

CONSCIENCE AND REMORSE

"Good-bye," I said to my Conscience—
"Good-bye for aye and aye;"
And I put her hands off harshly,
And turned my face away:
And Conscience, smitten sorely,
Returned not from that day.
But a time came when my spirit
Grew weary of its pace:
And I cried, "Come back, my Conscience,
I long to see thy face;"
But Conscience cried, "I cannot,—
Remorse sits in my place."

PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR

THE NEW YEAR

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night—
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new—,
Ring happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land—
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

FOUND WANTING

Belshazzar had a letter,—
He never had but one;
Belshazzar's correspondent
Concluded and begun
In that immortal copy
The conscience of us all
Can read without its glasses
On revelation's wall.

EMILY DICKINSON

DUTY

I slept and dreamed that life was Beauty:
I woke and found that life was Duty:
Was then thy dream a shadowy lie?
Toil on, sad heart, courageously,
And thou shalt find thy dream to be
A noonday light and truth to thee.

ELLEN STURGIS HOOPER

AN OLD BATTLE-FIELD

The softest whisperings of the scented South,
And rust and roses in the cannon's mouth;
And, where the thunders of the fight were born,
The wind's sweet tenor in the standing corn;
With song of larks, low-lingering in the loam,
And blue skies bending over love and home.
But still the thought: Somewhere,—upon the hills,
Or where the vales ring with the whip-poor-wills,
Sad wistful eyes and broken hearts that beat
For the loved sound of unreturning feet,
And, when the oaks their leafy banners wave,
Dream of the battle and an unmarked grave!

FRANK LEBBY STANTON

SMALL BEGINNINGS

A traveller through a dusty road strewed acorns on the lea;
And one took root and sprouted up, and grew into a tree.
Love sought its shade, at evening time, to breath its early vows;
And age was pleased, in heats of noon, to bask beneath its boughs;
The dormouse loved its dangling twigs, the birds sweet music bore;
It stood a glory in its place, a blessing evermore.

A little spring had lost its way amid the grass and fern,
A passing stranger scooped a well, where weary men might turn;
He walled it in, and hung with care a ladle at the brink;
He thought not of the deed he did, but judged that toil might drink.
He passed again, and lo! the well, by summers never dried,
Had cooled ten thousand parching tongues, and saved a life besides.

A dreamer dropped a random thought: 't was old, and yet 't was new;
A simple fancy of the brain, but strong in being true.
It shone upon a genial mind, and lo! its light became
A lamp of life, a beacon ray, a monitory flame.
The thought was small; its issue great; a watch-fire on the hill,
It shed its radiance far adown, and cheers the valley still!

A nameless man, amid the crowd that thronged the daily mart,
Let fall a word of Hope and Love, unstudied, from the heart;
A whisper on the tumult thrown,—a transitory breath,—
It raised a brother from the dust; it saved a soul from death.
O germ! O fount! O word of love! O thought at random cast!
Ye were but little at the first, but mighty at the last.

CHARLES MACKAY