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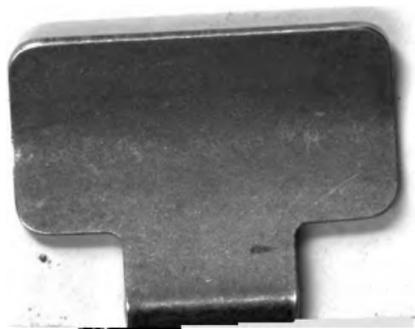
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Sylva Sacra.

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Sylva Sacra.

“He spake of Trees, from the Cedar Tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the Hyssop that springeth out of the wall.”—1 Kings iv. 33.



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1853.

שאלו שלום ירושלם ישליו אהביך :

Ps. cxxii. 6.



TO THE READER.

LET none suppose that, while musing in THE SACRED WOOD, the writer could be unmindful of "THE TREE OF LIFE in the midst of THE PARADISE OF GOD." There is in all the Trees of the *Sylva Sacra*, whether those which are fruit-bearing, or simply fragrant or pleasant to the eye, something either to symbolize, or, at least, to illustrate truth in relation to Christ and His Church. But "THE TREE OF LIFE" is the Lord and Giver of life HIMSELF. His symbol was planted in the Garden of Eden, and though the way to it was guarded by the Cherubic Sword, lest the Man of the Earth should take its fruit, and live for ever in sin-defiled humanity, yet the way to "The Tree of Life" HIMSELF has ever been kept open by the Revelations of God.

He is that Tree, of which the Royal Prophet-Bard spake in psalmody, whose "leaf shall not wither."—that tree, which "shall yield its fruit every month, and whose leaves shall be for the healing of the nations."

Nor let it be supposed that the writer, in seeking to awaken attention to the glorious destinies of the ancient People of God, can be forgetful of the Spiritual Israel, the heirs of Abraham's faith. Or that in pointing to that city

which shall yet be built on her own heap, he says not of the City which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning, Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I remember not JERUSALEM above *my* chief joy.'—Or that in hailing the day when the Temple shall be rebuilt on Mount Zion, and become a House of Prayer for all people, he confounds the predictions of John with those of Isaiah and Ezekiel.

Nothing seems more translucent to the eye of the writer's mind than this, that the Jews shall be restored to their own land according to the word and the oath of Jehovah. That they shall inherit all the promises made to the fathers, as well in relation to their Land, their City, and their Temple, as to their cleansing in the fountain which has been opened for sin and for uncleanness—That they shall be "as a dew upon all people," "The seed whom the Lord hath blessed."—That Mount Zion shall be the throne of Emanuel's earthly glory.—But that there is another Jerusalem "prepared as a Bride adorned for her Husband," which is not to be foundationed on the earth, but which shall "come down from God out of heaven," the abode (or the impersonation) of glorified Resurrection Saints, as distinguished from earthly Jewish Saints—of those who have believed in Jesus from the days of "righteous Abel" down to the moment of the Second Advent of the Lord of Life and Glory—That the nations of them that are saved, the restored tribes of Israel and Judah, and the Celestial Bride will

stand in the same relation to each other in the Millennial Kingdom as the outer-court worshippers stood to those within the holy place, and to the Inner Sanctuary—That the gentiles shall hand in their oblations to the Royal Priesthood, and the Royal Priesthood deliver them into the Celestial City. That *then* the ladder of Jacob shall re-connect heaven with earth, and on it the Angels of God shall ascend and descend—That *then* the “heavens shall hear the earth, the earth shall hear the corn, the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel,”—That then the Church’s universal prayer shall be answered,—“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

C. S.

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Sylva Sacra.

The Cedar. 178

I.

Yes. Like the Cedar, Israel yet shall grow—
Again the Mountain of the House shall rise—
Into her gates shall all the Nations flow,
And Salem's pinnacles salute the skies ;
Like Hyssop on the ruined wall no more,
The Cedar spreads her boughs from shore to shore.

II.

Away to Lebanon!—Prepare the beams,
Cedar and Fir to build the House of God.
The Prophets' visions are no airy dreams ;
Mount Zion is the place of His abode.
What though He loved the Tents of Jacob well,
Salem! within thy walls the Lord shall dwell.

III.

Cedar and Fir and costly stones they bring ;
Forest and Quarry yield their ample store ;
Zidonian artists and the Tyrian King
Into thy coffers jewelled offerings pour ;
“ Exceedingly magnificent of fame ”
Must be the Shrine which bears Jehovah's name.

IV.

“ Jehovah Shammah !” Yes, “ the Lord is there”—
Salem, thy towers no more in ruin lie.
Strangers shall build thy walls, thy stones prepare ;
 Foundationed deep and towering to the sky
City and Temple once again shall tell
That David’s Son is crowned—Emanuel.

V.

Hail, Jesus, Hail ! Thou Hyssop on the wall,
 Lowliest of lowly plants—despised of men ;
Content awhile to be thy creatures’ thrall,
 That Thou might’st woo them back to life again ;
No more a root in this dry sterile ground,
Thou goodly Cedar, spread thine arms around !

VI.

Aaron, thy work is o’er. The Cedar wood
 And Hyssop bunch which thou of old didst tye
With scarlet thread, then dip in tygal blood,
 Has told its tale—Incarnate Mystery !
A Royal Priest comes forth. Go bow thy head
To Him of Salem. First-born from the dead.

The Oak. אלה

I.

“An Angel of the Lord”—Wast thou the same
 Who erst in Ophrah sat beneath the Oak,
 Consumed the offering with a hallowed flame
 And in soft words to trembling Gideon spoke,
 Soft words of peace—“Fear not—thou shalt not die,
 For I am with thee—I, the Lord Most High.”

II.

Art thou the same who rested in the shade
 On Mamre's plains in Patriarchal days,
 When he, the Friend of God, a table laid
 Beneath the Oak, while shelter'd from the rays
 Of mid-day sun, he stood and thou didst eat,
 Nor deem it scorn to wash thy pilgrim feet?

III.

Say, art thou he, who changed the wrestler's name
 On that mysterious night at Penuel;
 The Angel who redeemed and blessed—the same
 The Patriarch prayed his wondrous name to tell;
 “The Angel of the Covenant,” whose delight
 Was with the sons of men—the Lord of Light?

IV.

Yes—and thou once didst sojourn here below,
No transient guest, a denizen of earth ;
A weary pilgrim wandering to and fro ;
A son of weeping even from thy birth ;
Content to leave thy native home awhile,
'That through thy tears the wilderness might smile.

V.

'Thou art the ladder reaching to the sky,
While on this earth is fix'd thy blessed foot ;
'Thou Son of Mary ! Son of God most high !
Offspring of David ! David's living root !
On Thee descending, man shall yet behold
Angels of light and love as erst of old.

VI.

Beneath the Oak, beside the shepherds' tent
Angels of God shall sit, nor think it scorn,
When on love's errand from the Father sent,
To hold converse with brethren younger born.
For God indeed with man on earth shall dwell
Our kinsman—Jesus is " Emanuel."

The Vine.

תדהר

I.

The Earth shall yield her increase—"Tis decreed—
 The field shall yet be joyful. All the trees
 That clothe the forest, or adorn the mead,
 For fruit created, or the eye to please,
 Before Jehovah shall rejoice, when HE
 Shall lift His arm to set His people free.

II.

The world's a wilderness—a mount of prey—
 The earth is iron and the skies are brass,
 The child of man the creature of a day,
 Cut down at noon—and withered as the grass—
 The whole creation groans. The creature sighs—
 O Lord, how long? How long? Arise! Arise!

III.

Pour down Thy Spirit on this wilderness,
 This barren waste, this groaning sin-girt earth,
 Comfort thy people—thine own Israel bless;
 Then shall creation raise the song of mirth.
 When Thou shalt crush thy people's taunting foes
 Then shall the desert blossom as the rose.

IV.

The Box, the Fir tree, and the Pine shall spring
Where grew the bramble and the thorn before;
Each shall its tribute to the Temple bring
Where all the earth shall worship and adore.
The Royal Cedar and the Forest Pine
To build and beautify the House combine.

V.

The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls ;
Their kings shall gird themselves to wait on thee ;
No more thy children shall be Edom's thralls.
When God brings back thy long captivity
Thy gates shall open stand by day—by night—
And all the nations hail thy risen light.

VI.

Kingdom of Priests—Ye Ministers of God !
The flocks of Kedar, incense, gold and myrrh
Shall flow to Salem, your redeemed abode,
With goodly trees—the Pine tree, Box and Fir.
The Isles are ready with their ships to bring
Thy sons—they wait the order of the King.

The Sign-Aloe.

אֵלֶּה

I.

The King and Prophet stand on Kirjath's Mount ;
 Beneath—the tents of Israel in the plain ;
 The dust of Jacob, say, what eye may count,
 Or fourth of Israel ?—Seer, the task is vain.
 And wouldst thou curse the people, or defy ?
 Mad Prophet, tremble, or thy doom is nigh.

II.

Prophet and King look down from Pisgah's brow :
 Again they fain would curse whom God hath blessed ;
 The utmost part is all they compass now
 Of those whose tents are spread from East to West.
 Nor King nor Prophet can reverse the word,
 Or crush the people chosen of the Lord.

III.

Once more they look, and lo ! from Peor's height
 They scan the object of their feeble rage ;
 O what a wondrous, what a goodly sight !
 With Israel, who shall dare the war to wage ?
 The Lord his God is with him ; who shall live
 That with the God of Jacob dares to strive ?

IV.

Thy tents, like gardens by the river side,
Planted by Him who planted Eden's trees ;
Thine is the Cedar in his lofty pride,
That spreads his sheltering arms, but what are these
That fill with sweet perfume the balmy air ?
Trees of Lign-Aloes, fragrant, green, and fair.

V.

For not doth beauty or doth strength alone
Adorn the garden of the King of Kings ;
The garden Jesus choseth as His own,
Enclosed and watered with unfailing springs,
Is filled with Spikenard, Calamus, and Myrrh,
As with the Vine and Olive, Palm and Fir.

VI.

Trees of Lign-Aloes ! O ! that box of nard
That Mary broke and poured on Jesu's head,
Then wiped those pilgrim-feet, with travel scarred,
Anointed, ere He made the tomb His bed !—
When to His garden back the Lord shall come,
Say, will He scorn the Aloes' sweet perfume ?

The Willow. ערב

I.

The Willows still their pensile branches wave
 As once they waved by Chebar's Eastern stream,
 O when shall Israel waken from the grave,
 Her mouth with laughter filled like those that dream?
 Long has she weeping gone—in tears has sowed,
 While yearning for her home—her loved abode.

II.

O when shall she her sackcloth garment doff,
 And clothe herself in beauty's joyous dress,
 Forget that she was once the Paynim's scoff,
 And glory in "The Lord our Righteousness;"
 Take down her harp, and tune it to the strain
 Which she shall lift when Salem smiles again?

III.

Take boughs of goodly trees, the joyous Palm,
 The Willows of the brook, and keep the feast;
 The mourner's wounds are healed with oil and balm,
 The captive's tears are dried, her sorrows cease,
 Rejoice with praise, let harp and cymbal tell
 'How goodly are thy tents, O Israel!'

IV.

Take boughs of Olive, Myrtle, and of Pine ;
In songs rehearse the goodness of the Lord ;
Bless Him for corn and milk, for oil and wine,
For all the plenty heaped upon the board.
The songs of Zion now her daughters sing,
Her children cry "Hosannah to the King!"

V.

As Willows spring beside the winding stream,
So shall thy children's offspring flourish now,
Thy long captivity becomes a dream—
A sweet memorial is that Willow-bough
Of all thy sorrows, of that tear-steeped bread
On which by Chebar's stream thy soul was fed.

VI.

Planted again in Canaan's fruitful ground,
Her streams shall nourish thy wide-spreading root,
On thee no yellow leaf shall e'er be found,
For Hermon's dew shall feed each verdant shoot.
"What hath Jehovah wrought!" the nations cry—
"Great things for us!" the ransomed tribes reply.

The Myrtle.

דוד

I.

Hadassah rise! The King holds out to thee
 The golden sceptre. What is thy request?
 Now is the time to set thy people free—
 Go touch the sceptre, 'tis the King's behest;
 He looks upon thee with a gracious eye;
 Ask what thou wilt—thy people shall not die.

II.

Daughter of Zion, "beautiful and fair,"
 Though like Hadassah, captive and forlorn;
 Jehovah makes thee his peculiar care,
 And takes the captive orphan for His own.
 Sweet Myrtle tree! How pleasant to the eye
 Thy living green, star-spangled as the sky!

III.

The haughty Vashti must be set aside
 For thee, the lowly one—the Myrtle tree;
 The Gentile Queen must forfeit for her pride
 The throne ordained of old, fair maid, for thee.
 The Royal Crown is set upon thy brow;
 To thee, Hadassah, all thy foes must bow.

IV.

Where grew the Briar, now the Myrtle grows,
The Fir tree where the now uprooted Thorn,
The Desert blossoms like the laughing Rose,
The knee is bent where curled the lip of scorn.
When Esther reigns proud Haman's power must cease
And Esther's kindred rest in tranquil peace.

V.

In sackcloth garb sits Mordecai no more ;
The King delights to honour Esther's race ;
Clothed in the robe his royal kinsman wore,
The robe HE wrought of righteousness and grace ;
At Dives' gate no more shall hunger pine,
But banquet with the King on food divine,

VI.

Through the long night of outcast Israel's grief
The Vine and Fig tree have been barren found,
The Palm and Olive without fruit or leaf ;
But in yon lone and unsuspected ground
A lowly Myrtle—type of one unseen—
Behold the REMNANT—fragrant, evergreen.

The Palm. תמר

I.

Thou Prophetess of God, Awake, awake!

Hark to the captive's long and bitter cry,
Awake to judgment—with thee *Barak take:

For sure the time of blessing draweth nigh.
Beneath the Palm the Judge again shall dwell;
Jehovah's Word shall govern Israel.

II.

Thou Bride of †Lapidoth ordained of God,
To free the people from the tyrant's chain!
A lamp that burneth is Jehovah's Word,

Nor burns that lamp, nor speaks that word in vain.
Awake, then, ‡Deborah! Awake, awake!
And with thee Barak, Son of Blessing, take.

III.

Before THE WORD the hills and mountains melt,
As Sinai melted once and quaked with awe,
When Israel's tribes before His footstool knelt
Who sent from His right hand a fiery law.
Again the hills shall tremble when they see
The Lord arise to set His people free.

* Blessing.

† Burning lamps.

‡ The Word.

IV.

For what though Judah's Palm Tree now is dry,
Withered and leafless like a beacon-mast,
Though "Raze it, Raze it," is the taunting cry,
Yon pallid crescent-moon is waning fast;
'Twill soon be quenched. Then Israel's night is o'er,
Her sun shall rise—Her moon shall wane no more.

V.

Her Sons shall all be righteous—they shall grow
Tall as the Palm tree, as the Lily fair;
The praises of Jehovah they shall show
When once again is reared "the House of Prayer,"
The House of Prayer for all the nations round—
Thrice happy they "who know the joyful sound!"

VI.

Palm-branch in hand—Go forth to meet the King;
Messiah comes! Rejected once and slain.
Daughter of Zion, loud "Hosannahs" sing!
Who came to suffer once—now comes to reign.
Beneath the Palm tree Israel's Judge shall sit;
Behold the people gathering at His feet!

The Vine. גפן

I.

Jehovah planted thee a goodly Vine,
 Brought out of Egypt to a kindly soil,
 A fruitful land where heaven and earth combine
 To fill the barn with corn, the cruise with oil.
 With His own hand, Himself prepared the ground,
 That not a weed might near thy roots be found.

II.

He cleared the stones, uptore each rival tree,
 Himself a wall of fire to guard from ill ;
 Bade His own heavenly dew descend on thee,
 That thou deep root mightst take and Canaan fill.
 Thy boughs like Cedars grew—beneath their shade
 The hills rejoiced, the vallies and the glade.

III.

He came and looked for fruit. Ungrateful tree !
 What could He more have done?—He looked in vain ;
 Wild grapes alone Jehovah found in thee,
 The fruit of all His culture, all His pain.
 What *could* He do but lay His vineyard bare ?
 What is that Vineyard now ? The Foxes' lair.

IV.

Broken her hedge—Her wine-press in decay,
The wild beast of the field devours her shoots ;
While all who pass along the open way
Her branches pluck, and trample down her roots.
Return, O Lord! O God of Hosts! return,
Nor let the foe thy Vine to ashes burn.

V.

Hast Thou not said the Vine shall yet revive,
Nor cast her fruit, but yield her strength again,
That torn and trampled on, she yet shall live,
And drink once more thy fructifying rain ?
That underneath the Vine and Fig tree's shade
Shall Israel rest : no more of foes afraid ?

VI.

And O thou true and living Vine ! look down,
Gather the branches so long torn from thee ;
Are not these peeled and scattered ones thine own !
O graft them in Thyself the living tree.
Fain would we Gentile wilding-boughs embrace
In tendril-clasp the Sons of Judah's race.

The Fig Tree.

תאנה

I.

Why doth the Vineyard mourn, the Fig tree fade,
 Zion's lone daughter sit with downcast eye?
 Nor Vine nor Fig tree yields its fruit or shade
 To him who rests beneath or passes by—
 It was not thus when Princes met to greet,
 And lay their tribute at her royal feet.

II.

Zion hath none to comfort her—Her tears
 Flow in the night—Lovers and friends are gone,
 Fine linen once—rude sackcloth now she wears,
 Her head, like Jacob's, pillowed on a stone.
 While treacherous friends her enemies become,
 And taunting ask her why she left her home.

III.

Her gates are desolate—her solemn feasts
 To which her children flocked, are now no more;
 She has no Fane, no Altars, and no Priests,
 All desolate she sits and weepeth sore.
 And is it naught to you who pass her by
 To see her widow's tears—to hear her sigh?

IV.

It was not thus with One, her Lord and thine,
 Who wept when he beheld Jerusalem ;
 The bark-torn Fig tree and the trampled Vine,
 Each drooping branch and each neglected stem
 Called forth such tears as none but He could weep
 Who gave His life—the shepherd for the sheep.

V.

Art thou a branch ? Thy parent stock was wild—
 Boast not against the root—it beareth thee.
 A stranger once, now an adopted child.
 The tyrant's bond slave—*Grace* hath made thee free.
 Oft hast thou drank the wine, and plucked the fruit
 Of Canaan's trees. Boast not against the root.

VI.

The Fig tree yet shall blossom, and the Vine
 Such clusters yield as ne'er in Eshcol grew ;
 That voice which says to Salem " Rise and shine"
 Is His—the Lord—the Faithful and the True.
 The mountains may depart, the hills remove,
 Eternal is the counsel of His love.

The Olive.

זית

I.

Lo! in her mouth she brought an Olive leaf,
 Symbol of peace, of mercy, and of rest—
 Daughter of Zion, raise that eye of grief,
 Nor doubt thy wave-tossed ark shall yet be blest
 “An Olive tree” thy God has called thy name;
 Who thus surnamed thee once, is still the same.

II.

What though the labour of the Olive fail,
 What though no fruit is found upon the Vine,
 Shall aught against Jehovah's word prevail
 Though man with man, tho' earth with hell combine?
 Daughter of Zion, raise that tearful eye,
 The waters are assuaged—thy rest is nigh.

III.

Behold thy children clustered round thy board,
 Like Olive plants around the parent stem;
 'Tis thus the Lord depicts thee in His word,
 Who holds thee forth as beauty's diadem.
 His Olive tree, His Vine, His undefiled,
 An unforgotten, though a wayward child.

IV.

Again the golden bowl and lamps shall stand
 Within the fane, within the holy place ;
A light shall shine on each benighted land
 From Zion, when the Lord reveals His face.
Then shall the Olive trees, those " Sons of oil,"
The press-vats fill nor ask the dresser's toil.

V.

O Mount of Olives ! When shall HE return,
 Who sat and taught among thy sacred shades ?
Here would I linger till my spirit burn,
 While musing on a scene which never fades.
Which never fades from eyes baptised with light,
Which long to change sweet hope for sweeter sight.

VI.

O Mount of Olives, where those feet have trod !
 Thy slopes, thy gardens ! shall these eyes behold
The spot where Jesus lay, the moistened sod
 Where He, the victim for my sins was sold ?
Gethsemane—the mystic Olive press
Where HE was crushed,—with light the world to bless.

The Pomegranate.

רמון

I.

Return, Return, O Shulamite! and hear
 The voice of Him who calls thee by thy name.
 How canst thou longer thus His absence bear!
 Do not His words thy widowed heart inflame?
 How cold that heart, or surely it would burn
 To hear that pleading call, "Return, Return."

II.

Orchard of Pomegranates! thy pleasant fruit
 He fain would gather and regale His taste,
 Why are thine ears so dull, thy lips so mute
 To one all fair, with charms celestial graced?
 "Rise up my love, my fair one, come away,"—
 And canst thou hear his voice, and still delay?

III.

Behold Him clothed in glorious robes for thee,
 Bells and Pomegranates fringe His Priestly dress;
 Music and fragrance, sweetly they agree
 To tell of Him the Virgins love to bless.
 See the day breaks—behold the shadows fly!
 Rise, fair one, rise, the Bridegroom draweth nigh!

IV.

No longer say "I sought but found him not,"
He came to seek for thee—for thee His bride ;
Sought thee in Priestly white without a spot,
Save that red stain when thou didst wound His side.
O look on Him thy hands have pierced, and mourn ;
'Tis HE who says to thee, "Return, return."

V.

All redolent of frankincense He comes ;
Daughter of Zion, greet the Priestly King ;
Take with thee Myrrh and Spice, all choice perfumes ;
Hark to those bells of gold how sweet they ring !
Sweet is their gracious sound in ears divine,
And have they, Shulamite, no charm for thine ?

VI.

Return His praises—tell how fair Thy Lord,
How sweet His lips, His eyes how full of grace ;
Worthy to be beloved—to be adored
By men, by angels—Ye of Israel's race
Go forth and herald Him who comes to reign,
Nor longer let Him plead with thee in vain.

The Almond.

תפ"ש

I.

Thou beauteous Almond tree, enrobed in white,
 Emblem of God's High Priest, that spotless one,
 The living Priest, who girds Himself with light
 As with the vesture which He once put on,
 When on Mount Tabor He transfigured stood,
 Or ere He bowed beneath the altar wood.

II.

Thou white-robed Priest, thou meek self-offered lamb,
 Thy robe is laid aside that thou mayst die,
 The hour is come—My Father, here I am,
 'Tis finished—see the Mercy-seat on high,
 Where all enrobed a Great High Priest He stands,
 With mitred brow, with incense in His hands.

III.'

Aaron! that budding, blooming Almond rod,
 Which stamped thy sacred office as divine,
 Which gave thee headship as the Priest of God,
 Thou mayst no longer hold—It is not thine.
 The law is changed, and changed the Priesthood too,
 Unlock that ark—we would its secrets view.

IV.

The veil is rent, we now may look within
The holy place, approach the inner shrine,
With eyes baptised behold the Cherubin,
And read the symbols of a lore divine.
The ark o'erlaid with gold—bring forth the key,
We would draw near and spell the mystery.

V.

With unshod foot—with holy fear we come,
With filial hearts we love to stand around,
Deep are the secrets of that mystic room,
Wherein that golden plated ark is found.
Symbol divine of Him our souls adore,
Of Him who died, yet lives for evermore.

VI.

The golden omer filled with angels' food,
The tables of the law fulfilled with love,
The budding Almond rod—now understood,
Sweet emblem of a Priesthood from above,
These are the wondrous gems thou dost incase,
Ark of the Covenant in yon holy place.

THE END.

Third Song of Degrees.

I was glad when they said unto me—
“ We will go into the House of the Lord :
Our feet shall stand in thy gates O Jerusalem.”

Jerusalem is built as a City that is at unity with itself :
For thither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord :
To testify unto Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.

For there is the seat of judgment :
Even the seat of the House of David.

O Pray for the peace of Jerusalem !
They shall prosper that love thee.

Peace be within thy walls :
And plenteousness within thy palaces !

For my brethren and companions' sakes
I will wish thee prosperity.

Yea, because of the House of the Lord our God
I will seek to do thee good.

Gild Ghyne,

GATHERED FOR

THE YOUNG AND EARNEST.

Second Edition.

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