

The heavenly land, from the De contemptu mundi of Bernard de Morlaix ... : Rendered into corresponding English verse / by Samuel W. Duffield.

Bernard, of Cluny, 12th cent.
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THE
HEAVENLY LAND

FROM THE

De Contemptu Mundi

OF

BERNARD DE MORLAIX MONK OF CLUNY (XII. CENTURY)
RENDERED INTO CORRESPONDING
ENGLISH VERSE

BY

SAMUEL W. DUFFIELD

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TO HIM

WHOSE LOVE ENCOURAGED THIS WORK;

WHO HAS BEEN THROUGHOUT

BROTHER MORE THAN FATHER;

I DEDICATE

THIS POOR ILLUSTRATION OF

A NOBLE POEM.



INTRODUCTION.

NOW and then, down the long years of the world, the heavenly glory seems to have broken in upon mankind. Now and then its light has pierced even the gloom of the Dark Ages, and has brightened the cell of some poor and lonely monk with more than earthly radiance. And while we remember Enoch, who “walked with God,” and Stephen, who looked “steadfastly up into Heaven,” and Paul, “caught up” by celestial power, and John on Patmos, “in the spirit on the Lord’s Day,” we should not forget those other, though later ones, to whom it seemed as though they gazed across the boundary stream, and saw, in very truth, the splendor of the Heavenly Land.

Such a man was Bernard de Morlaix, the Monk of Cluny, whose poem I bring you here. Although he designed the "De Contemptu Mundi" as a censure to the abuses of his time, he could not conceal the longings which were in his soul. And although he was no saint, in title, like his contemporary and namesake, Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaulx, he was still a saint, indeed. We feel the reality of his hope; and while we stand in wonder at the marvellous versification (unparalleled by any before or since), we are more impressed than ever by its fine simplicity. Those of his words which relate to heaven have lived, because they could not die. Such strains of lofty confidence appeal to every Christian heart, encouraging the strong, and raising to better efforts the doubting and the faint. Pilgrims ourselves, as we trust, to those holy portals, we have here one of the purest and noblest of all pilgrim-songs.

His poem consists of three books, containing, in all, some three thousand lines, and was written about the year 1145. Living chiefly in the memory of Protestants, it has yet, until very recently, been entirely unknown through any English translation.

The original is so rare, indeed, that a full copy is not to be found in the United States.

For its discovery and appreciation, we are indebted to Archbishop Trench. He has taken from various parts of the longer poem ninety-six lines, which describe the glories of the Heavenly Land, and has published them in his "Sacred Latin Poetry," in a connected shape. But as Daniel, in his "Treasaurus," has, for some reason, given Bernard of Cluny simply a passing reference, this is, therefore, the only place from which we, on our side of the water, derive a knowledge of his work. In the latest edition of his volume, Trench extends our information a little further. The poem is first found in Flacius Illyricus, *Pœemm. de Corrupto Ecclesiæ Statu*, p. 247. It has passed, according to Mohnike, through four editions, "to which," says Trench, "I could add a fifth." It was dedicated to Peter the Venerable, by its author; and this dedication furnishes us the monk's own account of the difficulty of his task. It was first printed at Brême, 1597.

Shortly after its republication, the grandeur of the composition aroused the interest of the Rev. John Mason Neale, and encouraged him to attempt its

translation. He did so, and, in its sweet, earnest aspiration, his poem, "The Celestial Country," known also as "Jerusalem the Golden," most amply represents the older hymn. It is even, in the judgment of a recent writer, "better than 'De Contemptu Mundi.'" In spirit, the rendering is perfect—yet, in fact, "The Celestial Country" is an original composition with Dr. Neale. It has been most wonderfully popular, in whole or in parts, and nothing but this can be said against its merit.

On this ground, then, Dr. Abraham Coles, of Newark, N. J., has endeavored to attain a more literal rendering of the "Laus Patriæ Cœlestis," as the cento has been named. His fourteen versions of the "Dies Iræ" have placed him in the front rank of translators, and his ability is beyond dispute. And yet the anapests which he employs fail to carry into our language the sounding dactyls of the Latin. His lengthening of the third portion of the line is a liberty, moreover, which does not enhance the compactness of the version. While he is at times remarkably literal, and while he represents better than any previous translator the exact expressions of the

original poem, he lacks that soaring fervor which distinguishes Dr. Neale.

Place has, therefore, still been left for another effort to bring the Cluniac's verses into a more perfect English dress. From this close imitation in all respects, both Neale and Coles have recoiled. The compiler of the "Seven Great Hymns" speaks of Bernard's verse as "so difficult that the English language is incapable of expressing it." Dr. Neale states that he "deviated from his ordinary rule of adopting the measure of the original; because our language, if it could be tortured into any distant resemblance of its rhythm, would utterly fail to give any idea of the majestic sweetness of the Latin." Bernard himself exclaims, when recounting its difficulties, and alluding to the failure of Hildebert de Lavardin and Wichard of Lyons, two eminent versifiers of his day: "I may then assert, not in ostentation, but with humble confidence, that if I had not received, directly from on high, the gift of inspiration and intelligence, I had not dared to attempt an enterprise so little accorded to the powers of the human mind." In commenting upon this extract, Dr. Coles adds: "What was difficult for the

author would be tenfold more difficult for the translator, because there hang upon him numerous clogs from which the other is free." He says, however, in another place, that "While one would not care to prosecute it through a long poem, *we are persuaded the thing could be done, and in a manner to make the verses tolerably readable and effective.*"

It is on the strength of this expression that the present translation is attempted.

The design was formed in Chicago, towards the latter part of 1866, and occupied intervals of leisure from that date until its completion, in Philadelphia, in April, 1867. Its possibility was suggested by an examination of the Latin verses, as given in the "Seven Great Hymns," and a confidence that their structure had been—partially, at least—misunderstood. The following analysis will, it is thought, bear out this statement.

The measure is called "leonine and tailed rhyme, with lines in three parts, between which a cæsura is not admissible." Each line consists of a first part composed of two dactyls, a second part containing two more dactyls, and a third part made up of a dactyl and a trochee. The last dactyls of the first

and second parts rhyme together, and the lines are in couplets—the final trochees also rhyming. This remark upon the *dactylic* nature of the rhymes in the first two parts is not made by Neale or Coles, or the compiler of the “Seven Great Hymns.” They all italicise the last *two* syllables, whereas it should be the last *three*, i. e., the foot itself. Take, for example, the sixth of the introductory eight lines,

Sōbriā *mūnīāt* || imprōbā *pūnīāt* || ūtrāqūe jūstě,

which is, in all respects, a perfect line—each foot being a word, and the rhyme unimpeachable. So with the line immediately succeeding :

Īllě *pīvīssīmūs* || illě *grāvīssīmūs* || ēccě! vĕnīt Rēx !

The poem is a daring effort to combine a dactylic hexameter (in which the last syllable is common) with the monkish rhyming usual in the Middle Ages. This constitutes its extreme difficulty. It seems, therefore, that certain principles and licenses which Bernard employed are lawful in any translation. They are these which I have placed below :

1. The use of *similar*, though not *identical* vowel-sounds (our “allowable rhymes”), e. g., *novīssīmā* and *pēssīmā*.

2. The rhyming of the two short syllables of the dactyls, even when introduced by a different consonant, and preceded by the *same* syllable, e. g., homō rěš and homō Děš, prēliā and prēmīā, glōriā and sōbriā, where in each case the consonant goes with the first short syllable in the spelling.

3. The rhyme must, however, be *perfectly dactylic*, so far as possible, e. g., tribulātiš and recreātiš, laūrěā and aūrěā.

4. When Bernard permits himself a license as to the *long* syllable (a thing very frequent with him), a translator can surely be allowed a like privilege in respect to the first *short* syllable. Bernard's looseness in this part of the construction is so great, that it becomes more general than usage which is strictly correct. This led to the belief that the *only* rhyme of the first two parts lay in the fact that the ~~first~~ two syllables of one dactyl were *identical* with those of the other. A fallacy on the face of it. But, in view of Bernard's own liberty in the matter, the present translation pays more attention to the *beginning* and *end* of the dactyl than it does to the *middle*—that syllable having no accent, either primary or secondary, and being, therefore, easily slurred in reading. But the closing syllable has always been carefully handled, since this aforesaid secondary accent always comes on it when the foot is at all broken.

These principles thus laid down have never been violated by the present version, except in two instances, where the discordance is very slight, and where it was necessary to preserve an exact agree-

ment with the original, even in its faults. And the license then taken is less than Bernard himself has claimed.

That the present translation may be found acceptable, is hoped, for several reasons :

1. It is as close an imitation of the measure as can be constructed from the English language.

2. It endeavors, like the version of Dr. Coles, to be a true and literal rendering, line for line, and often word for word.

3. It seeks, so far as may be, to catch the spirit of that "heavenly homesickness" so admirably seized by Dr. Neale.

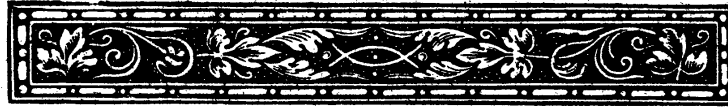
4. Its main purpose, like that of Dean Trench, is to spread wider through Christendom the knowledge of a poem which is the "real and deep utterance" of a fervent soul.

May it, even in some small degree, lift us into a purer air—placing us on that "Hill called Clear," from which our longing eyes can discern the glories of the Heavenly Land. May it comfort us in our waiting until "the former things have passed away," and we shall go to be forever with the Lord.

S. W. D.

April, 1867.

THE HEAVENLY LAND



LAUS PATRIÆ CŒLESTIS.

HORA novissima, tempora pessima
funt ; vigilemus !
Ecce ! minaciter imminet Arbiter
ille supremus !
Imminet, imminet et mala terminet,
æqua coronet,
Recta remuneret, anxia liberet,
æthera donet ;
Auferat aspera duraque pondera
mentes onustæ,
Sobria muniat, improba puniat
utraque iuste.
Ille piissimus, ille gravissimus,
ecce ! venit Rex !
Surgat homo reus ! Instat Homo Deus
a Patre Judex.

.



DE HÂC, POEMA.

How grand these monkish lines appear,
Kept purely through a bitter time ;
What noble rhymé
And what a grace is here !

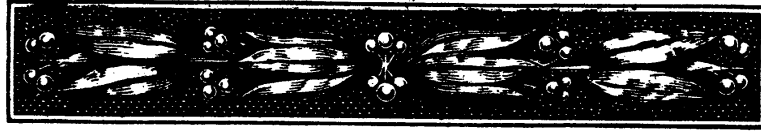
How sweetly full and calmly strong
They sweep our weaker thought on high—
To what a sky
They urge our hope along !

O rare Bernard ! I doubt no more
At that which seemed support divine,
For, line by line,
Shines through the Further Shore.

Old monk ! might I but see the day
Which thou beholdest, where is done
This feeble sun,
Where earth has passed away ;

I would not reckon heat or cold,
Or sadness or deep-graven grief,
Since such relief
Attends those streets of gold.

I



“THE HEAVENLY LAND.”

THESE are the latter times, these are not
better times, let us stand waiting:
Lo, how with awfulness He, first in lawfulness,
comes arbitrating!
Nearer and nearer yet!—Wrong shall in terror set,
right shine refulgent.
Sad ones He liberates, righteous remunerates, ever
indulgent;
Harshness he mitigates, burdened souls animates,
freeing them lightly;
Holy ones blesseth He, wicked distresseth He—
each alike rightly.
He the benignest One, He the divinest One, see!
as King reigneth;
God-man from God appears—man bursts the sod
of years—Judgment remaineth!

.

Briefly we tarry here, briefly are harried here, here
is brief sorrow ;

But not to brevity comes our longevity due on
that morrow.

O morn victorious ! short fight and glorious—then
life unending :

O morn victorious ! homes meritorious on us at-
tending.

“ What and to whom given ? ” Fullness of high
heaven to the unworthy ;

Best things to heedless ones, guerdons to speed-
less ones, stars to the earthy.

Battle’s malignities gain for us dignities—“ What
are they ? ” say you ?

Full, full replenishment, freedom from banishment,
none there to fray you.

Though she is bound and fast, Sion is crowned at
last (hope rules our going).

Now, tribulation comes ; then, new creation comes,
kingdoms bestowing.

Then shall fresh glory-light make the old story
bright, raising each spirit,

Ending obscurity ; true Sabbath purity then we
inherit.

Far over many seas, kept from his enemies, sing-
ing in gladness,

Then shall the Jew go free, holding his jubilee,
rescued from sadness.

Land of delightfulness, safe from all spitefulness,
safe from all trouble,

Thou shalt be filled again, Israel built again, joy
shall redouble.

Land all beneficent, country magnificent, succored
from dangers,

Given thou art to be and there have part in thee
home-born and strangers ;

While upon men around, glory shall then abound,
vision supernal

Of that great dignity, full of benignity, peace, pure
eternal—

Peace without wickedness, peace without wretch-
edness, peace without quarrel,

Goal to all wanderings, rest to all ponderings, con-
quest and laurel.

Portion shall then be mine in the dear Lord divine ;
I shall distinguish

Him the Sole Beautiful, whom the true dutiful
never relinquish.

Jacob with Israel and Leah with Rachel then
change condition ;

Then Sion's palace halls rise where no malice falls,
lift to completion.

O fairest Holy Land, our eyes have wholly scanned
calmly, thy splendor ;

At thy mere mention oft, moved by attention soft,
we have grown tender.

Eft tua mentio pectoris unctio,
cura doloris,
Concipientibus æthera mentibus
ignis amoris.
Tu locus unicus, illeque cœlicus
es paradifus,
Non ibi lacryma, fed placidiffima
gaudia, rifus.
Eft ibi confita laurus, et infita
cedrus hyfopo ;
Sunt radiantia jafpide moenia,
clara pyropo :
Hinc tibi fardius, inde topazius,
hinc amethyftus ;
Eft tua fabrica concio cœlica,
gemmaque Chriftus.
Tu fine littore, tu fine tempore—
fons modò rivus !
Dulce bonis fapis, eftque tibi lapis
undique vivus.
Eft tibi laurea, dos datur aurea,
Sponfa decora ;
Primaque Principis ofcula fufcipis,
infpicis ora :
Candida lilia, viva monilia
funt tibi, Sponfa ;
Agnus adefl tibi, Sponfus adefl tibi,
lux fpeciofa :

Vision and speech of thee unto us teach of thee
whene'er we languish;
Breath from thy cherished winds, cheers our nigh
perished minds, curing our anguish.
Thou art our Paradise, glowing with fairy dyes
which we strive after;
Not there come tears again, placidest joy shall
reign, music and laughter.
There, sown in equal guise, cedar and laurel rise
hyssop-attended;
Bright gold and jasper stone, clear as no Hesper
shone, make thy walls splendid.
There, upon either hand, sardius and topaz stand,
amethysts mingle.
There art thou permanent, throne of the firmament,
Christ there is single.
Thou hast no wave or strand, thou hast no grave or
band—rill and yet river!
Sweet wines there flow for us, jewels there glow for
us, radiant ever.
Laurels and golden toys better than olden joys thou
there shalt gather:
Yet in thy deference Jesus hath preference, His art
thou rather.
Lilies like driven snow, gems set in even row, wait
for thy wearing.
That Lamb is still with thee, that Spouse is still with
thee, clear light declaring.

No occupation there, no aspiration there, save but
sweet singing,
Telling of life preserved granted for grief deserved,
gratitude bringing.
City of lustre rare, none but the just are there,
thou shalt not crumble ;
Proud hearts are stupefied and, from the Crucified,
learn to be humble.
Naught I know, naught I know, what joys then
ought to grow, what rays shine o'er thee,
How deep thy pleasures are, how rare thy treasures
are, in years before thee !
When I have tried thy praise, wonder denied my
lays, foiled I desisted.
O best of any light ! in thee does any sight fail un-
assisted.

There is the corridor where martyrs o'er and o'er
sing, all together ;
There is the shining host, Jesus enshrining most in
the clear weather ;
There is the pasture ground where all the meek are
found, where saints are resting ;
There is the royal throne, whither comes joy alone,
joined with glad feasting ;
There is a nation bright in congregation white, clad
in pure raiment ;
No lamentations there ! such habitations fair ask for
no payment.

Sunt sine crimine, sunt sine turbine,
 sunt sine lite
 In Syon ædibus editioribus
 Ifraëlitæ.
 Urbs Syon inclyta, gloria debita
 glorificandis,
 Tu bona visibus interioribus
 intima pandis :
 Intima lumina, mentis acumina
 te speculantur,
 Pectora flammea spe modò, postea
 forte luçantur.
 Urbs Syon unica, mansio mystica,
 condita cœlo,
 Nunc tibi gaudeo, nunc mihi lugeo—
 tristior, anhele :
 Te quia corpore non queo, pectore
 sæpe penetro,
 Sed caro terrea, terraque carnea,
 mox cado retro.
 Nemo retexere, nemoque promere
 suffinet ore,
 Quo tua mœnia, quo capitalia
 plena decore ;
 Opprimit omne cor ille tuus decor,
 O Syon, O pax—
 Urbs sine tempore, nulla potest fore
 laus tibi mendax ;

Free from all wickedness, free from all wretchedness,
 free from contention,
 Safely in peace at home Israel shall cease to roam,
 cease from dissension.
 Sion, thou city blest, they whom thy pity blessed
 soon shall possess thee—
 Thou who bestowest good upon our lowest mood
 till we confess thee.
 With my mind's vision I scan thine Elysian sky,
 study thy story ;
 Hope now my burning thought comforts, but turns
 me not yet from thy glory.
 Sion, majestic place, mansion of mystic grace, heaven-
 built o'er me,
 Now I rejoice in thee, now does my voice in me
 fail—I long for thee !
 Thee, though my flesh be weak, strive I afresh to
 seek by my heart's yearning ;
 But, through my earthiness and earth's unworthiness,
 faint in my learning :
 No one discloseth yet, no one exposeth yet, unto us
 mortals
 Where are thy walls of light, on which there falls
 no night, or where thy portals.
 Thou dost each soul oppress with thy fair holiness,
 Sion the peaceful !
 City where time is not, praise through my rhyme is
 not aught but disgraceful.

O fine luxibus, O fine luctibus,
 O fine lite,
Splendida curia, florida patria,
 patria vitæ!
Urbs Syon inclyta, turris et edita
 littore tuto,
Te peto, te colo, te flagro, te volo—
 canto, saluto;
Nec meritis peto, nam meritis meto
 morte perire,
Nec reticens tegeo, quod meritis ego
 filius iræ:
Vita quidem mea, vita nimis rea,
 mortua vita,
Quippe reatibus exitialibus
 obruta, trita.
Spe tamen ambulo, præmia postulo
 speque fideque,
Illa perennia postulo præmia
 nocte dieque.
Me Pater optimus atque piissimus
 ille creavit;
In lue pertulit, ex lue sustulit,
 a lue lavit.
Gratia cœlica sustinet unica
 totius orbis,
Parcere fordibus, interioribus
 unctio morbis;

O thou secure from sin, whom tears endure not in—
thou without striving ;
Land of the rarest grace, country of fairest face—
ever surviving !
Sion renowned and vast, thy towers are found at
last in safe location ;
Search for thee, care for thee, love, hope and prayer
for thee, is my vocation.
Not through my good I crave, for nothing good I
have, death is my merit ;
Nor does my reticence court thy beneficence, wrath
I inherit.
Living indeed has been living indeed in sin—living
yet dying :
Guilty already held, pride now already quelled, no
more defying—
Yet do I go in faith ; honors I know He saith crown
my trust rightly ;
Yes, I can seek them still, however weak in skill,
daily and nightly.
Me that divinest One, me that benignest One, God,
has created ;
In my sin bore with me, kept good in store for me,
washed, renovated.
Grace such as His, alone brings us to bliss unknown :
earth's sole provision,
Fitted to spare the cursed, salving with care the worst
from Death's incision.

Diluit omnia cœlica gratia,
 fons David undans
 Omnia diluit, omnibus affluit,
 omnia mundans :
 O pia gratia ! cœlſa palatia
 cernere præſta,
 Ut videam bona, feſtaque confona,
 cœlica feſta.
 O mea, ſpes mea ! tu Syon aurea,
 clarior auro,
 Agmine ſplendida, ftans duce, florida
 perpete lauro,
 O bona patria !—num tua gaudia
 teque videbo ?
 O bona patria !—num tua præmia
 plena tenebo ?
 Dic mihi, flagito, verbaque reddito,
 dicque, Videbis.
 Spem ſolidam gero ; remne tenens ero ?
 dic, Retinebis.
 O facer, O pius, O ter et amplius
 ille beatus,
 Cui ſua pars Deus !—O miſer, O reus,
 hâc viduatus !

BERNARDUS CLUNIACENSIS.

Grace our guilt sweeps away, David's fount keeps
 always freshly upspringing ;
 That stream which flows for all, that which arose
 for all, all pureness bringing.
 O thou abounding love, be thou redounding love!—
 show me thy dwelling,
 That I may see the blessed gathered with thee at
 rest—hear anthems swelling.
 O thou, my trust of old, Sion, whose dust of gold
 our gold outshineth,
 Where saints in long array, praise Christ with song
 always—no flower declineth.
 Father-land best for me, shall *I* find rest in thee?
 shall *I* behold thee?
 Father-land best for me, shall *I* be blessed in thee?
 shall grace enfold me?
 Speak to me now I pray, answer and show the way,
 say “Thou shalt gain me.”
 Then shall my trust be strong—but wilt thou tarry
 long? O say “Attain me.”
 Sacred and free from ill, blessings for thee fulfil,
 widening ever :
 God shall thy stay appear—Ah! how shall they ap-
 pear who from Him sever!

EXPLICIT.

Dona nobis, Domine,
 Hæcce amplioraque
 Filii e sanguine.—Amen!



“JUST AS I AM,”

Ille qui sum, et sine spe
Nisi in tuo sanguine
Et in vocatu apud Te,
O Dei Agne, venio !

Ille qui sum, nec commorans
Ut purus sim, at obsecrans ;
Ad Te qui nunc stas condonans,
O Dei Agne, venio !

Ille qui sum, in prœliis
Jactatus, et in dubiis—
Intra extraque semper lis,
O Dei Agne, venio !

Ille qui sum, miserrimus,
Cæcus pauperque penitens
(In Te procumbat animus),
O Dei Agne, venio !

Illum qui sum recipies
Et purum planè facies
Quod Tibi fido indies,
O Dei Agne, venio !

Ille qui sum !—Amâsti me
Et claustra fracta sunt a Te :
Nunc Tuus, Tuus unicè,
O Dei Agne, venio !

From the English of CHARLOTTE ELLIOTT.



