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RAM BAGH, PATIALA

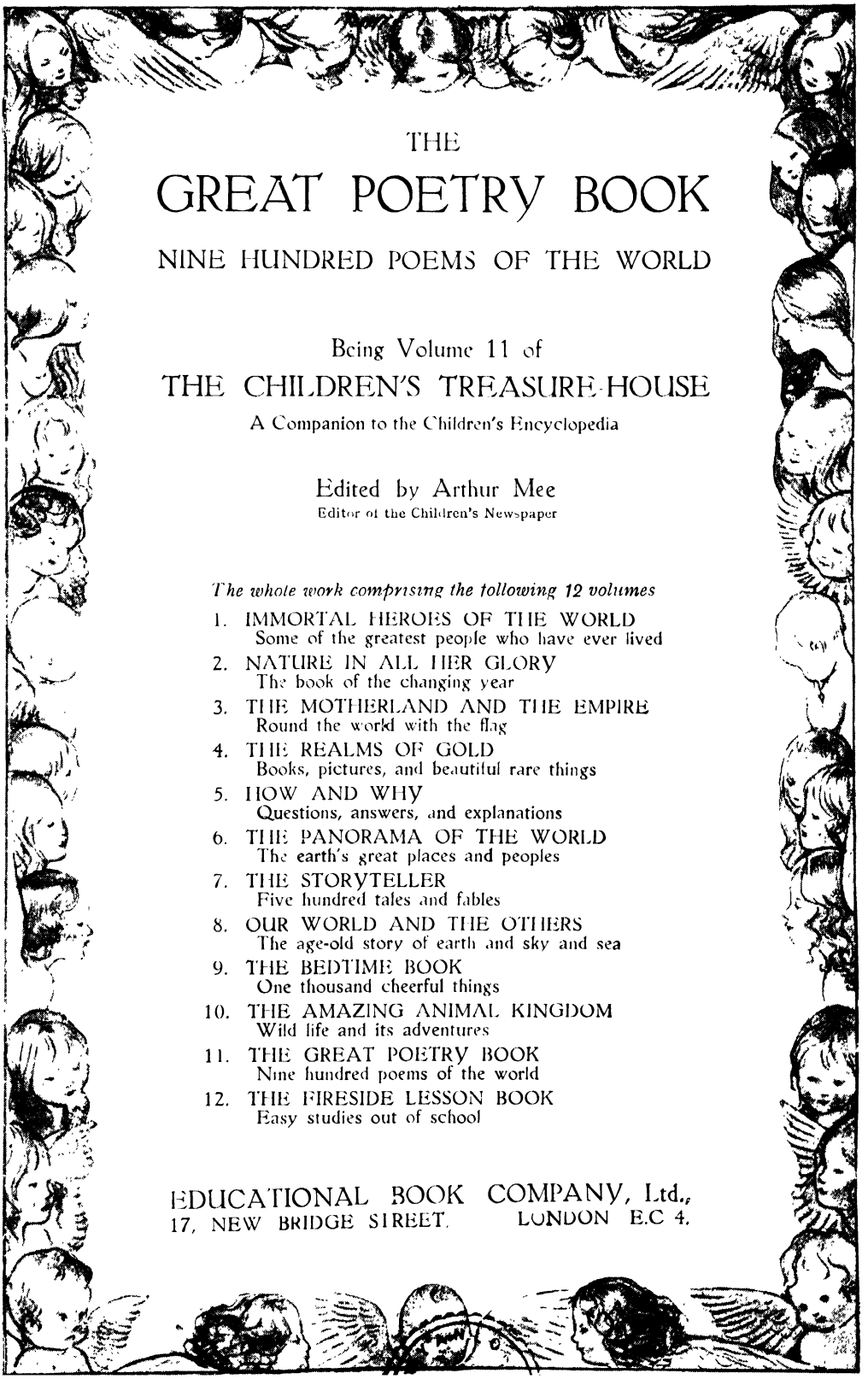
THE GREAT POETRY BOOK

To

The Poets of Every Age and Time

SINGING THE SONGS OF THE OLDEN TIME

A WANDERING MINSTREL



THE

GREAT POETRY BOOK

NINE HUNDRED POEMS OF THE WORLD

Being Volume 11 of

THE CHILDREN'S TREASURE-HOUSE

A Companion to the Children's Encyclopedia

Edited by Arthur Mee
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GOOD-MORNING AND GOOD-NIGHT

GOOD-MORNING

What says the Sun when first he pours
His light thro' yielding eastern doors?

He says, says he: "Good-morning, all!
Good-morning, flocks and herds,
Good-morning, too, my dears, to you,
Delightful little birds;
Good-morning, meadow, wood, and hill,
Good-morning, stream and flower,
Good-morning, earth, for all you're worth,
Good-morning, roof and tower."

What says the Sun when up he climbs
And hears the cock-crow and the chimes?

He says: "All hail, dear Brother Man,
Good-morning, sir and madam;
My love to all, good luck befall
The babes of Eve and Adam;
Good-morning, friend, good-morning, foe,
Good-morning, rich and poor;
Take up your load and seek the road
To heaven's shining door."

What says, at eventide, the Sun?
Either "Alas!" or else "Well done!"

HAROLD BEGBIE

GOOD-NIGHT

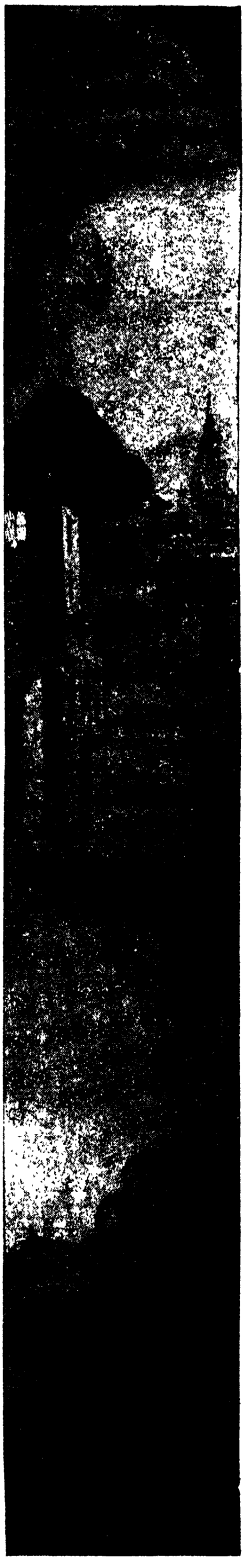
Half the world, with its hills, its trees,
its streets, and its houses,
Turns away to the dark, to the dark
where the sleep god drowses;
Half the world, with its toil, its hope, its
fear, and its cumber,
Turns from life with a sigh, and kisses
the lips of slumber.

Good-night, flower, good-night, bird,
Good-night, beast and neighbour,
Good-night, thought, and good-night, word,
Good-night, love and labour.

Good-night, lesson, good-night, toy,
Good-night, little brother,
Good-night, sorrow, good-night, joy,
Good-night, God and mother.

Half the world in the dark that shifts
like a moving billow,
Half the world like a babe asleep on a
restless pillow;
Stars in the heavens watching, light in
the sick-room burning,
Half the world in the dark, with dawn
and its toil returning.

HAROLD BEGBIE



THE HUMBLE-BEE

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) was the most profound of all American writers—a poet-philosopher; but he could stretch the simplest subject in the most simple, understanding way, as witness his journey on the path of the cheerful humble-bee. Besides delightful description that seems to interpret the very soul of the bee, there is sweet philosophy, suggesting to us the wisdom of "Seeing only what is fair, Sipping only what is sweet."

BURLY, dozing humble-bee,
Where thou art is clime to me.
Let them sail from Porto Rique,
Far-off hearts through seas to seek,
I will follow thee alone,
Thou animated, torrid-zone!
Zigzag steerer, desert cheerer,
Let me chase thy waving lines;
Keep me nearer, me thy hearer,
Singing over shrubs and vines.

Insect lover of the sun,
Joy of thy dominion!
Sailor of the atmosphere;
Swimmer through the waves of air;
Voyager of light and noon;
Epicurean of June;
Wait, I prithee, till I come
Within earshot of thy hum—
All without is martyrdom.

When the south wind, in May days,
With a net of shining haze
Silvers the horizon wall,
And, with softness touching all,
Tints the human countenance
With a colour of romance,
And, infusing subtle heats,
Turns the sod to violets,
Thou, in sunny solitudes,
Rover of the underwoods,
The green silence dost displace
With thy mellow, breezy bass.

Hot midsummer's petted crone,
Sweet to me thy drowsy tone
Tells of countless sunny hours,
Long days, and solid banks of flowers;
Of gulfs of sweetness without bound
In Indian wildernesses found;
Of Syrian peace, immortal leisure,
Firmest cheer, and bird-like pleasure.

Aught unsavoury or unclean
Hath my insect never seen;
But violets and bilberry bells,
Maple-sap and daffodils,
Grass with green flag half-mast high,
Succory to match the sky,
Columbine with horn of honey,
Scented fern, and agrimony,
Clover, catchfly, adder's-tongue,
And brier-roses, dwelt among;
All beside was unknown waste,
All was picture as he passed.

Wiser far than human seer,
Yellow-breeched philosopher!
Seeing only what is fair,
Sipping only what is sweet,
Thou dost mock at fate and care,
Leave the chaff and take the wheat.
When the fierce north-western blast
Cools sea and land so far and fast,
Thou already slumberest deep;
Woe and want thou canst outsleep;
Want and woe, which torture us,
Thy sleep makes ridiculous.

THE INFLUENCE OF BEAUTY

These are the opening lines of "Endymion," the poem by which, in 1818, John Keats made himself famous. He died in 1821. His poems are things of beauty and a joy for ever, like the lovely sights and thoughts he enumerates. Keats loved classical themes—the myths of Greek literature—and his writing has the sweetness and grace of the master-writers of the ancient tongues that inspired his poetic fancies.

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases: it will never
Pass into nothingness, but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching; yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils,
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:
And such, too, is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read;
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

TO AGE

Walter Savage Landor might well write about Age as a friend. He lived to be 89, and never gave up writing. A man of impetuous impulses, he needed age to give him mellowness.

WELCOME, old friend! These many years
Have we lived door by door:
The Fates have laid aside their shears
Perhaps for some few more.

I was indocile at an age
When better boys were taught,
But thou at length hast made me sage
If I am sage in aught.

Little I know from other men,
Too little they from me,
But thou hast pointed well the pen
That writes these lines to thee.

Thanks for expelling Fear and Hope,
One vile, the other vain;
One's scourge, the other's telescope,
I shall not see again.

Rather what lies before my feet
My notice shall engage—
He who hath braved Youth's dizzy heat
Dreads not the frost of Age.

LAUS DEO

This is a great thanksgiving to God for the abolition of slavery in America, by John Greenleaf Whittier. He was born in 1807 and died in 1892, and was all his life a friend of freedom.

IT is done!
Clang of bell and roar of gun
Send the tidings up and down.
How the belfries rock and reel!
How the great guns, peal on peal,
Fling the joy from town to town!

Ring, O bells!
Every stroke exulting tells
Of the burial hour of crime.
Loud and long, that all may hear,
Ring for every listening ear
Of Eternity and Time!

Let us kneel:
God's own voice is in that peal,
And this spot is holy ground.
Lord, forgive us! What are we,
That our eyes this glory see,
That our ears have heard the sound!

For the Lord
On the whirlwind is abroad;
In the earthquake He has spoken;
He has smitten with His thunder
The iron walls asunder.
And the gates of brass are broken!

Loud and long
Lift the old exulting song;
Sing with Miriam by the sea
He has cast the mighty down;
Horse and rider sink and drown;
"He hath triumphed gloriously!"

Did we dare,
In our agony of prayer,
Ask for more than He has done?
When was ever His right hand
Over any time or land
Stretched as now beneath the sun?

How they pale,
Ancient myth and song and tale,
In this wonder of our days,
When the cruel rod of war
Blossoms white with righteous law,
And the wrath of man is praise!

Blotted out!
All within and all about
Shall a fresher life begin;
Freer breathe the universe
As it rolls its heavy curse
On the dead and buried sin!

It is done!
In the circuit of the sun
Shall the sound thereof go forth.
It shall bid the sad rejoice,
It shall give the dumb a voice,
It shall belt with joy the earth!

Ring and swing,
Bells of joy! On morning's wing
Send the song of praise abroad!
With a sound of broken chains
Tell the nations that He reigns,
Who alone is Lord and God!

CLARIBEL

This poem, published in the first volume that contained poems only by Alfred Tennyson, who previously had published poems with two of his brothers, was an exercise in verbal melody. It is a poem of sweet sounds. In it we can see the poet's watchfulness of flower and tree, wind and wave, bird and insect, which was perfected in after years. The lintwhite is the linnet, and the mavis is the blackbird.

WHERE Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall:
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone:
At noon the wild bee hummeth
About the mossed headstone:
At midnight the moon cometh,
And looketh down alone.
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
The callow throstle lispeth,
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,
The babbling runnel crispeth,
The hollow grot replieth
Where Claribel low-lieth.

THE INVITATION

This delightful welcome to the earliest promise of Spring was written by Shelley for his wife only a short time before his death, and was published by her later. No poet ever lived more whole-heartedly with Nature than Shelley, not even Chaucer, who was our first great poet of the outdoor world.

BEST and brightest, come away!
Fairer far than this fair Day,
Which, like thee to those in sorrow,
Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
To the rough Year just awake
In its cradle on the brake.

The brightest hour of unborn Spring,
Through the Winter wandering,
Found, it seems, the halcyon Morn
To hoar February born.
Bending from Heaven, in azure mirth,
It kissed the forehead of the Earth,
And smiled upon the silent sea,
And bade the frozen streams be free,
And waked to music all their fountains,
And breathed upon the frozen mountains,
And like a prophetess of May
Strewed flowers upon the barren way,
Making the wintry world appear
Like one on whom thou smilest, dear.

Away, away, from men and towns,
To the wild wood and the downs—
To the silent wilderness
Where the soul need not repress
Its music lest it should not find
An echo in another mind,
While the touch of Nature's art
Harmonises heart to heart.
I leave this notice on my door
For each accustomed visitor:
"I am gone into the fields
To take what this sweet hour yields—
Reflection, you may come tomorrow,
Sit by the fireside with Sorrow.
You with the unpaid bill, Despair,
You tiresome verse-reciter, Care,
I will pay you in the grave,
Death will listen to your stave.
Expectation, too, be off!
Today is for itself enough;
Hope, in pity mock not Woe
With smiles, nor follow where I go;
Long having lived on thy sweet food,
At length I find one moment's good
After long pain—with all your love,
This you never told me of."

Radiant Sister of the Day,
Awake! arise! and come away!
To the wild woods and the plains,
And the pools where winter rains
Image all their roof of leaves,
Where the pine its garland weaves
Of sapless green and ivy dun
Round stems that never kiss the sun;
Where the lawns and pastures be,
And the sandhills of the sea;
Where the melting hoar-frost wets
The daisy-star that never sets,
And wind-flowers, and violets,
Which yet join not scent to hue,
Crown the pale year weak and new;
When the night is left behind
In the deep east, dun and blind,
And the blue noon is over us,
And the multitudinous
Billows murmur at our feet,
Where the earth and ocean meet,
And all things seem only one
In the universal sun.

ALMOND BLOSSOM

The almond is one of the earliest trees to bloom, its flowers appearing before its leaves. This captivating forwardness is expressed brightly and truthfully by Sir Edwin Arnold in these lines. The poet married a lady of the race that of all others, perhaps, loves flowers the most—a Japanese.

BLOSSOM of the almond-trees,
April's gift to April's bees,
Birthday ornament of spring,
Flora's fairest daughterling;
Coming when no flowerets dare
Trust the cruel outer air;
When the royal king-cup bold
Dares not don his coat of gold;
And the sturdy blackthorn spray
Keeps his silver for the May;
Coming when no flowerets would,
Save thy lowly sisterhood,
Early violets, blue and white,
Dying for their love of light.
Almond blossom, sent to teach us
That the spring days soon will reach us,
Lest, with longing over-tried,
We die as the violets died—
Blossom, clouding all the tree
With thy crimson 'broidery,
Long before a leaf of green
On the bravest bough is seen;
Ah! when winter winds are swinging
All thy red bells into ringing,
With a bee in every bell,
Almond bloom, we greet thee well.

SONG

The freedom of the winds and waters was a favourite thought of Tennyson's. This is how he first expressed it. Later he cast it into graver forms. No poet has found more adjectives for the sea than Tennyson. Here we meet with two which he used again and again—crispèd and ridgèd.

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,
Leaning upon the ridgèd sea,
Breathed low around the rolling earth
With mellow preludes, "We are free."
The streams through many a lilied row
Down-carolling to the crispèd sea,
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow
Atween the blossoms, "We are free."

THE AFRICAN CHIEF

We can never think too deeply on the horrors of slavery, and the first great claim of all humanity of freedom. This picture of what has been done in the past for gain, in brutal disregard of men's instinct for liberty, is from the pen of the American poet William Cullen Bryant, who lived and wrote when slavery was practised and defended by white men.

CHAINED in the market-place he stood,
A man of giant frame,
Amid the gathering multitude,
That shrunk to hear his name.
All stern of look and strong of limb,
His dark eyes on the ground;
And silently they gazed on him,
As on a lion bound.

Vainly but well that chief had fought,
He was a captive now,
Yet pride, that fortune humbles not,
Was written on his brow.
The scars his dark, broad bosom wore
Showed warrior true and brave;
A prince among his tribe before,
He could not be a slave.

Then to his conqueror he spake:
"My brother is a king;
Undo this necklace from my neck,
And take this bracelet ring,
And send me where my brother reigns,
And I will fill thy hands,
With store of ivory from the plains,
And gold-dust from the sands."

"Not for thy ivory nor thy gold
Will I unbind thy chain;
That bloody hand shall never hold
The battle-spear again.
A price that nation never gave
Shall yet be paid for thee;
For thou shalt be the Christian's slave,
In lands beyond the sea."

Then wept the warrior chief, and bade
To shred his locks away;
And, one by one, each heavy braid
Before the victor lay.
Thick were the platted locks, and long,
And closely hidden there
Shone many a wedge of gold among
The dark and crispèd hair.

"Look, feast thy greedy eye with gold,
Long kept for secret need;
Take it—thou asketh sums untold—
And say that I am freed.
Take it—my wife, the long, long day,
Weeps by the cocoa-tree,
And my young children leave their play
And ask in vain for me."

"I take thy gold, but I have made
Thy fetters fast and strong,
And ween that by the cocoa-shade,
Thy wife will wait thee long."
Strong was the agony that shook
The captive's frame to hear,
And the proud meaning of his look
Was changed to mortal fear.

His heart was broken—crazed his brain,
At once his eye grew wild;
He struggled fiercely with his chain,
Whispered, and wept, and smiled;
Yet wore not long those fatal bands,
And once, at shut of day,
They drew him forth upon the sands,
The foul hyena's prey.

ON A PICTURE

These verses on an Italian peasant woman and her family are written by Mrs. Hemans, whose short domestic poems, full of simple, tender feeling, made her for half a century the most popular English woman poet. She died in middle life in 1835. In this poem she makes a selection of the charms of Italy—its glorious skies, rich fruits, and fragrant trees—but gives the palm to the tender motherhood of its lovely peasant women.

NOT for the myrtle, and not for the vine,
Whose grape, like a gem, is the sunbeam's shrine;
And not for the deep blue heaven, that showers
Joy on thy spirit, like light on the flowers;
And not for the breath of the citron-trees,
Fair Peasant! I call thee not blest for these.

Not for the beauty spread over thy brow,
Though round thee a gleam, as of spring, it throw;
And not for the lustre that laughs from thine eye,
Like a dark stream's flash to the summer sky,
Though the South in its riches nought lovelier sees—
Fair Peasant! I call thee not blest for these.

But for these breathing and loving things—
For the boy's fond arm that around thee clings;
For the sunny cheek on thy lap that glows,
In the peace of a trusting child's repose;
For the hearts whose home is thy gentle breast—
Oh, richly I call thee, and deeply blest!

KATE

Not poetry, perhaps, but verse, and with a touch of good humour and originality which will excuse its presence here.

THERE'S something in the name of Kate
Which many will condemn ;
But listen, now, while I relate
The traits of some of them.

Communi-Kate's intelligent,
As we may well suppose ;
Her fruitful mind is ever bent
On telling all she knows.

There's intri-Kate, she's so obscure
'Tis hard to find her out,
For she is often very sure
To put your wits to rout.

Prevari-Kate's a surly maid,
She's sure to have her way ;
The cavilling, contrary jade
Objects to all you say.

There's alter-Kate, a perfect pest,
Much given to dispute ;
Her prattling tongue can never rest,
You cannot her refute.

Then dislo-Kate is quite a fret,
Who fails to gain her point ;
Her case is quite unfortunate
And sorely out of joint.

Equivo-Kate no one will woo—
The thing would be absurd ;
She is so faithless and untrue,
You cannot take her word.

There's vindi-Kate, she's good and true,
And strives with all her might
Her duty faithfully to do
And battles for the right.

There's rusti-Kate, a country lass,
Quite fond of rural scenes ;
She likes to ramble through the grass
And through the evergreens.

Of all the maidens you can find,
There's none like edu-Kate,
Because she elevates the mind
And aims at something great.

LITTLE ORPHANT ANNIE

We all know James Whitcomb Riley, whose loving presence the world has now lost, and we should all know "Little Orphant Annie," who "came to our house to stay." We need not be afraid of goblins, but little Orphant Annie's words are good for us all. Something, some misfortune of some sort, really will get us one of these days "if we don't watch out."

LITTLE Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay,
An' wash the cups an' saucers up, an' brush the crumbs away.
An' shoo the chickens off the porch, an' dust the hearth an' sweep,
An' make the fire, an' bake the bread, an' earn her board an' keep ;
An' all us other children, when the supper-things is done,
We set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun
A-list'nin' to the witch tales 'at Annie tells about,
An' the gobble-uns 'at gits you
Ef you don't watch out !

Onc't there was a little boy wouldn't say his pray'rs,
An' when he went to bed 'at night, away upstairs,
His mamma heerd him holler, an' his daddy heerd him bawl,
An' when they turned the kivvers down, he wasn't there at all !
An' they seek'd him in the rafter-room, an' cubby-hole, an' press,
An' seek'd him up the chimbly-flue, an' ev'rywheres, I guess ;
But all they ever found was thist, his pants an' roundabout !
An' the gobble-uns 'll git you
Ef you don't watch out !

An' one time a little girl 'ud allus laugh an' grin,
An' make fun of ever'one an' all her blood an' kin,
An' onc't when there was "company," an' ole folks was there,
She mocked 'em an' shocked 'em, an' said she didn't care !
An' thist as she kicked her heels, an' turn't to run an' hide,
There was two great big black things a standin' by her side,
An' they snatched her through the ceilin' 'fore she knowed what she's about !
An' the gobble-uns 'll git you
Ef you don't watch out !

An' little Orphant Annie says, when the blaze is blue,
An' the lamp-wick splutters, an' the wind goes woo-oo !
An' you hear the crickets quiet, an' the moon is grey,
An' the lightnin'-bugs in dew is all squenched away—
You'd better mind yer parents, an' yer teachers fond an' dear,
An' churish them 'at loves you, an' dry the orphant's tear,
An' he'p the pore an' needy ones 'at clusters all about,
Er the gobble-uns 'll git you
Ef you don't watch out !

MYSTERY

These striking lines by Louis Untermeyer put in the simplest way the transcendent mystery of the human soul.

THREE mysteries there will always be—
The changeless soul of the changeless sea,
The riddle of God in flower and thorn,
And the mind of a child just newly born.

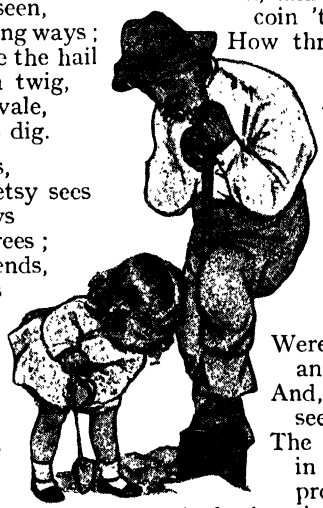
And the last of these is the greatest still,
For the sea can be plumbed to its depths at will,
And God may be found in the loneliest wild,
But who shall fathom the mind of a child?

EFFANY

One of the most graceful writers of verse today is Helen Parry Eden, a daughter of Judge Parry, himself a poet. Here is a charming example of her style in a description of the busyness in the garden of an aged gardener and a little lassie who is his friend. Bright and tender, this beautiful poem closes suitably with a touch of life's sadness.

WHEN elm-buds turn from red to green,
And growing lambs more staidly gaze,
And brighter nettle-tops are seen,
Along the hedgerow's rambling ways;
When leaves unclose where late the hail
Rustled in naked hawthorn twig,
April comes laughing up the vale,
And Effany comes round to dig.

Aloof among her nursery toys,
From her high casement Betsy sees
His vellum-coloured corduroys
Stirring behind the apple-trees;
Clutching her trowel she descends,
With unimagined projects big,
For Effany and she are friends,
And she helps Effany to dig.



Deep in the flowering currant rows,
The robin twitters gentle mirth,
Where Effany with Betsy goes,
Triumphant o'er the new-turned earth;
And the wind wanders out and in,
As doubting which it loves the best—
The grizzled stubble round his chin,
Or her beruffled golden crest.

His coat, lined with carnation red,
Hangs in the plum-tree's forked boughs.
Till sun is low and the day sped,
And Betsy called into the house;
He scrapes his spade, her trowel she,
She looks and lingers, loath to start
With little earth-bound feet to tea,
He takes his coat down to depart.

Half musing on the little maid,
He trudges toward the coming night,
Stooping beneath his shouldered spade,
To where across the curtained light,
With leaves upon its fiery fold,
His wife's thin shadow falls alone—
For she and Effany are old,
And all their little ones are gone.

THE WORLD IS FULL OF BEAUTY

The writer of these graceful lines of gracious truth was Gerald Massey, who began life as a working man, but by his writings gained an honourable position among Victorian minor poets.

THERE lives a voice within me, a guest-angel of my heart;
And its sweet lispings win me till the tears a-trembling start.
Up evermore it springeth, like some magic melody,
And evermore it singeth this sweet song of songs to me:
This world is full of beauty, as other worlds above;
And, if we did our duty, it might be full of love.

If faith, and hope, and kindness passed as coin 'twixt heart and heart,
How through the eyes' tear-blindness should the sudden soul upstart!
The dreary, dim, and desolate should wear a sunny bloom,
And love should spring from buried hate like flowers from winter's tomb.
This world is full of beauty, as other worlds above;
And, if we did our duty, it might be full of love.

Were truth our uttered language, angels might talk with men,
And, God-illumined, earth should see the golden age again;
The burdened heart should soar in mirth, like morn's young prophet-lark,
And misery's last tear wept on earth quench hell's last cunning spark.
This world is full of beauty, as other worlds above;
And, if we did our duty, it might be full of love.

The leaf-tongues of the forest, and the flower-lips of the sod,
The happy birds that hymn their raptures in the ear of God,
The summer wind that bringeth music over land and sea,
Have each a voice that singeth this sweet song of songs to me:
This world is full of beauty, as other worlds above;
And, if we did our duty, it might be full of love.

THE NURSERY RHYMES OF A TINKER.

These rhymes were written over 200 years ago by a famous tinker. The world knows John Bunyan as the author of "The Pilgrim's Progress," but few people know that he wrote a book of country rhymes for boys and girls. Some of them are very quaint, with old-fashioned morals, which are not given here.

THE BEE

The bee goes out, and honey home doth bring;
And some who seek that honey find a sting.
Now, wouldst thou have the honey and be free
From stinging; in the first place kill the bee.

THE SUN'S REFLECTION

Look yonder, ah! methinks mine eyes do see
Clouds edged with silver, as fine garments be!
They look as if they saw that golden face,
That makes black clouds most beautiful with grace.

THE MOLE IN THE GROUND

The mole's a creature very smooth and slick,
She digs in the dirt, but 'twill not on her stick.
Earth's the mole's element, she can't abide
To be above ground, dirt heaps are her pride.
Poor, silly mole, that thou shouldst love to be,
Where thou, nor sun, nor moon, nor stars can see.

THE FLY AT THE CANDLE

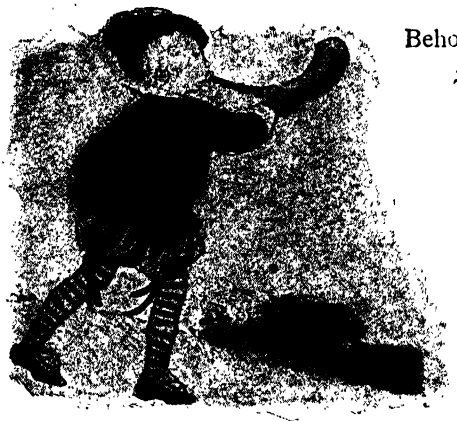
What ails this fly thus desperately to enter
A combat with the candle? Will she venture
To clash at light? Away, thou silly fly!
Thus doing, thou wilt burn thy wings and die.
But 'tis a folly her advice to give,
She'll kill the candle, or she will not live.
Slap, says she, at it; then she makes retreat;
So wheels about and doth her blows repeat.
But now, behold, the candle takes the fly,
And holds her till she doth by burning die.

THE LARK AND THE FOWLER

Thou simple bird, what mak'st thou here to play?
Look, there's the fowler, prithee come away.
Dost not behold the net? Look, there 'tis spread;
Venture a little farther, thou art dead.

Is there not room enough in all the field
For thee to play in, but thou needs must yield
To the deceitful glittering of a glass,
Placed betwixt nets to bring thy death to pass?

Bird, if thou art so much for dazzling light,
Look, there's the sun above thee, dart upright!
Thy nature is to soar up to the sky,
Why wilt thou come down to the nets and die?



THE POST-BOY

Behold this post-boy, with what haste and speed
He travels on the road ; and there is need
That he so does, his business calls for haste.
For should he in his journey now be cast,
His life for that default might hap to go ;
Yea, and the kingdom come to ruin too.
Stages are for him fixed, his hour is set,
He has a horn to sound, that none may check
Him in his haste, or give him stop or stay.
Then, post-boy, blow thy horn, and go thy way.

THE HORSE IN THE MILL

Horses that work in th' mill must hoodwinked be,
For they'll be sick or giddy if they see.
But keep them blind enough, and they will go
That way which would a seeing horse undo

A PENNY LOAF

Thy price one penny is, in time of plenty ;
In famine doubled 'tis, from one to twenty.
Yea, no man knows what price on thee to set,
When there is but one penny loaf to get.

THE BOY AND HIS WATCH

This watch my father did on me bestow,
A golden one it is, but 'twill not go,
Unless it be at an uncertainty ;
But as good none, as one to tell a lie.
When 'tis high day, my hand will stand at nine ;
I think there's no man's watch so bad as mine.
Sometimes 'tis sullen, 'twill not go at all,
And yet 'twas never broke, nor had a fall.

ON THE CACKLING OF A HEN

The hen, so soon as she an egg doth lay,
Spreads the fame of her doing where'er she may.
About the yard she cackling now doth go,
To tell what 'twas she at her nest did do.

Just thus it is with some professing men,
If they do ought that good is, like our hen,
They can't but cackle on't, where'er they go,
What their right hand doeth, their left hand must know.

THE DULL BOY AT HIS BOOK

Some boys have wit enough to sport and play,
Who at their books are blockheads day by day.
Some men are arch enough at any vice,
But dunces in the way to Paradise.

THE VICAR OF BRAY

This is one of the most famous pieces of scorn in all the world, the scorn of a man who was all things to all men as long as he could keep his post—and his salary. He would be a High Churchman, a Roman, a Tory, or a Whig, or anything else that it paid him to be, and he put on his principles as he put on his coat. Honest men have nothing but scorn and contempt for men like the vicar of this old song.

IN good King Charles's golden days,
When loyalty no harm meant,
A zealous High Churchman was I,
And so I got preferment,
To teach my flock, I never missed,
Kings were by God appointed,
And lost all those that dare resist,
Or touch the Lord's anointed.
And this is law that I'll maintain,
Until my dying day, Sir,
That whatsoever king shall reign,
I'll still be Vicar of Bray, Sir.

When royal James possessed the crown,
And Popery came in fashion,
The penal laws I hooted down,
And read the Declaration;
The Church of Rome I found would fit
Full well my constitution;
And I had been a Jesuit
But for the Revolution.

When William was our king declared,
To ease the nation's grievance,
With this new wind about I steered,
And swore to him allegiance.
Old principles I did revoke,
Set conscience at a distance;
Passive obedience was a joke,
A jest was non-resistance.

When royal Anne became our queen,
The Church of England's glory,
Another face of things was seen,
And I became a Tory.
Occasional conformists base,
I blamed their moderation;
And thought the Church in danger was,
By such prevarication.

When George in pudding-time came o'er,
And moderate men looked big, Sir,
My principles I changed once more,
And so became a Whig, Sir;
And thus preferment I procured
From our new faith's defender;
And almost every day abjured
The Pope and the Pretender.

Th' illustrious house of Hanover,
And Protestant succession,
To them I do allegiance swear—
While they can hold possession;
For in my faith and loyalty,
I never more will falter,
And George my lawful king shall be
Until the times do alter.
And this is law that I'll maintain,
Until my dying day, Sir,
That whatsoever king shall reign,
I'll still be Vicar of Bray, Sir.

MY NANIE, O

Nanie is one of the simplest and sweetest of all the figures in Robert Burns's poems. "Warl's gear" means "world's wealth."

BEHIND yon hills, where Lugar flows,
'Mang moors an' mosses many, O,
The wintry sun the day has closed,
And I'll awa to Nanie, O.
The westlin wind blaws loud an' shrill;
The night's baith mirk and rainy, O;
But I'll get my plaid, an' out I'll steal,
An' oure the hill to Nanie, O.
My Nanie's charming, sweet, an' young;
Nae artfu' wiles to win ye, O;
May ill befa' the flattering tongue
That wad beguile my Nanie, O!
Her face is fair, her heart is true,
As spotless as she's bonie, O;
The opening gowan, wat wi' dew,
Nae purer is than Nanie, O.
A country lad is my degree,
An' few there be that ken me, O;
But what care I how few they be?
I'm welcome aye to Nanie, O.
My riches a's my penny-fee,
An' I maun guide it cannie O;
But warl's gear ne'er troubles me.
My thoughts are a' my Nanie, O.
Our auld guidman delights to view
His sheep an' kye thrive bonie, O;
But I'm as blithe that hauds his pleugh,
An' hae nae care but Nanie, O.
Come weel, come woe, I care na by,
I'll tak' what Heaven will send me, O;
Nae ither care in life have I
But live an' love my Nanie, O.

THE TEST

Time is the only true test of vital verse. In the end it must destroy all but the best. Can we tell which of a poet's thoughts, if any, are indestructible? That is the problem set us in these quaint lines by Emerson, who, of all American writers, has the most piercing poetical insight—in flashes.

I HUNG my verses in the wind,
Time and tide their faults may find.
All were winnowed through and through
Five lines lasted sound and true;
Five were smelted in a pot
Than the South more fierce and hot;
These the siroc could not melt,
Fire their fiercer flaming felt,
And the meaning was more white
Than July's meridian light.
Sunshine cannot bleach the snow,
Nor time unmake what poets know.
Have you eyes to find the five
Which five hundred did survive?

FORBEARANCE

Of all the men known to the world produced by America, Ralph Waldo Emerson was the serenest soul, and most nobly gentle in bearing; and this is how he described the manhood, shaped by a fine restraint, which he admired.

HAST thou named all the birds without a gun?
Loved the wood-rose, and left it on its stalk?
At rich men's tables eaten bread and pulse?
Unarmed, faced danger with a heart of trust?
And loved so well a high behaviour,
In man or maid, that thou from speech refrained,
Nobility more nobly to repay?
O, be my friend, and teach me to be thine.

TERMINUS

Here Ralph Waldo Emerson, an aged man, hearing the voice of prudence advising him to take things easily, says he will do in old age what he did in fullest manhood—obey the promptings of his best self. In reply he receives the assurance that such a spirit will carry him safe to the end of life.

IT is time to be old,
To take in sail;
The god of bounds,
Who sets to seas a shore,
Came to me in his fatal rounds,
And said: "No more!
No farther shoot
Thy broad ambitious branches, and thy root.
Fancy departs: no more invent;
Contract thy firmament
To compass of a tent.
There's not enough for this and that,
Make thy option which of two;
Economise the failing river,
Not the less revere the Giver,
Leave the many and hold the few.
Timely wise accept the terms,
Soften the fall with wary foot;
A little while
Still plan and smile,
And—fault of novel germs—
Mature the unfallen fruit.
Curse, if thou wilt, thy sires,
Bad husbands of their fires,
Who, when they gave thee breath,
Failed to bequeath
The needful sinew stark as once,
The Beresark marrow to thy bones,
But left a legacy of ebbing veins,
Inconstant heat and nerveless reins—
Amid the Muses, left thee deaf and dumb,
Amid the gladiators, halt and numb."
As the bird trims her to the gale,
I trim myself to the storm of time,
I man the rudder, reef the sail,
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime;
"Lowly faithful, banish fear,
Right onward drive unharmed;
The port, well worth the cruise, is near,
And every wave is charmed."

BALDER'S WIFE

Alice Cary, the painter in words of this eerily fanciful picture, lived between 1820 and 1871 in the United States, and wrote poems and domestic stories with her sister Phœbe, who finds a place in a hundred hymn-books through her hymns.

HER casement like a watchful eye
From the face of the wall looks down,
Lashed round with ivy vines so dry,
And with ivy leaves so brown.
Her golden head in her lily hand
Like a star in the spray o' the sea,
And wearily rocking to and fro,
She sings so sweet and she sings so low
To the little babe on her knee.
But let her sing what tune she may,
Never so light and never so gay,
It slips and slides and dies away
To the moan of the willow water.

Like some bright honey-hearted rose
That the wild wind rudely mocks, [close
She blooms from the dawn to the day's sweet
Hemmed in with a world of rocks.

The livelong night she doth not stir,
But keeps at her casement lorn,
And the skirts of the darkness shine with her
As they shine with the light o' the morn.
And all who pass may hear her lay,
But let it be what tune it may,
It slips and slides and dies away
To the moan of the willow water.

And there, within that one-eyed tower,
Lashed round with the ivy brown,
She droops like some unpitied flower
That the rainfall washes down:
The damp o' the dew in her golden hair,
Her cheek like the spray o' the sea,
And wearily rocking to and fro,
She sings so sweet and she sings so low
To the little babe on her knee.
But let her sing what tune she may,
Never so glad and never so gay,
It slips and slides and dies away
To the moan of the willow water.

NOT A WORD OF FEAR

Here is one of the wise little philosophies of Walter Savage Landor, on the calm and peace and fearlessness of death.

DEATH stands above me, whispering low
I know not what into my ear:
Of this strange language all I know
Is, there is not a word of fear.

THE WEED'S COUNSEL

This charming poem, telling how love in the heart and a delight in the sights and sounds of Nature will cheer us on our way through life, is by Bliss Carman, a living Canadian poet.

Said a traveller by the way
Pausing, "What hast thou to say,
Flower by the dusty road,
That would ease a mortal's load?"

Traveller, hearken unto me!
I will tell thee how to see
Beauties in the earth and sky
Hidden from the careless eye.
I will tell thee how to hear
Nature's music wild and clear—
Songs of midday and of dark
Such as many never mark,
Lyrics of creation sung
Ever since the world was young,
And thereafter thou shalt know
Neither weariness nor woe.
Thou shalt see the dawn unfold
Artistries of rose and gold,
And the sunbeams on the sea
Dancing with the wind for glee.
The red lilies of the moors
Shall be torches on the floors,
Where the field-lark lifts his cry
To rejoice the passer-by
In a wide world rimmed with blue,
Lovely as when time was new.
And thereafter thou shalt fare
Light of foot and free from care.

I will teach thee how to find
Lost enchantments of the mind,
All about thee never guessed
By indifferent unrest.
Thy distracted thoughts shall learn
Patience from the roadside fern,
And a sweet philosophy
From the flowering locust tree—
While thy heart shall not disdain
The consolation of the rain.
Not an acre but shall give
Of its strength to help thee live.

With the many-wintered sun
Shall thy hardy course be run,
And the bright new moon shall be
A lamp to thy felicity.
When green-mantled spring shall come
Past thy door with flute and drum,
And when over wood and swamp
Autumn trails her scarlet pomp,
No misgiving shalt thou know,
Passing glad to rise and go.

So thy days shall be unrolled
Like a wondrous cloth of gold.
When grey twilight with her star
Makes a heaven that is not far,
Touched with shadows and with dreams,
Thou shalt hear the woodland streams
Singing through the starry night
Holy anthems of delight.
So the ecstasy of earth
Shall refresh thee as at birth,
And thou shalt arise each morn
Radiant with a soul new-born.

And this wisdom of a day
None shall ever take away.

What the secret, what the clue
The wayfarer must pursue?
Only one thing he must have
Who would share these transports brave.
Love within his heart must dwell
Like a bubbling roadside well
For a spring to quicken thought,
Else my counsel comes to naught.
For without that quickening trust
We are less than roadside dust.
This, O traveller, is my creed—
All the wisdom of the weed!

Then the traveller set his pack
Once more on his dusty back,
And trudged on for many a mile
Fronting fortune with a smile.

THE MOORLAND WELL

These lines in praise of sparkling water are by Allen Clarke, a Lancashire journalist who knows both sides of Lancashire and has written books on each. Years ago he wrote a terrible little book on life in the mills in Lancashire. Now he has completed two volumes on the windmill land of Lancashire. It is full of human interest, and splendidly described in these books on "Windmill Land," published by J. M. Dent.

I've sampled the ales that make merry and mad,
And the spirits that turn men crazy,
But the heavenliest drink that ever I had
Is the drink of the lark and the daisy—
Pure moorland water, milk of the skies,
Cream of the clouds and the weather,
Bright with the sun as a maiden's eyes,
And sweet with the honey of heather.

I've sampled the wines that muddle the mind,
The liquors that fuddle the senses,
All the concoctions that make men blind
To consequence and expenses;
They may be alluring, they may have a spell,
But there's mischief in their charming,
While the witchery of the moorland well
Makes happiness without harming.

Fresh as the flowers and cool as the grass
That grow where the rindle tinkles
Is the fountain where the farmer's lass
Fills her pail with dimples and twinkles;
Distilled by the fairies in healthy hills,
And with mountain flavours mated,
The water of the moorland rills
Is the jolliest drink created.

THE MILKMAID

This little sketch of simple country life is by Thomas Nabbes, a writer of masques in the generation after Shakespeare's. Here the word cow takes the old country pronunciation—coo.

WHAT a dainty life the milkmaid leads,
When over the flowery meads
She dabbles in the dew
And sings to her cow,
And feels not the pain
Of love or disdain!
She sleeps in the night, though she toils in the day,
And merrily passeth her time away.

CONTENT AND RICH

The Great War led many people to think afresh about the value of a life of simplicity and content, and to ask themselves what is best worth having in the world. That question has been discussed often by the poets, and the decision has always been in favour of contentment, with great moderation, for there is nothing poetical in the accumulation of vulgar riches or the boasts of showy pride. One of the fullest and best outlines of a life of wise happiness is sketched by Robert Southwell, a poet who was contemporary with Shakespeare. "Silly" (verse 2) means simple or plain. The word has changed its meaning in the last three hundred years. "A Mean" (verse 4) signifies a midway position. "Sith" (verse 9) is the old form of "since." Tear, to rend, was pronounced so as to rhyme with fear. The "foe" (verse 13) is the poet's self—his own unsatisfied nature.

I DWELL in Grace's court,
Enriched with Virtue's rights:
Faith guides my wit! Love leads my will!
Hope, all my mind delights!

In lowly vales, I mount
To Pleasure's highest pitch!
My silly shroud true Honour brings!
My poor estate is rich!

My Conscience is my crown!
Contented thoughts, my rest!
My heart is happy in itself;
My bliss is in my breast!

Enough, I reckon wealth!
A Mean, the surest lot:
That lies too high for base contempt;
Too low for envy's shot.

My wishes are but few;
All easy to fulfil!
I make the limits of my power
The bounds unto my will!

I have no hopes but one,
Which is of heavenly reign!
Effects attained, or not desired
All lower hopes refrain!

I feel no care of coin;
Well-doing is my wealth!
My mind to me an empire is,
While grace affordeth health.

I clip high-climbing thoughts,
The wings of swelling pride!
Their fall is worst, that from the height
Of greatest honour slide!

Sith sails of largest size
The storm doth soonest tear,
I bear so low and small a sail
As freeth me from fear!

I wrestle not with rage,
While fury's flame doth burn;
It is in vain to stop the stream,
Until the tide doth turn:

But when the flame is out,
And ebbing wrath doth end,
I turn a late enraged foe
Into a quiet friend!

And taught with often proof,
A tempered calm I find
To be most solace to itself,
Best cure for angry mind!

Spare diet is my fare;
My clothes, more fit than fine!
I know I feed and clothe a foe,
That, pampered, would repine!

I envy not their hap,
Whom favour doth advance!
I take no pleasure in their pain,
That have less happy chance!

To rise by others' fall,
I deem a losing gain!
All states, with others' ruin built,
To ruin run amain!

No change of Fortune's calms
Can cast my comforts down!
When Fortune smiles, I smile to think
How quickly she will frown!

And when, in froward mood,
She proves an angry foe,
Small gain I found to let her come,
Less loss to let her go!

AN AUTOGRAPH

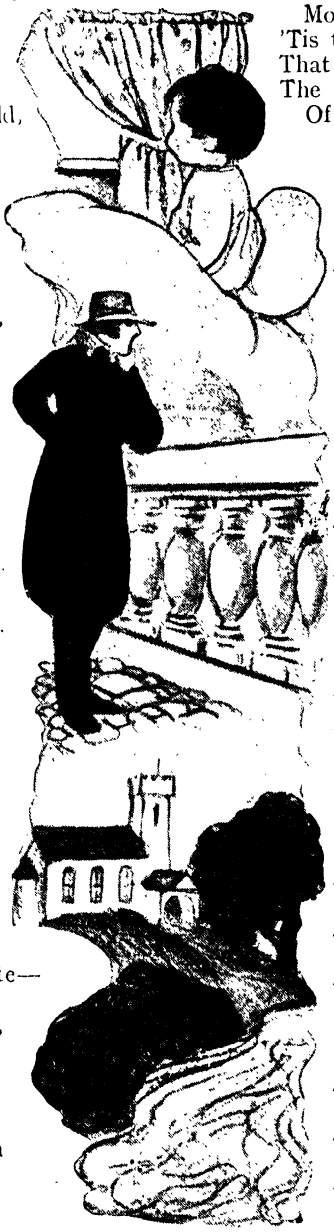
Milton called the poet's longing for fame "that last infirmity of noble minds." In these lines James Russell Lowell twits his fellow-poets with being outlived by the humblest creatures preserved by slow Time in fossil forms. But, even though the earth's remembrances of the inspired poet be short, what a "crowded hour of glorious life" it was while it lasted!

O'ER the wet sands an insect crept
Ages ere man on earth was known—
And patient Time, while Nature slept,
The slender tracing turned to stone.

'Twas the first autograph: and ours?
Prithee, how much of prose or song,
In league with the creative powers,
Shall 'scape Oblivion's broom so long.

THE SHANDON BELLS

The Church of St. Anne Shandon is overlooking the River Lee, which empties into Cork Harbour. By the tower of the church is buried the Rev. Francis Mahony, known in the early days of Queen Victoria as "Father Prout." He was a man of wide learning and many languages, but will be remembered chiefly because of one song, written in Rome when he was a student. It tells, with sweetest sentiment, and a music that echoes the sound of bells, of the superiority of the Shandon chimes, heard in the poet's childhood, to those of all other churches, whether in Rome, Paris, Moscow, or Constantinople. No other song in the English language comes nearer than this to being an actual song when it is only spoken. It chimes as well as sings.



With deep affection
And recollection
I often think of
Those Shandon bells,
Whose sounds so wild would,
In the days of chil lhood,
Fling round my cradle
Their magic spells.
On this I ponder
Where'er I wander,
And thus grow fonder
Sweet Cork, of thee,
With thy bells of Shandon,
That sound so grand on
The pleasant waters
Of the River Lee.

I've heard bells tolling
Old "Adrian's Mole" in,
Their thunder rolling
From the Vatican,
And cymbals glorious
Swinging uproarious
In the glorious turrets
Of Notre Dame;
But thy notes were sweeter
Than the dome of Peter
Flings over the Tiber
Pealing solemnly—
O! the bells of Shandon
Sound far more grand on
The pleasant waters
Of the River Lee.

I've heard bells chiming
Full many a chime in,
Tolling sublime in
Cathedral shrine;
While at a glibe rate
Brass tongues would vibrate—
But all their music
Spoke naught like thine,
For memory dwelling
On each proud swelling
Of the belfry knelling
Its bold notes free,
Made the bells of Shandon
Sound far more grand on
The pleasant waters
Of the River Lee.

There's a bell in Moscow,
While on tower and kiosk o!
In Saint Sophia
The Turkman gets,
And loud in air
Calls men to prayer
From the tapering summit
Of tall minarets.
Such empty phantom
I freely grant them;
But there's an anthem
More dear to me—
'Tis the bells of Shandon,
That sound so grand on
The pleasant waters
Of the River Lee.

A WAY

This is one of the poems with a familiar ring from the volumes of John Godfrey Saxe, the American poet, lawyer, journalist, politician, and lecturer, who died in 1887.

It was a noble Roman,
In Rome's imperial day,
Who heard a coward croaker
Before the castle say:
"They're safe in such a fortress;
There is no way to shake it!"
"On—on!" exclaimed the hero;
"I'll find a way, or make it!"

Is Fame your aspiration?
Her path is steep and high;
In vain he seeks her temple,
Content to gaze and sigh!
The shining throne is waiting,
But he alone can take it
Who says, with Roman firmness,
"I'll find a way, or make it!"

Is Learning your ambition?
There is no royal road;
Alike the peer and peasant
Must climb to her abode;
Who feels the thirst of knowledge,
In Helicon may slake it,
If he has still the Roman will
"To find a way, or make it!"

Are Riches worth the getting?
They must be bravely sought;
With wishing and with fretting
The boon cannot be bought:
To all the prize is open,
But only he can take it
Who says, with Roman courage,
"I'll find a way, or make it!"

In Love's impassioned warfare
The tale has ever been,
That victory crowns the valiant-
The brave are they who win:
Though strong is Beauty's castle,
A lover still may take it
Who says, with Roman daring,
"I'll find a way, or make it!"

BARCLAY OF URY—By JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

Barclay, the Scottish Lord of Ury, had been a soldier foremost in battle under the great Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, and much admired in consequence, but he learned afterwards the Christianity that says it is better to suffer than to fight and kill; and now those who once admired him jeered him through the streets, much to the astonishment of one of his old comrades in the war, who knew the bravery and prowess of Barclay, and wished to join him in chasing the mob from the streets. But Barclay would not have it so; he had learned the better lesson of suffering and forbearance. The poem is by Whittier, who as a Quaker appreciated non-resistance. The word carlin in the second verse means an old woman.

Up the streets of Aberdeen,
By the kirk and college green,
Rode the Laird of Ury;
Close behind him, close beside,
Foul of mouth and evil-eyed,
Pressed the mob in fury.

Flouted him the drunken churl,
Jeered at him the serving-girl,
Prompt to please her master;
And the begging carlin, late
Fed and clothed at Ury's gate,
Cursed him as he passed her.

Yet, with calm and stately mien,
Up the streets of Aberdeen
Came he slowly riding:
And, to all he saw and heard,
Answering not with bitter word,
Turning not for chiding.

Came a troop with broadswords swinging,
Bits and bridles sharply ringing,
Loose and free and froward;
Quoth the foremost, "Ride him down!
Push him! prick him! through the town
Drive the Quaker coward!"

But from out the thickening crowd
Cried a sudden voice and loud:
"Barclay! Ho! a Barclay!"
And the old man at his side
Saw a comrade, battle tried,
Scarred and sunburned darkly;

Who with ready weapon bare,
Fronting to the troopers there,
Cried aloud: "God save us,
Call ye coward him who stood
Ankle deep in Lutzen's blood,
With the brave Gustavus?"

"Nay, I do not need thy sword,
Comrade mine," said Ury's lord;
"Put it up, I pray thee:
Passive to His holy will,
Trust I in my Master still,
Even though He slay me.

"Pledges of thy love and faith,
Proved on many a field of death,
Not by me are needed."
Marvelled much that henchman bold,
That his laird, so stout of old,
Now so meekly pleaded.

"Woe's the day!" he sadly said,
With a slowly shaking head,
And a look of pity;
"Ury's honest lord reviled,
Mock of knave and sport of child,
In his own good city!

"Speak the word, and, master mine,
As we charged on Tilly's line,
And his Walloon lancers,
Smiting through their midst we'll teach
Civil look and decent speech
To these boyish prancers!"

"Marvel not, mine ancient friend,
Like beginning, like the end:"
Quoth the Laird of Ury,
"Is the sinful servant more
Than his gracious Lord who bore
Bonds and stripes in Jewry?

"Give me joy that in His name
I can bear, with patient frame,
All these vain ones offer;
While for them He suffereth long,
Shall I answer wrong with wrong,
Scoffing with the scoffer?

"Happier I, with loss of all,
Hunted, outlawed, held in thrall,
With few friends to greet me,
Than when reeve and squire were seen,
Riding out from Aberdeen,
With bared heads to meet me.

"Hard to feel the stranger's scoff,
Hard the old friend's falling off,
Hard to learn forgiving:
But the Lord His own rewards,
And His love with theirs accords,
Warm and fresh and living.

"Through this dark and stormy night
Faith beholds a feeble light
Up the blackness streaking;
Knowing God's own time is best,
In a patient hope I rest
For the full day-breaking!"

So the Laird of Ury said,
Turning slow his horse's head
Towards the Tolbooth prison,
Where, through iron grates, he heard
Poor disciples of the Word
Preach of Christ arisen!

Happy he whose inward ear
Angel comfortings can hear,
O'er the rabble's laughter;
And while Hatred's faggots burn,
Glimpses through the smoke discern
Of the good hereafter.

CURFEW

This poem, with its slow, grave cadences, is an instance of the skill with which Longfellow used a simple descriptive scene to suggest deeper meanings. The curfew which hushes the world to darkness, silence, and forgetfulness is made by him to sound through an undertone the final story of human life.

SOLEMNLY, mournfully,
Dealing its dole,
The Curfew Bell
Is beginning to toll.

Cover the embers,
And put out the light;
Toil comes with the morning,
And rest with the night.

Dark grow the windows,
And quenched is the fire;
Sound fades into silence,
All footsteps retire.

No voice in the chambers,
No sound in the hall!
Sleep and oblivion
Reign over all!

The book is completed,
And closed, like the day;
And the hand that has written it
Lays it away.

Dim grows its fancies,
Forgotten they lie;
Like coals in the ashes,
They darken and die.

Song sinks into silence,
The story is told,
The windows are darkened,
The hearthstone is cold.

Darker and darker
The black shadows fall;
Sleep and oblivion
Reign over all.

THE DOG OF THE THREE DAYS

This story of a dog's fidelity was written by Francis Sylvester Mahony, an Irish writer, popularly known as Father Prout, a journalist in London and Paris, and one of the leaders of literary society in the middle of the nineteenth century. This incident occurred in Paris during the three days' revolution in July, 1830, when the French Royal House of Bourbon was dethroned, and Louis Philippe of the Orleanist Royal House became king. The makers of the revolution, many of whom lost their lives in the fighting, were called "the Men of July."

WITH gentle tread,
With uncovered head,
Pass by the Louvre-gate,
Where buried lie the "Men of July,"
And flowers are flung by passers-by,
And the dog howls desolate.

That dog, they say,
On that awful day,
Had rushed with his master on;
They both fought well;
But the master fell—
And behold the surviving one!

By his lifeless clay,
Shaggy and grey,
His fellow-soldier stood:
Nor moved beyond,
But mingled fond,
Big tears with his master's blood.

Vigil he keeps
By those green heaps
That tell where heroes be;
No passer-by
Can attract his eye,
For he knows "It is not HE!"

At the dawn, when dew
Wets the garlands new
That are hung in the place of mourning,
He will start to meet
The coming feet
Of HIM whom he dreamt returning.

On the grave's wood cross
When the chaplets toss,
By the blasts of midnight shaken,
How he howleth! Hark!
From that dwelling dark,
The slain he would fain awaken.

When the snow comes fast
On the chilly blast,
Blanching the bleak churchyard,
With limbs outspread,
On the dismal bed
Of his liege, he still keeps guard.

Oft in the night,
With main and might,
He strives to raise the stone;
Short respite takes—
"If master wakes,
He'll call me"—then sleeps on.

Of bayonet-blades,
Of barricades,
And guns, he dreameth most;
Starts from his dream,
And then would seem
To eye a bleeding ghost.

He'll linger there
In sad despair,
And die on his master's grave.
His name? 'Tis known
To the dead alone—
He's the dog of the Nameless Brave!

Give a tear to the dead,
And give some bread
To the dog of the Louvre-gate!
Where buried lie the Men of July,
And flowers are flung by the passers-by,
And the dog howls desolate.

CHIDE ME NOT

Ralph Waldo Emerson is one of the greatest essayists the world has known—the greatest of all American prose writers; he was also a poet, perhaps chiefly a poet. He saw all life in Nature and man woven into one web, as is prefigured here.

CHIDE me not, laborious band,
For the idle flowers I brought;
Every aster in my hand
Goes home laden with a thought.

There was never mystery,
But 'tis figured in the flowers;
Was never secret history
But birds tell it in the bowers.

THE FLOWER

In this poem by Tennyson are several layers of suggestion. It is true that beautiful things are often first overlooked, then become popular and common, and are apt to be despised, irrespective of their true worth and beauty. But what the poet was really hinting at was the flower of his own song, which at first was slighted, then imitated and admired, then made commonplace under commonplace use, and afterwards was regarded with cool disfavour. This is the poet's sensitive feeling about the reception of his verse. But it does not truly represent the sequence of real opinion. It is only a poetical way of reading the surface signs of public favour. The real feeling for the poet's writing ran, as we know, with a far deeper current, and at last must have satisfied his heart.

ONCE in a golden hour
I cast to earth a seed,
Up there came a flower,
People said a weed.

To and fro they went,
Through my garden bower,
And muttering discontent
Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall
It wore a crown of light,
But thieves from o'er the wall
Stole the seed by night.

Sowed it far and wide,
By every town and tower,
Till all the people cried,
"Splendid is the flower."

Read my little fable:
He that runs may read,
Most can raise the flowers now,
For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
And some are poor indeed;
And now again the people
Call it but a weed.

VIOLET

Clement Scott, born 1841, died 1904, the writer who here declares his preference in flowers for the violet, whether judged by modest grace or by perfume, was once well known as a writer of descriptive sketches, and better known as a critic of plays. He was a lover of all things genial and kindly.

THE sweetest heart the garden grows
Some find in petals of the rose,
While many a sorrowing pilgrim tells
His beads of love with lily bells.

I care not what such dreamers say,
For on my honour I prefer
The flower that resembles her,
The violet of woodland way,
The violet that's born in May.

The sweetest scent that bloom exhales
Is found away in tropic vales,
Where, as the lonely forest sighs,
A wilderness of perfume lies.
I do not care what others say,
For on my honour I prefer
The sweetness in the eyes of her,
The violet that scents the way,
The violet that's true to May.

THE CLOVER

The poems of James Whitcomb Riley come to us with a joy like that of meeting a friend. A very human man was this American, touching us in all our moods. Here the sight of the clover field takes him back to the days of his childhood.

SOME sing of the lily, and daisy, and rose,
And the pansies and pinks that the summer-time throws
In the green grassy lap of the medder that lays
Blinkin' up at the skies through the sunshiny days;
But what is the lily and all of the rest
Of the flowers to a man with a heart in his breast
That has dipped brimmin' full of the honey and dew,
Of the sweet clover-blossoms his babyhood knew?

I never set eyes on a clover-field now,
Or fool round a stable, or climb in the mow,
But my childhood comes back, just as clear and as plain
As the smell of the clover I'm sniffin' again;
And I wander away in a barefooted dream,
Where I tangle my toes in the blossoms that gleam
With the dew of the dawn of the morning of love
Ere it wept o'er the graves that I'm weepin' above.

And so I love clover—it seems like a part
Of the sacredest sorrows and joys of my heart;
And wherever it blossoms, oh, there let me bow,
And thank the good God as I'm thankin' Him now;
And I pray to Him still for the strength, when I die,
To go out in the clover and tell it good-by,
And lovingly nestle my face in its bloom,
While my soul slips away on a breath of perfume.

MY GARDEN

This lovely little explanatory poem, sweetest of all swallow-flights of song about a garden, was penned by Thomas Edward Brown, the Manx poet. Born in 1830, T. E. Brown died in 1897. His poems were chiefly written about the people of the Isle of Man, their quaint ways and seafaring heroism.

A GARDEN is a lovesome thing, God wot!
Rose plot,
Fringed pool,
Ferned grot—
The veriest school
Of peace; and yet the fool
Contends that God is not—
Not God! in gardens! when the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign;
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

ROSE AND ROOT

A charming little poem by John James Piatt, an American poet who married a poet. He served in the American Government during the Civil War, became Librarian of the House of Representatives, was at one time an American Consul in Ireland, and has written many things worth remembering. Mr. Piatt was born in Indiana, in March, 1835, and this little fable of two lives is characteristic of his work.

THE Rose aloft in sunny air,
Beloved alike by bird and bee,
Takes for the dark Root little care
That toils below it ceaselessly.
I put my question to the flower:
"Pride of the Summer, garden queen,
Why livest thou thy little hour?"
And the Rose answered, "I am seen."
I put my question to the Root.
"I mine the earth content," it said,
"A hidden miner underfoot:
I know a Rose is overhead."

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE

Wordsworth, the supreme poet of Nature, wrote two poems on the small celandine, or common pilewort, a Lake District flower which he was long in noticing specially. Then he determined that he would give it a lasting name among the flowers beloved by poets. These verses are Wordsworth's second poem on this early, cheering spring flower. The poet's rich enjoyment of a simple bloom has given it rank among the frail flowers that yet have an immortality of fame.

PLEASURES newly found are sweet
When they lie about our feet;
February last, my heart
First at sight of thee was glad;
All unheard of as thou art
Thou must needs, I think, have had,
Celandine! and long ago,
Praise of which I nothing know.
I have not a doubt but he,
Whosoe'er the man might be,
Who the first with pointed rays
(Workman worthy to be sainted)
Set the Sign-board in a blaze,
When the risen sun he painted,
Took the fancy from a glance
At thy glittering countenance.
Soon as gentle breezes bring
News of winter's vanishing,
And the children build their bowers,
Sticking 'kerchief-plots of mould
All about with full-blown flowers,
Thick as sheep in shepherd's fold!
With the proudest thou art there,
Mantling in the tiny square.
Often have I sighed to measure
By myself a lonely pleasure,
Sighed to think I read a book
Only read, perhaps, by me;
Yet I long could overlook
Thy bright coronet and thee,
And thy arch and wily ways,
And thy store of other praise.
Blithe of heart, from week to week
Thou dost play at hide-and-seek;
While the patient primrose sits
Like a beggar in the cold,
Thou, a flower of wiser wits,
Slipp'st into thy sheltering hold;
Bright as any of the train
When ye all are out again.
Drawn by what peculiar spell,
By what charm of sight or smell,
Does the dim-eyed, curious bee,
Labouring for her waxen cells,
Fondly settle upon thee,
Prized above all buds and bells
Opening daily at thy side,
By the season multiplied?
Thou art not beyond the moon,
But a thing "beneath our shoon":
Let the bold adventurer thrid
In his bark the solar sea;
Rear who will a pyramid;
Praise it is enough to me,
If there be but three or four
Who will love my little flower.

GOLDEN GLORIES

Christina Rossetti, sister of the poet and painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti, was one of the half-dozen women who have sounded a pure note of melody in English verse. Here we see her picturing the flowers that are burnished with gold. And, indeed, yellow is the distinctive flower-colour of England. It is everywhere a land of greens and yellows

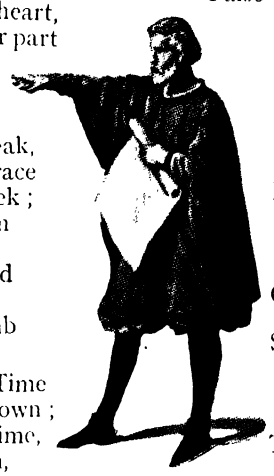
THE buttercup is like a golden cup,
The marigold is like a golden frill,
The daisy with a golden eye looks up,
And golden spreads the flower beside the rill,
And gay and golden nods the daffodil,
The grassy common swells a golden sea,
The cowslip hangs a head of golden tips,
And golden drips the honey which the bee
Sucks from sweet hearts of flowers, and stores and sips.

COLUMBUS

A number of poems, the finest of them by Tennyson, have been inspired by the heroic life of Columbus. In these verses, by Lydia Huntley Sigourney (1791-1865), a prolific American writer in prose and verse, the great discoverer is pictured at an early stage in his career, when he appeared at the monastery of St. Stephen, in Salamanca, Spain, and tried to interest the Spanish monarch in his plans for sailing to the East Indies across the Atlantic Ocean. His plans were then rejected. Afterwards he gained the ear of Queen Isabella, and succeeded in finding a new world. The sadness of the great voyager's closing years, when he was a victim of the grossest ingratitude, is echoed vaguely in the poem.

ST. STEPHEN'S cloistered hall was proud
In learning's pomp that day,
For there a robed and stately crowd
Pressed on in long array.
A mariner with simple chart
Confronts that conclave high,
While strong ambition stirs his heart,
And burning thoughts of wonder part
From lip and sparkling eye.

What hath he said? With frowning face,
In whispered tones they speak,
And lines upon their tablets trace
Which flush each ashen cheek;
The Inquisition's mystic doom
Sits on their brows severe,
And, bursting forth in visioned gloom,
Sad heresy from burning tomb
Groans on the startled ear.



Courage, thou Genoese! Old Time
Thy splendid dream shall crown;
Yon Western Hemisphere sublime,
Where unshorn forests frown,
The Awful Andes' cloud-wrapt brow,
The Indian hunter's bow,
Bold streams untamed by helm or prow,
And rocks of gold and diamonds, thou
To thankless Spain shalt show.

Courage, World-finder! Thou hast need!
In Fate's unfolding scroll,
Dark woes and ingrate wrongs I read
That rack the noble soul.
On! On! Creation's secrets probe,
Then drink thy cup of scorn,
And, wrapped in fallen Caesar's robe,
Sleep like that master of the globe,
All glorious, yet forlorn.

SIR MARMADUKE'S MUSINGS

These musings are by Theodore Tilton, an American writer (1837-1907). The idea of Job-like calamity is well worked out, but anyone capable of "a sweet good-will to all" would not be deserted by all—such a spirit and such a fate are incompatible, and we must allow for a poet's extravagance.

I WON a noble fame;
But, with a sudden frown,
The people snatched my crown,
And, in the mire, trod down
My lofty name.

I bore a bounteous purse;
And beggars by the way
Then blessed me, day by day;
But I, grown poor as they,
Have now their curse.

I gained what men call friends;
But now their love is hate,
And I have learned, too late,
How mated minds unmate,
And friendship ends.

I clasped a woman's breast—
As if her heart, I knew,
Or fancied, would be true—
Who proved, alas! she too!
False like the rest.

I now am all bereft—
As when some tower doth fall,
With battlement, and wall,
And gate, and bridge, and all,
And nothing left.

But I account it worth
All pangs of fair hopes crossed,
All loves and honours lost,
To gain the heavens, at cost
Of losing earth.

So, lest I be inclined
To render ill for ill;
Henceforth in me instil,
O God, a sweet good-will
To all mankind.

THE PLOUGH

A little picture of the early dawn and the ploughman's start afield. The writer was Richard Hengist Horne, a poet who died, after a life of adventure, in 1884. He was not a countryman, or he would have known that the depth of ploughing depends on the kind of soil ploughed.

ABOVE yon sombre swell of land
Thou see'st the dawn's grave orange hue,
With one pale streak like yellow sand,
And over that a vein of blue.

The air is cold above the woods;
All silent is the earth and sky,
Except with his own lonely moods
The blackbird holds a colloquy.

Over the broad hill creeps a beam,
Like hope that gilds a good man's brow;
And now ascends the nostril-stream
Of stalwart horses come to plough.

Ye rigid Ploughmen, bear in mind
Your labour is for future hours:
Advance—spare not—nor look behind—
Plough deep and straight with all your powers!

CHARTLESS

Here is a short and sweet little jet of verse on intuitions by Emily Dickinson, a quaint and fanciful American poetess.

I NEVER saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet know I how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

IRELAND—A SEASIDE PORTRAIT

John James Piatt, the artist in words who made this sketch of Ireland as a disconsolate mother, was the American Consul in Cork at a time when there was a great emigration of the Irish people to the United States. The "other woman" of the second half of the poem is the great statue to Liberty which stands outside New York Harbour. "Fields without walls that all the people own" is not a true description of the ownership of land in the Great Republic.

A GREAT, still Shape, alone,
She sits (her harp has fallen) on the sand,
And sees her children, one by one, depart;
Her cloak (that hides what sins beside her own!)
Wrapped fold on fold about her. Lo! she comforts her fierce heart,
As wailing some, and some gay—singing go,
With the far vision of that Greater Land
Deep in the Atlantic skies,
St. Brandan's Paradise!

Another Woman there,
Mighty and wondrous fair,
Stands on her shore-rock; one uplifted hand
Holds a quick-piercing light
That keeps long sea-ways bright;
She beckons with the other, saying 'Come,
O landless, shelterless,
Sharp-faced with hunger, worn with long distress,
Come hither, finding home!
Lo! my new fields of harvest, open, free,
By winds of blessing blown,
Whose golden corn-blades shake from sea to sea—
Fields without walls that all the people own!'

TO ALL YOU LADIES

The writer of this rhymed sailor's letter was Charles Sackville, sixth Earl of Dorset, a gay courtier of the time of Charles II. His ancestor, Thomas Sackville, the first earl, had been a poet of considerable distinction, who wrote the first English tragic play. The sixth earl was pleased to be a patron of literature and to write a little verse when verse-making was a fashionable accomplishment.

TO all you ladies now at land,
We men at sea indite;
But first would have you understand
How hard it is to write.
The Muses now, and Neptune, too,
We must implore to write to you.
For though the Muses should prove kind,
And fill our empty brain,
Yet, if rough Neptune rouse the wind
To wave the azure main,
Our paper, pen, and ink, and we
Roll up and down our ships at sea.

Then if we write not by each post,
Think not we are unkind,
Nor yet conclude our ships are lost,
By Dutchmen or by wind:
Our tears we'll send a speedier way,
The tide shall bring them twice a day.

The king, with wonder and surprise,
Will swear the seas grow bold,
Because the tides will higher rise
Than e'er they used of old:
But let him know it is our tears
Bring floods of grief to Whitehall stairs.

Let wind and weather do its worst,
Be you to us but kind;
Let Dutchmen vapour, Spaniards curse,
No sorrow we shall find.
'Tis then no matter how things go,
Or who's our friend, or who's our foe.

In justice you can not refuse
To think of our distress,
When we for hopes of honour lose
Our certain happiness;
All those designs are but to prove
Ourselves more worthy of your love.

And now we've told you all our loves,
And likewise all our fears,
In hopes this declaration moves
Some pity from your tears;
Let's hear of no inconstancy,
We have too much of that at sea.

TONIGHT

Here is an exercise in rhyming by Louise Chandler Moulton (1835-1908), an American lady who lived a considerable part of her life in London, and was a leader in literary society. Note that in each eight lines there are only two sets of rhyming sounds, and the first and eighth lines are the same. Such effects are a feature of French poetry of early origin.

BEND low, O dusky Night,
And give my spirit rest.
Hold me to your deep breast,
And put old cares to flight.
Give back the lost delight
That once my soul possest
When Love was loveliest.
Bend low, O dusky Night!

Enfold me in your arms—
The sole embrace I crave
Until the embracing grave
Shield me from life's alarms.
I dare your subtlest charms;
Your deepest spell I brave—
O, strong to slay or save,
Enfold me in your arms!

MY NEW WORLD

These graceful and tender lines were written by Irving Browne (1835-1899), an American lawyer, essayist, and poet.

My prow is tending toward the west,
Old voices growing faint, dear faces dim,
And all that I have loved the best
Far back upon the waste of memory swim.
My old world disappears :
Few hopes and many fears
Accompany me.
But from the distance fair
A sound of birds, a glimpse of
pleasant skies,
A scent of fragrant air,
All soothingly arise
In cooing voice, sweet breath and
merry eyes
Of grandson on my knee.
And ere my sails be furled,
Kind Lord, I pray
Thou let me live a day
In my new world.

WHITTIER ON HIS OWN POEMS

This is the poetical introduction by John Greenleaf Whittier for the first collected edition of his poems in 1847. It is his criticism of himself. The candour of it makes the reader hope that its sterner features are not true. But they are true, for, though Whittier had all the better qualities he claims, he was never safe from " the harshness of an untaught ear." He was so good a man that the admiring reader longs on his behalf for the endowment of a finer artistry.

I love the old melodious lays
Which softly melt the ages through,
The songs of Spencer's golden days,
Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,
Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest
morning dew.
Yet, vainly in my quiet hours
To breathe their marvellous notes I try ;
I feel them, as the leaves and flowers
In silence feel the dewy showers,
And drink with glad, still lip the blessing
of the sky.
The rigour of a frozen clime,
The harshness of an untaught ear,
The jarring words of one whose rhyme
Beat often Labour's hurried time,
Or Duty's rugged march through storm
and strife, are here.
Of mystic beauty, dreamy grace,
No rounded art the lack supplies ;
Unskilled the subtle lines to trace,
Or softer shades of Nature's face,
I view her common forms with unanointed
eyes.
Nor mine the seer-like power to show
The secrets of the heart and mind ;
To drop the plummet-line below
Our common world of joy and woe,
A more intense despair or brighter hope
to find.
Yet here at least an earnest sense
Of human right and weal is shown ;
A hate of tyranny intense,
And hearty in its vehemence,
As if my brother's pain and sorrow were
my own.
O Freedom ! if to me belong
Nor mighty Milton's gift divine,
Nor Marvell's wit and graceful song,
Still with a love as deep and strong
As theirs, I lay, like them, my best gifts on
thy shrine !

WARREN'S ADDRESS TO HIS SOLDIERS

The American War of emancipation, in the sixties of the nineteenth century, brought forth much poetry. This vigorous appeal for the defence of their country was made to the Northern, or Federal, soldiers by the Rev. John Pierpont (1785-1866), a minister who became a chaplain to the forces when he was in his seventy-sixth year. It takes the form of an appeal by General Warren to his men.

Stand ! the ground's your own, my braves
Will ye give it up to slaves ?
Will ye look for greener graves ?
Hope ye mercy still ?
What's the mercy despots feel ?
Hear it in that battle-peal !
Read it on yon bristling steel !
Ask it—ye who will.
Fear ye foes who kill for hire ?
While ye to your homes retire ?
Look behind you ! they're afire !
And, before you, see
Who have done it !—From the vale
On they come !—And will ye quail ?—
Leaden rain and iron hail
Let their welcome be !
In the God of battles trust !
Die we may, and die we must ;
But, O, where can dust to dust
Be consigned so well,
As where heaven its dews shall shed
On the martyred patriot's bed,
And the rocks shall raise their head,
Of his deeds to tell !

OUT OF THE SKIES

This was one of the last poems published by Tennyson. It seems to suggest that, as the world will perish in time comparatively short, nothing matters. But the contrary is Tennyson's continual teaching—namely, that the world is in its youth, and will exist long enough for mankind to reach higher developments. The poem may therefore be taken as a rebuke to people who fancy the end of the world is near.

A voice spake out of the skies
To a just man and a wise—
" The world and all within it
Will only last a minute ! "
And a beggar began to cry
" Food, food, or I die ! "
Is it worth his while to eat,
Or mine to give him meat,
If the world and all within it
Were nothing the next minute ?

MASSA'S IN DE COLD GROUND

The American negro was conspicuous in the days of slavery for his loyalty to his master wherever he was treated with kindness. That feeling and the note of sentimental sadness which marks the race in certain moods are expressed in this famous lament, written by Stephen Collins Foster, who also composed the melodious wailing music to which it is sung. Foster died while the war of emancipation was in progress.

ROUND de meadows am a-ringing
De darkey's mournful song,
While de mocking-bird am singing
Happy as the day am long.
Where de ivy am a-creeping,
O'er the grassy mound,
Dere old massa am a-sleeping
Sleeping in de cold, cold ground.

Down in de cornfield
Hear dat mournful sound;
All de darkeys am a-weeping—
Massa's in de cold, cold ground.

When de autumn leaves were falling,
When de days were cold,
'Twas hard to hear old massa calling,
'Cayse he was so weak and old.
Now de orange-tree am blooming
On de sandy shore,
Now de summer days am coming—
Massa nebber calls no more.

Massa make the darkeys love him,
'Cayse he was so kind;
Now dey sadly weep above him,
Mourning 'cayse he leave dem behind.
I cannot work before tomorrow,
'Cayse de tear-drop flow;
I try to drive away my sorrow,
Pickin' on de old banjo.

Down in the cornfield
Hear dat mournful sound:
All de darkeys am a-weeping—
Massa's in de cold, cold ground.

THE LOST GENIUS

The writer of this striking poem, John James Piatt, was at one time librarian of the American Parliament. He suggests that the gaining of wisdom—beyond the power of all magic—is a far longer and harder task than any other.

A GIANT came to me when I was young,
My instant will to ask—
My earthly Servant—from the earth he sprung
Eager for any task!

"What wilt thou, O my Master?" he began,
"Whatever can be," I.
"Say thy first wish—whate'er thou wilt I can,"
The Strong Slave made reply.

"Enter the earth and bring its riches forth,
For pearls explore the sea."
He brought from East and West and South and North.
All treasures back to me!

"Build me a palace wherein I may dwell."
"Awake and see it done,"
Spake his great voice at dawn. Oh, miracle
That glittered in the sun!

"Find me the princess fit for my embrace,
The vision of my breast;
For her search every clime and every race."
My yearning arms were blessed!

"Get me all knowledge." Sages with their lore,
And poets with their songs,
Crowded my palace halls at every door,
In still, obedient throngs!

"Now bring me wisdom." Long ago he went
(The cold task harder seems);
He did not hasten with the last content—
The rest, meanwhile, were dreams!

Houseless and poor, on many a trackless road,
Without a guide, I found
A white-haired phantom with the world his load,
Bending him to the ground!

"I bring thee wisdom, Master." Is it he?
I marvelled then, in sooth.
"Thy palace-builder, beauty-seeker, see!"
I saw the Ghost of Youth!

EPITHALAMIUM

This delicate poetical picture of a happy marriage and wedded life was written by one of the earliest of the American poets, John Gardiner Brainard (1796–1828), who did not himself live till life's calm evening. The title is a curious one. An epithalamium is a marriage poem in honour of the bride.

I SAW two clouds at morning,
Tinged with the rising sun,
And in the dawn they floated on,
And mingled into one;
I thought that morning cloud was blest,
It moved so sweetly to the west.

I saw two summer currents
Flow smoothly to their meeting,
And join their course, with silent force,
In peace each other greeting;
Calm was their course through banks of green,
While dimpling eddies played between.

Such be your gentle motion,
Till life's last pulse shall beat;
Like summer's beam, and summer's stream,
Float on, in joy, to meet
A calmer sea, where storms shall cease—
A purer sky, where all is peace.

LITTLE NARROW LANE

Country lanes, narrow and winding, are often very old. They were formed first by walkers, who sought the driest way from point to point. The sentiment associated with old lanes is happily expressed in the verses below, by A. Harrow.

YOU'VE made it broad and straight and true,
My little narrow lane.
A smooth rolled road, and broad paths, too,
Where once a cart scarce lumbered through,
Between high banks where daisies grew,
In the little narrow lane.

It took a thousand years or so
To make that narrow lane.
A sheep-track in the long ago,
A haunt for lovers strolling slow,
Or smugglers, when the moon was low,
And dark the narrow lane.

The fields changed thrice, then came one day
Your new and splendid road.
The weeds and thorn were swept away,
The twists that used to hide the way
Were evened out. A Roman's way,
A useful, well-made road.

I see a fine thing man has made,
Oh, little narrow lane!
And your high banks, your strips of shade
All gone! The way is smoothly laid,
Yet how I wish that *you* had stayed,
Dear little narrow lane!

ELEGIAC

The brave acceptance by youth of the sacrifice of death in war has been perhaps the greatest wonder of the present age. This is how it was hymned by an American poet, James Gates Percival (1795-1856), who was not, however, writing about his own countrymen, as the dates of his life show. Percival was a doctor, chemist, geologist, and poet, who served his country officially. As a poet he was fluent, but too rhetorical.

O, IT is great for our country to die, where ranks are contending!
Bright is the wreath of our fame; glory awaits us for aye—
Glory, that never is dim, shining on with light never ending,—
Glory that never shall fade, never, oh, never, away!

O, it is sweet for our country to die! How softly reposes
Warrior youth on his bier, wet by the tears of his love,
Wet by a mother's warm tears. They crown him with garlands of roses,
Weep, and then joyously turn, bright where he triumphs above.

Not to the shades shall the youth descend who for country hath perished;
Hebe awaits him in heaven, welcomes him there with her smile;
There, at the banquet divine, the patriot spirit is cherished;
Gods love the young who ascend pure from the funeral pile.

Not to Elysian fields, by the still, oblivious river;
Not to the isles of the blest, over the blue, rolling sea;
But on Olympian heights shall dwell the devoted for ever;
There shall assemble the good, there the wise, valiant, and free.

O, then, how great for our country to die, in the front rank to perish,
Firm with our breast to the foe, victory's shout in our ear!
Long they our statues shall crown, in songs our memory cherish;
We shall look forth from our heaven, pleased the sweet music to hear.

FRINGED GENTIAN

The gentian is a lovely blue flower that gains some of its beauty by its setting amid the snows. In these lines it is fancifully introduced to us by the American poetess Emily Dickinson, who imagines the gentian ambitious to rival the rose, but failing in summer, while on the border of the snows the gentian became unrivalled. "The Tyrian" means the blue colour. Tyre was famous for its blue dyes.

GOD made a little gentian;
It tried to be a rose,
And failed, and all the Summer laughed;
But just before the snows
There came a purple creature
That ravished all the hill.

And Summer hid her forehead,
And mockery was still.
The frosts were her condition;
The Tyrian would not come
Until the North evoked it:
"Creator, shall I bloom?"

TRUE MEN

This vigorous demand for upright politicians, by the American poet J. G. Holland, will be used by all kinds of public men against others whom they do not trust; but, however stirring this insistent appeal may be, the really strong and true men do not spend their strength in such hot denunciation.

GOD give us men. A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands,
Men whom the lust of office does not kill,
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy,
Men who possess opinions and a will,
Men who have honour and who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue
And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking;
Tall men, some crowned, who live above the fog,
In public duty and in private thinking;
For while the rabble, with their well-worn creeds,
Their large professions and their little deeds,
Mingle in selfish strife, lo, freedom weeps,
Wrong rules the land, and waiting justice sleeps.

IF I WERE KING

The poetry of romantic love, however beautiful, is unreal and full of extravagance. Here is an extreme instance translated from Victor Hugo, the French nineteenth century poet.

CHILD, if I were a king, my throne I would surrender,
My sceptre, and my car, and kneeling vavasors,
My golden crown, and porphyry baths, and consorts tender,
And fleets that fill the seas and regal pomp and splendour,
All for one look of yours!

If I were God, the earth and luminous deeps that span it,
Angels and demons bowed beneath my word divine,
Chaos profound, with flanks of flaming gold and granite,
Eternity, and space, and sky and sun and planet,
All for one kiss of thine!

THE AWAKENING OF THE PEOPLE

The freeing of large tracts of Europe from the tyranny of their rulers through the fearful ordeal of the Great War makes this vigorous poem by Gerald Massey most timely

O, SWEET is the fair face of Nature, when spring
With living flower-rainbow in glory hath spanned
Hill and dale; and the music of birds on the wing
Makes earth seem a beautiful faery land!
And dear is our first-love's young spirit-wed bride,
With her meek eyes just sheathing in tender eclipse,
When the sound of our voice calls her heart's ruddy tide,
Uprushing in beauty to melt on her lips.
But Earth has no sight half so glorious to see
As a people up-girding its might to be free.

To see men awake from the slumber of ages,
With brows grim from labour, and hands hard and tan,
Start up living heroes, the dreamt-of by sages!
And smite with strong arm the oppressors of man:
To see them come dauntless forth 'mid the world's warring,
Slaves of the midnight-mine! serfs of the sod!
Show how the Eternal within them is stirring,
And nevermore bend to a crowned clod:
Dear God, 'tis a sight for immortals to see,
A people up-girding its might to be free.

Battle on bravely, O sons of humanity!
Dash down the cup from your lips, O ye toilers!
Too long hath the world bled for Tyrant's insanity—
Too long our weakness been strength to our spoilers.
For Freedom and Right, gallant hearts, wrestle ever,
And speak ye to others the proud words that won ye;
Your rights, conquered once, shall be wrung from you never;
O, battle on bravely; the world's eyes are on ye;
And earth hath no sight half so glorious to see
As a people up-girding its might to be free!

OUR TOILING BROTHERS

One likes to hear sympathy with toilsome hardship, but in these verses Mary Nuton James goes too far when she wishes all the world would weep over labour, which leaves many men happier and better than they would be in unfruitful ease.

WITH bending backs
I watch them pass
To fields of toil,
The working class;
And I wonder why,
As they pass along,
The world can sing
So glad a song.

The weight they bear
Through all the years
Should call from us
A world of tears;
And I wonder why,
In God's great plan,
Few tears are shed
For toiling man.

IN FLANDERS FIELD

In these verses Robert Garland breathes the spirit of the cordial friendship between France and the United States.

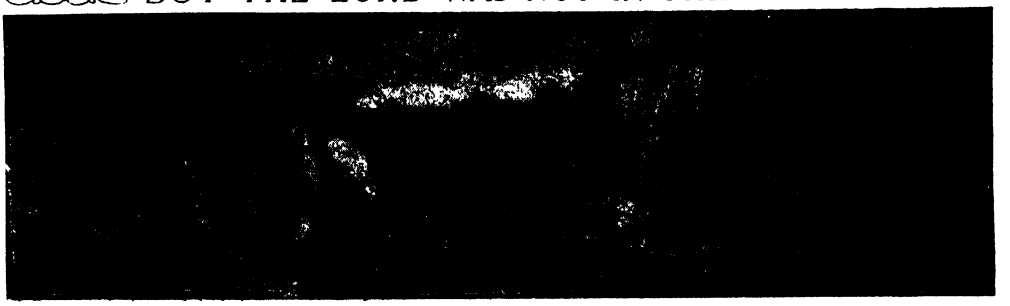
IF I should die in Flanders field,
If I should die in France,
Oh, take me out and bury me
Beneath some friendly poplar-tree
(Those poplar-trees of France!),
Oh, keep me near, where I can hear
Those roaring guns of France.

If I should lie in Flanders field
Beneath the sod of France,
There let me stay till victory
Is come, and all the world is free
(God grant this boon to France!),
Oh, let me stay to see the day
That freedom comes to France.

Then take me far from Flanders field
When freedom comes to France;
Return me to the very land
I love the best, my Maryland
(It's sweeter far than France!),
Oh, bring me home to Maryland
And say: "He died for France."

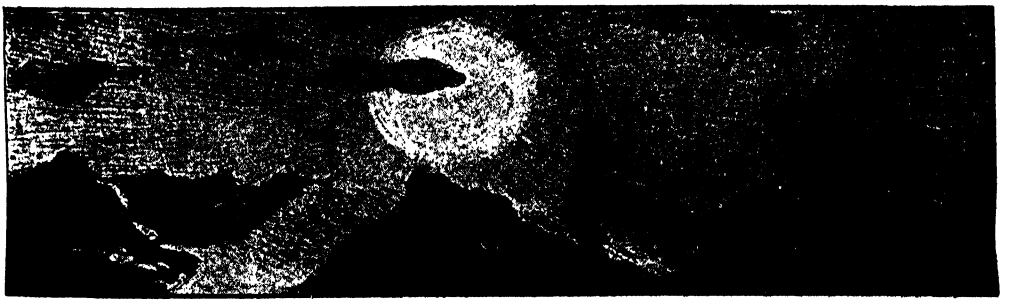
THERE CAME A GREAT STRONG WIND

A GREAT AND STRONG WIND RENT THE MOUNTAINS,
BUT THE LORD WAS NOT IN THE WIND



AND AFTER THE WIND AN EARTHQUAKE; BUT THE
LORD WAS NOT IN THE EARTHQUAKE

AND AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE A FIRE; BUT THE
LORD WAS NOT IN THE FIRE



AND AFTER THE FIRE A STILL, SMALL VOICE ····
AND IT WAS SO

OPPORTUNITY

Here is an interesting example, constructionally, of the sonnet. It is by John J. Ingalls, an American writer, born in 1833. The flow of the lines, and their breaks, are highly characteristic of this form of poem. But the main idea is unsound, for Opportunity comes to most men again and again.

MASTER of human destinies am I.
Fame, love, and fortune on my footsteps wait,
Cities and fields I walk; I penetrate
Deserts and seas remote, and, passing by
Hovel, and mart, and palace, soon or late
I knock unbidden once at every gate!
If sleeping, wake—if feasting, rise before
I turn away. It is the hour of fate,
And they who follow me reach every state
Mortals desire, and conquer every foe
Save death; but those who doubt or hesitate,
Condemned to failure, penury, and woe,
Seek me in vain and uselessly implore—
I answer not, and I return no more.

GOD'S WORLD

Gerald Massey, the democratic poet, was a firm believer in the good that is in the world. Had he lived to our day he probably would have added to his creed the belief that the world, in spite of the evil in it, was never better than it is now, but has always been growing, as it still grows, in goodness.

BEHOLD! an idle tale they tell,
And who shall blame their telling it?
The rogues have got their cant to sell,
The world pays well for selling it!
They say the world's a desert drear,
Still plagued with Egypt's blindness!
That we were sent to suffer here—
What! by a God of kindness?
That since the world has gone astray,
It must be so for ever,
And we should stand still, and obey
Its desolators. Never!
We'll labour for the better time,
With all our might of Press and pen;
Believe me, 'tis a truth sublime,
God's world is worthy better men.

With Paradise the world began,
A world of love and gladness;
Its beauty may be marred by man
With all his crime and madness.
Yet 'tis a brave world still. Love brings
A sunshine for the dreary;
With all our strife, sweet Rest hath wings
To fold o'er hearts a-weary.
The sun in glory, like a God,
Today climbs up heaven's bosom,
The flowers upon the jewelled sod
In sweet love-lessons blossom,
As radiant of immortal youth
And beauty, as in Eden; then
Believe me, 'tis a noble truth,
God's world is worthy better men.

O! they are bold, knaves over-bold,
Who say we are doomed to anguish;
That men in God's own image souled,
Like hell-bound slaves, must languish.
Probe Nature's heart to its red core,
There's more of good than evil;
And man, down-trampled man, is more
Of angel than of devil.
Prepare to die? *Prepare to live!*
We know not what is living:
And let us for the world's good give,
As God is ever giving.
Give action, thought, love, wealth and time,
To win the primal age again;
Believe me, 'tis a truth sublime,
God's world is worthy better men.

FAITH

These verses are specially interesting because they were written by a youth of genius who did not live through his eighteenth year. Thomas Chatterton had not the constancy of mind which he claims here. Had he lived in an age less prone to sentimentalise about anguish, gushing misery, sighs, and dewy tears, he might have lived to be a great writer. But he had not patience to wait for his manhood.

O GOD, whose thunder shakes the sky,
Whose eye this atom globe surveys,
To Thee, my only rock, I fly,
Thy mercy in Thy justice praise.

The mystic mazes of Thy will,
The shadows of celestial light,
Are past the power of human skill;
But what the Eternal acts is right.

Oh, teach me in the trying hour,
When anguish swells the dewy tear,
To still my sorrows, own Thy power,
Thy goodness love, Thy justice fear.

If in this bosom aught but Thee
Encroaching sought a boundless sway,
Omniscience could the danger see,
And Mercy look the cause away.

Then why, my soul, dost thou complain,
Why drooping seek the dark recess?
Shake off the melancholy chain,
For God created all to bless.

But ah! my breast is human still;
The rising sigh, the falling tear,
My languid vitals' feeble rill,
The sickness of my soul declare.

But yet, with fortitude resigned,
I'll thank the Inflicter of the blow;
Forbid the sigh, compose my mind,
Nor let the gush of misery flow.

The gloomy mantle of the night,
Which on my sinking spirit steals,
Will vanish at the morning light,
Which God, my east, my sun, reveals.

A GERMAN'S WOE

There was a time when German was the language of sentiment. Here is an instance of that mild national mood. The writer, Ernest Moritz Arndt, was in his day (1769-1860) the most popular German song-writer. He had some personal reasons for the regretful tone of this poem, for he suffered much disappointment. An ardent patriot during the Napoleonic Wars, he helped to arouse the national feeling of the German people; but his hopes of seeing them secure free government were all in vain, and he suffered persecution under the tyrannous Germany that was forming during the last century and has since been shattered to fragments.

Go and dig a grave for me—
All the ties of earth are riven!
Spent with toil, I soon shall flee
To the sweet repose of heaven;
Where the voices of the blest
Summon me to perfect rest.

Go, then, dig a grave for me,
Now my earthly course is closing,
Let my pilgrim's staff still be
Near me in the grave reposing;
And then lay my weary head
In that painless, dreamless bed.

Why should I make longer stay
In this shadowy vale of sorrow?
Things that are our boast today
Vanish from us on the morrow—
Like the sand before the wind,
Leaving scarce a trace behind.

Let me, then, in peace depart—
Let me quit this world for ever!
Earthly pleasures leave a smart—
Time all earthly ties must sever;
And its charms are empty show,
Vain deceit, which ends in woe.

THUS DO WE REACH THE STARS

The Latin name of this poem is "Sic Itur Ad Astra," meaning "Thus do we reach the stars." The writer, a Frenchman, Hervé Noël le Breton (born 1851), finds life's reward in work and effort—a manful gospel, vigorously enforced.

I PITY not the man whose years
Are spent in sore and ceaseless toil,
Even though his bitter bread with tears
Be wrung from a rebellious soil.

Nor him whose vigils shorn of sleep
And days forlorn of gladness find
Still labouring, brave of heart, to reap
The larger harvest of the mind.

For work alone can quench and quell
All feverish doubts, all fierce desires;
And idleness is instant hell,
Kindling on earth her penal fires.

The luminous souls that look with calm
Consummate from their supreme height
Won not the halo and the palm
In dreamful purlieus of delight.

The splendour of the rainbow dwells
Not in the clear but on the cloud;
And Virtue less in cloistered cells
Than with the conflict and the crowd.

Labour can lull, with soothing breath,
Sorrow and shame and pain to sleep,
Outstrip swift Time, laugh at dull Death,
And over gulfed Oblivion leap.

Work, therefore, if no dawn should come
To break against these prison-bars,
Though Truth be dark and Fate be dumb—
For so they climb that reach the stars!

TO THE JERSEY LILY

A pretty fancy etched in love-verse by Joaquin Miller, the well-known Californian poet of Western life.

IF all God's world a garden were,
And women were but flowers,
If men were bees that busied there,
Through endless summer hours,
O, I would hum God's garden through
For honey till I came to you.

BESIDE STILL WATERS

The following lovely poetical paraphrase of the Twenty-third Psalm, worthy to be ranked with, if not before, Addison's version, "The Lord my pasture shall prepare," was sent by the Rev. Stopford Brooke to his familiar friends when he was eighty years old. The story is related by Professor Jacks in his recent life of that gracious-hearted critic-poet.

BESIDE still waters, where the grass
Is sweet and soft, by shadowy trees,
My Shepherd leads my weary feet
To give me ease.

This Shepherd is my Lord, my Love;
I shall not want; and when my soul
Is sick and heavy-laden, He
Restores it whole.

In paths of righteousness He guides
My erring steps, and if I go
Through the dark shadowed vale of death
I find no foe.

For He is with me, and His staff
Guides me with love, and bids me take
Comfort and joy; and this He does
For His name's sake.

When in the hungry wild of life
My heart is starved, He doth prepare
His wine and oil for my poor sprite,
And plenteous fare.

So, like a stream that sweetly runs
Beside my path from lea to lea,
My Shepherd's goodness, year by year,
Has followed me.

And I shall dwell, when death shall bring
Me, wearied, to the eternal shore,
In His enclosed fold of peace
For evermore.

THE GIFTS OF GOD

In these verses, Jones Very, one of the American writers deeply influenced by Emerson's large views of man's relations with the universe, argues by the freedom of light, the winds, and the seas, against individual restrictions on land—a very thorny question not to be settled by poetical analogies.

THE light that fills thy house at morn
Thou canst not for thyself retain ;
But all who with thee here are born,
It bids to share an equal gain.

The wind that blows thy ship along,
Her swelling sails cannot confine ;
Alike to all the gales belong,
Nor canst thou claim a breath as thine.

The earth, the green outspreading earth,
Why hast thou fenced it off from me ?
Hadst thou than I a nobler birth,
Who callest thine a gift so free ?

The wave, the blue encircling wave,
No chains can bind, no fetters hold ;
Its thunders tell of Him who gave
What none can ever buy for gold.

IT WILL END IN THE RIGHT

Gerald Massey, who in youth was a working man, and became a vigorous patriotic poet with a noble love of freedom, and a firm faith in the triumph of goodness, wrote verses which have found splendid fulfilment in the present day. Here is an example. Massey, born in 1828, died in 1907.

NEVER despair, O my comrades in sorrow !
I know that our mourning is ended not. Yet
Shall the vanquished today be the victors tomorrow,
Our star shall shine on in the tyrant's sunset.
Hold on, though they spurn thee, for whom thou art living
A life only cheered by the lamp of its love ;
Hold on ! Freedom's hope to the bounden ones giving ;
Green spots in the waste wait the worn spirit-dove.
Hold on—still hold on—in the world's despite,
Nurse the faith in thy heart, keep the lamp of Truth bright,
And, my life for thine, it shall end in the Right.

What though the martyrs and prophets have perished !
The Angel of Life rolls the stone from their graves ;
Immortal's the faith, and the freedom they cherished,
Their lone triumph cry stirs the spirits of slaves !
They are gone—but a glory is left in our life,
Like the day-god's last kiss on the darkness of even—
Gone down on the desolate seas of their strife,
To climb as star-beacons up Liberty's heaven.

Think of the wrongs that have ground us for ages !
Think of the wrongs we have still to endure !
Think of our blood, red on history's pages !
Then work, that our reckoning be speedy and sure.
Slaves cry to their gods, but be our God revealed
In our lives, in our works, in our warfare for man ;
And bearing—or born upon—Victory's shield,
Let us fight battle-harnessed, and fall in the van.
Hold on—still hold on—in the world's despite,
Nurse the faith in thy heart, keep the lamp of Truth bright,
And, my life for thine, it shall end in the Right.

YOUTH

This warning appeal to youth to enjoy the passing hour and not wish to hurry forward is by Lord Houghton, father of the present Marquis of Crewe, and is a charming example of his graceful fancy. Lord Houghton died in 1885, after a life of helpfulness shown particularly to other writers.

YOUTH, that pursuest with such eager pace
Thy even way,
Thou pantest on to win a mournful race :
Then stay ! oh, stay !

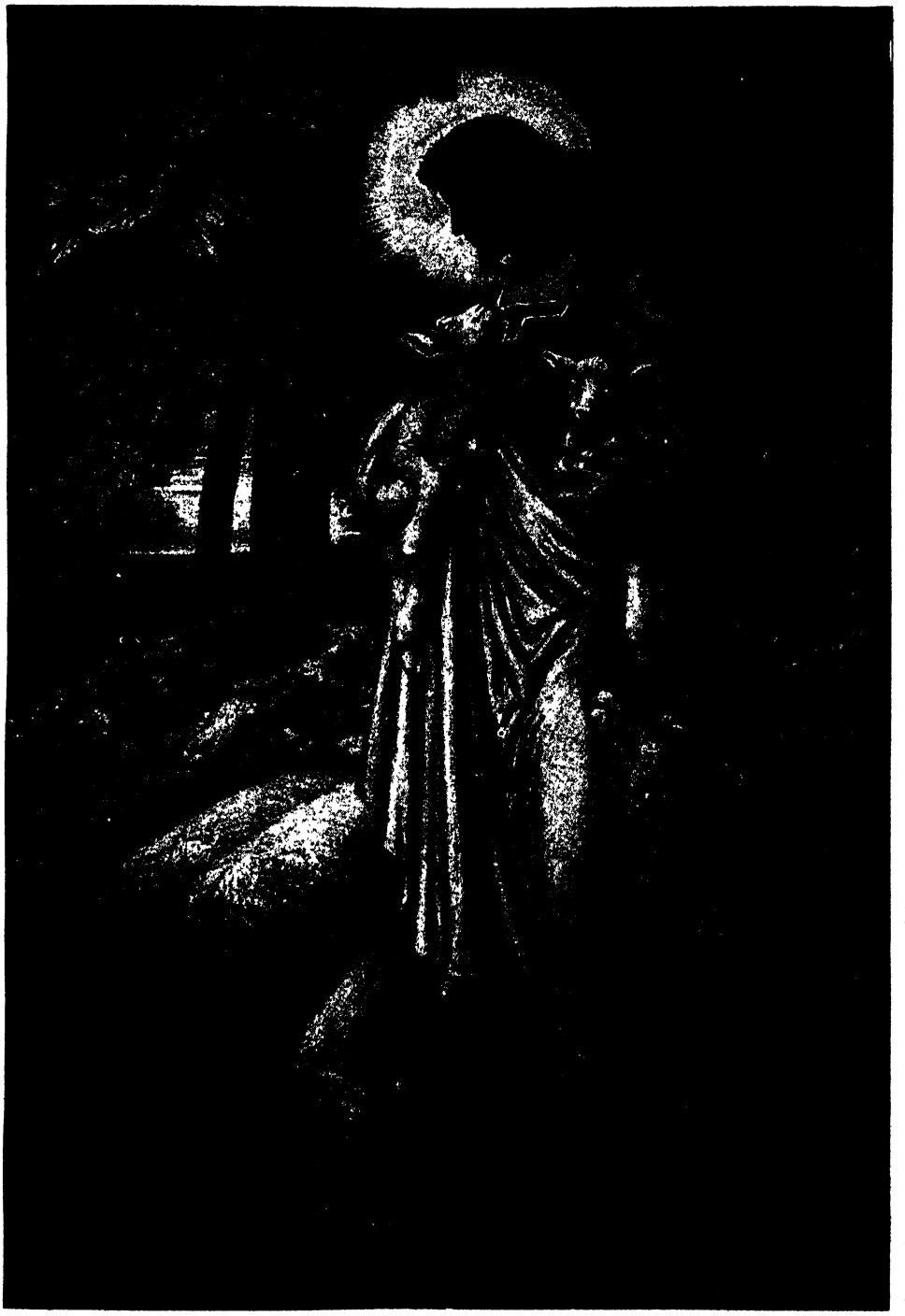
Pause, and luxuriate in thy sunny plain ;
Loiter—enjoy !
Once past, Thou never wilt come back again.
A second Boy.

The hills of Manhood wear a noble face
When seen from far ;
The mist of light from which they take their grace
Hides what they are.

The dark and weary path those cliffs between
Thou canst not know,
And how it leads to regions never green,
Dead fields of snow.

Pause, while thou mayst, nor deem that fate thy gain
Which, all too fast,
Will drive thee forth from this delicious plain,
A Man at last.

THERE WAS A KNIGHT OF BETHLEHEM



THERE WAS A KNIGHT OF BETHLEHEM WHOSE WEALTH WAS TEARS AND SORROWS;
HIS MEN-AT-ARMS WERE LITTLE LAMBS, HIS TRUMPETERS WERE SPARROWS;
HIS CASTLE WAS A WOODEN CROSS, WHEREON HE HUNG SO HIGH;
HIS HELMET WAS A CROWN OF THORNS, WHOSE CREST DID TOUCH THE SKY.

These beautiful lines are by Henry Neville Maughan. The picture is by permission of the Autotype Fine Art Company

AND SHALL TRELAWNY DIE?

There is some doubt as to who the Trelawny was about whom the refrain "And shall Trelawny die?" was first popularised in Cornwall. The Trelawnys were an old family, and the inquiry is said by some to have originated in the day of the first baronet, Sir John; but this ballad was written by the Rev. R. S. Hawker (1804–1875), vicar of a remote Cornish village, Morwenstowe, about Sir Jonathan Trelawny, one of the seven bishops imprisoned in the Tower by James II. This Trelawny lived in honour for many years after his trial for treason, and died Bishop of Winchester. Hawker took up the old refrain and wove it into a modern ballad which has sometimes been mistaken as being older than it is.

A good sword and a trusty hand!
A merry heart and true!
King James's men shall understand
What Cornish lads can do.

And have they fixed the where and when?
And shall Trelawny die?
Here's twenty thousand Cornish men
Will know the reason why!

Out spake their captain brave and bold,
A merry wight was he:
"If London Tower were Michael's hold,
We'll set Trelawny free!

"We'll cross the Tamar, land to land,
The Severn is no stay,
With 'one and all,' and hand in hand,
And who shall bid us nay?

"And when we come to London Wall,
A pleasant sight to view,
Come forth, come forth, ye cowards all,
Here's men as good as you!

"Trelawny he's in keep and hold,
Trelawny he may die;
But here's twenty thousand Cornish bold
Will know the reason why!"

O THOU UNKNOWN

Here we have Robert Burns in his serious mood. He was a man of strong sudden impulses, good and bad, and sincere for the time being in whatever he was doing or writing. This confession may be regarded as a true picture of his inward life.

O Thou unknown Almighty Cause
Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wandered in those paths
Of life I ought to shun;
As something, loudly in my breast,
Remonstrates I have done;

Thou know'st that Thou hast formed me
With passions wild and strong;
And listening to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,
Or frailty stept aside,
Do Thou, All-Good—for such Thou art—
In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have erred,
No other plea I have,
But, Thou art good; and Goodness still
Delighteth to forgive.

FOR THOSE WHO FAIL

To the thought in these verses every heart will respond, for the world has had new reasons for honouring men who die before victory. The writer, Joaquin Miller, published many volumes of verse, mostly on the life of the Western States.

"All honour to him who shall win the prize,"
The world has cried for a thousand years,
But to him who tries and who fails and dies
I give great honour and glory and tears.

Give glory and honour and pitiful tears
To all who fail in their deeds sublime;
Their ghosts are many in the van of years,
They were born with Time in advance of Time.

Oh, great is the hero who wins a name,
But greater many and many a time
Some pale-faced fellow who dies in shame
And lets God finish the thought sublime.

And great is the man with a sword undrawn,
And good is the man who refrains from wine;
But the man who fails and yet still fights on,
Lo, he is the twin-brother of mine.

CONSIDER IT AGAIN

Arthur Hugh Clough, who wrote this poem, was a favourite scholar of Dr. Arnold, the famous headmaster of Rugby School. Clough had an undecided mind. He loved to think of every side of any question, and seldom came to any fixed conclusion. In the last verse he seems to regret that other people do not turn things over and over in their minds in the same way. But he did it too much. Yet he was a real poet, and made a considerable reputation. Much thinking made him sad.

Old things need not be therefore true,
O brother men, nor yet the new:
Ah, still awhile the thought retain,
And yet consider it again!

The souls of now two thousand years
Have laid up here their toils and fears,
And all the earnings of their pain:
Ah, yet consider it again!

We! What do we see? Each a space
Of some few yards before his face;
Does that the whole wide plan explain?
Ah, yet consider it again!

Alas, the great world goes its way,
And takes the truth from each new day:
They do not quit, nor can retain,
Far less consider it again.

THIS AGE IS GREAT AND STRONG

This magnificent picture of the progress of the modern world, materially and morally, translated from the French of Victor Hugo, is marred by its wholly inappropriate close. So far from the voice of Jesus being heard less clearly than before, never has it spoken to men's hearts with a more universal insistence than now. That voice does not depend chiefly on the pulpit. The Grève, mentioned by the poet in the third verse, was a square in Paris where executions took place.

THIS age is great and strong. Her chains are riven.
Thought on the march of man her mission sends;
Toil's clamour mounts on human speech to heaven,
And with the sound divine of Nature blends.

In cities and in solitary stations
Man loves the milk wherewith we nourish him;
And in the shapeless block of sombre nations
Thought moulds in dreams new peoples grand and dim.

New days draw nigh. Hushed is the riot's clangour.
The Grève is cleansed, the old scaffold crumbling lies.
Volcano torrents, like the people's anger,
First devastate and after fertilise.

Now mighty poets, touched by God's own finger,
Shed from inspired brows their radiant beams.
Art has fresh valleys, where our souls may linger,
And drink deep draughts of song from sacred streams.

Stone upon stone, remembering antique manners,
In times that shake with every storm-wind wild,
The thinker rears these columns, crowned with banners—
Respect for grey old age, love for the child.

Beneath our roof-tree Duty and Right his father
Dwell once again, august and honoured guests,
The outcasts that around our thresholds gather
Come with less flaming eyes, less hateful breasts.

No longer Truth closes her austere portals.
Deciphered is each word, each scroll unfurled.
Learning the book of life, enfranchised mortals
Find a new sense and secret in the world.

O poets! Iron and steam, with fiery forces,
Lift from the earth, while yet your dreams float round,
Time's ancient load, that clogged the chariot's courses,
Crushing with heavy wheels the hard, rough ground.

Man by his puissant will subdues blind matter,
Thinks, seeks, creates! With living breath fulfilled,
The seeds that Nature's hands store up and scatter
Thrill as the forest leaves by winds are thrilled.

Yea, all things move and grow. The fleet hours flying
Leave each their track. The age has risen up great.
And now between its luminous banks, far-lying,
Man like a broadened river sees his fate.

But in this boasted march from wrong and error,
Mid the vast splendour of an age that glows,
One thing, O Jesus, fills my soul with terror:
The echo of Thy voice still feebler grows!

THE GUEST

This poetical setting of the consoling thought that Christ takes his place with us in the house of sorrow is by Harriet McEwen Kimball, an American writer of devotional verse.

SPEECHLESS Sorrow sat with me;
I was sighing wearily;
Lamp and fire were out; the rain
Wildly beat the window-pane.
In the dark I heard a knock,
And a hand was on the lock;
One in waiting spake to me,
Saying sweetly,
"I am come to sup with thee."

All my room was dark and damp:
"Sorrow," said I, "trim the lamp,
Light the fire, and cheer thy face,
Set the guest-chair in its place."
And again I heard the knock;
In the dark I found the lock:
"Enter, I have turned the key;
Enter, Stranger,
Who art come to sup with me."

Opening wide the door he came,
But I could not speak his name;
In the guest-chair took his place,
But I could not see his face.
When my cheerful fire was beaming,
When my little lamp was gleaming,
And the feast was spread for three,
Lo, my Master
Was the Guest that supped with me!

A WELCOME

Kossuth, the great Hungarian patriot, took refuge in England. This poem by Gerald Massey, though it is not one of his best from a literary point of view, shows the spirit in which he was welcomed to free England. Unfortunately, Hungary, after achieving freedom, did not give it freely to men of other races in her territory. Now, however, they, too, are likely to be free. The name Kossuth is pronounced Kosh-oot.

Ho! Patriots of Old England, wake!
And join ye heart and hand,
To welcome him for Freedom's sake
To our dear fatherland!
He needs no proud triumphal arch,
Nor banners on the wind;
In hearts that beat his triumph-march
Kossuth is fitly shrined!
We meet him here, we greet him here,
With Love's wide arms caress him!
Kings would have no such welcome cheer
As Kossuth hath: God bless him!

He rose like Freedom's morning star,
Where all was darkling, dim;
We saw his glory from afar,
And fought in soul for him!
Brave Victor! How his radiant brow
Kinged Freedom's host like Saul!
And in his crown of sorrow now
He's royallest heart of all.

Ay, English hearts through proud tears gush
With glory at his name,
Whose brave deeds made the roused blood rush
Along our veins like flame;
We cheered him through his hero-strife,
And, in his presence met,
Will show the world that patriot life
Lives in old England yet!

He cometh, dim with glorious dust,
From out his wrestling-ring;
But blessings—praises—deathless trust—
Like armies round him cling!
His Hungary billows o'er with graves
Of martyrs not in vain;
A rising ripening harvest waves
Its fruits of that red rain!

Freedom will run her radiant round,
Though clouds shut out the sky;
O, may his country's heart yet bound
To Kossuth's conquering cry;
And once again the Hapsburg star
His flaming sword make dim,
And palsy strike the arm that dare
Not strike a blow for him!

Ring out, exult, and clap your hands,
Free men and women brave;
Shout, Britain! Shake the startled lands,
And free the bounden slave!
Come forth, make merry in the sun,
And give him welcome due;
Heroic deeds have crowned him one
Of earth's immortal few!
We meet him here, we greet him here,
With Love's wide arms caress him!
Kings would have no such welcome cheer
As Kossuth hath: God bless him!

MEN OF THE NORTH

John Neal (1793–1876) was a literary American who wrote novels, historical works, and poems, and contributed to the English press articles on the American Republic which helped to a better understanding between the two countries.

Men of the North, look up!
There's a tumult in your sky;
A troubled glory surging out,
Great shadows hurrying by.

Your strength—where is it now?
Your quivers—are they spent?
Your arrows in the rust of death,
Your father's bows unbent?

Men of the North, awake!
Ye're called to from the deep;
Trumpets in every breeze—
Yet there ye lie asleep.

A stir in every tree;
A shout from every wave;
A challenging on every side;
A moan from every grave.

A battle in the sky;
Ships thundering through the air—
Jehovah on the march—
Men of the North, to prayer!

Now, now—in all your strength;
There's that before your way,
Above, about you, and below,
Like armies in array.

Lift up your eyes and see
The changes overhead;
Now hold your breath and hear
The mustering of the dead.

See how the midnight air
With bright commotion burns,
Thronging with giant shapes
Banner and spear by turns.

The sea-fog driving in,
Solemnly and swift,
The moon afraid—stars dropping out—
The very skies adrift.

The Everlasting God,
Our Father—Lord of Love—
With cherubim and seraphim
All gathering above.

Their stormy plumage lighted up
As forth to war they go;
The shadow of the Universe
Upon our haughty foe!

THE HERMIT OF THE THEBAID

"The Thebaid," where the hermit of this poem lived in contemplative solicitude, is the district around the site of ancient Thebes, in Egypt. "El Zara's race" means Egyptian. "Anchorite" is another name for hermit." This story poem, beautiful in its simplicity, of how a little child taught a man seeking for goodness that God can be served anywhere, is written by John Greenleaf Whittier, the American. We see in it that the greatest truths are often easiest to understand.

ALONE, the Thebaid hermit leaned
At noontime o'er the sacred word.
Was it an angel or a fiend
Whose voice he heard?

It broke the desert's hush of awe,
A human utterance, sweet and mild;
And, looking up, the hermit saw
A little child.

A child with wonder-widened eyes,
O'erawed and troubled by the sight
Of hot, red sands, and brazen skies,
And anchorite.

"What dost thou here, poor man? No shade
Of cool, green palms, nor grass, nor well,
Nor corn, nor vines." The hermit said:
"With God I dwell.

"Alone with Him in this great calm,
I live not by the outward sense;
My Nile is love, my sheltering palm
His providence."

The child gazed round him. "Does God live
Here only? Where the desert's rim
Is green with corn, at morn and eve
We pray to Him.

"My brother tills beside the Nile
His little field; beneath the leaves
My sisters sit and spin the while
My mother weaves.

"And when the millet's ripe heads fall,
And all the beanfield hangs in pod,
My mother smiles, and says that all
Are gifts from God.

"And when, to share our evening meal,
She calls the stranger at the door,
She says God fills the hands that deal
Food to the poor."

Adown the hermit's wasted checks
Glistened the flow of human tears;
"Dear Lord!" he said, "Thy angel speaks,
Thy servant hears."

Within his arms the child he took,
And thought of home and life with men;
And all his pilgrim feet forsook
Returned again.

The palmy shadows cool and long.
The eyes that smiled through lavish locks,
Home's cradle-hymn and harvest-song,
And bleat of flocks.

"O child," he said, "thou teachest me
There is no place where God is not;
That love will make, where'er it be,
A holy spot."

He rose from off the desert sand,
And, leaning on his staff of thorn,
Went, with the young child, hand-in-hand,
Like night with morn.

They crossed the desert's burning line,
And heard the palm-tree's rustling fan,
The Nile-bird's cry, the low of kine,
And voice of man.

Unquestioning, his childish guide
He followed as the small hand led
To where a woman, gentle-eyed,
Her distaff fed.

She rose, she clasped her truant boy,
She thanked the stranger with her eyes.
The hermit gazed in doubt and joy
And dumb surprise.

And lo! with sudden warmth and light
A tender memory thrilled his frame;
New-born, the world-lost anchorite
A man became.

"O sister of El Zara's race,
Behold me! had we not one mother?"
She gazed into the stranger's face;
"Thou art my brother?"

"O kin of blood, thy life of use
And patient trust is more than mine;
And wiser than the grey recluse
This child of thine.

"For, taught of him whom God hath sent,
That toil is praise, and love is prayer,
I come, life's cares and pains content
With thee to share."

Even as his foot the threshold crossed,
The hermit's better life began;
Its holiest saint the Thebaid lost,
And found a man!

THE COUNTRY FAITH

Mr. Norman Gale, who wrote these lines expressing the faith of simple country folk, has written many songs, chiefly about country life—sweet, short melodies like the robin's mellow lay.

HERE in the country's heart,
Where the grass is green,
Life is the same sweet life
As it e'er hath been.

Trust in a God still lives,
And the bell at morn
Floats with a thought of God
O'er the rising corn.

God comes down in the rain,
And the crop grows tall;
This is the country faith,
And the best of all.

THE HOLY ALLIANCE OF NATIONS

This song, graceful and true—and not quite complete here—was Béranger's part in celebrating the retirement of the Allies from France after the peace was made which followed the battle of Waterloo. The poet saw each nation giving its hand to the rest when the sinister influence of Napoleon was suppressed. A hundred years passed before Europe had again to unite to safeguard itself by war against an equally tyrannous ambition. Pierre Jean de Béranger, born in 1790, was the most popular song-writer France has ever produced. His bright lyrics expressed the spirit of the French race with singular exactness. Though his writing was light and airy, it was brave and outspoken, and several times he was imprisoned for his criticism of the Government. He died in 1857.

I HAVE seen Peace descend upon the earth,
Scattering her breast with flowers, and corn, and gold;
The air was calm, and of the god of wrath
The lurid bolts she stifled and controlled.
"Ah!" said she, "men, in courage equal all,
English, Russ, Belgian, German, Gallic land;
Ye nations, join one holy compact all;
Give each to each the hand!

"Poor mortals, wearied by such endless hate,
Ye never taste a sleep that's free from care;
Each from this globe can carve a just estate;
Each of you may the genial sunshine share;
Each of you, to the car of power a thrall,
Ye quit the path where happy dreams expand;
Ye nations, join one holy compact all;
Give each to each the hand!

"Unto your neighbour's doors ye carry flames;
The North wind blows, in flames your roof-trees glow,
And when her coolness the scorched earth reclaims,
Your maimed and weary arms forsake the plough.
Within the line where each State's boundaries fall,
No harvest's pure from blood that soaks the land;
Ye nations, join one holy compact all;
Give each to each the hand!

"Those rulers in your cities wrapped in flame,
At end of their disdainful sceptres dare
Those souls to mark, to count, and to proclaim,
Whom bloody triumphs portioned to their care;
Ye weak ones sink, ye pass, defenceless fall,
From heavy yoke, 'neath cruel yoke trepanned;
Ye nations, join one holy compact all;
Give each to each the hand!

"That Mars may not in vain arrest his course,
To aid your stricken land wise statutes bring;
Drain ye no more your life-blood from its source,
For mighty conqueror, for ungrateful king;
Ban the false stars and make their influence pall;
Frightful today, they pale tomorrow stand;
Ye nations, join one holy compact all;
Give each to each the hand!

"Yes, once more free, let the faint earth respire;
Veil now the past, your eyes now forward turn;
Sow blithe your fields to accents of the lyre;
Incense to arts now for your country burn;
Then Peace on Plenty's breast shall smiling fall,
And cull the sweet fruits of this marriage band.
Ye nations, join one holy compact all;
Give each to each the hand!"

A REVERIE IN THE GRASS

Charles Mackay was one of the healthiest writers who has used our language. There is always a spirit of breezy strength and openness of heart in his poems. Here he is in a lazy mood, but the reader feels as he lies and describes the summer sights and sounds around him that his is a clean, healthy mind.

HERE let me rest, amid the bearded grass,
Sprinkled with buttercups, and idly pass
One hour of sunshine on the green hill slope,
Watching the rigid clouds that o'er the cope
Of visible heaven sail quietly along;
Listening the wind, or rustling leaves, or song
Of blackbird or sweet ring-dove in the copse
Of pines or sycamores, whose dark-green tops
Form a clear outline right against the blue:
Here let me lie and dream, losing from view
All vexed and worldly things, and for one hour
Living such life as green leaf in a bower
Might live! breathing the calm, pure air,
Heedless of hope or fear, or joy or care.

Oh! it is pleasant in the summer-time
To sit alone and meditate or rhyme—
To hear the bee plying his busy trade,
Or grasshopper, alert in sun and shade,
With bright, large eyes and ample forehead bald,
Clad in cuirass and cuisses emerald.
Here let me rest, and for a space
Shut out the world from my abiding place:
Seeing around me naught but grass and bent,
Nothing above me but the firmament.

THE GOULDEN VANITEE

Sailormen have a way of singing with a refrain songs that appeal to them chiefly because of the repetition of some line or verse. It was in this way that many of the old ballads became popular with people ashore. Someone recited or sang a story in more or less doggerel verse, and those who listened sang the refrain as a chorus. The cruise of the Goulden Vanitee is a very old seaman's song. It is interesting rather because of its age and simplicity than for any other qualities.

THERE was a gallant ship, and a gallant ship was she,
Ik iddle du, and the Lowlands low;
And she was called the Goulden Vanitee,
As she sailed to the Lowlands low.

She had not sailed a league, a league but only three,
Ik iddle du, and the Lowlands low;
When she came up with a French gallee,
As she sailed to the Lowlands low.

Out spoke the little cabin-boy, out spoke he,
Ik iddle du, and the Lowlands low;
"What will you give if I sink that French gallee,
As ye sail to the Lowlands low?"

Out spoke the captain, out spoke he,
Ik iddle du, and the Lowlands low;
"We'll give ye an estate in the North Countree,
As ye sail to the Lowlands low."

"Then sew me up tight in a black bull's skin,
Ik iddle du, and the Lowlands low;
And throw me o'er deck-board, sink I or swim,
As ye sail to the Lowlands low."

So they sewed him up tight in a black bull's skin,
Ik iddle du, and the Lowlands low;
And threw him over deck-board, sink he or swim,
As they sailed to the Lowlands low.

About and about and about went he,
Ik iddle du, and the Lowlands low;
Until he had swum to the French gallee,
As she sailed to the Lowlands low.

O, some were playing cards, and some were playing dice,
Ik iddle du, and the Lowlands low;
When he took out an auger, bored thirty holes at twice,
As she sailed to the Lowlands low.

And some they ran with cloaks, and some they ran with caps,
Ik iddle du, and the Lowlands low;
To try if they could stop the salt water drops,
As she sailed to the Lowlands low.

About and about and about went he,
Ik iddle du, and the Lowlands low;
Until he came back to the Goulden Vanitee,
As she sailed to the Lowlands low.

"Now heave me o'er a rope, and sway me up aboard,
Ik iddle du, and the Lowlands low;
And give me the farm land, as good as your word,
As ye sail to the Lowlands low."

"We'll heave you no rope, nor sway you up aboard,
Ik iddle du, and the Lowlands low;
Nor give you an estate, as good as our word,
As we sail to the Lowlands low."

Out spoke the little cabin-boy, out spoke he,
Ik iddle du, and the Lowlands low;
"I'll sink ye as I sank the French gallee,
As ye sail to the Lowlands low."

They hove him o'er a rope, and they swayed him up aboard,
Ik iddle du, and the Lowlands low;
And they have proved to him much better than their word,
As they sailed to the Lowlands low.

THY WILL BE DONE

John Hay was a noted American citizen, secretary to Abraham Lincoln, and in his later life ambassador to Great Britain. He tells us here that we should not only sigh for God's will to be done, but should strive and, if necessary, fight for it.

NOT in dumb resignation
We lift our hands on high;
Not like the nerveless fatalist,
Content to trust and die.
Our faith springs like the eagle,
Who soars to meet the sun,
And cries exulting unto Thee,
O Lord, Thy will be done!

When tyrant feet are trampling
Upon the common weal,
Thou dost not bid us bend and writhe
Beneath the iron heel.
In Thy name we assert our right
By sword or tongue or pen,
And oft a people's wrath may flash
Thy message unto men.

Thy will! It strengthens weakness,
It bids the strong be just;
No lip to fawn, no hand to beg,
No brow to seek the dust.
Wherever man oppresses man
Beneath Thy liberal sun,
O Lord, be there Thine arm made bare,
Thy righteous will be done!

THE BABY'S DEBUT

William Wordsworth brought simplicity back into English poetry, after the rather pompous formality of writing in the eighteenth century. For doing this he was chaffed and caricatured. Here is an example of pretended imitation of him by James Smith, who with his brother, Horace Smith, published in 1812 a volume of parodies of poets under the title "Rejected Addresses." But times have changed, and now it is they who laughed at Wordsworth who are laughed at.

My brother Jack was nine in May,
And I was eight on New Year's Day;
So in Kate Wilson's shop
Papa (he's my papa and Jack's)
Bought me, last week, a doll of wax,
And Brother Jack a top.

Jack's in the pouts, and this it is—
He thinks mine came to more than his,
So to my drawer he goes,
Takes out the doll and, oh, my stars!
He pokes her head between the bars,
And melts off half her nose!

Quite cross, a bit of string I beg,
And tie it to his peg-top's peg,
And bang, with might and main,
Its head against the parlour door:
Off flies the head, and hits the floor,
And breaks a window-pane.

This made him cry with rage and spite:
Well, let him cry; it serves him right.
A pretty thing, forsooth!
If he's to melt, all scalding hot,
Half my doll's nose, and I am not
To draw his peg-top's tooth!

Aunt Hannah heard the window break
And cried, "Oh, naughty Nancy Lake!
Thus to distress your aunt:
No Drury Lane for you today!"
And while papa said, "Pooh, she may!"
Mamma said, "No, she shan't!"

Well, after many a sad reproach,
They got into a hackney coach,
And trotted down the street.
I saw them go: one horse was blind,
The tails of both hung down behind,
Their shoes were on their feet.

The chaise in which poor Brother Bill,
Used to be drawn to Pentonville,
Stood in the lumber-room:
I wiped the dust from off the top,
While Molly mopped it with a mop,
And brushed it with a broom.

My uncle's porter, Samuel Hughes,
Came in at six to black the shoes
(I always talk to Sam);
So what does he, but takes and drags
Me in the chaise along the flags,
And leaves me where I am.

My father's walls are made of brick,
But not so tall, and not so thick
As these; and, goodness me!
My father's beams are made of wood,
But never, never half so good
As these that now I see.

What a large floor! 'Tis like a town!
The carpet, when they lay it down,
Won't hide it, I'll be bound;
And there's a row of lamps! My eye!
How they do blaze! I wonder why
They keep them on the ground?

At first I caught hold of the wing
And kept away; but Mr. Thing-
umbob, the prompter man,
Gave with his hand my chaise a shove,
And said, "Go on, my pretty love!
Speak to 'em, little Nan!

"You've only got to curtsey, whisper, hold your chin up, laugh, and lisp,
And then you're sure to take:
I've known the day when brats not quite
Thirteen got fifty pounds a night;
Then why not Nancy Lake?"

But while I'm speaking, where's papa?
And where's my aunt? And where's mamma?
Where's Jack? Oh, there they sit!
They smile, they nod, I'll go my ways,
And order round poor Billy's chaise,
To join them in the pit.

And now, good gentlefolks, I go
To join mamma, and see the show;
So, bidding you adieu—
I curtsey, like a pretty miss,
And if you'll blow to me a kiss,
I'll blow a kiss to you.

AT SETTING DAY AND RISING MORN

A pleasant love song by Allan Ramsay, the Scottish poet, who started the first circulating library in Scotland in 1726, and wrote charming poems of simple life and natural scenes.

At setting day and rising morn,
With soul that still shall love thee,
I'll ask of Heaven thy safe return,
With all that can improve thee.
I'll visit aft the birken bush,
Where first thou kindly told me
Sweet tales of love, and hid thy blush,
Whilst round thou didst enfold me.

To all our haunts I will repair,
By greenwood, shaw, or fountain,
Or where the summer day I'd share
With thee upon yon mountain;
There will I tell the trees and flowers,
From thoughts unfeigned and tender,
By vows you're mine, by love is yours
A heart that cannot wander.

A ROAD IN FLANDERS

A simple picture by David Morton, a schoolmaster, of the difference made in a Belgian countryside by the passage of war.

THERE is a road in Flanders
That runs a quiet way,
And few there were that found it,
And yet, at dusk of day,
There were some feet that sought it,
And loved its dust and loam,
The feel of it beneath them,
Men glad of going home.

A little road and quiet,
Not built for great affairs—
The sort of road for children,
All sweet with evening airs.
So many now have found it,
That knew so few before,
But never the feet of home-glad men,
Or children any more.

A BROOK SONG

Eugene Field, who died nearly a quarter of a century ago, was perhaps the sweetest of all the writers of poetry for children; but he could also write serious verse on the unguessed mystery of life, as in this comparison of man's journey through the world with the course of an unforeseeing brook.

I'M hastening from the distant hills
With swift and noisy flowing,
Nursed by a thousand tiny rills,
I'm ever onward going.
The willows cannot stay my course,
With all their pliant wooing;
I sing and sing till I am hoarse,
My prattling way pursuing.
I kiss the pebbles as I pass,
And hear them say they love me;
I make obeisance to the grass
That kindly bends above me.
So onward through the meads and dells
I hasten, never knowing
The secret motive that impels,
Or whither I am going.

A little child comes often here
To watch my quaint commotion,
As I go tumbling, swift and clear,
Down to the distant ocean;
And as he plays upon my brink,
So thoughtless-like and merry,
And full of noisy song, I think
The child is like me, very.
Through all the years of youthful play,
With ne'er a thought of sorrow,
We, prattling, speed upon our way,
Unmindful of the morrow.
Aye, through these sunny meads and dells
We gambol, never trowing
The solemn motive that impels,
Or whither we are going.

And men come here to say to me:
"Like you, with weird commotion,
O little singing brooklet, we
Are hasting to an ocean;
Down to a vast and misty deep,
With fleeting tears and laughter,
We go, nor rest until we sleep
In that profound hereafter.
What tides may bear our souls along—
What monsters rise appalling—
What distant shores may hear our song
And answer to our calling?
Ah, who can say? Through meads and dells
We wander, never knowing
The awful motive that impels,
Or whither we are going!"

OXEN

The writer of this sonnet on the patient ox, Mahlon Leonard Fisher, is an American architect, who has made a special study of the sonnet. But for one puzzling line—the sixth—which we cannot understand, the poem is plain and impressive.

WEARY, they plod the ploughlands of the world.
Wherever turf is turned their hooves have pressed.
Gladly the great Earth-mother gives her breast
For them to trample—her pure bosom, pearled
With dews of innumerable mornings. Where were furled
Slit pitiful flags, their passing stills dismay:
Yoke-ridden, mute, Peace binds on them her bay.
For this the goad, the lash, the curse age-hurled!
Patient (Ah, theirs the patient eyes of Christ!)
They tread the centuries. Behind them flows
The furrowed glebe, and hath since Egypt rose,
Starlike, above the Nile. They bide the tryst
Man hath appointed; till he dig their graves,
Serve him, complaintless, who hath made them slaves.

DEVON MAID

John Keats was a Londoner, and frail in health. So from time to time he sought relief in the country, and, when he did, this is the turn his verses took. He died in the year 1821.

WHERE be you going, you Devon maid?
And what have ye there in the basket?
Ye tight little fairy, just fresh from the dairy,
Will ye give me some cream if I ask it?

I love your hills and I love your dales,
And I love your flocks a-bleating;
But, oh, on the heather to lie together,
With both our hearts a-beating!

I'll put your basket all safe in a nook;
Your shawl I'll hang on a willow;
And we will sigh in the daisy's eye,
And kiss on a grass-green pillow.

FLOWER CHORUS

What a charming view these happy verses give of the flower-life that rises into beauty in the spring! They are bright in spirit and sweet like the flowers, and tell truly of Nature's great awakening. They are by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the American writer who generally wrote more ruggedly than he writes in these verses.

O SUCH a commotion under the ground
When March called, " Ho, there ! ho ! "
Such spreading of rootlets far and wide,
Such whisperings to and fro !
" Are you ready ? " the snowdrop asked,
" 'Tis time to start, you know."
" Almost, my dear ! " the Scilla replied,
" I'll follow as soon as you go."
Then " Ha, ha, ha ! " a chorus came
Of laughter, sweet and low,
Of millions of flowers under the ground,
Yes, millions, beginning to grow.

" I'll promise my blossoms," the Crocus said,
" When I hear the blackbird sing."
And straight thereafter Narcissus cried,
" My silver and gold I'll bring."
" And ere they are dulled," another spoke,
" The hyacinth bells shall ring ; "
But the Violet only murmured, " I'm here,"
And sweet grew the air of spring.
Then " Ha, ha, ha ! " a chorus came
Of laughter, sweet and low,
From millions of flowers under the ground,
Yes, millions, beginning to grow.

O the pretty brave things, through the coldest days
Imprisoned in walls of brown,
They never lost heart though the blast shrieked loud
And the sleet and the hail came down ;
But patiently each wrought her wonderful dress
Or fashioned her beautiful crown,
And now they are coming to lighten the world
Still shadowed by winter's frown.
And well may they cheerily laugh, " Ha, ha ! "
In laughter, sweet and low,
The millions of flowers under the ground,
Yes, millions, beginning to grow.

HOME

These proud and ringing lines are perhaps the best ever written by the Sheffield poet, James Montgomery. Really Montgomery was a Scotsman, but he lived so long in Yorkshire that the clannish Yorkshiremen accepted him as one of themselves. His praise of home is all the finer because he leaves each reader to select his own country as the place that is meant, though, curiously, there are languages that have no word meaning just the same as our English word *home*. Montgomery wrote many popular hymns.

THERE is a land of every land the pride,
Beloved by Heaven o'er all the world beside ;
Where brighter suns dispense serener light,
And milder moons emparadise the night ;
A land of beauty, virtue, valour, truth,
Time-tutored age and love-exalted youth.
The wandering mariner, whose eye explores
The wealthiest isles, the most enchanting shores,
Views not a realm so bountiful and fair,
Nor breathes the spirit of a purer air ;
In every clime the magnet of his soul,
Touched by remembrance, trembles to that pole ;
For in this land of Heaven's peculiar grace,
The heritage of Nature's noblest race,
There is a spot of earth supremely blest,
A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest,
Where man, creation's tyrant, casts aside
His sword and sceptre, pageantry and pride,
While in his softened looks benignly blend
The sire, the son, the husband, brother, friend ;
Here woman reigns ; the mother, daughter, wife,
Strew with fresh flowers the narrow way of life !
In the clear heaven of her delightful eye,
An angel-guard of loves and graces lie ;
Around her knees domestic duties meet,
And fireside pleasures gambol at her feet.
Where shall that land, that spot of earth be found ?
Art thou a man—a patriot ? Look around !
Oh, thou shalt find, howe'er thy footsteps roam,
That land *thy* country, and that spot *thy* Home.

EVENING

This is an example of a picture drawn in words by one of the greatest English poets—Percy Bysshe Shelley. Apparently he took some time to observe and describe the different parts of his picture. Each part is true in itself, but not so true if regarded as simultaneous with the rest, for the same wind's breath that did not make a ripple on the pool would not drive the dust and straws up and down the street. Shelley was a master of word-melody.

THE sun is set ; the swallows are asleep,
The bats are flitting fast in the grey air ;
The soft, slow toads out of damp corners creep,
And evening's breath, wandering here and there
Over the quivering surface of the stream,
Wakes not one ripple from its silent dream.

There is no dew on the dry grass to-night,
Nor damp within the shadow of the trees,
The wind is intermitting, dry, and light ;
And in the inconstant motion of the breeze
The dust and straws are driven up and down,
And whirled about the pavement of the town.

BLOW, BUGLE, BLOW

In no language has a more perfect song been written than this by Tennyson, from "The Princess." It describes an evening scene watched by the poet at Killarney in 1848. Eight distinct echoes could be heard.. The music of the exquisitely chosen words requires that they shall be read aloud. They appeal at once to our senses of sight and sound and romance, and, besides, strike a deeper tone as they tell of the widening echoes of our lives.

THE splendour falls on castle walls,
And snowy summits old in story ;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear ! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going !
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying :
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river :
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying ;
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

THE MYSTERIOUS VISITOR—By Oliver Wendell Holmes

To understand the humour of this poem by Oliver Wendell Holmes, the delightful American author, it is necessary to know how deeply college students, the most irreverent of creatures, revere their college forms and traditions. If this story really happened, there is no wonder that "four freshmen fainted on the seat," while "six swooned on the floor." The writer was also making fun of the solemn and pompous manner in which stories of mystery are often told.

THERE was a sound of hurrying feet,
A tramp on echoing stairs,
There was a rush along the aisles—
It was the hour of prayers.

And on, like ocean's midnight wave,
The current rolled along,
When, suddenly, a stranger form
Was seen amidst the throng.

He was a dark and swarthy man,
That uninvited guest;
A faded coat of bottle-green
Was buttoned round his breast.

There was not one among them all
Could say from whence he came;
Nor beardless boy, nor ancient man,
Could tell that stranger's name.

All silent as the sheeted dead,
In spite of sneer and frown,
Fast by a grey-haired senior's side
He sat him boldly down.

There was a look of horror flashed
From out the tutor's eyes;
When all around him rose to pray,
The stranger did not rise!

A murmur broke along the crowd,
The prayer was at an end;
With ringing heels and measured tread,
A hundred forms descend.

Through sounding aisle, o'er grating stair,
The long procession poured,
Till all were gathered on the seats
Around the Commons board.

That fearful stranger! Down he sat,
Unasked, yet undismayed;
And on his lip a rising smile
Of scorn or pleasure played.

He took his hat and hung it up,
With slow but earnest air;

He stripped his coat from off his back,
And placed it on a chair.

Then from the nearest neighbour's side
A knife and plate he drew;
And, reaching out his hand again,
He took his teacup too.

How fled the sugar from the bowl!
How sunk the azure cream!
They vanished like the shapes that float
Upon a summer's dream.

A long, long draught, an outstretched hand,
And crackers, toast, and tea,
They faded from the stranger's touch,
Like dew upon the sea.

Then clouds were dark on many a brow,
Fear sat upon their souls,
And in a bitter agony.
They clasped their buttered rolls.

A whisper trembled through the crowd.
Who could the stranger be?
And some were silent, for they thought
A cannibal was he

All sullenly the stranger rose;
They sat in mute despair;
He took his hat from off the peg,
His coat from off the chair.

Four freshmen fainted on the seat,
Six swooned upon the floor;
Yet on the fearful being passed,
And shut the chapel door.

There is full many a starving man
That walks in bottle-green,
But never more that hungry one
In Commons hall was seen.

Yet often at the sunset hour,
When tolls the evening bell,
The freshman lingers on the steps,
That frightful tale to tell.

EACH IN HIS OWN TONGUE

A profound poem that will touch your heart more the longer you live and the more you know. In the universe an influence is astir, and always has been, that develops higher forms of life, purer tastes, nobler aspirations, and makes living things, including men and women, sacrifice themselves, often unconsciously, to the heroic. It is veiled and not clearly seen, but exists everywhere. It is the same that was meant in the first book of the Bible when the writer said, "The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters." The writer of this poem, William Herbert Carruth, is professor of German language and literature in the University of Kansas, but is best known to the world by these fine verses. The golden-rod is a characteristic American flower. The rood is, of course, the Cross.

A FIRE-MIST and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,
A jellyfish and a saurian,
And a cave where the cave-men dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty,
A face turned from the clod—
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God.

A haze on the far horizon,
The infinite tender sky,
The ripe rich tint of the cornfields,
And the wild geese sailing high;
And all over upland and lowland
The charm of the golden-rod—
Some of us call it Autumn,
And others call it God.

Like tides on a crescent sea-beach,
When the moon is new and thin,
Into our hearts high yearnings
Come welling and surging in—
Come from the mystic ocean,
Whose rim no foot has trod—
Some of us call it Longing,
And others call it God.

A picket frozen on duty,
A mother starved for her brood,
Socrates drinking the hemlock,
And Jesus on the rood;
And millions who, humble and faithful,
The straight, hard pathway trod—
Some call it Consecration,
And others call it God.

THE HAPPIEST HEART

The lesson, lovely as true, of contentment with things humble and good is here taught. It was Phœbus who was supposed to drive the horses of the sun in a flaming chariot across the sky, the course ending with the dying day. Better, says this poem, keep a humbler way with happiness and contentment as companions. The writer, John Vance Cheney, a librarian in Chicago, has published in his own country several books of verse.

WHO drives the horses of the sun
Shall lord it but a day;
Better the lowly deed was done
And kept the humble way.

The rust will find the sword of fame,
The dust will hide the crown;
Ay, none shall nail so high his name
Time will not tear it down.

The happiest heart that ever beat
Was in some quiet breast
That found the common daylight sweet
And left to Heaven the rest.

GUILD'S SIGNAL

Bret Harte, the American poet and tale-teller, knew well the life of the working people. No one has written better than he about the miners of the West. In these lines he tells a homely tale of an engine-driver who whistled at night a little greeting to his wife as he passed their home on the express. One night the signal was not heard, and the neighbours thought that Guild, the driver, had been forgetful; but his wife knew that the silence meant he had died at his duty. Heroism and love, qualities of character that are the best the world offers, are united in this simple story.

TWO low whistles, quaint and clear,
That was the signal the engineer—
That was the signal that Guild, 'tis said—
Gave to his wife at Providence,
As through the sleeping town, and thence,
Out in the night,
On to the light,
Down past the farms, lying white, he sped!

As a husband's greeting, scant, no doubt,
Yet to the woman looking out,
Watching and waiting, no serenade,
Love song, or midnight roundelay
Said what that whistle seemed to say:
"To my trust true,
So love to you!
Working or waiting, good-night!" it said.

Brisk young bagmen, tourists fine,
Old commuters along the line,
Brakemen and porters glanced ahead,
Smiled as the signal, sharp, intense,
Pierced through the shadows of Providence:
"Nothing amiss—
Nothing!—it is
Only Guild calling his wife," they said.

Summer and winter the old refrain
Rang o'er the billows of ripening grain;
Pierced through the budding boughs o'erhead;
Flew down the track when the red leaves burned
Like living coals from the engine spurned;
Sang, as it flew,
"To our trust be true;
First of all, duty—good-night," it said.

And then, one night, it was heard no more
From Stonington over Rhode Island shore;
And the folk in Providence smiled and said,
As they turned in their beds: "The engineer
Has once forgotten his midnight cheer."
One only knew,
To his trust true,
Guild lay under his engine, dead!

THE PIPES AT LUCKNOW

In these rugged verses, strangely changing their rhythm, John Greenleaf Whittier tells one of the most moving of all the stories of war. A multitude of rebels had for many weeks surrounded in Lucknow a few hundreds of British soldiers, women, children, and faithful natives, and seemed likely to break in on them and slaughter them before the relief army, led by Havelock, could arrive. When hope was almost gone and the fighting was at its fiercest, a Highland lassie called out that she could hear the pipes of the Highlanders coming through the city. No one else could hear them, but the lassie declared she knew the tune, the March of the Macgregors, "the grandest of them all"; and presently all could hear the music of the brave Highlanders as they forced their way through the lines of the enemy and brought safety to the beleaguered few.

PIPES of the misty moorlands,
Voice of the glens and hills,
The droning of the torrents,
The treble of the rills!
Not the braes of broom and heather,
Nor the mountains dark with rain,
Nor the maiden bower, nor border tower,
Have heard your sweetest strain!

Dear to the Lowland reaper
And plaided mountaineer—
To the cottage and the castle
The Scottish pipes are dear:
Sweet sounds the ancient pibroch
O'er mountain, loch, and glade;
But the sweetest of all music
The pipes of Lucknow played.

Day by day the Indian tiger
Louder yelled and nearer crept;
Round and round the jungle-serpent
Near and nearer circles swept.
"Pray for rescue, wives and mothers—
Pray today!" the soldiers said;
"Tomorrow death's between us
And the wrong and shame we dread."

Oh, they listened, looked, and waited,
Till their hope became despair;
And the sobs of low bewailing
Filled the pauses of their prayer.
Then up spake a Scottish maiden,
With her ear unto the ground:
"Dinna ye hear it?—dinna ye hear it?
The pipes o' Havelock sound!"

Hushed the wounded man his groaning;
Hushed the wife her little ones;
Alone they heard the drum-roll
And the roar of Sepoy guns.
But to sounds of home and childhood
The Highland ear was true—
As her mother's cradle-crooning
The mountain pipes she knew.

Like the march of soundless music
Through the vision of the seer.
More of feeling than of hearing,
Of the heart than of the ear,
She knew the droning pibroch,
She knew the Campbells' call:
"Hark! hear ye no Macgregors'—
The grandest o' them all?"

Oh, they listened, dumb and breathless,
And they caught the sound at last;
Faint and far beyond the Goomtee
Rose and fell the pipers' blast!
Then a burst of wild thanksgiving
Mingled woman's voice and man's;
"God be praised!—the march of Havelock!
The piping of the clans!"

Louder, nearer, fierce as vengeance,
Sharp and shrill as swords at strife,
Came the wild Macgregors' clan-call,
Stinging all the air to life.
But when the far-off dust-cloud
To plaided legions grew,
Full tenderly and blithesomely
The pipes of rescue blew!

Round the silver domes of Lucknow,
Moslem mosque and pagan shrine,
Breathed the air to Briton's dearest,
The air of "Auld Lang Syne."
O'er the cruel roll of war-drums
Rose that sweet and homelike strain;
And the tartan clove the turban,
As the Goomtee cleaves the plain.

Dear to the corn-land reaper
And plaided mountaineer—
To the cottage and the castle
The piper's song is dear:
Sweet sounds the Gaelic pibroch
O'er mountain glen, and glade;
But the sweetest of all music
The pipes of Lucknow played!

DAWN, GENTLE FLOWER

Bryan W. Procter, or "Barry Cornwall," was the writer of this simple little poetical story of the day's life of a beautiful flower.

DAWN, gentle flower,
From the morning earth!
We will gaze and wonder
At thy wondrous birth.

Bloom, gentle flower!
Lover of the light,
Sought by wind and shower,
Fondled by the night.

Fade, gentle flower!
All thy white leaves close,
Having shown thy beauty,
Time 'tis for repose.

VIRTUE

George Herbert, who wrote these lines, was, like his contemporary Herrick, a clergyman of the Church of England in the early seventeenth century. He died at the age of 40, in 1633. He was as serious as Herrick was bright, and his thoughtful verses are often given a humorous quaintness because of their artificial character. He was fond of making up what are called "conceits"—that is, comparisons of a forced or overdone kind, such as calling spring a "box" of sweets. But his poems contain much good sense and sincere piety, often powerfully expressed even when they are odd.

SWEET day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky;
The dew shall weep thy fall tonight,
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye;
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie;
Thy music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives,
But, though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

THE CLIFF-TOP

Dr. Robert Bridges, the writer of this charming poem and many others equally delightful, lives near Oxford, his old university. He was born in 1844, and has varied life as a successful doctor by some of the sweetest and most scholarly writings of our day. The poet here, we see, lies on a cliff-top watching earth and sea and sky, while the ocean and a cloud talk of one who is loved. Says the ocean, "If I were a cloud I would find my love and lavish my gifts on her;" and the cloud replies, "If I were the ocean I would tempt her by my quiet beauty to spend a summer on my waters." But neither cloud nor ocean could have its wish, for a rough wind blew the cloud away and made the ocean fling itself hoarsely against the cliff. Why not make the best of what we are?

THE cliff-top has a carpet
Of lilac, gold, and green:
The blue sky bounds the ocean,
The white clouds scud between.

A flock of gulls are wheeling
And wailing round my seat;
Above my head the heaven,
The sea beneath my feet.

THE OCEAN

WERE I a cloud I'd gather
My skirts up in the air
And fly I well know whither
And rest I well know where.

As pointed the star surely,
The legend tells of old,
Where the wise kings might offer
Myrrh, frankincense, and gold.

Above the house I'd hover
Where dwells my love, and wait
Till haply I might spy her
Throw back the garden gate.

There in the summer evening
I would bedeck the moon,
I would float down and screen her
From the sun's rays at noon.

And if her flowers should languish,
Or wither in the drought,
Upon her tall white lilies
I'd pour my heart's blood out:

So if she wore one only,
And shook not out the rain,
Were I a cloud, O cloudlet,
I had not lived in vain.

THE CLOUD

BUT were I thou, O ocean,
I would not chafe and fret
As thou, because a limit
To thy desires is set.

I would be blue, and gentle,
Patient, and calm, and see
If my smiles might not tempt her,
My love, to come to me.

I'd make my depths transparent
And still, that she should lean
O'er the boat's edge, to ponder
The sights that swam between.

I would command strange creatures,
Of bright hue and quick fin,
To stir the water near her,
And tempt her bare arm in.

I'd teach her spend the summer
With me: and I can tell
That, were I thou, O ocean,
My love should love me well.

But on the mad cloud scudded,
The breeze it blew so stiff;
And the sad ocean bellowed,
And pounded at the cliff.

RHYMED MAXIMS

George Herbert, the Puritan poet, followed a fashion of his day and built up carefully short moralisings in rhyme. They were sensible and quaint, though sometimes far-fetched. Here are examples about reading the Bible in the morning, being generous, praying at night, refraining from fault-finding, and cultivating humility. Our forefathers greatly admired such pithy sayings.

WHO read a chapter when they rise
Shall ne'er be troubled with ill eyes.

Who shuts his hand has lost his gold:
Who opens it hath it twice told.

Who goes to bed, and doth not pray,
Maketh two nights to every day.

Who by aspersions throw a stone
At th' head of others, hit their own.

Who looks on ground with humble eyes
Finds himself there, and seeks to rise.

GATHER ROSEBUDS WHILE YE MAY

Robert Herrick, a merry seventeenth-century clergyman, who lived in the country in Devonshire but dearly loved the town, did not himself take the advice he gave in this bright and graceful poem. He did not marry. His verses, easily written and prettily touched with sentiment, are favourably represented by these cheerful lines.

GATHER ye rosebuds while ye may :
Old Time is still a-flying ;
And this same flower that smiles today
Tomorrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be done,
The nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer ;
But, being spent, the worse and worst
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And whilst ye may go marry ;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry.

HOPE

All man's future is built on hope. This great fact of life, often unrealised, is expanded and illustrated in this useful verse.

IN hope a king doth go to war ;
In hope a lover lives full long ;
In hope a merchant sails full far ;
In hope just men do suffer wrong.
In hope the ploughman sows his seed :
Thus hope helps thousands at their need.
Then faint not, heart, among the rest ;
Whatever chance, hope thou the best.

THE DEATH OF FOX

This poem gives us the thoughts of William Wordsworth, the great "Lake" poet, on the night when Charles James Fox, a popular statesman of that generation, was dying. Wordsworth was walking in the Vale of Grasmere, usually so peaceful, but now resounding with the down-rush of many streams after a heavy storm. "The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steeps" was his description at another time. It seemed to him that the whole scene suited the passing from earth of the spirit of a great man.

LOUD is the Vale : the Voice is up
With which she speaks when storms are gone ;
A mighty unison of streams !
Of all her voices, One !

Loud is the Vale ; this inland depth
In peace is roaring like the sea ;
Yon star upon the mountain-top
Is listening quietly.

Sad was I, even to pain deprest,
Importunate and heavy load !
The Comforter hath found me here,
Upon this lonely road ;
And many thousands now are sad—
Wait the fulfilment of their fear ;
For he must die who is their stay,
Their glory disappear.

A power is passing from the earth
To breathless Nature's dark abyss ;
But when the mighty pass away
What is it more than this,

That man who is from God sent forth.
Doth yet again to God return ?
Such ebb and flow must ever be,
Then wherefore should we mourn ?

UNDER THE HOLLY BOUGH

This is a hearty Christmas call, by Charles Mackay, to a renewal of friendship and a revival of family feeling. Christmas is pictured as a time for the forgiveness of past differences and a beginning of new hopes ; and it is this spirit that has made that season dear.

YE who have scorned each other,
Or injured friend or brother,
In this fast-fading year ;
Ye who, by word or deed,
Have made a kind heart bleed,
Come gather here.

Let sinned against, and sinning,
Forget their strife's beginning,
And join in friendship now ;
Be links no longer broken,
Be sweet forgiveness spoken
Under the holly bough.

Ye who have loved each other,
Sister and friend and brother,
In this fast-fading year ;
Mother and sire and child,
Young man and maiden mild,
Come gather here ;

And let your hearts grow fonder,
As memory shall ponder
Each past unbroken vow.
Old love and younger wooing
Are sweet in the renewing,
Under the holly bough.

Ye who have nourished sadness,
Estranged from hope and gladness,
In this fast-fading year ;
Ye with o'erburthened mind,
Made aliens from your kind,
Come gather here.

Let not the useless sorrow
Pursue you night and morrow ;
If e'er you hoped, hope now—
Take heart, uncloud your faces,
And join in our embraces
Under the holly bough.

WELL ENOUGH AND TIDY NEW

The American rhymester James W. Riley dresses up cleverly in pretty verses the useful truth that neat, nice ways—in girls particularly—are charming to all who look on, while a slatternly style, though it may be called "Well Enough," is not really well enough, but instead is quite ugly. And what girl would be ugly?

TIDY NEW had eyes so blue
That all the flowers kissed her,
And said: "Sit down, dear Tidy New;
Oh, come and be our sister!"

Well Enough was coarse and rough;
She was Tidy's cousin.
But Tidy New of Well Enough
Was worth six hundred dozen.

Well Enough went down the street
On the mud side shady,
Across the street her cousin neat
Walked a little lady.

Not a spot on Tidy's dress,
Coat and hat so jaunty,
Sunlight on each streaming tress—
Going to see her Aunty.

All the birds, up in the trees,
Flit three branches nearer
Down to Tidy, just to please,
Feet now coming nearer.

Well Enough and Tidy New,
In the summer weather,
Walking, 'neath the skies so blue,
To their aunt's together.

Both will come back ere the night
Along the road all shady,
One, I know, a perfect fright,
And one a perfect lady.

ONE BY ONE

The lady who gave the wise advice in this poem was Adelaide A. Procter, a daughter of the poet who called himself, when writing, Barry Cornwall. He was a friend of Charles Dickens. Miss Procter sent her verses to Dickens for his publications, and when he accepted them and asked for more he was unaware that they were composed by his friend's daughter. It was a delightful surprise when he found out. There is an old rhyme which teaches the lesson that is taught practically in these verses—

One thing at a time, And that done well,
Is a very good rule, As many can tell.

ONE by one the sands are flowing,
One by one the moments fall;
Some are coming, some are going,
Do not strive to grasp them all.

One by one thy duties wait thee,
Let thy whole strength go to each;
Let no future dreams elate thee,
Learn thou first what those can teach.

One by one (bright gifts of Heaven),
Joys are sent thee here below;
Take them readily when given,
Ready, too, to let them go.

One by one thy griefs shall meet thee,
Do not fear an armèd band;
One will fade as others greet thee,
Shadows passing through the land.

Do not look at life's long sorrow;
See how small each moment's pain
God will help thee for to-morrow,
So each day begin again.

Every hour that fleets so slowly
Has its task, to do or bear;
Luminous the crown and holy,
When each gem is kept with care.

Do not linger with regretting,
Or for passing hours despond;
Nor, the daily toil forgetting,
Look too eagerly beyond.

Hours are golden links, God's token
Reaching heaven; but one by one
Take them, lest the chain be broken
Ere the pilgrimage be done.

AT THE CHURCH GATE

It is said that Thackeray wrote these charming verses to fit a picture. It showed a sweet girl walking quickly and modestly to church while a passer-by glanced after her admiringly. The poet has put himself in the place of that passer-by. Notice the breathless eagerness of the second and third verses. They throb with feeling. Few verses have expressed so much movement in simple words. The poem, too, is full of pretty fancies that make us think well of the tender-hearted poet who thought of them.

ALTHOUGH I enter not,
Yet round about the spot
Ofttimes I hover;
And near the sacred gate,
With longing eyes I wait
Expectant of her.

The minster bell tolls out
Above the city's rout
And noise and humming:
They've hushed the minster bell:
The organ 'gins to swell:
She's coming! she's coming!

My lady comes at last,
Timid, and stepping fast
And hastening hither,
With modest eyes downcast
She comes—she's here—she's past—
May Heaven go with her!

Kneel undisturbed, fair saint,
Pour out your praise and plaint
Meekly and duly.
I will not enter there
To sully your pure prayer
With thoughts unruly.

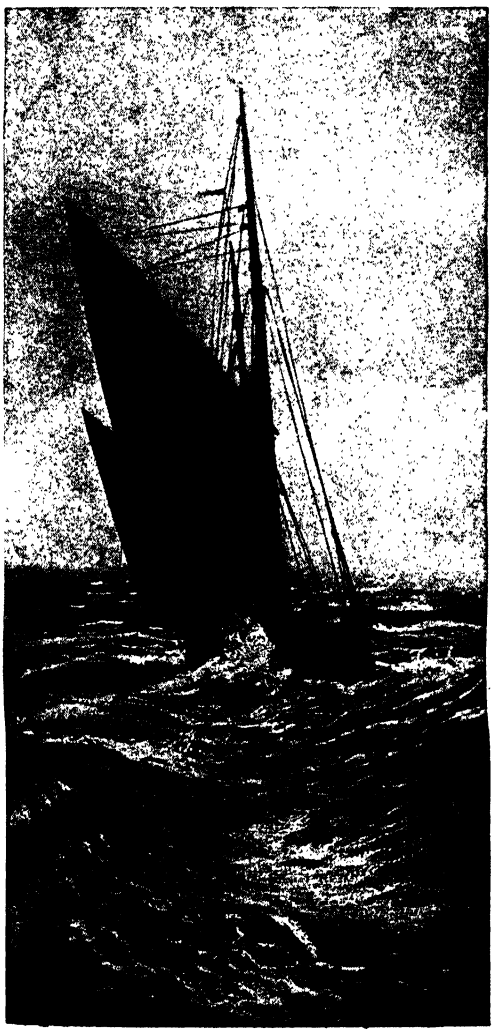
But suffer me to pace
Round the forbidden place,
Lingering a minute.
Like outcast saints who wait
And see through heaven's gate
Angels within it.

THE SAILOR'S CONSOLATION

It does not seem certain who wrote these jolly verses—the most cheerful, surely, of all songs of the sea. Sometimes they are attributed to Charles Dibdin, the seamen's laureate, and sometimes to W. Pitt. Probably they are by Dibdin, for they have his rollicking spirit as well as the sailor's way of making the best of things.

ONE night came on a hurricane,
The sea was mountains rolling,
When Barney Buntline slewed his quid,
And said to Billy Bowline:
"A strong nor'-wester's blowing, Bill,
Hark! don't ye hear it roar now?
Lord help 'em, how I pities them
Unhappy folks on shore now!

"Foolhardy chaps as live in towns,
What danger they are all in!
And now lie quaking in their beds,
For fear the roof should fall in!



ONE NIGHT CAME ON A HURRICANE

Poor creatures, how they envies us,
And wishes, I've a notion,
For our good luck in such a storm,
To be upon the ocean!

"And as for them that's out all day,
On business from their houses,
And late at night returning home,
To cheer their babes and spouses;
While you and I, Bill, on the deck
Are comfortably lying,
My eyes! what tiles and chimney-pots
About their heads are flying!

"Both you and I have oft-times heard
How men are killed and undone,
By overturns from carriages,
By thieves, and fires in London.
We know what risks these landsmen run,
From noblemen to tailors;
Then, Bill, let us thank Providence
That you and I are sailors."

TO THE BRAMBLE FLOWER

It is easy to criticise verses like Ebenezer Elliott's on the Bramble Flower, and to say that he admits echoes from other poets, such as from Milton's "gadding" vine and Wordsworth's "violet by a mossy stone," or to suggest that a lady's fear that the bramble will tear her satin dress is out of place in the country scene imagined by the poet; but such criticisms are outweighed by the sheer love of wild things that thrills through the poem.

THY fruit full well the schoolboy knows,
Wild bramble of the brake!
So put thou forth thy small white rose;
I love it for his sake.
Though woodbines flaunt, and roses glow
O'er all the fragrant bowers,
Thou need'st not be ashamed to show
Thy satin-dreaded flowers;
For dull the eye, the heart is dull,
That cannot feel how fair,
Amid all beauty beautiful,
Thy tender blossoms are!
How delicate thy gauzy frill!
How rich thy branchy stem!
How soft thy voice, when woods are still,
And thou sing'st hymns to them;
While silent showers are falling slow,
And 'mid the general hush,
A sweet air lifts the little bough,
Lone whispering through the bush!
The primrose to the grave is gone;
The hawthorn flower is dead;
The violet by the moss'd grey stone
Hath laid her weary head;
But thou, wild bramble, back dost bring,
In all their beauteous power,
The fresh green days of life's fair spring,
And boyhood's blossomy hour.
Scorn'd bramble of the brake, once more
Thou bidst me be a boy,
To gad with thee the woodlands o'er
In freedom and in joy.

A POET'S EPITAPH

Ebenezer Elliott, an English rhymer, sketches in these lines the purpose and spirit of his own writings. What he says about himself is what anyone who reads his poems would say about him. Born in 1781, at Rotherham, he lived all his life in the Sheffield district, and died in 1849, a fairly prosperous manufacturer. He knew the terrible sufferings of the people when corn was kept out of the country by law, and bread was at starvation prices, and he wrote what he knew so plainly and powerfully that the poor felt they had in him a voice that was heard everywhere.

STOP, Mortal! Here thy brother lies,
The Poet of the Poor.
His books were rivers, woods, and skies,
The meadow and the moor.

His teachers were the torn heart's wail,
The tyrant and the slave,
The street, the factory, the jail,
The palace—and the grave!

The meanest thing, earth's feeble worm,
He feared to scorn or hate;
And honoured in a peasant's form
The equal of the great.

But if he loved the rich who make
The poor man's little more;
Ill could he praise the rich who take
From plundered labour's store.

A hand to do, a head to plan,
A heart to feel and dare—
Tell man's worst foes, here lies a man
Who drew them as they are.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN DEAD

The assassination of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, in April, 1865, was one of the world's most distressing tragedies, for, as a great patriot and leader, he had just piloted his country safely through its terrible war for freedom. Walt Whitman, a great and highly original poet, who wrote this passionate and thrilling lament, went through the war as a follower of Lincoln on the anti-slavery side, so that the deep and intensely personal tone of the poem is in no way out of place.

O CAPTAIN! my Captain! Our fearful
trip is done;
The ship has weathered every rack,
The prize we sought is won;
The port is near, the bells I hear,
The people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel,
The vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! Rise up and hear
the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—
For you the bugle trills:
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths,
For you the shores a-crowding;
For you they call, the swaying mass,
Their eager faces turning;
Here, Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head;
It is some dream that on the deck
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are
pale and still;
My father does not feel my arm,
He has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchored safe and sound,
Its voyage closed and done;
From fearful trip, the victor ship,
Comes in with object won:
Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

MEG MERRILIES

Meg Merrilies is a picturesque old gipsy-wife described by Scott in his fine tale "Guy Mannering," and in these lines John Keats, the London-reared English poet, who died when he was still hardly more than a youth, put into verse his idea of the romantic Meg, as any reader of the tale might do. An Amazon is a female soldier. There have been such, and they were supposed to have been tall

OLD Meg she was a gipsy,
And lived upon the moors;
Her bed it was the brown heath turf,
And her house was out of doors.

Her apples were swart blackberries,
Her currants pods o' broom;
Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,
Her book a churchyard tomb.

Her brothers were the craggy hills,
Her sisters larchen-trees;
Alone with her great family
She lived as she did please.

No breakfast had she many a morn,
No dinner many a noon,
And 'stead of supper she would stare
Full hard against the moon.

But every morn of woodbine fresh
She made her garlanding,
And every night the dark glen yew
She wore; and she would sing.

And with her fingers old and brown
She plaited mats of rushes.
And gave them to the cottagers
She met among the bushes.

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen,
And tall as Amazon;
An old red blanket cloak she wore,
A ship-hat had she on;
God rest her aged bones somewhere!
She died full long agone!

THE TWO ANGELS

The tenderest hearts of men that God has made have often cheered themselves by picturing a time when of the souls said to be lost even the very worst will be saved. Terrible descriptions have been imagined of the dreadful state in which God's rebel angel and all bad men exist—as, for instance, by Milton in "Paradise Lost"; but here J. G. Whittier, the loving-hearted Quaker poet of America, imagines how, under the ministrations of Pity and Love, all may at last be rescued. The good poets cannot be kinder than God.

GOD called the nearest angels who dwell
with Him above;
The tenderest one was Pity, the dearest one
was Love.

"Arise," He said, "My angels! a wail of woe
and sin
Steals through the gates of heaven, and
saddens all within.

"My harps take up the mournful strain that
from a lost world swells,
The smoke of torment clouds the light and
blights the asphodels.

"Fly downward to that underworld, and
on its souls of pain
Let Love drop smiles like sunshine, and Pity
tears like rain!"

Two faces bowed before the Throne veiled
in their golden hair;
Four white wings lessened swiftly down the
dark abyss of air.

The way was strange, the flight was long;
at last the angels came
Where swung the lost and nether world,
red-wrapped in rayless flame.

There Pity, shuddering, wept; but Love,
with faith too strong for fear,
Took heart from God's almightiness and
smiled a smile of cheer.

And lo! that tear of Pity quenched the flame
whereon it fell,
And, with the sunshine of that smile, hope
entered into hell!

Two unveiled faces full of joy looked upward to the Throne,
Four white wings folded at the feet of Him
who sat thereon!

And deeper than the sound of seas, more
soft than falling flake,
Amidst the hush of wing and song the Voice
Eternal spake:

"Welcome, my angels! ye have brought a
holier joy to heaven;
Henceforth its sweetest song shall be the
song of sin forgiven!"

A MOOD

The significance of this fragment is compressed in the last line. Does Nature dumbly feel a sense of pain when the life of a tree-branch is destroyed? That she perhaps does is a fancy by Thomas B. Aldrich, the American poet. Men feel strange, dim sorrows sometimes.

A BLIGHT, a gloom, I know not what, had
crept upon my gladness—
Some vague, remote ancestral touch of
sorrow or of madness;
A fear that is not fear, a pain that has not
pain's insistence;
A sense of longing, or of loss, in some forgone
existence;
A subtle hurt that never pen had writ nor
tongue had spoken—
Such hurt perchance as Nature feels when a
blossomed bough is broken.

WORDS

These striking lines were written by Charles Harpur, the first Australian who wrote genuine poetry. When he was born, at Windsor, New South Wales, in 1817, the continent was as yet scarcely inhabited by white men. The influences of voice and pen have rarely been more picturesquely condensed into a few sentences. Thermopylæ was a famous battle in Greece, and Inkerman a battle in the Crimea, and in each great heroism was displayed.

Words are deeds. The words we hear
May revolutionise or rear
A mighty State. The words we read
May be a spiritual deed
Excelling any fleshly one,
As much as the celestial sun
Transcends a bonfire made to throw
A light upon some raree-show.
A simple proverb tagged with rhyme
May colour half the course of time;
The pregnant saying of a sage
May influence every coming age;
A song in its effects may be
More glorious than Thermopylæ,
And many a lay that schoolboys scan
A nobler feat than Inkerman.

GRANDMOTHER TENTERDEN

Bret Harte, the American poet, had a rare power of surcharging verse with feeling, and this poem is quite a tragedy of feeling, played out in silence, between a proud wife and a jealous mother. A sailor leaving home parts tenderly from his mother but not from his wife, with whom he has quarrelled. But at night he returns and kisses her while she sleeps. The mother knows this, but the wife does not. When the sailor does not come back the wife pines away in silence, and the jealous mother never tells her that she, too, was kissed, an obstinacy that causes her deep self-reproach when the son returns.

I mind it was but yesterday—
The sun was dim, the air was chill;
Below the town, below the hill,
The sails of my son's ship did fill—
My Jacob, who was cast away.

He said, "God keep you, mother dear,"
But did not turn to kiss his wife;
They had some foolish, idle strife;
Her tongue was like a two-edged knife,
And he was proud as any peer.

Howbeit, that night I took no note
Of sea nor sky, for all was drear;
I marked not that the hills looked near,
Nor that the moon, though curved and clear,
Through curd-like scud did drive and float.

For with my darling went the joy
Of autumn woods and meadows brown;
I came to hate the little town;
It seemed as if the sun went down
With him, my only darling boy.

It was the middle of the night,
The wind it shifted west-by-south;
It piled high up the harbour mouth;
The marshes, black with summer drouth,
Were all abroad with sea-foam white.

It was the middle of the night,
The sea upon the garden leapt,
And my son's wife in quiet slept,
And I, his mother, waked and wept,
When lo! there came a sudden light.

And there he stood! His seaman's dress
All wet and dripping seemed to be;
The pale blue fires of the sea
Dripped from his garments constantly—
I could not speak through cowardness.

"I come through night and storm," he said;
"Through storm and night and death," said he,
"To kiss my wife, if it so be
That strife still holds 'twixt her and me,
For all beyond is Peace," he said.

"The sea is His, and He who sent
The wind and wave can soothe their strife;
And brief and foolish is our life."
He stooped and kissed his sleeping wife,
Then sighed, and, like a dream, he went.

Now, when my darling kissed not me,
But her, his wife, who did not wake,
My heart within me seemed to break;
I swore a vow! Nor thenceforth spake
Of what my clearer eyes did see.

And when the slow weeks brought him not,
Somehow we spake of aught beside;
For she—her hope upheld her pride;
And I—in me all hope had died,
And my son passed as if forgot.

It was about the next spring-tide,
She pined and faded where she stood,
Yet spake no word of ill or good;
She had the hard, cold Edwards' blood
In all her veins—and so she died.

One time I thought, before she passed,
To give her peace, but ere I spake
Methought, "*He* will be first to break
The news in heaven," and for his sake
I held mine back until the last.

And here I sit, nor care to roam;
I only wait to hear his call;
I doubt not that this day, next fall,
Shall see me safe in port; where all
And every ship at last comes home.

And you have sailed the Spanish main,
And knew my Jacob? . . . Eh! Mercy!
Ah, God of Wisdom, hath the sea
Yielded its dead to humble me?
My boy! . . . My Jacob! . . .
Turn again!

THE CHAMELEON

James Merrick, who was born in 1720 and died in 1769, and who wrote this popular poem, was a learned, pious, Oxford man, who qualified as a clergyman, but rarely preached. He spent his life studying Greek, and writing religious poems, some of which are still sung from our hymn-books. He is chiefly known now by this flowing description of the changeful chameleon—an excellent example of the easy narrative-writing of eighteenth-century poets.

OFT has it been my lot to mark
A proud, conceited, talking spark,
With eyes that hardly served at most
To guard their master 'gainst a post;
Yet round the world the blade has been,
To see whatever could be seen.
Returning from his finished tour,
Grown ten times perter than before;
Whatever word you chance to drop,
The travelled fool your mouth will stop:
"Sir, if my judgment you'll allow—
I've seen—and sure I ought to know."
So begs you'd pay a due submission,
And acquiesce in his decision.

Two travellers of such a cast,
As o'er Arabia's wilds they passed,
And on their way, in friendly chat,
Now talked of this, and then of that;
Discoursed awhile, 'mongst other matter,
Of the Chameleon's form and nature.
"A stranger animal," cries one,
"Sure never lived beneath the sun;
A lizard's body, lean and long,
A fish's head, a serpent's tongue,
It's foot with triple claw disjoined;
And what a length of tail behind!
How slow its pace! and then its hue—
Who ever saw so fine a blue?"
"Hold there," the other quick replies,
"'Tis green, I saw it with these eyes,
As late with open mouth it lay,
And warmed it in the sunny ray;
Stretched at its ease the beast I viewed,
And saw it eat the air for food."
"I've seen it, sir, as well as you,
And must again affirm it blue;
At leisure I the beast surveyed
Extended in the cooling shade."
"'Tis green, 'tis green, sir, I assure ye."
"Green!" cries the other in a fury:
"Why, sir, d'ye think I've lost my eyes?"
"'Twere no great loss," the friend replies;
"For if they always serve you thus,
You'll find them but of little use."
So high at last the contest rose,
From words they almost came to blows:
When luckily came by a third;
To him the question they referred;
And begged he'd tell them, if he knew,
Whether the thing was green or blue.
"Sirs," cries the umpire, "cease your pother;
The creature's neither one nor t'other.
I caught the animal last night,
And viewed it o'er by candle-light;
I marked it well, 'twas black as jet—
You stare—but, sirs, I've got it yet.
And can produce it." "Pray, sir, do;
I'll lay my life the thing is blue."
"And I'll be sworn that, when you've seen
The reptile, you'll pronounce him green."
"Well, then, at once to ease the doubt,"
Replies the man, "I'll turn him out;
And when before your eyes I've set him,
If you don't find him black, I'll eat him,"
He said; and full before their sight
Produced the beast, and lo! 'twas white.
Both stared; the man looked wondrous wise.
"My children," the Chameleon cries
(Then first the creature found a tongue),
"You all are right, and all are wrong;
When next you talk of what you view,
Think others see as well as you:
Nor wonder if you find that none
Prefers your eyesight to his own."

O, NANNY, WILT THOU GANG WI' ME?

A song that sings itself softly while it appeals vaguely to feeling will always be a favourite. This one by Thomas Percy, the grocer's son who became a bishop (1729–1811), is an instance. We do not know why Nanny should renounce everything and follow her lover into the country, where he anticipates nothing but calamities, but the plaintive ring of the lines causes us to overlook a great deal.

O, NANNY, wilt thou gang wi' me,
Nor sigh to leave the flaunting town?
Can silent glens have charms for thee,
The lowly cot and russet gown?
Nae langer drest in silken sheen,
Nae langer deck'd wi' jewels rare,
Say, canst thou quit each courtly scene,
Where thou wert fairest of the fair?

O, Nanny, when thou'rt far awa,
Wilt thou not cast a look behind?
Say, canst thou face the flaky snaw,
Nor shrink before the winter wind?
O, can that soft and gentle mien
Severest hardships learn to bear,
Now, sad, regret each courtly scene,
Where thou wert fairest of the fair?

O, Nanny, canst thou love so true,
Through perils keen wi' me to gae?
Or, when thy swain mishap shall rue,
To share with him the pang of wae?
Say, should disease or pain befall,
Wilt thou assume the nurse's care,
Nor, wishful, those gay scenes recall,
Where thou wert fairest of the fair?

And when at last thy love shall die,
Wilt thou receive his parting breath?
Wilt thou repress each struggling sigh,
And cheer with smiles the bed of death?
And wilt thou o'er his much-loved clay
Strew flowers, and drop the tender tear?
Nor then regret those scenes so gay,
Where thou wert fairest of the fair?

GOOD-NIGHT!

This farewell song of a soldier who is leaving Scotland for the wars was written by Robert Tannahill, the weaver-poet of Paisley. Tannahill was born in 1774, and died at the age of 36. During the last years of his life he wrote many popular songs in imitation of Robert Burns. In the days when this song was written Scotland sent many of her sons into the army, for the land was very poor.

THE weary sun's gaen down the west,
The birds sit nodding on the tree;
All Nature now prepares for rest,
But rest prepared there's none for me.
The trumpet sounds to war's alarms,
The drums they beat, the fifes they play,
Come, Mary, cheer me wi' thy charms,
For the morn I will be far away.
Good-night, and joy—good-night, and joy,
Good-night, and joy be wi' you a';
For since it's so that I must go,
Good-night, and joy be wi' you a'!

I grieve to leave my comrades dear,
I mourn to leave my native shore;
To leave my aged parents here,
And the bonnie lass whom I adore.
But tender thoughts maun now be hushed,
When danger calls I must obey,
The transport waits us on the coast,
And the morn I will be far away.

Adieu, dear Scotia's sea-beat coast!
Though bleak and drear thy mountains be,
When on the heaving ocean tost
I'll cast a wistful look to thee!
And now, dear Mary, fare thee well.
May Providence thy guardian be!
Or in the camp, or on the field,
I'll heave a sigh, and think on thee!

MIDGES DANCE ABOON THE BURN

Robert Tannahill was losing his health working as a weaver while he was writing songs like this about the delights of country life. The "paitrick" is the partridge; the "mavis" the thrush; the "yeldrin" the yellow-hammer; and a "shaw" is a wood. Some of the words used are very expressive, as all must feel who have watched the "jinking" flight of the cheerful but retiring wren.

THE midges dance aboon the burn;
The dews begin to fa';
The paitricks down the rushy holm
Set up their e'ening ca'.
Now loud and clear the blackbird's sang
Rings through the briery shaw,
While, flitting gay, the swallows play
Around the castle wa'.

Beneath the golden gloaming sky
The mavis mends her lay;
The redbreast pours his sweetest strains
To charm the ling'ring day;
While weary yeldrins seem to wail
Their little nestlings torn,
The merry wren, frae den to den,
Gaes jinking through the thorn.

The roses fauld their silken leaves,
The foxglove shuts its bell;
The honeysuckle and the birk
Spread fragrance through the dell.
Let others crowd the giddy court
Of mirth and revelry,
The simple joys that Nature yields
Are dearer far to me.

THE OAK-TREE

We may tell the time when Mary Howitt wrote this poem, because it speaks of the oak-made ship; and now nearly all ships are made of iron or steel to carry the machinery that drives them. But though ships are no longer made from "hearts of oak" the tree will be admired by poets and thoughtful people for its long life, both as tree and timber. It is the favourite English tree.

SING for the oak-tree, the monarch of the wood!
Sing for the oak-tree, that groweth green and good!
That groweth broad and branching within the forest shade;
That groweth now, and still shall grow when we are lowly laid!

The oak-tree was an acorn once, and fell upon the earth;
And sun and shower nourished it, and gave the oak-tree birth;
The little sprouting oak-tree, two leaves it had at first,
Till sun and shower nourished it, then out the branches burst.

The winds came and the rain fell; the gusty tempest blew;
All, all were friends to the oak-tree, and stronger yet it grew.
The boy that saw the acorn fall, he feeble grew and grey;
But the oak was still a thriving tree, and strengthened every day.

Four centuries grows the oak-tree, nor does its verdure fail;
Its heart is like the iron-wood, its bark like plaited mail.
Now cut us down the oak-tree, the monarch of the wood;
And of its timber stout and strong we'll build a vessel good.

The oak-tree of the forest both east and west shall fly;
And the blessings of a thousand lands upon our ship shall lie.
She shall not be a man-of-war, nor a pirate shall she be;
But a noble Christian merchant ship, to sail upon the sea.

MONSIEUR ET MADEMOISELLE

We have here a lesson for English children in admiration of the French. Mrs. Craik—a lady who, under her maiden name of Miss Dinah Mulock, wrote one of our most popular tales, "John Halifax, Gentleman"—is wise enough to see and tell us how charming, in children, is French gaiety of heart and politeness, points we English are liable to overlook in our grim, practical way.

DEUX petits enfants Français :
Monsieur et Mademoiselle.
Of what can they be talking, child ?
Indeed I cannot tell.

But of this I am very certain,
You would find naught to blame
In that sweet French politeness—
I wish we had the same !

Monsieur has got a melon,
And scoops it with his knife,
While Mademoiselle sits watching him :
No rudeness here—or strife :
Though, could you only listen,
They're chattering like two pies—
French magpies, understand me—
So merry and so wise.

Their floor is bare of carpet,
Their curtains are so thin ;
They dine off meagre pottage, and
Put many an onion in !
Her snow-white caps she irons ;
He blacks his shoes, he can ;
Yet she's a little lady,
And he a gentleman.

O busy, happy children !
That light French heart of yours,
Would it might sometimes enter at
Our solemn English doors !
Would that we worked as gaily,
And played, yes, played as well,
And lived our lives as simply
As Monsieur and Mademoiselle !

ON PLANTING A TREE AT INVERARAY

When James Russell Lowell was in Scotland, an honoured guest of the Duke of Argyll, he was asked to plant a tree at Inveraray ; and he not only did so, but wrote this thoughtful poem about it, to be a lasting inducement to many generations to go on with the beneficent work of planting trees, that will be enjoyed as a help to man, bird, and beast long after the planter is forgotten.

WHO does his duty is a question
Too complex to be solved by me :
But he, I venture the suggestion,
Does part of his that plants a tree.

For after he is dead and buried,
And epitaphed, and well forgot—
Nay, even his shade by Charon ferried
To—let us not inquire to what,

His deed, its author long outliving,
By Nature's mother-care increased,
Shall stand, his verdant almoner, giving
A kindly dole to man and beast.

The wayfarer, at noon reposing,
Shall bless its shadow on the grass,
Or sheep beneath it huddle, dozing
Until the thundergust o'erpass.

The owl, belated in his plundering,
Shall here await the friendly night,
Blinking whene'er he wakes, and wondering
What fool it was invented light.

Hither the busy birds shall flutter,
With the light timber for their nests,
And, pausing from their labour, utter
The morning sunshine in their breasts.

What, though his memory shall have vanished,
Since the good deed he did survives ?
It is not wholly to be banished
Thus to be part of many lives.

Grow, then, my foster-child, and strengthen,
Bough over bough, a murmurous pile,
And, as your stately stem shall lengthen,
So may the statelier of Argyll.

A LAUGHING PHILOSOPHER

This is one of Mr. George Cooper's happy rhymes, telling us most truly how joyousness of spirit seems to have the effect of making the whole world to shine, and calls forth friendship everywhere.

I KNOW a funny fellow,
With locks of golden yellow,
Who never yet could cross or angry be.
Although he often tumbles,
He never cries or grumbles,
But he laughs "Ha-ha !" and "Ho-ho-ho !
He-he !"

The very blossoms knew him ;
The brooks came running to him,
And sang, "We love to join you in your glee !"
Glad birds came flying after,
To listen to his laughter,
With its "Ha-ha-ha !" and "Ho-ho-ho !
He-he !"

"We're comrades," smiled the daisies.
In pleasant woodland mazes
The squirrels chirped, "He's quite as gay as we !"
What merry sunshine made he,
In places lone and shady,
With his "Ha-ha-ha !" and "Ho-ho-ho !
He-he !"

When rain began to patter,
And timid birds to scatter,
He laughed, "That makes no difference to me !
The sun will soon be shining,
My cure for all repining
Is a Ha-ha-ha ! and a Ho-ho-ho ! He-he !"

THE WONDERS OF THE LANE

The writer of this charming description of things to be seen in a country lane near the Pennine moorlands was Ebenezer Elliott. He is best known as the author of political poems that helped towards the repeal of the Corn Laws, but the writing of those poems was an after-thought. It was love of Nature that first made Elliott write poetry. It is said he was attracted into the fields by seeing a picture of a primrose in a book on botany. How great his love of the sights and sounds of country life became can be judged by these verses, which are the best of the kind he ever wrote. The "gloaming clock" is the beetle that "wheels its droning flight" in the twilight, and, of course, Sol is the sun.

STRONG climber of the mountain's side,
Though thou the vale disdain,
Yet walk with me where hawthorns hide
The wonders of the lane.
High o'er the rushy springs of Don
The stormy gloom is rolled;
The moorland hath not yet put on
His purple, green, and gold.
But here the titling spreads his wing,
Where dewy daisies gleam;
And here the sunflower of the spring
Burns bright in morning's beam.
To mountain winds the famish'd fox
Complains that Sol is slow,
O'er headlong steeps and gushing rocks
His royal robe to throw.
But here the lizard seeks the sun,
Here coils in light the snake;
And here the fire-tuft hath begun
Its beauteous nest to make.

Oh, then, while hums the earliest bee
Where verdure fires the plain,
Walk thou with me, and stoop to see
The glories of the lane!
For, oh, I love these banks of rock,
This roof of sky and tree,
These tufts, where sleeps the gloaming clock,
And wakes the earliest bee!
As spirits from eternal day
Look down on earth secure,
Gaze thou, and wonder, and survey
A world in miniature!
A world not scorned by Him who made
Even weakness by His might;
But solemn in His depth of shade,
And splendid in His light.
Light! not alone on clouds afar
O'er storm-loved mountains spread,
Or widely teaching sun and star,
Thy glorious thoughts are read;
Oh, no! thou art a wondrous book,
To sky, and sea, and land—
A page on which the angels look,
Which insects understand!
And here, O Light, minutely fair,
Divinely plain and clear,
Like splinters of a crystal hair,
Thy bright small hand is here.

Yon drop-fed lake, six inches wide,
Is Huron, girt with wood;
This driplet feeds Missouri's tide—
And that Niagara's flood.
What tidings from the Andes brings
Yon line of liquid light,
That down from heaven in madness flings
The blind foam of its might?
Do I not hear his thunder roll—
The roar that ne'er is still?
'Tis mute as death!—but in my soul
It roars, and ever will.

What forests tall of tiniest moss
Clothe every little stone!
What pigmy oaks their foliage toss
O'er pigmy valleys lone!
With shade o'er shade, from ledge to ledge,
Ambitious of the sky,
They feather o'er the steepest edge
Of mountains mushroom high.
O God of marvels, who can tell
What myriad living things
On these grey stones unseen may dwell;
What nations, with their kings?
I feel no shock, I hear no groan,
While fate perchance o'erwhelms
Empires on this subverted stone—
A hundred ruined realms!
Lo! in that dot, some mite, like me,
Impelled by woe or whim,
May crawl, some atoms, cliffs to see—
A tiny world to him!
Lo! while he pauses, and admires
The works of Nature's might,
Spurned by my foot, his world expires,
And all to him is night!

O God of terrors! what are we?—
Poor insects, sparked with thought!
Thy whisper, Lord, a word from Thee,
Could smite us into nought!
But shouldst Thou wreck our fatherland,
And mix it with the deep,
Safe in the hollow of Thine hand
Thy little ones would sleep.

THOUGHTS

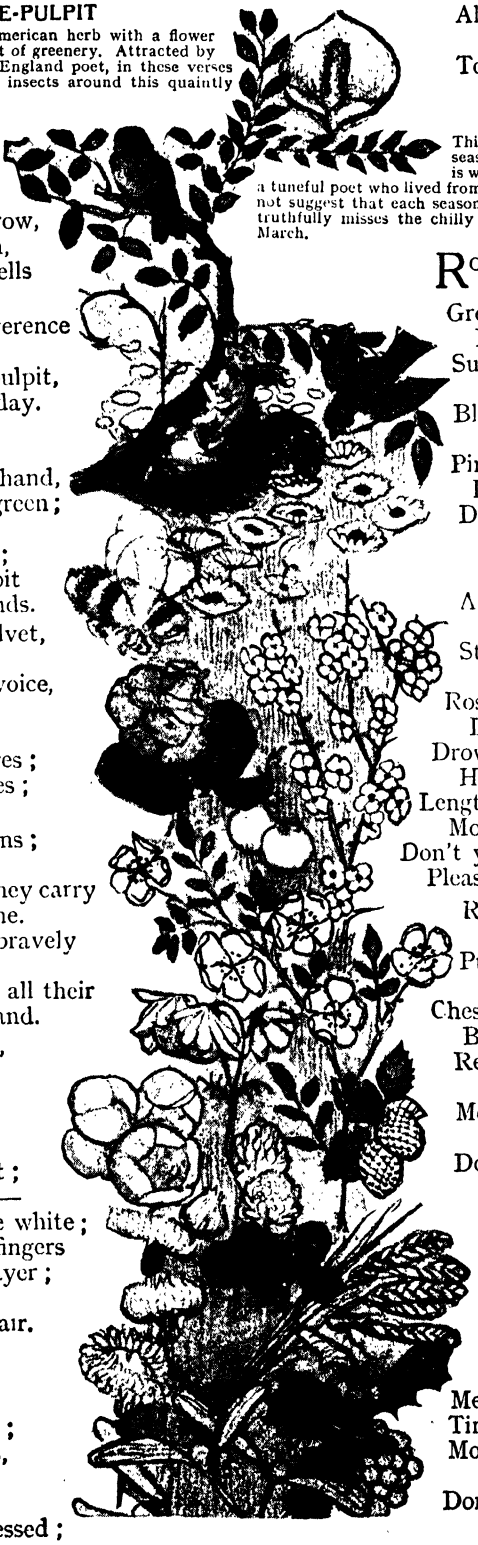
These lines by Shelley variously illustrate one thought—the permanence of beautiful things. This is illustrated in many of his verses, for his thoughts remain with us, and will always remain, like lingering perfumes and remembered melodies.

MUSIC, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT

"Jack-in-the-pulpit" is an American herb with a flower springing up as if from a pulpit of greenery. Attracted by the name, Whittier, the New England poet, in these verses groups the flowers, birds, and insects around this quaintly named flower.



JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT
Preaches today,
Under the green trees
Just over the way.
Squirrel and song-sparrow,
High on their perch,
Hear the sweet lily-bells
Ringing to church.
Come, hear what his reverence
Rises to say,
In his low, painted pulpit,
This calm Sabbath day.
Fair is the canopy
Over him seen,
Pencilled, by Nature's hand,
Black, brown, and green;
Green is his surplice,
Green are his bands;
In his queer little pulpit
The little priest stands.
In black and gold velvet,
So gorgeous to see,
Comes, with his bass voice,
The chorister bee.
Green fingers playing
Unseen on wind-lyres;
Low singing-bird voices;
These are his choirs.
The violets are deacons;
I know by the sign
That the cups which they carry
Are purple with wine.
And the columbines bravely
As sentinels stand
On the look-out, with all their
Red trumpets in hand.
Meek-faced anemones,
Drooping and sad;
Great yellow violets,
Smiling out glad;
Buttercups' faces,
Beaming and bright;
Clovers, with bonnets—
Some red and some white;
Daisies, their white fingers
Half clasped in prayer;
Dandelions, proud of
The gold of their hair.
Innocents, children
Guileless and frail,
Meek little faces
Upturned and pale;
Wild-wood geraniums,
All in their best,
Languidly leaning
In purple gauze dressed;
All are assembled,
This sweet Sabbath day,
To hear what the priest
In his pulpit will say.

OUR ALMANAC

This lovely little journey round the seasons as they appear in America is written by Thomas Bailey Aldrich, a tuneful poet who lived from 1836 till 1907. Mr. Aldrich does not suggest that each season is as pleasant as the rest. He truthfully misses the chilly end of winter in February and March.

ROBINS in the tree-tops;
Blossoms in the grass;
Green things a-growing
Everywhere you pass;
Sudden little breezes;
Showers of silver dew;
Black bough and bent twig
Budding out anew;
Pine-tree and willow-tree,
Fringed elm and larch—
Don't you think that
May-time's
Pleasanter than March?

Apples in the orchard,
Mellowing one by one;
Strawberries upturning
Soft cheeks to the sun;
Roses, faint with sweetness;
Lilies, fair of face;
Drowsy scents and murmurs
Haunting every place;
Lengths of golden sunshine;
Moonlight bright as day—
Don't you think that summer's
Pleasanter than May?

Roger in the corn-patch,
Whistling negro songs;
Pussy by the hearth-side,
Romping with the tongs;
Chestnuts in the ashes,
Bursting through the rind;
Red leaf and gold leaf
Rustling down the wind;
Mother doing peaches
All the afternoon—
Don't you think that
autumn's
Pleasanter than June?

Little fairy snow-flakes,
Dancing in the flue;
Old Mr. Santa Claus,
What is keeping you?
Twilight and firelight;
Shadows come and go;
Merry chime of sleigh-bells
Tinkling through the snow;
Mother knitting stockings
(Pussy has the ball!)—
Don't you think that winter's
Pleasanter than all?

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN

William Wordsworth, the great poet of Nature, thought that the simplest scenes described in the simplest language could be made poetical. Here is an example of his art, which sometimes succeeded with simplicity, and sometimes did not. He pictures a country girl in the very heart of London, entranced by a sudden vision of her distant mountain home through the singing of a caged thrush in the early morning. The last line is tragically full.

At the corner of Wood Street, when day-
light appears,
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung
for three years :
Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has
heard
In the silence of morning the song of the
bird.

'Tis a note of enchantment ; what ails her ?
She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees ;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury
glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of
Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the
dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with
her pail ;
And a single small cottage, a nest like a
dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she
loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven : but
they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the
shade :
The stream will not flow, and the hill will
not rise,
And the colours have all passed away from
her eyes !

PLANTING A TREE

Few simple human acts are so impressive as the planting of a tree, which thus gives life its chance to help and beautify the future. Miss Lucy Larcom, the American poet, has developed this fine thought in these lines with varied and graceful truth.

He who plants a tree
Plants a hope.
Rootlets up through fibres blindly grope ;
Leaves unfold into horizons free.
So man's life must climb
From the clods of time
Unto heavens sublime.
Canst thou prophesy, thou little tree,
What the glory of thy boughs shall be ?

He who plants a tree
Plants a joy ;
Plants a comfort that will never cloy.
Every day a fresh reality.
Beautiful and strong,
To whose shelter throng
Creatures blithe with song.
If thou couldst but know, thou happy tree,
Of the bliss that shall inhabit thee !

He who plants a tree
He plants peace ;
Under its green curtains jargons cease ;
Leaf and zephyr murmur soothingly ;
Shadows soft with sleep
Down tired eyelids creep,
Balm of slumber deep.
Never hast thou dreamed, thou blessed tree,
Of the benediction thou shalt be.

He who plants a tree
He plants youth ;
Vigour won for centuries in sooth ;
Life of time, that hints eternity !
Boughs their strength uprear,
New shoots every year
On old growths appear.
Thou shalt teach the ages, sturdy tree,
Youth of soul is immortality.

He who plants a tree
He plants love ;
Tents of coolness spreading out above
Wayfarers, he may not live to see.
Gifts that grow are best ;
Hands that bless are blest ;
Plant ; life does the rest.
Heaven and earth help him who plants a tree,
And his work its own reward shall be.

THE OAK

The oak is the most characteristic tree of the north temperate part of the world, and, like the people of that region, sturdy, strong, enduring, living for use, not for show. The writer of this description, George Hill, has put this feeling happily into verse.

A glorious tree is the old grey oak ;
He has stood for a thousand years—
Has stood and frowned
On the trees around,
Like a king among his peers ;
As around their king they stand, so now,
When the flowers their pale leaves fold,
The tall trees round him stand, arrayed
In their robes of purple and gold.
He has stood like a tower
Through sun and shower,
And dared the winds to battle ;
He has heard the hail,
As from plates of mail,
From his own limbs shaken, rattle ;
He has tossed them about, and shorn the
tops
(When the storm has roused his might)
Of the forest trees, as a strong man doth
The heads of his foes in fight.

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON

This poem, by James Russell Lowell, tells the fine story of the man who, perhaps more than any other, helped to bring freedom to the slaves of America. William Lloyd Garrison, as the first two verses tell us, was a printer, and poor. But he never rested until what he printed had roused his countrymen against slavery. Lowell compares his pioneer work with that of Luther and of Columbus. But he had many noble-minded helpers among the American writers of his day, such as Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Russell Lowell himself.

In a small chamber, friendless and unseen,
  Toiled o'er his types one poor, unlearned young man;
The place was dark, unfurnitured, and mean—
  Yet there the freedom of a race began.

Help came but slowly; surely no man yet
  Put lever to the heavy world with less:
What need of help? He knew how types were set,
  He had a dauntless spirit, and a press.

Such earnest natures are the fiery pith,
  The compact nucleus, round which systems grow!
Mass after mass becomes inspired therewith,
  And worlds impregnate with the central glow.

O Truth! O Freedom! how are ye still born
  In the rude stable, in the manger nursed!
What humble hands unbar those gates of morn
  Through which the splendours of the New Day burst?

What! shall one monk, scarce known beyond his cell,
  Front Rome's far-reaching bolts, and scorn her frown?
Brave Luther answered YES; that thunder's swell
  Rocked Europe, and discharmed the triple crown.

'Whatever can be known of earth we know,"
  Sneered Europe's wise men in their snail-shells curled;
'No!" said one man in Genoa, and that No
  Out of the dark created this New World.

Who is it will not dare himself to trust?
  Who is it hath not strength to stand alone?
Who is it thwarts and bilks the inward MUST?
  He and his works, like sand, from earth are blown.

Men of a thousand shifts and wiles, look here!
  See one straightforward conscience put in pawn
To win a world; see the obedient sphere
  By bravery's simple gravitation drawn!

Shall we not heed the lesson taught of old,
  And by the Present's lips repeated still,
In our own single manhood to be bold,
  Fortressed in conscience and impregnable?

We stride the river daily at its spring,
  Nor, in our childish thoughtlessness, foresee
What myriad vassal streams shall tribute bring,
  How like an equal it shall greet the sea.

O small beginnings, ye are great and strong,
  Based on a faithful heart and weariless brain!
Ye build the future fair, ye conquer wrong,
  Ye earn the crown, and wear it not in vain.

HEAVENLY WISDOM

Some of the Psalms from the Bible have been turned into beautiful English verse—that is, they have been paraphrased, yet kept in verse form. Psalms so treated in well-known poems are the twenty-third, the ninetieth, and the hundredth. This is a poetical version of the first Psalm. The writer, John Logan, was a Scottish writer, who lived from 1748 to 1788, and, beginning life as a minister, ended by being a contributor to reviews in London. There is a good deal of doubt whether certain poems were written by Logan or by a college friend named Michael Bruce.

Oh, happy is the man who hears
  Instruction's warning voice;
And who celestial Wisdom makes
  His early, only choice.

For she has treasures greater far
  Than East or West unfold;
And her rewards more precious are
  Than all their stores of gold.

In her right hand she holds to view
  A length of happy days;
Riches, with splendid honours joined,
  Are what her left displays.

She guides the young with innocence,
  In pleasure's paths to tread,
A crown of glory she bestows
  Upon the hoary head.

According as her labours rise
  So her rewards increase;
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
  And all her paths are peace.

A PARABLE

The power of the true poet far transcends that of all other men—preachers, statesmen, or kings—as this noble and lovely poem proves. For it will go on echoing in the minds and softening the hearts of men till for very shame it brings them back from religions of show and earthly state to the pure human tenderness of Christ. The teaching is that the real service of God is not in gorgeous ceremonials that please ourselves, but in ministering to others. Lowell, the golden-hearted American poet, was the writer.

SAID Christ our Lord, " I will go and see
How the men, My brethren, believe in Me."
He passed not again through the gate of birth,
But made Himself known to the children of earth.

Then said the chief priests, and rulers and kings,
" Behold, now, the Giver of all good things ;
Go to, let us welcome with pomp and state
Him who alone is mighty and great."

With carpets of gold the ground they spread,
Wherever the Son of Man should tread,
And in palace-chambers lofty and rare
They lodged Him, and served Him with kingly fare.

Great organs surged through arches dim
Their jubilant floods in praise of Him ;
And in church, and palace, and judgment-hall
He saw his image high over all.

But still, wherever His steps they led,
The Lord in sorrow bent His head,
And from under the heavy foundation stones
The Son of Mary heard bitter groans.

And in church, and palace, and judgment-hall
He marked great fissures that rent the wall,
And opened wider and yet more wide
As the living foundation heaved and sighed.

" Have ye founded your thrones and altars, then,
On the bodies and souls of living men ?
And think ye that building shall endure
Which shelters the noble and crushes the poor ?

" With gates of silver and bars of gold
Ye have fenced My sheep from their Father's fold ;
I have heard the dropping of their tears
In heaven these eighteen hundred years."

" O Lord and Master, not ours the guilt ;
We build but as our fathers built ;
Behold Thine images, how they stand,
Sovereign and sole, through all our land.

" Our task is hard, with sword and flame
To hold Thy earth for ever the same,
And with sharp crooks of steel to keep
Still, as Thou leftest them, Thy sheep."

Then Christ sought out an artisan,
A low-browed, stunted, haggard man ;
And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin
Pushed from her faintly want and sin.

These set He in the midst of them,
And as they drew back their garment-hem,
For fear of defilement, " Lo, here," said He,
" The images ye have made of Me ! "

LINES ON THE CAPTURE OF FUGITIVE SLAVES NEAR WASHINGTON

The people of the United States of America are very proud of their freedom ; but they were the last civilised white people who kept slaves, and the final battle for freedom was fought out in their midst, after it had been won elsewhere. Lowell, Whittier, and Longfellow were its poets. Lowell particularly wrote songs of freedom that will ring for ever in the minds of men and keep them free. These rousing verses were written when the poet heard of escaping slaves being dragged back to servitude. The whole human race is being uplifted by the great truth that wherever wrong is done to the humblest, that wrong is done to all mankind.

LOOK on who will in apathy, and stifle they who can
The sympathies, the hopes, the words, that make man truly man ;
Let those whose hearts are dungeoned up with interest or with ease
Consent to hear, with quiet pulse, of loathsome deeds like these !

I first drew in New England's air, and from her hardy breast
Sucked in the tyrant-hating milk that will not let me rest ;
And if my words seem treason to the dullard and the tame,
'Tis but my Bay State dialect—our fathers spake the same !

Shame on the costly mockery of piling stone on stone
To those who won our liberty, the heroes dead and gone,
While we look coldly on and see law-shielded ruffians slay
The men who fain would win their own, the heroes of today !

Are we pledged to craven silence ? Oh, fling it to the wind,
The parchment wall that bars us from the least of human kind,
That makes us cringe and temporise, and dumbly stand at rest,
While Pity's burning flood of words is red-hot in the breast !

Though we break our father's promise, we
have nobler duties first ;
The traitor to Humanity is the traitor most
accursed ;
Man is more than Constitutions ; better rot
beneath the sod
Than be true to Church and State, while we
are doubly false to God.

We owe allegiance to the State ; but deeper,
truer, more,
To the sympathies that God hath set within
our spirit's core ;
Our country claims our fealty ; we grant it
so, but then
Before Man made us citizens, great Nature
made us men.

He's true to God who's true to man ;
wherever wrong is done
To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath
the all-beholding sun,
That wrong is also done to us ; and they
are slaves most base
Whose love of right is for themselves and
not for all their race.

God works for all. Ye cannot hem the hope
of being free
With parallels of latitude, with mountain
range or sea.
Put golden padlocks on Truth's lips, be
callous as ye will,
From soul to soul, o'er all the world, leaps
one electric thrill.

Chain down your slaves with ignorance, ye
cannot keep apart,
With all your craft of tyranny, the human
heart from heart :
When first the pilgrims landed on the Bay
State's iron shore,
The word went forth that slavery should one
day be no more.

Out from the land of bondage 'tis decreed
our slaves shall go
And signs to us are offered, as erst to
Pharaoh ;
If we are blind, their exodus, like Israel's
of yore,
Through a Red Sea is doomed to be, whose
surges are of gore.

'Tis ours to save our brethren, with peace
and love to win
Their darkened heart from error, ere they
harden it to sin ;
But if before his duty man with listless spirit
stands,
Ere long the Great Avenger takes the work
from out his hands.

THE SOLDIER'S DREAM

Thomas Campbell, the Scottish author of these sad but melodious verses, descriptive of the thoughts of men engaged in war far from home, lived when wars were frequent everywhere, and people felt the reality of the soldier's dream. Campbell was himself a spectator of some of the wars on the Continent. The singular appropriateness of the martial imagery in the line "the sentinel stars set their watch in the sky" has often been admired.

OUR bugles sang truce, for the night-
cloud had lowered,
And the sentinel stars set their watch in
the sky ;
And thousands had sunk on the ground
overpowered,
The weary to sleep and the wounded to die.

When reposing that night on my pallet of
straw,
By the wolf-scaring faggot that guarded the
slain ;
At the dead of the night a sweet vision
I saw,
And thrice ere the morning I dreamt it again.

Methought from the battlefield's dreadful
array,
Far, far I had roamed on a desolate track :
'Twas autumn—and sunshine arose on the
way
To the home of my fathers, that welcomed
me back.

I flew to the pleasant fields traversed so oft
In life's morning march, when my bosom
was young ; [aloft,
I heard my own mountain-goats bleating
And knew the sweet strain that the corn-
reapers sung.

Then pledged we the wine-cup, and fondly
I swore
From my home and my weeping friends
never to part ;
My little ones kissed me a thousand times
o'er, [heart
And my wife sobbed aloud in her fulness of

Stay, stay with us—rest, thou art weary
and worn !
And fain was their war-broken soldier to
stay ;
But sorrow return'd with the dawning of
morn, [away.
And the voice in my dreaming ear melted

EUGENE FIELD

This simple tribute to one of the children's poets should clearly find a corner in these pages. Eugene Field died on Nov. 4, 1895

BUT yesterday he was, and lo ! today
Upon his lips there is not any breath
To tell me how he fared along the way.
And yet, methinks, beside his pulseless clay
I kneel and listen till I hear him say,
"I'll sing more sweetly for the sleep of death."

I LAY IN SORROW, DEEP DISTRESSED

These lines, tender and true, by Charles Mackay, tell their story plainly—to give of ourselves to others, our time, thought, care, and love, is a far greater gift than money, which may cost little.

I LAY in sorrow, deep distressed:
  My grief a proud man heard;
His looks were cold, he gave me gold,
  But not a kindly word.
My sorrow passed—I paid him back
  The gold he gave to me;
Then stood erect and spoke my thanks,
  And blessed his Charity.

I lay in want, in grief and pain:
  A poor man passed my way;
He bound my head, he gave me bread,
  He watched me night and day.
How shall I pay him back again,
  For all he did to me?
Oh, gold is great, but greater far
  Is heavenly Sympathy!

THE LADDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE

St. Augustine—whose name must be pronounced in this poem with the stress on the first syllable—was a great Christian writer of the fourth century after Christ. Here Longfellow, the American poet, expands one of Augustine's thoughts—namely, "That men may rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things." The argument is not only poetically true but scientifically sound, for we are what we make ourselves, by conquering or being conquered by our lower desires. The third verse from the end has passed into every book of quotations.

SAINT AUGUSTINE! well hast thou said,
  That of our vices we can frame
A ladder, if we will but tread
  Beneath our feet each deed of shame!

All common things, each day's events,
  That with the hour begin and end,
Our pleasures and our discontents,
  Are rounds by which we may ascend.

The low desire, the base design,
  That makes another's virtues less;
The revel of the ruddy wine,
  And all occasions of excess;

The longing for ignoble things;
  The strife for triumph more than truth;
The hardening of the heart, that brings
  Irreverence for the dreams of youth;

All thoughts of ill; all evil deeds,
  That have their root in thoughts of ill';
Whatever hinders or impedes
  The action of the nobler will—

All these must first be trampled down
  Beneath our feet, if we would gain
In the bright fields of fair renown
  The right of eminent domain.

We have not wings, we cannot soar;
  But we have feet to scale and climb
By slow degrees, by more and more,
  The cloudy summits of our time.

The mighty pyramids of stone
  That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen, and better known,
  Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

The distant mountains, that uprear
  Their solid bastions to the skies,
Are crossed by pathways, that appear
  As we to higher levels rise.

The heights by great men reached and kept
  Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
  Were toiling upward in the night.

Standing on what too long we bore
  With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,
We may discern—unseen before—
  A path to higher destinies.

Nor deem the irrevocable Past
  As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks, at last
  To something nobler we attain.

BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL!

Some of the sacred songs of the Hebrews, contained in the Bible, are wonderful examples of pure, simple praise, gushing forth like the over-brimming of the heart. Besides their exalted piety, they are filled with a beauty and a majesty which give them rank with the world's choicest poetry. The quotation below is described as "A Psalm of David," but it is unlikely that he wrote it himself.

BLESS the Lord, O my soul!
  And let all that is within me
Bless His holy name!
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits;
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;
Who crowneth thee with loving kindness
And tender mercies.
Like as a father pitieth his children
So the Lord pitieth them that fear Him;
For He knoweth our frame;
He remembereth that we are dust.
The Lord hath prepared His throne in the
  heavens,
And His kingdom ruleth over all.
Bless the Lord, ye His angels,
That excel in strength, and do His pleasure,
Harkening to the voice of His word!
Bless the Lord, all ye His hosts;
Ye ministers of His, that do His pleasure!
Bless the Lord, all His works
In all places of His dominions!
Bless the Lord, O my soul!

The poem "Windy Nights," on page 67 is from "A Child's Garden of Verses," and is published by the courtesy of Messrs. Longmans &, Co.

PARENTAL RECOLLECTIONS

The pathos of this loving little poem is that it was written by a tender-hearted bachelor—Charles Lamb—about somebody else's child.

A CHILD'S a plaything for an hour;
  Its pretty tricks we try
For that or for a longer space;
  Then tire, and lay it by.

But I knew one that to itself
  All seasons could control;
That would have mocked the sense of pain
  Out of a grieved soul.

Thou straggler into loving arms,
  Young climber up of knees,
When I forget thy thousand ways
  Then life and all shall cease.

CONSIDER THE LILIES

Christina Rossetti, the writer of this poem, was a sister of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the famous painter and poet. Notice how happy is the choice of the flowers and growths to illustrate pretty fancies and thoughtful lessons—the rose, poppy, lily, and violet, grass, lichen, moss. The juice of the poppy is, of course, opium; and the word "virtue," as used here, means power, not goodness.

FLOWERS preach to us if we will hear:
  The rose saith in the dewy morn:
"I am most fair;
Yet all my loveliness is born
Upon a thorn."
The poppy saith amid the corn:
"Let but my scarlet head appear
And I am held in scorn;
Yet juice of subtle virtue lies
Within my cup of curious dyes."
The lilies say: "Behold how we
Preach without words of purity."
The violets whisper from the shade
Which their own leaves have made:
"Men scent our fragrance on the air,
Yet take no heed
Of humble lessons we would read."
But not alone the fairest flowers:
The merest grass
Along the roadside where we pass,
Lichen and moss and sturdy weed,
Tell of His love Who sends the dew,
The rain and sunshine too,
To nourish one small seed.

HUNTING SONG

Outdoor sports were one of the delights of Sir Walter Scott's busy life. He would be out in the morning showing the spirit that rings so buoyantly through these verses, till people wondered when he did his work. He did it by waking earlier than the rest and writing before they were up. What a strength and healthy bustle there is in the song! One feels that it expresses the vigorous enjoyment of a man who loved the sports of the open air; and how naturally the deeper tones of life are heard in the last verse!

WAKEN, lords and ladies gay
  On the mountain dawns the day,
All the jolly chase is here,
With hawk, and horse, and hunting-spear!
Hounds are in their couples yelling,
Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,
Merrily, merrily, mingle they,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
The mist has left the mountain grey,
Springlets in the dawn are steaming,
Diamonds on the brake are gleaming;
And foresters have busy been,
To track the buck in thicket green;
Now we come to chant our lay,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
To the green-wood haste away;
We can show you where he lies,
Fleet of foot, and tall of size;
We can show the marks he made,
When 'gainst the oak his antlers frayed;
You shall see him brought to bay,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay"

Louder, louder, chant the lay,
Waken, lords and ladies gay;
Tell them youth, and mirth, and glee,
Run a course as well as we;
Time, stern huntsman, who can baulk
Staunch as hound, and fleet as hawk?
Think of this, and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay.

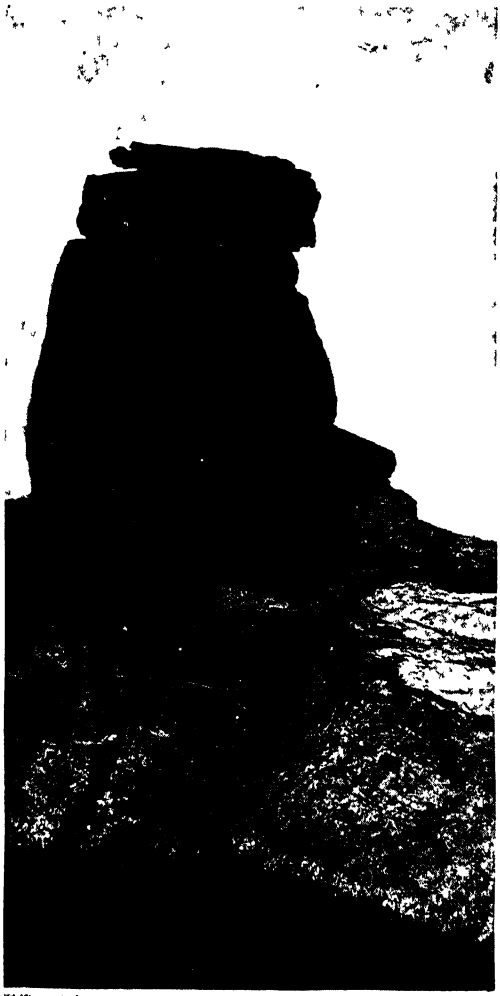
THE GIFTS OF GOD

We have here one of the best examples of Puritan George Herbert's quaint method of verse-making—the deliberate building up of a formal but homely illustration of some thought. We should now feel that we were irreverent if we supposed that God, in making man, amended his plans on second thoughts, as pictured by George Herbert, but such fancies were allowed in his day. And it is true that man is a restless seeker; that is why he has improved so much.

WHEN God at first made Man,
  Having a glass of blessings standing by;
Let us (said He) pour on him all we can:
Let the world's riches, which dispersèd lie,
  Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way;
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure:
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone, of all His treasure,
  Rest in the bottom lay.
For if I should (said He)
Bestow this jewel also on My creature,
He would adore My gifts instead of Me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature,
  So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness:
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
  May toss him to My breast.



I AM THE ROCK

These vivid and powerful descriptions of the rock and the sea are written by an American lady, Mrs Gilman—formerly Charlotte Perkins Stetson—who is well known in her own country as a popular lecturer The rock and the sea each in turn speaks, as it were, in competitive pride, but of course the sea holds the mastery, and the rock must surrender little by little to the air as well as to the sea By comparison the transient race of man is spoken of lightly; but man is slowly conquering rock and sea.

I AM the Rock, presumptuous Sea!
I am set to encounter thee.
Angry and loud or gentle and still,
I am set here to limit thy power, and I will!

I am the Rock!

I am the Rock. From age to age
I scorn thy fury and dare thy rage.
Scarred by frost and worn by time,
Brown with weed and green with slime,
Thou may'st drench and defile me and spit in my face,
But while I am here thou keep'st thy place!

I am the Rock!

I am the Rock, beguiling Sea!
I know thou art fair as fair can be,
With golden glitter and silver sheen,
And bosom of blue and garments of green.
Thou may'st pat my cheek with baby hands,
And lap my feet in diamond sands,
And play before me as children play;
But plead as thou wilt, I bar the way!

I am the Rock!

I am the Rock. Black midnight falls;
The terrible breakers rise like walls;
With curling lips and gleaming teeth
They plunge and tear at my bones beneath.
Year upon year they grind and beat
In storms of thunder and storms of sleet—
Grind and beat and wrestle and tear,
But the rock they beat on is always there!

I am the Rock!

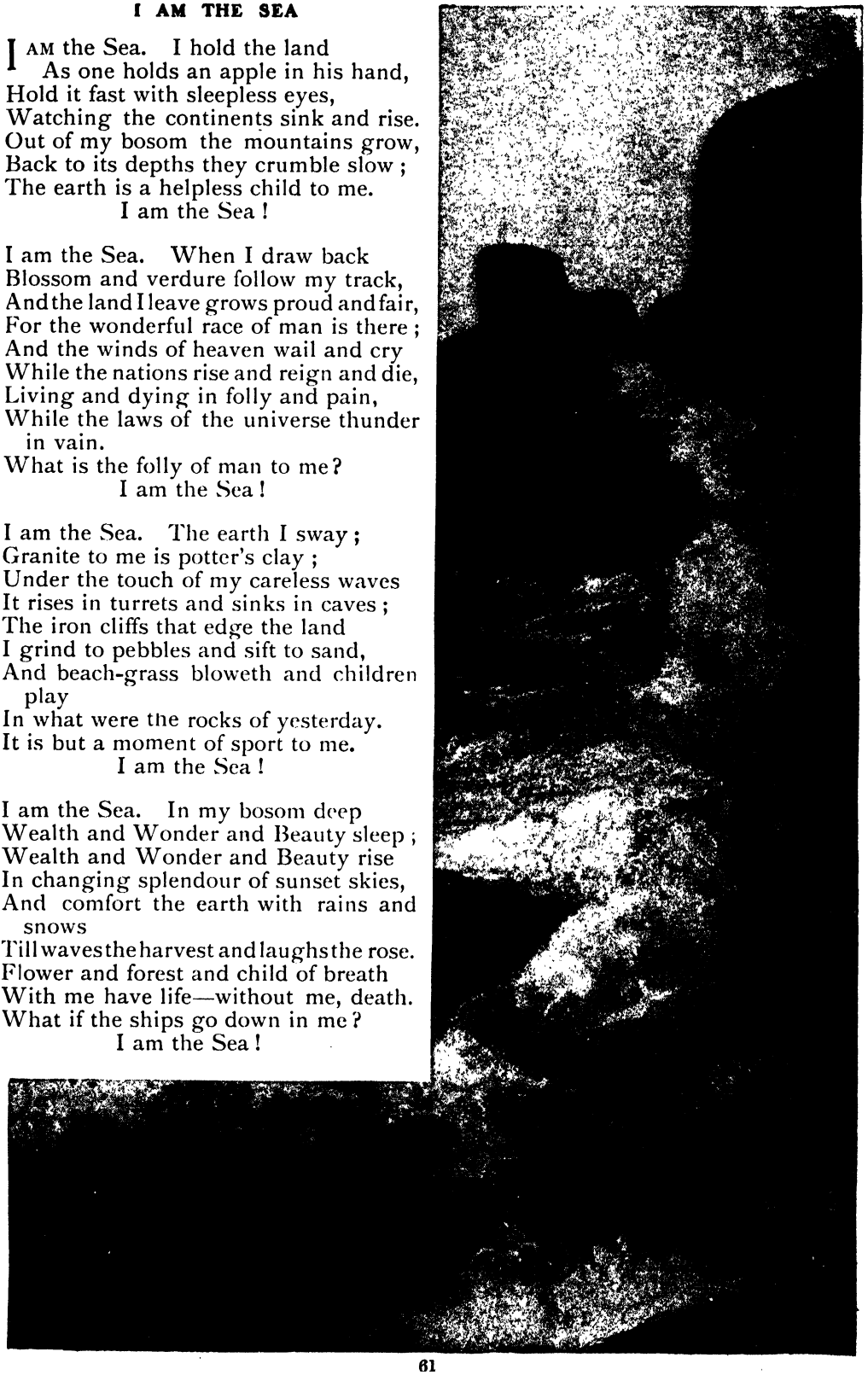
I AM THE SEA

I AM the Sea. I hold the land
As one holds an apple in his hand,
Hold it fast with sleepless eyes,
Watching the continents sink and rise.
Out of my bosom the mountains grow,
Back to its depths they crumble slow;
The earth is a helpless child to me.
I am the Sea!

I am the Sea. When I draw back
Blossom and verdure follow my track,
And the land I leave grows proud and fair,
For the wonderful race of man is there;
And the winds of heaven wail and cry
While the nations rise and reign and die,
Living and dying in folly and pain,
While the laws of the universe thunder in vain.
What is the folly of man to me?
I am the Sea!

I am the Sea. The earth I sway;
Granite to me is potter's clay;
Under the touch of my careless waves
It rises in turrets and sinks in caves;
The iron cliffs that edge the land
I grind to pebbles and sift to sand,
And beach-grass bloweth and children play
In what were the rocks of yesterday.
It is but a moment of sport to me.
I am the Sea!

I am the Sea. In my bosom deep
Wealth and Wonder and Beauty sleep;
Wealth and Wonder and Beauty rise
In changing splendour of sunset skies,
And comfort the earth with rains and snows
Till waves the harvest and laughs the rose.
Flower and forest and child of breath
With me have life—without me, death.
What if the ships go down in me?
I am the Sea!



IN A GARDEN

Algernon Charles Swinburne, one of the greatest poets of the last half of the nineteenth century, was born in London, April 5, 1837, and died there April 10, 1909. Not only was he a true poet, with a fine command of all the forms of verse, but he was also a remarkable writer of prose—always enthusiastic and sometimes fierce. He loved children, especially when they were small, and no poet has written of them more beautifully. For a union of simplicity with poetic thought and sweetest music in words, nothing more perfect than these lines has ever been written. They are published here, with those below, by courtesy of Mr. Watts-Dunton, the life-long friend and executor of Mr. Swinburne.

BABY, see the flowers!
—Baby sees
Fairer things than these,
Fairer though they be than dreams of ours!

Baby, hear the birds!
—Baby knows
Better songs than those,
Sweeter though they sound than sweetest words.

Baby, see the moon!
—Baby's eyes
Laugh to watch it rise,
Answering light with love and night with noon.

Baby, hear the sea!
—Baby's face
Takes a graver grace,
Touched with wonder what the sound may be.

Baby, see the star!
—Baby's hand
Opens, warm and bland,
Calm in claim of all things fair that are.

Baby, hear the bells!
—Baby's head
Bows, as ripe for bed,
Now the flowers curl round and close their cells.

Baby, flower of light,
Sleep and see
Brighter dreams than we,
Till good-day shall smile away good-night.

A CHILD'S LAUGHTER

Here is Swinburne's description of the pure laughter of a child of seven—the sweetest sound ever heard. The poet says that only the wren's song made as loud as the nightingale's could be half as sweet. The wren's song is a pure twitter, like the falling of drops of water, but hardly loud enough to be heard. "None know not well" is what we call a double negative, and means "Everyone knows well" that a child's laughter is the sweetest thing. Swinburne's poems are published by Messrs. Chatto & Windus.

ALL the bells of heaven may ring,
All the birds of heaven may sing,
All the wells on earth may spring,
All the winds on earth may bring
All sweet sounds together;
Sweeter far than all things heard,
Hand of harper, tone of bird,
Sound of woods at sundawn stirred,
Welling water's winsome word,
Wind in warm wan weather.

One thing yet there is, that none,
Hearing ere its chime be done,
Knows not well the sweetest one
Heard of man beneath the sun,
Hoped in heaven hereafter;
Soft and strong and loud and light,
Very sound of very light,
Heard from morning's rosiest height,
When the soul of all delight
Fills a child's clear laughter.

Golden bells of welcome rolled
Never forth such notes, nor told
Hours so blythe in tones so bold,
As the radiant mouth of gold
Here that rings forth heaven.
If the golden-crested wren
Were a nightingale—why, then,
Something seen and heard of men
Might be half as sweet as when
Laughs a child of seven.

THE MUSIC OF THE UNIVERSE

To rightly understand and accept the spirit of these lines, by Emerson, we need a great faith. We must feel that the whole world is serving a beautiful purpose, that all things are working together for good, even though they may seem mean and bad. Creation sings a hopeful song to the man who holds that faith in his heart, and life to him is a perpetual concert of gladness.

LET me go where'er I will
I hear a sky-born music still:
It sounds from all things old,
It sounds from all things young,
From all that's fair, from all that's foul,
Peals out a cheerful song.

It is not only in the rose,
It is not only in the bird,
Not only where the rainbow glows,
Nor in the song of woman heard;
But in the darkest, meanest things
There alway, alway something sings.

'Tis not in the high stars alone,
Nor in the cups of budding flowers,
Nor in the redbreast's mellow tone,
Nor in the bow that smiles in showers;
But in the mud and scum of things
There alway, alway something sings.

THREE GREAT POETS

These lines were written by John Dryden under a portrait of John Milton. Homer was the poet of Greece who had "loftiness of thought," and Virgil the poet of Italy who surpassed in "majesty."

THREE poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed;
The next in majesty; in both the last.
The force of Nature could no further go;
To make a third, she joined the former two.

WHO SHALL BE FAIREST?

Here is one of Charles Mackay's breezy, rushing songs. He asks who shall be placed first among women and men; and he answers his question himself—that the steadfast woman, faithful in adversity, shall be first, with the brave and truthful man.

WHO shall be fairest?
Who shall be rarest?
Who shall be first in the songs that we sing?
She who is kindest,
When Fortune is blindest,
Bearing through winter the blooms of the spring.
Charm of our gladness,
Friend of our sadness,
Angel of Life, when its pleasures take wing!
She shall be fairest,
She shall be rarest,
She shall be first in the songs that we sing!

Who shall be nearest,
Noblest and dearest,
Named but with honour and pride evermore?
He the undaunted,
Whose banner is planted
On Glory's high ramparts and battlements hoar;
Fearless of danger,
To falsehood a stranger,
Looking not back while there's Duty before!
He shall be nearest,
He shall be dearest,
He shall be first in our hearts evermore!

CARACTACUS

Bernard Barton, a poet of the early half of the nineteenth century, tells through these verses the story of the bold British chieftain Caractacus, who, when taken to Rome as a prisoner to grace the triumph of his conqueror, walked proudly as if he were the conqueror, and when asked by the Emperor to speak replied that as he could be no longer a British chief he did not want anything else. This daring and dignity so impressed Claudius that he gave the prisoner his liberty. Nothing shows the change of feeling since Christianity has prevailed more than this, that formerly the most civilised people gloated over the men they had defeated, and now we honour all men who have bravely lost.

BEFORE proud Rome's imperial throne,
In mind's unconquered mood,
As if the triumph were his own,
The dauntless captive stood.
None, to have seen his free-born air,
Had fancied him a captive there.

Though, through the crowded streets of Rome,
With slow and stately tread,
Far from his own loved island home,
That day in triumph led,
Unbowed his head, unbent his knee,
Undimmed his eye, his aspect free.

A free and fearless glance he cast
On temple, arch, and tower,
By which the long procession passed
Of Rome's victorious power;
And somewhat of a scornful smile
Upcurled his haughty lip the while.

And now he stood, with brow serene,
Where slaves might prostrate fall,
Bearing a Briton's manly mien
In Cæsar's palace hall;
Claiming, with kindled brow and cheek,
The liberty e'en there to speak.

Nor could Rome's haughty lord withstand
The claim that look preferred,
But motioned, with uplifted hand,
The suppliant should be heard—
If he indeed a suppliant were
Whose glance demanded audience there.

Deep stillness fell on all the crowd,
From Claudius on his throne
Down to the meanest slave that bowed
At his imperial throne;
Silent his fellow-captive's grief,
As fearless spoke the island chief:

"Think not, thou eagle lord of Rome
And master of the world,
Though victory's banner o'er thy dome
In triumph be unfurled,
I would address thee as thy slave,
But as the bold should greet the brave.

"I might, perchance, could I have deigned
To hold a vassal's throne,
E'en now in Britain's isle have reigned
A king in name alone,
Yet holding, as thy meek ally,
A monarch's mimic pageantry.

"Then through Rome's crowded streets today
I might have passed with thee,
Not in a captive's base array,
But fetterless and free—
If freedom he could hope to find
Whose bondage is of heart and mind.

"But canst thou marvel that, free-born,
With heart and soul unquelled,
Throne, crown, and sceptre I should scorn
By thy permission held;
Or that I should retain my right
Till wrested by a conqueror's might?

"Now I have spoken, do thy will;
Be life or death my lot,
Since Britain's throne no more I fill,
To me it matters not.
My fame is clear; but on my fate
Thy glory or thy shame must wait."

He ceased; from all around upsprung
A murmur of applause;
For well had truth and freedom's tongue
Maintained their holy cause.
The conqueror was the captive then:
He bade the slave be free again.

PALE GENIUS ROVES ALONE

Emerson here tells, in poetical form, the frequent fate of Genius—that power which creates or inspires what is new and great. It is solitary, unrecognised, disowned, often scorned, until it succeeds. In such ways God keeps it true to its purpose.

PALE Genius roves alone,
No scout can track his way,
None credits him till he have shown
His diamonds to the day.

Not his the feaster's wine,
Nor land, nor gold, nor power,
By want and pain God screeneth him
Till his elected hour.

Go, speed the stars of thought
On to their shining goals:
The sower scatters broad his seed,
The wheat thou strewest be souls.

THE WIDOW BIRD

In these verses, written by the great poet Shelley, the reader should notice the skill in selecting the things mentioned, so that every image brought before our minds harmonises sadly with the desolation of the sorrowing bird. The bare tree, bitter wind, chilled stream, stripped woodland, colourless earth, all heighten the sense of sadness, and the mill-wheel suggests the dull sameness of life when something is long missed. Poetry can reflect all our moods.

A WIDOW bird sat mourning for her love
Upon a wintry bough,
The frozen wind crept on above,
The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare,
No flower upon the ground,
And little motion in the air,
Except the mill-wheel's sound.

POCAHONTAS

William Makepeace Thackeray, one of the cleverest of English prose tale-tellers, here puts into vigorous verse the story of Pocahontas, the daughter of an Indian chief, who saved the life of an Englishman her tribe had captured. Most of Thackeray's verse was written lightly for the purpose of amusing himself and others.

WEARIED arm and broken sorrow
Wage in vain the desperate fight;
Round him press a countless horde,
He is but a single knight.
Hark! a cry of triumph shrill
Through the wilderness resounds,
As with twenty bleeding wounds,
Sinks the warrior fighting still.

Now they heap the fatal pyre,
And the torch of death they light;
Ah! 'tis hard to die of fire!
Who will shield the captive knight?
Round the stake with fiendish cry
Wheel and dance the savage crowd,
Cold the victim's mien and proud,
And his heart is bared to die.

Who will shield the fearless heart?
Who avert the murderous blade?
From the throng, with sudden start,
See! there springs an Indian maid.
Quick she stands before the knight:
"Loose the chain, unbind the ring;
I am daughter of the king,
And I claim the Indian right!"

Dauntlessly aside she flings
Lifted axe and thirsty knife,
Fondly to his heart she clings,
And her bosom guards his life.
In the woods of Powhattan,
Still is told by Indian fires
How a daughter of their sires
Saved a captive Englishman.

THE WINDMILL

If you have ever seen a windmill close at hand when it was at work, you will know how wonderfully true to life Longfellow keeps in this description, talked by the mill itself. At the time when the poem was written the threshing of corn was still done by hand with a flail. Now it is done by machinery, and a good deal of the grinding also of corn used as food; but the windmill remains a picturesque object, warranting all the sentiment shown in these verses and also a proud consciousness of being useful.

BEHOLD! a giant am I!
Aloft here in my tower,
With my granite jaws I devour
The maize, and the wheat, and the rye,
And grind them into flour.

I look down over the farms;
In the fields of grain I see
The harvest that is to be,
And I fling to the air my arms,
For I know it is all for me.

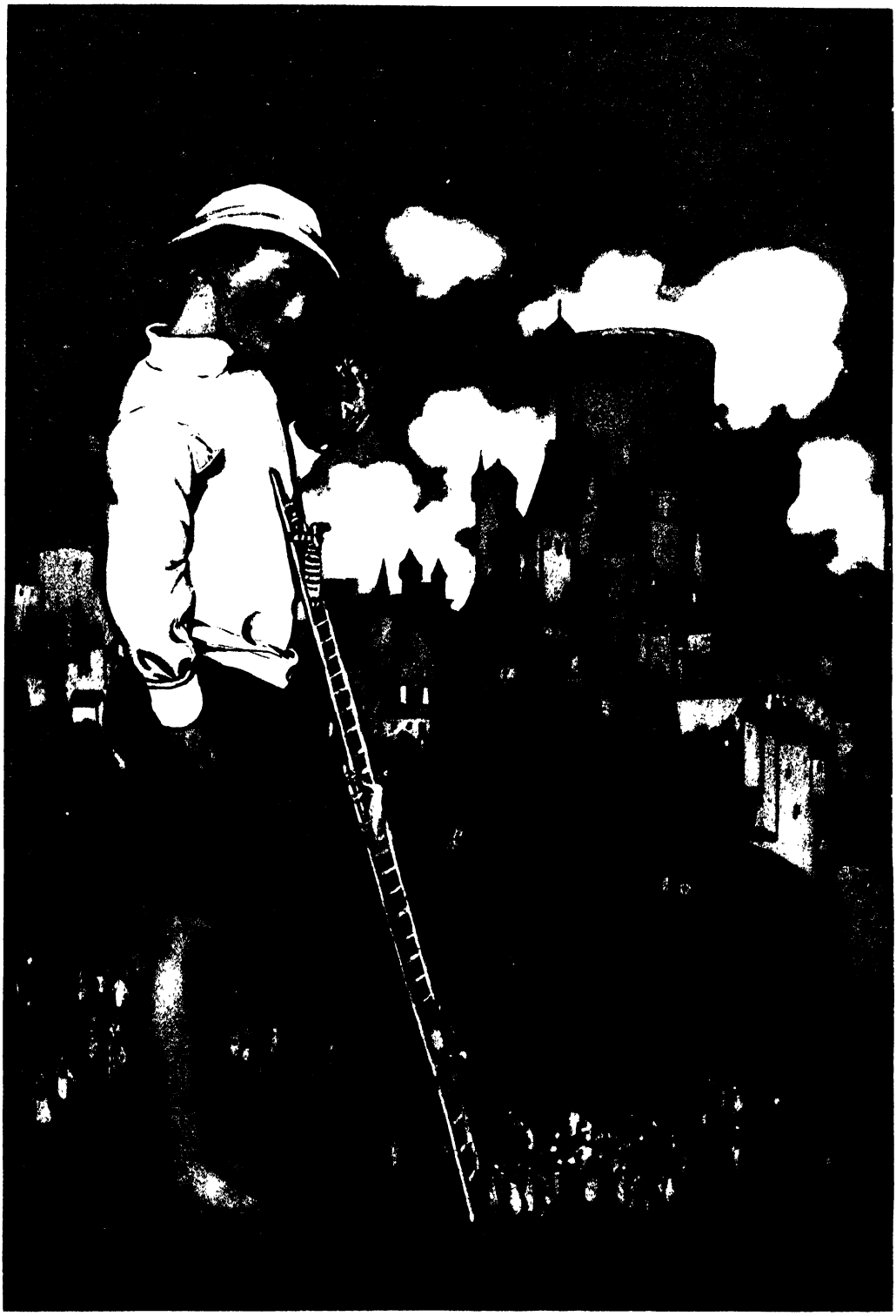
I hear the sound of flails
Far off, from the threshing floors
In barns, with their open doors,
And the wind, the wind in my sails,
Louder and louder roars.

I stand here in my place,
With my foot on the rock below,
And whichever way it may blow,
I meet it face to face,
As a man may meet his foe.

And while we wrestle and strive,
My master, the miller, stands
And feeds me with his hands;
For he knows who makes him thrive,
Who makes him lord of lands.

On Sundays I take my rest;
Churchgoing bells begin
Their low, melodious din;
I cross my arms on my breast,
And all is peace within.

WHEN I'M ASLEEP



Small people, smaller than Tom Thumb,
A pigmy ladder climb, and come
To sit upon my giant hand
And tell me tales of fairyland.

AGNES

Here we have four scenes in a life pictured by Henry Francis Lyte, a poet who is best known as a hymn-writer. One of his hymns, "Abide with me, fast falls the eventide," is probably printed in every hymn-book in the English language. Mr. Lyte was born in 1793, and died in 1847. He was a clergyman. In these fair pictures he tells the story of a life tenderly and sweetly.

I saw her in childhood—
A bright, gentle thing,
Like the dawn of the morn,
Or the dews of the spring:
The daisies and harebells
Her playmates all day;
Herself as lighthearted
And artless as they.

I saw her again—
A fair girl of eighteen,
Fresh glittering with graces
Of mind and of mien.
Her speech was all music;
Like moonlight she shone;
The envy of many
The glory of one.

Years, years fleeted over—
I stood at her foot:
The bud had grown blossom,
The blossom was fruit.
A dignified mother,
Her infant she bore;
And looked, I thought, fairer
Than ever before.

I saw her once more—
'Twas the day that she died;
Heaven's light was around her,
And God at her side;
No wants to distress her,
No fears to appal—
O then, I felt, then
She was fairest of all!

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

Miss Florence Nightingale, whose work as a nurse of soldiers is commemorated in this poem by Longfellow, the sweet and gracious American poet, was the founder of kind attention to soldiers suffering from wounds or disease through war. She went out during the Crimean War, in the year 1854, and nursed the soldiers, who often, in former wars, had been almost wholly neglected. And now, wherever there is a war, kind women hurry to help the wounded and sick, and this tender feeling will grow till cruel wars become impossible. It was Florence Nightingale, "the Lady with the Lamp" going from bed to bed, who first lighted this lamp of love which at last will shine into all hearts.

Whene'er a noble deed is wrought,
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
Our hearts, in glad surprise,
To higher levels rise.

The tidal wave of deeper souls
Into our inmost being rolls,
And lifts us unawares
Out of all meaner cares.

Honour to those whose words or deeds
Thus help us in our daily needs,
And by their overflow
Raise us from what is low!

Thus thought I, as by night I read
Of the great army of the dead,
The trenches cold and damp,
The starved and frozen camp—

The wounded from the battle-plain
In dreary hospitals of pain,
The cheerless corridors,
The cold and stony floors.

Lo! in that house of misery
A lady with a lamp I see
Pass through the glimmering gloom,
And flit from room to room.

And slow, as in a dream of bliss,
The speechless sufferer turns to kiss
Her shadow, as it falls
Upon the darkening walls.

As if a door in heaven should be
Opened and then closed suddenly,
The vision came and went,
The light shone and was spent.

On England's annals, through the long
Hereafter of her speech and song,
That light its rays shall cast
From portals of the past.

A Lady with a Lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land,
A noble type of good,
Heroic womanhood.

FOR A FOUNTAIN

These lines are suggested, by the poet who wrote as "Barry Cornwall," as an inscription for a fountain that is never dry. The Sirian heat means the greatest heat of summer. The ancients believed this heat came with the star Sirius, which appears in summer. Another name for it is the dog-star. Hence the hottest part of summer is sometimes called the "dog days." The Naiades were the Greek spirits of springs and fountains, and the flow of water was named from them, so "bade the Naiad fall" means "made the water flow." "Pan" was the ancient deity of the outdoor life of woods, streams, and rocky places used by shepherds.

Rest! This little fountain runs
Thus for aye. It never stays
For the look of summer suns,
Nor the cold of winter days.
Whosoe'er shall wander near,
When the Sirian heat is worst,
Let him hither come, nor fear
Lest he may not slake his thirst;
He will find this little river
Running still as bright as ever.
Let him drink and onwards hie,
Bearing but in thought that I,
Erotas, bade the Naiad fall,
And thank the great god Pan for all!

LIFE AND LOVE

James Thomson, the writer of this poem, like the earlier poet of the same name who wrote "The Seasons," was a Scotsman. He was born in 1834, and died at the age of 47, after a doleful and disappointing life. Now his poems are read because they express darkness of spirit worse than any other poems. Yet in these verses Thomson rises above his melancholy into an exultant strain, and shows how fine a poet happiness might have made him.

LET my voice ring out and over the earth,
Through all the grief and strife,
With a golden joy in a silver mirth:
Thank God for Life.

Let my voice swell out through the great abyss,
To the azure dome above,
With a chord of faith in the harp of bliss:
Thank God for Love.

Let my voice thrill out beneath and above,
The whole world through:
O my Love and Life, O my Life and Love,
Thank God for you!

AT THE END OF A CHRISTMAS PLAY

The title tells the story of these verses. They were written by Thackeray as a finish for a Christmas play, and they show a tender commingling of the thoughts of youth and age that is appropriate for Christmastide, when the young and the old rejoice together, but when jollity and merrymaking are mixed with serious remembrance of what is greatest and noblest in the world's story.

THE play is done; the curtain drops,
Slow falling to the prompter's bell;
A moment yet the actor stops,
And looks around to say farewell.
It is an irksome word and task;
And when he's laughed and said his say,
He shows, as he removes his mask,
A face that's anything but gay.

One word ere yet the evening ends,
Let's close it with a parting rhyme,
And pledge a hand to all young friends,
As fits the merry Christmas time.
On life's wide scene you, too, have parts,
That Fate ere long shall bid you play,
Good-night! With honest, gentle hearts,
A kindly greeting go alway.

Good-night! I'd say, the griefs, the joys
Just hinted in this mimic page,
The triumphs and defeats of boys
Are but repeated in our age.
I'd say your woes were not less keen,
Your hopes more vain than those of men;
Your pangs or pleasures of fifteen
At forty-five played o'er again.

I'd say we suffer and we strive
Not less nor more as men than boys;
With grizzled beards at forty-five,
As erst at twelve in corduroys;
And if, in times of sacred youth,
We learned at home to love and pray,
Pray Heaven that early love of truth
May never wholly pass away.

Come wealth or want, come good or ill,
Let young and old accept their part,
And bow before the awful Will
And bear it with an honest heart.
Who misses or who wins the prize,
Go, lose or conquer as you can;
But if you fail, or if you rise,
Be each, pray God, a gentleman!

A gentleman, or old or young
(Bear kindly with my humble lays);
The sacred chorus first was sung
Upon the first of Christmas days;
The shepherds heard it overhead,
The joyful angels raised it then:
"Glory to Heaven on high," it said,
"And peace on earth to gentle men."

My song, save this, is little worth;
I lay the weary pen aside,
And wish you health, and love, and mirth,
As fits the solemn Christmas-tide.
As fits the holy Christmas birth,
Be this, good friends, our carol still—
Be peace on earth, be peace on earth,
To men of gentle will.

THE FATHERLAND

The spirit of man, bound by the narrow thoughts of the past, readily offers devotion to any land that gave it birth, but it does not rise so easily to a conception of the whole earth as its Fatherland, and mankind as its brethren. James Russell Lowell, in striving for freedom for America, reached this broader idea of a humanity that embraces every race, and makes the whole planet its natural home

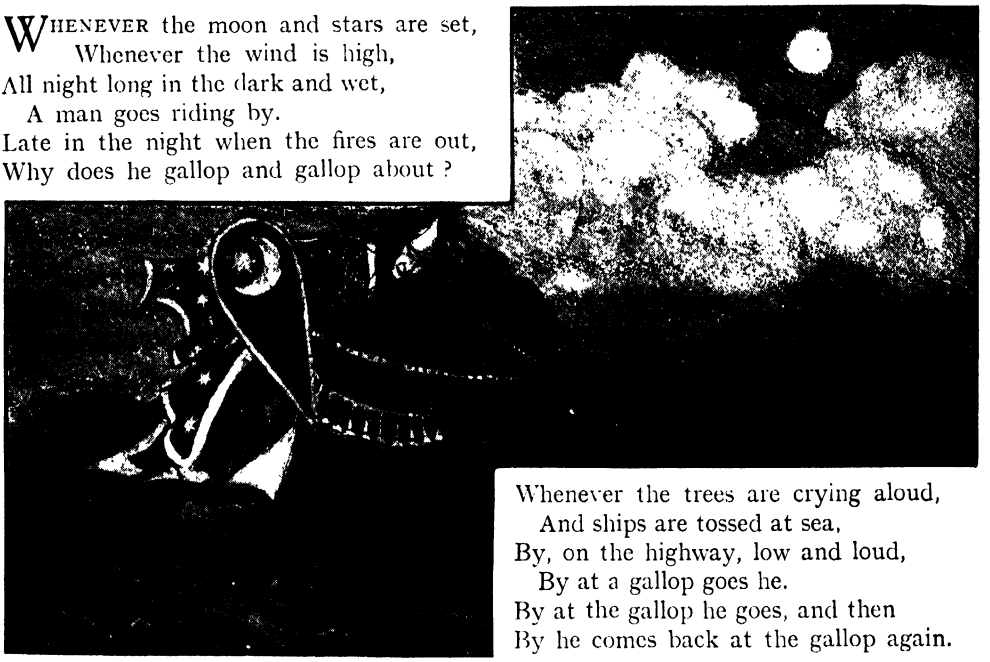
WHERE is the true man's fatherland?
Is it where he by chance is born?
Doth not the yearning spirit scorn
In such scant borders to be spanned?
Oh, yes! his fatherland must be
As the blue heaven wide and free!

Is it alone where freedom is,
Where God is God and man is man?
Doth he not claim a broader span
For the soul's love of home than this?
Oh, yes! his fatherland must be
As the blue heaven wide and free!

Where'er a human heart doth wear
Joy's myrtle-wreath or sorrow's gyves,
Where'er a human spirit strives
After a life more true and fair,
There is the true man's birthplace grand,
His is a world-wide fatherland!

Where'er a single slave doth pine,
Where'er one man may help another—
Thank God for such a birthright, brother—
That spot of earth is thine and mine!
There is the true man's birthplace grand,
His is a world-wide fatherland!

WINDY NIGHTS—By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON



Whenever the moon and stars are set,
Whenever the wind is high,
All night long in the dark and wet,
A man goes riding by.
Late in the night when the fires are out,
Why does he gallop and gallop about?

Whenever the trees are crying aloud,
And ships are tossed at sea,
By, on the highway, low and loud,
By at a gallop goes he.
By at the gallop he goes, and then
By he comes back at the gallop again.

WHICH WAY DOES THE WIND BLOW?—By Dorothy Wordsworth

WHAT way does the wind come? What way does he go?
He rides over the water, and over the snow,
Through wood and through vale; and o'er rocky height
Which the goat cannot climb, takes his sounding flight.
He tosses about in every bare tree,
As, if you look up, you plainly may see;
But how he will come, and whither he goes,
There's never a scholar in England knows.

He will suddenly stop in a cunning nook,
And ring a sharp 'larum—but if you should look,
There's nothing to see but a cushion of snow,
Round as a pillow, and whiter than milk,
And softer than if it were covered with silk.
Sometimes he'll hide in the cave of a rock,
Then whistle as shrill as the buzzard cock;
Yet, seek him—and what shall you find in the place?
Nothing but silence and empty space,
Save, in a corner, a heap of dry leaves,
That he's left for a bed for beggars or thieves!

As soon as 'tis daylight, to-morrow, with me,
You shall go to the orchard and then you will see
That he has been there, and made a great rout, [about;
And cracked the branches, and strewn them
Heaven grant that he spare but that one upright twig
That look'd up at the sky so proud and big
All last summer, as well you know,
Studded with apples—a beautiful show.

Hark! Over the roof he makes a pause,
And growls as if he would fix his claws
Right in the slates, and with a huge rattle
Drive them down, like men in a battle:
But let him range round, he does us no harm,
We build up the fire, we're snug and warm;
Untouch'd by his breath see the candle shines bright,
And burns with a clear and steady light;
Books have we to read—hush! that half-stifled knell; [bell.
Methinks 'tis the sound of the eight o'clock

Come, now we'll to bed, and when we are there
He may work his own will, and what shall we care?
He may knock at the door—we'll not let him in,
May drive at the windows—we'll laugh at his din;
Let him seek his own home, wherever it be;
Here's a cosy warm house for Edward and me.

LITTLE BELL

This poem, beautiful in its tenderness, tells how a loving heart can give us such kinship with wild, free things that the birds themselves return it. It is so. There are people like this girl, "Little Bell," who have so much sympathy with birds that the birds will let them stroke them on their nests. True love extends to all God's creatures; and the poem says that towards people who are full of kindness God's angels are particularly kind. The writer of the verses was Thomas Westwood, who was born about 1818 and died in 1888. In business he was a railway official.

PIPED the Blackbird, on the beechwood spray,
" Pretty maid, slow wandering this way,
" What's your name ? " quoth he.
" What's your name ? Oh, stop and straight unfold,
Pretty maid, with showery curls of gold ! "
" Little Bell," said she.

Little Bell sat down beneath the rocks,
Tossed aside her gleaming, golden locks.
" Bonny bird," quoth she,
" Sing me your best song before I go."
" Here's the very finest song I know,
Little Bell," said he.

And the Blackbird piped—you never heard
Half so gay a song from any bird ;
Full of quips and wiles.
Now so round and rich, now so soft and slow,
All for love of that sweet face below,
Dimpled o'er with smiles.

And the while that bonny bird did pour
His full heart out, freely, o'er and o'er,
'Neath the morning skies,
In the little childish heart below
All the sweetness seemed to grow and grow,
And shine forth in happy overflow
From the brown, bright eyes.

Down the dell she tripped, and through the glade
Peeped the Squirrel from the hazel shade,
And from out the tree,
Swung and leaped and frolicked, void of fear,
While bold Blackbird piped, that all might hear—
" Little Bell ! " piped he.

Little Bell sat down amid the fern :
" Squirrel, Squirrel, to your task return ;
Bring me nuts ! " quoth she.
Up, away ! the frisky Squirrel hies,
Golden wood-lights glancing in his eyes.
And adown the tree,
Great ripe nuts, kissed brown by July sun,
In the little lap drops, one by one—
Hark ! how Blackbird pipes to see the fun !
" *Happy* Bell ! " pipes he.

Little Bell looked up and down the glade :
" Squirrel, Squirrel, from the nut-tree shade,
Bonny Blackbird, if you're not afraid,
Come and share with me ! "
Down came Squirrel, eager for his fare,
Down came bonny Blackbird, I declare ;
Little Bell gave each his honest share—
Ah, the merry three !

And the while those frolic playmates twain
Piped and frisked from bough to bough again,
'Neath the morning skies,
In the little childish heart below
All the sweetness seemed to grow and grow,
And shine out in happy overflow
From her brown, bright eyes.

By her snow-white cot, at close of day,
Knelt sweet Bell, with folded palms, to pray ;
Very calm and clear
Rose the praying voice, to where, unseen,
In blue heaven, an angel shape serene
Paused awhile to hear.
" What good child is this," the angel said,
" That, with happy heart, beside her bed,
Prays so lovingly ? "
Low and soft, oh, very low and soft,
Crooned the Blackbird in the orchard croft,
" Bell, *dear* Bell ! " crooned he.
" Whom God's creatures love," the angel fair
Murmured, " God doth bless with angels' care ;
Child, thy bed shall be
Folded safe from harm ; love deep and kind
Shall watch round and leave good gifts behind,
Little Bell, for thee."

STAY AT HOME, MY HEART

Often the poets try to express one mood or flush of feeling in a few verses. That indeed is a true lyric. Here Longfellow gives us the stay-at-home feeling which everyone must have known at times if his home has been happy. Of course, this is only the picture of a mood of the mind that will pass away, for much of life must lie outside the home, and the mind must have free range.

STAY, stay at home, my heart, and rest ;
Home-keeping hearts are happiest,
For those that wander they know not where
Are full of trouble and full of care ;
To stay at home is best.
Weary and homesick and distressed,
They wander east, they wander west,
And are baffled and beaten and blown about
By the winds of the wilderness of doubt ;
To stay at home is best.
Then stay at home, my heart, and rest ;
The bird is safest in its nest ;
O'er all that flutter their wings and fly
A hawk is hovering in the sky ;
To stay at home is best.

DADDY'S EYES

Charming, original, and tender, with a pretty but sad fancy faithfully followed up, these verses are written by quite a young English writer, Miss Almey St. John Adcock, whose father also writes stories and poems. The verses have not been printed before.

WHEN Mother tucks me up in bed
She sometimes stops and nearly cries;
And then she gives me "one more kiss,"
"Because," she says, "you've Daddy's eyes."

When Uncle Thomas came to tea
He stood and watched me in surprise;
Then, slipping sixpence in my hand,
Said, "That's because you've Daddy's eyes."

And Grandma draws me near her chair.
And wipes away a tear, and sighs;
And then she softly strokes my head,
And says, "You *have* got Daddy's eyes."

For Daddy lives in Heaven now,
Where angels are. I'd like to see
If angels make a fuss of him,
And say that he has eyes like me.

TELL ME

This thoughtful and haunting little allegory of life, which we are able to give here by the courtesy of Messrs. Chatto and Windus, was written by the Scottish poet and tale-teller George Macdonald. Of course, the hill we cannot see over is Time ahead of us, and the dangerous streams are our passions. Indeed, we may attach meanings to all the waiting dangers we must pass, till we come "round to home again," in daily duty, or reach at last, in the west, the steep but glorious ascending stair. Poets' meanings are well worth thinking over, especially when the poets are good men.

"TRAVELLER, what lies over the hill?
Traveller, tell to me:
Tiptoe-high on the window-sill,
Over I cannot see."

"My child, a valley green lies there,
Lovely with trees, and sky;
And a tiny brook that says 'Take care,
Or I'll drown you by and by.'"

"And what comes next?"—"A little town,
And a towering hill again;
More hills and valleys, up and down,
And a river now and then."

"And what comes next?"—"A lonely moor,
Without one beaten way;
And slow clouds drifting dull before
A wind that will not stay."

"And then?"—"Dark rocks and yellow sand,
Blue sea and a moaning tide."
"And then?"—"More sea, more sea, more land,
With rivers deep and wide."

"And then?"—"Oh—rock and mountain and vale,
Ocean and shores and men,
Over and over—a weary tale—
And round to your home again!"

"And is that all? From day to day—
As with a long chain bound—
Oh! never to get right away,
But go round and round and round?"

"No, no; I have not told the best—
Neither the best nor the end:
On summer eves, away in the west,
You may see a stair ascend,

"Built of all colours of lovely stones—
A stair up into the sky,
Where no one is weary, and no one moans,
Or wants to be laid by."

"Is it far away?"—"I do not know;
You must fix your eyes thereon,
And travel, travel through thunder and snow,
Till the weary way is gone.

"All day, though you never see it shine,
You must travel, nor turn aside,
Through blinding sunlight and moonbeams fine,
And mist and darkness wide."

"When I am older." "Nay, not so."
"I have hardly opened my eyes!"
"He who to the old sunset would go
Starts best with the young sunrise."

"But the stair—is it very, very steep?"
"Too steep for you to climb;
You must lie at the foot of the glorious heap,
And patiently wait your time."

"How long?" "Nay, that I cannot tell."
"In wind and rain and frost?"
"It may be." "Ah!—Ah!" "It is well
That you should count the cost."

"Yea, travellers many on you will stand."
"That will be hard to bear."
"But One with wounded feet and hand
Will carry you up the stair."

A VISION

Henry Vaughan, who had this vision, was a Welsh poet who died in 1695. He is often called "the Silurist," because the Silures were a Welsh tribe living where he lived. His poetry was purely English, polished and imaginative. In this verse he tries to simplify in a picture such great ideas as Time and Eternity.

I SAW Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm, as it was bright:
And round beneath it, Time, in hours, days, years,
Driven by spheres,
Like a vast shadow moved; in which the World
And all her train were hurled.

THE DREAM-SHIP

Eugene Field, the American poet, stands first among the writers of all lands who appeal to children by fancies lovely and true. This is a charming example of his graceful imagination. How do our dreams come to us? The poet sees a dream-ship carrying three angels steering its way through the midnight sky and scattering dreams to all of us, some pleasant, some sorrowful. The rue wreath on the angel's brow suggests the sadder part.

WHEN the world is fast asleep,
Along the midnight skies—
As though it were a wandering cloud—
The ghostly dream-ship flies.

An angel stands at the dream-ship's helm,
An angel stands at the prow,
And an angel stands at the dream-ship's side
With a rue-wreath on her brow.

The other angels, silver-crowned,
Pilot and helmsman are;
And the angel with the wreath of rue
Tosseth the dreams afar.

The dreams they fall on rich and poor,
They fall on young and old:
And some are dreams of poverty,
And some are dreams of gold.

And some are dreams that thrill with joy,
And some that melt to tears;
Some are dreams of the dawn of love,
And some of the old dead years.

On rich and poor alike they fall,
Alike on young and old,
Bringing to slumbering earth their joys
And sorrows manifold.

The friendless youth in them shall do
The deeds of mighty men,
And drooping age shall feel the grace
Of buoyant youth again.

The king shall be a beggarman—
The pauper be a king—
In that revenge or recompense
The dream-ship dreams do bring.

So ever downward float the dreams
That are for all and me;
And there is never mortal man
Can solve that mystery.

But ever onward in its course
Along the haunted skies—
As though it were a cloud astray—
The ghostly dream-ship flies.

Two angels with their silver crowns
Pilot and helmsman are;
And an angel with a wreath of rue
Tosseth the dreams afar.

BABY MAY

There are not as many descriptions in verse as we might expect of babies and their varying moods, but of the few this is one of the very best. It is written by Dr. W. C. Bennett, who worked hard to popularise poetry, but only reached a satisfactory standard now and then with his own verse. With "Baby May" he made his greatest success, and we can see why. It was love that wrote the poem. Dr. Bennett, who lived at Greenwich, died in 1895.

CHEEKS as soft as July peaches,
Lips whose dewy scarlet teaches
Poppies paleness—round large eyes
Ever great with new surprise,
Minutes fill'd with shadeless gladness,
Minutes just as brimmed with sadness,
Happy smiles and wailing cries,
Crows and laughs and tearful eyes,
Lights and shadows swifter born
Than on windswept Autumn corn,
Ever some new tiny notion
Making every limb all motion,
Catchings up of legs and arms,
Throwings back and small alarms,
Clutching fingers—straightening jerks,
Twining feet whose each toe works,
Kickings up and straining risings,
Mother's ever new surprisings,
Hands all wants and looks all wonder
At all things the heavens under,
Tiny scorns of smiled reprovings
That have more of love than lovings,
Mischiefs done with such a winning
Archness that we prize such sinning,
Breakings dire of plates and glasses,
Graspings small at all that passes,
Pullings off of all that's able
To be caught from tray or table,
Silences—small meditations
Deep as thoughts of cares for nations,
Breaking into wisest speeches
In a tongue that nothing teaches,
All the thoughts of whose possessing
Must be wooed to light by guessing,
Slumbers—such sweet angel-seemings
That we'd ever have such dreamings,
Till from sleep we see thee breaking,
And we'd always have thee waking,
Wealth for which we know no measure,
Pleasure high above all pleasure,
Gladness brimming over gladness,
Joy in care—delight in sadness,
Loveliness beyond completeness,
Sweetness distancing all sweetness,
Beauty all that beauty may be,
That's May Bennett—that's my baby.

LOVE LIGHTENS LABOUR

We do not know who wrote this delightful poem, but if we read it carefully we shall judge that it was written in America. The word "fix" is used in an American way, and the word "pies," and then there is the burning of wood instead of coal. But wherever it was written, its appreciation, so tender and true, of a mother's work and care makes it wholly charming.

A GOOD wife rose from her bed one morn,
And thought with a nervous dread
Of the piles of clothes to be washed, and more
Than a dozen mouths to be fed.
There were meals to get for the men in the field,
And the children to fix away
To school, and the milk to be skimmed and churned,
And all to be done that day.

It had rained in the night, and all the wood
Was wet as wet could be;
There were puddings and pies to make, besides
A loaf of cake for tea.
And the day was hot, and her aching head
Throbbed wearily as she said,
"If maidens knew what good wives know,
They would be in no haste to wed!"

"Jennie, what do you think I told Ben Brown?"
Called the farmer from the well;
And a flush crept up to his bronzed brow,
As his eyes half bashfully fell.
"It was this," he said; and coming near,
He smiled—and stooping down
Kissed her cheek—"it was this: that you were the best
And the dearest wife in town!"

The farmer went to the field, and the wife,
In a smiling and absent way,
Sang snatches of tender little songs
She'd not sung for many a day;
And the pain in her head was gone, and the clothes
Were white as the foam of the sea,
Her bread was light and her butter was sweet,
And as golden as it could be.

"Just think," the children all called in a breath,
"Tom Wood has run off to sea!
He wouldn't, I know, if he'd only had
As happy a home as we."
The night came down, and the good wife smiled;
To herself she softly said,
"'Tis so sweet to labour for those we love:
'Tisn't strange that maidens will wed!"

A DOG'S GRAVE

Mrs. Marriott Watson, unhappily no more with us, wrote delightful poems, gracious and tender. Here is one that tells us of the poet's feelings beside the grave of a favourite dog, on a day when her faithful little friend would have loved to go for a walk.

THEY'VE all gone out a-walking
This day of blue and gold;
But you stay here behind with me
Just as of old.

Just as of old—and yet not so—
I wander as I will
About the grassy garden plot,
But you lie still.

You with the little eager feet,
The eyes of tender brown,
The eyes and feet that followed me
Aye up and down.

The sward lies smooth above you,
Your gentle heart is cold,
And mine seems like to break for you,
Dear Heart of Gold.

THE BOY AND HIS TOP

The writer of this rhyme with a hidden meaning—John H. Frere—has been good enough to tell us quite plainly, in his Explanation, what the meaning of the poem really is. We only learn by being active, he says, in mind, or body, or both; and whatever keeps us active should be welcomed and not resented.

A LITTLE Boy had bought a Top,
The best in all the toyman's shop;
He made a whip with good eel's-skin,
He lashed the Top, and made it spin.
All the children within call
And the servants, one and all,
Stood round to see it and admire.
At last the Top began to tire,
He cried out, "Pray don't whip me, master;
You whip too hard—I can't spin faster;
I can spin quite as well without it."
The little Boy replied, "I doubt it.
I only whip you for your good.
You were a foolish lump of wood;
By dint of whipping you were raised
To see yourself admired and praised,
And if I left you, you'd remain
A foolish lump of wood again."

EXPLANATION

Whipping sounds a little odd—
It is not whipping with a rod:
It means to teach a boy incessantly,
Whether by lessons, or more pleasantly,
Every hour and every day,
By every means, in every way,
By reading, writing, rhyming, talking,
By riding to see sights, and walking;
If you leave off, he drops at once,
A lumpish, wooden-headed dunce.

THE COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE

No lines written on a tomb have been quoted oftener than these. In them Ben Jonson, a fine, scholarly poet who knew Shakespeare, tells us that while Time lasts there will never be a more perfect woman than this Countess of Pembroke, who was the sister of Sir Philip Sidney. It was for her that Sidney wrote his romance "Arcadia." Jonson himself has a remarkable epitaph, saying much in little, in Westminster Abbey—"O rare Ben Jonson!"

UNDERNEATH this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse:
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother.
Death, ere thou hast slain another
Learned and fair and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.

DOG DAYS

Animals play such a softening part in most of our lives that it is always pleasant to see their attractive, if wayward, doings brought into a poem. Into these verses, which are taken from the "Spectator," and were written by Dorothea Sumner, the errant dog Timothy, who is carried away by the joy of scampering after wild things, is very tenderly introduced by his forgiving mistress.

TIMOTHY, Timothy, where have you been?
"Over the sloping meadows green;
The river called, but I could not stay,
Into the copse I ran away."

Timothy, Timothy, what did you see?
"A bunny scampering up a tree,
A squirrel saying such wicked words,
And ever so many different birds."

Timothy, Timothy, what did you smell?
"That is a secret I cannot tell;
I followed the ground, I followed the air,
And there were messages everywhere."

Timothy, Timothy, what did you hear?
"I heard you calling, mistress dear;
But there were calls of another kind,
Irresistible, to my mind."

Timothy, Timothy, why did you go?
"I couldn't help it; I love it so.
Hunting things that flutter and run
Is such eternally perfect fun."

Timothy, Timothy, what must I do?
"Oh, don't be cross, for that isn't you;
And I'm so hungry and tired and sore—
Feed me and love me as before!"

ONCE, BUT NO MATTER WHEN

For centuries we keep uneffaced the records of the great, and of the less great for generations, but how brief and elusive is the story of the ordinary average life! That is the moral of these verses, which the anonymous poet pretends has escaped him.

ONCE—but no matter when—
There lived—no matter where—
A man, whose name—but then
I need not that declare.

He—well, he had been born,
And so he was alive;
His age—I details scorn—
Was somethingty and five.

He lived—how many years
I truly can't decide;
But this one fact appears,
He lived—until he died.

"He died," I have averred,
But cannot prove 'twas so,
But that he was interred,
At any rate, I know.

I fancy he'd a son,
I hear he had a wife:
Perhaps he'd more than one,
I know not, on my life!

But whether he was rich,
Or whether he was poor,
Or neither—both—or which,
I cannot say, I'm sure.

I can't recall his name,
Or what he used to do:
But then—well, such is fame!
'Twill so serve me and you.

And that is why I thus,
About this unknown man,
Would fain create a fuss,
To rescue, if I can,

From dark oblivion's blow,
Some record of his lot:
But, ah! I do not know
Who—where—when—why—or what.

In this brief pedigree
A moral we should find—
But what it ought to be
Has quite escaped my mind!

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

The poem which made Lord Byron suddenly famous as a poet was a description of his travels under the title "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," and one part of it closed with this magnificent Address to the Ocean. In it Byron approached nearer sublimity than in any of his writings. It should be noted that the word "lay" at the end of the third verse is ungrammatical. The name "Trafalgar" must here be pronounced with the stress strongly on the last syllable, or the rhythm is broken.

THERE is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.

Roll on, thou deep and dark-blue Ocean—roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown.

His steps are not upon thy paths—thy fields
Are not a spoil for him—thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering, in thy playful spray,
And howling, to his gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth—there let him lay.

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake
And monarchs tremble in their capitals;
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war;
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's pride, or spoils of Trafalgar.

SAY NO

These verses are an excellent example of the writings of Eliza Cook, a maiden lady whose sensible and useful rhymes were very popular in the middle of the last century. This is not poetry in the finest literary manner, but it is flowing in style and supremely true in its teaching. The first four lines of the second verse refer to the ancient fable that syrens, a kind of attractive mermaid, make sweet music on the seashore to lure mariners into danger. The "hollow reed" spoken of was supposed to be the first musical instrument.

WOULD you learn the bravest thing
That men can ever do?
Would you be an uncrowned king,
Absolute and true?
Would you seek to emulate
All we learn in story
Of the noble, just, and great,
Rich in real glory?
Would you lose much bitter care
In your lot below?
Bravely speak out when and where
'Tis right to utter No.

When temptation's form would lead
To some pleasant wrong—
When she tunes the hollow reed
To the syren's song,
When she offers bribe and smile,
And our conscience fails,
There is naught but shining guile
In the gifts she deals;
Then, O then, let courage rise
To its strongest flow;
Show that you are brave and wise
And firmly answer No.

Ah, how many thorns we wreathe
To twine our brows around,
By not knowing when to breathe
This important sound.
Many a breast has rued the day
When it reckoned less
Of fruits upon the moral "Nay"
Than flowers upon the "Yes."
Many a sad repentant thought
Turns to long ago,
When a luckless fate was wrought
By want of saying No.

Few have learned to speak this word
When it should be spoken;
Resolution is deferred,
Vows to virtue broken.
More of courage is required
This one word to say,
Than to stand where shots are fired
In the battle fray.
Use it fitly and you'll see
That a lot below
May be schooled and nobly ruled
By power to utter No.

QUEEN MAB AND HER FAIRIES

No one knows who wrote this merry song describing the midnight revels of the fairies. The date usually given for it is 1635. There is a wild love of play in it, and just a little pleasant mischief; but it is all bright and dainty, as fairy doings must be. The "tester" left in the clean housemaid's shoe is what we call sixpence.

COME follow, follow me,
You fairy elves that be:
Which circle on the greene,
Come follow Mab your queene.
Hand in hand let's dance around,
For this place is fairye ground.

When mortals are at rest,
And snoring in their nest,
Unheard, and unespye l,
Through keyholes we do glide;
Over tables, stools, and shelves,
We trip it with our fairy elves.

Upon a mushroome's head
Our tablecloth we spread;
A grain of rye, or wheat,
Is manchet, which we eat;
Pearly drops of dew we drink,
In acorn cups filled to the brink.

The grasshopper, gnat, and fly,
Serve for our minstrelsie;
Grace said, we dance a while,
And so the time beguile:
And if the moon doth hide her head,
The gloe-worm lights us home to bed.

On tops of dewie grasse
So nimbly do we passe,
The young and tender stalk
Ne'er bends when we do walk:
Yet in the morning may be seen
Where we the night before have been.

THERE'S A GOOD TIME COMING

Charles Mackay, who wrote this bold, strong song, was a healthy-minded and really Christian Englishman, and his songs always have the ring of downright sincerity and a wealth of homely wisdom. The "good time" he sang of has not yet come, but it is nearer, and more and more people feel it would indeed be a good time.

THERE'S a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming:
There's a good time coming, boys—
Wait a little longer.
We may not live to see the day,
But earth shall glisten in the ray
Of the good time coming.
Cannon-balls may aid the truth,
But thought's a weapon stronger;
We'll win our battle by its aid,
Wait a little longer.

CHORUS:

Oh, there's a good time coming, boys,
There's a good time coming:
There's a good time coming, boys,
Wait a little longer.

There's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming:
The pen shall supersede the sword,
And right, not might, shall be the lord,
In the good time coming.
Worth, not birth, shall rule mankind,
And be acknowledged stronger.
The proper impulse has been given—
Wait a little longer.

There's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming:
Hateful rivalries of creed
Shall not make their martyrs bleed,
In the good time coming.
Religion shall be shorn of pride,
And flourish all the stronger;
And Charity shall trim her lamp—
Wait a little longer.

There's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming:
War in all men's eyes shall be
A monster of iniquity,
In the good time coming.
Nations shall not quarrel then
To prove which is the stronger,
Nor slaughter men for glory's sake—
Wait a little longer.

THE WEAKEST THING

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who wrote this lovely little poem, did not always succeed in being musical in her choice of words, but she succeeds daintily here while depicting the moods to which our hearts are subjected. Poets often put into their songs a deep undertone of meaning, besides that which appears plain on the surface, and it may be so here in the last verse, with God, the moving heart of all things, strengthening our weak hearts in their need.

WHICH is the weakest thing of all
Mine heart can ponder?
The sun, a little cloud can pall
With darkness yonder;
The cloud, a little wind can move
Where'er it listeth;
The wind, a little leaf above,
Though sere, resisteth.

What time that yellow leaf was green,
My days were gladder;
But now, whatever spring may mean
I must grow sadder.
Ah, me! a leaf with sighs can wring
My lips asunder—
Then is mine heart the weakest thing
Itself can ponder.

Yet, Heart, when sun and cloud are pined
And drop together,
And at a blast which is not wind,
The forests wither,
Thou, from the darkening deathly curse,
To glory breakest—
The Strongest of the universe
Guarding the weakest!

TRUTH

Arthur Hugh Clough, the writer of these noble lines, was a poet who died comparatively young, after he had written a few pieces with fine insight and beauty, but before he had had time to fulfil completely the expectations of clever friends. He died in 1861, in his forty-second year, and Matthew Arnold wrote a lovely poem in memory of him.

IT fortifies my soul to know
That, though I perish, Truth is so:
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
I steadier step when I recall
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

THE MOTHER'S BOOK

The writer of this account of the boyhood of the great English King Alfred was a lady, Charlotte M. Yonge, who wrote many pleasant and good stories particularly for girls' reading. Alfred's love of learning caused him to do all he could to preserve the early English language. He became, perhaps, the most perfect of all the kings of ancient days.

"COME here, my boys," the lady said,
Seated in royal chair.
Four lads came, each with flaxen head,
And features fresh and fair.

"See here, my children, come and look!
See tales of many a saint,
Fair written in this beauteous book,
All decked with pictures quaint.

"The boy who first shall read the scroll
Unaided and alone,
And all its precious stores unroll,
Shall have it for his own."

Up spake the eldest of the four:
"I am the kingdom's heir;
Of monkish pen or scholar's lore
Nought would I know or care."

The second brother then spake out:
"I have my sword and bow.
How should it serve in battle shout
That learning I should know?"

And answered gentle Ethelred:
"I love a holy song;
But letters weary sore mine head,
Study is all too long!"

Resolve was on young Alfred's face;
Eager he raised his head,
Like a brave courser in the race,
And "That I will!" he said.

Soon at the lady's side he stood;
And every line and verse,
Each holy life and maxim good,
Did he throughout rehearse.

And thus the book was twice his own,
Mastered its precious store;
And in the camp and on the throne
He valued still its lore!

Yet still a better thing he earned,
And we may gain it too;
This was what "England's Darling" earned:
To make "I will!" "I do!"

HOW THE KING WENT TO WAR

These verses are from a Russian poem. They are sung by Mr. Robert Radford, one of the most famous of living English singers, who has a love of poetry, too, for he himself made this translation, which tells with sad truth how the supposed glories of war are won by the sufferings of men to whom no glory comes, but only death.

WHEN the king went forth to war,
To a foreign land afar,
The clarion trumpets bravely sang—
While helmets flashed and weapons rang.

When the serf went forth to war,
To a foreign land afar,
His unreaped corn with rustling breath
Seemed whispering to him of death.

Now the battle rages near,
Death is stalking everywhere.
'Mid the fire and smoke are groaning men
Beaten to earth, never to rise again.

The battle o'er—the trumpets sound;
Lies the serf with mortal wound.

But the king returns in pomp and pride,
With his banners waving far and wide.
Shout the folk with joyous lay,
As the victor wends his way;
And the bells crash out from every tower
Their welcome in this glorious hour.

But the serf lies cold in death,
Moans the wind with trembling breath;
O'er his lonely grave the sweet bluebell
Bows its head and rings his funeral knell.

A FINE DAY

Is this not a delightful bit of description? Michael Drayton, who lived at the same time as Shakespeare, wrote a great deal of poetry, for he described all England in verse, much of which was "made up" like an exercise, but here and there were flashes of beauty in his descriptive chronicle Of course, "heaven's most glorious eye" is the poet's name for the sun. "Lawn" is another word for "lace."

CLEAR had the day been from the dawn,
All chequered was the sky,
Thin clouds like scarfs of cobweb lawn
Veiled heaven's most glorious eye.
The wind had no more strength than this,
That leisurely it blew,
To make one leaf the next to kiss
That closely by it grew.

O HUSH THEE, MY BABIE!

In this tender and graceful lullaby Sir Walter Scott touched perfection as a master of romance in verse. The nurse is crooning to a small boy-child on his father's embattled tower, and every word of the poem tells of the sights and feelings of the moment. A loyal, yet tremulous, love irradiates the whole song and brings out a deeper tone at the close.

O HUSH thee, my babie!
Thy sire was a knight
Thy mother a lady,
Both gentle and bright;
The woods and the glens
From the towers which we see,
They all are belonging,
Dear babie, to thee.

O fear not the bugle,
Though loudly it blows;
It calls but the warders
That guard thy repose;
Their bows would be bended,
Their swords would be red,
Ere the step of a foeman
Drew near to thy bed.

O hush thee, my babie!
The time soon will come
When thy sleep shall be broken
By trumpet and drum;
Then hush thee, my darling,
Take rest while you may,
For strife comes with manhood,
And waking with day.

AE FOND KISS

This is a song of parting written by Robert Burns, the immortal Scottish poet. Burns had a wonderful power of putting deep feeling into a few simple words. Perhaps it was because he felt intensely for a short time. Then his mood changed. The lady to whom he gave this poem—a lament that sobs with anguish—was going across the Atlantic, and he never saw her again. *Ae* is Scottish for *one*; *sae* for *so*; *nae* for *no*; and *ilka* for *every*. The other words are easily understood.

AE fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, and then for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
Who shall say that fortune grieves him
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy;
And to see her was to love her—
Love but her, and love for ever.
Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure.
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

THE CHILD WITH THE BIRD

Two years before he died—that is, in 1686—John Bunyan published a "Book for Boys and Girls; or, Country Rhymes for Children," and from it these lines are taken. The wish of children to understand and pet wild creatures that love freedom most of all is expressed with a tenderness and sweetness that increases our admiration of Bunyan's powers as a writer.

MY little bird, how canst thou sit
And sing amidst so many thorns?
Let me but hold upon thee get;
My love with honour thee adorns.

Thou art at present little worth;
Five farthings none will give for thee.
But, prithee, little bird, come forth,
Thou of more value art to me.

'Tis true, it is sunshine to-day,
To-morrow birds will have a storm;
My pretty one, come thou away,
My bosom then shall keep thee warm.

Thou subject art to cold o' nights,
When darkness is thy covering;
At day's thy dangers great by kites,
How canst thou, then, sit there and sing?

Thy food is scarce and scanty, too,
'Tis worms and trash which thou dost eat;
Thy present state I pity do,
Come, I'll provide thee better meat.

I'll feed thee with white bread and milk,
And sugar-plums, if thou them crave;
I'll cover thee with finest silk,
That from the cold I may thee save.

My father's palace shall be thine,
Yea, in it thou shalt sit and sing;
My little bird, if thou'lt be mine,
The whole year round shall be thy spring.

I'll teach thee all the notes at Court!
Unthought-of musick thou shalt play;
And all that thither do resort,
Shall praise thee for it ev'ry day.

I'll keep thee safe from cat and cur,
No manner o' harm shall come to thee;
Yea, I will be thy succourer,
My bosom shall thy cabin be.

But lo! behold, the bird is gone;
These charmings would not make her yield.
The child's left at the bush alone,
The bird flies yonder o'er the field.

A SUNDAY HYMN

The hymns found in our hymn-books written by the finer poets are but few in number. This, by Oliver Wendell Holmes, is one of the best. It is both a true poem and a noble hymn. How devout is its adoration! How tender its love! How pure and mild its humility! How glowing its trust!

LORD of all being! throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star;
Centre and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near!

Sun of our life, Thy quickening ray
Sheds on our path the glow of day;
Star of our hope, Thy softened light
Cheers the long-watches of the night.

Our midnight is Thy smile withdrawn;
Our noontide is Thy gracious dawn;
Our rainbow arch Thy mercy's sign;
All, save the clouds of sin, are Thine!

Lord of all life, below, above,
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,
Before Thy ever-blazing throne
We ask no lustre of our own.

Grant us Thy truth to make us free,
And kindling hearts that burn for Thee,
Till all Thy loving altars claim
One holy light, one heavenly flame!

GOD BLESS OUR FATHERLAND

It is pleasant to think of the writer of these verses as an American whose affection embraced our land. National songs often are so warlike as almost to suggest ill-will toward other countries; but here the gentle-hearted Oliver Wendell Holmes says nothing that is not fit for a prayer. In the last verse he sinks all national distinctions and differences and sees the whole of mankind united in peace under the great Father of all.

GOD bless our fatherland,
Keep her in heart and hand
One with our own;
From all her foes defend,
Be her brave people's friend;
On all her realms descend;
Protect her throne.

Father, in loving care
Guard Thou her kingdom's heir,
Guide all his ways;
Thine arm his shelter be,
From harm by land and sea;
Bid storm and danger flee;
Prolong his days.

Lord, bid war's trumpet cease;
Fold the whole earth in peace
Under Thy wings.
Make all Thy nations one,
All hearts beneath Thy sun,
Till Thou shalt reign alone,
Great King of Kings.

A MAN'S REQUIREMENTS

These simple lines are full of charm. They picture for us true love in many phases, and they are, of course, true poetry, because they are written by a true poet—Mrs. Browning.

LOVE me, sweet, with all thou art,
Feeling, thinking, seeing;
Love me in the lightest part,
Love me in full being.

Love me with thine open youth
In its frank surrender;
With the vowing of thy mouth,
With its silence tender.

Love me with thy azure eyes,
Made for earnest granting;
Taking colour from the skies,
Can Heaven's truth be wanting?

Love me in thy gorgeous airs,
When the world has crowned thee;
Love me kneeling at thy prayers,
With the angels round thee.

Love me pure, as musers do,
Up the woodlands shady;
Love me gaily, fast and true,
As a winsome lady.

MY LITTLE BOY'S GOOD-NIGHT

This pretty picture of a boy saying good-night to the world is by Eliza Lee Follen, a well-known American writer of songs, fables, fairy tales, and nursery rhymes. Mrs. Follen was born in Boston, at the beginning of the 19th century. These verses express what children often feel at bedtime, and we feel as we read them that the little boy had had a very happy day.

THE sun is hidden from our sight
The birds are sleeping sound;
'Tis time to say to all "Good-night!"
And give a kiss all round.

Good-night! my father, mother dear,
Now kiss your little son;
Good-night! my friends, both far and near,
Good-night to every one.

Good-night! ye merry, merry birds,
Sleep well till morning light;
Perhaps if you could sing in words,
You would have said "Good-night!"

To all my pretty flowers, good-night!
You blossom while I sleep;
And all the stars that shine so bright,
With you their watches keep.

The moon is lighting up the skies,
The stars are sparkling there;
'Tis time to shut our weary eyes,
And say our evening prayer.

OUR DUTIES

This is a favourite recitation. It is written by Mrs. Ellen H. Gates, an American lady, to impress upon us the truth that we can all do something to help the world forward and make people happy. They were favourite verses with Abraham Lincoln, who proved their truth by making his way from a poor boy's log cabin to the White House of the President of America.

IF you cannot on the ocean
Sail among the swiftest fleet,
Rocking on the highest billow,
Laughing at the storms you meet;
You can stand among the sailors,
Anchored yet within the bay,
You can lend a hand to help them
As they launch their boats away.

If you are too weak to journey
Up the mountains steep and high,
You can stand within the valley
While the multitude go by;
You can chant a happy measure
As they slowly pass along;
Though they may forget the singer
They may not forget the song.

If you cannot in the conflict
Prove yourself a soldier true,
If where smoke and fire are thickest
There's no work for you to do;
When the battlefield is silent
You can go with careful tread,
You can bear away the wounded,
You can cover up the dead.

If you cannot in the harvest
Garner up the richest sheaves,
Many a grain both ripe and golden
May the careless reapers leave;
Go and glean among the briers
Growing rank against the wall,
For it may be that their shadow
Hides the heaviest wheat of all.

Do not then stand idly waiting
For some greater work to do;
Fortune is a fickle goddess,
She will never come to you.
Go and toil in any vineyard,
Do not fear to do and dare;
If you want a field of labour
You can find it anywhere.

A GAELIC LULLABY

Thousands of mothers in Scotland sing this little lullaby to their babies, and millions of mothers all the world over feel the spirit of these lines as they bend over the cot to watch baby sleeping. The word "knowes" is Scottish for little hills.

HUSH! the waves are rolling in,
White with foam, white with foam;
Father toils amid the din;
But baby sleeps at home.

Hush! the winds roar hoarse and deep—
On they come, on they come;
Brother seeks the wandering sheep;
But baby sleeps at home.

Hush! the rain sweeps o'er the knowes,
Where they roam, where they roam;
Sister goes to seek the cows;
But baby sleeps at home.

OBEDIENCE

The lady who wrote these simple lines of sound advice was an American poetess named Phoebe Carey, who was born in Ohio in 1824. She and her sister Alice published many verses of this kind, and were, in their day, very popular in America.

IF you're told to do a thing,
And mean to do it really;
Never let it be by halves;
Do it fully, freely.

Do not make a poor excuse,
Waiting, weak, unsteady;
All obedience worth the name
Must be prompt and ready.

BEAUTY AND HER VISITORS

A charming example of Praed's light verse. He pictures how the world treats Beauty in woman. Beauty toys with Love. Wealth tries to bribe her; Genius cannot suit her taste; Flattery cajoles her; Envy disparages her; Time fails to mar her looks; but Death with Forgetfulness (Lethe) startles her, till the poet advises her to be painted by Lawrence, the great portrait painter, who will preserve her on his canvas.

I LOOKED for Beauty: on a throne,
A dazzling throne of light, I found her;
And Music poured its softest tone,
And flowers their sweetest breath around her.
A score or two of idle gods,
Some dressed as peers and some as peasants,
Were watching all her smiles and nods,
And making compliments and presents.

And first young Love, the rosy boy,
Exhibited his bow and arrows,
And gave her many a pretty toy—
Torches, and bleeding hearts, and sparrows.
She told him, as he passed, she knew
Her court would scarcely do without him;
But yet—she hoped they were not true—
There were some awkward tales about him.

Wealth deemed that magic had no charm
More mighty than the gifts he brought her,
And linked around her radiant arm
Bright diamonds of the purest water.
The Goddess, with a scornful touch,
Unclasped the gaudy, galling fetter,
And said—she thanked him very much—
She liked a wreath of roses better.

Then Genius snatched his golden lute
And told a tale of love and glory;
The crowd around were hushed and mute
To hear so sad and sweet a story.
And Beauty marked the minstrel's cheek,
So very pale—no bust was paler;
Vowed she could listen for a week,
But, really, he *should* change his tailor.

As died the echo of the strings,
A shadowy Phantom kneeled before her,
Looked all unutterable things,
And swore to see was to adore her.
He called her veil a cruel cloud,
Her cheek a rose, her smile a battery;
She fancied it was Wit that bowed—
I'm almost certain it was Flattery.

There was a beldame finding fault
With every person's every feature;
And by the sneer, and by the halt,
I knew at once the odious creature.
"You see," quoth Envy, "I am come
To bow—as is my bounden duty.
They tell me Beauty is at home.
Impossible! that *can't* be Beauty!"

I heard a murmur, far and wide,
Of "Lord, how quick the dotard passes!"
As Time threw down at Beauty's side
The prettiest of his clocks and glasses.
But it was noticed in the throng
How Beauty marred the maker's cunning;
For when she talked the hands went wrong,
And when she smiled the sands stopped running.

Death, in a doctor's wig and gown,
Came, arm in arm with Lethe, thither,
And crowned her with a withered crown,
And hinted, Beauty too must wither!
"Avaunt!" she cried. "How came he here?
The frightful fiend—he's my abhorrence!"
I went and whispered in her ear:
"He shall not hurt you—sit to Lawrence!"

THE SEA-FAIRIES

This is Tennyson's version of the fairy folks weaving their spells to draw mariners to the charms of the land. They symbolise the power of pleasure tempting us away from duty.

SLOW sailed the weary mariners and saw,
Betwixt the green brink and the running foam,
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest
To little harps of gold; and while they mused,
Whispering to each other half in fear,
Shrill music reached them on the middle sea

Whither away, whither away, whither away? fly no more.
Whither away from the high green field, and the happy blossoming shore?
Day and night to the billow the fountain calls:
Down shower the gambolling waterfalls
From wandering over the lea:
Out of the live-green heart of the dells
They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,
And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells
High over the full-toned sea:
O hither, come hither and furl your sails,
Come hither to me and to me:
Hither, come hither and frolic and play;
Here it is only the mew that wails;
We will sing to you all the day:
Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
For here are the blissful downs and dales,
And merrily, merrily carol the gales,
And the spangle dances in bight and bay,
And the rainbow forms and flies on the land
Over the islands free;
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand;
Hither, come hither and see;
And the rainbow hangs on the poising wave,

And sweet is the colour of cove and cave,
And sweet shall your welcome be :
O hither, come hither, and be our lords,
For merry brides are we :
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words :
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
With pleasure and love and jubilee :
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
When the sharp clear twang of the golden chords
Runs up the ridged sea.
Who can light on as happy a shore
All the world o'er, all the world o'er ?
Whither away ? Listen and stay : mariner, mariner, fly no more.

THE HUMAN SEASONS

The poets have always likened the life of men to the growing and declining year. This is the comparison as it was made by John Keats. He died before he reached the strength of summer. It might be guessed that the poem was an outcome of inexperience, for it is often in the autumnal years that the " fair things " of earth are most closely noticed and admired.

FOUR seasons fill the measure of the year ;
There are four seasons in the mind of man :
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
Takes in all beauty with an easy span.
He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring's honeyed cud of youthful thought he loves
To ruminate, and, by such dreaming, nigh
His nearest unto heaven ; quiet coves
His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
He furleth close ; contented so to look
On mists in idleness—to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
He has his Winter, too, of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forgo his mortal nature.

THE DYING SWAN

It is fabled that the swan, a mute bird during life, sings a wild song when it is about to die. Tennyson, accepting the story, tries to fill in an appropriate picture, with surroundings to match the song. Of course, it must be a desolate river scene. The little poem rises finely to a climax as the mute soul of the swan finds a grandly melodious freedom.

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful grey.
With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as it went.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky
Shone out their crowning snows.
One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh ;
Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild will,
And far through the marish green and still
The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green and yellow.

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow : at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and clear ;
And floating about the under-sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear ;
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flowed forth on a carol free and bold ;
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is rolled
Through the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star.
And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
And the wavy swell of the soughing reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

ON THE SEA

In this sonnet Keats expressed something of the refreshing vigour and restfulness which the city-dweller ever finds in the freedom and grandeur of the ocean. Hecate was the goddess of the moon, which causes the tides of the ocean.

IT keeps eternal whisperings around
Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell
Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
Often 'tis in such gentle temper found
That scarcely will the very smallest shell
Be moved for days from where it sometime fell,
When last the winds of heaven were unbound.
O ye who have your eye-balls vexed and tired,
Feast them upon the wideness of the sea ;
O ye whose ears are dinned with uproar rude,
Or fed too much with cloying melody,
Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood
Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired !

THE WAY THE BABY CAME

These three verses, each of which was written as a separate poem, are by James Whitcomb Riley, who, as a delightful writer for children and about childhood, ranks with Eugene Field. Mr. Riley, who was born in 1853, is still living and writing. In pure poetical imagery, borrowed from the dawn, the fire-flame, and the unfolding blossom, he tells of the coming of the baby's tender life, of the waking of the baby with eyes like dewdrops, and, alas! of the last sleep of the baby before it could know how it was loved.

O THIS is the way the baby came:
  Out of the night as comes the dawn;
Out of the embers as the flame;
  Out of the bud the blossom on
The apple-bough, that blooms the same
  As in glad summers dead and gone—
With a grace and beauty none could name
O this is the way the baby came!

And this is the way the baby woke:
  As when in deepest drops of dew
The shine and shadows sink and soak,
  The sweet eyes glimmered through and through;
And eddyings and dimples broke
  About the lips, and no one knew
Or could divine the words they spoke—
And this is the way the baby woke.

This is the way the baby slept:
  A mist of tresses backward thrown
By quavering sighs where kisses crept
  With yearnings she had never known:
The little hands were closely kept
  About a lily newly blown—
And God was with her. And we wept—
And this is the way the baby slept.

THE DAYS GONE BY

In what a melodious measure these regretful, admiring scenes from a happy boyhood are pictured by James Whitcomb Riley! The feeling of youth never fails as long as we keep our "glad belief in everything." The "tilting snipe" describes well the standing attitude of that shy, long-legged, long-beaked bird.

O THE days gone by! O the days gone by!
  The apples in the orchard, and the pathway through the rye;
The chirrup of the robin, and the whistle of the quail
As he piped across the meadows sweet as any nightingale;
When the bloom was on the clover, and the blue was in the sky,
And my happy heart brimmed over, in the days gone by.

In the days gone by, when my naked feet were tripped
By the honeysuckle tangles where the water-lilies dipped,
And the ripples of the river lipped the moss along the brink
Where the placid-eyed and lazy-footed cattle came to drink,
And the tilting snipe stood fearless of the truant's wayward cry
And the splashing of the swimmer, in the days gone by.

O the days gone by! O the days gone by!
The music of the laughing lip, the lustre of the eye;
The childish faith in fairies, and Aladdin's magic ring—
The simple, soul-reposing, glad belief in everything—
When life was like a story holding neither sob nor sigh,
In the golden, olden glory of the days gone by.

DUSK-SONG

The sights and sounds of the fading evening light, or the gloaming, in this descriptive song by the American poet James Whitcomb Riley, are naturally American. The locust, the katydid—a bird—and the fireflies are not heard or seen in this country, but we know quite well the beetle blundering heavily along, and the musk smelling most strongly when the daylight is fading.

THE shrilling locust slowly sheathes
  His dagger-voice, and creeps away
Beneath the brooding leaves where breathes
  The zephyr of the dying day:
One naked star has waded through
  The purple shallows of the night,
And faltering as falls the dew
  It drips its misty light.

O'er garden blooms,
On tides of musk,
The beetle booms adown the glooms
And bumps along the dusk.

The katydid is rasping at
  The silence from the tangled broom:
On drunken wings the flitting bat
  Goes staggering athwart the gloom;
The toadstool bulges through the weeds,
  And lavishly to left and right
The fireflies, like golden seeds,
  Are sown about the night.

O'er slumbrous blooms,
On floods of musk,
The beetle booms adown the glooms
And bumps along the dusk.

The primrose flares its baby-hands
  Wide open, as the empty moon,
Slow lifted from the underlands,
  Drifts up the azure-arched lagoon;
The shadows on the garden walk
  Are frayed with rifts of silver light;
And, trickling down the poppy-stalk,
  The dewdrop streaks the night.

O'er folded blooms,
On swirls of musk,
The beetle booms adown the glooms
And bumps along the dusk.

WHAT THE WIND SAID

In this poem by Mr. Whitcomb Riley we are taken by the many-tempered Wind on one of its free rounds of the earth. The Wind tells us it was born in the Arctic North, amid the glorious architecture built by ice and snow. Then it is swept across the open ocean, fretting the waves, but helping the homeward-bound ship, and hurrying over the land by secluded vales and dawn-painted mountain peaks, to the wickedness of cities, where it shows its anger in a great conflagration made by fanning a chance spark. This is one of the most vigorous of all Wind poems.

I MUSE today, in a listless way,
  In the gleam of a summer land;
I close my eyes as a lover may
  At the touch of his sweetheart's hand,
And I hear these things in the whisperings
  Of the zephyrs 'round me fanned:

I am the Wind, and I rule mankind,
  And I hold a sovereign reign
Over the lands, as God designed,
  And the waters they contain:
Lo! the bound of the wide world round
  Falleth in my domain!

I was born on a stormy morn
  In a kingdom walled with snow,
Whose crystal cities laughed to scorn
  The proudest the world can show;
And the daylight's glare is frozen there
  In the breath of the blasts that blow.

Life to me was a jubilee
  From the first of my youthful days:
Clinking my icy toys with glee—
  Playing my childish plays,
Filling my hands with the silver sands
  To scatter a thousand ways:

Chasing the flakes that the Polar shakes
  From its shaggy coat of white,
Or hunting the trace of the track he makes
  And sweeping it from sight,
As he turned to glare from the slippery stair
  Of the iceberg's farthest height.

Till I grew so strong that I strayed ere long
  From my home of ice and chill;
With an eager heart and a merry song
  I travelled the snows until
I heard the thaws in the ice-crag's jaws
  Crunched with a hungry will.

And the grand old sea invited me
  With a million beckoning hands,
And I spread my wings for a flight as free
  As ever a sailor plans
When his thoughts are wild and his heart beguiled
  With the dreams of foreign lands.

I passed a ship on its homeward trip,
  With a weary and toil-worn crew;
And I kissed their flag with a welcome lip,
  And so glad a gale I blew
That the sailors quaffed their grog and laughed
  At the work I made them do.

With a seagull resting on my breast,
  I launched on the madder flight:
And I lashed the waves to a wild unrest,
  And howled with a fierce delight
Till the daylight slept; and I wailed and wept
  Like a fretful babe all night.

I journeyed on, when the night was gone,
  O'er a coast of oak and pine;
And I followed a path that a stream had drawn
  Through a land of vale and vine,
And here and there was a village fair
  In a nest of shade and shine.

I joyed to stand where the jewelled hand
  Of the maiden morning lies
On the tawny brow of the mountain land,
  Where the eagle shrieks and cries,
And holds his throne to himself alone
  From the light of human eyes.

And I turned and fled from the place of dread
  To the far-off haunts of men,
"In the city's heart is rest," I said—
  But I found it not, and when
I saw but care and vice reign there
  I was filled with wrath again:

And I blew a spark in the midnight dark
  Till it flashed to an angry flame
And scarred the sky with a lurid mark
  As red as the blush of shame:
And a hint of hell was the dying yell
  That up from the ruins came.

I am the Wind, and I rule mankind,
  And I hold a sovereign reign
Over the lands, as God designed,
  And the waters they contain:
Lo! the bound of the wide world round
  Falleth in my domain!

. . . . . .

I wake, as one from a dream half done,
  And gaze with a dazzled eye
On an autumn leaf like a scrap of sun
  That the wind goes whirling by,
While afar I hear, with a chill of fear,
  The winter storm-king sigh.

THE SAND IN THE HOUR-GLASS

This poem by Longfellow is an example of imaginative description. It is the poet's privilege to let his fancy play around any object that attracts his eye. In this instance he sees the trickling sands of his hour-glass, and, wondering whence they have come, pictures for us a panorama of possibilities. Whose feet have pressed these sands? And how strange if these sands in a little glass bulb should have been whirled by the winds about the desert skies!

A HANDFUL of red sand, from the hot clime
Of Arab deserts brought,
Within this glass becomes the spy of Time,
The minister of Thought.

How many weary centuries has it been
About those deserts blown!
How many strange vicissitudes has seen,
How many histories known!

Perhaps the camels of the Ishmaelite
Trampled and passed it o'er,
When into Egypt from the patriarch's sight
His favourite son they bore.

Perhaps the feet of Moses, burnt and bare,
Crushed it beneath their tread;
Or Pharaoh's flashing wheels into the air
Scattered it as they sped.

Or Mary, with the Christ of Nazareth
Held close in her caress,
Whose pilgrimage of hope and love and faith
Illumined the wilderness.

Or anchorites beneath Engaddi's palms
Pacing the Dead Sea beach,
And singing slow their old Armenian psalms
In half-articulate speech.

Or caravans, that from Bassora's gate
With westward steps depart;
Or Mecca's pilgrims, confident of Fate,
And resolute in heart!

These have passed over it, or may have passed!
Now in this crystal tower;
Imprisoned by some curious hand at last,
It counts the passing hour.

And as I gaze these narrow walls expand;
Before my dreamy eye
Stretches the desert with its shifting sand,
Its unimpeded sky.

And borne aloft by the sustaining blast,
This little golden thread
Dilates into a column high and vast,
A form of fear and dread.

And onward, and across the setting sun,
Across the boundless plain,
The column and its broader shadow run,
Till thought pursues in vain.

The vision vanishes! These walls again
Shut out the lurid sun,
Shut out the hot, immeasurable plain,
The half-hour's sand is run!

OLD GRIMES

Here Albert Gordon Greene gives a description in rhyme of a very old-fashioned gentleman of days now forgotten. That the verses are American can be seen by the use of three characteristic words—"some" in the second verse, "pantaloons" for breeches in the third verse, and "town-meeting" in the sixth. It would, perhaps, be a good exercise to try to draw a portrait of this old gentleman.

OLD Grimes is dead; that good old man,
We ne'er shall see him more;
He used to wear a long, black coat,
All buttoned down before.

His heart was open as the day,
His feelings all were true;
His hair was some inclined to grey,
He wore it in a queue.

He lived at peace with all mankind,
In friendship he was true;
His coat had pocket-holes behind,
His pantaloons were blue.

He modest merit sought to find,
And pay it its desert;
He had no malice in his mind,
No ruffles on his shirt.

His neighbours he did not abuse,
Was sociable and gay;
He wore large buckles on his shoes,
And changed them every day.

His knowledge, hid from public gaze,
He did not bring to view,
Nor make a noise town-meeting days,
As many people do.

His worldly goods he never threw
In trust to fortune's chances,
But lived (as all his brothers do)
In easy circumstances.

Thus undisturbed by anxious cares
His peaceful moments ran;
And everybody said he was
A fine old gentleman.

THE RAINBOW

This pretty fancy, so gracefully expressed, is by Thomas Campbell, the Scottish poet who never wrote in the Scottish tongue.

TRIUMPHAL arch, that fills the sky
When storms prepare to part,
I ask not proud Philosophy
To teach me what thou art.

Still seem, as to my childhood's sight,
A midway station given,
For happy spirits to alight,
Betwixt the earth and heaven.

THE SONG OF WHAT THE WORLD WILL BE

THE rain had fallen, the poet arose,
He passed by the town and out of the street,
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,
And waves of shadow went over the wheat,
And he sat him down in a lonely place,
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
That made the wild swan pause in her cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the fly,
The snake slipt under a spray;
The wild hawk stood with his down on his beak,
And stared, with his foot on the prey;
And the nightingale thought, "I have sung many songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away."

Lord Tennyson

TO THE LESSER CELANDINE

William Wordsworth, the great poet, knew and delighted in the flowers, and here he tells us with great simplicity of one of his favourites—the lesser celandine. He loves it because of its modesty, and because its cheering presence penetrates everywhere without intrusion. The poet pretends to be jealous of more pushing and obtrusive plants, but that is only the poet's pleasant humour. Really, Wordsworth loved them all.

PANSIES, lilies, kingcups, daisies,
Let them live upon their praises;
Long as there's a sun that sets,
Primroses will have their glory;
Long as there are violets,
They will have a place in story:
There's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine.

Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star;
Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that keep a mighty rout!
I'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
Little flower!—I'll make a stir,
Like a sage astronomer.

Modest, yet withal an elf,
Bold and lavish of thyself;
Since we needs must first have met,
I have seen thee, high and low,
Thirty years or more, and yet
'Twas a face I did not know;
Thou hast now, go where I may,
Fifty greetings in a day.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about her nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast
Like a careless prodigal;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we've little warmth, or none.

Poets, vain men in their mood!
Travel with the multitude:
Never heed them; I aver
That they all are wanton wooers;
But the thrifty cottager,
Who stirs little out of doors,
Joys to spy thee near her home;
Spring is coming, thou art come!

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly, unassuming spirit!
Careless of thy neighbourhood,
Thou dost show thy pleasant face
On the moor, and in the wood,
In the lane; there's not a place,
Howsoever mean it be,
But 'tis good enough for thee.

Ill befall the yellow flowers,
Children of the flaring hours!
Buttercups that will be seen,
Whether we will see or no;
Others, too, of lofty mien;
They have done as worldlings do,
Taken praise that should be thine,
Little, humble Celandine!

Prophet of delight and mirth,
Ill requited upon earth;
Herald of a mighty band,
Of a joyous train ensuing,
Serving at my heart's command,
Tasks that are no tasks renewing,
I will sing, as doth behove,
Hymns in praise of what I love!

A CHILD'S FANCY

The genuine lover of Nature feels just such a spirit of companionship with the flowers, birds, and streams as is expressed in these verses, which are supposed to be by a child, who attributes to the things about her the feeling she has for them. So far as animals are concerned, the fancy, no doubt, is sometimes true, but we can hardly believe that flowers share our feelings.

O LITTLE flowers, you love me so,
You could not do without me;
O little birds that come and go,
You sing sweet songs about me;
O little moss, observed by few,
That round the tree is creeping,
You like my head to rest on you,
When I am idly sleeping.

O rushes by the river side,
You bow when I come near you;
O fish, you leap about with pride,
Because you think I hear you;
O river, you shine clear and bright,
To tempt me to look in you;
O water-lilies, pure and white,
You hope that I shall win you.

O pretty things, you love me so,
I see I must not leave you;
You'd find it very dull, I know,
I should not like to grieve you.
Don't wrinkle up, you silly moss;
My flowers, you need not shiver;
My little buds, don't look so cross;
Don't talk so loud, my river.

And I will make a promise, dears,
That will content you, maybe;
I'll love you through the happy years,
Till I'm a nice old lady.
True love (like yours and mine), they say,
Can never think of ceasing,
But year by year, and day by day,
Keeps steadily increasing.

A MOTHER'S LAST SONG TO HER CHILD—By WORDSWORTH

We have here a picture by Wordsworth, terrible in its simplicity, showing us a scene that must have taken place some time in the cold wilds of the North. An Eskimo mother, with a babe, falls ill on the march, and cannot drag her sledge any further. She asks her companions to save her child and leave her to die. They make her a fire, leave her some food and water, and go on. She lives through the night in which it was thought she would die, and, coming to herself next day, regrets that she did not try to keep up with the tribe longer. Her fire is out, the water frozen, a wolf has eaten her food, and she is alone. Sad, is it not? But it is wonderfully described by the poet through the eyes of the mind.

BEFORE I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!
In sleep I heard the Northern gleams;
The stars, they were among my dreams;
In rustling conflict through the skies,
I heard, I saw the flashes drive;
And yet they are upon my eyes,
And yet I am alive;
Before I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!

My fire is dead: it knew no pain;
Yet is it dead, and I remain:
All stiff with ice the ashes lie;
And they are dead, and I will die.
When I was well, I wished to live,
For clothes, for warmth, for food, and fire;
But they to me no joy can give,
No pleasure now, and no desire.
Then here contented will I lie!
Alone, I cannot fear to die

Alas! ye might have dragged me on
Another day, a single one!
Too soon I yielded to despair;
Why did ye listen to my prayer?
When ye were gone my limbs were stronger;
And oh, how grievously I rue,
That, afterwards, a little longer,
My friends, I did not follow you!
For strong and without pain I lay,
Dear friends, when ye were gone away.

My Child! they gave thee to another,
A woman who was not thy mother.
When from my arms my babe they took,
On me how strangely did he look!
Through his whole body something ran:
A most strange working did I see;
As if he strove to be a man,
That he might pull the sledge for me.
And then he stretched his arms, how wild!
Oh, mercy! like a helpless child.

My little joy! my little pride!
In two days more I must have died.
Then do not weep and grieve for me;
I feel I must have died with thee.
O wind, that o'er my head art flying
The way my friends their course did bend,
I should not feel the pain of dying.
Could I with thee a message send;
Too soon, my friends, ye went away;
For I had many things to say.

I'll follow you across the snow;
Ye travel heavily and slow;
In spite of all my weary pain
I'll look upon your tents again.
My fire is dead, and snowy white
The water which beside it stood;
The wolf has come to me to-night,
And he has stolen away my food.
For ever left alone am I;
Then wherefore should I fear to die?

Young as I am, my course is run,
I shall not see another sun;
I cannot lift my limbs to know
If they have any life or no.
My poor forsaken Child, if I
For once could have thee close to me,
With happy heart I then would die,
And my last thought would happy be;
But thou, dear Babe, art far away,
Nor shall I see another day.

THE ROSE OF MAY

Mary Howitt, wishing to place the Rose of May where we can best admire it, imagines it will only grow near deserted houses that remind us of former grandeur; so she pictures it keeping alive the faded splendour of a fine old house sinking into decay.

AH, there's the lily, marble pale;
The bonny broom, the cistus frail;
The rich sweet-pear, the iris blue,
The larkspur with its peacock hue—
Each one is fair, yet hold I will
That the Rose of May is fairer still.

'Tis grand 'neath palace walls to grow,
To blaze where lords and ladies go;
To hang o'er marble founts, and shine
In modern gardens trim and fine;
But the Rose of May is only seen
Where the great of other days have been.

The house is mouldering stone by stone,
The garden-walks are overgrown;
The flowers are low, the weeds are high,
The fountain-stream is choked and dry;
The dial-stone with moss is green
Where'er the Rose of May is seen.

The Rose of May its pride displayed
Along the old stone balustrade;
And ancient ladies, quaintly dight,
In its pink blossoms took delight,
And on the steps would make a stand
To scent its sweetness, fan in hand.

Long have been dead those ladies gay;
Their very heirs have passed away;
And their old portraits, prim and tall,
Are mouldering in the mouldering hall;
The terrace and the balustrade
Lie broken, weedy, and decayed.

But, lithe and tall, the Rose of May
Shoots upward through the ruin grey,
With scented flower, and leaf pale green,
Such rose as it hath ever been;
Left, like a noble deed, to grace
The memory of an ancient race.

THE BROOM-FLOWER

Mary Howitt, who wrote this hearty poem, had a great love of things that reach their perfection in the British Isles, and the broom is one of them. It has not quite the richness of colour of the gorse at the moment when the gorse is at its best, but it takes up the work of the gorse in beautifying many landscapes, and, by the end of May, outshines the dying glories of its rival.

OH, the Broom, the yellow Broom!
The ancient poet sung it;
And sweet it is on summer days
To lie at rest among it.

I know the realms where people say
The flowers have not their fellow;
I know where they shine out like suns,
The crimson and the yellow.

I know where ladies live enchained
In luxury's silken fetters,
And flowers, as bright as glittering gems,
Are used for written letters.

But ne'er was flower so fair as this
In modern days or olden;
It groweth on its nodding stem
Like to a garland golden.

And all about my mother's door
Shine out its glittering bushes,
And down the glen, where clear as light
The mountain-water gushes.

Take all the rest, but leave me this,
And the bird that nestles in it;
I love it, for it loves the Broom,—
The green and yellow linnet.

Well, call the rose the queen of flowers,
And boast of that of Sharon;
Of lilies like to marble cups,
And the golden rod of Aaron;

I care not how these flowers may be
Beloved of man and woman;
The Broom it is the flower for me,
That groweth on the common.

Oh! the Broom, the yellow Broom,
The ancient poet sung it;
And sweet it is on summer days
To lie at rest among it!

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THE ROSE

How Christina Rossetti, the sister of Dante Rossetti, the poet and artist, succeeded in the delicate art of putting together right words simply, may be seen in this praise of our English rose.

THE lily has an air,
And the snowdrop a grace,
And the sweet-pea a way,
And the heart's-ease a face—
Yet there's nothing like the rose
When she blows.

THE WATER-LILY

The grace of the water-lily leads the writer, John Banister Tabb—a teacher in Maryland—to frame poetic fancies as to the origin of the flower. The texture of the poem is as delicate as the lily.

WHENCE, O fragrant form of light,
Hast thou drifted through the night,
Swanlike, to a leafy nest,
On the restless waves, at rest?

Art thou from the snowy zone
Of a mountain-summit blown,
Or the blossom of a dream,
Fashioned in the foamy stream?

Nay; methinks the maiden moon,
When the daylight came too soon,
Fleeting from her bath to hide,
Left her garment in the tide.

BLOSSOMS

Robert Herrick, the town-loving poe of country scenes, wrote of flowers as they gladdened his eye, and not as science shows them to us. We know now that the blossoms, fair in themselves, gain their truest beauty from being a stage in a continuous life.

FAIR pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do ye fall so fast ?
Your date is not so past,
But you may stay yet here a while
To blush and gently smile,
And go at last.

What ! were ye born to be
An hour or half's delight,
And so to bid good-night ?
'Twas pity Nature brought ye forth,
Merely to show your worth,
And lose you quite.

TO THE DANDELION

This loving appreciation of the lavish carelessness with which the earth is besprinkled with beauty till forms of it seem common was written by James Russell Lowell. The word "peers" at the end of the last verse but one means "equals." When the white lily is spoken of as the bee's "fragrant Sybaris," the reference is to a Greek city named Sybaris, famous for its luxury.

DEAR common flower, that growest beside the way.
Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,
First pledge of blithesome May,
Which children pluck, and, full of pride uphold,
High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they
An Eldorado in the grass have found,
Which not the rich earth's ample round
May match in wealth, thou are more dear to me
Than all the prouder summer blooms may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow
Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,
Nor wrinkled the lean brow
Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease.
'Tis the spring's largess, which she scatters now
To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,
Though most hearts never understand
To take it at God's value, but pass by
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy ;
To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime ;
The eyes thou givest me
Are in the heart, and heed not space or time :
Not in mid-June the golden-cuirassed bee
Feels a more summer-like warm ravishment
In the white lily's breezy tent,
His fragrant Sybaris, than I, when first
From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

Then think I of deep shadows on the grass,
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,
Where, as the breezes pass,
The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways,
Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,
Or whiten in the wind, of waters blue
That from the distance sparkle through
Some woodland gap, and of a sky above,
Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked with thee ;
The sight of thee calls back the robin's song,
Who, from the dark old tree
Beside the door, sang clearly all day long,
And I, secure in childish piety,
Listened as if I heard an angel sing
With news from heaven, which he could bring
Fresh every day to my untainted ears.
When birds and flowers and I were happy peers.

How like a prodigal doth Nature seem,
When thou, for all thy gold, so common art !
Thou teachest me to deem
More sacredly of every human heart,
Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam
Of heaven, and could some wondrous secret show,
Did we but pay the love we owe,
And with a child's undoubting wisdom look
On all these living pages of God's book.

THE GOLDEN HEADS

In these few lines Miriam S. Clark, an American lady, tells us, with true poetic feeling, how flowers, like men and women, pass from golden youth to silvered age, with changes in their beauty.

I KNOW not how it happened—
But when I looked out at dawn,
A merry troop of golden heads
Were playing on the lawn ;
And, laughing with the summer breeze
Who chanced to linger there,
Were begging him for strings of dew
To bind upon their hair.
I know not how it happens—
But youth must surely pass,
As certainly and silently
As wind across the grass ;
And now, where golden locks were seen
Beyond the garden beds,
A gentle group of grandmas sit
With placid, silver heads.

ROBERT BURNS

In Robert Burns, the Scottish poet, good and bad were curiously mixed, and so, while many admire him greatly, many blame him. Here Longfellow shows his largeness of heart as he generously pictures whatever was noblest in the ploughman poet, and passes by his faults with half-averted eyes. After such a tribute, well might the American poet welcome the spirit of Burns to his fireside.

I SEE amid the fields of Ayr
A ploughman, who, in foul and fair,
Sings at his task
So clear, we know not if it is
The laverock's song we hear, or his;
Nor care to ask.

For him the ploughing of those fields
A more ethereal harvest yields
Than sheaves of grain;
Songs flush with purple bloom the rye,
The plover's call, the curlew's cry,
Sing in his brain.

Touched by his hand, the wayside weed
Becomes a flower; the lowliest reed
Beside the stream
Is clothed with beauty; gorse and grass
And heather, where his footsteps pass,
The brighter seem.

He sings of love, whose flame illumes
The darkness of lone cottage rooms;
He feels the force,
The treacherous undertow and stress
Of wayward passions, and no less
The keen remorse.

At moments wrestling with his fate,
His voice is harsh, but not with hate;
The brushwood, hung
Above the tavern door, lets fall
Its bitter leaf, its drop of gall
Upon his tongue.

But still the music of his song
Rises o'er all elate and strong;
Its master-chords
Are Manhood, Freedom, Brotherhood,
Its discords but an interlude
Between the words.

And then to die so young, and leave
Unfinished what he might achieve!
Yet better sure
Is this than wandering up and down
An old man in a country town,
Infirm and poor.

For now he haunts his native land
As an immortal youth; his hand
Guides every plough;
He sits beside each ingle-nook,
His voice is in each rushing brook,
Each rustling bough.

His presence haunts this room tonight,
A form of mingled mist and light
From that far coast.
Welcome beneath this roof of mine!
Welcome! This vacant chair is thine,
Dear guest and ghost

AUTOCHTHON

This poem, written by Charles G. D. Roberts, a Canadian poet who lives in New Brunswick, hints to us of the spirit of life and of poetry that lurks wherever there is existence, and gives the world beauty and majesty and suspense and hope, and all the feelings that come to us and elevate our nature. The curious title, "Autochthon," means the first impulse of life in all created things.

I AM the spirit astir
To swell the grain,
When fruitful suns confer
With labouring rain;
I am the life that thrills
In branch and bloom;
I am the patience of abiding hills,
The promise masked in doom.

When the sombre lands are wrung,
And storms are out,
And giant woods give tongue,
I am the shout;
And when the earth would sleep,
Wrapped in her snows,
I am the infinite gleam of eyes that keep
The post of her repose.

I am the hush of calm,
I am the speed,
The flood-tide's triumphing psalm,
The marsh-pool's heed;
I work in the rocking roar
Where cataracts fall;
I flash in the prismy fire that dances o'er
The dew's ephemeral ball.

I am the voice of wind
And wave and tree,
Of stern desires and blind,
Of strength to be;
I am the cry by night
At point of dawn,
The summoning bugle from the unseen height,
In cloud and doubt withdrawn.

I am the strife that shapes
The stature of man,
The pang no hero escapes,
The blessing, the ban;
I am the hammer that moulds
The iron of our race,
The omen of God in our blood that a people beholds,
The foreknowledge veiled in our face.

THE SKYLARK

The writer of this comparison between a poet scaling the skies in song and a skylark warbling its joy and praise was Frederick Tennyson, one of three sons of a Lincolnshire clergyman who all wrote poetry. Frederick was the eldest; the next was Charles, a year younger; and the third was Alfred, a year younger still, and one of the greatest poets of our race. Frederick Tennyson died in 1898, about five and a half years after his distinguished brother.

How the blithe lark runs up the golden stair
That leans through cloudy gates from heaven to earth,
And all alone in the empyreal air,
Fills it with jubilant sweet songs of mirth;
How far he seems, how far
With the light upon his wings!
Is it a bird, or star
That shines and sings?

What matter if the days be dark and frore,
That sunbeam tells of other days to be,
And singing in the light that floods him o'er,
In joy he overtakes Futurity;
Under cloud-arches vast
He peeps, and sees behind
Great Summer coming fast
Adown the wind!

And now he dives into a rainbow's rivers,
In streams of gold and purple he is drowned;
Shrilly the arrows of his song he shivers,
As though the stormy drops were turned to sound;
And now he issues through,
He scales a cloudy tower,
Faintly, like falling dew,
His fast notes shower.

Let every wind be hushed, that I may hear
The wondrous things he tells the world below,
Things that we dream of he is watching near,
Hopes that we never dreamed he would bestow;
Alas! the storm hath rolled
Back the gold gates again,
Or surely he had told
All heaven to men!

So the victorious poet sings alone,
And fills with light his solitary home,
And through that glory sees new worlds foreshown,
And hears high songs and triumphs yet to come;
He waves the air of Time
With thrills of golden chords,
And makes the world to climb
On linked words.

What if his hair be gray, his eyes be dim,
If wealth forsake him, and if friends be cold?
Wonder unbars her thousand gates to him,
Truth never fails, nor Beauty waxes old;
More than he tells his eyes
Behold, his spirit hears,
Of grief, and joy, and sighs
'Twixt joy and tears.

Blest is the man who with the sound of song
Can charm away the heartache, and forget
The frost of Penury, and the stings of Wrong,
And drown the fatal whisper of Regret!
Darker are the abodes
Of kings, though his be poor,
While Fancies, like the gods,
Pass through his door.

Singing, thou scalest heaven upon thy wings,
Thou liftest a glad heart into the skies;
He maketh his own sunrise, while he sings,
And turns the dusty earth to paradise;
I see thee sail along,
Far up the sunny streams,
Unseen, I hear his song,
I see his dreams.

TO A HUMMING-BIRD IN A GARDEN

Evidently this poem, written by George Murray, was shaped in his mind while he was watching a humming-bird in an aviary. The descriptions of the appearance and the movements of the bird are very faithful, and will be appreciated by all observers.

Blithe playmate of the Summer time,
Admiringly I greet thee;
Born in old England's misty clime,
I scarcely hoped to meet thee.

Com'st thou from forests of Peru,
Or from Brazil's savannahs,
Where flowers of every dazzling hue
Flaunt, gorgeous as Sultanas?

Now here, now there, thy flash is seen,
Like some stray sunbeam darting,
With scarce a second's space between
Its coming and departing.

What though thy throatlet never rings
With music, soft or stirring;
Still, like a spinning-wheel, thy wings
Incessantly are whirring.

Farewell, bright bird! I envy thee,
Gay rainbow-tinted rover;
Would that my life, like thine, were free
From care till all is over!

PRAISE YE THE LORD

This wonderful hymn of adoration is from the 148th Psalm. The great Eastern poet who conceived it, whoever he was, rose to the sublime height of seeing all things, with or without life, acclaiming the Creator, and finding joy in fulfilling the Divine will. That is a spiritual mood which only visits common-place souls in moments of rare exaltation, but some men have lived in it constantly.

PRAISE ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise Him in the heights.

Praise ye Him, all His angels: praise ye Him, all His hosts.

Praise ye Him, sun and moon: praise Him, all ye stars of light.

Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.

Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded, and they were created.

He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: He hath made a decree which shall not pass.

Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons and all deeps:

Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling His word:

Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:

Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl:

Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:

Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:

Let them praise the name of the Lord: for His name alone is excellent; His glory is above the earth and heaven.

Praise ye the Lord.

MY AVIARY

Oliver Wendell Holmes, the tender-hearted American doctor-poet, here gives a dreadful description of how cruel men, with a blind disregard of lovely life and fragile beauty, murder some of the sweetest things that God has made, and call it sport. If that is sport, then sport is sometimes murder and destruction. The Latin exclamation *Habet!* in the third verse, may be translated here, in modern slang, "Got him!" The verses are taken from a longer poem.

SHREWD is our bird; not easy to outwit him!
Sharp is the outlook of those pin-head eyes;
Still, he is mortal and a shot may hit him,
One cannot always miss him if he tries.

Look! there's a young one, dreaming not of danger;
Sees a flat log come floating down the stream;
Stares undismayed upon the harmless stranger;
Ah! were all strangers harmless as they seem!

Habet! a leaden shower his breast has shattered;
Vainly he flutters, not again to rise;
His soft white plumes along the waves are scattered;
Helpless the wing that braved the tempest lies.

He sees his comrades high above him flying
To seek their nests among the island reeds;
Strong is their flight; all lonely he is lying,
Washed by the crimsoned water as he bleeds.

O Thou who carest for the falling sparrow,
Canst Thou the sinless sufferer's pang forget?
Or is Thy dread account-book's page so narrow
Its one long column scores Thy creatures' debt?

Poor, gentle guest, by Nature kindly cherished,
A world grows dark with thee in blinding death;
One little gasp—thy universe has perished,
Wrecked by the idle thief who stole thy breath!

TO AN ORIOLE

Seeing a beautifully coloured tropical bird in a Northern garden—no doubt in an aviary—the poet makes fanciful suggestions to account for its lovely colours. The writer, Edgar Fawcett, was an American who lived between the years 1847 and 1904.

HOW falls it, oriole, thou hast come to fly
In tropic splendour through our Northern sky?

At some glad moment was it Nature's choice
To dower a scrap of sunset with a voice?

Or did some orange tulip, flaked with black,
In some forgotten garden, ages back,

Yearning towards heaven until its wish was heard,
Desire unspeakably to be a bird?

THE LITTLE FLOWER

This very simple poem, as it seems, really has a deep meaning, for it says that the impulse that makes life everywhere is love and it is true, as all life comes from God, and God is love. The writer is Tom Hood, who was a very wise, merry, and sad poet.

THERE grew a little flower once,
That blossomed in a day,
And some said it would ever bloom,
And some 'twould fade away;
And some said it was Happiness,
And some said it was Spring,
And some said it was Grief and Tears,
And many such a thing;
But still the little flower bloomed,
And still it lived and throve,
And men do it call "Summer Growth,"
But angels call it "Love!"

THE NAMES OF LOVELY THINGS

AT TIMES THE WISH HATH COME TO ME TO WRITE
ONLY UNORDERED NAMES OF LOVELY THINGS.

WHITE MISTY SNOWS UNDER
THE MOONRAYS WHITE,

RICH RHODODENDRON-BLOSSOMS
IN GREEN SPRINGS

GREY LICHEN'D ROCKS WHERETO
THE WALLFLOWER CLINGS

WARM LIGHTS FROM COTTAGE
WINDOWS IN BLUE EVES,

RED-FRUITED SPRAYS ON WHICH
THE REDBREAST SINGS,

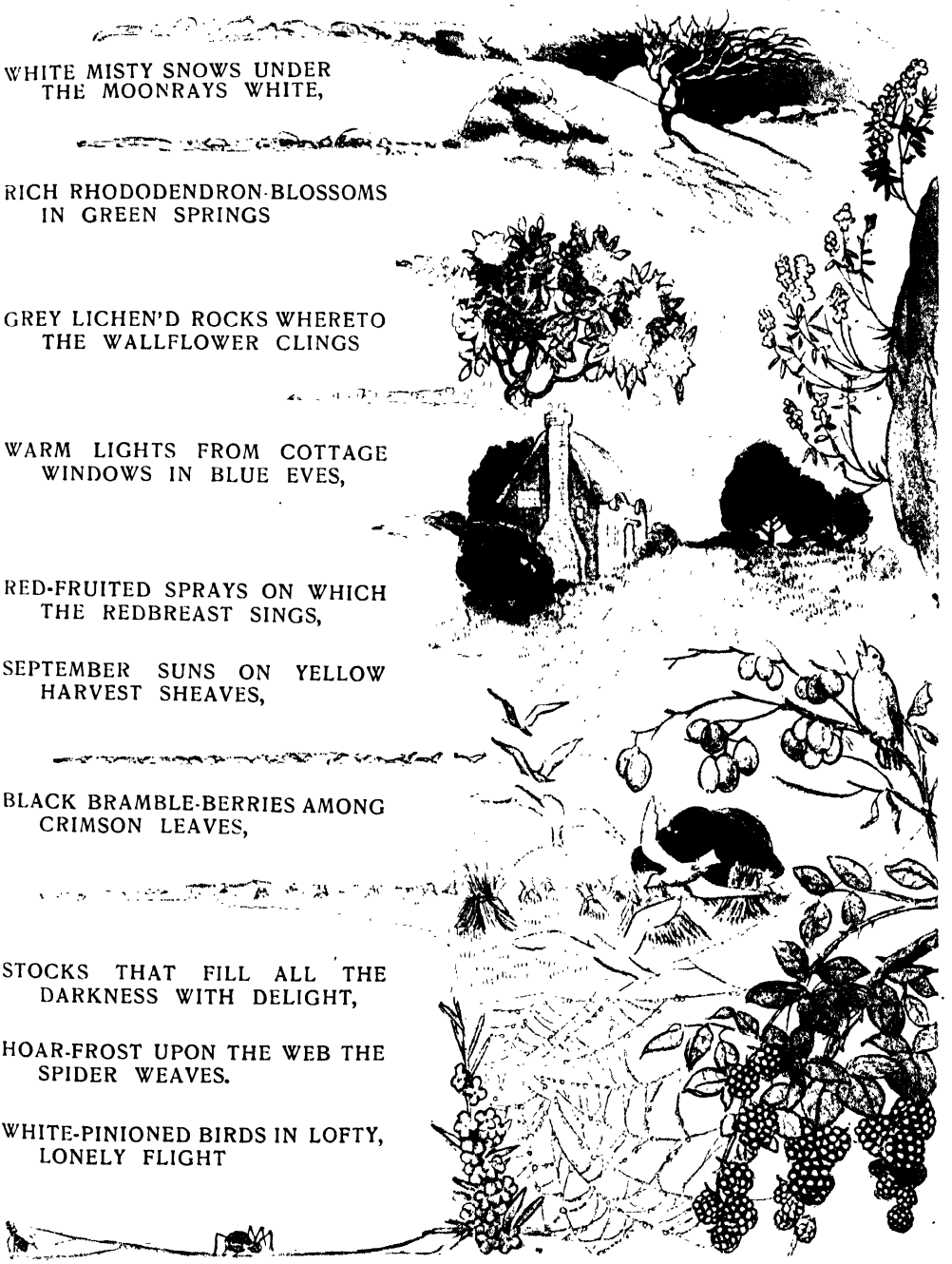
SEPTEMBER SUNS ON YELLOW
HARVEST SHEAVES,

BLACK BRAMBLE-BERRIES AMONG
CRIMSON LEAVES,

STOCKS THAT FILL ALL THE
DARKNESS WITH DELIGHT,

HOAR-FROST UPON THE WEB THE
SPIDER WEAVES.

WHITE-PINIONED BIRDS IN LOFTY,
LONELY FLIGHT



WHEN WRITTEN THOUGHTS BUT WEARY ME OR TEASE ME,
SUCH SWEET UNORDERED NAMES HAVE POWER TO PLEASE ME.

A. STEVENSON NICOL

FAME

The poems of James Whitcomb Riley are usually bright and carolling, but this is sad—sadder, indeed, than the truth requires. The poet suggests that the artist, the sculptor, and the poet only win fame when they can no longer appreciate it, and that they die unrecognised. But that is far from the facts of the case. Unless the artist, sculptor, and poet die very young, the rule is that they gain in their lifetime foretastes of the fame they have deserved. The instances in which this does not occur are more than balanced by those in which greater fame comes to living men than they really deserve, men whose names are forgotten in later ages.

ONCE, in a dream, I saw a man
With haggard face and tangled hair,
And eyes that nursed as wild a care
As gaunt Starvation ever can ;
And in his hand he held a wand
Whose magic touch gave life and thought
Unto a form his fancy wrought,
And robed with colouring so grand,
It seemed the reflex of some child
Of heaven, fair and undefiled—
A face of purity and love—
To woo him into worlds above :
And as I gazed with dazzled eyes,
A gleaming smile lit up his lips
As his bright soul from its eclipse
Went flashing into Paradise.
Then tardy Fame came through the door
And found a picture—nothing more.

And once I saw a man alone,
In abject poverty, with hand
Uplifted o'er a block of stone
That took a shape at his command
And smiled upon him, fair and good—
A perfect work of womanhood,
Save that the eyes might never weep,
Nor weary hands be crossed in sleep,
Nor hair that fell from crown to wrist
Be brushed away, caressed and kissed.
And as in awe I gazed on her,
I saw the sculptor's chisel fall—
I saw him sink, without a moan,
Sink lifeless at the feet of stone,
And lie there like a worshipper.
Fame crossed the threshold of the hall,
And found a statue—that was all.

And once I saw a man who drew
A gloom about him like a cloak,
And wandered aimlessly. The few
Who spoke of him at all, but spoke
Disparagingly of a mind
The Fates had faultily designed :
Too indolent for modern times—
Too fanciful, and full of whims—
For, talking to himself in rhymes,
And scrawling never-heard-of hymns,
The idle life to which he clung
Was worthless as the songs he sung !
I saw him, in my vision, filled
With rapture o'er a spray of bloom
The wind threw in his lonely room ;
And of the sweet perfume it spilled
He drank to drunkenness, and flung
His long hair back, and laughed and sung
And clapped his hands as children do
At fairy tales they listen to,
While from his flying quill there dripped
Such music on his manuscript
That he who listens to the words
May close his eyes and dream the birds
Are twittering on every hand
A language he can understand.
He journeyed on through life unknown,
Without one friend to call his own ;
He tired. No kindly hand to press
The cooling touch of tenderness
Upon his burning brow, nor lift
To his parched lips God's freest gift—
No sympathetic sob or sigh
Of trembling lips—no sorrowing eye
Looked out through tears to see him die.
And Fame her greenest laurels brought
To crown a head that heeded not.

And this is Fame ! A thing, indeed,
That only comes when least the need :
The wisest minds of every age
The book of life from page to page
Have searched in vain ; each lesson conned
Will promise it the page beyond—
Until the last, when dusk of night
Falls over it, and reason's light
Is smothered by that unknown friend
Who signs his *nom de plume*, The End.

BY THE SEA

In May, 1802, Dorothy Wordsworth read to her brother William, the poet, Milton's sonnets, and he was deeply impressed by their majesty and beauty. Two months later they went to France for a holiday, and the poet began his sonnet-writing with a description of London as he saw it when driving in the early morning over Westminster Bridge towards Dover. On reaching Calais he wrote, upon the beach, this lovely sonnet. Thus, in the first two sonnets he ever wrote, Wordsworth rivalled Milton. Who the "dear girl" walking with him was, we do not know. It could hardly be Dorothy, for she was thirty years old, and as deeply thoughtful as her brother, and not the fancy-free child he speaks of.

IT is a beauteous evening, calm and free ;
The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration ; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity.

The gentleness of heaven is on the sea :
Listen ! the mighty being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.

Dear child ! dear girl ! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought
Thy nature is not therefore less divine :

Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year,
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

THE TWO ANGELS

This is a poem of faith, even though the lives of our children be risked. The poet pictures how God sends his angels of Life and Death hither and thither where He wills, and whichever of them visits us comes for the best. The poet's faith led him to open the door to the angel he feared was Death, but it proved to be Life. Nothing can hurt us if we have that deep trust in God.

Two angels, one of Life and one of Death,
Passed o'er our village as the morning broke;
The dawn was on their faces, and beneath
The sombre houses hearsed with plumes of smoke.

Their attitude and aspect were the same,
Alike their features and their robes of white;
But one was crowned with amaranth, as with flame,
And one with asphodels, like flakes of light.

I saw them pause on their celestial way;
Then said I, with deep fear and doubt oppressed,
"Beat not so loud, my heart, lest thou betray
The place where thy beloved are at rest!"

And he who wore the crown of asphodels,
Descending, at my door began to knock,
And my soul sank within me, as in wells
The waters sink before an earthquake's shock.

I recognised the nameless agony,
The terror and the tremor and the pain,
That oft before had filled or haunted me,
And now returned with threefold strength again.

The door I opened to my heavenly guest,
And listened, for I thought I heard God's voice;
And, knowing whatsoe'er He sent was best,
Dared neither to lament nor to rejoice.

Then, with a smile that filled the house with light,
"My errand is not Death, but Life," he said;
And ere I answered, passing out of sight,
On his celestial embassy he sped.

'Twas at thy door, O friend! and not at mine,
The angel with the amaranthine wreath,
Pausing, descended, and with voice divine,
Whispered a word that had a sound like Death.

Then fell upon the house a sudden gloom,
A shadow on those features fair and thin;
And softly, from that hushed and darkened room,
Two angels issued, where but one went in.

All is of God! If He but wave His hand,
The mists collect, the rain falls thick and loud,
Till, with a smile of light on sea and land,
Lo! He looks back from the departing cloud.

Angels of Life and Death alike are His;
Without His leave they pass no threshold o'er;
Who, then, would wish or dare, believing this,
Against His messengers to shut the door.

THE APPLE-TREE

This jolly rhyme should help us to appreciate the familiar things of beauty that might be unobserved because of their familiarity. Who will not admit that the golden-fruited apple-tree, one of the most neighbourly of all trees, merits a cheerful song?

Let them sing of bright red gold,
Let them sing of silver fair;
Sing of all things on the earth,
All things in the air;
All things in the sunny air,
All things in the sea;
And I'll sing a song as rare,
Of the apple-tree.

Learned men have learned books,
Which they ponder day and night;
Easier leaves than theirs I read—
Blossoms pink and white,
Blossom leaves all pink and white,
Wherein I can see
Charactered, as clear as light,
Every apple-tree.

Autumn comes, and our good man,
Soon as harvest toil is o'er,
Speculates on apple crops—
Be they less or more.
I could tell him: less or more
Is well known to me;
I have eyes that see the core
Of the apple-tree.

Winter comes, as winter will,
Bringing dark days, frost, and rime;
But the apple is in vogue
At the Christmas-time.
At the merry Christmas-time
Folks are full of glee;
Then they bring out apples prime,
Of the primest tree;
Then you roast the apple, see,
While they toast the apple-tree,
Singing rhyme in jolly chime
To the brave old apple-tree.

LONGING FOR HOME

One of the most tender of the women-poets of England was Jean Ingelow, who lived from 1820 to 1897, and wrote both stories and verse, but best in verse. Never has the feeling of a mother who has lost both husband and children been expressed with a more musical sadness than in this poem.

A song of a boat:
There was once a boat on a billow,
Lightly she rocked to her port remote,
And the foam was white in her wake like snow,
And her frail mast bowed when the breeze would blow,
And bent like a wand of willow.

I shaded mine eyes one day when a boat
Went curtseying over the billow,
I marked her course till a dancing mote
She faded out on the moonlit foam,
And I stayed behind in the dear loved home;
And my thoughts all day were about the boat,
And my dreams upon the pillow.

I pray you hear my song of a boat,
For it is but short—
My boat, you shall find none fairer afloat,
In river or port.
Long I looked out for the lad she bore,
On the open, desolate sea,
And I think he sailed to the heavenly shore,
For he came not back to me—
Ah me!

A song of a nest:
There was once a nest in a hollow,
Down in the mosses and knot-grass pressed
Soft and warm, and full to the brim,
Vetches leaned over it purple and dim,
With buttercup buds to follow.

I pray you hear my song of a nest,
For it is not long:
You shall never light, in a summer's quest,
The bushes among—
Shall never light on a prouder sitter,
A fairer nestful, nor ever know
A softer sound than their tender twitter,
That wind-like did come and go.

I had a nestful once of my own,
Ah, happy, happy I!
Right dearly I loved them, but when they were grown,
They spread out their wings to fly.
Oh, one after one they flew away,
Far up to the heavenly blue,
To the better country, the upper day,
And—I wish I was going too.

I pray you, what is the nest to me,
My empty nest?
And what is the shore where I stood to see
My boat sail down to the west?
Can I call that home where I anchor yet,
Though my good man has sailed?
Can I call that home where my nest was set,
Now all its hope hath failed?
Nay, but the port where my sailor went,
And the land where my nestlings be—
There is the home where my thoughts are sent,
The only home for me—
Ah me!

THE SCHOLAR

Written by Robert Southey, in his library, among his books, as he was growing old, this touching poem shows the humility of the writer. His name will not perish, but will be preserved because he wrote two or three simple poems like this.

My days among the Dead are passed;
Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
The mighty minds of old:
My never-failing friends are they,
With whom I converse day by day.
With them I take delight in weal,
And seek relief in woe;
And while I understand and feel
How much to them I owe,
My cheeks have often been bedewed
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.
My thoughts are with the Dead; with them
I live in long-past years,
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,
Partake their hopes and fears,
And from their lessons seek and find
Instruction with an humble mind.
My hopes are with the Dead; anon
My place with them will be,
And I with them shall travel on
Through all Futurity;
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
That will not perish in the dust.

SEVERED FRIENDSHIP

It is lines like these, so simple, so touching, nay, even agonising, that make us regret, with a sense of pain, that the poet who wrote them, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, wrote so little.

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny, and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Ronald and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain,
And insult to his heart's best brother;
They parted—ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I wean,
The marks of that which once hath been.

THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND MORE

This simple poem, written by John S. Gibbons, moved deeply the hearts of the American people during their Civil War. President Lincoln, the Father Abraham of the poem, made an appeal for more recruits to make up the losses in the Northern anti-slavery army. At the time these verses truly represented the reluctance of the United States to enter upon a fearful war, but they show too the determined, fervent patriotism of the brave American people.

WE are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more,
From Mississippi's winding stream, and from New England's shore.
We leave our ploughs and workshops, our wives and children dear,
With hearts too full for utterance, with but a silent tear.
We dare not look behind us, but steadfastly before;
We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more!

If you look across the hilltops that meet the northern sky,
Long moving lines of rising dust your vision may descry.
And now the wind an instant tears the cloudy veil aside,
And floats aloft our spangled flag in glory and in pride.
And bayonets in the sunlight gleam, and bands brave music pour;
We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more!

If you look all up our valleys, where the growing harvests shine,
You may see our sturdy farmer boys fast forming into line;
And children from their mothers' knees are pulling at the weeds,
And learning how to reap and sow, against their country's needs.
And farewell groups stand weeping at every cottage door—
We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more!

You have called us, and we're coming, by Richmond's bloody tide,
To lay us down for freedom's sake our brother's bones beside;
Or from foul treason's savage grasp to wrench the murderous blade,
And in the face of foreign foes its fragments to parade.
Six hundred thousand loyal men and true have gone before—
We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more!

THE OPEN WINDOW

A tender example of Longfellow's delight in children. We do not know where the children have gone from the nursery window of the now lonely house, but we may guess from the warmer grasp of his own boy's hand that they had passed beyond this world, and the loving father had a moment's fear for his son. The lindens, twice mentioned, are what we call lime-trees.

THE old house by the lindens
Stood silent in the shade,
And on the gravelled pathway
The light and shadow played.

I saw the nursery windows
Wide open to the air;
But the faces of the children,
They were no longer there.

The large Newfoundland house-dog
Was standing by the door;
He looked for his little playmates,
Who would return no more.

They walked not under the lindens,
They played not in the hall;
But shadow, and silence, and sadness
Were hanging over all.

The birds sang in the branches,
With sweet, familiar tone;
But the voices of the children
Will be heard in dreams alone!

And the boy that walked beside me,
He could not understand
Why closer in mine, ah, closer,
I pressed his warm, soft hand!

THE PRAYER PERFECT

This is a lovely prayer by James Whitcomb Riley, beginning, as is natural, with those who are loved best, but going on to include all who need praying for. A happy heart would spread its blessings over all mankind. The imagery in "a wake of angel-wings" is taken from the widening fan-shaped flow of water behind a moving ship.

DEAR Lord! kind Lord!
Gracious Lord! I pray
Thou wilt look on all I love
Tenderly today.
Weed their hearts of weariness;
Scatter every care
Down a wake of angel-wings
Winnowing the air.

Bring unto the sorrowing
All release from pain;
Let the lips of laughter
Overflow again;
And with all the needy
O divide, I pray,
This vast treasure of content
That is mine today!

MEN OF ENGLAND

Thomas Campbell, who was born in 1777 and died in 1844, is one of the poets buried in Westminster Abbey; and he deserved it, for he wrote lyrics which embody the choicest spirit of the British race, as this noble poem, in love of freedom, bears witness.

MEN of England! who inherit
Rights that cost your sires their blood!
Men whose undegenerate spirit
Has been proved on field and flood;

By the foes ye've fought uncounted,
By the glorious deeds ye've done,
Trophies captured—breaches mounted,
Navies conquer'd—kingdoms won!

Yet, remember, England gathers
Hence but fruitless wreaths of fame
If the freedom of your fathers
Glow not in your hearts the same.

What are monuments of bravery
Where no public virtues bloom?
What avail in lands of slavery,
Trophied temples, arch, and tomb?

Pageants!—Let the world revere us
For our people's rights and laws,
And the breasts of civic heroes
Bared in Freedom's holy cause.

Yours are Hampden's, Russell's glory,
Sidney's matchless shade is yours—
Martyrs in heroic story,
Worth a hundred Agincourts!

We're the sons of sires that baffled
Crown'd and mitred tyranny;
They defied the field and scaffold
For their birthrights—so will we!

SONG

This plaintive song, set to even sadder music, is the best known writing of Allan Ramsay, an Edinburgh wigmaker and bookseller, who, living between 1686 and 1758, became a popular poet. We hear in it the wail of home-loving but poor people, who must send their sons into far-off lands if they are to have a chance of making their way in the world. It has been said that the Scot now possesses the earth, but he has set out to do it in deep sadness.

FAREWELL to Lochaber, farewell to my Jean,
Where heartsome with thee I have mony a day been.
To Lochaber no more, to Lochaber no more;
We'll maybe return to Lochaber no more.

. . . . . .

Though hurricanes rise, and rise every wind,
No tempest can equal the storm in my mind:
Though loudest of thunders on louder waves roar,
That's naething like leaving my love on the shore.

To leave thee behind me my heart is sair pained,
But by ease that's inglorious no fame can be gained;
And beauty and love's the reward of the brave,
And I maun deserve it before I can crave.

Then glory, my Jeany, maun plead my excuse,
Since honour commands me, how can I refuse?
Without it I ne'er can have merit for thee,
And losing thy favour I'd better not be.

I gae then, my lass, to win honour and fame;
And, if I should chance to come glorious hame,
I'll bring a heart to thee with love running o'er,
And then I'll leave thee and Lochaber no more.

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

The pure, sweet smoothness of this song shows with what beauty Lord Byron might have written if he had only been good enough to write at his best. But he was wayward.

SHE walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies,
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meets in her aspect and her eyes,
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which Heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face,
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent:
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent.

THOSE EVENING BELLS

Thomas Moore, the Irish poet, had the gift of expressing tender sentiment as if in tuneful chimes. This song and "The Last Rose of Summer" are examples. He sang his own songs.

THOSE evening bells, those evening bells!
How many a tale their music tells,
Of youth, and home, and that sweet time
When last I heard their soothing chime!

Those joyous hours are passed away,
And many a heart that then was gay
Within the tomb now darkly dwells,
And hears no more those evening bells.

And so 'twill be when I am gone—
That tuneful peal will still ring on;
While other bards shall walk these dells,
And sing your praise, sweet evening bells.

HE CONQUERS WHO ENDURES

The writer of this poem, Charles J. Dunphie, was a magazine poet of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, his writing usually being light and bright. In this example of his more serious style he praises a feature of character that is sometimes regarded as specially British—a determination when beset by difficulty and danger to see the strife right through to the end, and never to give in. Often this is the true secret of great deeds.

HOPELESS the task to baffle care,
Or break through sorrow's thrall!
To shake thy yoke thou may'st not dare;
It would more keenly gall.
Through life's dark maze a sunnier way
This tranquil thought insures—
To know, let Fate do what she may,
He conquers who endures!

Vengeance for any cruel wrong
Bringeth a dark renown;
But fadeless wreaths to him belong
Who calmly lives it down;
Who, scorning every mean redress,
Each recreant art abjures,
Safe in the noble consciousness,
He conquers who endures!

Who quells a nation's wayward will
May lord it on a throne;
But he's a mightier monarch still
Who vanquisheth his own.
No frown of Fortune lays him low,
No treacherous smile allures;
King of himself, through weal or woe,
He conquers who endures!

Mark the lone rock that grandly studs
The melancholy main—
The raving winds, the foaming floods,
Burst over it in vain.
In age majestic as in youth,
It stands unchanged, secure;
Symbol immortal of the truth—
They conquer who endure!

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES

In the whole range of literature there is not a sadder poem than this by the gentle-hearted Charles Lamb. It must not be taken as expressing Lamb's actual experience, for he did not live so long that his friends faded away from his memory. He only imagined that it was so. But it is a true picture sometimes when men and women outlive their generation, and "the names they loved to hear have been carved for many a year on the tomb."

I HAVE had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful schooldays—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a love once, fairest among women;
Clos'd are her doors on me, I must not see her—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man.
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly:
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like, I paced round the haunts of my childhood,
Earth seemed a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother!
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces.

For some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

A SPRING MORNING

Everyone thinks of Thomas Hood as a poet who wrote merry verses to make us laugh or else poems that fill our hearts with sadness; but in these lines he appears in another character, as one who revels in the coming of the spring flowers, and would lead us forth to share his joy. When he says in the last verse that streams may reflect the hues of the flowers on their banks, he is not exaggerating. There are streams in flowery lands, like Tyrol, that shine with the colours of the great beds of wild flowers.

O LADY, leave thy silken thread
And flowery tapestrie:
There's living roses on the bush,
And blossoms on the tree;
Stoop where thou wilt, thy careless hand
Some random bud will meet;
Thou canst not tread, but thou wilt find
The daisy at thy feet.

'Tis like the birthday of the world,
When earth was here in bloom;
The light is made of many dyes,
The air is all perfume;
There's crimson buds, and white, and blue—
The very rainbow showers
Have turned to blossoms where they fell,
And sown the earth with flowers.

There's fairy tulips in the east,
The garden of the sun;
The very streams reflect the hues
And blossom as they run:
While Morn opes like a crimson rose,
Still wet with pearly showers;
Then, lady, leave the silken thread
Thou twinest into flowers.

SONG

Thomas Campbell was drawn to war for his most life-like poems, perhaps because his youth was at a time when the British were desperately at war. This simple song is a characteristic example.

WHEN Napoleon was flying
From the field of Waterloo,
A British soldier dying
To his brother bade adieu.

"And take," he said, "this token
To the maid that owns my faith,
With the words that I have spoken
In affection's latest breath."

Sore mourned the brother's heart
When the youth beside him fell;
But the trumpet warned to part,
And they took a sad farewell.

There was many a friend to lose him
For that gallant soldier sighed;
But the maiden of his bosom
Wept when all their tears were dried.

JINGLES

Here are three little jingles by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the great American citizen who could be merry as well as wise.

BORROWING

SOME of your hurts you have cured,
And the sharpest you still have survived,
But what torments of grief you endured
From evils which never arrived!

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

He who has a thousand friends has not a friend to spare,
And he who has one enemy will meet him everywhere.

LETTERS

Every day brings a ship,
Every ship brings a word;
Well for those who have no fear,
Looking seaward well assured
That the word the vessel brings
Is the word they wish to hear.

ENGLAND'S KING

One of our own poets has called Shakespeare "the kingliest king that ever England bred," and Thomas Bailey Aldrich, the American poet, here describes him as "the King of England's Kings." And, indeed, most of us know the early kings of our country simply as Shakespeare described them. What a fine contrast the poet draws for us between the modesty of the man Shakespeare and the magnificent effect of his immortal writings!

THE folk that lived in Shakespeare's day,
And saw that gentle figure pass
By London Bridge—his frequent way—
They little knew what man he was!

The pointed beard, the courteous mien,
The equal port to high and low,
All this they saw, or might have seen,
But not the light behind the brow!

The doublet's modest grey or brown,
The slender sword-hilt's plain device,
What sign had these for prince or clown?
Few turned, or none, to scan him twice.

Yet 'twas the King of England's Kings!
The rest, with all their pomps and trains,
Are mouldered, half-remembered things—
'Tis he alone that lives and reigns!

THE FLIGHT OF THE ARROW

The mystery of the life of man has been expressed by many of the poets. Whence? Where? Why?—they ask. And we do not know. But we have faith, as this poet has, that God knows. The lines are written by Richard Henry Stoddard, an American poet who published a large collection of verses. He died in 1903.

THE life of man
Is an arrow's flight,
Out of darkness
Into light,
And out of light
Into darkness again;
Perhaps to pleasure,
Perhaps to pain!
There must be Something,
Above, or below;
Somewhere unseen
A mighty Bow,
A Hand that tires not,
A sleepless Eye
That sees the arrows
Fly and fly;
One who knows
Why we live—and die.

ADELGITHA

One of the features of true poetry is that it condenses a story into the fewest words. Here is a whole tale, told by Thomas Campbell, in sixteen lines, with moving feeling, vigour, and completeness.

THE ordeal's fatal trumpet sounded,
And sad, pale Adelgitha came,
When forth a valiant champion bounded,
And slew the slanderer of her fame.

She wept, delivered from her danger;
But when he knelt to claim her glove—
"Seek not," she cried, "O gallant stranger,
For hapless Adelgitha's love.

"For he is in a foreign far land
Whose arms should now have set me free;
And I must wear the willow garland
For him that's dead or false to me."

"Nay! say not that his faith is tainted!"
He raised his vizor—at the sight
She fell into his arms and fainted;
It was indeed her own true knight!

ALONG THE ROAD

These lines, written by Robert Hamilton, in the "Century Magazine," tell a deep truth. Pleasure is but a thin soil, and strong character will not grow from it. The soil of Sorrow is far richer.

I WALKED a mile with Pleasure.
She chatted all the way,
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow,
And ne'er a word said she;
But, oh, the things I learned from her
When Sorrow walked with me!

THE KING OF BEASTS AND A LITTLE CHILD

THE LITTLE GIRL LOST

In the Southern clime,
Where the summer's prime
Never fades away
Lovely Lyca lay

Seven summers old
Lovely Lyca told;
She had wandered long,
Hearing wild birds' song.

"Sweet sleep, come to me
Underneath this tree!
Do father, mother, weep?
Where can Lyca sleep?

"Lost in desert wild
Is your little child!
How can Lyca sleep
If her mother weep?

"If her heart does ache
Then let Lyca wake.
If my mother sleep,
Lyca shall not weep.

"Frowning, frowning night,
O'er this desert bright,
Let thy moon arise
While I close my eyes!"

Sleeping Lyca lay:
While the beasts of prey,
Come from caverns deep,
Viewed the maid asleep.

The kingly lion stood,
And the virgin viewed:
Then he gambolled round,
O'er the hallowed ground.

Leopards, tigers, play
Round her as she lay;
While the lion old
Bowed his mane of gold,

And did her bosom lick;
And upon her neck
From his eyes of flame
Ruby tears there came.

While the lioness
Loosed her slender dress;
And naked they conveyed
To caves the sleeping maid.

THE LITTLE GIRL FOUND

All the night in woe
Lyca's parents go
Over valleys deep
While the deserts weep.

Tired and woe-begone,
Hoarse with making moan,
Arm-in-arm seven days
They traced the desert ways.

Seven nights they sleep
Among the shadows deep,
And dream they see their child
Starved in desert wild.

Pale through pathless ways
The fancied image strays,
Famished, weeping, weak,
With hollow, piteous shriek.

Rising from unrest
The trembling woman pressed
With feet of weary woe:
She could no further go.

In his arms he bore
Her, armed with sorrow sore;
Till before their way
A couching lion lay.

Turning back was vain:
Soon his heavy mane
Bore them to the ground;
Then he stalked around,

Smelling to his prey;
But their fears allay,
When he licks their hands,
And silent by them stands.

They look upon his eyes,
Filled with deep surprise;
And, wondering, behold
A spirit armed in gold.

On his head a crown:
On his shoulders down
Flowed his golden hair!
Gone was all their care.

"Follow me," he said;
"Weep not for the maid;
In my palace deep
Lyca lies asleep."

Then they followéd
Where the vision led,
And saw their sleeping child
Among the tigers wild.

To this day they dwell
In a lonely dell;
Nor fear the wolvish howl,
Nor the lion's growl.

WILLIAM BLAKE

"THEY SAW THEIR SLEEPING CHILD AMONG THE TIGERS WILD"

THE DAISY'S SONG

This was one of the pretty fragments of writing left by the young English poet John Keats. The daisy has been the favourite flower of the poets since the time of Chaucer—of poets and of children, too.

THE sun, with his great eye,
Sees not so much as I;
And the moon, all silver-proud,
Might as well be in a cloud.

And O the spring—the spring!
I lead the life of a king!
Couched in the teeming grass,
I spy each pretty lass.

I look where no one dares,
And I stare where no one stares,
And when the night is nigh
Lambs bleat my lullaby.

THE FLAX FLOWER

When Mary Howitt wrote these verses in praise of the usefulness of the flax flower, people were far less able to manage without the plant than they are now. Then it was necessary in weaving. To-day, through improved machinery, the warp may be made of other material. But the beauty of the homely little flax flower remains as enchanting though its usefulness has decreased.

OH, the little flax flower!
It groweth on the hill,
And, be the breeze awake or 'sleep,
It never standeth still.
It groweth, and it groweth fast;
One day it is a seed,
And then a little grassy blade
Scarce better than a weed.
But then out comes the flax flower
As blue as is the sky;
And "'Tis a dainty little thing,"
We say as we go by.

Ah! 'tis a goodly little thing,
It groweth for the poor,
And many a peasant blesseth it
Beside his cottage door.
He thinketh how those slender stems
That shimmer in the sun
Are rich for him in web and woof,
And shortly shall be spun.
He thinketh how those tender flowers
Of seed will yield him store,
And sees in thought his next year's crop
Blue shining round his door.

Oh, the little flax flower!
The mother then says she,
"Go pull the thyme, the heath, the fern,
But let the flax flower be!
It groweth for the children's sake,
It groweth for our own;
There are flowers enough upon the hill,
But leave the flax alone!

The farmer hath his fields of wheat,
Much cometh to his share;
We have this little plot of flax
That we have tilled with care."

Oh, the goodly flax flower!
It groweth on the hill,
And, be the breeze awake or 'sleep,
It never standeth still.
It seemeth all astir with life
As if it loved to thrive,
As if it had a merry heart
Within its stem alive.
Then fair befall the flax-field,
And may the kindly showers
Give strength unto its shining stem,
Give seed unto its flowers!

THE COMING AND GOING

The suddenness of the spring arrival of the dandelion is cleverly suggested in the first of these two verses; while the second verse tells of the swift ageing of the flowers. The author, Helen Gray Cone, is a writer and teacher living in New York.

UPON a showery night and still,
Without a sound of warning,
A trooper band surprised the hill,
And held it in the morning.
We were not waked by bugle-notes,
No cheer our dreams invaded,
And yet, at dawn, their yellow coats
On the green slopes paraded.

We careless folk the deed forgot;
Till one day, idly walking,
We marked upon the self-same spot
A crowd of veterans talking.
They shook their trembling heads and grey
With pride and noiseless laughter;
When, well-a-day! they blew away,
And ne'er were heard of after!

I KNOW A BANK

Shakespeare was not only the greatest but the sweetest of all writers. When he writes of the country, as in these lines, his words are like the breath of flowers and the song of birds.

I KNOW a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows:
Quite over-canopied with lush woodbine,
With sweet musk roses, and with eglantine.

VIOLETS

A child's fancy accounting for the flowers, but it is more beautiful to realise that all their delicacy comes from the plain, dull earth.

I KNOW, blue modest violets,
Gleaming with dew at morn—
I know the place you come from,
And the way that you are born!

When God cuts holes in heaven—
The holes the stars look through—
He lets the scraps fall down to earth—
The little scraps are you!

GOING TO BED

These little verses, inspired by a child's quaint question, pitying the sun that it should never see the stars, are by Nelson Rich Tyerman, whom many old boys of Bedford Grammar School will long remember as a popular master there. The blue-eyed lad who was sorry for the sun is now a man, and helps to send out the Children's Treasure House into the world.

WATCHING ere bedtime once the star-ranks bright,
Quick-trooping o'er the shadowy eastern hill,
My little blue-eyed lad for joy did thrill
Of such a wonderful and dear delight.
"But why," cried he, "do they only come at night,
When the poor sun's asleep?" And with that ill
Soul-smitten, suddenly the kind eyes fill
With tears—poor sun being robbed of such a sight!

Ah, little one, heaven's stars from earliest ages
Calm ministering angels to tired earth have been;
The loveliest rhymes in holy poets' pages
Haply record what in the stars they've seen;
But sure no thoughts of poet or of sages
Are sweet as those which from the stars *you* glean.

THE GOLDEN CROWN SPARROW OF ALASKA

John Burroughs is an American fruit-grower, who has written about open-air life, and particularly about birds, with such sympathy and skill that Nature-lovers everywhere own him as one of their best observers. Far away north, amid the Alaskan snows, he finds a bird he never knew as a boy, and in these tender verses he gives us a picture of it that brings it, and its surroundings, before us, and helps us to hear its plaintive voice.

OH, minstrel of these borean hills,
Where twilight hours are long,
I would my boyhood's fragrant days
Had known thy plaintive song;

Had known thy vest of ashen grey,
Thy coat of drab and brown,
The bands of jet upon thy head
That clasp thy golden crown.

We heard thee in the cold White Pass,
Where cloud and mountain meet,
Again where Muir's great glacier shone
Far spread beneath our feet.

I bask me now on emerald heights
To catch thy faintest strain,
But cannot tell if in thy lay
Be more of joy or pain.

Far off behold the snow-white peaks
Athwart the sea's blue shade;
Anear there rise green Kadiak hills,
Wherein thy nest is made.

I hear the wild bee's mellow chord,
In airs that swim above;
The lesser hermit tunes his flute
To solitude and love.

But thou, sweet singer of the wild,
I give more heed to thee;
Thy wistful note of fond regret
Strikes deeper chords in me.

Farewell, dear bird! I turn my face
To other skies than thine—
A thousand leagues of land and sea
Between thy home and mine.

OLD MAN'S NURSERY RHYME

As age comes on, the blood grows thin and cold is felt more. Old people, moreover, cannot keep themselves warm, as children do, by moving about swiftly, and so here James Whitcomb Riley, the American poet of child-life, writes longingly about his remembrance of the days when the crisp cold of winter added to the joy of life.

IN the jolly winters
Of the long-ago,
It was not so cold as now—
Oh, no, no!
Then, as I remember,
Snowballs to eat
Were as good as apples now,
And every bit as sweet!

In the jolly winters
Of the dead-and-gone,
Bub was warm as summer,
With his red mitts on,
Just in his little waist-
And-pants all together,
Who ever heard him growl
About cold weather?

In the jolly winters
Of the long-ago,
Was it *half* as cold as now?
Oh, no, no!
Who caught his death o' cold,
Making prints of men,
Flat-backed in snow that now's
Twice as cold again?

In the jolly winters
Of the dead-and-gone,
Startin' out rabbit-huntin'
Early as the dawn,
Who ever froze his fingers,
Ears, heels, or toes,
Or'd 'a' cared if he had?
Nobody knows!

Nights by the kitchen-stove,
Shellin' white and red
Corn in the skillet, and
Sleepin' four abed!
Ah, the jolly winters
Of the long-ago!
We were not as old as now—
Oh, no, no!

CHILDREN

None of the poets was a greater lover of children than Longfellow. In every mood he writes of them, and always bids them welcome. The refreshment of his spirit by their happiness is pictured in these verses with a grateful tenderness unsurpassed; but we can also read through the poem how the children loved the poet.

COME to me, O ye children!
For I hear you at your play,
And the questions that perplexed me
Have vanished quite away.

Ye open the eastern windows,
That look towards the sun,
Where thoughts are singing swallows
And the brooks of morning run.

In your hearts are the birds and the sunshine,
In your thoughts the brooklet's flow,
But in mine is the wind of autumn,
And the first fall of the snow.

Ah! what would the world be to us
If the children were no more?
We should dread the desert behind us
Worse than the dark before.

What the leaves are to the forest,
With light and air for food,
Ere their sweet and tender juices
Have been hardened into wood,

That to the world are children;
Through them it feels the glow
Of a brighter and sunnier climate
Than reaches the trunks below.

Come to me, O ye children!
And whisper in my ear
What the birds and the winds are singing
In your sunny atmosphere.

For what are all our contrivings,
And the wisdom of our books,
When compared with your caresses,
And the gladness of your looks?

Ye are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said;
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A STATE?

The writer of these strong, true lines—Sir William Jones—was the greatest linguist of his day. He knew twenty-eight languages, though he was only in his forty-eighth year when he died, in 1794, a judge in India. Alcæus, whose style is here imitated, was a Greek poet who invented poetical rhythms. The thought in Sir William Jones's ode lies at the foundation of all politics.

WHAT constitutes a state?
Not high-raised battlement or laboured mound,
Thick wall or moated gate;
Not cities proud with spires and turrets crowned;
Not bays and broad-armed ports,
Where, laughing at the storm, rich navies ride;
Not starred and spangled courts,
Where low-browed baseness wafts perfume to pride.
No: men, high-minded men,
With powers as far above dull brutes endued
In forest, brake, or den,
As beasts excel cold rocks and brambles rude;
Men who their duties know,
But know their rights, and, knowing, dare maintain,
Prevent the long-aimed blow,
And crush the tyrant while they rend the chain:
These constitute a state.

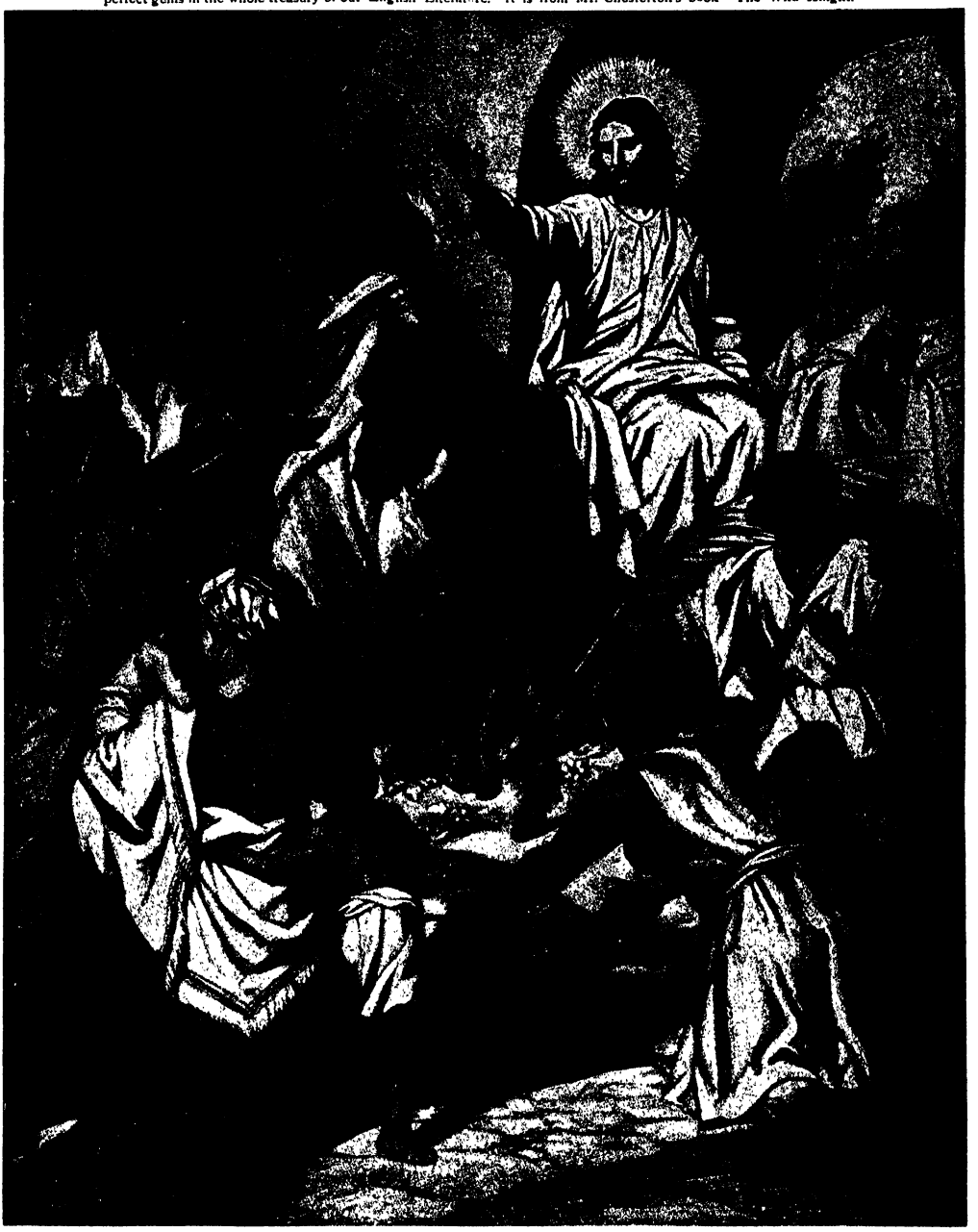
ENGLAND

The writer of this pleasant general description of England, sketched not from one spot, but ranging over the country—hill and plain, town and village—was Henry Alford, Dean of Canterbury, a fine-spirited clergyman, who when young was a friend of Tennyson, at Cambridge. He was born in 1810, and died in 1871.

WE have been dwellers in a lovely land;
A land of lavish lights and floating shades,
And broad green flats, bordered by woody capes
That lessen ever as they stretch away
Into the distant blue. A land of hills;
Cloud-gathering ranges, on whose ancient breast
The morning mists repose; each autumn tide
Deep purple with the heath-bloom; from whose brow
We might behold the crimson sun go down
Behind the barrier of the western sea;
A land of beautiful and stately fanes,
Aerial temples most magnificent,
Rising with clusters of rich pinnacles
And fretted battlements; a land of towers,
Where sleeps the music of deep-voiced bells,
Save when in holyday time the joyous air
Ebbs to the welling sound; and Sabbath morn,
When from a choir of hill-side villages
The peaceful invitation churchward chimes.
So were our souls brought up to love this earth,
And feed on natural beauty; and the light
Of our own sunsets, and the mountains blue
That girt around our home, were very parts
Of our young being; linked with all we knew;
Centres of interest for undying thoughts,
And themes of mindful converse. Happy they
Who in the fresh and dawning time of youth
Have dwelt in such a land, turning their souls
To the deep melodies of Nature's laws,
Heard in the after-time of riper thought,
Reflective on past seasons of delight.

THE DONKEY'S HOUR—By G. K. CHESTERTON

It is a great pleasure to give to the children of the world this lovely litt'e poem by G. K. Chesterton one of the most perfect gems in the whole treasury of our English Literature. It is from Mr. Chesterton's book "The Wild Knight."



WHEN fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood,
Then surely I was born.

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will,
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools, for I also had my hour,
One far fierce hour and sweet,
There was a shout about my ears
And palms before my feet.

ADDRESS TO AN EGYPTIAN MUMMY

Quite a number of the world's best-known poems have been written by authors who only wrote one or two fine pieces. This poem is an instance. Its author, Horace Smith (1779—1849), was a very active writer, but he produced nothing else that is as impressive as these fine resounding verses. An Italian excavator named Belzoni had brought mummies from Egypt to show in a museum of antiquities, and here we get the inquiring thoughts of Horace Smith as he looked at one of the embalmed figures. The poem rises at its close to a stately eloquence. A feature of it is the skill with which romantic, high-sounding names are woven into the lines, an art in which great poets of olden times excelled.

AND thou has walked about (how strange a story!)
In Thebes's street three thousand years ago;
When the Memnonium was in all its glory,
And time had not begun to overthrow
Those temples, palaces, and piles stupendous,
Of which the very ruins are tremendous.

Speak! for thou long enough hast acted dummy—
Thou hast a tongue; come, let us hear its tune;
Thou'rt standing on thy legs above ground, Mummy!
Revisiting the glimpses of the moon,
Not like thin ghosts or disembodied creatures,
But with thy bones and flesh and limbs and features.

Tell us, for doubtless thou canst recollect,
To whom should we assign the Sphinx's fame?
Was Cheops or Cephrenes architect
Of either pyramid that bears his name?
Is Pompey's Pillar really a misnomer?
Had Thebes a hundred gates, as sung by Homer?

Perhaps thou wert a mason, and forbidden
By oath to tell the secrets of thy trade;
Then say what secret melody was hidden
In Memnon's statue which at sunrise played?
Perhaps thou wert a priest—if so my struggles
Are vain, for priestcraft never owns its juggles.

Perchance that very hand, now pinioned flat,
Has hob-a-nobbed with Pharaoh, glass to glass:
Or dropped a halfpenny in Homer's hat,
Or doffed thine own to let Queen Dido pass,
Or held, by Solomon's own invitation,
A torch at the great temple's dedication.

I need not ask thee if that hand, when armed,
Has any Roman soldier mauled or knuckled,
For thou wert dead and buried and embalmed,
Ere Romulus and Remus had been suckled;
Antiquity appears to have begun
Long after thy primeval race was run.

Thou couldst develop, if that withered tongue
Might tell us what those sightless orbs have seen,
How the world looked when it was fresh and young,
And the great Deluge still had left it green;
Or was it then so old that History's pages
Contained no record of its early ages?

Still, silent, incommunicative elf!
Art sworn to secrecy? Then keep thy vows;
But prithee tell us something of thyself—
Reveal the secrets of thy prison-house!
Since in the world of spirits thou hast slumbered,
What hast thou seen, what strange adventures numbered?

Since first thy form was in this box extended,
We have, above ground, seen some strange mutations;
The Roman Empire has begun and ended,
New worlds have risen, we have lost old nations,
And countless kings have into dust been humbled,
While not a fragment of thy flesh has crumbled.

Didst thou not hear the pother o'er thy head,
When the great Persian conqueror, Cambyses,
Marched armies o'er thy tomb with thundering tread,
O'erthrew Osiris, Orus, Apis, Isis,
And shook the Pyramids with fear and wonder,
When the gigantic Memnon fell asunder?

If the tomb's secrets may not be confessed,
The nature of thy private life unfold;
A heart has throbbed beneath that leathern breast,
And tears adown that dusty cheek have rolled.
Have children climbed those knees, and kissed that face?
What was thy name and station, age and race?

Statue of flesh—immortal of the dead!
Imperishable type of evanescence!
Posthumous man, who quitt'st thy narrow bed,
And standest undecayed within our presence,
Thou wilt hear nothing till the Judgment-morning,
When the great Trump shall thrill thee with its warning!

Why should this worthless tegument endure,
If its undying guest be lost for ever?
Oh, let us keep the *soul* embalmed and pure
In living virtue; that, when both must sever,
Although corruption may our frame consume,
The immortal spirit in the skies may bloom!

THE FLAG GOES BY

The writer of this stirring poem, Henry Holcomb Bennett, is an American of the Western States, whose favourite theme is the Army. Men of each free nation can apply these words to their own flag; but more than all should British people be thrilled by the thought of the long-won and wide-won honour of the British ensign—the first flag of the free that ever floated on the wind.

HATS off!
Along the street there comes
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums,
A flash of colour beneath the sky:
Hats off!
The flag is passing by!

Blue and crimson and white it shines
Over the steel-tipped, ordered lines.
Hats off!
The colours before us fly;
But more than the flag is passing by

Sea-fights and land-fights, grim and great,
Fought to make and to save the State:
Weary marches and sinking ships;
Cheers of victory on dying lips;

Days of plenty and years of peace;
March of a strong land's swift increase;
Equal justice, right, and law,
Stately honour and reverend awe.

Sign of a nation, great and strong
Toward her people from foreign wrong:
Pride and glory and honour—all
Live in the colours to stand or fall.

Hats off!
Along the street there comes
A blare of bugles, a ruffle of drums;
And loyal hearts are beating high:
Hats off!
The flag is passing by!

OLD IRONSIDES

The romance of an old warship sets every heart vibrating. It is so when we walk the decks of Nelson's flagship, the Victory, or look at Turner's painting, "The Fighting Temeraire Towed to Her Last Resting Place," or rejoice as we read in Tennyson's poem how, after her heroic fight against fifty-three Spanish ships, "Our little Revenge herself went down by the island crags, to be lost evermore in the Main." In these verses Oliver Wendell Holmes describes his feelings when an old warship was dismantled.

AY, tear her tattered ensign down!
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky;
Beneath it rung the battle shout,
And burst the cannon's roar;
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,
And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor's tread,
Or know the conquered knee;
The harpies of the shore shall pluck
The eagle of the sea!

O, better that her shattered hulk,
Should sink beneath the wave;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
And there should be her grave;
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale!

TO THE ADVENTUROUS

This sonnet was written by John Keats when he first read Chapman's translation of Homer's poems. It is perhaps best remembered—though all of it is beautiful—by the striking tableau with which it closes. The "realms of gold" held in fealty to Apollo, the god of poetry, are the books of verse that Keats had read before he read Homer. But Homer seemed so illimitably more spacious than the other poets that the poet likens his feeling on reading him to that of an astronomer discovering a new planet, or to the Spanish adventurers struck dumb with astonishment when, like Drake, they first saw the vast Pacific Ocean from the Isthmus of Panama.

MUCH have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise,
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

DELIGHT IN GOD ONLY

Francis Quarles, who was born in 1592 and died in 1644, was in his day a very popular religious poet; but his thoughts were often so far-fetched and formal that they have not interested people of later times. This poem is one of the most easily understood of Quarles's writings, but its thought is over-stated, as when he makes natural friendship seem treason and mirth seem madness.

I LOVE (and have some cause to love) the earth;
She is my Maker's creature, therefore good;
She is my mother, for she gave me birth;
She is my tender nurse—she gives me food;
But what's a creature, Lord, compared with Thee?
Or what's my mother or my nurse to me?

I love the air: her dainty sweets refresh
My drooping soul, and to new sweets invite me;
Her shrill-mouthed quire sustains me with their flesh,
And with their polyphonian notes delight me;
But what's the air, or all the sweets that she
Can bless my soul withal, compared to thee?

I love the sea: she is my fellow-creature,
My careful purveyor; she provides me store;
She walls me round; she makes my diet greater;
She wafts my treasure from a foreign shore;
But, Lord of oceans, when compared with Thee,
What is the ocean or her wealth to me?

. . . . . .

Without Thy presence earth gives no refection;
Without Thy presence sea affords no treasure;
Without Thy presence air's a rank infection,
Without Thy presence heaven itself no pleasure;
If not possessed, if not enjoyed in Thee,
What's earth, or sea, or air, or heaven to me?

. . . . . .

Without Thy presence wealth is bags of cares;
Wisdom but folly; joy disquiet—sadness;
Friendship is treason and delights are snares;
Pleasures but pain and mirth but pleasing madness;
Without Thee, Lord, things be not what they be,
Nor have they being when compared with Thee.

In having all things and not Thee, what have I?
Not having Thee, what have my labours got?
Let me enjoy but Thee, what further crave I?
And having Thee alone, what have I not?
I wish nor sea nor land, nor would I be
Possessed of heaven, heaven unpossessed of Thee.

THE BAREFOOT BOY

In these vividly descriptive lines, John Greenleaf Whittier, the Quaker poet of America, tells of his own free boyhood; and the spirit of the open-air life of the country has never been more happily put into words. English boys will not know some of the living things mentioned; as, for example, the wood-chuck, which is not a bird, but a marmot. The American oriole is a black and orange bird. The Hesperides were fabled gardens, where golden apples grew; and one of the labours of the Greek Hercules was to get some of these apples, which were guarded by a dragon.

BLESSINGS on the little man,
Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan!
With thy turned-up pantaloons,
And thy merry whistled tunes;
With thy red lip, redder still
Kissed by strawberries on the hill;
With the sunshine on thy face,
Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace;
From my heart I give thee joy—
I was once a barefoot boy!
Let the million-dollared ride!
Barefoot, trudging at his side,
Thou hast more than he can buy
In the reach of ear and eye—
Outward sunshine, inward joy;
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy!

O for boyhood's painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day,
Health that mocks the doctor's rules,
Knowledge never learned of schools,
Of the wild bee's morning chase,
Of the wildflower's time and place,
Flight of fowl and habitude
Of the tenants of the wood;
How the tortoise bears his shell,
How the woodchuck digs his cell,
And the ground-mole sinks his well;
How the robin feeds her young,
How the oriole's nest is hung;
Where the whitest lilies blow,
Where the freshest berries grow,
Where the groundnut trails its vine,
Where the wood-grape's clusters shine;
Of the black wasp's cunning way,
Mason of his walls of clay,
And the architectural plans
Of grey hornet artisans!—
For, eschewing books and tasks,
Nature answers all he asks;
Hand in hand with her he walks,
Face to face with her he talks,
Part and parcel of her joy—
Blessings on the barefoot boy!

O for boyhood's time of June,
Crowding years in one brief moon,
When all things I heard or saw,
Me, their master, waited for.
I was rich in flowers and trees,
Humming-birds and honey-bees;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade;
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone;
Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night,
Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall;
Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond,
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,
Mine, on bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides!
Still as my horizon grew,
Larger grew my riches too,
All the world I saw or knew
Seemed a complex Chinese toy,
Fashioned for a barefoot boy!

O for festal dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread—
Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,
On the door-stone, grey and rude!
O'er me, like a regal tent,
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,
Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,
Looped in many a wind-swung fold;
While for music came the play
Of the pied frogs' orchestra;
And, to light the noisy choir,
Lit the fly his lamp of fire.
I was monarch: pomp and joy
Waited on the barefoot boy!

Cheerily, then, my little man,
Live and laugh, as boyhood can!
Though the flinty slopes be hard,
Stubble-spread the new-mown sward,
Every morn shall lead thee through
Fresh baptisms of the dew;
Every evening from thy feet
Shall the cool wind kiss the heat:
All too soon these feet must hide
In the prison cells of pride,
Lose the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work be shod,
Made to tread the mills of toil,
Up and down in ceaseless moil;
Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground;
Happy if they sink not in
Quick and treacherous sands of sin.
Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy!

ADDRESS TO THE NIGHTINGALE

This Ode was thought for generations to be Shakespeare's, because it was published in a volume bearing his initials. Now we know it was written by a young admirer of Shakespeare, Richard Barnfield, who evidently was closely associated with the poet he imitated. Barnfield, who was born in 1574 and died in 1627, gave up writing while still a young man, and lived as a country gentleman. Notice his imitation in words of part of the nightingale's song. All the poets have heard sadness in that song.

As it fell upon a day
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade
Which a grove of myrtles made,
Beasts did leap, and birds did sing,
Trees did grow, and plants did spring;
Everything did banish moan,
Save the nightingale alone.
She, poor bird, as all forlorn,
Leaned her breast up against a thorn;
And there sung the dolefullest ditty,
That to hear it was great pity.
Fie, fie, fie, now would she cry;
Teru, teru, by and by;
That, to hear her so complain,
Scarce I could from tears refrain;
For her griefs, so lively shown,
Made me think upon mine own.
Ah! (thought I) thou mourn'st in vain;
None takes pity on thy pain:
All thy fellow-birds do sing,
Careless of thy sorrowing!
Whilst as fickle Fortune smiled,
Thou and I were both beguiled.
Every one that flatters thee
Is no friend in misery.
Words are easy, like the wind;
Faithful friends are hard to find.
Every man will be thy friend
Whilst thou hast wherewith to spend:
But, if store of crowns be scant,
No man will supply thy want.

. . . .

He that is thy friend indeed,
He will help thee in thy need;
If thou sorrow he will weep,
If thou wake he cannot sleep:
Thus, of every grief in heart
He with thee doth bear a part.
These are certain signs to know
Faithful friend from flattering foe.

THE SPHINX

The sphinx is a mysterious huge stone statue in the Egyptian desert, with an unreadable look on its face that has puzzled observers for thousands of years. Here Mr. James Whitcomb Riley makes a joke of it all by the punning phrase "cut out."

I KNOW all about the Sphinx,
I know even what she thinks,
Staring with her stony eyes
Up for ever at the skies.
For last night I dreamed that she
Told me all the mystery:
Why for æons mute she sat—
She was just cut out for that!

KATHLEEN

This delightful story, in ballad form, of the cruel young mother-in-law, the sweet girl patient under wrong, and her lover, the handsome page, is from the writings of John Greenleaf Whittier, and shows how romance can live in the heart even of a Quaker poet. The kern were the men-servants.

O NORAH, lay your basket down,
And rest your weary hand,
And come and hear me sing a song
Of our old Ireland.

There was a lord of Galaway,
A mighty lord was he;
And he did wed a second wife,
A maid of low degree.

But he was old, and she was young,
And so, in evil spite,
She baked the black bread for his kin,
And fed her own with white.

She whipped the maids and starved the kern,
And drove away the poor;
"Ah, woe is me!" the old lord said,
"I rue my bargain sore!"

This lord he had a daughter fair,
Beloved of old and young,
And nightly round the shealing-fires
Of her the gleeman sung.

"As sweet and good is young Kathleen
As Eve before her fall";
So sang the harper at the fair,
So harped he in the hall.

"Oh, come to me, my daughter dear!
Come sit upon my knee,
For looking in your face, Kathleen,
Your mother's own I see!"

He smoothed and smoothed her hair away,
He kissed her forehead fair;
"It is my darling Mary's brow,
It is my darling's hair!"

Oh, then spake up the angry dame,
"Get up! get up!" quoth she;
"I'll sell ye over Ireland,
I'll sell ye o'er the sea!"

She clipped her glossy hair away,
That none her rank might know,
She took away her gown of silk,
And gave her one of tow,

And sent her down to Limerick town,
And to a seaman sold
This daughter of an Irish lord
For ten good pounds in gold.

The lord he smote upon his breast,
And tore his beard so grey;
But he was old, and she was young,
And so she had her way.

Sure that same night the Banshee howled
To fright the evil dame,
And fairy folks, who loved Kathleen,
With funeral torches came.

She watched them glancing through the trees,
And glimmering down the hill;
They crept before the dead-vault door,
And there they all stood still!

"Get up, old man! the wake-lights shine!"
"Ye murthering witch!" quoth he;
"So I'm rid of your tongue, I little care
If they shine for you or me.

"Oh, whoso brings my daughter back,
My gold and land shall have!"
Oh, then spake up his handsome page,
"No gold nor land I crave!

"But give to me your daughter dear,
Give sweet Kathleen to me;
Be she on sea, or be she on land,
I'll bring her back to thee."

"My daughter is a lady born,
And you of low degree,
But she shall be your bride the day
You bring her back to me."

He sailed east, he sailed west,
And far and long sailed he,
Until he came to Boston town,
Across the great salt sea.

"Oh, have ye seen the young Kathleen,
The flower of Ireland?
Ye'll know her by her eyes so blue,
And by her snow-white hand!"

Out spake an ancient man, "I know
The maiden whom ye mean;
I bought her of a Limerick man,
And she is called Kathleen.

"No skill hath she in household work,
Her hands are soft and white,
Yet well by loving looks and ways
She doth her cost requite."

So up they walked through Boston town,
And met a maiden fair,
A little basket on her arm
So snowy-white and bare.

"Come hither, child, and say hast thou
This young man ever seen?"
They wept within each other's arms,
The page and young Kathleen.

"Oh, give to me this darling child,
And take my purse of gold!"
"Nay, not by me," her master said,
"Shall sweet Kathleen be sold.

"We loved her in the place of one
The Lord hath early ta'en;
But, since her heart's in Ireland,
We give her back again!"

Oh, for that same the saints in heaven
For his poor soul shall pray,
And Mary Mother wash with tears
His heresies away.

Sure now they dwell in Ireland,
As you go up Claremore
Ye'll see their castle looking down
The pleasant Galway shore.

And the old lord's wife is dead and gone,
And a happy man is he,
For he sits beside his own Kathleen,
With her darling on his knee.

THE EQUALITY OF THE GRAVE

This solemn dirge, which is said to have made even Oliver Cromwell shudder, appeared as a song in a masque, written in 1659. James Shirley, the author, born in 1596, was the last of the playwriters who preserved the great spirit of the age of Elizabeth. He died in 1666. The stately power with which the unreality of earthly greatness is exposed gives the poem a lasting place in literature. It was a favourite poem of Charles the Second.

THE glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings:
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill;
But their strong nerves at last must yield;
They tame but one another still:
Early or late,
They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow;
Then boast no more your mighty deeds;
Upon Death's purple altar now
See where the victor-victim bleeds:
Your hands must come
To the cold tomb;
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.

IN SCHOOLDAYS

The boy who was taken down in his class in spelling by the little maiden who loved him, but was grieved that she had passed above him, was John Greenleaf Whittier, the poet who wrote this account of it. The kind heart of that nameless schoolgirl has made her known, through this poem, to people in every part of the world long after both she and the boy she loved have died. Her loving unselfishness, once recorded, becomes a bright example which time cannot make dim.

STILL sits the school-house by the road,
A ragged beggar sunning;
Around it still the sumachs grow,
And blackberry vines are running.

Within, the master's desk is seen,
Deep scarred by raps official;
The warping floor, the battered seats,
The jack-knife's carved initial;

The charcoal frescoes on its wall;
Its door's worn sill, betraying
The feet that, creeping slow to school,
Went storming out to playing!

Long years ago a winter sun
Shone over it at setting;
Lit up its western window-panes,
And low eaves' icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls,
And brown eyes full of grieving,
Of one who still her steps delayed
When all the school were leaving.

For near her stood the little boy
Her childish favour singled;
His cap pulled low upon a face
Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow
To right and left, he lingered—
As restlessly her tiny hands
The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes; he felt
The soft hand's light caressing,
And heard the tremble of her voice,
As if a fault confessing.

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word:
I hate to go above you,
Because"—the brown eyes lower fell—
"Because, you see, I love you!"

Still memory to a grey-haired man
That sweet child-face is showing.
Dear girl! the grasses on her grave
Have forty years been growing!

He lives to learn, in life's hard school,
How few who pass above him
Lament their triumph and his loss,
Like her—because they love him.

GOOD-NIGHT

George Gascoigne, who gave this good advice respecting self-examination each night on the actions of that day, was a very busy writer who died when Shakespeare was a lad of thirteen. Gascoigne made many experiments in writing before the English tongue had become adaptable for the uses to which he put it. The spelling is in the old-fashioned style.

WHEN thou hast spent the lingering day
in pleasure and delight,
Or, after toyle and wearie waye, dost seeke
to rest at nighte,
Unto thy paynes or pleasures past adde this
one labour yet—
Ere sleepe close up thyne eye too fast, do not
thy God forget,
But searche within thy secret thoughts
what deeds did thee befal
And if thou find amisse in aught, to God
for mercy call.
Yea, though thou find nothing amisse which
thou canst call to mind,
Yet evermore remember this—there is the
more behind,
And thinke how well so ever it be that thou
hast spent the daye
It came of God, and not of thee, so to direct
thy waye.

THE FIRST OF AUGUST, 1834

The writer of this vigorous commemoration of the freeing of her slaves by England was the seventh Earl of Carlisle, a liberal-minded nobleman who for thirty years took, in many ways, an active part in the government of the country. He was born in 1802 and died in 1864. The poem commends itself by a hearty love of freedom, but its slightly formal character gives it somewhat of the appearance of having been composed as a dutiful task.

PROUDLY on Cressy's tented wold
The Lion-flag of England flew;
As proudly gleamed its crimson fold
O'er the dim heights of Waterloo:
But other lyres shall greet the brave;
Sing now that we have freed the slave.

The ocean plain, where Nelson bled,
Fair commerce plies with peaceful oar,
Duteous o'er Britain's clime to shed
The gathered spoil of every shore;
Today across the Atlantic sea
Shout—shout ye, that the slave is free!

And eloquence in rushing streams
Has flowed our halls and courts along,
Or kindled 'mid yet loftier dreams
The glowing bursts of glorious song:
Let both their noblest burthen pour,
To tell that slavery is no more.

Bright Science through each field of space
Has urged her mist-dispelling Car,
Coy Nature's hidden reign to trace,
To weigh each wind, and count each star;
Yet stay, thou proud Philosophy,
First stoop and bid Mankind be Free.

And Freedom has been long our own,
With all her soft and generous train,
To gild the lustre of the throne,
And guard the labour of the plain:
Ye heirs of ancient Runneymede!
Your slaves—oh could it be?—are freed.

Ah! for the tale the slave could speak,
Ah! for the shame of Britain's sway,
On Afric sands the maddened shriek,
'Neath Indian suns the burning day:
Ye sounds of guilt—ye sights of gore—
Away! for slavery is no more.

'Mid the great haunts of Force and Strife,
The Ministers of Peace shall stand,
And pour the willing words of life
Around a parched and thirsty land;
While, spread beneath the tamarind tree,
Rise "happy homes and altars free."

Ye Isles, that court the tropic rays,
Clustered on ocean's sapphire breast,
Ye feathery bowers, ye fairy bays,
In more than fable now—"the Blest":
Waft on each gale your choral strain,
Till every land has rent the chain.

Oh! England, empire's home and head,
First in each art of peace and power,
Mighty the billowy crest to tread,
Mighty to rule the battle hour—
But mightiest to relieve and save,
Rejoice, that thou hast Freed the Slave!

NIGHT

These examples of love-making by night, taken from old romance, are told each other by Shylock's daughter Jessica and her lover, Lorenzo, in Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice." Lorenzo breaks into the exclamation "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!" and goes on to speak words as lovely as soft music under the starry sky in the clear Italian landscape.

THE moon shines bright: in such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
And they did make no noise—in such a night,
Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls,
And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night.

. . . .

In such a night,
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild sea-banks, and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.

In such a night,
Medea gathered the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.

In such a night,
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice,
As far as Belmont.

In such a night,
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well;
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And ne'er a true one.

In such a night,
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

. . . . . .

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica: look, how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

THE EVE OF WATERLOO

The night before the beginning of the battle which ended at Waterloo in the final overthrow of the great Napoleon a ball was given at Brussels, where the English army was gathering. The object was partly to quiet the fears of the people, who dreaded, but expected, the coming of the French. Wellington ordered his officers to leave quietly at the close of the ball, and join their regiments. But while the dancing still went on the sounds of the opening battle at Quatre Bras reached the ball-room, as told in this breathlessly vivid description by Lord Byron in his poem "Childe Harold." Wellington and Napoleon, the greatest generals of the age, had never met in battle before, and, riding over the battlefield after Napoleon's historic defeat, Wellington said, again and again, "Thank God I have met him!"

THERE was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her beauty and her chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men.
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell.
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

Did ye not hear it? No; 'twas but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street.
On with the dance! Let joy be unconfined!
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet!
But hark! that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! arm! it is—it is the cannon's opening roar!

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and trembling of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which, but an hour ago,
Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness.
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated. Who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise?

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering with white lips, "The foe! They come! They come!"

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with Nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave—alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which, now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe,
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay;
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms—the day,
Battle's magnificently stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which, when rent,
The earth is covered thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
Rider, and horse—friend, foe—in one red burial blent!

CONTENT

These verses are the wisest left us in the works of Robert Greene, who was born about four years before Shakespeare. He was one of the University wits who were displeased by the country youth Shakespeare writing plays. Greene did not practise the quietness and contentment he praised, but lived wildly and died young.

SWEET are the thoughts that savour of content;
The quiet mind is richer than a crown.
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent;
The poor estate scorns Fortune's angry frown.
Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss,
Beggars enjoy when princes oft do miss.
The lonely house that harbours quiet rest,
The cottage that affords no pride nor care,
The mean that 'grees with country music best,
The sweet consort of mirth and modest fare.
Obscured life sets down a type of bliss;
A mind content both crown and kingdom is.

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?

A few years ago some foolish person attracted attention by the silliest question anyone could ask: Is life worth living? The answer given below is an example of the verse of the last Poet Laureate, Mr. Alfred Austin. He takes us the round of the seasons, showing the successive forms of Nature's attractiveness, then passes into the realms of human sympathy and thought, and, last, appeals, at a much lower level, to patriotism—"the flash of English steel"—to prove the richness of the rewards of life.

Is life worth living? Yes, so long
As Spring revives the year,
And hails us with the cuckoo's song,
To show that she is here;
So long as May of April takes
In smiles and tears farewell,
And windflowers dapple all the brakes,
And primroses the dell;
While children in the woodlands yet
Adorn their little laps
With ladysmock and violet,
And daisy-chain their caps;
While over orchard daffodils
Cloud shadows float and fleet,
And ousel pipes and laverock trills,
And young lambs buck and bleat;
So long as that which bursts the bud
And swells and tunes the rill
Makes springtime in the maiden's blood,
Life is worth living still.

Life not worth living! Come with me,
Now that, through vanishing veil,
Shimmers the dew on lawn and lea,
And milk foams in the pail;
Now that June's sweltering sunlight bathes
With sweat the striplings lithe,
As fall the long, straight, scented swathes
Over the crescent scythe;
Now that the throstle never stops
His self-sufficing strain,
And woodbine-trails festoon the copse,
And eglantine the lane;
Now rustic labour seems as sweet
As leisure, and blithe herds
Wend homeward with unweary feet,
Carolling like the birds;
Now all, except the lover's vow
And nightingale, is still;
Here, in the twilight hour, allow,
Life is worth living still.

When Summer, lingering half forlorn,
On Autumn loves to lean,
And fields of slowly yellowing corn
Are girt by woods still green;
When hazel-nuts wax brown and plump,
And apples rosy red,
And the owlet hoots from hollow stump,
And the dormouse makes its bed;
When crammed are all the granary floors
And the Hunter's moon is bright,
And life again is sweet indoors,
And logs again alight;
Ay, even when the houseless wind
Waileth through cleft and chink,
And in the twilight maids grow kind,
And jugs are filled and clink;
When children clasp their hands, and pray,
"Be done Thy heavenly will!"
Who doth not lift his voice, and say,
"Life is worth living still"?

Is life worth living? Yes, so long
As there is wrong to right,
Wail of the weak against the strong,
Or tyranny to fight;
Long as there lingers gloom to chase,
Or streaming tear to dry,
One kindred woe, one sorrowing face
That smiles as we draw nigh;
Long as at tale of anguish swells
The heart, and lids grow wet,
And at the sound of Christmas bells
We pardon and forget;
So long as Faith with Freedom reigns,
And loyal Hope survives,
And gracious Charity remains
To leaven lowly lives;
While there is one untrodden tract
For Intellect or Will,
And men are free to think and act,
Life is worth living still.

Not care to live while English homes
Nestle in English trees,
And England's Trident-Sceptre roams
Her territorial seas!
Not live while English songs are sung
Wherever blows the wind,
And England's laws and England's tongue
Enfranchise half mankind!
So long as in Pacific main
Or on Atlantic strand,
Our kin transmit the parent strain,
And love the motherland;
So long as flashes English steel,
And English trumpets shrill,
He is dead already who doth not feel
Life is worth living still.

SHE IS NOT FAIR TO OUTWARD VIEW

These dainty lines, just like an echo of the sweetest songs of Elizabethan writers, are by Hartley Coleridge, the gentle and weak son of the greater poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

She is not fair to outward view
As many maidens be;
Her loveliness I never knew
Until she smiled on me.
Oh, then I saw her eye was bright,
A well of love, a spring of light.

But now her looks are coy and cold,
To mine they ne'er reply,
And yet I cease not to behold
The love-light in her eye;
Her very frowns are fairer far
Than smiles of other maidens are.

THE RIDE ON THE WILD HORSE—BY LORD BYRON

BRING forth the horse!
The horse was brought:
In truth he was a noble steed,
A Tartar of the Ukraine breed,
Who looked as though the speed of thought
Were in his limbs; but he was wild,
Wild as the wild deer, and untaught,
With spur and bridle undefiled.
'Twas but a day he had been caught;
And snorting, with erected mane,
And struggling fiercely, but in vain,
In the full foam of wrath and dread
To me the desert-born was led.
They *bound* me on, that menial throng,
Upon his back, with many a thong;
They loosed him, with a sudden lash:
Away! away! and on we dash!
Torrents less rapid and less rash!

Away, away, my steed and I,
Upon the pinions of the wind!
All human dwellings left behind,
We sped, like meteors through the sky.
The boughs gave way, and did not tear
My limbs; and I found strength to bear
My wounds, already scarred with cold—
My bonds forbade to loose my hold.
We rustled through the leaves like wind,
Left shrubs, and trees, and wolves behind!

By night I heard them at my back;
The troop came hard upon our track,
With their long gallop, which can tire
The hound's deep hate, and hunter's fire;
Where'er we flew they followed on,
Nor left us with the morning sun.
Oh, how I wished for spear or sword,
At least to die amidst the horde,
And perish, if it must be so,
At bay, destroying many a foe!
My heart turned sick, my brain grew sore,
And throbbed a while, then beat no more;
The skies spun like a mighty wheel;
I saw the trees like drunkards reel;
And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,
Which saw no farther: he who dies
Can die no more than then I died,
O'er-tortured by that ghastly ride.

But see! from out the forest prance
A trampling troop!—I see them come!
In one vast squadron they advance!
I strove to cry—my lips were dumb.
The sight unnerved my courser's feet—
A moment staggering, feebly fleet,
A moment with a faint, low neigh
He answered, and then fell!
With gasps and glazing eyes he lay
And reeking limbs immovable:
His first and last career is done.

On came the troop!—
They saw him stoop,
They saw me strangely bound along
His back with many a crimsoned thong;
They stop—they start—they sniff the air,
Gallop a moment here and there,
Approach, retire, wheel round and round,
Then plunging back with sudden bound;
They snort—they foam—neigh—swerve aside,
And backward to the forest fly,
By instinct, from a human eye.

They left me there
To my despair,
Linked to the dead and stiffening wretch,
Whose lifeless limbs beneath me stretch—
Relieved from that unwonted weight,
From whence I could not extricate
Nor him nor me; and there we lay
The dying on the dead.

I know no more—my latest dream
Is something of a lovely star.
I woke—where was I?—Do I see
A human face look down on me?
And doth a roof above me close?
Do these limbs on a couch repose?
A slender girl, long-haired and tall,
Sate watching by the cottage wall.
And then her hand on mine she laid,
And smoothed the pillow for my head,
And stole along on tip-toe tread . . .
She came with mother and with sire—
What need of more? I will not tire
With long recital of the rest,
Since I became the Cossack's guest.
They found me senseless on the plain—
They bore me to the nearest hut—
They brought me into life again—
Me—one day o'er their realm to reign!

HIE AWAY!

You can hear that the poet who gives this cheery invitation to come out in the early morning is a lover of the outdoor world. It was Sir Walter Scott, who rose early, and who spent so much time in the open air that his neighbours wondered when he wrote his books.

HIE away! hie away!
Over bank and over brae—
Where the copsewood is the greenest,
Where the fountains glisten sheenest,
Where the lady-fern grows strongest,
Where the morning dew lies longest,
Where the black-cock sweetest sips it,
Where the fairy latest trips it;
Hie to haunts right seldom seen,
Lovely, lonesome, cool, and green:
Over bank and over brae—
Hie away! hie away!

WHICH SHALL IT BE?

This lovely story of the love of fathers and mothers, told with such tender grace, was written by an American lady named Ethelinda Beers. Her maiden name was Eliot, and she was descended from John Eliot, the "Apostle of the Indians," who first preached Christianity to the Red Indians, and first translated the Bible into their tongue. Indeed, this Bible in the Indian language was the first Bible ever printed in America. That was in 1663. Mrs. Beers lived from 1827 to 1879. The poem shows that John Eliot's loving spirit was animating his descendants after two hundred years.

"WHICH shall it be? Which shall it be?"
I looked at John—John looked at me;
(Dear, patient John, who loves me yet
As well as though my locks were jet);
And when I found that I must speak,
My voice seemed strangely low and weak:
"Tell me again what Robert said."
And then I, listening, bent my head.
"This is his letter: 'I will give
A house and land while you shall live,
If, in return, from out your seven,
One child to me for aye is given.'"
I looked at John's old garments worn,
I thought of all that John had borne
Of poverty and work and care,
Which I, though willing, could not share;
I thought of seven mouths to feed,
Of seven little children's need,
And then of this. "Come, John," said I,
"We'll choose among them as they lie
Asleep"; so, walking hand in hand,
Dear John and I surveyed our band.
First to the cradle lightly stepped,
Where the new nameless baby slept.
"Shall it be Baby?" whispered John.
I took his hand and hurried on
To Lily's crib. Her sleeping grasp
Held her old doll within its clasp;
Her dark curls lay like gold alight,
A glory 'gainst the pillow white.
Softly her father stooped to lay
His rough hand down in loving way,
When dream or whisper made her stir,
Then huskily said John, "Not her, not her!"
We stopped beside the trundle-bed,
And one long ray of lamplight shed
Athwart the boyish faces there,
In sleep so pitiful and fair;
I saw on Jamie's rough, red cheek
A tear undried. Ere John could speak,
"He's but a baby, too," said I,
And kissed him as we hurried by.
Pale, patient Robbie's angel face
Still in his sleep bore suffering's trace.
"No, for a thousand crowns, not him!"
We whispered, while our eyes were dim.
Poor Dick! bad Dick! our wayward son,
Turbulent, reckless, idle one—
Could he be spared? Nay; He who gave
Bids us befriend him to his grave;
"Only a mother's heart can be
Patient enough for such as he;
And so," said John, "I would not dare
To send him from her bedside prayer."
Then stole we softly up above
And knelt by Mary, child of love.
"Perhaps for her 'twould better be,"
I said to John. Quite silently
He lifted up a curl astray
Across her cheek in wilful way,
And shook his head: "Nay, love; not thee,"
The while my heart beat audibly.
Only one more, our eldest lad,
Trusty and truthful, good and glad—
So like his father. "No, John, no—
I cannot, will not, let him go."
And so we wrote, in courteous way,
We could not give one child away;
And afterward toil lighter seemed,
Thinking of that of which we dreamed,
Happy in truth that not one face
We missed from its accustomed place;
Thankful to work for all the seven,
Trusting the rest to One in heaven.

THE DAYS THAT ARE NO MORE

Tennyson scattered throughout his narrative poem, "The Princess," a number of songs which express with artistic delicacy some of the passing moods of a fanciful mind. In this song he tries, by calling up sad comparative scenes, to suggest the vague trouble which may creep over the soul when we think of the irrecoverable past. A little further on in the poem he describes these strains of almost feminine tenderness as "fancies hatched in silken-folded idleness."

TEARS, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others: deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
Oh, death in life! the days that are no more.

SOWING THE SEED

Men work out the will of God in ways they cannot see, That is the truth illustrated here by Edward Everett Hale, an American writer who was born in 1822 and died in 1909.

THE ploughing of the Lord is deep,
On ocean or on land;
His furrows cross the mountain-steep,
They cross the sea-washed sand.

Wise men and prophets know not how,
But work their Master's will;
The kings and nations drag the plough
His purpose to fulfil.

They work His will because they must,
On hillside or on plain,
Till clods are broken into dust,
And ready for the grain.

Where prophets lone the deserts trod,
Where monarchs dragged the plough,
Behold the seed-time of His Word,
The Sower comes to sow!

A HORRIBLE TALE

The sketcher of this cleverly worked-up picture of an awesome tale-teller was Arthur Locker, who penned many merry verses in his younger days. Born in 1828, he was a well-known journalist, once a writer for the "Times," and for many years the editor of the "Graphic." He died in 1893.

WITHOUT—the wind against the pane
Sighed like a ghost that strives to gain
Admittance to its old domain.

Within—the fire burnt brimstone-blue,
So that each face, to neighbours' view,
Seemed of a ghastly corpse-like hue.

Close by the fire sat Mr. Jones,
Who told, in earnest, awe-struck tones,
A thrilling tale of blood and bones!

A tale of mystery and crime,
Beginning, "Once upon a time,"
And echoing like funeral chime.

We listened with a solemn dread,
As to a message from the dead,
For Jones believed each word he said.

And as he spoke he waxed in vigour,
His hair rose up, his eyes grew bigger;
He seemed a supernatural figure!

Entranced, we marked his stony glare,
His hollow voice, his bristling hair;
Our eyeballs gave back stare for stare!

And then we saw upon the wall
A something that was worse than all—
Something that held us fast in thrall.

A gruesome shape, with peakèd jaw,
With hornèd head, with outstretched paw,
And at each finger's end a claw!

Our blood was chilled, we could not speak,
We could not even raise a shriek.
Each moment seemed a tedious week.

But fear was soon laid on the shelf,
When we perceived this monstrous elf
Was but the shade of Jones himself.

Reaction made us laugh—and that
Made Jones's tale seem rather flat,
So presently he sought his hat.

THE LAST WORD

Men who spend their lives in trying to make the world better sometimes grow discouraged because they cannot see the success they wish for. This almost despairing mood is expressed by Matthew Arnold, the fine nineteenth-century poet; but, though he is saddened by what seems like failure, he is resolved to go on to the last with the good warfare, and he knows victory will eventually come, if not for him.

CREEP into thy narrow bed,
Creep, and let no more be said!
Vain thy onset! all stands fast.
Thou thyself must break at last.

Let the long contention cease!
Geese are swans, and swans are geese.
Let them have it how they will!
Thou art tired; best be still.

They out-talked thee, hissed thee, tore thee?
Better men fared thus before thee:
Fired their ringing shot and passed,
Hotly charged—and sank at last.

Charge once more, then, and be dumb!
Let the victors, when they come,
When the forts of folly fall,
Find thy body by the wall!

CUPID

William Blake, who asks why Cupid, the cherub that symbolises young love, should not be pictured as a girl rather than as a boy, seeing that his tricks are much more girl-like than boy-like, was a man of genius, whether we judge him as a poet or as an artist. No man of the modern world has shown imagination in such rare forms as Blake.

WHY was Cupid a boy
And why a boy was he?
He should have been a girl,
For aught that I can see.

For he shoots with his bow,
And the girl shoots with her eye;
And they both are merry and glad,
And laugh when we do cry.

Then to make Cupid a boy
Was surely a woman's plan,
For a boy never learns so much
Till he has become a man:

And then he's so pierced with cares,
And wounded with arrowy smarts,
That the whole business of his life
Is to pick out the heads of the darts

KATY DID

The Katy-did is a cheerful American insect like a cricket. Its name is an imitation of the sound it makes in the grass. Here Mrs. Sangster, a well-known poetess, tells us how the insect's merry chirruping seems to mock us if we try to put a meaning to it. The golden-rod is a common American flower.

THE golden-rod is tossing
Its feathery plumes in air,
Its willows touch the laughing waves,
And all the world is fair.
And somewhere in the happy fields
Are tiny minstrels hid,
Who try to tell in merry time
What little Katy did.

A little Katy darling,
I think, who used to play,
Just like her rosy namesakes now,
In heaps of fragrant hay,
Who skipped about the meadows,
And tripped along the grass,
While clouds of yellow butterflies
Flew up to see her pass.

This little madcap Katy,
I'd really like to know
What funny things it was she did
That summer long ago.
But just as our musician
Begins the tale to tell,
The chorus sounds with might and main
From every hill and dell.

And Katy, Katy didn't,
And Katy, Katy did,
Ring out in strains of mirth and glee,
From sportive elfins hid
In bowers of tangled briers,
And thickets lone and deep;
I listen to the concert till
It lulls me fast asleep.

GOING INTO BREECHES

This delightful picture of what happens in the mind of a little lad when he is first put into trousers was sketched by Mary Lamb, the sister of the entrancing essayist, Charles Lamb. Mary Lamb was a sad-hearted old maid, living a troubled life, but see with what tender humour she could enter into the thoughts of a child! Born in 1764, she died in 1847, and her writings for children are worth reading.

JOY to Philip!—he this day
Has his long coats cast away
And (the childish season gone)
Put the manly breeches on.
Officer on gay parade,
Redcoat in his first cockade,
Bridegroom in his wedding trim,
Birthday beau surpassing him,
Never did with conscious gait
Strut about in half the state
Or the pride (yet free from sin)
Of my little Manikin;
Never was there pride or bliss
Half so rational as his.
Sashes, frocks, to those that need 'em—
Philip's limbs have got their freedom:
He can run or he can ride
And do twenty things beside
Which his petticoats forbad.
Is he not a happy lad?
Now he's under other banners,
He must leave his former manners,
Bid adieu to female games,
And forget their very names—
Puss-in-corners, hide-and-seek,
Sports for girls and punies weak!
Baste-the-bear he may now play at,
Leap-frog, football, sport away at;
Show his skill and strength at cricket—
Mark his distance, pitch his wicket;
Run about in winter's snow
Till his cheeks and fingers glow;
Climb a tree or scale a wall
Without any fear to fall;
If he get a hurt or bruise,
To complain he must refuse,
Though the anguish and the smart
Go unto his little heart;
He must have his courage ready,
Keep his voice and visage steady,
Brace his eyeballs stiff as drum,
That a tear must never come;
And his grief must only speak
From the colour in his cheek.
This, and more, he must endure—
Hero he in miniature!
This, and more, must now be done
Now the breeches are put on.

JUDGE ETERNAL THRONED IN SPLENDOUR

This hymn is by Canon Scott Holland, formerly of St. Paul's Cathedral, one of the most popular preachers of our day.

JUDGE eternal throned in splendour,
Lord of lords and King of kings,
With Thy living fire of judgment
Purge this land of bitter things,
Solace all its wide dominion
With the healing of Thy wings.

Still the weary folks are pining
For the hour that brings release,
And the city's crowded clangour
Cries aloud for sin to cease;
And the homesteads and the woodlands
Plead in silence for their peace.

Crown, O God, Thine own endeavour;
Cleave our darkness with Thy sword;
Feed Thy faint and hungry heathen
With the richness of Thy Word;
Cleanse the body of this nation
Through the glory of the Lord.

TO MY SON AGED THREE

The child as he is written about by poets, and the child as he really is, has never been sketched so funnily as by Tom Hood. Poor Hood was himself as contradictory as this poem of his, for he was at times the most humorous and at other times the saddest of men. His little boy, pictured so quaintly in these verses, was only three years and five months old.

THOU happy, happy elf!
(But stop—first let me kiss away that tear)
Thou tiny image of myself!
(My love, he's poking peas into his ear!)
Thou merry, laughing sprite!
With spirits feather-light,
Untouched by sorrow, and unsoiled by sin
(Good heavens! The child is swallowing a pin!)

Thou little tricksy Puck!
With antic toys so funnily bestuck,
Light as the singing bird that wings the air
(The door! The door! He'll tumble down the stair!)
Thou darling of thy sire!
(Why, Jane, he'll set his pinafore afire!)
Thou imp of mirth and joy!
In love's dear chain so strong and bright a link,
Thou idol of thy parents (Drat the boy! There goes my ink!)

Thou cherub—but of earth;
Fit playfellow for Fays by moonlight pale,
In harmless sport and mirth
(That dog will bite him if he pulls its tail!)
Thou human honey-bee, extracting honey
From every blossom in the world that blows;
Singing in youth's Elysium ever sunny
(Another tumble—that's his precious nose!)
Thy father's pride and hope!
(He'll break the mirror with that skipping-rope!)
With pure heart newly stamped from Nature's mint
(Where did he learn that squint?)

Thou young domestic dove!
(He'll have that jug off with another shove!)
Dear nursling of the hymenial nest
(Are those torn clothes his best?)
Little epitome of man
(He'll climb upon the table, that's his plan!)
Touched with the beauteous tints of dawning life
(He's got a knife!)
Thou enviable being!
No storms, no clouds, in thy blue sky foreseeing;
Play on, play on,
My elfin John!

Toss the light ball, bestride the stick
(I knew so many cakes would make him sick!)
With fancies buoyant as the thistle-down,
Prompting the face grotesque, and antic brisk,
With many a lamblike frisk
(He's got the scissors, snipping at your gown!)
Thou pretty opening rose!
(Go to your mother, child, and wipe your nose!)
Balmy, and breathing music like the south
(He really brings my heart into my mouth!)
Fresh as the morn, and brilliant as its star
(I wish that window had an iron bar!)
Bold as the hawk, yet gentle as the dove
(I'll tell you what, my love:
I cannot write unless he's sent above!)

THE CASTLE BY THE SEA

This sad little poem, suggesting how ill-mated are grandeur and sorrow, was translated by Longfellow from the German of Uhland. Longfellow was Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard University, and showed his fitness by translations from French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Swedish. The poems he translated were usually filled with a sentiment very much like that which plays around his original writings. It is so here.

"HAST thou seen that lordly castle,
That castle by the sea?
Golden and red above it
The clouds float gorgeously.

"And fain it would stoop downward
To the mirrored wave below;
And fain it would soar upward
In the evening's crimson glow."

"Well have I seen that castle,
That castle by the sea,
And the moon above it standing,
And the mist rise solemnly."

"The winds and the waves of ocean,
Had they a merry chime?
Didst thou hear, from those lofty chambers,
The harp and the minstrel's rhyme?"

"The winds and the waves of ocean,
They rested quietly;
But I heard on the gale a sound of wail,
And tears came to mine eye."

"And sawest thou on the turrets
The king and his royal bride?
And the wave of their crimson mantles,
And the golden crown of pride?

"Led they not forth in rapture
A beauteous maiden there,
Resplendent as the morning sun,
Beaming with golden hair?"

"Well saw I the ancient parents,
Without the crown of pride;
They were moving slow, in weeds of woe,
No maiden was by their side."

GOLDEN-TRESSÉD ADELAIDE

The little maid—Adelaide Ann Procter—about whom this song was written by her father—whose pen-name was Barry Cornwall!—became a poet herself. We can tell that her father knew she was very tender and sensitive as a child, and that can also be seen in her own graceful and melodious poems, some of which are in all the hymn-books.

SING, I pray, a little song,
Mother dear!
Neither sad nor very long:
It is for a little maid,
Golden-tressèd Adelaide!
Therefore let it suit a merry, merry ear,
Mother dear!
Let it be a merry strain,
Mother dear!
Shunning e'en the thought of pain,
For our gentle child will weep
If the theme be dark and deep;
And we will not draw a single, single tear,
Mother dear!
Childhood should be all divine,
Mother dear!
And like an endless summer shine;
Gay as Edward's shouts and cries,
Bright as Agnes' azure eyes:
Therefore bid thy song be merry. Dost thou hear,
Mother dear?

THE REVEILLE

During the dreadful Civil War in the United States, which lasted from 1861 to 1865 and ended in the abolition of slavery, a meeting was held in San Francisco to rouse the city to send help to the North—the anti-slavery army. At that meeting, presided over by the Rev. Thomas Starr King, the stirring poem given below was recited. It had been written for the meeting by a young man of four-and-twenty who had lately arrived in the city to be secretary to the Government Mint. His name was Bret Harte, and afterwards he became one of the most famous of American writers. The reveille is the morning call that rouses an army.

HARK! I hear the tramp of thousands,
And of armèd men the hum;
Lo! a nation's hosts have gathered
Round the quick alarming drum—
Saying, "Come,
Freemen, come!
Ere your heritage be wasted," said the quick alarming drum.
"Let me of my heart take counsel:
War is not of Life the sum;
Who shall stay and reap the harvest
When the autumn days shall come?"
But the drum
Echoed, "Come!
Death shall reap the braver harvest," said the solemn-sounding drum.
"But when won the coming battle,
What of profit springs therefrom?
What of conquest, subjugation,
Even greater ills become?"
But the drum
Answered, "Come!
You must do the sum to prove it," said the Yankee-answering drum.
"What if, 'mid the cannons' thunder,
Whistling shot and bursting bomb,
When my brothers fall around me,
Should my heart grow cold and numb?"
But the drum
Answered, "Come!
Better there in death united, than in life a recreant—come!"

Thus they answered—hoping, fearing,
Some in faith, and doubting some,
Till a trumpet-voice, proclaiming,
Said, "My chosen people, come!"
Then the drum,
Lo! was dumb,
For the great heart of the nation, throbbing, answered, "Lord, we come!"

RELIEVING GUARD

T. S. K., died March 4, 1864

The initials T. S. K. are those of the Rev. Thomas Starr King, of San Francisco, a popular preacher who helped to rally California to the side of the North in the anti-slavery war which was raging when he died on the date named above. He was a great friend of the poet Bret Harte, and these are the fine verses in which the poet told of God's recall of his friend from his post of duty in this world.

CAME the relief. "What, sentry, ho!
How passed the night through thy long waking?"
"Cold, cheerless, dark—as may befit
The hour before the dawn is breaking."
"No sight, no sound?" "No, nothing save
The plover from the marshes calling,
And in yon western sky, about
An hour ago, a star was falling."
"A star? There's nothing strange in that."
"No, nothing; but, above the thicket,
Somehow it seemed to me that God
Somewhere had just relieved a picket."

COMPENSATIONS

The painter of this little word-picture, imagining the fateful play of light and shade over human life, is Dr. Ronald Campbell Macfie, whose picturesque pen has often been busy helping the Editor of this book to please his readers.

LIFE laughs and sighs,
Life gives and takes;
A pleasure dies,
A memory wakes.

When daylight fades,
The stars are born;
And from the shades
Arises morn.

Life takes a part
To give the whole;
And breaks the heart
To heal the soul.

TO ALTHEA FROM PRISON

A few poets are known because of a single song. That is the case of Richard Lovelace, and this is the song. The delicate fancy of the verses and their natural melody preserve them. Lovelace was a Cavalier who ruined himself in support of Charles I. in the days of the Commonwealth, and died, at the age of forty, in 1658, just before Charles II. became king.

WHEN love with unconfinèd wings
Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
To whisper at the grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair
And fettered to her eye,
The birds that wanton in the air
Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round
With no allaying Thames,
Our careless heads with roses crowned,
Our hearts with loyal flames;
When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
When healths and draughts go free—
Fishes that tipple in the deep
Know no such liberty.

When, linnet-like, confinèd, I
With shriller note shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty,
And glories of my king;
When I shall voice aloud how good
He is, how great should be,
Enlargèd winds, that curl the flood,
Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage:
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.

THE HYMN OF THE RAIN

When Bret Harte, the American poet, wrote most of his verses he was living in California, or the neighbouring Western States, which the fearful Civil War did not reach. His reference to "Eastern graves" is to the effects of that war, and it does not mean Eastern from Europe. The poem shows how much the terrible war had impressed the poet's mind. He cannot even hear the rain on the roof without thinking of the blood shed by his countrymen; and all the images in the poem—fusillade, tattoo, trumpet, banners, pickets, bayonets—are warlike, though the poem is of peace.

LAST night, above the whistling wind,
I heard the welcome rain—
A fusillade upon the roof,
A tattoo on the pane.
The keyhole piped, the chimney-top
A warlike trumpet blew;
Yet, mingling with these sounds of strife,
A softer voice stole through.
"Give thanks, O brothers!" said the voice,
"That He who sent the rains
Hath spared your fields the scarlet dew
That drips from patriot veins:
I've seen the grass on Eastern graves
In brighter verdure rise;
But, oh, the rain that gave it life
Sprang first from human eyes!
"I come to wash away no stain
Upon your wasted lea,
I raise no banners, save the ones
The forest wave to me.
Upon the mountain-side, where Spring
Her farthest picket sets,
My reveille awakes a host
Of grassy bayonets.
"I visit every humble roof,
I mingle with the low;
Only upon the highest peaks
My blessings fall in snow;
Until in tricklings of the stream,
And drainings of the lea,
My unspent bounty comes at last
To mingle with the sea."
And thus all night, above the wind,
I hear the welcome rain—
A fusillade upon the roof,
A tattoo on the pane.
The keyhole piped, the chimney-top
A warlike trumpet blew;
But, mingling with these sounds of strife,
This hymn of peace stole through.

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS

This old Scottish song is sometimes attributed to Robert Burns, but he only revised and expanded it. It expresses the love of their country which is such a deep-seated passion with Gaelic Scotsmen. Men of Highland regiments, when long abroad, have been known to die of their longing for home.

MY heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.
Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birthplace of valour, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.
Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valley below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents, and loud-pouring floods.
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

ENGLAND'S DEAD

Mrs. Hemans, who wrote this poem, was probably the most popular English poetess who has ever lived, and a number of her verses hold a place in all the selections of poems that express a love of country and home. The main thought of the poem, that the world is strewn with the graves of our countrymen, is truer now than when the poem was written, "because on the bones of the English the English flag is stayed." They now mark the way to the South as well as the North Pole. At Roncesvalles, in the Pyrenees, mentioned in the ninth verse, the English have fought battles twice.

SON of the ocean isle!
Where sleep your mighty dead?
Show me what high and stately pile
Is reared o'er Glory's bed.

Go, stranger! track the deep,
Free, free, the white sail spread!
Wave may not foam, nor wild wind sweep,
Where rest not England's dead.

On Egypt's burning plains,
By the pyramid o'erswayed,
With fearful power the noonday reigns,
And the palm-trees yield no shade.

But let the angry sun
From heaven look fiercely red,
Unfelt by those whose task is done!
There slumber England's dead.

The hurricane hath might
Along the Indian shore,
And far, by Ganges' banks at night,
Is heard the tiger's roar.

But let the sound roll on!
It hath no tone of dread
For those that from their toils are gone—
There slumber England's dead!

Loud rush the torrent-floods
The western wilds among,
And free, in green Columbia's woods,
The hunter's bow is strung.

But let the floods rush on!
Let the arrow's flight be sped!
Why should *they* reck whose task is done?
There slumber England's dead!

The mountain-storms rise high
In the snowy Pyrenees,
And toss the pine-boughs through the sky,
Like rose-leaves on the breeze.

But let the storm rage on!
Let the forest-wreaths be shed!
For the Roncesvalles' field is won—
There slumber England's dead.

On the frozen deep's repose
'Tis a dark and dreadful hour,
When round the ship the ice-fields close,
To chain her with their power.

But let the ice drift on!
Let the cold-blue desert spread!
Their course with mast and flag is done—
There slumber England's dead.

The warlike of the isles,
The men of field and wave!
Are not the rocks their funeral piles,
The seas and shores their grave?

Go, stranger! track the deep,
Free, free, the white sail spread!
Wave may not foam, nor wild wind sweep,
Where rest not England's dead.

THE SONG OF THE BOW

This vigorous song, with the ring of open-air England in it, is given here by the courtesy of its author, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It is from his "Songs of Action," but was first printed in his breezy, manly tale of early English life, "The White Company," one of the best historical stories. It is supposed to be sung by a bowman at a meeting in the New Forest.

WHAT of the bow?
The bow was made in England,
Of true wood, of yew wood,
The wood of English bows;
So men who are free
Love the old yew-tree,
And the land where the yew-tree grows.

What of the cord?
The cord was made in England:
A rough cord, a tough cord,
A cord that bowmen love;
And so we will sing
Of the hempen string,
And the land where the cord was wove.

What of the shaft?
The shaft was cut in England:
A long shaft, a strong shaft,
Barbed and trim and true;
So we'll drink altogether
To the grey goose-feather,
And the land where the grey goose flew.

What of the mark?
Ah! seek it not in England:
A bold mark, our old mark,
Is waiting over-sea.
When the strings harp in chorus,
And the lion flag is o'er us,
It is there that our mark will be.

What of the men?
The men were bred in England:
The bowmen, the yeomen,
The lads of dale and fell.
Here's to you—and to you!
To the hearts that are true,
And the land where the true hearts dwell.

THE OLD APPLE-TREE

We might very well guess that the singer of this bold and hearty strain in praise of the sturdy apple-tree was born in the country. In youth he was a New England farm lad, but afterwards became known as a poet and scholar. His name was George Shepard Burleigh. He died in 1903 at the age of eighty-two. That he loved the trees and knew them this poem proves abundantly. The lines ending "the genesis of nepenthe dreams" mean that the scent of the apple blossom and the hum of the bees together lulls us almost to sleep. Nepenthe was an Egyptian drug which was often used in olden days to lull people into forgetful slumber.

A song for the brave old apple-tree,
Sturdy and hardy, a strong athlete,
Giving a challenge to hail and sleet,
His grey-green coat flung off at his feet,
And his stiff limbs set defiantly!

When frost would nip him, and west wind whip him,
And rain, conspiring with these, would strip him,
In the sturdy pride of his stubborn hide
Their wrath he has utterly defied;
The more they raged the more he hissed;
Each knot laid bare was a doubled fist;
And his naked limbs could better resist
The wrestling blasts sent down to trip him!

A strain for my gallant in garments made
By vernal sprites for his dress parade!
Plumed with the lithest greening spray,
The love gift of his lady May,
And wearing for this gala day
Over all his breast a bonny bouquet
In the glory of pink and pearl displayed;
Ah, now it is he is wholly gay;
His knot and gnarls are hidden away
In a scented cloud of blooms that crowd
All over his tangled head, between
The fluttering plumes of tenderest green:
And every bloom has a bee that swings
In that dainty cradle rocked by wings
Of invisible fairies hovering there;
And every bee to the blossom hums
A murmuring monody that comes
To the listening ear from everywhere,
Mixed with the odour that fills the air—
Two dizzying sweets whose mingling seems
The genesis of nepenthe dreams;
You would think the sun had warmed the sap
In the icy veins of my grey old chap
Till his head was awhirl with the bee in his cap!

A stave for the brave in his autumn suit;
Dusty and dull from the burning sun,
And wafts from the withered fields that run
Yet out of the dusk of its foldings dun
How gleam the globes of his peerless fruit!
A priceless boon, a beautiful boon,
The jewels of autumn's golden moon;
Only the dream of it makes him laugh
Into flowers, that are winnowed off like chaff,
In the warmer air of the mid-May noon;
Aye, while the flocks of the feathered snow
On white wings hovering, silent, slow,
Came down to alight on his naked breast,
In his old heart quivered a sweet unrest,
The prescience of his own bloom shower,
And this crowning wealth of his leafy bower.

Then a song for the brave old apple-tree,
For his lavish bounty, and gallant show,
And his tough old fibres that tougher grow
In the storm's insult and the smothering snow!
Ah, well for our hearts were they brave as he!

THE DAWN OF PEACE

This tender and lovely poem by John Ruskin, on the coming of peace, is a kind of free paraphrase of the words of the Hebrew prophet Isaiah, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!" The last exquisite verse is a rendering of "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain."

Put off, put off your mail, O kings,
And beat your brands to dust!
Your hands must learn a surer grasp,
Your hearts a better trust.

O, bend aback the lance's point,
And break the helmet bar;
A noise is in the morning wind,
But not the note of war.

Upon the grassy mountain paths,
The glittering hosts increase:
They come! They come! How fair their feet!
They come who publish peace.

And victory, fair victory,
Our enemies are ours!
For all the clouds are clasped in light,
And all the earth with flowers.

Aye, still depressed and dim with dew;
But wait a little while,
And with the radiant, deathless rose,
The wilderness shall smile.

And every tender, living thing,
Shall feed by streams of rest;
Nor lambs shall from the flock be lost,
Nor nestling from the nest.

O, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST?

This exquisitely tender song, which has been set to music by Mendelssohn, was written in a few minutes by Robert Burns. He asked a lady at whose house he had called to play him a favourite Scottish air, and wrote these words to it.

O, WERT thou in the cauld blast
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee.
Or did Misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a Paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch of the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

A WELCOME

Charles Kingsley, the generous-hearted clergyman who wrote this swiftly rushing welcome to the bitter, snow-bearing wind, was as manly as his verse. He loved the open-air world, the mountains, and the sea, and such verses as these breathe his inmost spirit. It has been said that he sang to the wind that slew him—this north-easter—but that is not quite a fact, for he had been ailing long before his death in 1875. He was born in 1819. As a writer of stories, such as "Westward Ho!" Charles Kingsley was even more popular than as a poet.

WELCOME, wild North-easter!
Shame it is to see
Odes to every zephyr,
Ne'er a verse to thee.
Welcome, bleak North-easter!
O'er the German foam;
O'er the Danish moorlands,
From thy frozen home.
Tired we are of summer,
Tired of gaudy glare,
Showers soft and streaming,
Hot and breathless air.
Tired of listless dreaming,
Through the lazy day:
Jovial wind of winter,
Turn us out to play!
Sweep the golden reed-beds;
Crisp the lazy dyke;
Hunger into madness
Every plunging pike.
Fill the lake with wild-fowl;
Fill the marsh with snipe;
While on dreary moorlands
Lonely curlew pipe.
Through the black fir-forest,
Thunder harsh and dry,
Shattering down the snow-flakes
Off the curdled sky.

Hark! the brave North-easter!
Breast-high lies the scent,
On by holt and headland,
Over heath and bent.
Chime, ye dappled darlings,
Through the sleet and snow.
Who can over-ride you?
Let the horses go!
Chime, ye dappled darlings,
Down the roaring blast;
You shall see a fox die
Ere an hour be past.
Go! and rest tomorrow,
Hunting in your dreams,
While our skates are ringing
O'er the frozen streams.
Let the luscious South Wind
Breathe in lovers' sighs,
While the lazy gallants
Bask in ladies' eyes.
What does he but soften
Heart alike and pen?
'Tis the hard, grey weather
Breeds hard Englishmen.
What's the soft South-wester?
'Tis the ladies' breeze,
Bringing home their true loves
Out of all the seas:
But the black North-easter,
Through the snowstorm hurled,
Drives our English hearts of oak
Seaward round the world.
Come, as came our fathers,
Heralded by thee,
Conquering from the eastward,
Lords by land and sea.
Come; and, strong within us,
Stir the Vikings' blood;
Bracing brain and sinew:
Blow, thou wind of God!

"THIS IS MY WORK"

The writer of these wise lines in love of work, Henry Van Dyke, is professor of English literature in the American University of Princeton. He has not only written poetry, but much thoughtful appreciation of the poetry of others.

LET me but do my work from day to day,
In field or forest, at the desk or loom,
In roaring market-place or tranquil room;
Let me but find it in my heart to say,
When vagrant wishes beckon me astray,
"This is my work; my blessing, not my doom;
Of all who live I am the one by whom
This work can best be done in the right way";
Then shall I see it not too great, nor small,
To suit my spirit and to prove my powers.

THE BARGAIN COUNTER

The terrible dearness to somebody of things which are sold too cheap is thrown at us in taunting tones in these verses, written by Berton Braley in the hope of making us think.

BARGAINS in dress goods and bargains in lace,
Bargains in garments of beauty and grace,
Here are the offerings piled in a heap,
Bargains on bargains—remarkably cheap!
Wait, let's see whence these bargain goods came
E'er we plunge into the bargaining game!
Look at that exquisite blouse—it was made
Down in the slums by a woman ill paid;
Glorious plume for a wonderful hat?—
Little child hands gave the beauty to that!
Bargains in goods? Why, they're bargains in pain,
Bargains in bodies and bargains in brain,
Bargains in manhood and womanhood, too,
Bargains in childhood here offered to you;
Bargains in hate and oppression and greed,
Bargains in hearts that must suffer and bleed,
Bargains from sweat-shops and plague-stricken holes,
Bargains in labour and bargains in souls,
Here on the counter together they lie.
Bargain sale! Bargain sale! Come on and buy!

IN PRAISE OF ENGLAND

We see Alfred Austin, the late Poet Laureate, at his best in this whole-hearted tribute to things English—the English rose, the English woman, the English home, the English landscape, and English freedom. There may be roses as sweet and women as true in other lands, but wanderers over the world know that the poet's English claim for freedom, home, and sweetness in scenery is peculiarly true. The expression "Round the zodiac" means, of course, round the world, the zodiac being a band of sky that surrounds the earth.

FROM tangled brake and trellised bower
Bring every bud that blows,
But never will you find the flower
To match an English rose.
It blooms with more than city grace,
Though rustic and apart;
It has a smile upon its face
And a dewdrop in its heart.

Though wide the goodly world around
Your fancy may have strayed,
Where was the woman ever found
To match an English maid?
At work she smiles, through play she sings;
She doubts not, nor denies.
She'll cling to you as woodbine clings,
And love you till she dies.

If you would put it to the proof,
Then round the zodiac roam;
But never will you find the roof
To match an English home.
You hear the sound of children's feet
Still pattering on the stair;
'Tis made by loving labour sweet,
And sanctified by prayer.

Go traverse tracts sublime or sweet,
Snow-peak or scorched ravine;
But where will you the landscape meet
To match an English scene?
The hamlet hallowed by its spire,
The wild wood fresh with flowers;
Garden and croft and thorp and byre
Gleaming through silvery showers.

Across the wave, along the wind,
Flutter and plough your way;
But where will you a Sceptre find
To match the English sway?
Its conscience holds the world in awe
With blessing or with ban;
Its Freedom guards the Reign of Law,
And majesty of Man!

NOW

"Act, act, in the living present," wrote Longfellow, and here, in mellow verses, Adelaide Anne Procter makes the same rousing appeal. "Let us be up and doing," is her cry, "lest the chance of today should slip by into the shadowy past." It is never too early to obey that call to noble service, and the world is waiting for workers always.

RISE! for the day is passing,
And you lie dreaming on;
The others have buckled their armour,
And forth to the fight are gone:
A place in the ranks awaits you,
Each man has some part to play;
The Past and the Future are nothing,
In the face of the stern Today.

Rise from your dreams of the Future—
Of gaining some hard-fought field;
Of storming some airy fortress,
Or bidding some giant yield;
Your future has deeds of glory,
Of honour (God grant it may!),
But your arm will never be stronger
Or the need so great as Today.

Rise! If the Past detains you,
Her sunshine and storms forget;
No chains so unworthy to hold you
As those of a vain regret:
Sad or bright, she is lifeless ever,
Cast her phantom arms away,
Nor look back, save to learn the lesson
Of a nobler strife Today.

Rise! for the day is passing:
The sound that you scarcely hear
Is the enemy marching to battle—
Arise! for the foe is here!
Stay not to sharpen your weapons,
Or the hour will strike at last
When from dreams of a coming battle
You may wake to find it past!

THE DAY IS COMING

The writer of this forecast of a future when all men join to be kind—William Morris—was a very notable man. A poet, an artist, a tale-teller, a politician, a philosopher, he worked all his life, in faith, for the things he describes in these verses. To bring the looked-for day nearer, he spent time and toil and money. With his dream of goodness many men are in love, but others, much more numerous, regard it with a sort of dread. The name the newspapers give to it all is Socialism.

COME hither lads and hearken,
For a tale there is to tell,
Of the wonderful days a-coming
When all shall be better than well.

And the tale shall be told of a country,
A land in the midst of the sea,
And folk shall call it England
In the days that are going to be.

There more than one in a thousand,
In the days that are yet to come,
Shall have some hope of the morrow,
Some joy of the ancient home.

For then—laugh not, but listen
To this strange tale of mine—
All folk that are in England
Shall be better lodged than swine.

Then a man shall work and bethink him,
And rejoice in the deeds of his hand,
Nor yet come home in the even
Too faint and weary to stand.

Men in that time a-coming
Shall work and have no fear
For tomorrow's lack of earning,
And the hunger-wolf a-near.

I tell you this for a wonder,
That no man then shall be glad
Of his fellow's fall and mishap
To snatch at the work he had.

For that which the worker winneth
Shall then be his indeed,
Nor shall half be reaped for nothing
By him that sowed no seed.

Then all MINE and all THINE shall be OURS,
And no more shall any man crave
For riches that serve for nothing
But to fetter a friend for a slave.

And what wealth then shall be left us
When none shall gather gold
To buy his friend in the market,
And pinch and pine the sold.

Nay, what save the lovely city,
And the little house on the hill,
And the wastes and the woodland beauty,
And the happy fields we till;

And the homes of ancient stories,
The tombs of the mighty dead;

And the wise men seeking out marvels,
And the poet's teeming head;

And the painter's hand of wonder,
And the marvellous fiddle-bow,
And the banded choirs of music:
All those that do and know.

For all these shall be ours and all men's,
Nor shall any lack a share
Of the toil and the gain of living
In the days when the world grows fair.

DEVON LAND

Nearly every county of England has now one or more writers to recount its merits proudly. Usually this is done in prose; but that is much too tame for men of Devon—they burst forth into song when they think of the glorious county that shelters their homes and has given us so many heroes. Mr. C. H. Morgan is the writer of this vigorous lay of the rugged West.

O WESTERN land! O Devon land!
Land of the good red earth!
None like thy sons so justly boast
The soil that gave them birth;
No fresh-turned fallow, otherwhere,
Such wealth of colour yields;
No air so fragrant with the breath
Of fertile-furrowed fields.

O Western land! O Devon land!
Land of the frequent hill!
From city street, or virgin plain,
To thee our thoughts turn still;
In dreams we tread thy fern-fringed lanes—
Close screened by hedgerows deep—
And view again the prospect spread
Around thy hillsides steep.

O Western land! O Devon land!
Land of the upland moor!
Where Devon's sons, on Devon's breast,
Find welcome ever sure;
There golden gorse-blooms cheerily gleam;
There purple heather glows;
And bracken bends, in billowy waves,
To every breeze that blows.

O Western land! O Devon land!
Land of the granite crown!
Thy cloud-kissed tors, like sentinels,
On coombe and cleeve look down;
Through changing centuries, unchanged,
Those silent watchers stand;
Enduring as the love that links
Our hearts to thee, dear land!

O Western land! O Devon land!
Land of all lands the queen!
Now, as of yore, in farthest climes
Thy stalwart sons are seen;
But North, and South, and East, and West,
Thy liegemen all are we;
Earth has no land that can compare,
Dear Devon land, with thee!

THE STORIED PAST THAT GATHERS ROUND A TREE

OH, ye who love to overhang the springs,
And stand by running waters, ye whose boughs
Make beautiful the rocks o'er which they play,
Who pile with foliage the great hills, and rear
A paradise upon the lonely plain,
Trees of the forest and the open field!
Have ye no sense of being? . . .
When on your winter's sleep
The sun shines warm, have ye no dreams of spring?
And when the glorious springtime comes at last,
Have ye no joy of all your bursting buds,
And fragrant blooms, and melody of birds
To which your young leaves shiver? Do ye strive
And wrestle with the wind, yet know it not?
Does the loud bolt that smites you from the cloud
And rends you, fall unfelt? Do there not run
Strange shudderings through your fibres when the axe
Is raised against you, and the shining blade
Deals blow on blow, until, with all their boughs,
Your summits waver and ye fall to earth?
Know ye no sadness when the hurricane
Has swept the wood, and snapped its sturdy stems . . .
And piled the ruin all along his path?

Nay, doubt we not that under the rough rind,
In the green veins of these fair growths of earth,
There dwells a nature that receives delight
From all the gentle processes of life,
And shrinks from loss of being. Dim and faint
May be the sense of pleasure and of pain,
As in our dreams; but, haply, real still.

Our sorrows touch you not. We watch beside
The beds of those who languish or who die.
But ye, while anxious fear and fainting hope
Are in our chambers, ye rejoice without. . . .

Ye have no part in this distress; for still
The February sunshine steeps your boughs,
And tints the buds, and swells the leaves within.
. . . When the wind
Sweeps the broad forest in its summer prime,
As when some master-hand exulting sweeps
The keys of some great organ, ye give forth
The music of the woodland depths, a hymn
Of gladness and of thanks. . . .

Thus, as the seasons pass, ye keep alive
The cheerfulness of Nature, till in time
The constant misery which wrings the heart
Relents, and we rejoice with you again,
And glory in your beauty. . . .

Ye have no history. I cannot know
Who, when the hillside trees were hewn away,
Haply two centuries since, bade spare this oak, . . .
I know not who, but thank him that he left
The tree to flourish where the acorn fell,
And join these later days to that far time
While yet the Indian hunter drew the bow
In the dim woods, and the white woodman first
Opened these fields to sunshine, turned the soil
And strewed the wheat. An unremembered past
Broods, like a presence, 'mid the long grey boughs
Of this old tree, which has outlived so long
The flittering generations of mankind.

Ye that my hands have planted, or have spared,
Beside the way, or in the orchard ground,
Or in the open meadow, ye whose boughs
With every summer spread a wider shade,
Whose herd in coming years shall lie at rest
Beneath your noontide shelter? Who shall pluck
Your ripened fruit? Who grave, as was the wont
Of simple pastoral ages, on this rind
Of my smooth beeches some beloved name?

Idly I ask; yet may the eyes that look
Upon you in your later, nobler growth,
Look also on a nobler age than ours;
An age when, in the eternal strife between
Evil and Good, the Power of Good shall win
A grander mastery; when kings no more
Shall summon millions from the plough to learn
The trade of slaughter, and of populous realms
Make camps of war; when in our younger land
The hand of ruffian Violence, that now
Is insolently raised to smite, shall fall
Unnerved before the calm rebuke of Law,
And Fraud, his sly confederate, shrink, in shame,
Back to his covert, and forego his prey.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

BALLAD OF THE VICTORIA CROSS

The Victoria Cross, "For Valour," tells its own story in these verses by Mr. Harold Begbie, the friend of every reader of this magazine. Pulsating to the call of heroism, trembling with human pity, faithful to the modesty of unselfish duty, the verses are worthy of the cross to which they give a voice.

I SPRANG from the yearning mind of a Queen, as she prayed for her warrior host,
And she bade me gleam in the front of the fight and aloft of the lonely post;
O! pure as the spirit that set me there must the heart of the hero be
Who would win my crown on the furious field or the plunging decks of the sea;
Mine is the light that the sailor sees when the flames from the turret flash,
Mine is the voice that the soldier hears when the great guns shudder and crash,
Mine is the prize that their fingers clutch as they reel at the gates of Death,
And I am the priest of the stricken field who quiets their dying breath.
I am the pride of the valiant Brave:
I am the shame of the coward Knave:
Look thro' the world—Is there prouder meed
Than the plain bronze Cross of the golden deed?

O! I turn from the camp and the smoking seas, from the scream of the eagle's strife,
To the lonely posts of the marching world and the pitiless fields of Life,
Where the hearts of the valorous Weak meet Fear, and beat him back to the door,
Where the courage of God exalts the soul of the least of the fighting Poor.
O! never a day in the race of the years but is lit by a golden deed,
I am won, I am won by the victor smile on the lips of the hearts that bleed.
Wherever for sake of another's need they reck of their lives as dross—
God knows I cling to their wounded breast as they cling to the greater Cross!
I am the pride of the valiant Brave:
I am the shame of the coward Knave:
Look thro' the world—Is there prouder meed
Than the plain bronze Cross of the golden deed?

But many have won who shall never wear; in the midst of the strife they fell,
Or struck for another where none could see and never a tongue could tell;
Yet better to earn and never to wear, than slink to the shielding walls,
When Fear rides out in the flaming way and the whisper of Duty calls.
Ah! many have won who have never told, and they utter no plaint of loss,
They know I am theirs by the sovran right that alone obtains the Cross;
And they know they shall wear in the Day to be, when they stand with the Unafraid,
And the trumpets of God from star to star ring out for the Great Parade.
I am the pride of the valiant Brave:
I am the shame of the coward Knave:
Look thro' the world—Is there prouder meed
Than the plain bronze Cross of the golden deed?

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

Why is not man, whose spirit is so closely attuned to the spirit of wild things, as naturally happy as the flitting birds, the opening flowers, and the trees as they spread their leaves in the sun? It is William Wordsworth who, in these delightful verses, is trying to puzzle that question out. He seems to think that man's want of instinctive happiness is somehow due to the treatment he gets from his fellow-men. But really it is because man has so much greater power of both joy and sorrow that sad thoughts chase pleasant thoughts through his mind.

I HEARD a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure:
But the least motion which they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

THANKSGIVING

The lady who wrote this call to thanksgiving was Ellen Isabelle Tupper, a daughter of Martin Farquhar Tupper, a poet who wrote a very popular book entitled "Proverbial Philosophy." The verses are a more minute expression of the Psalmist's feeling, "Bless the Lord, O my soul."

For all that God in mercy sends:
For health and children, home and friends,
For comfort in the time of need,
For every kindly word and deed,
For happy thoughts and holy talk,
For guidance in our daily walk,
For everything give thanks.

For beauty in this world of ours,
For verdant grass and lovely flowers,
For song of bird, for hum of bees,
For the refreshing summer breeze,
For hill and plain, for streams and wood,
For the great ocean's mighty flood,
For everything give thanks.

For the sweet sleep that comes with night,
For the returning morning's light,
For the bright sun which shines on high,
For stars that glitter in the sky—
For these and everything we see,
O Lord, our hearts we lift to Thee,
And give Thee thanks.

SLAVERY AND WAR

This fine example of blank verse is taken from William Cowper's poem "The Task." Cowper, who lived between the years 1731 and 1800, was one of the kindest of men, and was grieved at the thought of war and slavery. The poem was written about 1784, when wars had been rife everywhere, and when slavery, though forbidden in England, was permitted in English possessions. In the fifteenth line, the word "devotes" is not used in its present meaning. It meant "disposes of" in Cowper's day. A noble spirit animates this poem, and the style is balanced with a delightful ease.

O for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more. My ear is pained,
My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage, with which earth is filled.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart;
It does not feel for man; the natural bond
Of brotherhood is severed as the flax
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not coloured like his own; and having power
T'enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause,
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.
Lands intersected by a narrow frith
Abhor each other. Mountains interposed
Make enemies of nations, who had else,
Like kindred drops, been mingled into one.
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys;
And, worse than all, and most to be deplored
As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
With stripes, that Mercy with a bleeding heart
Weeps, when she sees inflicted on a beast.
Then what is Man? And what man, seeing this,
And having human feelings, does not blush,
And hang his head, to think himself a man?
I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earned.
No; dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation prized above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave,
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
We have no slaves at home; then why abroad?
And they themselves, once ferried o'er the wave
That parts us, are emancipate and loosed.
Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free.
They touch our country and their shackles fall.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it, then,
And let it circulate through every vein
Of all your empire; that, where Britain's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

FAREWELL, BRIEF DAY

Here, in the form of a poetical farewell to the dying day, so swiftly passing, we have a tender little lament on the brevity of human life—a consciousness that grows clearer the longer we live. The writer's name is Harry Fowler.

So little done, so little done,
And soon comes setting of the sun.
So little said, so little said,
And blue skies deepening to red.
So short a time to backward gaze—
The sky is filled with purple haze.
So short a time to look afar—
The veil has fallen from a star.
Farewell, brief day, adown the dark
Float dewy memories, and hark!
To you and me fair angels call
Beyond the moonlit, dreamland wall;
And thou with Time and I with sleep
A happy, holy tryst shall keep.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

The writer of this description of a visit to the poet Wordsworth in his old age, Francis Turner Palgrave, made the finest of all collections of short English poems. It is called the Golden Treasury. There is a volume for grown-up people and one for children. Palgrave was himself a poet. He was also Professor of Poetry at Oxford. The poem is not only interesting as a picture of the great poet of Nature in his seventy-fifth year, but it is also a criticism of him, wise, tender, and true. The reference in the last verse but one to "our Homer of the war in heaven" is, of course, to Milton, who pictured Satan's rebellion in heaven, as the great Homer pictured the warlike doings of the early Greeks.

GENTLE and grave, in simple dress,
And features by keen mountain air
Moulded to solemn ruggedness,
The man we came to see sat there:
Not apt for speech, nor quickly stirred,
Unless when heart to heart replied;
A bearing equally removed
From vain display or sullen pride.

The sinewy frame yet spoke of one
Known to the hillside: on his head
Some five-and-seventy winters gone
Their crown of perfect white had shed:
As snow-tipped summits toward the sun
In calm of lonely radiance press,
Touched by the broadening light of death
With a serener pensiveness.

O crown of venerable age!
O brighter crown of well-spent years!
The bard, the patriot, and the sage,
The heart that never bowed to fears!
That was an age of soaring souls;
Yet none with a more liberal scope
Surveyed the sphere of human things;
None with such manliness of hope.

Others, perchance, as keenly felt,
As musically sang as he;
To Nature as devoutly knelt,
Or toiled to serve humanity:
But none with those ethereal notes,
That starlike sweep of self-control;
The insight into world unseen,
The lucid sanity of soul.

The fever of our fretful life,
The autumn poison of the air,
The soul with its own self at strife,
He saw and felt, but could not share:
With eye made clear by pureness, pierced
The life of Man and Nature through;
And read the heart of common things,
Till new seemed old, and old was new.

To his own self not always just,
Bound in the bonds that all men share—
Confess the failings as we must,
The lion's mark is always there!
Nor any song so pure, so great,
Since his, who closed the sightless eyes,
Our Homer of the war in heaven,
To wake in his own Paradise.

O blaring trumpets of the world!
O glories, in their budding sere!
O flaunting roll of Fame unfurl'd!
Here was the king—the hero here!
It was a strength and joy for life
In that great presence once to be;
That on the boy he gently smiled,
That those white hands were laid on me.

LABOUR IN HOPE

Faithful labour in hope of coming good is its own reward, sings John Greenleaf Whittier, the wise American poet.

IT may not be our lot to wield
The sickles in the ripened field;
Not ours to hear, on summer eves,
The reaper's song among the sheaves.

Yet ours the grateful service whence
Comes, day by day, the recompense;
The hope, the trust, the purpose stayed,
The fountain, and the noonday shade.

And were this life the outmost span,
The only end and aim of man,
Better the toil of fields like these
Than waking dream and slothful ease.

THE TWO STREAMS

The poet stands on the "divide," or watershed, where the slightest obstacle may turn the rain-made rivulet either eastward, where the Athabasca flows, first towards the morning sun, but at last into the Arctic Sea, or westward, where the Columbia River, or Oregon, seeks the calm Pacific. And so, says the poet, Oliver Wendell Holmes, are lives sundered that began together. Turned by small circumstances, they drift far apart, not only in locality, but in thought and aim.

BEHOLD the rocky wall
That down its sloping sides
Pours the swift rain-drops, blending, as they fall,
In rushing river-tides!

Yon stream, whose sources run,
Turned by a pebble's edge,
Is Athabasca, rolling toward the sun
Through the cleft mountain-ledge.

The slender rill had strayed,
But for the slanting stone,
To evening's ocean, with the tangled braid
Of foam-flecked Oregon.

So from the heights of Will
Life's parting stream descends,
And, as a moment turns its slender rill,
Each widening torrent bends—

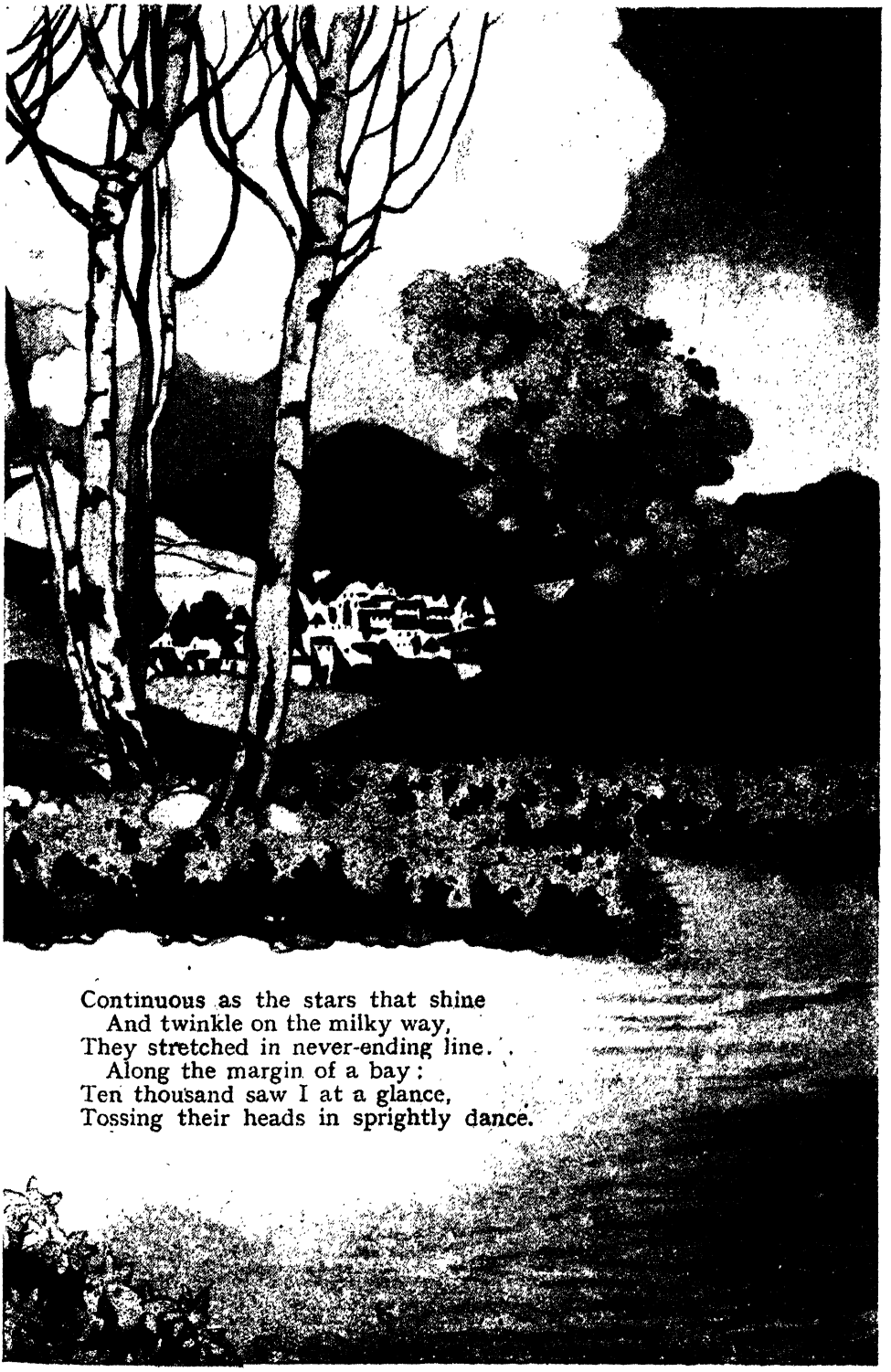
From the same cradle's side,
From the same mother's knee—
One to long darkness and the frozen tide,
One to the Peaceful Sea!

THE DAFFODILS

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,

The Daffodils *By William Wordsworth*

When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils:
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.



Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line.
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company;
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills
And dances with the daffodils.

WHEN THAT I WAS A LITTLE TINY BOY

WHEN THAT I WAS A LITTLE TINY BOY,
WITH HEY, HO, THE WIND AND THE RAIN,
A FOOLISH THING WAS BUT A TOY,
FOR THE RAIN IT RAINETH EVERY DAY.

BUT WHEN I CAME TO MAN'S ESTATE,
WITH HEY, HO, THE WIND AND THE RAIN,
'GAINST KNAVES AND THIEVES MEN SHUT THE GATE,
FOR THE RAIN IT RAINETH EVERY DAY.

BUT WHEN I CAME, ALAS, TO WIVE,
WITH HEY, HO, THE WIND AND THE RAIN,
BY SWAGGERING COULD I NEVER THRIVE,
FOR THE RAIN IT RAINETH EVERY DAY.

A GREAT WHILE AGO THE WORLD BEGAN,
WITH HEY, HO, THE WIND AND THE RAIN,
BUT THAT'S ALL ONE, OUR PLAY IS DONE,
AND WE'LL STRIVE TO PLEASE YOU EVERY DAY.

SHAKESPEARE

WEB-SPINNER WAS A MISER OLD

WEB-SPINNER was a miser old,
Who came of low degree ;
His body was large, his legs were thin,
And he kept bad company.
And his visage had the evil look
Of a black felon grim ;
To all the country he was known,
But none spoke well of him.

His house was seven storeys high,
In a corner of the street ;
And it always had a dirty look,
When other homes were neat.
Up in his garret dark he lived,
And from the windows high
Looked out in the dusky evening
Upon the passers-by.

Most people thought he lived alone,
Yet many have averred
That dismal cries from out his house
Were often loudly heard.
And that none living left his gate,
Although a few went in,
For he seized the very beggar old,
And stripped him to the skin.

And though he prayed for mercy,
Yet mercy ne'er was shown.
The miser cut his body up,
And picked him bone from bone.
Thus people said, and all believed
The dismal story true ;
As it was told to me, in truth,
I tell it so to you.

There was an ancient widow—
One Madgy de la Moth,
A stranger to the man, or she
Had ne'er gone there in troth.
But she was poor, and wandered out
At nightfall in the street,
To beg from rich men's tables
Dry scraps of broken meat.

So she knocked at old Web-Spinner's door
With a modest tap and low ;
And downstairs came he speedily,
Like an arrow from a bow.
"Walk in, walk in, mother," said he,
"And shut the door behind."
She thought, for such a gentleman,
That he was wondrous kind.

But ere the midnight clock had tolled,
Like a tiger of the wood,
He had eaten the flesh from off her bones,
And drunk of her heart's blood !
Now, after this foul deed was done—
A little season's space—
The burly Baron Bluebottle
Was riding from the chase.

The sport was dull, the day was hot,
The sun was sinking down,
When wearily the Baron rode
Into the dusty town.
Says he, "I'll ask a lodging
At the first house I come to."
With that, the gate of Web-Spinner
Came suddenly in view.

WHO CAME OF LOW DEGREE

Loud was the knock the Baron gave ;
Down came the churl with glee.
Says Bluebottle, " Good sir, to-night
I ask your courtesy ;
I am wearied with a long day's chase,
My friends are far behind."
" You may need them all," said Web-Spinner,
" It runneth in my mind." [
" A Baron am I," said Bluebottle,
" From a foreign land I come."
" I thought as much," said Web-Spinner,
" Fools never stay at home ! "
Says the Baron, " Churl, what meaneth this ?
I defy you, villain base ! " [
And he wished the while, in his inmost heart,
He was safely from the place. [

Then up and down his house he went,
Arranging dish and platter,
With a dull and heavy countenance,
As if nothing were the matter.
At length he seized on Bluebottle,
That strong and burly man ,
And, with many and many a desperate tug,
To hoist him up began [
And step by step, and step by step,
He went with heavy tread ;
But ere he reached the garret door,
Poor Bluebottle was dead !
Now all this while a magistrate,
Who lived in a house hard by,
Had watched Web-Spinner's cruelty
Through a window privily.

Web-Spinner ran and locked the door,
And a loud laugh laughed he ;
With that, each one on the other sprang,
And they wrestled furiously. [
The Baron was a man of might,
A swordsman of renown ;
But the Miser had the stronger arm,
And kept the Baron down.
Then out he took a little cord,
From a pocket at his side,
And with many a crafty, cruel knot,
His hands and feet he tied,
And bound him down unto the floor,
And said, in savage jest,
" There is heavy work for you in store ;
So, Baron, take your rest ! " [

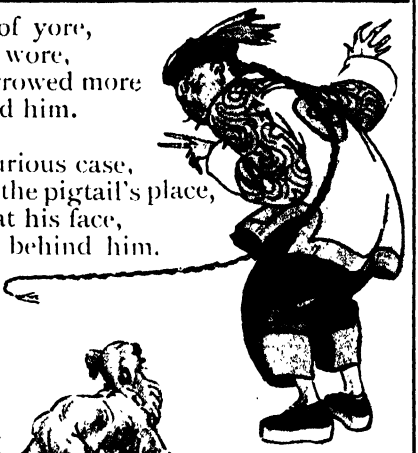
So in he burst, through bolts and bars,
With a loud and thundering sound ;
And vowed to burn the house with fire,
And level it with the ground.
But the wicked churl, who all his life
Had looked for such a day,
Passed through a trap-door in the wall,
And took himself away.

But where he went no man could tell :
'Twas said that underground
He died a miserable death ;
But his body ne'er was found.
They pulled his house down, stick and stone,
" For a caitiff vile as he," [
Said they, " Within our quiet town
Shall not a dweller be ! "

THE SAGE'S PIGTAIL

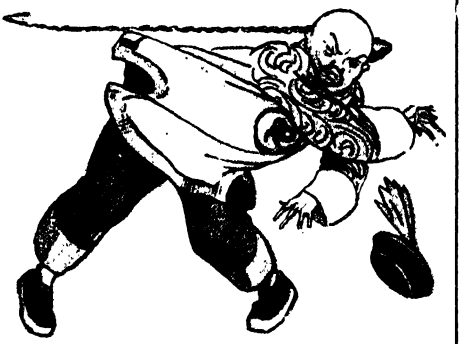
There lived a sage in days of yore,
And he a handsome pigtail wore,
But wondered much and sorrowed more
Because it hung behind him.

He mused upon this curious case,
And swore he'd change the pigtail's place,
And have it dangling at his face,
Not dangling there behind him.



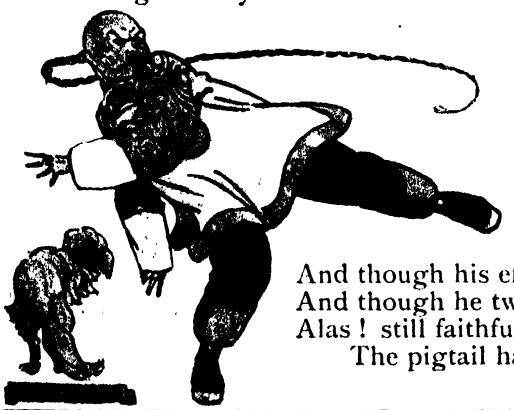
Says he, "The mystery I've found;
I'll turn me round." He turned him round,
But still it hung behind him.

Then round and round, and out and in,
All day the puzzled sage did spin;



In vain—it mattered not a pin—
The pigtail hung behind him.

And right and left, and round about,
And up and down, and in and out,
He turned, but still the pigtail stout
Hung steadily behind him.



And though his efforts never slack,
And though he twist and twirl and tack,
Alas! still faithful to his back
The pigtail hangs behind him.

THE SIN OF OMISSION

The reminder that Miss Margaret Sangster conveys to us here so sympathetically is one that is much needed in these days. The world is moving so rapidly that we are apt to scorn the little, gracious acts that may mean so much to those who stand just outside the rushing stream.

It isn't the thing you do, dear,
It's the thing you leave undone,
That gives you a bit of a heart-ache
At the setting of the sun.
The tender word forgotten,
The letter you did not write,
The flowers you did not send, dear,
Are your haunting ghosts at night.

The stone you might have lifted
Out of a brother's way,
The bit of hearthstone counsel
You were hurried too much to say,
The loving touch of the hand, dear,
The gentle, winning tone
Which you had no time nor thought for
With troubles enough of your own.

Those little acts of kindness
So easily out of mind,
Those chances to be angels
Which we poor mortals find—
They come in night and silence,
Each sad, reproachful wraith,
When hope is faint and flagging
And a chill has fallen on faith.

For life is all too short, dear,
And sorrow is all too great,
To suffer our slow compassion
That tarries until too late;
And it isn't the thing you do, dear,
It's the thing you leave undone,
Which gives you a bit of a heart-ache
At the setting of the sun.

THE LURE OF ENGLAND

The late Stephen Phillips, the poet, offered in "The Poetry Review" a prize for the best war poem, and this is the poem which won it. It tells how the soldier, blinded in the war, thinks of England before his sorrowful return to her. The writer, Miss C. A. Renshaw, B.A., is a teacher in the Sheffield schools. In her poems on the war Miss Renshaw has displayed a most sympathetic insight into the mind of the soldier in the trenches, "going over," and in his long and dreary waits when the homeland has shone like heaven in his thoughts. Perhaps in these pathetic verses her interpretation sounds its most poignant note.

There's a misty sea-girt island in the sunset-haunted west;
I can see it in my wounded dreams of home.
I can see the dwindling hedgerows where the sparrow builds her nest,
And the grassland with its throw of daisied foam.

Oh! there's Spring upon the island, and the greening lures me back
To mysterious meres and woodways in the west.
. . . They have stripped my manhood from me, they have stretched me on the rack . . .
. . . Take me home, a blinded, broken thing, to rest!

I can never see the island with its fields of sheeted gold,
And the wisps of sunset drifting in the west.
Darkness drowns the dim green valleys and the silent hills of old,
And the hedges where the sparrow builds her nest.

Let me put my blind eyes down among the bluebells and the grass.
Let me feel the brimming coolness on my brow.
Let me touch the dewy bracken where the dreamful shadows pass.
. . . I have bled for England! . . .
Let her heal me now!

O England, misty England, grey and vague across the sea!
All your bluebells bloom in May-time, and your skies are throbbing blue,
. . . Here, the streams are streaked with crimson, and red Death is haunting me.
—England, England! all my hungry heart is yearning back to you!

O my misty sea-girt island in the sunset-laden west!
I can feel your moorland wind upon my eyes;
I can hear your sleepy birdeens in their swaying moonlit nest . . .
England—England! . . . with your bluebells and your skies!

MY PSALM

There is a deep personal interest in this poem. It was William Lloyd Garrison who published John Greenleaf Whittier's poems when he found him working as a young man in his father's cornfield; and on his 70th birthday, when the great crusade that freed the slaves had been fought and won, Garrison went back to his old printing office, stood at the type box, and set up this psalm of Whittier's without making one mistake.

I MOURN no more my vanished years;
Beneath a tender rain,
An April rain of smiles and tears,
My heart is young again.

The west winds blow, and, singing low,
I hear the glad streams run;
The windows of my soul I throw
Wide open to the sun.

No longer forward nor behind
I look in hope or fear;
But, grateful, take the good I find,
The best of now and here.

I plough no more a desert land,
To harvest weed and tare;
The manna dropping from God's hand
Rebukes my painful care.

I break my pilgrim staff, I lay
Aside the toiling oar;
The angel sought so far away
I welcome at my door.

The airs of spring may never play
Among the ripening corn,
Nor freshness of the flowers of May
Blow through the autumn morn;

Yet shall the blue-eyed gentian look
Through fringed lids to heaven,
And the pale aster in the brook
Shall see its image given;

The woods shall wear their robes of praise,
The south wind softly sigh,
And sweet, calm days in golden haze
Melt down the amber sky.

Not less shall manly deed and word
Rebuke an age of wrong,
The graven flowers that wreathe the sword
Make not the blade less strong.

But smiting hands shall learn to heal,
To build as to destroy;
Nor less my heart for others feel
That I the more enjoy.

All as God wills, who wisely heeds
To give or to withhold,
And knoweth more of all my needs
Than all my prayers have told!

Enough that blessings undeserved
Have marked my erring track;
That whereso'er my feet have swerved,
His chastening turned me back;

That more and more a Providence
Of love is understood,
Making the springs of time and sense
Sweet with eternal good;

That death seems but a covered way
Which opens into light,
Wherein no blinded child can stray
Beyond the Father's sight;

That care and trial seem at last,
Through Memory's sunset air,
Like mountain-ranges overpast,
In purple distance fair;

That all the jarring notes of life
Seem blending in a psalm,
And all the angels of its strife
Slow rounding into calm.

And so the shadows fall apart,
And so the west winds play;
And all the windows of my heart
I open to the day.

TO W.L.G.

W.L.G. is William Lloyd Garrison, one of the bravest men who ever lived. He faced a hostile nation, feared no man, and left no stone unturned by day or night till he freed the slaves. This tribute to him is by John Greenleaf Whittier.

CHAMPION of those who groan beneath
Oppression's iron hand:
In view of penury, hate, and death,
I see thee fearless stand,
Still bearing up thy lofty brow,
In the steadfast strength of truth,
In manhood sealing well the vow
And promise of thy youth.

Go on—for thou hast chosen well;
On in the strength of God!
Long as one human heart shall swell
Beneath the tyrant's rod.
Speak in a slumbering nation's ear,
As thou hast ever spoken,
Until the dead in sin shall hear,
The fetter's link be broken!

I love thee with a brother's love,
I feel my pulses thrill,
To mark thy spirit soar above
The cloud of human ill.
My heart hath leaped to answer thine,
And echo back thy words,
As leaps the warrior's at the shine
And flash of kindred swords!

They tell me thou art rash and vain—
A searcher after fame;
That thou art striving but to gain
A long-enduring name;
That thou hast nerved the Afric's hand,
And steeled the Afric's heart,
To shake aloft his vengeful brand,
And rend his chain apart.

Have I not known thee well, and read
Thy mighty purpose long?
And watched the trials which have made
Thy human spirit strong?
And shall the slanderer's demon breath
Avail with one like me,
To dim the sunshine of my faith
And earnest trust in thee?

Go on—the dagger's point may glare
Amid the pathway's gloom;
The fate which sternly threatens there
Is glorious martyrdom!
Then onward with a martyr's zeal,
And wait thy sure reward
When man to man no more shall kneel,
And God alone be Lord!

ANTIQUITY

This poem is a satire on those who make a claim to antiquity. Many do, like the tomtit, and the jackdaw, and the raven, but the eagle knows that true age is so far off that going back to the very making of the birds may still leave one young compared with the oldest things. The writer, Mortimer Collins, was a novelist and poet who died in 1876, before he was fifty. He was greater as a lover of birds than as a poet, and the birds knew him so well that they would let him stroke them as they sat on their nests.

THE eagle said, " I am old " ;
Said the tomtit, " I'm older than you "—
A ball of green and gold
That had counted summers two.

And the jackdaw said, from his perch,
A pulpit of grey old stone,
" 'Twas I first founded the Church:
Leave questions of age alone."

And the raven came with a croak,
A mixture of humour and woe,
And claimed the Druid's oak
And the magical mistletoe.

But the eagle, far withdrawn,
Remembered old royal words,
When on Eden's sun-touched lawn
God said, " Let us make the birds."

And away into ether rare,
And close to the sun's fierce gold,
Rose the king of the kings of the air,
Crying, " Ay, I am young! I am old! "

A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

According to the Greek mythology, the god Pan, the goat-shaped shepherd's god, invented the pan-pipes on which shepherds used to play as they watched their flocks; and here Elizabeth Barrett Browning imaginatively tells us how he did it. Pan is also the fabled inspirer of the poetry of an open-air life, and so there runs through this poem an undercurrent of meaning, the pipe Pan plays on being intended as a figure of the poets who bring their sweet music to the world.

WHAT was he doing, the great god Pan,
Down in the reeds by the river?
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat
With the dragon-fly on the river?

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
From the deep, cool bed of the river.
The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,
And the dragon-fly had fled away,
Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sate the great god Pan,
While turbidly flowed the river,
And hacked and hewed as a great god can,
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of a leaf indeed
To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,
(How tall it stood in the river!)
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
Then notched the poor, dry, empty thing
In holes as he sate by the river.

" This is the way," laughed the great god Pan
(Laughed while he sate by the river!),
" The only way since gods began
To make sweet music they could succeed."
Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,
He blew in power by the river.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan,
Piercing sweet by the river!
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly
Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan
To laugh, as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man.
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain—
For the reed that grows nevermore again
As a reed with the reeds in the river.

THE VOICELESS

Oliver Wendell Holmes suggests that many in their hearts are poets, but cannot express their feelings, or, in the words of Gray, " wake to ecstasy the living lyre." For such this graceful lament is penned. Sappho, mentioned in the second verse, was an impassioned Greek poetess who lived about 600 B.C. She is said to have thrown herself into the sea from the Leucadian rock when disappointed in love.

WE count the broken lyres that rest
Where the sweet wailing singers slumber,
But o'er their silent sister's breast
The wild flowers who will stoop to number?
A few can touch the magic string,
And noisy Fame is proud to win them;
Alas! for those that never sing,
But die with all their music in them.

Nay, grieve not for the dead alone
Whose song has told their hearts' sad story—
Weep for the voiceless who have known
The cross without the crown of glory!
Not where Leucadian breezes sweep
O'er Sappho's memory-haunted billow,
But where the glistening night-dews weep
On nameless sorrow's churchyard pillow.

O hearts that break and give no sign,
Save whitening lip and fading tresses,
Till Death pours out his cordial wine,
Slow-dropped from Misery's crushing presses.
If singing breath or echoing chord
To every hidden pang were given,
What endless melodies were poured,
As sad as earth, as sweet as heaven!

THE BONNIE BANKS OF AYR

Robert Burns, the poet, was ruined and in despair, partly through his own wild conduct, and he determined to leave Scotland for Jamaica. On his way to Greenock, where the ship was to start, he wrote this farewell song. To get money for his voyage he had published a book of poems. Finding they were a great success, he changed his mind, and did not leave the country. Notice how he makes all the aspects of Nature which he describes express the tumult of grief raging within him. The name Coila means a district in Ayrshire, where, according to tradition, a Pictish king, Coilus, once reigned.

THE gloomy night is gathering fast,
Loud roars the wild, inconstant blast;
Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,
I see it driving o'er the plain;

ROBERT BURNS

The hunter now has left the moor,
The scattered coveys meet secure;
While here I wander, prest with care,
Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

The autumn mourns her ripening corn,
By early winter's ravage torn;
Across her placid, azure sky,
She sees the scowling tempest fly:
Chill runs my blood to hear it rave—
I think upon the stormy wave,
Where many a danger I must dare,
Far from the bonnie banks of Ayr.

'Tis not the surging billow's roar,
'Tis not that fatal, deadly shore;
Tho' death in every shape appear,
The wretched have no more to fear!
But round my heart the ties are bound,
That heart transpierced with many a wound;
These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,
To leave the bonnie banks of Ayr.

Farewell, old Coila's hills and dales,
Her healthy moors and winding vales;
The scenes where wretched fancy roves,
Pursuing past unhappy loves!
Farewell, my friends! farewell, my foes!
My peace with these, my love with those—
The bursting tears my heart declare;
Farewell, the bonnie banks of Ayr!

UP IN THE MORNING EARLY

Robert Burns wrote this song to suit the chorus, which is much older than his time. He tries to give the winter feeling of bitter rawness more clearly than it is felt in the chorus.

CAULD blaws the wind frae east to west,
The drift is driving sairly;
Sae loud and shrill I hear the blast,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

Up in the morning's no for me,
Up in the morning early;
When a' the hills are covered wi' snaw,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

The birds sit chittering in the thorn,
A' day they fare but sparely;
And lang's the night frae e'en to morn—
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

Up in the morning's no for me,
Up in the morning early;
When a' the hills are covered wi' snaw,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

A NIGHT-RAIN IN SUMMER

This scrap of the poetry of the open window was written by Leigh Hunt in days when people did not know the greatness of the gift of fresh air. The old word 'coil" meant noise or tumult, but the line in which it occurs here is obscure. Leigh Hunt was a graceful writer, living in the nineteenth century.

OPEN the window, and let the air
Freshly blow upon face and hair,
And fill the room, as it fills the night,
With the breath of the rain's sweet might.
Hark! the burthen, swift and prone!
And how the odorous limes are blown!
Stormy Love's abroad, and keeps
Hopeful coil for gentle sleeps.

Not a blink shall burn tonight
In my chamber, of sordid light;
Nought will I have, not a window-pane,
'Twixt me and the air and the great good rain,
Which ever shall sing me sharp lullabies;
And God's own darkness shall close mine eyes;
And I will sleep, with all things blest,
In the pure earth-shadows of natural rest.

A BACHELOR'S RHYME

There was a robust good sense about everything that came from the pen of Charles Mackay, the song-writer, and nothing that he wrote shows his sturdy wisdom more clearly than this sketch of the kind of woman whom it would be foolish for a man who hopes to succeed in life to marry.

Do you think I'd marry a woman
That can neither cook nor sew,
Nor mend a rent in her gloves,
Or a tuck in her furbelow;
Who spends her time in reading
The novels that come and go;
Who tortures heavenly music,
And makes it a thing of woe;
Who deems three-fourths of my income
Too little, by half, to show
What a figure she'd make, if I'd let her,
'Mid the belles of Rotten Row;
Who has not a thought in her head,
Where thoughts are expected to grow,
Except of trumpery scandals
Too small for a man to know?
Do you think I'd wed with *that*
Because both high and low
Are charmed by her youthful graces
And her shoulders white as snow?
Ah, no! I've a wish to be happy,
I've a thousand a year or so,
'Tis all I can expect
That fortune will bestow!
So, pretty one, idle one, stupid one!
You're not for me, I trow,
Today, nor yet tomorrow.
No, no! Decidedly no!

THE LIVING TEMPLE

This is a poem of the human body. The writer, Oliver Wendell Holmes, was not only a poet and a doctor, but a professor of anatomy. Who, then, so fit as he to sing the wonders of man's physical home? In successive verses he describes the action of the lungs, and heart, the structure of the bony skeleton, and the nerves it protects, the eye, the ear, the brain; and in all he sees divine wisdom and love

Not in the world of light alone,
Where God has built His blazing throne,
Nor yet alone in earth below,
With belted seas that come and go,
And endless isles of sunlit green,
Is all thy Maker's glory seen:
Look in upon thy wondrous frame—
Eternal wisdom still the same!

The smooth, soft air with pulse-like waves
Flows murmuring through its hidden caves,
Whose streams of brightening purple rush
Fired with a new and livelier blush,
While all their burden of decay
The ebbing current steals away,
And red with Nature's flame they start
From the warm fountains of the heart.

No rest that throbbing slave may ask,
For ever quivering o'er his task,
While far and wide a crimson jet
Leaps forth to fill the woven net
Which in unnumbered crossing tides
The flood of burning life divides,
Then kindling each decaying part
Creeps back to find the throbbing heart.

But warmed with that unchanging flame
Behold the outward moving frame,
Its living marbles jointed strong
With glistening band and silvery thong,
And linked to reason's guiding reins
By myriad rings in trembling chains,
Each graven with the threaded zone
Which claims it as the Master's own.

See how yon beam of seeming white
Is braided out of seven-hued light,
Yet in those lucid globes no ray
By any chance shall break astray.
Hark how the rolling surge of sound,
Arches and spirals circling round,
Wakes the hushed spirit through thine ear
With music it is heaven to hear.

Then mark the cloven sphere that holds
All thought in its mysterious folds,
That feels sensation's faintest thrill,
And flashes forth the sovereign will;
Think on the stormy world that dwells
Locked in its dim and clustering cells!
The lightning gleams of power it sheds
Along its slender, grassy threads!

O Father! grant Thy love divine
To make these mystic temples Thine!
When wasting age and wearying strife
Have sapped the leaning walls of life,
When darkness gathers over all,
And the last tottering pillars fall,
Take the poor dust Thy mercy warms
And mould it into heavenly forms.

BROTHERHOOD

Brotherhood, under the Fatherhood of God, was Christ's teaching, and here Edwin Markham, a living American poet sings of its coming. What is known as the "Aftermath" is the second crop of grass from a field left for mowing. It is often called, in England, the "lattermath," or later crop.

The crest and crowning of all good,
Life's final star is brotherhood,
For it will bring again to earth
Her long-lost poesy and mirth;
Will send new light on every face,
A kingly power upon the race.
And till it come we men are slaves,
And travel downward to the dust of graves.

Come, clear the way, then clear the way!
Blind creeds and kings have had their day.
Break the dead branches from the path:
Our hope is in the aftermath—
Our hope is in heroic men,
Star-led to build the world again,
To this event the ages ran:
Make way for brotherhood—make way for man.

ROCKED IN THE CRADLE OF THE DEEP

This hymn of faith, best known as a song, was written by Emma Willard, who, for many years in the middle of the nineteenth century, was the most popular schoolmistress in the United States. She continued her work till she was over seventy, and wrote school books of which over a million copies were circulated. Perhaps no one who ever heard this song has crossed the ocean without thinking of it.

ROCKED in the cradle of the deep,
I lay me down in peace to sleep;
Secure I rest upon the wave,
For Thou, O Lord, hast power to save.

I know Thou wilt not slight my call,
For Thou dost mark the sparrow's fall;
And calm and peaceful is my sleep,
Rocked in the cradle of the deep.

And such the trust that still were mine,
Though stormy winds swept o'er the brine,
Or though the tempest's fiery breath
Roused me from sleep to wreck and death.

In ocean's caves still safe with Thee,
The germ of immortality;
And calm and peaceful is my sleep,
Rocked in the cradle of the deep.

THE REWARD

Here John Greenleaf Whittier gives a picture of a sensitive man looking backward over his own life—the bad of it and the good of it—with sorrow for what was wrong and gratitude for whatever has made him helpful, and feeling that from whatever was good he will gain a growing strength.

WHO, looking backward from his manhood's prime,
Sees not the spectre of his misspent time?
And, through the shade
Of funeral cypress planted thick behind,
Hears no reproachful whisper on the wind
From his loved dead?

Who bears no trace of passion's evil force?
Who shuns thy sting, O terrible Remorse?
Who does not cast
On the thronged pages of his memory's book,
At times, a sad and half-reluctant look,
Regretful of the Past?

Alas! the evil which we fain would shun
We do, and leave the wished-for good undone:
Our strength today
Is but tomorrow's weakness, prone to fall;
Poor, blind, unprofitable servants all
Are we alway.

Yet who, thus looking backward o'er his years,
Feels not his eyelids wet with grateful tears,
If he hath been
Permitted, weak and sinful as he was,
To cheer and aid, in some ennobling cause,
His fellow-men?

If he hath hidden the outcast, or let in
A ray of sunshine to the cell of sin—
If he hath lent
Strength to the weak, and, in the hour of need,
Over the suffering, mindless of his creed
Or home, hath bent—

He hath not lived in vain, and while he gives
The praise to Him in whom he moves and lives,
With thankful heart,
He gazes backward, and with hope before,
Knowing that from his works he nevermore
Can henceforth part.

THE TOILING CHILDREN

The terrible state of overworked children, as described in these verses by W. W. Whitlock in the "New York Times," was true in England far on into the nineteenth century, and has remained still true in some parts of the United States.

WE never see the blue, big sky
From out some country lane,
We never watch the clouds sail by
Above the waving grain,
We never hear at close of day
The birds grow quiet in sleep,
We never run, we never play—
We only toil and weep.

The dark, cold night has hardly fled
Ere we are set to work,
With weary fingers, aching head—
But, ah, we dare not shirk!
"Work fast! Work fast!" our parents cry,
And though our tears flow free,
We choke them back, for if we cry
Our task we cannot see.

We are so young, the day's so long,
Yet there's no time to smile,
Or make believe, or sing a song—
And oh, to sleep a while!
But no, we do not dare to pause,
They beat us if we do—
Oh, tell us, are there, then, no laws
For little children, too?

We only ask a little play,
A little youth and zest,
A little time for fun each day,
A little sleep and rest.
We're always hungry, often cold,
Oh, let us stop, we pray!
It cannot be that God's been told
How long we work each day.

THE PARADISE OF GOD

Charles Kingsley, the writer of this hymn, was Canon of Westminster when he died, in 1875. It is a hymn to be sung on "Hospital" Sunday. Kingsley misses the great fact that all life would be very much poorer without death.

FROM Thee all skill and science flow,
All pity, care, and love,
All calm and courage, faith and hope,
O pour them from above!

And part them, Lord, to each and all,
As each and all shall need,
To rise like incense, each to Thee,
In noble thought and deed.

And hasten, Lord, that perfect day
When pain and death shall cease,
And Thy just rule shall fill the earth
With health, and light, and peace;

When ever blue the sky shall gleam,
And ever green the sod,
And man's rude work deface no more
The paradise of God.

TEARS

Many people are ashamed of tears, but this poem gives them a new dignity and meaning. The poet, with fine insight, presents them to us in a number of beautiful little pictures, or similes. His name was Robert Leighton. He was born in 1822, went round the world as a sailor lad, and afterwards came home and succeeded in business. He died in 1869.

WHENCE are these tears that come with sudden start,
In spite of nerve that struggles to restrain,
From overflowing cisterns of the heart,
Or wells within the brain?

That heart-beats have to do with them I know---
Quick beats of joy, slow beats of weary dole;
And, whether out of heart or brain they flow,
Close kin are they with soul.

Fine mists of thought condensed to dewy speech,
Pearls of emotion from their shells set free,
Wavelets that come with treasure to the beach
Of life's mysterious sea.

Naked affections from their Eden driven,
To seek another through this world's unrest;
Embodied spirit from the little heaven
Each keeps in his own breast.

Akin to all that we most sacred hold,
Twin-born with thought, affection, joy, and care;
Twin-born, but how we never may unfold,
Nor Heaven itself declare.

They are not what they seem. If we despise
The weak creations of our childish years,
A higher wisdom comes to recognise
The sacredness of tears.

THERE AM I

This poem, by Henry Van Dyke, a living American university professor, is based upon one of the traditional sayings of Jesus that are not in the Bible—"Raise the stone and you shall find Me; cleave the wood and there am I." The poet treats this saying as a sanctification of labour; it may have other meanings, such as the sanctification of knowledge.

THEY who tread the path of labour
Follow where My feet have trod;
They who work without complaining
Do the holy will of God.

Where the many toil together,
There am I among My own;
Where the tired workman sleepeth,
There am I with him alone.

I, the peace that passeth knowledge,
Dwell amid the daily strife,
I, the bread of heaven, am broken
In the sacrament of life.

Every task, however simple,
Sets the soul that does it free,
Every deed of love and mercy
Done to man is done to Me.

Nevermore thou needest seek Me,
I am with thee everywhere;
Raise the stone and thou shalt find Me;
Cleave the wood and I am there.

THE PRELUDE OF THE PAST

The main thought of this poem, by John Greenleaf Whittier—the presence with us, now and here, of all the world's past good—is the comfort and inspiration of myriads of helpful lives.

O SOMETIMES gleams upon our sight,
Through present Wrong, the eternal Right;
And step by step, since time began,
We see the steady gain of man.

That all of good the past have had
Remains to make our own time glad,
Our common, daily life divine,
And every land a Palestine.

Through the harsh noises of our day
A low, sweet prelude finds it way;
Through clouds of doubt, and creeds of fear,
A light is breaking calm and clear.

Henceforth my soul shall sigh no more
For olden time and holier shore;
God's love and blessing, then and there,
Are now and here and everywhere.

A LITTLE GARDEN OF VERSES

IF I KNEW YOU

Joaquin Miller was the literary name of an extraordinary American born in 1841. He became a miner, he fought in the Red Indian wars, and was an editor, a lawyer, a fruit-grower, and a judge. He felt strongly and wrote strongly, but he felt and wrote tenderly, too, as in such verse as this.

If I knew you, and you knew me,
  And both of us could clearly see,
I'm sure that we would differ less,
And clasp our hands in friendliness—
If I knew you, and you knew me.

In men whom men pronounce as ill,
I find so much of goodness still;
In men whom men pronounce divine,
I find so much of sin and blot;
I hesitate to draw the line
Between the two, when God has not.

TO A FALSE PATRIOT

"Punch" is one of our great possessions; if we were asked to draw up a list of the things that stand for England, we could no more leave out "Punch" than we could leave out the Children's Encyclopedia. And among the best verse that is written in these days are the poems by the editor of "Punch," Sir Owen Seaman. This is one of them—a terrible rebuke to those cruel, thoughtless people who offer drink to soldiers and help them on the road to ruin.

He came obedient to the Call;
  He might have shirked like half his mates
Who, while their comrades fight and fall,
  Still go to swell the football gates.

And you, a patriot in your prime,
  You waved a flag above his head,
And hoped he'd have a high old time,
  And slapped him on the back and said:

"You'll show 'em what we British are!
  Give us your hand, old pal, to shake!"
And took him round from bar to bar
  And made him drunk—for England's sake.

That's how you helped him. Yesterday,
  Clear-eyed and earnest, keen and hard,
He held himself the soldier's way—
  And now they've got him under guard.

That doesn't hurt you, you're all right;
  Your easy conscience takes no blame;
But he, poor boy, with morning's light,
  He eats his heart out, sick with shame.
What's that to you? You understand
  Nothing of all his bitter pain;
You have no regiment to brand;
  You have no uniform to stain;
No vow of service to abuse,
  No pledge to King and country due;
But he had something dear to lose,
  And he has lost it—thanks to you.

A VERY EARLY RISER

Here is a merry quatrain by Gerald Massey, a vigorous thinker and writer and poet of the last generation, who died in 1907.

At the Last Day, while all the rest
  Are soundly sleeping underground,
He will be up, clean-shaved and dressed,
  An hour before the trumpets sound.

THE GIFTS I ASK

We shall all be better people if we make this prayer our own. It is by Henry Van Dyke, of New York, poet and ambassador.

These are the gifts I ask
  Of Thee, Spirit serene:
Strength for the daily task,
Courage to face the road,
Good cheer to help me bear the traveller's load,
And, for the hours of rest that come between,
An inward joy in all things heard and seen.
These are the sins I fain
Would have Thee take away:
Malice and cold disdain,
Hot anger, sullen hate,
Scorn of the lowly, envy of the great,
And discontent that casts a shadow grey
On all the brightness of a common day.

ON THE BIRTH OF A SON

Eight hundred years ago some Chinese poet wrote these eight lines, which have lately been translated and seem quite well to fit a modern book. The merry irony of the hit at politicians seems like a perfect touch of yesterday.

Families, when a child is born,
  Hope it will turn out intelligent.
I, through intelligence
Having wrecked my whole life,
Only hope that the baby will prove
Ignorant and stupid.
Then he'll be happy all his days
And grow into a Cabinet Minister.

LITTLE BROTHER

The longing here expressed to know and help children going contentedly and pluckily about their play or work is felt by all kind people. The lines are taken from the American "Independent," and the writer who so well and so tenderly interprets a general feeling is Max Preston Slosson.

PLAYING in the city street,
Little Brother;
Running errands with swift feet;
Passing me with footsteps fleet;
Ought we not to know each other—
Little Brother?

Care comes early at our call—
Little Brother;
Far too heavy burdens fall
On your shoulders slight and small.
Would that I could lift them all,
Little Brother!

In the world's relentless mart,
Little Brother,
Each must bear his manly part,
Earn his bread with toil and smart—
But *your* courage breaks my heart,
Little Brother!

Surely there are, unconfest,
Little Brother,
Longings in your boyish breast?
Teach me how to help you best—
How we each may help the other—
Little Brother!

LOVE AND AGE

These verses, showing how the sentiments of childhood and youth may be continued, as mild and kind remembrances, right on into old age, were written by Thomas Love Peacock, who lived between the years 1785 and 1866. He was one of the chief clerks under the East India Company. In his leisure he wrote a number of tales, but they were too clever to be easily understood, and now he is known better by the occasional verses he scattered through his books. These tender lines show him in a favourable mood. Often his humour had a bitter taste, and was not so pleasing.

I PLAYED with you 'mid cowslips blowing,
When I was six and you were four;
When garlands weaving, flower-balls throwing,
Were pleasures soon to please no more.
Through groves and meads, o'er grass and heather,
With little playmates, to and fro,
We wandered hand in hand together—
But that was sixty years ago.

You grew a lovely roseate maiden,
And still our early love was strong;
Still with no care our days were laden,
They glided joyously along;
And did I love you very dearly,
How dearly words want power to show;
I thought your heart was touched as nearly—
But that was fifty years ago.

Then other lovers came around you,
Your beauty grew from year to year,
And many a splendid circle found you
The centre of its glittering sphere.
I saw you then, first vows forsaking,
On rank and wealth your hand bestow;
Oh, then I thought my heart was breaking—
But that was forty years ago.

And I lived on, to wed another:
No cause she gave me to repine;
And when I heard you were a mother,
I did not wish the children mine.
My own young flock, in fair progression,
Made up a pleasant Christmas row;
My joy in them was past expression—
But that was thirty years ago.

You grew a matron plump and comely,
You dwelt in fashion's brightest blaze;
My earthly lot was far more homely,
But I, too, had my festal days.
No merrier eyes have ever glistened
Around the hearthstone's wintry glow
Than when my youngest child was christened—
But that was twenty years ago.

Time passed. My eldest girl was married,
And I am now a grandsire grey;
One pet of four years old I've carried
Among the wild-flowered meads to play.
In our old fields of childish pleasure,
Where now, as then, the cowslips blow,
She fills her basket's ample measure—
And that is not ten years ago.

But though first love's impassioned blindness
Has passed away in colder light,
I still have thought of you with kindness,
And shall do till our last good-night.
The ever-rolling, silent hours
Will bring a time we shall not know,
When our young days of gathering flowers
Will be an hundred years ago.

REST

These thoughts in verse are from the great German poet Goethe—the greatest of all German poets and writers, and one of the giants of European literature. He lived between 1749 and 1832. These twelve lines are worth careful study as an instance of compression of thought. Nine thoughts are expressed in less than fifty words in this fine little poem.

REST is not quitting
The busy career;
Rest is the fitting
Of self to one's sphere.

'Tis the brook's motion,
Clear without strife;
Fleeting to ocean,
After its life.

'Tis loving and serving
The highest and best;
'Tis onward, unswerving,
And this is true rest.

THE CHILD

In these two verses, written by an American, James Oppenheim, is the most hopeful thought that can visit men's minds. The human race is born anew from God with every generation of babes, and we can never know which children will grow into the men who may change the world as Christ changed it by His goodness. A child, too, that may not be destined to have great influence, like Shakespeare has had, is a living spirit greater than all material things; and so no care that can be exercised on its behalf can possibly be too great.

You may be Christ or Shakespeare, little child,
A saviour or a sun to the lost world.
There is no babe born but may carry furled
Strength to make bloom the world's disastrous wild.
Oh, what then must our labours be to mould you,
To open the heart, to build with dream the brain,
To strengthen the young soul in toil and pain,
Till our age-aching hands no longer hold you!

Vision far-dreamed! But soft! If your last goal
Be low, if you are only common clay,
What then? Toil lost? Were our toil trebled, nay!
You are a soul, you are a human soul,
A greater than the skies ten-trillion starred—
Shakespeare no greater, O you slip of God!

OPTIMISM

An American lady, Marguerite Ogden Bigelow, tells us in these verses what learned men of science tell us in prose, that any force started in the world never dies away and is lost, but goes on acting in changing forms, and producing effects good or bad. Tennyson said the same of our moral actions: "Our echoes roll from soul to soul, and grow for ever and for ever."

There was never a sunbeam lost, and never a drop of rain;
There was never a carol sweet that was sung, and sung in vain;
There was never a noble thought, but through endless years it lives:
And never a blacksmith's blow, but an endless use it gives.

There was never a child's full laugh, or a woman's cheerful word,
That did not exalt the state where its tones were felt and heard.
Know, then, that it still holds true from the skies to the humblest soil,
That there is no wasted love and there is no wasted toil!

PESSIMISM

A pessimist is one who feels that nothing is right, or likely to be for the best, and, seeing only the worst side of things, grumbles. The writer of these quaint verses, Ben King, grumbles to make grumbling ridiculous, and then, in the last two lines, healthily sweeps away his pretended discontent.

Nothing to do but work,
Nothing to eat but food;
Nothing to wear but clothes,
To keep one from going nude.

Nothing to breathe but air,
Quick as a flash 'tis gone;
Nowhere to fall but off,
Nowhere to stand but on.

Nothing to comb but hair,
Nowhere to sleep but in bed;
Nothing to weep but tears,
Nothing to bury but dead.

Nothing to sing but songs,
Ah, well, alas! alack!
Nowhere to go but out,
Nowhere to come but back.

Nothing to see but sights,
Nothing to quench but thirst;
Nothing to have but what we've got—
Thus through life we are cursed.

Nothing to strike but a gait;
Everything moves that goes
Nothing at all but common sense
Can ever withstand these woes.

A HEART TO KEEP

Over those who trust us in love we should watch with an unfailing care, and think of them as if their being were a beautiful marble cathedral, reserved sacred to pure, sweet thoughts. That is an idea, tender and true, expressed here, in smoothly chiselled lines, by Arthur O'Shaughnessy, a young poet who unfortunately died before he had an opportunity of giving to the world all the music that was in him.

If one should give me a heart to keep,
With love for the golden key,
The giver might live at ease or sleep;
It should ne'er know pain, be weary, or weep,
The heart watched over by me.

I would keep that heart as a temple fair,
No heathen should look therein;
Its chaste marmoreal beauty rare
I only should know, and to enter there
I must hold myself from sin.

THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO SPRING

When the winter has made the birds mute, stripped the trees and hardened the ground, and the snow has covered it, we might think the earth is dead; but life is waiting underneath—all things feel that faintly—and its fairy forms are making ready for the spring. An American lady has here conceived the pretty fancy that when the snow is gone the flowers will bloom in the footsteps of good children, thanks to the fairies.

There lies a path beneath the snow,
A path that leads to spring,
That bloom and bee and brooklet know,
And all the birds that sing.

And little fairy people pass
Along its shining way;
Beneath the snow, above the grass,
All winter there they play.

And when a little child is kind,
And runs with willing feet,
The fairies every footprint find,
And plant with blossoms sweet.

He may not know the road to spring
That eager children seek;
He may not know when bluebirds sing
The secret they would speak.

But when at last shall melt the snow,
And fairy folk are gone,
By blossoms he has made us grow,
The path shall lead him on.

THE ROMANCE OF THE SWAN'S NEST

Mrs. Browning, the writer of these smooth and tuneful verses ranks first among Englishwomen as a poet. She introduces us to the romantic mind of a fanciful little maid who has found a swan's nest, and makes for herself a tale of how she will show the nest only to a knightly lover. Alas! the spirited tale ends in disappointment, as fancies often must. In the days of chivalry every knight performed brave deeds to please his lady fair.

LITTLE Ellie sits alone
'Mid the beeches of a meadow,
By a stream-side, on the grass:
And the trees are showering down
Doubles of their leaves in shadow,
On her shining hair and face.

She has thrown her bonnet by:
And her feet she has been dipping
In the shallow water's flow—
Now she holds them nakedly
In her hands, all sleek and dripping,
While she rocketh to and fro.

Little Ellie sits alone—
And the smile she softly useth
Fills the silence like a speech;
While she thinks what shall be done—
And the sweetest pleasure chooseth
For her future within reach.

Little Ellie in her smile
Chooseth . . . "I will have a lover,
Riding on a steed of steeds!
He shall love me without guile;
And to *him* I will discover
That swan's nest among the reeds.

"And the steed shall be red-roan,
And the lover shall be noble,
With an eye that takes the breath—
And the lute he plays upon
Shall strike ladies into trouble,
As his sword strikes men to death.

"And the steed, it shall be shod
All in silver, housed in azure,
And the mane shall swim the wind;
And the hoofs, along the sod,
Shall flash onward and keep measure,
Till the shepherds look behind.

"But my lover will not prize
All the glory that he rides in,
When he gazes in my face.
He will say, 'O Love, thine eyes
Build the shrine my soul abides in;
And I kneel here for thy grace.'

"Then, ay, then—he shall kneel low—
With the red-roan steed anear him,
Which shall seem to understand—
Till I answer, 'Rise and go!
For the world must love and fear him
Whom I gift with heart and hand.'

"Then he will arise so pale,
I shall feel my own lips tremble
With a *yes* I must not say—
Nathless, maiden-brave, 'Farewell,'
I will utter, and dissemble—
'Light to-morrow with to-day.'

"Then he will ride through the hills
To the wide world past the river,
There to put away all wrong;
To make straight distorted wills,
And to empty the broad quiver
Which the wicked bear along.

"Three times shall a young foot-page
Swim the stream, and climb the mountain,
And kneel down beside my feet—
'Lo! my master sends this gage,
Lady, for thy pity's counting!
What wilt thou exchange for it?'

"And the first time I will send
A white rosebud for a guerdon—
And the second time a glove;
But the third time—I may bend
From my pride, and answer—'Pardon—
If he comes to take my love.'

"Then the young foot-page will run—
Then my lover will ride faster,
Till he kneeleth at my knee:
'I am a duke's eldest son!
Thousand serfs do call me master—
But, O Love, I love but *thee*!'

"He will kiss me on the mouth
Then, and lead me as a lover,
Through the crowds that praise his deeds:
And when soul-tied by one troth,
Unto *him* I will discover
That swan's nest among the reeds."

Little Ellie, with her smile
Not yet ended, rose up gaily—
Tied the bonnet, donned the shoe—
And went homeward, round a mile,
Just to see, as she did daily,
What more eggs were with the two.

Pushing through the elm-tree copse,
Winding by the stream, light-hearted,
Where the osier pathway leads—
Past the boughs she stoops—and stops:
Lo! the wild swan had deserted—
And a rat had gnawed the reeds.

Ellie went home sad and slow;
If she found the lover ever,
With his red-roan steed of steeds,
Sooth I know not! but I know
She could never show him—never,
That swan's nest among the reeds!

TO DAFFODILS

Poetry sometimes lives because of the power of thought or passion in it; other kinds of poetry may live because of its perfect form. Robert Herrick, a merry Londoner of Shakespeare's time, wrote much verse of the light and musical kind. His short lyrics were like the mellow outbursts of a robin's song. At times, as in these verses, his tuneful fancy sounds a sadder strain.

FAIR daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon:
As yet the early rising sun
Has not attained his noon.
Stay, stay until the hasting day
Has run but to the evensong;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have a short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything. We die,
As your hours do, and dry away,
Like to the summer's rain;
Or, as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

THE MAN WHO IS TWELVE YEARS OLD

The great poet Wordsworth said, "The child is father of the man," and in these lines Maurice Smiley, an American writer, develops a similar thought. He sees in every boy of twelve the man into whom the boy will change in future years, and, knowing that all the great men of a later age are now boys, he takes off his hat and salutes the hidden greatness in boys, undeveloped, but there. That is why all boys and girls should be educated—nobody can tell where genius waits.

THERE'S a man that I know, and he lives near you,
In a town called Everywhere;
You might not think he's a man from his hat
Or the clothes he may chance to wear;
But under the jacket with many a patch
Is a heart more precious than gold—
The heart of a man 'neath the coat of a boy,
A man who is twelve years old.

He only is waiting to wear the crown
That already is made for his brow;
And I pray that his mind will always be clean,
His body as pure as snow;
His heart always fresh and sunny and warm,
And free from life's canker and mould,
And may he be worthy his waiting estate,
This man who is twelve years old.

We never may know what the future will make
Of the boys that we carelessly meet,
For many a statesman is now at school,
And presidents play in the street.
The hand that is busy with playthings now
The reins of power will hold;
So I take off my hat and gladly salute
This man who is twelve years old.

THE LITTLE LARK

The Taylor sisters, Jane and Ann, did not always write poetry when they put rhymes together for children, but here, in simple words, we have a picture of the lark high in the sky and its welcome of the morning which is tinted with poetry.

I HEAR a pretty bird, but hark!
I cannot see it anywhere.
Oh! it is a little lark,
Singing in the morning air.
Little lark, do tell me why
You are singing in the sky?

Other little birds at rest,
Have not yet begun to sing;
Every one is in its nest,
With its head behind its wing:
Little lark, then, tell me why
You're so early in the sky?

You look no bigger than a bee,
In the middle of the blue;
Up above the poplar tree,
I can hardly look at you:
Little lark, do tell me why
You are mounted up so high?

'Tis to watch the silver star,
Sinking slowly in the skies;
And beyond the mountain far,
See the glorious sun arise:
Little lady, this is why
I am mounted up so high.

'Tis to sing a merry song
To the pleasant morning light;
Why stay in my nest so long,
When the sun is shining bright?
Little lady, this is why
I sing so early in the sky.

To the little birds below,
I do sing a merry tune;
And I let the ploughman know
He must come to labour soon.
Little lady, this is why
I am singing in the sky.

A NOON SONG

Here we have a song chanting the glory of the great cheerful sun as it lights and revives the world till, by noonday, its heat brings stillness and rest. Notice the change in the metre after the first four lines, and how in the next four the words sway as if to the motion of a swing in the garden. The writer, Dr. Henry van Dyke, is an American professor.

THERE are songs for the morning and songs for the night,
For sunrise and sunset, the stars and the moon;
But who will give praise to the fullness of light,
And sing us a song of the glory of noon?
Oh, the high noon, and the clear noon,
The noon with golden crest;
When the sky burns, and the sun turns
With his face to the way of the west!

How swiftly he rose in the dawn of his strength;
How slowly he crept as the morning wore by;
Ah, steep was the climbing that led him at length
To the height of his throne in the blue summer sky.
Oh, the long toil, and the slow toil,
The toil that may not rest
Till the sun looks down from his journey's crown,
To the wonderful way of the west!

Then a quietness falls over meadow and hill,
The wings of the wind in the forest are furled;
The river runs softly, the birds are all still,
And the workers are resting all over the world.
Oh, the good hour, and the kind hour,
The hour that calms the breast!
Little inn half-way on the road of the day,
Where it follows the turn to the west.

There's a plentiful feast in the maple-tree shade,
The lilt of a song to an old-fashioned tune;
The talk of a friend, and the kiss of a maid,
To sweeten the cup that we drink to the noon.
Oh, the deep noon, and the full noon,
Of all the day the best!
When the sky burns, and the sun turns
To his home by the way of the west!

OH, FOR A BOOK

The love of a book has never been more sweetly put than in these quaint words by some unknown writer. The lines are not so old as they seem, having been written in imitation of verse of long ago, but they are beautiful enough to be really old.

Oh, for a booke and a shadie nooke,
Eyther in-a-dorre or out;
With the grene leaves whisp'ring overhede,
Or the streete cryes all about.
Where I maie reade all at my ease,
Both of the newe and olde;
For a jollie goode booke whereon to locke
Is better to me than golde.

THE MILLER OF THE DEE

Charles Mackay's songs always breathe a genial spirit, and this is one of the heartiest of them. The joy of inward health and gay content is carolled so naturally by the happy miller that he is envied by a passing king. Notice how well a story may be told in easy words. Out of 201 words in these verses 177 are of one syllable, and only one—"nobody"—has three

There dwelt a miller hale and bold
Beside the River Dee;
He wrought and sang from morn to night,
No lark more blithe than he;
And this the burden of his song
For ever used to be—
"I envy nobody, no, not I,
And nobody envies me!"

"Thou'rt wrong, my friend!" said old King Hal,
"Thou'rt wrong as wrong can be;
For could my heart be light as thine
I'd gladly change with thee.
And tell me now what makes thee sing
With voice so loud and free,
While I am sad, though I'm the king,
Beside the River Dee?"

The miller smiled and doffed his cap:
"I earn my bread," quoth he;
"I love my wife, I love my friends,
I love my children three;
I owe no penny I cannot pay;
I thank the River Dee,
That turns the mill and grinds the corn,
To feed my babes and me."

"Good friend!" said Hal, and sighed the while,
"Farewell, and happy be;
But say no more, if thou'dst be true,
That no one envies thee.
Thy mealy cap is worth my crown,
Thy mill my kingdom's fee!
Such men as thou are England's boast,
O miller of the Dee!"

ONE, TWO, THREE

The writer of this lovely poem was an American journalist, Henry Cayler Bunner, who was born in the middle of last century and died in 1896. The imaginative game played by the dear grandmother and the crippled child is described with fascinating clearness and a sweetness of feeling that causes the reader's heart to brim over. The maple-tree is common in America, and its leaf is the national emblem of Canada.

It was an old, old, old, old lady,
And a boy that was half-past three,
And the way that they played together
Was beautiful to see.

She couldn't go romping and jumping,
And the boy no more could he;
For he was a thin little fellow,
With a thin little twisted knee.

They sat in the yellow sunlight,
Out under the maple-tree,
And the game that they played I'll tell you
Just as it was told to me.

It was hide-and-go-seek they were playing—
Though you'd never have known it to be
With an old, old, old, old lady
And a boy with a twisted knee.

The boy would bend his face down
On his little sound right knee,
And he guessed where she was hiding
In guesses one, two, three.

"You are in the china-closet."
He would cry and laugh with glee—
It wasn't the china-closet,
But he still had two and three.

"You are up in papa's big bedroom,
In the chest with the queer old key."
And she said, "You are warmer and warmer,
But you are not quite right," said she.

"It can't be the little cupboard
Where mamma's things used to be—
So it must be in the clothes-press, gran'ma."
And he found her with his three.

Then she covered her face with her fingers,
That were wrinkled and white and wee;
And she guessed where the boy was hiding,
With a one and a two and a three.

And they never had stirred from their places,
Right under the maple-tree—
This old, old, old, old lady
And the boy with the lame little knee—
This dear, dear, dear old lady,
And the boy who was half-past three.

LADY MOON

The author of this pretty talk with the "pale-faced moon" was known during most of his lifetime as Richard Monckton Milnes, and much may be read about him in books that tell of writers in the middle of the nineteenth century, for he was rich, and he was kind and helpful to poor authors. In 1863 he became Lord Houghton, and his son is now the Earl of Crewe, and a leader in Parliament. The moon, perhaps the most personal thing in Nature, has cast her charm over many poets since Homer saw her as a "silver-footed queen."

"I see the moon, and the moon sees me;
God bless the moon, and God bless me."
Old Rhyme.

Lady Moon, Lady Moon, where are you roving?
Over the sea.
Lady Moon, Lady Moon, whom are you loving?
All that love me.

Are you tired with rolling, and never
Resting to sleep?
Why look so pale and so sad, as for ever
Wishing to weep?

Ask me not this, little child, if you love me;
You are too bold.
I must obey my dear Father above me,
And do as I'm told.

Lady Moon, Lady Moon, where are you roving?
Over the sea.
Lady Moon, Lady Moon, whom are you loving?
All that love me.

I WOULD LIKE YOU FOR A COMRADE

Judge Parry, judge of Lambeth County Court, is the clever author of many quaint rhymes for children, as well as grave books and gay plays for their elders. These pretty lines from one of his plays show how hard it is for quite dissimilar creatures to make their kindness for each other fully understood.

I would like you for a comrade, for I love you, that I do,
I never met a little girl as amiable as you;
I would teach you how to dance and sing, and how to talk and laugh,
If I were not a little girl and you were not a calf.

I would like you for a comrade; you should share my barley meal,
And butt me with your little horns just hard enough to feel;
We would lie beneath the chestnut-trees, and watch the leaves uncurl,
If I were not a clumsy calf and you a little girl.

A THANKSGIVING

The numberless beautiful sights and sounds of the prolific earth steal like music into the hearts of all of us, and the writer, Lucy Larcom, gives a voice to our instinctive delight, the voice of thanksgiving, that now finds utterance too seldom.

For the wealth of pathless forests
Whereon no axe may fall;
For the winds that haunt the branches,
The young birds' timid call;
For the red leaves dropped like rubies
Upon the dark green sod;
For the waving of the forests,
I thank Thee, O my God!

For the rosebud's break of beauty
Along the toiler's way;
For the violet's eye that opens
To bless the new-born day;
For the bare twigs that in summer
Blossom like the prophet's rod;
For the sweetness of the flowers,
I thank Thee, O my God!

THE OLD MAN DREAMS

Oliver Wendell Holmes, the most light-handed writer that the American States have produced, was fond of writing verses to cheer people against the oncoming of age. He and his friends met from time to time to persuade each other that they were still really young and that life was giving them a full reward. The verses given below are examples of the kind that Holmes wrote for these gatherings. They were first published in his "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table."

Oh, for one hour of youthful joy!
Give back my twentieth spring!
I'd rather laugh, a bright-haired boy,
Than reign, a grey-beard king.

Off with the spoils of wrinkled age!
Away with Learning's crown!
Tear out life's Wisdom-written page,
And dash its trophies down!

One moment let my life-blood stream
From boyhood's fount of flame!
Give me one giddy, reeling dream
Of life, all love and fame!

. . . . . .

My listening angel heard the prayer,
And, calmly smiling, said,
"If I but touch thy silvered hair,
Thy hasty wish hath sped.

"But is there nothing in thy track,
To bid thee fondly stay,
While the swift seasons hurry back
To find the wished-for day?"

"Ah, truest soul of womankind!
Without thee what were life?
One bliss I cannot leave behind:
I'll take—my—precious—wife!"

The angel took a sapphire pen,
And wrote in rainbow dew:
"The man would be a boy again,
And be a husband, too?"

"And is there nothing yet unsaid,
Before the change appears?
Remember, all their gifts have fled
With those dissolving years."

"Why, yes"—for memory would recall
My fond paternal joys;
"I could not bear to leave them all—
I'll take—my—girl—and—boys!"

The smiling angel dropped his pen—
"Why, this will never do;
The man would be a boy again,
And be a father, too!"

. . . . . .

And so I laughed—my laughter woke
The household with its noise—
And wrote my dream, when morning broke,
To please the grey-haired boys.

A CANADIAN FOLK-SONG

Dr. William Wilfred Campbell is a Canadian poet of Scottish descent, born in Ontario, June 1, 1861. He now holds a post in the Canadian Privy Council Office at Ottawa. Nearly all his poems have been interpretations of Canada, helping British people at home to understand the spirit of that great Dominion. In this folk-song we feel how Canada feels just as the winter is coming along, and cheerfulness takes shelter inside the house until the snow has fallen deeply. There is much fitness in the song of the Canadian kettle, because tea is the national drink of Canada even more than it is of England.

The doors are shut, the windows fast,
Outside the gust is driving past,
Outside the shivering ivy clings,
While on the hob the kettle sings—
Margery, Margery, make the tea,
Singeth the kettle merrily.

The streams are hushed up where they flowed,
The ponds are frozen along the road,
The cattle are housed in shed and byre,
While singeth the kettle on the fire—
Margery, Margery, make the tea,
Singeth the kettle merrily.

The fisherman on the bay in his boat
Shivers and buttons up his coat;
The traveller stops at the tavern door,
And the kettle answers the chimney's roar—
Margery, Margery, make the tea,
Singeth the kettle merrily.

The firelight dances upon the wall,
Footsteps are heard in the outer hall,
And a kiss and a welcome that fill the room,
And the kettle sings in the glimmer and gloom—
Margery, Margery, make the tea,
Singeth the kettle merrily.

SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

Whittier, the pure-minded poet of the movement for freeing the slaves of America, lived to a great age, and his best poems were written when he had left youth far behind. The verses given here are from a poem entitled "My Birthday," and they ask for a gift that was granted—namely, growing strength and serenity of spirit as the body became more and more frail.

Rest for the weary hands is good,
And love for hearts that pine,
But let the manly habitude
Of upright souls be mine.

Let winds that blow from heaven refresh,
Dear Lord, the languid air;
And let the weakness of the flesh
Thy strength of spirit share.

And if the eye must fail of light,
The ear forget to hear,
Make clearer still the spirit's sight,
More fine the inward ear!

Be near me in mine hours of need,
To soothe, or cheer, or warn,
And down these slopes of sunset lead
As up the hills of morn,

HE AND SHE

The universal wish of true love to serve the one loved is here glowingly expressed, with this further touch of truth—that the woman's nature carries her to the greatest self-surrender. The writer is an American lady, Mrs. Wetmore, who wrote many familar verses of this kind under her maiden name of Elizabeth Bisland.

"IF I were a king," he said,
"And you were just a lowly beggar maid,
With my strong hand I'd lift you to my side
And crown you queen; and in the great king's bride
Men would not know,
Or would forget, the beggar maid."

"If I were queen," she said,
"And you, a careless, wandering minstrel, strayed
To my fair court, I'd set you on the throne,
And being there, the greatest king e'er known,
I would kneel down
And serve you as your maid."

THE MUSICIAN

This sonnet, translated from the French of Theodore de Banville, sketches a saddening sight of the callousness of the world towards some of the unsuccessful. An old violinist, rapt and lost in his music, is rudely driven away by servants. But we may be sure this is not often the fate of clever men now. Usually they are cared for.

A WORN old man with flowing locks and white,
With brow as pallid as the April flowers,
With eyes so deep, so blue, it seemed the hours
Aging all else had left undimmed their light—

Held an old violin close-clasped and tight,
And improvised with all his master-powers,
Defying grief, while from his bow in showers,
Fell notes that sang both sorrow and delight.

He, hungry, cold, and clad but scantily,
Played all his timid tongue dare not reveal,
His youth's vain efforts, manhood's strife, the sore
And bitter sorrows only death can heal—
Lo! swift awakens from his ecstasy,
A servant struck him trembling from the door.

THE OBSTACLE

The familiar style of these verses must not cause us to overlook their sound sense. If we go right on and do not take any notice of people's prejudices, they will often disappear as if they were not there, though they can never be argued out of the way. The writer is Mrs. Gilman, an American author and lecturer, better known as Charlotte Perkins Stetson. She is a niece of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, who wrote "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and these verses are from a book called "In This Our World."

I WAS climbing up a mountain path,
With many things to do—
Important business of my own,
And other people's, too;
When I ran against a prejudice
That quite shut out the view.

My work was such as couldn't wait,
My path quite clearly showed;
My strength and time were limited,
I carried quite a load—
And there that hulking prejudice
Sat, all across the road.

So I spoke to him politely,
For he was huge and high;
I begged that he would move a bit
And let me travel by.
He smiled—but as for moving,
He didn't even try.

So then I reasoned quietly
With that colossal mule;
My time was short, no other path,
The mountain winds were cool.
I argued like a Solomon—
He sat there like a fool.

And then I begged him on my knees—
I might be kneeling still
If so I hoped to move that mass
Of obstinate ill-will.
As well implore the Monument
To vacate Bunker Hill.

So I sat before him helpless
In an ecstasy of woe;
The mountain mists were rising fast.
The sun was sinking low . . .
When a sudden inspiration came,
As sudden winds do blow.

I took my hat, I took my stick,
My load I settled fair—
I approached that awful incubus
With an absent-minded air—
And I walked directly through him
As if he wasn't there.

WHAT GRANDMA SAYS

An American writer named George Cooper has composed some very pretty poems for children, and we give this example. The lines that follow tell in the tenderest way how the thoughts of old people travel back to their childhood, and they sympathise with children of the present day through recollection of their own childish joys. Young people and old together make a charming picture.

THOSE were wonderful days of long ago,
Grandmother says, and she must know.
There was quilting to do the whole year round—
The length and the breadth of those quilts astound:
Then summers were nicer far than these,
Apples were larger, so were trees—
Grandma says.

The manners of folks were more polite,
Winters less cold, and flowers more bright,
And churning and work went on all day—
Nobody could have stopped to play.
Now, where were the little children then?
For girls were all women, boys all men—
Grandma says.

Do you think they had then discovered toys,
Or ever had games and other joys?
And as for a shout or a romp, I'm sure
That would not have suited folks demure.
They never had any time for fun;
Everyone knitted, darned, or spun—
Grandma says.

Now, it puzzled me once all this to hear,
Till one day I brought to Grandma dear
A doll that I'd found, so queer and old,
Its body its limbs could scarcely hold.
She took it up tenderly, and smiled—
"It's Betsy Maria Matilda, child!"
Grandma said.

Then she smoothed down its ragged frock, and told
Of playtimes in those good days of old;
A far-away look came in her eyes,
That beamed with the mildness of twilight skies.
But why did she weep if she was glad?
"The prettiest doll I ever had!"
Grandma said.

BEFORE THE RAIN

The poetry of the weather is always interesting, no matter where the place is that is being studied. In these verses it is the New England region that is being watched by Thomas Bailey Aldrich, a graceful American poet and chee ful tale-teller.

We knew it would rain, for all the morn
A spirit on slender ropes of mist
Was lowering its golden buckets down
Into the vapoury amethyst

Of marshes and swamps and dismal fens—
Scooping the dew that lay in the flowers,
Dipping the jewels out of the sea,
To sprinkle them over the land in showers.

We knew it would rain, for the poplars show'd
The white of their leaves; the amber grain
Shrunk in the wind; and the lightning now
Is tangled in tremulous skeins of rain.

AFTER THE RAIN

A companion picture—another example of Mr. Aldrich's descriptive style, with its selection of things best worth seeing. The scene is much more clearly described than in the poem "Before the Rain," as is natural in the pure air cleared by the refreshing shower. The writer, who contributed frequently to the American magazines and newspapers, died four years ago.

The rain has ceased, and in my room
The sunshine pours an airy flood;
And on the church's dizzy vane
The ancient cross is bathed in blood.

From out the dripping ivy-leaves,
Antiquely carven, grey and high,
A dormer, facing westward, looks
Upon the village like an eye:

And now it glimmers in the sun,
A square of gold, a disc, a speck:
And in the belfry sits a dove
With purple ripples on her neck.

THE LAST LEAF

No more affecting poem about old age has ever been written than this by Oliver Wendell Holmes. The seemingly incongruous touch of thoughtless humour in the last verse but one was introduced probably to relieve the strain of the pathos which the poet had evoked. Oliver Wendell Holmes, dying at eighty-five, was "the last leaf upon the tree" of his generation, but he was so beloved that no one ever smiled at him.

I saw him once before,
As he passed by the door;
And again
The pavement-stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground,
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
And it seems as if he said,
"They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has pressed
In their bloom;
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said—
Poor old lady! she is dead
Long ago—
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
In the snow.

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
Like a staff;
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
At him here,
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling.

THE FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY OF AGASSIZ

Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz was a great student of the story of the earth as it may be read in animals and rocks. Born in Switzerland, in the district known as the Pays de Vaud, he left his native land before middle life and settled in America, where he was much honoured. The Swiss often have a great longing to go back to their own country, especially when they hear again the "Ranz des Vaches," or cowherd's song, as they heard it in childhood on the mountains. When Longfellow wrote these lines Agassiz had been more than ten years away from Switzerland, and the poet sympathised deeply with his love for the distant land where he was born. Agassiz lived at a time when fascinating discoveries were being made constantly in the realms of science, and he was too busy to rest or go home.

It was fifty years ago,
In the pleasant month of May,
In the beautiful Pays de Vaud,
A child in its cradle lay.

And Nature, the old nurse, took
The child upon her knee,
Saying: "Here is a story-book
Thy Father has written for thee.

"Come, wander with me," she said,
"Into regions yet untrod;
And read what is still unread
In the manuscripts of God."

And he wandered away and away,
With Nature, the dear old nurse,
Who sang to him night and day
The rhymes of the universe.

And whenever the way seemed long,
Or his heart began to fail,
She would sing a more wonderful song,
Or tell a more marvellous tale.

So she keeps him still a child,
And will not let him go,
Though at times his heart beats wild
For the beautiful Pays de Vaud;

Though at times he hears in his dreams
The "Ranz des Vaches" of old,
And the rush of mountain streams
From glaciers clear and cold;

And the mother at home says, "Hark!
For his voice I listed and yearn;
It is growing late and dark,
And my boy does not return!"

GODIVA'S RIDE AT COVENTRY—By LORD TENNYSON

Tennyson wrote this lovely poem about the kind, brave, and admired Lady Godiva just eight hundred years after her ride through the silent city she made free. The stern earl's name was Leofric. The story has been told many times during the past seven hundred years, but never so well as in these lines. Both the earl and Lady Godiva were buried under one of the "three tall spires" that make Coventry visible for many miles. In the church was placed a picture of the earl holding in his right hand a charter inscribed—

"I, Leofric, for love of thee, Do make Coventry toll-free."

I waited for the train at Coventry ;
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,
To watch the three tall spires ; and there I shaped
The ancient city's legend into this.

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past; not only we, that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,
And loathed to see them overtax'd ; but she
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,
The woman of a thousand summers back—
Godiva, wife of that grim earl who ruled
In Coventry ; for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought
Their children, clamouring, "If we pay, we starve!"
She sought her lord, and found him where he strode
About the hall, among his dogs, alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his hair
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,
And pray'd him, "If they pay this tax, they starve."
Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,
"You would not let your little finger ache
For such as *these?*" "But I would die," said she.
He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by Paul:
Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear;
"O ay, ay, ay, you talk!" "Alas!" she said,
"But prove me what it is I would not do."
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,
He answer'd, "Ride you naked thro' the town,
And I repeal it;" and nodding, as in scorn,
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.
So left alone, the passions of her mind,
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,
Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all
The hard condition ; but that she would loose
The people : therefore, as they loved her well,
From then till noon no foot should pace the street,
No eye look down, she passing ; but that all
Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd.
Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there
Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,
The grim earl's gift ; but ever at a breath
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon
Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook her head,
And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee;
Unclad herself in haste ; adown the stair
Stole on ; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid
From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd
The gateway; there she found her palfry trapt
In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity:
The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.
The little wide-mouthed heads upon the spout
Had cunning eyes to see ; the barking cur
Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's footfall shot
Light horrors thro' her pulses ; the blind walls
Were full of chinks and holes ; and overhead
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared : but she
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the field
Gleam thro' the Gothic archways in the wall.
Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity:
And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,

The fatal byword of all years to come,
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peep'd—but his eyes, before they had their will
Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,
And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait
On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused;
And she, that knew not, pass'd; and all at once,
With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon
Was clash'd and hammered from a hundred towers,
One after one : but even then she gain'd
Her bower; whence re-issuing, robed and crown'd,
To meet her lord, she took the tax away,
And built herself an everlasting name.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE NORTHFLEET

The story told in this poem is one that is always happening again. British sailors die like heroes as a matter of course. The hero of this poem was a captain who stood by his ship and parted from his young wife. He died; she lived. Duty triumphed, even over love. The verses are by Gerald Massey, a poet who was working for ninepence a week when he was eight years old. Born in 1828, he lived till 1907. He was the hero of George Eliot's story, "Felix Holt."

So often is the proud deed done
By men like this at duty's call;
So many are the honours won
For us, we cannot wear them all!

They make the heroic commonplace,
And dying thus the natural way;
And yet our world-wide English race
Feels nobler, for that death, today!

It stirs us with a sense of wings
That strive to lift the earthiest soul;
It brings the thoughts that fathom things
To anchor fast where billows roll.

Love was so new, and life so sweet,
But at the call he left the wine,
And sprang full-statured to his feet,
Responsive to the touch divine.

"Nay, dear, I cannot see you die.
For me, I have my work to do
Up here. Down to the boat! Good-bye!
God bless you! I shall see it through."

We read until the vision dims
And drowns; but, ere the pang be past,
A tide of triumph overbrims
And breaks with light from heaven at last.

Through all the blackness of that night
A glory streams from out the gloom;
His steadfast spirit lifts the light
That shines till night is overcome.

The sea will do its worst, and life
Be sobbed out in a bubbling breath;
But firmly in the coward strife
There stands a man who has conquered Death:

A soul that masters wind and wave,
And towers above a sinking deck;
A bridge across the gaping grave;
A rainbow rising o'er the wreck.

Others he saved; he saved the name
Unsullied that he gave his wife;
And, dying with so pure an aim,
He had no need to save his life!

Lord, how they shame the life we live,
These sailors of our sea-girt isle,
Who cheerily take what Thou mayst give,
And go down with a heavenward smile.

The men who sow their lives to yield
A glorious crop in lives to be,
Who turn to England's harvest field
The unfruitful furrows of the sea—

With such a breed of men so brave,
The Old Land has not had her day;
But long her strength, with crested wave,
Shall ride the seas, the proud old way.

THE CROOKED FOOTPATH

Why does a natural footpath across a common—that is, a path made only by feet, and never planned—always wind? The true answer is that it skirts and avoids damp places. But the poet, Oliver Wendell Holmes, writes this poem, so full of tender memories, to bring in the closing thought, applicable to life as well as to a wavering footpath, the thought that even a wandering footpath may bring us home at last, to where we find friends and kindness awaiting us.

Ah, here it is! the sliding rail
That marks the old-remembered spot:
The gap that struck our schoolboy trail—
The crooked path across the lot.

It left the road by school and church,
A pencilled shadow, nothing more,
That parted from the silver birch
And ended at the farmhouse door.

No line or compass traced its plan;
With frequent bends to left or right,
In aimless, wayward curves it ran.
But always kept the door in sight.

The gabled porch, with woodbine green,
The broken millstone at the sill,
Though many a rood might stretch between,
The truant child could see them still.

No rocks across the pathway lie,
No fallen trunk is o'er it thrown,
And yet it winds, we know not why,
And turns as if for tree or stone.

Perhaps some lover trod the way
With shaking knees and leaping heart,
And so it often runs astray
With sinuous sweep or sudden start.

Or one, perchance, with clouded brain
From some unholy banquet reeled,
And since, our devious steps maintain
His track across the trodden field.

Nay, deem not thus—no earthborn will
Could ever trace a faultless line;
Our truest steps are human still—
To walk unswerving were divine!

Truants from love, we dream of wrath;
Oh, rather let us trust the more!
Through all the wanderings of the path,
We still can see our Father's door!

SONGS OF THE WINDS—FOR FOUR PUPILS

THE NORTH WIND DOTH BLOW

FIRST PUPIL

THE north wind doth blow, and
we shall have snow ;
And what will the robin do then,
poor thing ?
He'll sit in a barn, and keep himself
warm,
And hide his head under his wing,
poor thing !

SECOND PUPIL

The north wind doth blow, and we shall
have snow ;
And what will the swallow do then,
poor thing ?
Oh, do you not know that he's gone
long ago
To a country much warmer than ours,
poor thing ?

THIRD PUPIL

The north wind doth blow, and we shall
have snow ; [poor thing ?
And what will the honey-bee do,
In his hive he will stay till the cold's
gone away,
And then he'll come out in the spring,
poor thing ?

FOURTH PUPIL

The north wind doth blow, and we
shall have snow ;
And what will the dormouse do then,
poor thing ?
Rolled up like a ball, in his nest snug
and small,
He'll sleep till warm weather comes
back, poor thing !

ALL

The north wind doth blow, and we shall
have snow ;
And what will the children do then,
poor things ?
When lessons are done, they'll skip,
jump, and run,
And play till they make themselves
warm, poor things !

WHAT THE WINDS DO

FIRST PUPIL—EAST WIND

I AM the East Wind,
Bringing the showers
To water the violets
And sweet woodland flowers

I waft the robin
Back to his nest,
I wake the earth up
From its long rest.

I sigh through the tree-tops,
A soft little breeze; [time,
I'm the breath of the spring-
That calls back the leaves

SECOND PUPIL—SOUTH WIND

I am the South Wind,
Summer I bring,
Wherever I wander
Sweet perfumes I fling.

I wave the long grasses,
And shake out the seeds
I play by the river,
Among the tall reeds.

I rock the wee birdies,
Asleep in their nest,
I ruffle the feathers
On the mother-bird's breast.

THIRD PUPIL—WEST WIND

I am the West Wind,
I blow through the year,
But I am happiest
When autumn is here.

On clear, frosty mornings
I blow through the trees,
I shake each tiny twig
And away whirl the leaves.

I shake down the walnuts,
And chestnuts too,
To feed the squirrels
The long winter through.

FOURTH PUPIL—NORTH WIND

Out from the icy north
I fill the sky
With sleet and with snow,
For the North Wind am I.

My breath is the hoarfrost,
The ice fills the river,
I make all the alders
Rustle and shiver.

And the white snowflakes
As downward they fly,
I whirl them and toss them
And heap them up high.

SONG OF LIFE

Charles Mackay, who lived during the greater part of the last century, wrote poetry so plain that anybody can understand it at once. Here he illustrates in three ways the thought that little deeds well done may grow into a usefulness that was not foreseen at first. The sown acorn, the scooped well, the cheering word spoken, have great effects at last.

A TRAVELLER on a dusty road
Strewed acorns on the lea ;
And one took root and sprouted up,
And grew into a tree.
Love sought its shade at evening time,
To breathe its early vows ;
And age was pleased, in heights of noon,
To bask beneath its boughs.
The dormouse loved its dangling twigs,
The bird sweet music bore—
It stood a glory in its place,
A blessing evermore.

A little spring had lost its way
Amid the grass and fern ;
A passing stranger scooped a well
Where weary man might turn.
He walled it in, and hung with care
A ladle on the brink ;
He thought not of the deed he did,
But judged that toil might drink,
He passed again, and lo, the well,
By summer never dried,
Had cooled ten thousand parchéd tongues
And saved a life beside.

A nameless man, amid a crowd
That thronged the daily mart,
Let fall a word of hope and love,
Unstudied from the heart,
A whisper on the tumult thrown,
A transitory breath,
It raised a brother from the dust.
It saved a soul from death.
O germ ! O fount ! O word of love !
O thought at random cast !
Ye were but little at the first,
But mighty at the last.

FAIR INES

Thomas Hood's "Fair Ines" is an example of complimentary verse. Once it was a fashion for poets to choose some fair lady with whom they feigned to be in love, and, calling her by a romantic name, they praised her with graceful fancy. Hood wrote skilfully in many strains—often laughingly, then sadly, and at times in deep earnest, but here he followed the fashion, and painted in words a sentimental picture of a lovely lady, who, after being won by a stranger, leaves her land with great honour and appearance of rejoicing, though hearts remained behind saddened by concealed love.

O SAW ye not fair Ines ?
She's gone into the West,
To dazzle when the sun is down,
And rob the world of rest :
She took our daylight with her,
The smiles that we love best,
With morning blushes on her cheek,
And pearls upon her breast.

O turn again, fair Ines,
Before the fall of night,
For fear the moon should shine alone,
And stars unrivalled bright ;
And blesséd will the lover be
That walks beneath their light,
And breathes the love against thy cheek
I dare not even write !

Would I had been, fair Ines,
That gallant cavalier,
Who rode so gaily by thy side,
And whispered thee so near !
Were there no bonny dames at home,
Or no true lovers here,
That he should cross the seas to win
The dearest of the dear ?

I saw thee, lovely Ines,
Descend along the shore,
With bands of noble gentlemen,
And banners waved before ;
And gentle youth and maidens gay,
And snowy plumes they wore :
It would have been a beauteous dream—
If it had been no more !

Alas, alas ! fair Ines,
She went away with song,
With music waiting on her steps,
And shoutings of the throng ;
But some were sad, and felt no mirth,
But only music's wrong,
In sounds that sang Farewell, farewell,
To her you've loved so long.

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines !
That vessel never bore
So fair a lady on its deck,
Nor danced so light before,
Alas for pleasure on the sea,
And sorrow on the shore !
The smile that blessed one lover's heart
Has broken many more.

A CHARACTER

The quiet gospel of content has often been preached by the poets, and in these four verses we get another picture of a wise man who, by making the best of things as they come to him, and remaining thankful, lived long as well as happily.

HE sowed and hoped for reaping—
A happy man and wise ;
The clouds—they did his weeping,
The wind—it sighed his sighs.

He made what fortune brought him
The limit of desire ;
Thanked God for shade in summer days,
In winter time for fire.

When tempest, as with vengeful rod,
His earthly mansions cleft,
On the blank sod he still thanked God.
Life and the land were left !

Content, his earthly race he ran,
And died—so people say—
Some ten years later than the man
Who worried his life away !

I DREAM OF ALL THINGS FREE

Mrs. Hemans, who wrote this dream of freedom, had a rather sad and toilsome life, that may explain the pathetic note in the last line ; but her spirit, we see, remained unfettered, and, indeed, rejoiced in the most exultant liberty. She seems to have refreshed herself by thinking of wild, free things.

I DREAM of all things free, of a gallant, gallant bark,
That crept through storm and sea like an arrow to its mark ;
Of a stag that o'er the hills goes bounding in its glee,
Of a thousand flashing rills, of all things glad and free.

I dream of some proud bird, a bright-eyed mountain king,
In my vision I have heard the rushing of its wing;
I follow some wild river, on whose breast no sail may be;
Dark woods around it shiver, I dream of all things free.

Of a happy forest child, with the fawns and flowers at play;
Of an Indian 'midst the wild, with the stars to guide his way;
Of a chief, his warriors leading, of an archer's greenwood tree;
My heart in chains is bleeding—I dream of all things free.

OVER THE HILLS

We have, in these American verses, three pictures of stages in life—first, the boy's brave dreaming of noble deeds; then the strong man's stern ambition while he is striving eagerly, too busy to think; and afterwards the old man's regret if he has not been faithful to what was best in his early dreams. Unless we learn the lesson of this little poem and act up to it, our lives, too, may end in sadness.

OVER the hills and far away
A little boy steals from his morning's play,
And under the blossoming apple-tree
He lies and he dreams of the things to be;
Of battles fought and of victories won,
Of wrongs o'erthrown and of great deeds done,
Of the valour that he shall prove some day,
Over the hills and far away—
Over the hills and far away!

Over the hills and far away
It's, oh, for the toil the livelong day!
But it mattered not to the soul aflame
With a love for riches and power and fame.
On, oh, man! while the sun is high—
On to the certain joys that lie
Yonder where blazeth the noon of day.
Over the hills and far away—
Over the hills and far away!

Over the hills and far away
An old man lingers at close of day;
Now that his journey is almost done,
His battles fought and his victories won—
The old time honesty and truth,
The truthfulness and the friends of youth,
Home and mother—where are they?
Over the hills and far away—
Over the hills and far away!

MARY MORISON

This most lovely song was written by Robert Burns while he was still at home, working on his father's farm and unknown to the world. There is a doubt who was meant by Mary Morison. The last two lines of the second and third verses are beautiful examples of saying much with charming sweetness in the simplest of words. *Trysted* means *appointed; bide the stoure* means *endure the dust;* and *braw* means *handsome.*

O MARY, at thy window be,
It is the wished, the trysted hour,
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor.
How blithely wad I bide the stoure,
A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string,
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat but neither heard nor saw:
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sighed, and said amang them a',
"Ye are na Mary Morison."

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown:
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.

THE GOLDEN KEY

This is a very sweet and simple poem that all can understand. It shows the grace and charm of the kindness that is felt towards everybody. The poem is all imagery—that is, it is built up of pictured comparisons. Though the image of a casket may seem to suit girls well, boys need equally the spirit of open-hearted kindness that is so prettily presented.

I KNOW a jewelled casket
Where is hidden a golden key
That opens the door of a castle fair,
Called the Castle of Courtesy.

Its owner, a bright-eyed maiden,
When she wakes in the morning light
Takes the treasure out from its hiding-place
And bears it round till night.

She opens the door of the castle
With the beautiful golden key,
And smiles a welcome to all who come—
Even strangers, like you and me.

And to every door in the castle
The maiden fits her key;
Wide open it flies at her magic touch,
That all may its treasures see.

The heart is the jewelled casket,
And kindness the golden key
That opens the doors of the numberless rooms
In the Castle of Courtesy.

A SONG OF BEAUTY

Healthy children are bright and happy naturally, and in that they suit the joyousness of the outdoor world. Here is a little burst of song, by an American writer, like that of the birds, telling of light and colour, movement and gladness. Sadness comes at times, but still how good the world really is!

OH, sing me a song of beauty! I'm tired of the stressful song,
I'm weary of all the preaching, the arguing right and wrong,
I'm fain to forget the adder that under the leaf lies curled,
And dream of the light and beauty that gladdens the grey old world.
Oh, sing of the emerald meadows that smile all day in the sun,
The ripple and gleam of the rivers that on through the meadows run!
The birds—let them sing in your singing and flash through the lines you write,
The lark with his lilt in the morning, the nightingale charming the night,
The butterfly over the flowers that hovers on painted wing—
All these, let them brighten and lighten the beautiful song you sing.
Though under the leaf the adder of death and of gloom lies curled,
Oh, sing for a space of the beauty that gladdens the grey old world!

AT EVENING TIME

James Montgomery, the Sheffield hymn-writer, here expands a Scriptural expression, and applies it to his own approach towards old age. The poem is a personal experience, for James Montgomery had a placid and almost radiant ending.

At evening time let there be light :
Life's little day draws near its close ;
Around me fall the shades of night,
The night of death, the grave's repose :
To crown my joys, to end my woes,
At evening time let there be light.

At evening time let there be light :
Stormy and dark hath been my day ;
Yet rose the morn divinely bright,
Dews, birds, and blossoms cheered the way :
O for one sweet, one parting ray !
At evening time let there be light.

At evening time there *shall* be light ;
For God hath spoken—it must be :
Fear, doubt, and anguish take their flight,
His glory now is risen on me ;
Mine eyes shall His salvation see :
—'Tis evening time, and there *is* light !

THE RIDE TO THE TOURNAMENT

The poet who wrote these gay, descriptive verses was named Walter Thornbury. He was born in 1828 and lived till 1876. He wrote many tales, and was fond of picturing olden times. Here he gives us a procession of the people who went to tournaments, and tells us how they looked, behaved, and felt. The chalumeau means a musical pipe. The clarinet is an improvement on it. The shawm of the jester was the same instrument.

Over meadows purple-flowered,
Through the dark lanes oak-embowered,
Over commons dry and brown,
Through the silent red-roofed town,
Past the reapers and the sheaves,
Over white roads strewn with leaves,
By the gipsy's ragged tent,
Rode we to the tournament.

Over clover wet with dew,
Whence the skylark, startled, flew,
Through brown fallows, where the hare
Leapt up from its subtle lair,
Past the mill-stream and the reeds,
Where the stately heron feeds,
By the warren's sunny wall,
Where the dry leaves shake and fall,
By the hall's ancestral trees,
Bent and writhing in the breeze,
Rode we all with one intent
Gaily to the tournament.

Golden sparkles, flashing gem,
Lit the robes of each of them,
Cloak of velvet, robe of silk,
Mantle snowy-white as milk,
Rings upon our bridle hand,
Jewels on our belt and band,
Bells upon our golden reins,
Tinkling spurs and shining chains,
In such merry mob we went
Riding to the tournament.

Charger with the massy chest,
Foam-spots flecking mane and breast,
Pacing stately, pawing ground,
Fretting for the trumpet's sound,
White and sorrel, roan and bay,
Dappled, spotted, black, and grey,
Palfreys snowy as the dawn,
Ponies sallow as the fawn,
All together neighing went
Trampling to the tournament.

Long hair scattered in the wind,
Curls that flew a yard behind,
Flags that struggled like a bird,
Chained and restive—not a word,
But half buried in a laugh ;
And the lance's gilded staff,
Shaking when the bearer shook
At the jester's merry look,
As he grins upon his mule,
Like an urchin leaving school,
Shaking bauble, tossing bells,
At the merry jest he tells ;
So in happy mood we went
Laughing to the tournament.

Pilgrims with their hood and cowl,
Pursy burghers cheek by jowl,
Archers with their peacock's wing
Fitting to the waxen string,
Pedlars with their pack and bags,
Beggars with their coloured rags,
Silent monks whose stony eyes
Rest in trance upon the skies,
Children sleeping at the breast,
Merchants from the distant West,
All in gay confusion went
To the royal tournament.

Blackbirds from the hedges broke,
Black crows from the beeches croak,
Glossy swallows in dismay
From the mill-stream fled away,
The angry swan, with ruffled breast,
Frowned upon her osier nest,
The wren hopped restless on the brake,
The otter makes the sedges shake,
The butterfly before our rout
Flew like a blossom blown about,
The lark in terror from the sod
Flew up and straight appealed to God,
As a noisy band we went
Trotting to the tournament.

But when we saw the holy town,
With its rivers and its down,

Then the drums began to beat,
And the flutes piped mellow sweet;
Then the deep and full bassoon
Murmured like a wood in June,
And the fifes, so sharp and bleak,
All at once began to speak.
Hear the trumpet clear and loud,
Full-tongued, eloquent, and proud,
And the dulcimer that ranges
Through such wild and plaintive changes;
Merry sound the jester's shawm,
To our gladness giving form;
And the shepherd's chalumeau,
Rich, and soft, and sad, and low;
Hark! The bagpipes squeak and groan—
Every herdsman has his own,
So in measured step we went
Pacing to the tournament.

All at once the chimes break out,
Then we hear the townsmen shout,
And the morris-dancers' bells
Tinkling in the grassy dells;
The bell thunder from the tower
Adds its sound of doom and power,
As the cannon's loud salute
For a moment made us mute;
Then again the laugh and joke
On the startled silence broke;
Thus in merry mood we went
Laughing to the tournament.

I SAW A NEW WORLD

There are conceited people, generally very thoughtless, who fancy if they had made the world they would have made it better than it is made now. In this poem, W. B. Rands, who was wise as well as playful, shows what a mess might be made of the world if it were to be fixed without change, and how interesting it is with all its surprises and strife and hope.

I SAW a new world in my dream,
Where all the folks alike did seem:
There was no Child, there was no Mother,
There was no Change, there was no Other.

For everything was Same, the Same;
There was no Praise, there was no Blame;
There was neither Need nor Help for it;
There was nothing fitting, or unfit.

Nobody laughed, nobody wept;
None grew weary, so none slept;
There was nobody born, and nobody wed;
This world was a world of the living dead.

I longed to hear the Time-Clock strike
In the world where the people were all alike;
I hated Same, I hated For-ever,
I longed to say Neither, or even Never.

I longed to mend, I longed to make,
I longed to give, I longed to take,
I longed for a change, whatever came after,
I longed for crying, I longed for laughter.

At last I heard the Time-Clock boom,
And woke from my dream in my little room;
With a smile on her lips my mother was nigh,
And I heard the baby crow and cry.

And I thought to myself, How nice it is
For me to live in a world like this,
Where things can happen, and clocks can strike,
And none of the people are made alike;

Where Love wants this, and Pain wants that,
Where all our hearts want Tit for Tat
In the jumbles we make with our heads and our hands,
In a world that nobody understands,
But with work, and hope, and the right to call
Upon Him who sees it and knows us all.

SUN AND SHADOW

The meaning of this wise poem by Oliver Wendell Holmes is that we must not govern our actions by what we imagine lookers-on are thinking of us, but must bend our thoughts on the duty before us, and not stand posing to be looked at.

AS I look from the isle, o'er its billows of green,
To the billows of foam-crested blue,
Yon bark, that afar in the distance is seen,
Half dreaming, my eyes will pursue:
Now dark in the shadow, she scatters the spray
As the chaff in the stroke of the flail;
Now white as the sea-gull, she flies on her way,
The sun gleaming bright on her sail.

Yet her pilot is thinking of dangers to shun,
Of breakers that whiten and roar;
How little he cares if, in shadow or sun,
They see him that gaze from the shore!
He looks to the beacon that looms from the reef,
To the rock that is under his lee,
As he drifts on the blast, like a wind-wafted leaf,
O'er the gulfs of the desolate sea.

Thus drifting afar to the dim vaulted caves
Where life and its ventures are laid,
The dreamers who gaze while we battle the waves
May see us in sunshine or shade;
Yet true to our course, though our shadow grow dark,
We'll trim our broad sail as before,
And stand by the rudder that governs the bark,
Nor ask how we look from the shore!

THE WIVES OF BRIXHAM

Brixham is a noted little Devonshire fishing port just to the south of Tor Bay Its fishermen, who are very skilful and brave sailors, take their boats far from home, round Land's End on the one hand, and into the North Sea on the other hand. These verses give us some idea of the anxiety the fishermen's wives must feel when sudden storms arise. It is said that this is a true story of how they kept a beacon alight to guide their husbands through a raging sea. Nothing is more beautiful than the evening light on the sails of a fishing boat. It makes the boat a fiery apparition. And, says the poem, the women's love is like that light.

THE merry boats of Brixham
Go out to search the seas;
A staunch and sturdy fleet are they,
Who love a swinging breeze;
And before the woods of Devon,
And the silver cliffs of Wales,
You may see, when summer evenings fall,
The light upon their sails.

But when the year grows darker,
And gray winds hunt the foam,
They go back to Little Brixham,
And ply their toil at home.
And thus it chanced one winter's night,
When a storm began to roar,
That all the men were out at sea,
And all the wives on shore.

Then, as the wind grew fiercer,
The women's cheeks grew white,
It was fiercer in the twilight,
And fiercest in the night.
The strong clouds set themselves like ice,
Without a star to melt;
The blackness of the darkness
Was darkness to be felt.

The old men they were anxious,
They dreaded what they knew;
What do you think the women did?
Love taught them what to do!
Outspake a wife, "We've beds at home,
We'll burn them for a light—
Give us the men, and the bare ground,
We want no more to-night."

They took the grandame's blanket,
Who shivered and bade them go;
They took the baby's pillow,
Who could not say them no;
And they heaped a great fire on the pier,
And knew not all the while
If they were heaping a bonfire,
Or only a funeral pile.

And, fed with precious food, the flame
Shone bravely on the black,
Till a cry rang through the people,
"A boat is coming back!"
Staggering dimly through the fog
Come shapes of fear and doubt,
But when the first prow strikes the pier,
Cannot you hear them shout?

Then all along the breath of flame,
Dark figures shrieked and ran,
With "Child, here comes your father!"
Or "Wife, is this your man?"
And faint feet touch the welcome shore,
And wait a little while;
And kisses drop from frozen lips,
Too tired to speak or smile.

So, one by one they struggled in,
All that the sea would spare;
We will not reckon through our tears
The names that were not there;
But some went home without a bed,
When all the tale was told,
Who were too cold with sorrow
To know the night was cold.

And this is what the men must do
Who work in wind and foam;
And this is what the women bear
Who watch for them at home.
So when you see a Brixham boat
Go out to face the gales,
Think of the love that travels
Like light upon her sails!

THE ORDER OF THE SOIL

The writer of this song in honour of the farmer, king of the soil, was an Irishman named James McCarroll, who emigrated to Canada in 1831, and became a well-known journalist in New York. He held that true honour is due to those who serve.

AMONG the fine old kings that reign
Upon a simple, wooden throne,
There's one with but a small domain,
But, mark you, it is all his own.

And though upon his rustic towers
No ancient standard waves its wing,
Thick, leafy banners, flushed with flowers,
From all the fragrant casements swing.

And here, in royal homespun, bow
His nut-brown court, at night and morn,
The bronzed Field Marshal of the Plough,
The Chancellor of the Wheat and Corn.

The Keeper of the Golden Stacks,
The Mistress of the Milking Pail,
The bold Knights of the Ringing Axe,
The Heralds of the Sounding Flail.

The Ladies of the New Mown Hay,
The Master of the Spade and Hoe,
The Minstrels of the Glorious Lay
That all the Sons of Freedom know.

And thus, while on the seasons roll,
He wins from the inspiring sod
The brawny arm and noble soul
That serve his country and his God.

A CHRISTMAS HYMN

The man who sketched this picture of the time when Christ was born—so romantic and stately, yet simple—became a Prime Minister. His name was Alfred Domett. He was born at Camberwell, London, in 1811; became a lawyer; went to New Zealand in 1842, and twenty years later was the Premier of that colony. He returned to England, where he died in 1887. This poem, published in Blackwood's Magazine in 1837, made him famous, and gave him the friendship of Tennyson, Browning, and Longfellow, who all admired it greatly.

It was the calm and silent night—
  Seven hundred years and fifty-three
Had Rome been growing up to might,
  And now was queen of land and sea!
No sound was heard of clashing wars;
  Peace brooded o'er the hushed domain;
Apollo, Pallas, Jove, and Mars,
  Held undisturbed their ancient reign,
    In the solemn midnight
      Centuries ago!

'Twas in the calm and silent night!
  The senator of haughty Rome
Impatient urged his chariot's flight,
  From lordly revel rolling home!
Triumphal arches gleaming swell
  His breast with thoughts of boundless sway;
What recked the Roman what befell
  A paltry province far away,
    In the solemn midnight
      Centuries ago!

Within the province far away
  Went plodding home a weary boor:
A streak of light before him lay,
  Fall'n through a half-shut stable door
Across his path. He passed—for nought
  Told what was going on within;
How keen the stars! his only thought;
  The air how calm and cold and thin,
    In the solemn midnight
      Centuries ago!

O strange indifference!—low and high
  Drowsed over common joys and cares:
The earth was still—but knew not why;
  The world was listening—unawares!
How calm a moment may precede
  One that shall thrill the world for ever!
To that still moment none would heed,
  Man's doom was linked no more to sever
    In the solemn midnight
      Centuries ago!

It is the calm and solemn night!
  A thousand bells ring out and throw
Their joyous peals abroad, and smite
  The darkness, charmed and holy *now!*
The night that erst no name had worn,
  To it a happy name is given;
For in that stable lay new-born
  The peaceful Prince of Earth and Heaven,
    In the solemn midnight
      Centuries ago!

THE HOUSE BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD

The American writer of this poem, Sam Walter Foss, died two years ago. He was a well-known librarian as well as an author. The aspiration in these verses to be a man among men, with a heart that feels for all, will keep his memory green. When he says that he does not wish to "hurl the cynic's ban," he means that he does not fling unbelieving sneers at people. The earliest meaning of the word "cynic" was a snarling dog, and it is still largely true.

There are hermit souls that live withdrawn
  In the peace of their self-content;
There are souls, like stars, that dwell apart,
  In a fellowless firmament;
There are pioneer souls that blaze their paths
  Where highways never ran;
But let me live by the side of the road
  And be a friend to man.

Let me live in a house by the side of the road
  Where the race of men go by—
The men who are good and the men who are bad,
  As good and as bad as I.
I would not sit in the scorner's seat,
  Or hurl the cynic's ban,
Let me live in a house by the side of the road
  And be a friend to man.

I see from my house by the side of the road,
  By the side of the highway of life,
The men who press with the ardour of hope,
  The men who are faint with the strife.
But I turn not away from their smiles nor their tears—
  Both parts of an infinite plan—
Let me live in my house by the side of the road
  And be a friend to man.

I know there are brook-gladdened meadows ahead,
  And mountains of wearisome height;
That the road passes on through the long afternoon,
  And stretches away to the night.
But still I rejoice when the travellers rejoice,
  And weep with the strangers that moan,
Nor live in my house by the side of the road
  Like a man who dwells alone.

Let me live in a house by the side of the road
  Where the race of men go by—
They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they are strong,
  Wise, foolish—so am I.
Then why should I sit in the scorner's seat,
  Or hurl the cynic's ban?
Let me live in my house by the side of the road
  And be a friend to man.

JOHN BURNS OF GETTYSBURG

The battle of Gettysburg, fought at the beginning of July, 1863, was the turning-point in the great American War. Up to that time the Southern rebels, who wished to break away from the United States, had on the whole held their own, but then the tide of victory turned. It was a war of the people, not a war waged by regular soldiers. This poem, by Bret Harte, brings out that point. It tells how, though his neighbours had run away, farmer John Burns of Gettysburg, when the war came to his doors, put on a white hat, dressed himself in his best clothes, and fought with the bravest, and then went on with his farm work next day. To "show the white feather," is to be a coward. In the cruel days of cock-fighting a bird with a white feather in his tail was thought to be less brave than other birds.

HAVE you heard the story that gossips tell
Of Burns of Gettysburg? No? Ah, well!
Brief is the glory that hero earns,
Briefer the story of poor John Burns:
He was the fellow who won renown,
The only man who didn't back down
When the rebels rode through his native town,
But held his own in the fight next day,
When all his townsfolk ran away.

That was in July, sixty-three,
The very day that General Lee,
Flower of Southern chivalry,
Baffled and beaten, backward reeled
From a stubborn Meade and a barren field.
I might tell how, but the day before,
John Burns stood at his cottage door,
Looking down the village street,
Where, in the shade of his peaceful vine,
He heard the low of his gathered kine,
And felt their breath with incense sweet;
Or I might say, when the sunset burned
The old farm gable, he thought it turned
The milk, that fell in a babbling flood
Into the milk-pail, red as blood!
Or how he fancied the hum of bees
Were bullets buzzing among the trees.
But all such fanciful thoughts as these
Were strange to a practical man like Burns,
Who minded only his own concerns,
Troubled no more by fancies fine
Than one of his calm-eyed, long-tailed kine—
Quite old-fashioned and matter-of-fact,
Slow to argue, but quick to act.
That was the reason, as some folks say,
He fought so well on that terrible day.

And it was terrible. On the right
Raged for hours the heavy fight,
Thundered the battery's double bass—
Difficult music for men to face;
While on the left—where now the graves
Undulate like the living waves
That all that day unceasing swept
Up to the pits the rebels kept—
Round shot ploughed the upland glades,
Sown with bullets, reaped with blades;
Shattered fences here and there
Tossed their splinters in the air;
The very trees were stripped and bare;
The barns that once held yellow grain
Were heaped with harvests of the slain;
The cattle bellowed on the plain,
The turkeys screamed with might and main,
And brooding barn-fowl left their rest
With strange shells bursting in each nest.

Just where the tide of battle turns,
Erect and lonely stood old John Burns.
How do you think the man was dressed?
He wore an ancient long buff vest,
Yellow as saffron, but his best;
And buttoned over his manly breast
Was a bright blue coat, with a rolling collar,
And large gilt buttons—size of a dollar—
With tails that the country folk called
"swaller."
He wore a broad-brimmed, bell-crowned hat,
White as the locks on which it sat.
Never had such a sight been seen
For forty years on the village green,
Since old John Burns was a country beau
And went to the "quiltings" long ago.

Close at his elbows all that day,
Veterans of the Peninsula,
Sunburnt and bearded, charged away;
And striplings, downy of lip and chin—
Clerks that the Home Guard mustered in—
Glanced, as they passed, at the hat he wore,
Then at the rifle his right hand bore;
And hailed him, from out their youthful lore,
With scraps of a slangy repertoire:
"How are you, White Hat!" "Put her through!"
"Your head's level," and "Bully for you!"
Called him "Daddy," begged he'd disclose
The name of the tailor who made his clothes,
And what was the value he set on those;
While Burns, unmindful of jeer and scoff,
Stood there picking the rebels off,
With his long brown rifle, and bell-crown hat,
And the swallow tails they were laughing at.

'Twas but a moment, for that respect
Which clothes all courage their voices checked;
And something the wildest could understand
Spake in the old man's strong right hand;
And his corded throat, and the lurking frown
Of his eyebrows under his old bell-crown;
Until, as they gazed, there crept an awe
Through the ranks in whispers, and some men saw,

In the antique vestments and long white hair,
The Past of the Nation in battle there;
And some of the soldiers since declare
That the gleam of his old white hat afar,
Like the crested plume of the brave Navarre,
That day was their oriflamme of war.

So raged the battle. You know the rest:
How the rebels, beaten, and backward pressed,
Broke at the final charge, and ran.
At which John Burns—a practical man—
Shouldered his rifle, unbent his brows,
And then went back to his bees and cows.

That is the story of old John Burns,
This the moral the reader learns:
In fighting the battle, the question's whether
You'll show a hat that's white, or a feather!

THERE'S NO DEARTH OF KINDNESS

This lovely setting of the truth that nearly everybody is kind at heart is by Gerald Massey, who was born in 1828 and died in 1907, and has been called "the poet of liberty, labour, and the people." He had a great love for Nature and mankind, and we see in these verses, with their gentle warning, how right his heart was towards everybody.

THERE'S no dearth of kindness
In this world of ours;
Only in our blindness
We gather thorns for flowers!
Outward, we are spurning,
Trampling one another;
While we are inly yearning
At the name of "Brother!"

There's no dearth of kindness
Or love among mankind,
But in darkling loneness
Hooded hearts grow blind!
Full of kindness tingling,
Soul is shut from soul,
When they might be mingling
In one kindred whole!

As the wild-rose bloweth,
As runs the happy river,
Kindness freely floweth
In the heart for ever.
But if men will hanker
Ever for golden dust,
Kingliest hearts will canker,
Brightest spirits rust.

There's no dearth of kindness
In this world of ours;
Only in our blindness
We gather thorns for flowers!
Oh, cherish God's best giving,
Falling from above;
Life were not worth living,
Were it not for Love.

THE AGED STRANGER

Bret Harte, one of the poets gifted with humour—a gift more common among American than among English poets—is here making fun of a device often used by poets—namely, a surprising interview between unknown people. Ulysses Grant was the general who brought the great American Civil War between North and South to a close in the year 1865.

"I WAS with Grant," the stranger said.
Said the farmer: "Say no more,
But rest thee here at my cottage porch,
For thy feet are weary and sore."

"I was with Grant," the stranger said.
Said the farmer: "Nay, no more.
I prithee sit at my frugal board,
And eat of my humble store.

"How fares my boy—my soldier boy,
Of the old Ninth Army Corps?
I warrant he bore him gallantly
In the smoke and the battle's roar!"

"I know him not," said the aged man;
"And, as I remarked before,
I was with Grant." "Nay, nay, I know,"
Said the farmer. "Say no more.

"He fell in battle. I see, alas!
Thou'dst smooth these tidings o'er.
Nay; speak the truth, whatever it be,
Though it rend my bosom's core.

"How fell he? With his face to the foe,
Upholding the flag he bore?
Oh, say not that my boy disgraced
The uniform that he wore!"

"I cannot tell," said the aged man,
"And should have remarked before
That I was with Grant, in Illinois,
Some three years before the war."

Then the farmer spake him never a word,
But beat with his fist full sore
That aged man, who had worked for Grant
Some three years before the war.

A DEWDROP FALLING

The writer of these lines, Richard Chenevix Trench, who was born in 1807 and died in 1886, was a notable clergyman and author, once Dean of Westminster and afterwards Archbishop of Dublin. He studied closely the wording of English, and wrote several useful books on it. He also wrote pleasing verse. The idea of beautiful transformations in this poem is wonderfully true, but perhaps too fancifully illustrated, for dewdrops do not fall into the sea and become pearls.

A DEWDROP falling on the wild sea wave
Exclaimed in fear, "I perish in this grave!"
But, in a shell received, that drop of dew
Unto a pearl of marvellous beauty grew;
And, happy now, the grace did magnify
Which thrust it forth, as it had feared to die;
Until again, "I perish quite," it said,
Torn by rude diver from its ocean bed;
O unbelieving!—so it came to gleam
Chief jewel in a monarch's diadem.

A REMONSTRANCE

A stray leaf of verse drifted to us from the age of carefully worked-up sentiment. A friend having complained to the poet—Alaric A. Watts—that he was all alone in the world, the poet replies that books will give him company, Nature soothe and charm him, while the Divine care surrounds him. The writer, a musical poet, was the editor of "The Literary Souvenir," a popular annual to which some of the best poets and writers of the day contributed. He died in 1864.

OH, say not thou art all alone,
Upon this wide, cold-hearted earth;
Sigh not o'er joys for ever flown,
The vacant chair, the silent hearth;
Why should the world's unholy mirth
Upon thy quiet dreams intrude,
To scare those shapes of heavenly birth
That people oft thy solitude!

Though many a fervent hope of youth
Hath passed, and scarcely left a trace;
Though earth-born love, its tears and truth,
No longer in thy heart have place;
Nor time, nor grief, can e'er efface
The brighter hopes that now are thine,
The fadeless love, all-pitying grace,
That makes thy darkest hours divine!

Not all alone; for thou canst hold
Communion sweet with saint and sage,
And gather gems, of price untold,
From many a pure, untravelled page:
Youth's dreams, the golden lights of age,
The poet's lore, are still thine own;
Then, while such themes thy thoughts engage,
Oh, how canst thou be all alone!

Not all alone; the lark's rich note,
As, mounting up to heaven, she sings;
The thousand silvery sounds that float
Above—below—on morning's wings;
The softer murmurs twilight brings,
The cricket's chirp, cicala's glee;
All earth—that lyre of myriad strings—
Is jubilant with life for thee!

Not all alone; the whispering trees,
The rippling brook, the starry sky,
Have each peculiar harmonies,
To soothe, subdue, and sanctify:
The low, sweet breath of evening's sigh
For thee hath oft a friendly tone,
To lift thy grateful thoughts on high,
To say—thou art not all alone!

Not all alone; a watchful eye,
That notes the wandering sparrow's fall;
A saving hand is ever nigh,
A gracious Power attends thy call:
When sadness holds thy heart in thrall,
Is oft His tenderest mercy shown;
Seek then the balm vouchsafed to all,
And thou canst never be alone!

ADDRESS TO CERTAIN GOLDFISHES

An example of pleasing fancy woven in the mind of Hartley Coleridge—a playful description fitting the slightness of the subject. The writer was the son of the great Coleridge. Sallee was a port of Morocco, once noted as a haunt of pirates.

RESTLESS forms of living light,
Quivering on your lucid wings,
Cheating still the curious sight
With a thousand shadowings;
Various as the tints of even,
Gorgeous as the hues of heaven,
Reflected on your native streams,
In flitting, flashing, billowy gleams!

Harmless warriors, clad in mail
Of silver breastplate, golden scale,
Mail of Nature's own bestowing,
With peaceful radiance mildly glowing,
Fleet are ye as fleetest galley
Of pirate rover sent from Sallee,
Keener than the Tartar's arrow,
Sport ye in your sea so narrow.

Was the sun himself your sire?
Were ye born of vital fire?
Or of the shade of golden flowers,
Such as we fetch from Eastern bowers,
To mock this murky clime of ours?

Upwards, downwards, now ye glance,
Weaving many a mazy dance;
Seeming still to grow in size
When ye would elude our eyes.
Pretty creatures! we might deem
Ye were happy as ye seem,
As gay, as gamesome, and as blithe,
As light, as loving, and as lithe,
As gladly earnest in your play,
As when ye gleamed in far Cathay.

And yet, since on this hapless earth
There's small sincerity in mirth,
And laughter oft is but an art
To drown the outcry of the heart,
It may be that your ceaseless gambols,
Your wheelings, dartings, divings, rambles,
Your restless roving round and round
The circuit of your crystal bound,
Is but the task of weary pain,
An endless labour, dull and vain;
And while your forms are gaily shining,
Your little lives are inly pining!

Nay, but still I fain would dream
That ye are happy as ye seem;
For what is Oriental pride,
To an English warm fireside?
And what are Oriental skies,
To a British maiden's eyes?

BRITONS BEYOND THE SEAS

In this stirring poem Mr. Harold Begbie imagines the various peoples of British race, in all the Colonies, speaking their thoughts about England, the ancient Motherland, and about the younger lands beyond the seas which they have made their own. We hear what these children of the Empire feel of the sweet rural beauty of England, of the tumult of London, of the historic pride of Westminster; but equally tender is their devotion to their own lands; and from this twin love comes a vision of the building up of such a State, peaceful, just, and wise, as God wills shall be. So the poem finely blends pride of race with a noble strain of humanity.

God made our bodies of all the dust
  That is scattered about the world,
That we might wander in search of home
  Wherever the seas are hurled;
But our hearts He hath made of English
    dust,
  And mixed it with none beside,
That we might love with an endless love
  The land where our kings abide.

And tho' we weave on a hundred shores,
  And spin on a thousand quays,
And tho' we are truant with all the winds,
  And gipsy with all the seas,
We are touched to tears as the heart is
    touched
  By the sound of an ancient tune,
At the name of the Isle in the Western seas
  With the rose on her breast of June.

And it's O for a glimpse of England!
  And the buds that her garden yields,
The delicate scent which her hedges wind,
  And the shimmering green of her fields,
The roll of her downs and the lull of her
    streams,
  The grace of her dew-drenched lawns,
And the calm of her shores, where the waters
    wash
  Rose-tinged with her thousand dawns.

And it's O for a glimpse of London town!
  Tho' it be through the fog and the rain,
The loud-thronged streets and the glittering
    shops,
  The pageant of pomp and pain;
And it's O for a sight tho' it be in a dream,
  Of the Briton's beacon and pride—
The old grey Abbey that guards our ghosts
  On Thames's sacred side.

But, lo, we have buried our fathers here,
  And here we have reared our sons;
These are our Britains, and here the word
  Of the British people runs;
Wherefore the while we call you Home,
  And dream of your gentle shires,
We are rooted here by the smile of our babes
  And the pilgrim dust of our sires.

Out of the grave our fathers reach
** Dead hands to hold us here;**
And never we open the earth with tears
  But the land becomes more dear—
Sweet with memory, brave with love,
  And proud with the hope ahead
That our sons shall be stronger, our homes
    more fair,
  When we go down to the dead.

Loved, you are loved, O England,
  And ever that love endures;
But we must have younger visions,
  And mightier dreams than yours;
Cleaner Londons and wider fields,
  And a statelier bridge to span
The gulf which severs the rich and poor
  In the brotherly ranks of man.

Yet with the bolder vision
  We cleave to you, look to you still,
That you gather our scattered toil and bind
  Our strength in a single will;
That you build with us out of the coasts of
    the earth
  A realm, a race, and a rede
That shall govern the peace of the world and
    serve
  The humblest State in her need.

Happy we are but tools in the Hand
  Of a Power we do not know,
And not for ourselves we plough the waste,
  And not for ourselves we sow;
Yet by the vision that leads us on
  To the goal of a single State,
We are blessed that our own great weal is
    woofed
  With strands of eternal Fate.

Come, let us walk together,
  We who must follow one gleam;
Come, let us link our labours,
  And tell each other our dream;
Shakespeare's tongue for our counsels,
  And Nelson's heart for our task—
Shall we not answer as one strong man
  To the things that the people ask?

THE HEART

The German language abounds in wise thought briefly expressed, of which this little translation is a good example.

Two chambers have the heart,
  And there
Dwell Joy and Care.

Make Joy in thine,
Thus Care in his
Will peacefully recline.

O Joy, beware!
Speak gently,
Lest thou waken Care.

THE BURIAL OF MOSES

Cecil Frances Alexander, who wrote this noble expansion of the Bible story of the burial of Moses, the Jewish leader and law-giver, was the wife of Dr. Alexander, Bishop of Derry, who, after her death, became Archbishop of Armagh. The poem, so stately in imagination yet simple in wording, will live alongside Mrs. Alexander's exquisite hymns, such as "There is a green hill far away" and "Once in royal David's city." Born in the year 1818, this gentle poetess died in 1895.

By Nebo's lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab
There lies a lonely grave.
And no man knows that sepulchre,
And no man saw it e'er,
For the angels of God upturned the sod
And laid the dead man there.

That was the grandest funeral
That ever passed on earth;
But no man heard the trampling,
Or saw the train go forth—
Noiselessly as the daylight
Comes back when night is done,
And the crimson streak on ocean's cheek
Grows into the great sun.

Noiselessly as the Spring-time
Her crown of verdure weaves,
And all the trees on all the hills
Open their thousand leaves;
So, without sound of music,
Or voice of them that wept,
Silently down from the mountain's crown
The great procession swept.

Perchance the bald old eagle
On grey Beth-peor's height,
Out of his lonely eyrie
Looked on the wondrous sight;
Perchance the lion, stalking,
Still shuns that hallowed spot,
For beast and bird have seen and heard
That which man knoweth not.

This was the truest warrior
That ever buckled sword;
This the most gifted poet
That ever breathed a word;
And never earth's philosopher
Traced, with his golden pen,
On the deathless page, truths half so sage
As he wrote down for men.

And had he not high honour,
The hillside for a pall,
To lie in state while angels wait
With stars for tapers tall,
And the dark rock-pines, like tossing plumes,
Over his bier to wave,
And God's own hand, in that lonely land,
To lay him in the grave?

In that strange grave without a name,
Whence his uncoffined clay
Shall break again, O wondrous thought!
Before the Judgment Day,
And stand with glory wrapt around
On the hill he never trod,
And speak of his strife that won our life
With the Incarnate Son of God.

O lonely grave in Moab's land!
O dark Beth-peor's hill!
Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
And teach them to be still.
God hath His mysteries of grace,
Ways that we cannot tell;
He hides them deep, like the hidden sleep
Of him He loved so well.

THE PANAMA GANG

What is going to happen to the thousands of men who have built the Panama Canal? Many of them will still be wanted, but all of them, we may be sure, will not fit into the civilisation that will spring up on the banks of the canal. In these rough-and-ready lines an American journalist has drawn up an application of the Panama Gang for a new situation. These verses appeared in an American magazine, and are by Berton Braley. They have the true American vigour.

Here we are, gentlemen; here's the whole gang of us,
Pretty near through with the job we are on;
Size up our work—it will give you the hang of us—
South to Balboa and north to Colon.
Yes, the canal is our letter of reference;
Look at Culebra and glance at Gatun;
What can we do for you—got any preference,
Wireless to Saturn or bridge to the moon?

Don't send us back to a life that is flat again,
We who have shattered a continent's spine;
Office work—oh, but we couldn't do that again!
Haven't you something that's more in our line?
Got any river they say isn't crossable?
Got any mountains that can't be cut through?
We specialise in the wholly impossible,
Doing things "nobody ever could do!"

Take a good look at the whole husky crew of us,
Engineers, doctors, and steam-shovel men;
Taken together you'll find quite a few of us
Soon to be ready for trouble again.
Bronzed by the tropical sun that is blistery,
Chockful of energy, vigour, and tang,
Trained by a task that's the biggest in history,
Who has a job for this Panama Gang?

JACK AND JOAN

The story of Thomas Campion, who wrote this delightful description of the simple happiness of country life, is one of the romances of literature. Campion, who was a doctor, was also a poet and musician. He was born a few years after Shakespeare and died four years after him. He wrote songs in what he called "Books of Airs," and set them to charming music. After his death the serious Puritans objected to both songs and music, and so Campion's writings, which had been popular in his own day, were entirely forgotten, and were only rediscovered late in the nineteenth century. "Tutties," in the third verse, is an old word for nosegays. The word "silly" has changed its meaning since Campion's time. Then it meant merely simple but not foolish.

JACK and Joan, they think no ill,
But loving live, and merry still;
Do their week-days' work, and pray
Devoutly on the holy day.
Skip and trip it on the green,
And help to choose the Summer Queen;
Lash out at a country feast
Their silver penny with the best.

Well can they judge of nappy ale,
And tell at large a winter tale;
Climb up to the apple loft,
And turn the crabs till they be soft.
Tib is all the father's joy,
And little Tom the mother's boy.
All their pleasure is Content,
And care, to pay their yearly rent.

Joan can call by name her cows,
And deck her windows with green boughs;
She can wreaths and tutties make,
And trim with plums a bridal cake.
Jack knows what brings gain or loss,
And his long flail can stoutly toss;
Makes the hedge which others break,
And ever thinks what he doth speak.

Now, you courtly dames and knights,
That study only strange delights,
Though you scorn the homespun grey,
And revel in your rich array;
Though your tongues dissemble deep,
And can your heads from danger keep;
Yet for all your pomp and train,
Securer lives the silly swain.

MY BOAT IS ON THE SHORE

Lord Byron, a great poet, was a wayward, unwise man, and managed his life so badly that he had to leave his native land in great disfavour. In this poem to his faithful friend Tom Moore he pretended hard that he did not care, but he was really very bitter in spirit. Tom Moore, later, met him in Italy, and, after his early death, wrote his life. Byron's trust in his friend, so genially expressed, was well deserved. If he could have thought about more people in the same happy way, he would have lived and died a far happier man.

MY boat is on the shore,
And my bark is on the sea;
But before I go, Tom Moore,
Here's a double health to thee!

Here's a sigh to those that love me,
And a smile to those who hate;
And whatever sky's above me,
Here's a heart for every fate.

Though the ocean roar around me,
Yet it shall yet bear me on;
Though a desert should surround me,
It hath springs that may be won.

Were't the last drop in the well
As I gasped upon the brink,
Ere my fainting spirit fell,
'Tis to thee that I would drink.

BYRON AND HIS DOG

With that water as this wine,
The libation I would pour
Should be: "Peace with thine and mine,
And a health to thee, Tom Moore!"

GLYCINE'S SONG

Glycine is a character in Coleridge's Christmas tale "Zapolya." Of this song Mr. Swinburne, another poet, said it is "one of the brightest bits of music ever done into words." A brief vision of passing beauty from the poet's eye and heart, it pictures his poetic method. He saw beautiful things in sudden gleams, scintillating fragments, and, except in his "Ancient Mariner," pieced nothing together into a complete harmonious whole.

A SUNNY shaft did I behold,
From sky to earth it slanted;
And poised therein a bird so bold—
Sweet bird, thou wert enchanted!
He sunk, he rose, he twinkled, he trolled
Within that shaft of sunny mist;
His eyes of fire, his beak of gold,
All else of amethyst!

And thus he sang: "Adieu, adieu,
Love's dreams prove solemn true.
The blossoms they make no delay;
The sparkling dewdrops will not stay.
Sweet month of May, we must away;
Far, far away, today, today!"

NOTHING

The author of this severe sonnet on the emptiness of much human labour was Dr. Richard Porson, a great Greek scholar of Cambridge, who illustrated sadly his own strictures on the paltriness of many people's endeavours, for he left behind him but little writing that truly represented his great learning and ability. He was born in 1759 and died in 1808.

MYSTERIOUS Nothing! how shall I define
Thy shapeless, baseless, placeless emptiness?
Nor form, nor colour, sound, nor size is thine,
Nor words nor figures can thy voice express;
But though we cannot thee to aught compare,
A thousand things to thee may likened be,
And though thou art with nobody nowhere,
Yet half mankind devote themselves to thee.
How many books thy history contain!
How many heads thy mighty plans pursue!
What labouring hands thy portion only gain!
What busybodies thy doings only do!
To thee the great, the proud, the giddy bend,
And—like my sonnet—all in nothing end.

MY LITTLE COUSINS

This defence of the merriness of childhood is by an anonymous writer, who would have succeeded even better if she had kept the sadness of growing years more in the background.

LAUGH on, fair cousins, for to you
All life is joyous yet;
Your hearts have all things to pursue,
And nothing to regret;
And every flower to you is fair,
And every month is May:
You've not been introduced to Care—
Laugh on, laugh on, today!

Old Time will fling his clouds ere long
Upon those sunny eyes;
The voice, whose every word is song,
Will set itself to sighs;
Your quiet slumbers—hopes and fears
Will chase their rest away;
Tomorrow you'll be shedding tears—
Laugh on, laugh on, today!

Oh, yes; if any truth is found
In the dull schoolman's theme—
If friendship is an empty sound,
And love an idle dream—
If mirth, youth's playmate, feels fatigue
Too soon on life's long way,
At least he'll run with you a league—
Laugh on, laugh on, today!

Perhaps your eyes may grow more bright
As childhood's hues depart;
You may be lovelier to the sight,
And dearer to the heart;
You may be sinless still, and see
This earth still green and gay;
But what you are you will not be—
Laugh on, laugh on, today!

O'er me have many winters crept,
With less of grief than joy;
But I have learned, and toiled, and wept,
I am no more a boy!
I've never had the gout, 'tis true,
My hair is hardly grey;
But now I cannot laugh like you—
Laugh on, laugh on, today!

I used to have as glad a face,
As shadowless a brow;
I once could run as blythe a race
As you are running now;
But never mind how I behave,
Don't interrupt your play,
And though I look so very grave,
Laugh on, laugh on, today!

THE HOUR IS COMING

We do not know who wrote this prophecy of the good time coming; but it is lofty and stirring and true, with a thrill of human love and eternal justice palpitating right through it.

O, HARK, for the hour is coming,
When your ears shall anointed be,
Aye, listen, 'tis rising and swelling,
O'er populous land and sea,
The morning stars began it
At the dawn of creation's birth,
And the circling spheres go swinging
And singing it unto earth.
And earth shall forget her groaning,
And learn the song of the spheres,
And the tired shall sing that are moaning,
And the sad shall dry their tears.

For the song of the spheres is motion,
And motion and toil are life.
And the idle shall fail and falter,
And yield at the end of strife.
As the stars tread forth appointed,
And the sun gives forth his heat,
So the sons of men shall labour
Ere they rest in honour's seat.
And kings are to serve the people,
And wealth is to ease the poor,
And learning to lift up the lowly,
And strength that the weak may endure.

Lo, the burden shall be divided,
And each shall know his own,
And the royalty of manhood
Shall be more than crown or throne,
And the flesh and blood of toilers
Shall no longer be less than gold,
And never an honest life shall be
Into hopeless bondage sold.

THERE IS NO DEATH

For many years this comforting poem, illustrating in many ways the idea that what is called death is only a change of being, was supposed to be written by Lord Lytton, but the author was an American newspaper editor in Iowa, Mr. J. L. McCreery, who wrote a volume of "Songs of Trial and Triumph." The thought of the poem has been expressed by other poets, as by Longfellow: "There is no death; what seems so is transition"; and by the Welsh poet, Lewis Morris: "Death! There is not any death, only infinite change."

THERE is no death! The stars go down
To rise upon some other shore,
And bright in heaven's jewelled crown
They shine for evermore.

There is no death! The forest leaves
Convert to life the viewless air;
The rocks disorganise to feed
The hungry moss they bear.

There is no death! The dust we tread
Shall change, beneath the summer showers,
To golden grain, or mellow fruit,
Or rainbow-tinted flowers.

There is no death! The leaves may fall,
The flowers may fade and pass away—
They only wait, through wintry hours,
The warm, sweet breath of May.

There is no death! The choicest gifts
That heaven hath kindly lent to earth
Are ever first to seek again
The country of their birth.

And all the things that for growth of joy
Are worthy of our love or care,
Whose loss has left us desolate,
Are safely garnered there.

Though life becomes a dreary waste,
We know its fairest, sweetest flowers,
Transplanted into Paradise,
Adorn immortal bowers.

The voice of bird-like melody
That we have missed and mourned so long
Now mingles with the angel choir
In everlasting song.

There is no death! Although we grieve
When beautiful, familiar forms
That we have learned to love are torn
From our embracing arms.

Although with bowed and breaking heart,
With sable garb and silent tread,
We bear their senseless dust to rest,
And say that they are "dead."

They are not dead! They have but passed
Beyond the mists that blind us here
Into the new and larger life
Of that serener sphere.

They have but dropped their robe of clay
To put their shining raiment on;
They have not wandered far away—
They are not "lost" or "gone."

Though disenthralled and glorified,
They still are here and love us yet;
The dear ones they have left behind
They never can forget.

And sometimes, when our hearts grow faint
Amid temptations fierce and deep,
Or when the wildly raging waves
Of grief or passion sweep,

We feel upon our fevered brow
Their gentle touch, their breath of balm;
Their arms enfold us, and our hearts
Grow comforted and calm.

And ever near us, though unseen,
The dear, immortal spirits tread;
For all the boundless universe
Is life—there are no dead.

THE QUIP

George Herbert, the pious writer of this poem—born 1593, died 1633—was a man of lovely character. Of gentle birth he became first a courtier and then a country clergyman near Salisbury, beloved by all around him. This poem expresses his true spirit. Though beauty, money, glory, and wit might tempt him, he sought only to serve God. As part of that service he wrote a large number of poems and hymns, which were found among his papers and published after his death.

THE merry World did on a day
With his train-bands and mates agree
To meet together, where I lay,
And all in sport to jeer at me.

First, Beauty crept into a rose,
Which when I plucked not, "Sir," said she,
"Tell me, I pray, whose hands are those?"
But Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then Money came, and chinking still,
"What tune is this, poor man?" said he.
"I heard in music you had skill."
But Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then came brave Glory puffing by
In silks that whistled—who but he?
He scarce allowed me half an eye—
But Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then came quick Wit and Conversation,
And he would need a comfort be,
And, to be short, make an oration—
But Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Yet when the hour of Thy design
To answer these fine things shall come,
Speak not at large, say I am Thine,
And then they have their answer home.

THE LOOKING-GLASSES

Thomas Moore, the popular Irish poet, is best remembered for his sentimental songs, but he was also a tale-teller in verse, and a clever writer of good-humoured satires on the follies of mankind. Here he makes fun of the pretensions by which a select class-government was so long upheld.

THERE was a land—to *name* the place
Is neither now my wish nor duty—
Where reigned a certain royal race
By right of their superior beauty.

What was the cut legitimate
Of these great persons' chins and noses,
By right of which they ruled the State,
No history I have seen discloses.

But so it was—a settled case—
Some Act of Parliament, passed snugly,
Had voted *them* a beauteous race,
And all their faithful subjects ugly.

As rank, indeed, stood high or low,
Some change it made in visual organs;
Your Peers were decent—Knights so-so—
But all your *common* people gorgons!

Of course, if any knave but hinted
That the King's nose was turned awry,
Or that the Queen (God bless her!) squinted,
The judges doom'd that knave to die.

But rarely things like this occurred;
The people to their King were duteous,
And took it, on his Royal word,
That they were frights and he was beauteous.

The cause whereof, among all classes,
Was simply this—these island elves
Had never yet seen looking-glasses,
And therefore did not *know themselves*.

Sometimes, indeed, their neighbours' faces
Might strike them as more full of reason,
More fresh than those in certain places—
But, Lord! the very thought was treason.

Besides, howe'er we love our neighbour,
And take his face's part, 'tis known
We ne'er so much in earnest labour
As when the face attacked's our own.

So on they went—the crowd believing
(As crowds, well governed always do)—
Their rulers, too, themselves deceiving—
So old the joke, they thought 'twas true.

But jokes, we know, if they too far go,
Must have an end—and so, one day,
Upon that coast there was a cargo
Of looking-glasses cast away.

'Twas said, some Radicals somewhere,
Had laid their wicked heads together,
And forced the ship to founder there—
While some believed it was the weather.

However this might be, the freight
Was landed without fees or duties;
And from that hour historians date
The downfall of the Race of Beauties.

The looking-glasses got about,
And grew so common through the land
That scarce a tinker could walk out
Without a mirror in his hand.

Comparing faces, morning, noon,
And night, their constant occupation—
By dint of looking-glasses, soon
They grew a most reflecting nation.

In vain the Court, aware of errors
In all the old-established mazards,
Prohibited the use of mirrors,
And tried to break them at all hazards.

In vain—their laws might just as well
Have been waste-paper on the shelves;
That fatal freight had broke the spell;
People had looked, and knew themselves.

If chance a Duke, of birth sublime,
Presumed upon his ancient race,
(Some calf-head, ugly from all time),
They popped a mirror to his Grace—

Just hinting, by that gentle sign,
How little Nature holds it true
That what is called an ancient line
Must be a line of beauty too.

At length—but here I drop the veil,
To spare some loyal folks' sensations;
Besides, what followed is the tale
Of all such late-enlightened nations;

Of all to whom old Time discloses
A truth they should have sooner known—
That kings have neither rights nor noses
A whit diviner than their own.

TIME OF ROSES

Tom Hood is known partly as a humorous poet and partly as a very serious writer, but he could also write a dainty song.

IT was not in the winter
Our loving lot was cast;
It was the time of roses,
We plucked them as we passed.

That churlish season never frowned
On early lovers yet.
O, no—the world was newly crowned
With flowers when first we met.

'Twas twilight, and I bade you go,
But still you held me fast;
It was the time of roses,
We plucked them as we passed.

THE ISLES OF THE SEA FAIRIES

Mary Howitt wrote a great deal of prose and verse in the days of our grandfathers, but she never wrote anything prettier than this picture of the Isle of the Fairies, or anything that has a better meaning. It means that we cannot live well in ease and enjoyment without effort, however pleasant life may be ; and if we do exert ourselves, as we must if life is to be more than a dream, we should be sure that the things we exert ourselves to gain are things that are really worth having.

AMONG the isles of the golden mist
I lived for many a year ;
And all that chanced unto me there,
'Tis well that ye should hear.

I dwelt in a hall of silvery pearl,
With rainbow light inlaid ;
I sate on a throne, as old as the sea,
Of the ruby coral made.

The old carbuncle lit the dome,
Where I was sworn a king ;
And my crown was wrought of the pale sea gold,
And so was my fairy ring.

And she who was set on my right hand,
As the morning star was fair ;
She was clothed in a robe of shadowy light,
And veiled by her golden hair.

They made me king of the Fairy Isles
That lie in the golden mist,
Where the coral rocks, and the silvery sand,
By singing waves are kissed.

Far off in the ocean solitudes,
They lie—a glorious seven !
Like a beautiful group of sister stars,
In the untraced heights of heaven.

Oh, beautiful isles ! and a fairy race,
As the dream of a poet, fair,
Now hold the place by a charmed spell,
That has power o'er sea and air.

They taught me the song which is their speech,
A tone of love divine ;
They sat me down at their banquet board,
And poured me out fairy wine.

For many a year and more, I dwelt
With neither thought nor care,
Till I forgot almost my speech,
Forgot both creed and prayer.

At length it chanced that as my boat
Went on its charmèd way,
I came unto the veil of mist
Which round the Seven Isles lay.

Even then it was a Sabbath morn,
And a ship was passing by,
And I heard a hundred voices raise
A sound of psalmody.

A mighty love came o'er my heart,
A yearning toward my kind,
And unwillingly I spoke aloud
The impulse of my mind.

" Oh, take me hence, ye Christian men ! "
I cried, in spiritual want,
And anon the golden mist gave way,
That had been like adamant.

The little boat wherein I sate
Seemed all to melt away ;
And I was left upon the sea,
Like Peter in dismay.

Those Christian mariners, amazed,
Looked on me in affright ;
Some cried, I was an evil ghost,
And some a water-sprite !

But the chaplain seized the vessel's boat,
With mercy prompt and boon,
And took me up into the ship
As I fell into a swoon.

In vain I told the mariners ;
No man to me would list :
They jested at the fairy isles,
And at the golden mist.

At length when I perceived how dull
The minds of men had grown,
I locked these things within my soul
For my own thought alone.

And soon a wondrous thing I saw :
I now was old and grey,
A man of three-score years and ten,
A weak man in decay.

I passed among the busy crowds,
I marked their care and pain,
And how they waste their manhood's strength,
To make but little gain.

I saw besotted men mistake
For gold, unworthy clay ;
And many more, who sell their souls
For the pleasures of a day.

I saw how years on years roll on
As a tale that has been told,
And then at last they start, like me,
To find that they are old.

Said I, " These men laugh me to scorn,
My wisdom they resist ;
But they themselves abide, like me,
Within a golden mist ! "

PHILLIDA AND CORYDON

This graceful example of pastoral poetry was written by Nicholas Breton, a fashionable and popular poet, who was born a few years before Shakespeare and died a few years after him. Breton (or Brittain, as he was pronounced) wrote a great deal, but his writings had become forgotten till Dr. Percy included this poem in his "Reliques of Ancient Poetry." It was a fashion in Breton's day for people, especially lovers, to call each other by fanciful names, like Phillida and Corydon. Corydon was a Greek name for a shepherd. The word "spied" in the fifth line must be read as two syllables.

In the merry month of May,
In a morn by break of day,
Forth I walked by the woodside,
Whenas May was in his pride:
There I spied all alone
Phillida and Corydon.
Much ado there was, God wot;
He would love and she would not.
She said, "Never man was true,"
He said, "None was false to you."
He said he had loved her long;
She said, Love should have no wrong.
Corydon would kiss her then;
She said, Maids must kiss no men
Till they did for good and all.
Then she made the shepherd call
All the heavens to witness truth
Never loved a truer youth.
Thus with many a pretty oath,
Yea and nay, and faith and troth,
Such as silly shepherds use
When they still will love abuse,
Love, which had been long deluded,
Was with kisses sweet concluded;
And Phillida, with garlands gay,
Was made the lady of the May.

THE FRIAR OF ORDERS GRAY

The writer of this pleasing ballad, Dr. Thomas Percy, was a bishop who was born in 1729 and died in 1811. He made a fine collection of poetry, written, for the most part, centuries ago, and called it "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry." Some of the poems, like this, were written in imitation of old ballads. The thirteenth verse is taken from Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing." The story told in the ballad is the same as Goldsmith's "Edwin and Angelina," in "The Vicar of Wakefield," but the lover in Goldsmith's tale becomes a hermit, not a monk. The Gray Friars were an order of monks called also Franciscans, from the name of their founder, St. Francis of Assisi. They vowed to remain poor.

It was a friar of orders gray
Walked forth to tell his beads,
And he met with a lady fair,
Clad in a pilgrim's weeds.

"Now Christ thee save, thou reverend friar!
I pray thee tell to me,
If ever at yon holy shrine
My true love thou didst see."

"And how should I know your true love
From many another one?"
"Oh! by his cockle hat and staff,
And by his sandal shoon:
"But chiefly by his face and mien,
That were so fair to view,
His flaxen locks that sweetly curled,
And eyes of lovely blue."

"O lady, he is dead and gone!
Lady, he's dead and gone!
At his head a green grass turf,
And at his heels a stone.

"Within these holy cloisters long
He languished, and he died,
Lamenting of a lady's love,
And 'plaining of her pride.

"Here bore him barefaced on his bier
Six proper youths, and tall;
And many a tear bedewed his grave
Within yon kirkyard wall."

"And art thou dead, thou gentle youth—
And art thou dead and gone?
And didst thou die for love of me?
Break, cruel heart of stone!"

. . . . . .

"Weep no more, lady, weep no more;
Thy sorrow is in vain:
For violets plucked, the sweetest shower
Will ne'er make grow again.

"Our joys as winged dreams do fly;
Why, then, should sorrow last?
Since grief but aggravates thy loss,
Grieve not for what is past."

"O say not so, thou holy friar!
I pray thee say not so;
For since my true love died for me,
'Tis meet my tears should flow.

. . . . . .

"His cheek was redder than the rose;
The comeliest youth was he;
But he is dead and laid in his grave—
Alas! and woe is me."

"Sigh no more, lady, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever;
One foot on sea, and one on land,
To one thing constant never.

"Hadst thou been fond, he had been false,
And left thee sad and heavy;
For young men ever were fickle found,
Since summer trees were leafy."

"Now say not so, thou holy friar,
I pray thee say not so;
My love he had the truest heart—
O, he was ever true!

"And art thou dead, thou much-loved youth,
And didst thou die for me?
Then farewell home; for evermore
A pilgrim I will be.

" But first upon my true love's grave
My weary limbs I'll lay,
And thrice I'll kiss the green grass turf
That wraps his breathless clay."

" Yet stay, fair lady, rest a while
Beneath this cloister wall;
The cold wind through the hawthorn blows,
And drizzly rain doth fall."

" O stay me not, thou holy friar,
O stay me not, I pray;
No drizzly rain that falls on me
Can wash my fault away."

" Yet stay, fair lady, turn again,
And dry those pearly tears;
For see, beneath this gown of gray,
Thy own true love appears.

" Here, forced by grief and hopeless love,
These holy weeds I sought;
And here, amid these lonely walls,
To end my days I thought.

" But haply, for my year of grace
Is not yet passed away,
Might I still hope to win thy love,
No longer would I stay."

" Now farewell grief, and welcome joy,
Once more unto my heart;
For since I've found thee, lovely youth,
We never more will part."

THE HAPPY MAN

This is a translation by King Alfred, through Anglo-Saxon into English, of some " metres " by the great Roman statesman and philosopher Boethius. A wise and just man, Boethius was one of the best Ministers under the Roman emperors. In trying to be honest he made enemies, who at last brought about his downfall and execution. In prison he wrote his " Consolations of Philosophy," which the English King Alfred translated towards the end of his own life.

Lo! now on earth is he
In every thing
A happy man,
If he may see
The clearest
Heaven-shining stream,
The noble fountain
Of all good;
And of himself
The swarthy mist—
The darkness of the mind—
Can dispel!
We will as yet,
With God's help,
With old and fabulous
Stories instruct
Thy mind;
That thou the better mayest
Discover to the skies
The right path
To the eternal region
Of our souls.

BALLAD OF A BOAT

The Ballad of a Boat is, of course, a moving picture of human life, though the ending of that voyage does not often come in tumult and agitation as depicted in the poem, but quietly. The writer, Dr. Richard Garnett, towards the end of his life, was the keeper of the printed books at the British Museum. He knew a great deal about books, and wrote several, including volumes of verse. He died in 1906.

THE stream was smooth as glass, we said:
" Arise and let's away;"
The siren sang beside the boat that in the rushes lay,
And spread the sail, and strong the oar, we gaily took our way.
When shall the sandy bar be crossed?
When shall we find the bay?

The broadening flood swells slowly out o'er cattle-dotted plains;
The stream is strong and turbulent, and dark with heavy rains;
The labourer looks up to see our shallop speed away.
When shall the sandy bar be crossed?
When shall we find the bay?

Now are the clouds like fiery shrouds; the sun, superbly large,
Slow as an oak to the woodman's stroke, sinks, flaming at their marge;
The waves are bright with mirrored light as jacinths on our way.
When shall the sandy bar be crossed?
When shall we cross the bay?

The moon is high up in the sky, and now no more we see
The spreading river's either bank, and surging distantly
There booms a sullen thunder as of breakers far away.
Now shall the sandy bar be crossed, now shall we find the bay.

The sea-gulls shriek high overhead, and dimly to our sight
The moonlight crests of foaming waves gleam towering through the night.
We'll steal upon the mermaid soon, and start her from her lay,
When once the sandy bar is crossed, and we are in the bay.

What rises white and awful, as a shroud-enfolded ghost?
What roar of rampant thunder tumult bursts in clangour on the coast?
Pull back! pull back! The raging flood sweeps every oar away.
O stream, is this thy bar of sand? O boat, is this the bay?

HEARD YOU NOT THE BATTLE HORN?

Mother, stay not thou thy boy, He must learn the battle's joy.
Sister, bring the sword and spear, Give thy brother words of cheer.
Maiden, bid thy lover part, Britain calls the strong in heart.

THE BENDED BOW

THERE was heard the sound of a coming foe,
There was sent through Britain a bended bow;
And a voice was poured on the free winds far,
As the land rose up at the sign of war.

HEARD you not the battle horn?
Reaper, leave thy golden corn,
Leave it for the birds of heaven.
Swords must flash, and spears be riven.
Leave it for the winds to shed—
Arm, ere Britain's turf grow red!

And the reaper armed, like a freeman's son;
And the bended bow and the voice passed on.

HUNTER, leave the mountain-chase,
Take the falchion from its place;
Let the wolf go free today,
Leave him for a nobler prey.
Let the deer ungalled sweep by—
Arm thee! Britain's foes are nigh!

And the hunter armed ere the chase was done;
And the bended bow and the voice passed on.

CHIEFTAIN, quit the joyous feast,
Stay not till the song hath ceased.
Though the mead be foaming bright,
Though the fires give ruddy light,
Leave the hearth, and leave the hall—
Arm thee! Britain's foes must fall.

And the chieftain armed, and the horn was blown;
And the bended bow and the voice passed on.

PRINCE, thy father's deeds are told,
In the bower, and in the hold:
Where the goatherd's lay is sung,
Where the minstrel's harp is strung,
Foes are on thy native sea—
Give our bards a tale of thee.

And the prince came armed, like a leader's son;
And the bended bow and the voice passed on.

MOTHER, stay not thou thy boy,
He must learn the battle's joy.
Sister, bring the sword and spear,
Give thy brother words of cheer.
Maiden, bid thy lover part,
Britain calls the strong in heart.

And the bended bow and the voice passed on;
And the bards made song for a battle won.

FELICIA HEMANS

BRING BACK THE CHAIN!

This poem, by the Hon. Mrs. Norton, a clever Society lady, who lived between 1808 and 1877, is an example of the kind of poetical sentiment that was much admired in the 'thirties and 'forties of the last century, a legacy from the weaker romantic writings of Byron. A released man would not "hug his chains" as reminders of his past, or discourse with such fluency to his liberators. The attitude is theatrical.

It was an aged man who stood
  Beside the blue Atlantic sea;
They cast his fetters by the flood,
  And hailed the time-worn Captive free!
From his indignant eye there flashed
  A gleam his better nature gave,
And while his tyrants shrunk abashed,
  Thus spoke the spirit-stricken slave.

"Bring back the chain, whose weight so long
  These tortured limbs have vainly borne;
The word of Freedom from *your* tongue,
  My weary ear rejects with scorn!
'Tis true, there was—there was a time,
  I sighed, I panted to be free;
And, pining for my sunny clime,
  Bowed down my stubborn knee.

"Then I have stretched my yearning arms,
  And shook in wrath my bitter chain;
Then, when the magic word had charms,
  I groaned for liberty in vain!
That freedom ye, at length, bestow,
  And bid me bless my envied fate:
Ye tell me I am free to go—
  Where?—I am desolate!

"The boundless hope—the spring of joy,
  Felt when the spirit's strength is young,
Which slavery only can alloy,
  The mockeries to which I clung,
The eyes, whose fond and sunny ray
  Made life's dull lamp less dimly burn,
The tones I pined for, day by day,
  Can ye bid them return?

"Bring back the chain! its clanking sound
  Hath then a power beyond your own;
It brings young visions smiling round,
  Too fondly loved—too early flown!
It brings me days when these dim eyes
  Gazed o'er the wild and swelling sea,
Counting how many suns must rise
  Ere one might hail me free!

"Bring back the chain! that I may think
  'Tis *that* which weighs my spirit so;
And, gazing on each galling link,
  Dream as I dreamt—of bitter woe!
My days are gone—of hope of youth,
  These traces now alone remain;
(Hoarded with sorrow's sacred truth)
  Tears—and my iron chain!

"Freedom! though doomed in pain to live,
  The freedom of the soul is mine;
But all of slavery you could give
  Around my steps must ever twine.
Raise up the head which age hath bent;
  Renew the hopes that childhood gave;
Bid all return kind Heaven once lent—
  Till then—I am a Slave!"

HOFER

This poem is a translation from a poem by the German patriot poet Körner, describing the death of the Tyrolese patriot, Andreas Hofer, a brave innkeeper, who defended his country against the French when Napoleon was overrunning Europe. He was captured, and was shot in cold blood, at Mantua, in Italy. This cruel deed helped to rouse Europe against Napoleon. Hofer is now buried in Innsbruck, and is the national hero of Tyrol. Death in his case, as an inscription in the Innsbruck church says, "is absorbed in victory."

Still to his own wild country true,
  Its hills and valleys, waters blue,
  And virtue's path to fame;
The hero burning in his breast,
He kindled every mountain crest,
  With Freedom's deathless flame!

Small was his band, but true and brave;
Nought feared they but the name of slave,
  And their bold leader's frown:
From crag, and precipice, and glen,
Till then untrod by breathing men,
  They poured a torrent down.

Like the pale lightning's shafts they fell;
How well they fought who well can tell
  As they who felt their ire!
Who heard their shots unerring fly,
Scared by the sons of Liberty,
  Scathed by their mountain-fire.

Where are they now, and where is he?
Gone to the land where all are free;
  For him all bonds are past;
His name is in his country's songs,
His fame is on a thousand tongues,
  He wears his crown at last.

God's will be done! His arms they bind,
They cannot chain his chainless mind;
  He has a triumph yet
Nobler than arms have ever won;
Adversity but sees his son
  In noonday splendours set.

No shade of fear is on his brow,
His step is as a warrior's now
  To whom new deeds are given.
His dark eye's on the helmed line,
His smile upon the blaze whose shine
  Flashes his life to heaven!

FORTUNE

In these dozen lines the great poet Tennyson tells us, with picturesqueness and charm, that the life we live within ourselves is far more important than anything that can come to us from without, through either good or bad fortune. If we quietly keep our own hearts unshaken, changing circumstances, though unfavourable, lose all their power over us.

TURN, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the proud;
Turn thy wild wheel through sunshine, storm, and cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown;
With that wild wheel we go not up or down;
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands;
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands;
For man is man and master of his fate.

Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring crowd;
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

MY TRIUMPH

The golden-hearted American poet John Greenleaf Whittier shows us his inmost desires in these fine verses. His truest life, he tells us, was lived not in his imperfect writings, but in all the good he wished for the world; and as those wishes are realised through the fine thoughts and labours of the poets, thinkers, and workers of the future, his own choicest triumphs will come as his dreams of good are made true.

LET the thick curtain fall;
I better know than all
How little I have gained,
How vast the unattained.

Not by the page word-painted
Let life be banned or sainted;
Deeper than written scroll
The colours of the soul.

Sweeter than any sung
My songs that found no tongue;
Nobler than any fact
My wish that failed of act.

Others shall sing the song,
Others shall right the wrong,
Finish what I begin,
And all I fail of win.

What matter I or they?
Mine or another's day,
So the right word be said
And life the sweeter made?

Hail to the coming singers!
Hail to the brave light-bringers!
Forward I reach and share
All that they sing and dare.

The airs of heaven blow o'er me;
A glory shines before me
Of what mankind shall be—
Pure, generous, brave, and free.

A dream of man and woman
Diviner but still human,
Solving the riddle old,
Shaping the Age of Gold!

The love of God and neighbour;
An equal-handed labour;
The richer life, where beauty
Walks hand in hand with duty.

Ring, bells in unreared steeples,
The joy of unborn peoples!
Sound, trumpets far-off blown,
Your triumph is my own!

Parcel and part of all,
I keep the festival,
Fore-reach the good to be,
And share the victory.

THE PALE OPERATOR

These sad, and indeed gruesome, verses tell how long and dreary is some of the most necessary work of the world. They describe the dull, unhealthy life of a Jewish tailor in the East End of London, where some of the poorest people from Continental cities crowd in, and everyone knows that someone else is waiting to take his place. The writer, Morris Rosenfeld, is himself a Jew, living in America.

IF but with my pen I could draw him,
With terror you'd look in his face;
For he, since the first day I saw him,
Has sat there and sewed in his place.

Years pass in procession unending,
And ever the pale one is seen,
As over his work he sits bending,
And fights with the soulless machine.

I feel, as I gaze at each feature,
Perspiring, and grimy, and wan,
It is not the strength of the creature—
The will only urges him on.

And ever the sweat-drops are flowing,
They fall o'er his thin cheeks in streams,
They water the stuff he is sewing,
And soak themselves into the seams.

How long shall the wheel yet, I pray you,
Be chased by the pale artisan?
And what shall the ending be, say you?
Resolve the dark riddle who can!

I know that it cannot be reckoned,
But one thing the future will show:
When this man has vanished, a second
Will sit in his place there and sew.

A VISTA

The loveliness of this heart-stirring vision of peace can perhaps be appreciated best in these days of war and horror, when the realisation of the dream seems farther off than ever. But how clear is the poet's faith in the triumph of reason and love over selfishness and hate! The vision will come true when sufficient people wish to have it true. The writer, John Addington Symonds, was born in 1840 and died in 1893. Much of his life was spent in search of health. By his writings he helped to make Switzerland popular in winter. He wrote a great deal about Italian history and literature, and his grave is in Rome.

SAD heart, what will the future bring
To happier men when we are gone?
What golden days shall dawn for them,
Transcending all we gaze upon?

Will our long strife be laid at rest,
The warfare of our blind desires
Be merged in a perpetual peace
And love illume but harmless fires?

Shall faith, released from forms that chain
And freeze the spirit while we pray,
Expect with calm and ardent eyes
The morning of death's brighter day?—

These things shall be! A loftier race
Than e'er the world hath known shall rise,
With flame of freedom in their souls,
And light of science in their eyes.

They shall be pure from fraud, and know
The names of priest and king no more;
For them no placeman's hand shall hold
The balances of peace and war.

They shall be gentle, brave, and strong,
To spill no drop of blood, but dare
All that may plant man's lordship firm
On earth and fire and sea and air.

Nation with nation, land with land,
Unarmed shall live as comrades free;
In every heart and brain shall throb
The pulse of one fraternity.

They shall be simple in their homes
And splendid in their public ways,
Filling the mansions of the State
With music and with hymns of praise.

In aisles majestic, halls of pride,
Groves, gardens, baths, and galleries,
Manhood and youth and age shall meet
To grow by converse inly wise.

Women shall be man's mate and peer,
In all things strong and fair and good,
Still wearing on her brows the crown
Of sinless sacred motherhood.

High friendship, hitherto unknown,
Or by great poets half divined,
Shall burn, a steadfast star, within
The calm clear ether of the mind.

Man shall love man with heart as pure
And fervent as the young-eyed joys
Who chaunt their heavenly songs before
God's face with undiscordant noise.

New arts shall bloom of loftier mould,
And mightier music thrill the skies,
And every life shall be a song,
When all the earth is paradise.

There shall be no more sin, no shame,
Though pain and passion may not die;
For man shall be at one with God
In bonds of firm necessity.

These things—they are no dream—shall be
For happier men when we are gone:
Those golden days for them shall dawn,
Transcending aught we gaze upon.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

Toussaint was an educated negro slave of St. Domingo, who rose to be a general in the island under the French Republic. When Napoleon announced the re-establishment of slavery, Toussaint rebelled and tried to keep the land free and independent. He was treacherously seized and taken to France, where he died in prison in 1803. His name will ever be preserved in this sonnet by Wordsworth. The last lines are immortal

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den;
O miserable chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow;
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

THE OLD STOIC

The "stoics" of ancient Greece were men who taught themselves to bear painful evils without shrinking and to keep a stout heart. Here we see Emily Brontë, one of the three brilliant writing sisters, schooling herself in the true stoic spirit, when she realised that she was doomed to die young.

RICHES I hold in light esteem,
And Love I laugh to scorn;
And lust of fame was but a dream,
That vanished with the morn.

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me
Is, "Leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me liberty."

Yes, as my swift days near their goal,
'Tis all that I implore;
In life and death a chainless soul,
With courage to endure.

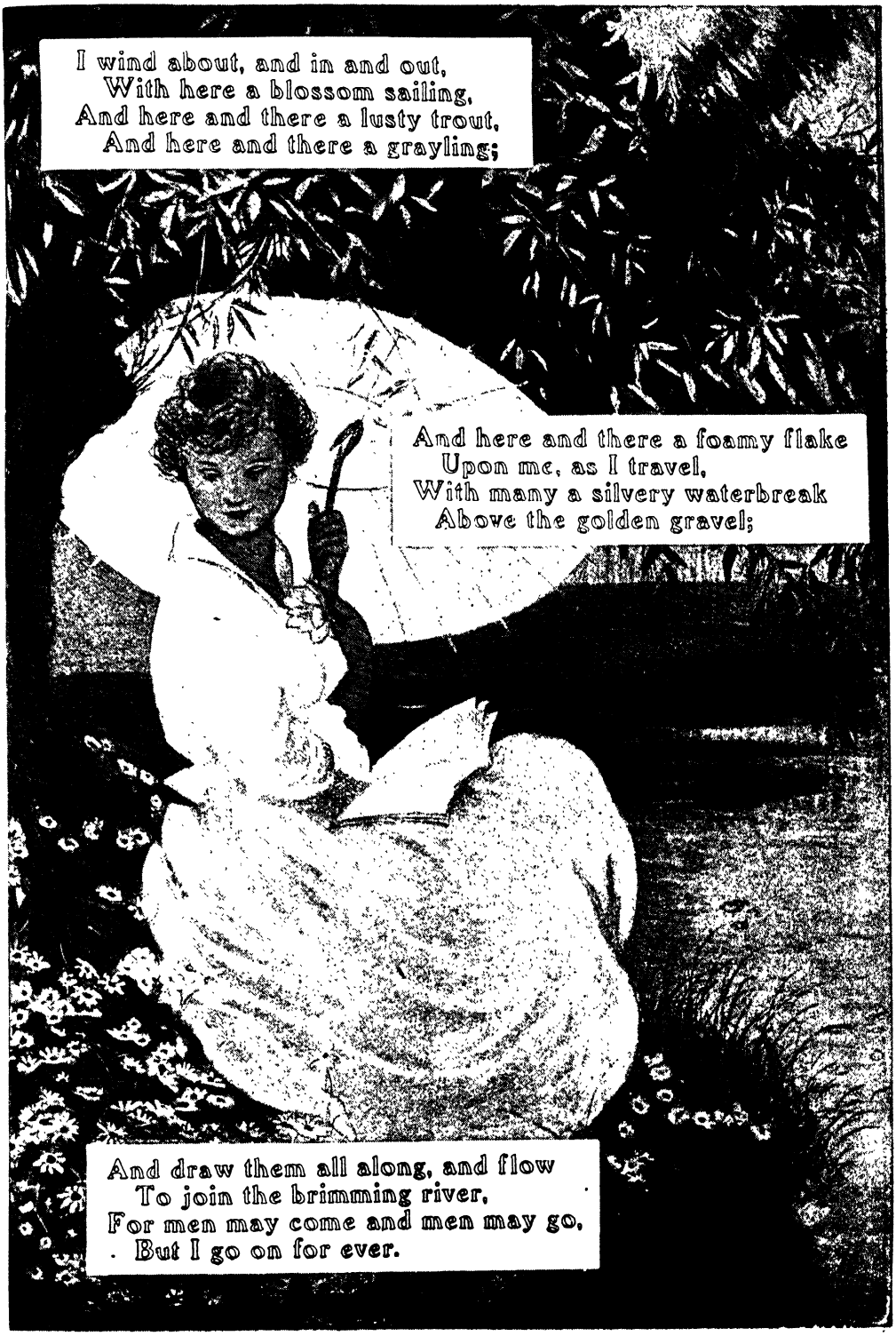
THE BROOK By LORD TENNYSON

I COME from haunts of coot and hern.
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

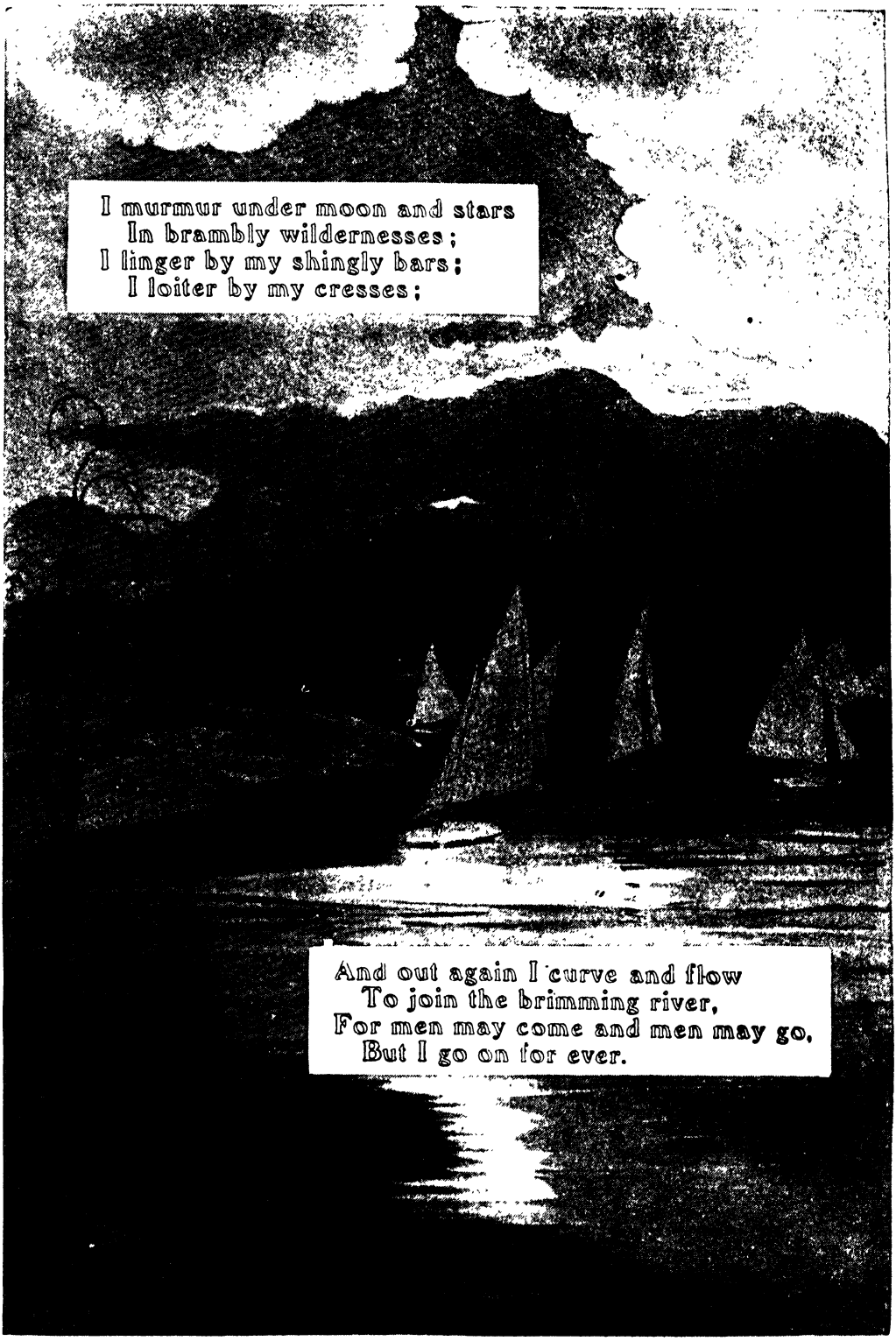
By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.
With many a curve my banks I fret,
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.
I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.


I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling;
And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel,
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel;
And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.
I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.


I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter by my cresses;
And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

BONNET O' BLUE

We give here an example of a homely ballad of love and war—the kind of poem which was made up by people who knew little of style or metre to tell a story to listeners in the street. In this way much popular verse was created in distant days. A limner was an artist who painted portraits.

AT Kingston-upon-Waldy, a town in Yorkshire,
I lived in great splendour and free from all care,
I rolled quite in riches, had sweethearts not a few,
I was wounded by a bonny lad and his bonnet o' blue.

There came a troop of soldiers as you now shall hear,
From Scotland to Waldy abroad for to steer;
There is one among them I wish I ne'er knew;
He's a bonny Scotch laddie wi' bonnet o' blue.

I cannot find rest, contentment has fled,
The form of my true love will run in my head,
The form of my true love still keeps in my view,
He's a bonny Scotch lad in his bonnet o' blue.

Early in the morning, arising from bed,
I called upon Sally, my own waiting maid,
To dress me as fine as her two hands could do,
To seek out the lad and his bonnet o' blue.

So quickly she dressed me and quickly I came
To mingle with persons to hear my love's name,
Charles Stewart they called him, I felt it was true;
Once a prince of that name wore a bonnet o' blue.

My love he marched by with a gun in his hand,
I strove to speak to him but all was in vain,
I strove to speak to him, away then he flew—
My heart it was with him and his bonnet o' blue.

She says, "My dear laddie, I'll buy your discharge,
I'll free you from soldiers, I'll let you at large,
I'll free you from soldiers, if your heart will prove true,
And I'll ne'er cast a stain on your bonnet o' blue."

He says, "My dear lassie, you'll buy my discharge,
You'll free me from soldiers, and let me at large?
For your very kind offe , I bow, ma'am, to you,
But I'll ne'er wear a stain in my bonnet o' blue.

"I have a sweet girl in my own country town,
Whom I ne'er would forsake though poverty frown,
I ne'er will forsake the girl that proves true,
And I'll ne'er wear a stain in my bonnet o' blue."

I will send for a limner from London to Hull,
To draw my love's picture out in the full,
I'll set it in my chamber all close in my view,
And I'll think on the lad whose heart proved so true.

REVEILLE

The reveille is the trumpet sound that wakes soldiers in the morning. This call to a soldier to rise and arm himself is from Scott's tale "The Betrothed," where it is supposed to be sung outside an officer's tent by a wandering minstrel. A jack was a soldier's leather coat, often lined with metal

SOLDIER, wake—the day is peeping,
Honour ne'er was won in sleeping;
Never when the sunbeams still
Lay unreflected on the hill;
'Tis when they are glinted back
From axe and armour, spear and jack,
That they promise future story,
Many a page of deathless glory;
Shields that are the foeman's terror
Ever are the morning's mirror.

Arm and up—the morning beam
Hath called the rustic to his team,
Hath called the falc'ner to the lake,
Hath called the huntsman to the brake;
The early student ponders o'er
His dusty tomes of ancient lore.
Soldier, wake—thy harvest, fame,
Thy study, conquest—war thy game;
Shield that should be a foeman's terror
Still should gleam the morning's mirror.

Poor hire repays the rustic's pain,
More paltry still the sportsman's gain;
Vainest of all the student's theme
Ends in some metaphysic dream;
Yet each is up, and each has toiled
Since first the peep of dawn has smiled,
And each is eagerer in his aim
Than he who barters life for fame:
Up, up, and arm thee, son of terror,
Be thy bright shield the morning mirror.

TREES

THE Oak is called the King of Trees,
The Aspen quivers in the breeze,
The Poplar grows up straight and tall
The Pear-tree spreads along the wall,
The Sycamore gives pleasant shade,
The Willow droops in watery glade,
The Fir-tree useful timber gives,
The Beech amid the forest lives.

HOW HAMELIN PAID FOR A BROKEN WORD

TO PUNISH THE GERMANS FOR BREAKING THEIR WORD BY REFUSING TO PAY HIS FEE FOR CLEARING THE RATS, THE PIED PIPER CHARMS THE CHILDREN OUT OF HAMELIN

THERE WAS A RUSTLING THAT SEEMED LIKE A BUSTLING
OF MERRY CROWDS JUSTLING AT PITCHING AND HUSTLING,
SMALL FEET WERE PATTERING, WOODEN SHOES CLATTERING,
LITTLE HANDS CLAPPING AND LITTLE TONGUES CHATTERING,
AND, LIKE FOWLS IN A FARMYARD WHEN BARLEY IS SCATTERING,
OUT CAME THE CHILDREN RUNNING. Robert Browning

MY LOST YOUTH

The "dear old town" which was the birthplace of Longfellow, who wrote this poem, was the seaport of Portland, in Maine. The sea-fight he remembered was between an English ship and an American ship during the last war waged between the two countries, now almost a hundred years ago. As mentioned in the fifth verse, both the captains were killed, and they were buried ashore. There are many haunting, poetical refrains to which an exact meaning cannot be put, but they appeal to us like the sound of evening bells, and one of them is this elusive poem about the boy's will and the "long, long" thoughts of youth.

OFTEN I think of the beautiful town
That is seated by the sea;
Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
And my youth comes back to me.
And a verse of a Lapland song
Is haunting my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long,
long thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
And catch in sudden gleams
The sheen of the far surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides
Of all my boyish dreams.
And the burden of that old song
It murmurs and whispers still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long,
long thoughts."

I remember the black wharves and the slips
And the sea-tides tossing free;
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.
And the voice of that wayward song
Is singing and saying still,
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long,
long thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
And the fort upon the hill;
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,
And the bugle wild and shrill.
And the music of that old song
Throbs in my memory still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long,
long thoughts."

I remember the sea-fight far away,
How it thundered o'er the tide,
And the dead captains, as they lay
In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay,
Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long,
long thoughts."

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with a Sabbath sound as of doves
In quiet neighbourhoods.
And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long,
long thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the schoolboy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.
And the voice of that fitful song
Sings on and is never still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long,
long thoughts."

There are things of which I may not speak,
There are dreams that cannot die,
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye.
And the words of that fatal song
Come over me like a chill:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long,
long thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long,
long thoughts."

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were
I find my lost youth again.
And the strange and beautiful song,
The groves are repeating it still:
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long,
long thoughts."

HOAR-FROST

William Howitt, who was a great lover of natural beauty, thus sketched the vision of loveliness that comes out of the air with the early morning frost and vanishes before the sun.

WHAT dream of beauty ever equalled this !
What bands from Faëryland have sallied forth,
With snowy foliage from the abundant North,
With imagery from the realms of bliss !
What visions of my boyhood do I miss
That here are not restored ! All splendours pure,
All loveliness, all graces that allure ;
Shapes that amaze ; a paradise that is—
Yet was not—will not in few moments be :
Glory from nakedness, that playfully
Mimics with passing life each summer boon ;
Clothing the ground—replenishing the tree ;
Weaving arch, bower, and delicate festoon ;
Still as a dream—and like a dream to flee !

THE REVIEW OF THE VICTIMS

This vision of a ghostly review by Napoleon of the men who died in many lands because of his passion for war was pictured by Alaric A. Watts, a poet and journalist of the middle of the nineteenth century. Till recently no similar charge of bringing on the world the curse of war could be brought against any living man ; but now, alas ! the same crime blackens the life of the German Emperor, who, at the time these words are written, is still alive to see the misery he has scattered through Europe by breaking his solemn word.

IT was the dead midnight ;
No star was in the sky ;
The struggling moon shed a troubled light,
As she won her way on high ;

And deepest silence hung,
Like a garment, o'er the land ;
When a loud and shrill reveille rung
From a grisly drummer's hand !

It rolled through the startled space—
That wild, unearthly sound ;
Till the martyred dead of a doomed race
Uprose, and crowded round.

From the sleeping city near ;
From the warm and genial South ;
From the sands of Egypt's deserts drear ;
From the Danube's stormy mouth ;

From the ice-realms of the North ;
From devoted Moscow's plain ;
Trooped the might of armed thousands forth
To that stirring call again !

From the depths of Indian seas ;
From the Tyrol's hills of blue ;
From the base of the snowy Pyrenees ;
From the "deadly Waterloo."

For many a far-off land,
And many a wandering wave,
Had heard that stern and loud command,
And had yielded up its brave !

The trumpet's peal is blown ;
Those scattered hosts combine ;
And the soldier-slaves of the iron crown
Arise and make their sign !

On shadowy chargers mounted,
With swords uplifted high,
From battlefields uncounted,
The Imperial Guards draw nigh !

With folded arms he stands,
As they pass him in review ;
And sadly he looks on those gallant bands,
As he thinks on Waterloo !

They shout no *vivas* now
For the chieftain once so dear ;
But curses deep, though murmured low,
Alone salute his ear.

He strains his glance to look
Beyond that grisly train ;
What doth he see but a barren rock,
A vulture, and a chain !

The drum hath ceased to roll,
That despot's dreams are o'er ;
And the conflicts of his stormy soul,
Are stilled for evermore !

His empires all are gone ;
His trappings, once so proud ;
A rock-bound grave is his only throne ;
His kingly robe a shroud !

And he, whose dread commands
To millions once were doom,
Hath claimed, at length, from alien hands,
A lone, unhonoured tomb !

MY WIFE'S A WINSOME WEE THING

This song is an adaptation by Robert Burns from an old song that was not half so sweet. We can feel the poet's admiration and love pulsing in every line. "For fear my jewel tine" means for fear it be lost. "Warstle" means "wrestle."

SHE is a handsome wee thing,
She is a winsome wee thing,
She is a bonnie wee thing,
This sweet wee wife o' mine.

I never saw a fairer,
I never lo'ed a dearer,
And neist my heart I'll wear her,
For fear my jewel tine.

She is a winsome wee thing,
She is a handsome wee thing,
She is a bonnie wee thing,
This sweet wee wife o' mine.

The warld's wrack, we share o't,
The warstle and the care o't,
Wi' her I'll blithely bear it,
And think my lot divine.

A POOR MAN'S WIFE

The English language does not contain a finer tribute than this to the beloved and helpful wife of a poor man, and it was written genuinely by a poor man. The author, Gerald Massey (born in 1820; died in 1907), was a working boy at the age of eight, and had to pick up his education by reading. Until he became known as a writer he was a working man.

HER dainty hand nestled in mine, rich and white,
And timid as trembling dove;
And it twinkled about me, a jewel of light,
As she garnished our feast of love;
'Twas the queenliest hand in all lady-land,
And she was a poor man's wife!
Oh! little ye'd think how that wee, white hand
Could dare in the battle of life.

Her heart it was lowly as maiden's might be,
But hath climbed to heroic height,
And burned like a shield in defence of me,
On the sorest field of fight!
And startling as fire, it has often flashed up
In her eyes, the good heart and rare!
As she drank down her half of our bitterest cup,
And taught me how to bear.

Her sweet eyes that seemed, with their smile sublime,
Made to look me and light me to heaven,
They have triumphed through bitter tears many a time,
Since their love to my life was given;
And the maiden-meek voice of the womanly wife
Still bringeth the heavens nigher;
For it rings like the voice of God over my life,
Aye bidding me climb up higher.

I hardly dared think it was human, when
I first looked in her yearning face;
For it shone as the heavens had opened then,
And clad it with glory and grace!
But dearer its light of healing grew
In our dark and desolate day,
As the rainbow, when heaven hath no break of blue,
Smileth the storm away.

Oh! her shape was the lithest loveliness—
Just an armful of heaven to enfold!
But the form that bends flowerlike in love's caress,
With the victor's strength is souled!
In her worshipful presence transfigured I stand,
And the poor man's English home
She lights with the beauty of Greece the grand,
And the glory of regallest Rome.

THE OLD ARMCHAIR

Wherever the English tongue is known this poem, by Eliza Cook, has travelled. It is an outburst of tenderest feeling over the simplest and greatest things—home memories and a good mother's influence. Its appeal is made to the heart.

I LOVE it, I love it; and who shall dare
To chide me for loving that old armchair?
I've treasured it long as a sainted prize;
I've bedewed it with tears, and embalmed it with sighs.
'Tis bound by a thousand bands to my heart;
Not a tie will break, not a link will start.
Would ye learn the spell?—a mother sat there;
And a sacred thing is that old armchair.

In childhood's hour I lingered near
The hallow'd seat with listening ear;
And gentle words that mother would give,
To fit me to die, and teach me to live.
She told me shame would never betide,
With truth for my creed and God for my guide;
She taught me to lisp my earliest prayer;
As I knelt beside that old armchair.

I sat and watched her many a day,
When her eyes grew dim, and her locks were grey;
And I almost worshipped her when she smiled,
And turned from her Bible to bless her child.
Years rolled on; but the last one sped—
My idol was shattered; my earth-star fled.
I learnt how much the heart can bear,
When I saw her die in that old armchair.

'Tis past, 'tis past, but I gaze on it now
With quivering breath and throbbing brow;
'Twas there she nursed me, 'twas there she died;
And memory flows with lava tide.
Say it is folly, and deem me weak.
While the scalding drops start down my cheek;
But I love it, I love it; and cannot tear
My soul from a mother's old armchair.

A SONG

A happy illustration, by James Whitcomb Riley, the American poet, of the thought that every cloud has a silver lining.

THERE is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
There is ever a something sings alway:
There's the song of the lark when the skies are clear,
And the song of the thrush when the skies are grey.
The sunshine showers across the grain,
And the bluebird trills in the orchard tree;
And in and out, when the eaves dip rain,
The swallows are twittering ceaselessly.

THE PEOPLE'S ANTHEM

Ebenezer Elliott, the Sheffield "Corn Law Rhymer," wrote much verse that moved the hearts of the people of his day—he died in 1849—but this one poem, which thrills with a love of the great mass of men, was written for all ages and countries.

WHEN wilt thou save the people?
O God of mercy! when?
Not kings and lords, but nations!
Not thrones and crowns, but men!
Flowers of thy heart, O God, are they!
Let them not pass, like weeds, away!
Their heritage a sunless day!
God save the people!

Shall crime bring crime for ever,
Strength aiding still the strong?
Is it thy will, O Father!
That man shall toil for wrong?
"No!" say thy mountains; "No!" thy skies;
"Man's clouded sun shall brightly rise,
And songs be heard instead of sighs."
God save the people!

When wilt thou save the people?
O God of mercy! when?
The people, Lord! the people!
Not thrones and crowns, but men!
God save the people! thine they are;
Thy children, as thy angels fair:
Save them from bondage and despair!
God save the people!

THE BRAVE AT HOME

It is right that we should be reminded of the truth that these lines teach us. The full tale of courage is not told on the battlefield, and there are heroes at home though they wear no V.C. This poem is by an American, Thomas Buchanan Read.

THE maid who binds her warrior's sash,
With smile that well her pain dissembles,
The while beneath her drooping lash,
One starry tear-drop hangs and trembles,
Though Heaven alone records the tear,
And Fame shall never know her story,
Her heart has shed a drop as dear
As e'er bedewed the field of glory!

The wife who girds her husband's sword,
'Mid little ones who weep or wonder,
And bravely speaks the cheering word,
What though her heart be rent asunder,
Doomed nightly in her dreams to hear
The bolts of death around him rattle,
Hath shed as sacred blood as e'er
Was poured upon the field of battle!

The mother who conceals her grief,
While to her breast her son she presses,
Then breathes a few brave words and brief,
Kissing the patriot brow she blesses,
With no one but her secret God
To know the pain that weighs upon her,
Sheds holy blood as e'er the sod
Received on Freedom's field of honour!

THE PATRIOT'S PASS-WORD

These lines, by James Montgomery, tell of the legendary deed of Arnold von Winkelried at the battle of Sempach, in 1386, when the Swiss defeated the Austrians. According to the story, Winkelried seized an armful of the enemy's spears, and thrust them into his body to make a breach in the Austrian rank.

"MAKE way for liberty!" he cried;
Made way for liberty, and died.
And now the work of life and death
Hung on the passing of a breath;
The fire of conflict burned within,
The battle trembled to begin;
Yet while the Austrians held their ground
Point for assault was nowhere found;
Where'er the impatient Switzers gazed
The unbroken line of lances blazed;
That line 'twere suicide to meet,
And perish at their tyrants' feet:
How could they rest within their graves,
To leave their home the haunt of slaves?
Would they not feel their children tread,
With clanking chains, above their head?

KOSSUTH

Kossuth was a noble Hungarian patriot who tried to free his country from Austrian rule. Much of his life was lived in exile, but after his death, in 1894, his countrymen fetched his body home with great honour. In this poem James Russell Lowell, the American author, expresses what all lovers of liberty felt about Kossuth, the noble-minded hero who regarded himself as fulfilling a mission from God.

A RACE of nobles may die out,
A royal line may leave no heir;
Wise Nature sets no guards about
Her pewter plate and wooden ware.
But they fail not, the kinglier breed,
Who starry diadems attain;
To dungeon, axe, and stake succeed
Heirs of the old heroic strain.
The zeal of Nature never cools,
Nor is she thwarted of her ends;
When gapped and dulled her cheaper tools,
Then she a saint and prophet spends.
Land of the Magyars, though it be
The tyrant may relink his chain,
Already thine the victory,
As the just Future measures gain.
Thou hast succeeded, thou hast won
The deathly travail's amplest worth;
A nation's duty thou hast done,
Giving a hero to our earth.
And he, let come what will of woe,
Has saved the land he strove to save;
No Cossack hordes, no traitor's blow,
Can quench the voice shall haunt his grave.
"I Kossuth am: O Future, thou
That clear'st the just and blott'st the vile,
O'er this small dust in reverence bow,
Remembering what I was erewhile.
"I was the chosen trump wherethrough
Our God sent forth awakening breath;
Came chains? Came death? The strain He blew
Sounds on, outliving chains and death."

THE SHOEMAKERS

In the Middle Ages each workman's craft had its patron saint, and St. Crispin, who made his living by shoemaking, was the shoemaker's saint. This poem, by John Greenleaf Whittier, honours the shoemaker's craft and tells of notable men who were shoemakers. Many cobblers have won great fame.

Ho! workers of the old time styled
The Gentle Craft of Leather;
Young brothers of the ancient guild,
Stand forth once more together!
Call out again your long array,
In the olden merry manner!
Once more, on gay St. Crispin's Day,
Fling out your blazoned banner!

Rap, rap! upon the well-worn stone
How falls the polished hammer!
Rap, rap! the measured sound has grown
A quick and merry clamour.
Now shape the sole, now deftly curl
The glossy vamp around it,
And bless the while the bright-eyed girl
Whose gentle fingers bound it!

For you, along the Spanish Main
A hundred keels are ploughing;
For you, the Indian on the plain
His lasso-coil is throwing;
For you, deep glens with hemlock dark
The woodman's fire is lighting;
For you, upon the oak's grey bark,
The woodman's axe is smiting.

For you, from Carolina's pine
The rosin-gum is stealing;
For you, the dark-eyed Florentine
Her silken skein is reeling;
For you, the dizzy goatherd roams
His rugged Alpine ledges;
For you, round all her shepherd homes,
Bloom England's thorny hedges.

The foremost still, by day or night,
On moated mound or heather,
Where'er the need of trampled right
Brought toiling men together;
Where the free burghers from the wall
Defied the mail-clad master,
Than yours, at Freedom's trumpet-call,
No craftsman rallied faster.

Let foplings sneer, let fools deride—
Ye heed no idle scorner;
Free hands and hearts are still your pride,
And duty done, your honour.
Ye dare to trust, for honest fame,
The jury Time empanels,
And leave to truth each noble name
Which glorifies your annals.

Thy songs, Hans Sachs, are living yet,
In strong and hearty German;
And Bloomfield's lay, and Gifford's wit,
And patriot fame of Sherman;
Still from his book a mystic sneer
The soul of Behmen teaches,
And England's priestcraft shakes to hear
Of Fox's leathern breeches.

The red brick to the mason's hand,
The brown earth to the tiller's,
The shoe in yours shall wealth command,
Like fairy Cinderella's!
As they who shunned the household maid
Beheld the crown upon her,
So all shall see your toil repaid
With health and home and honour.

Then let the toast be freely quaffed,
In water cool and brimming,
"All honour to the good old Craft,
Its merry men and women!"
Call out again your long array,
In the old time's pleasant manner;
Once more, on gay St. Crispin's Day,
Fling out his blazoned banner!

TO THE REFORMERS OF ENGLAND

When Richard Cobden and John Bright were striving to give untaxed food to the English poor, this poem was addressed to them by the American poet John Greenleaf Whittier.

God bless ye, brothers!—in the fight
Ye're waging now, ye cannot fail,
For better is your sense of right
Than kingcraft's triple mail.

Than tyrant's law, or bigot's ban,
More mighty is your simplest word;
The free heart of an honest man
Than crosier or the sword.

The great hearts of your olden time
Are beating with you, full and strong,
All holy memories and sublime
And glorious round ye throng.

The bluff, bold men of Runnymede
Are with ye still in times like these;
The shades of England's mighty dead,
Your cloud of witnesses!

The truths ye urge are borne abroad
By every wind and every tide;
The voice of Nature and of God
Speaks out upon your side.

The weapons which your hands have found
Are those which Heaven itself has wrought,
Light, Truth, and Love; your battle-ground
The free, broad field of Thought.

No partial, selfish purpose breaks
The simple beauty of your plan,
Nor lie from throne or altar shakes
Your steady faith in man.

O ye who, with undoubting eyes,
Thro' present cloud and gathering storm,
Behold the span of Freedom's skies,
And sunshine soft and warm,

Press on! and we who may not share
The toil or glory of your fight
May ask, at least, in earnest prayer,
God's blessing on the right!

DELICATESSEN

The American writer of these verses tries to reveal the poetry of the most commonplace lives. Could anything be more ordinary than the business of what schoolboys would call a "tuck-shop"? Yet Joyce Kilmer, who searched for poetry everywhere, found it in the life of a man whose anxious work was the providing of his customers with delicate eating.

WHY is that wanton gossip Fame
So dumb about this man's affairs?
Why do we titter at his name
Who come to buy his curious wares?

Here is a shop of wonderment.
From every land has come a prize:
Rich spices from the Orient,
And fruit that knew Italian skies,

And figs that ripened by the sea
In Smyrna, nuts from hot Brazil,
Strange pungent meats from Germany,
And currants from a Grecian hill.

He is the lord of goodly things
That make the poor man's table gay,
Yet of his worth no minstrel sings
And on his tomb there is no bay.

Perhaps he lives and dies unpraised,
This trafficker in humble sweets,
Because his little shops are raised
By thousands in the city streets.

Yet stars in greater numbers shine,
And violets in millions grow,
And they in many a golden line
Are sung, as every child must know.

Perhaps Fame thinks his worried eyes,
His wrinkled, shrewd, pathetic face,
His shop, and all he sells and buys
Are desperately commonplace.

Well, it is true he has no sword
To dangle at his booted knees.
He leans across a slab of board,
And draws his knife and slices cheese.

He never heard of chivalry,
He longs for no heroic times;
He thinks of pickles, olives, tea,
And dollars, nickels, cents and dimes.

His world has narrow walls, it seems;
By counters is his soul confined;
His wares are all his hopes and dreams,
They are the fabric of his mind.

Yet in a room above the store
There is a woman—and a child
Pattered just now across the floor;
The shopman looked at him and smiled.

For once he thrilled with high romance
And tuned to love his eager voice.
Like any cavalier of France
He wooed the maiden of his choice.

And now deep in his weary heart
Are sacred flames that whitely burn.
He has of Heaven's grace a part
Who loves, who is beloved in turn.

And when the long day's work is done,
(How slow the leaden minutes ran!)
Home, with his wife and little son,
He is no huckster, but a man!

And there are those who grasp his hand,
Who drink with him and wish him well.
Oh, in no drear and lonely land
Shall he who honours friendship dwell.

And in his little shop, who knows
What bitter games of war are played?
Why, daily on each corner grows
A foe to rob him of his trade.

He fights, and for his fireside's sake;
He fights for clothing and for bread;
The lances of his foemen make
A steely halo round his head.

He decks his window artfully;
He haggles over paltry sums.
In this strange field his war must be,
And by such blows his triumph comes.

What if no trumpet sounds to call
His armed legions to his side?
What if to no ancestral hall
He comes in all a victor's pride?

The scene shall never fit the deed.
Grotesquely wonders come to pass.
The fool shall mount an Arab steed,
And Jesus ride upon an ass.

This man has home and child and wife
And battle set for every day.
This man has God and love and life;
These stand, all else shall pass away.

O Carpenter of Nazareth,
Whose mother was a village maid,
Shall we, Thy children, blow our breath
In scorn on any humble trade?

Have pity on our foolishness
And give us eyes, that we may see
Beneath the shopman's clumsy dress
The splendour of humanity!

THE FOURTH SHEPHERD

Joyce Kilmer was one of the victims of the war; here he writes what may well be called the Doom of the Kaiser.

THE hand of God is sure and strong,
Nor shall a man for ever flee
The bitter punishment of wrong.
The wrath of God is over me!

With ashen bread and wine of tears
Shall I be solaced in my pain.
I wear through black and endless years
Upon my brow the mark of Cain.

THE ONSET

The incitement to bravery by stirring sounds has seldom been flung forth with more effect than in this battle-cry by Barry Cornwall. Today "the trumpet speaks not to the armed throng," and courage has to be more quietly sustained.

SOUND an alarum! The foe is come!
I hear the tramp—the neigh—the hum,
The cry, and the blow of his daring drum:
Huzzah!

Sound! The blast of our trumpet blown
Shall carry dismay into hearts of stone:
What! Shall we shake at a foe unknown?
Huzzah!—Huzzah!

Have we not sinews as strong as they?
Have we not hearts that ne'er give way?
Have we not God on our side today?
Huzzah!

Look! They are staggered on yon black heath!
Steady awhile, and hold your breath!
Now is your time, men—Down like Death!
Huzzah!—Huzzah!

Stand by each other, and front your foes!
Fight, whilst a drop of the red blood flows!
Fight, as ye fought for the old red rose!
Huzzah!

Sound! Bid your terrible trumpets bray!
Blow, till their brazen throats give way!
Sound to the battle! Sound, I say!
Huzzah!—Huzzah!

THE UPRIGHT LIFE

This is the idea of a perfect life, according to Thomas Campion, the Elizabethan song-writer, and the writing has a grace which suits the balanced wisdom of the man who is pictured.

THE man of life upright,
Whose guiltless heart is free
From all dishonest deeds
Or thought of vanity;

The man whose silent days
In harmless joys are spent,
Whom hopes cannot delude
Nor sorrow discontent:

That man needs neither towers
Nor armour for defence,
Nor secret vaults to fly
From thunder's violence:

He only can behold
With unaffrighted eyes
The horrors of the deep
And terrors of the skies.

Thus scorning all the cares
That fate or fortune brings,
He makes the heaven his book,
His wisdom heavenly things;

Good thoughts his only friends,
His wealth a well-spent age,
The earth his sober inn
And quiet pilgrimage.

THE BLUE BELLS OF SCOTLAND

Set to a tune that all know well, this simple song expresses in the most direct way the longings of a woman's heart when one she loves is offering his life on the battlefield.

OH where, and oh where, is your Highland laddie gone?
He's gone to fight the foe for King George upon the throne;
And it's oh, in my heart, how I wish him safe at home!

Oh where, and oh where, does your Highland laddie dwell?
He dwells in merry Scotland, at the sign of the Blue Bell;
And it's oh, in my heart, that I love my laddie well.

In what clothes, in what clothes, is your Highland laddie clad?
His bonnet's of the Saxon green, his waistcoat's of the plaid;
And it's oh, in my heart, that I love my Highland lad.

Suppose, oh, suppose that your Highland lad should die?
The bagpipes shall play over him, and I'll lay me down and cry;
And it's oh, in my heart, I wish he may not die.

WILL THERE BE TIME?

The sad thought that man's triumphs in science and industry, amazing in their range and power, have not made the mass of mankind happier and better is thrust on our notice in these lines by Belle Fligelman, appearing in an American paper. Modern cleverness is behindhand in helping all to live well.

WHEN man has harnessed lightning to his will,
And spanned the ocean's breadth with bows of steel;
When he has made the universe his mill,
And set the winds to work to drive his wheel;
When he has scaled the skies with ghastly mirth
To rob the stars of their stupendous powers;
When he has probed the bowels of the earth
And gathered up the breath of all the flowers;
Will he then pause awhile to count the dead
Whom poverty and steel have ground to dust?
Will he then heed the children's cry for bread?
Or hear the mother's wail for what is just?
Will he then square himself with God and man?
Will he repudiate the vice and crime
That have endured since being first began?
God! Can he do all this? Will there be time?

CHARTIST SONG

The Chartists were a political association of the poor in the days (1820 to 1850) when poverty was appallingly common in England, and Thomas Cooper, a Leicester shoemaker, who wrote this song for them, was one of their leaders. The Charter made seven demands, and six of them have now been won. Cooper, who died in 1892, happily lived to see the triumph of the causes for which he had suffered two years of imprisonment.

THE time shall come when Wrong shall end,
When peasant to peer no more shall bend—
When the lordly Few shall lose their sway,
And the Many no more their frown obey.
Toil, brothers, toil, till the work is done—
Till the struggle is o'er, and the Charter won!

The time shall come when the artisan
Shall homage no more the titled man—
When the moiling men who delve the mine
By Mammon's decree no more shall pine.
Toil, brothers, toil, till the work is done—
Till the struggle is o'er, and the Charter won!

The time shall come when the weavers' band
Shall hunger no more in their fatherland—
When the factory child can sleep till day,
And smile while it dreams of sport and play.
Toil, brothers, toil, till the work is done—
Till the struggle is o'er, and the Charter won!

The time shall come when man shall hold
His brother more dear than sordid gold—
When the Negro's stain his freeborn mind
Shall sever no more from human-kind.
Toil, brothers, toil, till the world is free—
Till Justice and Love hold jubilee!

The time shall come when kingly crown
And mitre for toys of the Past are shown—
When the Fierce and False alike shall fall,
And Mercy and Truth encircle all.
Toil, brothers, toil, till the world is free—
Till Mercy and Truth hold jubilee!

The time shall come when earth shall be
A garden of joy, from sea to sea,
When the slaughterous sword is drawn no more,
And goodness exults from shore to shore.
Toil, brothers, toil, till the world is free—
Till goodness shall hold high jubilee!

THE BATTLE AUTUMN OF 1862

Written in 1862, in the midst of the terribly slaughterous Civil War of the American Republic, this poem, by John Greenleaf Whittier, speaks with faith and cheer to aching British hearts now that our own countrymen are giving their lives in sacrifice for all that lovers of freedom hold dear.

THE flags of warlike storm-birds fly,
The charging trumpets blow;
Yet rolls no thunder in the sky,
No earthquake strives below.

And, calm and patient, Nature keeps
Her ancient promise well,
Though o'er her bloom and greenness sweeps
The battle's breath of hell.

And still she walks in golden hours
Through harvest-happy farms,
And still she wears her fruits and flowers
Like jewels on her arms.

What mean the gladness of the plain,
This joy of eve and morn,
The mirth that shakes the beard of grain
And yellow locks of corn?

Ah! eyes may well be full of tears,
And hearts with hate are hot;
But even-paced come round the years,
And Nature changes not.

She meets with smiles our bitter grief,
With songs our groans of pain;
She mocks with tint of flower and leaf
The war-field's crimson stain.

Still, in the cannon's pause, we hear
Her sweet thanksgiving psalm;
Too near to God for doubt or fear,
She shares the eternal calm.

She knows the seed lies safe below
The fires that blast and burn;
For all the tears of blood we sow
She waits the rich return.

She sees with clearer eye than ours
The good of suffering born,
The hearts that blossom like her flowers,
And ripen like her corn.

O, give to us, in times like these,
The vision of her eyes;
And make her fields and fruited trees
Our golden prophecies!

O, give to us her finer ear!
Above this stormy din;
We, too, would hear the bells of cheer
Ring peace and freedom in!

PRAYERS FROM SHAKESPEARE

O God of battles, steel my soldiers' hearts;
Possess them not with fear; take from them now
The sense of reckoning, if the opposed numbers
Pluck their hearts from them. Not today, O Lord!
O! not today, think not upon the fault
My father made in compassing the crown.
I Richard's body have interred anew,
And on it have bestowed more contrite tears
Than from it issued forced drops of blood.
Five hundred poor I have in yearly pay,
Who twice a day their withered hands hold up
Toward heaven, to pardon blood; and I have built
Two chantries, where the sad and solemn priests
Sing still for Richard's soul. More will I do;
Though all that I can do is nothing worth,
Since that my penitence comes after all,
Imploring pardon.

Henry V.'s prayer before Agincourt

"O GOD OF BATTLES, STEEL MY SOLDIERS' HEARTS"—KING HENRY V. AT AGINCOURT

O Thou, whose captain I account myself,
Look on my forces with a gracious eye;
Put in their hands Thy bruising irons of wrath,
That they may crush down with a heavy fall
The usurping helmets of our adversaries!
Make us Thy ministers of chastisement,
That we may praise Thee in Thy victory!
To Thee I do commend my watchful soul,
Ere I let fall the windows of mine eyes:
Sleeping and waking, O! defend me still.

Richmond's prayer on Bosworth Field

O God! Thy arm was here;
And not to us, but to Thy arm alone,
Ascribe we all. When, without stratagem,
But in plain shock and even play of battle,
Was ever known so great and little loss
On one part and on the other? Take it, God,
For it is none but Thine!

Henry V.'s prayer after Agincourt

God, if Thy will be so,
Enrich the time to come with smooth-faced peace,
With smiling plenty, and fair prosperous days!
Abate the edge of traitors, gracious Lord,
That would reduce these bloody days again,
And make poor England weep in streams of blood!
Let them not live to taste this land's increase,
That would with treason wound this fair land's peace!

Richmond's prayer after Bosworth Field

OLD JOHN BROWN

John Brown was an American hero who began fighting for the abolition of slavery in 1859. He was wounded, taken prisoner, tried, and executed for treason. When, a little later, the Civil War broke out, the troops fighting against slavery marched to the song "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave, but his soul is marching on." These stirring verses were written by a well-known American minister, Edmund H. Sears, at the time of John Brown's trial. "Henry's cry for Liberty" refers to a speech made in 1775 by Patrick Henry against the tyranny of George III. The speech, which is well known in American schools, ended with the words "Give me liberty or give me death." After the American revolution was successful, Patrick Henry became Governor of Virginia.

THEY call thee hot-brained, crazed, and mad;
But every word that falls
Goes straight and true, and hits the mark
More sure than cannon-balls.
Through spectre forms of bogus law
It cuts its way complete;
And judge and jury, too, are tried
At God's great judgment-seat.

Old man, farewell! They'll take thy life;
For dangerous enough,
In these our sweetly piping times,
Are men of hero stuff.
We should tread soft above the fires
That underneath us lie;
You'll crack the crust of compromise,
And set them spouting high.

Where Henry's cry for "Liberty"
Once sent its shivering thrill,
There's only room, six feet by two,
For heroes now to fill.
And o'er the spot the years will roll,
As spring its verdure weaves,
And autumn o'er the felon's grave
Shakes down its yellow leaves.

But not the spot six feet by two
Will hold a man like thee;
John Brown will tramp the shaking earth
From Blue Ridge to the sea,
Till the strong angel comes at last
And ope's each dungeon door,
And God's Great Charter holds, and waves
O'er all His humble poor.

And then the humble poor will come
(In that far-distant day),
And from the felon's nameless grave
They'll brush the leaves away;
And grey old men will point the spot
Beneath the pine-tree shade,
As children ask with streaming eyes
Where Old John Brown was laid.

WAITING FOR THE DENTIST

The writer of this description of the dolefulness of a dentist's waiting-room, which most of us have experienced, is Mr. Mackenzie Bell, a producer of much lively verse, who is still living.

THOUGH many dismal years I've been
To dull old Care apprenticed,
The worst of the small woes I've seen
Is—waiting for the dentist!

How dreary is the cheerless room
In which you bide his pleasure!
The very chairs seem steeped in gloom
And sorrow without measure.

As if so wild mute-molar grief,
So uncontrolled its swelling—
That its fierce tide had sought relief
By deluging the dwelling.

What though of literature a store
Is lying on the table,
You only think the books a bore;
To read you are unable.

What from the windows though, perchance,
You see forms full of graces,
They merely make you look askance,
And think how sore your face is.

On many chairs and sofas, too,
More martyrs round you languish;
You glance at them, they glance at you,
And give a groan of anguish.

You deem it hard, their turn arrives
Before you in rotation,
Or they wax wroth that yours deprives
Their case of consolation.

You muse upon the ruthless wrench
Which buys a tooth's departing—
Or how the stopping-pangs to quench,
In which you may be starting.

Or haply on these ivory chips
Harsh Nature may deny you—
But which the "golden key" equips
Man's genius to supply you.

No words your mood of mind express,
A mood devoid of quiet,
In which pain, pleasure, and distress,
Mingle in hopeless riot.

Yes, though much sorrow one must know
While to old Care apprenticed,
The greatest unheroic woe
Is—waiting for the dentist.

THE TRAILING ARBUTUS

The trailing arbutus is a fragrant pink flower that blossoms in early spring in the Eastern American States, where the writer, John Greenleaf Whittier, lived. It is often sheltered by woods, as in this poem. The poet uses a little Nature-picture to suggest a likeness in human life where nothing can prevent the cheering influence of goodness from being felt.

I WANDERED lonely where the pine-trees made
Against the bitter east their barricade,
And, guided by its sweet
Perfume, I found, within a narrow dell,
The trailing spring flower tinted like a shell
Amid dry leaves and mosses at my feet.

From under dead boughs, for whose loss the pines
Moaned ceaseless overhead, the blossoming vines
Lifted their glad surprise,
While yet the bluebird smoothed in leafless trees
His feathers ruffled by the chill sea-breeze,
And snow-drifts lingered under April skies.

As, pausing, o'er the lonely flower I bent,
I thought of lives thus lowly, clogged, and pent,
Which yet find room,
Through care and cumber, coldness and decay,
To lend a sweetness to the ungenial day,
And make the sad earth happier for their bloom.

PAULINUS AND EDWIN

The conversion here recorded by Francis Turner Palgrave, is said to have taken place at Doncaster, when Edwin, the Northumbrian king, met Paulinus, a monk sent by Pope Gregory, with Augustine, to convert the English. The "stern old warrior" who advised Edwin to accept the new religion, which told men whence they were come and whither they were going, is usually referred to as a priest named Coifi. It was this king who built Edinburgh Castle.

THE black-haired, gaunt Paulinus
By ruddy Edwin stood:
"Bow down, O King of Deira,
Before the holy rood!
Cast forth thy demon idols,
And worship Christ our Lord!"
But Edwin looked and pondered,
And answered not a word.

Again the gaunt Paulinus
To ruddy Edwin spake:
"God offers life immortal
For His dear Son's own sake.
Wilt thou not hear His message,
Who bears the keys and sword?"
But Edwin looked and pondered,
And answered not a word.

Rose then a sage old warrior—
Was five score winters old—
Whose beard from chin to girdle
Like one long snow-wreath rolled:

"At Yuletide in our chamber
We sit in warmth and light,
While cavern-black around us
Lies the grim mouth of Night.

"Athwart the room a sparrow
Darts from the open door;
Within the happy hearth-light
One red flash, and no more!
We see it born from darkness,
And into darkness go—
So is our life, King Edwin!
Ah, that it should be so!

"But if this pale Paulinus
Have somewhat more to tell,
Some news of whence and whither,
And where the soul may dwell—
If on that outer darkness
The sun of Hope may shine,
He makes life worth the living—
I take his God for mine."

So spake the wise old warrior,
And all about him cried:
"Paulinus, God hath conquered,
And He shall be our Guide;
For He makes life worth living
Who brings this message plain—
When our brief days are over,
That we shall live again."

THE SHIP OF STATE

A hundred years after the formation of the American Republic, the poet Longfellow wrote a poem which he called "The Building of the Ship." It described how a captain set the lover of his daughter the task of building a ship, to be called "The Union," staunch and strong, on the condition that the young people should be married on the day the ship was launched. Having told this simple story, the poet nobly applies the simile of a ship to his country—the Ship of State—and it will apply equally well to our own.

THOU, too, sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O Union, strong and great!
Humanity, with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!
We know what Master laid thy keel,
What workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge and what a heat
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
'Tis of the wave and not the rock;
'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale!
In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore,
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee—are all with thee.

TOM DUNSTAN

From Robert Buchanan's "London Poems" we take this fine, sad lay of the tailor's shop. It breathes the unquenchable love of liberty which has been the life-force of the world's progress. This is the faith which today nerves millions of men to fight and die where Freedom and Tyranny grapple in war. Robert Buchanan, a Scottish poet, who died in 1901, was himself always a lover of human freedom.

Now poor Tom Dunstan's cold,
All life grows duller;
There's a blight on young and old,
And our talk has lost its bold
Red-republican colour!
Poor Tom was crippled and thin,
But, Lord, if you'd seen his face,
When, sick of the country's sin,
With bang of the fist, and chin
Stuck out, he argued the case!
He prophesied men should be free,
And the money-bags be bled!
"She's coming, she's coming," said he;
"Courage, boys! wait and see!
Freedom's ahead!"

Cross-legged on the board we sat,
Like spiders spinning,
Stitching and sweating, while fat
Old Moses, with eyes like a cat,
Sat greasily grinning;
And here Tom said his say,
And prophesied Tyranny's death;
And the tallow burned all day,
And we stitched and stitched away
In the thick smoke of our breath
Poor worn-out slops were we,
With hearts as heavy as lead;
But "Patience! she's coming!" said he;
"Courage, boys! wait and see!
Freedom's ahead!"

. . . .

But Tom was little and weak,
The hard hours shook him;
Hollower grew his cheek,
And when he began to speak
The coughing took him.
And at last the cheery sound
Of his voice among us ceased,
And we made a purse, all round,
That he mightn't starve, at least.
His pain was awful to see,
Yet there, on his poor sick-bed,
"She's coming, in spite of me!
Courage and wait!" cried he;
"*Freedom's ahead!*"

Ay, now Tom Dunstan's cold,
All life seems duller;
There's a blight on young and old,
And our talk has lost the bold
Red-republican colour.
But we see a figure grey,
And we hear a voice of death,
And the tallow burns all day,
And we stitch and stitch away
In the thick smoke of our breath;
Ay, while in the dark sit we,
Tom seems to call from the dead—
"She's coming! she's coming!" says he;
"Courage, boys! wait and see!
Freedom's ahead!"

THE BOYS

We do not know who wrote these companion pictures of boys and girls, but they are very beautiful and nobly true.

God wants the boys, the merry,
merry boys,
The noisy boys, the funny boys,
The thoughtless boys.
God wants the boys, with all their joys,
That He as gold may make them pure,
And teach them trials to endure.
His heroes brave
He'll have them be,
Fighting for truth
And purity.
God wants the boys.

THE GIRLS

God wants the happy-hearted girls,
The loving girls, the best of girls,
The worst of girls.
God wants to make the girls His pearls,
And so reflect His holy face,
And bring to mind His wondrous grace;
That beautiful
The world may be,
And filled with love
And purity.
God wants the girls.

WRITTEN ON THE DAY MR. LEIGH HUNT LEFT PRISON

Leigh Hunt was sent to prison in 1812 for writing in a newspaper the truth about the Prince Regent, who afterwards was George the Fourth. He said George had lived fifty years "without a single claim on the gratitude of his country." During Hunt's imprisonment all the poets of his time—Byron, Shelley, Keats, Charles Lamb—visited him, and John Keats wrote this sonnet when he was released

What though, for showing truth to flattered state,
Kind Hunt was shut in prison, yet has he,
In his immortal spirit, been as free
As the sky-searching lark, and as elate.
Minion of grandeur! think you he did wait?
Think you he nought but prison walls did see,
Till, so unwilling, thou unturnedst the key?
Ah, no! far happier, nobler was his fate!
In Spenser's halls he strayed, and bowers fair,
Culling enchanted flowers; and he flew
With daring Milton through the fields of air:
To regions of his own his genius true
Took happy flights. Who shall his fame impair
When thou art dead, and all thy wretched crew?

KING SOLOMON AND THE ANTS

Here is a poem by John Greenleaf Whittier, telling a gracious story of how greatness is better shown by simple kindness than by pride—the kindness which embraces all living things.

OUT from Jerusalem
The king rode with his great
War chiefs and lords of state,
And Sheba's queen with them,

Comely, but black withal,
To whom, perchance, belongs
That wondrous Song of songs,
Sensuous and mystical,

Whereto devout souls turn
In fond, ecstatic dream,
And through its earth-born theme
The Love of loves discern.

Proud in the Syrian sun,
In gold and purple sheen,
The dusky Ethiop queen
Smiled on King Solomon.

Wisest of men, he knew
The languages of all
The creatures, great or small,
That trod the earth or flew

Across an ant-hill led
The king's path, and he heard
Its small folk, and their word
He thus interpreted:

"Here comes the king men greet
As wise and good and just,
To crush us in the dust
Under his heedless feet."

The great king bowed his head,
And saw the wide surprise
Of the Queen of Sheba's eyes
As he told her what they said.

"O king!" she whispered sweet,
"Too happy fate have they
Who perish in thy way
Beneath thy gracious feet!

"Thou of the God-lent crown,
Shall these vile creatures dare
Murmur against thee where
The knees of kings kneel down?"

"Nay," Solomon replied,
"The wise and strong should seek
The welfare of the weak,"
And turned his horse aside.

His train, with quick alarm,
Curved with their leader round
The ant-hill's peopled mound,
And left it free from harm.

The jewelled head bent low.
"O king!" she said, "henceforth
The secret of thy worth
And wisdom well I know.

"Happy must be the State
Whose ruler heedeth more
The murmurs of the poor
Than flatteries of the great."

SPEAK LOW, SPEAK LITTLE

Ought we to be cheerful while war rages, or to be silent and subdued? That is the question asked and answered in these lines. The reply is that Nature's song of life goes on in the very midst of death, and tears should not quench our hopes.

SPEAK low, speak little, who may sing
While yonder cannon-thunders boom?
Watch, shuddering, what each day may bring:
Nor "pipe amid the crack of doom."

And yet—the pines sing overhead,
The robins by the alder-pool,
The bees about the garden bed,
The children dancing home from school.

And ever at the loom of Birth
The mighty Mother weaves and sings:
She weaves—fresh robes for mangled earth;
She sings—fresh hopes for desperate things.

And thou, too: if through Nature's calm
Some strain of music touch thine ears,
Accept and share that soothing balm,
And sing, though choked with pitying tears.

READY

These verses describe an incident in the Civil War which freed American slaves. It shows that the black man is as capable of heroism as the white man. The writer, Phoebe Cary, died in 1871. She wrote several books of poems, and one of her hymns, "One sweetly solemn thought," is known in all lands.

LOADED with gallant soldiers,
A boat shot into the land,
And lay at the right of Rodman's Point,
With her keel upon the sand.

Lightly, gaily, they came to shore,
And never a man afraid;
When the enemy suddenly opened fire
From his deadly ambuscade.

Each man fell flat on the bottom
Of the boat; and the captain said:
"If we lie here, we all are captured,
And the first who moves is dead!"

Then out spoke a negro sailor,
No slavish soul had he;
"Somebody's got to die, boys,
And it might as well be me!"

Firmly he rose, and fearlessly
Stepped out into the tide;
He pushed the vessel safely off,
Then fell across her side.

Fell, pierced by a dozen bullets,
As the boat swung clear and free—
But there was not a man of them that day
Who was fitter to die than he.

A MESSAGE FROM ITALY

Margaret Widdemer, writing in the "Century Magazine," pictures how an Italian girl, working in a dull city factory, is brightened for a whole day by a white dove resting on the window-sill, and reminding her of the gaiety and freedom of her childhood in the pleasant spaces of sunny Italy.

THERE was a white bird lighted on the sill
That sang of Italy.

All day the great bands whirled along the mill
And pale girls languidly
Wound the long skeins that do not ever end,
And nothing saw or heard,
Only one heart flew back to sun and friend
And freedom with the bird.

Doves by the broken fountain in the square
Cooed at her small brown feet.
There was wide sky and love and laughter there
And the soft wind was sweet;
The long days ran, like little children, free
In that blue, sunny air,
Life did not labour hushed and mea uredly,
There was not gold or care.

The close heat pulsed, unsweetened by the sun,
And the blind walls again
Penned her to tasks unending, unbegun,
Monotony and pain;
But all the day her feet paced with gay will,
Her child-heart circled free.

There was a white dove lighted on the sill
That cooed of Italy.

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

In this poem William Wordsworth tried to describe not only the perfect soldier but the perfect man. It was written in 1806, about the time when Wordsworth was ceasing to write his best, and was becoming a little heavy and argumentative. He himself explained that in writing the description of the man who has a perfectly balanced nature he was thinking of his own brother John, who was drowned at sea.

WHO is the happy warrior? Who is he
Who every man in arms should wish to be?
It is the generous spirit who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his childish thought:
Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care:
Who, doom'd to go in company with pain,
And fear, and bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain:
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate:
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more: more able to endure
As more exposed to suffering and distress:
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.

'Tis he whose law is reason, who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends!
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He fixes good on good alone, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire:
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state:
Whom they must follow, on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a lover, and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a soul whose master bias leans
To home-felt pleasures and to gentle scenes;

Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart—and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve:
More brave for this, that he hath much to love.

'Tis, finally, the man who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a nation's eye,
Or left unthought of in obscurity:
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not,
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray:
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must go to dust without his fame,
And leave a dead, unprofitable name,
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
That is the happy warrior—this is he
Who every man in arms should wish to be.

THE NAME OF OLD GLORY

The American people are taught from their earliest childhood to love and reverence their national flag, the Stars and Stripes—which they familiarly call "Old Glory." In this poem James Whitcomb Riley questions the flag itself about that name, and the brave flag, answering, tries to raise the questioner's thoughts high above earthly pride.

OLD Glory! say, who—
By the ships and the crew,
And the long, blended ranks of the grey and the blue,
With such pride everywhere
As you cast yourself free through the rapturous air,
And leap out full-length, as we're wanting you to—
Who gave you that name, with the ring of the same,
And the honour and fame so becoming to you?
Your stripes stroked in ripples of white and of red,
With your stars at their glittering best overhead—
By day or by night
Their delightfullest light
Laughing down from their little square heaven of blue—
Who gave you the name of Old Glory?—say, who—
Who gave you the name of Old Glory?

The old banner lifted, and faltering then
In vague lisps and whispers fell silent again.

Old Glory, speak out, we are asking about
How you happened to "favour" a name, so to say,
That sounds so familiar and careless and gay
As we cheer it, and shout in our wild, breezy way—
We—the crowd, every man of us, calling you that—
We—Tom, Dick, and Harry—each swinging his hat . . .
Who gave you the name of Old Glory?

The old flag unfurled with a billowy thrill
For an instant, then wistfully sighed, and was still

Old Glory, the story we're wanting to hear
Is what the plain facts of your christening were;
For your name, just to hear it,
Repeat it, and cheer it, is a tang to the spirit
As salt as a tear.
And seeing you fly, and the boys marching by,
There's a shout in the throat, and a blur in the eye,
And an aching to live for you always, or die,
If, dying, we still keep you waving on high.
And so, by our love
For you, floating above,
And the stars of all wars and the sorrows thereof,
Who gave you the name of Old Glory, and why
Are we thrilled at the name of Old Glory?

Then the old banner leaped like a sail in the blast,
And fluttered an audible answer at last,
And it spake, with a shake of the voice, and it said:

"By the driven snow-white and the living blood-red
Of my bars, and their heaven of stars overhead;
By the symbol conjoined of them all, skyward cast,
As I float from the steeple, or flap at the mast,
Or droop o'er the sod where the long grasses ned,
My name is as old as the glory of God.
So I came by the name of Old Glory."

THE GIFT OF TRITEMIUS

John Greenleaf Whittier wrote a number of what he called "legendary poems," telling stories from ancient times. This is one from the Middle Ages, as we know by the reference to the Moors being the slave-masters of Tunis. The poem shows in a material way—by silver and gold—what is always true in the hearts of men—that doing what is right and kind is repaid many times over in riches of the spirit.

TRITEMIUS of Herbipolis, one day,
While kneeling at the altar's foot to pray,
Alone with God, as was his pious choice,
Heard from without a miserable voice,
A sound which seemed, of all sad things to tell,
As of a lost soul crying out of hell.

Thereat the abbot paused; the chain whereby
His thoughts went upward broken by that cry;
And, looking from the casement, saw below
A wretched woman, with grey hair a-flow,
And withered hands held up to him, who cried
For alms as one who might not be denied.

She cried, "For the dear love of Him who gave
His life for ours, my child from bondage save—
My beautiful, brave first-born, chained with slaves
In the Moor's galley, where the sun-smit waves
Lap the white walls of Tunis!" "What I can
I give," Tritemius said: "my prayers." "O man
Of God!" she cried, for grief had made her bold,
"Mock me not thus; I ask not prayers, but gold.
Words will not serve me, alms alone suffice;
Even while I speak perchance my first-born dies."

"Woman," Tritemius answered, "from our door
None go unfed; hence we are always poor:
A single soldo is our only store.
Thou hast our prayers—what can we give thee more?"
"Give me," she said, "the silver candlesticks
On either side of the great crucifix.
God well may spare them on His errands sped,
Or He can give you golden ones instead."

Then spake Tritemius, "Even as thy word,
Woman, so be it! (Our most gracious Lord,
Who loveth mercy more than sacrifice
Pardon me, if a human soul I prize
Above the gifts upon His altar piled!)
Take what thou askest, and redeem thy child."

But his hand trembled as the holy alms
He placed within the beggar's eager palms;
And as she vanished down the linden shade
He bowed his head and for forgiveness prayed.

So the day passed, and when the twilight came
He woke to find the chapel all a-flame,
And, dumb with grateful wonder, to behold
Upon the altar candlesticks of gold!

THE PERFECT STATE

Robert Buchanan, who, in his "Drama of Kings," sketched this simple, well-drawn picture of a perfect State, was a Scottish poet, novelist, and dramatist, born in 1841. He died in 1901. Because he was sometimes severe in his criticisms of other writers, he was himself judged harshly and became embittered; but he wrote much verse that will not be wholly neglected by future generations. In these verses we see him in a gentle mood.

WHERE is the perfect State
Early most blest and late,
Perfect and bright?
'Tis where no palace stands
Trembling on shifting sands
Morning and night.
'Tis where the soil is free,
Where, far as eye may see,
Scattered o'er hill and lea,
Homesteads abound;
Where clean and broad and sweet
(Market, square, lane, and street,
Belted by leagues of wheat),
Cities are found.

Where is the perfect State
Early most blest and late,
Gentle and good?
'Tis where no lives are seen
Huddling in lanes unclean,
Crying for food;
'Tis where the home is pure,
'Tis where the bread is sure,
'Tis where the wants are fewer,
And each want fed;
Where plenty and peace abide,
Where health dwells heavenly-eyed,
Where in nooks beautified
Slumber the dead.

Where is the perfect State,
Unvexed by Wrath and Hate,
Quiet and just?
Where to no form of creed
Fettered are thought and deed,
Reason and trust?
'Tis where the great free mart
Broadens, while from its heart
Forth the great ships depart
Blown by the wind;
'Tis where the wise men's eyes,
Fixed on the earth and skies,
Seeking for signs, devise
Good for mankind.

THE LOST LEADER

No one can tell who was meant by the Lost Leader described by Robert Browning in this much-quoted poem. Probably no one man was referred to, but a picture was drawn of any leader of men who first raises high hopes in his followers and then deceives them by allowing himself to be bribed into a commonplace career. Many men could be named from history whose enthusiasm has burnt itself out, or been quenched by honours. Browning himself was a man who "kept the faith."

JUST for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a riband to stick in his coat—
Found the one gift of which Fortune bereft us,
Lost all the others she lets us devote ;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,
So much was theirs who so little allowed :
How all our copper had gone for his service !
Rags—were they purple, his heart had been proud !
We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die !
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
Burns, Shelley, were with us—they watch from their graves !
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves !

We shall march prospering—not thro' his presence ;
Songs may inspirit us—not from his lyre ;
Deeds will be done—while he boasts his quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire :
Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
One task more declined, one more foot-path untrod,
One more devil's triumph and sorrow for angels,
One wrong more to man, one more insult to God !
Life's night begins : let him never come back to us !
There would be doubt, hesitation and pain,
Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,
Never glad confident morning again !
Best fight on well, for we taught him—strike gallantly,
Menace our heart ere we master his own ;
Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne.

OUT OF THE NIGHT

Human pride has seldom found stronger expression than in this bold poem by W. E. Henley. The main thought in it is the same as that of Tennyson's line "Man is man, and master of his fate." He has the free power of doing what he wills. The writer was a great sufferer, much time being spent by him in hospitals uncured. In that way he learned to endure. All his writings show a spirit bold and strong. He died in 1903.

OUT of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud ;
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how straight the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.

HEART AND WILL

Time has brought round once more the day when this song of England's championship of freedom is being proved to all the world. The writer, William James Linton, was not only a poet, but a notable engraving artist. He died in 1898.

OUR England's heart is sound as oak ;
Our English will is firm ;
And through our actions Freedom spoke,
In History's proudest term ;
When Blake was lord from shore to shore,
And Cromwell ruled the land,
And Milton's words were shields of power
To stay the oppressor's hand.

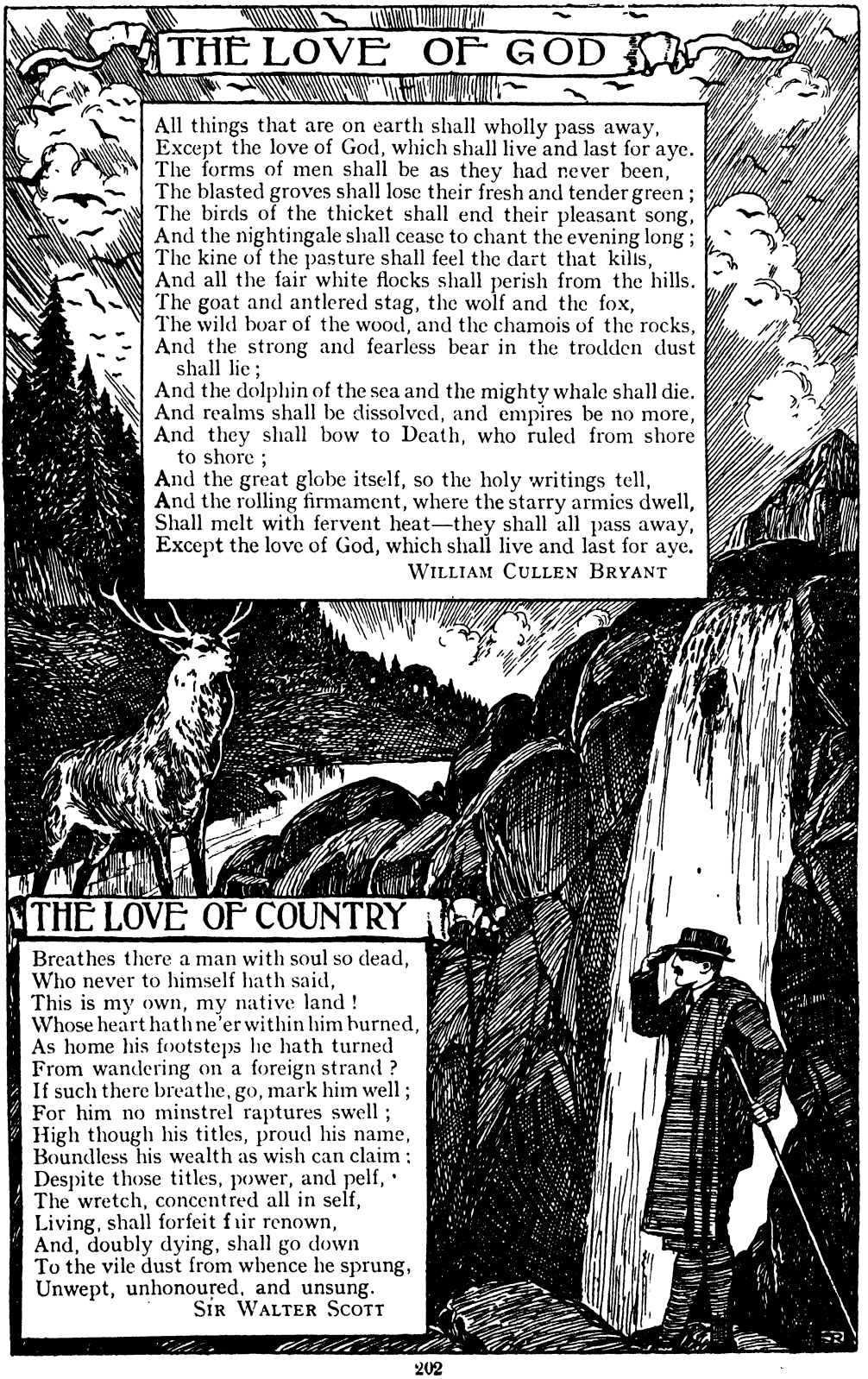
Our England's heart is yet as sound,
As firm our English will ;
And tyrants, be they cowled or crowned,
Shall find us fearless still.
And though our Vane be in his tomb,
Though Hampden's blood is cold,
Their spirits live to lead our doom
As in the days of old.

Our England's heart is stout as oak ;
Our English will as brave
As when indignant Freedom spoke
From Eliot's prison grave.
And closing yet again with Wrong,
A world in arms shall see
Our England foremost of the Strong
And first among the Free.

THE LOVE OF GOD

All things that are on earth shall wholly pass away,
Except the love of God, which shall live and last for aye.
The forms of men shall be as they had never been,
The blasted groves shall lose their fresh and tender green;
The birds of the thicket shall end their pleasant song,
And the nightingale shall cease to chant the evening long;
The kine of the pasture shall feel the dart that kills,
And all the fair white flocks shall perish from the hills.
The goat and antlered stag, the wolf and the fox,
The wild boar of the wood, and the chamois of the rocks,
And the strong and fearless bear in the trodden dust shall lie;
And the dolphin of the sea and the mighty whale shall die.
And realms shall be dissolved, and empires be no more,
And they shall bow to Death, who ruled from shore to shore;
And the great globe itself, so the holy writings tell,
And the rolling firmament, where the starry armies dwell,
Shall melt with fervent heat—they shall all pass away,
Except the love of God, which shall live and last for aye.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT



THE LOVE OF COUNTRY

Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned
From wandering on a foreign strand?
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

THE SCHOOLMASTER

William Wordsworth, the great and pure-minded poet, once wrote a lament for the scholars of a beloved schoolmaster to sing by his grave; and then, years afterwards, he penned this picture of how the influence of the schoolmaster's life still remained a blessing to the whole valley where he had lived, his memory growing even sweeter as the years passed

Long time his pulse hath ceased to beat,
But benefits, his gift, we trace;
Expressed in every eye we meet
Round this dear vale, his native place.

To stately hall and cottage rude
Flowed from his life what still they hold;
Light pleasures every day renewed,
And blessings half a century old.

Oh, true of heart, of spirit gay,
Thy faults, where not already gone
From memory, prolong their stay
For charity's sweet sake alone.

Such solace find we for our loss;
And what beyond this thought we crave
Comes in the promise from the Cross,
Shining upon thy happy grave.

TO A LITTLE LADY WITH HER FIRST BONNET

These simple lines about a child's first bonnet, and its demand on good fairies for protection, were written by Caroline Anne Bowles, a rather popular poet, who died in 1854. She carried on for many years an interesting correspondence with the poet Southey, and, late in his life, married him.

Fairies! guard the baby's bonnet—
Set a special watch upon it;
Elfin people! to your care
I commit it, fresh and fair;
Neat as neatness, white as snow—
See ye keep it ever so.

Watch and ward set all about—
Some within, and some without:
Over it, with dainty hand,
One her kittle green expand;
Two or three about the bow
Vigilant concern bestow.

A score, at least, on either side,
'Gainst evil accidents provide—
Fall, or jar, or overlay;
And so the precious charge convey
Through all the dangers of the way.
But when *those* are battled through,
Fairies! more remains to do;
Ye must gift, before ye go,
The bonnet and the babe also.

Gift it to protect her well,
Fays! from all malignant spell
Charms and seasons to defy,
Blighting wind and evil eye.

And the bonny babe! on her
All your choicest gifts confer.
Just as much of wit and sense
As may be hers, without pretence;
Just as much of grace and beauty
As shall not interfere with duty;
Just as much of sprightliness
As shall companion gentleness;
Just as much light-hearted cheer
As may be melted to a tear,
By a word—a tone—a look—
Pity's touch, or Love's rebuke.

As much of frankness, bland and free,
As may consort with modesty;
As much of feeling as will bear
Of after life the wear and tear;
As much of life—but Fairies! there
Ye vanish into thinnest air!
And with ye parts the playful vein
That loved a light and trivial strain.

Befits me better, babe! for thee
To invoke Almighty agency;
Almighty love—Almighty power,
To nurture up the human flower;
To cherish it with heavenly dew,
Sustain with earthly blessings, too;
And when the ripe, full time shall be,
Engraft it on Eternity.

OVERRULED

It is the American Quaker poet, John Greenleaf Whittier, who, in these thoughtful verses, tells us his belief that God rules our lives in ways we cannot know. Even when we resolve firmly for ourselves, it is God who has formed the resolve in us. The pagan nations felt their lives were shaped for them, and called the power Fate. But now the best men think the unseen powers of God all "work together for good."

The threads our hands in blindness spin
No self-determined plan weaves in;
The shuttle of the unseen powers
Works out a pattern not as ours.

Ah, small the choice of him who sings
What sound shall leave the smitten strings;
Fate holds and guides the hand of Art;
The singer's is the servant's part.

The wind-harp chooses not the tone
That through its trembling threads is blown;
The patient organ cannot guess
What hand its passive keys shall press.

Through wish, resolve, and act, our will
Is moved by undreamed forces still;
And no man measures in advance
His strength in untried circumstance.

As streams take hue from shade and sun,
As runs the life the song must run;
But, glad or sad, to his good end
God grant the varying notes may tend!

NASEBY

To appreciate this vigorous battle poem, we must put ourselves in the place of the soldier who is supposed, by the writer of the poem, Lord Macaulay, to be describing the battle of Naseby, where Oliver Cromwell finally defeated Charles I. It is a sergeant of the Parliamentary Army, one Obadiah-bind-their-kings-in-chains-and-their-nobles-with-fetters-of-iron, who is speaking, and is telling how the Royalist cavalry leader, Prince Rupert, broke the left front of the Roundhead formation and shook the centre, but also how these temporary reverses were retrieved and the battle won by a charge of Cromwell's irresistible "Ironsides." No more breathless description of a battle from the inside has ever been written than that contained in verses five to nine—the charge, the shock, the confusion, the stern resistance, the overwhelming counter-charge. We here see the battle and its effects as they appealed to a passionate partisan of the fiercest Puritan type. We can feel these verses were written with a relish, and, indeed, Lord Macaulay was a very pronounced sympathiser with the Parliamentary side.

OH, wherefore come ye forth, in triumph from the North,
With your hands, and your feet, and your raiment all red?
And wherefore doth your rout send forth a joyous shout?
And whence be the grapes of the wine-press which ye tread?

Oh, evil was the root and bitter was the fruit,
And crimson was the juice of the vintage that we trod;
For we trampled on the throng of the haughty and the strong,
Who sate in the high places and slew the saints of God.

It was about the noon of a glorious day of June
That we saw their banners dance, and their cuirasses shine;
And the Man of Blood was there, with his long essenced hair,
And Astley, and Sir Marmaduke, and Rupert of the Rhine.

Like a servant of the Lord, with his Bible and his sword,
The General rode along us to form us to the fight,
When a murmuring sound broke out, and swell'd into a shout,
Among the godless horsemen upon the tyrant's right.

And hark! like the roar of the billows on the shore,
The cry of battle rises along their charging line.
For God! for the Cause! for the Church! for the Laws!
For Charles, King of England, and Rupert of the Rhine!

The furious German comes, with his clarions and his drums,
His bravoes of Alsatia and pages of Whitehall;
They are bursting on our flanks. Grasp your pikes, close your ranks;
For Rupert never comes but to conquer or to fall.

They are here! They rush on! We are broken! We are gone!
Our left is borne before them like stubble on the blast.
O Lord, put forth Thy might! O Lord, defend the right!
Stand back to back, in God's name, and fight it to the last!

Stout Skippon hath a wound; the centre hath given ground.
Hark! Hark! What means the trampling of horsemen on our rear?
Whose banner do I see, boys? 'Tis he, thank God, 'tis he, boys!
Bear up another minute; brave Oliver is here.

Their heads all stooping low, their points all in a row,
Like a whirlwind on the trees, like a deluge on the dykes,
Our cuirassiers have burst on the ranks of the Accurst,
And at a shock have scattered the forest of his pikes.

Fast, fast the gallants ride, in some safe nook to hide
Their coward heads, predestined to rot on Temple Bar;
And he—he turns, he flies! Shame on those cruel eyes
That bore to look on torture, and dare not look on war!

Ho, comrades, scour the plain; and, ere ye strip the slain,
First give another stab to make your search secure;
Then shake from sleeves and pockets their broad-pieces and lockets,
The tokens of the wanton, the plunder of the poor.

Where be your tongues that late mocked at heaven and hell and fate,
And the fingers that once were so busy with your blades,
Your perfum'd satin clothes, your catches and your oaths,
Your stage-plays and your sonnets, your diamonds and your spades?

Down, down, for ever down with the mitre and the crown,
With the Belial of the Court and the Mammon of the Pope!
There is woe in Oxford Halls; there is wail in Durham's Stalls—
The Jesuit smites his bosom, the Bishop rends his cope.

And She of the seven hills shall mourn her children's ills,
And tremble when she thinks on the edge of England's sword;
And the kings of earth, in fear, shall shudder when they hear
What the hand of God hath wrought for the Houses and the Word.

DISARMAMENT

The time when Whittier, the American Quaker poet, wrote this appeal for peace was in 1871. France and Germany were the nations at war, and about half a million men had been killed or wounded. Can any nation afford to put away its weapons, trusting that it will remain unmolested? The poet thinks that is the Christian course which should be followed, that love will conquer hate; but few have such faith.

"PUT up the sword!" The voice of Christ once more
Speaks, in the pauses of the cannon's roar,
O'er fields of corn by fiery sickles reaped
And left dry ashes; over trenches reaped
With nameless dead; o'er cities starving slow
Under a rain of fire; through wards of woe
Down which a groaning diapason runs
From tortured brothers, husbands, lovers, sons
Of desolate women in their far-off homes,
Waiting to hear the step that never comes!
O men and brothers, let that voice be heard.
War fails, try peace; put up the useless sword!

Fear not the end. There is a story told
In Eastern tents, when autumn nights grow cold,
And round the fire the Mongol shepherds sit
With grave responses listening unto it:
Once, on the errands of his mercy bent,
Buddha, the holy and benevolent,
Met a fell monster, huge and fierce of look,
Whose awful voice the hills and forests shook.
"O son of peace," the giant cried, "thy fate
Is sealed at last, and love shall yield to hate!"
The unarmed Buddha, looking, with no trace
Of fear or anger, in the monster's face,
In pity said, "Poor fiend, even thee I love!"
Lo! as he spake, the sky-tall terror sank
To hand-breadth size; the huge abhorrence shrank
Into the form and fashion of a dove;
And where the thunder of its rage was heard,
Circling above him, sweetly sang the bird:
"Hate hath no harm for love," so ran the song;
"And peace unweaponed conquers every wrong!"

THE GREENWOOD

William Howitt, a pleasant and copious writer in the middle of the nineteenth century, who penned these verses in praise of the forest, was more of a bookman than a Nature-lover, as we may see by his wish that he could have a volume to pore over in the heart of the woods on a sunny day. Born in 1792, William Howitt died in the year 1879 after a busy life.

THE greenwood! the greenwood! what bosom but allows
The gladness of the charm that dwells in thy pleasant, whispering boughs!
How often in this weary world I pine and long to flee,
And lay me down, as I was wont, under the greenwood tree!

The greenwood! the greenwood! to the bold and happy boy,
Thy realm of shades is a faëry-land of wonder and of joy.
Oh, for that flushness of the heart, that pure and vivid thrill,
As he listens to the woodland cries, and wanders at his will!

The youth delights through thy leafy gloom and thy winding walks to rove,
When his simple thought is snared and caught in the subtle webs of love:
Manhood, with high and restless hope, a spirit winged with flame,
Plans in thy bower his path to power, to affluence, or to fame.

The old man loves thee, when his soul dreams of the world no more,
But his heart is full of its gathered wealth, and he counts it o'er and o'er:
When his race is run, his prize is won, or lost, until the bound
Of the world unknown is overthrown, and his master-hope is crowned.

The greenwood! the greenwood! oh, be it mine to lie
In the depth of thy mossy solitude, when summer fills the sky!
With pleasant sounds and scents around, a tome of ancient lore,
And a pleasant friend with me to bend, and turn its pages o'er.

LET ME GO TO PARADISE WITH THE ASSES

These quaintly moving lines are by a quaintly original man—Francis Jammes, a poet of France, living at the foot of the Pyrenees, loving animals and insects, and trees and flowers, and all things of the open air. And especially he loves himself and his own life, for "he is always telling you that he is Francis Jammes," a critic says. And who, if he were not himself, would not like to be Francis Jammes, the writer of these lines?

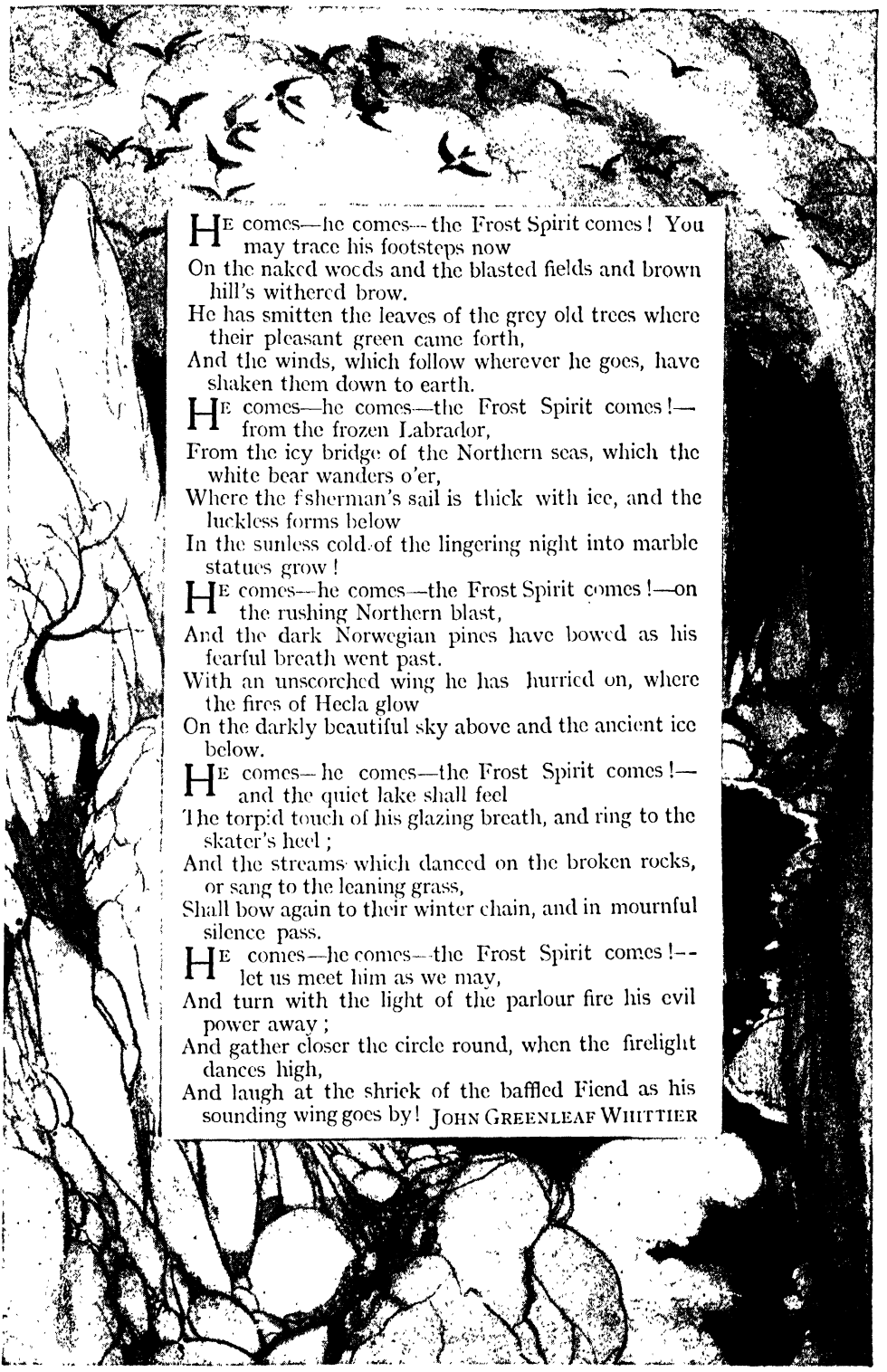
O God, when You send for me, let it be
Upon some festal day of dusty roads.
I wish, as I did ever here below,
By any road that pleases me, to go
To Paradise, where stars shine all day long.
Taking my stick out on the great highway,
To my dear friends the asses I shall say:

I am Francis Jammes going to Paradise,
For there is no hell where the Lord God dwells.
Come with me, my sweet friends of azure skies,
You poor, dear beasts who whisk off with your ears
Mosquitoes, peevish blows, and buzzing bees.

Let me appear before You with these beasts,
Whom I so love because they bow their head
Sweetly, and halting join their little feet
So gently that it makes you pity them.
Let me come followed by their million ears,
By those that carried panniers on their flanks,
And those that dragged the car of acrobats,
Those that had battered cans upon their backs,
She-asses, limping, full as leather bottles,
And those, too, that they breech because of blue
And oozing wounds round which the stubborn flies
Gather in swarms. God, let me come to You
With all these asses into Paradise.

Let angels lead us where Your rivers soothe
Their tufted banks, and cherries tremble, smooth
As in the laughing flesh of tender maids.
And let me, where Your perfect peace pervades,
Be like Your asses, bending down above
The heavenly waters through eternity,
To mirror their sweet, humble poverty
In the clear waters of eternal love.

HE COMES, HE COMES, FROM THE FROZEN NORTH



HE comes—he comes—the Frost Spirit comes! You may trace his footsteps now
On the naked woods and the blasted fields and brown hill's withered brow.
He has smitten the leaves of the grey old trees where their pleasant green came forth,
And the winds, which follow wherever he goes, have shaken them down to earth.

HE comes—he comes—the Frost Spirit comes!—from the frozen Labrador,
From the icy bridge of the Northern seas, which the white bear wanders o'er,
Where the fisherman's sail is thick with ice, and the luckless forms below
In the sunless cold of the lingering night into marble statues grow!

HE comes—he comes—the Frost Spirit comes!—on the rushing Northern blast,
And the dark Norwegian pines have bowed as his fearful breath went past.
With an unscorched wing he has hurried on, where the fires of Hecla glow
On the darkly beautiful sky above and the ancient ice below.

HE comes—he comes—the Frost Spirit comes!—and the quiet lake shall feel
The torpid touch of his glazing breath, and ring to the skater's heel;
And the streams which danced on the broken rocks, or sang to the leaning grass,
Shall bow again to their winter chain, and in mournful silence pass.

HE comes—he comes—the Frost Spirit comes!—let us meet him as we may,
And turn with the light of the parlour fire his evil power away;
And gather closer the circle round, when the firelight dances high,
And laugh at the shriek of the baffled Fiend as his sounding wing goes by!

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

SOLDIER, REST!

This sweetly cadenced song was sung on Ellen's Isle in Loch Katrine, by the heroine of Sir Walter Scott's "Lady of the Lake," to charm to sleep a tired soldier. The reference is to deep slumber, and not to death. The bittern is a marsh-haunting bird that makes a drumming sound.

SOLDIER, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! the warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more:
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil nor night of waking.

No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armour's clang, or war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here,
Mustering clan, or squadron tramping,
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At the daybreak from the fallow
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near;
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans, or squadron's stamping.

THE KING OF DENMARK'S RIDE

The writer of this breathlessly swift description of the ride of a Danish king to the bedside of his dying daughter was the Hon. Mrs. Norton, a lady who was very popular in society in the reign of George IV. and the early days of Queen Victoria. She was one of the writers who helped to rouse the country against the cruelty of causing children to work long hours in factories. The novelist George Meredith made her the heroine of his story "Diana of the Crossways."

WORD was brought to the Danish King
(Hurry!)
That the love of his heart lay suffering,
And pined for the comfort his voice would bring;
(O! ride as though you were flying!)
Better he loves each golden curl
On the brow of that Scandinavian girl
Than his rich crown jewels of ruby and pearl;
And his Rose of the Isles is dying!

Thirty nobles saddled with speed;
(Hurry!)
Each one mounting a gallant steed
Which he kept for battle and days of need;
(O! ride as though you were flying!)
Spurs were struck in the foaming flank;
Worn-out chargers staggered and sank;
Bridles were slackened, and girths were burst;
But ride as they would, the King rode first,
For his Rose of the Isles lay dying!

His nobles are beaten one by one;
(Hurry!)
They have fainted, and faltered, and homeward gone;
His little fair page now follows alone,
For strength and for courage trying!
The King looked back at that faithful child;
Wan was the face that answering smiled;
They passed the drawbridge with clattering din,
Then he dropped, and only the King rode in
Where his Rose of the Isles lay dying.

The King blew a blast on his bugle horn.
(Silence!)
No answer came; but faint and forlorn
An echo returned on the cold grey morn,
Like the breath of a spirit sighing.
The castle portal stood grimly wide;
None welcomed the King from that weary ride;
For dead, in the light of the dawning day,
The pale sweet form of the welcomer lay,
Who had yearned for his voice while dying!

The panting steed, with a drooping crest,
Stood weary.
The King returned from her chamber of rest,
The thick sobs choking in his breast;
And, that dumb companion eyeing,
The tears gushed forth which he strove to check;
He bowed his head on his charger's neck.
"O, steed—that every nerve did strain,
Dear steed, our ride hath been in vain
To the halls where my love lay dying!"

MOTHER WEPT

The writer of this poem on the pride of a lad who had reached an age when he could work in a coal-mine, a pride saddening to those who know the danger of it, was himself a miner in his youth. Joseph Skipsey was born in 1832 and died in 1903. He wrote several books of verse showing a grip of real life.

MOTHER wept, and father sighed;
With delight aglow
Cried the lad, "Tomorrow," cried,
"To the pit I go."

Up and down the place he sped—
Greeted old and young,
Far and wide the tidings spread,
Clapt his hands and sung.

Came his cronies—some to gaze
Wrapped in wonder, some
Free with counsel, some with praise,
Some with envy dumb.

"May he," many a gossip cried,
"Be from peril kept!"
Father hid his face and sighed.
Mother turned and wept.

THE RAZOR-SELLER

The humorous story in verse was very popular about the beginning of the nineteenth century, and Dr. Wolcot, who wrote this example, practised it continually. He wrote under the pen-name of "Peter Pindar." Wolcot was born in 1738 and died in 1819. Much of his writing would be offensive to the more refined taste of the present day.

A FELLOW in a market town,
Most musical cried "Razors!" up and down,
And offered twelve for eighteenpence,
Which certainly seemed wondrous cheap.
And for the money quite a heap,
As every man should buy, with cash and sense.

A country bumpkin the great offer heard,
Poor Hodge, who suffered by a thick black beard,
That seemed a shoe-brush stuck beneath his nose;
With cheerfulness the eighteenpence he paid,
And proudly to himself, in whispers, said:
"This rascal stole the razors, I suppose!

"No matter if the fellow be a knave,
Provided that the razors shave:
It *sartinly* will be a monstrous prize."
So home the clown with his good fortune went,
Smiling, in heart and soul content,
And quickly soaped himself to ears and eyes.

Being well lathered from a dish or tub,
Hodge now began with grinning pain to grub
Just like a hedger cutting furze.
'Twas a vile razor! Then the rest he tried.
All were impostors. "Ah," Hodge sighed,
"I wish my eighteenpence were in my purse!"

In vain, to chase his beard and bring the graces,
He cut, and dug, and winced, and stamped, and swore,
Brought blood, and danced, reviled, and made wry faces,
And cursed each razor's body o'er and o'er.

Hodge, in a passion, stretched his angry jaws,
Vowing the direst vengeance, with clenched claws,
On the vile cheat that sold the goods:
"Razors! A base, confounded dog!
Not fit to scrape a hog!"

Hodge sought the fellow, found him, and begun:
"Perhaps, Mister Razor-rogue, to you 'tis fun
That people flay themselves out of their lives;
You rascal! For an hour have I been grubbing,
Giving my whiskers here a scrubbing
With razors just like oyster-knives.
Sirrah, I tell you you're a knave,
To cry up razors that can't shave!"

"Friend," quoth the razor-man, "I'm no knave;
As for the razors you have bought,
Upon my word I never thought
That they would shave."
"Not think they'd shave!" quoth Hodge, with wondering eyes,
And voice not much unlike an Indian yell.
"What were they made for, then, you dog?" he cries.
"Made!" quoth the fellow, with a smile.
"*To sell.*"

MARCHING ON!

This vision of the future, written in the metre of Mrs. Julia Howe's famous "Battle Hymn of the Republic," is by the Rev. Fred L. Hosmer, a well-known editor of hymn-books.

FROM age to age they gather, all the brave of heart and strong;
In the strife of truth with error, of the right against the wrong;
I can see their gleaming banner, I can hear their triumph song;
The truth is marching on!

"In this sign we conquer"; 'tis the symbol of our faith,
Made holy by the might of love triumphant over death;
"He finds his life who loseth it," for evermore it saith:
The right is marching on!

The earth is circling onward out of shadow into light;
The stars keep watch above our way, however dark the night;
For every martyr's stripe there glows a bar of morning bright,
And love is marching on!

Lead on, O cross of martyr faith, with thee is victory;
Shine forth, O stars and reddening dawn, the full day yet shall be;
On earth His kingdom cometh, and with joy our eyes shall see;
Our God is marching on.

MY OWN SHALL COME TO ME

This is one of the great profound poems of the world, too profound for children to understand at once; but they should learn it, and its meaning, if they are worthy to receive it, will come to them in after years. It means that we find, naturally, in the world all that is akin to our best selves. John Burroughs, the writer, has been a farmer in America, and has written much about outdoor life. He understands the birds with his heart.

SERENE, I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind, nor tide, nor sea;
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
For lo! my own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid the eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face.

Asleep, awake, by night or day
The friends I seek are seeking me;
No wind can drive my bark astray,
Nor change the tide of destiny.

What matter if I stand alone?
I wait with joy the coming years;
My heart shall reap when it has sown,
And gather up its fruit of tears.

The stars come nightly to the sky;
The tidal wave comes to the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,
Can keep my own away from me.

The waters know their own, and draw
The brook that springs in yonder heights;
So flows the good with equal law
Unto the soul of pure delights.

A STRIP OF BLUE

The writer of these verses, an American lady, Lucy Larcom, who was born in 1826 and died in 1893, wrote a book of children's songs. She writes here as one confined to her room, but enriched by the sight of things outside, and her thoughts travel far, particularly across the band of blue sky seen from her window and imagined to be the sea. Chrysoprase is golden green, sapphire is blue, and amethyst is a rich violet.

I DO not own an inch of land,
But all I see is mine—
The orchards and the mowing-fields,
The lawns and gardens fine.
The winds my tax-collectors are,
They bring me tithes divine—
Wild scents and subtle essences,
A tribute rare and free;
And, more magnificent than all,
My window keeps for me
A glimpse of blue immensity,
A little strip of sea.

Richer am I than he who owns
Great fleets and argosies;
I have a share in every ship
Won by the inland breeze
To loiter on yon airy road
Above the apple-trees.
I freight them with my untold dreams,
Each bears my own pick'd crew;
And nobler cargoes wait for them
Than ever India knew—
My ships that sail into the East
Across that outlet blue.

Sometimes they seem like living shapes—
The people of the sky—
Guests in white raiment coming down
From heaven, which is close by.
I call them by familiar names,
As one by one draws nigh,
So white, so light, so spirit-like,
From violet mists they bloom!
The aching wastes of the unknown
Are half reclaim'd from gloom,
Since on life's hospitable sea
All souls find sailing room.

The sails, like flakes of roseate pearl,
Float in upon the mist;
The waves are broken precious stones—
Sapphire and amethyst,
Wash'd from celestial basement walls
By suns unsetting kiss'd.
Out throught the utmost gates of space,
Past where the gay stars drift,
To the widening Infinite, my soul
Glides on a vessel swift;
Yet loses not her anchorage
In yonder azure rift.

Here sit I, as a little child;
The threshold of God's door
Is that clear band of chrysoprase;
Now the vast temple floor,
The blinding glory of the dome
I bow my head before;
The universe, O God, is home,
In height or depth, to me;
Yet here upon Thy footstool green
Content am I to be;
Glad, when is open'd to my need
Some sea like glimpse of Thee.

THE WANDERER

No poet, not even Robert Louis Stevenson, has written so much charming verse for children as Eugene Field. This tuneful poem, cadenced by him to please young and old alike, tells how a seashell held to the ear seems to retain faintly the sound of the waves subsiding on the shore. That effect is produced by the shell collecting the air and conducting it into the ear, but it is very much like the distant sea.

UPON a mountain height, far from the sea,
I found a shell;
And to my listening ear this lonely thing
Ever a song of ocean seemed to sing,
Ever a tale of ocean seem'd to tell.

How came this shell upon the mountain height?
Ah, who can say
Whether there dropp'd by some too careless hand,
Whether there cast when oceans swept the land,
Ere the Eternal had ordain'd the day?

Strange, was it not? Far from its native deep,
One song it sang:
Sang of the awful mysteries of the tide,
Sang of the storied sea, profound and wide—
Ever with echoes of old ocean rang.

And as the shell upon the mountain height
Sang of the sea,
So do I ever, leagues and leagues away,
So do I ever, wandering where I may,
Sing, O my home! Sing, O my home, of thee!

THE TIME DRAWS NEAR THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

The time draws near the birth of Christ :
The moon is hid ; the night is still ;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again :

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controll'd me when a boy ;
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,
The merry, merry bells of Yule.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light :
The year is dying in the night ;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow :
The year is going, let him go ;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more ;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times ;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;
Ring out the narrow lust of gold ;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

TIGER TO TIGRESS

This talk between a tiger and tigress in an Indian jungle is imagined and described by Mr. Edgar Fawcett, an American poet and novelist. It gives faithfully the eerie feeling of the jungle by night, but, unfortunately, it makes the tiger know things about human beings, such as their love affairs, which are entirely beyond animal comprehension even when the animals are domesticated. How could a tiger know what throwing a rose from a balcony might mean?

THE sultry jungle holds its breath;
The palsied night is dumb as death;
The golden stars burn large and bland
Above this torrid Indian land;
But we, that hunger's pangs distress,
Crouch low in deadly watchfulness,
With sleek striped shapes of massive size,
Great velvet paws, and lurid eyes!

Hark! Did you hear that stealthy sound,
Where yonder monstrous ferns abound?
Some lissome leopard pauses there;
Let him creep nearer, if he dare!
And hark again! In yonder grove
I hear that lazy serpent move;
A mottled thing, whose languid strength
Coils round a bough its clammy length.

Soon the late moon that crimsons air
Will fall with mellow splendour where
The Rajah's distant palace shows
Its haughty domes in dark repose.
And from this dim lair, by-and-by,
We shall behold against pale sky,
With mighty gorges robed in gloom,
The wild, immense Himalayas loom!

At moonrise, through this very spot,
You still remember, do you not,
How that proud Punjaub youth, last night,
Sprang past us on his charger white,
Perchance to have some fair hand throw
A rose from some seraglio?
Well, if tonight he passes, note
My hot leap at his horse's throat!

ELFLAND

The path of pleasant wrong, the path of difficult right, and the land of fanciful dreams are described in this quaint old ballad. So the simplest thoughts of men took shape as poetry.

O SEE ye na that braid braid road,
That lies across the lily leven?
That is the path o' wickedness,
Though some call it the road to heaven.

And see ye na yon narrow road
Sae thick beset wi' thorns and briars?
That is the path o' righteousness,
Though after it but few inquires.

And see ye na yon bonny road
That winds about the ferny brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where you and I this night maun gae.

SOW! SEW! SO!

Three apt illustrations, in a most simple way, of a great truth—that Heaven blesses all helpfulness. A skilful use of plain, easy words. The writer of the verses is Eva Lovett.

THIS is the way my father sows,
As up and down the field he goes,
Walking fast, or walking slow,
Right and left the grain to throw.
Father knows,
While he goes,
That the grain thrown here and there
By-and-by good crops will bear.
All he loves will have a share
If the grain he throws with care.
So he throws,
So he goes.
Sow! Sow! Sow!

This is the way my mother sews
As up and down the seam she goes,
Working, singing soft and low,
While she's sitting there to sew.
Mother knows,
As she sews,
Jackets, trousers, aprons, too,
Johnnie's hat and baby's shoe,
Patching old, or making new,
Love runs all the stitches through.
This she knows,
So she sews.
Sew! Sew! Sew!

I can neither sow nor sew.
When I'm big, I'll learn then, though.
But while little, as I grow,
Little bits of love I'll show.
For I know,
As I go
Tending baby, calling Nan,
Running errands like a man,
Helping mother all I can,
Love will grow where it began.
Ah! I know,
See, 'tis so.
Little bits of love count up,
Like drops of water in a cup.
Fill it—so!
'Twill overflow!
So! So! So!

CLOSE THINE EYES AND SLEEP SECURE

These lines are supposed to have been written by **King** Charles I., and to show that he had an easy conscience If so, his powers of self-deception must have been great.

CLOSE thine eyes and sleep secure,
Thy soul is safe, thy body sure;
He that guards thee, He that keeps,
Never slumbers, never sleeps.
A quiet conscience in the breast
Has only peace, has only rest.
The music and the mirth of kings
Are out of tune unless she sings.
Then close thine eyes and sleep secure.

ORDER

This stern picture of changeless order under inflexible natural laws is drawn by Charles Kingsley, the novelist. A contrary picture of universal changeableness might well be drawn. Indeed, Tennyson drew it in two lines: "There, where the long street roars, hath been The stillness of the central sea."

FAR among the lonely hills
As I lay beside my sheep,
Rest came down upon my soul,
From the everlasting deep.

Changeless march the stars above,
Changeless morn succeeds to even;
And the everlasting hills
Changeless watch the changeless heaven.

See the rivers, how they run,
Changeless to the changeless sea;
All around is forethought sure,
Fixed will and stern decree.

Can the sailor move the main?
Will the potter heed the clay?
Mortal! where the Spirit drives,
Thither must the wheels obey.

Neither ask, nor fret, nor strive;
Where thy path is thou shalt go.
He who made the streams of time
Wafts thee down to weal or woe.

ON THE PORTRAIT OF A CHILD LOST IN THE LUSITANIA

Among the published portraits of American victims drowned by the ruthless sinking of the Lusitania by the Germans were those of a father, mother, and two sons. The face of one of the little lads, Dean Hodges, six years old, greatly impressed Dr. Robert Underwood Johnson, and he put his sorrowing thought into this poem printed in the "Evening Post" of New York. He sees in the laddie's face beauty like that of the most beautiful children of the great painters, and promise of a noble future unfulfilled.

DEAR boy of the seraphic face,
With brow of power and mouth of grace,
And deep, round eyes, set far apart,
So that the mind should match the heart!

Not Raphael's leaning cherub had
More beauty than this winsome lad;
Nor Andrea's little John more joy
Than dimpled in this darling boy.

What mother could so happy be
As not to covet such as he?
What childless passer could forgo
The smiling of that Cupid's bow?

Here promise spoke in every curve;
The wit to see, the heart to serve;
In fine proportions here did reign
An open nature, sweet and sane.

What wonder fancy vied with hope
To read his radiant horoscope,
And find within his future deed
The rescue of some mighty need:
A patriot to save the State;
A bard to take the sting from Fate;
A prophet men should know not of
To lift the fainting world by love!

Mourn those—and mourn not with despair—
Who find life's last adventure fair,
But let your treasured tears be spilled
For noble presage unfulfilled.

Mine fall unbidden as I look,
Here, upon Youth's unfinished book,
And with the loss my heart is torn,
As Heaven had withdrawn the morn.

Ah, could I know why over me
His spirit has such potency,
Then might I know how love began
And stays, the mystery of Man.

Child of the future! Beauty's flower!
His gentle image should have power
The conscience of a realm to wring
And haunt the pillow of a king.

THE MINSTREL TO HIS HARP

Thomas Moore, the Irish poet, is often thought of only as a musical writer of sentimental songs, but in reality he was an interpreter of the inmost feelings of his countrymen when they remember Ireland's story. He gave a fresh voice to Irish verse, as he claims here, a voice pensive even when happiest.

DEAR harp of my country, in darkness I found thee,
The cold chain of silence had hung o'er thee long,
When proudly, my own island harp, I unbound thee,
And gave all thy chords to light, freedom, and song!
The warm lay of love and the light note of gladness
Have wakened thy fondest, thy liveliest thrill;
But, so oft hast thou echoed the deep sigh of sadness,
That e'en in thy mirth it will steal from thee still.

Dear harp of my country, farewell to thy numbers,
This sweet wreath of song is the last we shall twine!
Go, sleep with the sunshine of fame on thy slumbers,
Till touched by some hand less unworthy than mine;
If the pulse of the patriot, soldier, or lover,
Have throbbed at thy lay, 'tis thy glory alone;
I was but as the wind, passing heedlessly over,
And all the wild sweetness I waked was thy own.

THE BRIDGE

It is almost impossible to believe that the writer of this lovely sketch of human brightness and happiness was sad at heart. His name was James Thomson, who lived from 1834 to 1882; and he had a sorrowful life, chiefly because he lost quite early the maiden who was his sunshine. With what life-like vivacity this picture of her is drawn!

"O, WHAT are you waiting for here, young man?
What are you looking for over the bridge?"
"A little straw hat with the streaming blue ribbons
Is soon to come dancing over the bridge.

"Her heart beats the measure that keeps her feet dancing,
Dancing along like a wave o' the sea;
Her heart pours the sunshine with which her eyes, glancing,
Light up strange faces in looking for me.

"The strange faces brighten in meeting her glances,
The strangers all bless her, pure, lovely, and free:
She fancies she walks, but her walk skips and dances,
Her heart makes such music in coming to me.

"O, thousands and thousands of happy young maidens
Are tripping this morning their sweet-hearts to see;
But none whose heart beats to a sweeter love-cadence
Than hers who will brighten the sunshine for me."

"O, what are you waiting for here, young man?
What are you looking for over the bridge?"
"A little straw hat with the streaming blue ribbons—
And here it comes dancing over the bridge!"

THE PEOPLE'S PETITION

In these verses the bitter want of the poor seems to be rather overstated, but they were once terribly true. In the earlier years of the nineteenth century the factory system brought long toil and low wages for old and young. Other poets, such as Mrs. Browning and Ebenezer Elliott, told the same sad and almost hopeless story. The writer of these verses was a clergyman with the curiously ugly name of Wathen Mark Wilks Call.

O LORDS! O rulers of the nation!
O softly clothed! O richly fed!
O men of wealth and noble station!
Give us our daily bread.

For you we are content to toil,
For you our blood like rain is shed;
Then, lords and rulers of the soil,
Give us our daily bread.

Your silken robes, with endless care,
Still weave we; still unclothed, unfed,
We make the raiment that ye wear;
Give us our daily bread.

In the red forge-light do we stand,
We early leave—late seek our bed,
Tempering the steel for your right hand:
Give us our daily bread.

We sow your fields, ye reap the fruit,
We live in misery and in dread:
Hear but our prayer, and we are mute:
Give us our daily bread.

Throughout old England's pleasant fields
There is no spot where we may tread,
No house to us sweet shelter yields:
Give us our daily bread.

Fathers are we; we see our sons,
We see our fair young daughters, dead:
Then hear us, O ye mighty ones!
Give us our daily bread.

'Tis vain—with cold, unfeeling eye
Ye gaze on us, unclothed, unfed;
'Tis vain—ye will not hear our cry,
Nor give us daily bread.

We turn from you, our lords by birth,
To Him who is our Lord above;
We all are made of the same earth,
Are children of one Love.

Then, Father of this world of wonders,
Judge of the living and the dead,
Lord of the lightnings and the thunders,
Give us our daily bread!

REINFORCEMENTS

This poem about children was written by the Rev. T. T. Lynch, a London minister, who died in 1871, and is remembered chiefly because of his hymns. Children are not seen here as they see themselves, but as older people see them; for the longer we live the more we feel that the future of the world depends on how the children, buoyed up by happiness and hope, grow up to carry on the strife for all that is good.

WHEN little boys with merry noise
In the meadows shout and run;
And little girls, sweet woman-buds,
Brightly open in the sun,
I may not of the world despair,
Our God despaireth not, I see;
For blithesomer in Eden's air
These lads and maidens could not be.

Why were they born, if Hope must die?
Wherefore this health, if Truth should fail?
And why such Joy, if Misery
Be conquering us and must prevail?
Arouse! our spirit may not droop!
These young ones fresh from heaven are;
Our God hath sent another troop,
And means to carry on the war.

THE BLIND LINNET

This poem of memories of the country, that come into a London attic to revive a weary sempstress and to make her blind linnet sing, was written by Robert Buchanan, a Scottish poet, for the first volume he produced after his own arrival in London. There he lived till he was sixty, and died in the year 1901; but he never wrote better than when he was poor and lonely, like the sempstress he pictured, and when, like her, he fed his heart on thoughts of the country he had left.

THE sempstress's linnet sings
At the window opposite me,
It feels the sun on its wings,
Though it cannot see
Can a bird have thoughts? May be.
The sempstress is sitting
High o'er the humming street,
The little blind linnet is flitting
Between the sun and her seat.
All day long
She stitches wearily there,
And I know she is not young,
And I know she is not fair;
For I watch her head bent down
Throughout the dreary day,
And the thin, meek hair o' brown
Is threaded with silver grey;
And now and then, with a start
At the fluttering of her heart,
She lifts her eyes to the bird,
And I see in the dreary place
The gleam of a thin white face.
And my heart is stirred.

Loud and long
The linnet pipes his song!
For he cannot see
The smoky street all round,
But loud in the sun sings he,
Though he hears the murmurous sound;
For his poor, blind eyeballs blink,
While the yellow sunlights fall
And he thinks (if a bird can think)
He hears a waterfall,
Or the broad and beautiful river
Washing fields of corn,
Flowing for ever
Through the woods where he was born;
And his voice grows stronger,
While he thinks that he is there,
And louder and longer
Falls his song on the dusty air.
And oft, in the gloaming still,
Perhaps (for who can tell?)
The musk and the muscatel
That grow on the window-sill,
Cheat him with their smell.

But the sempstress can see
How dark things be;
How black through the town
The stream is flowing;
And tears fall down
Upon her sewing.
So at times she tries,
When her trouble is stirred,
To close her eyes,
And be blind like a bird.
And then for a minute
As sweet things seem
As to the linnet
Piping in his dream!
For she feels on her brow
The sunlight glowing,
And hears nought now
But a river flowing—
A broad and beautiful river,
Washing fields of corn,
Flowing for ever
Through the woods where she was born—
And a wild bird winging
Over her head, and singing!
And she can smell
The musk and the muscatel
That beside her grow,
And, unaware,
She murmurs an old air
That she used to know!

PEACE

In these verses, by Henry Vaughan, the "Silurist," or Welsh poet, there are clear echoes of his life and character. He lived through the period of the great Civil War, was of a deeply religious and mystical temperament, and was somewhat affected by the craze for old comparisons which set in during the generation that followed Shakespeare.

MY soul, there is a country,
Afar beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged sentry
All skilful in the wars.
There, above noise and danger,
Sweet Peace sits, crowned with smiles,
And One born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious Friend,
And (O my soul, awake!)
Did in pure love descend,
To die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flower of peace,
The rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress and thine ease.
Leave, then, thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure,
But One who never changes,
Thy God, thy Life, thy Cure.

THE VAUDOIS TEACHER

Ever since the twelfth century a religious community which bases its faith on the New Testament has been spread through the Alpine valleys of Italy to the south-west of Turin, and over the Alps in the French valleys of Dauphine. Its founder was Peter Waldo, a rich merchant of Lyons, who gave away his wealth and went forth in poverty to preach the Gospel as he understood it. After him the believers are called Waldensians. Sometimes they are called the Vaudois. They suffered terrible persecution, but still number about twelve thousand in the mountain valleys where their forefathers were martyred. It is said that their method of spreading their faith was by selling goods as pedlars from house to house and mansion to mansion, and then giving away a copy of the New Testament, which was a forbidden book. Here John Greenleaf Whittier describes the manner in which they placed the Scriptures in the hands of the rich.

"O LADY fair, these silks of mine are
beautiful and rare,
The richest web of the Indian loom, which
beauty's queen might wear;
And my pearls are pure as thy own fair neck,
with whose radiant light they vie,
I have brought them with me a weary
way—will my gentle lady buy?"

And the lady smiled on the worn old man
through the dark and clustering curls
Which veiled her brow as she bent to view
his silks and glittering pearls;
And she placed their price in the old man's
hand, and lightly turned away,
But she paused at the wanderer's earnest
call—"My gentle lady, stay!"

"O lady fair, I have yet a gem which a
purer lustre flings
Than the diamond flash of the jewelled
crown on the lofty brow of kings,
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price, whose
virtue shall not decay,
Whose light shall be as a spell to thee and a
blessing on thy way!"

The lady glanced at the mirroring steel
where her form of grace was seen,
Where her eye shone clear, and her dark
locks waved their clasping pearls between,
"Bring forth thy pearl of exceeding worth,
thou traveller grey and old—
And name the price of thy precious gem,
and my page shall count thy gold."

The cloud went off from the pilgrim's
brow as a small and meagre book,
Unchased with gold or gem of cost, from his
folding robe he took!
"Here, lady fair, is the pearl of price, may
it prove as such to thee!
Nay—keep thy gold—I ask it not, for the
word of God is free!"

The hoary traveller went his way, but the
gift he left behind
Hath had its pure and perfect work on that
high-born maiden's mind,
And she hath turned from the pride of sin
to the lowliness of truth,
And given her human heart to God in its
beautiful hour of youth!

And she hath left the grey old halls, where
an evil faith had power,
The courtly knights of her father's train,
and the maidens of her bower;
And she hath gone to the Vaudois vales
by lordly feet untrod,
Where the poor and needy of earth are rich
in the perfect love of God!

WE ARE FREE

This vigorous song of ransom by battle from a tyrannous foe, swift like the onslaught it describes, was written by Robert Nicoll, a Scottish poet who died in 1837, at the age of twenty-three.

LIKE lightning's flash
Upon the foe
We burst, and laid
Their glories low!
Like mountain floods
We on them came—
Like withering blast
Of scorching flame,
Like hurricane
Upon the sea—
Shout, shout again,
Shout, *We are Free!*

We struck for God—
We struck for life—
We struck for sire—
We struck for wife—
We struck for home—
We struck for all
That man doth lose
By bearing thrall!
We struck 'gainst chains,
For liberty!
Now, for our pains,
Shout, *We are Free!*

Give to the slain
A sigh—a tear;
A curse to those
Who spoke of fear!
Then eat your bread
In peace; for now
The tyrant's pride
Is lying low!
His strength is broken—
His minions flee—
The Voice hath spoken—
Shout, *We are Free!*

EXCEEDING ALL

LONG life's a lovely thing to know,
With lovely health and wealth, forsooth,
And lovely name and fame. But O
The loveliness of Youth!

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

GREAT, WIDE, BEAUTIFUL WORLD

The writer of this delightful song, William Brighty Rand, died about thirty years ago. A better writer of children's verse and fairy tales has never been known in England.

GREAT, wide, beautiful, wonderful World!
With the wonderful water round you curled,
And the wonderful grass upon your breast;
World, you are beautifully dressed.

The wonderful air is over me,
And the wonderful wind is shaking the tree;
It walks on the water and whirls the mills,
And talks to itself on the tops of the hills.

You friendly Earth! How far do you go,
With the wheatfields that nod and the rivers that flow,
With cities and gardens and cliffs and isles,
And people upon you for thousands of miles?

Ah! you are so great, and I am so small,
I tremble to think of you, World, at all,
And yet, when I said my prayers today,
A whisper inside me seemed to say:
"You are more than the Earth, though you are such a dot:
You can love and think, and the Earth can not!"

WHAT MIGHT BE DONE

In everything that Charles Mackay wrote there was a ring of noble humanity, and also of sound sense. A splendid hope runs through all his writing. This poem, which some would sneer at as picturing the impossible, is, of course, simply true.

WHAT might be done if men were wise—
What glorious deeds, my suffering brother!
Would they unite
In love and right,
And cease the scorn of one another?

Oppression's heart might be imbued
With kindling drops of loving kindness;
And knowledge pour,
From shore to shore,
Light on the eyes of mental blindness.

All slavery, warfare, lies, and wrongs,
All vice and crime, might die together;
And wine and corn,
To each man born,
Be free as warmth in summer weather.

The meanest wretch that ever trod,
The deepest sunk in guilt and sorrow,
Might stand erect
In self-respect,
And share the teeming world tomorrow.

What might be done? *This* might be done,
And more than this, my suffering brother,
More than the tongue
E'er said or sung,
If men were wise and loved each other.

THE CAPTAIN STOOD ON THE CARRONADE

Captain Marryat, the novelist of the sea, was the writer of this humorously vigorous sketch of a captain of the old school, a fighting sea-dog of the days when ships were recruited by press gangs, and discipline was maintained by the use of the cat-o'-nine-tails. The poem is hardly an exaggeration, for bluff manners were regarded as quite suitable for the sea. The spirit of the seamen of that time, rollicking and reckless, is cleverly suggested by the lilt of the lines.

THE captain stood on the carronade—
"First lieutenant," says he,
"Send all my merry men aft here, for they must list to me:
I haven't the gift of the gab, my sons—because I'm bred to the sea;
That ship there is a Frenchman, who means to fight with we.
Odds blood, hammer and tongs, long as I've been to sea,
I've fought 'gainst every odds—but I've gained the victory.

"That ship there is a Frenchman, and if we don't take *she*,
'Tis a thousand bullets to one that she will capture we;
I haven't the gift of the gab, my boys; so each man to his gun;
If she's not mine in half an hour, I'll flog each mother's son.
Odds bobs, hammer and tongs, long as I've been to sea,
I've fought 'gainst every odds—and I've gained the victory."

We fought for twenty minutes, when the Frenchmen had enough;
"I little thought," said he, "that your men were of such stuff;"
The captain took the Frenchman's sword, a low bow made to he;
"I haven't the gift of the gab, monsieur, but polite I wish to be.
Odds bobs, hammer and tongs, long as I've been to sea,
I've fought 'gainst every odds—and I've gained the victory."

Our captain sent for all of us; "My merry men," said he,
"I haven't the gift of the gab, my lads, but yet I thankful be;
You've done your duty handsomely, each man stood to his gun;
If you hadn't, you villains, as sure as day, I'd have flogged each mother's son.
Odds bobs, hammer and tongs, as long as I'm at sea,
I'll fight 'gainst every odds—and I'll gain the victory."

THE SOLDIER'S TEAR

Some of the most popular flights of verse have been written as songs. They express a sentiment everyone can feel and understand. This simple description of a soldier's farewell is a good example. The poem is by Alexander Lee.

UPON the hill he turned
To take a last fond look
Of the valley and the village church,
And the cottage by the brook.
He listened to the sounds
So familiar to his ear,
And the soldier leaned upon his sword,
And wiped away a tear.
Beside that cottage porch
A girl was on her knees,
She held aloft a snowy scarf,
Which fluttered in the breeze.
She breathed a prayer for him,
A prayer he could not hear,
But he paused to bless her as she knelt,
And wiped away a tear.
He turned and left the spot,
Oh, do not deem him weak,
For dauntless was the soldier's heart,
Though tears were on his cheek.
Go watch the foremost ranks,
In danger's dark career,
Be sure the hand most daring there
Has wiped away a tear.

TIME'S SONG

It is Time that is speaking. Time, that changes everything, for "nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence," here wearily reviews his conquests. Thomas Carlyle says that the "illimitable, silent, onward rushing thing called Time, like an all-embracing ocean tide, is for ever a miracle, a thing to strike us dumb. We have no words to speak about it." But the unknown poet who wrote these verses tries to speak of it, and cleverly chooses his examples of Time's power.

O'ER the level plain—where mountains
greet me as I go;
O'er the desert waste—where fountains
at my bidding flow;
On the boundless stream by day, on the
cloud by night—
I am rushing hence away: who will chain
my flight?
War his weary watch was keeping: I have
crushed his spear;
Grief within her bower was weeping: I
have dried her tear;
Pleasure caught a minute-hold, then I
hurried by,
Leaving all her banquet cold, and her
goblet dry.
Power had won a throne of glory: where is
now his fame?
Genius said, "I live in story": who hath
heard his name?
Love, beneath a myrtle bough, whispered,
"Why so fast?"
And the roses on his brow withered as I
passed.
I have heard the heifer lowing o'er the wild
wave's bed;
I have seen the billow flowing where the
cattle fed.
Where began my wanderings? Memory
will not say.
Where shall rest my weary wings? Science
turns away.

OLD ENGLAND

Gerald Massey, who died in his eighty-eighth year, in 1907, was one of the poets who have been most inspired when writing of their love for England. His glowing verses gain a new appropriateness in these days. Massey was the man from whose character George Eliot sketched her hero Felix Holt.

THERE she sits in her Island-home,
Peerless among her peers!
And Humanity oft to her arms doth come.
To ease its poor heart of tears.
Old England still throbs with the muffled
fire
Of a past she can never forget;
And again shall she banner the world up
higher,
For there's life in the Old Land yet.

They would mock at her now, who of old
looked forth
In their fear, as they heard her afar;
But loud will your wail be, O Kings of
the Earth!
When the Old Land goes down to the war.
The avalanche trembles, half-launched and
half-riven,
Her voice will in motion set,
Oh, ring out the tidings, ye winds of heaven!
There's life in the Old Land yet.

The old nursing mother's not hoary yet,
There is sap in her Saxon tree;
Lo! she lifteth a bosom of glory yet,
Through her mists, to the sun and the sea.
Fair as the Queen of Love, fresh from the
foam,
Or a star in the dark cloud set;
Ye may blazon her shame, ye may leap
at her name,
But there's life in the Old Land yet.

Let the storm burst, it will find the Old Land
Ready-ripe for a rough, red fray!
She will fight as she fought when she took
her stand
For the Right in the olden day.
Ah, rouse the old royal soul, Europe's best
hope
Is her sword-edge by Victory set!
She shall dash Freedom's foes adown Death's
gloomy slope,
For there's life in the Old Land yet.

IT IS NOT ALWAYS MAY

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the most popular of the American poets, wrote beautifully about childhood, but he also felt the "tenderness of night," or the sadness of advancing years. He would have the young make the most of their youth before life's glances are chiefly backward. The lovely line expressing the emptiness of backward-looking thought, "There are no birds in last year's nest," is a Spanish proverb.

THE sun is bright, the air is clear,
The darting swallows soar and sing,
And from the stately elms I hear
The blue-bird prophesying spring.

So blue yon winding river flows,
It seems an outlet from the sky,
Where, waiting till the west wind blows,
The freighted clouds at anchor lie.

All things are new—the buds, the leaves,
That gild the elm-tree's nodding crest,
And even the nest beneath the eaves—
There are no birds in last year's nest.

All things rejoice in youth and love,
The fulness of their first delight,
And learn from the soft heavens above
The melting tenderness of night.

Maiden! that read'st this simple rhyme,
Enjoy thy youth—it will not stay;
Enjoy the fragrance of thy prime,
For, O! it is not always May!

Enjoy the spring of Love and Youth,
To some good angel leave the rest,
For Time will teach thee soon the truth—
There are no birds in last year's nest.

MOONRISE

This exquisite description of the rising of the moon, and the changes made by her magical beams in all things they light on, was written by a Welsh poet, Ernest Jones, who died in 1869. His best-known poems were fierce accounts of the sufferings of the poor in the middle of the last century, but this poem shows that the daintiness of his poetic feeling was not impaired by the strength of his sense of human wrong.

WHAT stands upon the highland?
What walks across the rise,
As though a starry island
Were sinking down the skies?

What makes the trees so golden?
What decks the mountain side,
Like a veil of silver folden
Round the white brow of a bride?

The magic moon is breaking,
Like a conqueror, from the east,
The waiting world awaking
To a golden fairy feast.

She works, with touch ethereal,
By changes strange to see,
The cypress, so funereal,
To a lightsome fairy tree;

Black rocks to marble turning,
Like palaces of kings;
On ruin windows burning,
A festal glory flings;

The desert halls uplighting,
While falling shadows glance,
Like courtly crowds uniting
For the banquet or the dance;

With ivory wand she numbers
The stars along the sky;
And breaks the billows' slumbers
With a love-glance of her eye;

Along the cornfields dances,
Brings bloom upon the sheaf;
From tree to tree she glances,
And touches leaf by leaf;

Wakes birds that sleep in shadows;
Through their half-closed eyelids gleams;
With her white torch through the meadows,
Lights the shy deer to the streams.

The magic moon is breaking,
Like a conqueror, from the east,
And the joyous world partaking
Of her golden fairy feast.

SEVEN YEARS

The writer of these exquisite lines is the Marquis of Crewe, a leading statesman of our time as leader of the House of Lords and Secretary of State for India. His father, Lord Houghton, also was a poet. The speaker in the poem is a husband whose wife is dead. How poetically the happiness of the seven years is suggested in the line, "Scant the shadow and high the sun," in the second verse!

TO join the ages they have gone,
Those seven years—
Receding as the months roll on;
Yet very oft my fancy hears
Your voice. 'Twas music to my ears,
Those seven years.

Scant the shadow and high the sun,
Those seven years.
Can hearts be one? Then ours were one—
One for laughter and one for tears,
Knit together in hopes and fears,
Those seven years.

How, perchance, do they seem to you,
Those seven years,
Spirit-free in the wider blue?
When Time in Eternity disappears,
What if all you have learned but the more endears
Those seven years?

THE CROWS AT WASHINGTON

John Hay, who wrote this description of birds flying over Washington, was known to his American countrymen as Colonel Hay. He gave fine service to his country as her ambassador in France, Spain, Austria, and Great Britain. The Capitol is the American Houses of Parliament. The obelisk is a monument to the memory of George Washington, after whom the city is named. The Potomac is the chief river, on which the city stands. Of course, the birds described are rooks, not crows. The crow is a rare bird; the rook plentiful.

SLOW flapping to the western sun
By twos and threes in setting rows,
As twilight shadows dimly close,
The crows fly over Washington.

Under the crimson sunset sky
Virginian woodlands leafless lie,
In wintry torpor bleak and dun.
Through the rich vault of heaven, which shines
Like a warmed opal in the sun,
With wide advance in broken lines
The crows fly over Washington.

Over the Capitol's white dome,
Across the obelisk soaring bare
To prick the clouds, they travel home,
Content and weary, winnowing
With dusky vans the golden air,
Which hints the coming of the spring,
Though winter whitens Washington.

The dim, deep air, the level ray
Of dying sunlight on their plumes,
Give them a beauty not their own;
Their hoarse notes fail and faint away;
A rustling murmur floating down
Blends sweetly with the thickening glooms;
They touch with grace the fading day,
Slow flying over Washington.

I stand and watch with clouded eyes
These dim battalions move along;
Out of the distance memory cries
Of days when life and hope were strong,
When love was prompt and wit was gay;
Even then, at evening, as today,
I watched, while twilight hovered dim
Over Potomac's curving rim,
This selfsame flight of homing crows
Blotting the sunset's fading rose
Above the roofs of Washington.

THE NIGHTINGALE

In these verses Mr. A. St. John Adcock, the well-known literary journalist, discovers for us a cheering companionship in the nightingale's song and the splendour of the stars; but, though he speaks of gladness, the verses have in them more of the sadness of the nightingale's note and a touch of night's gloom.

SOLE singer in the world of dreams,
Whose voice, outringing clear and far
Into the empty darkness, seems
An echo from a distant star.

Thou comest, as God's angels will,
When day and all its noisier mirth,
Gone past us like a wind, are still,
The stars in heaven and thou on earth.

Thou singest yet in all the years,
In all the years the stars arise,
When sleep has dulled our heedless ears
And weighs like death upon our eyes.

And, ah, outworn with sordid cares,
We drowse in other glooms supine,
Blind even to greater light than theirs,
And deaf to loftier songs than thine.

But still they shine, though none should see;
And singest thou, unheard, forgot;
Save in lone night-times, it may be,
When they and thou shall know it not.

Their shining makes some pathway bright,
One hears thee as he toils along,
And passes onward through the night,
Glad in their splendour, and thy song.

THE DOVE SAID "GIVE US PEACE"

Jean Ingelow, a Boston lady, who lived from 1820 to 1897, was a real poet with a clever command of musical rhythms that almost sing as they are read. In these verses she tells how she finds both music and thought in birds' songs; but she is not quite successful in her interpretation of all their strains. The dove coos of love and peace truly enough, and perhaps we might say that the lark sings of glory, and that the nightingale's mellow sadness suggests fame; but the wren surely does not ask for beauty. It is a drab little bird, filled with joy, not with ambition or love of show.

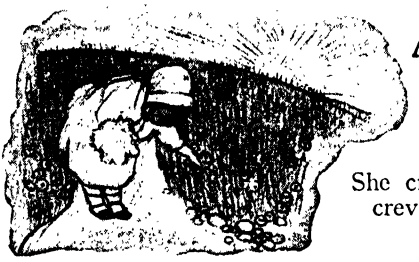
ONE morning, oh, so early, my belovèd, my belovèd,
All the birds were singing blithely, as if never they would cease;
'Twas a thrush sang in my garden, "Hear the story, hear the story!"
And the lark sang, "Give us glory!"
And the dove said, "Give us peace!"

Then I hearkened, oh! so early, my belovèd, my belovèd,
To that murmur from the woodland of the dove, my dear, the dove;
When the nightingale came after, "Give us fame to sweeten duty!"
When the wren sang, "Give us beauty!"
She made answer, "Give us love!"

Sweet is spring, and sweet the morning, my belovèd, my belovèd;
Now for us doth spring, doth morning, wait upon the year's increase,
And my prayer goes up, "Oh, give us, crowned in youth with marriage glory,
Give for all our life's dear story,
Give us love, and give us peace!"

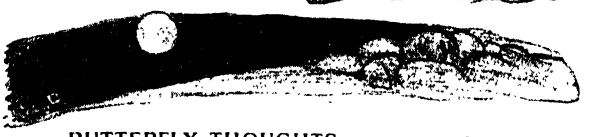
A LITTLE STRING OF BEADS—BY LADY LINDSAY

DAY AND NIGHT



Said Day to Night:
"I bring God's light;
What gift have you?"
Night said: "The dew."

"I give bright hours,"
Quoth Day, "and flowers."
Said Night: "More blest,
I bring sweet rest."



BUTTERFLY THOUGHTS

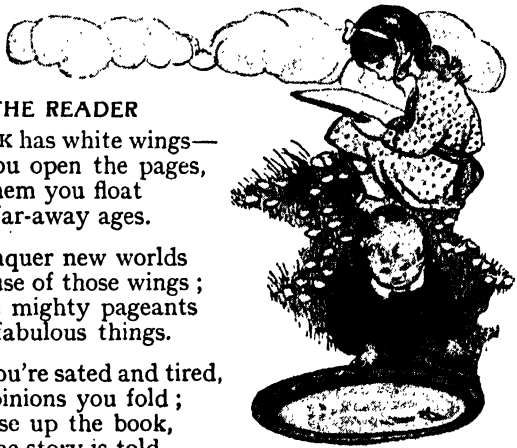
There are times when all the world's busy—
Quite busy the whole long day;
And every one says: "Why, Missy,
I haven't a moment for play.

"Go now; like a dear, out yonder
On the lawn by the pear-tree sit;
You'll get of your dolls the fonder
If you chatter to *them* for a bit."

Well, I go, and take my sewing,
And work with a doll on each knee:
I watch the men at their mowing,
And the twittering birds on the tree.

I sit by my own little table,
Very grave in my wicker chair;
I look as old as I'm able,
With a bundle of troubles to bear.

But I jump up, for sudden comes flying
A butterfly winged with gold;
And I shout: "How can folks sit sighing
For ever, alone, when they're old!"



THE READER

A book has white wings—
You open the pages,
Upon them you float
Into far-away ages.

You conquer new worlds
Because of those wings;
You see mighty pageants
And fabulous things.

When you're sated and tired,
The pinions you fold;
You close up the book,
For the story is told.

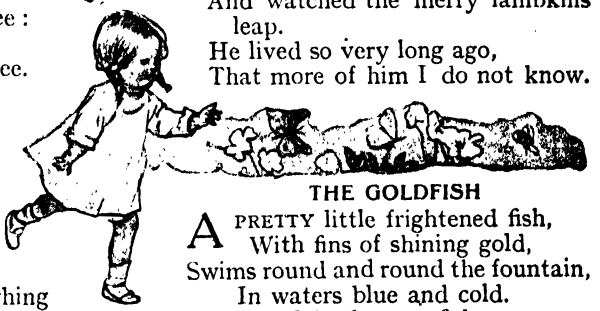
THE MOUSE

A little mouse
Dwells in her house
Hidden behind the parlour wall:
At dead of night,
When there's no light,
She creeps through crack and crevice small.

Patter, patter,
What a clatter!
Fast the scrambling footsteps fall;
'Tis some giant,
Fierce, defiant—
Nay, a little mouse; that's all.

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD

There was a little shepherd boy,
Who lived a life of idle joy;
He ate the berries red and ripe,
And played upon an oaten pipe;
He drove the pretty milk-white sheep,
And watched the merry lambkins leap.
He lived so very long ago,
That more of him I do not know.



THE GOLDFISH

A pretty little frightened fish,
With fins of shining gold,
Swims round and round the fountain,
In waters blue and cold.
Pretty fish, bonny fish, come up here on the land!
Pretty fish, bonny fish, come, eat out of my hand!

I'll show you brilliant flower beds,
Sweet roses on the wall;
The world is full of lovely things,
And you shall see them all.
Pretty fish, bonny fish, come up here on the land!
Pretty fish, bonny fish, come, eat out of my hand!

You dive and dart from side to side,
You stare with goggle eyes;
But if you will not learn of me
You surely can't grow wise.
Pretty fish, bonny fish, come up here on the land!
Pretty fish, bonny fish, come eat out [of my hand!

WHAT THE POET SEES

Many of us believe that the writer of these lines, Ralph Waldo Emerson, was the profoundest thinker and poet that the American continent has produced. The poet looks upon the world differently from the average man, and Emerson tells us what the poet sees, which the average person may regard as only fantastic. He sees the wonder of Nature's secret workings. "Booteth not" means "does not profit." "Vernal ides" means the spring days when the earth grows green.

For this present, hard
  Is the fortune of the bard
  Born out of time;
All his accomplishment,
From Nature's utmost treasure spent,
  Booteth not him.
When the pine tosses its cones
To the song of its waterfall tones,
He speeds to the woodland walks,
To birds and trees he talks:
Cæsar of his leafy Rome,
There the poet is at home.

He goes to the river side,
  Not hook nor line hath he:
He stands in the meadows wide,
  Nor gun nor scythe to see.
With none has he to do,
  And none to seek him,
Nor men below,
  Nor spirits dim.

What he knows nobody wants;
What he knows he hides, not vaunts.
Knowledge this man prizes best
Seems fantastic to the rest;
Pondering shadows, colours, clouds,
Grass buds, and caterpillars' shrouds,
Boughs on which the wild bees settle,
Tints that spot the violet's petal,
Why Nature loves the number five.
  And why the star-form she repeats;
Lover of all things alive,
  Wonderer at all he meets,
Wonderer chiefly at himself—
  Who can tell him what he is.
Or how meet in human elf
  Coming and past eternities?
And such I knew, a forest seer,
A minstrel of the natural year,
Foreteller of the vernal ides,
Wise harbinger of spheres and tides,
A lover true, who knew by heart
Each joy the mountain dales impart;
It seemed that Nature could not raise
A plant in any secret place,
In quaking bog, on snowy hill,
Beneath the grass that shades the rill,
Under the snow, between the rocks,
In damp fields known to bird and fox,
But he would come in the very hour
It opened in its virgin bower,
As if a sunbeam showed the place,
And tell its long descended race.
It seemed as if the breezes brought him;
It seemed as if the sparrows taught him,
As if by secret sight he knew
Where in far fields the orchis grew.
There are many events in the field
  Which are not shown to common eyes;
But all her shows did Nature yield
  To please and win this pilgrim wise.
He saw the partridge drum in the woods,
  He heard the woodcock's evening hymn;
He found the tawny thrush's brood,
  And the shy hawk did wait for him.
What others did at distance hear,
  And guessed within the thicket's gloom,
Was shown to this philosopher,
  And at his bidding seemed to come.

THE EMIGRANT'S FAREWELL

The note of intense reality in this farewell is not to be wondered at. The writer, Thomas Pringle, who died in 1834, and was a friend of Sir Walter Scott, was not merely indulging in a poet's fancy when he said adieu to his native land. He actually emigrated, not "beyond the Western Main," but to South Africa, where he helped to form a successful settlement. His was not, however, a "last adieu," for he returned to England and became a useful worker against slavery at the time of its abolition. The Scottish word "knowes," in the third verse, means little hills; and the word "howes," in the same verse, means hollows or dells.

Our native land—our native vale—
  A long and last adieu!
Farewell to bonny Teviotdale,
  And Cheviot mountains blue.

Farewell, ye hills of glorious deeds,
  And streams renowned in song—
Farewell, ye braes and blossomed meads,
  Our hearts have loved so long.

Farewell, the blithesome broomy knowes,
  Where thyme and harebells grow—
Farewell, the hoary, haunted howes,
  O'erhung with birk and sloe.

The mossy cave and mouldering tower
  That skirt our native dell—
The martyr's grave, and lover's bower,
  We bid a sad farewell!

Home of our love! our father's home!
  Land of the brave and free!
The sail is flapping on the foam
  That bears us far from thee!

We seek a wild and distant shore,
  Beyond the Western Main—
We leave thee to return no more,
  Nor view thy cliffs again!

Our native land—our native vale—
  A long and last adieu!
Farewell to bonny Teviotdale,
  And Scotland's mountains blue!

WHAT WE ALL THINK

To all healthy natures life is full of illusion, and Oliver Wendell Holmes, the cheery American poet and essayist, was a man who welcomed every ray of brightness, though he could not hide from himself the plain truth. He gives here a number of instances of this pleasant self-deception of men. The poem, like all Holmes's writing, though it teases men with its fancies and weaknesses, ends on a noble note.

THAT age was older once than now,
In spite of locks untimely shed,
Or silvered on the youthful brow;
That babes make love and children wed.

That sunshine had a heavenly glow,
Which faded with those "good old days,"
When winters came with deeper snow,
And autumns with a softer haze.

That—mother, sister, wife, or child—
The "best of women" each has known.
Were school-boys ever half so wild?
How young the grandpapas have grown!

That but for this our souls were free,
And but for that our lives were blest;
That in some season yet to be
Our cares will leave us time to rest.

Whene'er we groan with ache or pain,
Some common ailment of the race—
Though doctors think the matter plain—
That ours is "a peculiar case."

That when like babes with fingers burned
We count one bitter maxim more,
Our lesson all the world has learned,
And men are wiser than before.

That when we sob o'er fancied woes,
The angels hovering overhead
Count every pitying drop that flows,
And love us for the tears we shed.

That when we stand with tearless eye
And turn the beggar from our door,
They still approve us when we sigh:
"Ah, had I but one thousand more!"

That weakness smoothed the path of sin,
In half the slips our youth has known;
And whatsoe'er its blame has been,
That Mercy flowers on faults outgrown.

Though temples crowd the crumbled brink
O'erhanging truth's eternal flow,
Their tablets bold with what we think,
Their echoes dumb to what we know.

That one unquestioned text we read,
All doubt beyond, all fear above,
Nor crackling pile nor cursing creed
Can burn or blot it: God is Love!

THE CHILD AND THE MOURNER

This tender, gracious little song, by Charles Mackay, gains a new and deeper meaning to-day, when in thousands of homes men are being mourned who have died for England's sake. The only consolation, as they fall like blossoms from a wind-stripped tree, is that we know a good God reigns.

A LITTLE child beneath a tree,
Sat and chanted cheerily
A little song, a pleasant song,
Which was—she sang it all day long—
"When the wind blows the blossoms fall;
But a good God reigns over all."

There passed a lady by the way,
Moaning in the face of day:
There were tears upon her cheek,
Grief in her heart too great to speak;
Her husband died but yester-morn,
And left her in the world forlorn.

She stopped and listened to the child
That looked to heaven, and, singing, smiled:
And saw not, for her own despair,
Another lady, young and fair,
Who also, passing, stopped to hear
The infant's anthem ringing clear.

For she but few sad days before
Had lost the little babe she bore;
And grief was heavy at her soul
As that sweet memory o'er her stole,
And showed how bright had been the past,
The present drear and overcast.

And as they stood beneath the tree
Listening, soothed and placidly,
A youth came by, whose sunken eyes
Spake of a load of miseries;
And he, arrested like the twain,
Stopped to listen to the strain.

And though the child—if child it were,
And not a seraph sitting there—
Was seen no more, the sorrowing three
Went on their way resignedly,
The song still ringing in their ears—
Was it music of the spheres?

Who shall tell? They did not know.
But in the midst of deepest woe
The strain recurred, when sorrow grew,
To warn them, and console them too:
"When the wind blows the blossoms fall;
But a good God reigns over all."

THE POET'S PRIDE

This example of a poet's pride is by Alexander Pope, and was placed on his monument, though not by his wish. It is "on a poet who refused to be buried in the Abbey."

HEROES and kings, your distance keep,
In peace let one poor poet sleep,
Who never flattered folks like you;
Let Horace blush, and Virgil too.

SHEPHERD'S SONG

In this poem Charles Kingsley, the preacher, novelist, and poet, teaches that our lives are ordained for us by powers beyond our knowledge or understanding. It is for us to do our duty, and abide the destiny assigned us—a feeling strong in the hearts of millions in this time of war. Of course, the changelessness pictured in the second and third verses is only steadfast by comparison with short-lived things. The stars, the hills, the rivers—all change sooner or later.

HIGH among the lonely hills,
While I lay beside my sheep,
Rest came down and filled my soul
From the everlasting deep.

Changeless march the stars above,
Changeless morn succeeds to even;
Still the everlasting hills
Changeless watch the changeless heaven.

See the rivers how they run,
Changeless toward a changeless sea;
All around is forethought sure,
Fixed will and stern decree.

Can the sailor move the main?
Will the potter heed the clay?
Mortal! where the spirit drives,
Thither must the wheels obey.

Neither ask, nor fret, nor strive;
Where thy path is thou shalt go.
He who made the streams of Time
Wafts thee down to weal or woe.

BEN BOLT

Dr. Thomas Dunn English, an American writer who died fourteen years ago, tells in this poem how a sailor friend of his boyhood returns after twenty years' absence, and finds every material thing and everybody changed in the valley they knew in their schooldays; yet friendship remains unaltered.

DON'T you remember sweet Alice, Ben Bolt—
Sweet Alice, whose hair was so brown,
Who wept with delight when you gave her a smile,
And trembled with fear at your frown?
In the old churchyard in the valley, Ben Bolt,
In a corner obscure and alone,
They have fitted a slab of the granite so grey,
And Alice lies under the stone.

Under the hickory tree, Ben Bolt,
Which stood at the foot of the hill,
Together we've lain in the noonday shade,
And listened to Appleton's mill.
The mill-wheel has fallen to pieces, Ben Bolt,
The rafters have tumbled in,
And a quiet which crawls round the walls as you gaze
Has followed the olden din.

Do you mind the cabin of logs, Ben Bolt,
At the edge of the pathless wood,
And the button-ball tree with its motley limbs
Which nigh by the doorstep stood?
The cabin to ruin has gone, Ben Bolt,
The tree you would seek in vain;
And where once the lords of the forest waved
Grows grass and the golden grain.

And don't you remember the school, Ben Bolt,
With the master so cruel and grim,
And the shaded nook in the running brook
Where the children went to swim?
Grass grows on the master's grave, Ben Bolt,
The spring of the brook is dry;
And of all the boys who were schoolmates then
There are only you and I.

There is change in the things I loved, Ben Bolt;
They have changed from the old to the new;
But I feel in the deeps of my spirit the truth,
There never was change in you.
Twelve months twenty have passed, Ben Bolt,
Since first we were friends; yet I hail
Thy presence a blessing, thy friendship a truth,
Ben Bolt, of the salt-sea gale.

PHILOSOPHY

These verses are part of "Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue," written by Tennyson at an old inn near Temple Bar. "Raffs" is an old word used to signify sounding phrases with no meaning, such as were often put into refrains or choruses, like "Heigh ho!" and "Fol de rol," or "Fe fi fo fum" in old-fashioned fairy tales. When Tennyson wrote in this hopeful strain, he was at the lowest ebb of his fortunes.

AH, yet, though all the world forsake,
Though fortune clips my wings,
I will not cramp my heart, nor take
Half-views of men and things.
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;
There must be stormy weather;
But for some true result of good
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes;
If old things, there are new;
Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,
Yet glimpses of the true.
Let raffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
We lack not rhymes and reasons,
As on this whirligig of Time
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid,
With fair horizons bound;
This whole wide earth of light and shade
Comes out a perfect round.
High over roaring Temple Bar,
And set in heaven's third story,
I look at all things as they are,
But through a kind of glory.

AT HER WINDOW

The writing of songs that can easily be set to music is quite a distinct art that has been practised with success by a comparatively small number of poets. One of the best known of these song-writers is Mr. F. E. Weatherly, a Bristol barrister. Here is an example of his style, telling us in every line that it is written to be sung. Mr. Weatherly can develop in three or four verses a story full of sentiment and humour.

At her window she was watching,
  Where the apple-blossoms shone.
Is he never, never coming?
  And the day will soon be gone.
But above her sang a linnet,
  "Little maiden, do not fear!
In a minute," sang the linnet,
  "In a minute he'll be here!"

And he was, within a minute;
  Many minutes, too, he stayed,
Till she said, "I must be going"
  (For she was a timid maid).
But he cried, "Ah, stay a minute,
  Give me just another kiss!"
"Well, I never," sang the linnet,
  "Knew a minute long as this!"

But he did! For come next Sunday
  They were married, he and she,
With the apple-blossoms falling,
  And the linnet in the tree.
"Love will only last a minute,"
  Croaked the gossips at the door.
"Not a minute!" sang the linnet,
  "But for ever, evermore!"

THE TREADMILL SONG

The irrepressibly cheerful Oliver Wendell Holmes here makes up a song of contentment for criminals on the treadmill, supposing them to be able to enjoy their exercise. The poet's imagination could not be engaged upon a harder task. It is questionable whether as merry a heart as the poet portrays ever mistook its way so far as to reach the treadmill.

The stars are rolling in the sky,
  The earth rolls on below,
And we can feel the rattling wheel
  Revolving as we go.
Then tread away, my gallant boys,
  And make the axle fly;
Why should not wheels go round about
  Like planets in the sky?

Wake up, wake up, my duck-legged man,
  And stir your solid pegs;
Arouse, arouse, my gawky friend,
  And shake your spider legs;
What though you're awkward at the trade?
  There's time enough to learn;
So lean upon the rail, my lad,
  And take another turn.

They've built us up a noble wall,
  To keep the vulgar out;
We've nothing in the world to do,
  But just to walk about;
So faster, now, you middle men,
  And try to beat the ends;
It's pleasant work to ramble round
  Among one's honest friends.

Here, tread upon the long man's toes,
  He shan't be lazy here;
And punch the little fellow's ribs,
  And tweak that lubber's ear;
He's lost them both; don't pull his hair,
  Because he wears a scratch,
But poke him in the farther eye,
  That isn't in the patch.

Hark! fellows, there's the supper-bell,
  And so our work is done;
It's pretty sport—suppose we take
  A round or two for fun?
If ever they should turn me out,
  When I have better grown,
Now, hang me, but I mean to have
  A treadmill of my own!

THE STARVED GOLDFINCH

It has been said that William Cowper and Robert Burns were the poets who first brought into our literature a real sympathy with animal life; but that is not fair to Shakespeare, who pictured the chased hare with tenderest fidelity. Both Burns and Cowper, however, towards the close of the eighteenth century, were lovers of animals. Here is an example of Cowper, voicing the woes of a captive goldfinch. His picture is true in every detail, and his feeling is just.

Time was when I was free as air,
  The thistle's downy seed my fare,
My drink the morning dew;
I perched at will on every spray,
My form genteel, my plumage gay,
  My strains for ever new.

But gaudy plumage, sprightly strain,
And form genteel were all in vain,
  And of a transient date;
For, caught and caged, and starved to death,
In dying sighs my little breath
  Soon passed the wiry grate.

Thanks, gentle swain, for all my woes,
And thanks for this effectual close
  And cure of every ill!
More cruelty could none express;
And I, if you had shown me less,
  Had been your prisoner still.

SO LIVE

This epigram, happy alike in its wording and its aspiration, was written by a man learned in twenty-eight languages, Sir William Jones. He was born in London, on Sept. 28, 1746.

On parent knees, a naked new-born child,
  Weeping thou sat'st while all around thee smiled;
So live that, sinking to thy life's last sleep,
Calm thou may'st smile while all around thee weep.

SAND CASTLES

This poem is a charming example of the use by Mr. Harold Begbie of his gift of imagination to create kind and tender thoughts in other minds. Who can read these verses without wishing that every poor child may see the charms of the shore, and so have in its mind the materials for happy dreams!

The sun has sunk beneath the sea;
The town is starred with light;
On the dark waves and rocks and caves
Falls the deep hush of night.

The paddlers now are tucked in bed,
Bucket and spade are still;
Damp sand-shoes, specked with golden grit,
Dry on the window-sill.

No music sounds along the shore,
No shout of children's play;
The great black midnight tide has washed
The castles all away.

The lamp-lit town upon the cliff
Hangs silent o'er the deep;
Clowns, nigger-minstrels, donkey-boys,
And tars are all asleep.

It is the night—the silent, dark,
Inhospitable night;
What thing can be beside the sea
Without the cheerful light?

Hush! Little Winifred awakes!
She hears a sudden shout;
She yawns, she sighs, she rubs her eyes,
Starts up and looks about.

Oh, what has little Winnie heard?
Some magic voice has cried.
See! To the window swift she goes,
And plucks the blind aside.

All silvered is the midnight sea;
The shore with glory streams.
What is this light that shines so bright?
It is the light of dreams.

And what is this—this multitude—
This shouting host that comes
To play beside the sea in dreams?
The children of the slums.

So strange a sight, so rare a light,
Was never seen before.
Ten thousand, thousand little ghosts
Leap on the midnight shore.

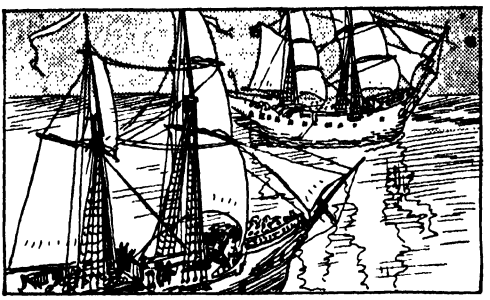
And some are lame, and all are pale;
Many seem like to die.
In rags they come from court and slum,
And shout with ecstasy.

Some run to paddle in the waves;
Some lost in wonder stand;
Some throw aside their coats to dig
Proud castles in the sand.

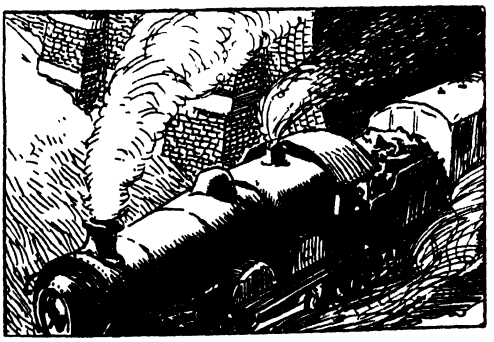
Some with their buckets climb the rocks,
Nor scratch of limpets heed,
Searching in pools for shrimps and crabs
Among the bunching weed.

A fairy Mr. Bones is there,
And fairy niggers sing;
And fairy donkeys, white as milk,
All night go galloping.

And many stately fairy ships,
With sails of azure, glide,
Filled full of little ghosts, who chant
Sweet songs across the tide.



Such perfect bliss, such wondrous joy,
Never has Winnie seen;
And yet the tears are in her eyes.
O tears, what do ye mean?



Some to glad holidays do go
By trains that roar and scream;
But many more to sea and shore
Slide down alone in dream.

No train, no steamer runs for them;
No house will take them in.
By day they bear their load of care—
The load of others' sin.

But when on wretched beds they lie,
Tired hearts, tired feet, tired hands,
Sweet fairies come, and from the slum
Bear them to golden sands.

Oh, little Winnie, in the dark
Shine many magic gleams!
God give thee love for all the poor,
And them the gift of dreams.

THE NARROW DOORS

The meaning of this picturesque little poem by Fannie Stearns Gifford in "The Atlantic Monthly" is that we allow ourselves to be harassed by trifling troubles while great sorrows, though ever around us, do not obscure our happiness by their waiting presence. It is well that is so, or we should never be happy. The lesson of the poem is that we should see little troubles in their true perspective.

THE Wide Door into Sorrow
Stands open night and day;
With head held high and dancing feet,
I pass it on my way.

I never tread within it,
I never turn to see
The Wide Door into Sorrow:
It cannot frighten me.

The Narrow Doors to Sorrow
Are secret, still, and low;
Swift tongues of dusk that spoil the sun
Before I even know.

My dancing feet are frozen;
I stare. I can but see
The Narrow Doors to Sorrow
They stop the heart in me.

Oh, stranger than my midnights
Of loneliness and strife,
The Doors that let the dark leap in
Across my sunny life!

MAZZINI

The writings and speeches of Mazzini, the great Italian patriot, not only aroused his fellow-countrymen till they attained unity and liberty, but struck an answering chord in the hearts of all free nations. This sonnet shows how they impressed W. M. W. Call, a writer of Early Victorian times.

MAZZINI! like to some majestic tower
On which the everlasting stars do sit,
While the unconquered heaven bends over it
And ocean shouts below with giant power,
Thou standest, while the people gather fast,
Thrilled by thy words that strengthen and inspire,
And burning like a forest all on fire
That flares and shakes beneath the thundering blast.
Silent and strong thou standest evermore,
Worthy of honour in all time to come,
Whether thou teach a wise and noble lore
To wandering children in an exile's home,
Or clothe with fear and splendour, as of yore,
The City of the World, the people's Rome.

THE KING OF YVETOT

These verses, by Béranger, the French song-writer of a hundred years ago, were a satire on the doings of Napoleon, whose ambitions and wars were the exact opposite of the picture painted of this domesticated and ordinary king of Yvetot. The poem is not quite complete as given here.

A KING once lived of Yvetot,
Though little known his name,
Rose late, to bed did early go,
Slept well, nor cared for fame.
And Jenny clapped, his crown instead,
A cotton nightcap on his head,
'Tis said.
Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
What a good little king, hurrah!
Hurrah!

He ate four meals a day inside
His palace thatched with straw;
And pace by pace, an ass astride,
His kingdom travelling saw.
Plain, jovial, thinking good, agog,
He'd but for guard, as forth he'd jog,
A dog!
Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
What a good little king, hurrah!
Hurrah!

He ne'er enlarged his proper states;
With all at peace abode;
He was your model, potentates!
For pleasure was his code.
Till death his people's love he kept;
They ne'er, till in the tomb he slept,
Had wept.
Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
What a good little king, hurrah!
Hurrah!

They keep the portrait, painted fine,
Of that right-worthy prince;
It hangs a famous tavern sign
In that good land long since.
As oft a fête they drink once more,
The crowd still shouts the wine-shop door
Before,
Ho, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha, ha!
What a good little king, hurrah!
Hurrah!

RUTH

Thomas Hood is generally known as a humorous poet. So he was; but to regard him as humorous only, though he brimmed with humour, is a grave injustice. He could write pure poetry most charmingly, and none of his pen-pictures excels this of Ruth—"praising God with sweetest looks."

SHE stood breast-high amid the corn,
Clasped by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweetheart of the sun,
Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush
Deeply ripened—such a blush
In the midst of brown was born
Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell—
Which were blackest none could tell,
But long lashes veiled a light
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim,
Made her tressy forehead dim:
Thus she stood amid the stooks,
Praising God with sweetest looks.

Sure, I said, Heaven did not mean
Where I reap thou shouldst but glean;
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
Share my harvest and my home.

MY LAST SONG PERHAPS

The song from which these are the first and last verses shows the spirit in which France received the Allies who invaded her in 1814, at the close of the last campaign but one of the great Napoleon. She was too proud to show her enemies how she suffered. These lines are written by Béranger, the most popular of French song-writers, who was born in the home of a poor tailor in the time of Napoleon.

THE glory of a Frenchman's name
Failed never to inspire my verse;
Through France the stranger comes in fame,
And his successes all I curse.
But though 'tis honourable to grieve,
What boots it now to groaning go?
Old Time doth yet one laugh reprieve—
'Tis so much taken from the foe!

If Hope, friends, will not on us glance,
Let's swear e'en at the risk of death
That for these enemies of France
We will not raise a welcome breath.
But hold this in your memories fast:
The swan, in death, dies singing. So
Sing yet, ye Frenchmen, to the last—
'Tis so much taken from the foe!

THE FISHERMAN AND THE PORTER

The American verse-writer J. G. Saxe loved to tell a story in rhyme, and told it with a vigorous relish. The sequins given by the handful to the honest fisherman were Turkish gold coins that were worth a little less than half a sovereign.

THERE was a famous nobleman
Who flourished in the East,
And once, upon a holiday,
He made a goodly feast,
And summoned in of kith and kin
A hundred at the least.

Now while they sat in social chat,
Discoursing frank and free,
In came the steward, with a bow—
"A man below," said he,
"Has got, my lord, the finest fish
That ever swam the sea!"

"Indeed!" exclaimed the nobleman,
"Then buy it in a trice;
The finest fish that ever swam
Must needs be very nice;
Go, buy it of the fisherman,
And never mind the price."

"And so I would," the steward said,
"But, faith, he wouldn't hear
A word of money for his fish—
Was ever man so queer?
But said he thought a hundred stripes
Could not be counted dear!"

"Go, bring him here," my lord replied;
"The man I fain would see:
A merry wag, by your report,
That fisherman must be!"
"Go, bring him here! Go, bring him here!"
Cried all the company.

The steward did as he was bid,
When thus my lord began:
"For this fine fish what may you wish?
I'll buy it if I can."
"One hundred lashes on my back!"
Exclaimed the fisherman.

"Now, by the rood! but this is good,"
The laughing lord replied;
"Well, let the fellow have his way;
Go, call a groom!" he cried;
"But let the payment he demands
Be modestly applied."

He bared his back and took the lash
As it were merry play;
But at the fiftieth stroke he said,
"Good master groom, I pray
Desist a moment, if you please;
I have a word to say.

"I have a partner in the case,
The fellow standing there;
Pray take the jacket off his back,
And let him have his share;
That one of us should take the whole
Were surely hardly fair!"

"A partner?" cried the nobleman,
"What can the fellow mean?"
"I mean," replied the fisherman,
With countenance serene,
"Your porter there! the biggest knave
That ever yet was seen!

"The rogue who stopped me at the gate,
And wouldn't let me in
Until I swore to give him half
Of all my fish should win.
I've got my share! Pray let, my lord,
His payment now begin!"

"What you propose," my lord replied,
"Is nothing more than fair;
Here, groom, lay on a hundred stripes,
And mind you do not spare;
The scurvy dog shall never say
He didn't get his share!"

Then all that goodly company,
They laughed with might and main,
The while beneath the stinging lash
The porter writhed in pain.
"So fare all villains," quoth my lord,
"Who seek dishonest gain!"

Then turning to the fisherman,
Who still was standing near,
He filled his hand with golden coins,
Some twenty sequins clear,
And bade him come and take the like
On each succeeding year.

THE VICTORS

A contrast between the ostentatious pageant with which the Romans celebrated a victory under the name of a "Triumph," and the strain and loss that usually accompany every kind of victory, and mingle sadness with its pride.

. . . . We came not in with proud,
Firm, martial footsteps in a measured tread,
Slow pacing to the crash of music loud.
No gorgeous trophies went before, no crowd
Of captives followed us with drooping head;
No shining laurel sceptred us, nor crowned,
Nor with its leaf our glittering lances bound.
"This looks not like a triumph," then they said.
With faces darkened in the battle flame,
With banners faded from their earthly pride,
Through wind, and sun, and showers of bleaching rain,
Yet red in all our garments deeply dyed,
With many a wound upon us, many a stain,
We came with steps that faltered—yet we came!

LADY CLARE

There is not in the English language a better example of a romantic story romantically related than this of Lady Clare by Tennyson. There is only one word in it that has more than two syllables, and that is the simple word "tomorrow." Yet not only is the tale told perfectly, but the feelings of the people in it are revealed. A tone of true nobility rings through it, unspoiled by the secrecy and duplicity of Alice, the nurse.

It was the time when lilies blow,
And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn;
Lovers long betrothed were they.
They, too, will wed the morrow morn—
God's blessing on the day!

"He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands, so broad and fair;
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well," said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice, the nurse;
Said, "Who was this that went from thee?"
"It was my cousin," said Lady Clare;
"Tomorrow he weds with me."

"O God be thanked!" said Alice, the nurse,
"That all comes round so just and fair.
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are *not* the Lady Clare."

"Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse,"
Said Lady Clare, "that ye speak so wild?"
"As God's above," said Alice, the nurse,
"I speak the truth: you are my child.

"The old earl's daughter died at my breast;
I speak the truth, as I live by bread!
I buried her like my own sweet child,
And put my child in her stead."

"Falsely, falsely have ye done,
O mother," she said, "if this be true,
To keep the best man under the sun
So many years from his due."

"Nay, now, my child," said Alice, the nurse,
"But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord Ronald's
When you are man and wife."

"If I'm a beggar born," she said,
"I will speak out, for I dare not lie.
Pull off, pull off the brooch of gold,
And fling the diamond necklace by."

She clad herself in a russet gown;
She was no longer Lady Clare.
She went by dale and she went by down,
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought
Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
And followed her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower!
"O Lady Clare, you shame your worth!
Why come you drest like a village maid,
That are the flower of the earth?"

"If I come drest like a village maid,
I am but as my fortunes are;
I am a beggar born," she said,
"And not the Lady Clare."

"Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
"For I am yours in word and in deed!
Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald;
"Your riddle is hard to read!"

O and proudly stood she up!
Her heart within her did not fail;
She looked into Lord Ronald's eyes,
And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laughed a laugh of merry scorn;
He turned and kissed her where she stood.
"If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, "the next in blood—

"If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, "the lawful heir,
We two will wed tomorrow morn,
And you shall still be Lady Clare."

WAITING LOVE

These lovely thoughts, so simply expressed, are by H. D. Thoreau, the American writer. Thoreau is better known as a prose writer than as a poet. He lived in a wood beside a pond, by himself, on land lent to him by the great writer Emerson, and he wrote his experiences of loneliness. That he could write true poetry, too, these verses show clearly.

There's nothing in the world, I know,
That can escape from love,
For every depth it goes below,
And every height above.

It waits, as waits the sky,
Until the clouds go by,
Yet shines serenely on
With an eternal day,
Alike when they are gone,
And when they stay.

Implacable is love,
Foes may be bought or teased
From their hostile intent,
But he goes unappeased
Who is on kindness bent.

A LEGEND FROM THE EAST

Lammas night here means the time of the harvest festival. The story is told, with a beautiful simplicity, by Charles Tennyson Turner, who was a brother of Lord Tennyson. Three Tennyson boys wrote poems. All were true poets. The house of Allah, in the last line, means the house of God.

It was upon a Lammas night
Two brothers woke and said,
As each upon the other's weal
Bethought him on his bed:

The elder spake unto his wife:
"Our brother dwells alone;
No little babes to cheer his life,
And helpmate hath he none.

"Up will I get, and of my heap
A sheaf bestow or twain,
And while our Ahmed lies asleep,
And wots not of his gain."

So up he got and did address
Himself with loving heed,
Before the dawning of the day,
To do that gracious deed.

Now to the younger, all unsought,
The same kind fancy came!
Nor wist they of each other's thought,
Though movèd to the same.

"Abdallah, he hath wife," quoth he,
"And little babes also;
What would be slender boot to me
Would make his heart o'erflow.

"Up will I get, and of my heap
A sheaf bestow or twain,
The while he sweetly lies asleep,
And wots not of his gain."

So up he got, and did address
Himself with loving heed,
Before the dawning of the day,
To mate his brother's deed!

Thus played they oft their gracious parts,
And marvelled oft to view
Their sheaves still equal, for their hearts
In love were equal too.

One morn they met, and wondering stood,
To see by clear daylight,
How each upon the other's good
Bethought him in the night.

So, when this tale to him was brought,
The Caliph did decree,
Where twain had thought the same good thought,
There Allah's house should be.

CHILDREN

It is Algernon Charles Swinburne who thinks, in these verses, that our Lord's description of the Kingdom of Heaven as child-heartedness is the loveliest of all pictures of Paradise. The star that is spoken of in the first verse is the North Star.

Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.
No glory that ever was shed
From the crowning star of the seven
That crown the north world's head,

No word that ever was spoken
Of human or godlike tongue,
Gave ever such godlike token
Since human harps were strung.

No sign that ever was given
To faithful or faithless eyes
Showed ever beyond clouds riven
So clear a Paradise.

Earth's creeds may be seventy times seven
And blood have defiled each creed:
If of such be the Kingdom of Heaven,
It must be Heaven indeed.

THE BEAUTY OF THE EARTH

These simple verses, without a long word in them, are among the most beautiful, true, and profound in our language. They are by W. B. Rands. Volumes have been written without saying half as much as is compressed into these lovely lines.

I saw the beauty of the world
Before me like a flag unfurled,
The splendour of the morning sky,
And all the stars in company;
I thought, How beautiful it is!—
My soul said, There is more than this.

I saw the pomps of death and birth,
The generations of the earth;
I looked on saints and heroes crowned,
And love as wide as heaven is round:
I thought, How wonderful it is!—
My soul said, There is more than this.

Sometimes I have an awful thought
That bids me do the thing I ought,
It comes like wind, it burns like flame,
How shall I give that thought a name?
It draws me like a loving kiss—
My soul says, There is more than this.

I dreamed an angel of the Lord,
With purple wings and golden sword,
And such a splendour in his face
As made a glory in the place;
I thought, How beautiful he is!—
My soul said, There is more than this.

The angel's Lord I cannot see
Or hear, but He is Lord to me;
And in the heavens, and earth, and skies—
The good which lives till evil dies—
The love which I cannot withstand—
God writes His name with His own hand.

NORA'S VOW

Sir Walter Scott loved to tell a tale in any form, and here he tells one very swiftly in verse—the tale of a maiden's capture by love. The wise old man in the poem gave Nora less than three months in which to change her mind about the earl's son; and, though she thought herself as true to her resolve not to care for him as the swan is true to the water, as strong in her determination as the rushing mountain stream, as firm as the great rugged mountain Ben Cruachan, as staunch as the bravery of her Highland kinsmen, she changed more quickly than the colour changes on the heather. The "brogue" mentioned in the last verse was the footwear of the Highlanders.

HEAR what the Highland Nora said,—
"The earlie's son I will not wed,
Should all the race of Nature die,
And none be left but he and I.
For all the gold, for all the gear,
And all the lands both far and near,
That ever valour lost or won,
I would not wed the earlie's son."

"A maiden's vows," old Callum spoke,
"Are lightly made and lightly broke;
The heather on the mountain's height
Begins to bloom in purple light;
The frost-wind soon shall sweep away
That lustre deep from glen and brae;
Yet Nora, ere its bloom be gone,
May blithely wed the earlie's son."

"The swan," she said, "the lake's clear breast
May barter for the eagle's nest;
The Awe's fierce stream may backward turn,
Ben Cruachan fall and crush Kilchurn;
Our kilted clans, when blood is high,
Before their foes may turn and fly;
But I, were all these marvels done,
Would never wed the earlie's son."

Still in the water-lily's shade
Her wonted nest the wild swan made;
Ben Cruachan stands as fast as ever,
Still downward foams the Awe's fierce river;
To shun the clash of foeman's steel
No Highland brogue has turned the heel:
But Nora's heart is lost and won,
She's wedded to the earlie's son!

OLD ENGLAND

The love of our country has inspired English poets, from Shakespeare and Milton to Tennyson and Kipling. No other land has so many patriotic songs that fire the blood. The following simple yet glowing verses, throbbing with native pride, were written in the "Spectator" by Mr. Horace Smith, a London magistrate, who has published many poems.

OUR armies march, and scour the plain;
Our navies guard our shores;
Our cities strain with might and main
To fill the world with stores;
Brave workers toil, both night and day,
With matchless strength and skill:
Where are the "signs of slow decay"?
England is England still.

Through many a shire by tow'r and spire
Each village makes its nest,
Hard sons of toil with hearts of fire—
Our bravest and our best.
They tend the kine, they fold the sheep,
The fields they sow or till,
Their "noiseless tenor" yet they keep—
England is England still.

Oh, friends far off—far, far away
From this our Island Home,
What shall we pray, what can we say
To you across the foam?
Whate'er betide may fear or pride
Ne'er touch our right goodwill;
May *you* and *we* long live to see
England old England still.

Though factions fight with all their might,
And mar each wise endeavour,
The cause of Freedom and of Right
Still rolls along for ever.
This happy land secure shall stand,
Based on her People's will.
Though wide the range, through every change,
England is England still.

O rolling down, more lovely made
By every passing cloud,
O purple heath, O dappled glade,
O wood by breezes bow'd,
O land and sea, O lake and lea,
O meadow-stream and hill,
O rock-bound coast!—where'er we be,
England is England still.

Dear Mother Isle, how fair the smile
That lightens up thy face!
E'en those who part from thee a while
Long for thy warm embrace.
Through hours of joy, through hours of pain,
My heart with thee I fill;
Through shine or rain, thou wilt remain
England *my* England still.

GIFTS THREE

These verses contain a little lesson in the right way of judging people. Three ways are mentioned—one bad, one indifferent, one good. The bad method is to see only faults and to exaggerate them. The indifferent method is to see good and bad alike in a cold way, making no allowances. The wise way is to judge others by the light of our own shortcomings.

THREE men took joy in finding fault,
And thus it came to pass,
That Fate upon each one of them
Bestowed a piece of glass.

The fool contrived of his a lens
Wherein, to gloating eyes,
The smallest blot that could be found
Was magnified in size.

The just man made of his a pane,
All clear without a flaw,
Nor summer sun nor winter rain
Affected what he saw.

The wise man pondered long and well
How best the search to aid,
Then, taking up the crystal gift,
Of it a mirror made.

OUR ANGELS

By a fanciful use of angels the poet Longfellow tells us, in these lines from his play, the "Golden Legend," that if at night we are sorry for having done wrong during the day, and really mean our sorrow, we shall be forgiven and our faults will be forgotten. When we read poetry like this we should not only admire its music of words, but should think how far it is true. The thought here is only half true; for though we may be forgiven, yet, if we have hurt others, the sad consequences of our fault may live on in their suffering.

THERE are two angels that attend unseen
Each one of us, and in great books record
Our good and evil deeds. He who writes down
The good ones, after every action closes
His volume, and ascends with it to God.
The other keeps his dreadful day-book open
Till sunset that we may repent; which doing,
The record of the action fades away,
And leaves a line of white across the page.

ROBIN HOOD'S DEATH AND BURIAL

People who judge things only by books doubt if there ever was a Robin Hood, but that is not the feeling of anyone who has walked through all the old forest lands he wandered in, with many romantic spots still preserving memories of him. The ballads about Robin Hood are mentioned in a copy of "Piers the Plowman," written probably in 1377. In a book of the year 1420 Robin is said to have lived about 1283. Some of the rhymes were printed in 1490—one of the earliest of English printed books. This account of the outlaw's death has the ring of age in its simplicity, in its disregard of rhyme in some of its line-endings, in its direct strong feeling, and in its fine picture of Robin Hood's chivalry, unaltered to the end.

When Robin Hood and Little John
Down a down, a down, a down,
Went o'er yon bank of broom,
Said Robin Hood to Little John,
"We have shot for many a pound:
Hey down, a down, a down.

"But I am not able to shoot one shot more,
My arrows will not flee;
But I have a cousin lives down below,
Please God she will bleed me."

Now Robin is to fair Kirkley gone,
As fast as he can wen;
But before he came there, as we do hear,
He was taken very ill.

And when that he came to fair Kirkley Hall,
He knock'd all at the ring,
But none was so ready as his cousin herself
For to let bold Robin in.

"Will you please to sit down, cousin Robin," she said,
"And drink some beer with me?"
"No, I will neither eat nor drink
Till I am blooded by thee."

She took him by the lily-white hand,
And led him to a private room,
And there she blooded bold Robin Hood,
Whilst one drop of blood would run.

He then bethought him of a casement door,
Thinking for to be gone,
He was so weak he could not leap,
Nor could he get him down.

He then bethought him of his bugle-horn,
Which hung low down to his knee,
He set his horn unto his mouth,
And blew out weak blasts three.

Then Little John, when hearing him,
As he sat under the tree,
"I fear my master is near dead,
He blows so wearily."

Then Little John to fair Kirkley is gone,
As fast as he can dree;
But when he came to Kirkley Hall,
He broke locks two or three

Until he came bold Robin to,
Then he fell on his knee;
"A boon, a boon," cries Little John,
"Master, I beg of thee!"

"What is that boon," quoth Robin Hood,
"Little John, thou begs of me?"
"It is to burn fair Kirkley Hall,
And all their nunnery."

"Now nay, now nay," quoth Robin Hood,
"That boon I'll not grant thee;
I never hurt woman in all my life,
Nor man in woman's company.

"I never hurt fair maid in all my time,
Nor at my end shall it be;
But give me my bent bow in my hand,
And a broad arrow I'll let flee;
And where this arrow is taken up,
There shall my grave digg'd be.

"Lay me a green sod under my head,
And another at my feet;
And lay my bent bow by my side,
Which was my music sweet,
And make my grave of gravel and green,
Which is most right and meet.

"Let me have length and breadth enough,
With a green sod under my head;
That they may say, when I am dead,
Here lies bold Robin Hood."

These words they readily promis'd him,
Which did bold Robin please:
And there they buried bold Robin Hood,
Near to the fair Kirkleys.

A FRIEND

This simple tribute to a friend is by Robert Burns, who knew the worth of friendship, and often expressed it in his poems.

An honest man here lies at rest,
As e'er God with His image blest:
The friend of man, the friend of truth;
The friend of age, and guide of youth:
Few hearts like his, with virtue warmed,
Few heads with knowledge so informed:
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this.

THE COMING OF SPRING

The poets of every age and land have echoed the gladness that spring awakens in young and old. Mrs. Howitt helps us here to notice with happier hearts the many delightful ways in which the spring smiles on us. She describes in these lines quite twenty cheering changes coming over the earth.

I am coming, little maiden,
With the pleasant sunshine laden,
With the honey for the bee,
With the blossom for the tree,
With the flower and with the leaf—
Till I come the time is brief.

I am coming, I am coming.
Hark! the little bee is humming;
See, the lark is soaring high
In the bright and sunny sky;
And the gnats are on the wing—
Little maiden, now is spring.

See the yellow catkins cover
All the slender willows over,
And on mossy banks so green
Starlike primroses are seen,
'Neath their clustering leaves below
White and purple violets grow.

Hark! the little lambs are bleating,
And the cawing rooks are meeting
In the elms, a noisy crowd;
And all birds are singing loud,
And the first white butterfly
In the sun goes flitting by.

Little maiden, look around thee.
Green and flowery fields surround thee,
Every little stream is bright,
All the orchard trees are white,
And each small and waving shoot
Has for thee sweet flower or fruit.

Turn thy eyes to earth and heaven.
God, for thee, the spring hath given,
Taught the birds their melodies,
Clothed the earth and cleared the skies.
For thy pleasure or thy food
Pour thy soul in gratitude,
So may'st thou 'mid blessings dwell.
Little maiden, fare thee well.

LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY

Mr. Arthur Christopher Benson, the author of these lines, is the gifted son of the Archbishop of Canterbury who died in church not many years ago while staying with Mr. Gladstone, and he is one of three brothers who have won distinction. A most beautiful writer, Mr. Benson has published several volumes of essays and poems, and in these verses he has deserved a nation's thanks, for we should all be grateful to a man who sings thus nobly and musicfully of our native land. The lines are set to music and published by Messrs. Boosey.

DEAR Land of Hope, thy hope is crowned,
God make thee mightier yet!
On Sov'ran brows, beloved, renowned,
Once more thy crown is set.
Thine equal laws, by freedom gained,
Have ruled thee well and long;
By freedom gained, by truth maintained,
Thine Empire shall be strong.

Thy fame is ancient as the days,
As ocean large and wide;
A pride that dares, and heeds not praise,
A stern and silent pride;
Not that false joy that dreams content
With what our sires have won;
The blood a hero sire hath spent
Still nerves a hero son.

Land of Hope and Glory, mother of the free,
How shall we extol thee, who are born of thee?
Wider still and wider shall thy bounds be set;
God, who made thee mighty, make thee mightier yet.

THE DEAD MOON

There is a wonderful thought in this poem, a thought that stirs the imagination and carries the mind into infinite space. It is the thought of the moon as a lady in white, following the earth about for ever and ever. The poem should be read slowly and thoughtfully, to appreciate the great imagination that the American author, Danske Dandridge, has put into it. Agape means open; æons means ages; wraith means ghost; orbit means the path of a planet. Note the varying metres.

WE are ghost-ridden:
Through the deep night
Wanders a spirit,
Noiseless and white;
Loiters not, lingers not, knoweth not rest,
Ceaselessly haunting the East and the West.

She, whose undoing the ages have wrought,
Moves on to the time of God's rhythmical thought.
In the dark, swinging sea,
As she speedeth through space,
She reads her pale image;
The wounds are agape on her face.
She sees her grim nakedness
Pierced by the eyes
Of the spirits of God
In their flight through the skies.
Her wounds—they are many and hollow.
The earth turns and wheels as she flies,
And this spectre, this ancient, must follow.

When, in the æons,
Had she beginning?
What is her story?
What was her sinning?
Do the ranks of the holy ones
Know of her crime?
Does it loom in the mists
Of the birthplace of Time?
The stars, do they speak of her
Under their breath,
"Will this wraith be for ever
Thus restless in death?"
On, through immensity,
Sliding and stealing,
On, through infinity,
Nothing revealing.

I see the fond lovers:
They walk in her light;
They charge the "soft maiden"
To bless their love-plight.
Does she laugh in her place,
As she glideth through space?
Does she laugh in her orbit with never a sound?
That to her, a dead body,
With nothing but rents in her round—
Blighted and marred,
Wrinkled and scarred,
Barren and cold,
Wizened and old—
That to her should be told,
That to her should be sung
The yearning and burning of them that are young?

Our earth, that is young,
That is throbbing with life,
Has fiery upheavals,
Has boisterous strife;
But she that is dead has no stir, breathes no air;
She is calm, she is voiceless, in lonely despair.

We dart through the void;
We have cries, we have laughter;
The phantom that haunts us
Comes silently after.
This ghost-lady follows,
Though none hear her tread;
On, on, we are flying.
Still tracked by our dead—
By this white, awful mystery,
Haggard and dead.

WHAT THE WINDS BRING

There is quite a good lesson in geography in these four verses about the four winds. They are by Edmund Clarence Stedman, one of the most appreciated contributors of verse to the American magazines. The poet is speaking to four children.

WHICH is the wind that brings the cold?
The north wind, Freddy, and all the snow;
And the sheep will scamper into the fold
When the north begins to blow.

Which is the wind that brings the heat?
The south wind, Katy; and corn will grow,
And peaches redden for you to eat,
When the south begins to blow.

Which is the wind that brings the rain?
The east wind, Arty; and farmers know
That cows come shivering up the lane
When the east begins to blow.

Which is the wind that brings the flowers?
The west wind, Bessy; and soft and low
The birdies sing in the summer hours
When the west begins to blow.

THE MERMAN

Tennyson was only twenty-one years old when he wrote these two musical poems. The fancy of poets has often played around the sights that may be at the bottom of the sea. Shakespeare, Tennyson (more than once), Matthew Arnold, and our living poet Mr. Kipling have imagined what that strange underworld is like; and some of them, as here, have peopled it with half-human creatures. Usually a tone of sadness is heard in mermaid verses, but Tennyson's mermen and mermaids are joyous and contented, and they tell us of their likings in verses that ripple and sway like moving waters.

I.

WHO would be
A merman bold
Sitting alone
Singing alone
Under the sea,
With a crown of gold,
On a throne ?

II.

I would be a merman bold ;
I would sit and sing the whole of the day ;
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of power;
But at night I would roam abroad and play
With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,
Dressing their hair with the white sea-flower ;
And, holding them back by their flowing locks,
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me
Laughingly, laughingly ;
And then we would wander away, away
To the pale-green sea-groves straight and high,
Chasing each other merrily.

III.

There would be neither moon nor star ;
But the wave would make music above us afar—
Low thunder and light in the magic night—
Neither moon nor star.
We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,
Call to each other and whoop and cry
All night, merrily, merrily ;
They would pelt me with starry spangles and shells,
Laughing and clapping their hands between,
All night, merrily, merrily ;
But I would throw to them back in mine
Turkis and agate and almondine :
Then, leaping out of the unseen,
I would kiss them often under the sea ;
And kiss them again till they'd kissed me
Laughingly, laughingly.
Oh ! what a happy life were mine
Under the hollow-hung ocean green !
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea ;
We would live, merrily, merrily.

THE MERMAID

I.

WHO would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne ?

II.

I would be a mermaid fair ;
I would sing to myself the whole of the day ;
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair ;
And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,
" Who is it loves me ? who loves not me ?"
I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall,
Low adown, low adown.
From under my starry sea-bud crown
Low adown, and around,
And I should look like a fountain of gold
Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
Over the throne
In the midst of the hall ;
Till that great sea-snake under the sea
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the gate
With his large calm eyes for the love of me.
And all the mermen under the sea
Would feel their immortality
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

III.

But at night I would wander away, away,
I would fling on each side my low-flowing locks,
And lightly vault from the throne and play
With the mermen in and out of the rocks ;
We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,
On the broad sea-wolds in the crimson shells,
Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.
But if any came near I would call, and shriek,
And adown the steep like a wave I would leap
From the diamond ledges that jut from the dells ;
For I would not be kiss'd by all who would list,
Of the bold merry mermen under the sea ;
They would sue me, and woo me, and flatter me,
In the purple twilights under the sea ;
But the king of them all would carry me,
Woo me, and win me, and marry me.
In the branching jaspers under the sea ;
Then all the dry pied things that be
In the hueless mosses under the sea
Would curl round my silver feet silently,
And looking up for the love of me.
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft
All things that are forked, and horned, and soft
Would lean out from the hollow sphere of the sea,
All looking down for the love of me.

A FAREWELL

These verses were written by Tennyson to the brook at Somersby, in Lincolnshire, the place where he was born—the brook which he described in a longer poem and more cheerful strain. The permanence of Nature contrasted with the short life of the individual man has been a theme for all the poets.

FLOW down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver :
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, swiftly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet, then a river :
Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder-tree,
And here thine aspen shiver ;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver ;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

THE CREAKY ROCKER

This fanciful little poem shows a pretty sympathy from the young towards the aged. Miss Florence Wilkinson is the writer.

GRANDMAMMA had a creaky rocker
Where she used to rock all day,
And she loved to sit a-murmuring
When we all were at our play;
Half the time we would not listen
To what Grandma used to say.

Often in my bed at night-time
I could hear her rocker creak;
Then I knew that she was murmuring,
With her hand upon her cheek,
And the husky-throated rocker
Was politely trying to speak.

Grandma died and went to heaven
And she took the rocking-chair;
But I never dared to ask them,
Though I saw it was not there.
Yesterday upon the mountain
Where the trees are bent and bare
Came a creaking far above me
From the top of the blue air:
And I knew that it was Grandma,
On the cup-like floor of heaven,
Rocking in her creaky chair.

THE WARDEN OF THE CINQUE PORTS

When the great Duke of Wellington died in his armchair at Walmer Castle, September 14th, 1852, though a very old man, he was Warden of the Cinque Ports, or five ports, that in ancient times guarded the coasts of Kent and Sussex. It was a period of some unrest, owing to the disturbing influence of Louis Napoleon in France, but the third and fourth verses of this impressive poem exaggerate the watchfulness between country and country. Longfellow, the American poet, had a fine power of sympathy with other lands besides his own, and here he tells in a most dramatic way how, amid the sounds of war's watchfulness, the veteran soldier died.

A MIST was driving down the British Channel,
The day was just begun,
And through the window-panes, on floor and panel,
Streamed the red autumn sun.

It glanced on flowing flag and rippling pennon,
And the white sails of ships;
And, from the frowning rampart, the black cannon
Hailed it with feverish lips.

Sandwich and Romney, Hastings, Hythe, and Dover
Were all alert that day,
To see the French war-steamers speeding over,
When the fog cleared away.

Sullen and silent, and like couchant lions,
Their cannon, through the night,
Holding their breath, had watched, in grim defiance,
The sea-coast opposite.

And now they roared at drum-beat from their station
On every citadel;
Each answering each, with morning salutation,
That all was well.

And down the coast, all taking up the burden,
Replied the distant forts,
As if to summon from his sleep the Warden
And Lord of the Cinque Ports.

Him shall no sunshine from the fields of azure,
No drum-beat from the wall,
No morning gun from the black fort's embrazure,
Awaken with its call!

No more, surveying with an eye impartial
The long line of the coast,
Shall the gaunt figure of the old Field-Marshal
Be seen upon his post!

For in the night, unseen, a single warrior,
In sombre harness mailed,
Dreaded of man, and surnamed the Destroyer,
The rampart wall had scaled.

He passed into the chamber of the sleeper,
The dark and silent room,
And as he entered, darker grew, and deeper,
The silence and the gloom.

He did not pause to parley or dissemble,
But smote the Warden hoar;
Ah, what a blow! that made all England tremble
And groan from shore to shore.

Meanwhile, without, the surly cannon waited,
The sun rose bright o'erhead;
Nothing in Nature's aspect intimated
That a great man was dead.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

Here is another little poem by Florence Wilkinson, a writer entering with a charming simplicity into the wondering mind of the perplexed child who would so much like her own way.

GOOD stories always are too short,
The dull ones are too long;
Nice people always go too soon;
There must be something wrong.

I'd like to find a story-book
The best I've ever read,
Which should go on for ever 'n' ever,
At least, till I was dead.

My porridge-bowl is much too big,
The pie-plate is too small;
The fattest cherries hang too high;
It isn't right at all.

I wish the cook would bake a pie
As big as that full moon,
And then a little one besides,
To eat to-morrow noon.

MY NATIVE VALE

Poets often delight in imagining how other people must feel, and in describing, for them, experiences that have never been their own. In this poem, Samuel Rogers, who was a Londoner by birth and life-long residence, but travelled in Italy and wrote about it, tells us how he thinks an Italian must feel about the valley in which he was born. The scenes brought before us are all Italian.

DEAR is my little native vale,
The ring-dove builds and murmurs there;
Close by my cot she tells her tale
To every passing villager.
The squirrel leaps from tree to tree
And shells his nuts at liberty.

In orange-groves and myrtle-bow'rs,
That breathe a gale of fragrance round,
I charm the fairy-footed hours
With my loved lute's romantic sound;
Or crowns of living laurel weave
For those that win the race at eve.

The shepherd's horn at break of day,
The ballet danced in twilight glade,
The canzonet and roundelay
Sung in the silent green-wood shade;
These simple joys, that never fail,
Shall bind me to my native vale.

WHITHER, MIDST FALLING DEW,

Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way ?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

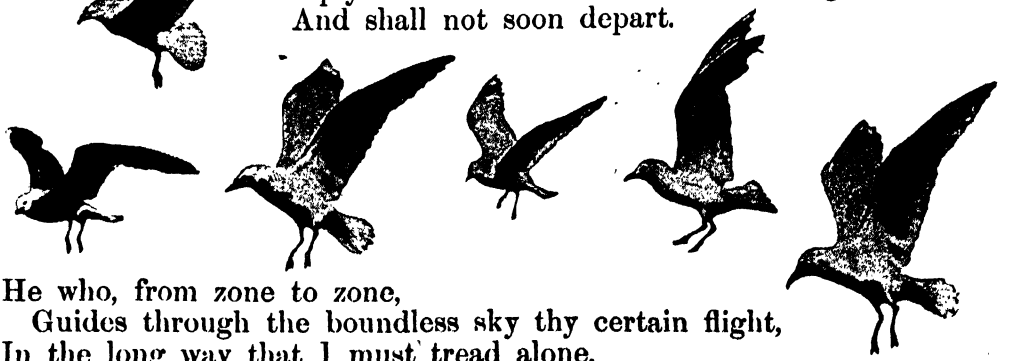
Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean-side ?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end ;
Soon shalt thou find a summer house, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows : reeds shall bend
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form ; yet, on my heart,
Deeply has sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.



He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

William Cullen Bryant

THE EXILE

This pretty lament by a Persian maid, exiled in Bagdad and longing for her Persian home, is translated from the Persian by Emerson. The way from Bagdad to Kerman would be down the River Tigris, if she escaped, and Farsistan is the pleasant Persian province at which she would first arrive. The wistfulness in the verses makes us wish we knew how the lady fared at last.

In Farsistan the violet spreads
Its leaves to the rival sky ;
I ask how far is the Tigris flood,
And the vine that grows thereby ?

Except the amber morning wind,
Not one salutes me here ;
There is no lover in all Bagdad
To offer the exile cheer.

I know that thou, O morning wind !
O'er Kernan's meadow blowest,
And thou, heart-warming nightingale !
My father's orchard knowest.

The merchant hath stuffs of price,
And gems from the sea-washed strand,
And princes offer me grace
To stay in the Syrian land.

But what is gold for but for gifts ?
And dark without love is the day ;
And all that I see in Bagdad
Is the Tigris to float me away.

EACH AND ALL

"We are all parts of a stupendous whole," wrote one of our poets, and in the lines on "Each and All" Emerson shows that although we may seem aloof from each other, we are not really so, but that each in his own place is playing a part—though, perhaps, unrealised by himself—in the great harmonious drama of life. That drama demands of us that we shall see all things in their natural setting, otherwise we can never hope to judge them aright.

Little thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown
Of thee from the hill-top looking down ;
The heifer that lows in the upland farm,
Far heard, lows not thine ear to charm ;
The sexton tolling his bell at noon,
Deems not that the great Napoleon
Stops his horse, and lists with delight,
Whilst his files sweep round yon Alpine height ;
Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbour's creed has lent.
All are needed by each one ;
Nothing is fair or good alone.

I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,
Singing at dawn on the alder bough ;
I brought him home, in his nest, at even ;
He sings the song, but it cheers not now,
For I did not bring home the river and sky ;—
He sang to my ear—they sang to my eye.
The delicate shells lay on the shore ;
The bubbles of the latest wave
Fresh pearls to their enamel gave,
And the bellowing of the savage sea
Greeted their safe escape to me.
I wiped away the weeds and foam,
I fetched my sea-born treasures home ;
But the poor, unsightly, noisome things
Had left their beauty on the shore
With the sun and the sand and the wild uproar.

The lover watched his graceful maid,
As 'mid the virgin train she strayed,
Nor knew her beauty's best attire
Was woven still by the snow-white choir.
At last she came to his hermitage,
Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage—
The gay enchantment was undone,
A gentle wife, but fairy none.

Then I said, " I covet truth ;
Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat ;
I leave it behind with the games of youth."
As I spoke, beneath my feet
The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath,
Running over the club-moss burrs ;
I inhaled the violet's breath ;
Around me stood the oaks and firs ;
Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground ;
Over me soared the eternal sky,
Full of light and of deity ;
Again I saw, again I heard,
The rolling river, the morning bird—
Beauty through my senses stole ;
I yielded myself to the perfect whole.

THE BOHEMIAN HYMN

This is how Emerson expressed the truly reverent thought that the Almighty Power creating, upholding, and developing the world is so majestic and illimitable that we can never hope, with our narrow minds, to comprehend it, but can only catch glimpses of its presence even in our religion. "Bohemian" in the title means a wanderer.

In many forms we try
To utter God's infinity,
But the boundless hath no form,
And the Universal Friend
Doth as far trascend
An angel as a worm.

The great Idea baffles wit,
Language falters under it,
It leaves the learned in the lurch ;
Nor art, nor power, nor toil can find
The measure of the eternal Mind,
Nor hymn, nor prayer, nor church.

THE UNCONQUERABLE

The lines below were prefixed by Emerson to an essay on worship, but that is not their subject. It is rather a picture of a Divine energy displayed in some men who feel always that they are working for noble purposes that cannot really know defeat. There have been many such men, who, "refreshed by blows," have helped the world along the pathway of progress. How much of their spirit is from God, who can say? Are they not inspired by Him?

This is he who, felled by foes,
Sprung harmless up, refreshed by blows ;
He to captivity was sold,
But him no prison-bars would hold ;
Though they sealed him in a rock,
Mountain chains he can unlock ;
Thrown to lions for their meat,
The crouching lion kissed his feet ;
Bound to the stake, no flames appalled,
But arched o'er him an honouring vault.

This is he men miscall Fate,
Threading dark ways, arriving late,
But ever coming in time to crown
The truth, and hurl wrong-doers down.
He is the oldest and best known,
More near than aught thou call'st thy own,
Yet, greeted in another's eyes,
Disconcerts with glad surprise.

This is Jove, who, deaf to prayers,
Floods with blessings unawares.
Draw, if thou canst, the mystic line,
Severing rightly his from thine,
Which is human, which divine.

DISTANCE LENDS ENCHANTMENT

We do not know who is the writer of these rather sad verses. That they are entirely true in their suggestions we do not admit. The sails of the far-off ship look whiter than the sails of the ship in the harbour, and the cloud on the mountain is only resplendent when seen at a distance—these are facts that any eyes can test; but the idea behind these pictures is that our aims in life, which look fine far off, will disappoint us if we reach them; and that idea is not true when we seek good things without exaggerated hope.

THE sails we see on the ocean
Are as white as white can be;
But never a one in the harbour
Is as white as the sails at sea.

And the clouds that crown the mountain
With purple and gold delight
Turn to cold grey mist and vapour
Ere ever we reach the height.

O distance, thou dear enchanter,
Still hold in thy magic veil
The glory of far-off mountains
The gleam of the far-off sail.

Hide in thy robes of splendour,
O mountain, cold and grey;
O sail, in thy snowy whiteness,
Come not into port, I pray!

HOW MANY TIMES?

Thomas Lovell Beddoes was a writer of the first half of the nineteenth century, which was a time of sentiment in song. The two comparisons worked up into these verses are what critics call "conceits." Wishing to say how much he loves his lady, the poet compares his thoughts of her with all the thoughts of all the people in all the nights and days of a year, or all the drops that glisten in the starlight. These comparisons are built up with a fanciful care, but they lack the simple outburst of feeling of the true song, as in Burns' "O, my love is like a red, red rose!"

HOW many times do I love thee, dear?
Tell me how many thoughts there be
In the atmosphere
Of a new-fallen year,
Whose white and sable hours appear
The latest flake of Eternity;
So many times do I love thee, dear.

How many times do I love, again?
Tell me how many beads there are
In a silver chain
Of the evening rain,
Unravell'd from the tumbling main,
And threading the eye of a yellow star;
So many times do I love, again.

THE BUTTERFLY'S FUNERAL

This poem is a sequel to the "Butterfly's Ball and Grasshopper's Feast," by William Roscoe. The poem is filled with pretty fancies about small creatures which every boy and girl should know. It tells of a comradeship between the lower animals, and wherever they do not prey on each other there is such a comradeship.

OH ye! who so lately were blithesome and gay,
At the Butterfly's banquet carousing away;
Your feasts and your revels of pleasure are fled,
For the chief of the banquet, the Butterfly's dead!

No longer the Flies and the Emmets advance,
To join with their friends in the Grasshopper's dance,
For see his fine form o'er the favourite bend,
And the Grasshopper mourns for the loss of his friend.

And hark to the funeral dirge of the Bee,
And the Beetle, who follows as solemn as he!
And see, where so mournful the green rushes wave,
The Mole is preparing the Butterfly's grave.

The Dormouse attended, but cold and forlorn,
And the Gnat slowly winded his shrill little horn;
And the Moth, being grieved at the loss of a sister,
Bent over her body and silently kissed her.

The corpse was embalmed at the set of the sun,
And enclosed in a case which the Silkworm had spun;
By the help of the Hornet the coffin was laid
On a bier out of myrtle and jessamine made.

In weepers and scarfs came the Butterflies all,
And six of their number supported the pall;
And the Spider came there in his mourning so black,
But the fire of the Glow-worm soon frightened him back.

The Grub left his nut-shell to join the sad throng,
And slowly led with him the Bookworm along,
Who wept for his neighbour's unfortunate doom,
And wrote these few lines, to be placed on his tomb:

EPITAPH

At this solemn spot, where the green rushes wave,
In sadness we bent o'er the Butterfly's grave:
'Twas here the last tribute to beauty we paid,
As we wept o'er the mound where her ashes are laid.

And here shall the daisy and violet blow,
And the lily discover her bosom of snow;
While under the leaves, in the evenings of spring,
Still mourning his friend, shall the Grasshopper sing.

THE LAST ROSE OF SUMMER

Thomas Moore, the Irish poet, was a musician who could sing a song in a charming way, and knew exactly how to write for singing. His "Irish Melodies" were written to Irish airs—that is, they were words written to music instead of the music being written to suit the words. Of all the songs so written none has been as popular as this dreamily sentimental "Last Rose of Summer." The music, differently accented, serves for "The Bells of Shandon," another famous Irish song.

'TIS the last rose of summer
Left blooming alone;
All her lovely companions
Are faded and gone;
No flower of her kindred,
No rose-bud is nigh,
To reflect back her blushes,
Or give sigh for sigh.

I'll not leave thee, thou lone one
To pine on the stem;
Since the lovely are sleeping,
Go sleep thou with them.
Thus kindly I scatter
Thy leaves o'er the bed
Where thy mates of the garden
Lie scentless and dead.

So soon may I follow,
When friendships decay,
And from Love's shining circle
The gems drop away.
When true heart lie withered,
And fond ones are flown,
O! who would inhabit
This bleak world alone?

SEVEN TIMES ONE

Jean Ingelow, who was born in 1820, at Boston, Lincolnshire, and died in London, July 20, 1897, had charming gifts of melody and sentiment that placed her among the most popular of poetesses. She wrote delightfully about childhood, including her own earliest recollections. Her power of interpreting children is shown in these lovely birthday verses, which express the pride and the fancies of a seven-year-old. Miss Ingelow's poems and stories are published by Messrs. Longman & Co.

THERE'S no dew left on the daisies and clover,
  There's no rain left in the heaven;
I've said my "seven times" over and over,
  Seven times one are seven.

I am old, so old, I can write a letter;
  My birthday lessons are done;
The lambs play always, they know no better—
  They are only one times one.

O moon! in the night I have seen you sailing
  And shining so round and low;
You were bright, ah, bright! but your light is failing—
  You are nothing now but a bow.

You moon, have you done something wrong in heaven
  That God has hidden your face?
I hope, if you have, you will soon be forgiven,
  And shine again in your place.

O velvet bee, you're a dusty fellow,
  You've powdered your legs with gold!
O brave marsh marybuds, rich and yellow,
  Give me your money to hold.

O columbine, open your golden wrapper,
  Where two twin turtle-doves dwell;
O cuckoo-pint, toll me the purple clapper
  That hangs in your clear green bell.

And show me your nest with the young ones in it;
  I will not steal them away;
I am old, you may trust me, linnet, linnet—
  I am seven times one to-day.

ADVERTISEMENT OF A LOST DAY

Mrs. Sigourney wrote in American publications, during the first half of the last century, an immense number of "Moral Pieces." This is one of the best of them. The warning not to waste time is needed by all of us; but to decide when time is being wasted is not so easy as Mrs. Sigourney thought it was in her somewhat narrow-minded times. Wisely-used rest and pleasure, for example, may be more fruitful than the busiest effort expended on ill-chosen tasks.

LOST! lost! lost!
  A gem of countless price,
Cut from the living rock,
  And graved in Paradise.
Set round with three times eight
  Large diamonds, clear and bright,
And each with sixty smaller ones,
  All changeful as the light.

Lost—where the thoughtless throng
  In fashion's mazes wind,
Where trilleth folly's song,
  Leaving a sting behind;
Yet to my hand 'twas given
  A golden harp to buy,
Such as the white-robed choir attune
  To deathless minstrelsy.

Lost! lost! lost!
  I feel all search is vain;
That gem of countless cost
  Can ne'er be mine again.
I offer no reward,
  For till these heart-strings sever,
I know that Heaven-entrusted gift
  Is reft away for ever.

But when the sea and land
  Like burning scroll have fled,
I'll see it in His hand
  Who judgeth quick and dead;
And when of scathe and loss
  That man can ne'er repair,
The dread inquiry meets my soul,
  What shall it answer there?

MRS. LOFTY AND I

These lines, by an unknown author, contain a pleasing picture of love and contentment under simple family conditions; but it must not lead us to suppose that the rich are necessarily less loving or less domestic than the poor. The happy mother and wife is often found, and sometimes is not found, in every rank. In these quaint lines the rich woman is pictured as poor in tenderness for the sake of dramatic contrast.

MRS. LOFTY keeps a carriage,
  So do I;
She has dapple greys to draw it,
  None have I;
She's no prouder with her coachman
  Than am I
With my blue-eyed laughing baby,
  Trundling by;
I hide his face lest she should see
The cherub boy, and envy me.

Her fine husband has white fingers,
  Mine has not;
He could give his bride a palace,
  Mine a cot;
Hers comes home beneath the starlight,
  Ne'er cares she;
Mine comes in the purple twilight,
  Kisses me,
And prays that He who turns life's sands
Will hold His loved ones in His hands

Mrs. Lofty has her jewels,
  So have I;
She wears hers upon her bosom,
  Inside I;
She will leave hers at Death's portal,
  By-and-by;
I shall bear my treasure with me
  When I die;
For I have love and she has gold;
She counts her wealth—mine can't be told.

She has those who love her station,
  None have I;
But I've one true heart beside me—
  Glad am I;
I'd not change it for a kingdom,
  No, not I;
God will weigh it in His balance,
  By-and-by;
And the difference define
'Twixt Mrs. Lofty's wealth and mine.

RING OUT THE OLD, RING IN THE NEW

RING OUT THE FALSE, RING IN THE TRUE

WOODMAN, SPARE THAT TREE!

Woodman, spare that tree! Touch not a single bough!
In youth it sheltered me, and I'll protect it now.
'Twas my forefather's hand that placed it near his cot;
There, woodman, let it stand; thy axe shall harm it not!

That old familiar tree, whose glory and renown
Are spread o'er land and sea. And wouldst thou hack it down?
Woodman, forbear thy stroke! Cut not its earth-bound ties;
O, spare that aged oak, now towering to the skies.

When but an idle boy I sought its grateful shade;
In all their gushing joy, here, too, my sisters played.
My mother kissed me here; my father pressed my hand—
Forgive the foolish tear; but let that old oak stand.

My heart-strings round thee cling, close as thy bark, old friend;
Here shall the wild bird sing, and still thy branches bend.
Old tree, the storm still brave! And, woodman, leave the spot;
While I've a hand to save, thy axe shall harm it not.

The Story of this famous poem. It is always peculiarly satisfying to know the circumstances under which any poem that abounds with tender sentiment has been written, and, happily, we have been told by the author how he came to write this homely song of world-wide popularity.

George P. Morris, an American writer, was riding with an old friend, who turned aside down a country lane to look once more at a familiar tree that had been planted by his grandfather. Under its boughs he had spent many happy hours of his boyhood. But this time they found a man just sharpening his axe to cut the tree down. The friend of the tree, much distressed, remonstrated earnestly.

"You are not going to cut that tree down, surely?" he said to the woodcutter.

"Yes, but I am, though," said the man.

"What for?" inquired the old gentleman, in a voice choked with emotion.

"What for? I like that! Well, I will tell you. I want the tree for firewood."

"What is the tree worth to you for firewood?" the gentleman asked, and then, finding that the tree would be worth about two pounds, he paid that amount to the woodman, who signed an agreement never to cut the tree down. On reaching home Mr. Morris expressed in this famous song the spirit of his friend's appeal, and the feeling of the scene has moved thousands of kindly hearts in every land.

REGULUS

The subject of this poem was one of the most popular among Latin poets, because it illustrated the Roman spirit so exactly. Regulus, one of the Roman consuls, long made war on Carthage successfully, but in the end was defeated, captured, and imprisoned. When the people of Carthage saw final defeat was a possibility, they set Regulus free to negotiate terms with Rome, under promise that he would return, unless an exchange of prisoners were arranged. He advised the Romans not to make peace, and not to exchange prisoners. They took his advice, and he returned to Carthage, where he was slain by torture. The writer of this poetical version, Thomas Dale, was a vicar of St. Pancras, in London.

URGE me no more—your prayers are vain,
And even the tears ye shed;
When Regulus can lead again
The bands that once he led;
When he can raise your legions slain
On swarthy Lybia's fatal plain
To vengeance from the dead;
Then will he seek once more a home,
And lift a freeman's voice in Rome!

Accursed moment! when I woke
From faintness all but death,
And felt the coward conqueror's yoke
Like venomed serpents wreathe
Round every limb!—If lip and eye
Betrayed no sign of agony,
Inly I cursed my breath!—
Wherefore, of all that fought, was I
The only wretch who could not die?

To darkness and to chains consigned,
The captive's blighting doom,
I recked not. Could they chain the mind,
Or plunge the soul in gloom?
And there they left me, dark and lone,
Till darkness had familiar grown;
Then from that living tomb
They led me forth—I thought to die—
Oh! in that thought was ecstasy.

But no—kind Heaven had yet in store
For me, a conquered slave,
A joy I thought to feel no more—
Or feel but in my grave.
They deemed perchance my haughtier mood
Was quelled by chains and solitude;
That he who once was brave—
Was I not brave?—had now become
Estranged from honour as from Rome!

They bade me to my country bear
The offers these have borne;
They would have trained my lips to swear,
Which never yet have sworn!
Silent their base commands I heard;
At length, I pledged a Roman's word
Unshrinking to return.
I go, prepared to meet the worst,
But I shall gall proud Carthage first.

They sue for peace—I bid you spurn
The gilded bait they bear!
I bid you still, with aspect stern,
War, ceaseless war, declare!
Fools that they were, could not mine eye,
Through their dissembled calmness, spy
The struggles of despair?
Else had they sent this wasted frame,
To bribe you to your country's shame?

Your land—I must not call it mine;
No country has the slave;
His father's name he must resign,
And even his father's grave;
But this not now—beneath her lies
Proud Carthage and her destinies:
Her empire o'er the wave
Is yours; she knows it well—and you
Shall know, and make her feel it, too!

Ay, bend your brows, ye Ministers
Of coward hearts, on me!
Ye know no longer it is hers,
The empire of the sea;
Ye know her fleets are far and few,
Her bands a mercenary crew;
And Rome, the bold and free,
Shall trample on her prostrate towers,
Despite your weak and wasted powers.

One path alone remains for me;
My vows were heard on high.
Thy triumphs, Rome, I shall not see,
For I return to die.
Then tell not me of hope or life;
I have in Rome no chaste, fond wife;
No smiling progeny.
One word concentres for the slave—
Wife, children, country, *all*—THE GRAVE!

THE YEAR

The little round of the year pictured in carefully chosen sights is by Coventry Patmore, a poet of Victorian days. Note the vividness of the one-line picture of the bright winter stars.

THE crocus, while the days are dark,
Unfolds its saffron sheen;
At April's touch the crudest bark
Discovers gems of green.

Then sleep the seasons, full of might,
While slowly swells the pod
And rounds the peach, and in the night
The mushroom bursts the sod.

The winter falls; the frozen rut
Is bound with silver bars;
The snowdrift heaps against the hut,
And night is pierced with stars.

A BALLAD OF FATHER CHRISTMAS

"CHRISTUS NATUS" pealed the bells,
"GLORIA" rang the steeple,
"PAX" boomed from ev'ry belfry tow'r,
Peace to all Christian people.

Old Father Christmas roused himself,
He trimmed his flowing beard of white,
He girt round him his robe of red,
And grasped his staff of holly tight.

He filled his wallet full of gifts,
And, starting from his house of snow,
Quoth, "England first I wish to seek,
To London Town I first will go."

But as he came near London Town,
Lo! scarce a house could there be seen;
Black dirt and darkness filled the air,
And made a barrier between.

When he did reach the town at last,
So dark and dismal was the sky,
It seemed that Man had made this screen
Lest God should see him from on high.

And as he passed along the streets,
He sometimes heard a weary chant,
Amid the tramp of weary feet,
"Oh, give us work!"—the hymn of want.

Sometimes in answer to his knock
And friendly word of greeting there,
"Our children starve," the mother said;
"Oh, give us bread, lest we despair!"

And once where livelier sounds were heard,
He shuddered at a sound of strife,
For Christian sought with Christian hand
To take a fellow-Christian's life.

Then some he greeted turned and fled,
And some but answered him with scorn;
And one, who seemed an angel, stood
And cursed the day that Christ was born.

Old Father Christmas felt his heart
Grow cold that such dread things should be.
"I must away from London Town,"
Quoth he; "this is no place for me."

But as he sped his woeful way
He spied a light behind a pane,
And said, "At least I'll try once more,
Lest I should never smile again."

There in a room a little child,
With golden curls and blue eyes wide,
Was sitting in a cosy cot,
And called the old man to its side.

"O Father K'ismas, here you are!
It then was true, as mummy said,
That you would come this night and see
Us little boys and girls in bed.

"If we were good and said our prayers,
And asked no questions; for, you see,
This morning will be Christmas Day,
When Christ was born a child like me.

"But mummy says that there are some
Poor little children far away
Whom Father K'ismas never sees,
Not even on a Christmas Day.

"For some are sick, an' cannot play
Like me, and have no toys, and no
Kind friends and homes; and Nanny says
The Queen has cried to see them so.

"Now, I have lots of dolls and toys,
And heaps of lovely sweets and food,
And yet I often ask for more,
And when I'm hungry I'm not good.

"O Father K'ismas, can't you go
And see those little children, too?
I'm not allowed to walk alone,
Or else I'd like to go with you.

"And I am tired and sleepy now.
Until you came I could not bear
To lie so warm and snug in bed,
While they are cold and hungry there.

"So kiss me, Father K'ismas, please,
And make me a good child to-day;
And when I say my prayers in church,
For you and them I'll surely pray."

The old man leant across the cot,
And kissed the child's lips as it slept;
And at their touch the pent-up grief
No more within him could be kept.

'Twas Pity brought our God from high,
To be a little child on earth!
The lowly manger Pity chose
To give the infant Saviour birth.

Old Father Christmas started forth
Once more to visit London Town,
And from his eyes came forth a flood
Of tears of pity flowing down.

And as the tears fell down to earth,
They rent the gloomy veil in twain,
And wiped away the grime and murk
Until the sun shone through again.

And as the sun's rays reached the town
He heard the hymn of sorrow cease;
He heard the children laugh again,
And love went hand in hand with peace.

And men rejoiced to hear the news
That Father Christmas told that morn,
And happy voices joined in praise
To bless the day that Christ was born.

"CHRISTUS NATUS" pealed the bells,
"GLORIA" rang the steeple,
"PAX" boomed from ev'ry belfry tow'r,
Peace to all Christian people.

A LEGEND OF BREGENZ

Tyrol is a land surrounded by mountains, one of which is called the Arlberg; but a part of Tyrol extends over the mountains into the valley of the Upper Rhine, and is called Vorarlberg, which means "beyond the Arlberg." This outlying portion, of which Bregenz is the capital, was specially liable to attack. Though Switzerland and Tyrol are adjoining and very similar mountain lands, they have been divided in feeling for many centuries; for Tyrol and Vorarlberg have been faithful to Austria, of which they form a part, while the Swiss are proud of being free from Austria. Between the Swiss and the Tyrolese there has often been ill-feeling that has burst into the flame of war. It was so in 1408, when the Swiss made the unsuccessful attack on Bregenz, of which the brave maiden of this poem by Adelaide A. Procter gave her town timely warning.

GIRT round with rugged mountains
The fair Lake Constance lies;
In her blue heart reflected
Shine back the starry skies;
And, watching each white cloudlet
Float silently and slow,
You think a piece of heaven
Lies on our earth below!

Midnight is there: and Silence,
Enthroned in heaven, looks down
Upon her own calm mirror,
Upon a sleeping town:
For Bregenz, that quaint city
Upon the Tyrol shore,
Has stood above Lake Constance
A thousand years and more.

Her battlements and towers,
From off their rocky steep,
Have cast their trembling shadow
For ages on the deep:
Mountain and lake and valley
A sacred legend know,
Of how the town was saved one night
Three hundred years ago.

For from her home and kindred
A Tyrol maid had fled,
To serve in the Swiss valleys,
And toil for daily bread;
And every year that fleeted
So silently and fast
Seemed to bear farther from her
The memory of the Past.

And so she dwelt; the valley
More peaceful year by year;
When suddenly strange portents
Of some great deed seemed near.
The golden corn was bending
Upon its fragile stalk,
While farmers, heedless of their fields,
Paced up and down in talk.

One day, out in the meadow
With strangers from the town,
Some secret plan discussing,
The men walked up and down,
Yet now and then seemed watching,
A strange, uncertain gleam,
That looked like lances 'mid the trees
That stood below the stream.

At eve they all assembled,
Then care and doubt were fled;
With jovial laugh they feasted;
The board was nobly spread.
The elder of the village
Rose up, his glass in hand,
And cried, "We drink the downfall
Of an accursed land!

"The night is growing darker,
Ere one more day is flown,
Bregenz, our foeman's stronghold,
Bregenz shall be our own!"
The women shrank in terror
(Yet Pride, too, had her part),
But one poor Tyrol maiden
Felt death within her heart.

Before her stood fair Bregenz;
Once more her towers arose;
What were the friends beside her?
Only her country's foes!
The faces of her kinsfolk,
The days of childhood flown,
The echoes of her mountains,
Reclaimed her as their own!

Nothing she heard around her
(Though shouts rang forth again);
Gone were the green Swiss valleys,
The pastures, and the plain;
Before her eyes one vision,
And in her heart one cry,
That said, "Go forth, save Bregenz,
And then, if need be, die!"

With trembling haste and breathless,
With noiseless step she sped;
Horses and weary cattle
Were standing in the shed;
She loosed the strong white charger
That fed from out her hand,
She mounted, and she turned his head
Towards her native land.

"Faster!" she cries, "oh, faster!"
Eleven the church-bells chime;
"Oh, God," she cries, "help Bregenz,
And bring me there in time!"
But louder than bells ringing,
Or lowing of the kine,
Grows nearer in the midnight
The rushing of the Rhine.

Shall not the roaring waters
Their headlong gallop check?
The steed draws back in terror,
She leans upon his neck

To watch the flowing darkness ;
The bank is high and steep ;
One pause—he staggers forward,
And plunges in the deep.

She strives to pierce the blackness,
And looser throws the rein ;
Her steed must breast the waters
That dash above his mane.
How gallantly, how nobly,
He struggles through the foam!
And see—in the far distance
Shine out the lights of home !

Up the steep banks he bears her,
And now they rush again
Towards the heights of Bregenz
That tower above the plain.
They reach the gate of Bregenz
Just as the midnight rings,
And out come serf and soldier
To meet the news she brings.

Bregenz is saved ! Ere daylight
Her battlements are manned ;
Defiance greets the army
That marches on the land.
And if to deeds heroic
Should endless fame be paid,
Bregenz does well to honour
The noble Tyrol maid.

Three hundred years are vanished,
And yet upon the hill
An old stone gateway rises
To do her honour still.
And there, when Bregenz women
Sit spinning in the shade,
They see in quaint old carving
The Charger and the Maid.

And when, to guard old Bregenz,
By gateway, street, and tower,
The warder paces all night long,
And calls each passing hour,
" Nine," " ten," " eleven," he cries aloud,
And then (O crown of fame !),
When midnight pauses in the skies,
He calls the maiden's name !

THE ENEMIES

A poetical setting for the sad fact that the small worries of life may overwhelm its nobler impulses. The writer, Mrs. Clement Shorter, is a daughter of the late Prof. Sigerson, and as Dora Sigerson was known as a graceful poet before her marriage.

I COULD have sung as sweet as any lark
Who in unfettered skies doth find him blest,
And sings to leaning angels prayer and praise,
For in God's garden the most lowly nest.
But came the cares—a grey and stinging throng
Of lilliputian foes, whose thrust and dart
Did blind my eyes and hush my song in tears ;
Their brushing wings flung poison to my heart.

I could have fought, in truth, a goodly fight,
Braved death, nor feared defeat before one foe ;
Against these puny cares I strive in vain,
They sting my soul unto its overthrow.

TO THE FIRST CUCKOO

Everyone has felt the sentiment that is musically expressed in these verses, for the cuckoo's voice has a quality that causes it to haunt the memory. The writer, J. A. Langford, was a Birmingham journalist who took an active part inthe public life of the city in the early days of popular education.

THE flowers were blooming fresh and fair,
The air was sweet and still ;
A sense of joy in all things beamed
From woodland, dale, and hill.
On every spray had fairies hung
Their sparkling lamps of dew,
When first across the meadows rung
Thy welcome voice, cuckoo :
" Cuckoo ! cuckoo ! " No blither sound
In all the songs of birds is found.

The early sun was mildly bright,
The woods were sleeping still ;
And scarce a chirp came from the trees,
Or murmur from the rill.
It was as Nature paused to hear
Thy pleasant song again,
And in her expectation hushed
Each heart-rejoicing strain :
" Cuckoo ! cuckoo ! " No blither sound
In all the songs of birds is found.

And as thy voice rang through the air,
All Nature fairer grew ;
The primrose had a brighter tint,
The violet deeper blue ;
The cowslip hung a richer bloom,
More sweetly breathed the may,
And greener seemed the very grass
In listening to thy lay :
" Cuckoo ! cuckoo ! " No blither sound
In all the songs of birds is found.

And, wandering through the air, thy song
Was now afar, now near—
A song that, in its airiness,
Is witchery to hear ;
And never is the spring complete
Without thy changeless voice,
And in thy coming to our woods,
O cuckoo, all rejoice.
" Cuckoo ! cuckoo ! " No blither sound
In all the songs of birds is found.

TO MEADOWS

This picture of the meadows in winter compared with the meadows as scenes of beauty and life and gaiety in spring and summer is by Robert Herrick. He was one of the first English poets who wrote largely about Nature and country life.

YE have been fresh and green,
Ye have been filled with flowers;
And ye the walks have been
Where maids have spent their hours.

Ye have beheld how they
With wicked arks did come,
To kiss and bear away
The richer cowslips home.

You've heard them sweetly sing,
And seen them in a round;
Each virgin, like a spring,
With honeysuckles crowned.

But now we see none here,
Whose silvery feet did tread,
And with dishevelled hair
Adorned this smoother mead.

Like unthrifts, having spent
Your stock and needy grown,
You're left here to lament
Your poor estates alone.

DEDICATION

This poem, by Dana Burnet, reads as if it were an introduction to a new book of poems. The continuity of the truest song is suggested with singular beauty in the last stanza.

A LITTLE while to pass within the throng,
To dream, to toil, to weep, to love, to die—
And then the silence, and the closing Song,
And no more of the riddle that was I!

My Book shall stand upon the quiet shelf
Like some bright banner that the Fates have furled.
My dust, that was the symbol of my Self,
Shall scatter to the distance of the world.

Yet who in this brief passing finds despair
Denies the certain God within his breast.
Life has a crown for every man to wear,
Tho' 'tis a thing of moments at the best.

A thing of moments, scattered preciously
Across the level causeway of the years!
And yet what sudden Light may I not see!
What Vision making glory of my tears!

Mayhap if I sing bravely, true, and well,
My song shall strike God's universal rhyme,
And, like the echoes of a sweet, stilled bell,
Live in the heart of Heaven after Time.

THE FISHER'S BOY

The idea that where the sea meets the land it is more romantic and fuller of meaning than mid-ocean is worked out very skilfully in these sixteen lines by Thoreau, the American writer, who is only known to many of us as a prose essayist.

MY life is like a stroll upon the beach;
As near the ocean's edge as I can go;
My tardy steps its waves sometimes o'erreach,
Sometimes I stay to let them overflow.

My sole employment is, and scrupulous care,
To place my gains beyond the reach of tides,
Each smoother pebble, and each shell more rare,
Which Ocean kindly to my hand confides.

I have but few companions on the shore;
They scorn the strand who sail upon the sea;
Yet oft I think the ocean they've sailed o'er
Is deeper known upon the strand to me.

The middle sea contains no crimson dulse,
Its deeper waves cast up no pearls to view;
Along the shore my hand is on its pulse,
And I converse with many a shipwrecked crew.

GOLD AND GREY

The poet's "mist of gold" is the brightness that surrounds youth, as it is described in the second verse. The "mist of grey" is the sober colouring that surrounds approaching age. Both are good in their due time. These wise verses are taken from "The Open Air," and are by the Rev. G. M. A. Hewett.

AND so farewell, days of my youth, farewell,
For all I've said or done, that was amiss,
For all I've hurt, for all I've used not well,
I pray Thee, Lord; to pardon me for this.

And for my youth, for hearing, health, and sight,
For nights of wonderment and joyous days,
For sea and streams, for down's and wood's delight,
I give to Thee, Lord of all these, the praise.

And if to any words of mine 'tis given
To lead young spirits where 'tis safe to tread,
That they may strive to love where I have striven,
Lay Thou Thy hands in blessing on their head.

Born in a mist of gold, a mist of grey
Enfolds our footsteps as we creep to rest;
And well for all who at the close of day
Can wonder whether gold or grey were best.

YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN HIM AS HE STOOD

OUR best beloved of all the brave
That ever for freedom fought,
And all his wonders of the wave
For fatherland were wrought!
He was the manner of man to show
How victories may be won;
So swift, you scarcely saw the blow;
You looked—the deed was done.

You should have seen him as he trod
The deck, our joy and pride!
You should have seen him, like a god
Of storm, his war-horse ride!
You should have seen him as he stood
Fighting for his good land,
With all the iron of soul and blood
Turned to a sword in hand.

The Nelson touch his men he taught,
And his great stride to keep;
His faithful fellows round him fought,
Ten thousand heroes deep.
With a red pride of life, and hot
For him, their blood ran free;
They "minded not the showers of shot
No more than peas," said he.

Oh, he could do the deeds that set
Old fighters' hearts afire;
The edge of every spirit whet,
And every arm inspire.
Yet I have seen upon his face
The tears that, as they roll,
Show what a light of saintly grace
May clothe a sailor's soul.

And when our darling went to meet
Trafalgar's Judgment Day,
The people knelt down in the street
To bless him on his way.
He felt the country of his love
Watching him from afar;
It saw him through the battle move;
His heaven was in that star.

Magnificently glorious sight
It was in that great dawn!
Like one vast sapphire flashing light,
The sea, just breathing, shone.
Their ships, fresh painted, stood up tall
And stately; ours were grim
And weatherworn, but one and all
In rare good fighting trim.

Our spirits all were flying light,
And into battle sped,
Straining for it on wings of might,
With feet of springy tread;
The battle-light on every face,
Its fire in every eye,
Our sailor blood at swiftest pace
To catch the victory nigh.

His proudly wasted face, wave-worn,
Was loftily serene;
I felt the brave, bright spirit burn
There, all too plainly seen,
As though the sword this time was drawn
For ever from the sheath,
And when its work today was done,
All would be dark in death.

Mast-high the famous signal ran;
Breathless we caught each word:
"England expects that every man
Will do his duty." Lord,
You should have seen our faces, heard
Us cheering, row on row,
Like men before some furnace stirred
To a fiery fearful glow!

How calm he was! When first he felt
The sharp edge of that fight,
Cabined with God alone he knelt;
The prayer still lay in light
Upon his face, that used to shine
In battle-flash with life,
As though the glorious blood ran wine,
Dancing with that wild strife.

And four hours after he had done
With winds and troubled foam,
The Reaper was borne dead upon
Our load of harvest home.
Not till he knew the old flag flew
Alone on all the deep;
Then said he, "Hardy, is that you?
Kiss me," and fell asleep.

Well, 'twas his chosen death, below
The deck in triumph trod.
'Tis well. A sailor's soul should go
From his good ship to God.
He would have chosen death aboard,
From all the crowns of rest;
And burial with the patriot's sword
Upon the victor's breast.

GERALD MASSEY

THE KING

These lines by Mary E. Coleridge tell how small acts may have enormous influences. The smile of a king may make a hero.

It was but the lightest word of the King,
When he was neither merry nor sad;
It was but a very little thing,
Yet it made his servant glad.
He gave a look as it befell,
Between a smile and a smothered sigh.
Whether he meant it, who can tell?
But the man went out to die.

EPILOGUE

An epilogue is a short, final address spoken at the end of a play. This epilogue was the last word of the profound poet, Robert Browning, ending the last poem of his last book. He asks how the world will think of him when he is dead, and in the two closing verses he tells how he would like to be thought of—as one who never lost faith in the strife for right, and who believes that, after death, he would live and strive again. No poet ever ended his song on a nobler note.

At the midnight, in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, imprisoned—
Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
—Pity me?

Oh, to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel,
—Being—who?

One who never turned his back, but marched breast-forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

No; at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
"Strive and thrive!" cry, "Speed—fight on, fare ever,
There as here!"

A MEMORY

A pretty picture of memory's caprice, by a charming Irish poet, William Allingham, who died a quarter of a century ago.

Four ducks on a pond,
A grass-bank beyond;
A blue sky of spring,
White clouds on the wing:
What a little thing
To remember for years—
To remember with tears!

MY SHARE OF THE WORLD

Both men and women are liable to shape, out of their own minds, round the character of someone of the opposite sex, an image of all that is lovely, and then to worship it. It is so in these unrestrained lines. The writer, Miss Alice Furlong, concentrates into her pleasant fancy her share of the whole world

I am jealous—I am true;
Sick at heart for love of you,
O my share of the world!
I am cold, O, cold as stone,
To all men save you alone.

Seven times slower creeps the day
When your face is far away,
O my share of the world!
Seven times darker falls the night
When you gladden not my sight.

Measureless my joy and pride,
Would you choose me for your bride
O my share of the world!
For your face is my delight,
Morn and even, noon and night.

To the dance and to the wake
Still I go, but for your sake,
O my share of the world!
Just to see your face awhile,
Meet your eyes and win your smile.

And the gay word on my lip
Never lets my secret slip
To my share of the world.
Light my feet trip over the green,
But my heart cries in the keen.

My poor mother sighs anew
When my looks go after you,
O my share of the world!
And my father's brow grows black
When you smile and turn your back.

I would part with wealth and ease,
I would go beyond the seas,
For my share of the world.
I would leave my hearth and home
If he only whispered, "Come!"

Houseless, under sun and dew,
I would beg my bread with you,
O my share of the world!
Houseless, in the snow and storm,
Your heart's love would keep me warm.

I would pray and I would crave
To be with you in the grave,
O my share of the world!
I would go through fire and flood,
I would give up all but God,
For my share of the world.

THE ISLE OF THE LONG AGO

The writer of this sweetly fanciful song of sentiment was Benjamin Franklin Taylor, who died in America late in the 'eighties. Its tender fancy will appeal alike to youth and age.

OH! a wonderful stream is the river Time,
As it runs through the realm of Tears,
With a faultless rhythm and a musical rhyme,
And a broader sweep and a surge sublime,
As it blends with the ocean of Years.

How the winters are drifting, like flakes of snow,
And the summers, like buds between,
And the year in the sheaf—so they come and they go,
On the river's breast, with its ebb and its flow,
As it glides in the shadow and sheen.

There's a magical isle up the river Time,
Where the softest of airs are playing;
There's a cloudless sky and a tropical clime,
And a song as sweet as a vesper chime,
And the Junes with the roses are straying.

And the name of the isle is the Long Ago,
And we bury our treasures there;
There are brows of beauty, and bosoms of snow;
There are heaps of dust—but we loved them so!
There are trinkets, and tresses of hair.

There are fragments of song that nobody sings,
And a part of an infant's prayer;
There's a lute unswept, and a harp without strings;
There are broken vows, and pieces of rings,
And the garments that She used to wear.

There are hands that waved when the fairy shore
By the mirage is lifted in air;
And we sometimes hear, through the turbulent roar,
Sweet voices we heard in the days gone before,
When the wind down the river is fair.

Oh, remembered for aye be the blessed isle,
All the days of our life till night;
When the evening comes with its beautiful smile,
And our eyes are closing to slumber awhile,
May that "Greenwood" of Soul be in sight!

HOLIDAY

Here is a prettily-worded sketch of a joyful, free holiday ramble, by Marion Patton Waldron, who writes for the American magazines. The lilt of the measure suits the subject.

WITH pilgrim staff and scrip,
With poetry and talking,
And laughter on the lip,
My love and I went walking.

"What! Walking?" they all cried;
They seemed to fear disaster.
We roused the countryside
By stepping out the faster.

Where clematis was spread
We came upon new honey;
Thereon we richly fed
For such a little money.

We drank from out a well
Where phlox and yew were growing;
Then, silent for a spell,
Just thought while we were going.

Our limbs in perfect time
Were rhythmically swinging,
Our bodies gave the rime,
Our blood was up and singing.

"And what poor fools are these?"
Cried tourists from the city.
We ran beneath the trees;
They motored by in pity.

We mocked them in our play
And danced a foot-free measure,
But at the end of day
We took a lift with pleasure.

GIBRALTAR

The writer of this sonnet, descriptive of the approach to Gibraltar by a ship that has crossed the Atlantic, is Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, a poet who has distinguished himself chiefly as a writer of sonnets.

SEVEN weeks of sea, and twice seven days of storm
Upon the huge Atlantic, and once more
We ride into still water and the calm
Of a sweet evening, screened by either shore
Of Spain and Barbary. Our toils are o'er,
Our exile is accomplished. Once again
We look on Europe, mistress as of yore
Of the fair earth and of the hearts of men.
Ay, this is the famed rock which Hercules
And Goth and Moor bequeathed us. At this door
England stands sentry. God! to hear the shrill
Sweet treble of her fifes upon the breeze,
And at the summons of the rock-gun's roar
To see her redcoats marching from the hill!

KING CANUTE AND HIS FLATTERERS—By W. M. THACKERAY

The story of King Canute and his courtiers is one of the best-known legends of our early kings, and keeps the name of this Danish conqueror of England familiar even in these later days. Canute reigned over England in the early part of the eleventh century, and though at first a stern and tyrannical leader, he became a wise and just ruler. But the nobles who wished to curry favour with him flattered him so much that, in order to test them, he made pretence of asking whether they believed he had power to make the waves roll back. The tale of how he made these flatterers look foolish lends itself to humorous treatment, and probably no author could have made better use of it than Thackeray does in this poem, of which a few verses are omitted.

KING CANUTE was weary-hearted; he had reigned for years a score,
Battling, struggling, pushing, fighting, killing much and robbing more;
And he thought upon his actions, walking by the wild sea-shore.

'Twixt the Chancellor and Bishop walked the King with steps sedate,
Chamberlains and grooms came after, silver-sticks and goldsticks great,
Chaplains, aides-de-camp, and pages—all the officers of state.

Sliding after like his shadow, pausing when he chose to pause,
If a frown his face contracted, straight the courtiers dropped their jaws;
If to laugh the King was minded, out they burst in loud hee-haws.

But that day a something vexed him, that was clear to old and young:
Thrice his Grace had yawned at table when his favourite gleemen sung,
Once the Queen would have consoled him, but he bade her hold her tongue.

. . . .

"Leading on my fierce companions," cried he, "over storm and brine,
I have fought and I have conquered! Where was glory like to mine?"
Loudly all the courtiers echoed: "Where is glory like to thine?"

"What avail me all my kingdoms? Weary am I now and old;
Those fair sons I have begotten long to see me dead and cold;
Would I were, and quiet buried underneath the silent mould!

"Oh, remorse, the writhing serpent! at my bosom tears and bites;
Horrid, horrid things I look on, though I put out all the lights;
Ghosts of ghastly recollections troop about my bed at nights.

"Cities burning, convents blazing, red with sacrilegious fires;
Mothers weeping, virgins screaming vainly for their slaughtered sires."
"Such a tender conscience," cries the Bishop, "everyone admires.

"But for such unpleasant bygones, cease, my gracious lord, to search,
They're forgotten and forgiven by our Holy Mother Church;
Never, never does she leave her benefactors in the lurch.

"Look! the land is crowned with minsters, which your Grace's bounty raised;
Abbeys filled with holy men, where you and Heaven are daily praised:
You, my lord, to think of dying? on my conscience I'm amazed!"

"Nay, I feel," replied King Canute, "that my end is drawing near."
"Don't say so," exclaimed the courtiers, striving each to squeeze a tear.
"Sure your Grace is strong and lusty, and may live this fifty year."

"Live these fifty years!" the Bishop roared, with actions made to suit.
"Are you mad, my good Lord Keeper, thus to speak of King Canute!
Men have lived a *thousand* years, and sure his Majesty will do't.

. . . .

"With his wondrous skill in healing ne'er a doctor can compete,
Loathsome lepers, if he touch them, start up clean upon their feet;
Surely he could raise the dead up, did his Highness think it meet.

"Did not once the Jewish captain stay the sun upon the hill,
And, the while he slew the foemen, bid the silver moon stand still?
So, no doubt, could gracious Canute, if it were his sacred will."

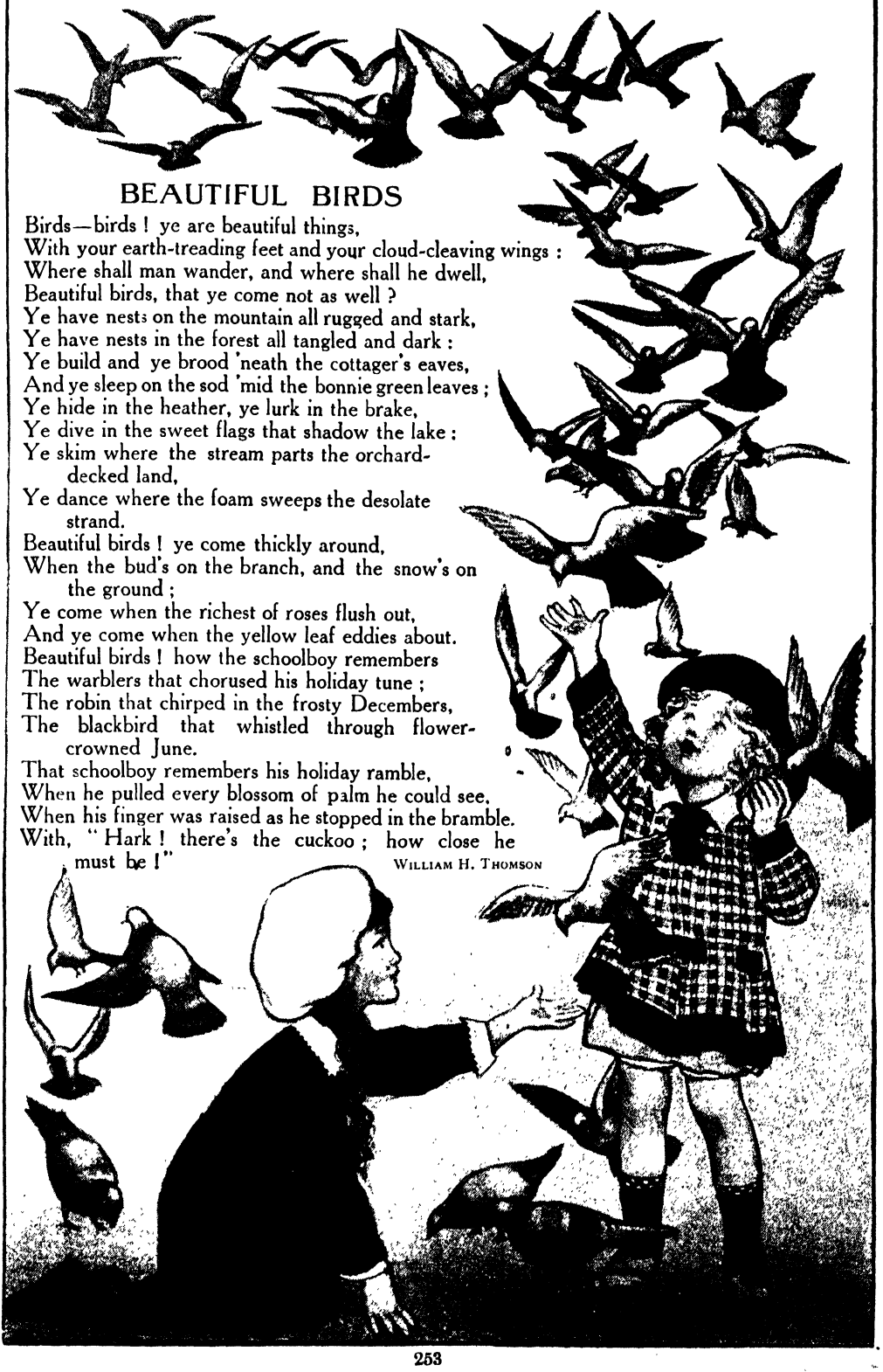
"Might I stay the sun above us, good Sir Bishop?" Canute cried;
"Could I bid the silver moon to pause upon her heavenly ride?
If the moon obeys my orders, sure I can command the tide.

"Will the advancing waves obey me, Bishop, if I make the sign?"
Said the Bishop, bowing lowly, "Land and sea, my lord, are thine."
Canute turned towards the ocean—"Back!" he said, "thou foaming brine.

"From the sacred shore I stand on, I command thee to retreat;
Venture not, thou stormy rebel, to approach thy master's seat:
Ocean, be thou still! I bid thee come not nearer to my feet!"

But the sullen ocean answered with a louder, deeper roar,
And the rapid waves drew nearer, falling sounding on the shore;
Back the Keeper and the Bishop, back the King and courtiers bore.

And he sternly bade them nevermore to kneel to human clay,
But alone to praise and worship That which earth and seas obey:
And his golden crown of empire never wore he from that day.
King Canute is dead and gone: parasites exist alway.



BEAUTIFUL BIRDS

Birds—birds ! ye are beautiful things,
With your earth-treading feet and your cloud-cleaving wings :
Where shall man wander, and where shall he dwell,
Beautiful birds, that ye come not as well ?
Ye have nests on the mountain all rugged and stark,
Ye have nests in the forest all tangled and dark :
Ye build and ye brood 'neath the cottager's eaves,
And ye sleep on the sod 'mid the bonnie green leaves ;
Ye hide in the heather, ye lurk in the brake,
Ye dive in the sweet flags that shadow the lake :
Ye skim where the stream parts the orchard-decked land,
Ye dance where the foam sweeps the desolate strand.
Beautiful birds ! ye come thickly around,
When the bud's on the branch, and the snow's on the ground ;
Ye come when the richest of roses flush out,
And ye come when the yellow leaf eddies about.
Beautiful birds ! how the schoolboy remembers
The warblers that chorused his holiday tune ;
The robin that chirped in the frosty Decembers,
The blackbird that whistled through flower-crowned June.
That schoolboy remembers his holiday ramble,
When he pulled every blossom of palm he could see,
When his finger was raised as he stopped in the bramble.
With, "Hark ! there's the cuckoo ; how close he must be !"

WILLIAM H. THOMSON

THE GIANT

Many of the things we fear are only creations of our own minds, and vanish if we face them with spirit. This idea is vividly presented in these bold verses by Charles Mackay.

THERE came a giant to my door,
A giant fierce and strong,
His step was heavy on the floor,
His arms were ten yards long.
He scowled and frowned; he shook the ground;
I trembled through and through;
At length I looked him in the face,
And cried, "Who cares for you?"

The mighty giant, as I spoke,
Grew pale, and thin, and small;
And through his body, as 'twere smoke,
I saw the sunshine fall.
His blood-red eyes turned blue as skies,
He whispered soft and low.
"Is this," I cried, with glowing pride,
"Is this the mighty foe?".

He sank before my earnest face,
He vanished quite away,
And left no shadow in his place
Between me and the day.
Such giants come to strike us dumb—
But, weak in every part,
They melt before the strong man's eyes,
And fly the true of heart.

THE PEDLAR'S CARAVAN

A charming example of the poems written by William Brighty Rands for children. The word "delf" in the third verse means pottery. The word comes from the town of Delft, in Holland, which is celebrated for its earthenware.

I WISH I lived in a caravan,
With a horse to drive, like a pedlar-man!
Where he comes from nobody knows,
Or where he goes to, but on he goes!

His caravan has windows two,
And a chimney of tin, that the smoke comes through;
He has a wife, with a baby brown,
And they go riding from town to town.

Chairs to mend and delf to sell!
He clashes the basin like a bell;
Tea-trays, baskets, ranged in order,
Plates, with the alphabet round the border.

The roads are brown, and the sea is green,
But his house is just like a bathing-machine;
The world is round, and he can ride,
Rumble, and splash to the other side!

With the pedlar-man I should like to roam,
And write a book when I came home;
All the people would read my book,
Just like the Travels of Captain Cook!

IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

The "rural Pan" that had breathed on Matthew Arnold in his cradle, as he says here, brought an abiding sense of the universal spirit of life in all things—birds and trees, restless man and watchful stars. We feel it in this noble poem.

IN this lone, open glade I lie,
Screened by deep boughs on either hand;
And at its end, to stay the eye,
Those black-crowned, red-boled pine-trees stand!

Birds here make song, each bird has his,
Across the girdling city's hum.
How green under the boughs it is!
How thick the tremulous sheep-cries come!

Sometimes a child will cross the glade
To take his nurse his broken toy;
Sometimes a thrush flit overhead
Deep in her unknown day's employ.

Here at my feet what wonders pass,
What endless, active life is here!
What blowing daisies, fragrant grass!
An air-stirred forest, fresh and clear.

Scarce fresher is the mountain sod,
Where the tired angler lies, stretched out,
And, eased of basket and of rod,
Counts his day's spoil, the spotted trout.

In the huge world, which roars hard by,
Be others happy if they can!
But in my helpless cradle I
Was breathed on by the rural Pan.

I, on men's impious uproar hurled,
Think often, as I hear them rave,
That peace has left the upper world,
And now keeps only in the grave.

Yet here is peace for ever new!
When I who watch them am away,
Still all things in this glade go through
The changes of their quiet day.

Then to their happy rest they pass!
The flowers upclose, the birds are fed;
The night comes down upon the grass,
The child sleeps warmly in his bed.

Calm soul of all things! make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That there abides a peace of thine
Man did not make and cannot mar.

The will to neither strive nor cry,
The power to feel with others give!
Calm, calm me more! nor let me die
Before I have begun to live.

THE DOVE

John Keats, a true but effeminate poet, was born in 1795 and died in 1821. He called this a song. It shows that Keats, who was a Londoner, had little knowledge of birds or real sympathy with them, otherwise, in his egotism, he would not have expected one to act for his sake quite contrary to its nature, which first of all of course demands freedom.

I HAD a dove, and the sweet dove died,
And I have thought it died of grieving.
O, what could it grieve for? Its feet were tied
With a silken thread of my own hand's weaving.
Sweet little red feet, why should you die?
Why should you leave me, sweet bird—why?
You lived alone in the forest tree;
Why, pretty thing, would you not live with me?
I kissed you oft and gave you white peas;
Why not live sweetly, as in the green trees?

A BALLAD

This sketch of an eighteenth-century Englishwoman of polite society was written by William Shenstone, who lived from 1714 to 1763, a period in which artificial pretences abounded. The young lady who would faint if she made a journey, and would die of dulness in the country as the wife of a squire, but is ready to trail away to far-off Scotland as the wife of a lord, is a true picture of the woman of that day who made marriage the chief business of her life.

FROM Lincoln to London rode forth our young squire,
To bring down a wife whom the swains might admire;
But, in spite of whatever the mortal could say,
The goddess objected the length of the way.
To give up the opera, the park, and the ball,
For to view the stag's horns in an old country hall;
To have neither China nor India to see,
Nor a laceman to plague in a morning—not she!
To forsake the dear playhouse, Quin, Garrick, and Clive,
Who by dint of mere humour had kept her alive;
To forego the full box for his lonesome abode—
O heavens! she should faint, she should die on the road!
To forget the gay fashions and gestures of France,
And to leave dear Auguste in the midst of the dance,
And Harlequin, too!—'twas in vain to require it,
And she wondered how folks had the face to desire it.
To be sure she could breathe nowhere else than in town.
Thus she talked like a wit, and he looked like a clown;
But the while honest Harry despaired to succeed,
A coach with a coronet trailed her to Tweed.

SONG OF THE CAPTIVE LARK

John Logan, the writer of this tender appreciation of the nature of that most joyous of birds, the lark, was a Scottish minister. He is one of the writers concerned in an unsettled dispute. At college he had a friend, named Michael Bruce, who wrote poetry which Logan published, after Bruce's death, mixed with his own. Now, there is doubt as to which of the friends wrote some of the poems, particularly the best. There is no doubt, however, that Logan had the better taste, and this poem shows the goodness of his heart.

'TIS merry morn—the sun hath shed
His light upon the mountain head;
The golden dews are sparkling now
On heath and hill, on flower and bough;
And many a happy song is heard
From every gay, rejoicing bird;
But nevermore, alas! shall I
Soar up and sing in yonder sky.

Through these harsh wires I glimpse in vain
The ray that once awoke my strain;
In pain, while cooped, I fret and pine,
My useless wings their strength decline.
Sad is my fate to see the stars
Pass one by one before my bars;
And know, when dawn returneth, I
No more may sing in yonder sky.

Oh, barbarous you, who still can bear
This mournful doom to bid me share—
To see me droop and sadden on,
With wishful eye, from dawn to dawn,
Beating my little breast in woe
'Gainst these dread wires that vex me so,
And my glad passage still deny
To soar and sing in yonder sky.

Oh, let me fly—fly up once more,
How would my wing delighted soar!
What rapture would my song declare,
Poured out upon the sunny air!
Oh, let me hence depart! In vain
I try to breathe one gladsome strain;
In this dark den I pine, I die;
Oh, let me fly to yonder sky!

THE GREAT LAW

THAT very law which moulds a tear,
And bids it trickle from its source—
That law preserves the earth a sphere,
And guides the planets in their course.

SAMUEL ROGERS

THE SOLDIER'S PART

Philip Massinger, who wrote this summary of a soldier's duties, was an Elizabethan dramatist who followed Shakespeare. He has grace and wit as a writer, but lacked the strength of the great Elizabethans. Born in 1583, he died in 1639.

If e'er my son
Follow the war, tell him it is a school
Where all the principles tending to honour
Are taught, if truly followed—
To dare boldly
In a fair cause, and for the country's safety,
To run upon the cannon's mouth undaunted;
To obey their leaders, and shun mutinies.
To bear with patience the winter's cold
And summer's scorching heat—
Are the essential parts make up a soldier.

A LITTLE LIFE

This tenderly touched miniature picture of human life came from the pen of the clever author-artist George du Maurier.

A little work, a little play—
To keep us going—and so—
Good-day.

A little warmth, a little light
Of love's bestowing—and so—
Good-night.

A little fun to match the sorrow
Of each day's growing—and so—
Good-morrow.

A little trust that when we die
We reap our sowing—and so—
Good-bye!

REGRET

"Go forward boldly, wasting no time on vain regrets," is the lesson of this delicate poem. The writer is Christina Rossetti, sister of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Here she writes like a painter, for we see the picture she draws as we read.

There is a haunting phantom called Regret,
A shadowy creature robed somewhat like woe,
But fairer in the face, whom all men know
By her sad mien, and eyes for ever wet.

No heart would seek her, but, once having met,
All take her hand, and to and fro
They wander through those paths of long ago,
Those hallowed ways 'twere wiser to forget.

One day she led me to that lost land's gate,
And bade me enter, but I answered "No;
I will pass on with my bold comrade, Fate,
I have no tears to waste on thee; no time.
My strength I hoard for heights to climb;
No friend art thou for souls who would be great."

GOOD COUNSEL

This pretty picture of a country scene that may be observed almost anywhere was painted by John Davidson, a poet who died within the present century, after spending most of his life in towns. "The milky low of cows," of course, is a reference to the mooing of cows asking to be milked.

At early dawn through London you must go
Until you come where long, black hedgerows grow,
With pink buds pearled, and here and there a tree,
And gates and stiles; and watch good country folk;
And scent the spicy smoke
Of withered weeds that burn where gardens be;
And in a ditch perhaps a primrose see.

The rooks shall stalk the plough, larks mount the skies,
Blackbirds and speckled thrushes sing aloud,
Hid in a warm white cloud,
Mantling the thorn, and far away shall rise
The milky low of cows and farmyard cries.

TAKE THY BALANCE

These stanzas from Edmund Spenser, the first great serious English poet, are an echo from the Bible. The greatness of God contrasted with the littleness of man was a favourite theme of prophet and psalmist. Here Spenser gives Hebrew thoughts an English dress. Listen to the long roll of the last line of each verse—the distinctive note of the Spenser stanza.

Whatever thing is done, by Him is done.
Nor any may His mighty will withstand,
Nor any may His sovran power shun,
Nor loose that He hath bound with steadfast band:
In vain, therefore, dost thou now take in hand
To call to count, or weigh His works anew,
Whose counsel's depth thou canst not understand,
Since of things subject to thy daily view
Thou dost not know the causes nor their courses due.

For take thy balance, if thou be so wise,
And weigh the wind that under heaven doth blow
Or weigh the light that in the east doth rise,
Or weigh the thought that from man's mind doth flow;
But if the weight of these thou canst not show,
Weigh but one word that from thy lips doth fall:
For how canst thou those greater secrets know,
That dost not know the least thing of them all?
Ill can he rule the great that cannot reach the small.

THE CAPTIVE OF ALHAMA

The source of the interesting love story told below was Conde's "History of the Arabs in Spain," and the ballad, which appeare l in an early nineteenth century publication, was signed "R," and dated from Woburn Abbey, the seat of the Dukes of Bedford. Probably it was written by Lord John Russell, who in his youth had poetical ambitions. Afterwards he became a great statesman. He died in 1878.

THE Moslem star was on the wane,
Eclipsed the Paynim powers;
And the haughty lord of Christian Spain
Besieged Granada's towers;
Gonsalvo, with a hundred knights
Of Leon's chivalrie,
Well posted on Alhama's heights,
Staid succour from the sea.

One morn a Moorish youth was led
To brave Gonsalvo's tent;
His escort from the field had fled,
And his horse had fall'n, o'erspent;
He hung his head in speechless grief,
As the tear rolled down his cheek,
And scornful looked each mailed chief,
To behold a youth so weak.

"Is it a girl," Gonsalvo cries,
"That in our toils is caught,
That thus it weeps, in woman's guise,
Where its fierce forefathers fought?"
"Nay, hear my tale," exclaimed the youth,
His eye one moment brightening,
"And Allah, if I speak not truth,
Consume me with his lightning!

"From beauteous Malaga I came,
But by no beaten way;
Superb Granada was my aim—
Woe, woe the luckless day!
For had I in my journey sped
To Darro's rushing water,
This morn Zorayda I had wed,
Granada's fairest daughter!

"If pity, then, or love's sweet power,
E'er touched thy gallant breast,
But grant me freedom for an hour—
To the oar I give the rest;
These few bright moments yield in grace,
My mournful fate to tell,
To see once more Zorayda's face,
And take my long farewell!"

Gonsalvo had no marble heart,
Albeit his look was stern;
He bade the Moorish youth depart,
And ere set of sun return:
Each pass and straight the chieftain eyed,
Yet sometimes turned his head,
To mark how down the mountain side
His captive featly sped.

The Sierra's dazzling peak of snow
Yet blushed with rosy light,
When again the grieving Moor bowed low
Before the Christian knight;
But alone he came not, as he went,
For a damsel pressed his arm,
Faint as a rose by tempests bent,
And quivering with alarm.

Awhile they stood in speechless gloom;
She looked at him and wept;
And the knights, still reckless of his doom,
An equal silence kept:
At length the maid unveiled her head,
She knelt at the chieftain's knee,
Few were the stifled words she said,
But he well could guess the plea.

"Gazúl, thy captive, Christian knight,
Is here by his solemn vow;
He was my lover yesternight,
He is my husband now!
Without him life to me is vain,
And its sounding pageants hollow,
With him I've promised to remain;
Him—him alone I follow.

"'Twas for me he dared, unwisely brave!
The ambushed road to take;
He was your foe, he is your slave,
But he suffers for *my* sake;
Ah! then, *his* love still let me share,
To whom I've pledged my oath;
The fetters, if you will, prepare,
But let them bind us both!"

Knights, little used to pity, sighed,
They softened to his suit;
For her voice to their hearts was felt to glide
Like music from a lute;
"Our arms," Gonsalvo said, "achieve
The buttress, not the bower;
My falchion's edged the oak to cleave,
And not to crush the flower.

"Peace be to both; you both are free!
Live happy; and whene'er
To you a Christian bends his knee,
Believe Gonsalvo there!"
They silent kissed his robes, and sped
To their own dear Darro's water,
And thus Gazúl Zorayda wed,
Granada's noblest daughter!

THE DEBT PAID

This is Matthew Prior's way of saying what Shakespeare also said: "Rich gifts grow poor when givers prove unkind."

TO John I owed great obligation;
But John, unhappily, thought fit
To publish it to all the nation.
Sure John and I are more than quit.

NEPTUNE'S RAGING FURY

This sailor's ballad comes to us from Stuart times. There is some doubt about this form of it, but the original draft was written by Martin Parker, who died about 1656. His writings were very popular, and won praise from Dryden, the poet and critic. Of course, a good deal of freedom is allowed in the rhyming of a ballad, and some words are dragged in to make rhymes; but, though the verses are rude and imperfect, they have caught in a large measure the spirit of the seafarer.

You gentlemen of England,
That live at home at ease,
Full little do you think upon
The dangers of the seas:
Give ear unto the mariners,
And they will plainly show,
The cares and the fears
When the stormy winas do blow.

All you that will be seamen,
Must bear a valiant heart,
For when you come upon the seas,
You must not think to start:
Nor once to be faint-hearted,
In hail, or rain, or snow,
Nor to shrink, nor to shrink,
When the stormy winds do blow.

The bitter storms and tempests
Poor seamen must endure,
Both day and night with many a fight,
We seldom rest secure:
Our sleep it is disturbed
With visions strange to know,
And with dreams, on the streams,
When the stormy winds do blow.

In claps of roaring thunder,
Which darkness doth enforce,
We often find our ship to stray
Beyond our wonted course;
Which causeth great distractions
And sinks our hearts full low,
'Tis in vain to complain
When the stormy winds do blow.

Sometimes on Neptune's bosom
Our ship is lost in waves,
And every man expecting
The sea to be their graves:
Then up aloft she mounteth,
And down again so low,
'Tis with the waves, O with the waves,
When the stormy winds do blow.

Then down again we fall to prayer,
With all our might and thought,
When refuge all doth fail us,
'Tis that must bear us out;
To God we call for succour,
For He it is, we know,
That must aid us and save us,
When the stormy winds do blow.

The lawyer and the usurer,
That sit in gowns of fur,
In closets warm, can take no harm,
Abroad they need not stir;
When winter fierce, with cold doth pierce,
And beats with hail and snow,
We are sure to endure,
When the stormy winds do blow.

We bring home costly merchandise,
And jewels of great price,
To serve our English gallantry,
With many a rare device:
To please the English gallantry
Our pains we freely show,
For we toyl, and we moyl,
When the stormy winds do blow.

We sometimes sail to the Indies,
To fetch home spices rare,
Sometimes, again, to France and Spain,
For wines beyond compare;
While gallants are carousing
In tavern in a row,
Then we sweep o'er the deep,
When the stormy winds do blow.

When tempests are blown over,
And greatest fears are past,
Ay, weather fair, and temperate air,
We straight lye down to rest;
But when the billows tumble,
And waves do furious grow,
Then we rouse, up we rouse,
When the stormy winds do blow.

If enemies oppose us,
When England is at wars
With any foreign nations,
We fear not wounds and scars;
Our roaring guns shall teach 'em
Our valour for to know,
Whilst they reel, in the keel,
When the stormy winds do blow.

We are no cowardly shrinkers,
But Englishmen true bred,
We'll play our parts with valiant hearts,
And never fly for dread;
We'll ply our business nimbly,
Where'er we come or go,
With our mates to the straights,
When the stormy winds do blow.

FAITH

Frances Anne Kemble (or Fanny, as she was generally called) was an actress, daughter of the great actor, Charles Kemble, and in her later life she was a writer. Here she tells us it is better to believe and be deceived than to lose the power of believing.

Better trust all, and be deceived,
And weep that trust and that deceiving,
Than doubt one heart that, if believed,
Had blessed one's life with true believing.
O, in this mocking world too fast
The doubting fiend o'ertakes our youth!
Better be cheated to the last
Than lose the blessed hope of truth.

AN ENGLISH COUNTRY LANE IN SEPTEMBER

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

The writer of this striking though simple poem is an American named Robert Frost, who has recently come into notice in his own country. He writes about New England rural life with the ease of talk, but, as in the case of this poem, a seeming simplicity hides deeper meanings worth pondering. Robert Frost has followed the less-travelled road of poetry. Perhaps he might have followed the road of worldly gain.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And, sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though, as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I marked the first for another day!
Yet, knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I ever should come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

AUTUMN IN A GARDEN

This miniature of life in a garden when the fruits are ripe is by Andrew Marvell, who was member of Parliament for Hull in the days of Cromwell, and joint Latin secretary with Milton. It is part of a poem which shows delightful appreciation of the quietness of the country and its many wonders.

What wondrous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;
The nectarine and curious peach
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

O! BREATHE NOT HIS NAME!

The subject of this poem by Thomas Moore was Robert Emmet, an Irish patriot who raised a feeble rebellion in 1803. It was at once suppressed, and Emmet was captured and hanged. Moore was a fellow-student with him at Dublin.

O! BREATHE not his name! let it sleep in the shade,
Where cold and unhonoured his relics are laid;
Sad, silent, and dark be the tears that we shed,
As the night dew that falls on the grave o'er his head.

But the night dew that falls, though in silence it weeps,
Shall brighten with verdure the grave where he sleeps;
And the tear that we shed, though in secret it rolls,
Shall long keep his memory green in our souls.

THE TREASURES OF THE DEEP

The dangers of the sea, since all the honourable traditions of life-saving have been thrown to the winds by the purposely brutal Germans, give this poem, by Mrs. Hemans, a fresh appropriateness. Born in 1793, Mrs. Hemans died in 1835. Her first book of poems was published when she was fifteen. Undoubtedly she has been the most popular British poetess, for in a vein of graceful sentiment she deals with subjects all can understand. She was a charming woman, one whom, as Scott said, everyone would like to claim as kith and kin.

WHAT hidest thou in thy treasure-caves and cells,
Thou hollow-sounding and mysterious main?
Pale glistening pearls, and rainbow-coloured shells,
Bright things which gleam unrecked of and in vain.
Keep, keep thy riches, melancholy sea!
We ask not such from thee.

Yet more, the depths have more! What wealth untold,
Far down, and shining through their stillness, lies!
Thou hast the starry gems, the burning gold,
Won from ten thousand royal argosies.
Sweep o'er thy spoils, thou wild and wrathful main!
Earth claims not these again!

Yet more, the depths have more! Thy waves have rolled
Above the cities of a world gone by!
Sand hath filled up the palaces of old,
Seaweed o'ergrown the halls of revelry!
Dash o'er them, Ocean, in thy scornful play,
Man yields them to decay!

Yet more! the billows and the depths have more!
High hearts and brave are gathered to thy breast!
They hear not now the booming waters roar,
The battle-thunders will not break their rest.
Keep thy red gold and gems, thou stormy grave!
Give back the true and brave!

Give back the lost and lovely! Those for whom
The place was kept at board and hearth so long;
The prayer went up through midnight's breathless gloom,
And the vain yearning woke 'midst festal song!
Hold fast thy buried isles thy towers o'erthrown—
But all is not thine own!

To thee thy love of woman hath gone down;
Dark flow thy tides o'er manhood's noble head,
O'er youth's bright locks and beauty's flowery crown!
Yet must thou hear a voice—Restore the Dead!
Earth shall reclaim her precious things from thee!
Restore the Dead, thou Sea!

THE MEANS TO ATTAIN A HAPPY LIFE

The Earl of Surrey was one of the first writers of verse in modern English. Here he summarises, from Martial, the Latin poet, the conditions under which life may be most happy. His recipe is to live a private life in frugal contentment. "Ne" in the last line is an old usage for "nor."

MARTIAL, the things that do attain
The happy life be these, I find:
The richesse left, not got with pain;
The fruitful ground, the quiet mind;

The equal friend; no grudge, no strife;
No charge of rule, nor governance;
Without disease, the healthful life;
The household of continuance;

The mean diet, no delicate fare;
True wisdom joined with simpleness;
The night dischargèd of all care
Where wine the wit may not oppress;

The faithful wife, without debate;
Such sleeps as may beguile the night;
Contented with thine own estate,
Ne wish for Death, ne fear his might.

SOOTHSAY

The writer of these sayings was a preacher contemporary with Shakespeare—John Donne. In his own day his poetry was admired, but in striving for oddity he lost all charm.

WHO makes the last a pattern for next year
Turns no new leaf, but still the same thing reads;
Seen things he sees again, heard things doth hear,
And makes his life but like a pair of beads.

Our soul, whose country's heaven, and God her father,
Into this world, corruption's sink, is sent;
Yet so much in her travel she doth gather
That she returns home wiser than she went.

GOD TOOK ME

In this poem Robert Browning seems to mean that we never reach a full understanding of our life and its surroundings.

OVERHEAD the tree-tops meet,
Flowers and grass spring 'neath one's feet;
There was nought above me, nought below
My childhood had not learned to know:
For, what are the voices of birds
—Ay, and of beasts—but words, our words,
Only so much more sweet?

The knowledge of that with my life begun.
But I had so near made out the sun,
And counted yon stars, the seven and one,
Like the fingers of my hand:
Nay, I could all but understand
Wherefore through heaven the white moon ranges;
And just when out of her soft fifty changes
No unfamiliar voice might overlook me—
Suddenly God took me.

THE FORCED RECRUIT

For generations the Austrians held Northern Italy under their yoke, and have never released any of it except through war. They have always forced races under their sway, but alien to themselves, to fight for them, even against their own kindred. In this poem Elizabeth Barrett Browning tells how, at the battle of Solferino, fought by the French and Italians to liberate Italy, a young Venetian Italian was found among the Austrian dead with a smile on his lips and an unloaded gun in his hands. He had died for his country as truly as if he had fought for her. Mrs. Browning was a great lover of Italy. She lived in the country many years, and died there, in 1861, two years after Solferino.

IN the ranks of the Austrian you found him,
He died with his face to you all;
Yet bury him here where around him
You honour your bravest that fall.

Venetian, fair-featured and slender,
He lies shot to death in his youth,
With a smile on his lips over-tender
For any mere soldier's dead mouth.

No stranger, and yet not a traitor,
Though alien the cloth on his breast,
Underneath it how seldom a greater
Young heart has a shot sent to rest!

Be your enemy tortured and goaded
To march with them, stand in their file,
His musket (see!) never was loaded,
He facing your guns with that smile!

As orphans yearn on to their mothers,
He yearned to your patriot bands;
"Let me die for our Italy, brothers,
If not in your ranks, by your hands!

"Aim straightly, fire steadily! spare me
A ball in the body which may
Deliver my heart here, and tear me
This badge of the Austrian away!"

So thought he, so died he this morning.
What then? Many others have died.
Ay, but easy for men to die scorning
The death-stroke, who fought side by side.

One tricolour floating above them;
Struck down 'mid triumphant acclaims
Of an Italy rescued to love them,
And blazen the brass with their names.

But he, without witness or honour,
Mixed, shamed in his country's regard,
With the tyrants who march in upon her,
Died faithful and passive; 'twas hard.

'Twas sublime. In a cruel restriction
Cut off from the guerdon of sons,
With most filial obedience, conviction,
His soul kissed the lips of her guns.

That moves you? Nay, grudge not to show it,
While digging a grave for him here;
The others who died, says your poet,
Have glory—let him have a tear.

AN ALLEGORY

S. T. Coleridge, the writer of this "schoolboy poem," as he calls it, has himself explained it. He says that by the sister, or imaginary time, he meant the state of a schoolboy's mind when he projects his being forward and lives in his coming holidays and contrasts it with the slow, even pace of real time.

ON the wide level of a mountain's head
(I knew not where, but 'twas some faery place),
Their pinions, ostrich-like, for sails outspread,
Two lovely children run an endless race,
A sister and a brother!
This far outstripped the other;
Yet ever runs she with reverted face,
And looks and listens for the boy behind:
For, he, alas, is blind!
O'er rough or smooth with even step he passed,
And knows not whether he be first or last.

THE TABLES TURNED

Wordsworth taught simplicity in writing, and an appreciation of the outdoor world, which he believed radiates teachings that are divine. Both these tendencies are seen in this poem. Simplicity even sinks into triviality in the first verse, a fault which caused Wordsworth to be criticised severely. But when we are past this very common verse we find a delightful view of the influence of the open-air world, and fresh and stimulating thought, although some of the poet's ideas challenge strong objections. He dismisses science and art too arbitrarily, and claims too much for rural influences. If impulses from a vernal wood are so potent, gypsies should be the most moral people in the world.

Up! up! my friend, and quit your books,
  Or surely you'll grow double.
Up! up! my friend, and clear your looks;
  Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
  A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
  His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife;
  Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life
  There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
  He, too, is no mean preacher;
Come forth into the light of things,
  Let Nature be your teacher

She has a world of ready wealth,
  Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
  Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood,
  May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good
  Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
  Our meddling intellect
Misshapes the beauteous forms of things;
  We murder to dissect.

Enough of science and of art;
  Close up these barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
  That watches and receives.

TO A YOUNG LADY REPROACHED FOR TAKING LONG COUNTRY WALKS

The young lady to whom this poem was addressed by Wordsworth went for walks with him on the mountains "hunting the waterfalls." Here he allows his imagination to travel into the future, and picture her peaceful and honoured in her later years.

Dear child of Nature, let them rail!
  There is a nest in a green dale,
  A harbour and a hold,
Where thou, a wife and friend, shalt see
Thy own delightful days, and be
  A light to young and old.

There, healthy as a shepherd-boy,
As if thy heritage were joy,
  And pleasure were thy trade,
Thou, while thy babes around thee cling,
Shalt show us how divine a thing
  A woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,
Nor leave thee, when grey hairs are nigh,
  A melancholy slave;
But an old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night,
  Shall lead thee to thy grave.

THIS FAIR WORLD

This is Coventry Patmore's view of men's want of appreciation of the poetry of the world. Is it true? Is a natural joy in the world's beauty confined to poets, lovers, and children? The true answer depends on whom we call poets. The poets among us who cannot write are many.

An idle poet, here and there,
  Looks round him, but, for all the rest,
The world, unfathomably fair,
  Is duller than a witling's jest.

Love wakes men, once a lifetime each
  They lift their heavy heads and look;
And, lo, what one sweet page can teach
  They read with joy, then shut the book.

And some give thanks, and some blaspheme,
  And most forget; but, either way,
That, and the Child's unheeded dream,
  Is all the light of all their day.

DIRGE FOR THE YEAR

We feel the pathos of passing time as we read these verses by Percy Bysshe Shelley. Something there is in a dying year that must always stir the human heart. But time does not end, and another year comes—and how lovely it is in March to think of coming May!

Orphan Hours, the Year is dead,
  Come and sigh, come and weep!
Merry Hours, smile instead,
  For the Year is but asleep.
See, it smiles as it is sleeping,
Mocking your untimely weeping.

As an earthquake rocks a corpse
  In its coffin in the clay,
So White Winter, that rough nurse,
  Rocks the death-cold Year today;
Solemn Hours, wail aloud
For your mother in her shroud.

As the wild air stirs and sways
  The tree-swung cradle of a child,
So the breath of these rude days
  Rocks the Year: be calm and mild,
Trembling Hours, she will arise
With new love within her eyes.

January grey is here,
  Like a sexton by her grave;
February bears the bier,
  March with grief doth howl and rave,
And April weeps—but, O ye Hours,
Follow with May's fairest flowers.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Abraham Lincoln was a plain, homely man without any show, but wise and strong, and the world is more and more coming to see that he was a very great man, and steered the United States through their great war that abolished slavery with increasing skill and lofty purpose. In this poem James Russell Lowell, who was one of the poets of the movement for Freedom, sketches Lincoln for us, bringing out many of the chief features of his fine, simple character. An irregular poem like this, which varies its rhythm, is called an Ode.

NATURE, they say, doth dote
And cannot make a man
Save on some worn-out plan,
Repeating us by rote:
From him her Old World aside she threw,
And choosing sweet clay from the breast
Of the unexhausted West,
With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.

How beautiful to see
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,
Who loved his charge, but never loved to lead;
One whose meek flock the people joyed to be,
Not lured by any cheat of birth,
But by his clear-grained human worth,
And brave old wisdom of sincerity!
They knew that outward grace is dust;
They could not choose but trust
In that sure-footed mind's unfaltering skill,
And supple tempered will
That bent like perfect steel to spring again and thrust.

His was no lonely mountain-peak of mind,
Thrusting to thin air o'er our cloudy bars,
A sea-mark now, now lost in vapours blind,
Broad prairie rather, genial, level-lined,
Fruitful and friendly for all her mankind,
Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of loftiest stars.
Nothing of Europe here,
Or, then, of Europe fronting mornward still,
Ere any names of Serf or Peer
Could Nature's equal scheme deface;
Here was a type of the true elder race,
And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face.

I praise him not; it were too late;
And some innative weakness there must be
In him who condescends to victory
Such as the Present gives, and cannot wait.
Safe in himself as in a fate,
So always firmly he;
He knew to bide his time,
And can his fame abide,
Still patient in his simple faith sublime,
Till the wise years decide.

Great captains, with their drums and guns,
Disturb our judgment for the hour,
But at last silence comes;
These are all gone, and standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame,
The kindly earnest, brave, foreseeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American.

A WINTER SKETCH

This fine description of winter, with its many striking little pictures etched in a few words, is from the pen of Lord de Tabley, a scholarly man of science, and also, as this poem shows, a vigorous poet with the seeing eye. He died in 1895.

WHEN the snow begins to feather,
And the woods begin to roar,
Clashing angry boughs together,
As the breakers grind the shore,
Nature then a bankrupt goes,
Full of wreck and full of woes.

When the swan for warmer forelands
Leaves the sea-firth's ice-bound edge,
When the grey geese from the moorlands
Cleave the cloud in noisy wedge,
Woodlands stand in frozen chains,
Hung with ropes of solid rains.

Shepherds creep to byre and haven,
Sheep in drifts are nipped and numb,
Some belated rook or raven
Rocks upon a sign-post dumb.
Mere-waves solid as a clod
Roar with skaters thunder-shod.

All the roofs and chimneys rumble,
Roads are ridged with slush and sleet;
Down the orchards apples tumble,
Ploughboys stamp their frosty feet.
Millers, jolted down the lanes,
Hardly feel for cold their reins.

Snipes are calling from the trenches
Frozen half and half at flow;
In the porches servant wenches
Work with shovels at the snow.
Rusty blackbirds, weak of wing,
Clean forget they once could sing.

Dogs and boys fetch down the cattle,
Deep in mire and powdered pale;
Spinning-wheels commence to rattle,
Landlords spice the smoking ale.
Hail, white winter, lady fine,
In a cup of elder wine.

CLEAR THE WAY

A fine example of the manly, straightforward, marching style of that breezy song-maker, Charles Mackay! This inspiring faith in a bettered world has been felt by the finer spirits of every age. And it comes true. Rarely, however, does it come true exactly when and how it is expected. Progress does not sweep straight in like a flood, but laps round like a creeping tide. Charles Mackay sees it coming, and shouts an honest welcome.

MEN of thought! be up and stirring,
Night and day;
Sow the seed—withdraw the curtain—
Clear the way!
Men of action, aid and cheer them,
As ye may!
There's a fount about to stream,
There's a light about to beam,
There's a warmth about to glow,
There's a flower about to blow;
There's a midnight blackness changing
Into grey;
Men of thought and men of action,
Clear the way!

Once the welcome light has broken,
Who shall say
What the unimagined glories
Of the day?
What the evil that shall perish
In its ray?
Aid the dawning, tongue and pen;
Aid it, hopes of honest men;
Aid it, paper—aid it, type—
Aid it, for the hour is ripe,
And our earnest must not slacken
Into play.
Men of thought and men of action,
Clear the way!

Lo! a cloud's about to vanish
From the day;
And a brazen wrong to crumble
Into clay.
Lo! the Right's about to conquer;
Clear the way!
With the Right shall many more
Enter smiling at the door;
With the giant Wrong shall fall
Many others, great and small,
That for ages long have held us
For their prey.
Men of thought and men of action,
Clear the way!

BE CONTENT

These homely verses are by an unknown writer. Is the statement in the last verse true? Are we all envious and ungrateful? Too many are, and for them this simple rhyme has a message. It also should warn us to use our judgment on what poetry says. The wish for a change is spoken of as equally sincere in rich and poor; but that would not be so.

A MAN in his carriage was riding along,
His gaily-dressed wife by his side;
In satins and laces, she looked like a queen,
And he like a king in his pride.

A wood-sawyer stood near the street as they passed;
The carriage and couple he eyed,
And said, as he worked with his saw on a log:
"I wish I was rich, and could ride."

The man in the carriage remarked to his wife:
"One thing I would do, if I could—
I would give all my wealth for the strength and the health
Of the man who is sawing the wood."

A pretty young maid with a bundle of work,
Whose face like the morning was fair,
Went tripping along with a smile of delight,
While humming a love-breathing air.

She looked at the carriage; the lady she saw,
All dressed in her clothing so fine,
And said in a whisper, "I wish from my heart.
Those satins and laces were mine!"

The lady looked out on the maid with her work,
So fair in her calico dress,
And said, "Ah, how gladly I'd give all my wealth,
Her beauty and youth to possess!"

It is thus in this world: whatever our lot,
Our minds and our time we employ
In longing and sighing for what we have not,
Ungrateful for what we enjoy.

CLEON AND I

The robustness of Charles Mackay's mind is represented happily in these verses. He saw great, plain, wholesome truths very clearly, such truths as that the true riches of life come from our own natures, and cannot be put on us from without. The poet draws from his fancy a dull, unhealthy man of fortune, to whom he gives the common Greek name of Cleon, and he contrasts him with one who, knowing how to look for natural enjoyment, finds health, beauty, and content.

CLEON hath a million acres—
Ne'er a one have I;
Cleon dwelleth in a palace—
In a cottage, I;
Cleon hath a dozen fortunes—
Not a penny, I;
But the poorer of the twain is
Cleon, and not I.

Cleon, true, possesseth acres,
But the landscape, I;
Half the charms to me it yieldeth
Money cannot buy;
Cleon harbours sloth and dulness,
Freshening vigour, I;
He in velvet, I in fustian—
Richer man am I.

Cleon is a slave to grandeur—
Free as thought am I;
Cleon fees a score of doctors—
Need of none have I;
Wealth-surrounded, care-environed,
Cleon fears to die;
Death may come, he'll find me ready,
Happier man am I.

Cleon sees no charm in Nature—
In a daisy, I;
Cleon hears no anthem ringing
In the sea and sky;
Nature sings to me for ever—
Earnest listener, I;
State for state, with all attendants,
Who would change?—Not I.

A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven;

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

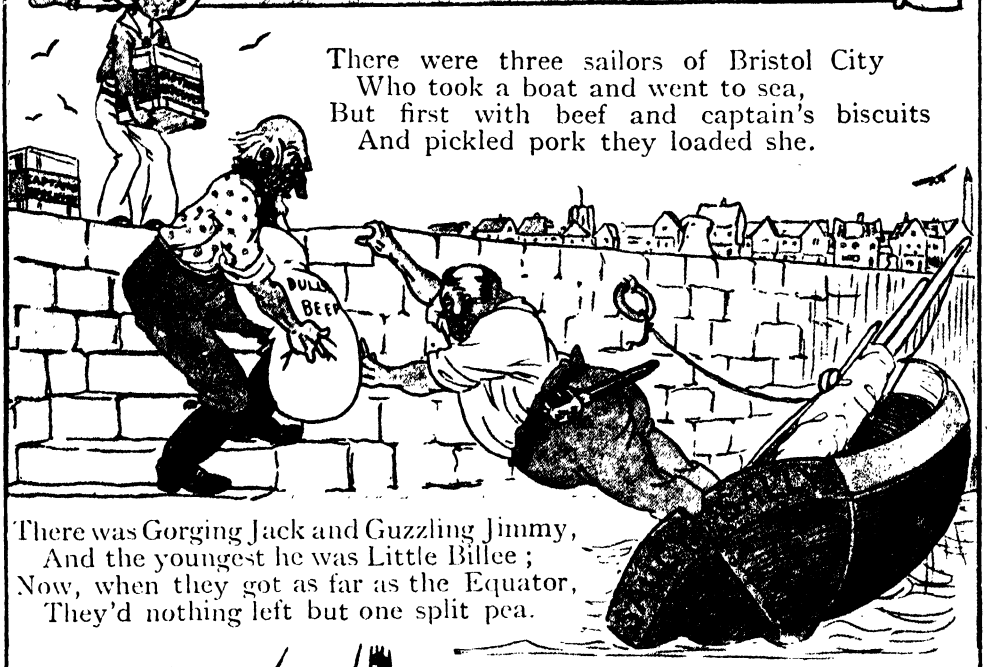
A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

Ecclesiastes iii. 1—8.

THERE IS A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

LITTLE BILLEE

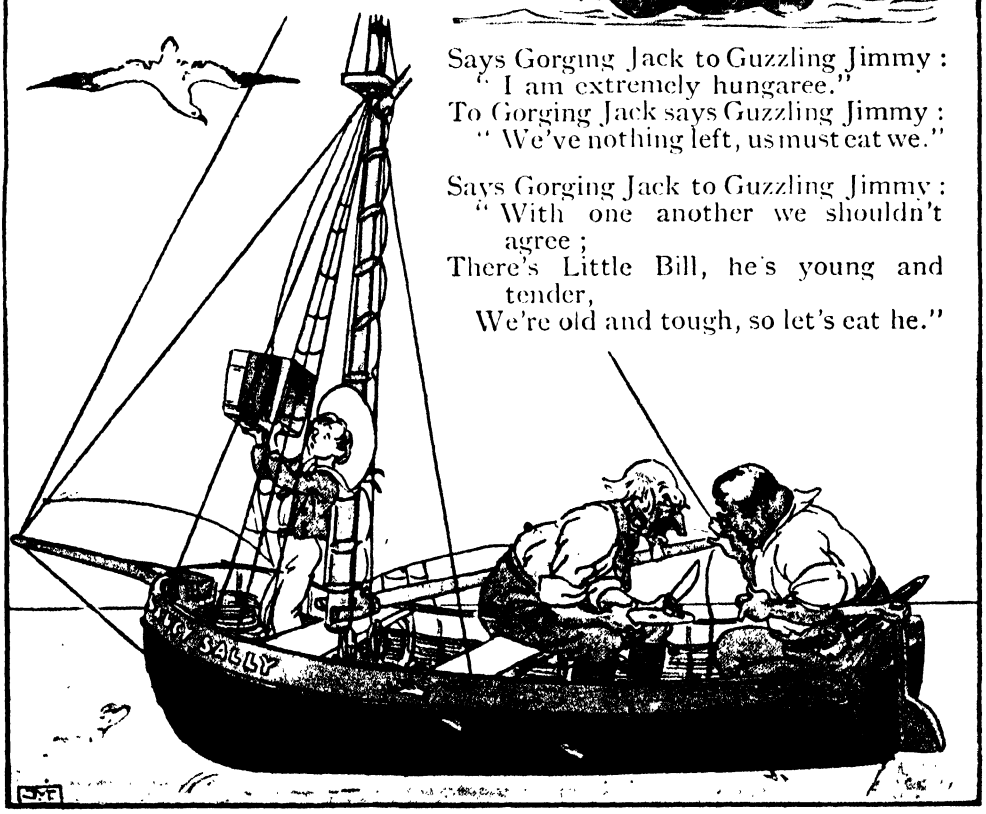


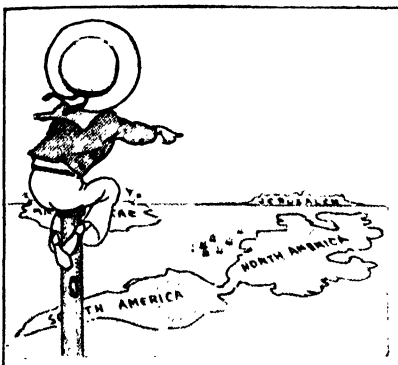
There were three sailors of Bristol City
Who took a boat and went to sea,
But first with beef and captain's biscuits
And pickled pork they loaded she.

There was Gorging Jack and Guzzling Jimmy,
And the youngest he was Little Billee ;
Now, when they got as far as the Equator,
They'd nothing left but one split pea.

Says Gorging Jack to Guzzling Jimmy :
" I am extremely hungaree."
To Gorging Jack says Guzzling Jimmy :
" We've nothing left, us must eat we."

Says Gorging Jack to Guzzling Jimmy :
" With one another we shouldn't agree ;
There's Little Bill, he's young and tender,
We're old and tough, so let's eat he."





" Oh, Billy we're going to kill and eat you
So undo the button of your little chemie."
When Bill received this information,
He used his pocket-handkerchie.

" First let me say my Catechism,
Which my poor mother taught to me."
" Make haste, make haste!" says Guzzling Jimmy,
While Jack pulled out his snickersnee.

So Billy went up to the main-top-gallant mast,
And down he fell on his bended knee;
He scarce had come to the Twelfth Commandment,
When up he jumps, " There's land I see.

" Jerusalem and Madagascar,
And North and South Amerikee!
There's the British flag a-riding at anchor,
With Admiral Napier, K.C.B."

So, when they got aboard of the Admiral's,
He hanged fat Jack and flogged Jimmee;
But as for Little Bill, he made him
The Captain of a Seventy-three.

W. M. THACKERAY

WHEN ICICLES HANG BY THE WALL

AND DICK THE SHEPHERD

BLOWS HIS NAIL

AND TOM BEARS LOGS

INTO THE HALL

AND MILK COMES FROZEN

HOME IN PAIL

WHEN BLOOD IS NIPPED

AND WAYS BE FOUL

THEN NIGHTLY SINGS THE STARING OWL

TO-WHIT!

TO-WHO!

A MERRY NOTE

WHILE GREASY JOAN

DOTH KEEL THE POT

WHEN ALL ALOUD THE WIND DOTH BLOW
AND COUGHING DROWNS
THE PARSONS SAW
AND BIRDS SIT BROODING IN THE SNOW
AND MARIAN'S NOSE
LOOKS RED AND RAW
WHEN ROASTED CRABS
HISS IN THE BOWL
THEN NIGHTLY SINGS
THE STARING OWL
WHIT!
-WHO!
A MERRY NOTE
WHILE GREASY JOAN
DOTH KEEL THE POT
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

THE AHKOND OF SWAT

WHO, or why, or which, or *what*,
Is the Ahkond of Swat ?
Is he tall or short, or dark or fair ?
Does he sit on a stool or sofa or chair,
or Squat,
The Ahkond of Swat ?
Is he wise or foolish, young or old ?
Does he drink his soup and his coffee cold,
or Hot,
The Ahkond of
Swat ?

Does he sing or whistle, jabber or talk,
And when riding abroad does he gallop or walk,
or Trot,
The Ahkond of Swat ?

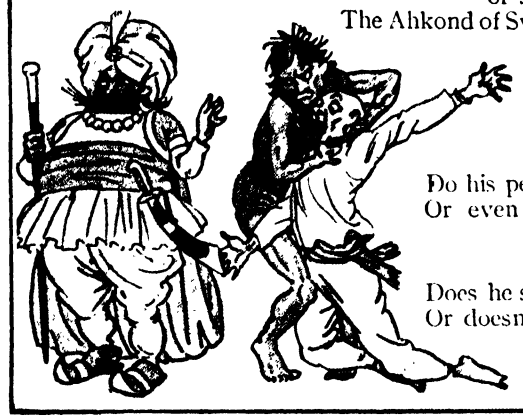
Does he wear a turban, a fez, or a hat ?
Does he sleep on a mattress, a bed, or a mat,
or a Cot,
The Ahkond of Swat ?

When he writes a copy in round-hand size,
Does he cross his t's and finish his i's
with a Dot,
The Ahkond of Swat ?

Can he write a letter concisely clear,
Without a speck or a smudge or smear,
or Blot,
The Ahkond of Swat ?

Do his people like him extremely well ?
Or do they, whenever they can, rebel,
or Plot,
At the Ahkond of Swat ?

If he catches them then, either old or young,
Does he have them chopped in pieces or hung,
or Shot,
The Ahkond of Swat ?



Do his people prig in the lanes or park ?
Or even at times, when days are dark,
Garotte ?
Oh, the Ahkond of Swat !

Does he study the wants of his own dominion ?
Or doesn't he care for public opinion
a Jot,
The Ahkond of Swat ?

To amuse his mind do his people show him
Pictures, or anyone's last new poem,
or What,
For the Ahkond of Swat ?

At night, if he suddenly screams and wakes,
Do they bring him only a few small cakes,
or a Lot,
For the Ahkond of Swat ?

Does he live on turnips, tea, or tripe ?
Does he like his shawl to be marked with a stripe
or a Dot,
The Ahkond of Swat ?

Does he like to lie on his back in a boat,
Like the lady who lived in that isle remote,
Shalott,
The Ahkond of Swat ?

Is he quiet, or always making a fuss ?
Is his steward a Swiss or a Swede or a Russ,
or a Scot,
The Ahkond of Swat ?

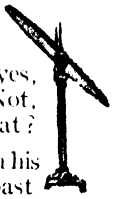
Does he like to sit by the calm blue wave ?
Or to sleep and snore in a dark green cave,
or a Grott,
The Ahkond of Swat ?

Does he drink small beer from a silver jug,
Or a bowl, or a glass, or a cup, or a mug,
or a Pot,
The Ahkond of Swat ?

Does he beat his wife with a gold-topped pipe
When she lets the gooseberries grow too ripe,
or Rot,
The Ahkond of Swat ?

Does he wear a white tie when he dines with his friends,
And tie it neat in a bow with ends,
or a Knot,
The Ahkond of Swat ?

Does he like new cream, and hate mince-pies ?
When he looks at the sun does he wink his eyes,
or Not,
The Ahkond of Swat ?



Does he teach his
subjects to roast
and bake ?
Does he sail about on an island lake,
in a Yacht,
The Ahkond of Swat ?

Someone or nobody knows, I wot,
Who, or which, or why, or what,
Is the Ahkond of Swat !

EDWARD LEAR

THE ROSE

This flower-lover's sonnet was written by a poet of country life, William Browne, a young contemporary of Shakespeare, about half his age at the time of his death. Probably behind the imagery is a personal meaning. The reference may be to Mary Queen of Scots as her friends have professed to see her.

A ROSE, as fair as ever saw the North,
Grew in a little garden all alone;
A sweeter flower did Nature ne'er put forth,

Nor fairer garden yet was ever known;
The maidens danced about it morn and noon,
And learned bards of it their ditties made;
The nimble fairies, by the pale-faced moon,
Watered the root, and kissed her pretty shade.

But, welladay! the gardener careless grew;
The maids and fairies both were kept away;
And in a drought the caterpillar threw
Themselves upon the bud and every spray.
God shield the stock! if heaven send no supplies,
The fairest blossom of the garden dies.

TALKING IN THEIR SLEEP

Is this not a pretty poem? So simple and true! The hiding of life and its resurrection is one of the world's increasing wonders. The sympathy between outdoor things—the trees, the grass, and the flowers—a sympathy limited and imperfect, is daintily expressed. Edith M. Thomas is the writer.

"You think I am dead,"
The apple-tree said,
"Because I have never a leaf to show—
Because I stoop,
And my branches droop,
And the dull grey mosses over me grow!
But I'm all alive in trunk and shoot;
The buds of next May
I fold away—
But I pity the withered grass at my root."

"You think I am dead,"
The quick grass said,
"Because I have started with stem and blade!
But under the ground
I am safe and sound
With the snow's thick blanket over me laid.
I'm all alive and ready to shoot,
Should the spring of the year
Come dancing here—
But I pity the flower without branch or root."

"You think I am dead,"
A soft voice said,
"Because not a branch or root I own!
I never have died,
But close I hide,
In a plumy seed that the wind has sown.
Patient I wait through the long winter hours;
You will see me again—
I shall laugh at you then,
Out of the eyes of a hundred flowers."

ELIHU

Here is a whole tale told by Alice Cary in nine verses. A little boy who had run away to sea in the Grey Swan remained, in the thought of his loving mother, a little boy even until he came back so old that his mother did not recognise him before he revealed himself. The poem is an illustration of a theme that will never be exhausted—a mother's love.

"O SAILOR, tell me, tell me true,
Is my little lad—my Elihu—
A-sailing in your ship?"
The sailor's eyes were dimmed with dew.
"Your little lad? Your Elihu?"
He said with trembling lip;
"What little lad—what ship?"

What little lad?—as if there could be
Another such a one as he!
"What little lad, do you say?
Why, Elihu, that took to the sea
The moment I put him off my knee.
It was just the other day
The Grey Swan sailed away."

The other day? The sailor's eyes
Stood wide open with surprise.
"The other day?—the Swan?"
His heart began in his throat to rise.
"Ay, ay, sir; here in the cupboard lies
The jacket he had on."
"And so your lad is gone!—

"Gone with the Swan. And did she stand
With her anchor clutching hold of the sand
For a month, and never stir?"

"Why, to be sure! I've seen from the land,
Like a lover kissing his lady's hand,
The wild sea kissing her—
A sight to remember, sir."

"But, my good mother, do you know,
All this was twenty years ago?
I stood on the Grey Swan's deck,
And to that lad I saw you throw—
Taking it off, as it might be so—
The kerchief from your neck."
"Ay, and he'll bring it back."

"And did the little lawless lad,
That has made you sick and made you sad,
Sail with the Grey Swan's crew?"
"Lawless! The man is going mad;
The best boy ever mother had;
Be sure, he sailed with the crew—
What would you have him do?"

"And he has never written line,
Nor sent you word, nor made you sign,
To say he was alive?"
"Hold, if 'twas wrong, the wrong is mine;
Besides, he may be in the brine;
And could he write from the grave?
Tut, man, what would you have?"

"Gone twenty years! A long, long cruise;
'Twas wicked thus your love to abuse;
But if the lad still live,
And come back home, think you, you can
Forgive him?" "Miserable man!
You're as mad as the sea; you rave!
What have I to forgive?"

The sailor twitched his shirt so blue,
And from within his bosom drew
The kerchief. She was wild:
"My God!—my Father!—is it true?
My little lad—my Elihu!
And is it?—is it?—is it you?
My blessed boy—my child—
My dead—my living child!"

TO-DAY

Writers who group poems of the same kind together, and give each group a distinguishing name, speak of verses that offer us good advice as didactic. This is a useful didactic poem. The key to it comes in the last line. Each day we should feel that the world is better because we have lived. Some ways of causing this to be felt are suggested in the first three verses. A pleasant feature is that our goodwill is asked on behalf of beasts as well as men. The author of the poem we do not know.

LET me to-day do something that shall take
A little sadness from the world's vast store,
And may I be so favoured as to make
Of joy's too scanty sum a little more.

Let me not hurt by any selfish deed,
Or thoughtless word, the heart of foe or friend,
Nor would I pass, unseeing, worthy need,
Or sin by silence where I should defend.

However meagre be my worldly wealth,
Let me give something that shall aid my kind.
A word of courage, or a thought of health,
Dropped as I pass for troubled hearts to find.

Let me to-night look back across the span
'Twixt dawn and dark, and to my conscience say:
"Because of some good act to beast or man,
The world is better that I lived to-day."

NEW YEAR'S COUNSEL

An American lady puts into these verses a thought expressed by many poets—that success does not depend on outward circumstances, as many people think, but on our inward state of mind. If we have done our best we may go on quietly with our heart at peace, even if we seem to have failed.

SEEK not to walk by borrowed light,
But keep unto thine own;
Do what thou doest with thy might,
And trust thyself alone!

Work for some good, nor idly lie
Within the human hive;
And though the outward man should die,
Keep thou the heart alive!

Strive not to banish pain and doubt,
In pleasure's noisy din;
The peace thou seekest for without
Is only found within.

If Fortune disregard thy claim,
By worth her slight attest;
Nor blush and hang the head for shame
When thou hast done thy best.

What thy experience teaches true,
Be vigilant to heed;
The wisdom that we suffer to,
Is wiser than a creed.

Disdain neglect, ignore despair,
On loves and friendships gone
Plant thou thy feet, as on a stair,
And mount right up and on!

THE GLOVE AND THE LIONS

These verses are an interesting example of a story told swiftly and completely in rhyme. Some writers would have taken ten times as many lines to bring out the same facts and descriptive effects. The spirit of the story, with its rebuke of the callous vanity of an unkind woman, makes it a welcome influence among thoughtful children. Leigh Hunt, the writer, who was born in 1784 and died in 1859, was an editor, a fine and prolific writer, and a great friend of men greater than himself, like Byron and Shelley.

KING FRANCIS was a hearty king, and loved a royal sport,
And one day, as his lions fought, sat looking on the court;
The nobles filled the benches, with the ladies in their pride,
And 'mong them sat the Count de Lorge with one for whom he sighed.
And truly 'twas a gallant thing to see that crowning show—
Valour and love, and a king above, and the royal beasts below.

Ramp'd and roar'd the lions, with horrid laughing jaws;
They bit, they glared, gave blows like beams, a wind went with their paws.
With wallowing might and stifled roar they rolled on one another,
Till all the pit with sand and mane was in a thunderous smother.
The bloody foam above the bars came whisking through the air;
Said Francis then, "Faith, gentlemen, we're better here than there!"

De Lorge's love o'erheard the king—a beauteous, lively dame,
With smiling lips and sharp, bright eyes, which always seem'd the same:
She thought, "The Count, my lover, is brave as brave can be;
He surely would do wondrous things to show his love of me.
King, ladies, lovers—all look on; the occasion is divine.
I'll drop my glove, to prove his love; great glory will be mine."

She dropp'd her glove, to prove his love, then looked at him and smiled;
He bowed, and in a moment leapt among the lions wild.
His leap was quick, return was quick, he has regain'd his place;
Then threw the glove, but not with love, right in the lady's face.
"Well done!" cried Francis; "bravely done!" And he rose from where he sat.
"No love," quoth he, "but vanity, sets love a task like that."

THE BLIND BEGGAR

Miss Florence Wilkinson, who wrote these lines, is the daughter of a Chicago professor. She has written plays as well as poems. You will see this poem is really a little scene—a one-part play. But it is more than that. It is a beautiful lesson in tender feeling that we may all learn and practise with advantage to ourselves as well as the poor.

SOMETIMES on a windy night,
When the world is drifted white,
I like to wander forth alone,
With father's cape around me thrown,
And imagine I'm a beggar,
Lean and blind and old,
Driven forth from every house
And shrivelling in the cold.
I shut my eyes to be more blind,
And mutter as I blow along,
"Be kind to me! Be kind!"
Or else I huddle by the gate,
And watch the firelight from our grate
Paint red the icy window-sill,
And leave the shadows blue and chill.
I hear the laughter from within,
But I—I cannot enter in.
The teardrops down my cheek they steal,
And so I learn how beggars feel.

THE SNOW LADY

Miss Florence Wilkinson, the author of this little description of a "lady of the snows," has written many verses for children during the last dozen years. Another poem appears above.

OUT in our garden stood a lady,
Her breast was as white as snow,
For it was snow;
Her breast was white as snow,
I swear that this is so.
And yet her heart was cold as ice;
This, too, I'll prove you in a trice.
Her figure dazzled all beholders,
Especially on a sunny day;
And melting eyes she had, in truth,
For once they melted quite away.

IF I HAD BUT TWO LITTLE WINGS

Many uncivilised people, because of dreams, have thought that when we are asleep our spirit leaves the body and wanders abroad, with all the world to itself, as Coleridge imagines in these verses. The sadness of absence from those we love that comes with our waking moments is powerfully expressed in the last lines. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was born in 1772 and died in 1834, quite an old man though only sixty-two, was a gifted poet, but, owing to ill-health, never exerted himself.

IF I had but two little wings,
And were a little feathery bird,
To you I'd fly, my dear!
But thoughts like these are idle things,
And I stay here.

But in my sleep to you I fly;
I'm always with you in my sleep!
The world is all one's own.
And then one wakes, and where am I?
All, all alone.

OZYMANDIAS OF EGYPT

The statue of an insolent king of long ago, broken amid the sands that have destroyed his gorgeous palaces, a mockery of pride, appealed powerfully—as this sonnet shows—to the imagination of Shelley, who, all his life, was in revolt against the spirit of tyranny. Percy Bysshe Shelley, who might have grown to be one of the greatest poets of all time, was drowned off the coast of Italy in 1822, before he was thirty.

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said, "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well these passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings;
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

AUF WIEDERSEHEN

The phrase "Auf wiedersehen" is in German what "au revoir" is in French, and what "till we meet again" is in English, or, literally, "till we see each other again." This poem is pervaded by a delicate atmosphere of romance, and it charms us the more because it leaves so much to be guessed at. James Russell Lowell, the writer, was distinguished as a poet, a humorist, a scholar, a critic, and he served his country, the American Republic, as ambassador to Great Britain.

THE little gate was reached at last,
Half hid in lilacs down the lane;
She pushed it wide, and, as she past,
A wistful look she backward cast,
And said, "*Auf wiedersehen!*"

With hand on latch, a vision white
Lingered reluctant, and again,
Half doubting if she did aright,
Soft as the dews that fell that night,
She said, "*Auf wiedersehen!*"

The lamp's clear gleam flits up the stair;
I linger in delicious pain;
Ah, in that chamber, whose rich air
To breathe in thought I scarcely dare,
Thinks she, "*Auf wiedersehen!*"

'Tis thirteen years; once more I press
The turf that silences the lane;
I hear the rustle of her dress,
I smell the lilacs, and—ah, yes,
I hear, "*Auf wiedersehen!*"

Sweet piece of bashful maiden art!
The English words had seemed too fain,
But these—they drew us heart to heart,
Yet held us tenderly apart.
She said, "*Auf wiedersehen!*"

THE BABIE

This sweet little description, in the Scottish manner, of a wee baby, with a perfectly lovely ending in the last two lines, is written by a retired American minister, Jeremiah Rankin, formerly president of Howard University, who is well known in his own country for a different style of verse—namely, hymns.

NAE shoon to hide her tiny taes,
Nae stockin' on her feet;
Her supple ankles white as snaw,
Or early blossoms sweet.

Her simple dress o' sprinkled pink,
Her double, dimplit chin;
Her puckered lips, and baumy mou',
With na ane tooth within.

Her een sae like her mither's een,
Twa gentle, liquid things;
Her face is like an angel's face,
We're glad she has nae wings.

UNDER MY WINDOW

Some of the best features of children's poetry are found in this gay poem. It gives pictures of little people that we can see clearly. The repetition of the names pleases the ear. There is a bright movement in the action, and a delightful rush of feeling at the close. The writer's name is Thomas Westwood.

UNDER my window, under my window,
And all in the midsummer weather,
Three little girls with fluttering curls
Flit to and fro together—
There's Bell with her bonnet of satin sheen,
And Maud with her mantle of silver-green,
And Kate with her scarlet feather.

Under my window, under my window,
Leaning stealthily over,
Merry and clear the voice I hear
Of each glad-hearted rover.
Ah, sly little Kate, she steals my roses,
And Maud and Bell twine wreaths and posies,
As merry as bees in clover.

Under my window, under my window,
In the blue midsummer weather,
Stealing slow, on hushed tiptoe,
I catch them all together—
Bell with her bonnet of satin sheen,
And Maud with her mantle of silver-green,
And Kate with the scarlet feather.

Under my window, under my window,
And off through the orchard closes;
While Maud she flouts, and Bell she pouts,
They scamper and drop their posies;
But dear little Kate takes naught amiss,
And leaps in my arms with a loving kiss,
And I give her all my roses.

ARISTOCRACY

The meaning of this simple little verse—written by Emily Dickinson, an American lady—is that we should always judge things by their uses and not merely by their appearances.

THE pedigree of honey
Does not concern the bee;
A clover any time to him
Is aristocracy.

WEALTH IS NOT HAPPINESS

This poem may well have been the personal experience of Mrs. Norton, who wrote it. She was a brilliant woman, admired in the best society of about sixty years ago; and still she sang the greater joys of a simpler happiness, within reach of everyone in quiet homes. What she says is quite true, and if we feel it we shall know our happiness and be free from envy.

I HAVE tasted each varied pleasure,
And drunk of the cup of delight;
I have danced to the gayest measure,
In the halls of dazzling light.

I have dwelt in a blaze of splendour,
And stood in the courts of kings;
I have snatched at each toy that could render
More rapid the flight of Time's wings.

But vainly I've sought for joy and peace
In the life of light and shade;
And I turn with a sigh to my own dear home,
That home where my childhood played.

When jewels are sparkling round me,
And dazzling with their rays,
I weep for ties that bound me
In life's first early days.

I sigh for one of the sunny hours,
Ere day was turned to night;
For one of my nosegays of fresh wild flowers,
Instead of these jewels bright.

THE INDIAN NAMES OF ARCADIA

Arcadia is the name given by the first white settlers, who were French, to the land now known as Nova Scotia. In writing these verses, and bringing into them many Indian names, the writer gives us a useful exercise in keeping the right flow of sound. If that is kept, the stress on the right syllable tells us how to pronounce the names.

THE memory of the Red MAN,
How can it pass away,
While his names of music linger
On each mount and stream and bay?
While Musquodobit's waters
Roll sparkling to the main;
While falls the laughing sunbeam
On Chegogin's fields of grain.

While floats our country's banner
O'er Chebucto's glorious wave;
And the frowning cliffs of Scaterie
The trembling surges brave;
While breezy Aspotogon
Lifts high its summit blue,
And sparkles on its winding way
The gentle Sissibou.

While Escasoni's fountains
Pour down their crystal tide;
While Inganish's mountains
Lift high their forms of pride;
Or while on Mabou's river
The boatman plies his oar;
Or the billows burst in thunder
On Chickaben's rock-girt shore

The memory of the Red Man,
It lingers like a spell
On many a storm-swept headland,
On many a leafy dell;
Where Tusket's thousand islets,
Like emeralds, stud the deep;
Where Blomidon, a sentry grim,
His endless watch doth keep.

It dwells round Catalon's blue lake,
'Mid leafy forests hid—
Round fair Discourse, and the rushing tides
Of the turbid Pisiquid.
And it lends, Chebogue, a touching grace
To thy softly flowing river,
As we sadly think of the gentle race
That has passed away for ever.

CARVING A NAME

Horatio Alger, an American writer, here enforces thoughts with which the poets love to dally—the fleeting character of all material things, and the enduring character of good deeds and thoughts which repeat themselves in the lives of others with a widening growth. Should anyone doubt the reality of this contrast, he may observe it by comparing the disappearance of records and material memorials of the time of our Lord with the wonderful spread of the spirit of His life throughout the whole world. So it is true for us all that we may live for ever "in minds made better by our presence."

I WROTE my name upon the sand,
And trusted it would stand for aye;
But soon, alas! the refluent sea
Had washed my feeble lines away.

I carved my name upon the wood,
And, after years, returned again;
I missed the shadow of the tree
That stretched of old upon the plain.

To solid marble, next, my name
I gave as a perpetual trust;
An earthquake rent it to its base,
And now it lies o'erlaid with dust.

All these have failed. In wiser mood
I turn and ask myself, "What then?
If I would have my name endure,
I'll write it on the hearts of men.

"In characters of living light,
From kindly words and actions wrought;
And these, beyond the reach of Time,
Shall live immortal as my thought."

THREE WORDS OF STRENGTH

These simple, great thoughts, translated from the German poet Schiller, are specially interesting to readers who know how the poet lived. He learned well, and faithfully practised, the lessons mentioned here. Born in Würtemberg, November 10, 1759, he only reached middle age through many troubles, and died May 9, 1805, without any beclouding of his hope, or faith, or love. As a writer of ballads he remains the most popular German poet in Germany, and as a dramatist has no superior in that country. His was a reverent mind, with an unquenchable love of freedom.

THERE are three lessons I would write—
Three words, as with a burning pen,
In tracings of eternal light,
Upon the hearts of men.

Have hope! though clouds environ round,
And Gladness hides her face in scorn,
Put thou the shadow from thy brow—
No night but has its morn.

Have faith! where'er thy bark is driven—
The calm's disport, the tempest's mirth—
Know this: God rules the hosts of heaven,
The inhabitants of earth.

Have love! Not love alone for one,
But man as man thy brother call,
And scatter, like the circling sun,
Thy charities on all.

Thus grave these lessons on thy soul,
Hope, faith, and love; and thou shalt find
Strength when life's surges rudest roll,
Light when thou else wert blind.

THIS IS THE KEY OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Here is the key of the kingdom
In that kingdom there is a town

In that town there is a street

In that street there is a lane

In that lane there is a court

In that court there is a house

In that house there is a room

In that room there is a bed
On that bed there is a child
And the child has the key of the Kingdom of Heaven

TOM WOODGATE

Tom Hood, the poet who most strangely mingled fun and sadness, delighted to visit Hastings and go sailing there with an honest boatman whose Christian name was like his own—Tom Woodgate. Writing in London for his living, he allows his fancy to play around his friend the boatman and his two sailing craft, the Aidant and the Chance, and in kindly strain revels in punning rhymes, which, however, describe with a bright fidelity the pleasures of boating on a lively sea.

TOM!—are you still within this land
Of livers—still on Hastings' sand,
Or roaming on the waves?
Or has some billow o'er you rolled,
Jealous that earth should lap so bold
A seaman in her graves?

On land the rush-light lives of men
Go out but slowly; nine in ten,
By tedious long decline—
Not so the jolly sailor sinks,
Who founders in the wave, and drinks
The apoplectic brine!

Ay, while I write, mayhap your head
Is sleeping on an oyster bed—
I hope 'tis far from truth—
With periwinkle eyes; your bone
Beset with mussels not your own,
And corals at your tooth!

Still does the Chance pursue the chance
The main affords—the Aidant dance
In safety on the tide?
Still flies that sign of my good-will,
A little *bunting* thing—but still
To thee a flag of pride?

Does that hard, honest hand now clasp
The tiller in its careful grasp—
With every summer breeze
When ladies sail, in lady-fear—
Or tug the oar, a gondolier
On smooth macadam seas?

Or are you where the flounders keep,
Some dozen briny fathoms deep,
Where sand and shells abound—
With some old Triton on your chest,
And twelve grave mermen for a 'quest,
To find that you are—drowned?

Swift is the wave, and apt to bring
A sudden doom: Perchance I sing
A mere funereal strain—
You have endured the utter strife—
And are—the same in death or life,
A good man in the main!

Oh, no—I hope the old brown eye
Still watches ebb and flood and sky;
That still the old brown shoes
Are sucking brine up—pumps indeed!
Your tooth still full of ocean weed,
Or Indian—which you choose.

I like you, Tom! and in these lays
Give honest worth its honest praise,
No puff at honour's cost;
For though you met these words of mine,
All letter-learning was a line
You, somehow, never crossed!

Mayhap we ne'er shall meet again,
Except on that Pacific main
Beyond this planet's brink—
Yet as we erst have braved the weather,
Still we may float awhile together,
As comrades on this ink!

Many a scudding gale we've had
Together, and, my gallant lad,
Some perils we have passed;
When huge and black the wave careered,
And oft the giant surge appeared
The master of our mast—

'Twas thy example taught me how
To climb the billow's hoary brow,
Or cleave the raging heap—
To bound along the ocean wild,
With danger only as a child
The waters rocked to sleep.

Oh, who can tell that brave delight,
To see the hissing wave in might,
Come rampant like a snake!
To leap his horrid crest, and feast
One's eyes upon the briny beast,
Left couchant in the wake!

The simple shepherd's love is still
To bask upon a sunny hill,
The herdsman roams the vale—
With both their fancies I agree;
Be mine the swelling, scooping sea,
That is both hill and dale!

I yearn for that brisk spray—I yearn
To feel the wave from stem to stern
Uplift the plunging keel.
That merry step we used to dance,
On board the Aidant or the Chance,
The ocean "toe and heel."

I long to feel the steady gale
That fills the broad, distended sail—
The seas on either hand!
My thought, like any hollow shell
Keeps mocking at my ear the swell
Of waves against the land.

It is no fable—that old strain
Of syrens!—so the witching main
Is singing—and I sigh!
My heart is all at once inclined
To sea-ward—and I seem to find
The waters in my eye!

Methinks I see the shining beach;
The merry waves, each after each,
  Rebounding o'er the flints;
I spy the grim preventive spy!
The jolly boatmen standing nigh!
  The maids in morning chintz!

And there they float—the sailing craft!
The sail is up—the wind abaft—
  The ballast trim and neat.
Alas! 'tis all a dream—a lie!
A printer's imp is standing by,
  To haul my mizen sheet!

My tiller dwindles to a pen—
My craft is that of bookish men—
  My sale, let Longman tell!
Adieu, the wave! the wind! the spray!
Men—maidens—chintzes—fade away!
  Tom Woodgate, fare thee well!

THE LITTLE BOOK-SHOP

Charles Hanson Towne, who has published half a dozen books of verse in the United States, sketches cleverly, in this poem which we reproduce from the "Century," the contrast between the bookish mind, happy in the romance of a vanished world, and the rush of everyday life in a great city.

I KNOW a book-shop in a quiet street
  Close to the flame and thunder of Broadway,
A little haven, a refuge and retreat
  From the loud murmur of the staring day.

There, in the hush, with voices of the past
  Singing far songs—Wordsworth and Keats and Poe—
Often I linger, dipping in the last
  Bright volume or some ancient folio.

The world goes by; haply is lost—well lost.
  But old worlds rise before me in this place,
And in some shining book, by Love embossed,
  I read the record of a nobler race.

I read of pomp and chivalry and pride,
  Or the light laughter of a quiet age;
I dwell in moonlight on a distant tide,
  What time I thumb and turn some yellow page.

I hear the rustle of imperial lace,
  I dream of glory and strong fighting men;
The lamps expire, and in the chimney-place
  The last red embers burn, go out; and then

I find myself one of the evening crowd,
  Facing the world that thrills me as before.
But, oh, that moment when they spoke aloud—
  Shakespeare and Dante—through Death's hidden door!

ROSALIND

One of the most popular sports of the olden times was falconry—the hunting of birds by means of trained birds of prey. The falcon, carried on a thickly gloved wrist till it was unloosed, was a keen-sighted, swift, and cruel creature. When Tennyson was young, and writing of men and women and the world wholly from imagination, he conceived a maiden who was bright of eye and bold and free, yet sharp of speech, and he compared her with the half-tamed falcon.

MY Rosalind, my Rosalind,
  My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,
Whose free delight, from any height of rapid flight,
Stoops at all game that wings the skies,
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon, whither,
Careless both of wind and weather,
Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,
Up or down the streaming wind?
The quick lark's closest-carolled strains,
The shadow rushing up the sea,
The lightning flash atween the rains,
The sunlight driving down the lea,
The leaping stream, the very wind,
That will not stay, upon his way,
To stoop the cowslip to the plains,
Is not so clear and bold and free
As you, my falcon Rosalind.
You care not for another's pains,
Because you are the soul of joy,
Bright metal all without alloy.
Life shoots and glances through your veins
And flashes off a thousand ways,
Through lips and eyes in subtle rays.
Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,
Keen with triumph, watching still
To pierce me through with pointed light;
But oftentimes they flash and glitter
Like sunshine on a dancing rill,
And your words are seeming-bitter,
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter
From excess of swift delight.
Come down, come home, my Rosalind,
My gay young hawk, my Rosalind:
Too long you keep the upper skies;
Too long you roam and wheel at will;
But we must hood your random eyes,
That care not whom they kill,
And your cheek, whose brilliant hue
Is so sparkling-fresh to view,
Some red heath-flower in the dew,
Touched with sunrise. We must bind
And keep you fast, my Rosalind,
Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,
And clip your wings, and make you love:
When we have lured you from above,
And that delight of frolic flight by day or night,
From North to South,
We'll bind you fast in silken cords,
And kiss away the bitter words
From off your rosy mouth.

GROWN UP

This poem and the next are linked together by their subject—the outgrowing of a mother's care by children. At first the mother is everything to the child; but then the son passes on into an independent life, such as is finely pictured by Robert Louis Stevenson in the second poem, where the mother, left behind, is likened to the smith who stays patiently at home shaping the weapons which the adventurous soldier wields.

CHILD, child, child!
What have they done with thee?
Where is the little child
Who laughed upon my knee?
My son is straight and strong,
Ready of lip and limb;
'Twas the dream of my whole life long
To bear a son like him.
He has griefs I cannot guess,
He has joys I cannot know;
I love him none the less;
With a man it should be so.
But where, where, where,
Is the child so dear to me,
With the silken golden hair,
Who sobbed upon my knee?

A MOTHER'S PAIN

THE child, the seed, the grain of corn,
The acorn on the hill,
Each for some separate end is born,
In season fit, and still
Each must in strength arise to work the almighty will.
So from the hearth the children flee,
By that almighty hand
Austerely led; so one by sea
Goes forth, and one by land;
Nor aught of all man's sons escapes from that command.
And as the fervent smith of yore
Beat out the glowing blade,
Nor wielded in the front of war
The weapons that he made,
But in the tower at home still plied his ringing trade;
So like a sword the son shall roam,
On nobler missions sent;
And as the smith remained at home,
In peaceful turret pent,
So sits the while at home the mother well content.

HAROUN AL RASCHID

Haroun Al Raschid, the gorgeous caliph of the East, is one of the characters in "The Arabian Nights" whose name is traditionally used to suggest magnificence and power. He lived through the latter half of the eighth century into the ninth century. In these lines Longfellow tells how the great caliph was made to feel the hollowness of passing greatness.

ONE day, Haroun Al Raschid read
A book wherein the poet said:
'Where are the kings, and where the rest
Of those who once the world possessed?
They're gone with all their pomp and show,
They're gone the way that thou shalt go.
O thou who choosest for thy share
The world, and what the world calls fair,
Take all that it can give or lend,
But know that death is at the end!"
Haroun Al Raschid bowed his head;
Tears fell upon the page he read.

VESPERS

A pretty little evening vignette by T. E. Brown, the poet of Manxland, who was long one of the masters at Clifton School.

O BLACKBIRD, what a boy you are!
How you do go it!
Blowing your bugle to that one sweet star—
How you do blow it!
And can she hear you, blackbird boy, so far?
Or is it wasted breath?
"Good Lord! She is so bright
To-night!"
The blackbird saith.

THE TWINS

An example of the humour of Henry S. Leigh, one of the most prolific writers of light verse in the 'seventies of the last century. It is taken from his "Ballads of Cockayne." He wrote chiefly about London, and very largely for the stage.

IN form and feature, face and limb,
I grew so like my brother
That folks got taking me for him,
And each for one another.
It puzzled all our kith and kin,
It reached a fearful pitch;
For one of us was born a twin,
And not a soul knew which.
One day, to make the matter worse,
Before our names were fixed,
As we were being washed by nurse,
We got completely mixed;
And thus, you see, by Fate's decree—
Or, rather, nurse's whim—
My brother John got christened me,
And I got christened him.
This fatal likeness ever dogged
My footsteps when at school,
And I was always getting flogged
When John turned out a fool.
I put this question fruitlessly
To everyone I knew:
"What would you do if you were me
To prove that you were you?"
Our close resemblance turned the tide
Of my domestic life,
For somehow my intended bride
Became my brother's wife.
In fact, year after year the same
Absurd mistakes went on,
And when I died the neighbours came
And buried brother John.

SIR NICHOLAS AT MARSTON MOOR

This poem shows how well Winthrop Mackworth Praed could have written in the heroic vein if he had not been led into writing chiefly about the graceful sentiments of Society. The bold knight riding to the fray bearing his lady's banner, in haughty confidence, and returning on foot, wounded but undismayed, and with the banner, is a picture that fixes itself in the mind. It is only an incident; we do not see the end; but Cromwell would not bear too hardly on the man whose bravery he admired. Quite an array of warring captains is paraded—Rupert, Lucas, Langley, Astley, and Newcastle on the Royalist side, and Skippon, Pride, Fairfax and Cromwell with the victors. The poem is a fitting companion to Macaulay's vigorous sketch of the charging hosts at Naseby.

To horse, to horse, Sir Nicholas! the clarion's note is high;
To horse, to horse, Sir Nicholas! the huge drum makes reply:
Ere this hath Lucas marched with his gallant cavaliers,
And the bray of Rupert's trumpets grows fainter on our ears.
To horse, to horse, Sir Nicholas! White Guy is at the door,
And the vulture whets his beak o'er the field of Marston Moor.

Up rose the Lady Alice from her brief and broken prayer,
And she brought a silken standard down the narrow turret stair.
Oh, many were the tears that those radiant eyes had shed,
As she worked the bright word "Glory" in the gay and glancing thread;
And mournful was the smile that o'er those beauteous features ran,
As she said, "It is your lady's gift, unfurl it in the van."
"It shall flutter, noble wench, where the best and boldest ride,
Through the steel-clad files of Skippon and the black dragoons of Pride;
The recreant soul of Fairfax will feel a sicklier qualm,
And the rebel lips of Oliver give out a louder psalm,
When they see my lady's gew-gaw flaunt bravely on their wing,
And hear her loyal soldier's shout, for God and for the King!"

'Tis noon; the ranks are broken along the royal line;
They fly, the braggarts of the Court, the bullies of the Rhine:
Stout Langley's cheer is heard no more, and Astley's helm is down,
And Rupert sheathes his rapier with a curse and with a frown;
And cold Newcastle mutters, as he follows in the flight,
"The German boar had better far have stayed in York tonight."
The Knight is all alone, his steel cap cleft in twain,
His good buff jerkin crimsoned o'er with many a gory stain;
But still he waves the standard, and cries amid the rout—
"For Church and King, fair gentlemen, spur on and fight it out!"
And now he wards a Roundhead's pike, and now he hums a stave,
And here he quotes a stage-play, and there he fells a knave.

Good speed to thee, Sir Nicholas! thou hast no thought of fear;
Good speed to thee, Sir Nicholas! but fearful odds are here.
The traitors ring thee round, and with every blow and thrust,
"Down, down," they cry, "with Belial, down with him to the dust!"
"I would," quoth grim old Oliver, "that Belial's trusty sword
This day were doing battle for the Saints and for the Lord!"

The Lady Alice sits with her maidens in her bower;
The grey-haired warden watches on the castle's highest tower—
"What news, what news, old Anthony?"—
"The field is lost and won;
The ranks of war are melting as the mists beneath the sun;
And a wounded man speeds hither, I am old and cannot see,
Or sure I am that sturdy step my master's step should be."

"I bring thee back the standard from as rude and rough a fray
As e'er was proof of soldier's thews, or theme for minstrel's lay.
Bid Hubert fetch the silver bowl, and liquor *quantum suff;*
I'll make a shift to drain it ere I part with boot and buff;
Though Guy through many a gaping wound is breathing out his life,
And I come to thee a landless man, my fond and faithful wife!

"Sweet, we will fill our money-bags, and freight a ship for France,
And mourn in merry Paris for this poor realm's mischance;
Or, if the worst betide me, why, better axe or rope,
Than life with Lenthal for a king, and Peters for a pope!
Alas, alas, my gallant Guy!—out on the crop-eared boor
That sent me with my standard on foot from Marston Moor!"

THE HOSTS OF THE DEAD

This vision of the slain in battle marching into the Beyond with stern resolve still written on their peaceful faces is a word-picture by a Canadian soldier in the front in Flanders.

IN lonely watches night by night
Great visions burst upon my sight,
For down the stretches of the sky
The hosts of dead go marching by.
Strange, ghastly banners o'er them float,
Strange bugles sound an awful note,
And all their faces and their eyes
Are lit with starlight from the skies.
The anguish and the pain have passed,
And peace hath come to them at last;
But in the stern looks linger still
The iron purpose and the will.

THE WHITE CZAR

In this poem Longfellow shows us how the Russian peasantry feel towards their Czar. The White Czar here means Peter the Great, who planned the expansion of Russia until she could reach the free seas. The word "Batyushka" means "Little Father," and is used in addressing the priest of a village. "Gosudar" is Russian for sovereign, or monarch The Russian spelling is always Tsar, and the T is sounded.

DOST thou see on the rampart's height
That wreath of mist in the light
Of the midnight moon? Oh, hist!
It is not a wreath of mist;
It is the Czar, the White Czar,
Batyushka! Gosudar!

He has heard, among the dead,
The artillery roll o'erhead;
The drums and the tramp of feet
Of his soldiery in the street.
He is awake—the White Czar,
Batyushka! Gosudar!

He has heard in the grave the cries
Of his people: "Awake! arise!"
He has rent the gold brocade
Whereof his shroud was made.
He is risen—the White Czar,
Batyushka! Gosudar!

From the Volga and the Don
He has led his armies on,
Over river and morass,
Over desert and mountain pass;
The Czar—the Orthodox Czar,
Batyushka! Gosudar!

He looks from the mountain-chain
Toward the seas, that cleave in twain
The continents; his hand
Points southward o'er the land
Of Roumele. O Czar,
Batyushka! Gosudar!

And the words break from his lips:
"I am the builder of ships,
And my ships shall sail these seas
To the Pillars of Hercules!
I say it—the White Czar,
Batyushka! Gosudar!

"The Bosphorus shall be free;
It shall make room for me,
And the gates of its water-streets
Be unbarred before my fleets.
I say it—the White Czar,
Batyushka! Gosudar!

"And the Christian shall no more
Be crushed, as heretofore,
Beneath thine iron rule,
O Sultan of Istamboul!
I swear it—I, the Czar,
Batyushka! Gosudar!"

A SONG OF THE SEA

Eric Mackay, the writer of this patriotic outburst, was the son of Charles Mackay, the song-writer. If there is something too much of the spirit of "England over all" in the second verse, it is modified by the thought that freedom and England are old friends. The poem is not complete here.

FREE as the wind that leaps from out the North,
When storms are hurrying forth,
Up springs the voice of England, trumpet-clear,
Which all the world shall hear,
As one may hear God's thunder overhead—
A voice that echoes through the sunset red,
And through the fiery portals of the morn
Where, day by day, the golden hours are born—
A voice to urge the strengthening of the bands
That bind our Empire lands
With such a love as none shall put to scorn!

They little know our England who deny
The claim we have, from zone to furthest zone,
To belt the beauteous earth,
And treat the clamorous ocean as our own
In all the measuring of its monstrous girth.
The tempest calls to us, and we reply;
And not, as cowards do, in under-tone!
The sun that sets for others sets no more
On Britain's world-wide shore
Which all the tides of all the seas have known.

We have no lust of strife;
We seek no vile dissension for base ends—
Freedom and fame and England are old friends.
Yet, if our foes desire it, let them come,
Whate'er their numbers be!
They know the road to England, mile by mile,
And they shall learn, full soon, that strength nor guile
Will much avail them in an English sea.
We will not hurl them backward to the waves—
We'll give them graves!

LONDON

This remarkable description of London by the first Scottish poet of considerable renown, William Dunbar (1465-1530), is given with its original spelling. Dunbar was a transition poet, marking the change from mediaeval to modern English. The poem is curious as coming from a Scot a century before the union of the two kingdoms. Though many of its comparisons are far-fetched, the general style is roughly vigorous. Flour, of course, means flower; cleped is named; roy, king; Noy, Noah; tour, tower. Note the description of London Bridge, which at that time was flanked on either side by shops.

LONDON, thou art of towns A-per-se,
Sovereign of cities, seemliest in sight,
Of high renown, riches, and royaltie;
Of lordis, barons, and many goodly knight;
Of most delectable lusty ladies bright;
Of famous prelatis, in habitis clerical;
Of merchantis full of substance and might:
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Gladdeth anon thou lusty Troynovant,
Citie that some time cleped was New Troy,
In all the earth, imperial as thou stant,
Princess of townes, of pleasure and of joy,
A richer resteth under no Christian roy;
For manly power, with craftis natural,
Fourmeth none fairer sith the flood of Noy:
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Gem of all joy, jasper of jocunditie,
Most mighty carbuncle of vertue and valour;
Strong Troy in vigour and in strenuitie;
Of royal cities rose and geraflour;
Empress of townes, exalt in honour;
In beautie bearing the crown imperial;
Sweet paradise precelling in pleasure:
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Above all rivers thy River hath renoun,
Whose beriall streamis, pleasant and preclare,
Under thy lusty wallis runneth down,
Where many a swan doth swim with wingis fair;
Where many a barge doth sail, and row with aer,
Where many a ship doth rest with top-royal.
O! town of townes, patron and not compare:
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Upon thy lusty Brig of pillars white
Been merchantis full royal to behold;
Upon thy streetis goeth many a seemly knight
All clad in velvet gownes and chains of gold.
By Julius Caesar thy Tour founded of old
May be the house of Mars victorial,
Whose artillery with tongue may not be told.
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Strong be they wallis that about thee standis;
Wise be the people that within thee dwellis;
Fresh is thy river with his lusty standis;
Blith be they churches, well-sounding be thy bellis;
Rich be thy merchantis in substance that excellis;
Fair be their wives, right lovesome, white and small;
Clear be thy virgins, lusty under killis:
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Thy famous Mayor, by princely governance,
With sword of justice, thee ruleth prudently.
No lord of Paris, Venice, or Florence
In dignitie or honour goeth to him nigh,
He is exemplar, lode-star, and guye;
Principal patron and rose original,
Above all Mayors as maister most worthy:
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

A SONG

Allan Ramsay was one of the Scottish song-writers who prepared the way for the triumph of Robert Burns, who won the heart of the whole world by the simple directness of his passion. This song, taken from Ramsay's "The Gentle Shepherd," is the most pleasing example of Ramsay's art.

MY Peggy is a young thing,
Just entered in her teens,
Fair as the day, and sweet as May,
Fair as the day, and always gay.
My Peggy is a young thing,
And I'm not very auld,
Yet well I like to meet her at
The walking of the fauld.

My Peggy speaks sae sweetly
Whene'er we meet alane,
I wish nae mair to lay my care,
I wish nae mair of a' that's rare.
My Peggy speaks sae sweetly,
To a' the lave I'm cauld;
But she gars a' my spirits glow
At the walking of the fauld.

My Peggy smiles sae kindly
Whene'er I whisper love
That I look down on a' the town,
That I look down upon a crown.
My Peggy smiles sae kindly,
It makes me blithe and bauld;
And naething gie's me sic delight
As walking of the fauld.

My Peggy sings sae saftly,
When on my pipe I play,
By a' the rest it is confest—
By a' the rest, that she sings best.
My Peggy sings sae saftly,
And in her songs are tauld,
Wi' innocence, the wale o' sense,
At walking of the fauld.

THE LAST BUCCANEER

In this poem Charles Kingsley, who was a canon of Westminster as well as a popular novelist and poet, tells us with an unexpected sympathy the story of the buccaneers of the Spanish Main, through the mouth of the last of them, an impenitent rogue, who has arrived in England to die, and who looks back with longing to the old days when he divided his time between piratical robbery and a lazy life.

OH, England is a pleasant place for them
that's rich and high,
But England is a cruel place for such poor
folks as I;
And such a port for mariners I ne'er shall
see again
As the pleasant isle of Avès, beside the
Spanish Main.

There were forty craft in Avès that were
both swift and stout,
All furnished well with small-arms and
cannon round about;
And a thousand men in Avès made laws so
fair and free,
To choose their gallant captains and obey
them loyally.

Thence we sailed against the Spaniard with
his hoards of plate and gold,
Which he wrung with cruel tortures from
Indian folk of old;
Likewise the merchant captains, with
hearts as hard as stone,
Who flog men, and keel-haul them, and
starve them to the bone.

Oh, the palms grew high in Avès, and fruits
that shone like gold,
And the colibris and parrots they were
gorgeous to behold;
And the negro maids to Avès from bondage
fast did flee,
To welcome gallant sailors, a-sweeping in
from sea.

Oh, sweet it was in Avès to hear the landward
breeze,
A-swing with good tobacco in a net between
the trees,
With a negro lass to fan you, while you
listened to the roar
Of the breakers on the reef outside, that
never touched the shore.

But Scripture saith, an ending to all fine
things must be,
So the King's ships sailed on Avès, and
quite put down were we.
All day we fought like bulldogs, but they
burst the booms at night;
And I fled in a piragua, sore wounded, from
the fight.

Nine days I floated starving, and a negro
lass beside,
Till, for all I tried to cheer her, the poor
young creature died;
But, as I lay a-gasping, a Bristol sail came
by,
And brought me home to England here, to
beg until I die.

And now I'm old, and going—I'm sure I
can't tell where;
One comfort is, this world's so hard, I can't
be worse off there;
If I might but be a sea-dove, I'd fly across
the main
To the pleasant isle of Avès, to look at it
once again.

THE OLD BEGGAR

The writer of this sympathetic picture of kindness and charity was Lucy Aikin, who usually wrote on serious historical subjects, like her father before her, Dr. Aikin. She died in 1864. This tender poem shows that she might perhaps have written with advantage on some simpler and lighter subjects than she chose when she wrote heavy history.

AROUND the fire, one wintry night,
The farmer's rosy children sat;
The fagot lent its blazing light,
And jokes went round and careless chat.

When, hark! a gentle hand they hear,
Low tapping at the bolted door;
And, thus to gain their willing ear,
A feeble voice was heard to implore:

"Cold blows the blast across the moor;
The sleet drives hissing in the wind.
Yon toilsome mountain lies before,
A dreary, treeless waste behind.

"My eyes are weak and dim with age;
No road, no path, can I descry;
And these poor rags ill stand the rage
Of such a keen, inclement sky.

"So faint I am, these tottering feet
No more my feeble frame can bear;
My sinking heart forgets to beat,
And drifting snows my tomb prepare.

"Open your hospitable door,
And shie'd me from the biting blast;
Cold, cold it blows across the moor—
The weary moor that I have passed!"

With hasty steps the farmer ran,
And close beside the fire they place
The poor, half-frozen beggar man,
With shaking limbs and pallid face.

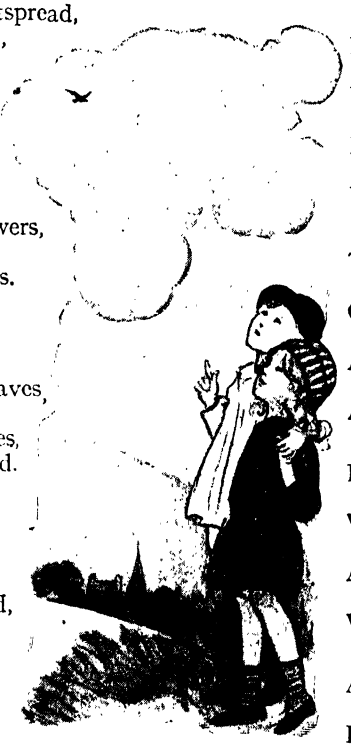
The little children flocking came,
And warmed his stiffening hands in theirs;
And busily the good old dame
A comfortable mess prepares.

Their kindness cheered his drooping soul,
And slowly down his wrinkled cheek
The big round tear was seen to roll,
And told the thanks he could not speak.

The children, too, began to sigh,
And all their merry chat was o'er;
And yet they felt, they knew not why,
More glad than they had done before.

THE JOURNEY

These delicately touched pictures of the four great stages in life's journey are sketched by Lena Keeling Collard, one of our readers who is only half-way through her teens.



WINGED clouds outspread,
A sunny morn,
A lark o'erhead,
A rosy dawn.
A girl and boy,
Sweet life and joy:
Springtime!

The hum of bees,
Bright-coloured flowers,
Cool shade of trees,
And scented bowers.
A maid and youth,
A plighted troth:
Summer!

The damp, brown leaves,
A moaning wind,
Heart to heart cleaves,
With love entwined.
A woman grown,
A man—her own:
Autumn.

The cold, bleak air,
Life's pathway trod,
A wrinkled pair,
Draw near to God.
A sinking sun,
The journey done:
Winter.

THE FUNNY LITTLE FELLOW

Charles Dickens once drew a picture of two genial, good-natured men whom he called the Brothers Cheeryble. In these verses James Whitcomb Riley, the American poet, pictures the passage through the world of a cheery spirit that diffuses mirth and goodwill, and captivates everybody by simplicity, merriment, and sincerity, with much more practical results than would ever be gained by glum virtue.

'TWAS a Funny Little Fellow
Of the very purest type,
For he had a heart as mellow
As an apple over-ripe;
And the brightest little twinkle
When a funny thing occurred,
And the lightest little tinkle
Of a laugh you ever heard!

His smile was like the glitter
Of the sun in tropic lands,
And his talk a sweeter twitter
Than the swallow understands;
Hear him sing, and tell a story,
Snap a joke, ignite a pun;
'Twas a capture, rapture, glory,
And explosion, all in one!

Though he hadn't any money—
That condiment which tends
To make a fellow "honey"
For the palate of his friends—
Sweet simples he compounded—
Sovereign antidotes for sin
Or taint—a faith unbounded
That his friends were genuine.

He wasn't honoured, maybe,
For his songs of praise were slim,
Yet I never knew a baby
That wouldn't crow for him;
I never knew a mother
But urged a kindly claim
Upon him as a brother
At the mention of his name.

The sick have ceased their sighing,
And have even found the grace
Of a smile when they were dying
As they looked upon his face;
And I've seen his eyes of laughter
Melt in tears that only ran
As though, swift-dancing after,
Came the Funny Little Man.

He laughed away the sorrow
And he laughed away the gloom
We are all so prone to borrow
From the darkness of the tomb;
And he laughed across the ocean
Of a happy life, and passed,
With a laugh of glad emotion,
Into Paradise at last.

And I think the angels knew him,
And had gathered to await
His coming, and run to him
Through the widely opened gate,
With their faces gleaming sunny
For his laughter-loving sake,
And thinking—"What a funny
Little angel he will make!"

IT IS LOVELY TO REMEMBER

These lines, with a deep pathetic interest, are poetry in spirit rather than in form. They were written by Emily Adams, a nine-year-old reader of My Magazine, whose father, after serving his country well, died far away from home. Soon after his death these lines were found hidden away in a desk, written on a scrap of paper by his only little girl. There is something beautiful in the thought of this child, in the hour of deep sorrow, not bending beneath the cruel weight of grief, but finding secret comfort in the memory of the beautiful things that "it is lovely to remember."

OH, it is lovely to remember [us,
That the Lord's almighty wing is round
Oh, it is lovely to remember
That we had a father who was good and holy;
And we will try like him to be.
Oh, it is lovely to remember
That some day we shall hear him call again.
Oh, it is lovely to remember
That when the last call shall awake us
We shall see his face once more.
Oh, it is lovely to remember
That the Lord has still our mother left us.

THE CONQUEST OF THE POLE

Innumerable have been the men who have died while trying to reach one or other of the Poles. A living poet, the Rev. Frederick Langbridge, imagines all those who have failed in the search rising from the graves which ended their sufferings, and saluting the men who first triumphed over Nature's terrors, and reached the long-sought goal. The poem contains a number of vivid pictures of the privations and agonies that accompanied unsuccessful Arctic exploration.

Lo, a lost and lonely place,
  At the end of time and space,
As forgotten as a still-born infant's soul!
  There was neither land nor sky,
  But a mightier wind went by,
And the ice began to shoulder and to roll.

  There was not a wandering wing,
  Not a famished moss to cling,
And it seemed that the Creator's flaming breath,
  Being faint and well-nigh spent,
  Had been turned from its intent,
And had fallen in a frozen word of death.

  Then I thought the dreary dark
  Seemed to shudder and to hark,
And the black gust seemed to gather to a form,
  And a man whose long desire
  Was a red and wasting fire
Was caught onward in the blindness of the storm.

  Then the dark did moan and creep,
  And on every tumbled heap
Stood a shadow lean and shaggy as a bear,
  And there from every muffled face
  On the half-begotten space
Fell a ghastly gleam of anger and despair.

  And at first they seemed to stand
  As if every ghostly hand
Shook a curse down, and a ban to hold and blight;
  Then a breath of sighs arose,
  Like the drift of sleety snows,
And they parted to the left and to the right.

  For a while they waited, mute,
  With their hands at the salute,
Till a welcome touched the wonder of their stare,
  While their breath in curls of white
  Round their eyes of tunnelled light
Made a jag of bitter ice-crust in their hair.

  Then one gathered voice and said:
"We had drifted to the dead;
We had poured upon the silences our soul;
  We have risen in the power
  And the splendour of the hour
That shall break the virgin gateway of the Pole.

"We have felt what flesh may feel,
  We have known the carrion meal,
And the caking of the dull blood into mire,
  And the leper's scaly skin,
  And the dead man's heart within,
And the thirsting and the numbing and the fire.

"For within the soul of all
  Where the longing and the call
We had neither will nor power to stint or stay;
  And we tore by stern degrees
  From the capes and stiffened seas
Fold on folding of their mystery away.

"We have given, all and each,
  To a sea-lane or a beach,
To a jet of cloud and flying spume, a name;
  But the gates were held; at last
  We were broken and we passed,
But our drowse was turned to dreaming when you came.

"We have played the game and lost—
  We were holden, we were crossed,
We were beaten at the gaining of the goal;
  You have plucked the mystery deep
  That the Lord had thought to keep;
We salute you; pass on, brother, to the Pole."

LOSSES RESTORED

The sonnet, a poem of fourteen lines on one subject, was often used in early times to pay personal compliments. This sonnet is an example from Shakespeare. The poet bewails the losses time brings, but finds full compensation in the thought of his friend. The first two lines have passed into every quotation book, and are familiar to us all.

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
  I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
  And with old woe new wail my dear time's waste.

Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
  For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long-since cancelled woe,
  And moan the expense of many a vanished sight.

Then can I grieve at grievances forgone,
  And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,
  Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

ANOTHER

The author of these lines, Thomas Lodge, born in 1558, was a writer of plays a little time before Shakespeare. He is now remembered chiefly for his play "Rosalynd," on which Shakespeare founded his delightful "As You Like It."

FIRST shall the heavens want starry light,
The seas be robbéd of their waves,
The day want sun, the sun want bright,
The night want shade, the dead men graves,
The April flowers, and leaves, and tree,
Before I false my faith to thee.

First shall the top of highest hill
By humble pains be overpryed,
And poets scorn the Muses' quill,
And fish forsake the water glide,
And Iris lose her coloured weed,
Before I false thee at thy need.

First direful Hate shall turn to peace,
And Love relent in deep disdain,
And Death his fatal stroke shall cease,
And Envy pity every pain,
And pleasure mourn, and Sorrow smile,
Before I talk of any guile.

First Time shall stay his stayless race,
And Winter bless his brows with corn,
And Snow bemoisten July's face,
And Winter spring, and Summer mourn,
Before my pen, by help of Fame,
Cease to recite thy sacred name.

THE UNFORGOTTEN

In this poem Dr. Richard Chenevix Trench claims for those who die from disease in war the same honour as is awarded to those who fight and win or fight and fall. The Crimean War was the occasion of the poem, when the losses from disease were very great indeed. Dr. Trench died in 1886.

WHOM for thy race of heroes wilt thou own,
And, England, who shall be thy joy, thy pride?
As thou art just, oh, then not those alone
Who nobly conquering lived, or conquering died.

Then also in thy roll of heroes write,
For well they earned what best thou canst bestow,
Who, being girt and arméd for the fight,
Yielded their arms, but to no mortal foe.

Far off they pined on fever-stricken coast,
Or sank in sudden arms of painful death;
And faces which their eyes desired the most
They saw not as they drew their parting breath.

Sad doom, to know a mighty work in hand,
Which shall from all the ages honour win;
Upon the threshold of this work to stand,
Arrested there, while others enter in.

And this was theirs—they saw their fellows bound
To fields of fame which they might never share;
And all the while within their own hearts found
A strength that was not less, to do and dare.

But knew that never, never with their peers,
They should salute some grand day's glorious close,
The shout of triumph ringing in their ears,
The light of battle shining on their brows.

Sad doom—yet say not Heaven to them assigned
A lot from all of glory quite estranged;
Albeit the laurel which they hoped to bind
About their brows for cypress wreath was changed.

Heaven gave to them a glory stern, austere,
A glory of all earthly glory shorn;
With firm heart to accept Fate's gift severe,
Bravely to bear the thing that must be borne;

To see such visions fade and turn to nought,
And in this saddest issue to consent;
If only the great work were duly wrought,
That others should accomplish it, content.

Then, as thou wouldst thyself continue great,
Keep a true eye for what is great indeed;
Nor know it only in its lofty state
And victor's robes, but in its lowliest weed.

And now, and when this dreadful work is done,
England, be these, too, thy delight and pride;
Wear them as near thy heart as any one
Of all who conquering lived, or conquering died.

THE LARK

Some of the most delightful writing of the age of Shakespeare, and the age which followed him, is found in the songs that were scattered through the plays of the period. This is an example from Thomas Heywood's "Lucreece," written in 1608.

PACK clouds away, and welcome day,
With night we banish sorrow:
Sweet air blow soft, mount lark aloft,
To give my love good-morrow:
Wings from the wind to please her mind,
Notes from the lark I'll borrow:
Bird, prune thy wing, nightingale sing,
To give my love good-morrow.
To give my love good-morrow,
Notes from them all I'll borrow.

Wake from thy nest, robin red-breast,
Sing, birds, in every furrow;
And from each hill let music shrill
Give my fair love good-morrow.
Blackbird and thrush in every bush,
Stare, linnet, and cock-sparrow,
You pretty elves, amongst yourselves,
Sing my fair love good-morrow.
To give my love good-morrow,
Sing, birds, in every furrow.

THE WANDERING WIND

These verses illustrate charmingly the clearness and simplicity, united with poetical feeling, which made the writings of Mrs. Hemans popular. The poet here suggests that the soulful messages we may hear in the sounds of Nature are really transfers by imagination from our own feelings. That is so; but it pleases us to endow material things with our own sensitiveness.

THE Wind, the wandering Wind
Of the golden summer eves—
Whence is the thrilling magic
Of its tones amongst the leaves?
Oh! is it from the waters,
Or from the long, tall grass?
Or is it from the hollow rocks
Through which its breathings pass?
Or is it from the voices
Of all in one combined
That it wins the tone of mastery?
The Wind, the wandering Wind!
No, no! the strange, sweet accents
That with it come and go,
They are not from the osiers,
Nor the fir-trees whispering low.
They are not of the waters,
Nor of the caverned hill;
'Tis the human love within us
That gives them power to thrill:
They touch the links of memory
Around our spirits twined,
And we start, and weep, and tremble,
To the Wind, the wandering Wind!

NONGTONGPAW

Charles Dibdin, who was born in 1745 and died in 1814, was a rollicking, quarrelsome song-writer, singer, musician, and actor. He lived for some time in France, and his experience there perhaps suggested this humorous account of an Englishman's difficulties with French. "Je vous n'entends pas," means, of course, "I don't understand you."

JOHN BULL for a pastime took a prance,
Some time ago, to peep at France;
To talk of sciences and arts,
And knowledge gained in foreign parts.
Monsieur, obsequious, heard him speak,
And answered John in heathen Greek:
To all he asked, about all he saw,
'Twas, "Monsieur, je vous n'entends pas."

John to the Palais-Royal come,
Its splendour almost struck him dumb.
"I say, whose house is that there here?"
"House! Je vous n'entends pas, monsieur."
"What, Nongtongpaw again!" cries John;
"This fellow is some mighty Don:
No doubt he's plenty for the maw,
I'll breakfast with this Nongtongpaw."

John saw Versailles from Marly's height,
And cried, astonished at the sight,
"Whose fine estate is that there here?"
"State! Je vous n'entends pas, monsieur."
"His? What, the land and houses too?
The fellow's richer than a Jew:
On everything he lays his claw!
I should like to dine with Nongtongpaw."

Next tripping came a courtly fair,
John cried, enchanted with her air,
"What lovely wench is that there here?"
"Ventch! Je vous n'entends pas, monsieur."
"What, he again? Upon my life!
A palace, lands, and then a wife
Sir Joshua might delight to draw:
I should like to sup with Nongtongpaw."

'But hold! Whose funeral's that?' cries John.
'Je vous n'entends pas.' 'What, is he gone?
Wealth, fame, and beauty could not save
Poor Nongtongpaw, then, from the grave!
His race is run, his game is up—
I'd with him breakfast, dine, and sup;
But since he chooses to withdraw,
Good-night t' ye, Mounseer Nongtongpaw!'

NIGHT IS NIGH GONE

This is a modernisation of an ancient song by Alexander Montgomery, who was a Scottish poet living between 1545 and 1610. Montgomery acted as poetical coach to James the First of England, when James was trying to be a poet.

HEY, now the day is dawning;
The jolly cock's crowing;
The Eastern sky's glowing;
Stars fade one by one;
The thistle-cock's crying
On lovers long lying,
Cease vowing and sighing;
The night is nigh gone.

The fields are o'erflowing
With gowans all glowing,
And white lilies growing,
A thousand as one;
The sweet ring-dove cooing,
His love-notes renewing,
Now moaning, now suing;
The night is nigh gone.

The season excelling,
In scented flowers smelling,
To kind love compelling
Our hearts every one;
With sweet ballads moving
The maids we are loving,
'Mid musing and roving
The night is nigh gone.

Of war and fair women
The young knights are dreaming,
With bright breastplates gleaming
And plumed helmets on;
The barbed steed neighs lordly,
And shakes his mane proudly,
For war-trumpets loudly
Say night is nigh gone.

I see the flags flowing,
The warriors all glowing,
And, snorting and blowing,
The steeds rushing on;
The lances are crashing,
Out broad blades come flashing,
'Mid shouting and dashing—
The night is nigh gone.

A SUMMER'S DAY

The Scottish writer of these verses, Alexander Hume, lived from 1560 to 1609, and so was a contemporary of Shakespeare. He was one of the first poets to describe outdoor life with simple feeling. These verses are taken from the best poem of its kind that had then appeared in the English tongue. "Simples" is an old word for simple remedies; "callor" means cool.

THE time so tranquil is and still,
That nowhere shall ye find,
Save on a high and barren hill,
An air of peeping wind.

All trees and simples, great and small,
That balmy leaf do bear,
Than they were painted on a wall,
No more they move or steir.

The rivers fresh, the callor streams,
O'er rocks do softly rin,
The water clear like crystal seems,
And makes a pleasant din.

THE BIRKENHEAD

This is a description by Sir Henry Yule of the sinking of the ship Birkenhead off the coast of South Africa. The original poem is spoiled by a needless sneer at the pride of France in the heroic deaths of a crew of one of her battleships; but we omit these unfortunate opening lines.

Now we recount no fable; Europe, hear!
And when they tell thee "England is a fen
Corrupt, a kingdom tottering to decay,
Her nerveless burghers lying an easy prey
For the first comer," tell how the other day
A crew of half a thousand Englishmen
Went down into the deep in Simon's Bay!

Not with the cheer of battle in the throat,
Or cannon-glare and din to stir their blood,
But, roused from dreams of home to find their boat
Fast sinking, mustered on the deck they stood,
Biding God's pleasure and their chief's command.
Calm was the sea, but not less calm that band [breath
Close ranged upon the poop, with bated
But flinching not, though eye to eye with death!

Heroes! Who were those heroes? Veterans steeled
To face the King of Terrors 'mid the scaith
Of many a hurricane and trenchèd field?
Far other: weavers from the stocking-frame;
Boys from the plough; cornets with beardless chin,
But steeped in honour and in discipline!

Weep, Britain, for the Cape whose ill-starred name,
Long since divorced from Hope, suggests but shame,
Disaster, and thy captains held at bay
By naked hordes; but, as thou weepest, thank
Heaven for those undegenerate sons who sank
Aboard the Birkenhead in Simon's Bay!

DIFFERENCES

There was always a bold, hearty tone in the writings of Charles Mackay, the foster-father of the writer known as Marie Corelli. Sturdy sense and manly outspokenness, with a deep human sympathy that included equally king and peasant, marked his songs, of which this is a popular example.

THE king can drink the best of wine—
So can I;
And has enough when he would dine—
So have I;
And cannot order rain or shine—
Nor can I.
Then where's the difference—let me see—
Betwixt my lord the king and me?

Do trusty friends surround his throne
Night and day?
Or make his interest their own?
No, not they.
Mine love me for myself alone—
Bless'd be they!
And that's the difference which I see
Betwixt the lord my king and me.

Do knaves around me lie in wait
To deceive?
Or fawn and flatter when they hate,
And would grieve?
Or cruel pomps oppress my state
By my leave?
No, Heaven be thanked! And here you see
More difference 'twixt the king and me.

He has his fools, with jests and quips,
When he'd play;
He has his armies and his ships—
Great are they;
But not a child to kiss his lips;
Well-a-day!
And that's the difference sad to see
Betwixt the lord my king and me.

I wear the cap and he the crown—
What of that?
I sleep on straw and he on down—
What of that?
And he's the king and I'm the clown—
What of that?
If happy I, and wretched he,
Perhaps the king would change with me.

BEWARE

The moral of these homely lines, of course, is to beware how you do a wrong which cannot be undone. The word "saw" here means an old saying still in common use.

IT is a wise and soothfast saw,
Half-roasted never will be raw,
No dough is ground once more to meal,
Nor crock new-shapen by the wheel.
You can't turn curds to milk again,
Nor Now—by wishing—back to Then,
And having tasted stolen honey,
You can't buy innocence for money.

OUR CAT

Here is a charming cat poem from "Pater's Book of Rhymes," by Judge Parry. Who would not have a father who could write rhymes as easy in their run and as jolly as these! Judge Parry, the well-known County Court judge, is that extraordinary rarity—a judge with a real sense of humour.

OH, I wish that you had seen him,
Our little pussy cat,
He came so skinny, scrag, and lean,
And went away so fat!
They said he stole the food and things;
Perhaps he did so, but
He really couldn't help it—couldn't Smut.

He walked upon the dresser shelf
And knocked down mother's jugs,
Broke half a dozen dinner plates,
And Kate's and Molly's mugs.
I guess he thought he heard a mouse;
He didn't catch it, but
He really couldn't help it—couldn't Smut.

He tore up half the leather chairs,
They bought a set to match,
And just to show he noticed it
He marked them with a scratch.
Then Pater, he was raging mad;
It was annoying, but
He really couldn't help it—couldn't Smut.

So of fellowship and feelings, too,
We made a sacrifice,
And gave him to a farmer man
To catch his rats and mice.
We wept to lose our pussy cat;
And he was sorry, but
We really couldn't help it—could we, Smut?

A HUNDRED YEARS TO COME

The writer of these lines is Hiram Dodd Spencer. The lesson of them is that, as we must all pass away so soon, we should try to start by our lives good influences that will not perish.

WHERE, where will be the birds that sing,
A hundred years to come?
The flowers that now in beauty spring,
A hundred years to come?
The rosy cheek,
The lofty brow,
The heart that beats
So quickly now?
Where, where will be our hopes and fears,
Joy's pleasant smiles and sorrow's tears,
A hundred years to come?

Who'll press for gold the crowded street,
A hundred years to come?
Who'll tread yon aisle with willing feet,
A hundred years to come?
Pale, trembling age
And fiery youth,
And childhood with
Its brow of truth;
The rich, the poor, on land and sea—
Where will the mighty millions be,
A hundred years to come?

We all within our graves will sleep,
A hundred years to come;
No living soul for us will weep,
A hundred years to come;
And others then
Our lands will till,
And other men
Our homes will fill,
And other birds will sing as gay,
And bright the sun shine as today,
A hundred years to come.

THE PILOT

The spirit of the fearless, dutiful seaman is here contrasted truthfully with the timorousness of the nervous landsman The seaman trusts in God and accepts risks as inevitable. Thomas Haynes Bayly is the author—the most popular writer of songs in his day, with the exception of Tom Moore.

"OH, pilot, 'tis a fearful night,
There's danger on the deep!
I'll come and pace the deck with thee,
I do not dare to sleep."
"Go down!" the sailor cried, "go down!
This is no place for thee;
Fear not, but trust in Providence,
Wherever thou may'st be!"

"Ah, pilot, dangers often met
We all are apt to slight,
And thou hast known these raging waves
But to subdue their might."
"It is not apathy," he cried,
"That gives this strength to me;
Fear not, but trust in Providence,
Wherever thou may'st be!

"On such a night the sea engulfed
My father's lifeless form;
My only brother's boat went down
In just so wild a storm:
And such, perhaps, may be my fate,
But still I say to thee:
Fear not, but trust in Providence,
Wherever thou may'st be!"

THE FIRST MAN

A charming example of a poet placing himself imaginatively in a strange position—that of Adam becoming conscious. These graceful fancies are from the mind of Hartley Coleridge.

WHAT was't awakened first the untried ear
Of that sole man who was all humankind?
Was it the gladsome welcome of the wind,
Stirring the leaves that never yet were sere?
The four mellifluous streams which flowed so near,
Their lulling murmurs all in one combined?
The note of bird, unnamed? The startled hind,
Bursting the brake in wonder, not in fear,
Of her new lord? Or did the holy ground
Send forth mysterious melody to greet
The gracious presence of immaculate feet?
Did viewless seraphs rustle all around,
Making sweet music out of air as sweet?
Or his own voice awake him with its sound?

GREY GAUNTLET

The war has suggested many poems on the part played by the knitting needles of loving women. Here is a graceful, tender example by Mrs. Elmina Atkinson, a Canadian lady.

GREY GAUNTLET, you of the wristlets wrought
Of home-spun soft and grey,
Do you hear the flashing needles click
Three thousand miles away?
Oh, it's purl and plain,
And a toss of the arm,
For freeing the endless thread:
And mystic whisp'rings with each stitch
Too sacred to e'er be said.

Grey Gauntlet, you of the sword must go,
We of the spindle stay:
And our needles speed that our lads may march
Mail-coated in woollen grey.
Oh, it's slip and bind,
And seam and count,
And turn the heels with care:
No craven fears in the meshes hide,
But only a murmured prayer.

THE PAUPER'S DRIVE

These grim verses come to us from an unhappy period; they are a terrible touch with a world that is past. Their author was Thomas Noel, who wrote in the forties of the nineteenth century, when the workhouse was an institution into which large numbers of the poor were forced. The death-rate was appalling and the funerals were a scandal.

THERE'S a grim one-horse hearse in a jolly round trot—
To the churchyard a pauper is going, I wot;
The road it is rough, and the hearse has no springs,
And hark to the dirge which the mad driver sings:
Rattle his bones over the stones!
He's only a pauper whom nobody owns!

Oh, where are the mourners? Alas! there are none;
He has left not a gap in the world now he's gone—
Not a tear in the eye of child, woman, or man.
To the grave with his carcass as fast as you can!
Rattle his bones over the stones!
He's only a pauper whom nobody owns!

What a jolting and creaking and splashing and din!
The whip, how it cracks! and the wheels, how they spin!
How the dirt, right and left, o'er the hedges is hurled!
The pauper at length makes a noise in the world.
Rattle his bones over the stones!
He's only a pauper whom nobody owns!

Poor pauper, defunct! He has made some approach
To gentility, now that he's stretched in a coach!
He's taking a drive in his carriage at last;
But it will not be long, if he goes on so fast.
Rattle his bones over the stones!
He's only a pauper whom nobody owns!

You bumpkins, who stare at your brother conveyed,
Behold what respect to a cloddy is paid!
And be joyful to think, when by death you're laid low,
You've a chance to the grave like a gemman to go!
Rattle his bones over the stones!
He's only a pauper whom nobody owns!

But a truce to this strain, for my soul it is sad,
To think that a heart in humanity clad
Should make, like the brutes, such a desolate end,
And depart from the light without leaving a friend!
Bear soft his bones over the stones!
Though a pauper, he's one whom his Maker yet owns!

A PETITION TO TIME

This tender little poem is by Bryan Waller Procter, or "Barry Cornwall," as he called himself in his writings. He was a solicitor, and the beloved friend of the poets and writers of his generation. He died in 1874, a very old man.

TOUCH us gently, Time!
Let us glide adown thy stream
Gently, as we sometimes glide
Through a quiet dream.
Humble voyagers are we,
Husband, wife, and children three
(One is lost—an angel, fled
To the azure overhead).

Touch us gently, Time!
We've not proud nor soaring wings;
Our ambition, our content
Lies in simple things.
Humble voyagers are we
O'er Life's dim, unsounded sea,
Seeking only some calm clime.
Touch us gently, gentle Time!

BIRDS

This lovely morsel of rhyme, telling of the escape of a poet's fancies, is by Richard Henry Stoddard. He was a graceful American man of letters who lived till about twelve years ago.

BIRDS are singing round my window
Tunes the sweetest ever heard,
And I hang my cage there daily,
But I never catch a bird.

So with thoughts my brain is peopled,
And they sing there all day long;
But they will not fold their pinions
In the little cage of Song!

THE PLACE TO DIE

The pith of this poem is in the last two lines. Though it is singularly appropriate just now, when so many of our countrymen are being buried in nameless graves abroad, it was written in the middle of the last century by Michael Joseph Barry, who, in 1841, published his "Songs of Ireland."

How little recks it where men die,
When once the moment's past
In which the dim and glazing eye
Has looked on earth its last—
Whether beneath the sculptured urn
The coffined form shall rest,
Or, in its nakedness, return
Back to its mother's breast!

Death is a common friend or foe,
As different men may hold,
And at its summons each must go,
The timid and the bold;
But when the spirit, free and warm,
Deserts it, as it must,
What matters where the lifeless form
Dissolves again to dust?

The soldier falls 'mid corpses piled
Upon the battle plain.
Where reinless war-steeds gallop wild
Above the gory slain;
But though his corse be grim to see,
Hoof-trampled on the sod,
What recks it when the spirit free
Has soared aloft to God!

The coward's dying eye may close
Upon his downy bed,
And softest hands his limbs compose,
Or garments o'er him spread;
But, ye who shun the bloody fray
Where fall the mangled brave,
Go strip his coffin-lid away,
And see him in his grave!

'Twere sweet indeed to close our eyes
With those we cherish near,
And, wafted upward by their sighs,
Soar to some calmer sphere;
But whether on the scaffold high,
Or in the battle's van,
The fittest place where man can die
Is where he dies for man.

IN TIME OF "THE BREAKING OF NATIONS"

Thomas Hardy, the greatest living novelist, and some think the greatest living poet, here tells us how the quiet everyday life of the world goes on unchanged for ever, notwithstanding the clash of arms in war and the downfall of thrones. The so-called great events fade into forgotten history, but the world truly lives on through such quiet lives as the old man ploughing and the young people's love-making.

Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow, silent walk,
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch grass:
Yet this will go on just the same
Though dynasties pass.

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by;
War's annals will fade into night
Ere their story die.

I'M GROWING OLD

This was one of the most popular poems of John G. Saxe, an American writer who died in 1887. It voices a feeling which comes, in various forms, to men and women of all ages, but which is firmly faced and made familiar by the wise.

My days pass pleasantly away,
My nights are blessed with sweetest sleep;
I feel no symptoms of decay,
I have no cause to mourn nor weep;
My foes are impotent and shy,
My friends are neither false nor cold;
And yet of late I often sigh—
I'm growing old!

My growing talk of olden times,
My growing thirst for early news,
My growing apathy for rhymes,
My growing love for easy shoes,
My growing hate of crowds and noise,
My growing fear of taking cold—
All whisper in the plainest voice,
I'm growing old!

I'm growing fonder of my staff,
I'm growing dimmer in the eyes,
I'm growing fainter in my laugh,
I'm growing deeper in my sighs,
I'm growing careless of my dress,
I'm growing frugal of my gold,
I'm growing wise, I'm growing—yes,
I'm growing old!

I see it in my changing taste,
I see it in my changing hair,
I see it in my growing waist,
I see it in my growing hair;
A thousand signs proclaim the truth,
As plain as truth was ever told,
That even in my vaunted youth
I'm growing old!

Ah me! my very laurels breathe
The tale in my reluctant ears;
And every boon the hours bequeath
But makes me debtor to the years.
E'en Flattery's honeyed words declare
The secret she would fain withhold,
And tells me in "How young you are!"
I'm growing old!

Thanks for the years whose rapid flight
My sombre muse too sadly sings;
Thanks for the gleams of golden light
That tint the darkness of their wings,
The light that beams from out the sky,
Those heavenly mansions to unfold,
Where all are blest and none may sigh,
"I'm growing old!"

THE LAND O' THE LEAL

A titled Scottish lady—Lady Carolina Nairne—wrote this pathetic address of a dying husband to his wife. It is known all over the world. Lady Nairne was very retiring and modest, and never claimed her true place as a writer, but she wrote some of Scotland's favourite songs, as, for example, "Will ye no come back again?" "Leal" means loyal. "Fain" sometimes means fond, and sometimes glad.

I'M wearin' awa', Jean,
Like snaw-wreaths in thaw, Jean,
I'm wearin' awa'
To the land o' the leal.
There's nae sorrow there, Jean,
There's neither cauld nor care, Jean,
The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, Jean,
She was baith gude and fair, Jean,
And oh! we grudged her sair
To the land o' the leal.
But sorrow's sel' wears past, Jean,
And joy's a-comin' fast, Jean,
The joy that's aye to last
In the land o' the leal.

Sae dear that joy was bought, Jean,
Sae free the battle fought, Jean,
That sinfu' man e'er brought
To the land o' the leal.
Oh! dry your glistening e'e, Jean,
My soul langs to be free, Jean,
And angels beckon me
To the land o' the leal.

Oh! haud ye leal and true, Jean,
Your day it's wearin' thro', Jean,
And I'll welcome you
To the land o' the leal.
Now fare ye weel, my ain Jean,
This warld's cares are vain, Jean,
We'll meet, and we'll be fain,
In the land o' the leal.

MISS NANCY S GOWN

An American poetess, Miss Zitella Cocke, here tells how a fine Court dress was brought to America more than a hundred years ago and remains fine today, though its admired wearer, who danced with Washington, is scarcely now a name.

IN days when George the Third was King,
And ruled the Old Dominion,
And Law and Fashion owned the sway
Of Parliament's opinion,
A good ship brought across the sea
A treasure fair and fine—
Miss Nancy's gown from London town,
The latest Court design!

The plaited waist from neck to belt
Scarce measured half a span;
The sleeves, balloon-like, at the top
Could hold her feather fan;
The narrow skirt with bias gore
Revealed an ankle neat,
Whene'er she put her dainty foot
From carriage-step to street!

By skilful hands this wondrous gown
Of costliest stuff was made:
Cocoons of France on Antwerp looms
Wrought to embossed brocade,
Where roses red and violets
In blooming beauty grew,
As if young May were there alway,
And June and April, too!

And from this bower of delight
Miss Nancy reigned a Queen,
Nor one disloyal heart rebelled
In all her wide demesne:
The noble House of Burgesses
Forgot its fierce debate
O'er rights of Crown, when Nancy's gown
Appeared in Halls of State!

Through jocund reel, or measured tread
Of stately minuet,
Like fairy vision shone the bloom
Of rose and violet,
As, hand in hand with Washington,
The hero of the day,
The smiling face and nymph like grace
Of Nancy led the way!

A century, since that gay time
The merry dance was trod,
Has passed, and Nancy long has slept
Beneath the churchyard sod;
Yet on the brocade velvet gown
The rose and violet
Are blooming bright as on the night
She danced the minuet!

DOLCINO TO MARGARET

In health good spirits are often renewed with the morning light, as Charles Kingsley happily reminds us in these pleasant lines. Dolcino is meant to suggest a song of sweet thoughts.

THE world goes up and the world goes down,
And the sunshine follows the rain;
And yesterday's sneer and yesterday's frown
Can never come over again,
Sweet wife,
No, never come over again.

For woman is warm, though man be cold,
And the night will hallow the day,
Till the heart which at even was weary and old
Can rise in the morning gay,
Sweet wife,
To its work in the morning gay.

ON DR. HILL'S FARCE

Here is a little irony of David Garrick, which most of us could apply to somebody we know in this very mixed world.

FOR physic and farces
His equal there scarce is;
His farces are physic,
His physic a farce is.

ENGLAND, MY ENGLAND

WHAT have I done for you,
England, my England?
What is there I would not do,
England, my own?
With your glorious eyes austere,
As the Lord were walking near,
Whispering terrible things and dear,
As the song on your bugles blown,
England—
Round the world on your bugles blown!

WHERE shall the watchful sun,
England, my England,
Match the master-work you've done,
England, my own?
When shall he rejoice agen
Such a breed of mighty men
As come forward, one to ten,
To the song on your bugles blown,
England—
Down the years on your bugles blown?

EVER the faith endures,
England, my England!
Take and break us—we are yours,
England, my own!
Life is good, and joy runs high
Between English earth and sky;
Death is death; but we shall die
To the song on your bugles blown,
England—
To the stars on your bugles blown!

W. E. HENLEY

OUR LITTLE MOTHER ISLE, GOD BLESS HER

Hugged in the clinging billow's clasp,
  From sea-weed fringe to mountain heather,
The British oak with rooted grasp
  Her slender handful holds together;
With cliffs of white and bowers of green,
  And Ocean narrowing to caress her,
And hills and threaded streams between,
  Our little mother isle, God bless her.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

RING THE BELLE

Thomas Hood was the most prolific of punsters in an age when punning -a trick of using a word that has two meanings and suggesting both of them at once—was more popular than it is now. Hood revelled in puns, scattering them all over his poems. At times he built up his verses in order to introduce a pun at the close. This is an example of a little story told solely for the purpose of bringing in the word "ring" with its double meaning. Though punning is the most mechanical form of wit, Hood was a true humorist.

I'LL tell you a story that's not in Tom Moore:
Young Love likes to knock at a pretty girl's door:
So he called upon Lucy—'twas just ten o'clock—
Like a spruce single man, with a smart double knock.

Now a handmaid, whatever her fingers be at,
Will run like a puss when she heart a *rat*-tat:
So Lucy ran up, and in two seconds more
Had questioned the stranger and answered the door.

The meeting was bliss; but the parting was woe;
For the moment will come when such comers must go:
So she kissed him, and whispered—poor, innocent thing!—
"The next time you come, love, pray come with a ring."

SUNSHINE THE TEMPTRESS

G. K. Menzies is the writer of this alluring invitation into the open air to see some of the most attractive sights of Scotland. The verses themselves run and flash like the falling waters they describe. "Ben" means mountain. The eagle is still found in the remoter parts of Scotland.

THE bee is on the heather and the sun is on the ben—
Ho, there! Bookworm, shut your musty tome!
Come, ramble by the river that is leaping down the glen,
Come, climb the purple upland where the wild deer roam.
I will show a thousand beauties which you'll never, never see
In your fusty, dusty volumes if you'll only follow me:
You shall see the waters falling,
O'er the sandy shallows brawling,
Dashing, splashing,
Gaily flashing
Over rock and under tree.
And I'll show you, lying cool
In his deep and inky pool,
All secure, the wise old salmon
Whom the angler cannot gammon.
There he lies serenely sleeping
While above him flashes bright
The frolic troutlet leaping
In the light.
Come and scramble through the heather where the hill-tops touch the sky,
Come and scale the peaks of granite where the eagles soar on high.
See the white-tailed rabbits near you,
How they scuttle when they hear you!
Hurry-scurry
In their flurry,
Swift as lightning off they fly.
And I'll also show you where,
With his antlers high in air,
Unapproachable of men,
Stands the monarch of the glen.
At his sweet will he shall ramble
Over leagues of upland lawns,
While around him gaily gambol
Fairy fawns.

THE MAGIC OF THE WATERS

Nearly all Lord Byron's poetry was personal—that is, it was written around his own sensations and impulses. Here is an example of a love song intended for a musical setting. The poet apparently has in mind the sea as it appears under the charm of music while one floats in a gondola in Venice, and all the sights and sounds are used in personal compliment.

THERE be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like thee;
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me:
When, as if its sound were causing
The charmed ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lulled winds seem dreaming.

And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep,
Whose breast is gently heaving,
As an infant's asleep;
So the spirit bows before thee,
To listen and adore thee.
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

COME TO THESE SCENES OF PEACE

This call to those who are troubled, advising them to find comfort in country scenes, is made by the Rev. William Lisle Bowles, a canon of Salisbury, who wrote poems at the beginning of the nineteenth century much admired by Coleridge, and who lived on till 1850. Mr. Bowles acted as he advised, for he sought the country and wrote in a natural way about its charms as a remedy for early disappointments.

COME to these scenes of peace
Where, to rivers murmuring,
The sweet birds all the summer sing;
Where cares, and toil, and sadness cease!
Stranger, does thy heart deplore
Friends whom thou wilt see no more?
Does thy wounded spirit prove
Pangs of hopeless, severed love?
Thee, the stream that gushes clear,
Thee, the birds that carol near,
Shall soothe, as silent thou dost lie
And dream of their wild lullaby;
Come to bless these scenes of peace,
Where cares, and toil, and sadness cease.

THE NECKAN

Here is a merman legend of the Baltic put into verse by Matthew Arnold, who delighted in stories of an undersea world, and retold more than one of them. Arnold was a thoughtful, polished poet whose verse was suffused by a gentle sadness, as in this poem. Born in 1822, a son of the great schoolmaster Dr. Arnold of Rugby, he became an inspector of schools. He died in 1888. He wrote much prose, all displaying a rather annoying air of superiority.

In summer, on the headlands,
The Baltic Sea along,
Sits Neckan with his harp of gold,
And sings his plaintive song.

Green rolls, beneath the headlands,
Green rolls the Baltic Sea;
And there, below the Neckan's feet,
His wife and children be.

He sings not of the ocean,
Its shells and roses pale;
Of earth, of earth the Neckan sings—
He hath no other tale.

He sits upon the headlands,
And sings a mournful stave
Of all he saw and felt on earth,
Far from the kind sea-wave.

Sings how, a knight, he wandered
By castle, field, and town—
But earthly knights have harder hearts
Than the sea-children own.

Sings of his earthly bridal—
Priest, knights, and ladies gay.
"And who art thou," the priest began,
"Sir Knight, who wedd'st today?"

"I am no knight," he answered;
"From the sea-waves I come."
The knights drew sword, the ladies screamed,
The surpliced priest stood dumb.

He sings how from the chapel
He vanished with his bride,
And bore her down to the sea-halls,
Beneath the salt sea-tide.

He sings how she sits weeping
'Mid shells that round her lie.
"False Neckan shares my bed," she weeps;
"No Christian mate have I."

He sings how through the billows
He rose to earth again,
And sought a priest to sign the cross,
That Neckan heaven might gain.

He sings how, on an evening,
Beneath the birch trees cool,
He sate and played his harp of gold,
Beside the river-pool.

Beside the pool sate Neckan—
Tears filled his mild blue eye.
On his white mule, across the bridge,
A cassocked priest rode by.

"Why sitt'st thou there, O Neckan,
And play'st thy harp of gold?
Sooner shall this, my staff, bear leaves,
Than thou shalt heaven behold."

But lo, the staff, it budded!
It greened, it branched, it waved.
"O ruth of God," the priest cried out,
"This lost sea-creature saved!"

The cassocked priest rode onward,
And vanished with his mule;
But Neckan in the twilight grey
Wept by the river-pool.

He wept: "The earth hath kindness,
The sea, the starry poles;
Earth, sea, and sky, and God above—
But, ah, not human souls!"

In summer, on the headlands,
The Baltic Sea along,
Sits Neckan with his harp of gold,
And sings this plaintive song.

RONDEL

These lines are prefixed by Mr. Harold Begbie to his "Bed Book of Happiness," a book to keep beside your bed for occasional happy reading. A Rondel is an old French form of verse with the following characteristics: it must have only two rhymes (such as stay, away, tray, stray, and day, and skill, will, pill, fill, ill), the first two lines being repeated as the seventh and eighth, and again as the thirteenth and fourteenth, the whole poem making fourteen lines.

Beside your bed I come to stay
With magic more than human skill,
My pages run to do your will,
My covers keep your cares away.

The nurse arrives with laden tray,
The doctor cancels draught and pill;
Beside your bed I come to stay
With magic more than human skill.

And you thro' faery lands will stray,
At laughter's fountain drink your fill,
For tho' your body cry "I'm ill!"
Your mind will dance from night to day.
Beside your bed I come to stay
With magic more than human skill.

FROM MAYFLOWER TO MISTLETOE

A happy comparison by Sarah J. Day, "hitting off" the hollyhock's stately demeanour among flowers of freer growth.

The stately Lady Hollyhock
Has graced my garden-bed for years,
Sedately stiffened in a frock
All frills and ruffles to her ears;
For at the fashions one may mock
When one is born a hollyhock.

Her gay companions creep and twine
And riot in the summer breeze;
But she doth haughtily decline
To join in common sports like these;
Such indecorum needs must shock
A well-bred, well-starched hollyhock.

TO FIND GOD

Robert Herrick, though a clergyman, was a bright, merry, and dainty poet, but his cheerfulness did not cause him to neglect true reverence. He knew that God is unsearchable. It is only the shallow mind that supposes it can grasp with full understanding the Power that is Eternal, Ever-Present, Omnipotent. Here Herrick teaches us the lesson of humility, a lesson which many who talk most about God most need to learn.

WEIGH me the fire ; or canst thou find
A way to measure out the wind ;
Distinguish all those floods that are
Mixed in that watery theatre,
And taste thou them as saltless there,
As in their channel first they were.
Tell me the people that do keep
Within the kingdoms of the deep ;
Or fetch me back that cloud again,
Beshivered into seeds of rain.
Tell me the motes, dusts, sands, and spears
Of corn, when Summer shakes his ears ;
Show me that world of stars, and whence
They noiseless spill their influence :
This if thou canst, then show me Him
That rides the glorious cherubim.

THE LAST TREE OF THE FOREST

The making of trees, flowers, and streams to talk about human affairs was a poetical device frequently used by Mrs. Hemans. In this poem she illustrates her good sense, for, as she says towards the close, the freedom and quiet domestic happiness of modern life are far preferable to the romantic glory of the ages of chivalry, outlawry, and tyranny.

WHISPER, thou Tree, thou lonely Tree,
One, where a thousand stood !
Well might proud tales be told by thee,
Last of the solemn wood !

Dwells there no voice amidst thy boughs,
With leaves yet darkly green ?
Stillness is round, and noontide glows—
Tell us what thou hast seen.

I have seen the forest shadows lie
Where men now reap the corn ;
I have seen the kingly chase rush by,
Through the deep glades at morn.

With the glance of many a gallant spear,
And the wave of many a plume,
And the bounding of a hundred deer,
It hath lit the woodland's gloom.

I have seen the knight and his train ride past,
With his banner borne on high ;
O'er all my leaves there was brightness cast
From his gleaming panoply.

The pilgrim at my feet hath laid
His palm-branch 'midst the flowers,
And told his beads and meekly pray'd,
Kneeling, at vesper hours.

And the merry men of wild and glen,
In the green array they wore,
Have feasted here, with the red wine's cheer,
And the hunter's song of yore.

And the minstrel, resting in my shade,
Hath made the forest ring
With the lordly tales of the high Crusade,
Once loved by chief and king.

But now the noble forms are gone
That walked the earth of old ;
The soft wind hath a mournful tone,
The sunny light looks cold.

There is no glory left us now,
Like the glory with the dead ;
I would that where they slumber low
My latest leaves were shed !

Oh, thou dark Tree, thou lonely Tree,
That mournest for the past !
A peasant's home in thy shades I see,
Embowered from every blast.

A lovely and a mirthful sound
Of laughter meets mine ear,
For the poor man's children sport around
On the turf, with nought to fear.

And roses lend that cabin's wall
A happy summer glow ;
And the open door stands free to all,
For it recks not of a foe.

And the village bells are on the breeze
That stirs thy leaf, dark Tree !
How can I mourn, 'midst things like these,
For the stormy past, with thee ?

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

In this sonnet we have Wordsworth sounding his most melodious and his fullest poetic note. He is the seer reading human life to its depths, and the poet who can present the vision in words that both sing and rouse. He sees men caring for what is paltry and common, the vulgarity of riches and show, and failing to take delight in what is truly lovely—the poetry of earth—and he would rather be a pagan who saw the gods in everything than find success in dull greed. It is a noble teaching that will never be out of date.

THE world is too much with us ; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers ;
Little we see in nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers ;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;
It moves us not. Great God ! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn :
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus coming from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

THE NEW YEAR

These stanzas from "In Memoriam" show Tennyson longing for the coming of spring, which may help him to conquer his sorrow for the death of his friend, and sound a more cheerful note in his verse. Descriptions of flowers are a feature of Tennyson's verse. Of this the third verse gives charming examples.

DIP down upon the northern shore,
O sweet New Year delaying long;
Thou doest expectant Nature wrong;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, New Year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud
And flood a fresher throat with song.

THE IDLE LIFE

This charming little word-picture of happy contentment, enlivened by the play of fancy, is by Dr. Robert Bridges.

THE idle life I lead
Is like a pleasant sleep,
Wherein I rest and heed
The dreams that by me sweep.

And still of all my dreams
In turn so swiftly past,
Each in its fancy seems
A nobler than the last.

And every eve I say
Noting my step in bliss,
That I have known no day
In all my life like this.

SONG OF THE AIRMAN

Dr. Frederick Langbridge is one of the first poets to do justice to the flight of an airman and the marvels of his machine. It will be seen that Dr. Langbridge's application of the aeroplane is rich in fancy, vigour, and picturesqueness.

I SAIL the air as a yacht the sea, when the
waves are combing and singing;
I know the glee of the screaming gull as
she rides the plunging blast;
The motor's roar is the thud of my heart,
and the planes are plumes of my winging:
I am sail and wing and storm and fate, as
I toss the townships past.

I have done with the wright of the labouring
world, and time and space and resistance;
I drive the clouds like frightened sheep,
I catch and loose the wind;
The spires and chimneys dive and run, the
rivers wink into distance;
I worry the trains like a frolicsome dog
till they drop with a pant behind.

The wondering winds come gathering round,
like cattle, snuffing and lowing—
A turn of my hand, a shake of my wings,
they butt and scatter and fly!
I thread the lights of the station-sites in a
necklace glowing and growing:
I fling the beats of my heart behind to
measure the rounded sky.

The song of the lark comes sparkling down,
like rain on my open fingers;
I sweep between the swooping hawk and
the dove she has all but torn;
I dodge the teeth of the lightning-flash as it
hisses and turns and lingers:
I am free in the void as a shooting star
let loose when the worlds were born.

DAY AND NIGHT

The Elizabethan poets delighted in playing gracefully with simple thoughts. This is an example from Thomas Campion, who was equally well known as doctor, poet, and musician.

COME, cheerful day, part of my life to me;
For while thou view'st me with thy
fading light,
Part of my life doth still depart with thee,
And I still onward haste to my last night.
Time's fatal wings do ever forward fly;
So every day we live a day we die.

But, O ye nights, ordained for barren rest,
How are my days deprived of life in you,
When heavy sleep my soul hath dispossessed
By feigned death life sweetly to renew!
Part of my life in that you life deny;
So every day we live a day we die.

MY LAND

The land here spoken of is Ireland, the writer being Thomas Davis, an Irish patriot of Welsh descent, who died in 1845, in his thirty-first year. The poem is an imitation, or parody, of a song by Robert Burns, "She's a winsome wee thing."

SHE is a rich and rare land;
O! she's a fresh and fair land;
She is a dear and rare land—
This native land of mine.

No men than hers are braver,
Her women's hearts ne'er waver;
I'd freely die to save her,
And think my lot divine.

She's not a dull or cold land;
No! she's a warm and bold land;
O! she's a true and old land,
This native land of mine.

Could beauty ever guard her,
And virtue still reward her,
No foe would cross her border,
No friend within it pine.

O! she's a fresh and fair land;
O! she's a true and rare land;
Yes, she's a rare and fair land,
This native land of mine.

THE SHEEP

Ann Taylor, an Essex lady, and her sister Jane wrote, early in the nineteenth century, many delightful, simple verses for children, which they called "Poetry for Infant Minds." This poem, by Ann Taylor, is a charming example. The two sisters helped greatly in spreading abroad a kind feeling towards animals. Ann Taylor's name after marriage was Mrs. Gilbert. Her husband fell in love with her through her writings, which he much admired, before he had seen her.

LAZY sheep, pray tell me why
In the grassy fields you lie,
Eating grass and daisies white
From the morning till the night?
Every thing can something do,
But what kind of use are you?

Nay, my little master, nay,
Do not serve me so, I pray.
Don't you see the wool that grows
On my back to make you clothes?
Cold and very cold you'd get
If I did not give you it.

Sure it seems a pleasant thing
To nip the daisies in the spring;
But many chilly nights I pass
On the cold and dewy grass,
Or pick a scanty dinner where
All the common's brown and bare.

Then the farmer comes at last,
When the merry spring is past,
And cuts my woolly coat away
To warm you in the winter's day.
Little master, this is why
In the grassy fields I lie.

ANGER

Charles and Mary Lamb, brother and sister, wrote poems for children in the early years of the last century. Probably this rhymed excuse for a quick show of impulsive temper was written by Mary Lamb. It is better to believe that anger is never wise, though indignation may sometimes be.

ANGER in its time and place
May assume a kind of grace;
It must have some reason in it,
And not last beyond a minute.
If to further lengths it go,
It does into malice grow.
'Tis the difference that we see
'Twixt the serpent and the bee.
If the latter you provoke,
It inflicts a hasty stroke,
Puts you to some little pain,
But it never *stings again.*
Close in tufted bush or brake
Lurks the poison-swelled snake,
Nursing up his cherished wrath.
In the purlieus of his path,
In the cold or in the warm,
Mean him good or mean him harm,
Wheresoever fate may bring you,
The vile snake will *always sting you.*

THE WAVES ON THE SEASHORE

This is one of Mrs. Hawkshaw's poems, written for her own children. As was the custom then, it introduces a lesson at the end, a practice started thousands of years ago by Aesop.

ROLL on, roll on, you restless waves,
That toss about and roar.
But why do you all run back again
When you have reached the shore?

Roll on, roll on, you noisy waves;
Roll higher up the strand.
How is it that you cannot pass
That line of yellow sand?

Make haste, or else this tide will turn;
Make haste, you noisy sea.
Roll quite across the bank, and then
Far on across the lea.

"We must not dare," the waves reply.
"That line of yellow sand
Is laid along the shore to bond
The waters from the land.

"And all should keep to time and place,
And all should keep to rule—
Both waves upon the sandy shore
And little boys at school."

LOVING AND LIKING

Rhyme has been used for curious purposes. In the lines that follow, Dorothy Wordsworth, sister of the great poet, explains when the words "like" and "love" can be used properly—"like" applying only to our feeling towards dead material things, and "love" to such things as have in them the function of life. In common speech these words are very often confused. Dorothy Wordsworth was a keen observer of Nature, and often pointed out to her brother features of the open-air world which he used in his poems.

SAY not you *love* a roasted fowl,
But you may love a screaming owl.
And, if you can, the unwieldy toad
That crawls from his secure abode,
Within the grassy garden wall,
When evening dews begin to fall.
Oh, mark the beauty of his eye!
What wonders in that circle lie!
So clear, so bright, our fathers said
He wears a jewel on his head!
And when, upon some showery day,
Into a path or public way
A frog leaps out from bordering grass,
Startling the timid as they pass,
Do you observe him, and endeavour
To take the intruder into favour;
Learning from him to find a reason
For a light heart in a dull season.
And you may love the strawberry flower,
And love the strawberry in its bower;
But when the fruit, so often praised
For beauty, to your lip is raised,
Say not you *love* the delicate treat,
But *like* it, enjoy it, and thankfully eat.

TIME'S GLORY

William Shakespeare gained fame as a poet before he was equally well known as a writer of plays. This quotation is from his poem "Lucrece," which was published in 1594, when the poet, after writing plays of a lighter kind, was beginning to gain in strength and gravity. Note the wonderful compression—the number and range of the illustrations of Time's power—five-and-twenty of them in twenty-one lines.

TIME'S glory is to calm contending kings,
To unmask falsehood and bring truth to light,
To stamp the seal of time in aged things,
To wake the morn, and sentinel the night,
To wrong the wronger till he render right,
To ruinate proud buildings with thy hours,
And smear with dust their glittering golden towers;

To fill with worm-holes stately monuments,
To feed oblivion with decay of things,
To blot old books and alter their contents,
To pluck the quills from ancient ravens' wings,
To dry the old oak's sap and cherish springs,
To spoil antiquities of hammered steel
And turn the giddy round of Fortune's wheel;

To show the beldame daughters of her daughter,
To make the child a man, the man a child,
To slay the tiger that doth live by slaughter,
To tame the unicorn and lion wild,
To mock the subtle, in themselves beguiled,
To cheer the ploughman with increaseful crops,
And waste huge stones with little water-drops.

NAPOLEON'S FAREWELL

Lord Byron put these words into the mouth of Napoleon when he surrendered and was sent into exile. They do not represent the true relations between Napoleon and France, for Napoleon was the betrayer of liberty in that great country; but they are the kind of thoughts which Napoleon, dazzled by the idea of personal glory, probably cherished.

FAREWELL to the land where the gloom of my glory
Arose and o'ershadowed the earth with her name—
She abandons me now—but the page of her story,
The brightest or blackest, is filled with my fame.
I have warred with a world which vanquished me only
When the meteor of conquest allured me too far;
I have coped with the nations which dread me thus lonely,
The last single captive to millions in war.

Farewell to thee, France! when thy diadem crowned me
I made thee the gem and the wonder of earth;
But thy weakness decrees I should leave as I found thee,
Decayed in thy glory, and sunk in thy worth.
Oh, for the veteran hearts that were wasted
In strife with the storm, when their battles were won—
Then the eagle, whose gaze in that moment was blasted,
Had still soared with eyes fixed on victory's sun!

Farewell to thee, France! but when Liberty rallies
Once more in thy region, remember me then:
The violet still grows in the depths of thy valleys;
Though withered, thy tears will unfold it again.
Yet, yet I may baffle the hosts that surround us,
And yet may my heart leap awake to thy voice;
There are links which must break in the chain that has bound us,
Then turn thee and call on the Chief of thy choice!

A BRITON'S THOUGHTS ON SWITZERLAND

Wordsworth, who had noble conceptions of liberty, thought it was most fitly symbolised by mountains and the sea, and in this sonnet he refers to the suppression of liberty in Switzerland by Napoleon—the land of mountain freedom—and fears lest it should not survive on the sea. That Liberty should remain triumphant at sea depended then on Nelson.

TWO voices are there; one is of the Sea,
One of the Mountains; each a mighty voice.
In both, from age to age, thou didst rejoice.
They were thy chosen Music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven:
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

MY ENGLAND!

These stirring verses, expressing the feeling of the best part of the American nation during the great European war into which our country has entered to defend innocent States against cruel aggression, were written by William Winter, a veteran American journalist and poet. Such generous ardour and poetic fire from a poet eighty years old, in the midst of the war, vindicate the American Republic from the charge of coldness in the face of world-wide wrong, and must send a responsive thrill of gratitude through every British heart.

My England! Not my native land,
But dear to me as if she were—
How often have I longed to stand
With those brave hearts who fight for her!

Bereft by Fortune, worn with Age,
My life is all I have to give,
But freely would that life engage
For those who die that she may live.

Mother of Freedom! Pledged to Right!
From Honour's path she would not stray,
But, sternly faithful, used her might
To lead mankind the nobler way.

My England!—patient, valiant, true!—
Not foes without, nor frauds within,
Will shake her purpose to subdue
The cohorts of embattled sin.

Her task was hard, her burden great,
But round the world her edict ran
That reared and ruled a Sovereign State,
Securely, on the Rights of Man.

No vandal foot should tread her land,
No despot hold her realm in awe;
The humblest peasant should command
The shelter of her righteous law.

In vain her lion port was braved!
Her pennant streamed o'er every sea,
And wheresoe'er her ensign waved
All fetters fell and Man was free.

My England! Should the hope be crost
In which she taught the world to strive,
Then all of Virtue would be lost
And naught of Manhood left alive.

My England, *strike!* Droop not, nor pause,
Till triumph on your banners shine!
Then take a grateful world's applause—
Millions of hearts that beat like mine.

HOME

Judge Parry, who can turn a pleasant rhyme on any subject, humorous or sentimental, has illustrated in a happy variety of ways, through these lines, the universal love of home that is so much like the love of the bird for its nest. The line in the last verse that seems so questionable is quite true. There are people who prefer "a den in an alley" for a home. To them it is more familiar than anywhere else.

It may be a hut with the thatch on,
In a garden where roses grow,
Or built of bad bricks, with a patch on
Of stucco, and twelve in a row;
It may be a palace of crystal,
With a splendid, sparkling dome.
But what does it matter, whatever it is?
It is Home.

It may be an inn on the high-road,
With the Green Man creaking above,
Or a sheltered farm, down a by-road,
Where Darby and Joan make love;
Or even a cave or a wigwam
In the wilds where the travellers roam.
Well, what does it matter, whatever it is?
It is Home.

It may be a den in an alley
Where the air is stifling dark,
Or the great house down in the valley,
In the midst of a royal park,
Or a sunlit, whitewashed cottage
Within reach of the spray and the foam.
Well, what does it matter, whatever it is?
It is Home.

THE CHALLENGE

Here is a striking little picture worth knowing, contrasting man's boastings and Nature's powers. It is written by Fitzjames O'Brien, an Irish-American author who died in 1862.

A warrior hung his plumed helm
On the ragged trunk of an aged elm.
"Where is the knight so bold," he cried,
"That dares my haughty crest deride?"

The wind came by with a sudden howl,
And dashed the helm on the pathway foul,
And shook in scorn each sturdy limb,
For where was the knight that could fight with him?

GOD BLESS THE PRINCE OF WALES

These verses, set to music in 1862 by Henry Brinley Richards, a Welsh musician, have become as truly national a song as "God Save the King." Their popularity has been enhanced by the attractive character of each of the three holders of the title of Prince of Wales since the song was written.

Among our ancient mountains,
And from our lovely vales,
O let the prayer re-echo,
"God bless the Prince of Wales."
With heart and voice awaken
Those minstrel strains of yore,
Till Britain's name and glory
Resound from shore to shore.

Should hostile bands or danger
E'er threaten our fair isle,
May God's strong arm protect us,
May Heaven still on us smile!
Above the throne of England
May fortune's star long shine,
And round its sacred bulwarks
The olive branches twine.

BY THE STATUE OF A KING AT CHARING CROSS

Charles the First died by an act of English justice, but this strange man, false to his country, was not entirely bad. One side of his character, the picturesque side, is here most sympathetically sketched by Lionel Johnson, a graceful Irish poet and critic, who died in 1902 at the age of thirty-five. Charles was not allowed to speak after sentence had been passed on him, but the grace with which he accepted his doom still speaks. The poem is reproduced by courtesy of Mr. Elkin Matthews.

SOMBRE and rich, the skies,
Great glooms and starry plains;
Gently the night wind sighs;
Else a vast silence reigns.

The splendid silence clings
Around me; and around
The saddest of all kings,
Crowned, and again discrowned.

Comely and calm, he rides
Hard by his own Whitehall.
Only the night wind glides:
No crowds, nor rebels, brawl.

Gone, too, his Court; and yet
The stars his courtiers are:
Stars in their stations set;
And every wandering star.

Alone he rides, alone,
The fair and fatal King;
Dark night is all his own,
That strange and solemn thing.

Which are more full of fate:
The stars, or those sad eyes?
Which are more still and great:
Those brows, or the dark skies?

Altho' his whole heart yearn
In passionate tragedy,
Never was face so stern
With sweet austerity.

Vanquished in life, his death
By beauty made amends;
The passing of his breath
Won his defeated ends.

Brief life, and hapless? Nay;
Thro' death, life grew sublime.
Speak after sentence? Yea;
And to the end of time.

Armoured he rides, his head
Bare to the stars of doom;
He triumphs now, the dead,
Beholding London's gloom.

Our wearier spirit faints,
Vexed in the world's employ;
His soul was of the saints,
And art to him was joy.

King, tried in fires of woe!
Men hunger for thy grace,
And through the night I go,
Loving thy mournful face.

Yet when the city sleeps,
When all the cries are still,
The stars and heavenly deeps
Work out a perfect will.

THE HAG

When Robert Herrick, who was born in 1591, wrote this weird description of the ride of a witch at the dead of night, witches were believed in; but the poet evidently did not believe in them—he only wished to make our flesh creep.

THE hag is astride
This night for to ride,
The devil and she together;
Through thick and through thin,
Now out and then in,
Though ne'er so foul be the weather.

A thorn or a burr
She takes for a spur,
With a lash of a bramble she rides now;
Through brakes and through briers,
O'er ditches and mires,
She follows the spirit that guides now.

No beast for his food
Dare now range the wood,
But hushed in his lair he lies lurking;
While mischiefs, by these,
On land and on seas,
At noon of night are a-working.

The storm will arise
And trouble the skies;
This night, and more the wonder,
The ghost from the tomb
Affrighted shall come,
Called out by the clap of the thunder.

WHERE DO FAIRIES HIDE THEIR HEADS?

Are the fairies only spirits of the spring and summer? Thomas Haynes Bayly, the early nineteenth-century song-writer, suggests that they are only the companions of the green leaves. But why should they not draw the wonderful ice patterns on the window-panes in winter? However that may be, here are pretty fancies enough about their spring doings.

O! WHERE do fairies hide their heads
When snow lies on the hills,
When frost has spoiled their mossy beds
And crystallised their rills?
Beneath the moon they cannot trip
In circles o'er the plain;
And draughts of dew they cannot sip,
Till green leaves come again.

Perhaps in small, blue diving-bells
They plunge beneath the waves,
Inhabiting the wreathed shells
That lie in coral caves.
Perhaps, in red Vesuvius,
Carousals they maintain,
And cheer their little spirits thus
Till green leaves come again.

When they return there will be mirth,
And music in the air,
And fairy wings upon the earth,
And mischief everywhere.
The maids, to keep the elves aloof,
Will bar the doors in vain;
No key-hole will be fairy-proof,
When green leaves come again.

THE GOLDEN CHAIN

This anonymous poem expresses with a joyous vigour love of one of the most beautiful of the May flowering trees, but there is a want of reverence in saying that God laughs aloud.

THERE's gold that the miser loves not,
The gold that is dear to me—
A gift that sweet spring loves to bring
To the glad laburnum tree!

All Nature laughs, and the children laugh,
And God laughs loud with glee
As He marks the glint of the golden mint
On the boughs of the golden tree.

For the lilac is fair and the hawthorn fair,
But fairer far to see
Is the laughing lane where the "Golden Chain"
Doth flaunt her braverie!

And ever the sweet birds sing most sweet,
And ever is life most free,
When Faerie May her gold doth pay
To the glad laburnum tree!

A PORTRAIT

Wordsworth explained that the beginning of this poem was inspired by the sight of a sweet Highland girl of whom he wrote a sketch. Afterwards he merged this youthful vision into later pictures of his own wife, the series making, perhaps, the most satisfying panorama of developing and developed womanhood to be found in any language. All Wordsworth's best poems were written between his thirtieth and thirty-seventh years. When he wrote this he was thirty-four.

SHE was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman, too!
Her household motions light and free,
Her steps of virgin liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller betwixt life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill,
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright,
With something of an angel light.

THE STORY OF THE PALACE ASLEEP—By TENNYSON

THE SILENT PALACE

THE varying year with blade and sheaf
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains;
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapours lightly curled,
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world,
To spirits folded in the womb.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

Here sits the butler with a flask
Between his knees, half drained; and there
The wrinkled steward at his task,
The maid-of-honour blooming fair:
The page has caught her hand in his:
Her lips are severed as to speak:
His own are pouted to a kiss:
The blush is fixed upon her cheek.

When will the hundred summers die,
And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the soul of men?
Here all things in their place remain,
As all were ordered, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
And bring the fated fairy prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

YEAR after year unto her feet,
She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purpled coverlet,
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,
On either side her tranced form
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl:
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
And moves not on the rounded curl.

She sleeps: her breathings are not heard
In palace chambers far apart,
The fragrant tresses are not stirred
That lie upon her charmed heart.
She sleeps: on either hand upswells
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest:
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
A perfect form in perfect rest.

THE ARRIVAL

HE comes, scarce knowing what he seeks:
He breaks the hedge: he enters there:
The colour flies into his cheeks:
He trusts to light on something fair;
For all his life the charm did talk
About his path, and hover near
With words of promise in his walk,
And whispered voices at his ear.

More close and close his footsteps wind;
The Magic Music in his heart
Beats quick and quicker, till he find
The quiet chamber far apart.
His spirit flutters like a lark,
He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.
"Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
How dark those hidden eyes must be!"

THE REVIVAL

A TOUCH, a kiss! the charm was snapt.
There rose a noise of striking clocks,
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;
A fuller light illumined all,
A breeze through all the garden swept,
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
The butler drank, the steward scrawled,
The fire shot up, the martin flew,
The parrot screamed, the peacock squalled,
The maid and page renewed their strife,
The palace banged, and buzzed and clackt,
And all the long-pent stream of life
Dashed downward in a cataract.

And last with these the king awoke,
And in his chair himself upreared,
And yawned, and rubbed his face, and spoke,
"By holy rood, a royal beard!
How say you? We have slept, my lords.
My beard has grown into my lap."
The barons swore, with many words,
'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

"Pardy," returned the king, "but still
My joints are somewhat stiff or so,
My lord, and shall we pass the Bill
I mentioned half an hour ago?"
The chancellor, sedate and vain,
In courteous words returned reply:
But dallied with his golden chain,
And, smiling, put the question by.

THE DEPARTURE

AND on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
In that new world which is the old.
And o'er them many a sliding star,
And many a merry wind was borne,
And, streamed through many a golden bar,
The twilight melted into morn.

THE KING AND THE COTTAGER

The healthy spirit of the writings of the American humorist John Godfrey Saxe is well illustrated in these narrative verses. The poet, for the sake of a pun, drags in the word "khan" as a description of a Persian king, of course a misnomer, and a really great poet would not have done it

PRAY list unto a legend
The ancient poets tell;
'Tis of a mighty monarch
In Persia once did dwell;
A mighty queer old monarch,
Who ruled his kingdom well.

"I must build another palace,"
Observed this mighty king;
"For this is getting shabby
Along the southern wing;
And, really, for a monarch,
It isn't quite the thing.

"So I will have a new one,
Although I greatly fear
To build it just to suit me
Will cost me rather dear:
And I'll choose, God wot, another spot,
Much finer than this here."

So he travelled o'er the kingdom
A proper site to find,
Where he might build a palace
Exactly to his mind,
All with a pleasant prospect
Before it, and behind.

Not long with this endeavour
The king had travelled round,
Ere, to his royal pleasure,
A charming spot he found;
But an ancient widow's cabin
Was standing on the ground.

"Ah, here," exclaimed the monarch,
"Is just the proper spot,
If this woman would allow me
To remove her little cot!"
But the beldam answered plainly,
She had rather he did not!

"Within this lowly cottage,
Great Monarch, I was born;
And only from this cottage
By Death will I be torn:
So spare it, in your justice,
Or spoil it in your scorn!"

Then all the courtiers mocked her,
With cruel words and jeers:
"'Tis plain her royal master
She neither loves nor fears;
We would knock her ugly hovel
About her ugly ears!

"When ever was a subject
Who might the king withstand?
Or deem his spoken pleasure
As less than his command?
Of course, he'll rout the beldam,
And confiscate her land!"

But, to their deep amazement,
His Majesty replied:
"Good woman, never heed them,
The king is on your side:
Your cottage is your castle,
And here you shall abide.

"To raze it in a moment,
The power is mine, I grant;
My absolute dominion
A hundred poets chant;
For, being *Khan* of Persia,
There's nothing that I *can't.*

"But power is scarcely worthy
Of honour or applause
That in its domination
Contemns the widow's cause,
Or perpetrates injustice
By trampling on the laws.

"That I have wronged the meanest
No honest tongue may say:
So bide you in your cottage,
Good woman, while you may;
What's yours by deed and purchase
No man may take away.

"And I will build beside it,
For though your cot may be,
In such a lordly presence,
No fitting thing to see,
If it honour not my castle,
It will surely honour me!

"For so my loyal people
Who gaze upon the sight
Shall know that in oppression
I do not take delight;
Nor hold a king's convenience
Before a subject's right!"

Now, from his spoken purpose
The king departed not;
He built the royal dwelling
Upon the chosen spot,
And there they stood together
The palace and the cot!

Sure such unseemly neighbours
Were never seen before;
"His Majesty is doting,"
His silly courtiers swore;
But all true, loyal subjects,
They loved the King the more.

Long, long he ruled his kingdom
In honour and renown;
But danger ever threatens
The head that wears a crown,
And Fortune, tired of smiling,
For once put on a frown.

For ever secret Envy
Attends a high estate;
And ever lurking Malice
Pursues the good and great;
And ever base Ambition
Will end in deadly Hate!

And so two wicked courtiers,
Who long had strove in vain
By craft and evil counsels
To mar the monarch's reign,
Contrived a scheme infernal,
Whereby he should be slain!

But as all deeds of darkness
Are wont to leave a clue
Before the glaring sunlight
To bring the knaves to view,
That sin may be rewarded,
And Satan get his due,

To plan their wicked treason,
They sought a lonely spot
Behind the royal palace,
Hard by the widow's cot,
Who heard their machinations,
And straight revealed the plot!

"I see," exclaimed the Persian,
"The just are wise alone;
Who spares the rights of others
May chance to guard his own;
The widow's humble cottage
Has propped a monarch's throne!"

THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME

Here is an instance of a song known by tune and name to every soldier, yet no one knows who wrote it. Indeed, it is but lamely rhymed. But the song has been kept alive partly by its lilting tune and partly by the strongly human appeal of its sentiment.

I'm lonesome since I crossed the hill,
And o'er the moor and valley;
Such heavy thoughts my heart do fill,
Since parting with my Sally.
I seek no more the fine or gay,
For each does but remind me
How swift the hours did pass away
With the girl I've left behind me.

Oh, ne'er shall I forget the night,
The stars were bright above me,
And gently lent their silvery light
When first she vowed to love me.

But now I'm bound to Brighton camp,
Kind Heaven, then, pray guide me,
And send me safely back again
To the girl I've left behind me.
My mind her form shall still retain,
In sleeping or in waking;
Until I see my love again,
For whom my heart is breaking.
If ever I return that way,
And she would not decline me,
I evermore will live and stay
With the girl I've left behind me.

WINTER FANCIES

This bright little poem was written by James Whitcomb Riley, one of the most graceful of American poets. That it is American can be seen from the use of the stove to warm the room instead of the still jollier English fire, and the flue to carry the smoke away instead of a chimney. But, whether we are cosy by fire or by stove, the right indoor spirit during wild weather is charmingly expressed in it.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

Winter without,
And warmth within;
The winds may shout
And the storm begin;
The snows may pack
At the window-pane,
And the skies grow black,
And the sun remain
Hidden away
The livelong day—
But here—in here is the warmth of May!

Swoop your spitefulest
Up the flue,
Wild Winds, do!
What in the world do I care for you?
O delightfulest
Weather of all,
Howl and squall,
And shake the trees till the last leaves fall!

The joy one feels,
In an easy-chair,
Cocking his heels
In the dancing air
That wreaths the rim of a roaring stove,
Whose heat loves better than hearts can love,
Will not permit
The coldest day
To drive away
The fire in his blood, and the bliss of it.

Then blow, Winds, blow!
And rave and shriek,
And snarl and snow,
Till your breath grows weak;
While here in my room
I'm as snugly shut
As a glad little worm
In the heart of a nut!

ENGLAND

The best-known Canadian poet, Dr. W. Wilfred Campbell, has not only written faithful descriptions of Canadian life but also poems thrilling with a fervent patriotism and appreciation of the great part played in the world by the British Empire. This poem expresses the feeling for England which brought over a great army of volunteers from Canada to fight in Europe for the Motherland. Dr. Campbell was born in 1861, and entered the Canadian Civil Service in 1891.

ENGLAND, England, England,
Girdled by ocean and skies,
And the power of a world, and the heart of a race,
And a hope that never dies.

England, England, England,
Wherever a true heart beats,
Wherever the rivers of commerce flow,
Wherever the bugles of conquest blow,
Wherever the glories of liberty grow,
'Tis the name that the world repeats.

And ye who dwell in the shadow
Of the century's sculptured piles,
Where sleep our century-honoured dead
While the great world thunders overhead,
And far out miles on miles,
Beyond the smoke of the mighty town,
The blue Thames dimples and smiles,
Not yours alone the glory of old,
Of the splendid thousand years,
Of Britain's might and Britain's right,
And the brunt of British spears.

Not yours alone, for the great world round
Ready to dare and do,
Scot and Celt and Norman and Dane,
With the Northman's sinew and heart and brain,
And the Northman's courage for blessing or bane
Are England's heroes, too.

North and south and east and west,
Wherever their triumphs be,
Their glory goes home to the ocean-girt isle
Where the heather blooms and the roses smile,
With the green isle under her lee;
And if ever the smoke of an alien gun
Should threaten her iron repose,
Shoulder to shoulder against the world,
Face to face with her foes,
Scot and Celt and Saxon are one
Where the glory of England goes.
And we of the newer and vaster West,
Where the great war banners are furled,
And commerce hurries her teeming hosts;
And the cannon are silent along our coasts,
Saxon and Gaul, Canadians claim
A past in the glory and pride and aim
Of the Empire that girdles the world.

England, England, England,
Wherever the daring heart
By Arctic floe or torrid strand
Thy heroes play their part;
For as long as Conquest holds the earth,
Or commerce sweeps the sea,
By orient jungle or western plain,
Will the Saxon spirit be.
And whatever the people that dwell beneath
Or whatever the alien tongue,
Over the freedom and peace of the world
Is the flag of England flung.
Till the last great freedom is found,
And the last great truth be taught,
Till the last great deed is done,
And the last great battle is fought,
Till the last great fighter is slain in the last great fight,
And the war-wolf is dead in his den,
England, breeder of hope and valour and might,
Iron mother of men.

Yea, England, England, England,
Till honour and valour are dead,
Till the world's great cannons rust,
Till the world's great hopes are dust,
Till faith and freedom be fled,
Till wisdom and justice have passed
To sleep with those who sleep in the many-chambered vast,
Till glory and knowledge are charnelled dust in dust,
To all that is best in the world's unrest,
In heart and mind you are wed.
While out from the Indian jungle
To the far Canadian snows,
Over the east and over the west,
Over the worst and over the best,
The flag of the world to its winds unfurled,
The blood-red ensign blows.

THE OFFERING

The proud though anguished patriotism of many thousands of mothers whose sons have fallen in sacrifice is aptly expressed in this poem by Isobel H. Rentoul in the "Sydney Bulletin."

SHE had no offering for her king
Of gems or gold;
She could not proffer anything
Of wealth untold;
For what could any woman bring
So poor and old?

She sent her boy, so strong and brave,
Her only son;
She spake not of the gift she gave
To anyone;
He found death and a foreign grave
"For duty done."

She held no grudge against her God,
She made no prayer;
She bent her back beneath the rod
Of pain and care.
She chose the path her son had trod,
And found it fair,

THE MAN WHO WAS LIKE SHAKESPEARE

W. S. Gilbert (1836–1911), or, to give him his full name and title at the end of his life, Sir William Schwenk Gilbert, was a delightful rhymester, who made a large fortune and a world-wide reputation by writing witty and whimsical plays interspersed with verses for a musical setting by Sir Arthur Sullivan, the most popular modern English composer. Gilbert's easy style and happy fancifulness are well illustrated in this sketch—not quite complete here—of the unenviable lot of a man who happens to have the features of Shakespeare. Gilbert must not be judged entirely by his humour. He had the power of passing from real fun into sudden pathos and pure poetry.

I'VE painted Shakespeare all my life,
"An Infant" (even then at "play"),
"A boy" with stage-ambition rife,
Then "married to Ann Hathaway."

The bard play-writing in his room,
The bard a humble lawyer's clerk,
The bard a lawyer—parson—groom—
The bard deer-stealing, after dark.

The bard a tradesman—and a Jew—
The bard a botanist—a beak—
The bard a skilled musician too—
A sheriff and a surgeon eke!

Yet critics say (a friendly stock)
That, though it's evident I try,
Yet even *I* can barely mock
The glimmer of his wondrous eye!

One morning as a work I framed,
There passed a person, walking hard:
"My gracious goodness!" I exclaimed,
"How very like my dear old bard!

"Oh, what a model he would make!"
I rushed outside, impulsive me!—
"Forgive the liberty I take,
"But you're so very——" "Stop!" said he.

"You needn't waste your breath or time;
I know what you are going to say—
That you're an artist, and that I'm
Remarkably like Shakespeare. Eh?

"You wish that I would sit to you?"
I clasped him madly round the waist,
And breathlessly replied, "I *do!*"
"All right!" said he. "But please make haste."

I led him by his hallowed sleeve,
And worked away at him apace;
I painted him till dewy eve;
There never was a nobler face!

"Oh, sir," I said, "a fortune grand
Is yours by dint of merest chance—
To sport *his* brow at second hand—
To wear *his* cast-off countenance!

"To rub *his* eyes whene'er they ache—
To wear *his* baldness ere you're old—
To clean *his* teeth when you awake—
To blow *his* nose when you've a cold!"

His eyeballs glistened in his eyes,
I sat and watched and smoked my pipe;
"Bravo!" I said. "I recognise
The frenzy of your prototype!"

His scanty hair he wildly tore:
"That's right," said I; "it shows your breed."
He danced, he stamped, he wildly swore.
"Bless me, that's very fine indeed!"

"Sir!" said the grand Shakespearean boy
(Continuing to blaze away),
"You think my face a source of joy?
That shows you know not what you say.

"Forgive these yells and cellar-flaps:
I'm always thrown in some such state
When on his face well-meaning chaps
This wretched man congratulate.

"For, oh, this face—this pointed chin—
This nose—this brow—these eyeballs too,
Have always been the origin
Of all the woes I ever knew!

"If to the play my way I find
To see a grand Shakespearean piece,
I have no rest, no ease of mind,
Until the author's puppets cease.

"Men nudge each other—thus—and say,
'This certainly is Shakespeare's son,'
And merry wags (of course in play)
Cry 'Author,' when the piece is done.

"In church the people stare at me,
Their soul the sermon never binds;
I catch them looking round to see,
And thoughts of Shakespeare fill their minds.

"And sculptors, fraught with cunning wile,
Who find it difficult to crown
A bust with Brown's insipid smile
Or Tomkins's unmannered frown,

"Yet boldly make my face their own,
When (oh, presumption!) they require
To animate a paving-stone
With Shakespeare's intellectual fire.

"At parties, where young ladies gaze,
And I attempt to speak my joy,
'Hush, pray!' some lovely creature says;
'The fond illusion don't destroy!'

"Whene'er I speak, my soul is wrung
With these or some such whisperings:
''Tis pity that a Shakespeare's tongue
Should say such un-Shakespearean things!'

"I should not thus be criticised
Had I a face of common wont:
Don't envy me—now, be advised!"
And, now I think of it, I don't!

THREE DAYS OF COLUMBUS

The ungenerous treatment meted out to the great Columbus has been a favourite theme with the poets, including Tennyson. This sketch of the discovery of the American continent is by Jean François Casimir Delavigne, a French poet and playwright who was extraordinarily popular with his countrymen during the period following Waterloo, when the French were rallying from the Napoleonic wars. Delavigne was born in 1793 and died in 1843. A Cazique was a Mexican chief. The sage who wrung lightning from heaven was Franklin.

On the deck stood Columbus; the ocean's expanse,
Untried and unlimited, swept by his glance.
"Back to Spain!" cry his men; "Put the vessel about!
We venture no further through danger and doubt."
"Three days, and I give you a world!" he replied;
"Bear up, my brave comrades; three days shall decide."
He sails—but no token of land is in sight;
He sails—but the day shows no more than the night.

. . . . .

The second day's past, and Columbus is sleeping,
While Mutiny near him his vigil is keeping;
"Shall he perish?" "Ay! death!" is the barbarous cry.
"He must triumph tomorrow, or, perjured, must die!"
Ungrateful and blind!—shall the world-linking sea,
He traced for the future, his sepulchre be?
Shall that sea, on the morrow, with pitiless waves,
Fling his corse on that shore which his patient eye craves?
The corse of an humble adventurer, then;
One day later—Columbus, the first among men.

But hush! he is dreaming! A veil on the main,
At the distant horizon is parted in twain,
And now, on his dreaming eye, rapturous sight,
Fresh burst the new world from the darkness of night!
O vision of glory, how dazzling it seems,
How glistens the verdure, how sparkle the streams!
How blue the far mountains, how glad the green isles,
And the earth and the ocean, how dimpled with smiles!
"Joy! joy!" cries Columbus, "this region is mine!"
Ah! not e'en its name, wondrous dreamer, is thine!

But, lo! his dream changes—a vision less bright
Comes to darken and banish that scene of delight.
The gold-seeking Spaniards, a merciless band,
Assail the meek natives and ravage the land.
He sees the fair palace, the temple on fire,
And the peaceful Cazique 'mid their ashes expire.

. . . . .

Again the dream changes. Columbus looks forth,
And a bright constellation beholds in the north.
'Tis the herald of empire! A people appear,
Impatient of wrong, and unconscious of fear!
They level the forest, they ransack the seas,
Each zone finds their canvas unfurled to the breeze.
"Hold!" Tyranny cries; but their resolute breath
Sends back the reply, "Independence or death!"
The ploughshare they turn to a weapon of might,
And, defying all odds, they go forth to the fight.

They have conquered! The people, with grateful acclaim,
Look to Washington's guidance, from Washington's fame;
Behold Cincinnatus and Cato combined,
In his patriot heart and republican mind.
Oh, type of true manhood! What sceptre or crown
But fades in the light of thy simple renown?
And, lo! by the side of the hero, a sage,
In freedom's behalf, sets his mark on the age;
Whom science adorningly hails, while he wrings
The lightning from heaven, the sceptre from kings!

At length, o'er Columbus slow consciousness breaks;
"Land! land!" cry the sailors; "land! land!" he awakes.
He runs—yes, behold it!—it blesseth his sight.
The land! Oh, dear spectacle! Transport, delight!
Oh, generous sobs, which he cannot restrain,
What will Ferdinand say? And the Future and Spain?
He will lay this fair land at the foot of the throne,
His king will repay all the ills he has known,
In exchange for a world what are honours and gains?
Or a crown? But how *is* he rewarded?
With chains!

WHERE AND WHITHER?

Henry S. Leigh, a writer of cheerful light verse, who died in 1843, here makes fun of the days when poets played with country life in their verses, pretending to be shepherds. Painters did the same in their pictures; it was a fashion.

WHERE are the times when—miles away
From the din and the dust of cities—
Alexis left his lambs to play,
And wooed some shepherdess half the day
With pretty and plaintive ditties?

Where are the pastures daisy-strewn,
And the flocks that lived in clover;
The zephyrs that caught the pastoral tune
And carried away the notes as soon
As ever the notes were over?

Where are the echoes that bore the strains
Each to his nearest neighbour;
And all the valleys and all the plains
Where all the nymphs and their lovesick swains
Made merry to pipe and tabor?

Where are they gone? They are gone to sleep
Where Fancy alone can find them;
But Arcady's times are like the sheep
That quitted the care of Little Bo-peep,
For they've left their tales behind them!

ODE TO PEACE

Thomas Hood (1799-1845), quite the funniest and almost the saddest of English poets, was fond of making jerky contrasts by pretending that his writing was woefully interrupted. His best example is his "Parental Ode to My Son." Here he struggles in vain to hymn the praise of peace while he is distracted by innumerable callers. If humour is "a sense of the incongruous," this must be the height of humour.

O PEACE! oh, come with me and dwell—
But stop, for there's the bell.
O Peace! for thee I go and sit in churches,
On Wednesday, when there's very few
In loft or pew—
Another ring, the tarts are come from Birch's.
O Peace! for thee I have avoided marriage—
Hush! there's a carriage.
O Peace! thou art the best of earthly goods—
The five Miss Woods.
O Peace! thou art the goddess I adore—
There come some more.
O Peace! thou child of solitude and quiet—
That's Lord Drum's footman, for he loves a riot.
O Peace!—
Knocks will not cease.
O Peace! thou wert for human comfort planned—
That's Weippert's band.
O Peace! how glad I welcome thy approaches—
I hear the sound of coaches.
O Peace! O Peace!—another carriage stops—
It's early for the Blenkinsops.
O Peace! with thee I love to wander,
But wait till I have showed up Lady Squander;
And now I've seen her up the stair,
O Peace!—but here comes Captain Hare.
O Peace! thou art the slumber of the mind,
Untroubled, calm, and quiet, and unbroken—
If that is Alderman Guzzle from Portsoken,
Alderman Gobble won't be far behind.
O Peace! serene in worldly shyness—
Make way there for his Serene Highness!

O Peace! if you do not disdain
To dwell amongst the menial train,
I have a silent place, and lone,
That you and I may call our own,
Where tumult never makes an entry—
Susan, what business have you in my pantry?

O Peace!—but there is Major Monk,
At variance with his wife. O Peace!—
And that great German, Van der Trunk,
And that great talker, Miss Apreece.
O Peace! so dear to poets' quills—
They're just beginning their quadrilles.
O Peace! our greatest renovator—
I wonder where I put my waiter.
O Peace!—but here my ode I'll cease!
I have no peace to write of Peace.

SLEEP

William Wordsworth, the great poet, here tells us of the devices by which he tried in vain to bring sleep to his wearied wakefulness. The slow counting of a flock of sheep, passing one by one before the mind's eye, has often been recommended as sleep-producing, and as often as not has failed, as it failed with Wordsworth. This is one of the best known of Wordsworth's sonnets, because it relates a common experience with full appreciation of the trying discomforts of sleeplessness.

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the falls of rivers, winds, and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky—
I've thought of all by turns; and still I lie
Sleepless; and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear tonight away:
Without thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessed barrier betwixt day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

THE LAVENDER BEDS

W. B. Rands, "the children's laureate," had a mind brimming with fancies, like those which dance through these sprightly verses. No one could make Fairyland more real than he. What a delightfully quaint way he has of saying it was night—"the moon made the sun-dial tell the time wrong"!

THE garden was pleasant with old-fashioned flowers,
The sunflowers and hollyhocks stood up like towers;
There were dark turncap lilies and jessamine rare,
And sweet thyme and marjoram scented the air.

The moon made the sun-dial tell the time wrong;
'Twas too late in the year for the nightingale's song;
The box-trees were clipped, and the alleys were straight,
Till you came to the shrubbery hard by the gate.

The fairies stepped out of the lavender beds,
With mob-caps, or wigs, on their quaint little heads;
My lord had a sword, and my lady a fan;
The music struck up and the dancing began.

I watched them go through with a grave minuet;
Wherever they footed the dew was not wet;
They bowed and they curtsied, the brave and the fair;
And laughter like chirping of crickets was there.

Then all on a sudden a church clock struck loud:
A flutter, a shiver, was seen in the crowd,
The cock crew, the wind woke, the trees tossed their heads,
And the fairy folk hid in the lavender beds.

THE DRUMMER BOY

This charming little parable, which prettily suggests the influences of love on the young, was written by William Brighty Rands. He was a Parliamentary reporter, who wrote many kinds of prose and verse, using different names besides his own. Sometimes he called himself Mathew Browne and sometimes Henry Holbeach, but his poetry preserves his true name, W. B. Rands. He died in 1882, in his sixtieth year.

DRUMMER-BOY, drummer-boy, where is your drum?
And why do you weep, sitting here on your thumb?
The soldiers are out, and the fifes we can hear,
But where is the drum of the young grenadier?

"My dear little drum it was stolen away
Whilst I was asleep on a sunshiny day;
It was all through the drone of a big bumble-bee,
And sheep and a shepherdess under a tree."

Shepherdess, shepherdess, where is your crook?
And why is your little lamb over the brook?
It bleats for its dam, and dog Tray is not by.
So why do you stand with a tear in your eye?

"My dear little crook it was stolen away
Whilst I dreamt a dream on a morning in May;
It was all through the drone of a big bumble-bee,
And a drum and a drummer-boy under a tree."

THE OUTLAW'S SONG

This outlaws' song, telling of the men who in olden times lived in the woods by poaching, was written by Joanna Baillie, a charming Scottish lady who was born in 1762 and died in 1851. Most of her life was passed in London. She wrote a number of plays, and was a great friend of Sir Walter Scott. The wild-fire dancing on the fen is the will-o'-the-wisp.

THE chough and crow to roost are gone,
The owl sits on the tree,
The hushed wind wails with feeble moan,
Like infant charity;
The wild-fire dances on the fen,
The red star sheds its ray;
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men!
It is our opening day.

Both child and nurse are fast asleep,
And closed is every flower,
And winking tapers faintly peep
High from my lady's bower;
Bewildered hinds with shortened ken
Shrink on their murky way;
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men!
It is our opening day.

Nor board nor garner own we now,
Nor roof nor latchèd door,
Nor kind mate, bound by holy vow,
To bless a good man's store;
Noon lulls us in a gloomy den,
And night is grown our day;
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men!
And use it as ye may.

LATE LEAVES

Here is a picture by Walter Savage Landor of autumn verging into winter, which really is the parable of his own life lived bravely to the end. The poet died in his ninetieth year in 1864.

THE leaves are falling; so am I;
The few late flowers have moisture in the eye;
So have I too.
Scarcely on any bough is heard
Joyous, or even unjoyous, bird
The whole wood through.

Winter may come: he brings but nigher
His circle (yearly narrowing) to the fire
Where old friends meet.
Let him; now heaven is overcast,
And spring and summer both are past,
And all things sweet.

TO A SINGER

This description of the influence of music over the music-lover—perhaps the best example in our literature of an attempt to put into words the effects on a receptive mind of a sequence of sweet sounds—is taken from one of the greatest of Shelley's poems, his "Prometheus Unbound." In a supreme degree Shelley had himself the gift of melody in verse.

My soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;
And thine doth like an angel sit
Beside the helm conducting it,
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.
It seems to float ever, for ever,
Upon that many-winding river,
Between mountains, woods, abysses,
A paradise of wildernesses!
Till, like one in slumber bound,
Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,
Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound.
Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions
In music's most serene dominions,
Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.
And we sail on, away, afar,
Without a course, without a star,
But by the instinct of sweet music driven;
Till through Elysian garden islets
By thee, most beautiful of pilots,
Where never mortal pinnace glided,
The boat of my desire is guided:
Realms where the air we breathe is love,
Which in the winds on the waves doth move,
Harmonising this earth with what we feel above.

THE BLACK PRINCE

This vigorous account of the last hours of Edward, the Black Prince, is from the pen of Sir Walter Scott. It is given as a song in the story of "Rob Roy." The reference is to the horn of Roland, one of Charlemagne's generals, who was attacked when passing through the Pyrenees, and would not blow his horn for help till he was the last man left.

O for the voice of that wild horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
The dying hero's call,
That told imperial Charlemagne
How Paynim sons of swarthy Spain
Had wrought his champion's fall!

Sad over earth and ocean sounding,
And England's distant cliffs astounding,
Such are the notes should say
How Britain's hope, and France's fear,
Victor of Cressy and Poitiers,
In Bordeaux dying lay.

"Raise my faint head, my squires," he said,
"And let the casement be displayed,
That I may see once more
The splendour of the setting sun
Gleam on thy mirrored wave, Garonne,
And Blay's empurpled shore.

"Like me, he sinks to Glory's sleep,
His fall the dews of evening steep,
As if in sorrow shed.
So soft shall fall the trickling tear,
When England's maids and matrons hear
Of their Black Edward dead.

"And though my sun of glory set,
Nor France nor England shall forget
The terror of my name;
And oft shall Britain's heroes rise,
New planets in these southern skies,
Through clouds of blood and flame."

THE SECRET OF THE SEA

Here we have quite a characteristic example of the sweet, even flow of the verse of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the most popular American poet, and his vein of literary romance. It is from the story books that he takes his scenes. The poet finds the heroism of the sea in "ancient lore," and not with tarred hands, as it may be found any day.

Ah! what pleasant visions haunt me
As I gaze upon the sea!
All the old romantic legends,
All my dreams come back to me.

Sails of silk and ropes of sendal,
Such as gleam in ancient lore;
And the singing of the sailors,
And the answer from the shore!

Most of all, the Spanish ballad
Haunts me oft, and tarries long,
Of the noble Count Arnaldos
And the sailor's mystic song;

Telling how the Count Arnaldos,
With his hawk upon his hand,
Saw a fair and stately galley
Steering onward to the land;

How he heard the ancient helmsman
Chant a song so wild and clear
That the sailing sea-bird slowly
Poised upon the mast to hear,

Till his soul was full of longing,
And he cried with impulse strong—
"Helmsman! for the love of heaven,
Teach me, too, that wondrous song!"

"Would'st thou"—so the helmsman answered,
"Learn the secret of the sea?
Only those who brave its dangers
Comprehend its mystery!"

In each sail that skims the horizon,
In each landward-blowing breeze,
I behold that stately galley,
Hear those mournful melodies,

Till my soul is full of longing
For the secret of the sea,
And the heart of the great ocean
Sends a thrilling pulse through me.

NATURE'S FAREWELL

In this poem Mrs. Hemans imagines the woods, birds, and streams bidding a country youth farewell as he leaves his native district to pursue Fortune in the busy city. These natural objects assure him that he will never be able to enjoy again the pleasure he has felt in them in the past, as he will be changed in mind by his experience of the world. The poem suggests two objections. First, it is not natural for external things to have prophetic insight into a man's future mood; and next, their prophecy is not true. For the boy who has once enjoyed the natural beauty of his birthplace will return in later life from dissimilar surroundings with an increased appreciation of his first impressions.

A YOUTH rode forth from his childhood's home,
Through the crowded paths of the world to roam;
And the green leaves whispered, as he passed,
"Wherefore, thou dreamer, away so fast?
"Knewest thou with what thou art parting here,
Long would'st thou linger in doubt and fear;
Thy heart's light laughter, thy sunny hours,
Thou hast left in our shades with the spring's wild flowers.
"Under the arch by our mingling made,
Thou and thy brother have gaily played.
Ye may meet again where ye roved of yore,
But as ye *have* met there—oh, never more!"

On rode the youth, and the boughs among,
Thus the free birds o'er his pathway sung:
"Wherefore so fast unto life away?
Thou art leaving for ever thy joy in our lay!
"Thou may'st come to the summer woods again,
And thy heart have no echo to greet their strain;
Afar from the foliage its love will dwell—
A change must pass o'er thee. Farewell, farewell!"

On rode the youth, and the founts and streams
Thus mingled a voice with his joyous dreams:
"We have been thy playmates through many a day,
Wherefore thus leave us? Oh, yet delay!
"Listen but once to the sound of our mirth!
For thee 'tis a melody passing from earth.
Never again wilt thou find in its flow
The peace it could once on thy heart bestow.
"Thou wilt visit the scenes of thy childhood's glee,
With the breath of the world on thy spirit free;
Passion and sorrow its depth will have stirred,
And the singing of waters be vainly heard
"Thou wilt bear in our gladsome laugh no part—
What should it do for a burning heart?
Thou wilt bring to the banks of our freshest rill
Thirst which no fountain on earth may still.

"Farewell! When thou comest again to thine own,
Thou wilt miss from our music its loveliest tone;
Mournfully true is the tale we tell,
Yet on, fiery dreamer! Farewell, farewell!"
And a something of gloom on his spirit weighed,
As he caught the last sounds of his native shade;
But he knew not till many a bright spell broke
How deep were the oracles Nature spoke!

SILENCE

In this fine sonnet Thomas Hood tells us with truth that a more profound sense of silence comes to us where we feel how the life of long ago has vanished, leaving only desolation, than we can realise by imagining empty soundless wastes. To be impressed deeply we must have a contrast of then and now.

THERE is a silence where hath been no sound,
There is a silence where no sound may be,
In the cold grave—under the deep, deep sea,
Or in wide desert where no life is found,
Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound;
No voice is hushed—no life treads silently,
But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,
That never spoke, over the idle ground:
But in green ruins, in the desolate walls
Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,
Though the dun fox or wild hyæna calls,
And owls, that flit continually between,
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan—
There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.

A SPECULATION

In this epigram, by Thomas Moore, Marcus stands for any very self-conceited person—we all know many it would fit.

OF all speculations the market holds forth,
The best that I know for a lover of pelf
Is to buy Marcus up at the price he is worth,
And then sell him at that which he sets on himself.

THE GENTLE LADY

During the war there were published some heart-stirring verses by a brave young Australian, Corporal J. D. Burns, who heard the bugles of England calling him, and could not stay away from the war. When he fell on the Gallipoli Peninsula the world lost a true poet as well as a brave soldier, as all will realise who read this lovely poem on Sleep.

THE gentle lady comes to me
When all the lights are dim,
When o'er the shadowy hill appears
The big moon's yellow rim,
When beetles flit and shrilly sounds
The cricket's evening hymn.

O gentle lady, come tonight,
The earth is rapt and still;
The stars are leaning from the sky
Upon the earth, until
They seem to whisper tender dreams
To sleeping plain and hill.

Light-footed breezes are abroad,
Their hands caressing mine,
I feel their breath upon my brow,
'Tis cool with scent of pine;
But, gentle lady, dear, their touch
Is not so soft as thine.

The gentle lady comes to me,
She comes without a sound,
She wears a robe of softest grey
That shadows fling around,
As Evening wears her gown of dark,
So is my lady gowned.

And while the great moon rises slow
Into the star-strewn sky,
With her beside me, I forget
The world, and by and by
We wander far from world and stars,
My lady dear and I.

Beyond the world, beyond the stars,
That silent vigil keep,
We wander to our Land of Dreams,
And weary eyelids steep
In gentle dews of slumber—I
And my dear lady—Sleep.

BEFORE THE BATTLE

Tens of thousands of families will feel today, as they never could have felt before the dread era of almost universal war, the glory of the hero's death in a noble cause. This is how Thomas Moore hymns the blessedness of the patriot's sacrifice. The "horn" mentioned in the fourth verse is the ancient Irish corna, which served both to summon men to battle and, as a drinking horn, to commemorate victory.

BY the hope within us springing,
Herald of tomorrow's strife;
By that sun, whose light is bringing
Chains of freedom, death or life—
Oh, remember life can be
No charm for him who lives not free!
Like the day-star in the wave,
Sinks a hero in his grave,
'Midst the dew-fall of a nation's tears.

Happy is he o'er whose decline
The smiles of home may soothing shine,
And light him down the steep of years—
But oh, how blessed they sink to rest,
Who close their eyes on victory's breast!

O'er his watch-fire's fading embers
Now the foeman's cheek turns white,
When his heart that field remembers,
Where we tamed his tyrant might!

Never let him bind again
A chain like that we broke from then.
Hark! the horn of combat calls—
Ere the golden evening falls,
May we pledge that horn in triumph round!

Many a heart that now beats high,
In slumber cold at night shall lie,
Nor waken even at victory's sound—
But oh, how blessed that hero's sleep,
O'er whom a wondering world shall weep!

WHEN I SIT DOWN TO READ

There is something for us all in these beautiful verses. How often, when we sit down to rest in a room, do we think of the life that the room enshrines—the men who have lived and died that that room might be there for us to rest in, all those whose love and thought and toil are woven in these very walls? Here Muriel Stuart thinks of these things that should make a deep appeal to all, and it was in the "Westminster Gazette" that she gave this charming poem to the world.

WHEN I sit down to read at night,
I hear a thousand voices call—
The painted cups, the mirror bright,
The crazy pattern on the wall.

The curtains, whispering that they were
Plucked from the bosom of the lea;
The coal that knew the Flood, the chair
Remembering when it was a tree.

They told of those who beat and broke,
Blasted and burned their lives away;
And with them other voices spoke,
And spoke more dreadfully than they.

Terrible sounds of woe and strife
Made thunder in this quiet room—
Women who gave the mill their life,
And men who shuddered at the loom.

The noise the snarling hammer made
In maddened ears, the foundry's roar,
The hands that stitched the rich brocade,
That beat the brass, that hewed the door.

How can I read while round me swarm
Creatures that strove and wept and died
To make this room rich, safe, and warm,
To keep the weather-beasts outside?

How can I rest while in the gloom
From mine and garret, den and pit,
They pass who built in blood this room,
And with their tears have furnished it?

THE CALENDAR IN THE ATTIC

Poetry without rhyme or metre, but with what is called "flow and cadence," is being practised in America. Here is an example by John Gould Fletcher, describing his feeling on seeing an old calendar with his birthday marked upon it.

I WONDER how long it has been
Since this old calendar hung here,
With my birthday date upon it?
Nothing else—not a word of writing,
Not a mark of any hand.

Perhaps it was my father
Who left it thus
For me to see.

Perhaps my mother
Smiled as she saw it;
But in later years did not smile.

If I could tear it down
From the wall
Somehow,
I would be content;
But I am afraid, as a little child, to touch it.

THE TURF SHALL BE MY SHRINE

In these verses Thomas Moore sees God mirrored in every aspect of Nature, and breaking forth into ultimate goodness. The poem is a changing expression of the spirit's deepest worship. The tone of humble adoration is sustained throughout.

THE turf shall be my fragrant shrine,
My temple, Lord, that arch of Thine;
My censer's breath the mountain airs,
And silent thoughts my only prayers.

My choir shall be the moonlight waves,
When murmuring homeward to their caves;
Or when the stillness of the sea,
E'en more than music, breathes of Thee.

I'll seek by day some glade unknown,
All light and silence, like Thy throne;
And the pale stars shall be, at night,
The only eyes that watch my rite.

Thy heaven, on which 'tis bliss to look,
Shall be my pure and shining book,
Where I shall read, in words of flame,
The glories of Thy wondrous name.

I'll read Thy anger in the rack
That clouds awhile the day-beam's track;
Thy mercy in the azure hue
Of sunny brightness, breaking through.

There's nothing bright, above, below,
From flowers that bloom to stars that glow,
But in its light my soul can see
Some feature of Thy deity.

There's nothing dark, below, above,
But in its gloom I trace Thy love;
And meekly wait that moment when
Thy touch shall turn all bright again.

THOU ART, O GOD!

In middle life, after he had passed his thirty-fifth year, Thomas Moore wrote a series of sacred songs, of which this was the first. It is an expansion of verses in the seventy-fourth psalm: "The day is Thine, and the night also is Thine; Thou hast prepared the light of the sun; Thou hast made summer and winter." The poet helps our imagination by filling in the picture. Moore died on February, 25, 1852.

THOU art, O God, the life and light
Of all this wondrous world we see.
Its glow by day, its smile by night,
Are but reflections caught from Thee.
Where'er we turn Thy glories shine,
And all things fair and bright are Thine.

When day, with farewell beam, delays
Among the opening clouds of even,
And we can almost think we gaze
Through golden vistas into heaven—
Those hues, that make the sun's decline
So soft, so radiant, Lord, are Thine.

When night, with wings of starry gloom,
O'ershadows all the earth and skies,
Like some dark, beauteous bird, whose plume
Is sparkling with unnumbered eyes—
That sacred gloom, those fires divine,
So grand, so countless, Lord, are Thine.

When youthful spring around us breathes,
Thy spirit warms her fragrant sigh,
And every flower the summer wreathes
Is born beneath that kindling eye.
Where'er we turn Thy glories shine,
And all things fair and bright are Thine.

DOWN IN THE SUNLESS RETREATS

The faith in God that nothing can quench has seldom been suggested more reverently than in these verses by Thomas Moore.

AS down in the sunless retreats of the ocean
Sweet flowers are springing no mortal can see,
So, deep in my soul, the still prayer of devotion,
Unheard by the world, rises silent to Thee,
My God, silent to Thee;
Pure, warm, silent to Thee;
So, deep in my soul, the still prayer of devotion,
Unheard by the world, rises silent to Thee!

As still, to the Star of its worship, though clouded,
The needle points faithfully o'er the dim sea,
So, dark as I roam in this wintry world shrouded,
The hope of my spirit turns trembling to Thee,
My God, trembling to Thee;
True, fond, trembling to Thee;
So, dark as I roam in this wintry world shrouded,
The hope of my spirit turns trembling to Thee!

SOMETIMES WHEN I WAKE UP IN BED

Sometimes when I wake up in bed,
Before the dawn comes in the sky,
My little room seems big and wide,
There are no walls on either side,
And strange things moving silently
Are passing by my head.

And where the hearthrug used to be
Tosses a grey, mysterious ocean,
With seven ships sailing in a row,
Each with a dragon at the bow,
And seven seamen in crazy motion
All signalling to me.

That corner that I just can't see
I'm certain is a robbers' den.
They're talking now of treasure hid,
Of a magic box with a magic lid,
And a prince a-riding down the glen—
The prince is *so* like me.

My water basin's turned to ice,
And under it are snowfields dim.
An Arctic bear lives in that hole,
He knows just where to find the Pole;
I think I'm rather 'fraid of him,
His manners are not nice.

That rocking-chair a-moving by
Is a tremendous caravan;
Each camel has a white-robed rider,
The desert wider grows and wider;
And on they pass before I can
The hidden traveller spy,

But when I wake in morning light,
And birds sing out from tree to tree,
My chairs and table tidy stand,
There is no more a wonderland.
The things I saw have vanished quite,
It is so strange to me.

GO WHERE GLORY WAITS THEE

Nearly all Thomas Moore's poems were sentimental. They were written to be sung, and dwelt tenderly on such subjects as memories and long-cherished affections. This appeal for unweakened remembrance is a happy example of this.

Go where glory waits thee;
But, while Fame elates thee,
O still remember me!
When the praise thou meetest
To thine ear is sweetest,
O then remember me!
Other arms may press thee,
Dearer friends caress thee—
All the joys that bless thee
Sweeter far may be;
But when friends are nearest,
And when joys are dearest,
O then remember me!

When, at eve, thou rovest
By the star thou lovest,
O then remember me!
Think when home returning,
Bright we've seen it burning—
O, thus remember me!
Oft as summer closes,
When thine eye reposes
On its lingering roses,
Once so loved by thee,
Think of her who wove them,
Her who made thee love them;
O then remember me!

When around thee, dying,
Autumn leaves are lying,
O then remember me!
And, at night, when gazing
On the gay hearth blazing,
O still remember me!
Then should music, stealing
All the soul of feeling,
To thy heart appealing,
Draw one tear from thee—
Then let memory bring thee
Strains I used to sing thee;
O then remember me!

THE LITTLE CHAIR

One of John Gould Fletcher's attempts to imagine himself back in childhood, a dream expressed in free, rhymeless verse.

I know not why, when I saw the little chair,
I suddenly desired to sit in it.
I know not why, when I sat in the little chair,
Everything changed, and life came back to me.
I am convinced no one at all has grown up in the house;
The break that I dreamed, itself was a dream, and is broken.
I will sit in the little chair and wait
Till the others come looking after me.
And if it is after nightfall they will come,
So much the better.
For the little chair holds me as tightly as death,
And, rocking in it, I can hear it whisper strange things.

THE SOLDIER RELIEVED

This tribute to an old soldier relieved from life's duty by the angels is from the pen of Robert Browning, one of the great poets of the second half of the nineteenth century. By a sudden contrast between ourselves and the worn, poor old soldier, dutiful to the last, the poet makes us feel paltry.

I'd like now, yet had haply been afraid,
To have just looked, when this man came to die,
And seen who lined the clean, gay garret-sides,
And stood about the neat, low truckle-bed,
With the heavenly manner of relieving guard.
Here had been, mark, the general-in-chief,
Through a whole campaign of the world's life and death,
Doing the King's work all the dim day long,
In his old coat and up to knees in mud,
Smoked like a herring, dining on a crust—
And, now the day was won, relieved at once!
No further show or need of that old coat,
You are sure, for one thing! Bless us, all the while
How sprucely we are dressed out, you and I!
A second, and the angels alter that.

OUR NATIVE SOIL

This sonnet was written in 1802 by Wordsworth when, with his sister Dorothy, he returned from a visit to the Continent. It was the last journey he made with his sister before his marriage. He had been much struck by the contrast between devastated France and prosperous England. "Let that pass, thought for another moment," means that he will return later to the subject of free England and enslaved Europe. His later sonnets were, however, chiefly written to rouse his countrymen to an appreciation of their privileges.

Here, on our native soil, we breathe once more!
The cock that crows, the smoke that curls, that sound
Of bells—those boys who in yon meadow-ground
In white-sleeved shirts are playing—and the roar
Of the waves breaking on the chalky shore—
All, all are English. Oft have I looked round
With joy in Kent's green vales; but never found
Myself so satisfied in heart before.
Europe is yet in bonds; but let that pass,
Thought for another moment. Thou art free,
My country! and 'tis joy enough and pride,
For one hour's perfect bliss, to tread the grass
Of England once again, and hear and see,
With such a dear companion at my side.

ON MUSIC

Thomas Moore was a musician and singer as well as a poet. He sang his own songs with fine expression. In this poem he claims for music pre-eminence over language itself as a means for moving the heart. To some natures, tuned to artistic refinement, this may be true, but the appeal of music is far from universal. Its message to multitudes is very vague.

WHEN through life unblest we rove,
Losing all that made life dear,
Should some notes we used to love
In days of boyhood meet our ear,
Oh, how welcome breathes the strain!
Wakening thoughts that long have slept!
Kindling former smiles again
In faded eyes that long have wept.
Like the gale that sighs along
Beds of oriental flowers,
Is the grateful breath of song
That once was heard in happier hours;
Filled with balm the gale sighs on,
Though the flowers have sunk in death;
So, when pleasure's dream is gone,
Its memory lives in Music's breath.
Music! oh, how faint, how weak,
Language fades before thy spell!
Why should feeling ever speak,
When thou canst breathe her soul so well?
Friendship's balmy words may feign,
Love's are even more false than they;
Oh, 'tis only Music's strain
Can sweetly soothe, and not betray!

AUTUMN IN THE WOOD

A pleasant picture of a day in a wood, by Cecily A. Hallack, a reader of this magazine who is still at school.

THE silver stream runs rippling through the wood,
Between its banks of fern where slow-worms creep;
The thrush's song vies with the lilting brook
To wake the rabbits from their morning sleep.
The sunlight plays on painted bramble-leaves,
Their treasuries by children rifted o'er;
And blown-clad squirrels leap from bough to bough,
To add fresh spoil to winter's cosy store.
The glistening stones lie shaded 'mid the brook,
Whose ripples are set whispering by the breeze;
A butterfly stays poised upon a flower,
To watch the darting minnows at their ease.
At length the evening falls in twilight shades,
The squirrels hide and grey moths flit about;
The evening deepens, till the night is here,
And clear and bright the evening star shines out.

THE LAND OF ERIN

The poems by Thomas Moore that have made the most lasting appeal to later generations are his Irish Melodies. Though he lived most of his life in England amid fashionable society, Moore remained an ardent lover of his native land, and his tuneful strains were most truly inspired when he told of her fame or sorrow. A legend tells how, early in Ireland's history, the people, under Brien, their king, were so honest that a beautiful young lady, richly dressed and adorned with jewels, passed alone and unmolested through the land. This is how Moore cast the story into graceful verse.

RICH and rare were the gems she wore,
And a bright gold ring on her wand she bore;
But oh, her beauty was far beyond
Her sparkling gems or snow-white wand.
"Lady, dost thou not fear to stray,
So lone and lovely, through this bleak way?
Are Erin's sons so good or cold,
As not to be tempted by woman or gold?"
"Sir Knight, I feel not the least alarm,
No son of Erin will offer me harm:
For, though they love women and golden store,
Sir Knight, they love honour and virtue more."
On she went, and her maiden smile
In safety lighted her round the green isle;
And blest for ever is she who relied
Upon Erin's honour and Erin's pride.

THE SWORDS OF FORMER TIME

This glorification of past times by Thomas Moore is vigorous and bold, but we may doubt whether there ever were such times as are described here with unstinted admiration. It is the rule of the sword that is sung, and the rule of the sword passes easily, and almost naturally, into tyranny. Perhaps the country which most nearly corresponds with Moore's description of free men armed for the right is Switzerland, a land where kings have been unknown.

OH for the swords of former time!
Oh for the men who bore them,
When, armed for Right, they stood sublime,
And tyrants crouched before them!
When, pure yet, ere courts began
With honours to enslave him,
The best honours worn by Man
Were those which Virtue gave him.
Oh for the swords of former time!
Oh for the men who bore them,
When, armed for Right, they stood sublime,
And tyrants crouched before them!
Oh for the kings who flourished then:
Oh for the pomp that crowned them,
When hearts and hands of freeborn men
Were all the ramparts round them!
When, safe built on bosoms true,
The throne was but the centre
Round which Love a circle drew,
That Treason durst not enter.
Oh for the kings who flourished then!
Oh for the pomp that crowned them,
When hearts and hands of freeborn men
Were all the ramparts round them!

AUTUMN

Thomas Hood is known as a humorous poet chiefly, but he could and did write sadly when he was in the mood, even in his youth, when he penned this unrelieved picture of autumn. Scientific people say now that autumn is really a season of renewal and not of death, for the trees then gather their strength for the next spring outburst of life; but poets did not know this eighty years ago, when these lines were written.

THE Autumn is old;
The sere leaves are flying;
He hath gathered up gold,
And now he is dying:
Old age, begin sighing!
The vintage is ripe;
The harvest is heaping;
But some that have sowed
Have no riches for reaping:
Poor wretch, fall a-weeping!
The year's in the wane;
There is nothing adorning;
The night has no eve,
And the day has no morning;
Cold Winter gives warning!
The rivers run chill;
The red sun is sinking;
And I am grown old,
And life is fast shrinking.
Here's enow for sad thinking!

A JACOBITE'S EPITAPH

This touching description of the feelings of an exile unable to return to England because of his fidelity to the Stuart line of kings, is from the pen of Lord Macaulay, a historian who could sympathise with the followers of the Pretender, while detesting their cause. Scargill is on the River Greta.

TO my true king I offered, free from stain,
Courage and faith; vain faith, and courage vain.
For him I threw lands, honours, wealth away,
And one dear hope that was more prized than they.
For him I languished in a foreign clime.
Grey-haired with sorrow in my manhood's prime;
Heard on Lavernia Scargill's whispering trees,
And pined by Arno for my lovelier Tees;
Beheld each night my home in fevered sleep,
Each morning started from the dream to weep;
Till God, who saw me tried too sorely, gave
The resting-place I asked—an early grave.
O thou whom chance leads to this nameless stone,
From that proud country which was once mine own,
By those white cliffs I never more must see,
By that dear language which I speak like thee,
Forget all feuds, and shed one English tear
O'er English dust. A broken heart lies here.

ROOF-TOPS, WHAT DO YOU COVER?

Writers have often looked out over the continuous roofs of cities and allowed imagination to picture the scenes beneath. The most striking picture of the kind is in prose by Thomas Carlyle, in his "Sartor Resartus." Here an American writer, Charles Hanson Towne, in "Collier's Weekly," makes the same imaginative survey, varied by the thought of the supreme tragedy of those who have no home at all.

ROOF-TOPS, roof-tops, what do you cover?
Sad folk, bad folk, and many a glowing lover;
Wise people, simple people, children of despair—
Roof-tops, roof-tops, hiding pain and care.
Roof-tops, roof-tops, oh, what sin you're knowing,
While above you in the sky the white clouds are blowing;
While beneath you agony and dolour and grim strife
Fight the olden battle, the olden war of Life!
Roof-tops, roof-tops, cover up their shame—
Wretched souls, prisoned souls, too piteous to name;
Man himself hath built you all to hide away the stars—
Roof-tops, roof-tops, you hide ten billion scars.
Roof-tops, roof-tops, well I know you cover
Many solemn tragedies, and many a lonely lover;
But, ah, you hide the good that lives in the throbbing city—
Patient wives and tenderness, forgiveness, faith, and pity.
Roof-tops, roof-tops, this is what I wonder:
You are thick as poisonous plants, thick the people under;
Yet roofless and homeless and shelterless they roam,
The driftwood of the town who have no roof and no home!

WE HOPE TO WIN

These verses, appearing anonymously in the "Spectator" during the war, serve to remind us of that time of strain in which they were written, and to stir us to look forward.

WE hope to win? By God's help, Yes!
Though of the "when" no man may guess,
Since there must yet be weary strain,
Alternate joy, alternate pain,
Till victory come, at end, to bless!
But there are other wars that press,
Wars bred of fulness and excess,
Which—if we would our place maintain—
We hope to win.
There is the war with selfishness—
A sluggish fiend that doubts distress;
With hearts that fail, and lips that feign;
With vice and drink and greed of gain—
These are the wars in which, not less,
We hope to win.

THIS WAS THE WORLD AND I WAS KING

THE LOVELY CORNERS OF OUR LAND IN ENGLAND'S HUNDRED DAYS OF MATCHLESS SUMMER

And all about was mine, I said,
The little sparrows overhead,
The little minnows too.

This was the world, and I was king;
For me the bees came by to sing,
For me the swallows flew.

R. L. Stevenson

ARETHUSA

To understand this mellifluous poem by Shelley, we must know the Greek myth of Arethusa. She was a fresh-water nymph, a sprite of the swiftly running streams. Coming to the river Alpheus, the god of that stream saw her, fell in love with her, and chased her. But she prayed to the goddess of the Ocean for help, and the goddess cleft a way beneath the salt waters till Arethusa passed from Greece and rose again in a fountain in Sicily, near Syracuse, "the Ortygian shore," where they live united in peace. A happy example of Shelley's plastic power over rhyme and rhythmical movement.

ARETHUSA arose
From her couch of snows
In the Acroceraunian mountains—
From cloud and from crag,
With many a jag,
Shepherding her bright fountains.
She leapt down the rocks
With her rainbow locks
Streaming among the streams;
Her steps paved with green
The downward ravine
Which slopes to the western gleams:
And gliding and springing,
She went, ever singing,
In murmurs as soft as sleep;
The Earth seemed to love her,
And Heaven smiled above her,
As she lingered towards the deep.

Then Alpheus bold,
On his glacier cold,
With his trident the mountains strook;
And opened a chasm
In the rocks—with the spasm
All Erymanthus shook.
And the black south wind
It concealed behind
The urns of the silent snow,
And earthquake and thunder
Did rend in sunder
The bars of the springs below:
The beard and the hair
Of the river god were
Seen through the torrent's sweep,
As he followed the light
Of the fleet nymph's flight
To the brink of the Dorian deep.

"Oh, save me! Oh, guide me!
And bid the deep hide me.
For he grasps me now by the hair!"
The loud Ocean heard,
To its blue depth stirred,
And divided at her prayer;
And under the water
The Earth's white daughter
Fled like a sunny beam,
Behind her descended,
Her billows unblended
With the brackish Dorian stream:
Like a gloomy stain
On the emerald main
Alpheus rushed behind—
As an eagle pursuing
A dove to its ruin
Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

Under the bowers
Where the Ocean Powers
Sit on their pearléd thrones,
Through the coral woods
Of the weltering floods,
Over heaps of unvalued stones:
Through the dim beams
Which amid the streams
Weave a network of coloured light;
And under the caves,
Where the shadowy waves
Are as green as the forest's night:
Outspeeding the shark,
And the swordfish dark,
Under the ocean foam,
And up through the rifts
Of the mountain cliffs
They passed to their Dorian home.

And now from their fountains
In Enna's mountains,
Down one vale where the morning basks,
Like friends once parted
Grown single-hearted,
They ply their watery tasks.
At sunrise they leap
From their cradles steep
In the cave of the shelving hill:
At noontide they flow
Through the woods below
And the meadows of Asphodel;
And at night they sleep
In the rocking deep
Beneath the Ortygian shore;
Like spirits that lie
In the azure sky
When they love but live no more.

HARK! 'TIS THE BREEZE

This evening prayer for nightly protection, from the pen of Thomas Moore, is as sweet in expression as it is devout.

HARK! 'tis the breeze of twilight calling
Earth's weary children to repose;
While, round the couch of Nature falling,
Gently the night's soft curtains close.
Soon o'er a world, in sleep reclining,
Numberless stars, through yonder dark,
Shall look, like eyes of cherubs shining
From out the veils that hid the Ark!
Guard us, O Thou who never sleepest;
Thou who, in silence throned above,
Throughout all time, unwearied, keepest
Thy watch of Glory, Power, and Love.
Grant that beneath Thine eye securely
Our souls, awhile from life withdrawn,
May, in their darkness, stilly, purely,
Like "sealéd fountains," rest till dawn.

THE INDIAN GIRL'S LAMENT

In this poem William Cullen Bryant summarises the North American Indian's ideas of death and a future state. The ghost of the dead warrior passes to "the happy hunting ground" with the ghosts of his weapons, clothes, and food. The narrative is penned with sympathy and tenderness. Mocsen, the deerskin footwear of the Indians, is usually spelt moccasin. Wampum-belts were belts of beads or shells, sometimes used for money and sometimes used as pledges.

An Indian girl was sitting where
Her lover, slain in battle, slept;
Her maiden veil, her own black hair,
Came down o'er eyes that wept;
And wildly, in her woodland tongue,
This sad and simple lay she sung:

"I've pulled away the shrubs that grew
Too close above thy sleeping head,
And broke the forest boughs that threw
Their shadows o'er thy bed,
That, shining from the sweet south-west,
The sunbeams might rejoice thy rest.

"It was a weary, weary road
That led thee to the pleasant coast,
Where thou, in his serene abode,
Has met thy father's ghost;
Where everlasting autumn lies
On yellow woods and sunny skies.

"'Twas I the broidered mocsen made
That shod thee for that distant land;
'Twas I thy bow and arrows laid
Beside thy still, cold hand;
Thy bow in many a battle bent,
Thy arrows never vainly sent.

"With wampum-belts I crossed thy breast,
And wrapped thee in the bison's hide,
And laid the food that pleased thee best,
In plenty, by thy side,
And decked thee bravely, as became
A warrior of illustrious name.

"Thou'rt happy now, for thou has passed
The long, dark journey of the grave,
And in the land of light, at last,
Hast joined the good and brave;
Amid the flushed and balmy air,
The bravest and the loveliest there.

"Yet oft to thine own Indian maid
Even there thy thoughts will earthward stray—
To her who sits where thou wert laid,
And weeps the hours away.
Yet almost can her grief forget,
To think that thou dost love her yet.

"And thou, by one of those still lakes
That in a shining cluster lie,
On which the south wind scarcely breaks
The image of the sky,
A bower for thee and me hast made
Beneath the many-coloured shade.

"And thou dost wait and watch to meet
My spirit sent to join the blessed,
And, wondering what detains my feet
From that bright land of rest,
Dost seem, in every sound, to hear
The rustling of my footsteps near."

BEHOLD THE SUN

The thought that the revelations of Divine truth in pagan times and lands have been like the light of the stars, existent but dim, while Christianity has resembled the radiance of the sun, is here expressed by Thomas Moore. The poet succeeds in irradiating his verse not only with lucidity but with warmth.

Behold the sun, how bright
From yonder east he springs,
As if the soul of life and light
Were breathing from his wings.

So bright the Gospel broke
Upon the souls of men;
So fresh the dreaming world awoke
In truth's full radiance then!

Before yon sun arose,
Stars clustered through the sky;
But oh, how dim, how pale were those
To his one burning eye!

So truth lent many a ray
To bless the pagan's night;
But, Lord, how weak, how cold were they
To Thy one glorious light!

DEATH

Thomas Hood, who wrote this beautiful sonnet, with its sad, melodious chime, was threatened long by death before he died. His fear at the close that he might be forgotten will not be fulfilled for centuries, for his writings have touched the hearts of men, and linger in the common memory. "These bright stars," in the third line, mean, of course, our eyes.

It is not death, that sometime in a sigh
This eloquent breath shall take its speechless flight;
That sometime these bright stars, that now reply
In sunlight to the sun, shall set in night;
That this warm, conscious flesh shall perish quite
And all life's ruddy springs forget to flow;
That thoughts shall cease, and the immortal sprites
Be lapped in alien clay and laid below;
It is not death to know this—but to know
That pious thoughts, which visit at new graves
In tender pilgrimage, will cease to go
So duly and so oft—and when grass waves
Over the passed-away, there may be then
No resurrection in the minds of men.

THE HOMES OF ENGLAND—By MRS. HEMANS

Mrs. Hemans was an amiable lady who began to publish domestic poems when she was a girl of fifteen, and wrote half a dozen volumes of verse before her death, at the age of 41, in 1835. Some of her songs, of which the one following is characteristic, remain popular because they express pleasingly, in language all can understand, feelings which we all share. Mrs. Hemans was a brave woman to write so hopefully about English home life, for her own home life was not happy, owing to an unfortunate marriage.

THE stately homes of England!
How beautiful they stand,
Amidst their tall ancestral trees,
O'er all the pleasant land!
The deer across their greensward bound
Through shade and sunny gleam,
And the swan glides past them with the sound
Of some rejoicing stream.

The merry homes of England!
Around their hearths by night,
What gladsome looks of household love
Meet in the ruddy light!
There woman's voice flows forth in song,
Or childish tale is told,
Or lips move tunefully along
Some glorious page of old.

The blessed homes of England!
How softly on their bowers
Is laid the holy quietness
That breathes from Sabbath hours!
Solemn, yet sweet, the church-bells' chime
Floats through their woods at morn;
All other sounds, in that still time,
Of breeze and leaf are born.

The cottage homes of England!
By thousands on her plains,
They are smiling o'er the silvery brooks,
And round the hamlet fanes.
Through glowing orchards forth they peep,
Each from its nook of leaves;
And fearless there the lowly sleep,
As the birds beneath their eaves.

The free, fair homes of England!
Long, long in hut and hall
May hearts of native proof be reared
To guard each hallowed wall!
And green for ever be the groves,
And bright the flowery sod,
Where first the child's glad spirit loves
Its country and its God!

THE LOVERS' ROCK

Robert Southey (1774-1843), who with Wordsworth and Coleridge made the trio of "Lake" poets, wrote copiously in an ambitious style, but is now remembered only by his prose writings and his short, chatty stories in verse. Here is an example of his narrative style. The poet only looks at the romantic side of his story, and does not seem to notice that a Moslem father was certainly warranted in being angry with the Christian slave who eloped with his daughter.

THE maiden through the favouring night
From Granada took her flight,
She bade her father's house farewell,
And fled away with Manuel.

No Moorish maid might hope to vie
With Laila's cheek or Laila's eye,
No maiden loved with purer truth,
Or ever loved a lovelier youth.

In fear they fled across the plain,
The father's wrath, the captive's chain,
In hope to Murcia on they flee,
To peace, and love, and liberty.

And now they reach the mountain's height,
And she was weary with her flight,
She laid her head on Manuel's breast,
And pleasant was the maiden's rest.

But while she slept the passing gale
Waved the maiden's flowing veil;
Her father, as he crost the height,
Saw the veil so long and white.

Young Manuel started from his sleep,
He saw them hastening up the steep,
And Laila shrieked, and desperate now
They climbed the precipice's brow.

They saw him raise his angry hand,
And follow with his ruffian band,
They saw them climbing up the steep,
And heard his curses loud and deep.

Then Manuel's heart grew wild with woe,
He loosened crags and rolled below,
He loosened rocks, for Manuel strove
For life, and liberty, and love.

The ascent was steep, the rock was high,
The Moors they durst not venture nigh,
The fugitives stood safely there,
They stood in safety and despair.

The Moorish chief unmoved could see
His daughter bend the suppliant knee;
He heard his child for pardon plead,
And swore the Christian slave should bleed.

He bade the archers bend the bow,
And make the Christian fall below;
He bade the archers aim the dart,
And pierce the maid's apostate heart.

His archers aimed their arrows there;
She clasped young Manuel in despair.
"Death, Manuel, shall set us free,
Then leap below and die with me."

He clasped her close and groaned farewell;
In one another's arms they fell;
They leapt adown the craggy side,
In one another's arms they died.

And side by side they there are laid,
The Christian youth and Moorish maid,
But never cross was planted there,
To mark the victims of despair.

Yet every Murcian maid can tell
Where Laila lies who loved so well,
And every youth who passes there
Says for Manuel's soul a prayer.

THE CIRCLE

An old rhyme whose truth is being dramatically illustrated in these dark days of war. The writer is unknown.

WAR begets Poverty,
Poverty Peace:
Peace begets Plenty,
Then riches increase:
Riches bring Pride,
And Pride is War's ground,
War begets Poverty,
So goes the round.

O THOU WHO DRY'ST THE MOURNER'S TEAR!

These tender verses, sometimes sung as a hymn, show us Thomas Moore as a poet in his strength and his weakness. He is at his best in the closing lines, which are both poetical and profoundly true. He is at his weakest in the illustration of the broken plant which gives forth fragrance. The image is true to fact, but is too elaborated, and lacks the simplicity of stark sorrow. It comes from the pen and not from the heart.

O THOU who dry'st the mourner's tear!
How dark this world would be,
If, when deceived and wounded here,
We could not fly to Thee.
The friends, who in our sunshine live,
When winter comes are flown;
And he who has but tears to give,
Must weep those tears alone.
But Thou wilt heal that broken heart,
Which, like the plants that throw
Their fragrance from the wounded part,
Breathes sweetness out of woe.

When joy no longer soothes or cheers,
And e'en the hope that threw
A moment's sparkle o'er our tears
Is dimmed and vanished too.
Oh, who would bear life's stormy doom,
Did not the wing of love
Come briefly wafting through the gloom
Our peace-branch from above!
Then sorrow, touched by Thee, grows bright
With more than rapture's ray;
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day!

THE BARREL ORGAN

Why is this poem called "The Barrel Organ"? You have to listen to the sounds of its rhythm to find out. Read aright it suggests "the grind and grind and grind and grind" made by turning the handle of a hurdy-gurdy. That, however, is only a trick of the metre, and behind it is the fact that all the spring charms described do indeed come to the outskirts of London to lure forth the lover of Nature. The writer, Mr. Alfred Noyes, is one of the finest of living English poets, and is still young enough to enrich our literature greatly.

Go down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time ;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London !)
And you shall wander hand-in-hand with love in summer's wonderland ;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London !).

The cherry-trees are seas of bloom, and soft perfume, and sweet perfume,
The cherry-trees are seas of bloom (and oh ! so near to London !)
And there they say, when dawn is high, and all the world's a blaze of sky,
The cuckoo, though he's very shy, will sing a song for London.

The nightingale is rather rare, and yet they say you'll hear him there,
At Kew, at Kew, in lilac-time (and oh ! so near to London !)
The linnet and the throstle too, and after dark the long halloo,
And golden-eyed *tu-whit, tu-whoo,* of owls that ogle London.

For Noah hardly knew a bird of any kind that isn't heard
At Kew, at Kew, in lilac-time (and oh ! so near to London !)
And when the rose begins to pout, and all the chestnut spires are out,
You hear the rest without a doubt, all chorussing for London :

Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time ;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London !)
And you shall wander hand-in-hand with love in summer's wonderland ;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London !).

CONTENT

A fragment too good and rare to lose, these lines belong to that great mass of thought given to the world by men unknown; but we know it is about three centuries old at least.

THERE is a jewel which no Indian mine can buy,
No chemic art can counterfeit ;
It makes men rich in greatest poverty,
Makes water wine, turns wooden cups to gold,
The homely whistle to sweet music's strain ;
Se'dom it comes, to few from heaven sent,
That much in little—all in nought—Content.

AUSTRALIA

People who have only lived in England or Ireland do not know how green their country is. But it is the greenness that strikes travellers first, and many give it the palm for beauty. Most other lands are coloured chiefly in browns and greys. Here is an Australian lady, Dorothea Mackellar, who boldly, in ringing verse, defends the brown landscape of the great Pacific Commonwealth. This loving loyalty of the poet to her sunny homeland, uttered in tones of graceful conviction, is a pleasant change from that familiar—but not unwelcome—praise of earth's green zone in which England lies

THE love of field and coppice,
Of green and shaded lanes,
Of ordered woods and gardens,
Is running in your veins ;
Strong love of grey-blue distance,
Brown streams and soft, dim skies,
I know, but cannot share it—
My love is otherwise.

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of rugged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains.
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel sea,
Her beauty and her terror—
The wide, brown land for me.

The stark, white, ring-barked forests,
All tragic to the moon,
The sapphire-misted mountains,
The white gold hush of noon,
Green tangle of the brushes,
Where lithe lianas coil,
And orchids deck the tree-tops,
And ferns the warm, dark soil.

Core of my heart, my country !
Her pitiless blue sky,
When, sick at heart, around us
We see the cattle die ;
But then the grey clouds gather,
And we can bless again
The drumming of an army,
The steady, soaking rain.

Core of my heart, my country !
Land of the rainbow gold,
For flood and fire and famine,
She pays us back threefold.
Over the thirsty paddocks,
Watch, after many days,
The fi'my veil of greenness
That thickens as we gaze.

An opal-hearted country,
A wilful, lavish land,
All you who have not loved her,
You will not understand ;
Though earth holds many splendours,
Wherever I may die,
I know to what brown country
My homing thoughts will fly.

THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL

One of the most learned writers on British ballads places this first among the "supernatural ballads," for it has, he says, "dignity and reticence." According to old beliefs, all ghosts and supernatural appearances vanished when the cocks began to herald the dawn with their cries. Then it was that Hamlet's father's ghost departed. The "carline wife" means an aged woman. A "syke" is a dyke, and a "sheugh" a swampy hollow. "Channerin," means complaining. It is the maiden sitting by the bedside, with her mantle round her, who speaks the last verse but one of this weird story-poem that comes to us from an unknown writer and date.

THERE lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she;
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
And sent them o'er the sea.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely ane,
When word came to the carline wife
That her three sons were gane.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely three,
When word came to the carline wife
That her sons she'd never see.

"I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fashes in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me
In earthly flesh and blood!"

It fell about the Martinmas,
When nights are lang and mirk,
The carline wife's three sons came hame,
And their hats were o' the birk.

It neither grew in syke nor ditch,
Nor yet in ony sheugh;
But at the gates o' Paradise
That birk grew fair eneugh.

"Blow up the fire, my maidens!
Bring water from the well!
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well."

And she has made to them a bed,
She's made it large and wide;
And she's ta'en her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bedside.

Up then crew the red, red cock,
And up and crew the gray;
The eldest to the youngest said,
"'Tis time we were away."

The cock he hadna craw'd but once,
And clapped his wings at a',
When the youngest to the eldest said,
"Brother, we must awa'.

"The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
The channerin' worm doth chide;
Gin we be missed out o' our place,
A sair pain we maun bide."

"Lie still, lie still but a little wee while,
Lie still but if we may;
Gin my mother should miss us when she wakes,
She'll go mad ere it be day."

"Fare ye weel, my mother dear!
Farewell to barn and byre!
And fare ye weel, the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire!"

STANZAS WRITTEN NEAR NAPLES

The poet Shelley was a man of moods. Here one of his moods is described with musical grace and self-pitying tenderness. In 1818, when this was written, Shelley had left England, feeling that his life had been full of mistakes, as indeed it had been. The power of bringing all the sights and sounds of earth and sea into sympathy with man's prevailing feeling has never been more flawlessly used than in this poem.

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent light:
The breath of the moist air is light
Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight—
The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
The City's voice itself, is soft like Solitude's.

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple sea-weeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore
Like light dissolved in star-showers thrown:
I sit upon the sands alone;
The lightning of the noontide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion—
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that Content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned—
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure;
Others I see whom these surround—
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Yet now despair itself is mild
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne, and yet must bear,
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

ALEXANDER AND DIOGENES

In ancient Greece Alexander the Great, the world's dazzling conqueror, and Diogenes, the philosopher who lived in a tub, were regarded as marking the extremes of showy pride and ambitionless simplicity. In this poem Diogenes is supposed to address Alexander with blunt scorn, and show him the unrealities of his greatness. It is a poetical expansion of the interview which the two men are said to have had when Alexander asked Diogenes what he could do for him, and the philosopher replied from his tub that he could stand out of his light. Diogenes was a cynic, a sect of critics whose fault-finding was likened to the snarling of a dog, and the writer of this sketch, W. Mackworth Praed, faithfully reproduces this ungracious tone, especially in the closing lines.

SLOWLY the monarch turned aside :
But when his glance of youthful pride
Rested upon the warriors gray
Who bore his lance and shield that day,
And the long line of spears that came
Through the far grove like waves of flame,
His forehead burned, his pulse beat high,
More darkly flashed his shifting eye,
And visions of the battle plain
Came bursting on his soul again.

The old man drew his gaze away
Right gladly from that long array,
As if their presence were a blight
Of pain and sickness to his sight ;
And slowly folding o'er his breast
The fragments of his tattered vest,
As was his wont, unasked, unsought,
Gave to the winds his muttered thought,
Naming no name of friend or foe,
And reckless if they heard or no.

" Ay, go thy way, thou painted thing,
Puppet, which mortals call a king,
Adorning thee with idle gems,
With drapery and diadems,
And scarcely guessing that beneath
The purple robe and laurel wreath
There's nothing but the common slime
Of human clay and human crime !
My rags are not so rich, but they
Will serve as well to cloak decay.

" And ever round thy jewelled brow
False slaves and falser friends will bow :
And Flattery—as varnish flings
A baseness on the brightest things—
Will make the monarch's deeds appear
All worthless to the monarch's ear,
Till thou wilt turn and think that fame
So vilely drest is worse than shame !
The gods be thanked for all their mercies !
Diogenes hears nought but curses.

" And thou wilt banquet !—air and sea
Will render up their hoards for thee ;
And golden cups for thee will hold
Rich nectar, richer than the gold.
The cunning caterer still must share
The dainties which his toils prepare ;
The page's lip must taste the wine
Before he fills the cup for thine :
Wilt feast with me on Hecate's cheer ?
I dread no royal hemlock here !

" And night will come, and thou wilt lie
Beneath a purple canopy,
With lutes to lull thee, flowers to shed
Their feverish fragrance round thy bed,
A princess to unclasp thy crest,
A Spartan spear to guard thy rest.
Dream, happy one !—thy dreams will be
Of danger and of perfidy—
The Persian lance, the Carian club !
I shall sleep sounder in my tub.

" And thou wilt pass away, and have
A marble mountain o'er thy grave,
With pillars tall, and chambers vast,
Fit palace for the worm's repast !
I, too, shall perish ! Let them call
The vulture to my funeral ;
The cynic's staff, the cynic's den,
Are all he leaves his fellow men :
Heedless how this corruption fares—
Yea, heedless, though it mix with theirs."

REMEMBER ME

This poem, written by Winthrop Mackworth Praed in 1827, is a specimen of the sentimental love poetry, always characteristic of the Spanish, which was at that time fashionable in England. Praed, who was born in 1802 and died in 1839, was a clever writer of verse when he was an Eton scholar, and at Cambridge further developed his gift of bright and graceful poetry of the lighter kind. He became a lawyer and a member of Parliament, but unfortunately he died before he had developed seriously the considerable abilities he possessed.

IN Seville, when the feast was long,
And lips and lutes grew free,
At Inez' feet, amid the throng,
A masquer bent his knee ;
And still the burthen of his song
Was " Sweet, remember me !

" Remember me in shine and shower,
In sorrow and in glee,
When summer breathes upon the flower,
When winter blasts the tree,
When there are dances in the bower
Or sails upon the sea.

" Remember me beneath far skies,
On foreign lawn or lea,
When others worship those wild eyes
Which I no more may see,
When others wake the melodies
Of which I mar the key.

" Remember me ! My heart will claim
No love, no trust, from thee ;
Remember me, though doubt and blame
Linked with the record be ;
Remember me—with scorn or shame—
But yet, remember me ! "

ANTICIPATION

W. M. Praed was a member of Parliament as well as a society poet; and this is how he protested against his friends who declared that getting into Parliament would spoil him.

"OH, yes! he is in Parliament;
He's been returning thanks;
You can't conceive the time he's spent
Already on his franks.
He'll think of nothing, night and day,
But place, and the 'Gazette.'
No matter what the people say,
You won't believe them yet."

"He filled an album, long ago,
With such delicious rhymes;
Now we shall only see, you know,
His speeches in the 'Times';
And liquid tone and beaming brow,
Bright eyes and locks of jet,
He'll care for no such nonsense now."
Oh, don't believe them yet!

"I vow he's turned a Goth, a Hun,
By that disgusting Bill;
He'll never make another pun;
He's danced his last quadrille.
We shall not see him flirt again
With any fair coquette;
He'll never laugh at Drury Lane."
Psha!—don't believe them yet.

"Last week I heard his uncle boast
He's sure to have the seals;
I read it in the 'Morning Post'
That he has dined at Peel's;
You'll never see him any more,
He's in a different set;
He cannot eat at half-past four."
No!—don't believe them yet.

"In short, he'll soon be false and cold,
And infinitely wise;
He'll grow next year extremely old,
He'll tell enormous lies;
He'll learn to flatter and forsake,
To feign and to forget."
Oh, whisper—or my heart will break—
You won't believe them yet!

SHE IS PASSING FROM THE WORLD

These sad and tender lines, written by W. M. Praed on the death of his elder sister, who had been the good angel of his home (for his mother died when he was quite young) are among the most beautiful examples of appreciation and resignation.

THE hues of life are fading from her wan and wasted cheek,
Her voice is as an infant's voice, a whisper faint and weak;
But still we look and listen, for our hearts have never known
Such sweetness in a countenance, such softness in a tone.
She is passing from the world, from the weary world away,
From the sorrows that afflict us, from the pleasures that betray;
And another Home—a fairer Home—is opened to her sight,
Where the summer shines for ever, where the roses know no blight.
I know that we shall miss her, in the evening and the dawn,
In our converse round the fireside, in our walk upon the lawn;
I know that we shall miss her, in our mirth and in our care,
In the breaking of our bread, and in the breathing of our prayer.
And not the ring or brooch alone, but whatsoe'er we see,
The river and the green hill-side, the cottage and the tree,
Will bring her image back to us; there is not in our heart
A single hope, a single fear, in which she has no part.
Yet weep not, if you love her, that her tedious toil is done;
Oh, weep not, if you love her, that her holy rest is won!
There should be gladness in your thought and smiles upon your brow,
For will she not be happy then?—is she not happy now?
And we will learn to talk of her; and after many years
The tears which we shall shed for her will not be bitter tears,
When we shall tell each other, with a fond and thankful pride,
In what purity she lived, and in what peacefulness she died

SAMSON BLIND

This is how Milton makes Samson bewail his blindness and captivity after his strength has failed him. He is being led to a place he loves, where he can feel the wind and the sun, and they bring to him some consolation amid all his miseries.

A LITTLE onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little farther on;
For yonder bank has choice of sun or shade;
There I am wont to sit, when any chance
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,
Daily in the common prison else enjoined me,
Where I, a prisoner chained, scarce freely draw
The air imprisoned also, close and damp,
Unwholesome draught: but here I feel amends,
The breath of heaven fresh blowing, pure and sweet,
With dayspring born; here leave me to respire.

SPIRIT OF DELIGHT

Here is one of Shelley's bewitching invocations! He laments that the Spirit of Delight has deserted him, and tries to woo it back, and in doing so tells us what is worthiest of Delight—the earth and night, evening and morning, mists and snow and frost, waves, winds, and storms, solitude, wise thoughts, and love. How sweet and beautiful it all is! With what fresh and rejoicing eyes it invites us to look upon the world!

RARELY, rarely, comest thou,
Spirit of Delight!
Wherefore hast thou left me now
Many a day and night?
Many a weary night and day
'Tis since thou art fled away.

How shall ever one like me
Win thee back again?
With the joyous and the free
Thou wilt scoff at pain.
Spirit false! thou hast forgot
All but those who need thee not.

As a lizard with the shade
Of a trembling leaf,
Thou with sorrow art dismayed;
Even the sighs of grief
Reproach thee, that thou art not near,
And reproach thou wilt not hear.

Let me set my mournful ditty
To a merry measure;
Thou wilt never come for pity,
Thou wilt come for pleasure—
Pity, then, will cut away
Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

I love all that thou lovest,
Spirit of Delight!
The fresh earth in new leaves drest
And the starry night;
Autumn evening, and the morn
When the golden mists are born.

I love snow and all the forms
Of the radiant frost;
I love waves, and winds, and storms,
Everything almost
Which is Nature's, and may be
Untainted by man's misery.

I love tranquil solitude,
And such society
As is quiet, wise, and good;
Between thee and me
What difference? But thou dost possess
The things I seek, not love them less.

I love Love—though he has wings,
And like light can flee,
But, above all other things,
Spirit, I love thee—
Thou art love and life! Oh, come!
Make once more my heart thy home!

NIGHT

William Blake, poet and painter, was born in 1757 and died in 1827. He was a far greater man than his generation understood him to be. His life was irradiated by beautiful dreams. Here is one put into verse. He pictures night succeeding day, and bringing angels who carry kindness everywhere to man and beast. The tender angels pity even the cruel beasts, and atone for their cruelty by carrying the spirits of slain animals to a new world where rueful lions only guard the folds they once despoiled. Note how the poet changes the rhythm of his lines in the middle of each verse. Blake was original both in thought and in verse-forms.

THE sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine;
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine.
The moon, like a flower
In heaven's high bower,
With silent delight
Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy grove,
Where flocks have took delight:
Where lambs have nibbled, silent move
The feet of angels bright;
Unseen they pour blessing
And joy without ceasing
On each bud and blossom
On each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest
Where birds are covered warm;
They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them all from harm.
If they see any weeping
That should have been sleeping,
They pour sleep on their head,
And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey,
They pitying stand and weep,
Seeking to drive their thirst away
And keep them from the sheep.
But, if they rush dreadful,
The angels, most heedful,
Receive each mild spirit,
New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes
Shall flow with tears of gold,
And pitying the tender cries,
And walking round the fold:
Saying, "Wrath by His meekness,
And, by His health, sickness,
Are driven away
From our immortal day.

"And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
I can lie down and sleep,
Or think on Him who bore thy name,
Graze after thee, and weep;
For, washed in life's river,
My bright mane for ever
Shall shine like the gold
As I guard o'er the fold."

BEYOND KERGUELEN

Kerguelen's Island, midway between Cape Colony and Australia, named after a French voyager who discovered it and called it Desolation Land, is now French territory. It lies bleakly in the Antarctic in a zone swept by almost constant rain. The following powerful description of its repellant weirdness was written by Henry Clarence Kendall (born 1841, died 1882), the first Australian-born poet to make a name. A man of genius, who died a victim to drink, Kendall had an appreciation of the charms of Australian scenery as keen as his shuddering sense of the grimness of Kerguelen's Island.

Down in the South, by the waste without sail on it,
Far from the zone of the blossom and tree,
Lieth, with winter and whirlwind and wail on it,
Ghost of a land by the ghost of a sea.
Weird is the mist from the summit to base of it;
Sun of its heaven is wizened and gray;
Phantom of light is the light on the face of it,
Never is night on it, never is day!
Here is the shore without flower or bird on it,
Here is no litany sweet of the springs:
Only the haughty, harsh thunder is heard on it,
Only the storm with a roar in its wings.

Shadow of moon is the moon in the sky of it,
Wan as the face of a wizard and far!
Never there shines, from the firmament high of it,
Grace of the planet or glory of star.
All the year round, in the place of white days on it,
All the year round where there never is night—
Like a great, sinister, bitter, blind haze on it,
Growth that is neither of darkness nor light.
Wild is the cry of the sea in the caves by it,
Sea that is smitten by spears of the snow.
Desolate songs are the songs of the waves by it,
Down in the South where the ships never go.

Storm from the Pole is the singer that sings to it
Hymns of the land at the planet's gray verge;
Thunder discloses dark, wonderful things to it,
Thunder, and rain, and the dolorous surge.
Hills with no hope of a wing or a leaf on them,
Scarred with the chronicles written by flame,
Stare, through the gloom of inscrutable grief on them,
Down on the horns of the gulf without name.

Cliffs, with the records of fierce flying fires on them,
Loom over perilous pits of eclipse:
Alps, with anathema stamped in the spires on them,
Out by the waves with a curse on its lips.

Never is sign of soft, beautiful green on it,
Never the colour, the glory of rose;
Neither the fountain nor river is seen on it;
Naked its crags are, and barren its snows.
Blue as the face of the drowned is the shore of it,
Shore, with the capes of indefinite cave.
Strange is the voice of its wind, and the roar of it
Startles the mountains and hushes the wave.
Out to the south, and away to the north of it,
Spectral and sad are the spaces untold.
All the year round a great cry goeth forth of it,
Sob of this leper of lands in the cold.

SONG OF THE CATTLE-HUNTERS

Here is a little picture of Australian ranch life by Henry Clarence Kendall, the first Australian poet. The swing of the verse echoes very vividly the gallop of the racing herd and the herdsmen's horses that are rounding them up.

While the morning light beams on the fern-matted streams,
And the water-pools flash in its glow,
Down the ridges we fly, with a loud ringing cry—
Down the ridges and gullies we go!
And the cattle we hunt, they are racing in front
With a roar like the thunder of waves,
As the beat and the beat of our swift horses' feet
Start the echoes away from their caves.
Like a wintery shore that the waters pass o'er,
All the lowlands are filling with sound;
For swiftly we gain where the herds on the plain,
Like a tempest, are tearing the ground!
And we follow them hard, to the rails of the yard,
Over gulches and mountain-tops gray,
Where the beat and the beat of our swift horses' feet
Will die with the echoes away.

A MEMORY

These lines are by Walter Savage Landor, a poet who did his most successful work in the middle of the nineteenth century.

One lovely name adorns my song,
And, dwelling in the heart,
For ever falters at the tongue,
And trembles to depart.

CHILDHOOD AND HIS VISITORS

A pretty example of W. M. Praed's delicate versifying. He pictures the happy insensibility of the playing child to the serious things which agitate grown-up people. Time, Guilt, Sorrow, Poetry—for Pindus was the sacred mount of song—and Wisdom all appeal in vain to the child's simplicity, and the poet sides with the child being happy while it may.

ONCE upon a time, when sunny May
Was kissing up the April showers,
I saw fair Childhood hard at play
Upon a bank of blushing flowers:
Happy—he knew not whence or how—
And smiling—who could choose but love him?
For not more glad than Childhood's brow
Was the blue heaven that beamed above him.

Old Time, in most appalling wrath,
That valley's green repose invaded;
The brooks grew dry upon his path,
The birds were mute, the lilies faded.
But Time so swiftly winged his flight,
In haste a Grecian tomb to batter,
That Childhood watched his paper kite,
And knew just nothing of the matter.

With curling lip and glancing eye
Guilt gazed upon the scene a minute;
But Childhood's glance of purity
Had such a holy spell within it
That the dark demon to the air
Spread forth again his baffled pinion,
And hid his envy and despair,
Self-tortured, in his own dominion.

Then stepped a gloomy phantom up,
Pale, cypress-crowned, Night's awful daughter,
And proffered him a fearful cup
Full to the brim of bitter water:
Poor Childhood bade her tell her name;
And when the beldame muttered—"Sorrow,"
He said—"Don't interrupt my game;
I'll taste it, if I must, tomorrow."

The Muse of Pindus thither came,
And wooed him with the softest numbers
That ever scattered wealth and fame
Upon a youthful poet's slumbers;
Though sweet the music of the lay,
To Childhood it was all a riddle,
And "Oh," he cried, "do send away
That noisy woman with the fiddle!"

Then Wisdom stole his bat and ball,
And taught him, with most sage endeavour,
Why bubbles rise and acorns fall,
And why no toy may last for ever.
She talked of all the wondrous laws
Which Nature's open book discloses,
And Childhood, ere she made a pause,
Was fast asleep among the roses.

Sleep on, sleep on! Oh, Manhood's dreams
Are all of earthly pain or pleasure,
Of Glory's toils, Ambition's schemes,
Of cherished love, or hoarded treasure:
But to the couch where childhood lies
A more delicious trance is given,
Lit up by rays from seraph eyes,
And glimpses of remembered heaven!

OF MYSELF

These lines were written at the age of thirteen by Abraham Cowley (1618-1667), the most popular poet contemporary with Milton. So Cowley himself tells us in one of his essays, for he was a prose writer as well as a poet; and, indeed, a better prose writer than a poet. The picture of contented ease drawn by the boy was within the poet's reach in middle life; but though he wrote again about modest retirement, and lived in that state on a comfortable pension, he was not as happy as he ought to have been, for he felt that the Stuart king whom he had served faithfully in exile had treated him shabbily at the Restoration. Horace was a graceful Roman of the half-century before Christ, and delighted in country life on his farm on the Sabine hills near Rome.

THIS only grant me, that my means may lie
Too low for envy, for contempt too high.
Some honour I would have,
Not from great deeds, but good alone;
The unknown are better than ill-known:
Rumour can ope the grave.
Acquaintance I would have, but when 't depends
Not on the number, but the choice, of friends.

Books should, not business, entertain the light,
And sleep, as undisturbed as death, the night.
My house a cottage more
Than palace; and should fitting be
For all my use, no luxury.
My garden painted o'er
With Nature's hand, not Art's; and pleasures yield
Horace might envy in his Sabine field.

Thus would I double my life's fading space;
For he that runs it well twice runs his race.
And in this true delight,
These unbought sports, this happy state,
I would not fear, nor wish, my fate;
But boldly say each night,
"Tomorrow let my sun his beams display,
Or in clouds hide them; I have lived today."

AGE

As became a poet who attained length of years, Walter Savage Landor wrote often of the view of life taken from its period of decline. Here is what he said from the vantage ground of eighty years. He spent most of his life in Italy.

DEATH, though I see him not, is near,
And grudges me my eightieth year.
Now, I would give him all these last
For one that fifty have run past.
Ah! he strikes all things, all alike,
But bargains: those he will not strike.

WALT WHITMAN LOOKS OUT

O *TAKE my hand, Walt Whitman!*
Such gliding wonders! such sights and sounds!
Such joined unended links, each hooked to the next!
Each answering all, each sharing the earth with all.

What do you hear, Walt Whitman?

I HEAR the workman singing, and the farmer's wife singing;
I hear in the distance the sounds of children, and of animals early in the day;
I hear quick rifle-cracks from the riflemen of East Tennessee and Kentucky, hunting on hills;
I hear emulous shouts of Australians, pursuing the wild horse;
I hear continual echoes from the Thames;
I hear fierce French liberty songs;
I hear the stevedores unlading the cargoes and singing;
I hear the screams of the water-fowl of solitary north-west lakes;
I hear the Coptic refrain, toward sundown, pensively falling on the breast of the black, venerable, vast mother, the Nile;
I hear the bugles of raft-tenders on the streams of Canada;
I hear the chirp of the Mexican muleteer, and the bells of the mule;
I hear the Arab muezzin, calling from the top of the mosque;
I hear the cry of the Cossack, and the sailor's voice, putting to sea at Okotsk;
I hear the Hindoo teaching his favourite pupil the loves, wars, adages, transmitted safely to this day from poets who wrote three thousand years ago.

What do you see, Walt Whitman?
Who are they you salute, and that one after another salute you?

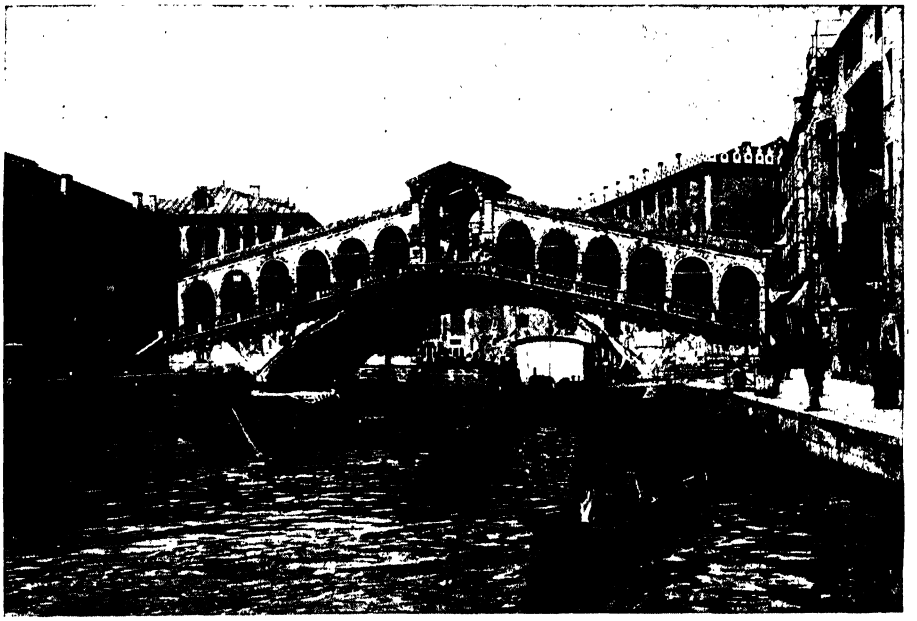
I SEE a great round wonder rolling through the air;
I see diminute farms, hamlets, ruins, graveyards, jails, factories, palaces, hovels, huts of barbarians, tents of nomads upon the surface;
I see the shaded part on one side, where the sleepers are sleeping, and the sun-lit part on the other side;
I see the curious silent change of the light and shade;
I see distant lands, as real and near to the inhabitants of them as my land is to me.

I BEHOLD the mariners of the world;
Some are in storms, some in the night, with the watch on the look-out;
Some drifting helplessly, some with contagious diseases.
I see the tracks of the railroads of the earth;
I see them welding State to State, city to city, through North America;
I see them in Great Britain, I see them in Europe;
I see them in Asia and in Africa.

WALT WHITMAN LOOKS OUT

I SEE the electric telegraphs of the earth ;
I see the filaments of the news of the wars, deaths, losses, gains, passions of my race.
I see the battlefields of the earth—grass grows upon them, and blossoms and corn ;
I see the tracks of ancient and modern expeditions.
I see the nameless masonries, venerable messages of the unknown events, heroes, records of the earth.

YOU, where you are—
You daughter or son of England !
You of the mighty Slavic tribes and empires ! You Russ in Russia !
You Frenchwoman and Frenchman of France !



THE MOST FAMOUS BRIDGE THE TRAVELLER SEES ON A JOURNEY ROUND THE WORLD—THE RIALTO, ON THE GRAND CANAL IN VENICE

You Belge ! you liberty-lover of the Netherlands !
All you continentals of Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, indifferent of place !
All you on the numberless islands of the archipelagoes of the sea !
And you of centuries hence, when you listen to me !
And you, each and everywhere . . .
Health to you ! Goodwill to you all, from me and America sent !

EACH of us inevitable ;
Each of us limitless, each of us with his or her right upon the earth ;
Each of us allowed the eternal purports of the earth ;
Each of us here as divinely as any is here.

WALT WHITMAN

STANZAS OF THE SEA

These lines, describing the magical inspiration the poet finds in the boundless ocean, are by Bernard Barton, the Quaker poet. He was born in 1784, and was a friend of Charles Lamb.

OH, I shall not forget, until memory depart,
When first I beheld it, the glow of my heart;
The wonder, the awe, the delight that stole o'er me,
When its billowy boundlessness opened before me.
As I stood on its margin, or roamed on its strand,
I felt new ideas within me expand,
Of glory and grandeur, unknown till that hour,
And my spirit was mute in the presence of power!
In the surf-beaten sands that encircled it round,
In the billow's retreat, and the breaker's rebound,
In its white, drifted foam, and its dark, heaving green,
Each moment I gazed, some fresh beauty was seen.
And thus, while I wandered on ocean's bleak shore,
And surveyed its vast surface, and heard its waves roar,
I seemed wrapt in a dream of romantic delight,
And haunted by majesty, glory, and might!

ON THE DEFEAT OF HENRY CLAY

Henry Clay was an eloquent and ambitious American politician who was born in 1777. By profession he was a lawyer. For a number of years he was chosen as the Speaker of the American House of Representatives, and also sat several times as a member of the Senate. Three times he was defeated as a candidate for the Presidentship. This poem was written by a too enthusiastic friend, the Rev. W. W. Lord. It greatly exaggerates Clay's position as an historical character, for he was an opportunist rather than a man of inflexible principle, and his fame has not endured.

FALLEN? How fallen? States and empires fall;
O'er towers and rock-built walls,
And perished nations, floods to tempests call
With hollow sound along the sea of time:
The great man never falls.
He lives, he towers aloft, he stands sublime—
They fall who give him not
The honour here that suits his future name—
They die and are forgot.
O Giant loud and blind! the great man's fame
Is his own shadow, and not cast by thee—
A shadow that shall grow
As down the heaven of time the sun descends,
And on the world shall throw
His god-like image, till it sinks where blends
Time's dim horizon with Eternity.

TO THE SISTER OF ELIA

This beautiful little consolatory poem was addressed by Walter Savage Landor to Mary Lamb after the death of her devoted brother, Charles Lamb, who wrote the "Essays of Elia," and spent his life in watching over his sister, who was subject to recurring lapses into insanity. Charles Lamb died in 1834. Poor Mary survived him till 1847. No writer is loved more than Charles Lamb. Landor was born in 1775, and lived till 1864. His tumultuous nature made him a difficult friend, but he knew the worth of the gentle "Elia."

COMFORT thee, O thou mourner, yet awhile!
Again shall Elia's smile
Refresh thy heart, where heart can ache no more.
What is it we deplore?
He leaves behind him, freed from griefs and years,
Far worthier things than tears—
The love of friends without a single foe;
Unequalled lot below!
His gentle soul, his genius, these are thine;
For these dost thou repine?
He may have left the lowly walks of men;
Left them he has; what then?
Are not his footsteps followed by the eyes
Of all the good and wise?
Though the warm day is over, yet they seek
Upon the lofty peak
Of his pure mind the roseate light that glows
O'er death's perennial snows.
Behold him! from the region of the blest
He speaks; he bids thee rest.

THE SABBATH

Many readers in his day regarded W. M. Praed, the poet, as only a writer of humorous verse, but he had in his nature a far deeper strain. Though gay in spirit he was a religious man, and this picture of the uses of the Sabbath was sincere.

FOR whom was the Sabbath made?—
It brings repose and rest;
It hushes study's aching head,
Ambition's anxious breast:
The slave that digs the mine,
The serf that ploughs the soil,
For them it was ordained to shine;
It is for all that toil.

For whom was the Sabbath made?—
It opens the Book of Peace,
Which tells of flowers that never fade,
Of songs that never cease:
If the hopes you nursed decline,
If the friends you cherished die,
For you it was ordained to shine;—
It is for all that sigh.

For whom was the Sabbath made?—
It calls the wretch to prayer,
Whose soul the noonday thoughts upbraid
And the midnight visions scare:
It calls thee to the shrine;
Fear'st thou to enter in?
For thee it was ordained to shine—
It is for all that sin.

HOPE AND LOVE

When W. M. Praed was writing graceful verse, it was the fashion of the poets to personify abstract ideas, like Fancy, Love, Hope, Pleasure, Beauty, Wisdom, Age, Danger, and Time, and make them talk like characters in a story, and no one could do it more smoothly than Praed. In this poem he shows how Love and Hope may help us to tide over all difficulties—even Death. The spirit of the poem is brave and sweet.

ONE day, through Fancy's telescope,
Which is my richest treasure,
I saw, dear Susan, Love and Hope
Set out in search of Pleasure.
All mirth and smiles I saw them go,
Each was the other's banker;
For Hope took up her brother's bow,
And Love, his sister's anchor.

They rambled on o'er vale and hill;
They passed by cot and tower;
Through summer's glow and winter's chill,
Through sunshine and through shower.
But what did those fond playmates care
For climate or for weather?
All scenes to them were bright and fair
On which they gazed together.

Sometimes they turned aside to bless
Some Muse and her wild numbers,
Or breathe a dream of holiness
On Beauty's quiet slumbers.
"Fly on," said Wisdom, with cold sneers;
"I teach my friends to doubt you!"
"Come back," said Age, with bitter tears;
"My heart is cold without you!"

When Poverty beset their path,
And threatened to divide them,
They coaxed away the beldame's wrath
Ere she had breath to chide them,
By vowing all her rags were silk,
And all her bitters honey,
And showing taste for bread and milk
And utter scorn of money.

They met stern Danger in their way
Upon a ruin seated;
Before him kings had quaked that day,
And armies had retreated.
But he was robed in such a cloud,
As Love and Hope came near him,
That, though he thundered long and loud,
They did not see or hear him.

A grey-beard joined them, Time by name;
And Love was nearly crazy
To find that he was very lame,
And also very lazy.
Hope, as he listened to her tale,
Tied wings upon his jacket;
And then they far outran the mail,
And far outsailed the packet.

And so, when they had safely passed
O'er many a land and billow,
Before a grave they stopped at last,
Beneath a weeping willow.

The moon upon the humble mound
Her softest light was flinging,
And from the thickets all around
Sad nightingales were singing.
"I leave you here," quoth Father Time,
As hoarse as any raven;
And Love kneeled down to spell the rhyme
Upon the rude stone graven.
But Hope looked onward, calmly brave,
And whispered, "Dearest brother,
We're parted on this side the grave;
We'll meet upon the other!"

WHERE DWELL THE DEAD?

This graceful poem, telling us that the dead really live in our loving remembrance of them, is taken from "Household Words," the magazine which Charles Dickens edited.

WHERE do they dwell? 'Neath grassy mounds, by daisies,
Lilies, and yellow-cups of fairest gold;
Near grey-grown walls, where, in wild, tortuous mazes,
Old clustering ivy wreathes in many a fold:
Where in red summer noons
Fresh leaves are rustling,
Where 'neath large autumn moons
Young birds are nestling—
Do they dwell there?

Where do they dwell? In sullen waters, lying
On beds of purple sea-flowers newly sprung;
Where the mad whirlpool's wild and ceaseless sighing
Frets sloping banks, by dark green reeds o'erhung:
Where, by the torrent's swell,
Crystal stones glitter,
While sounds the heavy bell
Over the river—
Do they dwell there?

No: for in these they slumber to decay,
And their remembrance with their life departs;
They have a home—nor dark, nor far away—
Their proper home—within our faithful hearts.
There happy spirits wed,
Loving for ever;
There dwell with us the dead,
Parting—ah, never—
There do they dwell!

WINTER

SUMMER has doft his latest green,
And Autumn ranged the barley-mows.
So long away then have you been?
And are you coming back to close
The year? It sadly wants repose.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

MAID OF ATHENS

This has been the most popular song written by Lord Byron. The sentimental abandonment just suited the romantic feeling of his age. It is curious that the intensity of the poet's pleading should only have been equalled by his notorious inconstancy. Istambol in the last verse is Constantinople.

MAID of Athens, ere we part,
Give, O, give me back my heart!
Or, since that has left my breast,
Keep it now, and take the rest!
Hear my vow before I go.

By those tresses unconfined,
Wooed by each Ægean wind;
By those lids whose jetty fringe
Kiss thy soft cheeks' blooming tinge;
By those wild eyes like the roe,

By that lip I long to taste;
By that zone-encircled waist;
By all the token-flowers that tell
What words can never speak so well;
By love's alternate joy and woe.

Maid of Athens! I am gone
Think of me, sweet, when alone.
Though I fly to Istambol,
Athens holds my heart and soul.
Can I cease to love thee? No!

THE INDIAN

An Indian whose son died while he was living amid unsympathetic surroundings in the American States is said to have taken the dead body from the grave and carried it hundreds of miles to the scenes of his former free life as a hunter. He wished the spirit of his boy to find its home among the spirits of his race. The story is told by Mrs. Hemans.

IN the silence of the midnight,
I journey with my dead;
In the darkness of the forest-boughs
A lonely path I tread.

But my heart is high and fearless,
As by mighty wings upborne;
The mountain eagle hath not plumes
So strong as love and scorn.

I have raised thee from the grave-sod,
By the white man's path defiled;
On to the ancestral wilderness,
I bear thy dust, my child!

I have asked the ancient deserts
To give my dead a place
Where the stately footsteps of the free
Alone should leave a trace.

And the tossing pines made answer:
"Go, bring us back thine own!"
And the streams from all the hunters' hills
Rushed with an echoing tone.

Thou shalt rest by sounding waters
That yet untamed may roll;
The voices of that chainless host
With joy shall fill thy soul.

In the silence of the midnight,
I journey with the dead,
Where the arrows of my father's bow
Their falcon flight have sped.

I have left the spoilers' dwellings
For evermore behind;
Unmingled with their household sounds
For me shall sweep the wind.

Alone, amidst their hearth-fires,
I watched my child's decay;
Uncheered, I saw the spirit-light
From his young eyes fade away.

When his head sank on my bosom,
When the death-sleep o'er him fell,
Was there one to say, "A friend is near"?
There was none! Pale race, farewell!

To the forests, to the cedars,
To the warrior and his bow,
Back, back! I bore thee laughing thence,
I bear thee slumbering now!

I bear thee unto burial
With the mighty hunters gone;
I shall hear thee in the forest-breeze—
Thou wilt speak of joy, my son!

In the silence of the midnight,
I journey with the dead;
But my heart is strong, my step is fleet—
My father's path I tread.

THE PAINTER

This picture of a lover of the beauty of the natural world is taken from the poems of the Rev. George Croly, a clergyman who wrote much serious verse, and died in 1860. As in this instance, he often exaggerated romance. Admiration for the loveliness of the earth, however real, is no excuse for odd behaviour, such as littering the ground with artistic sketches

THAT rock's his haunt. There's not in all our hills
A hunter that can climb like him. He'll watch
Before the lark is up; and, staff in hand,
For hours stand gazing, by the eagle's nest,
Like one enamoured of the rising sun;
And then he'll make his couch beside a rill
Which, in his fantasy, he strews with shells,
And hangs with garlands of the weedy flowers.
Some think him love-crossed; others that he deals
With spirits; for all such seek loneliness.
And yet I think him holy, for he loves
Our convent walls, and many an evening strays
To see the sunset sleeping on its roof
And its whole arches; or but turns away
To pore upon its image in the stream;
And then he'll spread his book upon his knee,
And make a thousand things of beauty; then
He'll tear the page, and fling it to the wind.

WHERE POETRY DWELLS

This is how Emerson, the great American philosopher, expresses the truth that poetry interpenetrates all existence, small and great, mean and noble. Since Emerson's day, Mr Rudyard Kipling has shown in verse, again and again, how true poetry may be extracted from the seemingly unpoetical.

It is not only in the rose,
It is not only in the bird,
Not only where the rainbow glows,
Nor in the song of woman heard,
But in the darkest, meanest things,
There alway, alway something sings.

'Tis not in the high stars alone,
Nor in the cups of budding flowers,
Nor in the redbreast's mellow tone,
Nor in the bow that smiles in showers,
But in the mud and scum of things,
There alway, alway something sings.

THE MAID

These splendidly vivid lines, written by Theodore Roberts, show us the vitality of what is pure and noble. Of that purity and nobility Joan of Arc is the illustration. She lives in the admiration of the world when all the pageantry of her day has become a perishing commonplace of history. The contrast between the evanescence of material show and the undying power of moral grandeur is drawn with arresting skill.

THUNDER of riotous hoofs over the quaking sod;
Clash of reeking squadrons, steel-capped, iron-shod;
The White Maid and the white horse, and the flapping banner of God.

Black hearts riding for money: red hearts riding for fame;
The Maid who rides for France, and the King who rides for shame—
Gentlemen, fools, and a saint riding in Christ's high name!

"Dust to dust!" it is written. Wind-scattered are lance and bow.
Dust, the Cross of Saint George; dust, the banner of snow.
The bones of the King are crumbled, and rotted the shafts of the foe.

Forgotten, the young knight's valour; forgotten, the captain's skill;
Forgotten, the fear and the hate and the mailed hands raised to kill;
Forgotten, the shields that clashed and the arrows that cried so shrill.

Like a story from some old book, that battle of long ago:
Shadows, the poor French King and the might of his English foe;
Shadows, the charging nobles and the archers kneeling a-row—
But a flame in my heart and my eyes, the Maid with her banner of snow!

THE SKYLARK

One of the most musical and tender of the many songs addressed to the skylark, this carol came from the pen of a shepherd who in youth had scarcely any schooling. James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, was born in 1770. He became first a collector and then a writer of Scottish ballads. Later in life he was both farmer and author, and a friend of the best-known writers of his day. Though a rather rough man, Hogg was visited by most delicate poetic fancies.

BIRD of the wilderness,
Blythesome and cumberless,
Sweet be thy matin o'er moorland and lea!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place—
O to abide in the desert with thee!

Wild is thy lay and loud,
Far in the downy cloud,
Love gives it energy, love gave it birth.
Where, on thy dewy wing,
Where art thou journeying?
Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth.

O'er fell and fountain sheen,
O'er moor and mountain green,
O'er the red streamer that heralds the day,
Over the cloudlet dim,
Over the rainbow's rim,
Musical cherub, soar, singing, away!

Then, when the gloaming comes,
Low in the heather blooms,
Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place—
O to abide in the desert with thee!

THE FLOWER-CROWNED ROCK

The poet Wordsworth, finding a rock circled around its head with snowdrops, wonders who set the flowers there. Was it the fancy of a child, a maid, of husband, wife, or aged man? The answer of the poet's heart introduces us into the inmost spirit of his love of Nature. This flowery decoration of the rock, he says, is quite a natural thing for anyone, whether they be young or old, to do, "where life is wise and innocent."

WHO fancied what a pretty sight
This rock would be if edged around
With living snowdrops—circlet bright?
How glorious to this orchard ground!
Who loved the little rock and set
Upon its head this coronet?

Was it the humour of a child?
Or rather of some love-sick maid,
Whose brows, the day that she was styled
The shepherd queen, were thus arrayed?
Or man mature, or matron sage?
Or old man toying with his age?

I asked—'twas whispered, the device
To each or all might well belong:
It is the spirit of paradise
That prompts such work, a spirit strong,
That gives to all the self-same bent
Where life is wise and innocent.

YOU REMEMBER ELLEN

Here is a form of verse which Thomas Moore rarely attempted —namely, the telling of a story. It is the pretty romance of a girl of humble birth who marries a nobleman unawares.

You remember Ellen, our hamlet's pride
How meekly she blessed her humble lot,
When the stranger, William, had made her his bride,
And love was the light of their lowly cot.

Together they toiled through winds and rains,
Till William at length in sadness said,
"We must seek our fortune on other plains;"
Then, sighing, she left her lowly shed.

They roamed a long and a weary way,
Nor much was the maiden's heart at ease,
When now, at the close of one stormy day,
They see a proud castle among the trees.

"Tonight," said the youth, "we'll shelter there;
The wind blows cold, and the hour is late:"
So he blew the horn with a chieftain's air,
And the porter bowed as they passed the gate.

"Now, welcome, lady," exclaimed the youth.
"This castle is thine, and these dark woods all!"
She believed him crazed, but his words were truth,
For Ellen is Lady of Rosna Hall!
And dearly the lord of Rosna loves
What William the stranger wooed and wed;
And the light of bliss, in these lordly groves,
Shines pure as it did in the lowly shed.

A GIRL'S SONG

This pretty song is sung by a Persian girl in Thomas Moore's rhymed poem "Lalla Rookh." The Bendemeer is a Persian river. Roses are the flowers and nightingales the birds which appear most frequently in Persian poetry. The fragrant distillation spoken of in the second verse is attar of roses.

There's a bower of roses by Bendemeer's stream,
And the nightingale sings round it all the day long;
In the time of my childhood 'twas like a sweet dream
To sit in the roses and hear the bird's song.

That bower and its music I never forget,
But oft, when alone in the bloom of the year,
I think, is the nightingale singing there yet?
Are the roses still bright by the calm Bendemeer?

No; the roses soon withered that hung o'er the wave,
But some blossoms were gathered while freshly they shone,
And a dew was distilled from their flowers that gave
All the fragrance of summer when summer was gone.

Thus memory draws from delight, ere it dies,
An essence that breathes of it many a year;
Thus bright to my soul, as 'twas then to my eyes,
Is that bower on the banks of the calm Bendemeer!

THE THRESHOLD

This charming expression of the desire, common to us all, to remain akin to childhood, in spite of lengthening years, is contributed by Barbara Se.• our to "Harper's Magazine."

Life lies before me, but shut is the door
On all my childish days. No more, no more
Shall I in all my years again be free
And careless—happy as I used to be.
So be it, Lord! I know that all is right;
I would not alter it, or shirk the fight.
Shut then the door!—but leave a little crack,
That when I meet a child I may slip back!

A LIE-AWAKE SONG

An American publication, called the "Bellman," gives this pretty little rhyme, by Amelia Josephine Burr, for the children.

Raining, raining,
All night long.
Sometimes loud, sometimes soft,
Just like a song.

There'll be rivers in the gutters,
And lakes along the street;
It will make our lazy kitty
Wash his dirty little feet.

The roses will wear diamonds,
Like kings and queens at court;
But the pansies all get muddy,
Because they are so short.

I'll sail my boat tomorrow
In wonderful new places,
But first I'll take my watering-pot
And wash the pansies' faces.

THE DREAM-BEARER

The brightening of the lives of the poor and weary of our crowded cities by imagination is suggested happily in these hopeful lines by an American poetess, Mary Carolyn Davies.

Where weary folk toil, black with smoke,
And hear but whistles scream,
I went, all fresh from dawn and dew,
To carry them a dream.

I went to bitter lanes and dark,
Who once had known the sky,
To carry them a dream—and found
They had more dreams than I.

PIERRETTE GOES

This fanciful little poem of regret is from the pen of Mr. William Griffith, a well-known New York magazine editor.

PIERRETTE has gone, but it was not
Exactly that she died
So much as vanished, and forgot
To say where she would hide.

To keep a sudden rendezvous
It came into her mind
That she was late. What could she do
But leave distress behind?

Afraid of being in disgrace,
And hurrying to dress,
She heard there was another place
In need of loveliness.

She went so softly and so soon—
She hardly made a stir,
But, going, took the stars and moon
And sun away with her.

THE CAMERONS

This marching poem of the Cameron Highlanders, by Miss Constance A. Renshaw, is one of the songs of the war that brings with its movement the very feeling of a column swinging past, eager, fearless, filled with romantic thought, yet touched with the pathos of the Gael. Whoever has seen a gallant Highland regiment go by with the pipes a-droning must know that the spirit of that fine spectacle is here caught and put into words that sway in unison with the sinuous march. The Camerons themselves have felt the truth of its inspiration. Yet the writer is no Highlander born, as one might suppose, thrilling, as Scott thrilled in his "Pibroch of Donald Dhu," to the vivid memories of a warlike land.

THE Camerons are marching down the winding road together;
You can see the line of colour swinging, swaying as they move,
—Richly red with blood of heroes—deeply purple as the heather,
Gold as waving Autumn-bracken in the Scotland of their love.

Oh! the Camerons can hear the thrilling voice of ancient story;
They are lost amid the shadowy hails where haunting echoes steal.
. . . And the old dead clansmen tramp again the old red path to Glory,
The dear, dim path to Glory—in the Tartan of Lochiel.

All the road is rich with colour, and the shrill, fierce pipes are screaming,
Stirring all the crimson Highland blood as only pipes can do;
And the boys go forth to battle, tartans swinging, hearts a-dreaming,
—Dreaming, dreaming of lost causes—to the strains of "Donald Dhu."

Oh! the droning, skirling bagpipes with their eager ribbon-streamers
Blowing back adown the wind-ways as the kilted columns wheel!
. . . There's a blaze of shaken banners in the souls of many dreamers;
There's a glint of star-lit armour, and a clash of ringing steel!

The dim-lit lanes of Chivalry have throbbed with battle's clamour,
—The ancient wonder-battles where encountering chargers reel.
. . . A thousand clansmen call them; they are lured by deathless glamour
As they march away to battle in the Tartan of Lochiel.

The Camerons are marching down the winding road together
—The winding road of Chivalry where all the skies are blue.
. . . There are some will never see again the rolling seas of heather;
There are some will never hear again the strains of "Donald Dhu."

But they swing along together past the bracken and the heather,
—Dear knights who march to battle to the strains of "Donald Dhu!"

SONG

This song, written by Tennyson at his birthplace, Somersby Vicarage, Lincolnshire, is an example of his early style. In it he tries to express the feeling one has in a garden in the dark, heavy days of a wet late autumn. Even in his earliest work the moulding of the verse already shows a master hand

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers:
To himself he talks;
For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
In the walks:
Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
Of the mouldering flowers:
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

The air is damp, and hushed, and close,
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
An hour before death;
My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,
And the breath
Of the fading edges of box beneath,
And the year's last rose.
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

AN INFANT NEPHEW

There are only about six English poems describing with truth and joy very small babes in their beauty, merriness, and innocence, and this is one of them. It was written by W. M. Praed.

THE little one—the little one!
'Tis a fearful thing and strange
That the silent seasons as they run
Should work such mighty change;
The lips that cannot lisp my name
May rule the stern debate;
And the hands too weak for childhood's game
Sport with the falchion's weight!

The beauteous one—the beauteous one!
In the wide world, I wis,
There's many a beauteous thing, but none
Of beauty like to this.
In youth and age, earth's sinful leaven
Where'er we go we trace;
But there is only peace and heaven
In the smile of an infant's face.

The merry one—the merry one!
He is all wit and whim;
Our life has nought but a cloudless sun
And a waveless sea for him.
He knows not sorrow's thorny path,
Nor pleasure's flowery snare,
Nor heeds the bitter glance of wrath,
Nor the haggard cheek of care.

The cherished one—the cherished one!
A mystery is the love
Of parents for their infant son;
It cometh from above.
He is all music to their ear,
All glory to their sight,
By day he is their hope and fear,
Their thought and dream by night.

FREEDOM

The poem by James Russell Lowell from which these verses are extracted was, perhaps, the most striking of his writings. The test question to Lowell was slavery, but that was the darkness he contrasted with the light of liberty. But the belief in the triumph of Truth here expressed remains everlastingly inspiring, and applies to all circumstances and times. Lowell has been probably the greatest force in American literature, though he was not the most popular writer.

WHEN a deed is done for Freedom, through the broad earth's aching breast
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling on from east to west,
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels the soul within him climb
To the awful verge of manhood, as the energy sublime
Of a century bursts full-blossomed on the thorny stem of Time.

Through the walls of hut and palace shoots the instantaneous throe,
When the travail of the Ages wrings earth's systems to and fro;
And the birth of each new Era, with a recognising start,
Nation wildly looks at nation, standing with mute lips apart,
And glad Truth's yet mightier man-child leaps beneath the Future's heart.

For mankind are one in spirit, and an instinct bears along,
Round the earth's electric circle, the swift flash of right or wrong;
Whether conscious or unconscious, yet Humanity's vast frame
Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the gush of joy or shame—
In the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal claim.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right.
And the choice goes by for ever 'twixt that darkness and that light.

Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose party thou shalt stand,
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes the dust against our land?
Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 'tis Truth alone is strong,
And, albeit she wander outcast now, I see around her throng
Troops of beautiful tall angels, to enshield her from all wrong.

. . . . .

Truth for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on the throne,
But that scaffold sways the Future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own.

UNDER THE LINDENS

A quaint little picture, by Walter Savage Landor. Lindens are lime trees. Hydromel is watered honey, thé ancient mead.

UNDER the lindens lately sat
A couple, and no more, in chat;
I wondered what they would be at
Under the lindens.

I saw four eyes and four lips meet,
I heard the words, *How sweet! How sweet!*
Had, then, the faeries given a treat
Under the lindens?

I pondered long and could not tell
What dainty pleased them both so well:
Bees, bees, was it your hydromel
Under the lindens?

FAREWELL

It would be possible to make quite a considerable selection of the poetry of farewell. In this case it is Sir Walter Scott who is telling how a man-of-war's officer is tenderly bidding good-bye to his lady-love, and the poet dramatically contrasts the softness of that scene with the boisterousness that will follow when the ship is far away, encountering the dangers of tempest and battle.

FAREWELL! Farewell! The voice you hear
Has left its last soft tone with you;
Its next must join the seaward cheer,
And shout among the shouting crew.

The accents which I scarce could form
Beneath your frown's controlling check
Must give the word, above the storm,
To cut the mast, and clear the wreck.

The timid eye I dared not raise,
The hand that shook when pressed to thine
Must point the guns upon the chase,
Must bid the deadly cutlass shine.

To all I love, or hope, or fear,
Honour or own, a long adieu!
To all that life has soft and dear,
Farewell! save memory of you!

KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN

The writing of poetry for music is a special art sometimes attained by those who do not write poetry seriously in any other form. The popular song "Kathleen Mavourneen" is a charming example of poetical sentiment so expressed as to lend itself to a musical setting. It is a poem of parting, with an unmistakable Irish glamour vague, sad, and wistful. Anna Crawford was the writer. The word "mavourneen" means, in the Irish language, "darling."

KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN, the gray dawn is breaking,
The horn of the hunter is heard on the hill;
The lark from her bright wing the light dew is shaking,
Kathleen Mavourneen, what, slumbering still?
Oh, hast thou forgotten how soon we must sever?
Oh, hast thou forgotten how soon we must part?
It may be for years, and it may be for ever;
Oh, why art thou silent, thou voice of my heart?

Kathleen Mavourneen, awake from thy slumbers!
The blue mountains glow with the sun's golden light;
Ah! where is the spell that once hung on thy numbers?
Arise in thy beauty, thou star of my night.
Mavourneen, Mavourneen, my sad tears are falling,
To think that from Erin and thee I must part;
It may be for years, and it may be for ever,
Then why art thou silent, thou voice of my heart?

WINTER

In the bleak North the coming of winter is a sore trial to all except the most hardy. This feeling is reflected strongly in Sir Walter Scott's description of the approach of winter. Notice how wisely the colours are chosen for the picture. Earth and air, plant and animal life, and even the merry, mischievous children are called upon to contribute to the sense of desolation that comes with the gathering cold, and is relieved only by the promise of spring.

NO longer autumn's glowing red
Upon our forest hills is shed;
No more beneath the evening beam
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam.

Away hath passed the heather-bell
That bloomed so rich on Needpath Fell;
Sallow his brow, and russet bare,
Are now the sister heights of Yair.

The sheep before the pinching heaven
To sheltered dale and down are driven;
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines.

In meek despondency they eye
The withered sward and wintry sky;
The shepherd shifts his mantle fold,
And wraps him closer from the cold.

His dogs no merry circles wheel,
But, shivering, follow at his heel;
A cowering glance they often cast
As deeper moans the gathering blast.

My imps, though hardy, bold, and wild,
As best befits the mountain child,
Feel the sad influence of the hour,
And wail the daisy's vanished flower.

Their summer gambols tell and mourn,
And anxious ask—"Will spring return,
And birds and lambs again be gay,
And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray?"

Yes, prattlers, yes—the daisy's flower
Again will paint your summer bower;
Again the hawthorn shall supply
The garlands you delight to tie.

The lambs upon the lea shall bound,
The wild birds carol to the round;
And while you frolic, light as they,
Too short shall seem the summer day.

TODAY

This wise poem is written by Bishop Boyd Carpenter, one of the most eloquent of modern preachers. The power of the present only has rarely been more impressively suggested. To anyone who notices the double and triple beats in the accenting of verse these variations here are very interesting.

THREE days, I ween, make up our life,
When shadow and sunlight play;
The day that is passed, and the day to come,
And the day that is called today.

And the day that is passed is dear, most dear,
For sorrow and memory meet;
And we scarcely grasp the hand of today,
For we fly tomorrow to greet.

And tomorrow is robed with robes so fair
As hope from the future can borrow;
Tomorrow, tomorrow our vain hearts sing,
Till we live our life in the morrow.

Three days, I ween, make up our life,
But two are not ours at all,
For yesterday, laden with good and ill,
Has passed beyond recall.

And tomorrow sits shrouded near God's throne,
And her veil none can tear away,
But today is the golden day for men,
For God's work may be done today.

THE GREEN LINNET

Here is a charming study of the green linnet by Wordsworth. The detailed study of birds has not been a popular feature of English literature until comparatively recent times; but, as we may see in this poem, Wordsworth was closely observant of all the antics and characteristics of the living things around him. His kinship with all Nature is delightfully illustrated.

BENEATH these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of spring's unclouded weather;
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard seat!
And flowers and birds once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion!
Thou, linnet, in thy green array,
Presiding spirit here today,
Dost lead the revels of the May,
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment;
A life, a presence like the air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with anyone to pair,
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel-trees
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover;
There, where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives—
A brother of the dancing leaves;
Then flits, and from the cottage eaves
Pours forth his song in gushes,
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless form he chose to feign
While fluttering in the bushes.

THE MONKEY

This happy picture of a monkey, full of sympathy with animal nature, is by Mary Howitt, whose verses for children delighted the grandfathers of the present generation.

MONKEY, little merry fellow,
Thou art Nature's Punchinello;
Full of fun as Puck can be—
Harlequin might learn of thee!

In the very Ark, no doubt,
You went frolicking about;
Never keeping in your mind
Drowned monkeys left behind!

Have you no traditions—none,
Of the court of Solomon?
No memorial how ye went
With Prince Hiram's armament?

Look now at him—slyly peep;
He pretends he is asleep!
Fast asleep upon his bed,
With his arm beneath his head.

Now, that posture is not right,
And he is not settled quite;
There, that's better than before—
And the knave pretends to snore!

Ha, he is not half asleep!
See, he slyly takes a peep.
Monkey, though your eyes were shut,
You could see this little nut.

You shall have it, pigmy brother!
What, another! and another!
Nay, your cheeks are like a sack—
Sit down, and begin to crack.

There, the little ancient man
Cracks as fast as crack he can!
Now good-bye, you merry fellow,
Nature's primest Punchinello!

THE DEWDROP

Here is a little gem of thought, finely graven, in a recent volume of poems, "Polyclitus and Other Poems," by Rowland Thirlmere. The description of a natural object of great beauty and the spiritual application of it are alike delicate and just.

THIS brilliant sphere—
A fairy looking-glass
Large as a tear—
Mirrors the things that pass,
Or far or near.

Small though it be,
It holds the sun and moon;
Infinity
Of skies with stars o'erstrewn—
A mimic sea—

And, infinite
Itself, this magic orb
Is inly lit
With secrets that absorb
Man's utmost wit.

Souls thus might shine
Ere vanishing like dew:
O would that mine
Such transient glory drew
From depths divine!

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

In this poem Percy Bysshe Shelley, most poetical of poets, reached the full height of his power. It was written near Florence when the poet was twenty-seven years old, three years before his death. Love of Nature and love of freedom thrill through the poem, but also there is a tone of gravity and hope, as if the poet felt a growing power over men's thoughts, a power that, alas! by his death remained partly unfulfilled.

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed
The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow
Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:
Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and Preserver; Hear, O hear!

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share
The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than Thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be
The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed
Scarce seemed a vision, I would ne'er have striven
As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
O lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!
A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
Will take from both a deep autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth;
And, by the incantation of this verse,
Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth
The trumpet of a prophecy! O wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

SONNET

When John Keats wrote this beautiful sonnet, in 1816, he was not yet one-and-twenty. A Londoner born, he had all the poetic townsman's love of the country. The first line is an echo from Milton's "As one who long in populous city pent." Milton, too, was a Londoner, and Keats was taking his sonnets as a model, but finding a music all his own. Philomel means the nightingale, it being fabled in Greek mythology that a heroine of that name was changed into the bird.

TO one who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven—to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when, with heart content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel—an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by:
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

THE KING'S RIDE

A pretty picture is this, drawn by Lucy H. Hooper, of the grim and cross old King of Prussia, Frederick the Great, who trusted his people and was understood by their children. The question in the last line cannot be answered in favour of all kings now alive; but our own king and queen move among their people, except on State occasions, as simply as did the veteran Prussian king. They, like him, trust and are trusted.

ABOVE the city of Berlin shines soft the summer day,
And near the royal palace shout the schoolboys at their play,
When suddenly the palace gates unclasp their portals wide,
And forth into the sunshine see a single horseman ride.

A bent old man in plain attire! on him no courtiers wait,
No armèd guard attends the steps of Frederick the Great!
But boys have spied him, and with shouts the summer breezes ring;
The merry urchins haste to greet their well-belovèd king.

The frowning look, the angry tone, are feigned, full well they know;
They do not fear his stick—that hand ne'er struck a coward blow.
"Be off to school, you boys!" he cries. "Ho! ho!" the laughers say;
"A pretty king, *you*, not to know we've holiday to-day!"

And so upon that summer day, those children at his side,
The symbol of his nation's love, did royal Frederick ride.
O kings! your thrones are tottering now! dark frowns the brow of Fate!
When did you ride as rode that day King Frederick the Great?

FATHER LAND AND MOTHER TONGUE

Samuel Lover was a cheerful Irishman, who wrote amusing books, as well as serious ones and graceful verse. This poem is one of his jokes. He wished to twit women with being talkative. Of course the reasons given here for speaking of Father Land and Mother Tongue are not the real reasons. Our fatherland is the land that produced us and dowers us with all a father would give his sons; and our mother tongue is the language we learn to lisp on our mother's knee.

OUR Father Land! and wouldst thou know
Why we should call it Father Land?
It is that Adam here below
Was made of earth by Nature's hand.

And he, our father made of earth,
Hath peopled earth on every hand;
And we, in memory of his birth,
Do call our country Father Land.

At first in Eden's bowers, they say,
No sound of speech had Adam caught,
But whistled like a bird all day,
And maybe 'twas for want of thought.

But Nature, with resistless laws,
Made Adam soon surpass the birds;
She gave him lovely Eve because
If he'd a wife they must have words!

And so the native land, I hold,
By male descent is proudly mine;
The language, as the tale hath told,
Was given in the female line.

And thus we see on either hand
We name our blessings whence they're sprung;
We call our country Father Land,
We call our language Mother Tongue.

WHAT THE CHIMNEY SANG

Bret Harte, the painter in words of these four little pictures that tell how differently different people may look at the same thing, was born at Albany, America, August 25, 1839, and died in England, May 6, 1902. As a young man he went out West, and no one knew better than he the life of mining camps. In this poem we are made to feel how the wind in the chimney appeals to contrasted natures—to the sentiment of the widow, to the fancy of the child, to the practical instinct of the plain man, and to the poet whose mind is open to all influences.

OVER the chimney the night wind sang,
And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the woman stopped, and her babe she tossed,
And thought of the one she had long since lost,
And said, as her teardrops back she forced,
"I hate the wind in the chimney."

Over the chimney the night wind sang,
And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the children said as they closer drew,
"'Tis some witch that is cleaving the black night through,
'Tis a fairy trumpet that just then blew,
And we fear the wind in the chimney."

Over the chimney the night wind sang,
And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the man, as he sat on his hearth below,
Said to himself, "It will surely snow,
And fuel is dear and wages low,
And I'll stop the leak in the chimney."

Over the chimney the night wind sang,
And chanted a melody no one knew;
But the poet listened and smiled, for he
Was man, and woman, and child, all three,
And said, "It is God's own harmony,
This wind we hear in the chimney."

ABOUT THE FAIRIES

There are people in the world, dull and not very kind, who would steal from us, and destroy, all our pretty fancies about fairies; but the unknown writer of these charming verses gives us many more fancies, all tinted with grace and poetry.

PRAY, where are the little bluebells gone,
That lately bloomed in the wood?
Why, the little fairies have each taken one,
And put it on for a hood.

And where are the pretty grass-stalks gone,
That waved in the summer breeze?
Oh, the fairies have taken them every one,
To plant in their gardens like trees.

And where are the great big bluebottles gone,
That buzzed in their busy pride?
Oh, the fairies have caught them, every one,
And have broken them in, to ride.

And they've taken the glow-worms to light their halls,
And the cricket to sing them a song;
And the great red rose-leaves to paper their walls,
And they're feasting the whole night long.

And when spring comes back with its soft, mild ray,
And the ripple of gentle rain,
The fairies bring back what they've taken away,
And give it us all again.

THE SUN AND THE SHOWER

We have here, from the pen of Edward Leschemacher, a pretty panorama of the changing sights of spring, when all outdoor life is in sympathy, and the world is bright and happy.

THE sun and a show'r
Fell in love with a flow'r,
The first sweet flow'r of the May;
And the sun look'd down,
And a golden crown
He placed on her brow one day.

The sun and the show'r
Fell in love with a flow'r,
But it faded with the May;
And rough winds blew
Till its petals flew
With the springtime far away.

Then with tender love
From the clouds above,
When the sun had gone to rest,
Bright dewdrops fell
With magic spell
Upon that young flow'r's breast.

But the sun and the show'r
That fair summer hour
Kissed each other, and grief was gone;
And the world grew bright
With a diamond light,
For, behold, a rainbow shone.

THE JOLLY OLD PEDAGOGUE

This happy description, in easy flowing language like talk, of a cheerful, healthy life unhurt by time, is written by an American, George Arnold. Its lesson to the doleful, who find nothing to enjoy in the world, is suitable to young and old alike. And the spirit of the poem is true, for happiness is as natural to all who can keep in their hearts unjaded youth as song is to birds.

'TWAS a jolly old pedagogue, long ago,
Tall, and slender, and sallow, and dry;
His form was bent, and his gait was slow,
His long, thin hair was as white as snow;
But a wonderful twinkle shone in his eye,
And he sang every night as he went to bed:
"Let us be happy down here below;
The living should live, though the dead be dead,"
Said the jolly old pedagogue, long ago.

He taught his scholars the rule of three,
Writing, and reading, and history too;
He took the little ones up on his knee,
For a kind old heart in his breast had he,
And the wants of the littlest child he knew.
"Learn while you're young," he often said,
"There is much to enjoy down here below;
Life for the living, and rest for the dead,"
Said the jolly old pedagogue, long ago.

With the stupidest boys he was kind and cool,
Speaking only in gentlest tones;
The rod was hardly known in the school;
Whipping to him was a barbarous rule,
And too hard work for his poor old bones.
Besides, it was painful, he sometimes said.
"We should make life pleasant down here below,
The living need charity more than the dead,"
Said the jolly old pedagogue, long ago.

He lived in the house by the hawthorn lane,
With roses and woodbine over the door;
His rooms were quiet, and neat, and plain,
But a spirit of comfort there held reign,
And made him forget he was old and poor.
"I need so little," he often said,
"And my friends and relatives here below
Won't litigate over me when I am dead,"
Said the jolly old pedagogue, long ago.

But the pleasantest times that he had of all,
Were the sociable hours he used to pass,
With his chair tipped back to a neighbour's wall,
Making an unceremonious call
Over a pipe and a friendly glass.
This was the finest pleasure, he said,
Of the many he tasted here below.
"Who has no cronies had better be dead,"
Said the jolly old pedagogue, long ago.

Then the jolly old pedagogue's wrinkled face
Melted all over in sunshiny smiles;
He stirred his glass with an old-school grace,
Chuckled and sipped and prattled apace,
Till the house grew merry from cellar to tiles.
"I'm a pretty old man," he gently said,
"I've lingered a long while here below;
But my heart is fresh, if my youth is fled!"
Said the jolly old pedagogue, long ago.

He smoked his pipe in the balmy air,
Every night when the sun went down;
While the soft wind played in his silvery hair,
Leaving its tenderest kisses there,
On the jolly old pedagogue's jolly old crown;
And, feeling the kisses, he smiled and said,
'Twas a glorious world down here below;
"Why wait for happiness till we are dead?"
Said the jolly old pedagogue, long ago.

He sat at his door one midsummer night,
After the sun had sunk in the west,
And the lingering beams of golden light
Made his kindly old face look warm and bright;
While the odorous night-wind whispered
"Rest!"
Gently, gently he bowed his head—
There were angels waiting for him, I know;
He was sure of happiness, living or dead,
This jolly old pedagogue, long ago.

EARTH

These lines are written to make us feel how very small and unimportant we are, even our own world, that seems so big, and all that it contains, compared with the many other worlds in the vast everywhere of the sky. But as this lovely world is all we know at present we must do our very best in it. The writer of these lines is Oliver Herford, who is a New York journalist.

IF this little world to-night
Suddenly should fall through space
In a hissing, headlong flight,
Shrivelling from off its face,
As it falls into the sun,
In an instant every trace
Of the little crawling things—
Ants, philosophers, and lice,
Cattle, cockroaches, and kings,
Beggars, millionaires, and mice,
Men and maggots—all as one
As it falls into the sun—
Who can say but at the same
Instant from some planet far
A child may watch us and exclaim:
"See the pretty shooting star!"

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

If any boys or girls do not believe in Father Christmas, or in Saint Nicholas, they should read this description, and then say what they think about it. Can you not see the roguish, good-natured St. Nick as he is pictured in the last verse but one? If we do not believe in such a merry sprite, all the worse for us. We ought to. Clement Clarke Moore is the writer who saw him and describes him to us so delightfully.

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced through their heads;
And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap;

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave a lustre of midday to objects below;
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled and shouted, and call'd them by name:
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer! now, Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donner and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch, to the top of the wall!
Now, dash away, dash away, dash away, all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,
So, up to the housetop the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of toys and St. Nicholas too.
And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dress'd all in fur from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnish'd with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he look'd like a pedlar just opening his pack.
His eyes how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry,
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow.

The stump of a pipe he held high in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.
He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook when he laugh'd, like a bowl full of jelly.

He was chubby and plump—a right jolly old elf—
And I laugh'd when I saw him, in spite of myself
A wink of his eye, and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.

He spake not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turn'd with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew, like the down on a thistle;
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!"

SIMPLE NATURE

George John Romanes, the writer of this poem, was a very learned man—a professor at Oxford, and a great friend of Charles Darwin. Romanes was wise as well as learned—which is quite a different thing—for he knew how happiness comes most easily to those who have simple wants, tastes, and aspirations. Contentment is the rose without a thorn. Born in Canada, May 20, 1848, the writer died at Oxford, May 23, 1894. He was one of the most religious of our men of science.

Be it not mine to steal the cultured flower
From any garden of the rich and great,
Nor seek with care, through many a weary hour,
Some novel form of wonder to create.

Enough for me the leafy woods to rove,
And gather simple cups of morning dew;
Or, in the fields and meadows that I love,
Find beauty in their bells of every hue.
Thus round my cottage floats a fragrant air,
And though the rustic plot be humbly laid,
Yet, like the lilies gladly growing there,
I have not toil'd, but take what God has made.
My Lord Ambition passed, and smiled in scorn;
I plucked a rose, and, lo! it had no thorn.

HOW SLEEP THE BRAVE?

These lovely verses were written by William Collins, one of our poets, whose life was very sad. He was born Dec. 25, 1721, educated at Oxford, and afterwards lived and wrote in poverty in London. Later an uncle left him sufficient money, but his health and mind failed, and he died at the age of 38 (June 12, 1759), without knowing that his "Odes" had won a lasting place in our literature. The treatment of abstract ideas, like Fancy, Honour, and Freedom, as if they were living beings is called, in poetry, personification.

How sleep the brave who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest?
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallow'd mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod!

By fairy hands their knell is rung,
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honour comes—a pilgrim grey—
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And Freedom shall awhile repair
To dwell—a weeping hermit—there!

NO COWARD SOUL IS MINE

The nineteenth century was a great century for English literature; but in it no finer poem was written than this. It was written by a woman, young and dying. Emily Bronte, who was born in 1818, and died in 1848, was the most remarkable of three clever sisters, though Charlotte gained the greatest fame. This poem was found in Emily's desk, the last she had written before her death. It is more than an exultant chant of faith. It expresses profound views which great men of science are accepting more fully as the years pass by—the immanence of the Divine in all life, and most in man.

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere:
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity!
Life—that in me has rest,
As I—undying Life—have power in Thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by Thine infinity;
So surely anchored on
The stedfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou were left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death,
Nor atom that his might could render void:
Thou—Thou art Being and Breath,
And what Thou art may never be destroyed.

THE CUP OF WATER

We wish we knew who wrote these lines to illustrate the deep truth that it is better to give than to receive. The verses are full of poetical fancies, teaching the lovely lesson of self-forgetfulness. The change of the cup from tin to silver and from silver to gold is a parable to teach that every deed of unselfishness enriches our lives.

Once upon a time, in regions far away,
There came a drought, so dreadful (as men say)
That rivers, springs, and running brooks were dried,
And every plant and flower had drooped and died.
The birds, poor suffering creatures, ceased to sing,
And all the stricken land was famishing.

There crept out of a house one starlit night
A child, with noiseless movements, footfall light,
Bearing a little vessel wrought of tin.
She sought a wood near by and entered in,
Kneeling beneath a tree, with folded hands,
To pray for rain upon the thirsty lands.

"The birds are silent, all the blossoms dead,
Soon men and cattle, too, must die," she said.
"Dear Lord, since all the rain in heaven is Thine,
O spare enough to fill this little cup of mine."
Then wearied, slept, but woke with joyous mood,
For there beside her in the dim, still wood,
With clear, cool water filled, her vessel stood.

She waited not her own parched lips to wet,
Her dying mother she could not forget;
Stumbling through haste, her cup fell to the ground.
Stooping, a little fainting dog she found.
Lifting her vessel—ah, no drop was spilled!—
With eager haste her tiny hands she filled,
And gave to drink; but to her mother's door
It was a lovely silver cup she bore.

Meeting a servant there, she bade her take
And to her mother bear that she might slake
Her thirst. "Not so," they heard the mother cry.
"For though I drank it all I still should die.
But thou so young and strong from death must shrink,
Nay, nay, my sister, take it thou and drink."
And as the vessel left her feeble hold
The maid beheld it turned to shining gold.

"We will divide," the servant thought; "I'll bear
To each within the house an equal share."
But ere her thought had quickened into deed
She paused to note another's greater need,
She saw a sad and careworn stranger stand
Before the door, and in His trembling hand
She placed the cup with cooling crystal draught
For which all thirsted, but which none had quaffed.

He took, and, lo! a soft yet radiant light
About Him shone, and glorified the night.
"Blessed is he," in loving accents came,
"That gives a cup of water in My name."
Six sparkling diamonds gemmed the golden cup,
And from within there came all bursting up
A fountain sending out on every hand
Clear flowing streams that watered all the land.

The diamonds rose above the tree-tops far
Till each in heaven's high dome became a star,
There nightly still the upward gazing eye
Beholds that starry vessel in the sky,
Showing the world with what a light divine
Through all the years unselfish acts may shine.

WHAT IS GOOD?

Each of us may think with advantage about the meaning of this simple yet thoughtful poem. The best of it comes in the last line but one. Each heart holds the secret of kindness—that is, all can be kind. All of us cannot have beauty, or fame, or great knowledge, nor can we be sure that we shall find the truth, but we can be kind, and kindness ranks high among the things that are really good and true. The lines are written by James Boyle O'Reilly.

"What is the real good?"
I asked in a musing mood.

Order, said the law court;
Knowledge, said the school;
Truth, said the wise man;
Pleasure, said the fool;
Love, said the maiden;
Beauty, said the page;
Freedom, said the dreamer;
Home, said the sage;
Fame, said the soldier;
Equity, the seer.

Spake my heart full sadly:
"The answer is not here."

Then within my bosom
Softly this I heard:
"Each heart holds the secret,
Kindness is the word."

THE KINGFISHER

The writer of these verses, Charles Lee Barnes, evidently has in mind an American kingfisher, whose laughing cry is more noticeable than the notes of the British bird. Our kingfishers love brooks and small rivers rather than spreading waters. The poet describes the bird and its habits truthfully. No other British bird is so much like a flash of colour as it darts along a streamlet.

When the summer's bright and tender sunbeams fill the land with splendour,
In his robes of blue and purple, and his crown of burnished green,
Lone the kingfisher sits dreaming, with his dark eyes brightly gleaming,
While he peers for chub and minnows in the water's limpid sheen.

And he haunts the river's edges, oozy flats, and rustling sedges,
Till he sees his prey beneath him in the waters clear and cool;
Then he quickly dashes nearer, and he breaks the polished mirror
That was floating on the surface of the creek or hidden pool.

Where the nodding reeds are growing, and the yellow lilies blowing,
In our little boat we slowly glide along the placid stream;
And we know he's coming after, by the music of his laughter,
And the flashing of his vesture in the sun's effulgent beam.

Well he knows the alder bushes, and the slender, slimy rushes,
And the swamp, and pond, and lakelet, and the ice-cold crystal spring;
And the brooklet oft he follows through the meadows and the hollows,
Far within the shadowy woodland where the thrush and robin sing.

Oh, he well can flutter proudly, and he well can laugh so loudly,
For he lives within a castle where he never knows a care!
And his realm is on the water, and his wife a monarch's daughter;
And his title undisputed is on earth, or sea, or air!

THE BLACKBIRD'S SONG

This tender and lovely poem was written by Henry Kingsley—a brother of Charles Kingsley—in one of his story-books. Henry was born in 1830, and died in 1876. Though a busy editor, he wrote a number of tales. Magdalen, in these verses, means Sin, and Michael is the angel supposed to guard the gate of heaven. The words sung by the bird imitate the sound of its song; but it is the thrush, not the blackbird, that sings "Let her in! Let her in!" "Tirled the pin," means rattled the door-latch, and of course, the One who opens the gate is Christ. The poem receives much of its beauty from its wonderful reflection of His spirit.

Magdalen at Michael's gate
Tirled at the pin;
On Joseph's thorn sang the blackbird,
"Let her in! Let her in!"

"Hast thou seen the wounds?" said Michael,
"Knowest thou thy sin?"
"It is evening, evening," sang the blackbird,
"Let her in! Let her in!"

"Yes, I have seen the wounds,
And I know my sin."
"She knows it well, well, well," sang the blackbird,
"Let her in! Let her in!"

"Thou bringest no offerings," said Michael,
"Nought save sin."
And the blackbird sang, "She is sorry, sorry, sorry.
Let her in! Let her in!"

When he had sung himself to sleep,
And night did begin,
One came and opened Michael's gate,
And Magdalen went in.

HOW'S MY BOY?

No feeling in all the world equals the intensity—the depth and warmth—of a mother's love, and this poem, written by Sydney Dobell in a metre of his own, pictures this love. The mother in the poem forgets everything and everybody in her passionate longing for the safety of her boy. And many loving mothers feel like that, their children should know. How we wish that we could hear the boy was safe! But no; he will not return. Even children must realise that sorrow is mixed with joy in this world.

"Ho, sailor of the sea!
How's my boy—my boy?"
"What's your boy's name, good wife,
And in what good ship sailed he?"

"My boy John—
He that went to sea—
What care I for the ship, sailor?
My boy's my boy to me.

"You come back from sea
And not know my John?
I might as well have asked some landsman
Yonder down in the town.
There's not an ass in all the parish
But he knows my John.

"How's my boy—my boy?
And unless you let me know
I'll swear you are no sailor,
Blue jacket or no,
Brass button or no, sailor,
Anchor and crown or no!
Sure his ship was the Jolly Briton."
"Speak low, woman, speak low!"

"And why should I speak low, sailor,
About my own boy John?
If I was loud as I am proud
I'd sing him over the town!
Why should I speak low, sailor?"
"That good ship went down."

"How's my boy—my boy?
What care I for the ship, sailor,
I never was aboard her.
Be she afloat, or be she aground,
Sinking or swimming, I'll be bound
Her owners can afford her!
I say, how's my John?"
"Every man on board went down,
Every man aboard her."

"How's my boy—my boy?
What care I for the men, sailor?
I'm not their mother—
How's my boy—my boy?
Tell me of him and no other!
How's my boy—my boy?"

THE SLAVE SINGING AT MIDNIGHT

Poets often see far into the future with a strong faith that good is coming, but Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who wrote this touching poem about a slave singing of liberty, when black slaves were kept by white people in some of the American States, had not faith enough to see the end. The earthquake he speaks of, however, came in the awful form of war, and it set the slaves free.

LOUD he sang the Psalm of David!
He, a Negro and enslaved,
Sang of Israel's victory,
Sang of Zion, bright and free.

In that hour, when night is calmest,
Sang he from the Hebrew Psalmist,
In a voice so sweet and clear
That I could not choose but hear.

Songs of triumph, and ascriptions,
Such as reached the swart Egyptians,
When upon the Red Sea coast
Perished Pharaoh and his host.

And the voice of his devotion
Filled my soul with strange emotion;
For its tones by turns were glad,
Sweetly solemn, wildly sad.

Paul and Silas, in their prison,
Sang of Christ, the Lord arisen,
And an earthquake's arm of might
Broke their dungeon-gates at night.

But, alas! what holy angel
Brings the slave this glad evangel?
And what earthquake's arm of might
Breaks his dungeon-gates at night?

THE SHEPHERD OF KING ADMETUS

A Greek legend tells how Apollo, one of the gods, being driven from Olympus, appeared unrecognised at the Court of Admetus, King of Thessaly, and pleased the king so much with his music and song that he was made the chief shepherd over the royal flocks. He was of very little use as a shepherd, but while passing the time with music and song charmed men in a way that has never been forgotten, and so founded the art of poetry. The legend is here delicately shaped by the pen of James Russell Lowell. The poem carries the true thought that the beautiful is far more lasting than works of commonplace practicalness.

THERE came a youth upon the earth,
Some thousand years ago,
Whose slender hands were nothing worth,
Whether to plough, or reap, or sow.

Upon an empty tortoise-shell
He stretched some chords, and drew
Music that made men's bosoms swell
Fearless, or brimmed their eyes with dew.

Then King Admetus, one who had
Pure taste by right divine,
Decreed his singing not too bad
To hear between the cups of wine.

And so, well pleased with being soothed
Into a sweet half-sleep,
Three times his kingly beard he smoothed,
And made him viceroy o'er his sheep.

His words were simple words enough,
And yet he used them so
That what in other mouths was rough,
In his seemed musical and low.

Men called him but a shiftless youth,
In whom no good they saw;
And yet, unwittingly, in truth,
They made his careless words their law.

They knew not how he learned at all,
For idly, hour by hour,
He sat and watched the dead leaves fall,
Or mused upon a common flower.

It seemed the loveliness of things
Did teach him all their use,
For, in mere weeds, and stones, and springs,
He found a healing power profuse.

Men granted that his speech was wise,
But when a glance they caught
Of his slim grace and woman's eyes,
They laughed, and called him good-for-nought.

Yet after he was dead and gone,
And e'en his memory dim,
Earth seemed more sweet to live upon,
More full of love, because of him.

And day by day more holy grew
Each spot where he had trod,
Till after-poets only knew
Their first-born brother as a god.

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

The nautilus is a mollusc that lives in a pearly, spiral shell. As the shell grows the creature creeps forward and closes behind it the chamber in which it last dwelt. In olden times it was supposed that the nautilus, floating on its shell, had the power of lifting a gauzy sail, and being wafted along by the wind, and that from it men learned how to sail their boats. The poet, Oliver Wendell Holmes, having found one of these supposed voyagers wrecked, tells us beautifully the story of its growth, and leads up through his description to the last verse, which contains one of the noblest similitudes in the literature of our English tongue.

THIS is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main—
The venturous barque that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in its last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathed horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I heard a voice that sings:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length are free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

THE EAGLES HAVE FLOWN!

These verses, by Edward Shirley, give a true picture of a period in the story of England, when the Britons, long protected by the Roman legions, had lost the power of protecting themselves, and so, on the withdrawal of the Romans, fell an easy prey to our rude, warlike, pitiless forefathers, the Saxons, or English. The Romans carried the representation of an eagle at the head of their regiments, as flags are carried to-day; so to say "the eagles have flown" is a way of saying "the Romans have gone."

Woe, woe to our land! for Rome is no more;
Her legions have left us, and we are alone;
Her galleys are fading away from our shore.
All hope has gone with them. *The eagles have flown!*

Where is our bulwark, our sword, and our shield?
(List, O ye gods, to our pitiful moan!)
We know not to war, and no weapons we wield;
Who, who shall defend us? *The eagles have flown!*

They taught us to labour, to build, and to plough,
To fashion the clay and to quarry the stone.
Vain, vain all our learning to succour us now!
The foe is upon us. *The eagles have flown!*

They come from the north, they come from the east;
Swift o'er the ocean their long ships are blown.
They come to the slaughter, as wolves to a feast;
They rend us in pieces. *The eagles have flown!*

Our roof-trees they burn, our kinsfolk they slay;
From battle we flee, our feebleness known;
We perish by night, and we perish by day.
Say, what shall the end be? *The eagles have flown!*

They drive us like sheep to the pitiless wave;
Back by the sea on the beach we are thrown.
O Rome! in thy mercy, send hither and save!
Alas, all is over! *The eagles have flown!*

Doomed is our country; our end draweth nigh;
Soon shall the stranger call Britain his own!
The sword is our portion; our fate is to die!
Britannia is England! *The eagles have flown!*

THE HEIGHT OF THE RIDICULOUS

No man who has written the English language ever had a more buoyant heart than Oliver Wendell Holmes, the American poet and essayist. He kept his high spirits even when he was very old. He could laugh with anybody, and at himself. Here with hearty good nature he pokes fun at his own merry moods.

I wrote some lines once on a time
In wondrous merry mood,
And thought, as usual, men would say
They were exceeding good.

They were so queer, so very queer,
I laughed as I would die;
Albeit, in the general way
A sober man am I.

I called my servant, and he came:
How kind it was of him
To mind a slender man like me,
He of the mighty limb!

"These to the printer," I exclaimed,
And in my humorous way
I added (as a trifling jest),
"There'll be the devil to pay."

He took the paper, and I watched,
And saw him peep within;
At the first line he read, his face
Was all upon the grin.

He read the next—the grin grew broad,
And shot from ear to ear;
He read the third—a chuckling noise
I now began to hear.

The fourth—he broke into a roar;
The fifth—his waistband split;
The sixth—he burst five buttons off,
And tumbled in a fit.

Ten days and nights, with sleepless eye,
I watched that wretched man,
And since, I never dare to write
As funny as I can.

AN INCIDENT

This tender and true poem was written by Arthur Hugh Clough, a poet from whom great writings were expected, but who died before he reached middle life. In many of Clough's poems there is a tone of sadness because of the hardness and sinfulness of men, but it is followed by hope because of the world's many good influences, and in these verses the cheerfulness comes very beautifully from the simple sight of small children of one family walking hand in hand. And, after all, home life and natural affection, as hinted at here, do play the largest parts in the world.

'Twas on a sunny summer day
I trod a mighty city's street,
And when I started on my way
My heart was full of fancies sweet;
But soon, as nothing could be seen,
But countenances sharp and keen,
Nought heard or seen around but told
Of something bought or something sold,
And none that seemed to think or care
That any save himself was there—

Full soon my heart began to sink
With a strange shame and inward pain,
For I was sad within to think
Of this absorbing love of gain,
And various thoughts my bosom tost;
When suddenly my path there crossed,
Locked hand in hand with one another,
A little maiden and her brother—
A little maiden, and she wore
Around her waist a pinafore.

And hand in hand along the street
This pretty pair did softly go,
And as they went, their little feet
Moved in short, even steps and slow:
It was a sight to see and bless,
That little sister's tenderness;
One hand a tiny basket bore
Of flowers and fruit—a chosen store,
Such as kind friends oft send to others—
And one was fastened in her brother's.

It was a voice of meaning sweet,
And spake amid that scene of strife
Of home and homely duties meet,
And charities of daily life;
And often, should my spirit fail,
And under cold, strange glances quail,
'Mid busy shops and busier throng,
That speed upon their ways along
The thick and crowded thoroughfare,
I'll call to mind that little pair.

I WANDERED BY THE BROOK-SIDE

This song, by Richard Monckton Milnes—afterwards Lord Houghton—is one of the loveliest in the English tongue, for it has all the chief qualities of a good song. It is very simple, with each phrase and word clearly understood; it describes a scene that everyone can picture in sympathy; and it is brimming over with feeling, expressed by a haunting refrain. The meeting of lovers has never been more sweetly suggested. A spirit of tenderness flows through the poem almost with a little sobbing sound.

I WANDERED by the brook-side,
I wandered by the mill,
I could not hear the brook flow,
The noisy wheel was still;
There was no burr ot grasshopper,
Nor chirp of any bird;
But the beating of my own heart
Was all the sound I heard.

I sat beneath the elm-tree,
I watched the long, long shade.
And as it grew still longer
I did not feel afraid;
For I listened for a footfall,
I listened for a word,
But the beating of my own heart
Was all the sound I heard.

He came not—no, he came not;
The night came on alone;
The little stars sat one by one
Each on his golden throne;
The evening air passed by my cheek,
The leaves above were stirred,
But the beating of my own heart
Was all the sound I heard.

Fast, silent tears were flowing,
When someone stood behind;
A hand was on my shoulder,
I knew its touch was kind;
It drew me nearer, nearer;
We did not speak a word,
For the beating of our own hearts
Was all the sound we heard.

THE JOVIAL BEGGAR

This is a very old song telling of a state of life that has passed away. The features of the song are its rollicking tone—making the best of a life that never could have been desirable—and its description of the old-time begging profession. For the beggar was a sort of licensed wanderer in those far-off days, and he carried with him quite a number of bags, as described in the poem. In one of the Robin Hood ballads, Robin is said to have put on a beggar's clothes as a disguise, and he hung round him six separate bags, for meal, malt, barley, corn, bread, and beef. Begging was thought of then differently from now. Students begged their way from university to university, and an English poet, Goldsmith, in later years, begged his living across Europe.

THERE was a jovial beggar,
He had a wooden leg,
Lame from his cradle,
And forced for to beg.
And a-begging we will go,
Will go, will go,
And a-begging we will go.

A bag for his oatmeal,
Another for his salt,
And a long pair of crutches,
To show that he can halt

A bag for his wheat,
Another for his rye,
And a little bottle by his side,
To drink when he's a-dry.

Seven years I begged
For my old master Wilde,
He taught me how to beg
When I was but a child.

I begged for my master,
And got him store of pelf,
But goodness now be praised,
I'm begging for myself.

In a hollow tree
I live, and pay no rent,
Providence provides for me,
And I am well content.

Of all the occupations
A beggar's is the best,
For whenever he's a-weary,
He can lay him down to rest.

I fear no plots against me,
I live in open cell;
Then who would be a king, lads,
When the beggar lives so well?
And a-begging we will go,
Will go, will go,
And a-begging we will go.

THE FISHERMAN'S SONG

In this song Joanna Baillie, a Scottish author, who was a great friend of Sir Walter Scott, makes us feel as we should feel if we were in a fisherman's boat on a dark, wild night; but fishermen themselves take "the lashing waves" as a matter of course. It is pleasant to think of Joanna Baillie as being so sympathetic, for she was brought up to repress feeling. She had a good father, but he was so stern and cold that he never kissed her.

NO fish stir in our heaving net,
And the sky is dark and the night is wet;
And we must ply the lusty oar,
For the tide is ebbing from the shore;
And sad are they whose faggots burn,
So kindly stored for our return.

Our boat is small, and the tempest raves,
And naught is heard but the lashing waves
And the sullen roar of the angry sea
And the wild winds piping drearily;
Yet sea and tempest rise in vain,
We'll bless our blazing hearths again.

Push bravely, mates! Our guiding star
Now from its towerlet streameth far,
And now along the nearing strand,
See, swiftly moves yon flaming brand;
Before the midnight watch be past
We'll quaff our bowl and mock the blast.

PASSING PLEASURES

The writer of these manly, wise, and gracefully simple little verses was Walter Savage Landor. He wrote a great deal, with massive ability, but will be best remembered as a poet by his haunting snatches of song. These lines carry a fine faith that, though our pleasures may fade, "all's right with the world."

WHY, why repine, my pensive friend,
At pleasures slipt away
Some the stern Fates will never lend,
And all refuse to stay.

I see the rainbow in the sky,
The dew upon the grass;
I see them, and I ask not why
They glimmer or they pass.

With folded arms I linger not
To call them back—'twere vain;
In this, or in some other spot
I know they'll shine again.

REMEMBER, LORD

O Lord Almighty, Thou whose hands
  Despair and victory give;
In whom, though tyrants tread their lands,
  The souls of nations live.

Thou wilt not turn Thy face away
  From those who work Thy will,
But send Thy peace on hearts that pray,
  And guard Thy people still.

Remember not the days of shame,
  The hands with rapine dyed,
The wavering will, the baser aim,
  The brute material pride.

Remember, Lord, the years of faith,
  The spirits humbly brave,
The strength that died defying death,
  The love that loved the slave:

The race that strove to rule Thine earth
  With equal laws unbought:
Who bore for Truth the pangs of birth,
  And brake the bonds of Thought.

Remember how, since time began,
  Thy dark eternal mind
Through lives of men that fear not man
  Is light for all mankind.

Thou wilt not turn Thy face away
  From those who work Thy will,
But send Thy strength on hearts that pray
  For strength to serve Thee still.

HENRY NEWBOLT

From "Poems New and Old," published by John Murray

HILLS

A nappy example of a descriptive poem with a double meaning—a new Excelsior lasting into later years. The writer. Arthur Guiterman, is a well-known American poet.

I NEVER loved your plains,
Your gentle valleys,
Your drowsy country lanes
And pleachèd alleys.

I want my hills!—the trail
That scorns the hollow—
Up, up the ragged shale
Where few will follow;

Up, over wooded crest
And mossy boulder,
With strong thigh, heaving chest,
And swinging shoulder.

So let me hold my way,
By nothing halted,
Until, at close of day,
I stand, exalted.

High on my hills of dream—
Dear hills that know me!
And then, how fair will seem
The lands below me!

How pure, at vesper-time,
The far bells chiming!
God, give me hills to climb,
And strength for climbing!

DEATHLESS

An expression in rhyme, by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, of the central idea of Pantheism—that is, that an emanation from God lives in all life, an indestructible influence. Mrs. Wilcox is an American authoress whose work has made her widely popular.

THERE lies in the centre of each man's heart
A longing and love for the good and pure;
And if but an atom, or larger part,
I tell you this shall endure—endure
After the body has gone to decay—
Yea, after the world has passed away.
The longer I live and the more I see
Of the struggle of souls toward the heights above,
The stronger this truth comes home to me:
That the universe rests on the shoulders of love;
A love so limitless, deep, and broad,
That men have renamed it and called it—God.

And nothing that ever was born or evolved,
Nothing created by light or force,
But deep in its system there lies dissolved
A shining drop from the Great Love Source,
A shining drop that shall live for aye—
Though kingdoms may perish and stars decay.

BETSEY AND I ARE OUT

The writer of this poem of life and character, Will Carleton, an American editor and lecturer, has achieved one of the rarest of successes, that of mixing humour with sustained pathos. The friction of daily life has never been put into words more effectively than in this homely poem, or the undercurrent of love that is not affected by such friction.

DRAW up the papers, lawyer, and make 'em good and stout,
For things at home are crossways, and Betsey and I are out.
We, who have worked together so long as man and wife,
Must pull in single harness for the rest of our natural life.

"What is the matter?" say you. I guess it's hard to tell!
Most of the years behind us we've passed by very well!
I have no other woman, she has no other man—
Only we've lived together as long as we ever can.

So I have talked with Betsey, and Betsey has talked with me,
And so we've agreed together that we can't ever agree;
Not that we've catched each other in any terrible crime,
We've been a-gathering this for years, a little at a time.

There was a stock of temper we both had for a start,
Although we never suspected 'twould take us two apart;
I had my various failings, bred in the flesh and bone;
And Betsey, like all good women, had a temper of her own.

The first thing I remember whereon we disagreed
Was something concerning heaven—a difference in our creed;
We argued the thing at breakfast, we argued the thing at tea,
And the more we argued the question, the more we didn't agree.

And the next that I remember was when we lost a cow;
She had "kicked the bucket" for certain, the question was only How?
I held my own opinion, and Betsey another had;
And when we were done a-talking, we both of us were mad.

And the next that I remember, it started in a joke;
But full for a week it lasted, and neither of us spoke.
And the next was when I scolded because she broke a bowl;
And she said I was mean and stingy, and hadn't any soul.

And so the thing kept working, and all the self-same way;
Always something to argue, and something sharp to say;
And down on us came the neighbours, a couple dozen strong,
And lent their kindest service to help the thing along.

And there have been days together, and many a weary week,
We were both of us cross and sulky, and both too proud to speak;
And I have been thinking and thinking, the whole of the winter and fall,
If I can't live kind with a woman, I won't live with her at all.

And so I have talked with Betsey, and Betsey has talked with me,
And we have agreed together that we can't never agree;
And what is hers shall be hers, and what is mine shall be mine,
And I'll put it in the agreement, and take it to her to sign.

Write on the paper, lawyer—the very first paragraph—
Of all the farm and live-stock that she shall have her half;
For she has helped to earn it, through many a weary day,
And it's nothing more than justice that Betsey has her pay.

Give her the house and homestead—a man can thrive and roam;
But women are skeery critters, unless they have a home;
And I have always determined, and never failed to say,
That Betsey should never want a home if I was taken away.

There is a little hard money that's drawing tolerable pay:
A couple of hundred dollars laid by for a rainy day,
Safe in the hands of good men, and easy to get at;
Put in another clause there, and give her half of that.

Yes, I see you smile, sir, at my giving her so much;
Yes, divorce is cheap, sir, but I take no stock in such!
True and fair I married her, when she was blithe and young;
And Betsey was always good to me, excepting with her tongue.

Once, when I was young as you, and not so smart, perhaps,
For me she mittened a lawyer, and several other chaps,
And all of them was flustered, and fairly taken down,
And I for a time was counted the luckiest man in town.

Once when I had a fever—I won't forget it soon—
I was hot as a basted turkey and crazy as a loon;
Never an hour went by me when she was out of sight—
She nursed me true and tender, and stuck to me day and night.

And if ever a house was tidy, and ever a kitchen clean,
Her house and kitchen was as tidy as any I ever seen;
And I don't complain of Betsey, or any of her acts,
Excepting when we've quarrelled, and told each other facts.

So draw up the paper, lawyer, and I'll go home tonight,
And read the agreement to her, and see if it's all right;
And then, in the morning, I'll sell to a trading man I know,
And kiss the child that was left to us, and out in the world I'll go.

And one thing put in the paper, that first to me didn't occur,
That when I am dead at last she'll bring me back to her,
And lay me under the maples I planted years ago,
When she and I were happy, before we quarrelled so.

And when she dies I wish that she should be laid by me,
And, lying together in silence, perhaps we will agree;
And, if ever we meet in heaven, I wouldn't think it queer
If we loved each other the better because we quarrelled here.

HOW BETSEY AND I MADE UP

The sequel to "Betsey and I Are Out," must be read immediately after the pathetically developed overture. The writer had the secret of causing tears to flow down smiling faces.

GIVE us your hand, Mr. Lawyer: how
do you do today?
You drew up that paper—I suppose you
want your pay?
Don't cut down your figures: make it an
X or a V,
For that 'ere written agreement was just
the makin' of me.

Going home that evening, I tell you I was
blue,
Thinking of all my troubles, and what I was
going to do;
And if my horses hadn't been the steadiest
team alive
They'd have tipped me over, certain, for I
couldn't see where to drive.

No, for I was labouring under a heavy load;
No, for I was travelling an entirely different
road;
For I was a-tracing over the path of our
lives again,
And seeing where we missed the way, and
where we might have been.

And many a corner we'd turned that just to
a quarrel led,
When I ought to have held my temper, and
driven straight ahead;
And the more I thought it over the more
these memories came,
And the more I struck the opinion that I
was most to blame.

And things I had long forgotten kept rising
in my mind,
Of little matters betwixt us, where Betsey
was good and kind;
And these things flashed all through me,
as you know things sometimes will
When a feller's alone in the darkness, and
everything is still.

And Betsey, she pretended to look about the
house,
But she watched my side coat-pocket like
a cat would watch a mouse;
And then she went to fooling a little with
her cup,
And intently reading a newspaper, a-holding
it wrong side up.

And when I'd done my supper I drawed
the agreement out,
And gave it to her without a word, for she
knowed what 'twas about:

And then I hummed a little tune, but now
and then a note
Was bursted by some animal that hopped
up in my throat.

Then Betsey, she got her specs from off the
mantel-shelf,
And read the article over quite softly to
herself;
Read it by little and little, for her eyes are
getting old,
And lawyer's writing ain't no print, especially
when it's cold.

And after she'd read a little she gave my
arm a touch,
And kindly said she was afraid I was
allowing her too much;
But when she was through she went for me,
her face a-streaming with tears,
And kissed me for the first time in over
twenty years!

I don't know what you'll think, sir—I didn't
come to inquire—
But I picked up that agreement and stuffed
it in the fire;
And I told her we'd bury the hatchet
alongside of the cow;
And we struck an agreement never to have
another row.

And I told her in the future I wouldn't
speak cross or rash
If half the crockery in the house was broken
all to smash;
And she said, in regards to heaven, we'd try
and learn its worth
By starting a branch establishment and
running it here on earth.

And so we sat a-talking three-quarters of
the night,
And opened our hearts to each other until
they both grew light;
And the days when I was winning her away
from so many men
Was nothing to that evening I courted her
over again.

Next morning an ancient virgin took pains
to call on us,
Her lamp all trimmed and burning to kindle
another fuss;
But when she went to prying and opening
of old sores,
My Betsey rose politely, and showed her
out of doors.

Since then I don't deny but there's been a
word or two,
But we've got our eyes wide open, and know
just what to do;

THE NEW SONG

WIDE as the world our bounds are wide.
But if our hearts be true,
What England's done is naught beside
What England yet shall do!
Her fame shall mount on ampler wing,
Her sun more glorious shine;
Up with the flag of Peace and bring
The whole world into line!

The King who bade his people Wake
A goodly dawn shall hail;
The Years of Man flow on to make
The Will of God prevail:
Peace on the earth, goodwill, and joy!
Who asks the how and when?
Man may disgrace but not destroy
The Brotherhood of Men!

We see a shining light, we hear
A music at the door,
Bright angels of the Lord appear
With tidings for the poor—
An end to bitter want and woe,
An end to hate and strife,
The least of all mankind shall know
The blessed joy of life!

O Island Home, where Alfred dreamed,
And Wyclif's soul did pray,
Where Cromwell's host to battle streamed
And Hampden stood at bay—
Thy cliffs are strong, thy rose is sweet,
Thy woods, thy hills are fair,
O strong and tender, make us meet
To breathe thy sacred air!

Our fathers wrought for wealth and might,
Far did their war-drums roll;
Ours, with their fortitude, to fight
The battles of the soul!
For us shall come no eventide,
No age of wreck and rue,
What England's done is naught beside
What England yet shall do!

BY HAROLD BEGBIE

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