

16
SAINT MONDAY,

A POEM

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE

MECHANIC'S

Short Loan
Collection

SATURDAY NIGHT.

"He studied from the life,
And in the original perused mankind."

ARMSTRONG.

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BY THE AUTHOR,

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TO THE MECHANIC'S BEST FRIEND

DR. BIRKBECK

THIS POEM IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.

SAINT MONDAY.

Tools and the men I sing who forc'd by "fate"
(Not haughty JUNO's unrelenting hate,) *To work the glory of their native shore,*
And perils, labour, want, and scorn endure.

I.

O holy, holy, holy Sabbath day,
Beneath thy calm rule slumb'ring lies turmoil;—
O, holy, sabbath, is thy sweet delay,
For then, the poor mechanic rests from toil.
How pale he looks! as bending he walks by
To taste the quiet of the sabbath morn;
Poor worried thing! he seems abash'd and shy,
For the smart well dressed, passes him with scorn,
As if he were not of the same great parent born.

II.

But swiftly on the sabbath moments flee:
The holy hours of rest the green earth shun,
The lab'rer,—the yet weary lab'rer,—he,
Regretting, views the sabbath's setting sun;
He grieves to think it was the Godhead's will,
His own fair image should be banished
To caves and dungeons, there to labour still
Beneath the everlasting mandate dread,—
"Thy brows incessant sweat shall gain thy daily bread."

III.

Deluded brother workman ! dost thou turn
 Thy *fair* looks *pale* with sick'ning gloomy whims?
 The Almighty hath but said that thou shalt earn
 Thy bread by the proud vigour of thy limbs.
 But profitless thy labour, 'tis thy meed
 To dig for others ; and thou liv'st a slave
 Without wherewith thy little ones to feed,
 And diest without wherewith to buy thy grave,
 And sin 'tis deem'd in thee, earth's 'goodly things to
 [crave.

IV

The sabbath's past, the bells around are chiming
 St. Monday morning's welcome far and wide ;
 The sun the azure arch of heav'n is climbing,
 The *dim* mechanics to their labour glide.
 All nature smiles, but the poor artisan,
 Alas ! he smiles not, but looks pale and blank,
 Subdu'd, and spiritless, and less than man,
 For poverty, and labour's dungeon dank
 Have vanquish'd in his soul all sense of manhood's rank

V.

Now thronging from all quarters round about,
 Mechanics come, their little sons too, they,
 Scantily clad, and tremblingly turn out
 As "errand boys," for errand boys' poor pay.
 The wife too, she must charing go ; and worse
 Than all, her little infant must be left
 To scramble 'mong the ashes, of its nurse
 And its sweet milk, for many hours bereft:
 Oh ! then with mother's woe, the mother's heart is cleft.

VI.

Through garret. shed, and subterranean den,
 Hoarse sounds of enginry now deeply boom,
 The welkin too is fill'd with "hum of men"
 And sounds of hammer, anvil, forge and loom.
 The iron's welded, and the wedge is driven :
 With hungry speed the rattling shuttle flies,
 The mettle's melted, and the timber riven,
 And labour with his pow'rs herculean plies,
 And savagely his strength on brute and human tries.

VII.

Hark ! hark ! the fact'ry bells to breakfast ring ;
 O, 'tis a welcome, and enliv'ning peal :
 Aside their heavy tools the workmen fling,
 And leisurely await the coming meal :
 They wait not long, for, see ! the household crumb
 The careful wife brings, and the congou thin ;
 And then for fathers, brothers, trudging come,
 The little children with their pots of tin,
 And a tin case to keep the toast and butter in.

VIII.

Big Nabs too enters with a bounding skip
 And can of "heavy" frothy to the top ;
 For some prefer at breakfast time to sip
 Of "genuine butt beer" a spicky drop.
 Each sturdy one the quart pot grasps with ease
 And at the first draught, off a third he swings ;
 A two inch crust, and wedge-like lump of cheese,
 Then from his bread bag silently he brings,
 Disdaining butter'd bread and tea, as simple things.

IX.

And now each careless sooty mother's son,
 Lounging on bench and block their breakfast take;
 Such silent seriousness prevails, that one
 Might hear a mouse within its corner shake.
 At length breaks out a rough and witty joke,
 A certain moody one, the "cap" fits tight,
 The wink is giv'n, another one is broke
 With cruel whim on the ill-temper'd wight,
 While o'er his wrinkled brow creep fretfulness and spite.

X.

Baited by all, he threatens, swears and foams,
 And looks all madden'd with internal pain:
 He scowls and frowns, then flaming Phrensy comes
 And pours her boiling liquid on his brain.
 Like a vex'd serpent then himself he rear'd
 At him who first play'd off the bitter joke;
 He ey'd him close, then dismally he lear'd,
 And aim'd a mortal and a vengeful poke:
 But the sly imp slip'd by and shun'd the savage stroke.

XI.

Headforemost quickly plunged the angry clown —
 His brawny arms wide brandishing, pell mell,
 Like a proud falling structure he went down,
 And bang upon his grizly nossel fell.
 There like a stun'd and outstretch'd frog he sprawl'd,
 But the hot rage within, him soon uprous'd, —
 While o'er his lips a crimson streamlet crawl'd
 And all his visage was with vile dirt sous'd
 Just like Homeric hero, with hot warfare blows'd.

XII.

A merry blade now took him on his knee,
And wip'd the soil obscene from off his face,
And spoke enliv'ning things, and swore he'd be
His "second," or he'd combat in his place.
He bade him "cheer up," then with an air of demon
His upper garments to the earth he throws,
And from his pouch he took a racy lemon
With which he rub'd his cheeks, his lips, and nose,
And told him how to deal out heavy conq'ring blows.

XIII.

To "hold his wind," and keep his thorax spruce,
Two silken "belchers" round his waist he strung,
The ends beyond the knot were waving loose,
And on one side like tasty streamers hung.
With gallant stride the graceless foe came on,
Sparring at him with silent steady ken,
Such signs of fierceness on his forehead shone,
As told he meant to copy mighty men:
Or grapple with a grim gaunt griffin in its den.

XIV.

The "second" now all wide awake, and wary
Whisp'ring advice, put forth his charge, who gleam'd
With such dark frowns upon his adversary,
As shew'd his mind with fell-manslaughter teem'd.
Then sparring face to face, the pair set to,
Their tiger eyes were on each other set:
Now standing firm, then shuffling to and fro,
Tracing each corner dark, and light outlet,
As if they were engag'd in a graceful minuet.

XV.

All hands stood still, the striving pair admiring,
 And eying eagerly the gallant game;
 And with loud shouts, and glorious outcry firing,
 The combatants to deeds of noble name.
 As yet no blow was struck, although the sparring
 Went on with earnestness, and aim intense,
 And each man show'd his skill in art of warring,
 And admirable tactics of defence,
 And to the champion's belt bespoke their high pretence.

XVI.

At length the jester lur'd away his mate,
 To where the floor was strewn with broken wood,
 Then suddenly with attitude elate,
 And ghastly grim, he resolutely stood.
 A hasty feint he made, as if inclin'd
 To give a body blow, with all his strength,
 And snap the ribs, and beat out all the wind,
 And lay his fierce opponent out at length,
 For nine men he had floor'd, and now he fought the
 [tenth.

XVII.

But blows the joker meant not, for his breast
 He purposely left an unguarded spot,
 The other with his lynx eye at him prest,
 And two long blows with straight out prowess shot.
 Again the imp slip'd by, and he went sprawling,
 And flound'ring o'er the rubbish 'neath his foot,
 And slashing wide, and visage foremost falling,
 He tumbled in a slough of mud and soot,
 But soon he upwards sprung, a genuine double smut.

XVIII.

Doubtless his feelings tempest torn did roll :
 Doubtless hot phrensy deeply scor'd his face ;
 But the high fever'd workings of his soul,
 Beneath the hideous lacquer none could trace.
 He stood a moment as if wildly dreaming
 Of vengeance : then he started at full speed,
 And ev'ry shopmate followed him loud screaming
 In mirthful outcry at the untoward deed,
 And soon a hundred boys did the procession lead.

XIX.

At length upon them now the police drew,
 With heavy bludgeon, and with cutlas arm'd ;
 Their sudden coming panic struck the crew,
 And sorely each mischievous wag alarm'd.
 A tall built fellow of a bony frame,
 But little flesh, produced a broad wheel-barrow,
 And sat the man in black upon the same,
 With as much ease as one might dish a sparrow,
 And wheel'd him to his home, his attic story narrow.

XX.

And now the men unto the shop returning,
 Betook themselves to various merry tricks,
 Some "toss'd for quarterns," some for beer were burning
 And some went ranting wild in politics ;—
 Some wager'd against time, the bright sun facing,
 To hold at arm's length out a simple peg :—
 Some tried their skill at wrestling, some at racing,
 And who could hop the longest on one leg :—
 Some gossip'd of their girls, of Martha, Poll and Meg.

XXI.

Broad *Nabs* now lab'ring comes with the "half gallons,"
 With gallant gait the luscious juice is borne,
 Upon the same a strong one lays his talons,
 And fills with long drawn sweep the drinking horn.
Nabs stands among them while their throats are strain-
 To draw the cumbrous gulp of "heavy" down, [ing,
 And glorifies himself, while they are draining
 His "right sort," and "the best in all the town,"
 And fluently he prais'd its head and color brown.

XXII.

The governor advances, see! his looks
 Are hazy with the shade of dark displeasure,
 The men espy his coming,—to their nooks
 And quarters, hastily their way they measure.
 They eye him seriously as he goes by,
 And all attentively they leer and smirk,
 Among their tools they fumble silently,
 Like men intent on nothing less than work:
 The 'prentices likewise unto their stations lurk.

XXIII.

The "landlord's" rattle traps are now all hidden,
 And he too lingers like a nonplus'd thing;
 His pots and cans are into corners slidden,
 As if by the black art of conjuring.
 The men with steady looks, demurely grasp
 The various lumber, and with confidence
 They saw, they hammer, grind, and rub, and rasp,
 With ev'ry symptom of deep diligence,—
 The governor speaks not, but soon he wanders hence.

XXIV.

He goes, but not alone, for slyly watch'd
 His steps are, and the line of their direction;
 And a soft footed wily scout's despatch'd
 To eye him oft with closest circumspection.
 "He's safe?" "all's right," and such like knowing phrases
 And bye words quaint, and technicalities
 Go round, then a big jolly toper places
 The beer, the pots, and cups before their eyes,
 A spanking draught he takes, and glibly speechifies.

XXV.

A serious one now seizes the occasion,
 And tells his high wrought stories comical:
 Some with long steady looks of admiration,
 Drink up the wond'rous accents as they fall.
 Others, "hard of belief," stand marvelling
 Upon the story all so strange and new;
 Some did to "doubting castle" firmly cling,
 Some musing stood with image of deep blue:
 Some look'd as if they thought the story might be true.

XXVI.

The story teller saw how matters ran,
 And then he said with consequential tact,
 He knew a man, who knew another man
 Who knew that ev'ry word he spoke was fact.
 Yet, though he spoke in candour's decent mood,
 (And in the teeth of all his earnest spouting;
 Some whisper'd criticism smart, and stood
 Despite of all his "facts" perplex'd and doubting,
 Some with the beer in hand the facts were freely flout-
 [ing.

XXVII.

Another now in "conversation sweet,"
 Began, and spoke of times long pass'd away,
 When "prices" they were double, and complete
 And skilful workmen had their proper pay.
 E'er "scamping work" had into fashion grown,
 And master's kind to harden'd screws had wax'd;
 E'er labour's wages was a worthless bone,
 And workshops were by heartless statesmen tax'd,
 And the fair rule of right oppression had relax'd. (1)

XXVIII.

He told the young men, there had been a time
 His shoes had shining silver buckles on;
 And o'er his flowing coat of grass green prime,
 The glittering, big, bright half crown buttons shone.
 Then suddenly he stood as if in wrath;
 And drank oblivion to the by gone days
 Of silver buckles, and of good broad cloth,
 When half-crown buttons shot their sprightly rays,
 And labour had its pay; and merit had its praise.

XXIX.

But now impatient of each single story,
 The whole at once, for so their souls inclin'd,
 Broke into all the fascinating glory
 Of eager eloquence and play of mind.
 As when in parliament the "Members" join
 In rude behavior of foul coughs and groans, (2)
 And like hoarse winded paviors, combine
 To raise a roar of many sounding moans,
 As various as their tongues, so various were these tones.

XXX.

For some time rag'd the roar of many tongues :—

At length a tall one strove to gain attention,
And roaring with his loudest force of lungs,

Crav'd "silence all" to what he had to mention.
He cried aloud TOM TRUNDLE he would back,

Although his feet were knotted o'er with bunions.
To travel fifty furlongs in a sack,

For "four half gallons, tatoes, steaks, and onions,"
"Barrin" th' officiousness of police and their trun-

[cheons.

XXXI.

The bet was taken in an instant, and

The sack was introduc'd with high parade,
And TRUNDLE all obsequiously did stand,

A big faced, broad chested, square footed blade.
Triumphing then he shook his frame of brawn,

And in the sack he sprang with free good will;
Beneath his chin its mouth was neatly drawn,

And round his neck show'd like a gracefull frill,
While round about from all did high rejoicing thrill.

XXXII.

Then issuing forth with all his peers surrounded,

He stood a moment at the starting post,
With consciousness of strength he proudly bounded,

Then up the signal of a hat was toss'd,
Away he went in a swift kind of reel,

His path Nabs scouring with a frightful throng,
The gath'ring natives cheered with hearty zeal,

The brave procession as it mov'd along,
And spirit-stirring outcries rose from all the throng.

XXXIII.

The goal was in the distance seen, though yet
 Unto that spot appear'd a lengthy scope,
 But TRUNDLE's soul was busied with the bet,
 And full of perseverance, strength and hope.
 He wriggled onward ardently, while breaking
 From all his pores uprose the curling steam,
 And as he his laborious way was making,
 'He like a formless smoking mass did seem,
 Or like a tortoise dancing on its hindmost beam.

XXXIV.

Nearer, and nearer now he drew : at last,
 O, glorious moment ! swiftly forth he flung
 Himself and shot the mark of winning past,
 While all the air with pealing plaudits rung.
 He turns him round, and with his elbows graspeth
 The winning post, and stands exhausted there.
 E'en as a stranded fish for water gaspeth,
 So Trundle gasp'd for a sweet draught of air,
 And all the people then, bleated a mighty blare.

XXXV.

His friends now took him in their arms, and walk'd
 Him off to taste the sweet and well-earn'd "wittles,"
 They to the *Cat and Bagpipes* gaily stalk'd,
 To pass the day in gin and beer and skittles ;
 But some, though fairly press'd would not be seated,
 Nor did they care to join the jovial groupe,
 But took a hasty drop and then retreated,
 And from the busy hubbub strode the troop :—
 And to their own sweet whims all earnestly did stoop.

XXXVI.

Behold ! without the *Cat and Bagpipes* waiting,
 A little girl of neat and modest dress,
 Slowly she paces, the dull moments dating,
 As if she look'd for one among the press,
 Who had not kept his time with her ;—but, see !
 Her eyes, her looks, are fill'd with sudden light :
 She spies the Youth for whom she waits, and he
 Beholds the lass he loves, and at the sight,
 Toward her hastens on with love's demeanor bright.

XXXVII.

He was a 'prentice youth of lowly home,
 And she a humble tradesman's child, and they
 Had made appointment here to meet and roam,
 And taste the sweetness of a holiday.
 To see St. Paul's Cathedral, and the tomb
 Where NELSON in his Marble cabin dwells,
 To mount the airy summit of the dome,
 And see the play at night at *Sadler's Wells*,
 And all the wonders there, the wond'rous hand-bill
 [tells.

XXXVIII.

And now advancing, see ! a chosen band,
 In thoughtful and congenial knot they huddle,
 And wander through the City and the Strand,
 T' enjoy the pleasure of a "pictures fuddle" (3)
 A picture shop they gain,—now closely note
 How each unto the glass his visage brings,
 O'er *Wilkie's* graceful household stuff they gloat,
 And mighty *Martin's* high imaginings,
 And admiration then goes round in whisp'rings.

XXXIX.

Some issue forth, with gentils bred in liver,
 And line and rod, for 'tis their soul's best wish
 To sit beside a cool and silent river,
 ' And torture unto death a simple fish.
 Some seek their homes, and there in solitude,
 Over some fair creation of the brain,
 Cheer'd on by genius, zealously they brood,
 Lull'd in a splendid dream of fame or gain:
 Oh! may those visions fair, nor empty prove or vain.

XL.

Above the highest hill of heav'n, now
 The sun has risen, and his rays are streaming
 In summer's splendid and triumphant show,
 And all around with bounding life is beaming.
 Oh, glorious sun! while lofty man, indignant
 And proudly from his brother turns his head,
 Thou visitest with smiles and love benignant,
 The humblest hovel, and the lowliest shed,
 And of all earthly life is by thy bounty fed.

XLI.

Then who can blame the cramp'd up being, pent
 In airless cage, who, when he feels thy ray
 Warming his soul, breaks his imprisonment,
 And breathes the lux'ry of a sunny day.
 O, ye bright race! who can at will enjoy
 The healthful freshness of the earth and sky,
 Strive not the poor's enjoyments to destroy:—
 They are the gifts of heav'n: and He on high
 Rains blessings for the whole, on down or straw that
 [lie.

XLII.

Now strolling comes one of another grade,
 A bending artisan of aspect pale,
 Thin living o'er his brow hath cast its shade,
 And clog'd as if with chains his worn limbs trail.
 With apron tuck'd up round him, see ! he's feeding
 With cakes a child that's in his arms entwin'd,
 While his wan wife her little toddlers leading,
 In loud array comes strag'ling on behind.
 And the whole seem to drink with parchy gust the wind

XLIII.

'Tis his delight, the afternoon of one day,
 To walk out with his children and his wife,
 And no day is to him like fair *St. Monday*,
 Of all the moments of his hurried life.
 Then while his little ones are playing round him,
 Tho' worn with toil his soul pure joy partakes,
 Tho' want hath with her heavy trammels bound him,
 O'er his fall'n looks a tint of pleasure breaks,
 And all the parent then with careful love awakes.

XLIV.

But whither does his weekly ramble lead ?
 Through fields with butter cups and daisies trim ?
 O, no ! the flow'ret and the grassy mead,
 Have long since ceas'd to bud and bloom for him.
 The fields are broken up, and in their place,
 Form'd into narrow strag'ling streets, are seen
 Cold, scanty dwellings of a starvling race,
 And all around is silent, dim, and mean,
 And gone for e'er, the flow'r's the fields, and meadows
 [green.]

XLV.

Then up and down among the sunless streets,
 For other tracts are now to him denied :
 He wanders, where the showy alehouse seats
 Appear all tempting by the path-way side.
 He seats his little ones, then waiter *Ben*
 Brings him a pint , and soon it disappears;
 The measure is replenished, and then,
 Well pleased with them another pint he shares,
 And with the little tribe, then homeward he repairs.

XLVI.

Thus, thus, *St. Monday* wears away ; but, hush !
 Mehinks I hear the lords of many tomes
 Condemn as vulgar, this my song, and push
 It from them, as if fill'd with poisoning-fumes.
 'Tis true I prattle not of " drooping lilies,"
 And " green fields " in sweet sugar candy odes :—
 Of " lowing herds " or " milk maids " rural billies,
 Of " naiads " " driads " " fawns," and their abodes ;
 Nor sworded knight, nor steed bearing such cut-throat
 [loads.

XLVII.

But if those gentlemen who versify
 The *plough*, are honor'd with the laurel bough ;
 Apollo surely will not frown when I,
 Warble of those who *made* the self same plough.
 And if it is meet to sing of braggart beaus,
 Who swear and swagger in the tented fields,
 Surely I may have leave to sing of those
 Who *made* their tinsel, helmets, swords and shields :
 The artisan, who, fire, earth, air, and water wields.

XLVIII.

What could we do without the artisan?
 Surely but little, and that little weakly,
 And on a wishy-washy baby plan,
 And all would go on awkwardly and sickly.
 Without them, heroes could not rush to war,
 Or loves woo: and those with pride full blown,
 Would be but simple things; the "bench" and "bar"
 Would want their solemn wig and silken gown,
 E'en WILLIAM, our good King, would be without a
 [throne.

XLIX.

Whence springs old England's pow'r the world to lead?
 Her palaces? her splendid argosies?
 The golden lading of her ships that speed
 Like mighty spirits wing'd, on ev'ry breeze?
 The artisan, alas! he is the soul,
 The source of all her wealth, tho' little priz'd,
 From his incessant toil her treasures roll,
 And in that toil his life is sacrific'd,
 And he too is contemn'd, neglected, and despis'd.

L.

The swift Machine, what cunning master framed it?
 Who gave the mighty monster(4) "steam," its birth?
 Who to the mighty engine yok'd and tam'd it,
 And gave it pow'r o'er ocean and all earth?
 The artisan, 'twas he! then why contemn him?
 Why break his spirit, and his mind debase?
 Why in cold blood to ignorance condemn him,
 And of the gifts of heav'n rob his race?
 And for his "sweat of brow," give hunger and disgrace,

O, if the "sweat of brow" its wages had,
Then competence the artisan would bless,
His Home would pleasant be, his children glad,
His mourning chang'd to joy and happiness:
His age of strength would be untorn with care,
Untroubled too his life's last dark'ning hour,
With helpless crying offspring and despair,
For this ^{for} e'er would be his children's dow'r,
The sweetness of each fruit, the fragrance of each
[flow'r.

FINIS.

NOTES.

Page 14, Canto xxvii.

- 1.—The Author has an outhouse in the rear of the premises which he occupies, this he uses as a Workshop, it measures seven feet by ten, and its window measures three feet by four. This has been charged by the assessor of King's Taxes under the head of "Windows." The Author of course appealed, but was informed by the Commissioners that it must be paid for. Under the head of "windows," also he has been charged for four small panes in a back door. The author here takes the opportunity of bearing testimony to the vigilance of the assessor employed by the government in the district in which he resides. This man is extremely expert in detecting and valuing the rays of light as they fall from heaven, and in ascertaining the worth of bricks and mortar. Indeed the indefatigable persevering style in which he acquits himself in the business of "assessor," ought, if it has not, to obtain for him, the confidence and good will of his employers.

Page 14, Canto. xxix.

- 2.—It is a remarkable fact, but it is no less true than remarkable, that when truth, plain unvarnished truth, is spoken in a certain house, it has the effect of producing coughs, hoarseness asthmas, irritation of, and "burrs" in the throat, which operating at one, and at the same on many individuals, occasion those tones, moans, and groans, of which I have made mention in this stanza and which greatly annoy, and sometimes drown the voice of the speaker. It has been said, that truth is not to be spoken at all times, and certainly if its tendency is to create these alarming and distressing symptoms, I must subscribe to the assertion.

Page 17, Canto xxxviii.

- 3.—Those who can enjoy a "picture fuddle" will soon have an opportunity of gratifying their propensity more largely than they have hitherto been accustomed, thanks to those patriotic individuals to whom we are indebted for the "National Gallery," where all classes, I understand, are to be admitted free of expence to inspect the works of the best Masters. This in my opinion will do much to generate among the people a taste for what is correct, generous and noble. Let us hope that no evil aristocratic spirit will rise to turn this Institution from the purposes for which it was established.

Page 21., Canto L.

- 4.—I call it Monster, because it has ruined my father's and my wife's father's trade. But, reader, do not misunderstand me:—I believe the Steam Engine has the power of giving plenty to the sons of men. When it does so, I will call it angel, archangel, prince of archangels, or any other proud and sounding name, which grateful men may be pleased to bestow on it.—Until it does so, I shall be content to characterize it as a Monster. What other power would ruin a hundred families, for the solitary purpose of enriching one?