaven

While Lucifer is left, condemned and
unforgiven.

III

SOUL

I will address him. Mighty one, my
Lord,
My Guardian Spirit, all hail !

ANGEL

All hail, my child !
My child and brother, hail ! what
wouldest thou ?

SOUL

I would have nothing but to speak with
thee
For speaking's sake. I wish to hold
with thee
Conscious communion ; though I fain
would know

A maze of things, were it but meet to
ask,
And not a curiousness.

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ANGEL

You cannot now
Cherish a wish which ought not to be
wished.

SOUL

Then I will speak. I ever had believed
That on the moment when the strug-
gling soul
Quitted its mortal case, forthwith it fell
Under the awful Presence of its God,
There to be judged and sent to its own
place.
What lets me now from going to my
Lord?

Thou art not let; but with extremest
speed

Art hurrying to the Just and Holy
Judge :

For scarcely art thou disembodied yet.

Divide a moment, as men measure time,
Into its million — million — millionth
part,

Yet even less than that the interval
Since thou didst leave the body; and the
priest

Cried 'Subvenite,' and they fell to
prayer ;

Nay, scarcely yet have they begun to
pray.

For spirits and men by different stan-
dards mete

The less and greater in the flow of time.

By sun and moon, primeval ordin-
ances—

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By stars which rise and set harmoni-
ously—

By the recurring seasons, and the swing,
This way and that, of the suspended rod
Precise and punctual, men divide the
hours,

Equal, continuous, for their common
use.

Not so with us in th' immaterial world ;
But intervals in their succession
Are measured by the living thought
alone,

And grow or wane with its intensity.
And time is not a common property ;
But what is long is short, and swift is
slow,

And near is distant, as received and
grasped

The
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By this mind and by that, and every one
Is standard of his own chronology.
And memory lacks its natural resting
points,
Of years, and centuries, and periods.
It is thy very energy of thought
Which keeps thee from thy God.

SOUL

Dear Angel, say,
Why have I now no fear at meeting
Him?
Along my earthly life, the thought of
death
And judgment was to me most terrible.
I had it aye before me, and I saw
The judge severe e'en in the Crucifix.
Now that the hour is come, my fear is
fled;

And at this balance of my destiny,
Now close upon me, I can forward look
With a serenest joy.

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ANGEL

It is because
Then thou didst fear, that now thou
dost not fear.
Thou hast forestalled the agony, and so
For thee the bitterness of death is passed.
Also, because already in thy soul
The judgment is begun. That day of
doom,
One and the same for the collected
world—
That solemn consummation for all flesh,
Is, in the case of each, anticipate
Upon his death; and, as the last great
day
In the particular judgment is rehearsed,

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So now too, ere thou comest to the throne,
A presage falls upon thee, as a ray
Straight from the Judge, expressive of
thy lot.

That calm and joy uprising in thy soul
Is first-fruit to thee of thy recompense,
And heaven begun.

IV

SOUL

But hark ! upon my sense
Comes a fierce hubbub, which would
make me fear,
Could I be frightened.

ANGEL

We are now arrived
Close on the judgment-court ; that
sullen howl
Is from the demons who assemble there.

*"Hark! for the lintels of the presence-gate
are vibrating and echoing back the strain."*

*From a water-colour drawing by
R. T. ROSE.*



It is the middle region, where of old
Satan appeared among the sons of God,
To cast his jibes and scoffs at holy Job.
So now his legions throng the vestibule,
Hungry and wild, to claim their pro-
perty,
And gather souls for hell. Hist to their
cry.

SOUL

How sour and how uncouth a disson-
ance !

DEMONS

Low-born clods
Of brute earth,
They aspire
To become gods
By a new-birth,
And an extra grace,
And a score of merits,

As if aught
Could stand in place
Of the high thought,
And the glance of fire
Of the great spirits,
The powers blest,
The Lords by right,
The primal owners
Of the proud dwelling
And realm of light,
Dispossessed,
Aside thrust,
Chucked down,
By the sheer might
Of a despot's will,
Of a tyrant's frown,
Who after expelling
Their hosts, gave,
Triumphant still,
And still unjust,

Each forfeit crown The
To psalm-droners Dream of
And canting groaners Gerontius
 To every slave
And pious cheat,
And crawling knave,
Who licked the dust
 Under his feet.

ANGEL

It is the restless panting of their being ;
Like beasts of prey, who, caged within
 their bars,
In a deep hideous purring have their
 life,
And an incessant pacing to and fro.

DEMONS

The mind bold
And independent,

The purpose free,
So we are told,
Must not think
 To have the ascendant.
 What's a Saint ?
One whose breath
 Doth the air taint
Before his death ;
 A bundle of bones,
Which fools adore,
 Ha ! ha !
When life is o'er,
Which rattle and stink,
 E'en in the flesh.
We cry his pardon !
 No flesh hath he ;
 Ha ! ha !
For it hath died,
'Tis crucified
Day by day,

Afresh, afresh

Ha ! ha !

That holy clay,

Ha ! ha !

And such fudge

As priestlings prate

In his guerdon

Before the Judge,

And pleads and atones

For spite and grudge,

And bigot mood,

And envy and hate,

And greed of blood.

SOUL

How impotent they are ! and yet on
earth

They have repute for wondrous power
and skill ;

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And books describe, how that the very
face
Of th' Evil One, if seen, would have
a force
To freeze the very blood, and choke the
life
Of him who saw it.

ANGEL

In thy trial state
Thou hadst a traitor nestling close at
home,
Connatural, who with the powers of
hell
Was leagued, and of thy senses kept the
keys,
And to that deadliest foe unlocked thy
heart.
And therefore is it, in respect of man,
Those fallen ones show so majestic.

But, when some child of grace, angel or
 saint,
Pure and upright in his integrity
Of nature, meets the demons on their
 raid,
They scud away as cowards from the
 fight.
Nay, oft hath holy hermit in his cell,
Not yet disburdened of mortality,
Mocked at their threats and warlike
 overtures ;
Or, dying, when they swarmed, like
 flies, around,
Defied them, and departed to his Judge.

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DEMONS

Virtue and vice,
 A knave's pretence,
 'Tis all the same ;
 Ha ! ha !

Dread of hell-fire,
Of the venomous flame,
A coward's plea.

Give him his price,

Saint though he be,

Ha! ha!

From shrewd good sense

He'll slave for hire;

Ha! ha!

And does but aspire

To the heaven above

With sordid aim,

Not from love.

Ha! ha!

SOUL

I see not those false spirits; shall I see
My dearest Master, when I reach His
throne?

*“ That Angel best can plead
with Him for all.”*

*From a water-colour drawing by
R. T. ROSE.*

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Or hear, at least, His awful judgment-
word

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With personal intonation, as I now
Hear thee, not see thee, Angel? Hitherto
All has been darkness since I left the
earth;

Shall I remain thus sight-bereft all
through

My penance time? if so, how comes it
then

That I have hearing still, and taste, and
touch,

Yet not a glimmer of that princely sense
Which binds ideas in one, and makes
them live?

ANGEL .

Nor touch, nor taste, nor hearing hast
thou now;

Thou livest in a world of signs and types,

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The presentations of most holy truths,
Living and strong, which now encom-
pass thee.

A disembodied soul, thou hast by right
No converse with aught else beside thy-
self;

But, lest so stern a solitude should load
And break thy being, in mercy are
vouchsafed

Some lower measures of perception,
Which seem to thee, as though through
channels brought,

Through ear, or nerves, or palate, which
are gone.

And thou art wrapped and swathed
around in dreams,

Dreams that are true, yet enigmatical ;
For the belongings of thy present state,
Save through such symbols, come not
home to thee.

And thus thou tell'st of space and time
and size,
Of fragrant, solid, bitter, musical,
Of fire, and of refreshment after fire;
As (let me use similitude of earth,
To aid thee in the knowledge thou dost
ask)—
As ice which blisters may be said to
burn.
Nor hast thou now extension, with its
parts
Correlative,—long habit cozens thee,—
Nor power to move thyself, nor limbs
to move.
Hast thou not heard of those, who after
loss
Of hand or foot, still cried that they had
pains
In hand or foot, as though they had it
still?

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The
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So is it now with thee, who hast not lost
Thy hand or foot, but all which made up
man,

So will it be, until the joyous day
Of resurrection, when thou wilt regain
All thou hast lost, new-made and glori-
fied.—

—How, even now, the consummated
Saints

See God in heaven, I may not expli-
cate :—

Meanwhile let it suffice thee to possess
Such means of converse as are granted
thee,

Though till the Beatific Vision thou art
blind ;

For e'en thy purgatory, which comes
like fire,

Is fire without its light.

SOUL

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Gerontius

His will be done !

I am not worthy e'er to see again
The face of day ; far less His counten-
ance,
Who is the very sun. Natheless, in life,
When I looked forward to my purga-
tory,
It ever was my solace to believe,
That, ere I plunged into th' avenging
flame,
I had one sight of Him to strengthen me.

ANGEL

Nor rash nor vain is that presentiment ;
Yes,—for one moment thou shalt see
thy Lord.
Thus will it be : what time thou art
arraigned
Before the dread tribunal, and thy lot

The
Dream of
Gerontius

Is cast for ever, should it be to sit
On His right hand among His pure elect,
Then sight, or that which to thy soul is
sight,
As by a lightning-flash, will come to thee,
And thou shalt see, amid the dark pro-
found,
Whom thy soul loveth, and would fain
approach
One moment; but thou knowest not,
my child,
What thou dost ask: that sight of the
Most Fair
Will gladden thee, but it will pierce thee
too.

SOUL

Thou speakest darkly, Angel; and an
awe
Falls on me, and a fear lest I be rash.

ANGEL

The
Dream of
Gerontius

There was a mortal, who is now above
In the mid glory : he, when near to die,
Was given communion with the Crucified,—
Such, that the Master's very wounds
were stamped
Upon his flesh ; and from the agony
Which thrilled through body and soul in
that embrace,
Learn that the flame of the Everlasting
Love
Doth burn, ere it transform. . . .

V

Hark to those sounds !
They come of tender beings angelical,
Least and most childlike of the sons of
God.

FIRST CHOIR OF ANGELICALS

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise :
In all His words most wonderful ;
Most sure in all His ways !

To us His elder race He gave
To battle and to win,
Without the chastisement of pain,
Without the soil of sin.

The younger son he willed to be
A marvel in his birth :
Spirit and flesh his parents were ;
His home was heaven and earth.

The Eternal blessed His child, and
armed,
And sent him hence afar,
To serve as champion in the field
Of elemental war.





THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT
TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY
NATHANIEL BENTLEY

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

BOSTON: PUBLISHED BY
J. B. BENTLEY, 1822.

“ And o'er the penal waters, as they roll.”

*From a water-colour drawing by
R. T. ROSE.*

To be His Viceroy in the world
Of matter, and of sense ;
Upon the frontier, towards the foe,
A resolute defence.

The
Dream of
Gerontius

ANGEL

We now have passed the gate, and are
within
The House of Judgment ; and whereas
on earth
Temples and palaces are formed of parts
Costly and rare, but all material,
So in the world of spirits nought is
found,
To mould withal and form into a whole,
But what is immaterial ; and thus
The smallest portions of this edifice,
Cornice, or frieze, or balustrade, or
stair,
The very pavement is made up of life—

The
Dream of
Gerontius

Of holy, blessed, and immortal beings,
Who hymn their Maker's praise con-
tinually.

SECOND CHOIR OF ANGELICALS

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise :
In all His words most wonderful ;
Most sure in all His ways !

Woe to thee, man ! for he was found
A recreant in the fight ;
And lost his heritage of heaven,
And fellowship with light.

Above him now the angry sky,
Around the tempest's din ;
Who once had angels for his friends,
Has but the brutes for kin.

O man ! a savage kindred they :
To flee that monster brood
He scaled the seaside cave, and clomb
The giants of the wood.

With now a fear and now a hope,
With aids which chance supplied,
From youth to old, from sire to son,
He lived, and toiled, and died.

He dree'd his penance age by age ;
And step by step began
Slowly to doff his savage garb,
And be again a man.

And quickened by the Almighty's
breath,
And chastened by His rod,
And taught by Angel-visitings,
At length he sought his God ;

The
Dream of
Gerontius

And learned to call upon His Name,
And in His faith create
A household and a fatherland,
A city and a state.

Glory to Him who from the mire,
In patient length of days,
Elaborated into life
A people to His praise!

SOUL

The sound is like the rushing of the
wind—
The summer wind—among the lofty
pines;
Swelling and dying, echoing round
about,
Now here, now distant, wild, and beauti-
ful;

While, scattered from the branches it has stirred,
Descend ecstatic odours.

The
Dream of
Gerontius

THIRD CHOIR OF ANGELICALS

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise :
In all His words most wonderful ;
Most sure in all His ways !

The angels, as beseechingly
To spirit kind was given,
At once were tried and perfected,
And took their seats in heaven.

For them no twilight or eclipse ;
No growth and no decay :
'Twas hopeless, all ingulfing night,
Or beatific day.

But to the younger race there rose
A hope upon its fall ;
And slowly, surely, gracefully,
The morning dawned on all.

And ages, opening out, divide
The precious and the base,
And from the hard and sullen mass
Mature the heirs of grace.

O man ! albeit the quickening ray,
Lit from his second birth,
Makes him at length what once he
was,
And heaven grows out of earth ;

Yet still between that earth and
heaven—
His journey and his goal—
A double agony awaits
His body and his soul.

A double debt he has to pay—
The forfeit of his sins :
The chill of death is past, and now
The penance-fire begins.

The
Dream of
Gerontius

Glory to Him, who evermore
By truth and justice reigns ;
Who tears the soul from out its case,
And burns away its stains !

ANGEL

They sing of thy approaching agony,
Which thou so eagerly didst question of :
It is the face of the Incarnate God
Shall smite thee with keen and subtle
pain ;
And yet the memory which it leaves will
be
A sovereign febrifuge to heal the wound ;

The
Dream of
Gerontius

And yet withal it will the wound pro-
voke,
And aggravate and widen it the more.

SOUL

Thou speakest mysteries; still methinks
I know
To disengage the tangle of thy words:
Yet rather would I hear thy angel voice,
Than for myself be my interpreter.

ANGEL

When then—if such thy lot—thou seest
thy Judge,
The sight of Him will kindle in thy
heart
All tender, gracious, reverential
thoughts.
Thou wilt be sick with love, and yearn
for Him,

And feel as though thou couldest but pity
Him,

The
Dream of
Gerontius

That one so sweet should e'er have
placed Himself

At disadvantage such, as to be used
So vilely by a being so vile as thee.

There is a pleading in His pensive eyes
Will pierce thee to the quick, and trouble
thee.

And thou wilt hate and loathe thyself;
for, though

Now sinless, thou wilt feel that thou hast
sinned,

As never thou didst feel; and wilt desire
To slink away, and hide thee from His
sight;

And yet wilt have a longing eye to dwell
Within the beauty of His countenance.

And these two pains, so counter and so
keen,—

The
Dream of
Gerontius

The longing for Him, when thou seest
Him not;

The shame of self at thought of seeing
Him,—

Will be thy veriest, sharpest purgatory.

SOUL

Mysoul is in my hand: I have no fear,—
In His dear might prepared for weal or
woe.

But hark! a deep, mysterious harmony:
It floods me, like the deep and solemn
sound

Of many waters.

ANGEL

We have gained the stairs
Which rise toward the Presence-cham-
ber; there

A band of mighty Angels keep the way *The*
On either side, and hymn the Incarnate *Dream of*
God. *Gerontius*

ANGELS OF THE SACRED STAIR

Father, whose goodness none can know,
 but they
 Who see Thee face to face,
By man hath come the infinite display
 Of Thine all-loving grace;
But fallen man—the creature of a day—
 Skills not that love to trace.
It needs, to tell the triumph Thou hast
 wrought,
An Angel's deathless fire, an Angel's
 reach of thought.

It needs that very Angel, who with awe,
 Amid the garden shade,
The great Creator in His sickness saw,

The
Dream of
Gerontius

Soothed by a creature's aid,
And agonised, as victim of the Law
Which He Himself had made ;
For who can praise Him in His depth and
height,
But he who saw Him reel in that victori-
ous fight ?

SOUL

Hark ! for the lintels of the presence-
gate
Are vibrating and echoing back the
strain.

FOURTH CHOIR OF ANGELICALS

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise :
In all His words most wonderful ;
Most sure in all His ways !

The foe blasphemed the Holy Lord,
As if He reckoned ill,
In that He placed His puppet man
The frontier place to fill.

For, even in his best estate,
With amplest gifts endued,
A sorry sentinel was he,
A being of flesh and blood.

As though a thing, who for his help
Must needs possess a wife,
Could cope with those proud rebel hosts,
Who had angelic life.

And when, by blandishment of Eve,
That earth-born Adam fell,
He shrieked in triumph, and he cried,
'A sorry sentinel.

The
Dream of
Gerontius

The Maker by His word is bound,
Escape or cure is none;
He must abandon to his doom,
And slay His darling Son.'

ANGEL

And now the threshold, as we traverse it,
Utters aloud its glad responsive chant.

FIFTH CHOIR OF ANGELICALS

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise:
In all His words most wonderful;
Most sure in all His ways!

O loving wisdom of our God!
When all was sin and shame,
A second Adam to the fight
And to the rescue came.

O wisest love! that flesh and blood
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against the foe,
Should strive and should prevail.

The
Dream of
Gerontius

And that a higher gift than grace
Should flesh and blood refine,
God's Presence and His very Self,
And Essence all divine.

O generous love! that He who smote
In man for man the foe,
The double agony in man
For man should undergo;

And in the garden secretly,
And on the cross on high,
Should teach His brethren and inspire
To suffer and to die.

VI

ANGEL

Thy judgment now is near, for we are
come
Into the veiled presence of our God.

SOUL

I hear the voices that I left on earth.

ANGEL

It is the voice of friends around thy bed,
Who said the 'Subvenite' with the priest.
Hither the echoes come; before the
Throne
Stands the Great Angel of the Agony,
The same who strengthened Him, what
time He knelt
Lone in the garden shade, bedewed with
blood.

"Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial."

From a water-colour drawing by
R. T. ROSE.



That Angel best can plead with Him for all
Tormented souls, the dying and the dead. The
Dream of
Gerontius

ANGEL OF THE AGONY

Jesu! by that shuddering dread which fell
on Thee;

Jesu! by that cold dismay which sick-
ened Thee;

Jesu! by that pang of heart which thrilled
in Thee;

Jesu! by that mount of sins which cripp-
led Thee;

Jesu! by that sense of guilt which stifled
Thee;

Jesu! by that innocence which girdled
Thee;

Jesu! by that sanctity which reigned in
Thee;

Jesu! by that Godhead which was one
with Thee;

The Jesu! spare these souls which are so dear
Dream of to Thee,
Gerontius Who in prison, calm and patient, wait for
Thee;
Hasten, Lord, their hour, and bid them
come to Thee,
To that glorious Home, where they shall
ever gaze on Thee.

SOUL

I go before my Judge. Ah! . . .

ANGEL

. . . . Praise to His Name!
The eager spirit has darted from my hold,
And, with the intemperate energy of
love,
Flies to the dear feet of Emmanuel;

But, ere it reach them, the keen
sanctity,
Which with its effluence, like a glory,
clothes
And circles round the Crucified, has
seized,
And scorched, and shrivelled it; and now
it lies
Passive and still before the awful Throne.
O happy, suffering soul! for it is safe,
Consumed, yet quickened, by the glance
of God.

SOUL

Take me away, and in the lowest deep
There let me be,
And there in hope the lone night-
watches keep,
Told out for me.

The
Dream of
Gerontius

There motionless and happy in my pain,
Lone, not forlorn,—

There will I sing my sad perpetual
strain,

Until the morn

There will I sing, and soothe my stricken
breast,

Which ne'er can cease

To throb, and pine, and languish, till
possest

Of its Sole Peace.

There will I sing my absent Lord and
Love:—

Take me away,

That sooner I may rise, and go above,
And see Him in the truth of everlasting
day.

VII

The
Dream of
Gerontius

ANGEL

Now let the golden prison ope its gates,
Making sweet music, as each fold revolves
Upon its ready hinge. And ye, great
powers,
Angels of Purgatory, receive from me
My charge, a precious soul, until the day,
When, from all bond and forfeiture
released,
I shall reclaim it for the courts of light.

SOULS IN PURGATORY

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge: in
every generation;
Before the hills were born, and the
world was: from age to age Thou
art God.

The Bring us not, Lord, very low: for Thou
Dream of hast said, Come back again, ye sons
Gerontius of Adam.

A thousand years before Thine eyes are
but as yesterday; and as a watch
in the night which is come and
gone.

Though the grass spring up in the morn-
ing; yet in the evening it shall
shrivel up and die.

Thus we fail in Thine anger; and in
Thy wrath are we troubled.

Thou hast set our sins in Thy sight:
and our round of days in the light of
Thy countenance.

Come back, O Lord! how long? and be
entreated for Thy servants.

In Thy morning we shall be filled with
Thy mercy: we shall rejoice and
be in pleasure all our days.

We shall be glad according to the days
of our humiliation; and the years
in which we have seen evil.

The
Dream of
Gerontius

Look, O Lord, upon Thy servants and
on Thy work: and direct their
children.

And let the beauty of the Lord our God
be upon us: and the work of our
hands direct Thou it.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son;
and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and
ever shall be: world without end.
Amen.

ANGEL

Softly and gently, dearest, sweetest soul,
In my most loving arms I now enfold
thee,

The
Dream of
Gerontius

And o'er the penal waters, as they roll,
I poise thee, and I lower thee, and
hold thee.

And carefully I dip thee in the lake,
And thou, without a sob or a resist-
ance,
Dost through the flood thy rapid passage
take
Sinking deep, deeper, into the dim dis-
tance.

Angels, to whom the willing task is
given,
Shall tend, and nurse, and lull thee, as
thou liest;
And Masses on the earth, and prayers in
heaven,
Shall aid thee at the throne of the
Most Highest.

Farewell, but not for ever ! brother dear, The
Dream of
Gerontius
Be brave and patient on thy bed of
sorrow ;
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,
And I will come and wake thee on
the morrow.



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Author Newman, John Henry, Cardinal

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