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POETS AND POETRY

Senior Book II

BY

E. J. S. LAY



MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

POETS AND POETRY

Senior Book II

ARRANGED BY

E. J. S. LAY

AUTHOR OF "THE PUPILS' CLASS-BOOKS OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION,
GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, ARITHMETIC," ETC.

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PREFACE

THE use of pupils' books as a means of self-education is now an established practice in most schools. In books of poetry the pupil specially needs some guidance to enable him to make full use of his opportunities for self-instruction. It demands an extraordinary feat of mental adjustment to turn from a lesson, say, on arithmetic, and at a moment's notice to attune the senses to the appreciation of poetry. The teacher has not always the time to prepare the children's minds for the study. These books of *Poets and Poetry* have been prepared to supplement the work of the teacher and to stimulate the mental activities of the children.

The poems are arranged in groups, those in each group being linked by a common subject or thought. The notes at the beginning of each section are framed with the object of creating a suitable atmosphere for the study of the poems, and the notes and exercises at the end of each section will guide the pupil to a fuller appreciation of the beauty of poetry.

The sketches in the Junior Books are mainly intended as pictorial illustrations of certain words and phrases unfamiliar to children, especially to those children living in cities.

The majority of the poems are from the works of modern poets—Robert Bridges, Laurence Binyon, Patrick Chalmers, William Davies, Walter de la Mare, John Drinkwater, Rose Fyleman, Wilfrid Gibson, Thomas Hardy, F. W. Harvey, Rudyard Kipling, John Masefield, Sir Henry Newbolt, Alfred Noyes, J. C. Squire, James Stephens, Dorothy Margaret Stuart, Wilfred Thorley, William Butler Yeats, etc.

There are in all six books in the series, *viz.*, *Junior Books* I., II., III., and *Senior Books* I., II., III.

The Editor is specially indebted to J. H. Fowler, M.A., for reading the proofs and making many valuable suggestions.

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I. THE POETRY OF EARTH.

Part I.



[*Note to the Reader.* The chapters in this book are divided into sections with the principal poems grouped separately from the text, so that the reader can, if he wishes, study the poems before referring to the text.]

Most of the poems in this book are by writers of to-day. Occasionally, poems of an earlier date have been included, because it is interesting and informative to compare the works of poets who lived a century or so ago with the writings of modern poets. It should be remembered, too, that much of the older poetry is very beautiful, and, of its kind, is unsurpassed. The gems of this older poetry have been published for many years past, and examples will be found in a number of school and library books ; but those by modern poets printed in this book are at present comparatively little known.

1. *Autumn Evening*, by Frances Cornford, presents a quiet, restful picture of a simple homely scene. By a few bold strokes of the word-painter's brush, we are shown a picture of the interior of a room on an autumn evening—shadows, an old red sofa on which

the poet is lying, and silence that is accentuated by the twittering of the sparrows. No other details are given, and we do not remark their absence. So calm and soothing are the surroundings that the writer is too comfortable and sleepy even to think of fairies and imaginary creatures; she is perfectly content to watch the shadows and listen to the sparrows.

Have you ever noticed in the quiet of the night how the noise made by a nibbling mouse, or a creaking chair, intensifies the silence? When all is still, a slight sound, which would otherwise pass unnoticed, is clearly heard, and by contrast, makes the silence deeper than before. This fact is delightfully stated in the following lines by Keats:

The clouds were pure and white as flocks new shorn,
And fresh from the clear brook; sweetly they slept
On the blue fields of heaven, and then there crept
A little noiseless noise among the leaves,
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves.

2. *The Barn* was written by Edmund Blunden, one of the younger poets of to-day. A familiar feature of the countryside is an old barn. In earlier days, when wood was more plentiful, barns were well built of good English oak, so that many have withstood the ravages of time for hundreds of years. This poem is simply descriptive of such a barn and the life associated with it. By the magic of rhythmic language and imagination, we are led to experience the feelings of the man who visited the barn. The description is full of intimate details. In the first stanza are noted the roofs, sparrows' and starlings' nests, eaves, doors, pump, floors, and "idly-pencilled names" upon the posts. This method of detailed description is followed throughout, the various objects being further defined by the use of forcible adjectives and participles. Note, in the first stanza, the significance of the following: *rain-sunken* roof; *dishevelled* eaves; *unwieldy* doors; *cracked rusty* pump; *idly-pencilled* names. When you have read this poem a few times, you will have

in your mind a very complete and detailed picture of a country barn, and you will feel how delightful it must be actually to visit one.

The ancient appearance of a weatherworn barn often suggests mystery, and the first line seems to introduce such an atmosphere : "rain-sunken roof, grown green and thin"—but we find nothing of the kind, and the last line emphatically repudiates the suggestion of mystery : "the barn is old, not strange." Yet, by cleverly contrasting the real with the unreal, the impression on the mind is intensified :

The barn is old, and very old,
But not a place of spectral fear.

And, again :

Nothing but simple wane and change ;
Your tread will wake no ghost.

3. *The Shell* was written by James Stephens, an Irish poet, whose writings are marked by their vivid imagery and fantasy. Few people have handled a shell without pressing it to the ear and listening to the "slow, sad, murmur of far distant seas." Here the poet conjures from the sound a little history of the shell. He imagines that it has existed since a very early time in the earth's history, before man came, and when there was no sunlight. Then he enlarges on his theme and imagines the pebbles monotonously ground by the everlasting movement of the waters, the bubbling seaweeds, the continued twilight which was before the creation of day and night, and the mournful sounding wind. Suddenly he takes the shell away from his ear, and with a sigh of relief hears "a cart go jolting down the street," a homely sound that awakens less awesome images than those produced by the sounds in the shell. In parts of this poem we seem to hear echoes of the opening chapter of the Bible : "And the earth was without form and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

4. The next poem, *The Shell*, is an extract from *Maud*, a long poem by Lord Tennyson, the great poet of the Victorian era. In beautiful language he describes the wonders of this "work divine." In the first stanza there are no fanciful thoughts associated with the description, only a brilliant little word-painting of a real thing. We can imagine a picture of the strand, on which Stephens' shell lies solitary, painted with a large brush on a wide canvas depicting the mystery of gloom and murmuring seas; and Tennyson's shell as an exquisitely finished miniature. The second stanza of Tennyson's poem draws our attention to a wonderful fact of nature—the frail shell withstanding the force of "cataract seas," which wreck our great ships.

5. *Of Spring Music*. In this poem by William Ernest Henley, we hear something of the wonderful music of nature in springtime. There are no specially striking pictures in the poem, there is no deep underlying thought. But there is music; music that awakens feelings of great joy:

Here's shall make you leap and fling.
Fling and leap like Jack and Jill!

It is interesting to notice some of the devices by which the musical effect is produced. There is the repeated sound of *ing*, as in *growing*, *living*, *yeo-hoing*, *swing*, *spring*; and the repeated sound of the liquid *lls*, as in *fill*, *hill*, *still*, *will*. Then, the last line of each stanza has a musical sound—" 'Tis the symphony of Spring!" and, in addition, the word *symphony* itself has the meaning of a *harmony of sounds*. There are many other musically sounding words such as *clarion*, *skylark*, *rhythmic*, *Kapellmeister*, *orchestra*, *fluting* and *clacks*. The line "brisk and rhythmic clacks the mill" not only conveys the sense, but pleases the ear. Then, too, the vowels are harmoniously arranged. Listen to the vowel sounds in such lines as, "Hark! the echoes are yeo-hoing" and, "Hark! the West his clarion's blowing!" and you will realise how skilfully the sounds are blended to make music. In this poem, as in many others, the vowels are varied or repeated in

a very clever way, as though the poet carefully wove the sounds into a pattern. Note the vowel sounds in the first lines of each stanza : “ Sounds of waking, sounds of growing ” ; “ Showers are singing, clouds are flowing ” ; “ Lambs are bleating, steers are lowing.”

It would be a mistake to analyse every line of a poem, as by so doing one would miss the beauty of the whole, and lose the sound of the music and the thrill of the rhythm ; but by carefully examining a passage here and there, you will more readily and more keenly appreciate some of the wonders of good poetry.

An *Envoy* is a postscript which, in poetry, as here, is usually an extra short stanza that summarises the thoughts of the poem, or conveys a moral. *Envoy* is an old French word, for the parting words with which you speed a traveller upon his way.

1. AUTUMN EVENING.

The shadows flickering, the daylight dying,
And I upon the old red sofa lying,
The great brown shadows leaping up the wall,
The sparrows twittering ; and that is all.

I thought to send my soul to far-off lands,
Where fairies scamper on the windy sands,
Or where the autumn rain comes drumming down
On huddled roofs in an enchanted town.

But O my sleepy soul, it will not roam,
It is too happy and too warm at home :
With just the shadows leaping up the wall,
The sparrows twittering ; and that is all.

Frances Cornford.

THE POETRY OF EARTH

2. THE BARN.

Rain-sunken roof, grown green and thin
For sparrows' nests and starlings' nests ;
Dishevelled eaves ; unwieldy doors,
Cracked rusty pump, and oaken floors,
And idly-pencilled names and jests
 Upon the posts within.

The light pales at the spider's lust,
The wind tangs through the shattered pane :
An empty hop-poke spreads across
The gaping frame to mend the loss
And keeps out sun as well as rain,
 Mildewed with clammy dust.

The smell of apples stored in hay
And homely cattle-cake is there.
Use and disuse have come to terms,
The walls are hollowed out by worms,
But men's feet keep the mid-floor bare
 And free from worse decay.

All merry noise of hens astir
Or sparrows squabbling on the roof
Comes to the barn's broad open door ;
You hear upon the stable floor
Old hungry Dapple strike his hoof,
 And the blue fan-tail's whirl.

The barn is old, and very old,
But not a place of spectral fear.
Cobwebs and dust and speckling sun
Come to old buildings every one.
Long since they made their dwelling here,
 And here you may behold

Nothing but simple wane and change ;
Your tread will wake no ghost, your voice
Will fall on silence undeterred.
No phantom wailing will be heard,
Only the farm's blithe cheerful noise ;
The barn is old, not strange.

Edmund Blunden.

3. THE SHELL.

I.

And then I pressed the shell
Close to my ear,
And listened well.

And straightway, like a bell,
Came low and clear
The slow, sad, murmur of far distant seas,

Whipped by an icy breeze
Upon a shore
Wind-swept and desolate.

It was a sunless strand that never bore
The footprint of a man,
Nor felt the weight

Since time began
Of any human quality or stir,
Save what the dreary winds and wave incur.

II.

And in the hush of waters was the sound
Of pebbles, rolling round ;
For ever rolling, with a hollow sound :

THE POETRY OF EARTH

And bubbling sea-weeds, as the waters go,
Swish to and fro
Their long cold tentacles of slimy grey :

There was no day ;
Nor ever came a night
Setting the stars alight

To wonder at the moon :
Was twilight only, and the frightened croon,
Smitten to whimpers, of the dreary wind

And waves that journeyed blind . . .
And then I loosed my ear—Oh, it was sweet
To hear a cart go jolting down the street.

James Stephens.

4. THE SHELL.

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairly well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design !

.

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand ;
Small, but a work divine ;
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap

The three-decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand !

*Alfred, Lord Tennyson.
From "Maud."*

5. OF SPRING MUSIC.

Sounds of waking, sounds of growing
Seem the living air to fill.
Hark ! the echoes are yeo-hoing
Valiantly from vale and hill !
Nature's voices, moving still
In a larger, lustier swing,
Work together with a will.
'Tis the symphony of Spring !

Showers are singing, clouds are flowing,
Ocean thunders, croons the rill.
Hark ! the West his clarion's blowing !
Hark ! the thrush is fluting shrill,
And the blackbird tries his trill,
And the skylark soars to sing !
Even the sparrow tunes his quill.
'Tis the symphony of Spring !

Lambs are bleating, steers are lowing,
Brisk and rhythmic clacks the mill.
Kapellmeister April, glowing
And superb with glee and skill,
Comes, his orchestra to drill
In a music that will ring
Till the gray world yearn and thrill :
'Tis the symphony of Spring !

THE POETRY OF EARTH

Envoy.

Princes, though your blood be chill,
Here's shall make you leap and fling,
Fling and leap like Jack and Jill !
'Tis the symphony of Spring.

William Ernest Henley.

Part 2.

6. *January* is one of many poems written by Dr. Bridges, the present Poet Laureate. The first line strikes the keynote of this lyric to January : "cold is the winter day, misty and dark." Then follows a striking description of a familiar country scene in England during this first month of the year—sunless skies, patches of thin snow, dreary landscape, etc. But there is something more in this poem than a descriptive account of a winter scene, there is the expression of faithful hope of the future, a hope that is promised by the oak, the cherry, and the chestnut with "her gluey knops up-thrust." The sounds made by the starling as he chaps his bill, and the plaintive cry of the newborn lambs, further the hope, till the poet visualises the joy of spring, with the birds, the meadows and the bees, and he praises God "for wintry works not understood." The underlying thought is summarised in the last three words—"all as good." A similar thought was expressed by Robert Browning in the song in *Pippa Passes*, where he makes Pippa, the little Italian girl, sing :

God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world.

Much of the poetry of Robert Bridges is distinguished by the subtle arrangement of the vowels to produce pleasing sounds—soft or loud, swelling or dying, rising or falling, etc. Read aloud this last stanza, concentrating your mind on the vowels, and forgetting, as far as possible, everything else. You will be pleased with the organ-like effect of the sounds :

And God the Maker doth my heart grow bold
To praise for wintry works not understood,
Who all the worlds and ages doth behold,
Evil and good as one, and all as good.

7. *The Winnowers* is another poem of the countryside by Robert Bridges. It describes in picturesque language the visit of two city folk to a little hamlet where labourers were busy about a farmyard. First, the travellers came upon the pretty hamlet nestling "betwixt two billows of the downs"; next, they saw the busy woodman, and the cattle "knee-deep in straw"; then, coming from a barn, they heard the "steady muffled din" by which they knew that corn was being winnowed, and on entering the barn they note all the details of the winnowing by the "honest labourers." The last two stanzas express the feelings of many city dwellers whose lives and thoughts are bound by the business of a thronged town, and who on visiting such a delightful country place, are loosed for a time from the chains that fetter them, and find *themselves*. There is much colour in this word-picture—blue skies, grey slopes, red roofs, golden yellow lichen, brown arms.

8. *The Year* is a very musical nature lyric written by Coventry Patmore, a poet contemporary with Tenayson. With a great economy of words, the poet has delightfully expressed a number of simple facts. Note, particularly, the forcefulness of: "then sleep the seasons, full of might"; and the beauty of the line: "and night is pierced with stars." Among the works of poets are found many arresting passages descriptive of night and the stars, such as:

Ye stars! which are the poetry of heaven! (*Byron*).

Now glowed the firmament with living sapphires. (*Milton*).

Silently one by one, in the infinite meadows of heaven,

Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of the angels.

(*Longfellow*).

9. *Early Spring* is another beautiful lyric by Lord Tennyson. By the aid of musical rhythm and words, and much delightful imagery,

we are told of the joy and beauty of early spring. Do you remember the Bible story of the vision of Jacob's ladder ?

"And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.

"And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set ; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven : and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it."

The poet imagines the sun shining in early spring through the clouds "from skies of glass," making with its rays a Jacob's ladder joining earth and heaven, and at the angelic touch of the sunbeams

. . . fleets the shower,
And burst the buds,
And shine the level lands,
And flash the floods ;
The stars are from their hands
Flung thro' the woods.

(Note the alliteration of *burst the buds ; level lands ; flash the floods*). There are many more beautiful thoughts in this poem ; notice the seventh stanza which speaks of the "twinkling" black-bird and its "chuckled note," and particularly compare the first and last stanzas.

When you have read the poem a few times, select one or two stanzas, such as the first and fifth, and read them aloud, giving particular attention to the vowel sounds. You will enjoy their sonorous music.

10. We now go back about one hundred years to John Clare, the author of *Summer Evening*. John Clare was a poor peasant poet who had to work very long hours for what are now considered very small wages. But John Clare loved intensely the beauty of nature,

and particularly the lowly creatures that walked and crawled and flew about him during his daily task. Few men have either the knowledge that comes from close observation, or the ability which is largely due to kindly sympathy, to describe so exactly the doings of lowly creatures. Take the first line in this poem—"the frog half fearful jumps across the path." Does not the phrase, *half fearful* exactly describe the way in which a frog sits motionless at the path edge before it takes its long jump towards the unknown spot? Then, how could one better describe the little mouse that "nimbles with timid dread beneath the swath"? Throughout the passage we are conscious of the fact that here is the work of one who knew and understood some of the bountiful secrets of nature.

6. JANUARY.

Cold is the winter day, misty and dark :
The sunless sky with faded gleams is rent .
And patches of thin snow outlying, mark
The landscape with a drear disfigurement.

The trees their mournful branches lift aloft .
The oak with knotty twigs is full of trust,
With bud-thronged bough the cherry in the croft ;
The chestnut holds her gluey knops upthrust.

No birds sing, but the starling chaps his bill
And chatters mockingly ; the newborn lambs
Within their strawbuilt fold beneath the hill
Answer with plaintive cry their bleating dams.

Their voices melt in welcome dreams of spring,
Green grass and leafy trees and sunny skies :
My fancy decks the woods, the thrushes sing,
Meadows are gay, bees hum and scents arise.

THE POETRY OF EARTH

And God the Maker doth my heart grow bold
To praise for wintry works not understood,
Who all the worlds and ages doth behold,
Evil and good as one, and all as good.

Robert Bridges.

7. THE WINNOWNERS.

Betwixt two billows of the downs
The little hamlet lies,
And nothing sees but the bald crowns
Of the hills, and the blue skies.

Clustering beneath the long descent
And grey slopes of the wold,
The red roofs nestle, oversprent
With lichen yellow as gold.

We found it in the mid-day sun
Basking, what time of year
The thrush his singing has begun,
Ere the first leaves appear.

High from his load a woodman pitched
His faggots on the stack :
Knee-deep in straw the cattle twitched
Sweet hay from crib and rack :

And from the barn hard by was borne
A steady muffled din,
By which we knew that threshèd corn
Was winnowing, and went in.

The sunbeams on the motey air
Streamed through the open door,

And on the brown arms moving bare,
And the grain upon the floor.

One turns the crank, one stoops to feed
The hopper, lest it lack,
One in the bushel scoops the seed,
One stands to hold the sack.

We watched the good grain rattle down,
And the awns fly in the draught ;
To see us both so pensive grown
The honest labourers laughed :

Merry they were, because the wheat
Was clean and plump and good,
Pleasant to hand and eye, and meet
For market and for food.

It chanced we from the city were,
And had not got us free
In spirit from the store and stir
Of its immensity :

But here we found ourselves again,
Where humble harvests bring
After much toil but little grain,
'Tis merry winnowing.

Robert Bridges.

8. THE YEAR.

The crocus, while the days are dark,
Unfolds its saffron sheen ;
At April's touch the crudest bark
Discovers gems of green.

THE POETRY OF EARTH

Then sleep the seasons, full of might ;
While slowly swells the pod
And rounds the peach, and in the night
The mushroom bursts the sod.

The Winter falls, the frozen rut
Is bound with silver bars ;
The snowdrift heaps against the hut,
And night is pierced with stars.

Coventry Patmore.

9. EARLY SPRING.

Once more the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And domes the red-plow'd hills
With loving blue ;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The throistles too.

Opens a door in Heaven ;
From skies of glass
A Jacob's ladder falls
On greening grass,
And o'er the mountain-walls
Young angels pass.

Before them fleets the shower
And burst the buds,
And shine the level lands,
And flash the floods ;
The stars are from their hands
Flung thro' the woods,

The woods with living airs
How softly fann'd,

Light airs from where the deep,
All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
Heard by the land.

O follow, leaping blood,
The season's lure !
O heart, look down and up
Serene, secure,
Warm as the crocus cup,
Like snowdrops, pure !

Past, Future glimpse and fade
Thro' some slight spell,
A gleam from yonder vale,
Some far blue fell,
And sympathies, how frail,
In sound and smell !

Till at thy chuckled note,
Thou twinkling bird,
The fairy fancies range,
And, lightly stirr'd,
Ring little bells of change
From word to word.

For now the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And thaws the cold, and fills
The flower with dew ;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The poets too.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

10. SUMMER EVENING.

The frog half fearful jumps across the path,
 The little mouse that leaves its hole at eve
 Nimbles with timid dread beneath the swath ;
 My rustling steps awhile their joys deceive,
 Till past,—and then the cricket sings more strong,
 And grasshoppers in merry moods still wear
 The short night weary with their fretting song.
 Up from behind the molehill jumps the hare,
 Cheat of his chosen bed, and from the bank
 The yellowhammer flutters in short fears
 From off its nest hid in the grasses rank,
 And drops again when no more noise it hears.
 Thus nature's human link and endless thrall,
 Proud man, still seems the enemy of all.

John Clare.

NOTES AND EXERCISES.

1. AUTUMN EVENING. In many poems, we find words in which the *sound* is an echo to the *sense* which the words are meant to convey. In this poem, we have the sparrows *twittering*, and the rain *drumming*. This figure of speech is called *onomatopoeia*. (On-o-mat-o-pē'-ya = name-making.)

Exercises. (1) How does this poem help to make one feel contented ? (2) What is the force of the repetition in the last stanza ? (3) Explain the significance of the words in italics: *windy sands* ; *huddled roofs* ; *enchanted town*.

2. THE BARN. Poetic diction—the choice of words—is to some extent different from the diction of prose. We have just noticed the use of onomatopoeic words—a figure of speech more frequently used in poetry than in prose: in this poem of *The Barn* we have—the wind *tangs* ; sparrows *squabbling* ; blue fan-tail's *whir* ; phantom *wailing*. Poets generally use the least possible number of words, because they aim at the effect on the mind of concentration. Frequent use is made of compound words such as *rain-sunken*, *hop-poke*, *cattle-cake*, *mid-floor*, *fan-tail*. Of course, some of these compound words would be used in prose, but it is noticeable that the use of compound words is more

frequent in poetry than in prose, because poetry is concentrated and is read with closer attention than prose, where we allow ourselves many extra clauses to make our meaning clear.

Hop-poke—bag or sack in which hops are placed after being dried : *lust*—savage greed (the poet perhaps means that the light from the window is lessened by the bloodthirsty spider's web dark with captured flies) : *fan-tail*—a domestic pigeon having a broad rounded tail in the shape of a fan.

Exercises. (1) What birds and animals are mentioned in this poem ? (2) What details are given of the barn ? (3) Explain the force of the words in italics : *wind tangs*, *gaping frame* ; *clammy dust* ; *spectral fear* ; *speckling sun* ; silence *undeterred*. (4) Quote the pairs of lines that express contrasting statements. (5) Explain : "Use and disuse have come to terms."



FAN-TAIL

3. THE SHELL. *Exercises.* (1) Quote examples from this poem of the use of onomatopoeic words. (2) In one of his poems Keats says : "Ever let the fancy roam ! Pleasure never is at home." Show how this poem of *The Shell* gives the other side of the question. (3) Gather up and comment on the expressions used about the wind and the water.



WATER MILL

4. THE SHELL. *Exercise.* Explain how this extract illustrates the truth of the statement that poets find "sermons in stones."

5. OF SPRING MUSIC. **Kapellmeister*—a German word for the conductor of an orchestra : *mill*—a building containing machinery driven by water-power for grinding grain into flour.

Exercises. (1) Write four lines of the poem and mark the strong stresses. (2) Name six words that rhyme with *growing*. (3) Make a list of simple statements (subject and predicate only) of all the sounds mentioned in the second and third stanzas, such as "showers ring," "ocean thunder." (4) Name all the onomatopoeic words used in this poem. (5) What is the message of the *Envoy* ?

6. JANUARY. *Gluey knops*—chestnut buds which are covered with a sticky resinous substance to protect them from the weather. *Exercises.* (1) How does this poem express the feeling of contentment ? (2) What examples are there of the use of contrast ? (3) Quote lines illustrative of music, pictures, thought, and feeling. (4) Quote instances from

CHESTNUT
'KNOPS.'

this poem which suggest that the writer is a keen observer of nature.

- (5) Explain : (a) The sunless sky with faded gleams is rent.
(b) Evil and good as one, and all as good.

7. THE WINNERS. *Downs*—hills weather-worn into rounded shapes, which, viewed from a distance, have something the appearance of billows of the ocean : *lichen*—one of an order of flowerless plants that grow on rocks, bark of trees, etc. : *twitched*—pulled with a sudden jerk : *motey*—full of minute particles of dust : *hopper*—a wooden trough through which grain passes into a mill ; so called from its *hopping* or shaking motion : *awn*—a scale or husk, beard of corn or grasses.



Downs.

Exercises. (1) Describe in your own words the appearance and situation of the hamlet. (2) At what time of the year was the visit made to the hamlet ?

- (3) Which word-picture appeals to you most ? State reasons for your choice.
(4) Explain the significance of the italicised words : *bald crowns* of the hills ; a steady *muffled* din ; *good grain* ; of its *immensity* ; *humble* harvests.

8. THE YEAR. Dwellers in the country will know that “in the night the mushroom bursts the sod.” It grows much more quickly than the ordinary plant and passes through its whole life history in a short time. The mushroom is like a little umbrella which, when it is young, is closed, with its edges joined to the short stalk. It is then shaped like a button and is hardly noticeable in the ground. In the dampness of the night the stalk quickly lengthens, the edges of the umbrella are torn away and the umbrella opens, and we find the complete mushroom in the morning.

Exercises. (1) Why is this poem called *The Year* ? (2) State in your own words all the natural facts that are mentioned in the poem.

9. EARLY SPRING. *Red-plow'd hills*—in some parts of England, such as in Devonshire, the earth is of a red colour ; *Past, Future glimpse and fade Thro' some slight spell*—memories of the Past and thoughts of the Future are momentarily stirred within us by the spell of some beautiful thing that we see : *fell*—mountain : *throstle*—a poetical word for *thrush*.

Exercises. (1) Read the first and last stanzas. With whom are the throstles compared ? Why is the comparison a good one ? (2) Explain :

The stars are from their hands
Flung thro' the woods.



THROSTLE.

(3) Why is the crocus cup called *warm*, and the snowdrops *pure* ? (4) Why are the woods said to be fann'd with *living airs* ? (5) What phrase is used in this poem to describe a calm sea ?

10. SUMMER EVENING. *Crickets* and *grasshoppers* are often said to *sing*, but the chirping noise they make is produced by the rubbing of a smooth edge of one wing-case against the rough edge of the other : *nimbles*—a dialect form of the word, here used as a verb : *deceive*—mislead ; give a false alarm to : *cheat*—dialect form of *cheated* : *human link*—man links the creatures together by being their common enemy.

Robert Burns, a famous Scots poet, was, like Clare, a true countryman, fond of even the lowliest animals. In these two stanzas of his poem, "To A Mouse—On turning her up in her nest, with the plough," Burns expresses the same thought of regret that man should be the enemy of other living creatures :

Wee, sleekit, cowrin', tim'rous beastie,
O what a panic's in thy breastie !
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle !
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee
Wi' murd'ring pattle !

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal !

Exercises. (1) Quote passages from this poem that show Clare's knowledge of the habits of lowly creatures. (2) What is the poet's opinion of the grasshopper's song ? (3) Explain :

- (a) The yellowhammer flutters in short fears.
- (b) Proud man, still seems the enemy of all.

II. NARRATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE.

Part 1.



11. The poet, Austin Dobson (1840-1921), called *The Ladies of St. James's*—"A Proper New Ballad of the Country and the Town." In lyrical poetry, a poet expresses his own feelings and thoughts; but in dramatic poetry, he talks about other people, what they have thought and felt, or what they have said and done. The simplest form of dramatic poetry is the *ballad*. The original English ballads are very old. In many cases we do not know who wrote them; probably the oldest began in some one mind, and it was added to by groups of people who were gathered together to listen to stories, or to play games. Ballads were generally written in simple language, in a simple verse form. The "ballad metre" was the one in which William Cowper wrote *The History of John Gilpin*, which begins as follows :

John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London Town.

Here, you will notice that a line with four feet is followed by one with three feet, and only the second and fourth lines rhyme. In most old ballads, we find a good deal of repetition; questions and answers are

often introduced, and we find many of what are now old-fashioned words and phrases. Our modern poets who have told stories in verse have often tried to catch the spirit of old ballads. They use the devices mentioned to make their poetry lively and picturesque.

In *The Ladies of St. James's*, the metre is irregular, but some of it is in the ballad form :

But Phyllida', my Phyllida' !
She takes her buckled shoon.

The narrative is simply told ; each stanza is built up on contrasts ; the appearance, the deeds, the thoughts of the ladies of the town, are contrasted throughout with those of Phyllida of the country. The narrative takes us back to the eighteenth century, when footmen, carrying torches to lighten the darkness of the London streets, ran before the sedan chairs in which the ladies of rank were carried to the play or other centres of entertainment. The ladies of those days were elaborately clothed in voluminous dresses, and their hair, dressed with pomatum and flour, was drawn up over a pad of wool and twisted into curls decorated with artificial flowers, ribbons, and, later, with ornaments of glass sometimes representing ships in full sail, or coaches and horses. At that period, there was a marked contrast between the dresses of town folk and country folk ; in these days, the dresses of town and country folk are much alike.

You will enjoy the musical lilt of this " Proper New Ballad."

12. *In Mercer Street*. Here we have a pleasing musical and thoughtful poem on a very commonplace subject by a modern Irish writer, Seumas O'Sullivan. But a common street can become a paradise under the magic touch of a poet. *Mercer Street* is typical of many streets which are found in towns and cities of Ireland. The first part of the poem tells how a piper was heard in the street, and everybody within hearing stopped his business to listen to the glad music. Doors and windows were opened, women and children danced. men left their work, " and all the world went gay."

In the second part, the poet makes music and paints word-pictures of the visit of a rag-and-bone dealer to the street. "Gather 'em, gather 'em, gather 'em O," shouts the old dealer as he trundles his truck along the street. The boys and girls, mad with joy, rush out to meet him, to exchange their collection of rags, bones or bottles for sweets, toys or windmills. So joyous is the scene, that the air is filled with the rapture of springtime, and even the little caged bird on the wall "takes heart to sing."

In the third part, the poet sings in praise of the lark's song. Sunlight slanting down is flashed from high buildings upon the wall where the lark's cage hangs, and the poor bird, forgetting for a space the torture of its captivity, feels itself again free in the wide fields, and sings "strangely sweet." Carried away by its own happiness, it attempts to fly, but "panting falls at the rude touch of prison walls." The poet strongly protests against the cruelty of fastening up the lark in a cage; perhaps it is a punishment for the thoughtless imprisonment of the bird that when the lark ceases to sing there is

Silence. Again the street is grey;

Shut down the windows. Work-a-day.

13. *The Children and Sir Nameless* is a quaint and somewhat humorous story told by Thomas Hardy, the illustrious novelist, poet and dramatist, who died in 1928. Sir Nameless, a proud, self-satisfied gentleman, the owner of a large estate, strongly objected to children. He disliked them playing in his park, and he was glad that he had no family of his own, for according to his sour, grudging spirit, they would only wish he were dead so that they might possess his lands. With something of the arrogance of Nebuchadnezzar, he ordered a great statue to be sculptured representing him as a knight in armour, to be placed in the church "to be," as he said, "perpetuate for my mightiness." But in course of time nobody remembered the man. Church restorers disliked the great effigy, so they had it placed under the seats where the school-children sat at church. And then we see the irony of the story, for *children* "kicked out his name, and

hob-nailed off his nose ” and said to one another, “ Who was this old stone man beneath our toes ? ”

11. THE LADIES OF ST. JAMES’S.

A PROPER NEW BALLAD OF THE COUNTRY AND THE TOWN.

The ladies of St. James’s
Go swinging to the play ;
Their footmen run before them ,
With a “ Stand by ! Clear the way ! ”
But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
She takes her buckled shoon,
When we go out a-courting
Beneath the harvest moon.

The ladies of St. James’s
Wear satin on their backs ;
They sit all night at *Ombre*,
With candles all of wax :
But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
She dons her russet gown,
And runs to gather May dew
Before the world is down.

The ladies of St. James’s !
They are so fine and fair,
You’d think a box of essences
Was broken in the air :
But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
The breath of heath and furze,
When breezes blow at morning,
Is not so fresh as hers.

The ladies of St. James’s !
They’re painted to the eyes ;

Their white it stays for ever,
Their red it never dies :
But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
Her colour comes and goes ;
It trembles to a lily,—
It wavers to a rose.

The ladies of St. James's !
You scarce can understand
The half of all their speeches,
Their phrases are so grand :
But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
Her shy and simple words
Are clear as after rain-drops
The music of the birds.

The ladies of St. James's !
They have their fits and freaks ;
They smile on you—for seconds ;
They frown on you—for weeks :
But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
Come either storm or shine,
From Shrove-tide unto Shrove-tide
Is always true—and mine.

My Phyllida ! my Phyllida !
I care not though they heap
The hearts of all St. James's,
And give me all to keep ;
I care not whose the beauties
Of all the world may be,
For Phyllida,—for Phyllida
Is all the world to me !

Austin Dobson.

12. IN MERCER STREET.

I.

A PIPER.

A piper in the streets to-day
Set up, and tuned, and started to play,
And away, away, away on the tide
Of his music we started ; on every side
Doors and windows were opened wide,
And men left down their work and came,
And women with petticoats coloured like flame
And little bare feet that were blue with cold,
Went dancing back to the age of gold,
And all the world went gay, went gay,
For half an hour in the street to-day.

II.

RAGS AND BONES.

Gather 'em, gather 'em, gather 'em O,
He shouts monotonous, jolting slow
His little truck of rags and bones
Over the uneven cobble stones.
Ever about him clink and crowd
The waifs, a many-coloured cloud
All shrilly clamouring, mad with joy,
For sticky sweet, or painted toy.
Hardly a breath is in the air,
Yet every little windmill there
Goes whirling wildly, as though it knew
With every turn what rapture flew
Through all the heavy street, and stirred
The stagnant air, till the sad bird,

NARRATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE

High on the wall, takes heart to sing
And hails the simulated Spring.

III.

THE LARK'S SONG.

In Mercer Street the light slants down,
And straightway an enchanted town
Is round him, pinnacle and spire
Flash back, elate, the sudden fire ;
And clear above the silent street
Falls suddenly and strangely sweet
The lark's song. Bubbling, note on note
Rise fountain-like, o'erflow and float
Tide upon tide, and make more fair
The magic of the sunlit air.
No more the cage can do him wrong,
All is forgotten save his song ;
He has forgot the ways of men,
Wide heaven is over him again,
And round him the wide fields of dew
That his first infant mornings knew,
Ere yet the dolorous years had brought
The hours of captive anguish, fraught
With the vile clamour of the street,
The insult of the passing feet,
The torture of the daily round,
The organ's blasphemy of sound.
Sudden some old swift memory brings
The knowledge of forgotten wings,
He springs elate and panting falls
At the rude touch of prison walls.
Silence. Again the street is grey ;
Shut down the windows. Work-a-day.

Seumas O'Sullivan.

13. THE CHILDREN AND SIR NAMELESS.

Sir Nameless, once of Athelhall, declared :
“ These wretched children romping in my park
Trample the herbage till the soil is bared,
And yap and yell from early morn till dark !
Go keep them harnessed to their set routines :
Thank God I’ve none to hasten my decay ;
For green remembrance there are better means
Than offspring, who but wish their sires away.”

Sir Nameless of that mansion said anon :
“ To be perpetuate for my mightiness
Sculpture must image me when I am gone.”
—He forthwith summoned carvers there express
To shape a figure stretching seven-odd feet
(For he was tall) in alabaster stone,
With shield, and crest, and casque, and sword complete :
When done a statelier work was never known.

Three hundred years hied ; Church-restorers came,
And, no one of his lineage being traced,
They thought an effigy so large in frame
Best fitted for the floor. There it was placed,
Under the seats for schoolchildren. And they
Kicked out his name, and hobnailed off his nose ;
And, as they yawn through sermon-time, they say,
“ Who was this old stone man beneath our toes ? ”

Thomas Hardy.

Part 2.

14. *Fidele's Grassy Tomb* is a capital story told by Sir Henry Newbolt in simple rhyming couplets. It is mainly about a faithful dog that for its faithfulness to its master, an old Squire, is called *Fid-é-le*,

from the Latin word for *faithful*. The last thing remembered in life by the Squire "was the touch of the tongue that licked his hand," and the last command of the Squire was "bury the dog at my feet." Fidele died during its master's funeral, and was duly buried at its master's feet. But after a time, the Bishop heard of this, and he was shocked to think that a "soulless hound" had been buried in "hallowed ground." So the Bishop wrote to the Parson, who ordered the Sexton to remove the body of the hound, and bury it in "a lonely grave by the shore of the lake." But the Sexton had his own views of what was due to a faithful dog like Fidele, and you will find that the remainder of this story is different from what one might expect.

15. *Old Grey Squirrel*, like many poems by Alfred Noyes, has a musical lilt and a salt-water flavour. We do not, fortunately, often see a squirrel in a cage in these days, but to understand this poem properly, you should know that a squirrel's cage is generally fitted with a wheel which rapidly revolves as the squirrel puts its paws on the spokes. The squirrel gets some exercise from its action, but it is a sad task for a woodland creature.

The story shows as in a mirror the story of many thousands and hundreds of thousands of people. All boys and girls have their longings, and their dreams of what they would like to be when they grow up, or where they would like to go. Sometimes, by chance of circumstance, or by force of character, the dreams come true; but more frequently the hard facts of life compel the growing man and woman to take another course. Yet, as in the case of the *Old Grey Squirrel*, dreams can continue, and imagination can be active, even in old age, and :

The very last thing that he will see
Will be sailor-men a-dancing in the sunrise.

16. *The Iron-Worker*, by Dorothy Margaret Stuart, is a happy account of the virtues of iron. It would not be difficult to write a whole book on the wonderful story of iron, yet the poet has managed to arouse our interest, add to our knowledge, and sing the praises

of this metal in ten short stanzas. Dunstan (d. 988), an English saint, is credited with skill as a metal-worker, and he is the patron saint of blacksmiths, hence, in the second line, the invocation for a blessing : " Be Dunstan's benison on this place ! " You will note something of an old-world air about this poem, making it more fitting to the period of which it speaks—" when Eleanor our good Queen died." Eleanor, the Queen of Edward I. of England, died in 1290. The king erected crosses at the places where her body rested on the journey from Harley in Northamptonshire to Westminster. Note how the rhythm of the first line sounds like a smith at work on the anvil : " clink, hammer, clink and clang apace."

14. FIDELE'S GRASSY TOMB.

The Squire sat propped in a pillowed chair,
His eyes were alive and clear of care,
But well he knew that the hour was come
To bid good-bye to his ancient home.

He looked on garden, wood, and hill,
He looked on the lake, sunny and still :
The last of earth that his eyes could see
Was the island church of Orchardleigh.

The last that his heart could understand
Was the touch of the tongue that licked his hand :
" Bury the dog at my feet," he said,
And his voice dropped, and the Squire was dead.

Now the dog was a hound of the Danish breed,
Staunch to love and strong at need :
He had dragged his master safe to shore
When the tide was ebbing at Elsinore.

From that day forth, as reason would,
He was named " Fidele," and made it good :

NARRATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE

When the last of the mourners left the door
Fidele was dead on the chantry floor.

They buried him there at his master's feet,
And all that heard of it deemed it meet :
The story went the round for years,
Till it came at last to the Bishop's ears.

Bishop of Bath and Wells was he,
Lord of the lords of Orchardleigh ;
And he wrote to the Parson the strongest screed
That Bishop may write or Parson read.

The sum of it was that a soulless hound
Was known to be buried in hallowed ground :
From scandal sore the Church to save
They must take the dog from his master's grave.

The heir was far in a foreign land,
The Parson was wax to my Lord's command :
He sent for the Sexton and bade him make
A lonely grave by the shore of the lake.

The Sexton sat by the water's brink
Where he used to sit when he used to think :
He reasoned slow, but he reasoned it out,
And his argument left him free from doubt.

" A Bishop," he said, " is the top of his trade ;
But there's others can give him a start with the spade ;
Yon dog, he carried the Squire ashore,
And a Christian couldn't ha' done no more."

The grave was dug ; the mason came
And carved on stone Fidele's name ;
But the dog that the Sexton laid inside
Was a dog that never had lived or died.

So the Parson was praised, and the scandal stayed,
Till, a long time after, the church decayed,
And, laying the floor anew, they found
In the tomb of the Squire the bones of a hound.

As for the Bishop of Bath and Wells
No more of him the story tells ;
Doubtless he lived as a Prelate and Prince,
And died and was buried a century since.

And whether his view was right or wrong
Has little to do with this my song ;
Something we owe him, you must allow ;
And perhaps he has changed his mind by now.

The Squire in the family chantry sleeps,
The marble still his memory keeps :
Remember, when the name you spell,
There rest Fidele's bones as well.

For the Sexton's grave you need not search,
'Tis a nameless mound by the island church :
An ignorant fellow, of humble lot—
But he knew one thing that a Bishop did not.

Sir Henry Newbolt.

15. OLD GREY SQUIRREL.

A great while ago, there was a school-boy.
He lived in a cottage by the sea.
And the very first thing he could remember
Was the rigging of the schooners by the quay.

He could watch them, when he woke, from his window,
With the tall cranes hoisting out the freight.

NARRATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE

And he used to think of shipping as a sea-cook,
And sailing to the Golden Gate.

For he used to buy the yellow penny dreadfuls,
And read them where he fished for conger-eels,
And listened to the lapping of the water,
The green and oily water round the keels.

There were trawlers with their shark-mouthed flat-fish.
And red nets hanging out to dry,
And the skate the skipper kept because he liked 'em,
And landsmen never knew the fish to fry.

There were brigantines with timber out of Norrøway,
Oozing with the syrups of the pine.
There were rusty dusty schooners out of Sunderland,
And ships of the Blue Cross line.

And to tumble down a hatch into the cabin
Was better than the best of broken rules ;
For the smell of 'em was like a Christmas dinner,
And the feel of 'em was like a box of tools.

And, before he went to sleep in the evening,
The very last thing that he could see
Was the sailor-men a-dancing in the moonlight
By the capstan that stood upon the quay.

He is perched upon a high stool in London.
The Golden Gate is very far away.
They caught him, and they caged him, like a squirrel.
He is totting up accounts, and going grey.

He will never, never, never sail to 'Frisco.
But the very last thing that he will see

Will be sailor-men a-dancing in the sunrise

By the capstan that stands upon the quay. . . .

To the tune of an old concertina,

By the capstan that stands upon the quay.

Alfred Noyes.

16. THE IRON-WORKER.

Clink, hammer, clink and clang apace ;

Be Dunstan's benison on this place !

And, that the iron may glow,

Blow, bellows, blow !

Look ye, this iron is better far

Than pallid gold and silver are ;

Hark ! while I sing to you

What it may do.

In iron cressets torches burn ;

On iron spits the fat geese turn ;

In iron chests men hold

Their hoarded gold.

The shepherd's crook with iron is tipped ;

The rushlight wan in iron is clipped ;

The coulter and the spade

Thereof are made.

Though it be cold and hard and dull,

'Tis iron that maketh granaries full,

That maketh furrow and field

Their foison yield.

Time's solemn glass, where falls the sand,

Is held with iron loop and band ;

Till falleth his last grain

These will remain.

NARRATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE

When Eleanor our good Queen died,
 With gilded bronze and marble pied
 They wrought the tomb for her
 At Westminster.

The gold will darken as years pass ;
 The coloured stones will crack like glass ;
 What then abideth for
 Queen Eleanor ?

There will abide till crack of doom
 The great iron lattice on her tomb,
 A glory even then
 In the eyes o' men.

Clink, hammer, clink and clang apace ;
 Be Dunstan's benison on this place !
 And, lest the flame sink low,
 Blow, bellows, blow !

Dorothy Margaret Stuart.

NOTES AND EXERCISES.

11. THE LADIES OF ST. JAMES'S. When speaking of rhymes, it is usual to indicate the rhyming lines by similar letters of the alphabet, thus :

The ladies of St. James's	<i>a</i>
Go swinging to the play ;	<i>b</i>
Their footmen run before them	<i>c</i>
With a " Stand by ! Clear the way ! "	<i>b</i>

Here the first line is marked *a* ; as *play* rhymes with *way*, both lines are marked *b* ; the third line, which does not rhyme with any other, is marked *c*.

Metre. Each verse (or line) of poetry is divided into one or more *feet* ; in every foot there is one accented syllable, thus :

So now | we sîng | long lîve | the Kîng |
 And Gîl | pin long | live hé |

The regular arrangement of stresses is called *metre*, and lines receive their names according to the number of feet in them. Thus the metre of the first line, which contains four accented syllables, is called *tetrameter* (from the Greek *tetra*, four; and *metron*, a measure). In the second line there are only three feet, and this is called *trimeter*. There are several other kinds of metre to which suitable names are given by the use of the Greek prefixes, *mono*, single; *di*, two; *tri*, three; *tetra*, four; *penta*, five; *hexa*, six.



SEDAN CHAIR



LADY OF THE PERIOD.

Swinging to the play—in sedan chairs said to be named from Sedan, a town in France where they were first made; portable covered chairs for carrying a single person, usually borne on poles by two men: *Ombre*—a favourite card game of the period: *Shrovetide*—the days immediately before Ash Wednesday, so called as being the time for confession preparatory to Lent. (*Shrive*—to take a confession.)

Exercises. (1) Explain :

- (a) Their white it stays for ever
Their red it never dies.
- (b) It trembles to a lily,—
It wavers to a rose.

(2) One volume of Austin Dobson's poetry was called "Old-World Idylls." An *idyll* is a little picture in verse, or short descriptive poem, such as one dealing with rural life. Show that this poem might be placed under that title. (3) Explain the statement made by a critic that this poem is



PIPER.

"fresh and breezy." With what other appropriate adjectives might one describe it?

12. IN MERCER STREET. Seumas O'Sullivan is a *nom-de-plume*; the real name of the poet is James Starkey.

Lark—it is now rare to see a lark in a cage, as most people realise how cruel it is to deprive wild birds of their freedom.



CAGED LARK.

Exercises. (1) Explain the following phrases : a many-coloured cloud ; simulated Spring ; an enchanted town ; that his first infant mornings knew. (2) Explain the force of the following italicised words : *clink* and crowd the waifs ; till the *sad* bird ; *bubbling*, note on note ; the *dolorous* years. (3) What connection is there, other than the main title, between these three poems ?

13. THE CHILDREN AND SIR NAMELESS. *Green remembrance—*

fresh and vigorous recollection.

Exercises. (1) Why is the man called Sir Nameless ? (2) Why did Sir Nameless choose to be carved as a knight in armour ? (3) In what two-fold sense was he a *stone* man ? (4) What is the climax of this story ?

14. FIDELF'S GRASSY TOMB. Sir Henry Newbolt was knighted in 1915.

Rhyming couplets are two successive lines of verse that rhyme with each other. Occasionally poets allow themselves rhymes which are rhymes to the eye only, not to the ear, as in this poem *come* is made to rhyme with *home*. Note the curious rhymes *eyes could see* with *Orchardleigh* ; also *safe to shore* with *Elsinore*.

Chantry—a part of a church endowed for the chanting of masses and offering prayers : *strongest scree*—a long tirade ; a harsh tiresome letter : *Elsinore*—a port of Denmark.



KNIGHT.



'CAESAR,' the famous wire-haired terrier of King Edward VII., lying against the King's feet on the monument at Windsor.

Exercises. (1) Write your own imaginary account of the deed that earned Fidele his name. (2) Explain :

- (a) The Parson was wax to my Lord's command.
- (b) Was a dog that never had lived or died.
- (c) But he knew one thing that a Bishop did not.

(3) What is the force of the repetition in this stanza :

The Sexton sat by the water's brink
Where he used to sit when he used to think :
He reasoned slow, but he reasoned it out,
And his argument left him free from doubt.

(4) Write in your own words the soliloquy of the Sexton. (A soliloquy is a speech supposed to be spoken by a person when alone.) (5) In what sense was the Sexton an "ignorant fellow," and in what sense a learned fellow ?

15. OLD GREY SQUIRREL. Although the lines in this poem are long, there are only three marked stresses in each, but there is in each foot a varying number of weakly accented words ; compare, for instance, " was the rigging of the schooners by the quay," with " and sailing to the Golden Gate " : such an arrangement lessens monotony.

Golden Gate—the harbour of San Francisco, in western U.S.A. : *Norway*—a poetical name for Norway ; an important export of this country is wood tar from the pine forests ; (" oozing with the syrups of the pine ") : *capstan*—a vertical drum revolving on an upright spindle surmounted by a drumhead with sockets for levers, or capstan bars, which are pushed by the sailors when winding the rope attached to the anchor.



Exercises. (1) The first stanza (among others) is written almost exactly as it would be in prose. By what device has it been made to sound poetical ? (2) Explain the title of this poem. (3) A story-teller will sometimes arouse interest by introducing something unexpected. How has Alfred Noyes done

this ? (4) Give a list of the things mentioned that make the picture of the quay so real.

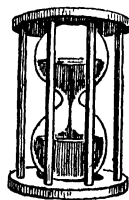
16. THE IRON-WORKER. *Cresset*—an iron vessel or basket for holding burning oil, pitchy wood or other illuminant, and mounted as a torch, or suspended as a lantern. Milton wrote :

Starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
With naptha and asphaltus.

rushlight—a candle made of the pith of certain rushes, peeled, except on one side, and dipped in grease: *coulter*—blade for a ploughshare: *foison*—



CRESSET.



EGG GLASS.

abundance: *Time's solemn glass*—an hour-glass as used for measuring time by means of running sand, water, or mercury. (*A three-minute glass* is sometimes used when cooking eggs): *Dunstan*—(d. 988), an English saint, is credited with skill as a metal-worker, and he is the patron saint of blacksmiths, hence, the invocation for a blessing: "Be Dunstan's benison on this place!"

Exercise. What devices have been used to create a romantic atmosphere for this poem ?



ST. DUNSTAN.

III. OF WOMEN.



17. *Mrs. Willow* is a mysterious woman. The poet, John Drinkwater, arouses our curiosity about her. She is a quiet, ordinary woman, none the less. She leads an exceedingly simple life working in her garden and keeping her house clean and bright ; she minds her own business and does nothing in secret, yet there is a mystery about her :

But glum she is, and she listens now and then
For a footfall, a footfall, a footfall again.

18. *Old Susan* is a sweet simple character. The picture of her by Walter de la Mare shows her laboriously reading romantic stories by candle light. So vividly is the word-picture portrayed, that we seem to change places with the child, who sits evening after evening watching the quiet old lady with the mild eyes as she struggles through the pages. Her life, like that of *Mrs. Willow*, is doubtless very humdrum, yet she has her fancies, and she satisfies her romantic feelings by reading the tales of others. Sternly, as far as a mild-eyed woman can be stern, she seems to sit in judgment on their actions, and to form her opinion of their conduct, sometimes shaking her head and saying, " You silly souls, to act this way ! " The whole is a delightful and real picture, and as we near the end we almost expect

to hear some one say to us, "You!—I thought you was in bed!"

19. *The Gypsy Girl*, by Ralph Hodgson, is a brilliant piece of colour work. The scene is a familiar one,—a gypsy girl superintending one of the many games at a fair. We recognise her at once by her tawny complexion, her large golden ear-rings, and her gay clothes. Pleased with the harmony of her colouring, we watch her with fascinated eyes. But suddenly we learn that she has a strong personal character concealed within; through her eyes we see as it were into her soul, and we are no longer merely fascinated, but filled with awe. When the man "too loose of tongue" insults her, she continues outwardly the same, uttering her familiar phrase, "Sweet gentleman, a penny for three tries"; but we can almost see the "cur" shrink away from "the den of wild things in the darkness of her eyes," as a cur would shrink from a den of lions.

20. *Lucy* was written by William Wordsworth, one of the great poets of the so-called Romantic period at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. This poem is a fine example of the pure lyric. It expresses, as a lyric should, one deep feeling (the feeling of the poet himself) simply, briefly, and musically. The metre of the poem is in a simple form, a form which in hymns is known as "common metre." The words are very simple (even the name of the girl), and so are the figures of speech. There are only two of these, a simile where Lucy is compared with a *star*, and a metaphor where Lucy is called a *violet*. One can imagine the violets growing outside the cottage door where Lucy lived, and one can imagine that from the door one could see the Evening Star shining in its glory while there was yet light enough to hide all the other stars. A poet makes frequent use of similes, for often no single word exists by which he can express the idea of his inspiration. When Wordsworth tells us that Lucy is dead, he does not suggest that he will never be happy again, he says *less* than he feels, and we realise the sincerity of the line—"Oh, the difference to me!"

21. *Ruth* was written by Thomas Hood, the son of a London publisher and bookseller. He was first apprenticed to his uncle, an engraver, but gave up this work owing to his delicate health. Hood then took to literary work, and wrote for magazines and published poems both humorous and serious. He was not one of the great poets, but some of his poems, such as *Ruth*, have stood the test of time.

This poem relates a part of the story of Ruth as told in the Bible, a story of sweetness and unselfishness. (Ruth ii.)

The poem is a word-picture, bright with sunlight, of Ruth in the harvest field, a picture of a brave and faithful woman such as Boaz saw in the days long past. The last line of the poem is the climax. Boaz, in his admiration and awakened love, invites Ruth to share his wealth and his home.

There is a reference to Ruth in Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale* :

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird !
 No hungry generations tread thee down :
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown :
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn ;
 The same that oft-times hath
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
 Of perilous seas, in faëry lands forlorn.

22. *To My Mother* is a thoughtful poem by William Ernest Henley. It is a poem of reflection, full of tender loving memories, memories too sacred to be revealed or expressed except in delicate poetry. The vastness of the sea, with its rhythmic sound and movement, invites contemplation and waking dreams. Tennyson wrote :

The ocean with its vastness, its blue green,
 Its ships, its rocks, its caves, its hopes, its fears—
 Its voice mysterious, which whoso hears
 Must think on what will be, and what has been.

In *Ruth* many details are given of the picture of the sun-kissed

maiden, but in *To My Mother* there are no details, only the mention of the spring, the sea, and the wind in her eyes and hair ; yet the picture is sufficiently complete, and each for himself can imagine the maiden “modest and kind and fair,” and feel the subtle influence “of her grace,” so that, as Keats wrote in one of his poems, “we feel uplifted from the world, walking upon the white clouds wreathed and curled.”

17. MRS. WILLOW.

Mrs. Thomas Willow seems very glum.
Her life, perhaps, is very lonely and hum-drum,
Digging up potatoes, cleaning out the weeds,
Doing the little for a lone woman's needs.
Who was her husband ? How long ago ?
What does she wonder ? What does she know ?
Why does she listen over the wall,
Morning and noon-time and twilight and all,
As though forgotten were some footfall ?

' Good-morning, Mrs. Willow,' ' Good-morning, sir,'
Is all the conversation I can get from her.
And her path-stones are white as lilies of the wood,
And she washes this and that till she must be very good.
She sends no letters, and no one calls,
And she doesn't go whispering beyond her walls ;
Nothing in her garden is secret, I think—
That's all sun-bright with foxglove and pink,
And she doesn't hover round old cupboards and shelves
As old people do who have buried themselves ;
She has no late lamps, and she digs all day
And polishes and plants in a common way,
But glum she is, and she listens now and then
For a footfall, a footfall, a footfall again,
And whether it's hope, or whether it's dread,

Or a poor old fancy in her head,
I shall never be told ; it will never be said.

John Drinkwater.

18. OLD SUSAN.

When Susan's work was done, she would sit,
With one fat guttering candle lit,
And window opened wide to win
The sweet night air to enter in.
There, with a thumb to keep her place,
She would read, with stern and wrinkled face,
Her mild eyes gliding very slow
Across the letters to and fro,
While wagged the guttering candle flame
In the wind that through the window came.
And sometimes in the silence she
Would mumble a sentence audibly,
Or shake her head as if to say,
' You silly souls, to act this way ! '
And never a sound from night I would hear,
Unless some far-off cock crowed clear ;
Or her old shuffling thumb should turn
Another page ; and rapt and stern,
Through her great glasses bent on me,
She would glance into reality ;
And shake her round old silvery head,
With—' You !—I thought you was in bed ! '
Only to tilt her book again,
And rooted in Romance remain.

Walter de la Mare.

OF WOMEN

19. THE GYPSY GIRL.

“ Come, try your skill, kind gentlemen,
A penny for three tries ! ”
Some threw and lost, some threw and won
A ten-a-penny prize.

She was a tawny gypsy girl,
A girl of twenty years,
I liked her for the lumps of gold
That jingled from her ears ;

I liked the flaring yellow scarf
Bound loose about her throat,
I liked her showy purple gown
And flashy velvet coat.

A man came up, too loose of tongue,
And said no good to her ;
She did not blush as Saxons do,
Or turn upon the cur ;

She fawned and whined “ Sweet gentleman,
A penny for three tries ! ”
—But oh, the den of wild things in
The darkness of her eyes !

Ralph Hodgson.

20. LUCY.

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love :
A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye !

—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be ;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me !

William Wordsworth.

21. RUTH.

She stood breast-high amid the corn,
Clasped by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweetheart of the sun,
Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush,
Deeply ripened ;—such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell,
Which were blackest none could tell,
But long lashes veiled a light
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim,
Made her tressy forehead dim ;
Thus she stood amid the stooks,
Praising God with sweetest looks.

“ Sure,” I said, “ heav’n did not mean
Where I reap thou shouldst but glean ;
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
Share my harvest and my home.”

Thomas Hood.

22. TO MY MOTHER.

Chiming a dream by the way
With ocean's rapture and roar,
I met a maiden to-day
Walking alone on the shore :
Walking in maiden wise,
Modest and kind and fair,
The freshness of spring in her eyes
And the fulness of spring in her hair.

Cloud-shadow and scudding sun-burst
Were swift on the floor of the sea,
And a mad wind was romping its worst,
But what was their magic to me ?
Or the charm of the midsummer skies ?
I only saw she was there,
A dream of the sea in her eyes
And the kiss of the sea in her hair.

I watched her vanish in space ;
She came where I walked no more :
But something had passed of her grace
To the spell of the wave and the shore ;
And now, as the glad stars rise,
She comes to me, rosy and rare,
The delight of the wind in her eyes
And the hand of the wind in her hair.

William Ernest Henley.

NOTES AND EXERCISES.

17. MRS. WILLOW. In this poem several questions are asked—"Who was her husband? How long ago?" etc.,—but the poet does not expect answers to these questions. This departure from the direct way of speaking, or writing, is a figure of speech called the *rhetorical question*. And she washes this and that till she must be very good—perhaps the poet is recalling the old saying: "Cleanliness is next to godliness."

Exercises. (1) What is the keynote of this poem ? Quote the lines in which this is expressed. (2) How does the poet show that Mrs. Willow's life is hum-drum ? (3) Tell a short story of your own invention which might account for the mystery surrounding Mrs. Willow.

18. OLD SUSAN. This is a homely subject, hence the poet has used homely words in his description,—note the *fat* guttering candle ; the *sweet* night air ; her *mild* eyes ; while *wagged* the guttering candle flame, etc. Perhaps the great charm of this poem is the way in which the poet makes us feel sympathetically towards an unlearned old woman who laboriously reads through books of Romance for her recreation.

Note the repetition of the sound of the initial letter *in*, “ and window opened wide to win ” ; and also in “ unless some far-off cock crowed clear.” This repetition of the same consonant sounds near together is called alliteration. In an earlier book, there was a capital example of alliteration where a short poem called *Silver*, by the same writer, depended almost entirely for its soft musical effect on the repetition of the *s* sound. The first lines run :

Slowly, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoon ;
This way, and that, she peers, and sees
Silver fruit upon silver trees.

19. THE GYPSY GIRL. “ She did not blush as *Saxons* do ”—this contrast is made because *gypsies* belong to a race different from the Teutonic race to which the fair-haired Saxons (English) belong. Gypsy tribes coming originally, it is supposed, from India, entered Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and are now scattered over Turkey, Russia, Hungary, Spain, England, etc. Their habits and mode of life teach them to be secretive, and not to betray their feelings by outward signs of the face, by words or actions. But it is almost impossible to dissemble with the eyes.

Exercises. (1) If an artist set himself to paint a portrait of this gypsy girl, which part of his work would he find easy ? And which would he find difficult ? Why ? (2) Quote the pictorial phrases from this poem. (3) What connection do you notice between the lines “ Or turn upon the cur ” and “ She fawned and whined ‘ Sweet Gentleman ’ ” ?

20. LUCY. The habit of comparing one thing with another, and of seeing resemblances between things that are alike in one point, but dissimilar in others, is natural to the human mind. We say, for example, that an aeroplane is like a bird, because it travels through the air. The one point of resemblance between the aeroplane and the bird is this power of flight. When a person states one point of similarity in two objects that are otherwise dissimilar he

is employing a *simile*. A simile is very often, but not always, introduced by *like* or *as*. The word *simile* is derived from the Latin *similis* meaning *like*. It is not a simile to say *My hat is just like yours*, because hats are things alike in many particulars ; but it would be a simile to say, *My hat is as black as your boots*. A writer sometimes shortens a simile by speaking of an object as if it actually were the object that it in one point resembles. When a man speaks, for example, of a theatrical star, he is really mentally comparing an actor with a star, because both are conspicuous and distinguished. In this case, he is employing a *metaphor*. *Knowledge* may metaphorically be called a *lamp* ; *words* are spoken of as *bitter*. In *Early Spring* (page 22) a *ray of sunlight* is spoken of as *Jacob's ladder*.

Poetry is really spoken music, and is generally written in a definite "time." One of the simplest of all the "times" or *metres*, of poetry is that used in this poem :

She dwelt among the untródden ways
Beside the springs of Dóve,
A maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love.

In the first and third lines of this stanza there are four stressed syllables each preceded by a weakly accented syllable. The second and fourth lines contain three stressed syllables, each preceded by a weak syllable.

Dove—a small river in Westmorland.

21. RUTH. *Exercises*. (1) What examples of similes are there in this poem ?
(2) The best poems are usually distinguished by music, pictures, thought, and feeling. Which of these qualities is most marked, and which least marked in this poem ?

22. TO MY MOTHER. *Scudding*—moving or running swiftly, as if driven forward by something.

Exercises. (1) Explain :

Cloud-shadow and scudding sun-burst
Were swift on the floor of the sea.

(2) Explain the significance of the italicised words : *chiming* a dream by the way ; a *mad* wind was romping ; to the *spell* of the wave and the shore ; as the *glad* stars rise.

IV. MEN WHO MARCH AWAY.

Part 1.



Part of an American Memorial to Scotsmen who fell in the Great War.

Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory :
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outred
All voluptuous garden roses.

Tennyson.

23. *In France.* In this chapter are six poems written by men who either themselves answered their country's call and served on one or more of the battle fronts during the period of the Great European War, or, too old to take up arms, helped to infuse the spirit of duty into the hearts of others by their writings. Three other short poems written by men of earlier days are also included. The four poems in the first section of this chapter were written by soldier poets, two of whom, Francis Ledwidge and William Noel Hodgson, were killed in battle. And of what did these four men write ; these men who lived amongst the horrors of modern warfare ? They all wrote of the Homeland ! The sweet memories of their young lives spent amidst

the wondrous beauty of nature in England were the recollections most dear to them in their hours of bitter trial.

In France is a tiny poem, but how poignantly it breathes of the soldier's yearnings, and, by contrast, how pitiful it makes the war appear!

24. *At the Wars* is another longer poem breathing the same spirit of the soul hungering for the beauty, the peace, the bird-life—especially the bird-life—of Home in springtime. Few can live in the country without being charmed by the music of the birds in spring, and even in towns many people try to satisfy this natural longing for the songs of birds by keeping a canary, and sometimes—as we saw in the first chapter—a lark or a linnet in a cage. Here the poet on the battle front, when the terrible noise of battle sounds in his stricken ears, recalls :

Not even the voice of any friend
Or eyes beloved-world-without-end,
But scenes and sounds of the country-side
In far England across the tide.

He sees the fields, the trees, the blossoms, the nestling chaffinches of spring ; he hears “ O ! too well ” the sheep-bell ; but, greatest joy of all, he hears a yellow-hammer singing its sweet song. And does he rave against the fate that has brought him to such a place of torment, far from the bird's song and all it means to him ? Read carefully the last twelve lines of the poem and you will understand what Englishmen can think and feel be they ever so sore pressed.

Here is a beautiful anonymous epitaph on a grave in Mesopotamia :

Soldiers of England,
Her sons and her servants,
Following homewards
The dreams that outspeed you,
Here lies a soldier,
His labours ended,
Even of England
Dreamless for ever.

‘25. *The Volunteer* is about another clerk whose life was much like that of *Old Grey Squirrel*. Day after day he was “ toiling at ledgers

in a city grey." Over his monotonous work he used to dream of the old chivalrous days of the past, when men went to battle in a noble cause. He thought such a happy fate would never be his ; but the time came when he was able to offer his life for his country in the spirit of the bravest knights of old. The Great War began. Then came the call for volunteers—"and now those waiting dreams are satisfied." *Satisfied*, remember ! *Enough* !—nothing more was needed to fill to the brim his cup of longing. And now on the battlefield "he lies *content*." Shall we mourn for him ? Shall we bewail his loss ? Read what the soldier-poet thinks.

26. *Before Action* is a serious poem, a poem filled with heartfelt thankfulness for the blessings of the past, and present prayers for spiritual strength to prove the thankfulness in time of action. The keynote of this poem is intense seriousness. Each stanza leads step by step to a short, earnest prayer. No better memorial of a man who fought and died for England could be found than the words left by this poet, especially the lofty aspirations expressed in each of the last lines of the three stanzas :

Make me a soldier, Lord.
Make me a man, O Lord.
Help me to die, O Lord.

23. IN FRANCE.

The silence of maternal hills
Is round me in my evening dreams ;
And round me music-making bills
And mingling waves of pastoral streams.

Whatever way I turn I find
The path is old unto me still.
The hills of home are in my mind,
And there I wander as I will.

Francis Ledwidge.

24. AT THE WARS.

Now that I am ta'en away,
And may not see another day,
What is it to my eye appears ?
What sound rings in my stricken ears ?
Not even the voice of any friend
Or eyes beloved-world-without-end,
But scenes and sounds of the country-side
In far England across the tide :
An upland field when Spring's begun,
Mellow beneath the evening sun . . .
A circle of loose and lichen'd wall
Over which seven red pines fall . . .
An orchard of wizen blossoming trees
Wherein the nesting chaffinches
Begin again the self-same song
All the late April day-time long . . .
Paths that lead a shelving course
Between the chalk scarp and the gorse
By English downs ; and, O ! too well
I hear the hidden, clanking bell
Of wandering sheep. . . . I see the brown
Twilight of the huge empty down. . . .
Soon blotted out ! for now a lane
Glitters with warmth of May-time rain,
And on a shooting briar I see
A yellow bird who sings to me.

O yellow-hammer, once I heard
Thy brief song when no other bird
Could to my sunk heart comfort bring ;
But now I would not have thee sing,

So sharp thy note is with the pain
Of England I may not see again !
Yet sing thy song : there answereth
Deep in me a voice which saith :
“ The gorse upon the twilight down,
The English loam so sunset brown,
The bowed pines and the sheep-bells' clamour,
The wet, lit lane and the yellow-hammer,
The orchard and the chaffinch song,
Only to the Brave belong.
And he shall lose their joy for aye
If their price he cannot pay,
Who shall find them dearer far
Enriched by blood after long War.”

Robert Nichols.

25. THE VOLUNTEER.

Here lies a clerk who half his life had spent
Toiling at ledgers in a city grey,
Thinking that so his days would drift away
With no lance broken in life's tournament :
Yet ever 'twixt the books and his bright eyes
The gleaming eagles of the legions came,
And horsemen, charging under phantom skies,
Went thundering past beneath the oriflamme.

And now those waiting dreams are satisfied ;
From twilight to the halls of dawn he went ;
His lance is broken ; but he lies content
With that high hour, in which he lived and died.
And falling thus, he wants no recompense,

MEN WHO MARCH AWAY

Who found his battle in the last resort ;
 Nor needs he any hearse to bear him hence,
 Who goes to join the men of Agincourt.

Herbert Asquith.

26. BEFORE ACTION.

By all the glories of the day
 And the cool evening's benison,
 By that last sunset touch that lay
 Upon the hills when day was done,
 By beauty lavishly outpoured
 And blessings carelessly received,
 By all the days that I have lived,
 Make me a soldier, Lord.

By all of all man's hopes and fears
 And all the wonders poets sing,
 The laughter of unclouded years,
 And every sad and lovely thing ;
 By the romantic ages stored
 With high endeavour that was his,
 By all his mad catastrophes,
 Make me a man, O Lord.

I, that on my familiar hill
 Saw with uncomprehending eyes
 A hundred of Thy sunsets spill
 Their fresh and sanguine sacrifice,
 Ere the sun swings his noonday sword
 Must say good-bye to all of this ;—
 By all delights that I shall miss,
 Help me to die, O Lord.

William Noel Hodgson.

Part 2.

Great deeds cannot die :
They with the sun and moon renew their light
For ever, blessing those that look on them.

27. *St. George's Day*, by Sir Henry Newbolt, records one of the many stirring incidents of the Great War. Ypres, in Flanders, was throughout the war the scene of some of the most desperate fighting between the British and the Germans. In the earlier days of the war hordes of German soldiers were opposed there by comparatively few British. The first poison gas attack, which began on April 22, 1915, enabled the Germans to break through the Allied front, and only the heroic determination and bravery of what, compared with the opposing forces, was a mere handful of British—"four hundred to a four-mile front"—averted a terrible defeat. Of those to whom it fell "to bind the line" and hold it without supports ("unbacked") but few remained at the close of what is called the Second Battle of Ypres.

Many of the heroes were young men, for England's need was great, but "unbacked and undismayed" they faced the legions "under those all-shattering skies."

The poem commemorates a Winchester boy, and *Domum* ("Home") is the refrain of the Winchester school song, sung especially on the last day of the school term.

28. *In Time of "The Breaking of Nations"* is a poem of an altogether different character from the others in this chapter. Thomas Hardy died in 1928, at the age of 88, so that he was an old man, but a mentally active man, during the period of the Great War. Through the perspective of many years, and by his knowledge of the past, he was able to "dip into the future." Out of all the turmoil and horror of war what did he see? He saw, "only a man harrowing clods"; he saw in the future the smoke rising from the fire of weeds as it had

risen at certain seasons for countless years past ; he saw, as for countless years past, a man and a maid happily walking together ; and so he comforted the hearts of all by his simple statement :

War's annals will fade into night
Ere *their* story die.

The next three poems are concerned with men who marched away in earlier days.

29. *A March*, by Charles Kingsley, is graphically descriptive of the soldiers' hardships as related in song by themselves as they swung along to battle. The same brave spirit, however, held the hearts of those in Kingsley's time as in our own time :

What can daunt us, what can turn us, led to death
by such as he ?

30. *To Lucasta, On Going to the Wars* is a well-known poem by Sir Richard Lovelace, who fought on the side of the Royalists during the Civil War in England. It is a simple but noble poem, in which the soldier excuses his absence from one he loves by the necessity to obey the call of Honour.

31. *Ode on Hearing the Drum*, by John Scott (1730-1783), is a protest, an expression of heartfelt hatred for "that drum's discordant sound" which lured the young men away for the sake of the soldiers' finery "to march and fight and fall in foreign lands." The drum speaks to the poet of the horrors that follow the fight, the ravaging, pillaging, dying, and the misery of it all. It is a poem with no aspirations of high endeavour, but is a catalogue of facts—the simple *truth*.

27. ST. GEORGE'S DAY—YPRES, 1915.

To fill the gap, to bear the brunt
With bayonet and with spade,
Four hundred to a four-mile front,
Unbacked and undismayed—

What men are these, of what great race,
 From what old shire or town,
 That run with such goodwill to face
 Death on a Flemish down ?

*Let be ! they bind a broken line :
 As men die, so die they.
 Land of the free ! their life was thine,
 It is St. George's Day.*

Yet say whose ardour bids them stand
 At bay by yonder bank,
 Where a boy's voice and a boy's hand
 Close up the quivering rank.
 Who under those all-shattering skies
 Plays out his captain's part
 With the last darkness in his eyes,
 And *Domum* in his heart ?

*Let be, let be ! in yonder line
 All names are burned away.
 Land of his love ! the fame be thine,
 It is St. George's Day.*

Sir Henry Newbott.

28. IN TIME OF "THE BREAKING OF NATIONS."

I.

Only a man harrowing clods
 In a slow silent walk
 With an old horse that stumbles and nods
 Half asleep as they stalk.

II.

Only thin smoke without flame
 From the heaps of couch-grass ;

MEN WHO MARCH AWAY

Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties pass.

III.

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by :
War's annals will fade into night
Ere their story die.

Thomas Hardy.

29. A MARCH.

Dreary East winds howling o'er us ;
Clay-lands knee-deep spread before us
Mire and ice and snow and sleet ;
Aching backs and frozen feet ;
Knees which reel as marches quicken,
Ranks which thin as corpses thicken ;
While with carrion birds we eat,
Calling puddle-water sweet,
As we pledge the health of our general, who fares
as rough as we :
What can daunt us, what can turn us, led to death
by such as he ?

Charles Kingsley.

30. TO LUCASTA, ON GOING TO THE WARS.

Tell me not, Sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly.
True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field ;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As you too shall adore ;
I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
Loved I not Honour more.

Sir Richard Lovelace.

31. ODE ON HEARING THE DRUM.

I hate that drum's discordant sound,
Parading round, and round, and round :
To thoughtless youth it pleasure yields,
And lures from cities and from fields,
To sell their liberty for charms
Of tawdry lace, and glittering arms ;
And when ambition's voice commands,
To march, and fight, and fall, in foreign lands.

I hate that drum's discordant sound,
Parading round, and round, and round
To me it talks of ravaged plains,
And burning towns, and ruined swains,
And mangled limbs, and dying groans,
And widows' tears, and orphans' moans ;
And all that misery's hand bestows,
To fill the catalogue of human woes.

John Scott.



THE RECRUITING-SERGEANT

NOTES AND EXERCISES.

23. IN FRANCE. Francis Ledwidge was born in Ireland. He was in turn a miner, a grocer's clerk, a farmer, and a scavenger. When he was 21 years of age he sent an old exercise book full of verses to Lord Dunsany, an Irish nobleman and writer of plays and stories, who then became his friend and adviser. He served in the War, and was killed in Flanders in 1917.

Maternal—considered as a mother.

Note how the sound of *m* has been used in the first stanza to produce a musical effect.

Exercise. Explain as fully as you can the meaning of:—maternal hills; music-making bills; pastoral streams.

24. AT THE WARS. Robert Nichols, whose father was also a poet, served in France in 1915, and was afterwards sent by the English Government on diplomatic business to America. After the War, he was for a time professor of English Literature at the Imperial College, Tokyo, the capital of Japan.



YELLOW-HAMMER

Note the rhetorical questions in the third and fourth lines: "What is it to my eye appears?" "What sound rings in my stricken ears?"

Yellow-hammer—the common finch, the male of which is bright yellow on the breast, neck and sides of the head.

Exercises. (1) How does the writer of this poem show his patriotism? (2) What is the meaning of the last two lines of the poem?

Who shall find them dearer far
Enriched by blood after long War.

(3) What *details* are noted in the word-picture of nature? Why is the expression "seven red pines" better than "a group of trees"? (4) Explain the force of the italicised words: *far* England; *stricken* ears; *hidden*, *clanking* bell; *empty* down; *sunk* heart; sheep-bells' *clamour*. (5) In what part of England could one find such scenes as are mentioned in the poem?

25. THE VOLUNTEER. Herbert Asquith was the son of the statesman who was Prime Minister of England when the Great War broke out. Herbert Asquith became a lawyer, but served during the War as an artillery captain.

Note how each stanza of this poem begins on a quiet note and ends in a sort of majestic organ swell; compare, for instance—"Here lies a clerk who half his life had spent," with—"Went thundering past beneath the oriflamme."

Oriflamme—a standard or ensign in battle: *gleaming eagles*—the figure of an eagle was the standard of the ancient Romans and also of the troops of Napoleon; it is now the emblem of other countries, as the U.S.A., Mexico, and the German Empire; a double-headed eagle is the standard of Austria.

Exercises. (1) What do you understand by (a) "life's tournament"; (b) "that high hour"? (2) Why are the skies described as *phantom* skies? (3) Explain: "From twilight to the halls of dawn he went." (4) Why did this soldier-clerk need "no recompense"? (5) Why is *Agincourt* brought into the poem?

26. BEFORE ACTION. William Noel Hodgson was killed in the battle of the Somme, 1916.

Benison—blessing: *catastrophe*—an event producing the over-turning of the usual order of things; a sudden disaster: *sanguine*—red, like blood: *uncomprehending*—here used in the sense of being unable to comprehend; being unable to grasp with the understanding.

Exercises. (1) What instances do you know from history of man's "high endeavour"? And what instances do you know of man's "mad catastrophes"? (2) Why does the setting sun make the poet think of the shedding of blood in sacrifice, and of swinging a sword? (3) Quote striking examples of the use of alliteration in this poem. (4) Explain the significance of the italicised words: *lavishly* outpoured; *unclouded* years; *uncomprehending* eyes.

27. ST. GEORGE'S DAY. St. George's Day, the feast day of Saint George, is held on April 23, the date of his martyrdom. He is generally identified with George of Cappadocia, who was put to death by Diocletian, 23rd April, A.D. 303. According to the *Golden Legend*, having slain a dragon, he put off his knightly habit, gave all he had to the poor, went forth to preach Christianity, and was martyred in 287.



ST. GEORGE AND THE
DRAGON



ROMAN EAGLE.

Exercises. (1) Quote from this poem examples of the use of the rhetorical question. (2) Comment on the force of the italicised words: *unbacked* and *undismayed*; run with such *goodwill*; *quivering* rank; *all-shattering* skies. (3) Which is nobler, to gain glory for oneself or for one's country? How does the poet answer this question? (4) Comment on the suitability of the title of this poem.

28. IN TIME OF "THE BREAKING OF NATIONS." *Couch-grass*—various grasses having creeping underground stems by which they spread rapidly : *dynasties*—a race or succession of sovereigns of the same line or family :



HARROW.

wight—a person or creature, here, a man : *harrow*—an implement of agriculture having iron or wooden teeth.

Exercises. (1) The force of this poem lies in its startling contrasts of great and of little things. Explain the contrast between the title and the first stanza.

(2) What is the contrast in the second stanza ? (3) If it were possible to paint a picture of the thoughts in this poem, what might form the background of the picture, and what might form the foreground ? (4) Explain that this poem expresses the thoughts of a philosopher—a lover of wisdom.

29. A MARCH. Charles Kingsley (1819-75) was born at Holne in Devonshire. He was ordained and became rector of Eversley, Hampshire, in 1844, and held the living for the rest of his life. He was a novelist, poet, and social reformer. In 1855 appeared *Westward Ho!* his best-known work, and by many regarded as his best. *Hereward the Wake* is another novel with a fine romantic flavour, while the inimitable *Water-Babies* and *The Heroes* are known to almost every child.

Exercises. (1) How are the stresses arranged in this poem ? Would it be a good song for marching ? (2) Do you think that the soldiers who sang this song bore their troubles ill or well ? State reasons for your answer.

30. TO LUCASTA, GOING TO THE WARS. Sir Richard Lovelace (1618-58) was an English cavalier and poet. For presenting to the Long Parliament the Kentish petition on behalf of the king, he was imprisoned in the Gatehouse, Westminster, where he wrote his "Stone walls do not a prison make." Lovelace was a man of high character. After spending his estate in behalf of the royal cause, he died a pauper.

Exercises. (1) What is the striking contrast between a nunnery and the field of war ? (2) An inconstant lover is one who changes one ladylove for another. Why does this soldier suggest that his mistress will like him better for appearing to be inconstant ?

31. ODE ON HEARING THE DRUM. *Ode*—a poem suitable to be sung or set to music.

Exercises. (1) Comment on the fitness of the italicised words : *parading* round ; *lures* from cities ; *tawdry* lace ; *discordant* sound. (2) What message does the drum's sound convey to the youth ? And what message to the writer of the poem ?

V. THE HAPPY HEART.

Part 1.



As it fell upon a day
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade,
Which a grove of myrtles made ;
Beasts did leap and birds did sing,
Trees did grow and plants did spring ;
Everything did banish moan.

Richard Barnefield.

32. *O Sweet Content*, or as it is sometimes called, *The Happy Heart*, the first poem in this chapter, is one of the best-known poems in the English language, and that for several reasons. It was written by Thomas Dekker, an Elizabethan poet, a contemporary with Shakespeare, so that it has been known for many generations. Then it is specially musical. The sounds of many words, particularly those with sibilants, or “whispering” letters, are soft and slipping and so have a soothing effect—“O sweet content ! O sweet, O sweet content ! Work apace, apace, apace,” etc. ; and in the second stanza—“Canst drink the waters of the crispèd spring ? ” etc.

Further, to aid the memory, to emphasise the sentiments, and to

make the music, there is much repetition, and in addition a joyful refrain at the end of each stanza, a refrain with no sense but with much gaiety : “ Then hey, nonny nonny—hey, nonny nonny ! ” Again, to attract attention there are the many rhetorical exclamations and questions. But above all the poem is thoughtful, it is worth remembering, for it expresses in a quaint way the thoughts and feelings of many a man and woman, indeed, of the majority of men and women who have happy hearts—“ Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers ? ” “ Honest labour bears a lovely face.”

The foolishness of thinking that wealth alone can make a happy heart is referred to in each stanza. The same thought has been expressed by many poets ; here is an example by Robert Herrick :

I'll hope no more
For things that will not come :
And, if they do, they prove but cumbersome ;
Wealth brings much woe :
And, since it fortunes so,
'Tis better to be poor,
Than so abound,
As to be drowned,
Or overwhelmed with store.

33. The second poem, *Oh, Sweet Content!* is by a modern writer, W. H. Davies, who has selected the same theme as Dekker for his poem, and in his own way has expressed his ideas of the contentment that produces a happy heart. He begins with the same thought that Dekker had about labour. Dekker said, “ Honest labour bears a lovely face,” and Davies says, “ Oh, sweet content, that turns the labourer's sweat to tears of joy.” Then Davies tells us what many people, after much vain seeking, eventually discover—that contentment cannot be found in pleasure, in sport, in crowded company, but it can be found in “ some lone quiet place ”—a room “ full of happy dreams ” ; “ or in a garden, on a summer's night.”

There are in this poem two word-pictures most pleasingly expressed—one picture of the moths “ that on my lighted ceiling kiss

their shadows as they dance and dance around," and the other of the heavens—"I have seen . . . heaven's bright face twitch with the stars that shine in thousands there."

Notice, too, the quaint expression, with its alliterative *b*, of the rapid movement of the bats through the air making the darkness *blink*—"I have seen the dark and solemn air blink with the blind bats' wings."

The quiet contemplation of the heavens at night is restful and soothing; the mystery, the vastness, the beauty have appealed to many poets. Byron wrote :

The stars are forth, the moon above the tops
Of the snow-shining mountains.—Beautiful !
I linger yet with Nature, for the Night
Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man ; and in her starry shade
Of dim and solitary loveliness,
I learn'd the language of another world.

34. The next poem, too, *Sweet Stay-at-Home*, is by W. H. Davies, and here again the musical and expressive word *sweet* is the keynote of the tune. The poem is an address to a maid, one Sweet Well-content, who has never sailed the seas, or travelled abroad to see strange sights and smell new scents. Miss Stay-at-Home is perfectly contented with her lot, and she finds her happiness in the simple daily round of her life. She has never widened her thoughts by travel, but within the narrow limits of her home and its surroundings she has learnt sympathy with others, and has a kindly heart. Longfellow wrote :

Stay, stay, at home, my heart, and rest,
Home-keeping thoughts are happiest.

You will be interested to note in this poem the pictures of the foreign lands mentioned, and to test your knowledge of their whereabouts. It is interesting, too, to compare the sentiment expressed in the last two lines of this poem—"I love thee for a heart that's

kind—not for the knowledge of thy mind”—with the sentiments expressed in a well-known poem by Charles Kingsley :

Be good, sweet maid, and let who can be clever ;
 Do lovely things, not dream them, all day long ;
 And so make Life, and Death, and that For Ever,
 One grand sweet song.

35. The last poem in this section is by Robert Bridges, the Poet Laureate. It has a Latin title, *Fortunatus Nimum*—exceedingly happy—a title that is most fitting to the substance of the poem. Robert Bridges praises the healthy life that is made up of work and play and rest in turn without undue pressure. He asks two questions in the poem : “Supposing his sleep were death ?” and, “What good have I wrought ?” The first he does not answer, for none can answer it, but he has faith and hope in the future, for he has loved “all life for its sake” ; and the second he does answer, and his reply is, “that joy cannot come unless it is earned.” This last statement is the same as that in the two songs of “O Sweet Content.” The closing stanza summarises the whole in a simple, emphatic and delightful way :

For a happier lot
 Than God giveth me
 It never hath been
 Nor ever shall be.

32. O SWEET CONTENT.

Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers ?

O sweet content !

Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexed ?

O punishment !

Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexed

To add to golden numbers golden numbers ?

O sweet content ! O sweet, O sweet content !

Work apace, apace, apace, apace ;
Honest labour bears a lovely face ;
Then hey, nonny nonny—hey, nonny nonny !

Canst drink the waters of the crisped spring ?

O sweet content !

Swim'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own tears ?

O punishment !

Then he that patiently want's burden bears,
No burden bears, but is a king, a king !

O sweet content, O sweet, O sweet content !

Work apace, apace, apace, apace ;
Honest labour bears a lovely face ;
Then hey, nonny nonny—hey, nonny nonny !

Thomas Dekker.

33. OH, SWEET CONTENT !

Oh, sweet content, that turns the labourer's sweat
To tears of joy, and shines the roughest face ;
How often have I sought you high and low
And found you still in some lone quiet place ;

Here, in my room, when full of happy dreams,
With no life heard beyond that merry sound
Of moths that on my lighted ceiling kiss
Their shadows as they dance and dance around ;

Or in a garden, on a summer's night,
When I have seen the dark and solemn air
Blink with the blind bats' wings, and heaven's bright face
Twitch with the stars that shine in thousands there.

William H. Davies.

THE HAPPY HEART

34. SWEET STAY-AT-HOME.

Sweet Stay-at-Home, sweet Well-content,
Thou knowest of no strange continent :
Thou hast not felt thy bosom keep
A gentle motion with the deep ;
Thou hast not sailed in Indian seas,
Where scent comes forth in every breeze.
Thou hast not seen the rich grape grow
For miles, as far as eyes can go ;
Thou hast not seen a summer's night
When maids could sew by a worm's light ;
Nor the North Sea in spring send out
Bright hues that like birds flit about
In solid cages of white ice—
Sweet Stay-at-Home, sweet Love-one-place.
Thou hast not seen black fingers pick
White cotton when the bloom is thick,
Nor heard black throats in harmony ;
Nor hast thou sat on stones that lie
Flat on the earth, that once did rise
To hide proud kings from common eyes,
Thou hast not seen plains full of bloom
Where green things had such little room
They pleased the eye like fairer flowers—
Sweet Stay-at-Home, all these long hours.
Sweet Well-content, sweet Love-one-place,
Sweet, simple maid, bless thy dear face ;
For thou hast made more homely stuff
Nurture thy gentle self enough ;
I love thee for a heart that's kind—
Not for the knowledge of thy mind.

William H. Davies.

35. FORTUNATUS NIMIUM.

I have lain in the sun,
I have toiled as I might,
I have thought as I would,
And now it is night.

My bed full of sleep,
My heart of content,
For friends that I met
The way that I went.

I welcome fatigue,
While frenzy and care
Like thin summer clouds
Go melting in air.

To dream as I may
And awake when I will
With the song of the birds
And the sun on the hill.

Or death—were it death—
To what should I wake
Who loved in my home
All life for its sake ?

What good have I wrought ?
I laugh to have learned
That joy cannot come
Unless it is earned.

For a happier lot
Than God giveth me
It never hath been
Nor ever shall be.

Robert Bridges.

Part 2.

36. *Dominion* is a thoughtful poem by John Drinkwater. It is full of joy, but it is a joy that comes of quiet thought. The poet observes the happiness of his cat and dog, and the birds, and beasts and bees, but he is "gladder than them all," because he can *think*, and especially because he can *imagine*. He can

Create a world for every day,
And store a dream for every night.

That is the dominion of human beings, that is their supreme authority which so far transcends the joy of all other created things. This gift of imagination is often referred to by the poets, for much of their art depends on the cultivation of this gift. Shakespeare, in a notable passage, tells how imagination can make a life happy even in adverse circumstances :

Sweet are the uses of adversity ;
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head :
And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

37. *Roadways* is one of John Masefield's sea-songs. This poet has had much experience on the sea, for he ran away to sea when he was a boy. The poem feelingly expresses a sailor's earnest longing to be on the sea again, where he can find contentment

In quest of that one beauty
God put me here to find.

There are musical passages in this poem, and you will again observe that the *s* sound has been freely used, as when the poet describes the music of the river, "as it goes singing slow." Shakespeare wrote a happy line on the same subject when he said that the current "makes sweet music with th' enamell'd stones."

38. The next poem, *Tewkesbury Road*, is also by John Masefield, and here he sings of his search for contentment on the road instead of on the sea. Such contentment as is here spoken of can only come to one who loves nature in its varying moods and colours. The poet speaks of the simple sights such as anyone can see when walking on a country road, and he speaks in homely language as befits the subject. Sympathy with the homely natural things and the joy they afford the poet are so delightfully expressed, that one can hardly read the lines without letting one's imagination run riot, till one can "feel the warmth of the rain," and smell "the homely smell of the earth." The last two lines of the poem are a fitting conclusion to a collection on "The Happy Heart":

And the blessed green comely meadows seem all a-ripple with mirth
At the lilt of the shifting feet, and the dear wild cry of the birds.

36. DOMINION.

I went beneath the sunny sky
When all things bowed to June's desire,
The pansy with its steadfast eye,
The blue shells on the lupin spire,

The swelling fruit along the boughs,
The grass grown heady in the rain,
Dark roses fitted for the brows
Of queens great kings have sung in vain ;

My little cat with tiger bars,
Bright claws all hidden in content ;
Swift birds that flashed like darkling stars
Across the cloudy continent ;

The wiry-coated fellow curled
Stump-tailed upon the sunny flags ;

THE HAPPY HEART

The bees that sacked a coloured world
Of treasure for their honey-bags.

And all these things seemed very glad,
The sun, the flowers, the birds on wing,
The jolly beasts, the furry-clad
Fat bees, the fruit, and everything.

But gladder than them all was I,
Who, being man, might gather up
The joy of all beneath the sky,
And add their treasures to my cup,

And travel every shining way,
And laugh with God in God's delight,
Create a world for every day,
And store a dream for every night.

John Drinkwater.

37. ROADWAYS.

One road leads to London,
One road runs to Wales,
My road leads me seawards
To the white dipping sails.

One road leads to the river,
As it goes singing slow ;
My road leads to shipping,
Where the bronzed sailors go.

Leads me, lures me, calls me
To salt green tossing sea ;

A road without earth's road-dust
Is the right road for me.

A wet road heaving, shining,
And wild with seagulls' cries,
A mad salt sea-wind blowing
The salt spray in my eyes.

My road calls me, lures me
West, east, south, and north ;
Most roads lead men homewards,
My road leads me forth.

To add more miles to the tally
Of grey miles left behind,
In quest of that one beauty
God put me here to find.

John Masefield.

38. TEWKESBURY ROAD.

It is good to be out on the road, and going one knows not where,
Going through meadow and village, one knows not whither nor
why ;
Through the grey light drift of the dust, in the keen cool rush of the
air,
Under the flying white clouds, and the broad blue lift of the sky ;
And to halt at the chattering brook, in the tall green fern at the
brink
Where the harebell grows, and the gorse, and the fox-gloves purple
and white ;
Where the shy-eyed delicate deer troop down to the pools to drink,
When the stars are mellow and large at the coming on of the night.

O! to feel the warmth of the rain, and the homely smell of the earth,

Is a tune for the blood to jig to, a joy past power of words ;
And the blessed green comely meadows seem all a-ripple with mirth

At the lilt of the shifting feet, and the dear wild cry of the birds.

John Masefield.



NOTES AND EXERCISES.

32. O SWEET CONTENT. *To add to golden numbers*—to add gold coins to gold coins. The coins are called *numbers* because we are meant to think of a miser counting them : *crispèd*—rippling : *want's burden*—the burden or load of poverty.

33. OH, SWEET CONTENT ! William H. Davies is known as the *tramp* poet. While in America he lost a foot in trying to board a train when it was moving. He did not become known as a poet till comparatively late in life, his first poems being published when he was thirty-four.

Note that in this poem *content* is personified, it is spoken of as a person who is able to think and act. This figure of speech is called personification ; it is more frequently used in poetry than in prose, and you will find many other instances of the use of personification in this book of poems.

Exercises. (1) What does the poet say that content can do for the labourer ? (2) Why does the poet speak of a room as “ full of happy dreams ” ? (3) It has been said that a lover of nature is least alone when he is solitary. How does this poem bear out the statement ?

34. SWEET STAY-AT-HOME. *Bright hues*—the Aurora Borealis, or Northern Lights : *black fingers*—the workers in the cotton fields of southern U.S.A. are descendants of the negro races who were forcibly transported from W. Africa in the seventeenth century : *nurture*—nourish, educate.



Exercises. (1) Explain the title of this poem. (2) How are the rhymes arranged in the poem? Quote examples of unusual rhymes. (3) Quote striking examples of the use of alliteration. (4) Explain :

- (a) When maids could sew by a worm's light.
- (b) Nor heard black throats in harmony.
- (c) Nor hast thou sat on stones that lie
Flat on the earth, that once did rise
To hide proud kings from common eyes.

(5) Quote and explain the two similes used in the poem.

35. FORTUNATUS NIMIUM. *Exercises.* (1) How does the first stanza summarise the independent spirit of an active man? (2) Explain the simile used in this poem. (3) Summarise the statements which justify the title of the poem. (4) Write a short account of a day in the life of a city clerk whose life is inspired by the same principles and sentiments as those expressed in the poem.

36. DOMINION. *Lupin spires*—the flower heads of the lupin. *Exercises.* (1) Why is this poem called *Dominion*? (2) What evidence is there in the poem that the poet is a keen observer of nature? (3) Explain the significance of the italicised words : its *steadfast* eye ; grass grown *heady* ; hidden in *content* ; sacked a *coloured* world. (4)



LUPIN SPIRES.

Comment on the pictorial quality of the four compound words used in the poem. (5) Quote the lines which seem to you to present the best word-picture. (6) Explain the metaphor "with tiger bars." (7) What instance do you know from English history of a queen that a great king "sung in vain"? (8) How does the study of poetry help in the cultivation of

the imagination? Is imagination worth cultivating? State reasons for your answer.

37. ROADWAYS. John Masefield, born in the west of England, spent his early years wandering in many parts of the world; as a sailor before the mast and in varied employments in the U.S.A. he gained the hard experience which he was later to make use of in prose and verse. He served in the Great War with the Red Cross in France and at the Dardanelles.

Tally—formerly, a piece of wood on which notches were cut as marks for number. When few men could either read or write, this method of counting was used. The word here means *total* or *number*: *dipping sails*—sailing vessels such as the one illustrated are now rarely seen, for steam-driven vessels have taken their place.



SAILING VESSEL.

Exercises. (1) Quote two lines that express a yearning to wander. (2) Quote two lines that express a love for the sea. (3) Quote the two lines that suggest that a poet's main object in life is to find out and preserve what is beautiful in life. (4) Quote the lines in which words of colour are used.

38. TEWKESBURY ROAD. The metrical arrangement of the poem helps to create the feeling of walking on a long open road. There are six strong stresses in each line, but to avoid monotony the feet are not all alike: "It is good to be out on the road, and going one knows not where."

Exercises. (1) This poem is full of colour. Quote examples. (2) Make a list of six pictorial phrases from the poem. (3) To what class of words do the italicised words belong?—*chattering* brook; *shifting* feet. What other words of the same class could you apply to a brook, and to human feet? (4) When do meadows "seem all a-ripple"? What is the underlying comparison in this phrase? (5) The poet has used homely phrases in his description of the natural scenes of the road. Quote instances. (6) Quote a line where the sound of *d* has been used alliteratively, and one in which the sound of *g* has been so used.



VI. OF FANCY.

Part 1.



And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dewdrop paints a bow ;
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

Tennyson.

•This is a chapter of fanciful poems, fanciful poems new and old. The old poems by Shakespeare and Herrick are about fairies, elves and other sprites, for in Shakespeare's time there was a fairly general belief in the real existence of good and bad fairies. Our modern poets, with the exception of the Irish poet William Butler Yeats, rarely speak of these fairy folk, but they let their imagination run riot, and weave delightful fancies about the ordinary everyday things, either those near at hand or those in distant lands.

39. *Snug in my Easy Chair*, a fanciful poem by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, describes in musical and picturesque language the thoughts of one sitting comfortably in a chair watching the flames in the fire. The poet tells us that the fancies were "born of heart's desire," that is, they are fulfilments of all the things that we long for. One can hardly fail to observe the musical alliteration in the opening lines where the *f* sound is repeated :

I stirred the fire to flame,
Fantastically fair,
The flickering fancies came.

Then are born the fancies of beautiful places shining like precious jewels in golden sunlight. Next, a medley of fancies follow each other like a dream ; there is no relationship between them ; just a stray thought of this and that tumbles pell-mell through the mind as in dreams—the ancient city of Troy, the funeral pyre of the poet Shelley, dragons, witches, golden galleys of Tyre. In another alliterative phrase, the poet describes them as

Fancies fugitive and fair
Flashed with singing through the air.

And now comes an anti-climax in the narrative, a sudden descent from the fanciful to the real. The glare of the fire causes the poet to shut his eyes, and suddenly !—but that you must read for yourself.

40. *The Ice-Cart* is another happy, fanciful poem by Wilfrid Gibson. The cause of the fancy is in marked contrast to the easy-chair and the glowing fire, for this time it is an office-stool in the city and an ice-cart in the street that set the imagination vividly working :

And I was wandering in a trice
Far from the grey and grimy heat
Of that intolerable street.

Again, in this poem the names of precious stones are used pictorially—sapphire berg, emerald floe, ruby glow—but these are real things and the colours of the jewels accurately describe them. Then in imagination the poet, “bewildered by the queer half-light,” stumbled unawares upon some of the wild creatures that haunt the Polar regions—white bears, shining seals—and in a moment, because, no doubt, the seas looked so cool, “I’d stripped and I was swimming too.” Then adventure follows adventure, and we imagine that we can see the poet dropping off to sleep on his office-stool, when suddenly the poetry ends in another anti-climax.

41. *The Listeners*, by Walter de la Mare, is a poem for wonder and delight. The first four lines, the keynote of the poem, at once convey an air of mystery, but mystery is blended with reality :

‘Is there anybody there?’ said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest’s ferny floor:

We immediately feel the silence, and we seem to hear someone *say* “Hush!” as one would do if a faint knock were heard on the street door late at night. Then the mystery increases. A bird flies up and startles *us*; the Traveller knocks again, but there is no answer, “only a host of phantom listeners . . . stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight.” So vividly is the story told, that we seem to be aware both of the traveller *outside* and of the spirits *within* (from whom he hears nothing), and *we* know, though *he* does not, that he is heard.

Then comes the climax. We are thrilled as “he suddenly smote on the door, even louder”; and we see him raise his head, and hear him shout to the silence: “Tell them I came, and no one answered, that I kept my word.”

What did he mean? What was the mystery? We are never told. Each is left to imagine for himself why the Traveller came, and why no one answered. Was the house empty of all but phantoms? Was there someone inside afraid to answer? Was the Traveller real? It is all so clever, so mystical, and yet so real, that we are still left wondering, and the phrases again and again echo in our thoughts—“Is there anybody there?”—“Tell them I came.”

The Traveller turns away. What does he look like now? Of what is he thinking? “They heard his foot upon the stirrup”—who are *they*? And then come the graphic closing lines that present a wonderful picture of *silence*, a picture so marvellously portrayed that we do not stop to enquire whether silence can “surge softly backward,” because the poet makes us feel that we know exactly what he means, and we see the Traveller and his horse swallowed *up* in the silence, and we are left watching the empty house.

39. SNUG IN MY EASY CHAIR.

Snug in my easy chair,
I stirred the fire to flame.
Fantastically fair
The flickering fancies came,
Born of heart's desire—
Amber woodland streaming ;
Topaz islands dreaming ;
Sunset-cities gleaming,
Spire on burning spire ;
Ruddy-windowed taverns :
Sunshine-spilling wines ;
Crystal-lighted caverns
Of Golconda's mines ;
Summers, unreturning ;
Passion's crater yearning ;
Troy, the ever-burning ;
Shelley's lustral pyre ;
Dragon-eyes, unsleeping ;
Witches' cauldrons leaping ;
Golden galleys sweeping
Out of sea-walled Tyre—
Fancies fugitive and fair
Flashed with singing through the air
Till, dazzled by the drowsy glare,
I shut my eyes to heat and light,
And saw in sudden night
Crouched in the dripping dark
With steaming shoulders stark,
The man who hews the coal to feed my fire.

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson.

40. THE ICE-CART.

Perched on my city office-stool
I watched with envy while a cool
And lucky carter handled ice . . .
And I was wandering in a trice
Far from the grey and grimy heat
Of that intolerable street
O'er sapphire berg and emerald floe
Beneath the still cold ruby glow
Of everlasting Polar night,
Bewildered by the queer half-light,
Until I stumbled unawares
Upon a creek where big white bears
Plunged headlong down with flourished heels
And floundered after shining seals
Through shivering seas of blinding blue.
And, as I watched them, ere I knew
I'd stripped and I was swimming too
Among the seal-pack, young and hale,
And thrusting on with threshing tail,
With twist and twirl and sudden leap
Through crackling ice and salty deep,
Diving and doubling with my kind
Until at last we left behind
Those big white blundering bulks of death,
And lay at length with panting breath
Upon a far untravelled floe
Beneath a gentle drift of snow—
Snow drifting gently fine and white
Out of the endless Polar night,
Falling and falling evermore
Upon ~~that~~ far untravelled shore

OF FANCY

Till I was buried fathoms deep
Beneath that cold white drifting sleep—
Sleep drifting deep,
Deep drifting sleep. . . .

The carter cracked a sudden whip :
I clutched my stool with startled grip,
Awakening to the grimy heat
Of that intolerable street.

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson.

41. THE LISTENERS.

‘ Is there anybody there ? ’ said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door ;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest’s ferny floor :
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller’s head :
And he smote upon the door again a second time :
‘ Is there anybody there ? ’ he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller ;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men :
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Harkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller’s call.

And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
 Their stillness answering his cry,
 While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
 'Neath the starred and leafy sky ;
 For he suddenly smote on the door, even
 Louder, and lifted his head :—
 ' Tell them I came, and no one answered,
 That I kept my word,' he said.
 Never the least stir made the listeners,
 Though every word he spake
 Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
 From the one man left awake :
 Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
 And the sound of iron on stone,
 And how the silence surged softly backward,
 When the plunging hoofs were gone.

Walter de la Mare.

Part 2.

Tell me, where is fancy bred,
 Or in the heart, or in the head ?
 How begot, how nourished ?

42. *A Fancy from Fontenelle* by Austin Dobson is a poem quite different in character and style from the others in this chapter. Fontenelle was a French poet who died in 1757 at the age of one hundred years. Austin Dobson has selected a fancy from the writings of this poet—"Among all the memories of Roses, no Rose remembers the death of the Gardener"—and about this fancy he has, as he says, woven a rhyme :

And I wove the thing to a random rhyme,
 For the Rose is Beauty, the Gardener, Time.

In the first two stanzas the Rose is personified in a very happy and

ingenious manner, so that we find the Rose laughing, and thinking, and talking. The music in these two stanzas is bright and quick, as befits the happiness of the Rose. The third stanza is in another key ; the music is slow and mournful, for the thoughts are sad. In the last line notice the figures of speech called metaphors : “ For the Rose is *Beau’y*, the Gardener, *Time*.”

43. *The Stolen Child*, by William Butler Yeats, is an old-world fanciful story, a legend of once-upon-a-time. As in many other poems by this writer, a quaint, half-humorous story is blended with pathos and sympathy. The poem arouses our interest and stirs our imagination, but, in addition, it gives us food for thought. The setting of the tale is among the beautiful natural scenery of Ireland, so that we are beguiled into the belief of the reality of what follows. We are given glimpses of the faery folk with their stolen cherries among the haunts of “ flapping herons ” and “ drowsy water-rats.” This care-free life is the first inducement offered to a “ human child ” to join their band. We see them dancing hand-in-hand in the moonlight “ on the dim gray sands,” and again the invitation is extended to share their revelry “ and chase the frothy bubbles.” The last inducement offered the human child is to go with the fairies “ where the wandering water gushes from the hills above Glen-Car,” where they whisper in the ears of slumbering trout.

The human child, “ the solemn-eyed,” goes with the fairies. We wonder why they call him “ the solemn-eyed.” Was he very thoughtful ? Was he real ? Was he one who could always see and believe in fairies ? Perhaps ! But, strangely, there is no rejoicing on the part of the fairies. Indeed, our sympathy is aroused for “ the solemn-eyed ” although he is going to the wonderful land of the little people, for now we are reminded of what he will miss by living in fairyland. In three vivid pictures the simple life of the farm, its human inhabitants, and its dumb creatures, rises before us :

He'll hear no more the lowing
Of the calves on the warm hillside ;

Or the kettle on the hob
Sing peace into his breast,
Or see the brown mice bob
Round and round the oatmeal-chest.

44. From *Oberon's Feast*. We now go back in thought for two hundred years, and we see the pretty, musical, fanciful ideas that pleased the poet Herrick. Robert Herrick was a clergyman who lived in the times of Charles I. and Charles II. He is specially noted for his beautiful, musical songs of country life, and this extract from *Oberon's Feast* shows that he was an intelligent and keen observer of nature. You will be surprised to find what a number of tiny creatures and tiny objects of the countryside are mentioned in the poem. Some of the words will be unfamiliar to you, and it will be necessary to look them up in the Notes at the end of the chapter, but you will have no difficulty in understanding the poem, and you will certainly delight in its strange and dainty fancy.

45. The next poem is called *Puck and the Fairy*. It is an extract from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one of William Shakespeare's famous Comedies. Shakespeare was the great Elizabethan poet, so that he lived about one hundred years before Herrick. This fanciful extract, too, is about fairies and the wonders of tiny things in nature. Here we read a conversation between a notable sprite called Puck and a Fairy. We learn how swiftly, "swifter than the moony sphere," the Fairy travelled to do the Queen's bidding. Puck relates the gossip about King Oberon and his Queen, and the Fairy then recognises Puck and asks him if he is the one that frightens the maids, prevents the butter forming in the churn, spoils the ale, and misleads night-wanderers. Puck acknowledges his deeds and goes on to relate several more of his mad pranks. The poem is full of interesting details, music and pictures. A delightful spirit of revelry and happiness pervades the poem, and we readily enter this world of make-believe, and fancy ourselves in fairyland.

42. A FANCY FROM FONTENELLE.

“DE MÉMOIRES DE ROSES ON N’A POINT VU MOURIR LE JARDINIER.”

The Rose in the garden slipped her bud,
And she laughed in the pride of her youthful blood
As she thought of the Gardener standing by—
“He is old,—so old ! And he soon must die !”

The full Rose waxed in the warm June air,
And she spread and spread till her heart lay bare ;
And she laughed once more as she heard his tread—
“He is older now ! He will soon be dead !”

But the breeze of the morning blew, and found
That the leaves of the blown Rose strewed the ground ;
And he came at noon, that Gardener old,
And he raked them gently under the mould.

*And I wove the thing to a random rhyme,
For the Rose is Beauty, the Gardener, Time.*

Austin Dobson.

43. THE STOLEN CHILD.

Where dips the rocky highland
Of Sleuth Wood in the lake,
There lies a leafy island
Where flapping herons wake
The drowsy water-rats ;
There we’ve hid our faery vats,
Full of berries,
And of reddest stolen cherries.
*Come away, O human child !
To the waters and the wild*

*With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.*

Where the wave of moonlight glosses
The dim gray sands with light,
Far off by furthest Rosses
We foot it all the night,
Weaving olden dances,
Mingling hands and mingling glances
Till the moon has taken flight ;
To and fro we leap
And chase the frothy bubbles,
While the world is full of troubles
And is anxious in its sleep.

*Come away, O human child !
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.*

Where the wandering water gushes
From the hills above Glen-Car,
In pools among the rushes
That scarce could bathe a star,
We seek for slumbering trout,
And whispering in their ears
Give them unquiet dreams ;
Leaning softly out
From ferns that drop their tears
Over the young streams.

*Come away, O human child !
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.*

Away with us he's going,
 The solemn-eyed :
 He'll hear no more the lowing
 Of the calves on the warm hillside ;
 Or the kettle on the hob
 Sing peace into his breast,
 Or see the brown mice bob
 Round and round the oatmeal-chest.
*For he comes, the human child,
 To the waters and the wild
 With a faery, hand in hand,
 From a world more full of weeping than he can understand.*

William Butler Yeats.

44. From " OBERON'S FEAST."

A little mushroom-table spread,
 After short prayers they set on bread,
 A moon-parch'd grain, of purest wheat,
 With some small glitt'ring grain to eat
 His choice bits with ; then in a trice
 They make a feast less great than nice.
 But all this while his eye is served,
 We must not think his ear was sterved ;
 But that there was in place to stir
 His spleen, the chirring grasshopper,
 The merry cricket, puling fly,
 The piping gnat for minstrelsy.
 And now we must imagine first,
 The elves present, to quench his thirst,
 A pure seed-pearl of infant dew,
 Brought and besweeten'd in a blue
 And pregnant violet ; which d'ne.

His kitling eyes begin to run
Quite through the table where he spies
The horns of papery butterflies,
Of which he eats ; and tastes a little
Of that we call the cuckoo's spittle ;
A little fuz-ball pudding stands
By, yet not blessed by his hands,
That was too coarse ; but then forthwith
He ventures boldly on the pith
Of sugar'd rush, and eats the sagge
And well-bestrutted bees' sweet bag ;
Gladding his palate with some store
Of emmet's eggs ; what would he more ?
But beards of mice, a newt's stewed thigh,
A bloated earwig and a fly ;
With the red-capt worm, that's shut
Within the concave of a nut,
Brown as his tooth. A little moth,
Late fatten'd in a piece of cloth ;
With wither'd cherries, mandrakes' ears,
Moles' eyes : to these the slain stag's tears ;
The unctuous dewlaps of a snail,
The broke-heart of a nightingale
O'ercome in music ; with a wine
Ne'er ravish'd from the flattering vine,
But gently prest from the soft side
Of the most sweet and dainty bride,
Brought in a dainty daisy, which
He fully quaffs up, to bewitch
His blood to height ; this done, commended
Grace by his priest ; the feast is ended.

Robert Herrick.

45. PUCK AND THE FAIRY.

Puck. How now, spirit ! whither wander you ?

Fairy. Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough briar,

Over park, over pale,

Thorough flood, thorough fire,

I do wander everywhere,

Swifter than the moony sphere ;

And I serve the fairy queen,

To dew her orbs upon the green :

The cowslips tall her pensioners be ;

In their gold coats spots you see ;

Those be rubies, fairy favours,

In those freckles live their savours :

I must go seek some dew-drops here,

And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

Farewell, thou lob of spirits : I'll be gone :

Our queen and all her elves come here anon.

Puck. The king doth keep his revels here to-night ;
Take heed, the queen come not within his sight.

For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,

Because that she, as her attendant, hath

A lovely boy, stol'n from an Indian king ;

She never had so sweet a changeling :

And jealous Oberon would have the child

Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild :

But she, perforce, withholds the lovèd boy,

Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy :

And now they never meet in grove or green,

By fountain clear, or spangled star-light sheen,

But they do square ; that all their elves, for fear,

Creep into acorn cups and hide them there.

Fairy. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite,
Call'd Robin Goodfellow : are you not he
That fright the maidens of the villagery ;
Skim milk ; and sometimes labour in the quern ;
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn ;
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm ;
Mislead night wanderers, laughing at their harm ?
Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck :
Are not you he ?

Puck. Thou speak'st aright,
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon and make him smile,
And sometimes lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab ;
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob,
And on her withered dew-lap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me ;
Then slip I from her, and down topples she,
And *tailor* cries, and falls into a cough ;
And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But, room, fairy ! here comes Oberon.

William Shakespeare.

From " A Midsummer Night's Dream."

NOTES AND EXERCISES.

39. SNUG IN MY EASY CHAIR. *Golconda*—a city of India noted for its mines of precious stones : *Troy*—an ancient city in Asia Minor, immortalised in Homer's *Iliad* as Priam's capital, whose capture was the objective of the

Trojan War: *Tyre*—an important seaport of ancient Phoenicia; its greatness dates from the 10th century B.C.: *Shelley's lustral pyre*—Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), a famous English poet, was drowned at sea off the coast of Italy. His body was burnt some days later on the seashore where it had



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been washed up, and his ashes were afterwards buried in the Protestant cemetery at Rome. The *lustral pyre* is the purifying fire of the funeral pile: *galley*—a large, low, usually one-decked vessel propelled by both oars and sails.

Exercises. (1) Comment on the pictorial quality of the compound words used in this poem. (2) Quote examples of alliteration where the sound of (a) *s* is repeated; (b) *z* is repeated. (3) What is the anti-climax of this poem? What effect has it on the reader's mind? (4) Comment on the significance of the italicised words: *flickering* fancies; *amber* woodland: passion's *crater*; *golden* galleys. (5) How are the rhymes arranged in this poem?

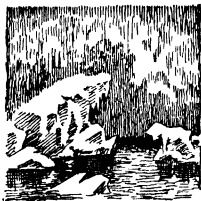
40. THE ICE-CART. *Berg*—an iceberg, a large floating mass of ice detached from a glacier: *floe*—floating ice formed in a sheet or field on the surface of the water.

Exercises. (1) What is the anti-climax of this narrative? (2) What is the effect of the repetition of the lines describing the heat? (3) Explain the suitability of the italicised words: *grey* and *grimy* heat; *intolerable* street; *sapphire* berg; *emerald* floe; *ruby* glow; *flourished* heels; *sudden* whip. (4) Comment on the following lines:—

(a) And thrusting on with threshing tail,
With twist and twirl and sudden leap.

(b) Those big white blundering bulks of death.

(5) Quote the lines that convey the impression that the poet is falling asleep on his stool. (6) Explain that this poem is arranged in rhyming couplets. (7) Describe in a few words the picture that the last four lines present to your mind.



ICEBERG.

41. THE LISTENERS. *Exercises.* (1) Quote the lines that convey to you striking word-pictures. (2) Select six descriptive phrases and say why you like them. (3) Explain the significance of the italicised words: *champed* the grasses; *leaf-fringed* sill; stood *perplexed*; silence *surged*. (4) In this poem are several contrasting statements, e.g.,

Stood listening *in the quiet* of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men.

Quote other examples of a similar kind. (5) Quote lines that move slowly and others that move quickly. State the effect of this arrangement in each case. (6) Quote six phrases or lines that suggest silence.

42. A FANCY FROM FONTENELLE. Austin Dobson (1840-1921) was born at Plymouth. He entered the Civil Service and became a principal clerk in the marine department of the Board of Trade: published several volumes of poems; wrote biographies, and contributed to several magazines and reviews. *Waxed*—increased in size; grew: *random*—having no fixed purpose.

Exercises. (1) What makes this poem (a) ingenious; (b) beautiful; (c) sad? (2) What is the moral implied in the poem?

43. THE STOLEN CHILD. It is frequently remarked that a child is "solemn-eyed." There is often in the eyes of a child a far-away look, as though he were reflecting on the memories of the past and lost in wonder at the present. Wordsworth in a notable passage said:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

Heron—a wading bird having a long beak and legs, and a long tapering bill with a sharp point and cutting edges.

Exercises. (1) Give examples from *The Stolen Child* of (a) beautiful pictures, (b) pleasing music. (2) How are the rhymes arranged in this poem? Write six words that rhyme with *glosses*. (3) How many strong stresses are there in most of the lines? What is the effect of the extra number of stresses in "For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand"? What is the effect of the lesser number of stresses in "The solemn-eyed"? (4) Explain:

In pools among the rushes
That scarce could bathe a star.

44. From "OBERON'S FEAST." *Chirring*—chirping: *sterved*—starved; to be in need of: *spleen*—melancholy; low spirits: *puling*—making a whimpering noise like a child: *killling*—like that of a kitten: *sagge*—sag; hanging down: *well-bestrutted*—swollen: *emmet's*—ant's: *mandrake*—a plant, the



HERON

root of which was supposed to bear resemblance to the human form, and to utter shrieks when pulled up: *unctuous*—fatty: *dewlaps*—the loose flesh on



NIGHTINGALE

the throat of some animals, such as cows: *nightingale*—a bird about six inches long, russet brown above with the under parts whitish. It is noted for the sweet song of the male often heard at night during the breeding season.

Exercises. (1) How are the rhymes arranged in this poem? Give examples of unusual rhymes. (2) Explain the fitness of the italicised words: *pip*ing gnat; *seed-pearl* of infant dew; *papery* butterfly; *flattering* vine.

(3) Make a list of all the names of tiny creatures mentioned in the poem. (4) What evidence is there in the poem that the poet was a close observer of nature?

45. PUCK AND THE FAIRY. William Shakespeare (1546-1616), our greatest poet and dramatist, was born at Stratford-on-Avon, and educated at the Free Grammar School of that town. He was married, when eighteen years of age, to Anne Hathaway and left Stratford for London, where in time he became an actor at the Globe Theatre, and later a dramatist. He left London once more for Stratford, purchased property and lived there as a country gentleman till his death, being buried in the chancel of Trinity Church. Most of his plays are written in unrhymed or *blank verse*, but this extract is in rhymed couplets.

Thorough—through: *savours*—scents: *lob*—dullard: *square*—to quarrel: *quern*—handmill: *bootless*—unprofitable; useless: *barm*—yeast: *crab*—crab-apple: *neeze*—sneeze: *puck*—a tricksy household fairy; the illustration shows Puck as depicted in a performance of the play “*Midsummer-Night’s Dream*.”

Exercises. (1) What was the quarrel between Oberon and his Queen? (2) What good deeds and what pranks are attributed to Puck? (3) What evidence is there in the poem to show that practical joking of a rough kind was popular in Shakespeare’s time? (4) How does the poem explain the presence of spots on cowslips?



PUCK.

VII. OF REFLECTION.

Part 1.



46. *Lying in the Grass*, by Sir Edmund Gosse, is one of the most pictorial and most musical poems in this book. In addition, it expresses the reflections of a person who is pictured as gazing thoughtfully on the scene before him. The title fully explains the subject of the poem. The scene is a familiar one of the countryside—three mowers mowing grass. The writer is “lying in the grass” watching the mowers :

Before me, dark against the fading sky
I watch three mowers mowing, as I lie :
With brawny arms they sweep in harmony.

The beauty of the natural surroundings, the hot air, the rhythm and harmony of the mowing, fill the watcher with harmony, and he goes on to describe the effect on himself, as well as the beauty that he sees about him. The happy laziness that seems to fill every living creature on a hot summer evening is beautifully suggested :

The weary butterflies that droop their wings,
The dreamy nightingale that hardly sings,
And all the lassitude of happy things.

Then we have a charming word-picture of the background of the scene, a "dark-green beech-wood." This scene is full of colour—amber air, a white path, a girl wearing a white apron and red gown carrying a pitcher on her head, and, when she meets one of the mowers "her cheeks are redder than the wild blush-rose." Next is a picture of rosy children romping in the hay, and in contemplating this happy scene the watcher is filled with longing to play unseen among them like the wind. So beautiful is the sight of the children that he reflects it was little wonder that the potters of old fashioned on their pottery little gods and loves in forest glades. The poet concludes his meditation by expressing his simple and only wish :

I only wish to live my life, and find
My heart in unison with all mankind.

Then so unimportant does he feel, so infinitely small and of so little account in this great world, that he suggests none need be sad when he leaves it, for young delight and glee will still, as always, be left.

47. *Nelson Street*, by Seumas O'Sullivan, is another pretty poem about a street. Here we are told of the quiet musings of a man who rises in the morning and goes downstairs to breakfast. The first line gives the atmosphere of the place, and we realise the meaning of the title, for the house is one of many in a large town—"there is hardly a mouthful of air." And later we learn that life in this street is like Mrs. Willow's life, very humdrum, for the description mentions "monotonous days." But, once again, as in *Mercer Street*, the sounds of music bring happy remembrances and bright hope ; the sounds, not of a lark or any other bird this time, but of a "reed organ, wheezy and sweet" grinding out the line—"There's a Land that is Fairer than This." Here the poem ends. We are left wondering. What are the man's reflections as he stands at the window listening to the music ? Where is that land that is fairer than this ?

48. *Wagtail and Baby* is a curious poem that will give you full material for reflection. A wagtail is a small bird having a trim slender body and a very long tail which it habitually jerks up and down. John Clare, the peasant poet, who knew so much of the pretty creatures of the countryside, wrote a short poem about "Little Trotty Wagtail." In one stanza he said :

Little Trotty Wagtail, he waddled in the mud,
And he left his little footmarks, trample where he would.
He waddled in the water-pudge, and waggle went his tail,
And chirrup up his wings to dry upon the garden rail.

The poem by Thomas Hardy is simple and straightforward, but there is a deep underlying thought in it, and you will need a good deal of cogitation before you can reasonably explain of what "the baby fell a-thinking." The arrangement of the rhyming lines with words ending in "ing" is quaint and arresting. You will perhaps find it helpful to compare the thoughts of this poem with a line from John Clare's poem of the countryside on page 24 : "Proud man, still seems the enemy of all."

49. *The Balliol Rooks* was obviously written by a poet who had spent some period of his life at Balliol College, Oxford. Balliol is one of the oldest and most famous colleges of the university of Oxford. It was founded between 1263 and 1268 by John Balliol of Barnard Castle in the county of Durham, and his wife Devorgilla. The poem speaks of the generations of young men who have studied and lived within its walls. In the third stanza, something of the wonder of its history through the ages is suggested, for the monk, the prior, the schoolman, and the cavalier are mentioned.

It is a well-known fact that rooks nest in large colonies in the tops of trees, preferably near human dwellings. Out of the breeding season the rookery is usually deserted, and the birds roost elsewhere, though in some cases they pay frequent visits to the nesting site. Although the life of a single rook is short, yet the same trees are colonised year after year. The pageant of history is ever changing.

Man comes and goes, but the rookery remains, a symbol of the unchanging laws of nature :

Have you marked men ceaselessly come and go,
Loiter a little while here and pass
As the ripple on water, the shadow on grass ?

In poetry one frequently finds a reference to the fleeting character of man's life, and this is a subject that in every age arouses the deep emotion of the poet's soul :

Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week. (Keats.)

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep. (Shakespeare.)

Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone and for ever ! (Scott.)

As for man, his days are as grass :
As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.
For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone ;
And the place thereof shall know it no more. (Bible.)

50. *A Child's Thought of God*, by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, perhaps shows the influence upon Mrs. Browning of her husband's poetry, especially in its very condensed language. You could imagine Pippa (see p. 16) using these words.

46. LYING IN THE GRASS.

Between two russet tufts of summer grass
I watch the world through hot air as through glass,
And by my face sweet lights and colours pass.

Before me, dark against the fading sky,
I watch three mowers mowing, as I lie :
With brawny arms they sweep in harmony.

Brown English faces by the sun burnt red,
Rich glowing colour on bare throat and head,
My heart would leap to watch them, were I dead !

And in my strong young living as I lie,
I seem to move with them in harmony,—
A fourth is mowing, and that fourth am I

The music of the scythes that glide and leap,
The young men whistling as their great arms sweep,
And all the perfume and sweet sense of sleep,

The weary butterflies that droop their wings,
The dreamy nightingale that hardly sings,
And all the lassitude of happy things,

Is mingling with the warm and pulsing blood
That gushes through my veins a languid flood,
And feeds my spirit as the sap a bud.

Behind the mowers, on the amber air,
A dark-green beech-wood rises, still and fair,
A white path winding up it like a stair.

And see that girl, with pitcher on her head,
And clean white apron on her gown of red,—
Her even-song of love is but half-said :

She waits the youngest mower. Now he goes ;
Her cheeks are redder than the wild blush-rose ;
They climb up where the deepest shadows close.

Ah ! now the rosy children come to play,
And romp and struggle with the new-mown hay ;
Their clear high voices sound from far away.

They know so little why the world is sad,
They dig themselves warm graves and yet are glad ;
Their muffled screams and laughter make me mad !

I long to go and play among them there,
Unseen, like wind, to take them by the hair,
And gently make their rosy cheeks more fair.

The happy children, full of frank surprise,
And sudden whims and innocent ecstasies ;
What godhead sparkles from their liquid eyes !

No wonder round those urns of mingled clays
That Tuscan potters fashioned in old days,
And coloured like the torrid earth ablaze,

We find the little gods and loves portrayed
Through ancient forests wandering undismayed,
Or gathered, whispering, in some pleasant glade.

They knew, as I do now, what keen delight
A strong man feels to watch the tender flight
Of little children playing in his sight.

I do not hunger for a well-stored mind,
I only wish to live my life, and find
My heart in unison with all mankind.

My life is like the single dewy star
That trembles on the horizon's primrose-bar,—
A microcosm where all things living are.

And if, among the noiseless grasses, Death
Should come behind and take away my breath,
I should not rise as one who sorroweth ;

For I should pass, but all the world would be
Full of desire and young delight and glee,
And why should men be sad through loss of me ?

The light is dying ; in the silver blue
The young moon shines from her bright window through ;
The mowers all are gone, and I go too.

Sir Edmund Gosse.

47. NELSON STREET.

There is hardly a mouthful of air
In the room where the breakfast is set,
For the blind is still down though it's late,
And the curtains are redolent yet
Of tobacco smoke, stale from last night.
There's the little bronze teapot, and there
The eggs on the blue willow-plate,
And the sleepy canary, a hen,
Starts faintly her chirruping tweet
And I know, could she speak, she would say,
"Hullo there—what's wrong with the light ?
Draw the blind up, let's look at the day."
I see that it's Monday again,
For the man with the organ is there ;
Every Monday he comes to the street
(Lest I, or the bird there, should miss
Our count of monotonous days)
With his reed-organ, wheezy and sweet,
And stands by the window and plays
"There's a Land that is Fairer than This."

Seumas O'Sullivan.

48. WAGTAIL AND BABY.

A baby watched a ford, whereto
A wagtail came for drinking ;
A blaring bull went wading through,
The wagtail showed no shrinking.
A stallion splashed his way across,
The birdie nearly sinking ; .
He gave his plumes a twitch and toss,
And held his own unblinking.
Next saw the baby round the spot
A mongrel slowly slinking ;
The wagtail gazed, but faltered not
In dip and sip and prinking.
A perfect gentleman then neared ;
The wagtail, in a winking,
With terror rose and disappeared ;
The baby fell a-thinking.

Thomas Hardy.

49. THE BALLIOL ROOKS, 1885.

The winter is dead, and the spring is a-dying,
And summer is marching o'er mountain and plain,
And tossing and tumbling and calling and crying
The Balliol rooks are above us again :
And watching them wheel on unwearied wings,
I question them softly of vanished things.

*Caw, caw, says every rook,
To the dreamer his dream, to the scholar his book.
Caw, caw, but the things for me
Are the windy sky and the windy tree !*

O rooks, have you leant from your heights and harkened
From year to year to the whirl below ?
While the suns have flamed and the days have darkened,
Have you marked men ceaselessly come and go,
Loiter a little while here and pass
As the ripple on water, the shadow on grass ?

*Caw, caw, says every rook,
To the dreamer his dream, to the scholar his book.
Caw, caw, but the things for me
Are the windy sky and the windy tree !*

The monk with his orisons heavenward rolling,
The friar of black, and the friar of grey ;
The schoolman stern, and the cavalier trolling
In court and in cloister his roundelay,
The singer sweet and the preacher pale—
O rooks, can you tell me their wondrous tale ?

*Caw, caw, says every rook,
To the dreamer his dream, to the scholar his book.
Caw, caw, but the things for me
Are the windy sky and the windy tree !*

And we that are heirs to their paths and places,
To the alleys dim and the sunlit towers,
With our hearts on fire, and our eager faces,
Still hasting along with the hasting hours ;
O rooks, I pray you, come, tell me true :
Was it better the old ? is it better the new ?

*Caw, caw, says every rook,
To the dreamer his dream, to the scholar his book.
Caw, caw, but the things for me
Are the windy sky and the windy tree !*

And they that shall follow upon us hereafter,
The men unborn of the unborn years ;
Will they move you at all with their grief and laughter ;
Will you reckon, O rooks, of their hopes and fears ;
Or will you but circle scornfully,
And mock at them as you mock at me ?

*Caw, caw, says every rook
To the dreamer his dream, to the scholar his book.
Caw, caw, but the things for me
Are the windy sky and the windy tree !*

Frederick S. Boas.

50. A CHILD'S THOUGHT OF GOD.

I.

They say that God lives very high ;
But if you look above the pines
You cannot see our God ; and why ?

II.

And if you dig down in the mines
You never see Him in the gold,
Though from Him all that's glory shines.

III.

God is so good, He wears a fold
Of heaven and earth across His face—
Like secrets kept, for love, untold.

IV.

But still I feel that His embrace
Slides down by thrills through all things made,
Through sight and sound of every place.

V.

As if my tender mother laid

On my shut lips her kisses' pressure,
Half waking me at night, and said,

“ Who kissed you through the dark, dear guesser ? ”

Elizabeth Barrett Browning



Part 2.

The poems in this section are of a didactic character, that is, they contain some definite teaching. You doubtless remember the well-known rhyme : “ Thirty days hath September, April, June and November,” etc. That is a didactic rhyme, for its object is to help us to remember how many days there are in each month. Most didactic poems, however, teach a moral lesson ; this one, for instance :

How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every open flower.

The main object of a poem is the self-expression of the poet, and good poems, especially those of a reflective character, give us something to think about that may, perhaps, influence our lives and conduct. Poets, as a rule, do not think of teaching a lesson, but when they paint a beautiful word-picture we naturally reflect on the underlying moral of the poem.

A poet plays upon our feelings by the aid of rhythmic sounds and by the charm of imagery. He does not often ask us to think, or feel, or remember, but his poetry is like a mirror reflecting something of his own soul. And, as we catch glimpses of the image in the mirror, so we feel what the poet would have us understand.

No introductory remarks are needed for the remainder of the poems in this chapter ; each reader, for himself, will enjoy the poems, and, according to his mood or his needs, will interpret the teaching that is given or implied.

51. THE GLORY OF THE GARDEN.

Our England is a garden that is full of stately views,
Of borders, beds and shrubberies and lawns and avenues,
With statues on the terraces and peacocks strutting by ;
But the Glory of the Garden lies in more than meets the eye.

For where the old thick laurels grow, along the thin red wall,
You'll find the tool- and potting-sheds which are the heart of all,
The cold-frames and the hot-houses, the dungpits and the tanks,
The rollers, carts and drain-pipes, with the barrows and the planks.

And there you'll see the gardeners, the men and 'prentice boys
Told off to do as they are bid and do it without noise ;
For, except when seeds are planted and we shout to scare the birds,
The Glory of the Garden it abideth not in words.

And some can pot begonias and some can bud a rose,
And some are hardly fit to trust with anything that grows ;
But they can roll and trim the lawns and sift the sand and loam,
For the Glory of the Garden occupieth all who come.

Our England is a garden, and such gardens are not made
By singing : " Oh, how beautiful ! " and sitting in the shade,
While better men than we go out and start their working lives
At grubbing weeds from gravel-paths with broken dinner-knives.

There's not a pair of legs so thin, there's not a head so thick,
There's not a hand so weak and white, nor yet a heart so sick,
But it can find some needful job that's crying to be done,
For the Glory of the Garden glorifieth every one.

Then seek your job with thankfulness and work till further orders,
If it's only netting strawberries or killing slugs on borders ;
And when your back stops aching and your hands begin to
 harden,
You will find yourself a partner in the Glory of the Garden.

Oh, 'Adam was a gardener, and God who made him sees
That half a proper gardener's work is done upon his knees ;
So when your work is finished, you can wash your hands and pray
For the Glory of the Garden that it may not pass away !
And the Glory of the Garden it shall never pass away !

Rudyard Kipling.

52. IF—

If you can keep your head when all about you
 Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
 But make allowance for their doubting too ;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
 Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
 And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise :

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master ;
 If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
 And treat those two impostors just the same ;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
 Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,

OF REFLECTION

Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools :

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss ;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them : " Hold on ! "

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much ;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son !

Rudyard Kipling.

53. IN THE STREET OF BY-AND-BY.

In the street of By-and-By
Stands the hostelry of Never.
Dream from deed he must dis sever
Who his fortune here would try.

There's a pathos in the cry,
As of impotent endeavour :
In the street of By-and-By
Stands the hostelry of Never.

Grave or gamesome, low or high,
Dull or dainty, crass or clever.

You must lose your chance for ever,
If you let it forth to fly
In the street of By-and-By.

William Ernest Henley.

54. THE EXAMPLE.

Here's an example from
A Butterfly ;
That on a rough, hard rock
Happy can lie ;
Friendless and all alone
On this unsweetened stone.

Now let my bed be hard,
No care take I ;
I'll make my joy like this
Small Butterfly ;
Whose happy heart has power
To make a stone a flower.

William Henry Davies.

55. MAN'S TRUE MEASURE.

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make Man better be ;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere :
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night—
It was the plant and flower of light.
In small proportions we just beauties see ;
And in short measure life may perfect be.

Ben Jonson.

56. SONG OF THE SHEPHERD BOY IN THE
VALLEY OF HUMILIATION.

He that is down needs fear no fall ;
 He that is low, no pride ;
 He that is humble, ever shall
 Have God to be his guide.

I am content with what I have,
 Little be it or much :
 And, Lord, contentment still I crave,
 Because Thou savest such.

Fullness to such a burden is,
 That go on pilgrimage ;
 Here little, and hereafter bliss,
 Is best from age to age.

John Bunyan.

NOTES AND EXERCISES.

46. LYING IN THE GRASS. Sir Edmund Gosse (1849-1928) was born in London, and educated at private schools in Devonshire. By the influence of Charles Kingsley he became assistant librarian at the British Museum, and later was appointed translator to the Board of Trade, and librarian to the House of Lords. He was distinguished as a poet, critic, translator and biographer.

Lassitude—weariness : *amber*—amber-coloured (a clear light yellow) : *ecstasies*—entrancing joys : *unison*—harmony ; agreement : *microcosm*—a little world ; man as a supposed miniature world.

Exercises. (1) How are the rhymes arranged in this poem ? (2) Write down all the phrases containing words of colour. (3) Mention three interesting compound words used in the poem, and explain their force. (4) Write the stanza which conveys to you the best picture, and say why you like it. (5) Quote a musical line and state how the vowel sounds help to make the music. (6) Explain the contrast in the line : " They dig themselves warm graves and yet

are glad." (7) Explain the significance of the italicised words: *weary butterflies*; *languid flood*; *muffled screams*; *frank surprise*. (8) Comment on the similes in the poem.

47. NELSON STREET. *Redolent*—smelling: *reed-organ*—a few years ago the organ-grinder (as he was popularly called) was frequently seen in large towns; he was usually an Italian and was accompanied by a monkey. In this poem the poet may be referring to the small reed-organ called an accordion.



ORGAN-GRINDER.

The language of this poem is particularly simple; there are few rhyming lines, no similes, and no striking instances of alliteration or repetition. The rhythm is very pleasing; it is not often that we find a modern poem containing feet of three syllables with the stress on the last syllable:

There is hard | ly a mouth | ful of air |
In the room | where the break | fast is set. |

Exercises. (1) What phrases in this poem convey the impression of loneliness? (2) What connection is there between the last line and the rest of the poem?

48. WAGTAIL AND BABY. *Stallion*—a male horse: *prinking*—to dress and arrange one's self for show.

Exercises. (1) This poem is arranged in the old ballad metre. Write out a stanza and mark the strong stresses. (2) What phrase in the last stanza is specially contrasted with a *blaring bull* and a *stallion splashed*? (3) What image does this picture convey to you?—"a mongrel slowly slinking." (4) Assume yourself to be the baby. What would you think?

49. THE BALLIOL ROOKS. *Orisons*—prayers: *reck*—heed; make account of.

Exercises. (1) Why does the refrain occur so often? What is the hidden meaning of the refrain? (2) Explain:

- (a) I questioned them softly of vanished things.
- (b) With our hearts on fire and our eager faces.

(3) Point out an example of alliteration in the first stanza. (4) With what is man's life on earth compared? In what sense is the comparison true? (5) There are many instances of the use of inversion in this poem where the adjective follows its noun, such as *friar of black*; *alley dim*. Quote other instances of this use.

51. **THE GLORY OF THE GARDEN.** Rudyard Kipling was educated at the United Services College at Westward Ho, a school afterwards made famous by him in his great school story *Stalky & Co.* Kipling spent a considerable part of his early life in India, and he has written many tales and poems about Indian life.

Exercises. (1) Explain the following in your own way :

(a) But the Glory of the Garden lies in more than meets the eye.

(b) The Glory of the Garden it abideth not in words.

(c) For the Glory of the Garden glorifieth every one.

(2) Why is *Adam* mentioned in the poem ? (3) Which line do you think *sounds* best ? Can you say why ?

52. **IF.** *Exercises.* (1) Above one of the entrance gates to the famous Tennis Courts of Wimbledon is this quotation from the poem : " If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster, and treat those two impostors just the same." Why do you think this passage was selected for such a place ? (2) Which passage from *If* would you select to place above the entrance door of a school ? (3) State in your own words six qualities necessary to make Kipling's ideal of a *Man*.

53. **IN THE STREET OF BY-AND-BY.** Pairs of words having opposite meanings are called *antonyms*—grave or gamesome, low or high, dull or dainty, crass or clever. *Crass* means *ignorant*.

Exercises. (1) Compare this line from *If*—" If you can dream—and not make dreams your master," with this line from *In the Street of By-and-By*—" Dream from deed he must dis sever," and explain their meaning. (2) *Pathos* is that which arouses the feeling of sympathy. What has *pathos* to do with the cry of *By-and-By* ? (3) Do you know a proverb that summarises the contents of this poem ?



54. **THE EXAMPLE** was written by the modern poet William H. Davies. Many people object to a *moral* in a poem, and you will observe how the poet has here softened that objection. The style of the poem is like that of Robert Herrick. We feel that the poet is watching the butterfly and soliloquising to himself about it.

Exercise. Do you, or do you not, like a poem to express a *moral* ? Give reasons for your answer.

55. **MAN'S TRUE MEASURE** is a tiny poetical gem written by Ben Jonson

(1574-1637), a noted dramatist contemporary with Shakespeare. He was made Poet Laureate and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Exercises. (1) Explain how the meaning of the poem is summed up in the last two lines. (2) What expressive name is given to the lily in this poem? (3) What comparison does the poet make between an *oak* and a *lily*?

56. SONG OF THE SHEPHERD BOY. John Bunyan (1628-88) was an English author and preacher. He was born at Elstow, Bedfordshire, attended the parish school, and also worked at his father's trade as a tinker. He later joined a nonconformist denomination and was imprisoned for unauthorised preaching. It was during a second period of imprisonment that he began *The Pilgrim's Progress*, from which this poem is taken. The story in this famous book is told as an allegory, illustrating the trials that beset a Christian on his way through life. Among his adventures Christian came to the Valley of Humiliation where he fought with the fiend Apollyon, and where he saw the Shepherd Boy who had found out that the secret of true happiness is a humble and contented mind. In the words of an old proverb: "A contented mind is a continual feast."



"The monk with his orisons heavenward rolling."

VIII. OF CHRISTMAS.



The time draws near the birth of Christ :
The moon is hid, the night is still ;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Tennyson.

“ AND there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

“ And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them : and they were sore afraid.

“ And the angel said unto them, Fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

“ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

“ And this shall be a sign unto you ; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

“ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

“ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

“ And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

“ And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

“ And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

“ And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

“ But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.”

St. Luke, ii. 8-19.

57. A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

The Christ-child lay on Mary's lap,

His hair was like a light.

(O weary, weary were the world,

But here is all aright.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's breast,

His hair was like a star.

(O stern and cunning are the kings,

But here the true hearts are.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's heart,

His hair was like a fire.

(O weary, weary is the world,

But here the world's desire.)

The Christ-child stood at Mary's knee,

His hair was like a crown,

And all the flowers looked up at Him,

And all the stars looked down.

G. K. Chesterton.

58. CHRISTMAS EVE AT SEA.

A wind is rustling "south and soft,"

Cooing a quiet country tune,

The calm sea sighs, and far aloft

The sails are ghostly in the moon.

Unquiet ripples lisp and purr,

A block there pipes and chirps i' the sheave,

The wheel-ropes jar, the reef-points stir

Faintly—and it is Christmas Eve.

The hushed sea seems to hold her breath,

And o'er the giddy, swaying spars,

Silent and excellent as Death,

The dim blue skies are bright with stars.

Dear God—they shone in Palestine

Like this, and yon pale moon serene

Looked down among the lowing kine

On Mary and the Nazarene.

The angels called from deep to deep,

The burning heavens felt the thrill,

Startling the flocks of silly sheep

And lonely shepherds on the hill.

To-night beneath the dripping bows

Where flashing bubbles burst and throng,

The bow-wash murmurs and sighs and soughs

A message from the angels' song.

The noon goes nodding down the west,

The drowsy helmsman strikes the bell ;

Rex Judaeorum natus est,

I charge you, brothers, sing *Nowell, Nowell,*

Rex Judaeorum natus est.

John Masefield.

59. THE OXEN.

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.

“Now they are all on their knees,”

An elder said as we sat in a flock

By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where

They dwelt in their strawy pen,

Nor did it occur to one of us there

To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave

In these years ! Yet, I feel,

If someone said on Christmas Eve,

“Come ; see the oxen kneel,

“In the lonely barton by yonder coomb

Our childhood used to know,”

I should go with him in the gloom,

Hoping it might be so.

Thomas Hardy.

60. A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

“What means this glory round our feet,”

The Magi mused, “more bright than morn ?”

And voices chanted clear and sweet,

“To-day the Prince of Peace is born !”

“What means that star,” the Shepherds said,

“That brightens through the rocky glen ?”

OF CHRISTMAS

And angels, answering overhead,
Sang, " Peace on earth, good-will to men ! "

'Tis eighteen hundred years and more
Since those sweet oracles were dumb ;
We wait for Him, like them of yore ;
Alas, He seems so slow to come !

But it was said, in words of gold
No time or sorrow e'er shall dim,
That little children might be bold
In perfect trust to come to HIM.

All round about our feet shall shine
A light like that the Wise Men saw,
If we our loving wills incline
To that sweet Life which is the Law.

So shall we learn to understand
The simple faith of shepherds then,
And, clasping kindly hand in hand,
Sing, " Peace on earth, good-will to men ! "

And they who do their souls no wrong,
But keep at eve the faith of morn,
Shall daily hear the angel-song,
" To-day the Prince of Peace is born ! "

James Russell Lowell.

61. CROWN WINTER WITH GREEN.

Crown Winter with green,
And give him good drink
To physic his spleen
Or ever he think.

His mouth to the bowl,
His feet to the fire ;
And let him, good soul,
No comfort desire.

So merry he be,
I bid him abide :
And merry be we
This good Yuletide.

Robert Bridges.



OLD-TIME CAROLLERS.

NOTES AND EXERCISES.

57. A CHRISTMAS CAROL. G. K. Chesterton (b. 1874) is a noted journalist. *Carol*—a song of praise or devotion.

Exercises. (1) What figure of speech is used in the second verse of each stanza ? (2) Explain : " O stern and cunning are the kings."

58. CHRISTMAS EVE AT SEA. This sea-song shows John Masefield's intimate knowledge of ships and the sea. *Block*—a grooved pulley or sheave encased in a wooden or metal frame : *reef-point*—one of the pieces of small rope passing through the eyelet holes of a sail : *silly*—at one time meant innocent, and is here used of the sheep : *Nowell*—from a French exclamation ; a shout of joy for the birth of the Saviour : *Rex Judaeorum natus est*—The King of the Jews is born.

Note how the unquietness of the second stanza is contrasted with the tranquillity of the third stanza, where all wait in breathless silence for The Birth.

Exercises. (1) There are many instances of the use of onomatopoeia in this

poem, such as the wind *cooing* and the sea *sighing*. Make a list of all the examples you can find. (2) What striking examples of the use of alliteration can you find in the poem? (3) What does the sailor hear the waves sing on Christmas Eve?

59. THE OXEN. Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) was a famous modern writer of prose and verse. This poem is based on a beautiful legend that at Christmas Eve the oxen went on their knees in adoration of the Saviour. *Barton*—a cattle enclosure or farmyard: *coomb*—a hollow in the side of a hill.

Exercise. Explain how this poem breathes the quiet spirit of the countryside.

60. A CHRISTMAS CAROL. James Russell Lowell (1819-91) was an American poet who, by his writings, helped to bring about the abolition of slavery in his own country.

This carol contains many words and many ideas direct from the Scriptures. The two lines

That little children might be bold
In perfect trust to come to HIM.

should be compared with "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (St. Matthew xix. 14).

The *Magi* are the Wise Men who came to worship Him; an *oracle* is a divine utterance, here delivered by angels from God: *words of gold* here mean *very precious* words.

Exercise. Explain simply what lesson the poem teaches.

61. CROWN WINTER WITH GREEN. Robert Bridges (b. 1844) is the British Poet Laureate. He is a doctor of medicine by profession, and, strangely enough, in this short poem he speaks of giving drink to Winter to *physic* his *spleen*; that is, to cure his spitefulness. Winter is personified throughout the poem; we imagine him as a somewhat spiteful old man made cheerful before a roaring fire by the good things to eat and drink that often accompany Christmas festivities.

Note that there are only two stressed syllables in the verses.

Yuletide—Christmastide: it was formerly customary to drag from the woods, with much quaint ceremony, a huge yule log to form the foundation for the fire on Christmas Eve. It was customary to lay aside the half-consumed block in a cellar, or other secure place, till the next anniversary of Christmas,

and then light the new log with the charred remains of its predecessor. This practice is alluded to in the following lines :

Come bring with a noise,
My merry, merry boys,
The Christmas log to the firing,
While my good dame she
Bids ye all be free,
And drink to your heart's desiring.

With the last year's brand
Light the new block, and,
For good success in his spending,
On your psalteries play
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is a teending.*

Drink now the strong beer,
Cut the white loaf here,
The while the meat is a shredding ;
For the rare mince-pie,
And the plums stand by,
To fill the paste that's a kneading.

A teending—burning.



• BRINGING IN THE YULE LOG.

IX. SONGS AND MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.



62. THE COASTWISE LIGHTS.

Our brows are bound with spindrift and the weed is on our knees ;
Our loins are battered 'neath us by the swinging, smoking seas.
From reef and rock and skerry—over headland, ness, and voe—
The Coastwise Lights of England watch the ships of England go !

Through the endless summer evenings, on the lineless, level floors ;
Through the yelling Channel tempest when the siren hoots and
 roars—

By day the dipping house-flag and by night the rocket's trail—
As the sheep that graze behind us so we know them where they hail.

We bridge across the dark, and bid the helmsman have a care,
The flash that, wheeling inland, wakes his sleeping wife to prayer.
From our vexed eyries, head to gale, we bind in burning chains
The lover from the sea-rim drawn—his love in English lanes.

We greet the clippers wing-and-wing that race the Southern wool ;
We warn the crawling cargo-tanks of Bremen, Leith, and Hull ;
To each and all our equal lamp at peril of the sea—
The white wall-sided warships or the whalers of Dundee !

Come up, come in from Eastward, from the guardports of the Morn !
 Beat up, beat in from Southerly, O gipsies of the Horn !
 Swift shuttles of an Empire's loom that weave us main to main,
 The Coastwise Lights of England give you welcome back again !
 Go, get you gone up-Channel with the sea-crust on your plates ;
 Go, get you into London with the burden of your freights !
 Haste, for they talk of Empire there, and say, if any seek,
 The Lights of England sent you and by silence shall ye speak !
Rudyard Kipling.

63. AT THE COMING OF THE WILD SWANS.

By loch and darkening river,
 Above the salt sea-plains,
 Across the misty mountains
 Amid the blinding rains,
 In fierce or silent weather
 The wild swans southward fare,
 The wild swans swing together
 Through lonely fields of air,
 Crying *Honk, Honk, Honk,*
Glugulû, ullalû, glugulû,
Honk ! Honk !

The seamew's lonely laughter
 Flits down the flowing wave,
 The green scarts follow after
 The surge where cross-tides rave
 The sea-duck's mellow wailing
 Floats over sheltered places,
 And southward, southward sailing
 Go all the feathered races.
 When the swans cry *Honk, Honk,*
Glugulû, ullalû, glugulû,
Honk ! Honk !

White spirits from the Northland.
 Grey clan of Storm and Frost,
 Wind-swooping to the Southland
 From icy-seas blast-tost.
 Wild clan of sons and daughters,
 A welcome, now you are come
 When all your polar waters
 Are frozen, white, and dumb !
 Crying *Honk, Honk, Honk,*
Glugulû, ullalû, glugulû,
Honk ! Honk !
"Fiona Macleod." (William Sharp.)



64. HAY HARVEST.

I met a man mowing
 A meadow of hay ;
 So smoothly and flowing
 His swathes fell away,
 At break of the day
 Up Hambleton way ;
 A yellow-eyed collie
 Was guarding his coat—
 Loose-limbed and lob-lolly;
 But wise and remote.

The morning came leaping,
'Twas four o' the clock,
The world was still sleeping
At Hambleton Lock—
As sound as a rock
Slept village and Lock ;
“ Fine morning ! ” the man says,
And I says, “ Fine day ! ”
Then I to my fancies
And he to his hay !

And lovely and quiet,
And lonely and chill,
Lay river and eyot,
And meadow and mill—
I think of them still—
Mead, river, and mill ;
For wasn't it jolly
With only us three—
The yellow-eyed collie,
The mower and me ?

Patrick R. Chalmers.

65. TO D. H.

O, Falmouth is a fine town with ships in the bay,
And I wish from my heart it's there I was to-day ;
I wish from my heart I was far away from here,
Sitting in my parlour and talking to my dear.
For it's home, dearie, home—it's home I want to be
Our topsails are hoisted, and we'll away to sea.
O, the oak and the ash and the bonnie birken tree,
They're all growing green in the old countrie.

In Baltimore a-walking a lady I did meet
 With her babe on her arm, as she came down the street ;
 And I thought how I sailed, and the cradle standing ready
 For the pretty little babe that has never seen its daddie.

And it's home, dearie, home,—

O, if it be a lass, she shall wear a golden ring ;
 And if it be a lad, he shall fight for his King :
 With his dirk and his hat and his little jacket blue,
 He shall walk the quarter-deck as his daddie used to do.

And it's home, dearie, home,—

O, there's a wind a-blowing, a-blowing from the west,
 And that of all the winds is the one I like the best,
 For it blows at our backs, and it shakes our pennon free,
 And it soon will blow us home to the old countrie.

For it's home, dearie, home,—it's home I want to be.

Our topsails are hoisted, and we'll away to sea.

O, the oak and the ash and the bonnie birken tree,

They're all growing green in the old countrie.

William Ernest Henley.

The refrain and the third stanza are old.

66. ENGLAND.

What have I done for you,

England, my England ?

What is there I would not do,

England, my own ?

With your glorious eyes austere,

As the Lord were walking near,

Whispering terrible things and dear

As the song on your bugles blown,

England—

Round the world on your bugles blown !

Where shall the watchful Sun,
 England, my England,
Match the master-work you've done,
 England, my own ?
When shall he rejoice agen
Such a breed of mighty men
As come forward, one to ten,
 To the Song on your bugles blown,
 England—
 Down the years on your bugles blown ?
Ever the faith endures,
 England, my England :—
“ Take and break us : we are yours,
 England, my own !
Life is good and joy runs high
Between English earth and sky :
Death is death ; but we shall die
 To the Song on your bugles blown,
 England—
 To the stars on your bugles blown ! ”
They call you proud and hard,
 England, my England :
You with worlds to watch and ward,
 England, my own !
You whose mailed hand keeps the keys
Of such teeming destinies
You could know nor dread nor ease
 Were the Song on your bugles blown,
 England—
 Round the Pit on your bugles blown !
Mother of Ships whose might,
 England, my England,

Is the fierce old Sea's delight,
 England, my own,
 Chosen daughter of the Lord,
 Spouse-in-Chief of the ancient sword,
 There's the menace of the word
 ' In the Song on your bugles blown,
 England—

Out of heaven on your bugles blown !

William Ernest Henley.

67. " FORTY YEARS ON."

Forty years on, when afar and asunder
 Parted are those who are singing to-day,
 When you look back and forgetfully wonder
 What you were like in your work and your play—
 Then it may be there will often come o'er you
 Glimpses of notes, like the catch of a song,
 Visions of boyhood shall float them before you,
 Echoes of dreamland shall bear them along.
 Follow up ! Follow up !
 Till the field ring again and again
 With the tramp of the twenty-two men—
 Follow up ! Follow up !
 Routs and discomfitures, rushes and rallies,
 Bases attempted, and rescued, and won,
 Strife without anger, and art without malice—
 How will it seem to you forty years on ?
 Then, you will say, not a feverish minute
 Strained the weak heart to the wavering knee,
 Never the battle raged hottest, but in it,
 Neither the last nor the faintest were we !
 Follow up ! etc.

O the great days, in the distance enchanted,
Days of fresh air, in the rain and the sun,
How we rejoiced as we struggled and panted,—
Hardly believable, forty years on !
How we discoursed of them, one with another,
Auguring triumph, or balancing fate,
Loved the ally with the heart of a brother,
Hated the foe with a playing at hate !
Follow up ! etc.

Forty years on, growing older and older,
Shorter in wind, as in memory long,
Feeble of foot and rheumatic of shoulder,
What will it help you that once you were strong ?
God give us bases to guard or beleague,
Games to play out whether earnest or fun ;
Fights for the fearless, and goals for the eager,
Twenty and thirty and forty years on !
Follow up ! etc.

Edward Bowen.

68. THE SONG OF THE UNGIRT RUNNERS.

We swing ungirded hips,
And lightened are our eyes,
The rain is on our lips,
We do not run for prize.
We know not whom we trust
Nor whitherward we fare,
But we run because we must
'Through the great wide air.

The waters of the seas
Are troubled as by storm.
The tempest strips the trees
And does not leave them warm.
Does the tearing tempest pause ?
Do the tree-tops ask it why ?
So we run without a cause
'Neath the big bare sky.

The rain is on our lips,
We do not run for prize.
But the storm the water whips
And the wave howls to the skies.
The winds arise and strike it
And scatter it like sand,
And we run because we like it
Through the broad bright land.

C. H. Sorley.



A LIVELY MEASURE.
From the painting by Seymour Luca-

X. FOR YOUR NOTEBOOK.

Verses from the Poems.

1. I thought to send my soul to far-off lands,
Where fairies scamper on the windy sands.
2. No phantom wailing will be heard,
Only the farm's blithe cheerful noise ;
The barn is old, not strange.
3. And in the hush of waters was the sound
Of pebbles, rolling round ;
For ever rolling, with a hollow sound.
4. See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine.
5. Lambs are bleating, steers are lowing,
Brisk and rhythmic clacks the mill.
6. My fancy decks the woods, the thrushes sing,
Meadows are gay, bees hum and scents arise.
7. The sunbeams on the motey air
Streamed through the open door,
And on the brown arms moving bare,
And the grain upon the floor.
8. The snowdrift heaps against the hut,
And night is pierced with stars.
9. Opens a door in Heaven ;
From skies of glass
A Jacob's ladder falls
On greening grass.
10. And grasshoppers in merry moods still wear
The short night weary with their fretting song.

11. But Phyllida, my Phyllida !
Her colour comes and goes ;
It trembles to a lily,—
It wavers to a rose.
12. And all the world went gay, went gay,
For half an hour in the street to-day.
13. And, as tney yawn through sermon-time, they say,
“ Who was this old stone man beneath our toes ? ”
14. The last that his heart could understand
Was the touch of the tongue that licked his hand.
15. He will never, never, never sail to 'Frisco.
But the very last thing that he will see
Will be sailor-men a-dancing in the sunrise
By the capstan that stands upon the quay.
16. There will abide till crack of doom
The great iron lattice on her tomb,
A glory even then
In the eyes o' men.
17. And her path-stones are white as lilies of the wood,
And she washes this and that till she must be very good.
18. There, with a thumb to keep her place,
She would read, with stern and wrinkled face,
Her mild eyes gliding very slow
Across the letters to and fro.
19. --But oh, the den of wild things in
The darkness of her eyes !
20. A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye !
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.
21. She stood breast-high amid the corn,
Clasped by the golden light of morn.
22. I watched her vanish in space ;
'She came where I walked no more ;
But something had passed of her grace
To the spell of the wave and the shore.

23. And round me music-making bills
And mingling waves of pastoral streams.
24. And on a shooting briar I see
A yellow bird who sings to me.
25. Yet ever 'twixt the books and his bright eyes
The gleaming eagles of the legions came,
And horsemen, charging under phantom skies,
Went thundering past beneath the oriflamme.
26. By the romantic ages stored
With high endeavour that was his,
By all his mad catastrophes,
Make me a man, O Lord.
27. Let be, let be ! in yonder line
All names are burned away.
Land of his love ! the fame be thine,
It is St. George's Day.
28. Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties pass.
29. As we pledge the health of our general, who fares as rough as we :
What can daunt us, what can turn us, led to death by such as he ?
30. I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
Loved I not Honour more.
31. I hate that drum's discordant sound,
Parading round, and round, and round.
32. Then he that patiently want's burden bears,
No burden bears, but is a king, a king !
O sweet content ! O sweet, O sweet content !
33. I have seen the dark and solemn air
Blink with the blind bats' wings, and heaven's bright face
Twitch with the stars that shine in thousands there.
34. Sweet Stay-at-Home, all these long hours.
Sweet Well-content, sweet Love-one-place.
Sweet, simple maid, bless thy dear face.
35. For a happier lot
Than God giveth me
It never hath been
Nor ever shall be.

36. And all these things seemed very glad,
The sun, the flowers, the birds on wing,
The jolly beasts, the furry-clad
Fat bees, the fruit, and everything.
37. One road leads to the river,
As it goes singing slow ;
My road leads to shipping,
Where the bronzed sailors go.
38. O ! to feel the warmth of the rain, and the homely smell of the earth,
Is a tune for the blood to jig to, a joy past power of words.
39. Fancies, fugitive and fair,
Flashed with singing through the air.
40. Till I was buried fathoms deep
Beneath that cold white drifting sleep—
Sleep drifting deep,
Deep drifting sleep. . . .
41. For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head :—
“ Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word,” he said.
42. The full Rose waxed in the warm June air,
And she spread and spread till her heart lay bare.
43. To and fro we leap
And chase the frothy bubbles,
While the world is full of troubles
And is anxious in its sleep.
44. But that there was in place to stir
His spleen, the chirring grasshopper,
The merry cricket, puling fly,
The piping gnat for minstrelsy.
45. The cowslips tall her pensioners be ;
In their gold coats spots you see ;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours.
46. The music of the scythes that glide and leap,
The young men whistling as their great arms sweep,
And all the perfume and sweet sense of sleep

47. And stands by the window and plays
"There's a Land that is Fairer than This."
48. The wagtail gazed, but faltered not
In dip and sip and prinking.
49. And tossing and tumbling and calling and crying
The Balliol rocks are above us again.
50. But still I feel that His embrace
Slides down by thrills through all things made,
Through sight and sound of every place.
51. Our England is a garden, and such gardens are not made
By singing :—"Oh, how beautiful!" and sitting in the shade,
While better men than we go out and start their working lives
At grubbing weeds from gravel-paths with broken dinner-knives.
52. If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same.
53. Dream from deed he must dis sever
Who his fortune here would try.
54. I'll make my joy like this
Small Butterfly;
Whose happy heart has power
To make a stone a flower.
55. In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measure life may perfect be.
56. He that is down needs fear no fall;
He that is low, no pride.
57. And all the flowers looked up at Him,
And all the stars looked down.
58. The wheel-ropes jar, the reef-points stir
Faintly—and it is Christmas Eve.
59. Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
"Now they are all on their knees."
60. And voices chanted clear and sweet,
"To-day the Prince of Peace is born!"

61. And merry be we
This good Yuletide.
62. Swift shuttles of an Empire's loom that weave us main to main,
The Coastwise Lights of England give you welcome back again !
63. The wild swans swing together
Through lonely fields of air,
Crying *Honk, Honk, Honk,*
Glugulû, ullalû, glugulû,
Honk ! Honk !
64. A yellow-eyed collie
Was guarding his coat—
Loose-limbed and lob-lolly,
But wise and remote.
65. For it blows at our backs, and it shakes our pennon free,
And it soon will blow us home to the old countrie.
66. Where shall the watchful Sun,
England, my England,
Match the master-work you've done,
England, my own ?

