

Thackeray, too, could write delightful lines. His daughter — Mrs. Thackeray-Ritchie—sent the following to the writer, written by her father to Miss Lucy Batler in America :—

LUCY'S BIRTHDAY.

Seventeen rosebuds in a ring,
Thick with silver flowers beset
In a fragrant coronet,
Lucy's servants this day bring.
Be it the birthday wreath she wears,
Fresh and fair and symboling
The young number of her years,
The sweet blushes of her spring.

Types of youth, and love, and hope,
Friendly hearts, your mistress greet,
Be you ever fair and sweet,
And grow lovelier as you ope.
Gentle nursling, fenced about
With fond care, and guarded so,
Scarce you've heard of storms without,
Frosts that bite, and winds that blow !

Kindly has your life begun,
And we pray that Heaven may send
To our floweret a warm sun,
A calm summer, a sweet end.
And where'er shall be her home,
May she decorate the place,
Still expanding into bloom,
And developing in grace.

To-day our birthday poets are limited—not in numbers, for the publishers of cards are inundated with verses—but in those of merit. One firm, indeed, during the last twelve or thirteen years has received no fewer than 150,000 compositions, of which number only some 5,600 have been found usable; not a very great number, when it is remembered that something between ten and twelve millions of cards pass between well-wishers in this country alone every year, and that a similar

THE birthday card, as we know it now, can scarcely have been with us more than

fifty or fifty-five years, and there is very little doubt that the more ancient reminder of St. Valentine's Day suggested the idea of putting a verse, appropriate to a birthday, in the place of the often far-fetched sentiments of February the fourteenth. Nearly all our later poets have contributed to birthday literature, and we may presume that the delightful *morceaux* which came from their pens were written on a card or sheet of paper, and quietly dispatched to the recipient. Eliza Cook, Tom Moore, Burns, Cowper, Johnson, Tom Hood, Charles Lamb, and Mrs. Hemans have given to the world the most beautiful of thoughts within the limits of a four-line verse. Where is a more suggestive sentiment—considered by many the finest of all such verse—than that which Pope addressed to Martha Blount?—

Is that a birthday? 'Tis, alas! too clear
'Tis but the funeral of the former year.



MISS HELEN MARION BURNSIDE.

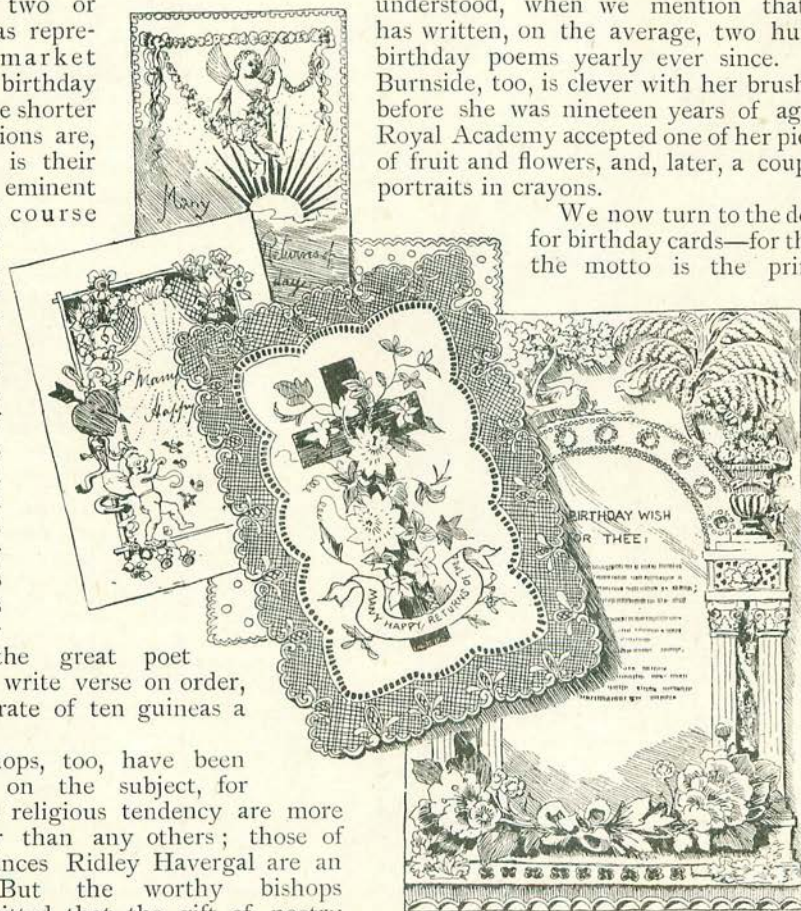
late Bishop of Worcester said: "I have not poetical talent enough to write short poems." Dr. King, Bishop of Lincoln, said: "I am sorry, but I am not a poet." The Bishops of Manchester and Liverpool also honestly confessed to being no poets, whilst Dr. Temple, Bishop of London, said: "I am afraid I should make a great mistake if at my age I began to write short poems;" generously adding, "the Bishop of Exeter is a genuine poet."

Perhaps the most popular writer to-day is the lady whose initials—H. M. B.—have been appended to many millions of cards—Miss Helen Marion Burnside, of whom we give a portrait. Miss Burnside was born at Bromley Hall, Middlesex, in 1843, and at twelve years of age was seized with a severe attack of scarlet fever, the result of which was that she lost her hearing. A year later she commenced to write birthday poetry, and her prolific abilities will be understood, when we mention that she has written, on the average, two hundred birthday poems yearly ever since. Miss Burnside, too, is clever with her brush, and before she was nineteen years of age the Royal Academy accepted one of her pictures of fruit and flowers, and, later, a couple of portraits in crayons.

We now turn to the designs for birthday cards—for though the motto is the principal

quantity are exported to the United States, India, China, and the Colonies. From five shillings to two or three guineas represents the market value of a birthday poem, and the shorter such expressions are, the greater is their value. But eminent writers of course obtain much more. Lord Tennyson was once asked to pen a dozen birthday poems of eight lines each. A thousand guineas were offered for the stanzas—but, alas for birthday literature, the great poet declined to write verse on order, even at the rate of ten guineas a line.

The Bishops, too, have been approached on the subject, for verses of a religious tendency are more sought after than any others; those of the late Frances Ridley Havergal are an instance. But the worthy bishops frankly admitted that the gift of poetry had not been allotted to them. The



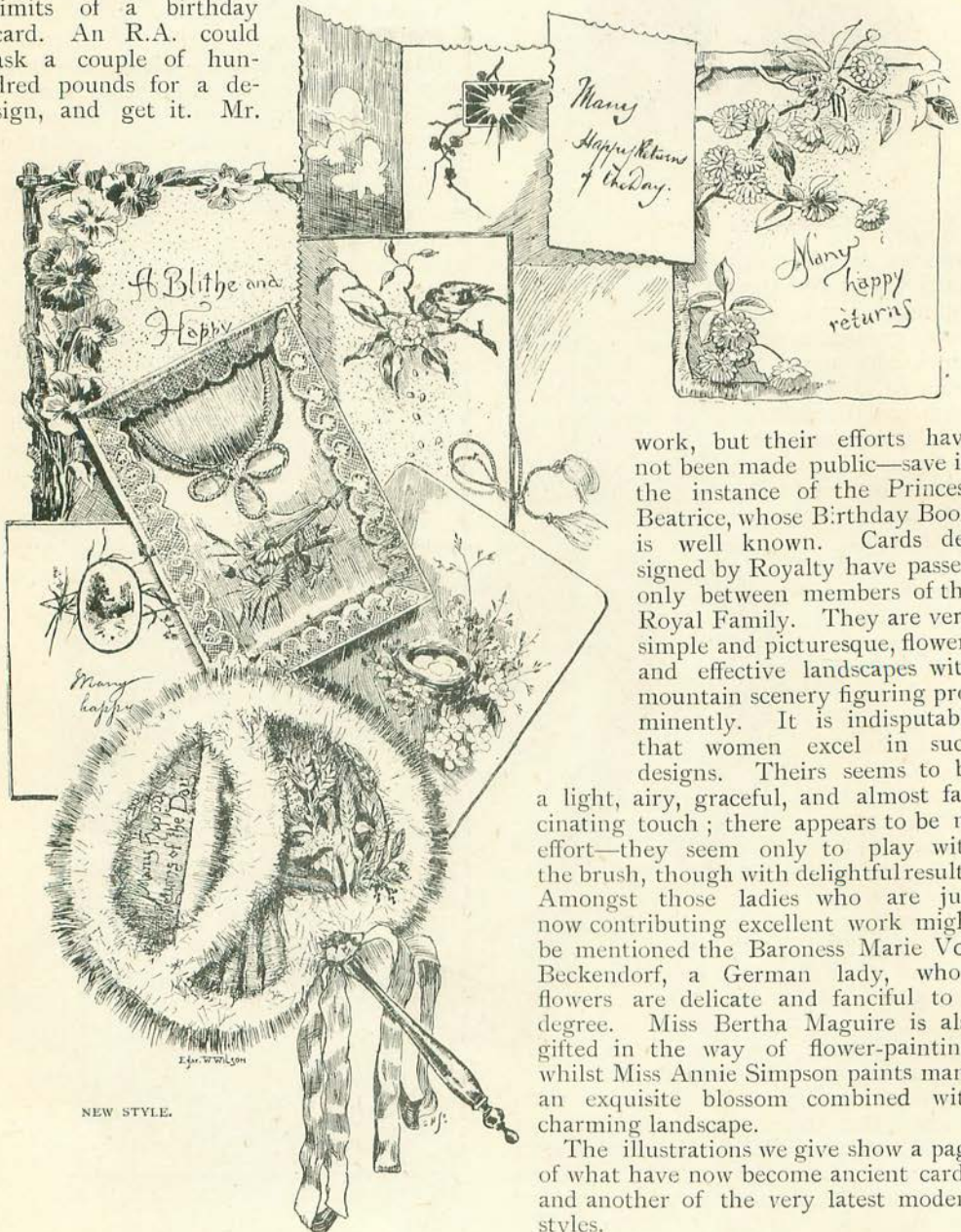
OLD STYLE.

consideration, a pretty and fanciful surrounding is by no means to be despised.

Royal Academicians really do little in this branch of art. Though both Mr. Poynter and Mr. Sant have applied their brushes in this direction, and Sir John Millais has before now signified his willingness to accept a commission, it is presumed that R.A.'s prefer not to have their work confined to the narrow limits of a birthday card. An R.A. could ask a couple of hundred pounds for a design, and get it. Mr.

Alma Tadema, when asked what he would charge to paint a pair of cards, replied—£600. Ordinary designs fetch from three to six guineas, though a distinctly original and novel idea, be it only in the shape of a score of splashes from the brush, is worth from ten to fifteen guineas.

Both the Princess Louise and Princess Beatrice have done some really artistic



NEW STYLE.

work, but their efforts have not been made public—save in the instance of the Princess Beatrice, whose Birthday Book is well known. Cards designed by Royalty have passed only between members of the Royal Family. They are very simple and picturesque, flowers and effective landscapes with mountain scenery figuring prominently. It is indisputable that women excel in such designs. Theirs seems to be

a light, airy, graceful, and almost fascinating touch; there appears to be no effort—they seem only to play with the brush, though with delightful results. Amongst those ladies who are just now contributing excellent work might be mentioned the Baroness Marie Von Beckendorf, a German lady, whose flowers are delicate and fanciful to a degree. Miss Bertha Maguire is also gifted in the way of flower-painting, whilst Miss Annie Simpson paints many an exquisite blossom combined with charming landscape.

The illustrations we give show a page of what have now become ancient cards, and another of the very latest modern styles.

It will at once be seen how the birthday card has grown out of the valentine. The two designs in the top corner of the first are essentially of a fourteenth of February tendency. Note the tiny god of love, that irrepressible mite of mischief, Cupid, playing with a garland of roses; and there, too, is the heart, a trifle too symmetrical to be natural, with the customary arrow, almost as big as young Cupid himself, cruelly thrust through the very middle of it. The centre card is a French design, embossed round the edges with lace paper, with a silken cross and hand-painted passion flowers laid on the card proper, which is of rice-paper. The remaining specimen is exceedingly quaint in the original, and has passed through more than forty birthdays. It is almost funereal in appearance, as indeed were most of those made at that period; indeed, many of the specimens of old-time birthday cards we have examined are made up of weeping willows, young women shedding copious tears into huge urns at their feet, and what, to all appearance, is a mausoleum in the distance. And above all is written, "Many happy returns of the day!"

The other set of cards, the modern ones, are all suggestive of the good wishes they carry with them. Many of them are of satin with real lace, delicately hand-painted marguerites, pansies, and apple-blossoms, whilst the elaborate fan, with its flowing ribbons, is edged with white swan's-down and gaily decorated with artificial corn and poppies. These are from designs kindly placed at our disposal by Messrs. Raphael

Tuck & Sons. The printing of the cards is in itself an art. One of the largest printing establishments in the world devoted to this purpose is that of Messrs. Raphael Tuck & Sons, in Germany, whence comes the greater portion of those required for the English market. In the little village of Rendnitz, just outside Leipsic, from a thousand to twelve hundred people find employment. Here may be found a room containing no fewer than thirty-two of the largest presses, on which colour-lithography is being printed. Every machine does its own work, and the amount of labour required on a single birthday card is such that many cards pass through eighteen or twenty different stages of printing, and in some exceptionally elaborate instances the number has run up to thirty-seven.

The cards are printed on great sheets of board, and from a thousand to fifteen hundred such sheets, so far as one colouring is concerned, constitute a good day's work. These sheets measure 29 inches by 30 inches, and when the various colours are complete, they are cut up by machinery into some twenty or more pieces, according to the size of the card. Nor is the printing of birthday cards confined to cardboard. Effective work has been of late years produced on satin, celluloid, and Japanese paper; and prices range from as low as twopence half-penny a gross to as much as seven and eight guineas for each card. The production of a birthday card, from the time it is designed to the time when it is laid before the public, generally occupies from eight to nine months.

