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A BOOK OF ENGLISH
POEMS

GRADED FOR USE IN SCHOOLS

By J. H. JAGGER, M.A., D.Litt.

INTRODUCTORY VOLUME WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT 96 PAGES, 1S

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J. H. JAGGER, M.A., D.Litt.

PART TWO



ILLUSTRATED BY GLADYS MERRIS

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INTRODUCTION

THOUGH poems can be arranged in groups, such as Nature Poems and Religious Poems, according to their subjects, or such as Songs, Comic Poems, and Narrative Poems, the most important characteristic of a poem is the way in which the poet views and treats his subject. Poetry, like beauty, is everywhere, any subject being a fit subject for a poem. As a poet is one who discovers beauties that are hidden from others, feels them intensely and can tell them to the rest of men, he will find celestial beauty in the trivial things of everyday life as well as in the rare and impressive and high. *Ducks* is a beautiful poem, although it describes a bird that eats worms and frogs, and waddles in the mud.

Nor are some words poetical and others unfit for poetic use. It seems natural to suppose that a poet is restricted in his choice, and that he cannot employ commonplace words. But such an idea is false. *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*, which is an exceedingly beautiful piece, does not contain an unusual word. A poet does not choose unusual words because of any special beauty in them; he employs words of all kinds with unusual care and skill; he finds the beauty that lives in them, just as he discerns the beauty that lives in the world; and he is obliged to do this if he is to express his meaning properly.

Poetry cannot be safely despised ; it is not an idle dream nor an amusement for the weak and fanciful. Before reading and writing were invented it was sung to music and transmitted by word of mouth from generation to generation. According to tradition, King Alfred was well acquainted with poetry. Alexander the Great, the conqueror of the world, carried a copy of Homer's poems with him through all his campaigns. Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Walter Raleigh both loved poetry, and both wrote poems. While he was being rowed across the St. Lawrence, General Wolfe is reported to have read Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* to his officers ; and when he had finished he said, "I would rather be remembered for having written such a poem as that than for having captured Quebec." The greatest men of action have honoured poetry, and great nations have always cherished it.



A BOOK OF ENGLISH POEMS

I

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

UNDER the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither !
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth Ambition shun
And loves to lie in the sun,
Seeking the food he eats
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither !
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

William Shakespeare.

TO DAISIES, NOT TO SHUT SO SOON

SHUT not so soon ; the dull-eyed night
Has not as yet begun
To make a seizure on the light,
Or to seal up the sun.

A Book of English Poems

No marigolds yet closèd are ;
 No shadows great appear ;
 Nor doth the early shepherd's star
 Shine like a spangle here.

Robert Herrick.

AULD LANG SYNE

Robert Burns was a great song-writer, and this is the most famous of his songs. It is sung wherever the English language is spoken or Britons meet together, for no other song that was ever made in English by any man expresses so finely the sense that it is good to revive and cherish old friendships.

SHOULD auld acquaintance be forgot,
 And never brought to min' ?
 Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
 And auld lang syne ?

We twa hae run about the braes,
 And pu'd the gowans fine ;
 But we've wandered mony a weary foot
 Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidled i' the burn
 Frae morning sun till dine ;
 But seas between us braid hae roared
 Sin' auld lang syne

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere,¹
 And gie's a hand o' thine ;
 And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught,²
 For auld lang syne.

¹ Friend.

² Draught.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp
And surely I'll be mine ;
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

Robert Burns.

SCOTS WHA HAE

The poet imagines that, on the dreadful day of Bannockburn, the Scottish king rides out in front of his host before the battle is joined. With the English army in view, he exhorts the Scots to fight for their homes and for liberty. The stern resolute courage expressed in these verses agrees well with what may be supposed to have been the character of the Scottish soldiers, and to have been their feelings as they stood to arms with the invader before their eyes.

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victory !
Now's the day, and now's the hour ;
See the front of battle lour ;
See approach proud Edward's power,—
Chains and slavery !

Wha will be a traitor knave ?
Wha can fill a coward's grave ?
Wha sae base as be a slave ?
Let him turn and flee !

Wha for Scotland's King and Law
 Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
 Freeman stand, or freeman fa' ?
 Let him follow me !

By oppression's woes and pains !
 By your sons in servile chains !
 We will drain our dearest veins,
 But they shall be free !
 Lay the proud usurpers low !
 Tyrants fall in every foe !
 Liberty's in every blow !
 Let us do, or dee !

Robert Burns.

ADMIRALS ALL

EFFINGHAM, Grenville, Raleigh, Drake,
 Here's to the bold and free !
 Benbow, Collingwood, Byron, Blake,
 Hail to the Kings of the Sea !
 Admirals all, for England's sake,
 Honour be yours and fame !
 And honour, as long as waves shall break,
 To Nelson's peerless name !
 Admirals all, for England's sake,
 Honour be yours and fame !
 And honour, as long as waves shall break,
 To Nelson's peerless name !

Essex was fretting in Cadiz Bay
 With the galleons fair in sight ;
 Howard at last must give him his way,
 And the word was passed to fight.

Never was schoolboy gayer than he,
Since holidays first began ;
He tossed his bonnet to wind and sea,
And under the guns he ran.

Drake nor devil nor Spaniard feared,
Their cities he put to the sack ;
He singed His Catholic Majesty's beard,
And harried his ships to wrack.
He was playing at Plymouth a rubber of bowls
When the great Armada came ;
But he said, "They must wait their turn, good
souls,"
And he stooped and finished the game.

Fifteen sail were the Dutchmen bold ;
Duncan, he had but two :
But he anchored them fast where the Texel
shoaled,
And his colours aloft he flew.
"I've taken the depth to a fathom," he cried,
"And I'll sink with a right good will,
For I know when we're all of us under the tide,
My flag will be fluttering still."

Spunters were flying above, below,
When Nelson sailed the Sound :
"Mark you, I wouldn't be elsewhere now,"
Said he, "for a thousand pound !"
The admiral's signal bade him fly,
But he wickedly wagged his head ;
He clapped the glass to his sightless eye,
And "I'm dashed if I see it," he said.

Admirals all, they said their say, '
(The echoes are ringing still);
Admirals all, they went their way
To the haven under the hill.
But they left us a Kingdom none can take,
The realm of the circling sea,
To be ruled by the rightful sons of Blake,
And the Rodneys yet to be.
Admirals all, for England's sake,
Honour be yours and fame!
And honour, as long as waves shall break,
To Nelson's peerless name!

Sir Henry Newbolt.



II

“ A COUNTRY LIFE IS SWEET ”

A COUNTRY life is sweet !
In moderate cold and heat
To walk in the air, how pleasant and fair,
In every field of wheat :
The fairest of flowers adorning the bowers,
And every meadow's brow ;
So that I say
No courtier may
Compare with them who clothe in gray,
And follow the useful plough.
They rise with the lark,
And labour till dark ;
Then folding their sheep they hasten to sleep,
While every pleasant park
Next morning is ringing with birds that are
singing
On each green, tender bough.
With what content and merriment
Their days are spent
Whose minds are bent
To follow the useful plough !

Anonymous.



THE PLOUGH

A LANDSCAPE IN BERKSHIRE

The first stanza paints a picture of daybreak ; in the second the keen morning air and the clear, joyful song of the birds are felt and heard ; in the third the picture changes. The fourth verse passes from the scenery of dawn to the reflections suggested by the sight of the ploughing.

ABOVE yon sombre swell of land
Thou see'st the dawn's grave orange hue,
With one pale streak like yellow sand,
And over that a vein of blue.

The air is cold above the woods ;
All silent is the earth and sky,
Except with his own lonely moods
The blackbird holds a colloquy.

Over the broad hill creeps a beam
Like hope that gilds a good man's brow ;
And now ascends the nostril-steam
Of stalwart horses come to plough.

Ye rigid ploughmen, bear in mind
Your labour is for future hours :
Advance—spare not—nor look behind—
Plough deep and straight with all your powers !

Richard Hengist Horne.

NOD

This poem should be compared with "The Village Blacksmith," which follows it, and which portrays the honest, manly character of the blacksmith. Although "Nod" does not directly describe the old shepherd, it delicately depicts the sort of life he leads, thereby giving us an insight into his mind. The whole poem is a gentle, subdued picture, without a harsh line, of the after-glow of a summer evening.

SOFTLY along the road of evening,
In a twilight dim with rose,
Wrinkled with age, and drenched with dew,
Old Nod the shepherd goes.

His drowsy flock streams on before him,
Their fleeces charged with gold,
To where the sun's last beam leans low
On Nod the shepherd's fold.

The hedge is quick and green with brier ;
From their sand the conies creep ;
And all the birds that fly in heaven
Flock singing home to sleep.

His lambs outnumber a noon's roses ;
Yet, when night's shadows fall,
His blind old sheep-dog, Slumber-soon,
Misses not one of all.

His are the quiet steps of dreamland,
The waters of no-more-pain ;
His ram's bell rings 'neath an arch of stars,
" Rest, rest, and rest again."

Walter de la Mare.

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH

UNDER a spreading chestnut-tree
The village smithy stands ;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands ;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long ;
His face is like the tan ;
His brow is wet with honest sweat ;
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,
You can hear his bellows blow ;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door ;
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing-floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church
And sits among his boys ;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice

Singing in the village choir, .
 And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
 Singing in Paradise !
 He needs must think of her once more,
 How in the grave she lies ;
 And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
 A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing,
 Onward through life he goes ;
 Each morning sees some task begun
 Each evening sees it close ;
 Something attempted, something done,
 Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
 For the lesson thou hast taught !
 Thus at the flaming forge of life
 Our fortunes must be wrought ;
 Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
 Each burning deed and thought !

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

WANDER-THIRST

BEYOND the East the sunrise, beyond the West
 the sea,
 And East and West the wander-thirst that will
 not let me be ;
 It works in me like madness, dear, to bid me say
 good-bye ;
 For the seas call, and the stars call, and oh ! the
 call of the sky !

I know not where the white road runs, nor what
the blue hills are ;
But a man can have the sun for a friend, and for
his guide a star ;
And there's no end of voyaging when once the
voice is heard,
For the rivers call, and the roads call, and oh !
the call of the bird !

Yonder the long horizon lies, and there by night
and day
The old ships draw to home again, the young
ships sail away ;
And come I may, but go I must, and, if men ask
you why,
You may put the blame on the stars and the sun
and the white road and the sky.

Gerald Gould.

THE WANDERER

In "Wander-Thirst" resides an intense longing for adventure, and travel, and experience. "The Wanderer," "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," and "The Slave's Dream" voice the opposite feeling, the longing for home which comes to the exile.

UPON a mountain height, far from the sea,
I found a shell,
And to my listening ear the lonely thing
Ever a song of ocean seemed to sing,
Ever a tale of ocean seemed to tell.

How came the shell upon that mountain height ?
Ah, who can say ?
Whether there dropped by some too-careless hand,
Or whether there cast when Ocean left the Land,
Ere the Eternal had ordained the Day.

Strange was it not ? Far from its native deep
 One song it sang,—
 Sang of the awful mysteries of the tide,
 Sang of the misty sea, profound and wide,—
 Ever with echoes of the ocean rang.

And as the shell upon the mountain height
 Sings of the sea,
 So do I ever, leagues and leagues away,
 So do I ever, wandering where I may,
 Sing, O my home ! sing, O my home, of thee !
Eugene Field.

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

Living in London, standing in London streets, hearing the noise of the city and jostled by the crowds, the poet is tormented by desire to return to his Irish home, and by desire for quiet—for such stillness as might be found on a deserted island in a lonely lake. Although every word in this poem is simple, it cannot be fully understood without careful study.

I WILL arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
 And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles
 made ;
 Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the
 honey bee,
 And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace
 comes dropping slow,
 Dropping from the veils of the morning to where
 the cricket sings ;
 There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple
 glow,
 And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the
shore ;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements
gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

William Butler Yeats.

THE SLAVE'S DREAM

The author of "The Slave's Dream" lived in the United States before the Civil War which ended the slavery of the negro, and daily he had before his eyes evidence of the unhappy lot of the slave. The poem is equally interesting to us for its wonderful account of the dream. Besides the misery of the sleeper, the scenery of tropical Africa is brought vividly before the mind by the poet's skill. One or two lines of this poem contain unexpected internal rhymes.

BESIDE the ungathered rice he lay,

His sickle in his hand ;

His breast was bare, his matted hair

Was buried in the sand ;

Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,

He saw his Native Land.

Wide through the landscape of his dreams

The lordly Niger flowed ;

Beneath the palm-trees on the plain

Once more a king he strode ;

And heard the tinkling caravans

Descend the mountain road.

He saw once more his dark-eyed queen

Among her children stand ;

They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,

They held him by the hand ;—

A tear burst from the sleeper's lids

And fell into the sand.

And then at furious speed he rode
Along the Niger's bank ;
His bridle-reins were golden chains,
And, with a martial clank,
At each leap he could feel his scabbard of steel
Smiting his stallion's flank.

Before him, like a blood-red flag,
The bright flamingoes flew ;
From morn till night he followed their flight,
O'er plains where the tamarind grew,
Till he saw the roofs of Caffre huts,
And the ocean rose to view.

At night he heard the lion roar
And the hyena scream,
And the river-horse, as he crushed the reeds
Beside some hidden stream ;
And it passed, like a glorious roll of drums,
Through the triumph of his dream.

The forests, with their myriad tongues,
Shouted of liberty ;
And the Blast of the Desert cried aloud,
With a voice so wild and free
That he started in his sleep, and smiled
At their tempestuous glee.

He did not feel the driver's whip,
Nor the burning heat of day ;
For Death had illumined the Land of Sleep,
And his lifeless body lay
A worn-out fetter, that the soul
Had broken and thrown away !

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

III

THE BAILIFF'S DAUGHTER OF ISLINGTON

It is sometimes said that of all the old ballads the Scottish ballads are the best. In "The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington," however, we possess a ballad of southern England which can compare with any rival. It is all that a ballad should be, an artless and arresting tale, told in simple language and simple metre.

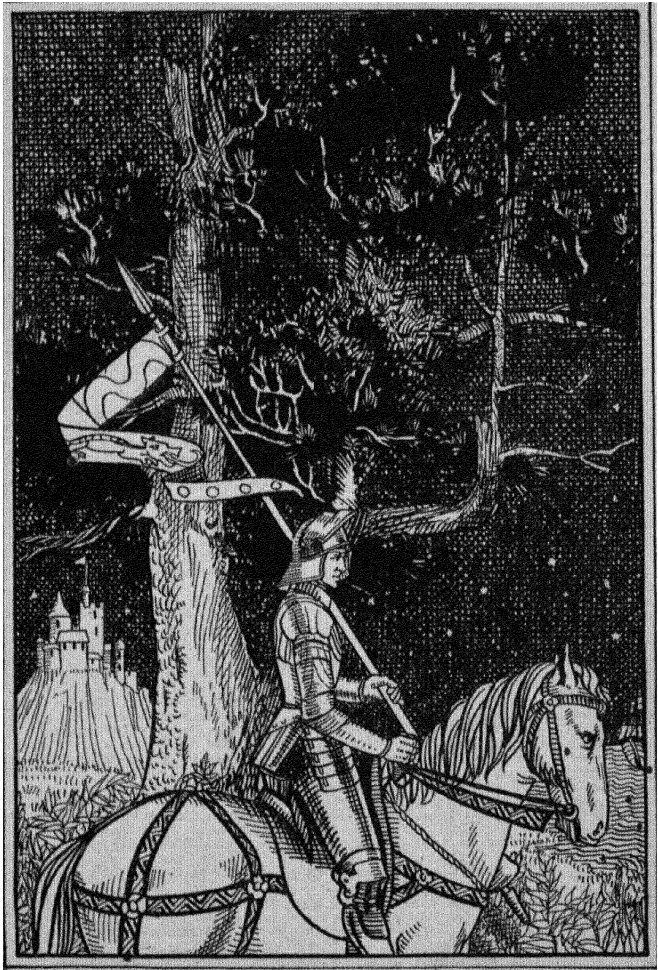
THERE was a youth, a well-belovèd youth,
And he was a squire's son ;
He loved the bailiff's daughter dear,
That lived in Islington.

Yet she was coy and would not believe
That he did love her so,
No, nor at any time would she
Any countenance to him show.

But when his friends did understand
His fond and foolish mind,
They sent him up to fair London
An apprentice for to bind.

And when he had been seven long years,
And never his love could see,
Many a tear have I shed for her sake
When she little thought of me.

.



The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington 19

Then all the maids of Islington
Went forth to sport and play ;
All but the bailiff's daughter dear,
She secretly stole away.

She pulled off her gown of green
And put on ragged attire,
And to fair London she would go,
Her true love to enquire.

And as she went along the high road,
The weather being hot and dry,
She sat her down upon a green bank,
And her true love came riding by.

She started up, with a colour so red,
Catching hold of his bridle-rein ;
One penny, one penny, kind sir, she said,
Will ease me of much pain.

Before I give you one penny, sweetheart,
Pray tell me where you were born.
At Islington, kind sir, said she,
Where I have had many a scorn.

I prithee, sweetheart, then tell to me,
O tell me, whether you know
The bailiff's daughter of Islington.
She is dead, sir, long ago.

If she be dead, then take my horse,
My saddle and bridle also ;
For I will unto some far countree,
Where no man shall me know.

O stay, O stay, thou goodly youth,
 She standeth by thy side ;
 She is here alive, she is not dead,
 And ready to be thy bride.

O farewell grief, and welcome joy,
 Ten thousand times therefore ;
 For now I have found mine own true love
 Whom I thought I should never see more.

Anonymous.

THE GOULDEN VANITIE

THERE WAS a gallant ship, and a gallant ship was
 she,
 And she went by the name of the *Goulden Vanitie*,
 As she sailed to the Lowlands low.

She had not sailed a league, a league but only
 three,
 When up she came with a Spanish gallalee
 As she sailed to the Lowlands low.

Then up stood the cabin-boy and out spoke he :
 “ What will you give me if I sink that gallalee,
 As ye sail to the Lowlands low ? ”

“ I’ll give you gold, and I’ll give you fee,¹
 And my youngest daughter your own true wife
 shall be,
 If you sink her off the Lowlands low.”

¹ Land.

Then the boy bared his breast, and straightway
leaped in.

And he swam till he came to the Spanish gallion,
As she lay by the Lowlands low.

He bored with his augur, he bored once and twice,
And the water flowed in and dazzled in their eyes,
And she sank by the Lowlands low.

About, and about, and about went he,
Until he came back to the *Goulden Vanitie*,
As she sailed to the Lowlands low.

"Captain, take me in, I am drifting with the
tide."

"I will shoot you, I will kill you," the cruel cap-
tain cried.

"You shall sink by the Lowlands low."

"You shall have gold, and you shall have fee,
But my youngest daughter your wife shall
never be,
As we sail by the Lowlands low."

Then the boy swam round all by the starboard
side,
And they pulled him up on board, but he closed
his eyes and died,
And they cast him from the deck to go down
with the tide,
And he sank by the Lowlands low.

Anonymous.

SIR HUMPHREY GILBERT

Before writing this poem Longfellow had read an account of the death of Sir Humphrey Gilbert which contains the following words: "Monday, the ninth of September, in the afternoon, the frigate was near cast away, oppressed by waves, yet at that time recovered: and, giving forth signs of joy, the General, sitting aloft with a book in his hand, cried out unto us in the *Hind*, so oft as we did approach within hearing, *We are as near to heaven by sea as by land.*"

SOUTHWARD with fleet of ice
Sailed the corsair Death;
Wild and fast blew the blast,
And the east wind was his breath.

c His lordly ships of ice
Glisten in the sun;
On each side, like pennons wide,
Flashing crystal streamlets run.

His sails of white sea-mist
Dripped with silver rain;
But where he passed there were cast
Leaden shadows o'er the main.

• • • •
Eastward from Campobello
Sir Humphrey Gilbert sailed;
Three days or more seaward he bore;
Then, alas, the land-wind failed.

Alas, the land-wind failed,
And ice-cold grew the night;
And never more, on sea or shore,
Should Sir Humphrey see the light.

He sat upon the deck ;
The Book was in his hand ;
“ Do not fear ! Heaven is as near,”
He said, “ by water as by land.”

.

In the first watch of the night,
Without a signal's sound,
Out of the sea, mysteriously,
The fleet of Death rose all around.

The moon and the evening star
Were hanging in the shrouds ;
Every mast, as it passed,
Seemed to rake the passing clouds. ●

They grappled with their prize
At midnight black and cold.
As of a rock was the shock ;
Heavily the ground-swell rolled.

Southward through day and dark
They drift in close embrace,
With mist and rain o'er the open main ;
Yet there seems no change of place.

Southward, for ever southward,
They drift through dark and day ;
And, like a dream, in the Gulf Stream
Sinking, vanish all away.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

THE ARMADA

This poem is in ordinary ballad metre, but the lines are not broken in the middle, as in "The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington."

It is a fragment which describes the manner in which the news of the arrival of the Spanish ships in the English Channel was flashed throughout the land. The rest of the poem, which would have been a narrative of the great victory, was never written.

ATTEND, all ye who list to hear our noble
 England's praise ;
 I tell of the thrice-famous deeds she wrought in
 ancient days,
 When that great fleet invincible against her bore
 in vain
 The richest spoils of Mexico, the stoutest hearts
 of Spain.

It was about the lovely close of a warm summer
 day,
 There came a gallant merchant ship full sail to
 Plymouth Bay ;
 Her crew had seen Castile's black fleet, beyond
 Aurigny's Isle,
 At earliest twilight, on the waves lie heaving
 many a mile.
 At sunrise she escaped their van, by God's special
 grace :
 And the tall Pinta, till the noon, had held her
 close in chase.

Forthwith a guard at every gun was placed along
 the wall :

The beacon blazed upon the roof of Edgecumbe's
lofty hall :
Many a light fishing bark put out to pry along the
coast,
And with loose rein and bloody spur rode inland
many a post.
With his white hair unbonneted the stout old
sheriff comes ;
Behind him march the halberdiers ; before him
sound the drums ;
His yeomen round the market cross make clear
an ample space ;
For there behoves him to set up the standard of
Her Grace.
And haughtily the trumpets peal and gaily dance
the bells,
As slow upon the labouring wind the royal blazon
swells.
Look how the Lion of the Sea lifts up his ancient
crown,
And underneath his deadly paw treads the gay
lilies down.
So stalked he, when he turned to flight, on that
famed Picard field,
Bohemia's plume, and Genoa's bow, and Cæsar's
eagle shield.
So glared he when at Agincourt in wrath he
turned to bay,
And crushed and torn beneath his claws the
princely hunters lay.
Ho, strike the flagstaff deep, Sir Knight ! ho,
scatter flowers, fair maids !
Ho, gunners, fire a loud salute ! ho, gallants,
draw your blades !

Thou sun, shine on her joyously : ye breezes,
 waft her wide ;
 Our glorious SEMPER EADEM, the banner of our
 pride.

.

The freshening breeze of eve unfurled that
 banner's massy fold ;
 The parting gleam of sunshine kissed that haughty
 scroll of gold ;
 Night sank upon the dusky beach, and on the
 purple sea,
 Such night in England ne'er had been, nor e'er
 again shall be.
 From Eddystone to Berwick bounds, from Lynn
 to Milford Bay,
 That time of slumber was as bright and busy as
 the day ;
 For swift to east and swift to west the ghastly
 war-flame spread,
 High on St. Michael's Mount it shone ; it shone
 on Beachy Head.
 Far on the deep the Spaniards saw, along each
 southern shire,
 Cape beyond cape, in endless range, those twink-
 ling points of fire.
 The fisher left his skiff to rock on Tamar's glitter-
 ing waves ;
 The rugged miners poured to war from Mendip's
 sunless caves ;
 O'er Longleat's towers, o'er Cranbourne's oaks,
 the fiery herald flew :
 He roused the shepherds of Stonehenge, the
 rangers of Beaulieu.

Right sharp and quick the bells all night rang out
from Bristol town,
And ere the day three hundred horse had met on
Clifton Down ;
The sentinel on Whitehall gate looked forth into
the night.
And saw o'erhanging Richmond Hill the streak
of bloodred light ;
Then bugle's note and cannon's roar the deathlike
silence broke,
And with one start and with one cry the royal city
woke.
At once on all her stately gates arose the answering
fires ;
At once the wild alarum clashed from all her
reeling spires ;
From all the batteries of the Tower pealed loud
the voice of fear ;
And all the thousand masts of Thames sent back
an answering cheer ;
And from the furthest wards was heard the rush
of hurrying feet,
And the broad streams of pikes and flags rushed
down each roaring street ;
And broader still became the blaze, and louder
still the din,
As fast from every village round the horse came
spurring in :
And eastward straight from wild Blackheath the
warlike errand went,
And roused in many an ancient hall the gallant
squires of Kent.
Southward from Surrey's pleasant hills flew those
bright couriers forth ;

High on bleak Hampstead's swarthy moor they
started for the north ;
And on, and on, without a pause, untired they
bounded still :
All night from tower to tower they sprang : they
sprang from hill to hill :
Till the proud Peak unfurled the flag o'er Dar-
wen's rocky dales,
Till like volcanoes flared to heaven the stormy
hills of Wales.
Till twelve fair counties saw the blaze on Mal-
vern's lonely height,
Till streamed in crimson on the wind the
Wrekin's crest of light,
Till broad and fierce the star came forth on Ely's
stately fane,
And tower and hamlet rose in arms o'er all the
boundless plain ;
Till Belvoir's lordly terraces the sign to Lincoln
sent,
And Lincoln sped the message on o'er the wide
vale of Trent ;
Till Skiddaw saw the fire that burned on Gaunt's
embattled pile,
And the red glare on Skiddaw roused the burghers
of Carlisle.

Lord Macaulay.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

In the days of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib, King of Assyria, made war upon the Jews, and caused great terror and distress by invading Palestine with a mighty army. Verses 32-35 of 2 Kings, ch. 19, run: "Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the King of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, saith the Lord. For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses."

THE Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of his spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is
green,
That host, with their banners, at sunset were
seen;
Like the leaves of the forest, when Autumn hath
blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and
strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the
blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and
chill,
And their hearts but once heaved,—and for ever
grew still.

And there lay the steed with his' nostril all wide,
 But through it there rolled not the breath of his
 pride :

And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
 And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
 With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his
 mail ;

And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
 The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
 And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal ;
 And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the
 sword,

Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord !

Lord Byron.

HORATIUS

LARS PORSENA of Clusium

By the nine Gods he swore
 That the great house of Tarquin
 Should suffer wrong no more.

By the nine Gods he swore it,
 And named a trysting day,
 And bade his messengers ride forth,
 East and west and south and north,
 To summon his array.

East and west and south and north
The messengers ride fast,
And tower and town and cottage
Have heard the trumpet's blast.
Shame on the false Etruscan
Who lingers in his home,
When Porsena of Clusium
Is on the march for Rome !

The horsemen and the footmen
Are pouring in amain
From many a stately market-place,
From many a fruitful plain,
From many a lonely hamlet,
Which, hid by beech and pine,
Like an eagle's nest hangs on the crest
Of purple Apennine.

Tall are the oaks whose acorns
Drop in dark Auser's rill ;
Fat are the stags that champ the boughs
Of the Ciminian hill ;
Beyond all streams Clitumnus
Is to the herdsman dear ;
Best of all pools the fowler loves
The Great Volsinian mere.

But now no stroke of woodman
Is heard by Auser's rill ;
No hunter tracks the stag's green path
Up the Ciminian hill ;
Unwatched along Clitumnus
Grazes the milk-white steer ;
Unharm'd the water-fowl may dip
In the Volsinian mere.

The harvests of Arretium'
This year old men shall reap ;
This year young boys in Umbro .
Shall plunge the struggling sheep ;
And in the vats of Luna
This year the must shall foam
Round the white feet of laughing girls
Whose sires have marched to Rome.

And now hath every city
Sent up her tale of men ;
The foot are fourscore thousand,
The horse are thousands ten :
Before the gates of Sutrium
Is met the great array.
A proud man was Lars Porsena
Upon the trysting day.

But by the yellow Tiber
Was tumult and affright :
From all the spacious champaign
To Rome men took their flight.
A mile around the city
The throng stopped up the ways ;
A fearful sight it was to see
Through two long nights and days .

Now, from the rock Tarpeian
Could the wan burghers spy
The line of blazing villages
Red in the midnight sky.
The Fathers of the city,
They sat all night and day,
For every hour some horseman came
With tidings of dismay.

I wis, in all the Senate,
 There was no heart so bold,
But sore it ached and fast it beat
 When that ill news was told.
Forthwith up rose the Consul,
 Up rose the Fathers all ;
In haste they girded up their gowns,
 And hied them to the wall.

They held a council standing
 Before the River-Gate ;
Short time was there, ye well may guess,
 For musing or debate.
Out spake the Consul roundly :
 “ The bridge must straight go down .
For, since Janiculum is lost,
 Naught else can save the town.”

Just then a scout came flying
 All wild with haste and fear :
“ To arms ! to arms ! Sir Consul :
 Lars Porsena is here ! ”
On the low hills to westward
 The Consul fixed his eye,
And saw the swarthy storm of dust
 Rise fast along the sky.

And nearer fast and nearer
 Doth the red whirlwind come :
And louder still and still more loud,
From underneath that rolling cloud,
Is heard the trumpet's war-note proud,
 The trampling and the hum.

And plainly and more plainly
Now through the gloom appears,
Far to left and far to right,
In broken gleams of dark-blue light,
The long array of helmets bright,
The long array of spears.

Fast by the royal standard,
O'erlooking all the war,
Lars Porsena of Clusium
Sat in his ivory car.
By the right wheel rode Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name :
And by the left false Sextus,
That wrought the deed of shame.

But when the face of Sextus
Was seen among the foes,
A yell that rent the firmament
From all the town arose.
On the house-tops was no woman
But spat towards him and hissed ;
No child but screamed out curses,
And shook its little fist.

But the Consul's brow was sad,
And the Consul's speech was low,
And darkly looked he at the wall,
And darkly at the foe.
" Their van will be upon us
Before the bridge goes down ;
And if they once may win the bridge
What hope to save the town ? "

Then out spake brave Horatius,
The Captain of the Gate :
“ To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late ;
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his gods.

“ And for the tender mother
Who dandled him to rest,
And for the wife who nurses
His baby at her breast,
And for the holy maidens
Who feed the eternal flame,
To save them from false Sextus,
That wrought the deed of shame ?

“ Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,
With all the speed ye may ;
I, with two more to help me,
Will hold the foe in play.
In yon strait path a thousand
May well be stopped by three.
Now who will stand on either hand
And keep the bridge with me ? ”

Then out spake Spurius Lartius,
A Ramnian proud was he :
“ Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,
And keep the bridge with thee.”
And out spake strong Herminius,
Of Titian blood was he :
“ I will abide at thy left side,
And keep the bridge with thee.”

“ Horatius,” quoth the Consul,
“ As thou sayest, so let it be.”
And straight against that great array
Forth went the dauntless Three.
For Romans in Rome’s quarrel
Spared neither land nor gold,
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
In the brave days of old.

Then none was for a party ;
Then all were for the State ;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great :
Then lands were fairly portioned ;
Then spoils were fairly sold :
The Romans were like brothers
In the brave days of old.

Now while the Three were tightening
Their harness on their backs,
The Consul was the foremost man
To take in hand an axe :
And Fathers mixed with Commons
Seized hatchet, bar, and crow,
And smote upon the planks above,
And loosed the props below.

Meanwhile the Tuscan army,
Right glorious to behold,
Came flashing back the noonday light,
Rank behind rank, like surges bright
Of a broad sea of gold.
Four hundred trumpets sounded
A peal of warlike glee,

As that great host, with measured tread,
And spears advanced and ensigns spread,
Rolled slowly towards the bridge's head,
Where stood the dauntless Three.

The Three stood calm and silent,
And looked upon the foes,
And a great shout of laughter
From all the vanguard rose :
And forth three chiefs came spurring
Before that deep array ;
To earth they sprang, their swords they drew,
And lifted high their shields, and flew
To win the narrow way :

Aunus from green Tifernum
Lord of the Hill of Vines ;
And Seius, whose eight hundred slaves
Sicken in Ilva's mines ;
And Picus, long to Clusium
Vassal in peace and war,
Who led to fight his Umbrian powers
From that grey crag where, girt with towers,
The fortress of Nequinum lowers
O'er the pale waves of Nar.

Stout Lartius hurled down Aunus
Into the stream beneath :
Herminius struck at Seius
And clove him to the teeth :
At Picus brave Horatius
Darted one fiery thrust,
And the proud Umbrian's gilded arms
Clashed in the bloody dust.

Then Ocnus of Falerii .
 Rushed on the Roman three :
 And Lausulus of Urgo,
 The rover of the sea ;
 And Aruns of Volsinium
 Who slew the great wild boar,
 The great wild boar that had his den
 Amidst the reeds of Cosa's fen,
 And wasted fields, and slaughtered men,
 Along Albinia's shore.

Herminius smote down Aruns :
 Lartius laid Ocnus low :
 Right to the heart of Lausulus
 Horatius sent a blow.
 " Lie there," he cried, " fell pirate !
 No more, aghast and pale,
 From Ostia's wall the crowd shall mark
 The track of thy destroying bark.
 No more Campania's hinds shall fly
 To woods and caverns when they spy
 Thy thrice-accursèd sail."

But now no sound of laughter
 Was heard among the foes,
 A wild and wrathful clamour
 From all the vanguard rose.
 Six spear's lengths from the entrance
 Halted that deep array,
 And for a space no man came forth
 To win the narrow way.

But hark ! the cry is " Astur " ;
 And lo ! the ranks divide :

And the great Lord of Luna
Comes with his stately stride.
Upon his ample shoulders
Clangs loud the four-fold shield,
And in his hand he shakes the brand
Which none but he can wield.

He smiled on those bold Romans
A smile serene and high ;
He eyed the flinching Tuscans,
And scorn was in his eye.
Quoth he, " The she-wolf's litter
Stand savagely at bay :
But will ye dare to follow
If Astur clears the way ? "

Then whirling up his broadsword
With both hands to the height,
He rushed against Horatius,
And smote with all his might.
With shield and blade Horatius
Right deftly turned the blow ;
The blow, though turned, came yet too nigh ;
It missed his helm, but gashed his thigh ;
The Tuscans raised a joyful cry
To see the red blood flow.

He reeled, and on Herminius
He leaned one breathing-space ;
Then, like a wild cat mad with wounds,
Sprang right at Astur's face ;
Through teeth and skull and helmet
So fierce a thrust he sped,
The good sword stood a handbreadth out
Behind the Tuscan's head.

And the great Lord of Luna
Fell at that deadly stroke
As falls on Mount Alvernus
A thunder-smitten oak ;
Far o'er the crashing forest
The giant arms lie spread,
And the pale augurs,¹ muttering low,
Gaze on the blasted head.

On Astur's throat Horatius
Right firmly pressed his heel,
And thrice and four times tugged amain,
Ere he wrenched out the steel.
“ And see,” he cried, “ the welcome,
Fair guests, that waits you here !
What noble Lucumo comes next
To taste our Roman cheer ? ”

But at his haughty challenge
A sullen murmur ran,
Mingled of wrath, and shame, and dread,
Along that glittering van.
There lacked not men of prowess,
Nor men of lordly race ;
For all Etruria's noblest
Were round the fatal place.

But all Etruria's noblest
Felt their hearts sink to see
On the earth the bloody corpses,
In the path the dauntless Three ;
And, from the ghastly entrance,
Where those bold Romans stood,

¹ Soothsayers.

All shrank, like boys who, unaware,
Ranging the woods to start a hare,
Come to the mouth of the dark lair
Where, growling low, a fierce old bear
Lies amidst bones and blood.

But meanwhile axe and lever
Have manfully been plied ;
And now the bridge hangs tottering
Above the boiling tide.
“ Come back, come back, Horatius ! ”
Loud cried the Fathers all ;
“ Back, Lartius ! back, Herminius !
Back, ere the ruin fall ! ”

Back darted Spurius Lartius,
Herminius darted back ;
And, as they passed, beneath their feet
They felt the timbers crack.
But when they turned their faces,
And on the farther shore
Saw brave Horatius stand alone,
They would have crossed once more.

But with a crash like thunder
Fell every loosened beam,
And like a dam, the mighty wreck
Lay right athwart the stream.
And a long shout of triumph
Rose from the walls of Rome,
As to the highest turret-tops
Was splashed the yellow foam.

And, like a horse unbroken
When first he feels the rein,
The furious river struggled hard,
And tossed his tawny mane,
And burst the curb and bounded,
Rejoicing to be free ;
And whirling down, in fierce career,
Battlement, and plank, and pier,
Rushed headlong to the sea.

Alone stood brave Horatius,
But constant still in mind ;
Thrice thirty thousand foes before,
And the broad flood behind.
“ Down with him ! ” cried false Sextus,
With a smile on his pale face.
“ Now yield thee,” cried Lars Porsena,
“ Now yield thee to our grace.”

Round turned he, as not deigning
Those craven ranks to see ;
Naught spake he to Lars Porsena,
To Sextus naught spake he ;
But he saw on Palatinus
The white porch of his home ;
And he spake to the noble river
That rolls by the towers of Rome.

“ Oh, Tiber ! father Tiber !
To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman's life, a Roman's arms
Take thou in charge this day ! ”

So he spake, and speaking sheathed
The good sword by his side,
And with his harness on his back
Plunged headlong in the tide.

No sound of joy or sorrow
Was heard from either bank ;
But friends and foes in dumb surprise,
With parted lips and straining eyes,
Stood gazing where he sank ;
And when above the surges
They saw his crest appear,
All Rome sent forth a rapturous cry,
And even the ranks of Tuscany
Could scarce forbear to cheer.

But fiercely ran the current,
Swollen high by months of rain :
And fast his blood was flowing,
And he was sore in pain,
And heavy with his armour,
And spent with changing blows ;
And oft they thought him sinking,
But still again he rose.

“ Curse on him ! ” quoth false Sextus ;
“ Will not the villain drown ?
But for this stay, ere close of day
We should have sacked the town.”
“ Heaven help him ! ” quoth Lars Porsena,
“ And bring him safe to shore ;
For such a gallant feat of arms
Was never seen before.”

And now he feels the bottom ;
Now on dry earth he stands ;
Now round him throng the Fathers
To press his gory hands ;
And now with shouts and clapping,
And noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the River-Gate,
Borne by the joyous crowd.

They gave him of the corn-land
That was of public right
As much as two strong oxen
Could plough from morn till night ;
And they made a molten image,
And set it up on high,
And there it stands unto this day
To witness if I lie.

And still his name sounds stirring
Unto the men of Rome,
As the trumpet-blast that cries to them
To charge the Volscian home ;
And wives still pray to Juno
For boys with hearts as bold
As his who kept the bridge so well
In the brave days of old.

And in the nights of winter,
When the cold north winds blow,
And the long howling of the wolves
Is heard amidst the snow ;
When round the lonely cottage
Roars loud the tempest's din,
And the good logs of Algidus
Roar louder yet within ;

When the oldest cask is opened,
And the largest lamp is lit ;
When the chestnuts glow in the embers,
And the kid turns on the spit ;
When young and old in circle
Around the firebrands close ;
When the girls are weaving baskets,
And the lads are shaping bows ;

When the goodman mends his armour,
And trims his helmet's plume ;
When the goodwife's shuttle merrily
Goes flashing through the loom ;
With weeping and with laughter
Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

Lord Macaulay.

HOHENLINDEN

In the year 1800, the French, under General Moreau, defeated the Austrians with terrible slaughter at a place called Hohenlinden. The Iser, a tributary of the Danube, flows near by.

This renowned poem consists of a series of pictures: the dreary winter scene, the midnight muster, the glare of the dread cannonade. Morning dawns, the sun being obscured by the clouds of smoke: then come the cavalry charge, the hand-to-hand fighting, and the silence of death. Every line is clear, and is made impressive by its solemn brevity.

ON Linden, when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow,
And dark as winter was the flow
Of Iser rolling rapidly.

But Linden saw another sight
When the drum beat at dead of night,
Commanding fires of death to light
The darkness of her scenery.

By torch and trumpet fast arrayed,
Each horseman drew his battle-blade,
And furious every charger neighed
To join the dreadful revelry.

Then shook the hills with thunder riven,
Then rushed the steed to battle driven,
And louder than the bolts of heaven
Far flashed the red artillery.

But redder yet that light shall glow
On Linden's hills of stained snow,
And bloodier yet the torrent flow
Of Iser rolling rapidly.

'Tis morn, but scarce yon level sun
Can pierce the war-clouds, rolling dun,
Where furious Frank and fiery Hun
Shout in their sulphurous canopy.

The combat deepens. On, ye brave,
Who rush to glory, or the grave!
Wave, Munich, all thy banners wave,
And charge with all thy chivalry!

Few, few shall part where many meet!
The snow shall be their winding-sheet,
And every turf beneath their feet
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre.

Thomas Campbell.

BONNY DUNDEE

When William of Orange took the Kingdom, Viscount Dundee gathered a few followers, and rode up the High Street of Edinburgh and through the Grassmarket to a spot below the Castle. There he held a conference with the Duke of Gordon, asking him to throw in his lot with the Stuarts. On the Duke refusing to do so, Dundee rode away to the Highlands, and summoned the clans. At Killiecrankie he met and defeated the English army which had been sent in pursuit of him, but was killed in the moment of victory, and with his death the rebellion collapsed.

To the Lords of Convention 'twas Claver'se who
spoke,
" Ere the king's crown shall fall there are crowns
to be broke ;
So let each cavalier who loves honour and mē
'Come follow the bonnet of Bonnie Dundee."

Come, fill up my cup ! come, fill up my can !
Come, saddle your horses, and call up your
men !
Come, open the West Port, and let me gang
free,
And it's room for the bonnets of Bonnie
Dundee !"

Dundee he is mounted, he rides up the street ;
The bells are rung backward, the drums they are
beat ;
But the Provost, douce man, said, " Just e'en let
him be ;
The guid town is well quit of that Deil of
Dundee."

With sour-featured whigs the Grassmarket was
 crammed,
 As if half the West had set tryst to be hanged ;
 There was spite in each look, there was fear in
 each e'e,
 As they watched for the bonnets of Bonnie
 Dundee.

These cowls of Kilmarnock had spits and had
 spears,
 And lang-hafted gullies to kill cavaliers ;
 But they shrunk to close-heads and the causeway
 was free,
 At the toss of the bonnet of Bonnie Dundee.

He spurred to the foot of the proud castle rock,
 And with the gay Gordon he gallantly spoke ;
 " Let Mons Meg¹ and her marrows speak twa'
 words or three,
 For the love of the bonnet of Bonnie Dundee."

The Gordon demands of him which way he goes—
 " Where'er shall direct me the shade of Montrose !
 Your Grace in short space shall hear tidings of me,
 Or that low lies the bonnet of Bonnie Dundee.

" There are hills beyond Pentland, and lands
 beyond Forth ;
 If there's lords in the Lowlands, there's chiefs in
 the North ;
 There are wild Duniewassals three thousand
 times three,
 Will cry *hoigh* for the bonnet of Bonnie Dundee.

¹ A very large and very ancient cannon which stands on the
 esplanade of Edinburgh Castle.

“ There’s brass on the target of barked bull-
hide ;
There’s steel in the scabbard that dangles beside ;
The brass shall be burnished, the steel shall flash
free,
At a toss of the bonnet of Bonnie Dundee.

“ Away to the hills, to the caves, to the rocks !
Ere I own an usurper, I’ll couch with the fox ;
And tremble, false Whigs, in the midst of your
glee,
You have not seen the last of my bonnet and me ! ”

He waved his proud hand, and the trumpets were
blown,
The kettle-drums clashed, and the horsemen
rode on,
Till on Ravelston’s cliffs, and on Clermiston’s lea,
Died away the wild war-notes of Bonnie Dundee.

Come, fill up my cup ! come, fill up my can !
Come, saddle the horses and call up the men !
Come, open your gates, and let me gae free,
For it’s up with the bonnets of Bonnie Dundee !

Sir Walter Scott.





IV

“ ANGEL SPIRITS OF SLEEP ”

The poems in this section are poems of enchantment, of magic and mystery. In them we are carried right out of this warm sunlit world into a dim shadowy realm of make-believe.

ANGEL spirits of sleep,
White-robed, with silver hair,
In your meadows fair
Where the willows weep,
And the sad moonbeam
On the gliding stream
Writes her scattered dream :

Angel spirits of sleep,
Dancing to the weir
In the hollow roar
Of its waters deep ;
Know ye how men say
That ye haunt no more
Isle and grassy shore
With your moonlit play ;
That ye dance not here,
White-robed spirits of sleep,
All the summer night
Threading dances light ?

Robert Bridges.

THOMAS THE RHYMER

“Thomas the Rhymer” is founded on an ancient Celtic legend about the Fenian hero Usheen, well known in Ireland even to this day. Fairyland, we learn from it, lies between heaven and earth, far beyond the setting sun and the mysterious boundless Atlantic; green, the hue of the woods and heaths and mountains where the fairies dwell, is their own peculiar colour; and any mortal who speaks or eats or drinks in fairyland falls into the power of the fairies, and may never return to earth.

TRUE Thomas lay on Huntlie bank;
 A ferlie ¹ he spied wi his e’e;
 And there he saw a lady bright
 Come riding down by the Eildon tree.

Her shirt was o’ the grass-green silk,
 Her mantle o’ the velvet fine;
 At ilka tett ² of her horse’s mane
 Hung fifty siller ³ bells and nine.

True Thomas he pullèd off his cap,
 And louted ⁴ low down to his knee,
 “All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
 For thy peer on earth I never did see.”

“O no, O no, Thomas,” she said,
 “That name does not belong to me:
 I am but the Queen of fair Elfland,
 That am hither come to visit thee.”

¹ Wonder.² Lock.³ Silver.⁴ Bowed.

She's mounted on her milk-white steed ;
She's ta'en true Thomas up behind :
And ay, whene'er her bridle rung,
The steed gaed swifter than the wind.

O they rode on, and farther on ;
The steed gaed swifter than the wind ;
Until they reached a desert wide,
And living land was left behind.

“ Now, Thomas, light down, light down,” she
said,
“ And lean your head upon my knee ;
Abide and rest a little space,
And I will show you ferlies three.

“ O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briars ?
That is the Path of Righteousness,
Though after it but few enquires.

“ And see ye not that braid braid road
That lies across the lily leven ?¹
That is the Path of Wickedness,
Though some call it the Road to Heaven.

“ And see ye not that bonny road,
That winds about the ferny brae ?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun² gae.

¹ Flowery meadow.

² Must.

“ But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever ye may hear and see :
For, speak ye word in Elfin land,
Ye’ll ne’er win back to your ain countrie.”

O they rode on, and farther on,
And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,
And they saw not star, nor sun, nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

Syne¹ they came on to a garden green,
And she pulled an apple frae a tree—
“ Take this for thy wages, Thomas,” she said ;
“ It will give thee the tongue that can never
lee.”

“ My tongue is mine ain,” true Thomas said ;
“ A gudely gift ye wad gie to me !
I neither dought to buy nor sell,
At fair or tryst where I might be.

“ I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
Nor ask of grace from fair ladye.”
“ Now hold your peace,” the lady said,
“ For as I say, so must it be.”

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of the velvet green :
And till seven years were gane and past
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

Anonymous.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

This lovely poem was written amidst such scenery as it describes. The river Wey ought to be held famous in literature for having provided the inspiration. The story itself was taken from an old book about King Arthur.

Like "Hohenlinden," this piece contains a number of word-pictures—indeed, several famous pictures have been painted after it. It is almost like an old illuminated manuscript, its colours are so bright and fresh.

The magic meaning, the glowing colours, the sweet melody act as if the poet was an enchanter charming our wits with a spell.

PART I

ON either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;
And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-towered Camelot ;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veilèd,
 Slide the heavy barges trailèd
 By slow horses ; and unhailèd
 The shallop flitteth silken-sailèd,
 Skimming down to Camelot :
 But who hath seen her wave her hand ?
 Or at the casement seen her stand ?
 Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early,
 In among the bearded barley,
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly,
 From the river winding clearly,
 Down to towered Camelot :
 And by the moon the reaper weary,
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
 Listening, whispers, " 'Tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott."

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
 A magic web with colours gay.
 She has heard a whisper say
 A curse is on her if she stay
 To look down to Camelot.
 She knows not what the curse may be,
 And so she weaveth steadily,
 And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
 That hangs before her all the year,
 Shadows of the world appear.

There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot :
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd lad,
Or long-haired page in crimson clad,
 Goes by to towered Camelot ;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two :
She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
 And music, went to Camelot :
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed ;
" I am half sick of shadows," said
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneeled
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot :
And from his blazoned baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed ;
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode ;
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
" Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
 She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide :
The mirror cracked from side to side :
“ The curse is come upon me ! ” cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
 Over towered Camelot ;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
 The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse,—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
 Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;
The broad stream bore her far away,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right,
The leaves upon her falling light,

Thro' the noises of the night
 She floated down to Camelot :
And, as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
 Turned to towered Camelot ;
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
 Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this ? and what is here ?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer ;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot :

But Lancelot mused a little space ;
He said, " She has a lovely face ;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

Alfred Tennyson.

ROSABELLE

" Rosabelle " is a good proof of what a poet can do with a story, how he can decorate it with an intricate pattern of words that glow, and infuse into it a singing tune.

O LISTEN, listen, ladies gay !
No haughty feat of arms I tell :
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

.

" Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew !
And, gentle lady, deign to stay !
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

" The blackening wave is edged with white ;
To inch and rock the seamews fly ;
The fishers have heard the Water Sprite
Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.

" Last night the gifted seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round lady gay :
Then stay thee, fair, in Ravensheuch ;
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day ? "

“ ’Tis not because Lord Lindesay’s heir
 To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
 But that my lady-mother there
 Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

“ ’Tis not because the ring they ride,
 And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
 But that my sire the wine will chide,
 If ’tis not filled by Rosabelle.”

.

O’er Roslin all that dreary night
 A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam ;
 ’Twas broader than the watch-fire’s light,
 And redder than the bright moonbeam.

It glared on Roslin’s castled rock,
 It ruddied all the copse-wood glen ;
 ’Twas seen from Dryden’s groves of oak,
 And seen from cavern’d Hawthornden.¹

Seemed all on fire that chapel proud,
 Where Roslin’s chiefs uncoffined lie,
 Each baron, for a sable shroud,
 Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seemed all on fire within, around,
 Deep sacristy and altar’s pale ;
 Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
 And glimmered all the dead men’s mail.

¹ Roslin and Hawthornden are two villages about eight miles south of Edinburgh.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair ;
So still they blaze when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high St. Clair.

.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle ;
Each one the holy vault doth hold—
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle !

And each St. Clair was buried there
With candle, with book, and with knell ;
But the sea caves rung, and the wild winds sung,
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

Sir Walter Scott.







THE SPIRIT OF EARTH

Love me, and I will give into your hands
The rare, enamelled jewels of my lands,
Flowers red and blue,
Tender with air and dew.

From far green armouries of pools and meres
I'll reach for you my lucent sheaves of spears,
The shining falls,
Where the lone ousel calls.

All the serene, stern dignity of trees,
The mournful ritual of mighty seas,
Joys calm and wild,
Shall be for you, my child.

When, like a passing light along the sky,
Your wild-bird soul shall clap her wings and fly,
She shall but nest
More closely in my breast.

Mary Webb.

THE YEAR

The first stanza is full of colour, and the last of strong imagination ; " night is pierced with stars " is a splendid phrase.

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

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.

SPRING

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now burgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drowned in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale ;
And whiter every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the sea-mew pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood, that live their lives

From land to land : and in my breast
 Spring wakens too ; and my regret
 Becomes an April violet,
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.

Lord Tennyson.

HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

This poem and the preceding are both upon the same theme, but could scarcely be more different from one another. The last is smooth ; this is very irregular. The last expresses man's sympathetic pleasure in the revival of nature after the seeming death of winter, and his joy at seeing the fresh flowers and budding trees ; this is the cry of an exile in Italy. Although " Spring " is more polished, " Home Thoughts from Abroad " is more sincere.

OH, to be in England
 Now that April's there,
 And whoever wakes in England
 Sees, some morning, unaware,
 That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
 Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
 While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
 In England—now !

And after April, when May follows,
 And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows !
 Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
 Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
 Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's
 edge—
 That's the wise thrush ; he sings each song twice
 over,
 Lest you should think he never could recapture
 The first fine careless rapture !

And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
 All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
 The buttercups, the little children's dower
 —Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower !

Robert Browning.

THE BARREL ORGAN

“The Barrel Organ” was written to bring before the mind's eye a picture of the cherry-blossom, and all the delights of spring; and also to imitate through its metre the way in which a street-organ grinds out its tunes. It is wonderful that the poet should be able to do something which is ugly and beautiful at the same time.

Go down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in
 lilac-time,
 Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from
 London !);
 And you shall wander hand-in-hand with love in
 summer's wonderland ;
 Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from
 London !).

The cherry-trees are seas of bloom and soft
 perfume and sweet perfume,
 The cherry-trees are seas of bloom (and oh, so
 near to London !);
 And there, they say, when dawn is high and all
 the world's a blaze of sky,
 The cuckoo, though he's very shy, will sing a song
 for London.

The nightingale is rather rare, and yet they say
you'll hear him there,
At Kew, at Kew, in lilac-time (and oh, so near
to London !);
The linnet and the throstle, too, and after dark
the long halloo,
And golden-eyed *tu-whit, tu-whoo* of owls that
ogle London.

For Noah hardly knew a bird of any kind that
isn't heard
At Kew, at Kew, in lilac-time (and oh, so near
to London !);
And when the rose begins to pout and all the
chestnut spires are out,
You'll hear the rest without a doubt, all chorusing'
for London.

Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time,
in lilac-time;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from
London !);
And you shall wander hand-in-hand with love in
summer's wonderland;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from
London !).

Alfred Noyes.

THE SUMMER SUN SHONE ROUND ME

We now pass from spring to summer. In place of the small intimate details that attract notice in spring, the daisies, the hue of the leafbuds, and the shape of the violet, in this poem there are the drowsy heat of summer, and its broad spaces of light and shadow. The rustling of the grass is imitated by the sound of the words.

THE summer sun shone round me ;
 The folded valley lay
 In a stream of sun and odour
 That sultry summer day.

The tall trees stood in the sunlight
 As still as still could be ;
 But the deep grass sighed and rustled,
 And bowed and beckoned me.

The deep grass moved and whispered,
 And bowed and brushed my face ;
 It whispered in the sunshine
 " The winter comes apace."

Robert Louis Stevenson.

RICH DAYS

Here follow two poems on autumn : the first is on early autumn, when the summer still lingers ; the second is about mid-autumn, when the leaves have changed to golden and brown.

WELCOME to you rich autumn days,
 Ere comes the cold, leaf-picking wind ;
 When golden stooks are seen in fields
 All standing arm in arm entwined ;
 And gallons of sweet cider seen
 On trees in apples red and green.

With mellow pears that cheat our teeth,
Which melt that tongues may suck them in ;
With cherries red, and blue-black plums,
Now sweet and soft from stone to skin ;
And woodnuts rich, to make us go
Into the loveliest lanes we know.

William Henry Davies.

AUTUMN

The author of this piece was a man who lived his life in such scenery as he describes. He was a farm worker, familiar with every mood of rural nature and with each season's changes. Here he is inspired by the sober charms of the month when the fruit and grain have ripened, and the harvest has been gathered.

I LOVE the fitful gust that shakes
The casement all the day,
And from the glossy elm tree takes
The faded leaves away,
Twirling them by the window pane
With thousand others down the lane.

I love to see the shaking twig
Dance till the shut of eve,
The sparrow on the cottage rig,
Whose chirp would make believe
That Spring was just now flirting by
In Summer's lap with flowers to lie.

I love to see the cottage smoke
Curl upwards through the trees,
The pigeons nestled round the cote
On November days like these :
The cock upon the dunghill crowing,
The mill sails on the heath a-going.

The feather from the raven's breast
 Falls on the stubble lea ;
 The acorns near the old crow's nest
 Drop pattering down the tree ;
 The grunting pigs, that wait for all,
 Scramble and hurry where they fall.

John Clare.

COCK-CROW

WHEN nights are short in early June,
 We, risen betimes, shall haply see
 The silver sickle of the moon
 Hang gleaming in an eastern tree.

Poised in the dawn's pure silver-grey,
 Blue clouds shall wait the gold and red,
 While pallid star-flakes melt away
 In cold, clear azure overhead.

The dim brown fields shall seem to sleep
 Self-shadowed ; mist shall here and there
 Lie white in pools, where dewlap-deep
 Great kine shall loom i' the twilight air.

Where trees in hazy blue embower
 Some distant farm, a sudden cock
 Shall crow ; and faint from city tower
 Shall float the chimes of three o'clock.

Then from the meadow, sweet and loud,
 The morning-star of song shall spire,
 And morn shall burst through sky and cloud
 In one vast flowerage of fire.

Oh, revelling skylark, sing and soar,
Rosewinged, rose-bosomed, o'er the morn !
But Chanticleer and we once more
Must scratch the world for gems and corn.

William Canton.

THE EAGLE

In six lines we are made to live the life of an eagle : the poet catches us up, and carries us away with the measureless speed of thought. In a moment we are perched on high, endowed with the eagle's piercing vision, seeing what he sees, feeling his desires, pursuing his prey.

HE clasps the crag with crooked hands ;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Alfred Tennyson.

THE WASP

WHERE the ripe pears droop heavily
The yellow wasp hums loud and long
His hot and drowsy autumn song :
A yellow flame he seems to be,
When darting suddenly from on high
He lights where fallen peaches lie :

Yellow and black, this tiny thing's
A tiger soul on elfin wings.

William Sharp.

THE CORAL GROVE

This, the last of the poems on the world around us, takes us by force of imagination into a place which none of us has seen—to the sandy ocean floor, where the green light scarcely filters down, and where, through the branches of the many-coloured seaweed, the fishes move to and fro. The poem is heaped with detail, and the contrast with the upper world is well brought out.

DEEP in the wave is a coral grove,
Where the purple mullet and gold-fish rove,
Where the sea-flower spreads its leaves of blue,
That never are wet with falling dew,
But in bright and changeful beauty shine,
Far down in the green and glassy brine.
The floor is of sand like the mountain drift,
And the pearl-shells spangle the flinty snow ;
From coral rocks the sea-plants lift
Their boughs, where the tides and billows flow ;
The water is calm and still below,
For the winds and waves are absent there,
And the sands are bright as the stars that glow
In the motionless fields of upper air.
There, with its waving blade of green,
The sea-flag streams through the silent water,
And the crimson leaf of the dulse is seen
To blush like a banner bathed in slaughter ;
There, with a light and easy motion,
The fan-coral sweeps through the clear, deep sea,
And the yellow and scarlet tufts of ocean
Are bending like corn on the upland lea :
And life, in rare and beautiful forms,
Is sporting amid those bowers of stone,
And is safe when the wrathful spirit of storms
Has made the top of the wave his own.

And when the ship from his fury flies,
Where the myriad voices of ocean roar,
When the wind-god frowns in the murky skies,
And demons are waiting the wreck on shore,
Then, far below in the peaceful sea,
The purple mullet and gold-fish rove,
Where the waters murmur tranquilly
Through the bending twigs of the coral grove.

James Gates Percival.





VI

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF A MAD DOG

This whimsical poem depends upon its surprises for its humorous effect. Each stanza commences in a mock-heroic vein, the line of thought unexpectedly changing near the end into a new and absurd direction.

Good people all, of every sort,
Give ear unto my song ;
And if you find it wondrous short,—
It cannot hold you long.

In Islington there was a man
Of whom the world might say
That still a godly race he ran,—
Whene'er he went to pray.

A kind and gentle heart he had
To comfort friends and foes ;
The naked every day he clad,—
When he put on his clothes.

And in that town a dog was found,
As many dogs there be,
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound,
And curs of low degree.

This dog and man at first were friends ;
But, when a pique began,
The dog (to gain some private ends)
Went mad, and bit the man.

Around from all the neighbouring streets
 The wondering neighbours ran,
 And swore the dog had lost his wits
 To bite so good a man.

The wound it seemed both sore and sad
 To every Christian eye ;
 And while they swore the dog was mad,
 They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light
 That showed the rogues they lied ;
 The man recovered of the bite,—
 The dog it was that died.

Oliver Goldsmith.

THE WALRUS AND THE CARPENTER

“The Walrus and the Carpenter” is funny because everything in it is wildly impossible, and flatly contradicts what we know from experience to be real fact.

THE sun was shining on the sea,
 Shining with all his might :
 He did his very best to make
 The billows smooth and bright—
 And this was odd, because it was
 The middle of the night.

The moon was shining sulkily,
 Because she thought the sun
 Had got no business to be there
 After the day was done—
 “It’s very rude of him,” she said,
 “To come and spoil the fun.”

The sea was wet as wet could be,
The sands were dry as dry.
You could not see a cloud, because
No clouds were in the sky :
No birds were flying overhead—
There were no birds to fly.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Were walking close at hand ;
They wept like anything to see
Such quantities of sand ;
“ If this were only cleared away,”
They said, “ It *would* be grand.”

“ If seven maids with seven mops
Swept it for half a year,
Do you suppose,” the Walrus said,
“ That they could get it clear ? ”
“ I doubt it,” said the Carpenter,
And shed a bitter tear.

“ O Oysters, come and walk with us ! ”
The Walrus did beseech.
“ A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,
Along the briny beach :
We cannot do with more than four,
To give a hand to each.”

The eldest Oyster looked at him,
But never a word he said :
The eldest Oyster winked his eye,
And shook his heavy head—
Meaning to say he did not choose
To leave the oyster bed.

But four young Oysters hurried up,
All eager for the treat :
Their coats were brushed, their faces washed,
Their shoes were clean and neat—
And this was odd, because, you know,
They hadn't any feet.

Four other Oysters followed them,
And yet another four ;
And thick and fast they came at last,
And more, and more, and more—
All hopping through the sandy waves,
And scrambling to the shore.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Walked out a mile or so,
And then they rested on a rock
Conveniently low.
And all the little Oysters stood
And waited in a row.

“The time has come,” the Walrus said,
“To talk of many things :
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing-wax—
Of cabbages—and kings—
And why the sea is boiling hot—
And whether pigs have wings.”

“But wait a bit,” the Oysters cried,
“Before we have our chat ;
For some of us are out of breath,
And all of us are fat !”
“No hurry !” said the Carpenter.
They thanked him much for that.

“ A loaf of bread,” the Walrus said,
“ Is what we chiefly need :
Pepper and vinegar, besides,
Are very good indeed—
Now, if you’re ready, Oysters dear,
We can begin to feed.”

“ But not on us ! ” the Oysters cried,
Turning a little blue.

“ After such kindness, that would be
A dismal thing to do ! ”

“ The night is fine,” the Walrus said,
“ Do you admire the view ? ”

“ It was so kind of you to come !
And you are very nice ! ”

The Carpenter said nothing but

“ Cut us another slice :
I wish you were not quite so deaf—
I’ve had to ask you twice.”

“ It seems a shame,” the Walrus said,
“ To play them such a trick,

After we’ve brought them out so far,
And made them trot so quick ! ”

The Carpenter said nothing but

“ The butter’s spread too thick.”

“ I weep for you,” the Walrus said :
“ I deeply sympathise.”

With sobs and tears he sorted out

Those of the largest size,
Holding his pocket-handkerchief
Before his streaming eyes.

“ O Oysters,” said the carpenter,
 “ You’ve had a pleasant run !
 Shall we be trotting home again ? ”
 But answer there was none—
 And this was scarcely odd, because
 They’d eaten every one.

Lewis Carroll.

DUCKS

“ Ducks ” gives a very amusing description, but it is much more than an amusing poem. It is true in all its details—true to life ; it is touched here and there with bright patches of beauty ; and it is a reverent poem.

FROM troubles of the world
 I turn to ducks,
 Beautiful comical things
 Sleeping or curled
 Their heads beneath white wings
 By water cool,
 Or finding curious things
 To eat in various mucks
 Beneath the pool,
 Tails uppermost, or waddling
 Sailor-like on the shores
 Of ponds, or paddling
 —Left ! right !—with fanlike feet
 Which are for steady oars
 When they (white galleys) float
 Each bird a boat
 Rippling at will the sweet
 Wide waterway. . . .
 When night is fallen *you* creep
 Upstairs, but drakes and dillies

Nest with pale water-stars,
Moonbeams and shadow bars
And water-lilies :
Fearful too much to sleep
Since they've no locks
To click against the teeth
Of weasel and fox.
And warm beneath
Are eggs of cloudy green
Whence hungry rats and lean
Would stealthily suck
New life but for the mien,
The bold ferocious mien,
Of the mother-duck.

Yes, ducks are valiant things
On nests of twigs and straws,
And ducks are soothy things
And lovely on the lake
When that the sunlight draws
Thereon their pictures dim
In colours cool.
And when beneath the pool
They dabble, and when they swim
And make their rippling rings,
O, ducks are beautiful things !

But ducks are comical things—
As comical as you.
Quack !
They waddle round, they do.
They eat all sorts of things,
And then they quack.
By barn and stable and stack

They wander at their will,
 But, if you go too near,
 They look at you through black
 Small topaz-tinted eyes
 And wish you ill.
 Triangular and clear
 They leave their curious track
 In mud at the water's edge,
 And there amid the sedge
 And slime they gobble and peer,
 Saying "Quack! Quack!"

When God had finished the stars and whirl of
 coloured suns,
 He turned His mind from big things to fashion
 little ones ;
 Beautiful tiny things (like daisies) He made, and
 then
 He made the comical ones in case the minds of
 men
 Should stiffen and become
 Dull, humourless, and glum :
 And so forgetful of their Maker be
 As to take even themselves—*quite seriously*.
 Caterpillars and cats are lively and excellent puns.
 All God's jokes are good—even the practical ones.
 And as for the duck, I think God must have
 smiled a bit,
 Seeing those bright eyes blink on the day He
 fashioned it.
 And He's probably laughing still at the sound that
 came out of its bill !

Frederick William Harvey.

VII

THE MINSTREL BOY

THE Minstrel Boy to the war is gone,
In the ranks of death you'll find him ;
His father's sword he has girded on,
And his wild harp slung behind him.—
“ Land of Song ! ” said the warrior 'bard,
“ Though all the world betrays thee,
One sword, at least, thy rights shall guard,
One faithful harp shall praise thee ! ”

The Minstrel fell. But the foeman's chain
Could not bring his proud soul under ;
The harp he loved ne'er spoke again,
For he tore its cords asunder ;
And said : “ No chains shall sully thee,
Thou soul of love and bravery !
Thy songs were made for the pure and free,
They shall never sound in slavery ! ”

Thomas Moore.

LAUGH AND BE MERRY

“ Laugh and be Merry ” and “ The Shepherd Boy's Song ” are two poems on similar subjects : the first is modern, the second old ; the first flashes with jewels, the second is unadorned ; the first is the pure and natural outcome of the joy of living, the second is a little sermon.

LAUGH and be merry ; remember, better the
world with a song,
Better the world with a blow in the teeth of a
wrong.



Laugh, for the time is brief, a thread the length
of a span.

Laugh, and be proud to belong to the old proud
pageant of man.

Laugh and be merry ; remember, in olden time,
God made Heaven and Earth for the joy He took
in a rhyme,

Made them, and filled them full with the strong
red wine of His mirth,

The splendid joy of the stars ; the joy of the earth.

So we must laugh and drink from the deep blue
cup of the sky,

Join the jubilant song of the great stars sweeping
by,

Laugh, and battle, and work, and drink of the
wine outpoured

In the dear green earth, the sign of the joy of
the Lord.

Laugh and be merry together, like brothers akin,
Guesting awhile in the rooms of a beautiful inn,
Glad till the dancing stops, and the lilt of the
music ends.

Laugh till the game is played ; and be you merry,
my friends.

John Masefield.

THE SHEPHERD BOY'S SONG

HE that is down need 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.

DOMINION

Like "Laugh and be Merry" this poem expresses the poet's joy, but now it is his joy in the earth's adornments. What a catalogue it contains ! Then it goes on to tell of the poet's thankfulness that he is man, and not merely a part of nature. He is capable of feeling gratitude, while the animals and flowers can only know themselves.

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 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 treasure 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.

THE SPACIOUS FIRMAMENT

“ Dominion ” is a poem of the warm sunlight, a poem of the colours and creatures of the earth and of the day. Our theme now is grander and vaster ; it is the sun, and moon, and stars. The feeling aroused by their contemplation is one of awe at the immeasurable skill and power that created them.

The third verse contains a reference to the ancient idea that each planet, as it moved, emitted a note of music, all the notes together producing a celestial harmony.

The meaning of the poem is quite simple ; its lines are lines of great dignity and sweetness, as their subject requires.

THE spacious firmament on high
 With all the blue ethereal sky,
 And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
 Their great Original proclaim.

The unwearied sun from day to day
 Does his Creator's power display,
 And publishes to every land
 The work of an Almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
 The moon takes up the wondrous tale ;
 And nightly to the listening earth
 Repeats the story of her birth ;
 Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
 And all the planets in their turn,
 Confirm the tidings as they roll,
 And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though in solemn silence all
 Move round the dark terrestrial ball ?
 What though no real voice nor sound
 Amidst their radiant orbs be found ?
 In reason's ear they all rejoice,
 And utter forth a glorious voice,
 For ever singing, as they shine,
 "The hand that made us is divine."

Joseph Addison.

THE LAND O' THE LEAL

I'm wearin' awa', John,
 Like snow wreaths in thaw, John,
 I'm wearin' awa'
 To the land o' the leal.
 There's nae sorrow there, John,
 There's neither cauld nor care, John,
 The day is aye fair
 In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, John,
She was baith guid and fair, John ;
And O we grudged her sair
 To the land o' the leal !
But sorrow's sel wears past, John,
And joy's a-comin' fast, John,
The joy that's aye to last
 In the land o' the leal.

Then dry that glist'ning e'e, John,
My soul langs to be free, John,
And angels beckon me
 To the land o' the leal.
Now fare ye weel, my ain John,
This world's care is vain, John ;
We'll meet and aye be fain
 In the land o' the leal.

Lady Nairne.

THE HEAVENLY CITY

JERUSALEM, my happy home,
 When shall I come to thee ?
When shall my sorrows have an end ?
 Thy joys when shall I see ?
O happy harbour of the Saints !
 O sweet and pleasant soil !
In thee no sorrow may be found,
 No grief, no care, no toil.
There lust and lucre cannot dwell ;
 There envy bears no sway ;
There is no hunger, heat, nor cold,
 But pleasure every way.

Thy walls are made of precious stones,
Thy bulwarks diamonds square ;
Thy gates are of right orient pearl,
Exceeding rich and rare.

Thy turrets and thy pinnacles
With carbuncles do shine ;
Thy very streets are paved with gold
Surpassing clear and fine.

Ah, my sweet home, Jerusalem,
Would God I were in thee !
Would God my woes were at an end,
Thy joys that I might see !

Thy vineyards and thy orchards are
Most beautiful and fair,
Full furnishèd with trees, and fruits
Most wonderful and rare.

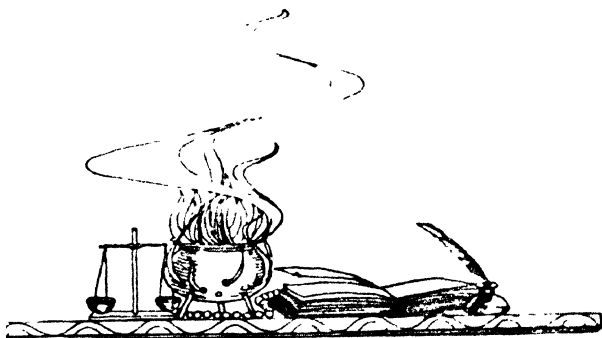
Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
Continually are green ;
There grows such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen.

Quite through the streets, with silver sound
The flood of Life doth flow ;
Upon whose banks on every side
The wood of Life doth grow.

There trees for evermore bear fruit,
And evermore do spring ;
There evermore the angels sit,
And evermore do sing.

Jerusalem, my happy home,
Would God I were in thee !
Would God my woes were at an end,
Thy joys that I might see !

Anonymous.



EXERCISES

(A number of these questions and exercises can be answered orally.)

1. Complete the following verses :

(1) I see the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size ;
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles—— ?

(2) Now ponder well, you parents dear,
These words that I shall write ;
A doleful story——,
In time brought forth to light.

(3) Lochiel ! Lochiel ! beware of the day
When the Lowlands shall meet thee in battle
array !
For a field of the dead rushes red on my sight,
And the clans of Culloden——.

2. What words vividly describe ?——

[*Model.*—Moonlight.

Answer.—Ivory moonlight.]

- (1) Apple blossom, the wild hyacinth, a sunflower, a foxglove.
- (2) The evening sky, the rainbow, a star, fallen snow, the horizon.
- (3) A tyrant, a king, an ocean liner.
- (4) The sound of church bells, waves on which the sun is shining, a crowd of people, a river which flows slowly, pine trees.

- (5) A thrush's egg, a meadow, an eagle.
 (6) February, July, September.
3. Rewrite the following passages as verse by dividing them into lines at the proper places: there is no need to alter the order of the words:
- (1) While I am lying on the grass thy two-fold shout I hear; from hill to hill it seems to pass, at once far off and near.
- (2) At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears, there's a thrush that sings loud; it has sung for three years. Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard in the silence of morning the song of the bird.
- (3) A violet by a mossy stone, half hidden from the eye; fair as a star, when only one is shining in the sky.
4. What words mean the opposite of?—
- (1) Bright, clear, dear, beautiful, sharp, steep.*
 (2) Hate, rise, finish, tender, forget, enter.
 (3) Child, friend, slavery, obedience, peace, danger.
5. What, in your opinion, is most like?—(a) A Daisy, the Evening Star, an Iceberg, White Fleecy Clouds, Primroses, a Windmill, a Morning Mist; (b) the Sound of Wind in the Tree-tops, a Smoothly-cut Lawn, a Yacht with White Sails, a Mob rushing along a Street, a Smooth Sheet of Water, a Field of Corn on a Windy Day, the Frost Figures on a Window-pane.
6. Mark the accented syllables in:
 [Models.—*Amóng, awáy, raiłway.*]
- (a) Silence, below, mountain, pilgrim, above, beneath, breathless, unless, decay, present, desert, July, August, crooked, suggest, tallest, command, morass, harass, palace, police, object.
- (b) Skylark, bookshop, hilltop, springtime, dew-drop, moonlight, upset, withdraw, man-of-war, forget-me-not, understand.

(c) Plentiful, forgetful, unworthy, trustworthy, innocent, important, beautiful, delightful, cunningly, accident, December, January, African, American, objection.

(d) New Street, a new street : come inside, inside out.

State, in the simplest manner, the meaning of :

(1) Birds of a feather flock together.

(2) A rolling stone gathers no moss.

(3) Every cloud has a silver lining.

(4) And ere the day three hundred horse had met
on Clifton Down (p. 27).

(5) Through the field the road runs by (p. 55).

8. Rearrange each of the following passages so as to form a stanza of four lines :

[*Model.*—The corsair Death sailed southward
with fleet of ice ; the blast blew wild and fast,
and the east wind was his breath.

Answer. —Southward with fleet of ice
Sailed the corsair Death ;
Wild and fast blew the blast,
And the east wind was his breath.

(1) Battlement and high pinnet blazed ; every
fair rose-carved buttress blazed ; they still
blaze so, when fate is nigh the lordly line
of high St. Clair.

(2) We are a thousand miles from land, tossing
about on the roaring sea, cast from billow
to bounding billow like fleecy snow on the
stormy blast.

(3) The ancient pibroch sounds sweet o'er moun-
tain, loch, and glade ; but the pipes at
Lucknow played the sweetest of all music.

9. Why would you consider each of the following com-
parisons to be a good one ?—

(1) The Assyrian came down *like the wolf on the fold*
(p. 29).

- (2) He watches from his mountain walls,
And *like a thunderbolt* he falls (p. 73).
- (3) Nor doth the early shepherd's star
Shine *like a spangle* here (p. 2).
- (4) *Like the dew on the mountain,*
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and for ever.
- (5) Then, *like a wild cat mad with wounds,*
[Horatius] Sprang right at Astur's face (p. 39).
10. In each of these lines the italicised word is specially appropriate. Why is that so ?
- (1) The *wrinkled* sea beneath him crawls (p. 73).
- (2) And night is *pierced* with stars (p. 66).
- (3) Willows *whiten*, aspens quiver,
Little breezes *dusk* and shiver (p. 55).
- (4) The *old* ships draw to home again, the *young*
ships sail away (p. 13).
- (5) For swift to east and swift to west the *ghastly*
war flame spread (p. 26).
1. In what is the sound of the following lines remarkable ?
- (1) To her enchanted with the gleam,
The glamour and the glory,
The bubble home's a home of dream.
- (2) The summer sun shone round me.
- (3) O'er fell and fountain sheen,
O'er moor and mountain green.
- (4) By torch and trumpet fast arrayed
Each horseman drew his battle-blade.
2. Read through *Sir Humphrey Gilbert* (p. 22), and then state in a short sentence, and as simply as you can, the subject of each stanza.
3. Read through *Rosabelle* (p. 61), and then relate the story implied therein, mentioning the events in the order in which they happened.
4. Almost all poets sometimes rhyme words which are not complete rhymes. Examine each pair of

rhymes in these passages, and state (a) whether the second of the pair rhymes completely with the first, (b) if not complete, in what respect it is imperfect :

(a) Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the rampart we hurried ;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

(b) Now, to the roll of muffled drums
To thee the greatest soldier comes.

(c) O'er the dales, o'er the downs,
Through the green meadows,
From the fields, through the towns,
To the dim shadows.

(d) " But not on us ! " the Oysters cried,
Turning a little blue.
" After such kindness, that would be
A dismal thing to do ! "
" The night is fine," the Walrus said,
" Do you admire the view ? "

15. Turn the following story into a poem of five stanzas, on the model of those on p. 61, making any alterations in the words that you wish. It will be necessary to shorten it.

THE FATE OF THE BUTTERFLY

I.—Of all the silver-winged flies that possess the empire of the air, none was more fair than the Butterfly. On a calm clear summer's day, when the sun spread his beams, he flew on high.

II.—He bound his armour on his breast, and threw round his shoulders the hide of a wild beast

that he had slain in fight : his helmet was of shining gold : his wings were painted with a thousand colours, passing fair : not the evening sky, nor the rainbow, does glow so bright.

III.—He soared over woods, and rivers, and green meadows, and at last came to a gay garden which poured forth sweet odours. There he flitted from flower to flower, viewing their silken leaves and petals, sipping their honey, and bathing his tender feet in the dew.

IV.—But a cruel monster had lately built there his hateful mansion, and was lurking close by. It was a cunning net of cords stretched far and wide, so fine that they could not be seen, and the butterfly was soon entangled in it.

V.—Then, like a raging lion, the grisly spider leaped upon the butterfly as he lay breathless and helpless in the web, struck his keen weapon into his heart, and slew him.

16. Write a poem in four stanzas of the same kind as those on p. 77 on the following subject :

A thrush rescued from a hawk by a signalman was carefully nursed back to health by him, and then released. Next day the bird returned, entered the signal-box, and showed its confidence and gratitude by taking food from its preserver's hand.

Subjects of stanzas : (1) The Rescue, (2) the Recovery, (3) the Release, (4) the Return.

17. After writing a composition in prose on any one of the subjects given in Question 18, turn it into a poem, using as model the stanzas of any poem in this book.
18. Subjects for composition : (1) Describe a Rookery ; (2) Describe a Lobster, or a Crab, or a Starfish ; (3) Describe the Speedwell, or the Ragged Robin, or the Purple Campion ; (4) Describe a Grasshopper ; (5) The Slave's Dream ; (6) The Diver ; (7) Life

in a Lighthouse ; (8) The Blacksmith's Forge ; (9) The Bathing Place ; (10) Robinson Crusoe's First Awakening on his Island ; (11) King Alfred and the Cakes ; (12) The Sleeping Beauty ; (13) St. George and the Dragon ; (14) The *Goulden Vanitie* ; (15) The Story of Pocahontas and Captain John Smith ; (16) A Wish ; (17) April's Charms ; (18) The Fable of the Fox and the Grapes ; (19) The Fable of the Wind and the Sun ; (20) A certain prince, wandering one night in disguise, found a beggar asleep in the street. He had the beggar carried to his palace, dressed in fine clothes, and treated as the prince, while he himself stood by disguised as a servant. At the end of one day the beggar was taken back, in his sleep, to the spot where he had first been found, and left there in his rags.

