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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE GOLDEN TREASURY OF AMERICAN SONGS AND LYRICS ***

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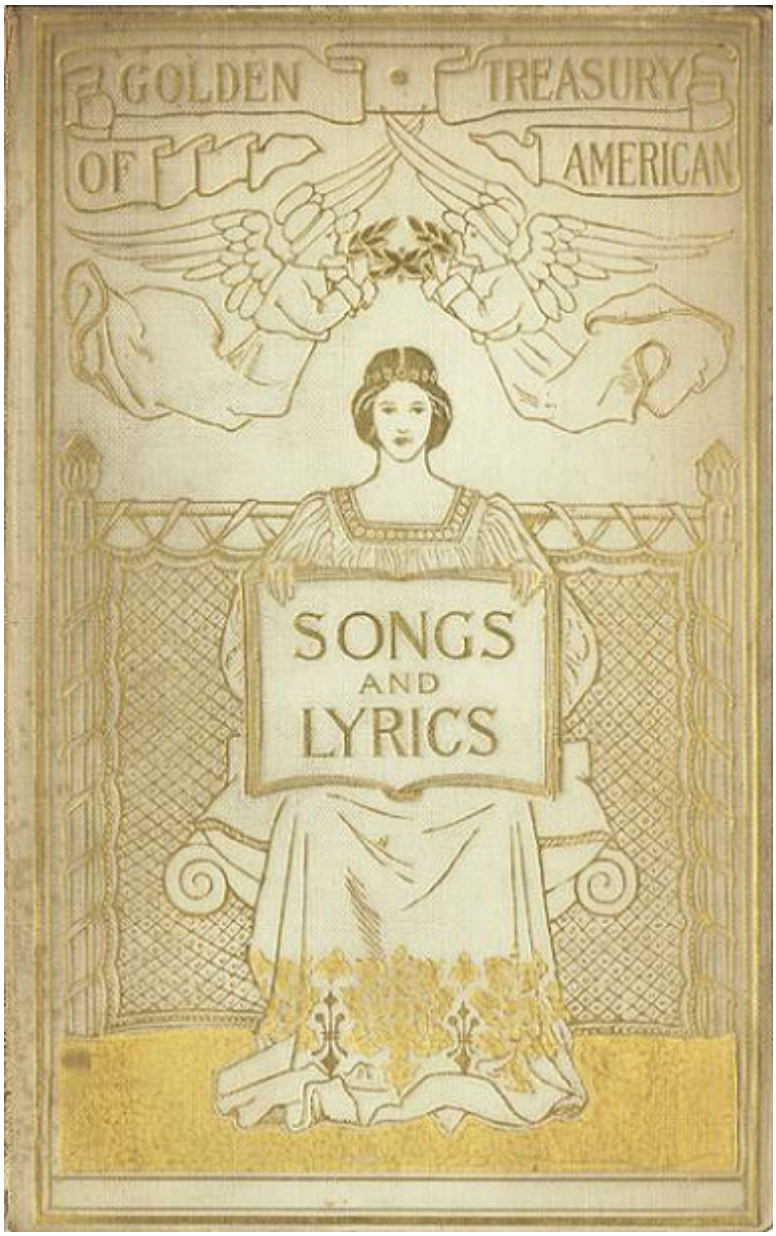

To My Mother.

THE

GOLDEN TREASURY

OF

AMERICAN SONGS AND LYRICS

EDITED BY

FREDERIC LAWRENCE KNOWLES

NEW REVISED EDITION

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PREFACE.

The numerous collections of American verse share, I think, one fault in common: they include too much. Whether this has been a bid for popularity, a concession to Philistia, I cannot say; but the fact remains that all anthologies of American poetry are, so far as I know, more or less uncritical. The aim of the present book is different. In no case has a poem been included because it is widely known. The purpose of this compilation is solely that of preserving, in attractive and permanent form, about one hundred and fifty of the best lyrics of America.

I am quite aware of the danger attending such exacting honor-rolls. At best, an editor's judgment is only personal, and the realization of this fact gives me no small diffidence in attempting to decide what American lyrics are best worthy of preservation. That every reader of the "American Treasury" will find some favorite poem omitted, there can be little doubt. But the effort made in this book towards a careful estimate of our lyrical poetry is at any rate, I feel sure, in a good direction.

There appear in the index of Mr. Stedman's "Poets of America" the names of over three hundred native writers. American verse in the last half century has been extraordinarily prolific. It would seem that the time has come, in the course of our national literature, for proving all things and holding fast that which is good.

The fact that the title of this compilation instantly calls to mind that of Mr. Palgrave's scholarly collection of English lyrics need not prove a disadvantage to the book if the purpose which led to the choice of name is understood. The verse of a single century produced in a new country should not be expected to equal the poetic wealth of an old and intellectual nation. But if American poetry cannot hope to rival the poetry of the mother country, it may at least be compared with it; and the fact of such a comparative point of view will aid rather than hinder the student of our native poetry in estimating its value.

American verse has suffered at the hands both of its admirers and its enemies. Injudicious praise, no less than supercilious contempt, has reacted unfavorably on the fame of our poets. Again and again has some minor versifier been hailed as the "American Keats" or the "American Burns." Really excellent poets, though distinctly poets of second rank, have been elevated amid the blare of critical trumpets to the company of Wordsworth and Milton. All this is unprofitable and silly. But not much better is the attitude of certain critics who patronize everything in the English language which has been written outside of England. Though America has added—leaving Poe out of account—no distinctly new notes to English poetry, it has added certainly not a few true ones. A nation need never apologize for its literature when it has produced such lyrics—to go no further—as "On a Bust of Dante," "Ichabod," "The Chambered Nautilus," and the "Waterfowl."

My method of arrangement is roughly chronological. The First Book, which is shorter than the others, might be called the book of Bryant; the Second, of Longfellow; and the Third, of Aldrich. Since the periods must of course overlap, this division of the poems can be at most only suggestive.

I have made it no part of my design to grant to the better known poets a larger number of lyrics than those given later and younger men. I have paid no regard to that purely conventional idea of proportion, that would assign to five or six writers a dozen selections each, and to another set of poets, in proportion to their popular fame, half that number. We can safely leave the final adjustment of all rival claims to Time, the best critic; in the meanwhile having the more modest aim of selecting, irrespective of contemporary judgments, whatever is best suited to our purpose.

A word more should be said about the title. I have not interpreted the term lyric so rigidly as to exclude sonnets, ballads, elegiac verse, or even pieces of almost pure description. If I had held to the strictest sense of lyric, this book would never have been compiled; for I suspect nothing will strike the reader more forcibly than the fact that, despite the excellence of the poems included, there is a notable lack of unconsciousness—of pure singing quality. Such things as Pinkney's "Health" and Holmes's "Old Ironsides" are the exception. The poems are composed cleverly, but they do not quite sing themselves to their own music. The best American verse, while not insincere, is seldom wholly spontaneous. This is not saying that much spontaneous verse has not been written in this country; much has been, but the singer's voice has too often been uncultivated, and the product inartistic.

The names of many popular poets are entirely omitted. In no case, however, was this probably due to oversight. I have gone over carefully a wide field of verse, not without finding much to admire, but never quite happening upon that final touch of successful achievement where art and inspiration join. I am especially sorry to leave unrepresented a writer—more imaginative, possibly, than any American poet except Poe—whose utter contempt for technique in the ordinary sense places him wholly outside my present purpose.

I wish to acknowledge various favors kindly shown by Professor C.T. Winchester, Professor Barrett Wendell, and Mr. H.E. Scudder. Thanks are also due Mr. T.B. Aldrich for the privilege of including the six poems from his pen, which were kindly selected for the book by the poet himself. The following firms deserve thanks for permitting the use of copyrighted poems:

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(Sequential.)

CONTENTS.

(Alphabetical.)

BOOK FIRST.

AMERICAN SONGS AND LYRICS

The Wild Honeysuckle.

Fair flower, that dost so comely grow,
  Hid in this silent, dull retreat,
Untouched thy honey'd blossoms blow,
  Unseen thy little branches greet;
    No roving foot shall crush thee here,
    No busy hand provoke a tear.

By Nature's self in white arrayed,
  She bade thee shun the vulgar eye,
And planted here the guardian shade,
  And sent soft waters murmuring by;
    Thus quietly thy summer goes,—
    Thy days declining to repose.

Smit with those charms, that must decay,
  I grieve to see your future doom;
They died—nor were those flowers more gay—
  The flowers that did in Eden bloom;
    Unpitying frosts and Autumn's power
    Shall leave no vestige of this flower.

From morning suns and evening dews
  At first thy little being came;
If nothing once, you nothing lose,
  For when you die you are the same;
    The space between is but an hour,
    The frail duration of a flower.

P. Freneau.

Song.

Who has robbed the ocean cave,
  To tinge thy lips with coral hue?
Who from India's distant wave

For thee those pearly treasures drew?
Who from yonder orient sky
Stole the morning of thine eye?

Thousand charms, thy form to deck,
From sea, and earth, and air are torn;
Roses bloom upon thy cheek,
On thy breath their fragrance borne.
Guard thy bosom from the day,
Lest thy snows should melt away.

But one charm remains behind,
Which mute earth can ne'er impart;
Nor in ocean wilt thou find,
Nor in the circling air, a heart.
Fairest! wouldst thou perfect be,
Take, oh, take that heart from me.
J. SHAW.

"My Life is Like the Summer Rose."

My life is like the summer rose
That opens to the morning sky,
But ere the shades of evening close,
Is scattered on the ground—to die!
Yet on the rose's humble bed
The sweetest dews of night are shed,
As if she wept the waste to see,—
But none shall weep a tear for me!

My life is like the autumn leaf
That trembles in the moon's pale ray;
Its hold is frail,—its date is brief,
Restless,—and soon to pass away!
Yet ere that leaf shall fall and fade,
The parent tree will mourn its shade,
The winds bewail the leafless tree,—
But none shall breathe a sigh for me!

My life is like the prints which feet
Have left on Tampa's desert strand;
Soon as the rising tide shall beat,
All trace will vanish from the sand;
Yet, as if grieving to efface
All vestige of the human race,
On that lone shore loud moans the sea,—
But none, alas! shall mourn for me!

R.H. WILDE.

"O Fairest of the Rural Maids!"

O Fairest of the rural maids!
Thy birth was in the forest shades;
Green boughs, and glimpses of the sky,
Were all that met thine infant eye.

Thy sports, thy wanderings, when a child,
Were ever in the sylvan wild;
And all the beauty of the place
Is in thy heart and on thy face.

The twilight of the trees and rocks
Is in the light shade of thy locks;
Thy step is as the wind, that weaves
Its playful way among the leaves.

Thine eyes are springs, in whose serene
And silent waters heaven is seen;
Their lashes are the herbs that look
On their young figures in the brook.

The forest depths, by foot unpressed,
Are not more sinless than thy breast;
The holy peace that fills the air
Of those calm solitudes is there.

W.C. Bryant.

The Bucket.

How dear to this heart are the scenes of my childhood,
When fond recollection presents them to view!—
The orchard, the meadow, the deep-tangled wild-wood,
And every loved spot which my infancy knew!
The wide-spreading pond, and the mill that stood by it;
The bridge, and the rock where the cataract fell;
The cot of my father, the dairy-house nigh it;
And e'en the rude bucket that hung in the well,—
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket which hung in the well.

That moss-covered vessel I hailed as a treasure;
For often at noon, when returned from the field,
I found it the source of an exquisite pleasure,—
The purest and sweetest that nature can yield.
How ardent I seized it, with hands that were glowing,
And quick to the white-pebbled bottom it fell!
Then soon, with the emblem of truth overflowing,
And dripping with coolness, it rose from the well,
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket arose from the well.

How sweet from the green, mossy brim to receive it,
As, poised on the curb, it inclined to my lips!
Not a full, blushing goblet could tempt me to leave it,
The brightest that beauty or revelry sips.

And now, far removed from the loved habitation,
The tear of regret will intrusively swell,
As fancy reverts to my father's plantation,
And sighs for the bucket that hangs in the well,—
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket that hangs in the well.
S. WOODWORTH.

Annabel Lee.

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea,
But we loved with a love that was more than love,
I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the wingèd seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me;
Yes, that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we,
Of many far wiser than we;
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling,—my darling,—my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea,

In her tomb by the sounding sea.
E.A. Poe.

A Health.

I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,—
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon;
To whom the better elements
And kindly stars have given
A form so fair, that, like the air,
'Tis less of earth than heaven.

Her every tone is music's own,
Like those of morning birds;
And something more than melody
Dwells ever in her words;
The coinage of her heart are they,
And from her lips each flows
As one may see the burden'd bee
Forth issue from the rose.

Affections are as thoughts to her,
The measures of her hours;
Her feelings have the fragrancy,
The freshness of young flowers;
And lovely passions, changing oft,
So fill her, she appears
The image of themselves by turns,—
The idol of past years!

Of her bright face one glance will trace
A picture on the brain;
And of her voice in echoing hearts
A sound must long remain,
But memory, such as mine of her,
So very much endears,
When death is nigh, my latest sigh
Will not be life's, but hers.

I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,—
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon.
Her health! and would on earth there stood
Some more of such a frame,
That life might be all poetry,
And weariness a name.

E.C. Pinkney.

A Serenade.

Look out upon the stars, my love,
And shame them with thine eyes,
On which, than on the lights above,
There hang more destinies.
Night's beauty is the harmony
Of blending shades and light:
Then, lady, up,—look out, and be
A sister to the night!

Sleep not!—thine image wakes for aye
Within my watching breast;
Sleep not!—from her soft sleep should fly,
Who robs all hearts of rest.
Nay, lady, from thy slumbers break,
And make this darkness gay,
With looks whose brightness well might make
Of darker nights a day.

E.C. PINKNEY.

The City in the Sea.

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently,
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free:
Up domes, up spires, up kingly halls,
Up fanes, up Babylon-like walls,
Up shadowy, long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers,
Up many and many a marvellous shrine,
Whose wreathèd friezes intertwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.

Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town

Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves;
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye,—
Not the gaily-jewelled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed;
For no ripples curl, alas,
Along that wilderness of glass;
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea;
No heavings hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene!

But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave—there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide;
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven!
The waves have now a redder glow,
The hours are breathing faint and low;
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.
E.A. Poe.

To The Past.

Thou unrelenting Past!
Strong are the barriers round thy dark domain,
And fetters, sure and fast,
Hold all that enter thy unbreathing reign.

Far in thy realm withdrawn,
Old empires sit in sullenness and gloom,
And glorious ages gone
Lie deep within the shadow of thy womb.

Childhood, with all its mirth,
Youth, Manhood, Age that draws us to the ground,
And last, Man's Life on earth,
Glide to thy dim dominions, and are bound.

Thou hast my better years;
Thou hast my earlier friends, the good, the kind,
Yielded to thee with tears,—
The venerable form, the exalted mind.

My spirit yearns to bring
The lost ones back,—yearns with desire intense,
And struggles hard to wring
Thy bolts apart, and pluck thy captives thence.

In vain; thy gates deny
All passage save to those who hence depart;
Nor to the streaming eye
Thou giv'st them back,—nor to the broken heart.

In thy abysses hide
Beauty and excellence unknown; to thee
Earth's wonder and her pride
Are gathered, as the waters to the sea;

Labors of good to man,
Unpublished charity, unbroken faith,
Love, that midst grief began,
And grew with years, and faltered not in death.

Full many a mighty name
Lurks in thy depths, unuttered, unrevered;
With thee are silent fame,
Forgotten arts, and wisdom disappeared.

Thine for a space are they,—
Yet shalt thou yield thy treasures up at last!
Thy gates shall yet give way,
Thy bolts shall fall, inexorable Past!

All that of good and fair
Has gone into thy womb from earliest time,
Shall then come forth, to wear
The glory and the beauty of its prime.

They have not perished,—no!
Kind words, remembered voices once so sweet,
Smiles, radiant long ago,
And features, the great soul's apparent seat;

All shall come back, each tie
Of pure affection shall be knit again;
Alone shall Evil die,
And Sorrow dwell a prisoner in thy reign.

And then shall I behold
Him, by whose kind paternal side I sprung,
And her, who, still and cold,
Fills the next grave,—the beautiful and young.
W.C. BRYANT.

Israfel.

> And the angel Israfel, whose heart-strings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures.
>
> —*Koran*.

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell
Whose heart-strings are a lute;

None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfel,
And the giddy stars (so legends tell),
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
  Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above
  In her highest noon,
  The enamored moon
Blushes with love,
  While, to listen, the red levin
  (With the rapid Pleiads, even,
  Which were seven)
  Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir
  And the other listening things)
That Israfeli's fire
Is owing to that lyre
  By which he sits and sings,—
The trembling living wire
Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,
  Where deep thoughts are a duty,
Where Love's a grown-up God,
Where the Houri glances are
  Imbued with all the beauty
Which we worship in a star.

Therefore thou art not wrong,
  Israfeli, who despisest
An unimpassioned song;
To thee the laurels belong,
  Best bard, because the wisest:
Merrily live, and long!

The ecstasies above
  With thy burning measures suit:
Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
  With the fervor of thy lute:
  Well may the stars be mute!

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this
  Is a world of sweets and sours;
  Our flowers are merely—flowers,
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss
Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell
Where Israfel
  Hath dwelt, and he where I,
He might not sing so wildly well
  A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might swell
  From my lyre within the sky.
E.A. Poe.

Unseen Spirits.

The shadows lay along Broadway,—
'Twas near the twilight-tide,—
And slowly there a lady fair
Was walking in her pride.
Alone walked she; but, viewlessly,
Walked spirits at her side.

Peace charmed the street beneath her feet,
And Honor charmed the air;
And all astir looked kind on her,
And called her good as fair—
For all God ever gave to her
She kept with chary care.

She kept with care her beauties rare
From lovers warm and true,
For her heart was cold to all but gold,
And the rich came not to woo;
But honored well are charms to sell,
If priests the selling do.

Now walking there was one more fair,—
A slight girl, lily-pale;
And she had unseen company
To make the spirit quail,—
'Twixt Want and Scorn she walked forlorn,
And nothing could avail.

No mercy now can clear her brow
For this world's peace to pray;
For, as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,
Her woman's heart gave way!
But the sin forgiven by Christ in heaven
By man is cursed alway.

N.P. Willis.

The Haunted Palace.

In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace—
Radiant palace—reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion,
It stood there;
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair.

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow
(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago),

And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A wingèd odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley
Through two luminous windows saw
Spirits moving musically,
To a lute's well-tunèd law,
Round about a throne where, sitting,
Porphyrogene,
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate;
(Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

And travellers now within that valley
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms that move fantastically
To a discordant melody;
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever,
And laugh—but smile no more.
E.A. Poe.

To a Waterfowl.

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 home, 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 hath 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.

W.C. Bryant.

To Helen.

Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicæan barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs, have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!

E.A. Poe.

Sparkling and Bright.

Sparkling and bright in liquid light
Does the wine our goblets gleam in,
With hue as red as the rosy bed
Which a bee would choose to dream in.
Then fill to-night, with hearts as light,
To loves as gay and fleeting
As bubbles that swim on the beaker's brim,
And break on the lips while meeting.

Oh! if Mirth might arrest the flight
Of Time through Life's dominions,
We here awhile would now beguile
The graybeard of his pinions,
To drink to-night, with hearts as light,
To loves as gay and fleeting
As bubbles that swim on the beaker's brim,
And break on the lips while meeting.

But since Delight can't tempt the wight,
Nor fond Regret delay him,
Nor Love himself can hold the elf,
Nor sober Friendship stay him,
We'll drink to-night, with hearts as light,
To loves as gay and fleeting
As bubbles that swim on the beaker's brim,
And break on the lips while meeting.

C.F. HOFFMAN.

To One in Paradise.

Thou wast all that to me, love,
For which my soul did pine:
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain and a shrine
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last!
Ah, starry Hope, that didst arise
But to be overcast!
A voice from out the Future cries,
"On! on!"—but o'er the Past
(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
Mute, motionless, aghast.

For, alas! alas! with me
The light of Life is o'er!
No more—no more—no more—
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,

Or the stricken eagle soar.

And all my days are trances,
  And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy gray eye glances,
  And where thy footstep gleams,—
In what ethereal dances,
  By what eternal streams.
E.A. Poe.

On the Death of Joseph Rodman Drake.

Green be the turf above thee,
  Friend of my better days!
None knew thee but to love thee,
  Nor named thee but to praise.

Tears fell when thou wert dying,
  From eyes unused to weep,
And long, where thou art lying,
  Will tears the cold turf steep.

When hearts, whose truth was proven,
  Like thine, are laid in earth,
There should a wreath be woven
  To tell the world their worth;

And I, who woke each morrow
  To clasp thy hand in mine,
Who shared thy joy and sorrow,
  Whose weal and woe were thine,

It should be mine to braid it
  Around thy faded brow,
But I've in vain essayed it,
  And feel I cannot now.

While memory bids me weep thee,
  Nor thoughts nor words are free,
The grief is fixed too deeply
  That mourns a man like thee.

F.G. Halleck.

The Valley of Unrest.

Once it smiled a silent dell
Where the people did not dwell;
They had gone unto the wars,
Trusting to the mild-eyed stars,
Nightly, from their azure towers,
To keep watch above the flowers,

In the midst of which all day
The red sunlight lazily lay.
Now each visitor shall confess
The sad valley's restlessness.
Nothing there is motionless,
Nothing save the airs that brood
Over the magic solitude.
Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
That palpitate like the chill seas
Around the misty Hebrides!
Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
That rustle through the unquiet Heaven
Uneasily, from morn to even,
Over the violets there that lie
In myriad types of the human eye,
Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a nameless grave!
They wave:—from out their fragrant tops
Eternal dews come down in drops.
They weep:—from off their delicate stems
Perennial tears descend in gems.
E.A. Poe.

To the Fringed Gentian.

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew,
And colored with the heaven's own blue,
That openest when the quiet light
Succeeds the keen and frosty night:

Thou comest not when violets lean
O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frosts and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue—blue—as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart.

W.C. Bryant.

The Crowded Street.

Let me move slowly through the street,
  Filled with an ever-shifting train,
Amid the sound of steps that beat
  The murmuring walks like autumn rain.

How fast the flitting figures come!
  The mild, the fierce, the stony face,—
Some bright with thoughtless smiles, and some
  Where secret tears have left their trace.

They pass—to toil, to strife, to rest;
  To halls in which the feast is spread;
To chambers where the funeral guest
  In silence sits beside the dead.

And some to happy homes repair,
  Where children, pressing cheek to cheek,
With mute caresses shall declare
  The tenderness they cannot speak.

And some, who walk in calmness here,
  Shall shudder as they reach the door
Where one who made their dwelling dear,
  Its flower, its light, is seen no more.

Youth, with pale cheek and slender frame,
  And dreams of greatness in thine eye!
Go'st thou to build an early name,
  Or early in the task to die?

Keen son of trade, with eager brow!
  Who is now fluttering in thy snare?
Thy golden fortunes, tower they now,
  Or melt the glittering spires in air?

Who of this crowd to-night shall tread
  The dance till daylight gleam again?
Who sorrow o'er the untimely dead?
  Who writhe in throes of mortal pain?

Some, famine-struck, shall think how long
  The cold, dark hours, how slow the light;
And some, who flaunt amid the throng,
  Shall hide in dens of shame to-night.

Each where his tasks or pleasures call,
  They pass, and heed each other not.
There is who heeds, who holds them all
  In His large love and boundless thought.

These struggling tides of life, that seem
  In wayward, aimless course to tend,
Are eddies of the mighty stream
  That rolls to its appointed end.

W.C. Bryant.

The Raven.

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and
weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a
tapping,
As of some one gently rapping—rapping at my chamber door.
"'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door,
—
Only this, and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember, it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the
floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost
Lenore,—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name
Lenore,—
Nameless here forevermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
"'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door,
—Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;
—
This it is, and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping—tapping at my chamber
door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you;"—here I opened wide the
door:—
Darkness there, and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering,
fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream
before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word,
"Lenore?"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word,
"Lenore:"
Merely this, and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window
lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore,—
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—

'Tis the wind, and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore,—
Tell, me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blest with seeing bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered, "Other friends have flown before—
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have flown before."
Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore,
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
Of 'Never—nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing

To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's
core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o'er
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an
unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the tufted floor.
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these angels He
hath sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, oh, quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost
Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or
devil!—
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here
ashore,
Desolate, yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore,—
Is there,—*is* there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I
implore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or
devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both
adore—
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore
—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name
Lenore."
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked,
upstarting,—
"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian
shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath
spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off
my door!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is
dreaming,
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on
the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the
floor
Shall be lifted,—nevermore!

E.A. Poe.

The Battle-field.

Once this soft turf, this rivulet's sands,
  Were trampled by a hurrying crowd,
And fiery hearts and armèd hands
  Encountered in the battle-cloud.

Ah! never shall the land forget
  How gushed the life-blood of her brave,—
Gushed, warm with hope and courage yet,
  Upon the soil they fought to save.

Now all is calm and fresh and still;
  Alone the chirp of flitting bird,
And talk of children on the hill,
  And bell of wandering kine are heard.

No solemn host goes trailing by
  The black-mouthed gun and staggering wain;
Men start not at the battle-cry;
  Oh, be it never heard again!

Soon rested those who fought; but thou
  Who minglest in the harder strife
For truths which men receive not now,
  Thy warfare only ends with life.

A friendless warfare! lingering long
  Through weary day and weary year;
A wild and many-weaponed throng
  Hang on thy front and flank and rear.

Yet nerve thy spirit to the proof,
  And blench not at thy chosen lot;
The timid good may stand aloof,
  The sage may frown,—yet faint thou not!

Nor heed the shaft too surely cast,
  The foul and hissing bolt of scorn,
For with thy side shall dwell, at last,
  The victory of endurance born.

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;
  The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
  And dies among his worshippers.

Yea, though thou lie upon the dust,
  When they who helped thee flee in fear,
Die full of hope and manly trust,
  Like those who fell in battle here.

Another hand thy sword shall wield,
  Another hand the standard wave,

Till from the trumpet's mouth is pealed
  The blast of triumph o'er thy grave.
W.C. BRYANT.

The Sleeper.

At midnight, in the month of June,
I stand beneath the mystic moon.
An opiate vapor, dewy, dim,
Exhales from out her golden rim,
And, softly dripping, drop by drop,
Upon the quiet mountain-top,
Steals drowsily and musically
Into the universal valley.
The rosemary nods upon the grave;
The lily lolls upon the wave;
Wrapping the fog about its breast,
The ruin moulders into rest;
Looking like Lethe, see! the lake
A conscious slumber seems to take,
And would not, for the world, awake.
All beauty sleeps!—and lo! where lies
Irene, with her destinies!

O lady bright! can it be right,
This window open to the night?
The wanton airs from the tree-top
Laughingly through the lattice drop;
The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
Flit through thy chamber in and out,
And wave the curtain canopy
So fitfully, so fearfully,
Above the closed and fringed lid
'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid,
That, o'er the floor and down the wall,
Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall.
O lady dear, hast thou no fear?
Why and what art thou dreaming here?
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
A wonder to these garden trees!
Strange is thy pallor; strange thy dress;
Strange, above all, thy length of tress,
And this all solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps. Oh, may her sleep,
Which is enduring, so be deep!
Heaven have her in its sacred keep!
This chamber changed for one more holy,
This bed for one more melancholy,
I pray to God that she may lie
Forever with unopened eye,
While the pale sheeted ghosts go by.

My love, she sleeps. Oh, may her sleep,
As it is lasting, so be deep!

Soft may the worms about her creep!
Far in the forest, dim and old,
For her may some tall vault unfold:
Some vault that oft hath flung its black
And wingèd panels fluttering back,
Triumphant, o'er the crested palls
Of her grand family funerals;
Some sepulchre, remote, alone,
Against whose portal she hath thrown,
In childhood, many an idle stone;
Some tomb from out whose sounding door
She ne'er shall force an echo more,
Thrilling to think, poor child of sin,
It was the dead who groaned within!
E.A. Poe.

BOOK SECOND.

Nature.

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
  Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
  Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
  Nor wholly reassured and comforted
  By promises of others in their stead,
Which, though more splendid, may not please him more,—
So Nature deals with us, and takes away
  Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
    Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,
  Being too full of sleep to understand
    How far the unknown transcends the what we know.

H.W. Longfellow.

Hebe.

  I saw the twinkle of white feet,
I saw the flash of robes descending;
  Before her ran an influence fleet,
That bowed my heart like barley bending.

  As, in bare fields, the searching bees
Pilot to blooms beyond our finding,
  It led me on, by sweet degrees
Joy's simple honey-cells unbinding.

Those Graces were that seemed grim Fates;
With nearer love the sky leaned o'er me;
The long-sought Secret's golden gates
On musical hinges swung before me.

I saw the brimmed bowl in her grasp
Thrilling with godhood; like a lover
I sprang the proffered life to clasp;—
The beaker fell; the luck was over.

The Earth has drunk the vintage up;
What boots it patch the goblet's splinters?
Can Summer fill the icy cup,
Whose treacherous crystal is but Winter's?

O spendthrift haste! await the Gods;
Their nectar crowns the lips of Patience;
Haste scatters on unthankful sods
The immortal gift in vain libations.

Coy Hebe flies from those that woo,
And shuns the hands would seize upon her;
Follow thy life, and she will sue
To pour for thee the cup of honor.
J.R. LOWELL.

The Day is Done.

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist:

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest

Life's endless toil and endeavor;
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who, through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.
H.W. LONGFELLOW.

Ichabod.

So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn
Which once he wore!
The glory from his gray hairs gone
Forevermore!

Revile him not,—the Tempter hath
A snare for all;
And pitying tears, not scorn and wrath,
Befit his fall!

Oh, dumb be passion's stormy rage,
When he who might
Have lighted up and led his age,
Falls back in night.

Scorn! would the angels laugh, to mark
A bright soul driven,
Fiend-goaded, down the endless dark,
From hope and heaven!

Let not the land once proud of him
Insult him now,
Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,
Dishonored brow.

But let its humbled sons, instead,
From sea to lake,
A long lament, as for the dead,
In sadness make.

Of all we loved and honored, naught
Save power remains,—
A fallen angel's pride of thought,
Still strong in chains.

All else is gone; from those great eyes
The soul has fled:
When faith is lost, when honor dies.
The man is dead!

Then, pay the reverence of old days
To his dead fame;
Walk backward, with averted gaze,
And hide the shame!
J.G. WHITTIER.

Sir Humphrey Gilbert.

Southward with fleet of ice
Sailed the corsair Death;
Wild and fast blew the blast,
And the east-wind was his breath.

His lordly ships of ice
Glisten in the sun;
On each side, like pennons wide,
Flashing crystal streamlets run.

His sails of white sea-mist
Dripped with silver rain;
But where he passed there were cast
Leaden shadows o'er the main.

Eastward from Campobello
Sir Humphrey Gilbert sailed;
Three days or more seaward he bore,
Then, alas! the land-wind failed.

Alas! the land-wind failed,
And ice-cold grew the night;
And nevermore, on sea or shore,
Should Sir Humphrey see the light.

He sat upon the deck,
The Book was in his hand;
"Do not fear! Heaven is as near,"
He said, "by water as by land!"

In the first watch of the night,
Without a signal's sound,

Out of the sea, mysteriously,
The fleet of Death rose all around.

The moon and the evening star
Were hanging in the shrouds;
Every mast, as it passed,
Seemed to rake the passing clouds.

They grappled with their prize,
At midnight black and cold!
As of a rock was the shock;
Heavily the ground-swell rolled.

Southward through day and dark,
They drift in close embrace,
With mist and rain, o'er the open main;
Yet there seems no change of place.

Southward, forever southward,
They drift through dark and day;
And like a dream, in the Gulf Stream
Sinking, vanish all away.
H.W. LONGFELLOW.

Concord Hymn.

Sung at the completion of the Battle Monument, April 19, 1836.

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And Time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set to-day a votive stone,
That memory may their deed redeem,
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare
To die, and leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and thee.

R.W. EMERSON.

To America.

What, cringe to Europe! Band it all in one,
  Stilt its decrepit strength, renew its age,
  Wipe out its debts, contract a loan to wage
Its venal battles,—and, by yon bright sun,
Our God is false, and liberty undone,
  If slaves have power to win your heritage!
  Look on your country, God's appointed stage,
Where man's vast mind its boundless course shall run:
For that it was your stormy coast He spread—
  A fear in winter; girded you about
With granite hills, and made you strong and dread.
  Let him who fears before the foemen shout,
Or gives an inch before a vein has bled,
  Turn on himself, and let the traitor out!

G.H. Boker.

Old Ironsides.

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!

Oh, 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!

O.W. Holmes.

To England.

I.

Lear and Cordelia! 'twas an ancient tale
  Before thy Shakespeare gave it deathless fame;
  The times have changed, the moral is the same.
So like an outcast, dowerless and pale,
Thy daughter went; and in a foreign gale
  Spread her young banner, till its sway became
  A wonder to the nations. Days of shame
Are close upon thee; prophets raise their wail.
When the rude Cossack with an outstretched hand
  Points his long spear across the narrow sea,—
  "Lo! there is England!" when thy destiny
Storms on thy straw-crowned head, and thou dost stand
Weak, helpless, mad, a by-word in the land,—
  God grant thy daughter a Cordelia be!

[1852.]

II.

Stand, thou great bulwark of man's liberty!
  Thou rock of shelter, rising from the wave,
  Sole refuge to the overwearied brave
Who planned, arose, and battled to be free,
Fell, undeterred, then sadly turned to thee,
  Saved the free spirit from their country's grave,
  To rise again, and animate the slave,
When God shall ripen all things. Britons, ye
Who guard the sacred outpost, not in vain
  Hold your proud peril! Freemen undefiled,
  Keep watch and ward! Let battlements be piled
Around your cliffs; fleets marshalled, till the main
Sink under them; and if your courage wane,
  Through force or fraud, look westward to your child!

[1853.]

G.H. Boker.

The Wreck of the Hesperus.

It was the schooner Hesperus,
  That sailed the wintry sea;
And the skipper had taken his little daughtèr,
  To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax,
  Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds,
  That ope in the month of May.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,
  His pipe was in his mouth,

And he watched how the veering flaw did blow
The smoke now West, now South.

Then up and spake an old Sailòr,
Had sailed to the Spanish Main,
"I pray thee, put into yonder port,
For I fear a hurricane.

"Last night, the moon had a golden ring,
And to-night no moon we see!"
The skipper, he blew a whiff from his pipe,
And a scornful laugh laughed he.

Colder and louder blew the wind,
A gale from the Northeast,
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm, and smote amain
The vessel in its strength;
She shuddered and paused, like a frightened steed,
Then leaped her cable's length.

"Come hither! come hither! my little daughter,
And do not tremble so;
For I can weather the roughest gale
That ever wind did blow."

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat
Against the stinging blast;
He cut a rope from a broken spar,
And bound her to the mast.

"O father! I hear the church-bells ring,
Oh, say, what may it be?"
"'Tis a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast!"—
And he steered for the open sea.

"O father! I hear the sound of guns,
Oh, say, what may it be?"
"Some ship in distress, that cannot live
In such an angry sea!"

"O father! I see a gleaming light,
Oh, say, what may it be?"
But the father answered never a word,
A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,
With his face turned to the skies,
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
That savèd she might be;
And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave,
On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear,

Through the whistling sleet and snow,
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept
Tow'rds the reef of Norman's Woe.

And ever the fitful gusts between
A sound came from the land;
It was the sound of the trampling surf
On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows,
She drifted a dreary wreck,
And a whooping billow swept the crew
Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves
Looked soft as carded wool,
But the cruel rocks, they gored her side
Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
With the masts went by the board;
Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank,
Ho! ho! the breakers roared!

At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach,
A fisherman stood aghast,
To see the form of a maiden fair,
Lashed close to a drifting mast.

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
The salt tears in her eyes;
And he saw her hair, like the brown sea-weed,
On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,
In the midnight and the snow!
Christ save us all from a death like this,
On the reef of Norman's Woe!
H.W. LONGFELLOW.

Bedouin Song.

From the Desert I come to thee
On a stallion shod with fire,
And the winds are left behind
In the speed of my desire.
Under thy window I stand,
And the midnight hears my cry:
I love thee, I love but thee,
With a love that shall not die
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!

Look from thy window and see

My passion and my pain;
I lie on the sands below,
And I faint in thy disdain.
Let the night-winds touch thy brow
With the heat of my burning sigh,
And melt thee to hear the vow
Of a love that shall not die
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!

My steps are nightly driven,
By the fever in my breast,
To hear from thy lattice breathed
The word that shall give me rest.
Open the door of thy heart,
And open thy chamber door,
And my kisses shall teach thy lips
The love that shall fade no more
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!
B. TAYLOR.

Skipper Ireson's Ride.

Of all the rides since the birth of time,
Told in story or sung in rhyme,—
On Apuleius's Golden Ass,
Or one-eyed Calendar's horse of brass,
Witch astride of a human back,
Islam's prophet on Al-Borak,—
The strangest ride that ever was sped
Was Ireson's, out from Marblehead!
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Body of turkey, head of owl,
Wings a-droop like a rained-on fowl,
Feathered and ruffled in every part,
Skipper Ireson stood in the cart.
Scores of women, old and young,
Strong of muscle, and glib of tongue,
Pushed and pulled up the rocky lane,
Shouting and singing the shrill refrain:
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Wrinkled scolds with hands on hips,
Girls in bloom of cheek and lips,
Wild-eyed, free-limbed, such as chase
Bacchus round some antique vase,
Brief of skirt, with ankles bare,

Loose of kerchief and loose of hair,
With conch-shells blowing and fish-horns' twang,
Over and over the Mænads sang:
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Small pity for him!—He sailed away
From a leaking ship, in Chaleur Bay,—
Sailed away from a sinking wreck,
With his own town's-people on her deck!
"Lay by! lay by!" they called to him.
Back he answered, "Sink or swim!
Brag of your catch of fish again!"
And off he sailed through the fog and rain!
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Fathoms deep in dark Chaleur
That wreck shall lie forevermore.
Mother and sister, wife and maid,
Looked from the rocks of Marblehead
Over the moaning and rainy sea,—
Looked for the coming that might not be!
What did the winds and the sea-birds say
Of the cruel captain who sailed away?—
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Through the street, on either side,
Up flew windows, doors swung wide;
Sharp-tongued spinsters, old wives gray,
Treble lent the fish-horn's bray.
Sea-worn grandsires, cripple-bound,
Hulks of old sailors run aground,
Shook head, and fist, and hat, and cane,
And cracked with curses the hoarse refrain:
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Sweetly along the Salem road
Bloom of orchard and lilac showed.
Little the wicked skipper knew
Of the fields so green and the sky so blue.
Riding there in his sorry trim,
Like an Indian idol glum and grim,
Scarcely he seemed the sound to hear
Of voices shouting, far and near:
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

"Hear me, neighbors!" at last he cried,—
"What to me is this noisy ride?
What is the shame that clothes the skin

To the nameless horror that lives within?
Waking or sleeping, I see a wreck,
And hear a cry from a reeling deck!
Hate me and curse me,—I only dread
The hand of God and the face of the dead!"
  Said old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
  Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
    By the women of Marblehead!

Then the wife of the skipper lost at sea
Said, "God has touched him! Why should we?"
Said an old wife, mourning her only son:
"Cut the rogue's tether and let him run!"
So with soft relentings and rude excuse,
Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose,
And gave him a cloak to hide him in,
And left him alone with his shame and sin.
  Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
  Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
    By the women of Marblehead!
J.G. WHITTIER.

The Village Blacksmith.

Under a spreading chestnut-tree
  The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
  With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
  Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
  His face is like the tan;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
  He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
  For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,
  You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
  With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
  When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
  Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge,
  And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
  Like chaff from a threshing-floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,
  And sits among his boys;
He hears the parson pray and preach,

He hears his daughter's voice,
Singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
Singing in Paradise!
He needs must think of her once more,
How in the grave she lies;
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling,—rejoicing,—sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begin,
Each evening sees it close;
Something attempted, something done.
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought.
H.W. LONGFELLOW.

The Last Leaf.

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,
That 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.
O.W. HOLMES.

The Old Kentucky Home.

A NEGRO MELODY.

The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky Home;
'Tis summer, the darkies are gay;
The corn-top's ripe, and the meadow's in the bloom,
While the birds make music all the day.
The young folks roll on the little cabin floor,
All merry, all happy and bright;
By-'n'-by hard times comes a-knocking at the door,—
Then my old Kentucky Home, good-night!

Weep no more, my lady,
Oh, weep no more to-day!
We will sing one song for the old Kentucky Home,
For the old Kentucky Home, far away.

They hunt no more for the possum and the coon,
On the meadow, the hill, and the shore;
They sing no more by the glimmer of the moon,
On the bench by the old cabin door.
The day goes by like a shadow o'er the heart,
With sorrow, where all was delight;
The time has come when the darkies have to part,—
Then my old Kentucky Home, good-night!

The head must bow, and the back will have to bend,
  Wherever the darkey may go;
A few more days, and the trouble all will end,
  In the field where the sugar-canes grow.
A few more days for to tote the weary load,—
  No matter, 'twill never be light;
A few more days till we totter on the road,—
  Then my old Kentucky Home, good-night!

    Weep no more, my lady,
    Oh, weep no more to-day!
We will sing one song for the old Kentucky Home,
    For the old Kentucky Home, far away.

S.C. FOSTER.

The Black Regiment.

Port Hudson, May 27, 1863.

Dark as the clouds of even,
Ranked in the western heaven,
Waiting the breath that lifts
All the dread mass, and drifts
Tempest and falling brand
Over a ruined land;—
So still and orderly,
Arm to arm, knee to knee,
Waiting the great event,
Stands the black regiment.

Down the long, dusky line
Teeth gleam, and eyeballs shine;
And the bright bayonet,
Bristling and firmly set,
Flashed with a purpose grand,
Long ere the sharp command
Of the fierce rolling drum
Told them their time had come,
Told them what work was sent
For the black regiment.

"Now," the flag-sergeant cried,
"Though death and hell betide,
Let the whole nation see
If we are fit to be
Free in this land; or bound
Down, like the whining hound,—
Bound with red stripes of pain
In our old chains again!"
Oh, what a shout there went
From the black regiment!

"Charge!" Trump and drum awoke,
Onward the bondmen broke;
Bayonet and sabre-stroke

Vainly opposed their rush.
Through the wild battle's crush,
With but one thought aflush,
Driving their lords like chaff,
In the guns' mouths they laugh;
Or at the slippery brands
Leaping with open hands,
Down they tear man and horse,
Down in their awful course;
Trampling with bloody heel
Over the crashing steel,
All their eyes forward bent,
Rushed the black regiment.

"Freedom!" their battle-cry,—
"Freedom! or leave to die!"
Ah! and they meant the word,
Not as with us 'tis heard,
Not a mere party shout;
They gave their spirits out,
Trusted the end to God,
And on the gory sod
Rolled in triumphant blood.
Glad to strike one free blow,
Whether for weal or woe;
Glad to breathe one free breath,
Though on the lips of death;
Praying—alas! in vain!—
That they might fall again,
So they could once more see
That burst to liberty!
This was what "freedom" lent
To the black regiment.

Hundreds on hundreds fell;
But they are resting well;
Scourges and shackles strong
Never shall do them wrong.
Oh, to the living few,
Soldiers, be just and true!
Hail them as comrades tried;
Fight with them side by side;
Never, in field or tent,
Scorn the black regiment.
G.H. Boker.

Carolina.

The despot treads thy sacred sands,
Thy pines give shelter to his bands,
Thy sons stand by with idle hands,
Carolina!
He breathes at ease thy airs of balm,
He scorns the lances of thy palm;
Oh! who shall break thy craven calm,

Carolina!
Thy ancient fame is growing dim,
A spot is on thy garment's rim;
Give to the winds thy battle-hymn,
Carolina!

Call on thy children of the hill,
Wake swamp and river, coast and rill,
Rouse all thy strength and all thy skill,
Carolina!
Cite wealth and science, trade and art,
Touch with thy fire the cautious mart,
And pour thee through the people's heart,
Carolina!
Till even the coward spurns his fears,
And all thy fields, and fens, and meres
Shall bristle like thy palm with spears,
Carolina!

I hear a murmur as of waves
That grope their way through sunless caves,
Like bodies struggling in their graves,
Carolina!
And now it deepens; slow and grand
It swells, as, rolling to the land,
An ocean broke upon thy strand,
Carolina!
Shout! Let it reach the startled Huns!
And roar with all thy festal guns!
It is the answer of thy sons,
Carolina!
H. TIMROD.

Dirge for a Soldier.

Close his eyes; his work is done!
What to him is friend or foeman,
Rise of moon, or set of sun,
Hand of man, or kiss of woman?
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? He cannot know;
Lay him low!

As man may, he fought his fight,
Proved his truth by his endeavor;
Let him sleep in solemn night,
Sleep forever and forever.
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? He cannot know;
Lay him low!

Fold him in his country's stars,
Roll the drum and fire the volley!

What to him are all our wars,
What but death bemocking folly?
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? He cannot know;
Lay him low!

Leave him to God's watching eye;
Trust him to the hand that made him.
Mortal love weeps idly by;
God alone has power to aid him.
Lay him low, lay him low,
In the clover or the snow!
What cares he? He cannot know!
Lay him low!

G.H. BOKER.

Battle-hymn of the Republic.

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fatal lightning of His terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps;
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps:
His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished rows of steel:
"As ye deal with My contemners, so with you My grace shall deal;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with His heel!
Since God is marching on."

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat;
Oh! be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born, across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me:
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

J.W. HOWE.

Farragut.

Farragut, Farragut,
  Old Heart of Oak,
Daring Dave Farragut,
  Thunderbolt stroke,
Watches the hoary mist
  Lift from the bay,
Till his flag, glory-kissed,
  Greets the young day.

Far, by gray Morgan's walls,
  Looms the black fleet.
Hark, deck to rampart calls
  With the drums' beat!
Buoy your chains overboard,
  While the steam hums;
Men! to the battlement,
  Farragut comes.

See, as the hurricane
  Hurtles in wrath
Squadrons of clouds amain
  Back from its path!
Back to the parapet,
  To the guns' lips,
Thunderbolt Farragut
  Hurls the black ships.

Now through the battle's roar
  Clear the boy sings,
"By the mark fathoms four,"
  While his lead swings.
Steady the wheelmen five
  "Nor' by east keep her,"
"Steady," but two alive:
  How the shells sweep her!

Lashed to the mast that sways
  Over red decks,
Over the flame that plays
  Round the torn wrecks,
Over the dying lips
  Framed for a cheer,
Farragut leads his ships,
  Guides the line clear.

On by heights cannon-browed,
  While the spars quiver;
Onward still flames the cloud
  Where the hulks shiver.
See, yon fort's star is set,
  Storm and fire past.
Cheer him, lads,—Farragut,
  Lashed to the mast!

Oh! while Atlantic's breast
  Bears a white sail,
While the Gulf's towering crest
  Tops a green vale;

Men thy bold deeds shall tell,
  Old Heart of Oak,
Daring Dave Farragut,
  Thunderbolt stroke!
W.T. MEREDITH.

My Maryland.

The despot's heel is on thy shore,
  Maryland!
His torch is at thy temple door,
  Maryland!
Avenge the patriotic gore
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,
And be the battle-queen of yore,
  Maryland, my Maryland!

Hark to an exiled son's appeal,
  Maryland!
My Mother State, to thee I kneel,
  Maryland!
For life and death, for woe and weal,
Thy peerless chivalry reveal,
And gird thy beauteous limbs with steel,
  Maryland, my Maryland!

Thou wilt not cower in the dust,
  Maryland!
Thy beaming sword shall never rust,
  Maryland!
Remember Carroll's sacred trust,
Remember Howard's warlike thrust,
And all thy slumberers with the just,
  Maryland, my Maryland!

Come! 'tis the red dawn of the day,
  Maryland!
Come with thy panoplied array,
  Maryland!
With Ringgold's spirit for the fray,
With Watson's blood at Monterey,
With fearless Lowe and dashing May,
  Maryland, my Maryland!

Dear Mother, burst the tyrant's chain,
  Maryland!
Virginia should not call in vain,
  Maryland!
She meets her sisters on the plain,—
"*Sic semper!*" 'tis the proud refrain
That baffles minions back amain,
  Maryland!
Arise in majesty again,
  Maryland, my Maryland!

Come! for thy shield is bright and strong,
Maryland!
Come! for thy dalliance does thee wrong,
Maryland!
Come to thine own heroic throng
Stalking with Liberty along,
And chant thy dauntless slogan-song,
Maryland, my Maryland!

I see the blush upon thy cheek,
Maryland!
For thou wast ever bravely meek,
Maryland!
But lo! there surges forth a shriek,
From hill to hill, from creek to creek,
Potomac calls to Chesapeake,
Maryland, my Maryland!

Thou wilt not yield the Vandal toll,
Maryland!
Thou wilt not crook to his control,
Maryland!
Better the fire upon thee roll,
Better the shot, the blade, the bowl,
Than crucifixion of the soul,
Maryland, my Maryland!

I hear the distant thunder-hum,
Maryland!
The old Line's bugle, fife, and drum,
Maryland!
She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb;
Huzza! she spurns the Northern scum!
She breathes! She burns! She'll come!
She'll come!
Maryland, my Maryland!
J.R. RANDALL.

After All.[1]

The apples are ripe in the orchard,
The work of the reaper is done,
And the golden woodlands redden
In the blood of the dying sun.

At the cottage door the grandsire
Sits, pale, in his easy-chair,
While a gentle wind of twilight
Plays with his silver hair.

A woman is kneeling beside him;
A fair young head is prest,
In the first wild passion of sorrow,
Against his aged breast.

And far from over the distance
The faltering echoes come,
Of the flying blast of trumpet,
And the rattling roll of drum.

And the grandsire speaks in a whisper:
"The end no man can see;
But we give him to his country,
And we give our prayers to Thee."

The violets star the meadows,
The rose-buds fringe the door,
And over the grassy orchard
The pink-white blossoms pour.

But the grandsire's chair is empty,
The cottage is dark and still,
There's a nameless grave in the battle-field,
And a new one under the hill.

And a pallid, tearless woman
By the cold hearth sits alone,
And the old clock in the corner
Ticks on with a steady drone.
WILLIAM WINTER.

[1] From "Wanderers," copyright, 1892, by Macmillan and Co.

The Song of the Camp.

"Give us a song!" the soldiers cried,
The outer trenches guarding,
When the heated guns of the camps allied
Grew weary of bombarding.

The dark Redan, in silent scoff,
Lay grim and threatening under;
And the tawny mound of the Malakoff
No longer belch'd its thunder.

There was a pause. A guardsman said:
"We storm the forts to-morrow;
Sing while we may, another day
Will bring enough of sorrow."

They lay along the battery's side,
Below the smoking cannon:
Brave hearts from Severn and from Clyde,
And from the banks of Shannon.

They sang of love, and not of fame;

Forgot was Britain's glory:
Each heart recall'd a different name,
But all sang "Annie Laurie."

Voice after voice caught up the song,
Until its tender passion
Rose like an anthem, rich and strong,—
Their battle-eve confession.

Dear girl, her name he dared not speak,
But as the song grew louder,
Something upon the soldier's cheek
Washed off the stains of powder.

Beyond the darkening ocean burn'd
The bloody sunset's embers,
While the Crimean valleys learn'd
How English love remembers.

And once again a fire of hell
Rain'd on the Russian quarters,
With scream of shot, and burst of shell,
And bellowing of the mortars!

And Irish Nora's eyes are dim
For a singer dumb and gory;
And English Mary mourns for him
Who sang of "Annie Laurie."

Sleep, soldiers! still in honor'd rest
Your truth and valor wearing:
The bravest are the tenderest,—
The loving are the daring.
B. TAYLOR.

In the Hospital.

I lay me down to sleep,
With little thought or care
Whether my waking find
Me here or there.

A bowing, burdened head,
That only asks to rest,
Unquestioning, upon
A loving breast.

My good right hand forgets
Its cunning now.
To march the weary march
I know not how.

I am not eager, bold,
Nor strong—all that is past;
I am ready not to do

At last, at last.

My half day's work is done,
And this is all my part;
I give a patient God
My patient heart,

And grasp His banner still,
Though all its blue be dim;
These stripes, no less than stars,
Lead after Him.
M.W. HOWLAND.

Under the Violets.

Her hands are cold; her face is white;
No more her pulses come and go;
Her eyes are shut to life and light;—
Fold the white vesture, snow on snow,
And lay her where the violets blow.

But not beneath a graven stone,
To plead for tears with alien eyes;
A slender cross of wood alone
Shall say, that here a maiden lies
In peace beneath the peaceful skies.

And gray old trees of hugest limb
Shall wheel their circling shadows round
To make the scorching sunlight dim
That drinks the greenness from the ground,
And drop their dead leaves on her mound.

When o'er their boughs the squirrels run,
And through their leaves the robins call,
And, ripening in the autumn sun,
The acorns and the chestnuts fall,
Doubt not that she will heed them all.

For her the morning choir shall sing
Its matins from the branches high,
And every minstrel voice of Spring,
That trills beneath the April sky,
Shall greet her with its earliest cry.

When, turning round their dial-track,
Eastward the lengthening shadows pass,
Her little mourners, clad in black,
The crickets, sliding through the grass,
Shall pipe for her an evening mass.

At last the rootlets of the trees
Shall find the prison where she lies,
And bear the buried dust they seize
In leaves and blossoms to the skies.

So may the soul that warmed it rise!

If any, born of kindlier blood,
Should ask, What maiden lies below?
Say only this: A tender bud,
That tried to blossom in the snow,
Lies withered where the violets blow.

O.W. HOLMES.

Days.

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.
I, in my pleachèd garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

R.W. EMERSON.

Song.[2]

You know the old Hidalgo
(His box is next to ours),
Who threw the Prima Donna
The wreath of orange-flowers;
He owns the half of Aragon,
With mines beyond the main;
A very ancient nobleman,
And gentleman of Spain.

They swear that I must wed him,
In spite of yea or nay,
Though uglier than the Scaramouch,
The spectre in the play;
But I will sooner die a maid
Than wear a gilded chain,
For all the ancient noblemen
And gentlemen of Spain!

R.H. STODDARD.

[2] From "The Poems of R.H. Stoddard," copyright, 1880, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Aladdin.

When I was a beggarly boy,
And lived in a cellar damp,
I had not a friend nor a toy,
But I had Aladdin's lamp;
When I could not sleep for cold,
I had fire enough in my brain,
And builded, with roofs of gold,
My beautiful castles in Spain!

Since then I have toiled day and night,
I have money and power good store,
But I'd give all my lamps of silver bright,
For the one that is mine no more;
Take, Fortune, whatever you choose,—
You gave, and may snatch again;
I have nothing 'twould pain me to lose,
For I own no more castles in Spain!

J.R. LOWELL.

The Flight of Youth.[3]

There are gains for all our losses,
There are balms for all our pain;
But when youth, the dream, departs,
It takes something from our hearts,
And it never comes again.

We are stronger, and are better,
Under manhood's sterner reign;
Still, we feel that something sweet
Followed youth, with flying feet,
And will never come again.

Something beautiful is vanished,
And we sigh for it in vain;
We behold it everywhere,
On the earth, and in the air,
But it never comes again.

R.H. STODDARD.

[3] From "The Poems of R.H. Stoddard," copyright, 1880, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

My Playmate.

The pines were dark on Ramoth hill,
  Their song was soft and low;
The blossoms in the sweet May wind
  Were falling like the snow.

The blossoms drifted at our feet,
  The orchard birds sang clear;
The sweetest and the saddest day
  It seemed of all the year.

For, more to me than birds or flowers,
  My playmate left her home,
And took with her the laughing spring,
  The music and the bloom.

She kissed the lips of kith and kin,
  She laid her hand in mine:
What more could ask the bashful boy
  Who fed her father's kine?

She left us in the bloom of May:
  The constant years told o'er
Their seasons with as sweet May morns,
  But she came back no more.

I walk, with noiseless feet, the round
  Of uneventful years;
Still o'er and o'er I sow the spring
  And reap the autumn ears.

She lives where all the golden year
  Her summer roses blow;
The dusky children of the sun
  Before her come and go.

There haply with her jewelled hands
  She smooths her silken gown,—
No more the homespun lap wherein
  I shook the walnuts down.

The wild grapes wait us by the brook,
  The brown nuts on the hill,
And still the May-day flowers make sweet
  The woods of Follymill.

The lilies blossom in the pond,
  The bird builds in the tree,
The dark pines sing on Ramoth hill
  The slow song of the sea.

I wonder if she thinks of them,
  And how the old time seems,
If ever the pines of Ramoth wood
  Are sounding in her dreams.

I see her face, I hear her voice:
  Does she remember mine?
And what to her is now the boy
  Who fed her father's kine?

What cares she that the orioles build
For other eyes than ours,—
That other hands with nuts are filled,
And other laps with flowers?

O playmate in the golden time!
Our mossy seat is green,
Its fringing violets blossom yet,
The old trees o'er it lean.

The winds so sweet with birch and fern
A sweeter memory blow;
And there in spring the veeries sing
The song of long ago.

And still the pines of Ramoth wood
Are moaning like the sea,—
The moaning of the sea of change
Between myself and thee!

J.G. WHITTIER.

The Fire of Driftwood.

DEVEREUX FARM, NEAR MARBLEHEAD.

We sat within the farmhouse old,
Whose windows, looking o'er the bay,
Gave to the sea-breeze, damp and cold,
An easy entrance, night and day.

Not far away we saw the port,
The strange, old-fashioned, silent town,
The lighthouse, the dismantled fort,
The wooden houses, quaint and brown.

We sat and talked until the night,
Descending, filled the little room;
Our faces faded from the sight,
Our voices only broke the gloom.

We spake of many a vanished scene,
Of what we once had thought and said,
Of what had been, and might have been,
And who was changed, and who was dead;

And all that fills the hearts of friends,
When first they feel, with secret pain,
Their lives thenceforth have separate ends,
And never can be one again;

The first slight swerving of the heart,
That words are powerless to express,
And leave it still unsaid in part,
Or say it in too great excess.

The very tones in which we spake

Had something strange, I could but mark;
The leaves of memory seemed to make
A mournful rustling in the dark.

Oft died the words upon our lips,
As suddenly, from out the fire
Built of the wreck of stranded ships,
The flames would leap and then expire.

And, as their splendor flashed and failed,
We thought of wrecks upon the main,
Of ships dismasted, that were hailed
And sent no answer back again.

The windows, rattling in their frames,
The ocean, roaring up the beach,
The gusty blast, the bickering flames,
All mingled vaguely in our speech;

Until they made themselves a part
Of fancies floating through the brain,
The long-lost ventures of the heart,
That send no answers back again.

O flames that glowed! O hearts that yearned!
They were indeed too much akin,
The driftwood fire without that burned,
The thoughts that burned and glowed within.
H.W. LONGFELLOW.

A Death-bed.

Her suffering ended with the day,
Yet lived she at its close,
And breathed the long, long night away
In statue-like repose.

But when the sun in all his state
Illumed the eastern skies,
She passed through Glory's morning gate
And walked in Paradise.

J. ALDRICH.

Telling the Bees.

Here is the place; right over the hill
Runs the path I took;
You can see the gap in the old wall still,
And the stepping-stones in the shallow brook.

There is the house, with the gate red-barred,

And the poplars tall;
And the barn's brown length, and the cattle-yard,
And the white horns tossing above the wall.

There are the beehives ranged in the sun;
And down by the brink
Of the brook are her poor flowers, weed-o'errun,—
Pansy and daffodil, rose and pink.

A year has gone, as the tortoise goes,
Heavy and slow;
And the same rose blows, and the same sun glows,
And the same brook sings of a year ago.

There's the same sweet clover-smell in the breeze;
And the June sun warm
Tangles his wings of fire in the trees,
Setting, as then, over Fernside farm.

I mind me how with a lover's care
From my Sunday coat
I brushed off the burrs, and smoothed my hair,
And cooled at the brookside my brow and throat.

Since we parted, a month had passed,—
To love, a year;
Down through the beeches I looked at last
On the little red gate and the well-sweep near.

I can see it all now,—the slantwise rain
Of light through the leaves,
The sundown's blaze on her window-pane,
The bloom of her roses under the eaves.

Just the same as a month before,—
The house and the trees,
The barn's brown gable, the vine by the door,—
Nothing changed but the hives of bees.

Before them, under the garden wall,
Forward and back,
Went, drearily singing, the chore-girl small,
Draping each hive with a shred of black.

Trembling, I listened; the summer sun
Had the chill of snow;
For I knew she was telling the bees of one
Gone on the journey we all must go!

Then I said to myself, "My Mary weeps
For the dead to-day;
Haply her blind old grandsire sleeps
The fret and the pain of his age away."

But her dog whined low; on the doorway sill,
With his cane to his chin,
The old man sat; and the chore-girl still
Sung to the bees stealing out and in.

And the song she was singing ever since
In my ear sounds on:
"Stay at home, pretty bees, fly not hence!
Mistress Mary is dead and gone!"
J.G. WHITTIER.

Katie.

It may be through some foreign grace,
And unfamiliar charm of face;
It may be that across the foam
Which bore her from her childhood's home,
By some strange spell, my Katie brought
Along with English creeds and thought—
Entangled in her golden hair—
Some English sunshine, warmth, and air!
I cannot tell,—but here to-day,
A thousand billowy leagues away
From that green isle whose twilight skies
No darker are than Katie's eyes,
She seems to me, go where she will,
An English girl in England still!

I meet her on the dusty street,
And daisies spring about her feet;
Or, touched to life beneath her tread,
An English cowslip lifts its head;
And, as to do her grace, rise up
The primrose and the buttercup!
I roam with her through fields of cane,
And seem to stroll an English lane,
Which, white with blossoms of the May,
Spreads its green carpet in her way!
As fancy wills, the path beneath
Is golden gorse, or purple heath;
And now we hear in woodlands dim
Their unarticulated hymn,
Now walk through rippling waves of wheat,
Now sink in mats of clover sweet,
Or see before us from the lawn
The lark go up to greet the dawn!
All birds that love the English sky
Throng round my path when she is by;
The blackbird from a neighboring thorn
With music brims the cup of morn,
And in a thick, melodious rain
The mavis pours her mellow strain!
But only when my Katie's voice
Makes all the listening woods rejoice
I hear—with cheeks that flush and pale—
The passion of the nightingale!

H. TIMROD.

My Love.

Not as all other women are
Is she that to my soul is dear;
Her glorious fancies come from far,
Beneath the silver evening-star,
And yet her heart is ever near.

Great feelings hath she of her own,
Which lesser souls may never know;
God giveth them to her alone,
And sweet they are as any tone
Wherewith the wind may choose to blow.

Yet in herself she dwelleth not,
Although no home were half so fair;
No simplest duty is forgot;
Life hath no dim and lowly spot
That doth not in her sunshine share.

She doeth little kindnesses,
Which most leave undone, or despise;
For naught that sets one heart at ease,
And giveth happiness or peace,
Is low-esteemèd in her eyes.

She hath no scorn of common things,
And, though she seem of other birth,
Round us her heart intwines and clings,
And patiently she folds her wings
To tread the humble paths of earth.

Blessing she is; God made her so,
And deeds of week-day holiness
Fall from her noiseless as the snow,
Nor hath she ever chanced to know
That aught were easier than to bless.

She is most fair, and thereunto
Her life doth rightly harmonize;
Feeling or thought that was not true
Ne'er made less beautiful the blue
Unclouded heaven of her eyes.

She is a woman; one in whom
The spring-time of her childish years
Hath never lost its fresh perfume,
Though knowing well that life hath room
For many blights and many tears.

I love her with a love as still
As a broad river's peaceful might,
Which, by high tower and lowly mill,
Goes wandering at its own will,
And yet doth ever flow aright.

And, on its full, deep breast serene,
Like quiet isles my duties lie;

It flows around them and between,
And makes them fresh, and fair, and green,
Sweet homes wherein to live and die.
J.R. LOWELL.

She Came and Went.

As a twig trembles, which a bird
  Lights on to sing, then leaves unbent,
So is my memory thrilled and stirred;—
  I only know she came and went.

As clasps some lake, by gusts unriven,
  The blue dome's measureless content,
So my soul held that moment's heaven;—
  I only know she came and went.

As, at one bound, our swift spring heaps
  The orchards full of bloom and scent,
So clove her May my wintry sleeps;—
  I only know she came and went.

An angel stood and met my gaze,
  Through the low doorway of my tent;
The tent is struck, the vision stays;—
  I only know she came and went.

Oh, when the room grows slowly dim,
  And life's last oil is nearly spent,
One gush of light these eyes will brim,
  Only to think she came and went.

J.R. LOWELL.

Her Epitaph.

The handful here, that once was Mary's earth,
  Held, while it breathed, so beautiful a soul,
That, when she died, all recognized her birth,
  And had their sorrow in serene control.

"Not here! not here!" to every mourner's heart
  The wintry wind seemed whispering round her bier;
And when the tomb-door opened, with a start
  We heard it echoed from within,—"Not here!"

Shouldst thou, sad pilgrim, who mayst hither pass,
  Note in these flowers a delicater hue,
Should spring come earlier to this hallowed grass,
  Or the bee later linger on the dew,—

Know that her spirit to her body lent

Such sweetness, grace, as only goodness can;
That even her dust, and this her monument,
Have yet a spell to stay one lonely man,
Lonely through life, but looking for the day
When what is mortal of himself shall sleep,
When human passion shall have passed away,
And Love no longer be a thing to weep.
T.W. PARSONS.

Apart.

At sea are tossing ships;
On shore are dreaming shells,
And the waiting heart and the loving lips,
Blossoms and bridal bells.

At sea are sails a-gleam;
On shore are longing eyes,
And the far horizon's haunting dream
Of ships that sail the skies.

At sea are masts that rise
Like spectres from the deep;
On shore are the ghosts of drowning cries
That cross the waves of sleep.

At sea are wrecks a-strand;
On shore are shells that moan,
Old anchors buried in barren sand,
Sea-mist and dreams alone.

J.J. PIATT.

The Discoverer.

I have a little kinsman
Whose earthly summers are but three,
And yet a voyager is he
Greater than Drake or Frobisher,
Than all their peers together!
He is a brave discoverer,
And, far beyond the tether
Of them who seek the frozen Pole,
Has sailed where the noiseless surges roll.
Ay, he has travelled whither
A winged pilot steered his bark
Through the portals of the dark,
Past hoary Mimir's well and tree,
Across the unknown sea.

Suddenly, in his fair young hour,
Came one who bore a flower,

And laid it in his dimpled hand
With this command:
"Henceforth thou art a rover!
Thou must make a voyage far,
Sail beneath the evening star,
And a wondrous land discover."
—With his sweet smile innocent
Our little kinsman went.

Since that time no word
From the absent has been heard.
Who can tell
How he fares, or answer well
What the little one has found
Since he left us, outward bound?
Would that he might return!
Then should we learn
From the pricking of his chart
How the skyey roadways part.
Hush! does not the baby this way bring,
To lay beside this severed curl,
Some starry offering
Of chrysolite or pearl?

Ah, no! not so!
We may follow on his track,
But he comes not back.
And yet I dare aver
He is a brave discoverer
Of climes his elders do not know.
He has more learning than appears
On the scroll of twice three thousand years,
More than in the groves is taught,
Or from furthest Indies brought;
He knows, perchance, how spirits fare,—
What shapes the angels wear,
What is their guise and speech
In those lands beyond our reach,—
And his eyes behold
Things that shall never, never be to mortal hearers told.
E.C. STEDMAN.

At Last.[4]

When first the bride and bridegroom wed,
They love their single selves the best;
A sword is in the marriage bed,
Their separate slumbers are not rest.
They quarrel, and make up again,
They give and suffer worlds of pain.
Both right and wrong,
They struggle long,
Till some good day, when they are old,
Some dark day, when the bells are tolled,

Death having taken their best of life,
  They lose themselves, and find each other;
They know that they are husband, wife,
  For, weeping, they are Father, Mother!
R.H. STODDARD.

[4] From "The Poems of R.H. Stoddard," copyright 1880, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

"Thalatta."

CRY OF THE TEN THOUSAND.

I stand upon the summit of my years.
Behind, the toil, the camp, the march, the strife,
The wandering and the desert; vast, afar,
Beyond this weary way, behold! the Sea!
The sea o'erswept by clouds and winds and wings,
By thoughts and wishes manifold, whose breath
Is freshness and whose mighty pulse is peace.
Palter no question of the dim Beyond;
Cut loose the bark; such voyage itself is rest;
Majestic motion, unimpeded scope,
A widening heaven, a current without care.
Eternity!—Deliverance, Promise, Course!
Time-tired souls salute thee from the shore.

J.B. BROWN.

Gondolieds.

I.

YESTERDAY.

Dear yesterday, glide not so fast;
  Oh, let me cling
To thy white garments floating past;
Even to shadows which they cast
  I cling, I cling.
  Show me thy face
Just once, once more; a single night
Cannot have brought a loss, a blight
  Upon its grace.

Nor are they dead whom thou dost bear,
  Robed for the grave.
See what a smile their red lips wear;
To lay them living wilt thou dare
  Into a grave?

I know, I know,
I left thee first; now I repent;
I listen now; I never meant
To have thee go.

Just once, once more, tell me the word
Thou hadst for me!
Alas! although my heart was stirred,
I never fully knew or heard
It was for me.
O yesterday,
My yesterday, thy sorest pain
Were joy couldst thou but come again,—
Sweet yesterday.

Venice, May 26.

II.

TO-MORROW.

All red with joy the waiting west,
O little swallow,
Couldst thou tell me which road is best?
Cleaving high air with thy soft breast
For keel, O swallow,
Thou must o'erlook
My seas and know if I mistake;
I would not the same harbor make
Which yesterday forsook.

I hear the swift blades dip and plash
Of unseen rowers;
On unknown land the waters dash;
Who knows how it be wise or rash
To meet the rowers!
Premì! Premì!
Venetia's boatmen lean and cry;
With voiceless lips I drift and lie
Upon the twilight sea.

The swallow sleeps. Her last low call
Had sound of warning.
Sweet little one, whate'er befall,
Thou wilt not know that it was all
In vain thy warning.
I may not borrow
A hope, a help. I close my eyes;
Cold wind blows from the Bridge of Sighs;
Kneeling I wait to-morrow.

Venice, May 30.

H.H. JACKSON.

In the Twilight.

Men say the sullen instrument
That, from the Master's bow,
With pangs of joy or woe,
Feels music's soul through every fibre sent,
Whispers the ravished strings
More than he knew or meant;
Old summers in its memory glow;
The secrets of the wind it sings;
It hears the April-loosened springs;
And mixes with its mood
All it dreamed when it stood
In the murmurous pine-wood
Long ago!

The magical moonlight then
Steeped every bough and cone;
The roar of the brook in the glen
Came dim from the distance blown;
The wind through its glooms sang low,
And it swayed to and fro
With delight as it stood,
In the wonderful wood,
Long ago!

O my life, have we not had seasons
That only said, "Live and rejoice?"
That asked not for causes and reasons,
But made us all feeling and voice?
When we went with the winds in their blowing,
When Nature and we were peers,
And we seemed to share in the flowing
Of the inexhaustible years?
Have we not from the earth drawn juices
Too fine for earth's sordid uses?
Have I heard, have I seen
All I feel and I know?
Doth my heart overween?
Or could it have been
Long ago?

Sometimes a breath floats by me,
An odor from Dreamland sent,
That makes the ghost seem nigh me
Of a splendor that came and went,
Of a life lived somewhere, I know not
In what diviner sphere,
Of memories that stay not and go not,
Like music heard once by an ear
That cannot forget or reclaim it,
A something so shy, it would shame it
To make it a show,
A something too vague, could I name it,
For others to know,
As if I had lived it or dreamed it,
As if I had acted or schemed it,

Long ago!

And yet, could I live it over,
This life that stirs in my brain,
Could I be both maiden and lover,
Moon and tide, bee and clover,
As I seem to have been, once again,
Could I but speak and show it,
This pleasure more sharp than pain,
That baffles and lures me so,
The world should not lack a poet,
Such as it had
In the ages glad,
Long ago!

J.R. LOWELL.

The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls.

The tide rises, the tide falls,
The twilight darkens, the curlew calls;
Along the sea-sands damp and brown
The traveller hastens toward the town,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

Darkness settles on roofs and walls,
But the sea in the darkness calls and calls;
The little waves, with their soft, white hands,
Efface the footprints in the sands,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

The morning breaks; the steeds in their stalls
Stamp and neigh, as the hostler calls;
The day returns, but nevermore
Returns the traveller to the shore,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

H.W. LONGFELLOW.

The Fall of the Leaf.

The evening of the year draws on,
The fields a later aspect wear;
Since Summer's garishness is gone,
Some grains of night tincture the noontide air.

Behold! the shadows of the trees
Now circle wider 'bout their stem,
Like sentries that by slow degrees
Perform their rounds, gently protecting them.

And as the year doth decline,
The sun allows a scantier light;

Behind each needle of the pine
  There lurks a small auxiliar to the night.

I hear the cricket's slumbrous lay
  Around, beneath me, and on high;
It rocks the night, it soothes the day,
  And everywhere is Nature's lullaby.

But most he chirps beneath the sod,
  When he has made his winter bed;
His creak grown fainter but more broad,
  A film of Autumn o'er the Summer spread.

Small birds, in fleets migrating by,
  Now beat across some meadow's bay,
And as they tack and veer on high,
  With faint and hurried click beguile the way.

Far in the woods, these golden days,
  Some leaf obeys its Maker's call;
And through their hollow aisles it plays
  With delicate touch the prelude of the Fall.

Gently withdrawing from its stem,
  It lightly lays itself along
Where the same hand hath pillowed them,
  Resigned to sleep upon the old year's throng.

The loneliest birch is brown and sere,
  The furthest pool is strewn with leaves,
Which float upon their watery bier,
  Where is no eye that sees, no heart that grieves.

The jay screams through the chestnut wood;
  The crisped and yellow leaves around
Are hue and texture of my mood,—
  And these rough burrs my heirlooms on the ground.

The threadbare trees, so poor and thin,—
  They are no wealthier than I;
But with as brave a core within
  They rear their boughs to the October sky.

Poor knights they are which bravely wait
  The charge of Winter's cavalry,
Keeping a simple Roman state,
  Discumbered of their Persian luxury.
H.D. THOREAU.

The Rhodora.

ON BEING ASKED, WHENCE IS THE FLOWER?

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,

Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
Made the black water with their beauty gay;
Here might the red-bird come his plumes to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array.
Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew:
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there brought you.
R.W. EMERSON.

Nature.

O nature! I do not aspire
To be the highest in thy quire,—
To be a meteor in the sky,
Or comet that may range on high;
Only a zephyr that may blow
Among the reeds by the river low;
Give me thy most privy place
Where to run my airy race.

In some withdrawn, unpublic mead
Let me sigh upon a reed,
Or in the woods, with leafy din,
Whisper the still evening in.
Some still work give me to do,—
Only—be it near to you!
For I'd rather be thy child
And pupil, in the forest wild,
Than be the king of men elsewhere,
And most sovereign slave of care.

H.D. THOREAU.

My Strawberry.

O marvel, fruit of fruits, I pause
To reckon thee. I ask what cause
Set free so much of red from heats
At core of earth, and mixed such sweets
With sour and spice: what was that strength
Which out of darkness, length by length,
Spun all thy shining thread of vine,
Netting the fields in bond as thine.
I see thy tendrils drink by sips

From grass and clover's smiling lips;
I hear thy roots dig down for wells,
Tapping the meadow's hidden cells;
Whole generations of green things,
Descended from long lines of springs,
I see make room for thee to bide
A quiet comrade by their side;
I see the creeping peoples go
Mysterious journeys to and fro,
Treading to right and left of thee,
Doing thee homage wonderingly.
I see the wild bees as they fare,
Thy cups of honey drink, but spare.
I mark thee bathe and bathe again
In sweet uncalendared spring rain.
I watch how all May has of sun
Makes haste to have thy ripeness done,
While all her nights let dews escape
To set and cool thy perfect shape.
Ah, fruit of fruits, no more I pause
To dream and seek thy hidden laws!
I stretch my hand and dare to taste,
In instant of delicious waste
On single feast, all things that went
To make the empire thou hast spent.
H.H. JACKSON.

The Humble-bee.

Burly, dozing humble-bee,
Where thou art is clime for me.
Let them sail for Porto Rique,
Far-off heats 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 color 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 unsavory or unclean
Hath my insect never seen;
But violets and bilberry bells,
Maple-sap and daffodels,
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 northwestern 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.
R.W. EMERSON.

The Summer Rain.

My books I'd fain cast off, I cannot read.
'Twixt every page my thoughts go stray at large
Down in the meadow, where is richer feed,
And will not mind to hit their proper targe.

Plutarch was good, and so was Homer too,
Our Shakespeare's life were rich to live again,
What Plutarch read, that was not good nor true,
Nor Shakespeare's books, unless his books were men.

Here while I lie beneath this walnut bough,
What care I for the Greeks or for Troy town,
If juster battles are enacted now
Between the ants upon this hummock's crown?

Bid Homer wait till I the issue learn,
If red or black the gods will favor most,
Or yonder Ajax will the phalanx turn,
Struggling to heave some rock against the host.

Tell Shakespeare to attend some leisure hour,
For now I've business with this drop of dew,
And see you not, the clouds prepare a shower,—
I'll meet him shortly when the sky is blue.

This bed of herdsgrass and wild oats was spread
Last year with nicer skill than monarchs use;
A clover tuft is pillow for my head,
And violets quite overtop my shoes.

And now the cordial clouds have shut all in,
And gently swells the wind to say all's well;
The scattered drops are falling fast and thin,
Some in the pool, some in the flower-bell.

I am well drenched upon my bed of oats;
But see that globe come rolling down its stem,
Now like a lonely planet there it floats,
And now it sinks into my garment's hem.

Drip, drip the trees for all the country round,
And richness rare distills from every bough;
The wind alone it is makes every sound,
Shaking down crystals on the leaves below.

For shame the sun will never show himself,
Who could not with his beams e'er melt me so;
My dripping locks,—they would become an elf,
Who in a beaded coat does gayly go.
H.D. THOREAU.

To the Dandelion.

Dear common flower, that grow'st 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 art 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.
J.R. LOWELL.

The Chambered Nautilus.

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main,—
The venturous bark 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 his 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 wreathèd horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear 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 art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!
O.W. Holmes.

Thought.

O messenger, art thou the king, or I?
Thou dalliest outside the palace gate
Till on thine idle armor lie the late
And heavy dews. The morn's bright scornful eye
Reminds thee; then, in subtle mockery,
Thou smilest at the window where I wait,
Who bade thee ride for life. In empty state
My days go on, while false hours prophesy
Thy quick return; at last, in sad despair,
I cease to bid thee, leave thee free as air;
When lo, thou stand'st before me glad and fleet,
And lay'st undreamed-of treasures at my feet.
Ah! messenger, thy royal blood to buy
I am too poor. Thou art the king, not I.

H.H. Jackson.

Stanzas.

Thought is deeper than all speech,
  Feeling deeper than all thought;
Souls to souls can never teach
  What unto themselves was taught.

We are spirits clad in veils:
  Man by man was never seen;
All our deep communing fails
  To remove the shadowy screen.

Heart to heart was never known;
  Mind with mind did never meet;
We are columns left alone
  Of a temple once complete.

Like the stars that gem the sky,
  Far apart, though seeming near,
In our light we scattered lie;
  All is thus but starlight here.

What is social company
  But a babbling summer stream?
What our wise philosophy
  But the glancing of a dream?

Only when the sun of love
  Melts the scattered stars of thought;
Only when we live above
  What the dim-eyed world hath taught;

Only when our souls are fed
  By the Fount which gave them birth,
And by inspiration led,
  Which they never drew from earth,

We, like parted drops of rain
  Swelling till they meet and run,
Shall be all absorbed again,
  Melting, flowing into one.

C.P. Cranch.

Coronation.

At the king's gate the subtle noon
  Wove filmy yellow nets of sun;
Into the drowsy snare too soon
  The guards fell one by one.

Through the king's gate, unquestioned then,
  A beggar went, and laughed, "This brings

Me chance, at last, to see if men
Fare better, being kings."

The king sat bowed beneath his crown,
Propping his face with listless hand;
Watching the hour-glass sifting down
Too slow its shining sand.

"Poor man, what wouldst thou have of me?"
The beggar turned, and, pitying,
Replied, like one in dream, "Of thee,
Nothing. I want the king."

Uprose the king, and from his head
Shook off the crown and threw it by.
"O man, thou must have known," he said,
"A greater king than I."

Through all the gates, unquestioned then,
Went king and beggar hand in hand.
Whispered the king, "Shall I know when
Before *his* throne I stand?"

The beggar laughed. Free winds in haste
Were wiping from the king's hot brow
The crimson lines the crown had traced.
"This is his presence now."

At the king's gate the crafty noon
Unwove its yellow nets of sun;
Out of their sleep in terror soon
The guards waked one by one.

"Ho here! Ho there! Has no man seen
The king?" The cry ran to and fro;
Beggar and king, they laughed, I ween,
The laugh that free men know.

On the king's gate the moss grew gray;
The king came not. They called him dead;
And made his eldest son one day
Slave in his father's stead.
H.H. JACKSON.

On a Bust of Dante.

See, from this counterfeit of him
Whom Arno shall remember long,
How stern of lineament, how grim,
The father was of Tuscan song:
There but the burning sense of wrong,
Perpetual care and scorn, abide;
Small friendship for the lordly throng;
Distrust of all the world beside.

Faithful if this wan image be,
No dream his life was,—but a fight;
Could any Beatrice see
A lover in that anchorite?
To that cold Ghibelline's gloomy sight
Who could have guessed the visions came
Of Beauty, veiled with heavenly light,
In circles of eternal flame?

The lips as Cumæ's cavern close,
The cheeks with fast and sorrow thin,
The rigid front, almost morose,
But for the patient hope within,
Declare a life whose course hath been
Unsullied still, though still severe;
Which, through the wavering days of sin,
Kept itself icy-chaste and clear.

Not wholly such his haggard look
When wandering once, forlorn, he strayed,
With no companion save his book,
To Corvo's hushed monastic shade;
Where, as the Benedictine laid
His palm upon the convent's guest,
The single boon for which he prayed
Was peace, that pilgrim's one request.

Peace dwells not here,—this rugged face
Betrays no spirit of repose;
The sullen warrior sole we trace,
The marble man of many woes.
Such was his mien when first arose
The thought of that strange tale divine,
When hell he peopled with his foes,
The scourge of many a guilty line.

War to the last he waged with all
The tyrant canker-worms of earth;
Baron and duke, in hold and hall,
Cursed the dark hour that gave him birth;
He used Rome's harlot for his mirth;
Plucked bare hypocrisy and crime;
But valiant souls of knightly worth
Transmitted to the rolls of Time.

O Time! whose verdicts mock our own,
The only righteous judge art thou;
That poor old exile, sad and lone,
Is Latium's other Virgil now:
Before his name the nations bow;
His words are parcel of mankind,
Deep in whose hearts, as on his brow,
The marks have sunk of Dante's mind.

T.W. Parsons.

Pan in Wall Street.

A.D. 1867.

Just where the Treasury's marble front
  Looks over Wall Street's mingled nations;
Where Jews and Gentiles most are wont
  To throng for trade and last quotations;
Where, hour by hour, the rates of gold
  Outrival, in the ears of people,
The quarter-chimes, serenely tolled
  From Trinity's undaunted steeple,—

Even there I heard a strange, wild strain
  Sound high above the modern clamor,
Above the cries of greed and gain,
  The curbstone war, the auction's hammer;
And swift, on Music's misty ways,
  It led, from all this strife for millions,
To ancient, sweet-do-nothing days
  Among the kirtle-robed Sicilians.

And as it stilled the multitude,
  And yet more joyous rose, and shriller,
I saw the minstrel, where he stood
  At ease against a Doric pillar:
One hand a droning organ played,
  The other held a Pan's-pipe (fashioned
Like those of old) to lips that made
  The reeds give out that strain impassioned.

'Twas Pan himself had wandered here
  A-strolling through this sordid city,
And piping to the civic ear
  The prelude of some pastoral ditty!
The demigod had crossed the seas,—
  From haunts of shepherd, nymph, and satyr,
And Syracusan times,—to these
  Far shores and twenty centuries later.

A ragged cap was on his head;
  But—hidden thus—there was no doubting
That, all with crispy locks o'erspread,
  His gnarlèd horns were somewhere sprouting;
His club-feet, cased in rusty shoes,
  Were crossed, as on some frieze you see them,
And trousers, patched of divers hues,
  Concealed his crooked shanks beneath them.

He filled the quivering reeds with sound,
  And o'er his mouth their changes shifted,
And with his goat's-eyes looked around
  Where'er the passing current drifted;
And soon, as on Trinacrian hills
  The nymphs and herdsmen ran to hear him,
Even now the tradesmen from their tills,
  With clerks and porters, crowded near him.

The bulls and bears together drew
From Jauncey Court and New Street Alley,
As erst, if pastorals be true,
Came beasts from every wooded valley;
The random passers stayed to list,—
A boxer Ægon, rough and merry,
A Broadway Daphnis, on his tryst
With Nais at the Brooklyn Ferry.

A one-eyed Cyclops halted long
In tattered cloak of army pattern,
And Galatea joined the throng,—
A blowsy, apple-vending slattern;
While old Silenus staggered out
From some new-fangled lunch-house handy,
And bade the piper, with a shout,
To strike up Yankee Doodle Dandy!

A newsboy and a peanut-girl
Like little Fauns began to caper:
His hair was all in tangled curl,
Her tawny legs were bare and taper;
And still the gathering larger grew,
And gave its pence and crowded nigher,
While aye the shepherd-minstrel blew
His pipe, and struck the gamut higher.

O heart of Nature, beating still
With throbs her vernal passion taught her,—
Even here, as on the vine-clad hill,
Or by the Arethusan water!
New forms may fold the speech, new lands
Arise within these ocean-portals,
But Music waves eternal wands,—
Enchantress of the souls of mortals!

So thought I,—but among us trod
A man in blue, with legal baton,
And scoffed the vagrant demigod,
And pushed him from the step I sat on.
Doubting, I mused upon the cry,
"Great Pan is dead!"—and all the people
Went on their ways:—and clear and high
The quarter sounded from the steeple.
E.C. Stedman.

Auspex.

My heart, I cannot still it,
Nest that had song-birds in it;
And when the last shall go,
The dreary days, to fill it,
Instead of lark or linnet,
Shall whirl dead leaves and snow.

Had they been swallows only,
Without the passion stronger
That skyward longs and sings,—
Woe's me, I shall be lonely
When I can feel no longer
The impatience of their wings!

A moment, sweet delusion,
Like birds the brown leaves hover;
But it will not be long
Before their wild confusion
Fall wavering down to cover
The poet and his song.
J.R. LOWELL.

Birds.[5]

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.

R.H. STODDARD.

[5] From "The Poems of R.H. Stoddard," copyright, 1880, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Toujours Amour.

Prithee tell me, Dimple-Chin,
At what age does Love begin?
Your blue eyes have scarcely seen
Summers three, my fairy queen,
But a miracle of sweets,
Soft approaches, sly retreats,
Show the little archer there,
Hidden in your pretty hair;
When didst learn a heart to win?
Prithee tell me, Dimple-Chin!

"Oh!" the rosy lips reply,
"I can't tell you if I try.
'Tis so long I can't remember:
Ask some younger lass than I!"

Tell, oh, tell me, Grizzled-Face,
Do your heart and head keep pace?
When does hoary Love expire,
When do frosts put out the fire?
Can its embers burn below
All that chill December snow?
Care you still soft hands to press,
Bonny heads to smooth and bless?
When does Love give up the chase?
Tell, oh, tell me, Grizzled-Face!

"Ah!" the wise old lips reply,
"Youth may pass and strength may die;
But of Love I can't foretoken:
Ask some older sage than I!"
E.C. STEDMAN.

A Sigh.

It was nothing but a rose I gave her,—
Nothing but a rose
Any wind might rob of half its savor,
Any wind that blows.

When she took it from my trembling fingers
With a hand as chill,—
Ah, the flying touch upon them lingers,
Stays, and thrills them still!

Withered, faded, pressed between the pages,
Crumpled fold on fold,—
Once it lay upon her breast, and ages
Cannot make it old!

H.P. SPOFFORD.

No More.

This is the Burden of the Heart,
The Burden that it always bore:
We live to love; we meet to part;
And part to meet on earth No More:
We clasp each other to the heart,
And part to meet on earth No More.

There is a time for tears to start,—
For dews to fall and larks to soar:
The Time for Tears, is when we part
To meet upon the earth No More:
The Time for Tears, is when we part
To meet on this wide earth—No More.

B.F. Willson.

To a Young Girl Dying.

WITH A GIFT OF FRESH PALM-LEAVES.

This is Palm Sunday: mindful of the day,
I bring palm branches, found upon my way:
But these will wither; thine shall never die,—
The sacred palms thou bearest to the sky!
Dear little saint, though but a child in years,
Older in wisdom than my gray compeers!
We doubt and tremble,—*we*, with bated breath,
Talk of this mystery of life and death:
Thou, strong in faith, art gifted to conceive
Beyond thy years, and teach us to believe!

Then take my palms, triumphal, to thy home,
Gentle white palmer, never more to roam!
Only, sweet sister, give me, ere thou go'st,
Thy benediction,—for my love thou know'st!
We, too, are pilgrims, travelling towards the shrine:
Pray that our pilgrimage may end like thine!

T.W. Parsons.

The Port of Ships.[6]

Behind him lay the gray Azores,
  Behind the Gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores,
  Before him only shoreless seas.
The good mate said: "Now must we pray,
  For lo! the very stars are gone.
Brave Adm'ral speak,—what shall I say?"
  "Why, say, 'Sail on! Sail on! and on!'"

"My men grow mutinous day by day;
  My men grow ghastly, wan and weak."
The stout mate thought of home; a spray
  Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.
"What shall I say, brave Adm'ral, say,
  If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"
"Why, you shall say, at break of day,
  'Sail on! Sail on! Sail on! and on!'"

They sailed, and sailed, as winds might blow,
  Until at last the blanched mate said:
"Why, now not even God would know
  Should I and all my men fall dead.
These very winds forget their way,

For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Adm'ral; speak, and say—"
He said: "Sail on! Sail on! and on!"

They sailed! They sailed! Then spake the mate:
"This mad sea shows its teeth to-night;
He curls his lip, he lies in wait
With lifted teeth, as if to bite!
Brave Adm'ral, say but one good word,—
What shall we do when hope is gone?"
The words leaped as a leaping sword:
"Sail on! Sail on! Sail on! and on!"
C.H. MILLER.

[6] From The Complete Poetical Works of Joaquin Miller.

Paradisi Gloria.

There is a city, builded by no hand,
And unapproachable by sea or shore,
And unassailable by any band
Of storming soldiery for evermore.

There we no longer shall divide our time
By acts or pleasures,—doing petty things
Of work or warfare, merchandise or rhyme;
But we shall sit beside the silver springs

That flow from God's own footstool, and behold
Sages and martyrs, and those blessed few
Who loved us once and were beloved of old,
To dwell with them and walk with them anew,

In alternations of sublime repose,
Musical motion, the perpetual play
Of every faculty that Heaven bestows
Through the bright, busy, and eternal day.

T.W. PARSONS.

Ballad.

In the summer even,
While yet the dew was hoar,
I went plucking purple pansies,
Till my love should come to shore.
The fishing-lights their dances
Were keeping out at sea,
And come, I sung, my true love!
Come hasten home to me!

But the sea, it fell a-moaning,
And the white gulls rocked thereon;
And the young moon dropped from heaven,
And the lights hid one by one.
All silently their glances
Slipped down the cruel sea,
And wait! cried the night and wind and storm,—
Wait, till I come to thee!
H.P. SPOFFORD.

BOOK THIRD.

The Fool's Prayer.

The royal feast was done; the King
Sought some new sport to banish care,
And to his jester cried: "Sir Fool,
Kneel now, and make for us a prayer!"

The jester doffed his cap and bells,
And stood the mocking court before;
They could not see the bitter smile
Behind the painted grin he wore.

He bowed his head, and bent his knee
Upon the monarch's silken stool;
His pleading voice arose: "O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

"No pity, Lord, could change the heart
From red with wrong to white as wool;
The rod must heal the sin: but, Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

"'Tis not by guilt the onward sweep
Of truth and right, O Lord, we stay;
'Tis by our follies that so long
We hold the earth from heaven away.

"These clumsy feet, still in the mire,
Go crushing blossoms without end;
These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust
Among the heart-strings of a friend.

"The ill-timed truth we might have kept—
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?
The word we had not sense to say—
Who knows how grandly it had rung?

"Our faults no tenderness should ask,
The chastening stripes must cleanse them all;
But for our blunders—oh, in shame

Before the eyes of heaven we fall.

"Earth bears no balsam for mistakes;
Men crown the knave, and scourge the tool
That did his will; but Thou, O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!"

The room was hushed; in silence rose
The King, and sought his gardens cool,
And walked apart, and murmured low,
"Be merciful to me, a fool!"
E.R. SILL.

On The Life-mask Of Abraham Lincoln.

This bronze doth keep the very form and mold
Of our great martyr's face. Yes, this is he:
That brow all wisdom, all benignity;
That human, humorous mouth; those cheeks that hold
Like some harsh landscape all the summer's gold;
That spirit fit for sorrow, as the sea
For storms to beat on; the lone agony
Those silent, patient lips too well foretold.
Yes, this is he who ruled a world of men
As might some prophet of the elder day,—
Brooding above the tempest and the fray
With deep-eyed thought and more than mortal ken.
A power was his beyond the touch of art
Or armèd strength: his pure and mighty heart.

R.W. GILDER.

Song.

Years have flown since I knew thee first,
And I know thee as water is known of thirst:
Yet I knew thee of old at the first sweet sight,
And thou art strange to me, Love, to-night.

R.W. GILDER.

To A Dead Woman.[7]

Not a kiss in life; but one kiss, at life's end,
I have set on the face of Death in trust for thee.
Through long years keep it fresh on thy lips, O friend!
At the gate of Silence give it back to me.

H.C. BUNNER.

[7] From "The Poems of H.C. Bunner," copyright, 1884, 1892, 1896, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Destiny.

Three roses, wan as moonlight, and weighed down
Each with its loveliness as with a crown,
Drooped in a florist's window in a town.

The first a lover bought. It lay at rest,
Like flower on flower, that night, on Beauty's breast.

The second rose, as virginal and fair,
Shrunk in the tangles of a harlot's hair.

The third, a widow, with new grief made wild,
Shut in the icy palm of her dead child.

T.B. ALDRICH.

The Kings.

A man said unto his angel:
"My spirits are fallen thro',
And I cannot carry this battle;
O brother! what shall I do?

"The terrible Kings are on me,
With spears that are deadly bright,
Against me so from the cradle
Do fate and my fathers fight."

Then said to the man his angel:
"Thou wavering, foolish soul,
Back to the ranks! What matter
To win or to lose the whole,

"As judged by the little judges
Who hearken not well, nor see?
Not thus, by the outer issue,
The Wise shall interpret thee.

"Thy will is the very, the only,
The solemn event of things;
The weakest of hearts defying
Is stronger than all these Kings.

"Tho' out of the past they gather,
Mind's Doubt and bodily Pain,

And pallid Thirst of the Spirit
That is kin to the other twain,

"And Grief, in a cloud of banners,
And ringletted Vain Desires,
And Vice with the spoils upon him
Of thee and thy beaten sires,

"While Kings of eternal evil
Yet darken the hills about,
Thy part is with broken sabre
To rise on the last redoubt;

"To fear not sensible failure,
Nor covet the game at all,
But fighting, fighting, fighting,
Die, driven against the wall!"
L.I. Guiney.

Triumph.[8]

The dawn came in through the bars of the blind,—
And the winter's dawn is gray,—
And said, "However you cheat your mind,
The hours are flying away."

A ghost of a dawn, and pale, and weak,—
"Has the sun a heart," I said,
"To throw a morning flush on the cheek
Whence a fairer flush has fled?"

As a gray rose-leaf that is fading white
Was the cheek where I set my kiss;
And on that side of the bed all night
Death had watched, and I on this.

I kissed her lips, they were half apart,
Yet they made no answering sign;
Death's hand was on her failing heart,
And his eyes said, "She is mine."

I set my lips on the blue-veined lid,
Half-veiled by her death-damp hair;
And oh, for the violet depths it hid
And the light I longed for there!

Faint day and the fainter life awoke,
And the night was overpast;
And I said, "Though never in life you spoke
Oh, speak with a look at last!"

For the space of a heart-beat fluttered her breath,
As a bird's wing spread to flee;
She turned her weary arms to Death,
And the light of her eyes to me.

H.C. BUNNER.

[8] From "The Poems of H.C. Bunner," copyright, 1884, 1892, 1896, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Evening Song.[9]

Look off, dear Love, across the sallow sands,
And mark yon meeting of the sun and sea,
How long they kiss in sight of all the lands.
Ah! longer, longer, we.

Now in the sea's red vintage melts the sun,
As Egypt's pearl dissolved in rosy wine,
And Cleopatra night drinks all. 'Tis done,
Love, lay thine hand in mine.

Come forth, sweet stars, and comfort heaven's heart;
Glimmer, ye waves, round else unlighted sands.
O night! divorce our sun and sky apart,
Never our lips, our hands.

S. LANIER.

[9] From "Poems of Sidney Lanier," copyright, 1884, 1891, by Mary D. Lanier, published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

"The Woods That Bring the Sunset Near."

The wind from out the west is blowing,
The homeward-wandering cows are lowing,
Dark grow the pine-woods, dark and drear,—
The woods that bring the sunset near.

When o'er wide seas the sun declines,
Far off its fading glory shines,
Far off, sublime, and full of fear,—
The pine-woods bring the sunset near.

This house that looks to east, to west,
This, dear one, is our home, our rest;
Yonder the stormy sea, and here
The woods that bring the sunset near.

R.W. GILDER.

At Night.

The sky is dark, and dark the bay below
Save where the midnight city's pallid glow
Lies like a lily white
On the black pool of night.

O rushing steamer, hurry on thy way
Across the swirling Kills and gusty bay,
To where the eddying tide
Strikes hard the city's side!

For there, between the river and the sea,
Beneath that glow,—the lily's heart to me,—
A sleeping mother mild,
And by her breast a child.

R.W. GILDER.

"Still in Thy Love I Trust."

Still in thy love I trust,
Supreme o'er death, since deathless is thy essence;
For, putting off the dust,
Thou hast but blest me with a nearer presence.

And so, for this, for all,
I breathe no selfish plaint, no faithless chiding;
On me the snowflakes fall,
But thou hast gained a summer all-abiding.

Striking a plaintive string,
Like some poor harper at a palace portal,
I wait without and sing,
While those I love glide in and dwell immortal.

A.A. FIELDS.

The Future.

What may we take into the vast Forever?
That marble door
Admits no fruit of all our long endeavor,
No fame-wreathed crown we wore,
No garnered lore.

What can we bear beyond the unknown portal?
No gold, no gains
Of all our toiling: in the life immortal
No hoarded wealth remains,
Nor gilds, nor stains.

Naked from out that far abyss behind us
We entered here:
No word came with our coming, to remind us
What wondrous world was near,
No hope, no fear.

Into the silent, starless Night before us,
Naked we glide:
No hand has mapped the constellations o'er us,
No comrade at our side,
No chart, no guide.

Yet fearless toward that midnight, black and hollow,
Our footsteps fare:
The beckoning of a Father's hand we follow—
His love alone is there,
No curse, no care.
E.R. SILL.

Prescience.

The new moon hung in the sky,
The sun was low in the west,
And my betrothed and I
In the churchyard paused to rest—
Happy maiden and lover,
Dreaming the old dream over:
The light winds wandered by,
And robins chirped from the nest.

And lo! in the meadow-sweet
Was the grave of a little child,
With a crumbling stone at the feet,
And the ivy running wild—
Tangled ivy and clover
Folding it over and over:
Close to my sweetheart's feet
Was the little mound up-piled.

Stricken with nameless fears,
She shrank and clung to me,
And her eyes were filled with tears
For a sorrow I did not see:
Lightly the winds were blowing,
Softly her tears were flowing—
Tears for the unknown years
And a sorrow that was to be!

T.B. ALDRICH.

In August.

All the long August afternoon,
The little drowsy stream
Whispers a melancholy tune,
As if it dreamed of June
And whispered in its dream.

The thistles show beyond the brook
Dust on their down and bloom,
And out of many a weed-grown nook
The aster-flowèrs look
With eyes of tender gloom.

The silent orchard aisles are sweet
With smell of ripening fruit.
Through the sere grass, in shy retreat,
Flutter, at coming feet,
The robins strange and mute.

There is no wind to stir the leaves,
The harsh leaves overhead;
Only the querulous cricket grieves,
And shrilling locust weaves
A song of Summer dead.

W.D. HOWELLS.

That Day You Came.

Such special sweetness was about
That day God sent you here,
I knew the lavender was out,
And it was mid of year.

Their common way the great winds blew,
The ships sailed out to sea;
Yet ere that day was spent I knew
Mine own had come to me.

As after song some snatch of tune
Lurks still in grass or bough,
So, somewhat of the end o' June
Lurks in each weather now.

The young year sets the buds astir,
The old year strips the trees;
But ever in my lavender
I hear the brawling bees.

L.W. REESE.

Negro Lullaby.

Bedtimes' come fu' little boys,
Po' little lamb.
Too tiahed out to make a noise,
Po' little lamb.
You gwine t' have to-morrer sho'?
Yes, you tole me dat, befo',
Don't you fool me, chile, no mo',
Po' little lamb.

You been bad de livelong day,
Po' little lamb.
Th'owin' stones an' runnin' 'way,
Po' little lamb.
My, but you's a-runnin' wild,
Look jes' lak some po' folks' chile;
Mam' gwine whup you atter while,
Po' little lamb.

Come hyeah! you mos' tiahed to def,
Po' little lamb.
Played yo'se'f clean out o' bref,
Po' little lamb.
See dem han's now,—sich a sight!
Would you ever b'lieve dey's white!
Stan' still 'twell I wash dem right,
Po' little lamb.

Jes' caint hol' yo' haid up straight,
Po' little lamb.
Hadn't oughter played so late,
Po' little lamb.
Mammy do' know whut she'd do,
Ef de chillun's all lak you;
You's a caution now fu' true,
Po' little lamb.

Lay yo' haid down in my lap,
Po' little lamb.
Y'ought to have a right good slap,
Po' little lamb.
You been runnin' roun' a heap.
Shet dem eyes an' don't you peep,
Dah now, dah now, go to sleep,
Po' little lamb.

P.L. DUNBAR.

A Woman's Thought.

I am a woman—therefore I may not
Call to him, cry to him,
Fly to him,
Bid him delay not!

And when he comes to me, I must sit quiet:

Still as a stone—
All silent and cold.
If my heart riot—
Crush and defy it!
Should I grow bold—
Say one dear thing to him,
All my life fling to him,
Cling to him—
What to atone
Is enough for my sinning!
This were the cost to me,
This were my winning—
That he were lost to me.
Not as a lover
At last if he part from me,
Tearing my heart from me—
Hurt beyond cure,—
Calm and demure
Then must I hold me—
In myself fold me—
Lest he discover;
Showing no sign to him
By look of mine to him
What he has been to me—
How my heart turns to him,
Follows him, yearns to him,
Prays him to love me.

Pity me, lean to me,
Thou God above me!
R.W. GILDER.

The Flight.

Upon a cloud among the stars we stood.
  The angel raised his hand and looked and said,
  "Which world, of all yon starry myriad
Shall we make wing to?" The still solitude
Became a harp whereon his voice and mood
  Made spheral music round his haloed head.
  I spake—for then I had not long been dead—
"Let me look round upon the vasts, and brood
A moment on these orbs ere I decide ...
  What is yon lower star that beauteous shines
  And with soft splendor now incarnadines
Our wings?—*There* would I go and there abide."
  He smiled as one who some child's thought divines:
  "That is the world where yesternight you died."

L. MIFFLIN.

Childhood.

Old Sorrow I shall meet again,
And Joy, perchance—but never, never,
Happy Childhood, shall we twain
See each other's face forever!

And yet I would not call thee back,
Dear Childhood, lest the sight of me,
Thine old companion, on the rack
Of Age, should sadden even thee.

J.B. TABB.

Little Boy Blue.[10]

The little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and stanch he stands;
And the little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket moulds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new
And the soldier was passing fair,
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

"Now, don't you go till I come," he said,
"And don't you make any noise!"
So toddling off to his trundle-bed
He dreampt of the pretty toys.
And as he was dreaming, an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue,—
Oh, the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true.

Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face.
And they wonder, as waiting these long years through,
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue
Since he kissed them and put them there.

E. FIELD.

[10] From "A Little Book of Western Verse," copyright, 1889, by Eugene Field, published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Strong as Death.[11]

O death, when thou shalt come to me
From out thy dark, where she is now,
Come not with graveyard smell on thee,
Or withered roses on thy brow.

Come not, O Death, with hollow tone,
And soundless step, and clammy hand—
Lo, I am now no less alone
Than in thy desolate, doubtful land;

But with that sweet and subtle scent
That ever clung about her (such
As with all things she brushed was blent);
And with her quick and tender touch.

With the dim gold that lit her hair,
Crown thyself, Death; let fall thy tread
So light that I may dream her there,
And turn upon my dying bed.

And through my chilling veins shall flame
My love, as though beneath her breath;
And in her voice but call my name,
And I will follow thee, O Death.

H.C. Bunner.

[11] From "The Poems of H.C. Bunner," copyright, 1884, 1892, 1896 by Charles Scribner's Sons.

The White Jessamine.

I knew she lay above me,
Where the casement all the night
Shone, softened with a phosphor glow
Of sympathetic light,
And that her fledgling spirit pure
Was pluming fast for flight.

Each tendril throbbed and quickened
As I nightly climbed apace,
And could scarce restrain the blossoms
When, anear the destined place,
Her gentle whisper thrilled me
Ere I gazed upon her face.

I waited, darkling, till the dawn
Should touch me into bloom,
While all my being panted
To outpour its first perfume,
When, lo! a paler flower than mine
Had blossomed in the gloom!

J.B. Tabb.

The House of Death.

Not a hand has lifted the latchet
  Since she went out of the door—
No footstep shall cross the threshold,
  Since she can come in no more.

There is rust upon locks and hinges,
  And mold and blight on the walls,
And silence faints in the chambers,
  And darkness waits in the halls—

Waits as all things have waited
  Since she went, that day of spring,
Borne in her pallid splendor
  To dwell in the Court of the King:

With lilies on brow and bosom,
  With robes of silken sheen,
And her wonderful, frozen beauty,
  The lilies and silk between.

Red roses she left behind her,
  But they died long, long ago
'Twas the odorous ghost of a blossom
  That seemed through the dusk to glow.

The garments she left mock the shadows
  With hints of womanly grace,
And her image swims in the mirror
  That was so used to her face.

The birds make insolent music
  Where the sunshine riots outside,
And the winds are merry and wanton
  With the summer's pomp and pride.

But into this desolate mansion,
  Where Love has closed the door,
Nor sunshine nor summer shall enter,
  Since she can come in no more.

L.C. Moulton.

A Tropical Morning at Sea.

Sky in its lucent splendor lifted
  Higher than cloud can be;
Air with no breath of earth to stain it,
  Pure on the perfect sea.

Crests that touch and tilt each other,
  Jostling as they comb;

Delicate crash of tinkling water,
  Broken in pearling foam.

Plashings—or is it the pinewood's whispers,
  Babble of brooks unseen,
Laughter of winds when they find the blossoms,
  Brushing aside the green?

Waves that dip, and dash, and sparkle;
  Foam-wreaths slipping by,
Soft as a snow of broken roses
  Afloat over mirrored sky.

Off to the east the steady sun-track
  Golden meshes fill
Webs of fire, that lace and tangle,
  Never a moment still.

Liquid palms but clap together,
  Fountains, flower-like, grow—
Limpid bells on stems of silver—
  Out of a slope of snow.

Sea-depths, blue as the blue of violets—
  Blue as a summer sky,
When you blink at its arch sprung over
  Where in the grass you lie.

Dimly an orange bit of rainbow
  Burns where the low west clears,
Broken in air, like a passionate promise
  Born of a moment's tears.

Thinned to amber, rimmed with silver,
  Clouds in the distance dwell,
Clouds that are cool, for all their color,
  Pure as a rose-lipped shell.

Fleets of wool in the upper heavens
  Gossamer wings unfurl;
Sailing so high they seem but sleeping
  Over yon bar of pearl.

What would the great world lose, I wonder—
  Would it be missed or no—
If we stayed in the opal morning,
  Floating forever so?

Swung to sleep by the swaying water,
  Only to dream all day—
Blow, salt wind from the north upstarting,
  Scatter such dreams away!

E.R. SILL.

Memory.

My mind lets go a thousand things,
Like dates of wars and deaths of kings,
And yet recalls the very hour—
'Twas noon by yonder village tower,
And on the last blue noon in May—
The wind came briskly up this way,
Crisping the brook beside the road;
Then, pausing here, set down its load
Of pine-scents, and shook listlessly
Two petals from that wild-rose tree.

T.B. ALDRICH.

A Mood.

A blight, a gloom, I know not what, has 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 tense of longing, or of loss, in some foregone existence;
A subtle hurt that never pen has writ nor tongue has spoken—
Such hurt perchance as Nature feels when a blossomed bough
is broken.

T.B. ALDRICH.

The Way to Arcady.[12]

Oh, what's the way to Arcady,
To Arcady, to Arcady;
Oh, what's the way to Arcady,
Where all the leaves are merry?

Oh, what's the way to Arcady?
The spring is rustling in the tree—
The tree the wind is blowing through—
It sets the blossoms flickering white.
I knew not skies could burn so blue
Nor any breezes blow so light.
They blow an old-time way for me,
Across the world to Arcady.

Oh, what's the way to Arcady?
Sir Poet, with the rusty coat,
Quit mocking of the song-bird's note.
How have you heart for any tune,
You with the wayworn russet shoon?
Your scrip, a-swinging by your side,
Gapes with a gaunt mouth hungry-wide.
I'll brim it well with pieces red,
If you will tell the way to tread.

Oh, I am bound for Arcady,
And if you but keep pace with me
You tread the way to Arcady.

And where away lies Arcady,
And how long yet may the journey be?

Ah, that (quoth he) *I do not know—*
Across the clover and the snow—
Across the frost, across the flowers—
Through summer seconds and winter hours.
I've trod the way my whole life long,
And know not now where it may be;
My guide is but the stir to song.
That tells me I can not go wrong,
Or clear or dark the pathway be
Upon the road to Arcady.

But how shall I do who cannot sing?
I was wont to sing, once on a time—
There is never an echo now to ring
Remembrance back to the trick of rhyme.

'Tis strange you cannot sing (quoth he),
The folk all sing in Arcady.

But how may he find Arcady
Who hath not youth nor melody?

What, know you not, old man (quoth he)—
Your hair is white, your face is wise—
That Love must kiss that Mortal's eyes
Who hopes to see fair Arcady?
No gold can buy you entrance there;
But beggared Love may go all bare—
No wisdom won with weariness;
But Love goes in with Folly's dress—
No fame that wit could ever win;
But only Love may lead Love in
To Arcady, to Arcady.

Ah, woe is me, through all my days
Wisdom and wealth I both have got,
And fame and name, and great men's praise;
But Love, ah, Love! I have it not.

There was a time, when life was new—
But far away, and half forgot—
I only know her eyes were blue;
But Love—I fear I knew it not.
We did not wed, for lack of gold,
And she is dead, and I am old.
All things have come since then to me,
Save Love, ah, Love! and Arcady.

Ah, then I fear we part (quoth he),
My way's for Love and Arcady.

But you, you fare alone, like me;

The gray is likewise in your hair.
What love have you to lead you there,
To Arcady, to Arcady?

Ah, no, not lonely do I fare;
My true companion's Memory.
With Love he fills the Spring-time air;
With Love he clothes the Winter tree.
Oh, past this poor horizon's bound
My song goes straight to one who stands—
Her face all gladdening at the sound—
To lead me to the Spring-green lands,
To wander with enlacing hands.
The songs within my breast that stir
Are all of her, are all of her.
My maid is dead long years (quoth he),
She waits for me in Arcady.

Oh, yon's the way to Arcady,
To Arcady, to Arcady;
Oh, yon's the way to Arcady,
Where all the leaves are merry.
H.C. Bunner.

[12] From "The Poems of H.C. Bunner," copyright, 1884, 1892, 1896, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Eve's Daughter.

I waited in the little sunny room:
The cool breeze waved the window-lace, at play,
The white rose on the porch was all in bloom,
And out upon the bay
I watched the wheeling sea-birds go and come.

"Such an old friend,—she would not make me stay
While she bound up her hair." I turned, and lo,
Danaë in her shower! and fit to slay
All a man's hoarded prudence at a blow:
Gold hair, that streamed away
As round some nymph a sunlit fountain's flow.
"She would not make me wait!"—but well I know
She took a good half-hour to loose and lay
Those locks in dazzling disarrangement so!

E.R. Sill.

On An Intaglio Head Of Minerva.

Beneath the warrior's helm, behold

The flowing tresses of the woman!
Minerva, Pallas, what you will—
A winsome creature, Greek or Roman.

Minerva? No! 'tis some sly minx
In cousin's helmet masquerading;
If not—then Wisdom was a dame
For sonnets and for serenading!

I thought the goddess cold, austere,
Not made for love's despairs and blisses:
Did Pallas wear her hair like that?
Was Wisdom's mouth so shaped for kisses?

The Nightingale should be her bird,
And not the Owl, big-eyed and solemn:
How very fresh she looks, and yet
She's older far than Trajan's Column!

The magic hand that carved this face,
And set this vine-work round it running,
Perhaps ere mighty Phidias wrought
Had lost its subtle skill and cunning.

Who was he? Was he glad or sad,
Who knew to carve in such a fashion?
Perchance he graved the dainty head
For some brown girl that scorned his passion.

Perchance, in some still garden-place,
Where neither fount nor tree to-day is,
He flung the jewel at the feet
Of Phryne, or perhaps 'twas Laïs.

But he is dust; we may not know
His happy or unhappy story:
Nameless, and dead these centuries,
His work outlives him—there's his glory!

Both man and jewel lay in earth
Beneath a lava-buried city;
The countless summers came and went
With neither haste, nor hate, nor pity.

Years blotted out the man, but left
The jewel fresh as any blossom,
Till some Visconti dug it up—
To rise and fall on Mabel's bosom!

O nameless brother! see how Time
Your gracious handiwork has guarded:
See how your loving, patient art
Has come, at last, to be rewarded.

Who would not suffer slights of men,
And pangs of hopeless passion also,
To have his carven agate-stone
On such a bosom rise and fall so!
T.B. ALDRICH.

Hunting-song.

Oh, who would stay indoor, indoor,
When the horn is on the hill? (*Bugle*: Tarantara!)
With the crisp air stinging, and the huntsmen singing,
And a ten-tined buck to kill!

Before the sun goes down, goes down,
We shall slay the buck of ten; (*Bugle*: Tarantara!)
And the priest shall say benison, and we shall ha'e venison,
When we come home again.

Let him that loves his ease, his ease,
Keep close and house him fair; (*Bugle*: Tarantara!)
He'll still be a stranger to the merry thrill of danger
And the joy of the open air.

But he that loves the hills, the hills,
Let him come out to-day! (*Bugle*: Tarantara!)
For the horses are neighing, and the hounds are baying,
And the hunt's up, and away!

R. Hovey.

Parting.

My life closed twice before its close;
  It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
  A third event to me,

So huge, so hopeless to conceive,
  As these that twice befell.
Parting is all we know of heaven,
  And all we need of hell.

E. Dickinson.

When the Sultan Goes to Ispahan.

When the Sultan Shah-Zaman
Goes to the city Ispahan,
Even before he gets so far
As the place where the clustered palm-trees are,
At the last of the thirty palace-gates,
The flower of the harem, Rose-in-Bloom,
Orders a feast in his favorite room—
Glittering squares of colored ice,
Sweetened with syrop, tinctured with spice,

Creams, and cordials, and sugared dates,
Syrian apples, Othmanee quinces,
Limes, and citrons, and apricots,
And wines that are known to Eastern princes;
And Nubian slaves, with smoking pots
Of spicèd meats and costliest fish
And all that the curious palate could wish,
Pass in and out of the cedarn doors;
Scattered over mosaic floors
Are anemones, myrtles, and violets,
And a musical fountain throws its jets
Of a hundred colors into the air.
The dusk Sultana loosens her hair,
And stains with the henna-plant the tips
Of her pointed nails, and bites her lips
Till they bloom again; but, alas, *that* rose
Not for the Sultan buds and blows!
Not for the Sultan Shah-Zaman
When he goes to the city Ispahan.

Then at a wave of her sunny hand
The dancing-girls of Samarcand
Glide in like shapes from fairy-land,
Making a sudden mist in air
Of fleecy veils and floating hair
And white arms lifted. Orient blood
Runs in their veins, shines in their eyes.
And there, in this Eastern Paradise,
Filled with the breath of sandal-wood,
And Khoten musk, and aloes and myrrh,
Sits Rose-in-Bloom on a silk divan,
Sipping the wines of Astrakhan;
And her Arab lover sits with her.
That's when the Sultan Shah-Zaman
Goes to the city Ispahan.

Now, when I see an extra light,
Flaming, flickering on the night
From my neighbor's casement opposite,
I know as well as I know to pray,
I know as well as a tongue can say,
That the innocent Sultan Shah-Zaman
Has gone to the city Isfahan.
T.B. ALDRICH.

Night.

Chaos, of old, was God's dominion;
'Twas His belovèd child, His own first-born;
And He was agèd ere the thought of morn
Shook the sheer steeps of black Oblivion.
Then all the works of darkness being done
Through countless æons hopelessly forlorn,
Out to the very utmost verge and bourn,
God at the last, reluctant, made the sun.

He loved His darkness still, for it was old:
  He grieved to see His eldest child take flight;
  And when His *Fiat lux* the death-knell tolled,
As the doomed Darkness backward by Him rolled,
  He snatched a remnant flying into light
  And strewed it with the stars, and called it Night.
L. Mifflin.

He Made the Stars Also.

Vast hollow voids, beyond the utmost reach
  Of suns, their legions withering at His nod,
  Died into day hearing the voice of God;
And seas new made, immense and furious, each
Plunged and rolled forward, feeling for a beach;
  He walked the waters with effulgence shod.
  This being made, He yearned for worlds to make
From other chaos out beyond our night—
For to create is still God's prime delight.
  The large moon, all alone, sailed her dark lake,
  And the first tides were moving to her might;
Then Darkness trembled, and began to quake
  Big with the birth of stars, and when He spake
  A million worlds leapt into radiant light!

L. Mifflin.

The Sour Winds.

Wind of the North,
Wind of the Norland snows,
Wind of the winnowed skies and sharp, clear stars—
Blow cold and keen across the naked hills,
And crisp the lowland pools with crystal films,
And blur the casement-squares with glittering ice,
But go not near my love.

Wind of the West,
Wind of the few, far clouds,
Wind of the gold and crimson sunset lands—
Blow fresh and pure across the peaks and plains,
And broaden the blue spaces of the heavens,
And sway the grasses and the mountain pines,
But let my dear one rest.

Wind of the East,
Wind of the sunrise seas,
Wind of the clinging mists and gray, harsh rains—
Blow moist and chill across the wastes of brine,
And shut the sun out, and the moon and stars,
And lash the boughs against the dripping eaves,

Yet keep thou from my love.

But thou, sweet wind!
Wind of the fragrant South,
Wind from the bowers of jasmine and of rose—
Over magnolia glooms and lilied lakes
And flowering forests come with dewy wings,
And stir the petals at her feet, and kiss
The low mound where she lies.
C.H. LÜDERS.

The Return.

Now at last I am at home—
  Wind abeam and flooding tide,
And the offing white with foam,
  And an old friend by my side
  Glad the long, green waves to ride.

Strange how we've been wandering
  Through the crowded towns for gain,
You and I who loved the sting
  Of the salt spray and the rain
  And the gale across the main!

What world honors could avail
  Loss of this—the slanted mast,
And the roaring round the rail,
  And the sheeted spray we cast
  Round us as we seaward passed?

As the sad land sinks apace,
  With it sinks each thought of care;
Think not now of aging face;
  Question not the whitening hair:
  Youth still beckons everywhere.

And the light we thought had fled
  From the sky-line glows there now;
Bends the same blue overhead;
  And the waves we used to plow
  Part in beryl at the bow.

Hours like this we two have known
  In the old days, when we sailed
Seaward ere the night had flown,
  Or the morning star had paled
  Like the shy eyes love has veiled.

Round our bow the ripples purled,
  As the swift tide outward streamed
Through a hushed and ghostly world,
  Where our harbor reaches seemed
  Like a river that we dreamed.

Then we saw the black hills sway
In the waters' crinkled glass,
And the village wan and gray,
And the startled cattle pass
Through the tangled meadow-grass.

Through the glooming we have run
Straight into the gates of day,
Seen the crimson-edgèd sun
Burn the sea's gray bound away—
Leap to universal sway.

Little cared we where we drove
So the wind was strong and keen.
Oh, what sun-crowned waves we clove!
What cool shadows lurked between
Those long combers pale and green!

Graybeard pleasures are but toys;
Sorrow shatters them at last:
For this brief hour we are boys;
Trim the sheet and face the blast;
Sail into the happy past!
L.F. Tooker.

Bereaved.

Let me come in where you sit weeping,—aye,
Let me, who have not any child to die,
Weep with you for the little one whose love
I have known nothing of.

The little arms that slowly, slowly loosed
Their pressure round your neck; the hands you used
To kiss.—Such arms—such hands I never knew.
May I not weep with you?

Fain would I be of service—say some thing,
Between the tears, that would be comforting,—
But ah! so sadder than yourselves am I,
Who have no child to die.

J.W. Riley.

The Chariot.

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,

And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played,
Their lessons scarcely done;
We passed the fields of gazing grain.
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.
E. DICKINSON.

Indian Summer.

These are the days when birds come back,
A very few, a bird or two,
To take a backward look.

These are the days when skies put on
The old, old sophistries of June,—
A blue and gold mistake.

Oh, fraud that cannot cheat the bee,
Almost thy plausibility
Induces my belief,

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear,
And softly through the altered air
Hurries a timid leaf!

Oh, sacrament of summer days,
Oh, last communion in the haze,
Permit a child to join,

Thy sacred emblems to partake,
Thy consecrated bread to break,
Taste thine immortal wine!

E. DICKINSON.

Confided.

Another lamb, O Lamb of God, behold,
Within this quiet fold,

Among Thy Father's sheep
I lay to sleep!
A heart that never for a night did rest
Beyond its mother's breast.
Lord, keep it close to Thee,
Lest waking it should bleat and pine for me!
J.B. TABB.

In Absence.

All that thou art not, makes not up the sum
  Of what thou art, belovèd, unto me:
All other voices, wanting thine, are dumb;
  All vision, in thine absence, vacancy.

J.B. TABB.

Song of the Chattahoochee.[13]

Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapids and leap the fall
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side
With a lover's pain to attain the plain
  Far from the hills of Habersham,
  Far from the valleys of Hall.

  All down the hills of Habersham,
  All through the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried *Abide, abide*,
The wilful waterweeds held me thrall,
The laving laurel turned my tide,
The ferns and the fondling grass said *Stay*,
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed *Abide, abide*
  Here in the hills of Habersham
  Here in the valleys of Hall.

  High o'er the hills of Habersham,
  Veiling the valleys of Hall,
The hickory told me manifold
Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall
Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,
The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine,
Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign,
Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*
  Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,
  These glades in the valleys of Hall.

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
And oft in the valleys of Hall,
The white quartz shone, and the smooth brook-stone
Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
And many a luminous jewel lone
—Crystals clear or acloud with mist,
Ruby, garnet and amethyst—
Made lures with the lights of streaming stone
In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,
In the beds of the valleys of Hall.

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of Duty call—
Downward to toil and be mixed with the main.
The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
And the lordly main from beyond the plain
Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall.
S. LANIER.

[13] From "Poems of Sidney Lanier," copyright, 1884, 1891, by Mary D. Lanier, published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

The Sea's Voice.

I.

Around the rocky headlands, far and near,
The wakened ocean murmured with dull tongue
Till all the coast's mysterious caverns rung
With the waves' voice, barbaric, hoarse, and drear.
Within this distant valley, with rapt ear,
I listened, thrilled, as though a spirit sung,
Or some gray god, as when the world was young,
Moaned to his fellow, mad with rage or fear.
Thus in the dark, ere the first dawn, methought
The sea's deep roar and sullen surge and shock
Broke the long silence of eternity,
And echoed from the summits where God wrought,
Building the world, and ploughing the steep rock
With ploughs of ice-hills harnessed to the sea.

II.

The sea is never quiet: east and west
The nations hear it, like the voice of fate;
Within vast shores its strife makes desolate,
Still murmuring mid storms that to its breast
Return, as eagles screaming to their nest.
Is it the voice of worlds and isles that wait

While old earth crumbles to eternal rest,
  Or some hoar monster calling to his mate?
O ye, that hear it moan about the shore,
  Be still and listen! that loud voice hath sung
    Where mountains rise, where desert sands are blown;
And when man's voice is dumb, forevermore
  'Twill murmur on its craggy shores among,
    Singing of gods and nations overthrown.
W.P. FOSTER.

At Gibraltar.

I.

England, I stand on thy imperial ground,
  Not all a stranger; as thy bugles blow,
  I feel within my blood old battles flow,—
The blood whose ancient founts in thee are found.
Still surging dark against the Christian bound
  Wide Islam presses; well its peoples know
  Thy heights that watch them wandering below;
I think how Lucknow heard their gathering sound.
I turn and meet the cruel turbaned face;
  England, 'tis sweet to be so much thy son!
I feel the conqueror in my blood and race;
  Last night Trafalgar awed me, and to-day
Gibraltar wakened; hark, thy evening gun
  Startles the desert over Africa!

II.

Thou art the rock of empire, set mid-seas
  Between the East and West, that God has built;
  Advance thy Roman borders where thou wilt,
While run thy armies true with His decrees.
Law, justice, liberty,—great gifts are these;
  Watch that they spread where English blood is spilt,
  Lest, mixt and sullied with his country's guilt,
The soldier's life-stream flow and Heaven displease.
Two swords there are: one naked, apt to smite,
  Thy blade of war; and, battled-storied, one
Rejoices in the sheath and hides from light
  American I am; would wars were done!
Now westward look, my country bids Good-night,—
  Peace to the world from ports without a gun!

G.E. WOODBERRY.

Jerry an' Me.

No matter how the chances are,

Nor when the winds may blow,
My Jerry there has left the sea
With all its luck an' woe:
For who would try the sea at all,
Must try it luck or no.

They told him—Lor', men take no care
How words they speak may fall—
They told him blunt, he was too old,
Too slow with oar an' trawl,
An' this is how he left the sea
An' luck an' woe an' all.

Take any man on sea or land
Out of his beaten way,
If he is young 'twill do, but then,
If he is old an' gray,
A month will be a year to him,
Be all to him you may.

He sits by me, but most he walks
The door-yard for a deck,
An' scans the boat a-goin' out
Till she becomes a speck,
Then turns away, his face as wet
As if she were a wreck.

I cannot bring him back again,
The days when we were wed.
But he shall never know—my man—
The lack o' love or bread,
While I can cast a stitch or fill
A needleful o' thread.

God pity me, I'd most forgot
How many yet there be,
Whose goodmen full as old as mine
Are somewhere on the sea,
Who hear the breakin' bar an' think
O' Jerry home an'—me.

H. RICH.

The Gravedigger.

Oh, the shambling sea is a sexton old,
And well his work is done;
With an equal grave for lord and knave,
He buries them every one.

Then hoy and rip, with a rolling hip,
He makes for the nearest shore;
And God, who sent him a thousand ship,
Will send him a thousand more;
But some he'll save for a bleaching grave,
And shoulder them in to shore,—

Shoulder them in, shoulder them in,
Shoulder them in to shore.

Oh, the ships of Greece and the ships of Tyre
Went out, and where are they?
In the port they made, they are delayed
With the ships of yesterday.

He followed the ships of England far
As the ships of long ago;
And the ships of France they led him a dance,
But he laid them all arow.

Oh, a loafing, idle lubber to him
Is the sexton of the town;
For sure and swift, with a guiding lift,
He shovels the dead men down.

But though he delves so fierce and grim,
His honest graves are wide,
As well they know who sleep below
The dredge of the deepest tide.

Oh, he works with a rollicking stave at lip,
And loud is the chorus skirled;
With the burly note of his rumbling throat
He batters it down the world.

He learned it once in his father's house
Where the ballads of eld were sung;
And merry enough is the burden rough,
But no man knows the tongue.

Oh, fair, they say, was his bride to see,
And wilful she must have been,
That she could bide at his gruesome side
When the first red dawn came in.

And sweet, they say, is her kiss to those
She greets to his border home;
And softer than sleep her hand's first sweep
That beckons, and they come.

Oh, crooked is he, but strong enough
To handle the tallest mast;
From the royal barque to the slaver dark,
He buries them all at last.

Then hoy and rip, with a rolling hip,
He makes for the nearest shore;
And God, who sent him a thousand ship,
Will send him a thousand more;
But some he'll save for a bleaching grave,
And shoulder them in to shore,—
Shoulder them in, shoulder them in,
Shoulder them in to shore.

B. CARMAN.

The Absence of Little Wesley.

HOOSIER DIALECT.

Sence little Wesley went, the place seems all so strange and
still—
W'y, I miss his yell o' "Gran'pap!" as I'd miss the whipperwill!
And to think I ust to *scold* him fer his everlastin' noise,
When I on'y rickollect him as the best o' little boys!
I wisht a hunderd times a day 'at he'd come trompin' in,
And all the noise he ever made was twic't as loud ag'in!—
It 'u'd seem like some soft music played on some fine
insturment,
'Longside o' this loud lonesomeness, sence little Wesley went!

Of course the clock don't tick no louder than it ust to do—
Yit now they's times it 'pears like it 'u'd bu'st itse'f in two!
And let a rooster, suddent-like, crow som'er's clos't around,
And seems's ef, mighty nigh it, it 'u'd lift me off the ground!
And same with all the cattle when they bawl around the bars,
In the red o' airly mornin', er the dusk and dew and stars,
When the neighbers' boys 'at passes never stop, but jes' go on,
A-whistlin' kind o' to theirse'v's—sence little Wesley's gone!

And then, o' nights, when Mother's settin' up oncommon late,
A-bilin' pears er somepin', and I set and smoke and wait,
Tel the moon out through the winder don't look bigger'n a
dime,
And things keeps gittin' stiller—stiller—stiller all the time,—
I've ketched myse'f a-wishin' like—as I dumb on the cheer
To wind the clock, as I hev done fer mor'n fifty year,—
A-wishin' 'at the time bed come fer us to go to bed,
With our last prayers, and our last tears, sence little Wesley's
dead!

J.W. RILEY.

Be Thou a Bird, My Soul.

Be thou a bird, my soul, and mount and soar
Out of thy wilderness,
Till earth grows less and less,
Heaven, more and more.

Be thou a bird, and mount, and soar, and sing,
Till all the earth shall be
Vibrant with ecstasy
Beneath thy wing.

Be thou a bird, and trust, the autumn come,
That through the pathless air
Thou shalt find otherwhere
Unerring, home.

Opportunity.

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:—
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.
A craven hung along the battle's edge,
And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel—
That blue blade that the king's son bears,—but this
Blunt thing!"—he snapt and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.
Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.

E.R. Sill.

Dutch Lullaby.[14]

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
  Sailed off in a wooden shoe,—
Sailed on a river of misty light
  Into a sea of dew.
"Where are you going, and what do you wish?"
  The old moon asked the three.
"We have come to fish for the herring-fish
  That live in this beautiful sea;
  Nets of silver and gold have we,"
      Said Wynken,
      Blynken,
      And Nod.

The old moon laughed and sung a song,
  As they rocked in the wooden shoe;
And the wind that sped them all night long
  Ruffled the waves of dew;
The little stars were the herring-fish
  That lived in the beautiful sea.
"Now cast your nets wherever you wish,
  But never afeard are we!"
  So cried the stars to the fishermen three,
      Wynken,
      Blynken,
      And Nod.

All night long their nets they threw
  For the fish in the twinkling foam,

Then down from the sky came the wooden shoe,
Bringing the fishermen home;
'Twas all so pretty a sail, it seemed
As if it could not be;
And some folk thought 'twas a dream they'd dreamed
Of sailing that beautiful sea;
But I shall name you the fishermen three:
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
Is a wee one's trundle-bed;
So shut your eyes while Mother sings
Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
As you rock on the misty sea
Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three,—
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.
E. FIELD.

[14] From "A Little Book of Western Verse," copyright, 1889, by Eugene Field, published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

The Maryland Yellow-throat.[15]

While May bedecks the naked trees
With tassels and embroideries,
And many blue-eyed violets beam
Along the edges of the stream,
I hear a voice that seems to say,
Now near at hand, now far away,
"*Witchery—witchery—witchery*."

An incantation so serene,
So innocent, befits the scene:
There's magic in that small bird's note—
See, there he flits—the yellow-throat:
A living sunbeam, tipped with wings,
A spark of light that shines and sings
"*Witchery—witchery—witchery*."

You prophet with a pleasant name,
If out of Mary-land you came,
You know the way that thither goes
Where Mary's lovely garden grows:
Fly swiftly back to her, I pray,
And try, to call her down this way,
"*Witchery—witchery—witchery*!"

Tell her to leave her cockleshells,
And all her little silver bells
That blossom into melody,
And all her maids less fair than she.
She does not need these pretty things,
For everywhere she comes, she brings
"*Witchery—witchery—witchery*!"

The woods are greening overhead,
And flowers adorn each mossy bed;
The waters babble as they run—
One thing is lacking, only one:
If Mary were but here to-day,
I would believe your charming lay,
"*Witchery—witchery—witchery*!"

Along the shady road I look—
Who's coming now across the brook?
A woodland maid, all robed in white—
The leaves dance round her with delight,
The stream laughs out beneath her feet—
Sing, merry bird, the charm's complete,
"*Witchery—witchery—witchery*!"
H. VAN DYKE.

[15] From "The Builders and Other Poems," copyright, 1897, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

The Silence of Love.

Oh, inexpressible as sweet,
Love takes my voice away;
I cannot tell thee, when we meet,
What most I long to say.

But hadst thou hearing in thy heart
To know what beats in mine,
Then shouldst thou walk, where'er thou art,
In melodies divine.

So warbling birds lift higher notes
Than to our ears belong;
The music fills their throbbing throats,
But silence steals the song.

G.E. WOODBERRY.

The Secret.

Nightingales warble about it,

All night under blossom and star;
The wild swan is dying without it,
And the eagle cryeth afar;
The sun he doth mount but to find it,
Searching the green earth o'er;
But more doth a man's heart mind it,
Oh, more, more, more!

Over the gray leagues of ocean
The infinite yearneth alone;
The forests with wandering emotion
The thing they know not intone;
Creation arose but to see it,
A million lamps in the blue;
But a lover he shall be it
If one sweet maid is true.
G.E. WOODBERRY.

The Whip-poor-will.[16]

Do you remember, father,—
It seems so long ago,—
The day we fished together
Along the Pocono?
At dusk I waited for you,
Beside the lumber-mill,
And there I heard a hidden bird
That chanted, "whip-poor-will,"
"*Whippoorwill! whippoorwill!*"
Sad and shrill,—"*whippoorwill!*"

The place was all deserted;
The mill-wheel hung at rest;
The lonely star of evening
Was quivering in the west;
The veil of night was falling;
The winds were folded still;
And everywhere the trembling air
Re-echoed "whip-poor-will!"
"*Whippoorwill! whippoorwill!*"
Sad and shrill,—"*whippoorwill!*"

You seemed so long in coming,
I felt so much alone;
The wide, dark world was round me,
And life was all unknown;
The hand of sorrow touched me,
And made my senses thrill
With all the pain that haunts the strain
Of mournful whip-poor-will.
"*Whippoorwill! whippoorwill!*"
Sad and shrill,—"*whippoorwill!*"

What did I know of trouble?
An idle little lad;

I had not learned the lessons
  That make men wise and sad,
I dreamed of grief and parting,
  And something seemed to fill
My heart with tears, while in my ears
  Resounded "whip-poor-will."
"*Whippoorwill! whippoorwill!*"
  Sad and shrill,—"*whippoorwill!*"

'Twas but a shadowy sadness,
  That lightly passed away;
But I have known the substance
  Of sorrow, since that day.
For nevermore at twilight,
  Beside the silent mill,
I'll wait for you, in the falling dew,
  And hear the whip-poor-will.
  "*Whippoorwill! whippoorwill!*"
  Sad and shrill,—"*whippoorwill!*"

But if you still remember,
  In that fair land of light,
The pains and fears that touch us
  Along this edge of night,
I think all earthly grieving,
  And all our mortal ill,
To you must seem like a boy's sad dream,
  Who hears the whip-poor-will.
  "*Whippoorwill! whippoorwill!*"
  A passing thrill—"*whippoorwill!*"
H. Van Dyke.

[16] From "The Builders, and Other Poems," copyright, 1897, Charles Scribner's Sons.

Fertility.

Spirit that moves the sap in spring,
When lusty male birds fight and sing,
Inform my words, and make my lines
As sweet as flowers, as strong as vines,

Let mine be the freshening power
Of rain on grass, of dew on flower;
The fertilizing song be mine,
Nut-flavored, racy, keen as wine.

Let some procreant truth exhale
From me, before my forces fail;
Or ere the ecstatic impulse go,
Let all my buds to blossoms blow.

If quick, sound seed be wanting where
The virgin soil feels sun and air,

And longs to fill a higher state,
There let my meanings germinate.

Let not my strength be spilled for naught,
But, in some fresher vessel caught,
Be blended into sweeter forms,
And fraught with purer aims and charms.

Let bloom-dust of my life be blown
To quicken hearts that flower alone;
Around my knees let scions rise
With heavenward-pointed destinies.

And when I fall, like some old tree,
And subtile change makes mould of me,
There let earth show a fertile line
Whence perfect wild-flowers leap and shine!
M. THOMPSON.

The Veery.[17]

The moonbeams over Arno's vale in silver flood were pouring,
When first I heard the nightingale a long-lost love deploring.
So passionate, so full of pain, it sounded strange and eerie,
I longed to hear a simpler strain,—the wood notes of the veery.

The laverock sings a bonny lay above the Scottish heather;
It sprinkles down from far away like light and love together;
He drops the golden notes to greet his brooding mate, his dearie;
I only know one song more sweet,—the vespers of the veery.

In English gardens, green and bright and full of fruity treasure,
I heard the blackbird with delight repeat his merry measure:
The ballad was a pleasant one, the tune was loud and cheery,
And yet, with every setting sun, I listened for the veery.

But far away, and far away, the tawny thrush is singing;
New England woods, at close of day, with that clear chant are ringing:
And when my light of life is low, and heart and flesh are weary,
I fain would hear, before I go, the wood notes of the veery.

H. VAN DYKE.

[17] From "The Builders, and Other Poems," copyright, 1897, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

The Eavesdropper.

In a still room at hush of dawn,
  My Love and I lay side by side
And heard the roaming forest wind
  Stir in the paling autumn-tide.

I watched her earth-brown eyes grow glad
  Because the round day was so fair;
While memories of reluctant night
  Lurked in the blue dusk of her hair.

Outside, a yellow maple-tree,
  Shifting upon the silvery blue
With small innumerable sound,
  Rustled to let the sunlight through.

The livelong day the elvish leaves
  Danced with their shadows on the floor;
And the lost children of the wind
  Went straying homeward by our door.

And all the swarthy afternoon
  We watched the great deliberate sun
Walk through the crimsoned hazy world,
  Counting his hilltops one by one.

Then as the purple twilight came
  And touched the vines along our eaves,
Another Shadow stood without
  And gloomed the dancing of the leaves.

The silence fell on my Love's lips;
  Her great brown eyes were veiled and sad
With pondering some maze of dream,
  Though all the splendid year was glad.

Restless and vague as a gray wind
  Her heart had grown, she knew not why.
But hurrying to the open door,
  Against the verge of western sky

I saw retreating on the hills,
  Looming and sinister and black,
The stealthy figure swift and huge
  Of One who strode and looked not back.

B. Carman.

Sesostris.

Sole Lord of Lords and very King of Kings,
  He sits within the desert, carved in stone;
  Inscrutable, colossal, and alone,
And ancienter than memory of things.

Graved on his front the sacred beetle clings;
Disdain sits on his lips; and in a frown
Scorn lives upon his forehead for a crown.
The affrighted ostrich dare not dust her wings
Anear this Presence. The long caravan's
Dazed camels stop, and mute the Bedouins stare.
This symbol of past power more than man's
Presages doom. Kings look—and Kings despair:
Their sceptres tremble in their jewelled hands
And dark thrones totter in the baleful air!
L. MIFFLIN.

NOTES.

American poetry before Bryant was considerable in amount, but, with few exceptions, it must be looked for by the curious student in the graveyard of old anthologies. Who now reads "The Simple Cobbler of Agawam in America," "The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung up in America," "The Day of Doom," "M'Fingal," or "The Columbiad?" Skipping a generation from Barlow's death, who reads with much seriousness any one of the group of poets of which Bryant in his earliest period was the centre: Halleck, Pierpont, Sprague, Drake, Dana, Percival, Allston, Brainard, Mrs. Osgood, and Miss Brooks? A few of them, to be sure, are remembered by an occasional lyric,—Halleck by "Marco Bozzaris," a spirited ode in the manner of Campbell; Pierpont by his ringing lines, "Warren's Address to the American Soldiers;" Drake by "The American Flag," conventional but not commonplace, and marked by one very imaginative line; and Allston by two rather excellent lyrics, "Rosalie" and "America to Great Britain." The first poet to accomplish work of high sustained excellence was Bryant. His poetry, though never impassioned, is uniformly elegant. It is often as chaste as Landor at his best. But it never surprises; it is not emotional, personal, suggestively imaginative. In fact, Bryant's muse is not lyrical. With the exception of Pinkney and Hoffman, whose "Sparkling and Bright," if technically defective, is a true song, we must wait for our lyric poet till we reach Edgar Allan Poe, the greatest—one inclines to say the only—master of musical quality in verse whom America has produced.

The Wild Honeysuckle.—Philip Freneau, born in 1752, was a soldier in the American Revolution. Though never rising quite into the highest class of poets, he is our first genuine singer. "The Indian Burying-ground" and "To a Honey-bee" are only less successful than the graceful lines quoted.

A Health.—Poe was an enthusiastic admirer of this poem. He pronounced it, in his essay entitled "The Poetic Principle," "full of brilliancy and spirit," and added: "It was the misfortune of Mr. Pinkney to have been born too far south. Had he been a New Englander, it is probable that he would have been ranked as the first of American lyrists by that magnanimous cabal which has so long controlled the destinies of American Letters, in conducting the thing called *The North American Review*." This passage, very characteristic of Poe's criticisms, illustrates both his championship of favorites, and unmerciful scourging of foes.

Unseen Spirits.—The earnest sincerity, evident in every line of this poem, removes it at once from the company of those gay society verses sparkling

with conceits which won for Willis the satiric comment of Lowell in "A Fable for Critics:"

> "There is Willis, all natty, and jaunty, and gay,
> Who says his best things in so foppish a way,
> With conceits and pet phrases so thickly o'erlaying 'em,
> That one hardly knows whether to thank him for saying 'em;
> Over-ornament ruins both poem and prose,—
> Just conceive of a Muse with a ring in her nose!"

Had Willis written more such lyrics as "Unseen Spirits," his fame could hardly have proved so ephemeral. Poe considered this poem Willis's best, and I see no ground for calling the critic's judgment in question.

To Helen.—This brief lyric, written in the poet's youth, is not only among the most exquisite from his pen, but it furnishes one of the most famous among current quotations:

> "The glory that was Greece,
> And the grandeur that was Rome."

On the Death of Joseph Rodman Drake.—These manly lines have yielded another phrase to the world's memory. Hardly any quotation is more hackneyed than the last two verses of the first stanza. Drake was a young poet, the intimate friend and literary co-laborer of Halleck, who died September, 1820, in his twenty-fifth year.

To the Fringed Gentian.—This lyric well illustrates what Mr. Stedman has aptly termed Bryant's "Doric simplicity." Nothing of Wordsworth's is freer from ornament or from the least trace of affectation.

The Raven.—Though not belonging to the highest order of poetry, "The Raven" still maintains its position at the head of its class. No more astonishing *tour de force* can be found in English literature.

Nature.—Generally regarded, I think, the finest of Longfellow's, if not of American, sonnets.

Ichabod.—Occasioned by the defection and fall of Daniel Webster. It is worthy a place by the side of Browning's "Lost Leader." In later years, Whittier wrote a poem on the theme, which, while not a retraction of his former position, is penned in a tenderer, more tolerant mood, "The Lost Occasion" is its title, and it is only just to the poet to read this second lyric, hardly less successful, in connection with the first.

Old Ironsides.—"Old Ironsides" was the popular name for the frigate *Constitution*. Dr. Holmes's poem appeared in the Boston *Advertiser* "at the time when it was proposed to break up the old ship as unfit for service."

Bedouin Song.—One of the most spirited, most genuinely lyrical of American poems.

Skipper Ireson's Ride.—These lines have an easy, swinging quality that is quite inimitable. One inclines to agree with Mr. Stedman: "Of all our poets he (Whittier) is the most natural balladist."

The Village Blacksmith.—The directness and homely strength of "The Village Blacksmith" have made it deservedly popular. One questions whether the last stanza might not have been omitted with advantage both to the unity and force of the poem.

The Last Leaf.—This masterpiece of mingled humor and pathos was a favorite poem of Abraham Lincoln.

The Old Kentucky Home.—The sincere and tender sentiment of this song, no less than its popular melody, has made it for many years a favorite. Even better known is Foster's "Old Folks at Home," which is said to have had a larger sale than any other American song.

Carolina.—The concluding lines of this lyric have an imaginative vigor rare in American poetry. Four stanzas are omitted.

Dirge for a Soldier.—Boker's Dirge was written in memory of General Philip Kearney.

Battle-hymn of the Republic.—Written in December, 1861, while Mrs. Howe was on a visit to Washington. Soon after the writer's return to Boston the lines were accepted for publication in the *Atlantic Monthly* by James T. Fields, who suggested the title of the poem. The song did not at first receive much notice, but before the Civil War was over had become very popular.

My Maryland.—A poem of great strength and beauty, though of uneven merit. It is unfortunately marred by a few rather intemperate expressions. The sincerity of feeling is everywhere so evident, however, that these must be forgiven. The lines were written by a native of Baltimore, Prof. James Randall, and were first published in April, 1861. The author of the famous song was teaching in a Louisiana college when he read in a New Orleans paper the news of the attack on the Massachusetts troops as they passed through Baltimore. This newspaper account inspired the verses.

In the Hospital.—This poem, which has enjoyed at best a newspaper immortality, deserves to be more widely known. Its simplicity, directness, and truth of feeling are quite beyond praise. According to a story which one dislikes to believe apocryphal, these lines were found under the pillow of a wounded soldier near Port Royal, South Carolina, in 1864.

Days.—Regarded from the point of view of artistic form, perhaps nothing of Emerson's is quite so flawless as "Days," a poem which for conciseness and polish is worthy to be called classic.

A Death-bed.—This is a worthy companion-piece to that other miniature classic, Thomas Hood's song, beginning, "We watched her breathing through the night."

Telling the Bees.—"A remarkable custom, brought from the Old Country, formerly prevailed in the rural districts of New England. On the death of a member of the family, the bees were at once informed of the event, and their hives dressed in mourning. The ceremonial was supposed to be necessary to prevent the swarms from leaving their hives and seeking a new home." This poem of Whittier's is almost his highest achievement. Lowell said, in writing of the Quaker poet (Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography, VI.): "Many of his poems (such for example as 'Telling the Bees'), in which description and sentiment mutually inspire each other, are as fine as any in the language." I often think, however, that Whittier will live longest by his hymns and poems of purely religious devotion. I know of nothing similar in English that surpasses "The Eternal Goodness," and perhaps half a dozen other poems.

Katie.—About one-third of Timrod's graceful poem which bears this title. This is one of the few cases where I have ventured to make omissions.

Thalatta.—Regarding this poem, Thomas Wentworth Higginson says, in "The New World and the New Book:" "Who knows but that, when all else of

American literature has vanished in forgetfulness, some single little masterpiece like this may remain to show the high-water mark, not merely of a single poet, but of a nation and a generation?" The author of "Thalatta" was a Dartmouth graduate, a teacher, and a disciple of Emerson.

The Fall of the Leaf.—Thoreau's prose is known universally; his verse has not won as yet the recognition it deserves. It has little lyrical quality, but for unconventionality, charming turns of phrase, and the intimate knowledge of Nature it reveals, it is almost alone in American poetry.

The Rhodora.—"The Rhodora" has a conciseness and unity too rare in Emerson's poetry, which, beautiful in details, is strangely uneven. We sigh as we think what an unrivalled lyric poet Emerson would have been had he been sustained at the heights he was capable of reaching. No one surpasses Emerson at his best; he is almost a great poet.

The Chambered Nautilus.—Many think this Holmes's finest poem. It is taken from "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," 1858.

Thought.—Helen Jackson is, perhaps, the most gifted of American women poets. Emily Dickinson is more imaginative, but her utter scorn of form in composition makes her work, unique as it is, less satisfying. Mrs. Jackson was a favorite with Emerson, and he is said to have liked best among her poems this sonnet, "Thought."

On a Bust of Dante.—Parsons, one of the best of American poets, is one of the most neglected. Stedman is inclined to think "On a Bust of Dante" the finest of American lyrics (see "The Nature of Poetry," 254).

The Port of Skips.—In a recent review of American Literature in the London *Athæneum* occurs this sentence: "In point of power, workmanship, and feeling, among all poems written by Americans, we are inclined to give first place to the 'Port of Ships,' of Joaquin Miller."

Evening Song.—No poem of Lanier is more free from his characteristic faults. One regrets that so much of his work, highly imaginative as it is, is marred by over-elaboration and artificiality.

A Woman's Thought.—The striking reality and directness of this lyric, its immense emotional undercurrent, and its abrupt, almost gasping metre, admirably suited to the impassioned mood of the speaker,—these are a few of the qualities that combine to make "A Woman's Thought" one of the most remarkable poems in the book.

The White Jessamine.—One of the most charming of Father Tabb's lyrics. The verse of this poet is uneven in merit. He is too prone to merely fanciful conceits. But at his best Tabb is imaginative, as, for example, in the lines where he says of Angelo that he—

> "From the sterile womb of stone,
> Raised children unto God."

Always artistic, Tabb's verse usually suggests workmanship; it is more thoughtful than spontaneous. His religious poetry presents, in the main, a rather striking similarity to the work of George Herbert.

The Battle-field.—Miss Dickinson has much of the witchcraft and subtlety of William Blake. Many verses of the shy recluse, whom Mr. Higginson so happily has introduced to the world, are not only daring and unconventional, but recklessly defiant of form. But, as her editor has well said, "When a thought takes one's breath away, a lesson on grammar seems an

impertinence." Emily Dickinson had more than a message, more than the charm of unexpectedness, more than the gift of phrase,—she had (and of how many Americans can this be said?) an intense imagination.

Fertility.—This selection appears in the collected poems of Maurice Thompson (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1892), under the title of "A Prelude."

Sesostris.—Of this poem Mr. Stoddard has the high praise that in imaginative quality it is unequalled in nineteenth century literature, unless by Leigh Hunt's sonnet on the Nile. The same critic does not scruple to declare of Mr. Mifflin that he has a "glorious imagination," and to prophesy for him a distinguished future. Seldom indeed has a first book of verse won such instant and universal appreciation as Mr. Mifflin's volume of sonnets, just issued as the "American Treasury" goes to press.

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