

WILL IT STAND THE
FIRE?



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WILL IT STAND THE FIRE?



THERE was in London-town a man
Who follow'd long a prosperous plan,
And he was rich, the people said,
And far and wide his fame was spread.
Though other folks their wealth might win
By silver, copper, brass, or tin,

Such trade to him was all unknown ;
 He dealt in gold, in gold alone.
 From different parts the people brought
 The different substances he bought,
 But still, whate'er they might display,
 He never would a shilling pay,
 Until, by prudence still restrain'd,
 He knew what gold the thing contain'd.
 All sorts of substances untried
 Within the fire he purified,
 Until his eyes could there behold
 Pure, unadulterated gold.

At times they brought him, less or more,
 Of dross, and earth, and sparkling ore,
 And told him, as he silent sat,
 That it was this, and it was that.
 They might have spared themselves the pain,
 For all they said they said in vain,
 Howe'er the thing might be approved
 He listen'd with a mind unmoved,
 And still prefer'd, as he drew nigher,
 The question, *Will it stand the fire?*

At times his customers demur'd
 Because he would not take their word.

The substance brought, they would uphold,
 Was nothing else but solid gold,
 'That it would every test endure
 Uninjured, unalloy'd, and pure ;
 But while of words they took their fill
 This was his steady answer still,
 Without his temper rising higher,
 Let's try it! *Will it stand the fire?*

Now, had this man believed the tale
 Of all who brought their goods for sale,
 And, without trial, been content
 With what they said, and what they sent,
 What heaps of rubbish had been sold!
 What dross would he have had for gold!
 But no! his maxim was to start
 The question all should gain by heart
 Who deal in gold, and would aspire
 To riches—*Will it stand the fire?*

But think me not so weak and frail
 To lure you with an idle tale.
 There is, and, reader, mark it well!
 A moral to the tale I tell.

A serious moral, and a truth
 To fix the wandering heart of youth,
 When glittering dust and dross arise,
 On real riches in the skies.
 The fire of which my tale has told
 May try the purity of gold,
 But there's another fire to try
 The dross of human vanity ;
 The sparkling dust that closely clings
 Unceasingly to human things ;
 A trial-flame, a day of doom,
 That shall the things of time consume ;
 For worldly gifts, and fleeting breath,
 Shall perish in the hour of death.
 Death is a trial-fire ; therein
 Shall perish all the hopes of sin :
 The glittering joys, the guilty gains,
 That gild the hour where folly reigns,
 And all the sinful ties that bind
 The wandering hearts of all mankind.

If every one that lives, alas !
 The trial-flame of death must pass !
 Put not away the solemn thought
 Till future sins have sorrows brought ;

Till age and care are on your brow,
 But rather ask the question now ;
 The thing in which you most delight,
 And fondly think of morn and night,
 The object of your heart's desire,
 Ask, reader, *Will it stand the fire ?*

You may as yet be but a child,
 With trifling hopes and toys beguiled :
 But should you peep, while rambling round
 Within the churchyard's solemn ground,
 Your eyes the resting-place will view
 Of children younger far than you.
 Then, if to-morrow, or to-day,
 Your spirit should be call'd away
 From this vain world of sin and woe,
 Where, think you, would your spirit go ?
 If trifles only are your care,
 And draw your heart from heaven, beware !
 Whate'er the toy that may delight—
 A doll, a hoop, a ball, a kite,
 Or blooming rose upon a brier,
 Ask, reader, *Will it stand the fire ?*

Think, while your eyes the world behold,
 How many metals look like gold,

Which, when inspected close, alas!
 Are worth no more than shining brass!
 And think how many glittering toys,
 And follies vain, and empty joys,
 That promise long the heart to cheer,
 Forsake us, fade, and disappear!

To lure your unsuspecting youth,
 Falsehood will wear the dress of Truth;
 And Pride depress her haughty eye,
 To personate Humility.
 Things are not what they seem! in air
 The bubbles burst that look so fair.
 Delay his promises will make.
 And Fraud and sly Deceit will take
 The air, the form, and fashion given
 To every virtue under heaven.
 But though a season they endure,
 And many an erring heart allure
 From duty's path, with influence dire,
 We know *they will not stand the fire.*

The thousand glittering things that bind
 The vain affections of mankind,

And shine with empty, proud display,
 So draw the heart from God away,—
 They boast at best a moment's breath,
 And vanish in the hour of death.

Look at the pleasures wealth commands—
 Dogs, horses, coaches, houses, lands;
 However lawful these may be,
 Enjoy'd with meek humility,
 How dangerous are they when they prove
 A hindrance to our heavenly love!
 In death they are but earthly mire,
 For they will *never stand the fire.*

“Give me thy heart,” the Saviour cries:
 Then let your fervent prayer arise,
 And humbly seek his grace and truth
 To guide you in the days of youth.
 Though you are young, and frail, and weak,
 “A bruised reed he will not break;”
 Nor will he quench, with mighty power,
 “The smoking flax” in angry hour.
 Sure as you seek with willing mind,
 So sure his mercy will you find!

Then hasten on your pilgrimage,
And foster in your youth and age
The hope of heaven through Christ alone;
For this, when other hopes are flown,
When friends, fame, riches, all expire,
THIS, reader, THIS *will stand the fire!*





JESUS ascends on high,
And sits upon his throne ;
Attending angels round him fly,
And all his greatness own.
Still for the young he prays,
And blesses them above ;
"Forbid them not," he kindly says,
And offers them his love.
His heart is still the same ;
To him may children fly ;
His gracious promise let them claim,
And on his word rely.