



POETS OVER-SEA.

A GOSSIP ON THE RECENT POETRY OF AMERICA.

By GLEESON WHITE, Author of "Some Poetry we Read," "Ballades and Rondeaux," etc.

CHAPTER I.

It was with a light heart that I projected a campaign to descend upon the recent poetry of America, to occupy not only its strongholds but every minor position, and bring captive its best and noblest, to be imprisoned for a while in these columns. It is with a sense of defeat that I marshal together the results and present them in haphazard fashion to the readers of *THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER*. The drift-weed which had floated to our shores of late, and the exotic blossoms, that, opening under Western skies, had been hidden between leaves of the many periodicals that come over to us, urged me, Columbus-fashion, to explore the source of their origin; but the overwhelming material that appeared leaves me in a mood near akin to sheer despair. Mrs. Partington, so good at a puddle, was powerless to mop back the Atlantic. To criticise a continent in a column, or even annotate the poesy of a new nation in a nutshell, needs either an infinity of previous knowledge of the subject, or sublime egotism. It may be brave sport for the critic to decide in a quarter of an hour the value of the labours of patient workers for a quarter of a century, but such a perilous task is only justified by that success which must needs be rare. In place, therefore, of an exhaustive notice and critical glance over the whole harvest of the last growth of American poetry, and a judicial summing-up recording its value in to-day's literature, or even a mere catalogue of authors and their volumes, a much more modest programme is forced upon me: and the ambitious scheme vanishes, to be replaced by a mere gossip upon the more noticeable of the verse-makers of to-day in the United States—not even rising to the dignity of a lecture or essay, but merely, as it were, going to a bookcase well filled with volumes hardly known on this side of the ocean, and taking down book after book at random, to make some little effort to introduce it to new readers. We all know how pleasantly a bibliophile can make an hour pass, as he lovingly displays the treasures of his collection, reading an extract there, or passing to us an open volume at the well known page where the very heart of the book beats in a short paragraph, and so by adding a word here and there, gives in desultory fashion a more fairly coherent summary of his stores than his visitor could glean if left to rummage as he pleased. For in that case he would probably either weary of his quest, or else be so enthralled by some one volume that chimed with his particular mood, that he would confine himself to it solely, leaving all the others untouched.

Here is the bookcase with its hundred or so of new volumes of American poetry, the garnered crop of a very few years; but whether

the book-lover who owns them can justify his position, and glean the ripest fruits and most rare blossoms, is doubtful; at least he does it as a labour of love, since every volume brings back kindly thoughts of the courtesy of the far off writers, who sent it over seas to help his purpose.

A few general observations may be risked, for what they are worth, and given merely as the opinion of one who has tried to grasp the main feature of this group of poetry. The fecundity of the rhymester of the States is undoubted; not even our own highly productive island shows more "new poems" in a year. Nor is there so far any sign of the advent of an epoch-making poet among the great chorus. In bulk, it is marked by the character of our own song of to-day—exceedingly high level of its mechanism, no paucity of imagination, a profusion of pretty fantasies and slightly varied similes—doing little things excellently well, but rarely attempting the greatest. One personality, unique and removed by date from the period immediately under notice, is yet so strange to the bulk of English readers, that later on it will be necessary to our purpose to include Walt Whitman.

Apart from this unique figure, it must be candidly said that there is no name of supreme power, towering over all its fellows among the younger school of the United States, any more than in England.

Of Longfellow, Poe, Bryant, Emerson, and the rest of the dead singers, no word to-day; nor even of Lowell, Holmes, or Whittier. They, with many others, are household words on both sides of the Atlantic. And since for sake of space a limit must be drawn, many names of poets either dead, or whose life-work was given to the public ten or twenty years back, must be left out here. The group to be noticed may be held to correspond roughly to our Austin Dobson, Andrew Lang, William Morris, George Meredith, A. M. F. Robinson, to choose a few names entirely at random. That is, of singers who have already won high place among literary people, but who are, compared with the position of Tennyson, or even Swinburne and Browning, not yet quite recognised by the great public, who are slow to make friends with new men, however staunch and lasting when the acquaintance has once fairly started.

From American poets we expect much; and perhaps bearing in mind that without rudeness it may be said their literature is a thing of yesterday only, too much. For one of the first demands we make is that theirs shall be a native and non-English song. Now although there are signs of this quality in their work,

yet it must be confessed it is not at present the dominant note. And remembering how the tradition of their art must needs commence, with our own, at the pure well-head of English poesy—Master Chaucer—and flow in the same channel down to this century, it can scarcely be a surprise that echoes of many a cadence dear to English ears are heard in their strain. Yet there is without doubt a subtle distinction which seems to indicate among their singers more intimate familiarity with certain strongly individual voices of the past, than is the case with our own younger writers, side by side with a less comprehensive grasp of the whole sequence of the art amongst us. Again, English poetry is not quite so exclusively the fountain on which they draw, as with us. Much of their verse suggests familiarity with other European song, with, at the same time, it may be a slighter acquaintance with the classics of Greece and Rome, betrayed chiefly by the use of more available material than an English scholar would care to own, that is to say, as if the classical allusions came from a Bohn's translation, or Lemprière, and not at first hand from the texts themselves. This may be hair-splitting or mere conjecture; but to differentiate their poesy is not quite easy. Yet even as a picture by Abbey, old English though its subject be, has a Dutch Knickerbocker flavour not quite our former ideal of Herrick's England, so their verse has a piquant flavour that just removes it from ours, adding the charm a mere trace of a provincial accent will sometimes lend to a well educated voice.

It is hard to exact at once entire originality of motive and conception from a new school of writers who work in the old tongue; even individual creators have used the manner of their predecessors. In music, hardly any great master has found his own tongue at first. For his earlier message he has chosen to modify accepted forms and well worn phrases, until gaining strength, and confidence in his own powers, he bursts impetuously into his own new song, not less new because of his previous restraint, but really more fresh because evolved in due order in place of being merely a sudden and abnormal new creation.

That their future individuality will be very marked, there is much already to prove. But it must not be forgotten that we also are in a productive state, and borrow at times the local colour and new features of their work directly it becomes popular. Poe and Bret Harte, to take two diverse names, will support this assertion. Anyone now reading either of these authors for this first time would fail to realise the novelty of their method, as so many on both sides of the Atlantic have

mimicked their mannerisms, and made the more prominent peculiarities of their style common property.

But generalisation is needless, and a start must be made, and surely *place aux dames* must rule in these pages even more than elsewhere, so a few of the daughters of the great republic who have lately joined her choir must claim first notice. In gauging the worth of a woman's contribution to literature, the infallible critic has a two-edged sword, warranted to slay without mercy, and to hew through the armour of any poetic Joan of Arc with deadly skill. For it cuts both ways. First, it holds that all woman's work in the arts is essentially feminine, lacking vigour, comprehensiveness, and the nobler virile qualities the critic marks off as the property of the other sex only. Next, that if by chance a George Eliot uses these very qualities, then it is not really woman's work at all, but purely masculine work accidentally produced by a female, but lacking in all the true attributes and the dainty elegance, etc., of the feminine mind. Thus armed, he easily does his work. It is not always "he" in this case, for it is temptingly easy for a woman, by adopting this slashing treatment, to demolish her rivals and indirectly proclaim her unique individuality at the same time. If space allowed, so clumsy a paradox could be easily refuted, but it would be killing a dead bogie, for no one can seriously refuse the possession of the true creative power to the women of to-day. In fiction, poem, and song, names second, in their own way, to none come too readily to need quotation.

The awkward question of precedence next arises. Scorning the easy refuge of alphabetical sequence, it seemed best to pick at random, for the date of birth of each writer would be hardly a graceful mode to regulate the order of notice. So blind chance must be the goddess to introduce the few who represent, more or less fully, youngest America of to-day. Not, of course, because they are all equally youthful in years; but, regarded from our own standpoint, the latest aspirants to the poet's bays—for the uncomfortable word "poetess" is at once a slight to the singer and a vulgarity to the reader; no one talks of a paintress, or musicianess, or a preacheress, or a doctress; why then a poetess?

A book, "John Ward, Preacher," has lately made the name of Margaret Deland familiar to us, and on the title-page of that much-praised book—about which, probably, a great deal more will be heard yet—we find "By the author of 'An Old Garden.'" This little volume, in its coat of white parchment and "gaily flowered gown," charms by its exterior being a booklet so daintily clad to be worthy of the boudoir of a princess. In its naïvely wrought lyrics there is a charm not easy to analyse. Herrick is probably the chief favourite of its author, and who dares object to the echo of the loved rhymes of the old Vicar of Dean Prior, here mimicked with such grace?

In the fore-motto to the group—and it is noticeable how often the prefatory rhyme betrays the true individuality of the author, more than all his more ambitious attempts—we find a suggestion of the influence of his verse.

"Put all thy faith in Time,
Nor trust in me;
Grant Life, and Love, and Rhyme,
Eternity.

The section that follows, giving title to the book, is heralded by a delightful word-painting of an old garden, followed by a series of

flower-pieces that may best speak for themselves in these two.

THE MORNING GLORY.

O maid!
I pray thee light
Both noon and night;
The envious dawn
Thou lookest on
Is too soon gone;
Then stay
The day,
I pray!

THE ROSEMARY.

My sweet maid Rosemary—
(Her gown it is so plain
E'en vanity
Dressed thus, could not be vain!)
Doth preach to me
When this my life doth seem
All small and mean
And full of briers to be;
For in the rain or sun,
Cloaked all in modest gray,
This garden nun
Doth stand as though to pray.
Content, she never heeds
If flaunting Poppy scorns,
Nor marks that weeds
Do tear her gown with thorns;
She tells her beads
And lives her life with joy,
Her one employ
To fill some small, sweet needs!

Among the children's poems is a rhyme that has the true nursery ring.

Bright up into Bossy's eyes,
Looked the Daisy, boldly;
But, alas! to his surprise,
Bossy ate him coldly.
Listen, Daisies in the fields:
Hide away from Bossy!
Daisies make the milk she yields,
And her coat grow glossy.
So, each day she tries to find
Daisies nodding sweetly,
And although it's most unkind,
Bites their heads off neatly!

There is one powerful story-teller, Amélie Rives, who has not only produced verse of rare promise, but attempted already the highest form of the poet's art. So far her poetry has not been collected, and therefore it is not easy to speak of it as a whole. Yet if up to the high level of her stories, "A Brother to Dragons," "Virginia of Virginia," "The Quick and the Dead," and others, it will be indeed a notable volume. But it may be that, like George Eliot, she will always remain essentially a prose writer, although her periods at times are set in rhythm and rhyme, and that the thing said will be more noteworthy than the melody of its expression. "Herod and Mariamne," a tragedy in classical form, is her last and boldest attempt. That a popular periodical should dare to devote almost an entire number to such a work is surely without parallel. Imagine the surprise of the readers of *Temple Bar* or *Macmillan*, if they discovered a play in blank verse filling their beloved magazine! The tragedy at the publishing office that would follow would be serious, and the subscribers killed off thereby equal to the most gory needs of the poet. As "Herod and Mariamne" would suffer from quotation, and much of Miss Rives's work is at hand in *Harper's*,

Scribner's, and other magazines that have an English edition, it need not be extracted here. If one dared to prophesy the arrival of a new genius of the first order in these dead-level days, Amélie Rives would justify the rash act. The first feeling produced by her work is absolute wonder that a young girl should use such masterful methods and dare the highest. *Nor is her work crude* or merely ambitious; it is the quiet, restrained force that seems to put forward only a fraction of its possible strength, and to hold in reserve far greater powers, that fascinates the reader, and provokes anticipation so far realised in each succeeding instance. It is natural that the American public should have welcomed her so warmly, and creditable to their taste.

Although it is an unpleasant thing to own, yet of late years (witness their discovery of Fitzgerald's "Omar Khayyám," their recognition of Robert Louis Stevenson, and many another instance) they have shown a quicker appreciation of artistic excellence than our own people, who have spent their excitement upon "Called Back" and other sensational romances, which however good in their way, for the most part, cannot be ranked as serious art.

The two books, "Songs at the Start," and "The White Sail, and other poems," by Louise Imogen Guiney, are two volumes of verse distinguished by a very pretty fancy, and typical of to-day. To say that they echo and reflect older song is true, but not derogatory to the charm of the lyrics. It is a feature of the day, this facile, graceful verse, that is so good that it seems churlish to wish it were better; and yet at times, when the finish of the verse is forgotten and the thought expresses itself with more natural vigour, there is evidence of more than just polished and dainty versification.

"The White Sail" is too long to be extracted, and these two give no fair test of the author's powers; yet the fancy of the one and the cadences of the other may leave readers eager to turn to the books themselves.

PRIVATE THEATRICALS.

You were a haughty beauty, Polly
(That was in the play),
I was the lover melancholy
(That was in the play).
And when your fan and you receded,
And all my passion lay unheeded,
If still with tenderer words I pleaded,
That was in the play!
I met my rival in the gateway
(That was in the play),
And so we fought a duel straightway
(That was in the play).
But when Jack hurt my arm unduly,
And you rushed over, softened newly,
And kissed me, Polly! truly, truly,
Was that in the play?

MY SOPRANO.

Loving her, what should I fail to do for her?
Keep season on season sunny and blue for her,
Lengthen her days like a happy tale,
With thoughts all tender and hearts all true for her.
Ward her from trouble, good tidings bring to her.
Fight for her, laugh with her, comfort her, cling to her;
But if I were even a nightingale,
I wonder — if I should dare to sing to her.

(To be concluded.)



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PART II.



MR. THAXTER has won full and lasting appreciation in her own land, and turning over the pages of "The Cruise of the Mystery," and her "Poems," two of the five volumes she has written, the wonder is that she is not better known here. Her delight in nature, and the pure, honest joy in living, make her verses not merely a pleasure, but a mental tonic. In these days of morbid self-questioning, and querulous askings if life itself is worth living, she strikes a true and rare note. Much study of poetry, many estimable people contend, unfits the student for everyday work; but such cannot be said of Celia Thaxter's lyrics: the healthful optimism of her praise of living, her exquisite nature-pictures and strong humanity, are no feigned sentiment. One look at her portrait shows that the peace and joy of her song is the outcome of a glad heart, that looks for the best, and therefore finds evidence of it everywhere. Nor are her poems merely "moral and emotional"; they are full of delicate movement and exquisite play of light that only the true crystal flashes. In despair of doing justice to the poet herself, or proving the truth of this praise, the following will at least show one side of her work, and become probably favourites here, as they are in the United States.

A ROSE OF JOY.

For a Betrothal.

As when one wears a fragrant rose
Close to the heart, a rose most fair,
And while the day's life onward flows,
Forget that it is fastened there;

And wonders what delicious charm
Dwells in the air about, and whence
Come the rich wafts of perfume warm,
Subtly saluting soul and sense;

And then, remembering what it is,
Bends smiling eyes the flower above,
Adores its beauty and its bliss,
And looks on it with grateful love—

Even so I wear, O friend of mine,
The sweet thought of your happiness;
The knowledge of your joy divine
Is fragrant with a power to bless.

With the day's work preoccupied,
Vaguely, half conscious of delight,
Upborne as on a buoyant tide,
I wonder why life seems so bright.

Then memory speaks; then winter gray,
And age and cares that have no end
Touch one no more. I am to-day
Rich in the wealth that cheers my friend.

The last volume by Mrs. Harriett Prescott Spofford, entitled "Ballads about Authors," is a good idea, well worked out. Unfortunately for our purpose they are too large to quote, for the feeling that re-tells the old stories of Cowper and his hares, Collins burning his odes, Samuel Johnson in Uttoxeter Market, and the others, is most charming, and the rhythm and music of the pieces alike good. In an earlier volume there are not a few lyrics of great beauty. The three, picked almost at random, each show that a certain dignity of

thought as well as pleasant words are characteristic of their author's work.

THE PINE TREE.

Before your atoms came together
I was full grown, a tower of strength,
Seen by the sailors out at sea,
With great storms measuring all my length,

Making my mighty minstrelsy
Companion of the ancient weather.

Yours! Just as much as the stars that shiver

When the frost sparkles overhead!
Call yours as soon those viewless airs
That sing in the clear vault, and tread
The clouds! Less yours than theirs—
The fish-hawks swooping round the river!

In the primeval depths, embowering
My broad boughs with my branching peers,

My gums I spilled in precious drops—
Ay, even in those elder years
The eagle building in my tops,
Along my boughs the panther cowering.

Beneath my shade the red man slipping
Himself a shadow, stole away;
A paler shadow follows him!
Races may go, or races stay,
The cones upon my loftiest limb
The winds will many a year be stripping.

And there the hidden day be throwing
His fires, though dark the dead prime be,
Before the bird shakes off the dew.

Ah! what songs have been sung to me,
What songs will yet be sung, when you
Are dust upon the four winds blowing!

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

What love do I bring you? The earth,
Full of love, were far lighter,
The great hollow sky, full of love,
Something slighter.

Earth full and heaven full were less
Than the full measure given;
Nay, say a heart full—the heart
Holds earth and heaven.

CAVEFE, FELICES.

The orchards all a-flutter with pink,
Robins' twitter, and wild bees' humming,
Break the song with a thrill, to think
How sweet is life when summer is coming.

The maple burning a scarlet leaf,
The melting haze, and the south wind
blowing,

Charm the sting from the touch of grief,
For sweet is life when summer is going.

Oh, sweet, so sweet that the heat grows
chill,

Knowing the clouds will sweep the clover,
The leaf will redden, the bird sing still;
But for us how soon it will be over!

Miss Minnie Gillmore (daughter of the well-known bandmaster of America) in spite, or perhaps because of certain exaggeration and redundancy inseparable from the enthusiasm of youth, has created in her "Pipes from Prairie Land" a book that is purely American, being daringly original, not to say ab-original, in its smiles and phantasies. The wayward impulse of her lyrics, the naïve frankness of her humour, and now and again her American use of English as we know it, witches one almost against one's critical judgment. Her poetry might have been recited by the entirely lovable Miss Peggy, of the "Strange Adventure of a House

Boat," that William Black created to steal away our hearts. The pleasure of this volume is a real one; aiming not at the highest, it amply fulfils its intention, and comes with the keen freshness of the western air laden with the perfume of the primeval forest, or, to be more accurate, with the glamour we who know it not associate with the Wild West itself (in spite of recollections of a certain circus at Kensington). After so much verve, "splendidly faultless, icily null, simple perfection, nothing more," this is in itself justification of Miss Gillmore's singing, but there is more than mere quaintness, more than novel treatment. I know not how her own country values this young lady's work, but to an Englishman it has more charm than a reproduction of Keats, or a faint shadow of Matthew Arnold. The following poem is a sample of her more serious work:—

LIFE.

A Song of a White Throne circled
By a girdle of white fire,
Once on the flame God breathed
Filled with divine desire.
Out, at his breath there flickered
A single tongue of flame,
Paling the golden planets,
Putting the sun to shame.
It flashed through the flashing Saturn,
It flamed through the flaming Mars,
Flooded the skies with glory,
Glanced down the glowing stars;
Burst on the six-day Eden,
And since has the world been rife
With fruit of that flame from heaven—
The God-breathed flame of life.

This is the initial poem of a "Quintette of Song," whereof the other numbers are entitled "Love," "Song," "Peace," "Death," and in their harmony, complete with singular grace and power, a conception at once beautiful in design and happy in its treatment.

From the ideality of this group to the Bret Harte-like humour of the section entitled "In the Original Key," is a far cry, yet perchance none of the many who have tried the method of that distinctly unique poet have so justified the adoption of his mannerisms. "A Pioneer Poet" and "A Border Romance" are full of the local colour we have learned to accept as a true reflection of the wild camp life of the Far West. Miss Gillmore's own address to her critics should also be quoted, since it shows at once her strength and the naïve youthfulness which atones for much.

I pray you hear my song of a bird,
My song of a bird fledged newly;
She plumed her wings on a sunny day,
And flew to the far, free west away
To mountains misted blue;—

To heights that cloister the virgin snows;
To canyons by cool brooks purled,
To hills that warden the vale's retreats,
To grass-seas ridden by flower-fleets
With petal-sails unfurled.

When back one even, on homeward wing
She fluttered with long flight weary,
To kindred sheltered their nests among,
She shyly lilted a glad young song
Of mountain and of cyrie:—

Of twilight woods with their scents of pine,
Of the rose that rides the prairie,
Of still ravines where the cactus hides
And rivers tuning their rippled tides
To the west wind's vagary.

The wise birds listed her simple lay,
And sang, "She is joyous, truly,"
Her prelude-pipes soar no note above
The scale of youth, but she sings for love—
We will not carp unduly.

So the bird sang on, and year by year
More strong rose her song and sweeter;—
O! critics mine! may I pray you be
So kind as my fabled bird to me,
Whose voice is new to metre!

In a volume, "Afternoon Songs," Julia C. Dorr collects her later work, and as the poem that insists on quotation is rather beyond the limits of this article, it must say for itself all the pretty things one could say equally of many of its companions.

THREE LADDIES.

O sailors sailing north,
Where the wild surges roar,
And fierce winds and strong winds
Blow down from Labrador—
Have you seen my three brave laddies,
My merry, red-cheeked laddies,
Three bold, adventurous laddies,
On some tempestuous shore?

O sailors sailing south,
Where the seas are calm and blue,
And light clouds and soft clouds
Are floating over you,
Say, have you seen my laddies,
My three bright, winsome laddies,
My brown-haired, smiling laddies,
With hearts so leal and true?

O sailors sailing east,
Ask the seagulls sweeping by;
O sailors sailing west,
Ask the eagles soaring high,
If they have seen my laddies,
My careless, heedless laddies,
Three debonair young laddies,
Beneath the wide, wide sky.

O sailors, if you find them,
Pray send them back to me;
For them the winds go sighing
Through every lonely tree—
For these three wandering laddies,
My tender, bright-eyed laddies,
The laughter-loving laddies,
Whom they no longer see.

There are three men who love me,
Three men with bearded lips;
But oh! ye gallant sailors
Who sail the sea in ships—

In elf-land, or in cloudland,
Or on the dream-land shore,
Can you find the little laddies,
Whom I can find no more?
Three quiet, thoughtful laddies,
Three merry, winsome laddies,
Three rollicking, frolicking laddies,
On any far off shore?

In the preface to one of her volumes, Miss Ella Wheeler Wilcox owns to having published twelve hundred poems. Such a statement is enough to repel the best intentioned critic. Yet amid much work too hastily done, and mere facile rhyming not always correct in its prosody and metrical shape, there is evidence of a spontaneous feeling and graceful fancy. It is only just to own so much, but the deed is almost unpardonable. Twelve hundred poems—why, the masterpieces of the whole English tongue must needs be ransacked to make up half that number; and although courtesy both to sex and country demand reticence, yet protest must be entered against such a terrible example; for if the youthful face which greets us so pleasantly on the frontispiece be so deeply dyed with guilt, what in all conscience will be the account, if the long life, it is our duty and pleasure to wish the fair singer, be equally prolific for half a century more? Besides, how can a well meaning scribe show fair sample of such countless wares? So amid more worth quoting than at first reading seemed possible I take this one, "Esthetic," and regret that many more serious and successful attempts are for various reasons not possible to quote.

ESTHETIC.

In a garb that was guiltless of colors
She stood, with a dull, listless air—
A creature of dumps and of dolours,
But most undeniably fair.

The folds of her garment fell round her,
Revealing the curve of each limb;
Well-proportioned and graceful I found her,
Although quite alarmingly slim.

From the hem of her robe peeped one sandal—
"High art" was she down to her feet;
And though I could not understand all
She said, I could see she was sweet.

Impressed by her limpness and languor,
I proffered a chair near at hand;
She looked back a mild sort of anger,
Posed anew, and continued to stand.

Some praises I next tried to mutter
Of the fan that she held to her face:
She said it was "utterly utter,"
And waved it with languishing grace.

I then in a strain quite poetic
Begged her gaze on the bow in the sky;
She looked, said its curve was "æsthetic,"
But the "tone was too dreadfully high."

Her lovely face, lit by the splendour
That glorified landscape and sea,
Woke thoughts that were daring and tender:—
Did her thoughts, too, rest upon me?

"Oh, tell me," I cried, growing bolder,
"Have I in your musings a place?"
"Well, yes," she said, over her shoulder
"I was thinking of nothing in space."

In "The Heart of the Weed" (Nora Perry) are many charming songs, the space devoted to sonnets and the French metrical forms being very noticeable, for of those poets noted thus far none have touched the *triolet*, *rondeau*, or *ballade*, so popular in America to-day; but quotation is impossible. So, too, of "Clover Leaves" (Ella M. Baker), a garland of poesy gathered after the singer had joined the choir invisible.

And here perforce this first chapter must end, full of omissions, since poets like Edith W. Thomas, Lucy Larcom, Mrs. Fields, Mrs. Phelps, Julia Ward Howe, H.H. (Helen M. F. Jackson) Mrs. Mapes Dodge, and many another are omitted; but it is only want of space, not want of heart, nor lack of admiration for these and dozens of others that curtails the notice. In Stedman's "Poets of America" an ungallant critic is quoted who has a fling "at the plague of American authoresses;" satiety we know is apt to produce disgust, yet it proves only that too much of a good thing cannot be taken at once, not that too much is good for nothing. But conscious already of having exceeded the limit, the rest of the women singers of America cannot be even named here; fortunately every fresh shipment of the American magazines, that have so quietly but surely won a wide circle of friends in the mother country, brings echo of their melody to our shores, while to those who are not in the habit of perusing those periodicals, this brief foretaste may whet the appetite for the plentiful feast that awaits them.

VARIETIES.

THE COUNTRYMAN IN LONDON.

A native of Cumberland, who was the very mouthpiece of eloquence in his own county, visited London about half a century ago. When there he inquired at a shoemaker's shop for a pair of small shoes for his little girl at home, with pink heels, pointed toes, and cropt straps for clasps, which he expressed in the following provincial dialect:—

"I pray yee noo, han yee gatten any neatly, feetly shoen, poainted toen, pink'd at heel and cropped strops for clposes?"

"Sir," answered the shopkeeper, "what's that you say?"

"Why, I pray yee noo" [repeats as before].

"The family who speak French," said the shoemaker, "live next door."

SEEKING WHAT IS GOOD.—"I always," says the mother of the great Goethe, "seek out what is good in people, and leave what is bad to Him who made mankind, and knows how to round off the angles."

AFTER MARRIAGE.

A poetical woman, who found the cords of Hymen not so silky as she expected, once gave vent to her feelings in the following touching stanzas. The penultimate line is peculiarly comprehensive and expansive:

"When I was young I used to earn
My living without trouble;
Had clothes and pocket-money too,
And hours of pleasure double.

"I never dreamed of such a fate,
When I, a lass, was courted—
Wife, mother, nurse, seamstress, cook,
housekeeper, chambermaid, laundress,
dairywoman, and scrub generally, doing
the work of six
or the sake of being supported."

TEMPERANCE AND EXERCISE.—Temperance makes the faculties clear, and exercise makes them vigorous; it is temperance and exercise united that can alone ensure the fittest state for mental or bodily exertion.

CARRYING OFF AN HEIRESS.

Several years ago, when running away to get married at Gretna Green was not an uncommon occurrence, a young man well-known in London went to consult a legal authority of Lincoln's Inn about carrying off an heiress.

"You cannot do it without considerable risk," said the lawyer, "but let her mount a horse and hold the bridle and whip, do you then get up behind her, and you are run away with by her, in which case you are safe."

The next day, the lawyer who gave such good advice found that his own daughter had run away in the aforesaid manner with his client.

RICH AND POOR.—How superior is a poor man with a rich spirit to a rich man with a poor spirit! To borrow the expression of St. Paul, he is "as having nothing and yet possessing all things." While the other presents the melancholy reverse, he is as possessing all things, and yet having nothing.

men, mounted and armed, and rode out in all authority of the law to guard the king's highway.

It was a moonlight night, not clear and brilliant, but over-cast and stormy; the pale moon sailed through mighty banks of clouds, now emerging suddenly in a burst of wild, white light, now passing fretfully out of sight, leaving the world in darkness.

Black Jan Wood was thick with foliage; the leaves rustled and whispered together; the silence was so profound that at a great distance could be heard the measured trot of the travellers approaching and the champ of their horses' bits.

They rode in absolute silence, the three men close abreast, going at a good round trot, with right hand each on the pistol at the holster of his saddle, and with watchful, wary eyes peering into the dense thickets on all sides.

The moon passed behind a cloud; it was very dark, so dark that the three men drew rein to ride more cautiously, when suddenly, with a rush as if of a whirlwind, they found themselves attacked.

It was too dark to distinguish the number of their assailants, and the rapidity of the onslaught gave no time. John Mowbray's horse lay weltering in his blood, and two dismounted men were fighting over his body.

The struggle waxed fiercer; this would be no easy victory for the gentlemen of the road; both assailants and assailed were desperate.

Now, full on the ear came the

measured tread of disciplined men, a hoarse voice shouted "In the King's name!" and Sir Michael Newport and his men rode up at full trot.

The outlaws saw themselves surrounded, but they fought on as men only fight when hope is extinct.

At the very moment of his triumph a cold fear was in Sir Michael's heart. What if after all his terrible suspicion should be justified, and Captain Bob yet lived! How could he face his wife with her brother's blood upon his hands?

Duty first, the duty that he owed to his country and her laws, he would not allow himself to pause or think.

The moon came out once more, and poured her light on men struggling for dear life. Sir Michael's eyes lit on one of them, a slender figure closely masked; he saw that on his hat he wore the short black plume of Captain Bob.

"God help me!" he cried, with a bitter groan as he fired and shot him through the heart. One bound, not a sigh, not a gasp—the pistol had done its work surely.

Sir Michael returned it to his saddle-bow, and sat grimly waiting on his horse till the *mêlée* should be at an end.

It was over; two shot, two fled; the still, slender form lying flat on the sward, with one hand thrown outwards from which the pistol had dropped, was the body of the leader who had been the terror of the roads.

They would have shown it no tenderness, would have torn off the mask relentlessly, had not Sir Michael interposed.

"Be gentle," he said, hoarsely. "He was a gallant fellow; perhaps some spark of life yet lingers."

"Better not," growled John Mowbray, fiercely. "If you feel compassion for him, the pistol is kinder than the cord."

Sir Michael did not answer; he was off his horse, and was kneeling now beside the dead man.

The moon shone out brilliantly, remorselessly; the clouds rolled away in two great curtains, parting right and left; the light was strong, implacable, stern as truth.

Sir Michael on his knees undid the dead man's mask, shrinking from the blood that stained his hand. The ribbon was twice knotted, and he was uncertain in his movements; he stooped and cut it; the ribbon divided and a mass of long dark hair fell loosened on his hands. Shuddering, he shrank back on his knees.

All the spectators had gathered round, struck with awe. No one spoke, only Sir Michael breathed heavily like a man hissing through his teeth. The long hair hung about his hands, he could not disentangle it.

John Mowbray did not understand, but he felt some instinctive deep compassion; he stooped forward and with a reverent hand drew off the mask.

Then all drew back with a muffled cry, for the light fell white and pitilessly on a woman's face. Only Sir Michael fell forwards, face downwards, on the body of his wife.

(To be concluded.)

POETS OVER-SEA.

A GOSSIP ON THE RECENT POETRY OF AMERICA.

By GLEESON WHITE, Author of "Some Poetry we Read," "Ballades and Rondeaux," etc.

PART II.

THE YOUNGER MEN.

ALTHOUGH in the previous chapter full apology was offered for its desultory arrangement and arbitrary quotation from the authors noted therein, yet before proceeding to glance at the work of the younger men in the same fashion, it is needful to reiterate the purport of this gossip. In selecting names to be included, a certain number chose themselves, as it were, and could not be omitted. But of the crowd of those termed "Minor Poets," whether that disdainful adjective applies to the quality or quantity of their work, there is little definite reason to offer in explanation of the choice of one in preference to another. Accident and opportunity, the parents of so many events in this world, must be responsible for this selection. The easy refuge of alphabetical sequence too lightly scorned before, is now welcomed, for the schools into which the groups must otherwise have been sorted so interlace and subdivide, that in the limited space no such classification seemed practicable. The extracts quoted, however, are by no means at haphazard, but the result of some years of study of the volumes; yet it dare not be claimed that they are in each case the best example of the poet, or the finest specimen of his work; all sorts of reasons, the mechanical limits of the space required (for it was held

best to show a complete poem rather than extracts deprived of their context), being powerful factors in the choice. Again, in the columns of a journal devoted to home-life, many subjects admissible enough in the general reading of the day were not quite in harmony with its mission.

These reservations are stated in justice to the authors represented, all of whom have given me the most helpful aid in the matter, so that the inadequate fulfilment of a scheme that involved years of preparatory work must be blamed to the writer, not to his subject.

The in-gathering here makes a poor show when the mighty crop to be reaped is considered; but the field is very wide and the granary all too small for even the choicest ears of that vast harvest, and the reaper knows only too well how scanty the results of his store.

The definite purpose being to include only the less known men, Holmes, Lowell, Whittier, and the rest of those who are as household words, were at once set aside, otherwise the space would have been filled by the first half-dozen. Mr. E. C. Stedman's "Poets of America" (Chatto and Windus, 1885) gives a very full account of these, and a list well nigh exhaustive of the minor poets. From this book the date of birth following the author's name has in each case

been taken. Had space allowed, a short biography of each would have been interesting, especially would it have been valuable in judging how far the habitat of the poet's home influenced his work. For America is not, as we sometimes think and speak of it, all New York and Boston. Nor is its literary outpour from those two centres alone, any more than London and Edinburgh are our only sources of book production. In a country spreading from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and almost from the Tropics to the North Pole itself, the locality of each poet might be expected to influence his work more definitely, than the evidence the majority of the poems actually prove.

It is rather to be suspected that the poet's true influence is the work of former singers, and that his study is not dissimilar wherever the English tongue is spoken. It would be hard to say that the want of local colour forbids the poetry itself to be ranked as pure inspiration, since the work of so many great men is full of subtle and open allusions to their surroundings. The truth is, probably, that the Anglo-Saxon character is much the same everywhere; the mere introduction of whip-poor-will, or katydid, in place of English wild birds, is not enough to change the song into an exotic melody. The evidence of loyalty to the poets we enshrine as our greatest is

rather another proof of the intimate relationship between the old country and its cousins over sea. In face of the fellowship and brotherhood, that in all its literature shows a mood responsive to our own, and a heart that is moved by just the same feelings, and has its standard of right and wrong identical with our own, a happy omen of the united future of the whole English-speaking race may be found. Dreamers, poets, and such feeble folk have a knack of swaying the destiny of nations, in spite of statesmen and armies, and if the great band of those who write and sing are true to a common purpose and work side by side, the most brilliant future for the whole world may be found in the onward march of the two great divisions who speak our common tongue.

But to proceed to the subject. The first on the list of those to be noticed is Aldrich. Yet, to include Thomas Bailey Aldrich among either the "younger men" or the "minor poets" of America would be absurd. For, although born in 1836, and still, as his friend Edmund Clarence Stedman, the poet and historian *par excellence* of poets, phrases it, "in his sunny prime," his reputation is not young; for years past his poetry has been published and loved in England. Still less could he be accounted a minor poet. His works may be small, but they are little masterpieces. Like one who fashioned a Greek gem, he brings to an intaglio of exquisite finish all the best qualities of colossal work. Within his self-prescribed limits the ideas and thoughts are as large and the execution as free as though an epic were being wrought. Yet with rare lyrical faculty and exquisite restraint he obtains "infinite riches in small room." His "Thirty-two Lyrics and Twelve Sonnets" (Sampson Low, 1881) might be each quoted in proof of this assertion, and one is included in defence, should it be needed, of the praise that is ungrudgingly bestowed on his work by all who are familiar with it.

IDENTITY.

Somewhere—in desolate wind-swept space—
In Twilight land—in No-man's land—
Two hurrying Shapes met face to face,
And bade each other stand.

"And who are you?" cried one, agape,
Shuddering in the gloaming light.
"I know not," said the second Shape,
"I only died last night!"

Oscar Fay Adams, the author of handbooks to English and American poetry, and editor of a delightful series of booklets, "Through the Year with the Poets," is also familiar as a frequent contributor to those Transatlantic magazines that are in every English home. His one volume yet published, "Poet Laureate Idylls," takes the stories of the old nursery rhymes, and re-tells them in happy imitation of the cadences of Tennyson. These are gracefully wrought and entirely charming, but too lengthy for quotation. From a group of sonnets and lyrics in the same work a dozen might be culled, yet one must suffice—a rondeau that has graver thought within its bonds than most rondeau writers attempt, although it has no hint of the humour and fancy of the lighter work of the pieces that entitle the book.

WITH A PRAYER BOOK.

In Common Prayer our hearts ascend
To that white throne where angels bend.
Now grant, O Lord, that those who call
Themselves by Thy dear name may all
Show forth Thy praise in lives that tend
To noble purpose, lofty end,
And unto us Thy blessing lend,
As low upon our knees we fall
In Common Prayer.

In this dear book past ages blend
Their voice with ours; we do commend
Our souls, in doubt and sin held thrall,
To His fond care, and cot and hall
Alike to him petitions send
In Common Prayer.

Mr. Oscar Fay Adams must not be confused with Charles Follen Adams, the author of "Leetle Yawcob Strauss," and "Dialect Ballads," that by their homely pathos and quaint humour have won friends all over the world. They are hardly within the limits of this chapter, discursive and catholic though it be. But for lovers of cleverly reproduced dialect, and the fun of homely life, they are, in their way, worthy of very high praise.

The two volumes, "Berries from the Briar" and "Sonnets in Shadow," by Arlo Bates, are marked by many of the characteristics of the best modern work. Each number has its central idea, and the thought is expressed in cleanly wrought, delicate lines; they are perfectly successful so far as they essay; and in this hurried, overloaded day there is need for such easily-grasped poems, in place of the dull epic or long-spun ode of an earlier fashion. The danger is that the public who judge by mere quantity of material may not observe the excellence of the work of this school of poets, whose aim is to give a complete work of art in a tiny space. Here is a little "impression" that surely has the light and colour of nature with a human touch that makes it no mere instantaneous photograph, but a poem.

A WINDY DAY.

As silver 'neath the smith's quick beat
Gleam the reflections in the bay,
Pale, trampled fires that have no heat
By the wind crushed from gold to gray.

The volume, "Sonnets in Shadow," contains a stately sequence of sonnets that are in memory of a lost one, and, in their sad despairing sorrow recall Tennyson's "In Memoriam," but the gloom of this poem is almost unpierced by the hope that lights the earlier elegy. To extract one from its rightful place would fail to do justice to the well-thought-out plan of the whole group. Yet since Mr. Bates uses the sonnet form so frequently, here is an example from his "Berries of the Briar."

CONTENT.

Contented lie the noontime resting herd;
Content are dotards, nodding heads of snow;
Content are prattling babes, too young to know
The hopes by which the mother's heart is stirred.
But strong men, fired with zeal unswerving,
gird
Their loins with patience, and to battle go;
Their souls with yearning filled, little they know
Of lotus-fed content! The soaring bird
Sees still new deeps above, and longing sends
Her song aspiring toward those loftier skies
She may not reach; and heroes, unto ends
Beyond attaining, strive with eager eyes
In godlike effort that as far transcends
Poor dull content as heaven an earthly prize.

The one volume of collected poems by H. C. Bunner ("Airs from Arcady," Charles Scribner & Sons, 1884) has found an English edition, but is yet not so well known as it deserves to be, although, thanks to the inconsistency of international copyright, much of it has been familiar in the corners of our provincial newspapers and journals that exist for the sake of collecting the flotsam and jetsam cast on the shores by the great ocean of literature.

The poems are lightly touched, and have a

vein of bright humour that is distinctly original, and well within the limits of the most rigorously exact taste. Like all true humorists, the singer has pathos in equal degree, and to quote but the one side of his verse is hardly fair. Yet while many are sad in this world, and can convey their sadness in expressive lines, it is given to fewer to be able to impart their humour in as scholarly a fashion. And just because the refined fancy and fun that infuses Mr. Bunner's rhymes is so far beyond the highest average, some of it must be quoted in proof of the bold assertion.

CANDOR.

(October.—A Wood.)

"I know what you are going to say," she said;
And she stood up, looking uncommonly tall.
"You are going to speak of the hectic Fall,
And say you're sorry the summer's dead,
And no other summer was like it, you know,
And can I imagine what made it so.
Now, aren't you, honestly?" "Yes," I said.

"I know what you are going to say," she said.
"You are going to ask if I forget
That day in June when the woods were wet,
And you carried me"—here she dropped her head—
"Over the creek; you are going to say,
Do I remember that horrid day.
Now, aren't you, honestly?" "Yes," I said.

"I know what you're going to say," she said,
"You are going to say that since that time
You have rather tended to run in rhyme,
And"—her clear glance fell, and her cheek grew red—
"And have I noticed your tone was queer?
Why, everybody has seen it here!—
Now, aren't you, honestly?" "Yes," I said.

"I know what you're going to say," I said;
"You're going to say, you've been much annoyed,
And I'm short of tact—you will say devoid—
And I'm clumsy and awkward, and call me Ted,
And I bear abuse like a dear old lamb,
And you'll have me, anyway, just as I am.
Now, aren't you, honestly?" "Ye-es," she said.

The volume has some charming examples of rondels and other forms; some very dainty pathetic verse of an exceedingly high order. Among its lighter things in "The Wail of the Personally Conducted," a very clever burlesque in an exceedingly difficult rhythm, are some extremely happy stanzas that plead for quotation.

Integral were we in our old existence,
Separate beings, individually;
Now are our entities, blended, fused, and
founded—

We are one person.

We are not mortals, we are not celestials,
We are not birds, the upper ether cleaving;
We are a retrogression toward the monad—
We are Cook's Tourists.

All ways we follow him who holds the
guide book,
All things we look at with bedazzled optics;
Sad are our hearts, because the vulgar
rabble

Call us the Cookies.

Mr. Bunner's *tour de force* of the Chant Royal, "Mrs. Jones" is an unparalleled flight in modern burlesque art, and may outlive even the historic form it parodies—possibly hand down the legend of its existence to antiquarians of the remote future.

In "The King's Garden," by James Berry Bensell (Lothrop), there are some poems notable for their fancy, and instinct with the subtle essence of *true poetry*; but although the initial poem, and others—"The Statue in the Wood," "About Myself"—might well be quoted here, inexorable restrictions of space forbid. So, too, of "Clover Leaves," by Ella Baker, a posthumous volume of collected verse, with much of the fervour and graceful feeling that have made Miss Havergal's poetry so popular; yet it is hardly correct to attribute such a result to the poet's art alone, for when a subject dear to the writer and reader is set forth in easy lines, the art is overlooked, and the subject alone fascinates readers who do not analyse the source of their emotions.

"Point Lace and Diamonds," by George A. Baker, jun., is, as its name suggests, a volume of lighter verse, done in neat graceful way with much of the local colour required by *vers de société*. As an example of a happy treatment of a subject that might in its handling easily offend the prejudice of worthy people, the following may be quoted as characteristic of the author's work, which it may be said is more distinctly American in its tone than many others of the same school; its slang is the slang of the States, and its society allusions redolent of customs and fashions that we only know by hearsay.

THOUGHTS ON THE COMMANDMENTS.

Love your neighbour as yourself,
So the parson preaches;
That's one-half the Decalogue
So the Prayer Book teaches.

Half my duty I can do
With but little labour,
For with all my heart and soul
I do love my neighbour.

Mighty little credit then
To my self-denial;
Not to love her, though, might be
Something of a trial.
Why, the rosy light that peeps
Through the glass above her
Lingers round her lips:—you see
E'en the sunbeams love her.

So to make my merit more,
I'll go beyond the letter;
Love my neighbour as myself?
Yes, and ten times better.
For she's sweeter than the breath
Of the Spring, that passes
Through the fragrant, budding woods,
O'er the meadow grasses.

And I've preached the word, I know,
For it was my duty
To convert the stubborn heart
Of the little beauty.
Once again success has crowned
Missionary labour,
For her sweet eyes own that she
Also loves her neighbour.

John Vance Cheney (1840) is a familiar signature to dainty poems in the American magazines. In his volume, "Thistle Drift," there are many lyrics felicitously turned, and spontaneous in their clear, easy expression, Light as the thistle drift he so aptly christens them they are, but the art is there although concealed. There are a dozen that might be quoted, any one of which would show the same careless grace and facile movement. "The Way of It" has a delicious lilt in it, that yearns for musical setting; and one a shade more serious, showing how a new treatment of a theme so well worn as "The Arrow and the Song" may yet shape a distinctly fresh lyric.

THE WAY OF IT.

The wind is awake; little leaves, little leaves,
Heed not what he says—he deceives, he
deceives;

Over and over
To the lowly clover
He has lisped the same love (and forgotten it,
too)
That he'll soon be lisping and pledging to you.

The boy is abroad; dainty maid, dainty maid,
Beware his soft words—I'm afraid, I'm afraid,
He's said them before
Times many a score

Ay, he died for a dozen ere his beard pricked
through,
As he'll soon be dying, my pretty, for you.

The way of the boy is the way of the wind;
As light as the leaves is dainty maid-kind;
One to deceive
And one to believe,
That is the way of it year by year,
But I know you will learn it too late, my dear.

THE LOST SONG.

Upon a summer day
I sang a little song,
And something soft did say,
"It won't, it won't go wrong."

I sang it high and clear,
Right cheery to the last;
But freighted with a tear,
It down the summer passed.

I sang it brave and loud,
The tear quenched not its flame;
'Twas caroled to the crowd
In long applause of fame.

Now many years had gone,
The heralds went and came;
Alas! it was not on
The mighty wings of fame.

"Well, let it go," I said,
"The idle little song;
The tear was foolish shed—
It did, it did go wrong."

Then, sweet with love's own art,
A mother sang and smiled:
She'd kept it in her heart
To sing it to my child.

(To be continued.)

A YOUNG OXFORD MAID.

(IN THE DAYS OF THE KING AND THE PARLIAMENT.)

By SARAH TYTLER, Author of "Papers for Thoughtful Girls," etc.

CHAPTER III.

FRITILLARY GATHERING. KITTY LEARNS BETIMES THE
SERIOUSNESS OF LIFE.

THE years which were so full of growing excitement and coming strife to the English nation passed gently over Kitty Dacre in the calm retreat of Oriol, and changed her from a child of ten to a girl between fourteen and fifteen. Her father never talked, if he could help it, on the political troubles which already had the country in their grip, and least of all would he have dreamt of speaking of them to Kitty, as has been seen.

Mrs. Judy, if she attended to much beyond her household economy, did not confide what rough inking she had of the brewing storm to her charge.

Lady Ottery, taught by bitter experience, was equally reticent.

Nay, "Jackie," who had attained the promotion of becoming, after the example of his cousin Anthony Walton, of Islip Barnes, who was as much older

than John Dacre as John was older than his sister Kitty, a demy or scholar of Magdalen College, had suddenly developed a similar silence. Yet the subject on which he was silent unquestionably deeply interested and rent into two opposing parties all the young scholars of Oxford of the time, just as it kept surging up in the minds of the greater proportion of their seniors, engrossing their thoughts to the detriment of art and letters.

The four years difference of age between John and Kitty Dacre had assumed, for the moment, what would probably be the most prominent aspect it would bear throughout their lives. For when is there a greater gap between a boy and a girl than when a boy is an intelligent, precocious lad between eighteen and nineteen, fired with the desire to assert his independence of thought, and claim his heritage of action, and the girl has not long entered

her teens, is kept back by the retirement and subjection in which she has lived, and finds her daily tasks and amusements quite sufficient for her latent powers; in short, when she is a docile, simple creature, if neither silly nor trifling?

Somehow Kitty and her old Jackie, whom she was tutoring her tongue to style Jack or John, had slipped a little apart, and she was conscious, with a dull pain at her contented, cheerful, yet most affectionate heart, that they were not so much to each other as they had been. This was not merely because they no longer lived in the same house, as Kitty sometimes tried to tell herself, for not even when they met, which of course was frequently, did her brother tell her his stories as he used to do, or find leisure to listen to her stories in return. He did not fail in kindness, but he was more or less occupied with his books or his college friends, which after all was natural enough, if Kitty had understood human nature. It

"That is not the best poem by any means," hurriedly interposed Evelyn.

"No, probably not; and I have no wish to discourage you. You have plenty of time before you, and I should say, as Mr. Hope would, I am sure—Wait awhile."

"Thank you. I need not trouble you any further," said Evelyn, rising, with mortification at her heart. She did not choose to suggest that Messrs. Wrexham and Bird should bring out the volume at her expense, and as they would probably have declined to do so, she was wise. She was provided with a second string to her bow, for she had furnished herself beforehand with all the information she could collect, and ere long she was mounting some steep and narrow stairs, on the way to see a member of the firm of Messrs. Dalrymple and Co.

Here a very different reception awaited

her. The stout, round-faced gentleman with the little, twinkling eyes, after a rapid survey of her appearance, glanced through the manuscript, and seemed to read a poem here and there.

"Very nice; very pretty indeed!" he remarked, approvingly. "This 'Sonnet to the East Wind' is capital!"

"South wind," put in Evelyn.

"Ah, well, just so. We have a good deal of poetry on hand just now, that is the only thing; but we could bring out an edition of five hundred for you—that will do to begin with—easily get a second edition out when it is wanted—if you felt inclined to risk from £30 to £50. Little doubt, I should say *no* doubt, but that you would recoup yourself amply out of the profits of sale, and —"

"Oh, money is not my object," put in Evelyn, charmed at this change of view; and she was very soon deep in

the discussion of binding, paper, and print.

As she was driving home she did not feel wholly satisfied with the result of her morning's work. She knew that Messrs. Wrexham and Bird occupied a far higher position in the publishing world than Messrs. Dalrymple and Co. She would like to have seen Mr. Wrexham fall back in his chair; to have heard him exclaim: "This, indeed, is genius! My dear young lady, you have a great future before you!" On the contrary, he evidently did not think much of the poems; but then, as Evelyn had remarked in one of them entitled "Misunderstood," the poet soul is not, as a rule, appreciated by the common herd.

To this she, in self-defence, supposed Mr. Wrexham, in spite of his eminence, must belong.

(To be continued.)

POETS OVER-SEA.

A GOSSIP ON THE RECENT POETRY OF AMERICA.

By GLEESON WHITE, Author of "Some Poetry we Read," "Ballades and Rondeaux," etc.

PART III.



F all the younger school of American men of letters, whose reputations have preceded a knowledge of their work on this side, the name of Edgar Fawcett is perhaps most familiar; yet although he is known amongst a few English people as a poet of no mean order, it would be hard to find many who have intimate knowledge of his poetry. When "Fantasy and Passion," published in 1878, found its way to England in privately presented copies, it won praise on all sides. Only lately the copy that belonged to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, was in my hands, and its pencilled margin showed that the great poet-painter was a reader and admirer of the young American's work. One specially underlined in Rossetti's copy was this—

TO AN ORIOLE.

How falls it, oriole, thou hast come to fly
In tropic splendour through our Northern
sky?

At some glad moment was it nature's
choice

To dower a scrap of sunset with a voice?

Or did some orange tulip, flaked with black,
In some forgotten garden, ages back,

Yearning toward Heaven until its wish was
heard,

Desire unspeakably to be a bird?

Even this tiny lyric shows the quality of Mr. Fawcett's poetry, and exhibits several of its special features—a delight in colour and gorgeous imagery, a sense of the decorative effect of the sounds of its syllables, no less than of their sense, and above all an idea clearly set forth amid the prodigal wealth of epithet that is never redundant and destructive of the complete effect.

In "Song and Story," 1884, and "Romance and Revery," 1886, the author's powers, shown in the first volume, found stronger utterance. But owing to successes in other departments of literature, his poetry is less widely known than its merits deserve. In fiction Mr. Fawcett

has produced a long series of novels that place him in the very foremost rank of American authors, and in sharp contrast to the minutely analysed chronicles of insignificant tediously-related events, that are so evident in the school most widely read in England.

"The Buntling Ball," a burlesque in the form of an old Greek tragedy, published anonymously, took the public by surprise. Its magnificent satire, caustic wit, and ingenious workmanship caused it to be attributed to Lowell, Wendell Holmes, and other well-known names. But when another book, "The New King Arthur"—a parody of Tennyson—that was at its best an absolutely perfect example of the art of parody, was also warmly received, the secret oozed out, and it was known that the author of "Fantasy and Passion" had produced these widely dissimilar works. Of late the poetry of Mr. Fawcett has aroused much curiosity in England, and a forthcoming English edition of his poems is even now "in the press," when, doubtless, in spite of an individual standpoint that may cause some divergence of opinion among our critics, the verdict will accord him a foremost place among the poets of to-day.

The following sonnet and lyric are both from "Romance and Revery":—

TREES IN THE CITY.

When I behold how beautifully they rear
From out the engirding pavements, dull
and plain,

Boughs that for genial meadow or fragrant
lane

Have longed, perchance, through many a
lonely year,

My sympathy wakes dubious yet sincere,

Conjecturing the incalculable pain

Of lives that yearn towards bourns whence
they retain

The balm of no remedial souvenir!

But when the spirit of spring breaks cold
eclipse,

I dream that every wind which fleetly slips
Through the broad city is bearing in soft-
wise,

From happier branches under far free skies,
Compassionate tidings on æolian lips,
Of sweet affinities and tender kinships.

GOLD.

No spirit of air am I, not one whose birth
Was deep in mouldy darkness of mid-earth.
Yet, where my yellow raiments choose to
shine,

What power is more magnificent than mine?

In hall and hut, in highway or in street,
Obedient millions grovel at my feet.

The loftiest pride to me its tribute brings;
I gain the lowly vassalage of kings!

How many a time have I made honour yield
To me its mighty and immaculate shield!

How often has virtue at my potent name
Robed her chaste majesty in scarlet shame!

How often has burning love within some
breast

Frozen to treachery at my cold behest!

Yet ceaselessly my triumph has been blent
With pangs of overmastering discontent.

For there are always certain souls that hear
My stealthy whispers with indifferent ear;

Pure souls that deem my smiles' most bland
excess,

For all its lavish radiance, valueless;

Rare souls, from my imperious guidance free,
Who know me for the slave that I should be;

Grand souls that from my counsel would
dissent,

Though each were tempted with a continent!

Bret Harte, as well known here as in the United States, needs no word of description or praise. The only regret is that the super-excellence of his prose, and the world-wide fame of his humorous poetry, has resulted in his delightful work in a more pathetic key being almost overlooked. That one who has done what he has should cease from singing, is a fact to regret keenly. Yet, save an occasional dialect piece, in which he is an unrivalled master, one waits in vain for any new lyrics from the pen that gave us "A Greyport Legend," "Dickens in Camp," "The Spanish Idyls," and many another exquisitely-turned poem.

Rossiter Johnson, in his volume "Idler and Poet," has many good things, somewhat after

the school of Præd, peculiarly local in their colour, as such work should be. The one quoted below, in spite of its wide popularity, may be new to some readers, and is a good sample of its fellows to represent the volume in this limited space:—

NINETY-NINE IN THE SHADE.

O for a lodge in a garden of cucumbers!
O for an iceberg or two at control!
O for a vale that at mid-day the dew cumbers!
O for a pleasure trip up to the pole!

O for a little one-storey thermometer
With nothing but zeroes all ranged in a row!

O for a big double-barrelled hygrometer,
To measure the moisture that rolls from
my brow!

O that this cold world were twenty times colder
(That irony's red hot it seemeth to me!)
O for a turn of its dreaded cold shoulder!
O what a comfort an ague would be!

O for a grotto frost-lined and rill-riven,
Scooped in the rock under cataract vast!
O for a winter of discontent, even!
O for wet blankets judiciously cast!

O for a soda fount spouting up boldly
From every hot lamp-post against the hot sky!

O for proud maiden to look on me coldly,
Freezing my soul with a glance of her eye!

Then, O for a draught of a cup of cold pizen!
And O for a through ticket, *via* Coldegrave,
To the banks of the Styx, where a thick shadow lies on

And deepens the chill of its dark-running wave.

The Rev. J. B. Kenyon, in two volumes, "Out of the Shadows" and "In Realms of Gold," has proved his right to sing, for his lyrics are instinct with song and musical in the lilt of their lines, besides being graceful in thought and refined in treatment. In place of praise, however, these two will speak for themselves:—

WHEN CLOVER BLOOMS.

When clover blooms in the meadows
And the happy south winds blow,
When under the leafy shadows
The singing waters flow—
Then come to me; as you pass
I shall hear your feet in the grass,
And my heart shall awake and leap
From its cool, dark couch of sleep,
And shall thrill again as of old,
Ere its long rest under the mould—
When clover blooms.

Deem not that I shall not waken;
I shall know, my love, it is you;
I shall feel the tall grass shaken,
I shall hear the drops of the dew
That scatter before your feet;
I shall smell the perfume sweet
Of the red rose that you wear,
As of old, in your sunny hair;
Deem not that I shall not know
It is your light feet that go
Mid clover blooms.

O love, the years have parted—
The long, long years!—our ways;
You have gone with the merry-hearted
These many and many days,
And I with that grim guest
Who loveth the silence best;
But come to me—I shall wait
For your coming, soon or late;
For soon or late, I know,
You shall come to my rest below
The clover blooms.

A CITY CRY.

Here hoarsely moan the floods of human woe,
And evermore, along the busy streets
The iron hoof of traffic loudly beats,
And lean-faced avarice shuffles to and fro;
How grudgingly the feet of mercy go
Where gaunt and grimy squalor sits and eats
Her bitter bread, and here, through foul retreats,

Death's noisome currents darkly ebb and flow.
O God, of those sweet airs which blow between

The emerald hills, let me e'er breathe;
Keep me

Far from the roaring city, in Thy green
And quiet solitudes, where I may see
The birds, the flowers, the grass, and sweetly lean

My heart upon the peace and love of Thee.

When, some ten or twelve years ago, a new poet from the Wild West was hailed (if the mixed metaphor may be allowed) as a rising star, those who read the impassioned song of "Joaquin" Miller, as he is termed (from the title of his first volume, "Joaquin et al"), predicted a great future. Yet, so far, it is singular how little more widely popular his poetry has grown. Its very faults are not those that stand in the way of recognition, and in the impetuous honesty of his daring cry against the platitudes and pruderies of conventional hypocrisy, it seemed that his words should have awakened an echo in many an English heart. But to say they have fulfilled in this one respect the expectations raised by "Songs of the Sierras" is certainly not borne out by facts; yet, on re-perusing any of his volumes, the poetry rouses the same enthusiasm to those who have once succumbed to its witchery. It is so unlike the work of any other man, at once so strong and so naive in its expression. "Songs of the Sun Lands," "Songs of Far Away Lands," "The Ship of the Desert," and "Mexican Songs" are among the most important of his published works. Of these, the longer poems, "Arizona," "With Walker in Nicaragua," "Benoni," and others, plead to be extracted, but as that is impossible, it must suffice to quote the following, picked almost at random, yet showing his peculiar genius:—

O thou To-morrow! Mystery,
O day that ever runs before.
What has thy hidden hand in store
For mine, To-morrow, and for me?
O thou To-morrow, what hast thou
In store to make me bear the Now?

O day in which we shall forget
The tangled troubles of to-day;
O day that laughs at duns, at debt!
O day of promises to pay!
O shelter from all present storm!
O day in which we shall reform!

O day of all days to reform!
Convenient day of promises!
Hold back the shadow of the storm.
Let not the mystery be less,
O bless'd To-morrow, chiefest friend,
But lead us blindfold to the end.

One poem, "Mother Egypt," exhibits such power that I particularly wish it to appear, yet one line has found objection by many who admire the poem, therefore I have but quoted it in part.

Dark-browed she broods with weary lids
Beside her sphynx and pyramids,
With low and never-lifted head;
If she be dead, respect the dead;
If she be weeping, let her weep;
If she be sleeping, let her sleep;
For lo! this woman named the stars,
She suckled
Her Moses while you reeked in wars
And prowled your woods, nude painted
Thugs.

Then back, brave England, back in peace,
To Christian isles of fat increase!
Go back! else bid your high priest take
Your great bronze Christs and cannons
make;

Take down their cross from proud St. Paul's
And coin it into cannon balls,
You tent not far from Nazareth,
Your camp spreads where His child-feet
strayed,

If Christ had seen this work of death,
If Christ had seen these ships invade,

I think the patient Christ had said:
"Go back, brave men! Take up your dead,
Draw down your great ships to the seas,
Repass the Gates of Hercules.

Go back to wife with babe at breast,
And leave lorn Egypt to her rest."
Is Christ then dead as Egypt is?

Ah, Mother Egypt, torn in twain,
There's something grimly wrong in this,
So like some gay, sad woman slain.

* * * * *

Here again is a very pleasantly worded lyric, that has the cry of home-sickness, which seems to come from the heart of a wanderer.

Better it were to abide by the sea
Loving somebody and satisfied;
Better it were to grow babes on the knee,
To anchor you down for all your days,
Than to wander and wander in all these
ways,
Land-forgotten, and love-denied.

Better sit still where born, I say,
Wed one sweet woman and love her well,
Love and be loved in the brave old way,
Drink sweet waters, and dream in a spell,
Than to sail in search of the Blessed Isles,
For aye and aye o'er the watery miles.

Better it were for the world, I say,
That you should sit still where you were
born,
Be it land of sand or of oil and corn,
Than seek red poppies, and the sweet dream-
land,
Than to wander the world as I to-day,
Breaking the heart into bits like clay,
And leaving it scattered on every hand.

Born in 1841, and again, if rumour is true,
living far away from the busy crowd, it may be that a great poem will come from his pen. No less a subject than "Christ's Life on Earth" is said to be occupying him at present. These verses show his mood upon human questions—

Is it worth while that we jostle a brother
Bearing his load on the rough road of
life?

Is it worth while that we jeer at each other
In blackness of heart—that we war to
the knife?
God pity us all in our pitiful strife.

God pity us all as we jostle each other;
God pardon us all for the triumphs we
feel

When a fellow goes down 'neath his load
on the heather,
Pierced to the heart: words are keener
than steel,
And mightier far for woe or for weal.

The daring imagery and unrestrained rigour that pushes poetic license to its utmost strain, and yet remains poetry, is seen in the lines from an unnamed lyric prefacing "Songs of Far-away Lands," and a slightly modified version in "Memorie and Rime," a later volume.

'Tis a land so far that you wonder whether
E'en God would know it should you fall
down dead;

'Tis a land so far through the wilds and weather,
That the sun falls weary and flushed and red,
That the sea and the sky seem coming together—
Seem closing together as a book that is read.

Oh, the nude, weird West where an unnamed river
Rolls restless in bed of bright silver and gold.

John Boyle O'Reilly (1844) is a name hardly known in England, yet his volumes and their reception in America should make him sure of a welcome here, while his Irish birth and strong patriotic bias would gain special interest in these days—whether for or against his future readers' peace of mind depends upon the standpoint taken. His chief published works are "Songs from the Southern Seas," "Songs, Legends, and Ballads" (1882), "In Bohemia" (1884), "Statues in the Block" (1887).

His ballads have all the "go" and fire of the true type, while his Australian poems are among the best inspired by that colonial scenery which, since Mr. Douglas Sladen has brought it to English notice, has roused no slight attention. From Mr. O'Reilly's works two of the shortest pieces will attest the fancy of his muse and the quaint turn of his lighter mood, but they give no indication of the power of the larger poems.

DISTANCE.

The world is large, when its weary leagues
Two loving hearts divide;
But the world is small when your enemy is
Loose on the other side.

"You gave me the key of your heart, my love,
Then why do you make me knock?"
"O, that was yesterday, saints above!
And last night—I changed the lock!"

A TRAGEDY.

A soft-breasted bird from the sea
Fell in love with the lighthouse flame,
And it wheeled round the tower on its airiest wing,

And floated and cried like a love-lorn thing;
It brooded all day and it fluttered all night,
But could win no look from the steadfast light.

For the flame had its heart afar,
Afar with the ships at sea;
It was thinking of children and waiting wives,
And darkness and danger to sailors' lives;
But the bird had its tender bosom pressed
On the glass, where at last it dashed its breast.

The light only flickered, the brighter to glow;

But the bird lay dead on the rocks below.

In "Cap and Bells," Samuel Minturn Peck (1854) has grouped poems more serious in their purpose than the title indicates, unless it be in sober earnest to show that the jester's heart is not as full of quips and cranks as his words imply. While belonging somewhat to the *vers de société* school, and using the old French metrical forms with easy grace, there is more genuine poetic work than the enemies of the "five o'clock tea school" are inclined publicly to allow. But of all volumes these lighter ones are most hard to represent by examples. A forest may be indicated by a bough, but how is a meadow ablaze with flowers to be judged of one dried specimen? Yet since it must be, these two are as fit as any for the purpose, because in the pages of the *Century* and *Scribner* many readers have

probably already made acquaintance with others that would else have claimed first notice.

THE SINGER'S REWARD.

(A Legend)

O once there dwelt a singer, in a valley far away,
Who in the fields with loving art awoke his lute and lay.

Now though his song, nor loud nor long,
Was strangely sweet to hear,
One day he said, while on his cheek there gleamed a silent tear:

"My note is low, my strain is weak, my singing all in vain,
The little guerdon I desire I cannot hope to gain.

"I do not care for lofty fame, for wealth I do not long,
I only wish my fellow-men to love me for their song."

The kindly zephyrs caught his lays, and bore them far and wide.
"Such songs were never sung before," the people rose and cried.

The great king even listened, in his palace by the sea,
And said, "Some day we'll send for him,
and honoured he shall be."

Alas! no herald ever came, the ancient legend saith,
But when he put his lute away, and laid him down in death,

The people made a great ado, and reared a column high,
In honour of the singer they had left in want to die.

BEYOND THE NIGHT.

Beyond the night no withered rose
Shall mock the later bud that blows,
Nor lily blossom e'er shall blight,
But all shall gleam more pure and white
Than starlight on the Arctic snows.
Sigh not while daylight dimmer grows,
And life a turbid river flows,
For all is sweetness—all is light,
Beyond the night.

Oh haste, sweet hour that no man knows;
Uplift us from our cumbering woes,
When joy and peace shall crown the right,
And perished hopes shall blossom bright—
To aching hearts bring sweet repose.

Beyond the night.

No apology is needed for noticing the "Songs and Satires" of James Jeffrey Roche. If the satires amuse us to the detriment of the songs that equally deserve attention, it is the author's fault. In a serious age honest laughter is of great consequence, and in face of such a witty trifle as the one quoted, we could spare many a poem of not absolutely the highest order. Perhaps the very success of one side of Mr. Roche's art is in no small degree owing to his mastery of the other; for in his fooling there are restraint and good form that charm while they amuse.

THE V-A-S-E.

From the madding crowd they stand apart—
The maidens four and the Work of Art.

And none might tell, from sight alone,
In which had culture ripest grown.

The Gotham million fair to see,
The Philadelphia pedigree,

The Boston mind of azure hue,
Or the soulful soul from Kalamazoo;

For they all loved Art in a seemly way,
With an earnest soul and a capital A.

Long they worshipped, but no one broke
The sacred stillness, until one spoke—

The Western one from the nameless place,
Who, blushing, said: "What a lovely vase!"

Over three faces a sad smile flew,
And they edged away from Kalamazoo.

But Gotham's haughty soul was stirred
To crush the stranger with one small word.

Deftly hiding reproof in praise,
She cries: "'Tis indeed a lovely vase!"

But brief her unworthy triumph when
The lofty one from the home of Penn,

With the consciousness of two grandpapas,
Exclaims: "It is quite a lovely vase!"

And glances round with an anxious thrill,
Awaiting the word of Beacon Hill.

But the Boston maid smiles courteouslee,
And gently murmurs: "Oh, pardon me,

I did not catch your remark, because
I was so entranced with the charming vaws!"

Dies erit prægelida

Sinistra quæm Bostonia.

In the section of "Debonair Verse," as Mr. E. C. Stedman has aptly christened it, Mr. Clinton Scollard has shown distinct power. His three volumes, "Pictures in Song," 1884, "With Reed and Lyre," 1886, and "Old and New World Lyrics," 1889, yield ample proof of a natural voice for singing and artistic insight, that having already done much and done it well, may yet do even better and greater things. He has the secret of that delicate trifling which is characteristic of this school of poetry, but it is not by any means mere trifling, rather the colloquial freedom of a scholar and thinker, who, as the taste of the day wills it, is more careful to conceal his learning than to set it forth to astonish his readers. To blame the younger school for not attempting mighty epics and voluminous tragedies is absurd, for few have time to read sustained efforts of that sort, even if the will be theirs. A little rhyme by Herrick, or lyric by one of our modern men, will outlast the monumental triumphs of their contemporaries who keep their solemn reputation for the most part by reason of the blind ignorance concerning the things they really wrote.

TO A CHINESE IDOL.

Once you ruled, a god divine,
In a sacred shady shrine,
Near a river dark as wine,

'Mid the trees;
And to you the mandarins,
With their smooth unshaven chins,
Prayed absolution from their sins
On their knees.

Tiny-footed Chinese maids,
With their hair in raven braids,
Sought you in your quiet shades
'Neath the boughs;

Haply for a thousand years
You beheld their smiles and tears,
Listened to their hopes and fears,
And their vows.

Now above her *escritoire*,
In my lady's pink boudoir,
Ever dumbly pining for
Lost repose;
You sit stolid day by day,
With your cheeks so thin and gray,
Stormy eyes and *retroussé*
Little nose.

Where the sunlight glinteth o'er
 Persian rug and polished floor,
 You will frown for evermore,
 Grim as hate;
 A divinity cast down,
 Having neither shrine nor crown,
 Once a god, but now a brown
 Paper-weight!

SUMMER NOON.

The air is full of soothing sounds. The bee
 Within the waxen lily's honeyed cells
 In monotone of mellow measure tells
 His yet unsated joyance, drowsily
 The swallows spill their liquid melody
 As down the sky they drop, and faintly
 swells
 The tremulous tinkle of the far sheep
 bells,
 While wind-harps sigh in every crown'd
 tree.
 Beneath the beechen shade the reapers lie,
 Upon their lips a merry harvest tune;
 Knee-deep within a neighbouring stream,
 the kine
 Stand blinking idly in the clear sun-
 shine;
 And like a dream of olden Arcady
 Seems the sweet languor of the summer
 noon.

But these two altogether fail to represent the charm of many facets in the brilliant crystals of Mr. Scollard's work. In the "blithe ballade" he has scored notable success, and throughout the whole range of the school in which he has chosen to abide, he is perhaps the most hopeful of its newest comers.

The collected poems of Edward Rowland Sill speak with all the pathos of a posthumous volume. Born in 1843, the rare promise of his earlier verse is only fulfilled by this scanty booklet (1887). Yet among its pages are real poems. Read in the light of its publication, "Service" has a personal note in it that deepens the pathetic expression of the idea it embodies.

SERVICE.

Fret not that the day is gone,
 And thy task is still undone.
 'Twas not thine, it seems, at all;
 Near to thee it chanced to fall,
 Close enough to stir thy brain,
 And to vex thy heart in vain.
 Somewhere, in a nook forlorn,
 Yesterday a babe was born;
 He shall do thy waiting task;
 All thy questions he shall ask,
 And the answers will be given,
 Whispered lightly out of heaven.

His shall be no stumbling feet,
 Fading when they should be fleet;
 He shall hold no broken clue;
 Friends shall unto him be true;
 Men shall love him; falsehood's aim
 Shall not shatter his good name;
 Day shall nerve his arm with light,
 Slumber soothe him all the night;
 Summer's peace and winter's storm
 Help him all his will perform;
 'Tis enough of joy for thee
 His high service to foresee.

THE BOOK OF HOURS.

As one who reads a tale writ in a tongue
 He only partly knows, runs over it
 And follows but the story, losing wit
 And charm, and half the subtle links among
 The haps and harms that the book's folk beset,
 So do we with our life. Night comes,
 and morn;
 I know that one has died and one is born;
 That this by love and that by hate is met,
 But all the grace and glory of it fail
 To touch me, and the meanings they enfold
 The Spirit of the World hath told the tale,
 And tells it, and 'tis very wise and old.
 But o'er the page there is a mist and veil—
 I do not know the tongue in which 'tis
 told.

(To be concluded.)

A YOUNG OXFORD MAID.

(IN THE DAYS OF THE KING AND THE PARLIAMENT.)

By SARAH TYTLER, Author of "Papers for Thoughtful Girls," etc.

CHAPTER VI.
A FAMILY RENT ASUNDER.

It was an immense relief to Kitty, in addition to the pleasure of getting speech with her brother, which was becoming a rarer and rarer treat, to see Jack walk in with his father, a couple of hours after the fog end of the riot, which she and Mrs. Judy, and many more besides them, had seen from their windows.

"Come here and tell us what all the stir has been about, Jack," cried the girl, quite cheerfully. The doubt and fear were gone from her voice. She spoke as if she had not been deeply moved by the scene that had passed before her, which, young as she was, she would never altogether forget; on many a day to come the vision of the boyish

face working with excitement, the hasty hand flung up to sweep back the streaming hair, and of Anthony Walton's steady tramp and heavy frown, was present to her in its first freshness; and now, instinctively for a reason she could not have explained to herself, she referred to what she had witnessed as if it had been an affair of no moment, a piece of mere make-believe, like an act in one of the students' plays. "What a fright you are!" she went on quickly. "How will you answer to Mrs. Judy for all the mending you will cost her?" Then, as she caught a nearer glimpse of her brother's face, she gave a little sharp cry and dropped her careless tone. "Oh, dear heart, thou art hurt!" for there was an ugly bruise on John Dacre's cheek, terminating in a slight cut, which ran up among his fair hair, and had dyed and matted it with the blood which had oozed from the wound. "Shall I get water or vinegar? Me and Mrs. Judy will bathe it, and it may not want a plaster or a bandage."

"Be silent, Kitty! let the young scoundrel alone," cried Dr. Dacre, in a voice which was not the quiet scholar's voice, so full was it of bitter anger, keen disappointment, and stern determination.

John Dacre said not a word; Kitty shrank back as if she had received a blow. Mrs. Judy, who had come in at Kitty's cry to see if anything was wanted, turned hastily to the door.

"Stay where you are, Judith Pettit," her master commanded her roughly, using the full name, which he had not

given her since the day she entered his service a score of years before. "It may be as well that there is another witness to this business. I have brought here to my college—his home, to my misfortune—this young man who calleth himself my son, to put to him one or two questions of which you will hear the answers, before I have done with him for ever."

Both Kitty and Mrs. Judy were struck dumb with consternation. Jack did not utter one protesting syllable, but neither did he droop or quail in any hang-dog fashion. In fact, he held up his head and looked at the speaker, in the white heat of his fury, with a mixture of reproach and defiance in his pale, blood-stained face.

"John Dacre, will you confess or deny that you did, as my own miserable eyes can testify, in the light of the sun this very midday, in Oxford, conspire with a handful of deluded and debauched students to disgrace thyself and thy family, thy college, thy class in life, by appearing as a ringleader among the town miscreants who dispute the authority of the University and the King?"

"I was in the row this morning, father, as you say you know; why need you ask me any question thereupon?" answered Jack, half indignantly, half sullenly. "Moreover, I will tell thee something for thy better understanding if not for thy satisfaction," he went on, looking his father straight in the face, with a clear conviction and a passionate resolution in his flashing eyes, which were not unlike his father's, except that

others more elaborate were constructed and universally played. In England three hundred years ago citterns were very popular. They had now assumed larger proportions, while some of them had four double strings of wire. We are told by Playford that Queen Elizabeth "did re-create herself on a most excellent instrument, not unlike a lute, but strung with wire." And there is good reason for supposing that this was the larger kind of cittern here mentioned. Shakespeare also refers to the "cittern head" in his play of *Love's Labour Lost*.

The loan collection of musical instruments at the Inventions Exhibition contained several specimens, not only of the old English lyre, but also of the zither. As yet, however, these instruments were played perpendicularly, and appear to have fallen into disuse, superseded doubtless by the spinet, the harpsichord, and finally the pianoforte.

It is to the Bavarians we are indebted for the charming zither, which I beg to bring to the notice of my readers if they are not already acquainted with it. Those who have travelled in the Bavarian Tyrol will know that the zither is to the mountaineer what the bag-pipe is to the Highlander—no Tyrolese home is complete without it.

There are different kinds of zithers—the ordinary Prime, the Concert, and the Elegie. Besides these there is the Streich zither, which is played with a bow, and requires an accompaniment. It is not, however, so perfect an instrument as the other description of zithers. My reader will observe that the engraving is of a thirty-one-stringed zither, and that it is played horizontally on a table. The five strings on the keyboard are used for producing the melody. The performer presses them with the fingers of the left hand, just below the metal frets, in the same manner as a guitar is played. At the same moment the thumb of the right hand strikes the strings, a plectrum of silver or gold—called by courtesy a "ring"—being worn on the thumb-nail.

The accompaniment strings, which are made of catgut and of silk and wire, are played with the first and second fingers of the right hand, the third being reserved for the bass

notes. This union of a sustained melody, with a staccato or harp-like accompaniment, renders the zither one of the most perfect of instruments. It has a remarkably sweet and sympathetic tone, its distinctive traits being richness and purity combined. The lover of music is astonished at the impressive effects, and the light and shade which may be produced by the hand of a masterly player. Elegant in form, as well as beautiful in tone, the modern zither may be favourably compared with any drawing-room instrument. One of its advantages is its exceeding portability.

There is another reason, however, why the zither should become popular in this country. It may be commenced by those who have not had the advantage of learning the pianoforte as children, and who yet feel desirous of playing some instrument. The chief requisite being an accurate musical ear, without which tuning could not be satisfactorily accomplished. This leads me to think that the zither is specially adapted for the blind, who are usually endowed not only with an exceedingly correct ear, but a delicate and sensitive touch and power of expression, which would cause the instrument at once to respond. Those who have heard bands of zithers in the Bavarian Tyrol, or the Black Forest, will, I think, unite with me in wishing that a similar union of sweet sounds may some day be heard in our schools and colleges for the blind. My readers must not infer that the zither is to be mastered with but little trouble. Beginners must expect to meet with and to overcome difficulties which at the outset will seem very hard indeed; and for the first three months the would-be zither player must exercise much patient perseverance to enable her to master the first principles of the instrument.

Those who persevere, however, will be richly rewarded by finding that their improvement increases more in proportion than it would, if they were to devote that same time to—let me say the pianoforte or the violin. In other words, it is the first step in the zither which is the most difficult, and one year of patient study of an hour a day ought to result in playing calculated to give pleasure to oneself and to those who listen. A com-

plete and perfect mastery is not obtainable without hard work and much time, but a simple melody, played with feeling, will give an exquisite sensation of pleasure, and is more in accordance with the nature of the instrument than elaborate and brilliant pieces. It forms an exceedingly pretty accompaniment to the voice, and duets on two zithers are most effective.

Being moderate in price, the instrument is within the reach of many. A good one may be bought at Metzler's for £5. A higher sum secures a first-rate zither; while on the other hand a small prime, suitable for beginners, may be purchased for 25s. To those, therefore, who feel the power of music strongly within them, I recommend this little instrument, at once delicate, and yet capable of expressing the strongest emotion, certain that it possesses all those attributes dear to true lovers of music.

Let me conclude by quoting the eloquent account of the zither by the late Anthony Trollope: "Reader, did you ever hear the zither? It combines all the softest notes of the human voice. It sings to you of love, and then wails to you of disappointed love, till it fills you with a melancholy from which there is no escaping, from which you never wish to escape. It speaks to you as no other instrument ever speaks, and reveals to you with wonderful eloquence the sadness in which it delights. It produces a luxury of anguish, a fullness of the satisfaction of imaginary woe, a realisation of the mysterious delights of romance, which no words can ever thoroughly supply. While the notes are living, while the music is still in the air, the ear comes to covet greedily every atom of tone which the instrument will produce, so that the slightest extraneous sound becomes an offence. The notes sink and sink so low and low, that the listener dreads that something will be lost in the struggle of listening. There seems to come some lethargy, on his sense of hearing, which he fears will shut out from his brain the last, lowest, sweetest strain, the very pearl of music, for which he has been watching with all the intensity of prolonged desire. And then the zither is silent; and there remains a fond memory, together with a deep regret."

POETS OVER-SEA.

A GOSSIP ON THE RECENT POETRY OF AMERICA.

By GLEESON WHITE, Author of "Some Poetry we Read," "Ballades and Rondeaux," etc.

PART IV.

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN (1860), who has published so far but a single volume, "Madrigals and Catches," is one of those who having done small things supremely, give hope of their doing great things equally well. While much of his verse is of the light, half-gay, half-grave order, dear to popular taste now, it has poetry in it, and never descends to be merely facile rhyming. At first sight the title of the book and the look of its contents suggest the lightest of the class Locker and Calverly made famous, but in many of the lyrics a more serious note is struck. These two give some idea of Mr. Sherman's style, but the variety of treatment and riper quality of his recent work reaches higher than the level attained even in these.

THE MARCH WIND.

Blow, wind of March, and sing
Your song unto the timid buds and grass—
Unclasp the fetters of the woodland spring,
Hushed in its house of glass.

Blow, wind of March, and thrill
The languid pulses of the barren trees,
Until their empty hands with blossoms fill,
And tempt the honey-bees.

Blow, wind of March, and wake
The sleeping violets with gentle words;
Spread your green canopy of leaves, and
make
A shelter for the birds.

Blow, sturdy wind of March,
And burst the winter's frosty prison-bars;
Blow all the clouds from heaven's azure arch,
And stud it with white stars.

Blow, wind of March, ay, blow
Until the orchards heed your voice, and
bloom;
Then whisper softly where the wild flowers
grow
About the winter's tomb.

A CATCH.

If any grace
To me belong
In song,

Know then your face
Has been to me
A key.

For pitched in this
Delicious tone
I've known,

I could not miss
What music slips
Your lips.

If faults be found
In any line
Of mine,

To mar the sound
Of notes that try
To vie

With yours, my sweet,
Then, always true
Do you

The words repeat,
And make sublime
My rhyme!

In "Songs of Sleepy Hollow" (1839) S. H. Thayer has written many graceful and facile verses on the district which entitles the book. While there is not any striking newness in his poems, they are neatly wrought and pleasantly written. Throughout the book suggests the work of a scholar and student, with less reminiscences of accepted models than is usual in work of its class. The idea in the following sonnet is well expressed, and musically set out in words that build up lines of considerable beauty.

A SONG WITHOUT WORDS.

Sometimes a silence breaks upon the air,
Full laden with a music mutely deep,
That lulls the senses to oblivious sleep;
No silvery chords or murmuring lips may dare
To vie in sweetness with this songster rare,
Or share its harmonies, which, voiceless, steep
The sacred revery of the heart, and keep
The spirit kindred to the spell of prayer.
The purest notes, trilled by impassioned voice,
Are wasted then upon the listless ear;
The wakened memory is left no choice
But to be wooed in flight to some old year,
When mother-lips in holy prayer were heard,
Or maiden love once spoke its sovereign word.

Maurice Thompson (1844), in his one volume, "Songs of Fair Weather" (1883), has so rare a collection of poems that a new volume from his pen is a thing to wish for. He has peculiarly marked the intuition that directs the exquisite rhythm evolved by the order of the words, quite apart from the actual scansion of the lines. There is distinction in his work, and while faithfully portraying nature, the result is not mere photography in black and white, nor even clever colour studies, but reflections of light and movement, and of the human interest that we call poetic. Whatever the ultimate standard he acquires in the Walhalla of American song, such refined and artistic poetry deserves special note. Not only do his lyrics read easily, but like a real melody they recur again unsought yet insistent, after being read but once.

AT NIGHT.

The moon hangs in a silver mist,
The stars are dull and thin;
Sleep, bending low, spreads loving arms
To fold the whole world in.
The air is like a spell; the hills
Waver, now seen, now lost,
The pallid river wanders by
A vast unquiet ghost.
A horned owl on silent wings
From out a cavernous space,
Speeds like a bolt of darkness hurled
Athwart the shimmering space,
Above the vale, from wood to wood,
And leaves no trace behind,
Like some dark fancy flung across
A pure and peaceful mind.

In "Etchings in Verse," Mr. Andrew F. Underhill hit upon a very happy title, after the accepted model, "Proverbs in Porcelain," and other fanciful designations. One, a humorous plaint to Mrs. Herrick, said to be the censor of poetry to the *Century* magazine, would be worth its space, could it be spared here. The other verses are sprightly and sad, but always graceful in their expression.

David Wasson's Poems, collected in 1883, are marked by lofty thought, in dignified, stately utterance. Their largeness of view and nobility of purpose stamp them at once as poetry of no mean order. One that has been called "a classic, and unrivalled in American poetry," entitled "All's Well," seems hardly to justify such eulogy; it is besides too long to quote here, but the two that are given may bear witness of the importance of the book.

LOVE AGAINST LOVE.

As unto blowing roses summer dews,
Or morning's amber to the tree-top choirs,
So to my bosom are the beams that use
To rain on me from eyes that love inspires.
Your love, vouchsafe it, royal-hearted few,
And I will set no common price thereon;
Oh! I will keep as heaven its holy blue,
Or night her diamonds, that dear treasure won.
But aught of inward faith must I forego,
Or miss one drop from Truth's baptismal hand;
Think poorer thoughts; pray cheaper prayers,
and grow
Less worthy trust, to meet your heart's demand?
Farewell! Your wish I for your sake deny;
Rebel to love, in truth to love am I.

TIME.

I. From Below.

"I have a tyrant-master, Time,
Whose small apprentice I am bound;
To each desire of his must rhyme
My ceaseless duty in servile round.
Two haughty officers, Night and Day,
Still whip and wind me every way;
Were Destiny my better friend,
This harsh apprenticeship had end!"

II. From Above.

"There is a shadowy weaver, Time,
Thwarting his threads below me far;
With lidless eye, from height sublime,
I look upon him, like a star,
But dwell in calm, cerulean sky,
Above that region where his ply
Makes changing season and chequered year
Eternity my mansion here!"

One great personality, whose utterances in spite of their unconventional melody and rugged disregard of the accepted attributes of poetry, wield a gigantic influence, has been left unnoticed here. But the canvas was too small to include Walt Whitman, and, curiously enough, his disciples seem so far almost exclusively upon this side of the ocean. To-day in England dozens of pages of our younger poets show unmistakably traces of close study of his works, and keen appreciation of his genius; but among his fellow citizens hardly a line recalls him, however faintly. Later on in these columns I hope to atone as far as possible for the apparent neglect.

The few poets here quoted are but a tithe of the large number who, in spite of the too often repeated axiom that nobody reads or cares for poetry now-a-days, brave the neglect of the cold reception, and put forth volume after volume. It is said that only those who write verses themselves ever read other poetry. If so, the would-be poet has a very large audience—one, too, that is to some extent trained by unconscious education to a standard of perfection, however low their ideal may be. But had not space forbidden, Will Carleton, whose ballads, somewhat akin to

those of Mr. G. R. Sims, are the delight of amateur reciters; Edmund Clarence Stedman, whose own fame is shadowed by his altruistic attempt to acquire fame for others, for his "Victorian Poets" and its companion volume "American," are probably the most comprehensive treatises upon contemporary workers that any art has seen in any age; Richard Watson Gilder; Charles Warren Stoddard; Charles Henry Phelps; Colonel Hay, whose curiously bold rhymes charm the very readers they repel; James Whitcomb Riley, whose "Old Fashioned Roses" has lately been published in England, and whose dialect verse has become very popular; Joel Chandler Harris (Uncle Remus), with his plantation rhymes; Burns Wilson, Sidney Lanier, F. W. Loring, Charles de Kay, George Parsons Lathrop, and many other names come to mind with self-consciousness of culpable neglect in omission. Yet to include them were well-nigh impossible, and as Mr. Douglas Sladen, who introduced to us a new world of poets from Australasia, is even now working in America upon a similar scheme to set forth specimens of its living poets—this time, however, with the vast resources of a continent, not in the first stage of civilisation, but in many respects ahead of the mother country—the reproach that we know so little of the contemporary poets of the United States may cease to exist. And, in sober truth, it is to be feared a similar series of gossips upon English versifiers, in an anthology restricted to the "coming men," would reveal to most of us depths of ignorance that we scarce suspect.

Canada, with Professor G. D. Roberts, whose "Orion" and "In Divers Tones" are notable volumes, and Bliss Carman, a young writer of whom more will be heard, can hardly be noticed under the "Poets Over-Sea." They are indeed geographically near our cousins, but rightly come into English limits, and take place with our next-door neighbours, as Englishmen who write for English audiences.

So these papers end, with a feeling of regret that the space already usurping the fair proportions allotted to it in a magazine with so many tastes to cater for, was not a hundred times greater, but with a much keener regret that such valuable opportunity could not have been made a perfect storehouse of flawless examples.

A cluster of jewels tossed into a common box look mere crystals, more or less brilliant, but hardly rarer in value than the torrent of coloured fragments that pour from a broken kaleidoscope. Yet there may be gems among them that, if detached from their fellows and set apart, whether in the diadem of an empress or reposing upon velvet in a jeweller's window, would make their royal worth apparent.

Out of such treasure trove as the whole mass of American poetry offers, though an Aladdin's lamp has given access thereunto, time admits only of the lucky seeker loading his wallet with such scant purpose as he may. He throws down here an armful of the glittering things, leaving behind, perhaps, some of the rarest jewels, and proudly exhibiting some mechanically built-up imitations. But that is the greedy treasure-hunter's error, and no fault of the treasury whence they have been so indiscriminately drawn.

NOTE.—"The Heart of the Weed," quoted as by Nora Perry, on page 231, was published anonymously by Houghton, Mifflin and Co., and is the work of Lilian Cabot Perry.

[THE END.]

