

WHITTIER.

A PLEASANT story, that went the round shortly after the close of our Civil War, shows the character of Whittier's hold upon his countrymen. It was said that one among a group of prominent men, when conversation on politics and finance began to lag, asked the question, Who is the best American poet? Horace Greeley, who was of the party, replied with the name of Whittier, and his judgment was instantly approved by all present. These active, practical Americans, patriots or demagogues,—some of them, doubtless, of the "heated barbarian" type,—for once found their individual preferences thus expressed and in accord. At that climacteric time the Pleiad of our elder poets was complete and shining,—not a star was lost. But the instinct of these stern, hard-headed men was in favor of the Quaker bard, the celibate and prophetic recluse; he alone appealed to the poetic side of their natures. We do not hold a press-item to absolute exactness in its report of words. The epithet "best" may not have been employed by the questioner on that occasion; were it not for the likelihood that those to whom he spoke would not have laid much stress upon verbal distinctions, one might guess that he said the most national, or representative, or inborn of our poets. The value of the incident remains; it was discovered that Whittier most nearly satisfied the various poetic needs of the typical, resolute Americans, men of his own historic generation, who composed that assemblage.

With this may be considered the fact that it is the habit of compilers and brief reviewers, whose work is that of generalization, to speak of him as a "thoroughly American" poet. An English critic, in a notice marked by comprehension of our home-spirit and with the honest effort of a delicate mind to get at the secret of Whittier's unstudied verse and gain the best that can be gained from it, finds him to be the "most national" of our writers, and the most characteristic through his extraordinary fluency, narrow experience, and wide sympathy,—language which implies a not unfriendly recognition of traits which have been thought to be American,—loquacity, provincialism, and generosity of heart.

In sentiments thus spoken and written there is a good deal of significance. But the words of the foreign verdict cannot be taken precisely as they stand. Has there been a time, as yet, when any writer could be thoroughly

American? What is the meaning of the phrase—the most limited meaning which a citizen, true to our notion of this country's future, will entertain for a moment? Assuredly not a quality which is collegiate, like Longfellow's,—or of a section, like Whittier's,—or of a special and cultured class, which alone can enjoy Whitman's sturdy attempt to create a new song for the people before the accepted and accepting time. During the period of these men America scarcely has been more homogeneous in popular characteristics than in climate and topography. I have discussed the perplexing topic of our nationalism, and am willing to believe that these States are blending into a country whose distinctions of race and tendency will steadily lessen; but whether such a faith is well grounded is still an open question. And whatsoever change is to ensue, in the direction of homogeneity, will be the counter-swing of a vibration whose first impulse was away from the uniformity of the early colonies to the broadest divergence consistent with a common language and government. At Whittier's time this divergence was greater than before—greater, possibly, than it ever can be again. In fact, it is partly as a result of this superlative divergence that he is called our most national poet. If his song was not that of the people at large, it aided to do away with something which prevented us from being one people; and it was national in being true to a characteristic portion of America—the intense expression of its specific and governing ideas.

The most discriminating *précis* is that which Mr. Parkman contributed at a gathering in honor of the Quaker bard. The exact eye of the author of "Frontenac" saw the poet as he is: "The Poet of New England. His genius drew its nourishment from her soil; his pages are the mirror of her outward nature, and the strong utterance of her inward life." The gloss of this sentiment belonged to the occasion; its analysis is specifically correct, and this with full recognition of Whittier's most famous kinsmen in birth and song. The distinction has been well made, that the national poet is not always the chief poet of a nation. As a poet of New England, Whittier had little competition from the bookish Longfellow, except in the latter's sincere feeling for the eastern sea and shore, and artistic handling of the courtier legends of the province.

He certainly found a compeer in Lowell, whose dialect idyls prove that only genius is needed to enable a scholar, turned farmer, to extract the richest products of a soil. And the lyric fervor of Lowell's odes is our most imaginative expression of that New England sentiment which has extended itself, an ideal influence, with the movement of its inheritors to the farthest West. Emerson, on his part, has volatilized the essence of New England thought into wreaths of spiritual beauty. Yet Mr. Parkman, than whom no scholar is less given to looseness of expression, terms Whittier the poet of New England, as if by eminence, and I think with exceeding justice. The title is based on apt recognition of evidence that we look to the people at large for the substance of national or sectional traits. The base, not the peak, of the pyramid determines its bearings. There is, to be sure, as much human nature in the mansion as in the cottage, in the study or drawing-room as in the shop and field. But just as we call those *genre* canvases whereon are painted idyls of the fireside, the roadside, and the farm, pictures of "real life," so we find the true gauge of popular feeling in songs that are dear to the common people and true to their unsophisticated life and motive.

Here we again confront the statement that the six Eastern States were not and are not America; not the nation, but a section,—the New Englanders seeming almost a race by themselves. But what a section! And what a people, when we take into account, super-added to their genuine importance, a self-dependence ranking with that of the Scots or Gascons. As distinct a people, in their way, as Mr. Cable's creoles, old or new. Go by rail along the Eastern coast and note the nervous, wiry folk that crowd the stations;—their eager talk, their curious scrutiny of ordinary persons and incidents, make it easy to believe that the trait chosen by Sprague for the subject of his didactic poem still is a chief motor of New England's progress, and not unjustly its attribute by tradition. This hive of individuality has sent out swarms, and scattered its ideas like pollen throughout the northern belt of our States. As far as these have taken hold, modified by change and experience, New England stands for the nation, and her singer for the national poet. In their native, unadulterated form, they pervade the verse of Whittier. It is notable that the sons of the Puritans should take their songs from a Quaker; yet how far unlike, except in the doctrine of non-resistance, were the Puritans and Quakers of Endicott's time? To me, they seem grounded in the same inflexible ethics, and alike disposed to supervise the

ethics of all mankind. Time and culture have tempered the New England virtues; the Eastern frugality, independence, propagandism, have put on a more attractive aspect; a sense of beauty has been developed—the mental recognition of it finally granted to a northern race, who still lack the perfect flexibility and grace observable wherever that sense comes by nature and directs the popular conscience. As for the rural inhabitants of New England, less changed by travel and accomplishments, we know what they were and are,—among them none more affectionate, pious, resolute, than Whittier, beyond doubt their representative poet.

He belongs, moreover,—and hence the point of the incident first related,—to the group, now rapidly disappearing, of which Horace Greeley was a conspicuous member, and to an epoch that gave its workers little time for over-refinement, Persian apparatus, and the cultivation of æsthetics. That group of scarred and hardy speakers, journalists, agitators, felt that he was of them, and found his song revealing the highest purpose of their boisterous, unsentimental careers. These men—like all men who do not retrograde—had an ideal. This he expressed, in measures that moved them, and whose perfection they had no thought or faculty of questioning. Many of them came from obscure and rural homes, and to read his verse was to recall the scent of the clover and apple-bloom, to hear again the creak of the well-pole, the rattle of the bars in the lane,—the sights and freshness of youth passing for a moment, a vision of peace, over their battle-field. They needed, also, their own pibroch and battle-cry, and this his song rang out; their determination was in it, blended with the tenderness from which such men are never wholly free.

His ultimate reputation, then, will be inseparable from that of his section and its class. He may not hold it as one of those whose work appeals to all times and races, and whose art is so refined as to be the model of after-poets. But he was the singer of what was not an empty day,—and of a section whose movement became that of a nation, and whose purpose in the end was grandly consummated. We already see, and the future will see it more clearly, that no party ever did a vaster work than his party; that he, like Hampden and Milton, is a character not produced in common times; that no struggle was more momentous than that which preceded our Civil War, no question ever affected the destinies of a great people more vitally than the anti-slavery issue, as urged by its promoters. Neither Greece nor Rome, not even England, the battle-ground of Anglo-

Saxon liberty, has supplied a drama of more import than that in which the poets and other heroes of our Civil Reformation played their parts.

II.

WHITTIER'S origin and early life were auspicious for one who was to become a poet of the people. His muse shielded him from the relaxing influence of luxury and superfine culture. These could not reach the primitive homestead in the beautiful Merrimack Valley, five miles out from the market-town of Haverhill, where all things were elementary and of the plainest cast. The training of the Friends made his boyhood still more simple; otherwise, as I have said, it mattered little whether he derived from Puritan or Quaker sources. Still, it was much, in one respect, to be descended from Quakers and Huguenots used to suffer and be strong for conscience' sake. It placed him years in advance of the comfortable Brahmin class, with its blunted sense of right and wrong, and, to use his own words, turned him "so early away from what Roger Williams calls 'the world's great trinity, pleasure, profit, and honor,' to take side with the poor and oppressed." The Puritans conformed to the rule of the Old Testament, the Friends to the spirit of the New. One has only to read our colonial annals to know how the Jews got on under the Mosaic law, inasmuch as to the end of the Mather dynasty the pandect of Leviticus, in all its terror, was sternly enforced by church and state. The Puritans had two gods, Deus and Diabolus; the Quakers recognized the former alone, and chiefly through his incarnation as the Prince of Peace. They exercised, however, the right of interference with other people's code and practice, after a fashion the more intolerable from a surrender of the right to establish their own by rope and sword. Whittier's Quaker strain, as Frothingham has shown, yielded him wholly to the "intellectual passion" that Transcendentalism aroused, and still keeps him obedient to the Inward Light. And it made him a poet militant, a crusader whose moral weapons, since he must disown the carnal, were keen of edge and seldom in their scabbards. The fire of his deep-set eyes, whether betokening, like that of his kinsman Webster, the Batchelder blood, or inherited from some old Feuillet, strangely contrasts with the benign expression of his mouth — that firm serenity, which by transmitted habitude dwells upon the lips of the sons and daughters of peace.

There was no affectation in the rusticity of his youth. It was the real thing — the neat

and saving homeliness of the Eastern farm. All the belongings of the household were not the equivalent of a week's expenses in a modern city home, yet there was no want and nothing out of tone. We see the wooden house and barn, set against the background of rugged acres, — indoors, still the loom and wheel, and still the Quaker mother, dear old toiling one, the incarnation of faith and charity, beloved by a loyal, bright-eyed family group. There was little to read but the Bible, "Pilgrim's Progress," and the weekly newspaper; no schooling but in the district school-house; nothing to learn of the outer world except from the eccentric and often picturesque strollers that in those days peddled, sang, or fiddled from village to village. Yet the boy's poetic fancy and native sense of rhythm were not inert. He listened eagerly to the provincial traditions and legends, a genuine folklore, recounted by his elders at the fireside; and he began to put his thoughts in numbers at the earliest possible age. A great stimulus came in the shape of Burns's poems, a cheap volume of which fell into his possession by one of those happenings that seem ordained for poets. His first printed efforts were an imitation of the dialect and measures of the Scottish bard, and perhaps no copybook could have been more suitable until he formed his own hand — a time not long postponed. He well might have fancied that in his experience there was much in common with that of his master; that he, too, might live to affirm, though surely in words less grandiloquent, "The Genius of Poetry found me at the plow, and threw her inspiring mantle over me." Of our leading poets, he was almost the only one who learned Nature by working with her at all seasons, under the sky and in the wood and field. So much for his boyhood; his after course was affected greatly by the man then coming into notice as a fanatic and agitator, the lion-hearted champion of freedom, long since glorified with the name he gave to his first pronunciamiento, the Liberator. A piece of verse sent by young Whittier to the Newburyport "Free Press" led Garrison, its editor, to look up his contributor, and to encourage him with praise and counsel. From that time we see the poet working upward in the old-fashioned way. A clever youth need not turn gauger in a land of schools and newspapers. Whittier's training was supplemented by a year or more at the academy, and by a winter's practice as a teacher himself, — fulfilling thus the customary *Lehrjahre* of our village aspirants. In another year we find him the conductor of a tariff newspaper in Boston. Before his twenty-fifth birthday he had experienced the vicissitudes of old-

time journalism, changing from one desk to another, at Haverhill, Boston, and Hartford, still pursuing literature, ere long somewhat known as a poet and sketch-writer, and near the close of this period issuing his first book of Legends, in prose and verse. At Hartford also he edited, with a well-composed preface, the posthumous collection of his friend Brainard's poems.

But the mission of his life now came upon him. He received a call. In 1831 Garrison had begun "The Liberator." He was Whittier's ally and guide; the ardor of the poet required an heroic purpose, and Garrison's crusade was one to which his whole nature inclined him. It was no personal ambition that made him the psalmist of the new movement. His verses, crude as they were, had gained favor; he already had a name, and a career was predicted for him. He now doomed himself to years of retardation and disfavor, and had no reason to foresee the honors they would bring him in the end. What he tells us is the truth: "For twenty years my name would have injured the circulation of any of the literary or political journals in the country." During this term his imaginative writings were to be "simply episodal," something apart from what he says had been the main purpose of his life. He was bent upon the service which led Samuel May to declare that of all our poets he "has, from first to last, done most for the abolition of slavery. All my anti-slavery brethren, I doubt not, will unite with me to crown him as our laureate." Bryant, many years later, pointed out that in recent times the road of others to literary success had been made smooth by anti-slavery opinions, adding that in Whittier's case the reverse of this was true; that he made himself the champion of the slave "when to say aught against the national curse was to draw upon one's self the bitterest hatred, loathing, and contempt of the great majority of men throughout the land." Unquestionably Whittier's ambition, during his novitiate, had been to do something as a poet and man of letters. Not that he had learned what few, in fact, at that time realized, that the highest art aims at creative beauty, and that devotion, repose, and calm are essential to the mastery of an ideal. But he was a natural poet, and, if he had not been filled with convictions, might have reached this knowledge as soon as others who possessed the lyrical impulse. The fact that he made his rarest gift subsidiary to his new purpose, in the flush of early reputation when one is most sensitive to popular esteem, has led me to dwell a little upon the story of his life, and to observe how life itself may be made no less inspiring than a poem. I would

not be misunderstood; we measure poetry at its worth, not at the worth of its maker. This is the law; yet in Whittier's record, if ever, there is an appeal to the higher law that takes note of exceptions. Some of his verse, as a pattern for verse hereafter, is not what it might have been if he had consecrated himself to poetry as an art; but it is memorably connected with historic times, and his rudest shafts of song were shot true and far and tipped with flame. This should make it clear to foreigners why we entertain for him a measure of the feeling with which Hungarians speak of Petöfi, and Russians of Turgueneff. His songs touched the hearts of his people. It was the generation which listened in childhood to the "Voices of Freedom" that fulfilled their prophecies.

Garrison started his journal with the watchword of "unconditional emancipation," and the pledge to be "harsh as truth and uncompromising as justice; . . . not to retreat a single inch, and to be heard." Whittier reinforced him with lyre and pen,—though sometimes the two differed in policy,—and soon was writing abolition pamphlets, editing "The Freeman," and active in the thick of the conflict. He was the secretary of the first anti-slavery convention, a signer of the Declaration of Sentiments, and, at an age when bardlings are making sonnets to a mistress's eyebrow, he was facing mobs at Plymouth, Boston, Philadelphia. After seven or eight years of this stormy service, he settled down in quarters at Amesbury, sending out, as ever, his prose and verse to forward the cause. But now his humane and fervent motives were understood even by opponents, and the sweetness of his rural lyrics and idyls had testified for him as a poet. In 1843 the most eclectic of publishing houses welcomed him to its list; the rise of poetry had set in, and Longfellow, Emerson, Lowell, were gaining a constituency. As he grew in favor, attractive editions of his poems appeared, and his later volumes came from the press as frequently as Longfellow's,—more than one of them, like "Snow-Bound," receiving in this country as warm and wide a welcome as those of the Cambridge laureate. After the war, Garrison—at last crowned with honor, and rejoicing in the consummation of his work—was seldom heard. Whittier, in his hermitage, the resort of many pilgrims, has steadily renewed his song. While chanting in behalf of every patriotic or humane effort of his time, he has been the truest singer of our homestead and wayside life, and has rendered all the legends of his region into familiar verse. The habit of youth has clung to him, and he often misses, in his too facile rhyme and

rhythm, the graces, the studied excellence of modern work. But all in all, as we have seen, and more than others, he has read the heart of New England, and expressed the convictions of New England at her height of moral supremacy,—the distinctive enjoyment of which, in view of the growth of the Union, and the spread of her broods throughout its territory, may not recur again.

III.

It would not be fair to test Whittier by the quality of his off-hand work. His verse always was auxiliary to what he deemed the main business of his life, and has varied with the occasions that inspired it. His object was not the artist's, to make the occasion serve his poem, but directly the reverse. Perhaps his naïveté and carelessness more truthfully spoke for his constituents than the polish of those bred in seats of culture; many of his stanzas reflect the homeliness of a provincial region, and are the spontaneous outcome of what poetry there was in it. His feeling gained expression in simple speech and the forms which came readily. Probably it occurred somewhat late to the mind of this pure and duteous enthusiast that there is such a thing as duty to one's art, and that diffuseness, bad rhymes, and prosaic stanzas are alien to it. Nor is it strange that the artistic moral sense of a Quaker poet, reared on a New England farmstead, at first should be deficient. A careless habit, once formed, made it hard for him to master the touch that renders a new poem by this or that expert a standard, and its appearance an event. His ear and voice were naturally fine, as some of his early work plainly shows. "Cassandra Southwick," "The New Wife and the Old," and "The Virginia Slave-mother" were of an original flavor and up to the standards of that day. If he had occupied himself wholly with poetic work, he would have grown as steadily as his most successful compeers. But his vocation became that of trumpeter to the impetuous reform brigade. He supplied verse on the instant, often full of vigor, but often little more than the rallying-blast of a passing campaign. We are told by May that "from 1832 to the close of our dreadful war in 1865, his harp of liberty was never hung up. Not an important occasion escaped him. Every significant incident drew from his heart some pertinent and often very impressive or rousing verses." It is safe to assume that if he had been more discriminating, or had cherished the resolve of Longfellow or Tennyson to make even conventional pieces artistic, many occasions would have

escaped him. We see again that Art will forego none of its attributes. Sincerity and spontaneity are the well-springs of its clearest flow; yet, if dependent on these traits alone, it may become cheap and common, and utterly fail of permanence. In the time under notice there was nothing more likely to confuse the imagination than the life of a journalist, especially of a provincial or reform editor. The case of Hood, one of the truest of poets by nature, has shown us something of the dangers that beset a journalist-poet. This Whittier emphatically became, though in every way superior to the band of temperance, abolition, and partisan rhymesters that, like the shadows of his own failings, sprang up in his train. He wrote verses very much as he wrote editorials, and they were forcible only when he was deeply moved by stirring crises and events. Some of his best were tributes to leaders, or rebukes of great men fallen. But he was too apt to write weak eulogies of obscurer people; for every friend or ally had a claim upon his muse.

His imperfections were those of his time and class, and he was too engrossed with a mission to overcome them. He never learned compression, and still is troubled more with fatal fluency than our other poets of equal rank,—by an inability to reject poor stanzas and to stop at the right place. Mrs. Browning was a prominent sufferer in this respect. The two poets were so much alike, with their indifference to method and taste, as to suggest the question (especially in view of the subaltern reform-verse-makers) whether advocates of causes, and other people of great moral zeal, are not relatively deficient in artistic conscientiousness and what may be called æsthetic rectitude.

An occasional looseness in matters of fact may be forgiven one who writes from impulse. We owe "Barbara Frietchie" to the glow excited by a newspaper report; and the story of "Skipper Ireson's Ride," now challenged, if not true, is too well told to be lost. Whittier became, like a mother's careless, warm-hearted child, dearer for his very shortcomings. But they sometimes mar his bravest outbursts. Slight changes would have made that eloquent lyric, "Randolph of Roanoke," a perfect one. Feeling himself a poet, he sang by ear alone, in a somewhat primitive time; but the finest genius, in music or painting for example, with the aid of a commonplace teacher can get over more ground in a month than he would cover unaided in a year; since the teacher represents what is already discovered and established. There came a period when Whittier's verse was composed solely with poetic intent, and after a less careless fashion.

It is chiefly that portion of it, written from 1860 onward, that has secured him a more than local reputation. His ruder rhymes of a day bear witness to an experience which none could better illustrate than by citing the words of the poet himself:

"Hater of din and riot,
He lived in days unquiet;
And, lover of all beauty,
Trode the hard ways of duty."

In prose he soon became skilled. His letters often are models of epistolary style; the best articles and essays from his pen are written with a true and direct hand, though rather barren of the epigram and original thought which enrich the prose of Lowell, Holmes, and Emerson. "Margaret Smith's Journal" is a charming *nuova antica*; a trifle thin in plot, but such a quaint reproduction of the early colonial period—its people, manners, and discourse—as scarcely any other author save Hawthorne, at the date of its production, could have given us.

IV.

His metrical style, except in certain lyrics of marked individuality, is that of our elders who wrote in diffuse measures, and whose readers favored sentiment more than beauty or wit. It is a degree more old-fashioned than styles which are so much older as to become new by revival; that is to say, its fashion was current within our own recollection and is now passing away. Some forms put on a new type with each successive period, such as blank-verse and the irregular ode-measures in which Lowell, Taylor, and Stoddard have been successful. Whittier uses these rarely, and to less advantage than his ballad-verse. He has conformed less than any one but Holmes to the changes of the day. Imagine him with an etching-needle, tracing the deft lines of a triolet or villanelle! If he could, and would, it would be seen that when one leaves a natural vein, the yield, lacking what is characteristic, is superfluous. Even his recent sonnets, "Requirement," "Help," etc., are little more than fourteen-line homilies. Those who know their author find something of him in them, but such efforts do not reveal him to a new acquaintance. A poet's voice must have a distinct quality to be heard above the general choir.

We turn to his early verse, as still acknowledged, to see in what direction his first independent step was made, and we note an effort to become a true American poet—to concern himself with the story and motive of his own land. For a time it was rather ineffective.

The author of "Mogg Megone" and "The Bride of Pennacook" was on the same trail with the New York squadron that sought the red man's path. It is queer, at this distance, to see the methods of Scott and Coleridge applied to the Indian legendary of Maine. Among works of this sort, however, these were the best preceding "Hiawatha." Longfellow had the tact to perceive that if the savage is not poetical his folk-lore may be made so. The prelude to Whittier's "Bridal" is quite modern and natural. It contains a suggestive plea that this experiment in a home field may not seem amiss even to those who are best pleased

"while wandering in thought,
Pilgrims of Romance o'er the olden world."

And, after all, "Mogg" was a planned and sustained effort, and full of promise. Its writer's later management of local themes was more to the point. The "Songs of Labor" are American chiefly in topic,—in manner they are much like what Mackay or Massey might have written,—yet they became popular, and their rhetorical flow adapted them to recitation in the country schools. The poet's distinctive touch first appears in the legendary ballads which now precede the "Voices of Freedom" in his late editions. "The New Wife and the Old" is almost our best specimen of a style that Mrs. Hemans affected, and which Miss Ingelow, Mrs. Browning, and others have employed more picturesquely. It is a weird legend, musically told, and clearly the lyric of a poet. The early Quaker pieces are as good, and have all the traits of his verse written forty years afterward. His first ballads give the clew to his genius, and now make it apparent that most of his verse may be considered without much regard to dates of production. "Cassandra Southwick," alone, showed where his strength lay: of all our poets he is the most natural balladist, and Holmes comes next to him. The manner of that poem doubtless was suggested by Macaulay's "Battle of Ivry," and nothing could better serve the purpose. The colonial tone is well maintained. Here is a touching picture of the inspired maid's temptation to recant, of her endurance, trial, and victory. A group, also, of the populace—cloaked citizens, grave and cold, hardy sea-captains, and others—gathered where

"on his horse, with Rawson, his cruel clerk at hand,
Sat dark and haughty Endicott, the ruler of the land."

The bigoted priest, a "smiter of the meek," is a type that was to reappear in our poet's scornful indictments of the divines who, within pub-

lic remembrance, upheld the slavery system under the sanction of Noah's curse of Canaan. This ballad is well-proportioned, and thus escapes the defect of "The Exiles," which is otherwise a good piece of idiomatic verse.

On the whole, it is as a balladist that Whittier displays a sure metrical instinct. The record of the Quakers has always served his muse, from the date of "Cassandra Southwick" to the recent production of "The Old South," "The King's Missive," and "How the Women went from Dover." Neither Bernard Barton nor Bayard Taylor is so well entitled to the epithet of the Quaker Poet. His Quaker strains, chanted while the sect is slowly blending with the world's people, seem like its swan-song. It is worth noting that of the nine American poets discussed in these essays, one is still a Friend, and two others, Whitman and Taylor, came of Quaker parentage on both sides. The strong ballad, "Barclay of Ury," would be almost perfect but for the four moralizing stanzas at the close. It is annoying to see a fine thing lowered, and even in moral effect, by an offense against the ethics of art. Whittier's successes probably have been scored most often through ballads of our eastward tradition and supernaturalism, such as those pertaining to witchcraft,—a province which, from "Calef in Boston" to "The Witch of Wenham," he never has long neglected. Some of his miscellaneous ballads are idyllic; others, in strong relief, were inspired by incidents of the War, during which our non-combatant sounded more than one blast, like that of Roderick, worth a thousand men. His ballads vary as much in excellence as in kind; among the most noteworthy are "Mary Garvin," "Parson Avery," "John Underhill," and that pure bit of melody and feeling, the lay of "Marguerite." Yet some of the poems which he classes in this department properly are eclogues, or slow-moving narratives. He handles well a familiar measure; when aiming at something new, as in "The Ranger," he usually is less at ease, despite the fact that the nonpareil of his briefer pieces is thoroughly novel in form and refrain, and doubtless chanced to come to him in such wise. "Skipper Ireson's Ride" certainly is unique. Dialect-poems are too often unfaithful or unpoetic. Imagination, humor, and dramatic force are found in the ballad of the Marblehead skipper's dole, and its movement is admirable. The culmination is more effective than is usual in a piece by Whittier. We have the widow of the skipper's victim saying "God has touched him! why should we?"—an old dame, whose only son has perished, bidding them "Cut the rogue's tether and let him run"; and

"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!"

The change of feeling is indicated by the single word "poor." This is only a minor piece, but quantity is the plane, and quality the height, of lyrical verse. Were it not for two of Collins's briefest poems, where would his name be?

A balladist should be a good reciter of tales. Our poet's prose work on "The Supernaturalism of New England" was devoted to the ghost and witch stories of his own neighborhood. In general design his chief story-book in verse, "The Tent on the Beach," like Longfellow's "Tales of a Wayside Inn,"—the first series of which it post-dated and did not equal,—follows the oft-borrowed method of Boccaccio and Chaucer. The home tales of this group are the best, among them "The Wreck of Rivermouth" and "Abraham Davenport." Throw out a ballad or two, and, but for a want of even finish, "The Tent on the Beach" might be taken for a portion of Longfellow's extended work. As a bucolic poet of his own section, rendering its pastoral life and aspect, Whittier surpasses all rivals. This is established chiefly by work that increased, after he reached middle age, with a consciousness of his lost youth. In some breathing-spell from the stress of his reform labors, he longed for the renewal of

"boyhood's painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day,
Health that mocks the doctor's rules,
Knowledge never learned of schools."

His eye fell upon the Barefoot Boy, and memory brought back a time when he too was

"rich in flowers and trees,
Humming-birds and honey-bees."

To rate the country life at its worth, one must have parted from it long enough to become a little tired of that for which it was exchanged. The best eclogues are those which, however simple, have a feeling added by the cast of thought. Poets hold Nature dear when refined above her. Goldsmith, after years of wandering; Burns, when too well acquainted with the fickle world. The maker of rural verse, moreover, should be country-bred, or he will fall short. Unless Nature has been his nurse in childhood, he never will read with ease the text of her story-book. The distinction between artifice and sincerity is involved. Watteau's pictures are exquisite in their way, but Millet gave us the real thing. Long-

fellow's rural pieces were done by a skilled workman, who could regard his themes objectively and put them to good use. Lowell delights in outdoor life, and his Yankee studies are perfect; still, we feel that he is, intellectually and socially, miles above the people of the vale. Whittier is of their blood, and always the boy-poet of the Essex farm, however advanced in years and fame. They are won by the sincerity and ingenuousness of his verse, rooted in the soil and native as the fern and wild rose of the wayside. His brother-poets are more exact: which of them would hit upon "Maud" as a typical farm-girl's name? But incongruities are the sign-manual of a rural bard, as one can discover from Burns's high-sounding letters and manifestoes. Whittier himself despises a sham pastoral. There is good criticism, a clear sense of what was needed, in his paper on Robert Dinsmore, the old Scotch bard of his childhood. He says of rural poetry that "the mere dilettante and the amateur ruralist may as well keep their hands off. The prize is not for them. He who would successfully strive for it must be himself what he sings,—part and parcel of the rural life, . . . one who has added to his book-lore the large experience of an active participation in the rugged toil, the hearty amusements, the trials and pleasures he describes." I need not dwell upon our poet's fidelity to the landscape and legends of the Eastern shore and the vales of the Piscataqua and Merrimack. Those who criticize his pastoral spirit as lacking Bryant's breadth of tone, Emerson's penetration, and Thoreau's detail, confess that it is honest and that it comes by nature. His most vivid pictures are of scenes which lie near his heart, and relate to common life — to the love and longing, the simple joys and griefs, of his neighbors at work and rest and worship. Lyrics such as "Telling the Bees," "Maud Muller," and "My Playmate" are miniature classics; of this kind are those which confirmed his reputation and still make his volumes real household books of song.

These rustic verses, as we have seen, came like the sound of falling waters to jaded men and women. Years ago, when "Snow-Bound" was published, I was surprised at the warmth of its reception. I must have underrated it in every way. It did not interest one not long escaped from bounds, to whom the poetry of action then was all in all. And in truth such poetry, conceived and executed in the spirit of art, is of the higher grade. But I now can see my mistake, a purely subjective one, and do justice to "Snow-Bound" as a model of its class. Burroughs well avows it to be the "most faithful picture of our north-

ern winter that has yet been put into poetry." If his discussion had not been restricted to "Nature and the Poets," he perhaps would have added that this pastoral gives, and once for all, an ideal reproduction of the inner life of an old-fashioned American rustic home; not a peasant-home,—far above that in refinement and potentialities,—but equally simple, frugal, and devout; a home of which no other land has furnished the coadequate type.

This poem is not rich in couplets to be quoted for their points of phrase and thought. Point, decoration, and other features of modern verse are scarcely characteristic of Whittier. In "Snow-Bound" he chose the best subject within his own experience, and he made the most of it. Taken as a whole, it is his most complete production, and a worthy successor to "The Deserted Village" and "The Cotter's Saturday Night." Here is that air which writers of quality so often fail to capture. "Hermann and Dorothea," "Enoch Arden," even "Evangeline," memorable for beauty of another kind, leave the impression that each of their authors said, as Virgil must have said, "And now I will compose an idyl." Whittier found his idyl already pictured for him by the camera of his own heart. It is a work that can be praised, when measured by others of the sort, as heartily as we praise the "Biglow Papers" or "Evangeline," and one that ranks next to them as an American poem. This "Winter Idyl" is honestly named. Under the title, however, is a passage from Cornelius Agrippa on the "Fire of Wood," followed by Emerson's matchless heralding of the snow-storm. Devices of this kind add to the effect of such a poem, only, as "The Ancient Mariner." The texts are needless at the outset of a work whose lovely and unliterary cast is sufficient in itself. From the key struck at the opening to the tender fall at the close, there is a sense of proportion, an adequacy and yet a restraint, not always observed in Whittier. This is a sustained performance that conforms to the maxim *ne quid nimis*. Its genuineness is proved by a severe test, the concord with which imaginative passages glide into homely, realistic verse:

"The wind blew east: we heard the roar
Of Ocean on his wintry shore,
And felt the strong pulse throbbing there
Beat with low rhythm our inland air.

"Meanwhile we did our nightly chores,—
Brought in the wood from out of doors,
Littered the stalls, and from the mows
Raked down the herd's-grass for the cows;
Heard the horse whinnying for his corn;
And, sharply clashing horn on horn,
Impatient down the stanchion rows
The cattle shake their walnut bows."

The gray day darkens to

"A night made hoary with the swarm
And whirl-dance of the blinding storm;

The white drift piled the window-frame,
And through the glass the clothes-line posts
Looked in like tall and sheeted ghosts."

The poet's child-vision makes this fancy natural and not grotesque. The whole transfiguration is recalled:

"The old familiar sights of ours
Took marvelous shapes, strange domes and towers

Rose up where sty or corn-crib stood,
Or garden-wall, or belt of wood;

The bridle-post an old man sat
With loose-flung coat and high cocked hat;
The well-curb had a Chinese roof;
And even the long sweep, high aloof,
In its slant splendor, seemed to tell
Of Pisa's leaning miracle."

More imaginative touches follow:

"The shrieking of the mindless wind,
The moaning tree-boughs swaying blind,
And on the glass the unmeaning beat
Of ghostly finger-tips of sleet.

From the crest
Of wooded knolls that ridged the west,
The sun, a snow-blown traveler, sank
From sight beneath the smothering bank."

The building and lighting of the wood-fire, the hovering family group that

"watched the first red blaze appear,
Heard the sharp crackle, caught the gleam
On whitewashed wall and sagging beam,"

the rude-furnished room thus glorified and transformed, while even

"The cat's dark silhouette on the wall
A couchant tiger's seemed to fall,"—

all this is an interior painted by our Merrimack Teniers. His hand grows free in artless delineations of each sharer of the charmed blockade: the father, with his stories of woodcraft and adventure; the Quaker mother rehearsing tales from Sewell and Chalkley "of faith fire-winged by martyrdom"; then a foil to these, the unlettered uncle "rich in lore of fields and brooks,"

"A simple, guileless, childlike man,
Content to live where life began";

the maiden aunt; the elder sister, full of self-sacrifice, a true New England girl; lastly, the "youngest and dearest," seated on the braided mat,

"Lifting her large, sweet, asking eyes."

The guests are no less vividly portrayed. The schoolmaster, distinct as Goldsmith's, is of an original type. The group is completed, with an

instinct for color and contrast, by the introduction of a dramatic figure, the half-tropical, prophetic woman, who was born to startle,

"on her desert throne,
The crazy Queen of Lebanon
With claims fantastic as her own."

The poem returns to its theme, and records the days of farm-house life during the chill embargo of the snow, until

"a week had passed
Since the great world was heard from last."

But the treading oxen break out the highways, the rustic carnival of sledding and sleighing is at hand,

"Wide swung again our ice-locked door,
And all the world was ours once more."

From the subject thus chosen and pursued, an unadventured theme before, our poet has made his masterpiece. Its readers afterward loved to hear his voice, whether at its best or otherwise; and the more so for his pleased and assured reflection,

"And thanks untraced to lips unknown
Shall greet me like the odors blown
From unseen meadows newly mown."

A claim that he has found, and preserved in fit and winning verse, the poetic aspect of his own section, can be grounded safely on this idyl. We return from the work in which his taste is most effectual to that inspired by his life-long convictions. It is in this that the faults heretofore noted are most common, but here also his natural force is at its height, and results from what is lacking in some of his group—the element of passion. The verse of his period, especially the New England verse, is barren enough of this. For what there was, and is, of love-poetry we must look south of the region where poets are either too fortunate or too self-controlled to die because a woman's fair. The song of the Quaker bard is almost virginal, in so far as what we term the master-passion is concerned. Its passion comes from the purpose that heated his soul and both strengthened and impeded lyrical expression. Active service in any strife, even the most humane, is unrest, and therefore hostile to the perfection of art. But the conflict often engenders in its cloud the flash of eloquence and song. Three-fourths of Whittier's anti-slavery lyrics are clearly effusions of the hour; their force was temporal rather than poetic. There are music and pathos in "The Virginia Slave Mother," and "The Slave Ship" is lurid and grotesque enough to have furnished Turner with his theme. The poet's deep-voiced scorn and invective rendered his anti-slavery verse a very different thing from Longfellow's, and made

the hearer sure of his "effectual calling." Even rhetoric becomes the outburst of true passion in such lines as these upon "Elliott":

"Hands off! thou tithed-fat plunderer! play
No trick of priestcraft here!
Back, puny lordling! darest thou lay
A hand on Elliott's bier?"

A little of this, however, goes quite far enough in poetry. As a writer of personal tributes, whether pæans or monodies, the reform bard, with his peculiar faculty of characterization, has been happily gifted. Scarcely one of these that might not be retouched to advantage, but they are many and various and striking. John Randolph lives for us in the just balancing, the masterly and sympathetic portraiture, of Whittier's fine elegy. Channing, Elliott, Pius IX., Foster, Rantoul, Kosuth, Sumner, Garibaldi,—all these historic personages are idealized by this poet, and haloed with their spiritual worth; his tributes are a lyrical commentary, from the minstrel's point of view, upon an epoch now gone by. The wreath his aged hands have laid upon the tomb of Garrison is a beautiful and consecrated offering. One of his memorable improvisations was "Ichabod," the lament for Webster's defection and fall,—a tragical subject handled with lyric power. In after years, his passion tempered by the flood of time, he breathes a tenderer regret in "The Lost Occasion":

"Thou shouldst have lived to feel below
Thy feet Disunion's fierce upthrow,—
The late-sprung mine that underlaid
Thy sad concessions vainly made.

Ah, cruel fate, that closed to thee,
O sleeper by the Northern sea,
The gates of opportunity!"

But the conception of "Ichabod" is most impressive; those darkening lines were graven too deeply for obliteration. In thought we still picture the deserted leader, the shadow gathering about his "august head," while he reads such words as these:

"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!"

Among our briefer poems on topics of dramatic general interest, I recall but one which equals this in effect,—and that, coming from a hand less familiar than Whittier's, is now almost unknown. I refer to the "Lines on a Great Man Fallen," written by William W. Lord, after the final defeat of Clay, and in

scorn of the popular judgment that to be defeated is to fall. The merit of this eloquent piece has been strangely overlooked by the makers of our literary compilations.

It is matter of history that our strictest clerical monitors, during the early struggle for abolition, opposed agitation of the slavery question, and often with a rancor that Holy Willie might envy. Not even this one-sided *odium theologicum* could long debar Whittier from the respect of the church-going classes, for he is the most religious of secular poets, and there is no gainsaying to a believer the virtues of one who guides his course by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. A worshipful spirit, a savor "whose fragrance smells to heaven," breathes from these pages of the Preacher-Poet's song. The devotional bent of our ancestors was the inheritance of his generation. Domesticity, patriotism, and religion were, and probably still are, American characteristics often determining an author's success or failure. A reverent feeling, emancipated from dogma and imbued with grace, underlies the wholesome morality of our national poets. No country has possessed a group, equal in talent, that has presented more willingly whatsoever things are pure, lovely, and of good report. There is scientific value in an influence, during a race's formative period, so clarifying to the general conscience. We have no proof that the unmorality of a people like the French, with exquisite resources at command, can evolve an art or literature greater than in the end may result from the virile chastity of the Saxon mind. Whittier is the Galahad of modern poets, not emasculate, but vigorous and pure; he has borne Christian's shield of faith and sword of the Spirit. His steadfast insistence upon the primitive conception of Christ as the ransom of the oppressed had an effect, stronger than argument or partisanship, upon the religiously inclined; and of his lyrics, more than of those by his fellow-poets, it could be averred that the songs of a people go before the laws. Undoubtedly a flavor smacking of the caucus, the jubilee, and other adjutants of "the cause" is found in some of his polemic strains; but again they are like the trumpeting of passing squadrons, or the muffled drum-beat for chieftains fallen in the fray. The courage that endures the imputation of cowardice, as in "Barclay of Ury," the suffering of man for man, the cry of the human, never fail to move him. He celebrates all brave deeds and acts of renunciation. The heroism of martyrs and resistants, of the Huguenot, the Vaudois, the Quakers, the English reformers, serves him for many a song and ballad. At every pause after some new de-

votion, after some supreme offering by one of his comrades, it was the voice of Whittier that sang the pæan and the requiem. His cry,

"Thou hast fallen in thine armor,
Thou martyr of the Lord!"

compares with Turgueneff's thought of the Russian maiden crossing the threshold of dishonor and martyrdom, the crowd crying "Fool!" without, while from within and above a rapturous voice utters the words, "Thou saint!" His sympathy flows to prisoners, emancipationists, throughout the world; and in "The May-Flower" he has a lurking kindness even for the Puritans,—but of the sort that Burns extends to Auld Hornie. This compassion reaches a climax in the lyric of the two angels who are commissioned to ransom hell itself. The injunction to beware of the man of one book applies to the poet whose Bible was interpreted for him by a Quaker mother. Its letter rarely is absent from his verse, and its spirit never. His hymns, than which he composes nothing more spontaneously, are so many acts of faith. The emancipationists certainly fought with the sword in one hand and the Bible in the other,—and Whittier's hymns were on their lips. The time came when these were no longer of hope, but of thanksgiving. Often his sacred numbers, such as the "Invocation," have a sonorous effect and positive strength of feeling. It was by the common choice of our poets that he wrote the "Centennial Hymn"; no one else would venture where the priest of song alone should go. The composition begins imposingly:

"Our fathers' God! from out whose hand
The centuries fall like grains of sand";

and it is difficult to see how a poem for sacred music, or for such an occasion, could be more adequately wrought.

His occasional and personal pieces reveal his transcendental habit of thought. We find him imagining the after-life of the good, the gifted, the maligned. The actuality of his conceptions is impressive:

"I have friends in spirit-land;
Not shadows in a shadowy band,
Not others, but themselves, are they."

The change is only one from twilight into dawn:

"Thou livest, Follen! — not in vain
Hath thy fine spirit meekly borne
The burthen of Life's cross of pain."

And in "Snow-Bound" he thus invokes a sister of his youth:

"And yet, dear heart, remembering thee,
Am I not richer than of old?
Safe in thy immortality,
What change can reach the wealth I hold?"

Whittier's religious mood is far from being superficial and temporary. It is the life of his genius, out of which flow his ideas of earthly and heavenly content. In outward observance he is loyal to the simple ways of his own sect, and still a frequenter of the Meeting, where

"from the silence multiplied
By these still forms on either side,
The world that time and sense have known
Falls off and leaves us God alone."

God should be most, he says,

"where man is least;
So, where is neither church nor priest,
And never rag of form or creed
To clothe the nakedness of,—
Where farmer-folk in silence meet,—
I turn my bell-unsummoned feet."

He clings in this wise to the formal formlessness of the Quakers, as he would cling, doubtless, to the usages of any church in which he had been bred, provided that its creed rested upon the cardinal doctrines of the Master. Channing seemed to him a hero and saint, with whom he could enter into full communion:

"No bars of sect or clime were felt,—
The Babel strife of tongues had ceased,—
And at one common altar knelt
The Quaker and the priest."

With this liberal inclusion of all true worshipers, he is so much the more impatient of clerical bigotry. "Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" has been often on his lips,—sometimes the outbreak of downright wrath:

"Woe to the priesthood! woe
To those whose hire is with the price of blood,—
Perverting, darkening, changing, as they go,
The searching truths of God!"

at other times varied with grim and humorous contempt, as in "The Pastoral Letter" and "The Haschish"; and never more effectively than in the vivid and stinging ballad of the fugitive slave-girl, captured in the house of God, in spite of tearful and defying women's eyes, and of the stout hands that rise between "the hunter and the flying." Down comes the parson, bowing low:

"Of course I know your right divine
To own and work and whip her;
Quick, deacon, throw that Polyglot
Before the wench, and trip her!"

The basic justification of Whittier's religious trust appears to be the "inward light" vouchsafed to a nature in which the prophet and the poet are one. This solvent of doubt removes him alike from the sadness of Clough and Arnold and the paganism of certain other poets. In the striking "Questions of Life," a piece which indicates his highest intellectual

mark and is in affinity with some of Emerson's discourse, he fairly confronts his own share of our modern doubts; questioning earth, air, and heaven; perplexed with the mystery of our alliance to the upper and lower worlds; asking what is this

"centred self, which feels and is;
A cry between the silences?"

He finds no resource but to turn, from

"book and speech of men apart
To the still witness of my heart."

His repose must come from the direction in which the Concord transcendentalists also have sought for it, the soul's temple irradiated by the presence of the inward light. I have seen a fervent expression of this belief, in a voluntary letter of Whittier's, to a poet who had written an ode concerning intuition as the refuge of the baffled investigator. In fine, the element of faith gives a tone to the whole range of his verse, both religious and secular, and more distinctively than to the work of any other living poet of equal reputation. What he has achieved, then, is greatly due to a force which is the one thing needful in modern life and art. Faith, of some kind, in things as they are or will be, has elevated all great works of human creation. The want of it is felt in that insincere treatment which weakens the builder's, the painter's, and the poet's appeal; since faith leads to rapture and that to exaltation,—the *passio vera*, without which art gains no hold upon the senses and the souls of men.

v.

THE leaders of our recent poetic movement, with the exception of Longfellow,—who, like Tennyson and Browning, devoted himself wholly to ideal work,—seem to have figured more distinctively as personages, in both their lives and writings, than their English contemporaries. This remark certainly applies to Poe, Emerson, Whitman, Holmes, and Lowell, and to none more clearly than to the subject of this review. His traits, moreover, have begotten a sentiment of public affection, which, from its constant manifestation, is not to be overlooked in any judgment of his career. In recognition of a beautiful character, critics have not found it needful to measure this native bard with tape and callipers. His service and the spirit of it offset the blemishes which it is their wont to condemn in poets whose exploits are merely technical. A life is on his written page; these are the chants of a soldier, and anon the hymnal of a saint. Contemporary honor is not the

final test, but it has its proper bearing,—as in the case of Mrs. Browning, whom I have called the most beloved of English poets. Whittier's audience has been won by unaffected pictures of the scenes to which he was bred, by the purity of his nature, and even more by the *earnestness* audible in his songs, injurious as it sometimes is to their artistic purpose. Like the English sibyl, he has obeyed the heavenly vision, and the verse of poets who still trust their inspiration has its material, as well as spiritual, ebb and flow.

It must be owned that Goethe's calm distinction between the poetry of humanity and that of a high ideal is fully illustrated in Whittier's reform-verse. Yet even his failings have "leaned to virtue's side." Those who gained strength from his music to endure defeat and obloquy cherish him with a devotion beyond measure. For his righteous and tender heart, they would draw him with their own hands, over paths strewn with lilies, to a shrine of peace and remembrance. They comprehend his purpose — that he has "tried to make the world a little better, . . . to awaken a love of freedom, justice, and good will," and to have his name, like Ben Adhem's, enrolled as of "one that loved his fellow-men." In their opinion a grace is added to his poetry by the avowal, "I set a higher value on my name as appended to the Anti-Slavery Declaration of 1833, than on the title-page of my book."

Our eldest living poet, then, is canonized already by his people as one who left to silence his personal experience, yet entered thoroughly into their joy and sorrow; who has been, like a celibate priest, the consoler of the hearts of others and the keeper of his own; who has best known the work and feeling of the humble household, and whose legend surely might be *Pro aris et focis*. He has stood for New England, also, in his maintenance of her ancient protest against tyranny. He is the veteran of an epoch that can never recur; that scarcely can be equaled, however significant future periods may seem from the artist's point of view. The primitive life, the old struggle for liberty, are idealized in his strains. Much of both his strength and incompleteness is due to his Hebraic nature; for he is the incarnation of Biblical heroism, of the moral energy that breathed alike, through a cycle of change from dogma to reason, in Hooker, Edwards, Parker, Garrison, and Emerson. In his outbursts against oppression and his cries unto the Lord, we recognize the prophetic fervor, still nearer its height in some of his personal poems, which popular instinct long ago attributed to him. Not only of Ezekiel, but also of himself, he

chanted in that early time of anointment and consecration :

"The burden of a prophet's power
Fell on me in that fearful hour;
From off unutterable woes
The curtain of the future rose;
I saw far down the coming time
The fiery chastisement of crime;
With noise of mingling hosts, and jar
Of falling towers and shouts of war,
I saw the nations rise and fall,
Like fire-gleams on my tent's white wall."

Oliver Johnson's tribute, a complement to Parkman's, paid honor to "The Prophet Bard of America, poet of freedom, humanity, and religion; whose words of holy fire aroused the conscience of a guilty nation, and melted the fetters of the slaves." This eulogy from a comrade is the sentiment of a multitude in whose eyes their bard seems almost transfigured by the very words that might be soonest forgotten if precious for their poetry alone. I confess to my own share of this feeling. It may be that he has thought too little of the canons which it is our aim to discover and illustrate; yet it was to him above all that the

present writer felt moved to dedicate a volume with the inscription "Ad Vatem," and to invoke for him

"the Land that loves thee, she whose child
Thou art,—and whose uplifted hands thou long
Hast stayed with song arising like a prayer."

For surely no aged servant, his eyes having seen in good time the Lord's salvation, ever was more endowed with the love and reverence of a chosen people. They see him resting in the country of Beulah, and there solacing himself for a season. From this comfortable land, where the air is sweet and pleasant (and he is of those who here have "met abundance of what they had sought for in all their pilgrimage"), they are not yet willing to have him seek the Golden City of his visions, but would fain adjure him,—

"And stay thou with us long! vouchsafe us long
This brave autumnal presence, ere the hues
Slow-fading, ere the quaver of thy voice,
The twilight of thine eye, move men to ask
Where hides the chariot,—in what sunset vale,
Beyond thy chosen river, champ the steeds
That wait to bear thee skyward."

Edmund C. Stedman.

THE PRINCE'S LITTLE SWEETHEART.

SHE was very young. No man had ever made love to her before. She belonged to the people, the common people. Her parents were poor, and could not buy any wedding trousseau for her. But that did not make any difference. A carriage was sent from the Court for her, and she was carried away "just as she was," in her stuff gown—the gown the Prince first saw her in. He liked her best in that, he said; and, moreover, what odds did it make about clothes? Were there not rooms upon rooms in the palace, full of the most superb clothes for Princes' Sweethearts?

It was into one of these rooms that she was taken first. On all sides of it were high glass cases reaching up to the ceiling, and filled with gowns, and mantles, and laces, and jewels: everything a woman could wear was there, and all of the very finest. What satins, what velvets, what feathers and flowers! Even down to shoes and stockings, every shade and color of stockings, of the daintiest silk. The Little Sweetheart gazed, breathless, at them all. But she did not have time to wonder, for in a moment more she was met by attendants, some young, some old, all dressed gayly. She did not dream at first that they were servants, till they began, all together,

asking her what she would like to put on. Would she have a lace gown, or a satin? Would she like feathers, or flowers? And one ran this way, and one that; and among them all, the Little Sweetheart was so flustered she did not know if she were really alive and on the earth, or had been transported to some fairy land; and before she fairly realized what was being done, they had her clad in the most beautiful gown that was ever seen. White satin with gold butterflies on it, and a white lace mantle embroidered in gold butterflies; all white and gold she was, from top to toe, all but one foot: and there was something very odd about that. She heard one of the women whispering to the other, behind her back: "It is too bad there isn't any mate to this slipper. Well, she will have to wear this pink one. It is too big, but if we pin it up at the heel she can keep it on. The Prince really must get some more slippers."

And then they put on her left foot a pink satin slipper, which was so much too big it had to be pinned up in plaits at each side, and the pearl buckle on the top hid her foot quite out of sight. But the Little Sweetheart did not care. In fact she had no time to think, for the Queen came sailing in and