

# THE CROWN OF THORNS

Translated from the Latin of Bonaventura

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## I

Wilt thou truly be renowned,  
And of God Himself be crowned  
With His Grace and Honor fit?  
His the crown thou must be viewing,  
His the footsteps aye pursuing,  
Who did wear and honour it?

## II

This the King of Heaven bearing,  
Sanctified and hallow'd,<sup>1</sup> wearing  
On His sacred brow the thorn.  
In this helm the fray he greeted,  
And our ancient foe defeated—  
On the cross a victor borne.

## III

Warrior's helmet glorious,  
Laurel wreath victorious,  
Yea, and Pontiff's mitre dread.  
Once of thorny branches wound,  
Then of purest gold 'twas found  
When it graced that sainted head.

## IV

By his cruel suffering bought,  
Cruel spines to kind are wrought—  
Goodness out of badness.  
Thorns, which for our sins did grow  
Symbols of eternal woe,  
Burgeon now for gladness.

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1. For *hallowed*, perhaps *blessed*.

## V

Thorn from evil briar clov'n,  
 Crown from thorny briar wov'n,  
 For His coronation.  
 But, when guilt be washed away,  
 Gold the crown that we assay,  
 Mystic transmutation.<sup>3</sup>

## VI

Guard us, Holy Jesu, guide us;  
 Through this earthly conflict tide us,  
 Granting us heavenly renown.<sup>3</sup>  
 Erring hearts we cast before thee:  
 Take them, mould them, make them worthy  
 Of thine everlasting crown.

2.

Verse V

Original Latin of Bonaventura  
 De malis colligitur  
 Et de spinis plectitur  
 Spinea perversis:  
 Sed in surum vertitur.  
 Quando culpa tollitur,  
 Eisdem conversis

To whom or to what do "malis", "perversis" and "conversis" refer? If to "spinis" throughout, then the translation stands. If, however, "de malis" = "in the matter of the sinners", i. e. "on account of sinners", and "perversis" = "hardened sinners, i. e. "The thorn bough is plucked (to make a crown) for sinners and of thorns is woven, thorny for hardened sinners—but is turned to gold when these same (sinners) are converted"—then the following translation is preferable:

Branch from thorny briar clov'n,  
 As a crown for sinners wov'n,  
 Lost in their perversion:  
 But when guilt be purged away,  
 Gold the crown that they assay,  
 Fruits of their conversion.

3. Or, Grant us heavenly renown.