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NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY

POEMS

BY

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

CONTENTS:

BARCLAY OF URY.

Among the earliest converts to the doctrines of Friends in Scotland was Barclay of Ury, an old and distinguished soldier, who had fought under Gustavus Adolphus, in Germany. As a Quaker, he became the object of persecution and abuse at the hands of the magistrates and the populace. None bore the indignities of the mob with greater patience and nobleness of soul than this once proud gentleman and soldier. One of his friends, on an occasion of uncommon rudeness, lamented that he should be treated so harshly in his old age who had been so honored before. "I find more satisfaction," said Barclay, "as well as honor, in being thus insulted for my religious principles, than when, a few years ago, it was usual for the magistrates, as I passed the city of Aberdeen, to meet me on the road and conduct me to public entertainment in their hall, and then escort me out again, to gain my favor."

Up the streets of Aberdeen,
By the kirk and college green,
Rode the Laird of Ury;
Close behind him, close beside,
Foul of mouth and evil-eyed,
Pressed the mob in fury.

Flouted him the drunken churl,
Jeered at him the serving-girl,
Prompt to please her master;
And the begging carlin, late
Fed and clothed at Ury's gate,
Cursed him as he passed her.

Yet, with calm and stately mien,
Up the streets of Aberdeen
Came he slowly riding;
And, to all he saw and heard,
Answering not with bitter word,
Turning not for chiding.

Came a troop with broadswords swinging,
Bits and bridles sharply ringing,
Loose and free and froward;
Quoth the foremost, "Ride him down!
Push him! prick him! through the town
Drive the Quaker coward!"

But from out the thickening crowd
Cried a sudden voice and loud
"Barclay! Ho! a Barclay!"
And the old man at his side
Saw a comrade, battle tried,
Scarred and sunburned darkly;

Who with ready weapon bare,
Fronting to the troopers there,
Cried aloud: "God save us,
Call ye coward him who stood
Ankle deep in Lutzen's blood,
With the brave Gustavus?"

"Nay, I do not need thy sword,
Comrade mine," said Ury's lord;
"Put it up, I pray thee
Passive to His holy will,
Trust I in my Master still,
Even though He slay me.

"Pledges of thy love and faith,
Proved on many a field of death,
Not by me are needed."
Marvelled much that henchman bold,

That his laird, so stout of old,
Now so meekly pleaded.

"Woe’s the day!" he sadly said,
With a slowly shaking head,
And a look of pity;
"Ury’s honest lord reviled,
Mock of knave and sport of child,
In his own good city.

"Speak the word, and, master mine,
As we charged on Tilly’s[8] line,
And his Walloon lancers,
Smiting through their midst we’ll teach
Civil look and decent speech
To these boyish prancers!"

"Marvel not, mine ancient friend,
Like beginning, like the end:"
Quoth the Laird of Ury;
"Is the sinful servant more
Than his gracious Lord who bore
Bonds and stripes in Jewry?

"Give me joy that in His name
I can bear, with patient frame,
All these vain ones offer;
While for them He suffereth long,
Shall I answer wrong with wrong,
Scoffing with the scoffer?

"Happier I, with loss of all,
Hunted, outlawed, held in thrall,
With few friends to greet me,
Than when reeve and squire were seen,
Riding out from Aberdeen,
With bared heads to meet me.

"When each goodwife, o’er and o’er,
Blessed me as I passed her door;
And the snooded daughter,
Through her casement glancing down,
Smiled on him who bore renown
From red fields of slaughter.

"Hard to feel the stranger’s scoff,
Hard the old friend’s falling off,
Hard to learn forgiving;
But the Lord His own rewards,
And His love with theirs accords,
Warm and fresh and living.

"Through this dark and stormy night

Faith beholds a feeble light
Up the blackness streaking;
Knowing God’s own time is best,
In a patient hope I rest
For the full day-breaking!"

So the Laird of Ury said,
Turning slow his horse’s head
Towards the Tolbooth prison,
Where, through iron gates, he heard
Poor disciples of the Word
Preach of Christ arisen!

Not in vain, Confessor old,
Unto us the tale is told
Of thy day of trial;
Every age on him who strays
From its broad and beaten ways
Pours its seven-fold vial.

Happy he whose inward ear
Angel comfortings can hear,
O’er the rabble’s laughter;
And while Hatred’s fagots burn,
Glimpses through the smoke discern
Of the good hereafter.

Knowing this, that never yet
Share of Truth was vainly set
In the world’s wide fallow;
After hands shall sow the seed,
After hands from hill and mead
Reap the harvests yellow.

Thus, with somewhat of the Seer,
Must the moral pioneer
From the Future borrow;
Clothe the waste with dreams of grain,
And, on midnight’s sky of rain,
Paint the golden morrow!

THE ANGELS OF BUENA VISTA.

A letter-writer from Mexico during the Mexican war, when detailing some of the incidents at the terrible fight of Buena Vista, mentioned that Mexican women were seen hovering near the field of death, for the purpose of giving aid and succor to the wounded. One poor woman was found surrounded by the maimed and suffering of both armies, ministering to the wants of Americans as well as Mexicans, with impartial tenderness.

SPEAK and tell us, our Ximena, looking northward
far away,
O’er the camp of the invaders, o’er the Mexican
array,
Who is losing? who is winning? are they far or
come they near?
Look abroad, and tell us, sister, whither rolls the
storm we hear.
Down the hills of Angostura still the storm of
battle rolls;
Blood is flowing, men are dying; God have mercy
on their souls!
"Who is losing? who is winning?" Over hill
and over plain,
I see but smoke of cannon clouding through the
mountain rain."

Holy Mother! keep our brothers! Look, Ximena,
look once more.
"Still I see the fearful whirlwind rolling darkly
as before,
Bearing on, in strange confusion, friend and foeman,
foot and horse,
Like some wild and troubled torrent sweeping
down its mountain course."

Look forth once more, Ximena! "Ah! the smoke
has rolled away;
And I see the Northern rifles gleaming down the
ranks of gray.
Hark! that sudden blast of bugles! there the troop
of Minon wheels;
There the Northern horses thunder, with the cannon
at their heels.

"Jesu, pity I how it thickens I now retreat and
now advance!
Bight against the blazing cannon shivers Puebla’s
charging lance!
Down they go, the brave young riders; horse and
foot together fall;
Like a ploughshare in the fallow, through them
ploughs the Northern ball."

Nearer came the storm and nearer, rolling fast and
frightful on!
Speak, Ximena, speak and tell us, who has lost,
and who has won?
Alas! alas! I know not; friend and foe together
fall,
O’er the dying rush the living: pray, my sisters,
for them all!

"Lo! the wind the smoke is lifting. Blessed
Mother, save my brain!
I can see the wounded crawling slowly out from
heaps of slain.
Now they stagger, blind and bleeding; now they
fall, and strive to rise;
Hasten, sisters, haste and save them, lest they die
before our eyes!

"O my hearts love! O my dear one! lay thy
poor head on my knee;
Dost thou know the lips that kiss thee? Canst
thou hear me? canst thou see?
O my husband, brave and gentle! O my Bernal,
look once more
On the blessed cross before thee! Mercy!
all is o'er!"

Dry thy tears, my poor Ximena; lay thy dear one
down to rest;
Let his hands be meekly folded, lay the cross upon
his breast;
Let his dirge be sung hereafter, and his funeral
masses said;
To-day, thou poor bereaved one, the living ask thy
aid.

Close beside her, faintly moaning, fair and young,
a soldier lay,
Torn with shot and pierced with lances, bleeding
slow his life away;
But, as tenderly before him the lorn Ximena knelt,
She saw the Northern eagle shining on his pistol-
belt.

With a stifled cry of horror straight she turned
away her head;
With a sad and bitter feeling looked she back upon
her dead;
But she heard the youth's low moaning, and his
struggling breath of pain,
And she raised the cooling water to his parching
lips again.

Whispered low the dying soldier, pressed her hand
and faintly smiled;
Was that pitying face his mother's? did she watch
beside her child?
All his stranger words with meaning her woman's
heart supplied;
With her kiss upon his forehead, "Mother!"
murmured he, and died!

"A bitter curse upon them, poor boy, who led thee
forth,
From some gentle, sad-eyed mother, weeping, lonely,
in the North!"
Spake the mournful Mexic woman, as she laid him
with her dead,
And turned to soothe the living, and bind the
wounds which bled.

"Look forth once more, Ximena!" Like a cloud
before the wind
Rolls the battle down the mountains, leaving blood
and death behind;
Ah! they plead in vain for mercy; in the dust the
wounded strive;
"Hide your faces, holy angels! O thou Christ of
God, forgive!"

Sink, O Night, among thy mountains! let the cool,
gray shadows fall;
Dying brothers, fighting demons, drop thy curtain
over all!
Through the thickening winter twilight, wide apart
the battle rolled,
In its sheath the sabre rested, and the cannon's
lips grew cold.

But the noble Mexic women still their holy task
pursued,
Through that long, dark night of sorrow, worn and
faint and lacking food.
Over weak and suffering brothers, with a tender
care they hung,
And the dying foeman blessed them in a strange
and Northern tongue.

Not wholly lost, O Father! is this evil world of
ours;
Upward, through its blood and ashes, spring afresh
the Eden flowers;
From its smoking hell of battle, Love and Pity
send their prayer,
And still thy white-winged angels hover dimly in
our air!
1847.

THE LEGEND OF ST. MARK.

"This legend [to which my attention was called by my friend Charles

Sumner], is the subject of a celebrated picture by Tintoretto, of which Mr. Rogers possesses the original sketch. The slave lies on the ground, amid a crowd of spectators, who look on, animated by all the various emotions of sympathy, rage, terror; a woman, in front, with a child in her arms, has always been admired for the lifelike vivacity of her attitude and expression. The executioner holds up the broken implements; St. Mark, with a headlong movement, seems to rush down from heaven in haste to save his worshipper. The dramatic grouping in this picture is wonderful; the coloring, in its gorgeous depth and harmony, is, in Mr. Rogers's sketch, finer than in the picture."--MRS. JAMESON'S Sacred and Legendary Art, I. 154.

THE day is closing dark and cold,
With roaring blast and sleety showers;
And through the dusk the lilacs wear
The bloom of snow, instead of flowers.

I turn me from the gloom without,
To ponder o'er a tale of old;
A legend of the age of Faith,
By dreaming monk or abbess told.

On Tintoretto's canvas lives
That fancy of a loving heart,
In graceful lines and shapes of power,
And hues immortal as his art.

In Provence (so the story runs)
There lived a lord, to whom, as slave,
A peasant-boy of tender years
The chance of trade or conquest gave.

Forth-looking from the castle tower,
Beyond the hills with almonds dark,
The straining eye could scarce discern
The chapel of the good St. Mark.

And there, when bitter word or fare
The service of the youth repaid,
By stealth, before that holy shrine,
For grace to bear his wrong, he prayed.

The steed stamped at the castle gate,
The boar-hunt sounded on the hill;
Why stayed the Baron from the chase,
With looks so stern, and words so ill?

"Go, bind yon slave! and let him learn,
By scath of fire and strain of cord,
How ill they speed who give dead saints
The homage due their living lord!"

They bound him on the fearful rack,

When, through the dungeon’s vaulted dark,
He saw the light of shining robes,
And knew the face of good St. Mark.

Then sank the iron rack apart,
The cords released their cruel clasp,
The pincers, with their teeth of fire,
Fell broken from the torturer’s grasp.

And lo! before the Youth and Saint,
Barred door and wall of stone gave way;
And up from bondage and the night
They passed to freedom and the day!

O dreaming monk! thy tale is true;
O painter! true thy pencil’s art;
in tones of hope and prophecy,
Ye whisper to my listening heart!

Unheard no burdened heart’s appeal
Moans up to God’s inclining ear;
Unheeded by his tender eye,
Falls to the earth no sufferer’s tear.

For still the Lord alone is God
The pomp and power of tyrant man
Are scattered at his lightest breath,
Like chaff before the winnower’s fan.

Not always shall the slave uplift
His heavy hands to Heaven in vain.
God’s angel, like the good St. Mark,
Comes shining down to break his chain!

O weary ones! ye may not see
Your helpers in their downward flight;
Nor hear the sound of silver wings
Slow beating through the hush of night!

But not the less gray Dothan shone,
With sunbright watchers bending low,
That Fear’s dim eye beheld alone
The spear-heads of the Syrian foe.

There are, who, like the Seer of old,
Can see the helpers God has sent,
And how life’s rugged mountain-side
Is white with many an angel tent!

They hear the heralds whom our Lord
Sends down his pathway to prepare;
And light, from others hidden, shines
On their high place of faith and prayer.

Let such, for earth’s despairing ones,
Hopeless, yet longing to be free,
Breathe once again the Prophet’s prayer
"Lord, ope their eyes, that they may see!"
1849.

KATHLEEN.

This ballad was originally published in my prose work, Leaves from Margaret Smith’s Journal, as the song of a wandering Milesian schoolmaster. In the seventeenth century, slavery in the New World was by no means confined to the natives of Africa. Political offenders and criminals were transported by the British government to the plantations of Barbadoes and Virginia, where they were sold like cattle in the market. Kidnapping of free and innocent white persons was practised to a considerable extent in the seaports of the United Kingdom.

O NORAH, lay your basket down,
And rest your weary hand,
And come and hear me sing a song
Of our old Ireland.

There was a lord of Galaway,
A mighty lord was he;
And he did wed a second wife,
A maid of low degree.

But he was old, and she was young,
And so, in evil spite,
She baked the black bread for his kin,
And fed her own with white.

She whipped the maids and starved the kern,
And drove away the poor;
"Ah, woe is me!" the old lord said,
"I rue my bargain sore!"

This lord he had a daughter fair,
Beloved of old and young,
And nightly round the shealing-fires
Of her the gleeman sung.

"As sweet and good is young Kathleen
As Eve before her fall;"
So sang the harper at the fair,
So harped he in the hall.

"Oh, come to me, my daughter dear!
Come sit upon my knee,

For looking in your face, Kathleen,
Your mother’s own I see!"

He smoothed and smoothed her hair away,
He kissed her forehead fair;
"It is my darling Mary’s brow,
It is my darling’s hair!"

Oh, then spake up the angry dame,
"Get up, get up," quoth she,
"I’ll sell ye over Ireland,
I’ll sell ye o’er the sea!"

She clipped her glossy hair away,
That none her rank might know;
She took away her gown of silk,
And gave her one of tow,

And sent her down to Limerick town
And to a seaman sold
This daughter of an Irish lord
For ten good pounds in gold.

The lord he smote upon his breast,
And tore his beard so gray;
But he was old, and she was young,
And so she had her way.

Sure that same night the Banshee howled
To fright the evil dame,
And fairy folks, who loved Kathleen,
With funeral torches came.

She watched them glancing through the trees,
And glimmering down the hill;
They crept before the dead-vault door,
And there they all stood still!

"Get up, old man! the wake-lights shine!"
"Ye murthering witch," quoth he,
"So I’m rid of your tongue, I little care
If they shine for you or me."

"Oh, whoso brings my daughter back,
My gold and land shall have!"
Oh, then spake up his handsome page,
"No gold nor land I crave!

"But give to me your daughter dear,
Give sweet Kathleen to me,
Be she on sea or be she on land,
I’ll bring her back to thee."

"My daughter is a lady born,
And you of low degree,
But she shall be your bride the day
You bring her back to me."

He sailed east, he sailed west,
And far and long sailed he,
Until he came to Boston town,
Across the great salt sea.

"Oh, have ye seen the young Kathleen,
The flower of Ireland?
Ye'll know her by her eyes so blue,
And by her snow-white hand!"

Out spake an ancient man, "I know
The maiden whom ye mean;
I bought her of a Limerick man,
And she is called Kathleen.

"No skill hath she in household work,
Her hands are soft and white,
Yet well by loving looks and ways
She doth her cost requite."

So up they walked through Boston town,
And met a maiden fair,
A little basket on her arm
So snowy-white and bare.

"Come hither, child, and say hast thou
This young man ever seen?"
They wept within each other's arms,
The page and young Kathleen.

"Oh give to me this darling child,
And take my purse of gold."
"Nay, not by me," her master said,
"Shall sweet Kathleen be sold.

"We loved her in the place of one
The Lord hath early ta'en;
But, since her heart's in Ireland,
We give her back again!"

Oh, for that same the saints in heaven
For his poor soul shall pray,
And Mary Mother wash with tears
His heresies away.

Sure now they dwell in Ireland;
As you go up Claremore
Ye'll see their castle looking down

The pleasant Galway shore.

And the old lord’s wife is dead and gone,
And a happy man is he,
For he sits beside his own Kathleen,
With her darling on his knee.
1849.

THE WELL OF LOCH MAREE

Pennant, in his Voyage to the Hebrides, describes the holy well of Loch Maree, the waters of which were supposed to effect a miraculous cure of melancholy, trouble, and insanity.

CALM on the breast of Loch Maree
A little isle reposes;
A shadow woven of the oak
And willow o’er it closes.

Within, a Druid’s mound is seen,
Set round with stony warders;
A fountain, gushing through the turf,
Flows o’er its grassy borders.

And whoso bathes therein his brow,
With care or madness burning,
Feels once again his healthful thought
And sense of peace returning.

O restless heart and fevered brain,
Unquiet and unstable,
That holy well of Loch Maree
Is more than idle fable!

Life’s changes vex, its discords stun,
Its glaring sunshine blindeth,
And blest is he who on his way
That fount of healing findeth!

The shadows of a humbled will
And contrite heart are o’er it;
Go read its legend, "TRUST IN GOD,"
On Faith’s white stones before it.
1850.

THE CHAPEL OF THE HERMITS.

The incident upon which this poem is based is related in a note to Bernardin Henri Saint Pierre's Etudes de la Nature. "We arrived at the habitation of the Hermits a little before they sat down to their table, and while they were still at church. J. J. Rousseau proposed to me to offer up our devotions. The hermits were reciting the Litanies of Providence, which are remarkably beautiful. After we had addressed our prayers to God, and the hermits were proceeding to the refectory, Rousseau said to me, with his heart overflowing, 'At this moment I experience what is said in the gospel: Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. There is here a feeling of peace and happiness which penetrates the soul.' I said, 'If Finelon had lived, you would have been a Catholic.' He exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, 'Oh, if Finelon were alive, I would struggle to get into his service, even as a lackey!'" In my sketch of Saint Pierre, it will be seen that I have somewhat antedated the period of his old age. At that time he was not probably more than fifty. In describing him, I have by no means exaggerated his own history of his mental condition at the period of the story. In the fragmentary Sequel to his Studies of Nature, he thus speaks of himself: "The ingratitude of those of whom I had deserved kindness, unexpected family misfortunes, the total loss of my small patrimony through enterprises solely undertaken for the benefit of my country, the debts under which I lay oppressed, the blasting of all my hopes,--these combined calamities made dreadful inroads upon my health and reason. . . . I found it impossible to continue in a room where there was company, especially if the doors were shut. I could not even cross an alley in a public garden, if several persons had got together in it. When alone, my malady subsided. I felt myself likewise at ease in places where I saw children only. At the sight of any one walking up to the place where I was, I felt my whole frame agitated, and retired. I often said to myself, 'My sole study has been to merit well of mankind; why do I fear them?'"

He attributes his improved health of mind and body to the counsels of his friend, J. J. Rousseau. "I renounced," says he, "my books. I threw my eyes upon the works of nature, which spake to all my senses a language which neither time nor nations have it in their power to alter. Thenceforth my histories and my journals were the herbage of the fields and meadows. My thoughts did not go forth painfully after them, as in the case of human systems; but their thoughts, under a thousand engaging forms, quietly sought me. In these I studied, without effort, the laws of that Universal Wisdom which had surrounded me from the cradle, but on which heretofore I had bestowed little attention."

Speaking of Rousseau, he says: "I derived inexpressible satisfaction from his society. What I prized still more than his genius was his probity. He was one of the few literary characters, tried in the furnace of affliction, to whom you could, with perfect security, confide your most secret thoughts. . . . Even when he deviated, and became the victim of himself or of others, he could forget his own misery in devotion to the welfare of mankind. He was uniformly the advocate of the miserable. There might be inscribed on his tomb these affecting words from that Book of which he carried always about him some select passages, during the last years of his life: 'His sins, which are many, are forgiven, for

he loved much.'"

"I DO believe, and yet, in grief,
I pray for help to unbelief;
For needful strength aside to lay
The daily cumberings of my way.

"I 'm sick at heart of craft and cant,
Sick of the crazed enthusiast's rant,
Profession's smooth hypocrisies,
And creeds of iron, and lives of ease.

"I ponder o'er the sacred word,
I read the record of our Lord;
And, weak and troubled, envy them
Who touched His seamless garment's hem;

"Who saw the tears of love He wept
Above the grave where Lazarus slept;
And heard, amidst the shadows dim
Of Olivet, His evening hymn.

"How blessed the swineherd's low estate,
The beggar crouching at the gate,
The leper loathly and abhorred,
Whose eyes of flesh beheld the Lord!

"O sacred soil His sandals pressed!
Sweet fountains of His noonday rest!
O light and air of Palestine,
Impregnate with His life divine!

"Oh, bear me thither! Let me look
On Siloa's pool, and Kedron's brook;
Kneel at Gethsemane, and by
Gennesaret walk, before I die!

"Methinks this cold and northern night
Would melt before that Orient light;
And, wet by Hermon's dew and rain,
My childhood's faith revive again!"

So spake my friend, one autumn day,
Where the still river slid away
Beneath us, and above the brown
Red curtains of the woods shut down.

Then said I,--for I could not brook
The mute appealing of his look,--
"I, too, am weak, and faith is small,
And blindness happeneth unto all.

"Yet, sometimes glimpses on my sight,

Through present wrong, the eternal right;
And, step by step, since time began,
I see the steady gain of man;

"That all of good the past hath had
Remains to make our own time glad,
Our common daily life divine,
And every land a Palestine.

"Thou weariest of thy present state;
What gain to thee time's holiest date?
The doubter now perchance had been
As High Priest or as Pilate then!

"What thought Chorazin's scribes? What faith
In Him had Nain and Nazareth?
Of the few followers whom He led
One sold Him,--all forsook and fled.

"O friend! we need nor rock nor sand,
Nor storied stream of Morning-Land;
The heavens are glassed in Merrimac,--
What more could Jordan render back?

"We lack but open eye and ear
To find the Orient's marvels here;
The still small voice in autumn's hush,
Yon maple wood the burning bush.

"For still the new transcends the old,
In signs and tokens manifold;
Slaves rise up men; the olive waves,
With roots deep set in battle graves!

"Through the harsh noises of our day
A low, sweet prelude finds its way;
Through clouds of doubt, and creeds of fear,
A light is breaking, calm and clear.

"That song of Love, now low and far,
Erelong shall swell from star to star!
That light, the breaking day, which tips
The golden-spired Apocalypse!"

Then, when my good friend shook his head,
And, sighing, sadly smiled, I said:
"Thou mind'st me of a story told
In rare Bernardin's leaves of gold."

And while the slanted sunbeams wove
The shadows of the frost-stained grove,
And, picturing all, the river ran
O'er cloud and wood, I thus began:--

. . . . . .

In Mount Valerien’s chestnut wood
The Chapel of the Hermits stood;
And thither, at the close of day,
Came two old pilgrims, worn and gray.

One, whose impetuous youth defied
The storms of Baikal’s wintry side,
And mused and dreamed where tropic day
Flamed o’er his lost Virginia’s bay.

His simple tale of love and woe
All hearts had melted, high or low;--
A blissful pain, a sweet distress,
Immortal in its tenderness.

Yet, while above his charmed page
Beat quick the young heart of his age,
He walked amidst the crowd unknown,
A sorrowing old man, strange and lone.

A homeless, troubled age,--the gray
Pale setting of a weary day;
Too dull his ear for voice of praise,
Too sadly worn his brow for bays.

Pride, lust of power and glory, slept;
Yet still his heart its young dream kept,
And, wandering like the deluge-dove,
Still sought the resting-place of love.

And, mateless, childless, envied more
The peasant’s welcome from his door
By smiling eyes at eventide,
Than kingly gifts or lettered pride.

Until, in place of wife and child,
All-pitying Nature on him smiled,
And gave to him the golden keys
To all her inmost sanctities.

Mild Druid of her wood-paths dim!
She laid her great heart bare to him,
Its loves and sweet accords;--he saw
The beauty of her perfect law.

The language of her signs lie knew,
What notes her cloudy clarion blew;
The rhythm of autumn’s forest dyes,
The hymn of sunset’s painted skies.

And thus he seemed to hear the song
Which swept, of old, the stars along;
And to his eyes the earth once more
Its fresh and primal beauty wore.

Who sought with him, from summer air,
And field and wood, a balm for care;
And bathed in light of sunset skies
His tortured nerves and weary eyes?

His fame on all the winds had flown;
His words had shaken crypt and throne;
Like fire, on camp and court and cell
They dropped, and kindled as they fell.

Beneath the pomps of state, below
The mitred juggler's masque and show,
A prophecy, a vague hope, ran
His burning thought from man to man.

For peace or rest too well he saw
The fraud of priests, the wrong of law,
And felt how hard, between the two,
Their breath of pain the millions drew.

A prophet-utterance, strong and wild,
The weakness of an unweaned child,
A sun-bright hope for human-kind,
And self-despair, in him combined.

He loathed the false, yet lived not true
To half the glorious truths he knew;
The doubt, the discord, and the sin,
He mourned without, he felt within.

Untrod by him the path he showed,
Sweet pictures on his easel glowed
Of simple faith, and loves of home,
And virtue's golden days to come.

But weakness, shame, and folly made
The foil to all his pen portrayed;
Still, where his dreamy splendors shone,
The shadow of himself was thrown.

Lord, what is man, whose thought, at times,
Up to Thy sevenfold brightness climbs,
While still his grosser instinct clings
To earth, like other creeping things!

So rich in words, in acts so mean;
So high, so low; chance-swung between
The foulness of the penal pit

And Truth’s clear sky, millennium-lit!

Vain, pride of star-lent genius!--vain,
Quick fancy and creative brain,
Unblest by prayerful sacrifice,
Absurdly great, or weakly wise!

Midst yearnings for a truer life,
Without were fears, within was strife;
And still his wayward act denied
The perfect good for which he sighed.

The love he sent forth void returned;
The fame that crowned him scorched and burned,
Burning, yet cold and drear and lone,--
A fire-mount in a frozen zone!

Like that the gray-haired sea-king passed,[9]
Seen southward from his sleety mast,
About whose brows of changeless frost
A wreath of flame the wild winds tossed.

Far round the mournful beauty played
Of lambent light and purple shade,
Lost on the fixed and dumb despair
Of frozen earth and sea and air!

A man apart, unknown, unloved
By those whose wrongs his soul had moved,
He bore the ban of Church and State,
The good man’s fear, the bigot’s hate!

Forth from the city’s noise and throng,
Its pomp and shame, its sin and wrong,
The twain that summer day had strayed
To Mount Valerien’s chestnut shade.

To them the green fields and the wood
Lent something of their quietude,
And golden-tinted sunset seemed
Prophetical of all they dreamed.

The hermits from their simple cares
The bell was calling home to prayers,
And, listening to its sound, the twain
Seemed lapped in childhood’s trust again.

Wide open stood the chapel door;
A sweet old music, swelling o’er
Low prayerful murmurs, issued thence,--
The Litanies of Providence!

Then Rousseau spake: "Where two or three

In His name meet, He there will be!"
And then, in silence, on their knees
They sank beneath the chestnut-trees.

As to the blind returning light,
As daybreak to the Arctic night,
Old faith revived; the doubts of years
Dissolved in reverential tears.

That gush of feeling overpast,
"Ah me!" Bernardin sighed at last,
I would thy bitterest foes could see
Thy heart as it is seen of me!

"No church of God hast thou denied;
Thou hast but spurned in scorn aside
A bare and hollow counterfeit,
Profaning the pure name of it!

"With dry dead moss and marish weeds
His fire the western herdsman feeds,
And greener from the ashen plain
The sweet spring grasses rise again.

"Nor thunder-peal nor mighty wind
Disturb the solid sky behind;
And through the cloud the red bolt rends
The calm, still smile of Heaven descends.

"Thus through the world, like bolt and blast,
And scourging fire, thy words have passed.
Clouds break,--the steadfast heavens remain;
Weeds burn,--the ashes feed the grain!

"But whoso strives with wrong may find
Its touch pollute, its darkness blind;
And learn, as latent fraud is shown
In others' faith, to doubt his own.

"With dream and falsehood, simple trust
And pious hope we tread in dust;
Lost the calm faith in goodness,--lost
The baptism of the Pentecost!

"Alas!--the blows for error meant
Too oft on truth itself are spent,
As through the false and vile and base
Looks forth her sad, rebuking face.

"Not ours the Theban's charmed life;
We come not scathless from the strife!
The Python's coil about us clings,
The trampled Hydra bites and stings!

"Meanwhile, the sport of seeming chance,
The plastic shapes of circumstance,
What might have been we fondly guess,
If earlier born, or tempted less.

"And thou, in these wild, troubled days,
Misjudged alike in blame and praise,
Unsought and undeserved the same
The skeptic's praise, the bigot's blame;--

"I cannot doubt, if thou hadst been
Among the highly favored men
Who walked on earth with Fenelon,
He would have owned thee as his son;

"And, bright with wings of cherubim
Visibly waving over him,
Seen through his life, the Church had seemed
All that its old confessors dreamed."

"I would have been," Jean Jaques replied,
"The humblest servant at his side,
Obscure, unknown, content to see
How beautiful man's life may be!

"Oh, more than thrice-blest relic, more
Than solemn rite or sacred lore,
The holy life of one who trod
The foot-marks of the Christ of God!

"Amidst a blinded world he saw
The oneness of the Dual law;
That Heaven's sweet peace on Earth began,
And God was loved through love of man.

"He lived the Truth which reconciled
The strong man Reason, Faith the child;
In him belief and act were one,
The homilies of duty done!"

So speaking, through the twilight gray
The two old pilgrims went their way.
What seeds of life that day were sown,
The heavenly watchers knew alone.

Time passed, and Autumn came to fold
Green Summer in her brown and gold;
Time passed, and Winter's tears of snow
Dropped on the grave-mound of Rousseau.

"The tree remaineth where it fell,
The pained on earth is pained in hell!"

So priestcraft from its altars cursed
The mournful doubts its falsehood nursed.

Ah! well of old the Psalmist prayed,
"Thy hand, not man's, on me be laid!"
Earth frowns below, Heaven weeps above,
And man is hate, but God is love!

No Hermits now the wanderer sees,
Nor chapel with its chestnut-trees;
A morning dream, a tale that's told,
The wave of change o'er all has rolled.

Yet lives the lesson of that day;
And from its twilight cool and gray
Comes up a low, sad whisper, "Make
The truth thine own, for truth's own sake.

"Why wait to see in thy brief span
Its perfect flower and fruit in man?
No saintly touch can save; no balm
Of healing hath the martyr's palm.

"Midst soulless forms, and false pretence
Of spiritual pride and pampered sense,
A voice saith, 'What is that to thee?
Be true thyself, and follow Me!

"In days when throne and altar heard
The wanton's wish, the bigot's word,
And pomp of state and ritual show
Scarce hid the loathsome death below,--

"Midst fawning priests and courtiers foul,
The losel swarm of crown and cowl,
White-robed walked Francois Fenelon,
Stainless as Uriel in the sun!

"Yet in his time the stake blazed red,
The poor were eaten up like bread
Men knew him not; his garment's hem
No healing virtue had for them.

"Alas! no present saint we find;
The white cymar gleams far behind,
Revealed in outline vague, sublime,
Through telescopic mists of time!

"Trust not in man with passing breath,
But in the Lord, old Scripture saith;
The truth which saves thou mayst not blend
With false professor, faithless friend.

"Search thine own heart. What paineth thee
In others in thyself may be;
All dust is frail, all flesh is weak;
Be thou the true man thou dost seek!

"Where now with pain thou treadest, trod
The whitest of the saints of God!
To show thee where their feet were set,
the light which led them shineth yet.

"The footprints of the life divine,
Which marked their path, remain in thine;
And that great Life, transfused in theirs,
Awaits thy faith, thy love, thy prayers!"

A lesson which I well may heed,
A word of fitness to my need;
So from that twilight cool and gray
Still saith a voice, or seems to say.

We rose, and slowly homeward turned,
While down the west the sunset burned;
And, in its light, hill, wood, and tide,
And human forms seemed glorified.

The village homes transfigured stood,
And purple bluffs, whose belting wood
Across the waters leaned to hold
The yellow leaves like lamps of hold.

Then spake my friend: "Thy words are true;
Forever old, forever new,
These home-seen splendors are the same
Which over Eden’s sunsets came.

"To these bowed heavens let wood and hill
Lift voiceless praise and anthem still;
Fall, warm with blessing, over them,
Light of the New Jerusalem!

"Flow on, sweet river, like the stream
Of John’s Apocalyptic dream
This mapled ridge shall Horeb be,
Yon green-banked lake our Galilee!

"Henceforth my heart shall sigh no more
For olden time and holier shore;
God’s love and blessing, then and there,
Are now and here and everywhere."
1851.

TAULER.

TAULER, the preacher, walked, one autumn day,
Without the walls of Strasburg, by the Rhine,
Pondering the solemn Miracle of Life;
As one who, wandering in a starless night,
Feels momently the jar of unseen waves,
And hears the thunder of an unknown sea,
Breaking along an unimagined shore.

And as he walked he prayed. Even the same
Old prayer with which, for half a score of years,
Morning, and noon, and evening, lip and heart
Had groaned: "Have pity upon me, Lord!
Thou seest, while teaching others, I am blind.
Send me a man who can direct my steps!"

Then, as he mused, he heard along his path
A sound as of an old man's staff among
The dry, dead linden-leaves; and, looking up,
He saw a stranger, weak, and poor, and old.

"Peace be unto thee, father!" Tauler said,
"God give thee a good day!" The old man raised
Slowly his calm blue eyes. "I thank thee, son;
But all my days are good, and none are ill."

Wondering thereat, the preacher spake again,
"God give thee happy life." The old man smiled,
"I never am unhappy."

Tauler laid
His hand upon the stranger's coarse gray sleeve
"Tell me, O father, what thy strange words mean.
Surely man's days are evil, and his life
Sad as the grave it leads to." "Nay, my son,
Our times are in God's hands, and all our days
Are as our needs; for shadow as for sun,
For cold as heat, for want as wealth, alike
Our thanks are due, since that is best which is;
And that which is not, sharing not His life,
Is evil only as devoid of good.
And for the happiness of which I spake,
I find it in submission to his will,
And calm trust in the holy Trinity
Of Knowledge, Goodness, and Almighty Power."

Silently wondering, for a little space,
Stood the great preacher; then he spake as one
Who, suddenly grappling with a haunting thought
Which long has followed, whispering through the dark
Strange terrors, drags it, shrieking, into light

"What if God’s will consign thee hence to Hell?"

"Then," said the stranger, cheerily, "be it so.
What Hell may be I know not; this I know,--
I cannot lose the presence of the Lord.
One arm, Humility, takes hold upon
His dear Humanity; the other, Love,
Clasps his Divinity. So where I go
He goes; and better fire-walled Hell with Him
Than golden-gated Paradise without."

Tears sprang in Tauler’s eyes. A sudden light,
Like the first ray which fell on chaos, clove
Apart the shadow wherein he had walked
Darkly at noon. And, as the strange old man
Went his slow way, until his silver hair
Set like the white moon where the hills of vine
Slope to the Rhine, he bowed his head and said
"My prayer is answered. God hath sent the man
Long sought, to teach me, by his simple trust,
Wisdom the weary schoolmen never knew."

So, entering with a changed and cheerful step
The city gates, he saw, far down the street,
A mighty shadow break the light of noon,
Which tracing backward till its airy lines
Hardened to stony plinths, he raised his eyes
O’er broad facade and lofty pediment,
O’er architrave and frieze and sainted niche,
Up the stone lace-work chiselled by the wise
Erwin of Steinbach, dizzily up to where
In the noon-brightness the great Minster’s tower,
Jewelled with sunbeams on its mural crown,
Rose like a visible prayer. "Behold!" he said,
"The stranger’s faith made plain before mine eyes.
As yonder tower outstretches to the earth
The dark triangle of its shade alone
When the clear day is shining on its top,
So, darkness in the pathway of Man’s life
Is but the shadow of God’s providence,
By the great Sun of Wisdom cast thereon;
And what is dark below is light in Heaven."
1853.

THE HERMIT OF THE THEBAID.

O STRONG, upwelling prayers of faith,
From inmost founts of life ye start,--
The spirit’s pulse, the vital breath
Of soul and heart!

From pastoral toil, from traffic’s din,
Alone, in crowds, at home, abroad,
Unheard of man, ye enter in
The ear of God.

Ye brook no forced and measured tasks,
Nor weary rote, nor formal chains;
The simple heart, that freely asks
In love, obtains.

For man the living temple is
The mercy-seat and cherubim,
And all the holy mysteries,
He bears with him.

And most avails the prayer of love,
Which, wordless, shapes itself in needs,
And wearies Heaven for naught above
Our common needs.

Which brings to God’s all-perfect will
That trust of His undoubting child
Whereby all seeming good and ill
Are reconciled.

And, seeking not for special signs
Of favor, is content to fall
Within the providence which shines
And rains on all.

Alone, the Thebaid hermit leaned
At noontime o’er the sacred word.
Was it an angel or a fiend
Whose voice be heard?

It broke the desert’s hush of awe,
A human utterance, sweet and mild;
And, looking up, the hermit saw
A little child.

A child, with wonder-widened eyes,
O’erawed and troubled by the sight
Of hot, red sands, and brazen skies,
And anchorite.

"’What dost thou here, poor man? No shade
Of cool, green palms, nor grass, nor well,
Nor corn, nor vines." The hermit said
"With God I dwell.

"Alone with Him in this great calm,
I live not by the outward sense;

My Nile his love, my sheltering palm
His providence."

The child gazed round him. "Does God live
Here only?--where the desert's rim
Is green with corn, at morn and eve,
We pray to Him.

"My brother tills beside the Nile
His little field; beneath the leaves
My sisters sit and spin, the while
My mother weaves.

"And when the millet's ripe heads fall,
And all the bean-field hangs in pod,
My mother smiles, and, says that all
Are gifts from God."

Adown the hermit's wasted cheeks
Glistened the flow of human tears;
"Dear Lord!" he said, "Thy angel speaks,
Thy servant hears."

Within his arms the child he took,
And thought of home and life with men;
And all his pilgrim feet forsook
Returned again.

The palmy shadows cool and long,
The eyes that smiled through lavish locks,
Home's cradle-hymn and harvest-song,
And bleat of flocks.

"O child!" he said, "thou teachest me
There is no place where God is not;
That love will make, where'er it be,
A holy spot."

He rose from off the desert sand,
And, leaning on his staff of thorn,
Went with the young child hand in hand,
Like night with morn.

They crossed the desert's burning line,
And heard the palm-tree's rustling fan,
The Nile-bird's cry, the low of kine,
And voice of man.

Unquestioning, his childish guide
He followed, as the small hand led
To where a woman, gentle-eyed,
Her distaff fed.

She rose, she clasped her truant boy,
She thanked the stranger with her eyes;
The hermit gazed in doubt and joy
And dumb surprise.

And to!--with sudden warmth and light
A tender memory thrilled his frame;
New-born, the world-lost anchorite
A man became.

"O sister of El Zara's race,
Behold me!--had we not one mother?"
She gazed into the stranger's face
"Thou art my brother!"

"And when to share our evening meal,
She calls the stranger at the door,
She says God fills the hands that deal
Food to the poor."

"O kin of blood! Thy life of use
And patient trust is more than mine;
And wiser than the gray recluse
This child of thine.

"For, taught of him whom God hath sent,
That toil is praise, and love is prayer,
I come, life's cares and pains content
With thee to share."

Even as his foot the threshold crossed,
The hermit's better life began;
Its holiest saint the Thebaid lost,
And found a man!
1854.

MAUD MULLER.

The recollection of some descendants of a Hessian deserter in the Revolutionary war bearing the name of Muller doubtless suggested the somewhat infelicitous title of a New England idyl. The poem had no real foundation in fact, though a hint of it may have been found in recalling an incident, trivial in itself, of a journey on the picturesque Maine seaboard with my sister some years before it was written. We had stopped to rest our tired horse under the shade of an apple-tree, and refresh him with water from a little brook which rippled through the stone wall across the road. A very beautiful young girl in scantest summer attire was at work in the hay-field, and as we talked with her we noticed that she strove to hide her bare feet by raking hay over them, blushing as she did so, through the tan of her cheek and neck.

MAUD MULLER on a summer's day,
Raked the meadow sweet with hay.

Beneath her torn hat glowed the wealth
Of simple beauty and rustic-health.

Singing, she wrought, and her merry glee
The mock-bird echoed from his tree.

But when she glanced to the far-off town,
White from its hill-slope looking down,

The sweet song died, and a vague unrest
And a nameless longing filled her breast,--

A wish, that she hardly dared to own,
For something better than she had known.

The Judge rode slowly down the lane,
Smoothing his horse's chestnut mane.

He drew his bridle in the shade
Of the apple-trees, to greet the maid,

And asked a draught from the spring that flowed
Through the meadow across the road.

She stooped where the cool spring bubbled up,
And filled for him her small tin cup,

And blushed as she gave it, looking down
On her feet so bare, and her tattered gown.

"Thanks!" said the Judge; "a sweeter draught
From a fairer hand was never quaffed."

He spoke of the grass and flowers and trees,
Of the singing birds and the humming bees;

Then talked of the haying, and wondered whether
The cloud in the west would bring foul weather.

And Maud forgot her brier-torn gown,
And her graceful ankles bare and brown;

And listened, while a pleased surprise
Looked from her long-lashed hazel eyes.

At last, like one who for delay
Seeks a vain excuse, he rode away.

Maud Muller looked and sighed: "Ah me!

That I the Judge’s bride might be!

"He would dress me up in silks so fine,
And praise and toast me at his wine.

"My father should wear a broadcloth coat;
My brother should sail a painted boat.

"I’d dress my mother so grand and gay,
And the baby should have a new toy each day.

"And I ’d feed the hungry and clothe the poor,
And all should bless me who left our door."

The Judge looked back as he climbed the hill,
And saw Maud Muller standing still.

A form more fair, a face more sweet,
Ne’er hath it been my lot to meet.

"And her modest answer and graceful air
Show her wise and good as she is fair.

"Would she were mine, and I to-day,
Like her, a harvester of hay;

"No doubtful balance of rights and wrongs,
Nor weary lawyers with endless tongues,

"But low of cattle and song of birds,
And health and quiet and loving words."

But he thought of his sisters, proud and cold,
And his mother, vain of her rank and gold.

So, closing his heart, the Judge rode on,
And Maud was left in the field alone.

But the lawyers smiled that afternoon,
When he hummed in court an old love-tune;

And the young girl mused beside the well
Till the rain on the unraked clover fell.

He wedded a wife of richest dower,
Who lived for fashion, as he for power.

Yet oft, in his marble hearth’s bright glow,
He watched a picture come and go;

And sweet Maud Muller’s hazel eyes
Looked out in their innocent surprise.

Oft, when the wine in his glass was red,
He longed for the wayside well instead;

And closed his eyes on his garnished rooms
To dream of meadows and clover-blooms.

And the proud man sighed, with a secret pain,
"Ah, that I were free again!

"Free as when I rode that day,
Where the barefoot maiden raked her hay."

She wedded a man unlearned and poor,
And many children played round her door.

But care and sorrow, and childbirth pain,
Left their traces on heart and brain.

And oft, when the summer sun shone hot
On the new-mown hay in the meadow lot,

And she heard the little spring brook fall
Over the roadside, through the wall,

In the shade of the apple-tree again
She saw a rider draw his rein.

And, gazing down with timid grace,
She felt his pleased eyes read her face.

Sometimes her narrow kitchen walls
Stretched away into stately halls;

The weary wheel to a spinnet turned,
The tallow candle an astral burned,

And for him who sat by the chimney lug,
Dozing and grumbling o’er pipe and mug,

A manly form at her side she saw,
And joy was duty and love was law.

Then she took up her burden of life again,
Saying only, "It might have been."

Alas for maiden, alas for Judge,
For rich repiner and household drudge!

God pity them both! and pity us all,
Who vainly the dreams of youth recall.

For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: "It might have been!"

Ah, well! for us all some sweet hope lies
Deeply buried from human eyes;

And, in the hereafter, angels may
Roll the stone from its grave away!
1854.

MARY GARVIN.

FROM the heart of Waumbek Methna, from the
lake that never fails,
Falls the Saco in the green lap of Conway's
intervales;
There, in wild and virgin freshness, its waters
foam and flow,
As when Darby Field first saw them, two hundred
years ago.

But, vexed in all its seaward course with bridges,
dams, and mills,
How changed is Saco's stream, how lost its freedom
of the hills,
Since travelled Jocelyn, factor Vines, and stately
Champernoon
Heard on its banks the gray wolf's howl, the trumpet
of the loon!

With smoking axle hot with speed, with steeds of
fire and steam,
Wide-waked To-day leaves Yesterday behind him
like a dream.
Still, from the hurrying train of Life, fly backward
far and fast
The milestones of the fathers, the landmarks of
the past.

But human hearts remain unchanged: the sorrow
and the sin,
The loves and hopes and fears of old, are to our
own akin;

And if, in tales our fathers told, the songs our
mothers sung,
Tradition wears a snowy beard, Romance is always
young.

O sharp-lined man of traffic, on Saco's banks today!
O mill-girl watching late and long the shuttle's
restless play!
Let, for the once, a listening ear the working hand

beguile,
And lend my old Provincial tale, as suits, a tear or smile!

. . . . . .

The evening gun had sounded from gray Fort Mary’s walls;
Through the forest, like a wild beast, roared and plunged the Saco’s’ falls.

And westward on the sea-wind, that damp and gusty grew,
Over cedars darkening inland the smokes of Spurwink blew.

On the hearth of Farmer Garvin, blazed the crackling walnut log;
Right and left sat dame and goodman, and between them lay the dog,

Head on paws, and tail slow wagging, and beside him on her mat,
Sitting drowsy in the firelight, winked and purred the mottled cat.

"Twenty years!" said Goodman Garvin, speaking sadly, under breath,
And his gray head slowly shaking, as one who speaks of death.

The goodwife dropped her needles: "It is twenty years to-day,
Since the Indians fell on Saco, and stole our child away."

Then they sank into the silence, for each knew the other’s thought,
Of a great and common sorrow, and words were needed not.

"Who knocks?" cried Goodman Garvin. The door was open thrown;
On two strangers, man and maiden, cloaked and furred, the fire-light shone.

One with courteous gesture lifted the bear-skin from his head;
"Lives here Elkanah Garvin?" "I am he," the goodman said.

"Sit ye down, and dry and warm ye, for the night is chill with rain."

And the goodwife drew the settle, and stirred the
fire amain.

The maid unclasped her cloak-hood, the firelight
glistened fair
In her large, moist eyes, and over soft folds of
dark brown hair.

Dame Garvin looked upon her: "It is Mary’s self
I see!"
"Dear heart!" she cried, "now tell me, has my
child come back to me?"

"My name indeed is Mary," said the stranger sobbing
wild;
"Will you be to me a mother? I am Mary Garvin’s child!"

"She sleeps by wooded Simcoe, but on her dying
day
She bade my father take me to her kinsfolk far
away.

"And when the priest besought her to do me no
such wrong,
She said, ’May God forgive me! I have closed
my heart too long.’

"’When I hid me from my father, and shut out
my mother’s call,
I sinned against those dear ones, and the Father
of us all.

"’Christ’s love rebukes no home-love, breaks no
tie of kin apart;
Better heresy in doctrine, than heresy of heart.

"’Tell me not the Church must censure: she who
wept the Cross beside
Never made her own flesh strangers, nor the claims
of blood denied;

"’And if she who wronged her parents, with her
child atones to them,
Earthly daughter, Heavenly Mother! thou at least
wilt not condemn!’

"So, upon her death-bed lying, my blessed mother
spake;
As we come to do her bidding, So receive us for her
sake."

"God be praised!" said Goodwife Garvin, "He taketh,
and He gives;

He woundeth, but He healeth; in her child our
daughter lives!"

"Amen!" the old man answered, as he brushed a
tear away,
And, kneeling by his hearthstone, said, with reverence,
"Let us pray."

All its Oriental symbols, and its Hebrew pararphrase,
Warm with earnest life and feeling, rose his prayer
of love and praise.

But he started at beholding, as he rose from off
his knee,
The stranger cross his forehead with the sign of
Papistrie.

"What is this?" cried Farmer Garvin. "Is an English
Christian’s home
A chapel or a mass-house, that you make the sign
of Rome?"

Then the young girl knelt beside him, kissed his
trembling hand, and cried:
Oh, forbear to chide my father; in that faith my
mother died!

"On her wooden cross at Simcoe the dews and
sunshine fall,
As they fall on Spurwink’s graveyard; and the
dear God watches all!"

The old man stroked the fair head that rested on
his knee;
"Your words, dear child," he answered, "are God’s
rebuke to me.

"Creed and rite perchance may differ, yet our
faith and hope be one.
Let me be your father’s father, let him be to me
a son."

When the horn, on Sabbath morning, through the
still and frosty air,
From Spurwink, Pool, and Black Point, called to
sermon and to prayer,

To the goodly house of worship, where, in order
due and fit,
As by public vote directed, classed and ranked the
people sit;

Mistress first and goodwife after, clerkly squire

before the clown,
"From the brave coat, lace-embroidered, to the gray
frock, shading down;"

From the pulpit read the preacher, "Goodman
Garvin and his wife
Fain would thank the Lord, whose kindness has
followed them through life,

"For the great and crowning mercy, that their
daughter, from the wild,
Where she rests (they hope in God's peace), has
sent to them her child;

"And the prayers of all God's people they ask,
that they may prove
Not unworthy, through their weakness, of such
special proof of love."

As the preacher prayed, uprising, the aged couple
stood,
And the fair Canadian also, in her modest maiden-
hood.

Thought the elders, grave and doubting, "She is
Papist born and bred;"
Thought the young men, "'T is an angel in Mary
Garvin's stead!"

THE RANGER.

Originally published as Martha Mason; a Song of the Old
French War.

ROBERT RAWLIN!--Frosts were falling
When the ranger's horn was calling
Through the woods to Canada.

Gone the winter's sleet and snowing,
Gone the spring-time's bud and blowing,
Gone the summer's harvest mowing,
And again the fields are gray.
Yet away, he's away!
Faint and fainter hope is growing
In the hearts that mourn his stay.

Where the lion, crouching high on
Abraham's rock with teeth of iron,
Glares o'er wood and wave away,
Faintly thence, as pines far sighing,

Or as thunder spent and dying,
Come the challenge and replying,
Come the sounds of flight and fray.
Well-a-day! Hope and pray!
Some are living, some are lying
In their red graves far away.

Straggling rangers, worn with dangers,
Homeward faring, weary strangers
Pass the farm-gate on their way;
Tidings of the dead and living,
Forest march and ambush, giving,
Till the maidens leave their weaving,
And the lads forget their play.
"Still away, still away!"
Sighs a sad one, sick with grieving,
"Why does Robert still delay!"

Nowhere fairer, sweeter, rarer,
Does the golden-locked fruit bearer
Through his painted woodlands stray,
Than where hillside oaks and beeches
Overlook the long, blue reaches,
Silver coves and pebbled beaches,
And green isles of Casco Bay;
Nowhere day, for delay,
With a tenderer look beseeches,
"Let me with my charmed earth stay."

On the grain-lands of the mainlands
Stands the serried corn like train-bands,
Plume and pennon rustling gay;
Out at sea, the islands wooded,
Silver birches, golden-hooded,
Set with maples, crimson-blooded,
White sea-foam and sand-hills gray,
Stretch away, far away.
Dim and dreamy, over-brooded
By the hazy autumn day.

Gayly chattering to the clattering
Of the brown nuts downward pattering,
Leap the squirrels, red and gray.
On the grass-land, on the fallow,
Drop the apples, red and yellow;
Drop the russet pears and mellow,
Drop the red leaves all the day.
And away, swift away,
Sun and cloud, o’er hill and hollow
Chasing, weave their web of play.

"Martha Mason, Martha Mason,
Prithee tell us of the reason

Why you mope at home to-day
Surely smiling is not sinning;
Leave, your quilling, leave your spinning;
What is all your store of linen,
If your heart is never gay?
Come away, come away!
Never yet did sad beginning
Make the task of life a play."

Overbending, till she's blending
With the flaxen skein she's tending
Pale brown tresses smoothed away
From her face of patient sorrow,
Sits she, seeking but to borrow,
From the trembling hope of morrow,
Solace for the weary day.
"Go your way, laugh and play;
Unto Him who heeds the sparrow
And the lily, let me pray."

"With our rally, rings the valley,--
Join us!" cried the blue-eyed Nelly;
"Join us!" cried the laughing May,
"To the beach we all are going,
And, to save the task of rowing,
West by north the wind is blowing,
Blowing briskly down the bay
Come away, come away!
Time and tide are swiftly flowing,
Let us take them while we may!

"Never tell us that you'll fail us,
Where the purple beach-plum mellows
On the bluffs so wild and gray.
Hasten, for the oars are falling;
Hark, our merry mates are calling;
Time it is that we were all in,
Singing tideward down the bay!"
"Nay, nay, let me stay;
Sore and sad for Robert Rawlin
Is my heart," she said, "to-day."

"Vain your calling for Rob Rawlin
Some red squaw his moose-meat's broiling,
Or some French lass, singing gay;
Just forget as he's forgetting;
What avails a life of fretting?
If some stars must needs be setting,
Others rise as good as they."
"Cease, I pray; go your way!"
Martha cries, her eyelids wetting;
"Foul and false the words you say!"

"Martha Mason, hear to reason!--
Prithee, put a kinder face on!"
"Cease to vex me," did she say;
"Better at his side be lying,
With the mournful pine-trees sighing,
And the wild birds o’er us crying,
Than to doubt like mine a prey;
While away, far away,
Turns my heart, forever trying
Some new hope for each new day.

"When the shadows veil the meadows,
And the sunset’s golden ladders
Sink from twilight’s walls of gray,--
From the window of my dreaming,
I can see his sickle gleaming,
Cheery-voiced, can hear him teaming
Down the locust-shaded way;
But away, swift away,
Fades the fond, delusive seeming,
And I kneel again to pray.

"When the growing dawn is showing,
And the barn-yard cock is crowing,
And the horned moon pales away
From a dream of him awaking,
Every sound my heart is making
Seems a footstep of his taking;
Then I hush the thought, and say,
’Nay, nay, he’s away!’
Ah! my heart, my heart is breaking
For the dear one far away."

Look up, Martha! worn and swarthy,
Glows a face of manhood worthy
"Robert!" "Martha!" all they say.
O’er went wheel and reel together,
Little cared the owner whither;
Heart of lead is heart of feather,
Noon of night is noon of day!
Come away, come away!
When such lovers meet each other,
Why should prying idlers stay?

Quench the timber’s fallen embers,
Quench the recd leaves in December’s
Hoary rime and chilly spray.

But the hearth shall kindle clearer,
Household welcomes sound sincerer,
Heart to loving heart draw nearer,
When the bridal bells shall say:
"Hope and pray, trust alway;

Life is sweeter, love is dearer,
For the trial and delay!"
1856.

THE GARRISON OF CAPE ANN.

FROM the hills of home forth looking, far beneath
the tent-like span
Of the sky, I see the white gleam of the headland
of Cape Ann.
Well I know its coves and beaches to the ebb-tide
glimmering down,
And the white-walled hamlet children of its ancient
fishing town.

Long has passed the summer morning, and its
memory waxes old,
When along yon breezy headlands with a pleasant
friend I strolled.
Ah! the autumn sun is shining, and the ocean
wind blows cool,
And the golden-rod and aster bloom around thy
grave, Rantoul!

With the memory of that morning by the summer
sea I blend
A wild and wondrous story, by the younger Mather
penned,
In that quaint Magnalia Christi, with all strange
and marvellous things,
Heaped up huge and undigested, like the chaos
Ovid sings.

Dear to me these far, faint glimpses of the dual
life of old,
Inward, grand with awe and reverence; outward,
mean and coarse and cold;
Gleams of mystic beauty playing over dull and
vulgar clay,
Golden-threaded fancies weaving in a web of
hodden gray.

The great eventful Present hides the Past; but
through the din
Of its loud life hints and echoes from the life
behind steal in;
And the lore of homeland fireside, and the legendary
rhyme,
Make the task of duty lighter which the true man
owes his time.

So, with something of the feeling which the Covenanter knew,
When with pious chisel wandering Scotland's moorland graveyards through,
From the graves of old traditions I part the black-berry-vines,
Wipe the moss from off the headstones, and retouch the faded lines.

Where the sea-waves back and forward, hoarse with rolling pebbles, ran,
The garrison-house stood watching on the gray rocks of Cape Ann;
On its windy site uplifting gabled roof and palisade,
And rough walls of unhewn timber with the moonlight overlaid.

On his slow round walked the sentry, south and eastward looking forth
O'er a rude and broken coast-line, white with breakers stretching north,--
Wood and rock and gleaming sand-drift, jagged capes, with bush and tree,
Leaning inland from the smiting of the wild and gusty sea.

Before the deep-mouthed chimney, dimly lit by dying brands,
Twenty soldiers sat and waited, with their muskets in their hands;
On the rough-hewn oaken table the venison haunch was shared,
And the pewter tankard circled slowly round from beard to beard.

Long they sat and talked together,--talked of wizards Satan-sold;
Of all ghostly sights and noises,--signs and wonders manifold;
Of the spectre-ship of Salem, with the dead men in her shrouds,
Sailing sheer above the water, in the loom of morning clouds;

Of the marvellous valley hidden in the depths of Gloucester woods,
Full of plants that love the summer,--blooms of warmer latitudes;
Where the Arctic birch is braided by the tropic's flowery vines,
And the white magnolia-blossoms star the twilight of the pines!

But their voices sank yet lower, sank to husky
tones of fear,
As they spake of present tokens of the powers of
evil near;
Of a spectral host, defying stroke of steel and aim
of gun;
Never yet was ball to slay them in the mould of
mortals run.

Thrice, with plumes and flowing scalp-locks, from
the midnight wood they came,--
Thrice around the block-house marching, met, unharmed,
its volleyed flame;
Then, with mocking laugh and gesture, sunk in
earth or lost in air,
All the ghostly wonder vanished, and the moonlit
sands lay bare.

Midnight came; from out the forest moved a
dusky mass that soon
Grew to warriors, plumed and painted, grimly
marching in the moon.
"Ghosts or witches," said the captain, "thus I foil
the Evil One!"
And he rammed a silver button, from his doublet,
down his gun.

Once again the spectral horror moved the guarded
wall about;
Once again the levelled muskets through the palisades
flashed out,
With that deadly aim the squirrel on his tree-top
might not shun,
Nor the beach-bird seaward flying with his slant
wing to the sun.

Like the idle rain of summer sped the harmless
shower of lead.
With a laugh of fierce derision, once again the
phantoms fled;
Once again, without a shadow on the sands the
moonlight lay,
And the white smoke curling through it drifted
slowly down the bay!

"God preserve us!" said the captain; "never
mortal foes were there;
They have vanished with their leader, Prince and
Power of the air!
Lay aside your useless weapons; skill and prowess
naught avail;
They who do the Devil’s service wear their master’s

coat of mail!"

So the night grew near to cock-crow, when again
a warning call
Roused the score of weary soldiers watching round
the dusky hall
And they looked to flint and priming, and they
longed for break of day;
But the captain closed his Bible: "Let us cease
from man, and pray!"

To the men who went before us, all the unseen
powers seemed near,
And their steadfast strength of courage struck its
roots in holy fear.
Every hand forsook the musket, every head was
bowed and bare,
Every stout knee pressed the flag-stones, as the
captain led in prayer.

Ceased thereat the mystic marching of the spectres
round the wall,
But a sound abhorred, unearthly, smote the ears
and hearts of all,--
Howls of rage and shrieks of anguish! Never
after mortal man
Saw the ghostly leaguers marching round the
block-house of Cape Ann.

So to us who walk in summer through the cool and
sea-blown town,
From the childhood of its people comes the solemn
legend down.
Not in vain the ancient fiction, in whose moral
lives the youth
And the fitness and the freshness of an undecaying
truth.

Soon or late to all our dwellings come the spectres
of the mind,
Doubts and fears and dread forebodings, in the
darkness undefined;
Round us throng the grim projections of the heart
and of the brain,
And our pride of strength is weakness, and the
cunning hand is vain.

In the dark we cry like children; and no answer
from on high
Breaks the crystal spheres of silence, and no white
wings downward fly;
But the heavenly help we pray for comes to faith,
and not to sight,

And our prayers themselves drive backward all the
spirits of the night!
1857.

THE GIFT OF TRITEMIUS.

TRITEMIUS of Herbipolis, one day,
While kneeling at the altar’s foot to pray,
Alone with God, as was his pious choice,
Heard from without a miserable voice,
A sound which seemed of all sad things to tell,
As of a lost soul crying out of hell.

Thereat the Abbot paused; the chain whereby
His thoughts went upward broken by that cry;
And, looking from the casement, saw below
A wretched woman, with gray hair a-flow,
And withered hands held up to him, who cried
For alms as one who might not be denied.

She cried, "For the dear love of Him who gave
His life for ours, my child from bondage save,--
My beautiful, brave first-born, chained with slaves
In the Moor’s galley, where the sun-smit waves
Lap the white walls of Tunis!"--"What I can
I give," Tritemius said, "my prayers."--"O man
Of God!" she cried, for grief had made her bold,
"Mock me not thus; I ask not prayers, but gold.
Words will not serve me, alms alone suffice;
Even while I speak perchance my first-born dies."

"Woman!" Tritemius answered, "from our door
None go unfed, hence are we always poor;
A single soldo is our only store.
Thou hast our prayers;--what can we give thee
more?"

"Give me," she said, "the silver candlesticks
On either side of the great crucifix.
God well may spare them on His errands sped,
Or He can give you golden ones instead."

Then spake Tritemius, "Even as thy word,
Woman, so be it! (Our most gracious Lord,
Who loveth mercy more than sacrifice,
Pardon me if a human soul I prize
Above the gifts upon his altar piled!
Take what thou askest, and redeem thy child."

But his hand trembled as the holy alms

He placed within the beggar's eager palms;
And as she vanished down the linden shade,
He bowed his head and for forgiveness prayed.
So the day passed, and when the twilight came
He woke to find the chapel all aflame,
And, dumb with grateful wonder, to behold
Upon the altar candlesticks of gold!
1857.

SKIPPER IRESON'S RIDE.

In the valuable and carefully prepared History of Marblehead, published in 1879 by Samuel Roads, Jr., it is stated that the crew of Captain Ireson, rather than himself, were responsible for the abandonment of the disabled vessel. To screen themselves they charged their captain with the crime. In view of this the writer of the ballad addressed the following letter to the historian:--

OAK KNOLL, DANVERS, 5 mo. 18, 1880.
MY DEAR FRIEND: I heartily thank thee for a copy of thy History of Marblehead. I have read it with great interest and think good use has been made of the abundant material. No town in Essex County has a record more honorable than Marblehead; no one has done more to develop the industrial interests of our New England seaboard, and certainly none have given such evidence of self-sacrificing patriotism. I am glad the story of it has been at last told, and told so well. I have now no doubt that thy version of Skipper Ireson's ride is the correct one. My verse was founded solely on a fragment of rhyme which I heard from one of my early schoolmates, a native of Marblehead. I supposed the story to which it referred dated back at least a century. I knew nothing of the participators, and the narrative of the ballad was pure fancy. I am glad for the sake of truth and justice that the real facts are given in thy book. I certainly would not knowingly do injustice to any one, dead or living.

I am very truly thy friend,
JOHN G. WHITTIER.

OF all the rides since the birth of time,
Told in story or sung in rhyme,--
On Apuleius's Golden Ass,
Or one-eyed Calendar's horse of brass;
Witch astride of a human back,
Islam's prophet on Al-Borak,--
The strangest ride that ever was sped
Was Ireson's, out from Marblehead!
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Body of turkey, head of owl,
Wings a-droop like a rained-on fowl,
Feathered and ruffled in every part,
Skipper Ireson stood in the cart.
Scores of women, old and young,
Strong of muscle, and glib of tongue,
Pushed and pulled up the rocky lane,
Shouting and singing the shrill refrain
"Here’s Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr’d an’ futherr’d an’ corr’d in a corrt
By the women o’ Morble’ead!"

Wrinkled scolds with hands on hips,
Girls in bloom of cheek and lips,
Wild-eyed, free-limbed, such as chase
Bacchus round some antique vase,
Brief of skirt, with ankles bare,
Loose of kerchief and loose of hair,
With conch-shells blowing and fish-horns’ twang,
Over and over the Manads sang
"Here’s Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr’d an’ futherr’d an dorr’d in a corrt
By the women o’ Morble’ead!"

Small pity for him!--He sailed away
From a leaking ship, in Chaleur Bay,--
Sailed away from a sinking wreck,
With his own town’s-people on her deck!
"Lay by! lay by!" they called to him.
Back he answered, "Sink or swim!
Brag of your catch of fish again!"
And off he sailed through the fog and rain!
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Fathoms deep in dark Chaleur
That wreck shall lie forevermore.
Mother and sister, wife and maid,
Looked from the rocks of Marblehead
Over the moaning and rainy sea,--
Looked for the coming that might not be!
What did the winds and the sea-birds say
Of the cruel captain who sailed away?--
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Through the street, on either side,
Up flew windows, doors swung wide;
Sharp-tongued spinsters, old wives gray,
Treble lent the fish-horn’s bray.
Sea-worn grandsires, cripple-bound,

Hulks of old sailors run aground,
Shook head, and fist, and hat, and cane,
And cracked with curses the hoarse refrain
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o''Morble'ead!"

Sweetly along the Salem road
Bloom of orchard and lilac showed.
Little the wicked skipper knew
Of the fields so green and the sky so blue.
Riding there in his sorry trim,
Like to Indian idol glum and grim,
Scarcely he seemed the sound to hear
Of voices shouting, far and near
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

"Hear me, neighbors!" at last he cried,--
"What to me is this noisy ride?
What is the shame that clothes the skin
To the nameless horror that lives within?
Waking or sleeping, I see a wreck,
And hear a cry from a reeling deck!
Hate me and curse me,--I only dread
The hand of God and the face of the dead!"
Said old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Then the wife of the skipper lost at sea
Said, "God has touched him! why should we?"
Said an old wife mourning her only son,
"Cut the rogue's tether and let him run!"
So with soft relentings and rude excuse,
Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose,
And gave him a cloak to hide him in,
And left him alone with his shame and sin.
Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!
1857.

THE SYCAMORES.

Hugh Tallant was the first Irish resident of Haverhill, Mass. He planted the button-wood trees on the bank of the river below the village in the early part of the seventeenth century. Unfortunately this noble avenue is now nearly destroyed.

IN the outskirts of the village,
On the river's winding shores,
Stand the Occidental plane-trees,
Stand the ancient sycamores.

One long century hath been numbered,
And another half-way told,
Since the rustic Irish gleeman
Broke for them the virgin mould.

Deftly set to Celtic music,
At his violin's sound they grew,
Through the moonlit eves of summer,
Making Amphion's fable true.

Rise again, then poor Hugh Tallant
Pass in jerkin green along,
With thy eyes brimful of laughter,
And thy mouth as full of song.

Pioneer of Erin's outcasts,
With his fiddle and his pack;
Little dreamed the village Saxons
Of the myriads at his back.

How he wrought with spade and fiddle,
Delved by day and sang by night,
With a hand that never wearied,
And a heart forever light,--

Still the gay tradition mingles
With a record grave and drear,
Like the rollic air of Cluny,
With the solemn march of Mear.

When the box-tree, white with blossoms,
Made the sweet May woodlands glad,
And the Aronia by the river
Lighted up the swarming shad,

And the bulging nets swept shoreward,
With their silver-sided haul,
Midst the shouts of dripping fishers,
He was merriest of them all.

When, among the jovial huskers,
Love stole in at Labor's side,
With the lusty airs of England,
Soft his Celtic measures vied.

Songs of love and wailing lyke--wake,
And the merry fair's carouse;

Of the wild Red Fox of Erin
And the Woman of Three Cows,

By the blazing hearths of winter,
Pleasant seemed his simple tales,
Midst the grimmer Yorkshire legends
And the mountain myths of Wales.

How the souls in Purgatory
Scrambled up from fate forlorn,
On St. Eleven’s sackcloth ladder,
Slyly hitched to Satan’s horn.

Of the fiddler who at Tara
Played all night to ghosts of kings;
Of the brown dwarfs, and the fairies
Dancing in their moorland rings.

Jolliest of our birds of singing,
Best he loved the Bob-o-link.
"Hush!" he ’d say, "the tipsy fairies
Hear the little folks in drink!"

Merry-faced, with spade and fiddle,
Singing through the ancient town,
Only this, of poor Hugh Tallant,
Hath Tradition handed down.

Not a stone his grave discloses;
But if yet his spirit walks,
’T is beneath the trees he planted,
And when Bob-o-Lincoln talks;

Green memorials of the gleeman I
Linking still the river-shores,
With their shadows cast by sunset,
Stand Hugh Tallant’s sycamores!

When the Father of his Country
Through the north-land riding came,
And the roofs were starred with banners,
And the steeples rang acclaim,--

When each war-scarred Continental,
Leaving smithy, mill, and farm,
Waved his rusted sword in welcome,
And shot off his old king’s arm,--

Slowly passed that August Presence
Down the thronged and shouting street;
Village girls as white as angels,
Scattering flowers around his feet.

Midway, where the plane-tree’s shadow
Deepest fell, his rein he drew
On his stately head, uncovered,
Cool and soft the west-wind blew.

And he stood up in his stirrups,
Looking up and looking down
On the hills of Gold and Silver
Rimming round the little town,--

On the river, full of sunshine,
To the lap of greenest vales
Winding down from wooded headlands,
Willow-skirted, white with sails.

And he said, the landscape sweeping
Slowly with his ungloved hand,
"I have seen no prospect fairer
In this goodly Eastern land."

Then the bugles of his escort
Stirred to life the cavalcade
And that head, so bare and stately,
Vanished down the depths of shade.

Ever since, in town and farm-house,
Life has had its ebb and flow;
Thrice hath passed the human harvest
To its garner green and low.

But the trees the gleeman planted,
Through the changes, changeless stand;
As the marble calm of Tadmor
Mocks the desert’s shifting sand.

Still the level moon at rising
Silvers o’er each stately shaft;
Still beneath them, half in shadow,
Singing, glides the pleasure craft;

Still beneath them, arm-enfolded,
Love and Youth together stray;
While, as heart to heart beats faster,
More and more their feet delay.

Where the ancient cobbler, Keezar,
On the open hillside wrought,
Singing, as he drew his stitches,
Songs his German masters taught,

Singing, with his gray hair floating
Round his rosy ample face,--
Now a thousand Saxon craftsmen

Stitch and hammer in his place.

All the pastoral lanes so grassy
Now are Traffic’s dusty streets;
From the village, grown a city,
Fast the rural grace retreats.

But, still green, and tall, and stately,
On the river’s winding shores,
Stand the Occidental plane-trees,
Stand, Hugh Taliant’s sycamores.
1857.

THE PIPES AT LUCKNOW.

An incident of the Sepoy mutiny.

PIPES of the misty moorlands,
Voice of the glens and hills;
The droning of the torrents,
The treble of the rills!
Not the braes of broom and heather,
Nor the mountains dark with rain,
Nor maiden bower, nor border tower,
Have heard your sweetest strain!

Dear to the Lowland reaper,
And plaided mountaineer,--
To the cottage and the castle
The Scottish pipes are dear;--
Sweet sounds the ancient pibroch
O’er mountain, loch, and glade;
But the sweetest of all music
The pipes at Lucknow played.

Day by day the Indian tiger
Louder yelled, and nearer crept;
Round and round the jungle-serpent
Near and nearer circles swept.
"Pray for rescue, wives and mothers,--
Pray to-day!" the soldier said;
"To-morrow, death’s between us
And the wrong and shame we dread."

Oh, they listened, looked, and waited,
Till their hope became despair;
And the sobs of low bewailing
Filled the pauses of their prayer.
Then up spake a Scottish maiden,
With her ear unto the ground

"Dinna ye hear it?--dinna ye hear it?
The pipes o' Havelock sound!"

Hushed the wounded man his groaning;
Hushed the wife her little ones;
Alone they heard the drum-roll
And the roar of Sepoy guns.
But to sounds of home and childhood
The Highland ear was true;--
As her mother's cradle-crooning
The mountain pipes she knew.

Like the march of soundless music
Through the vision of the seer,
More of feeling than of hearing,
Of the heart than of the ear,
She knew the droning pibroch,
She knew the Campbell's call
"Hark! hear ye no' MacGregor's,
The grandest o' them all!"

Oh, they listened, dumb and breathless,
And they caught the sound at last;
Faint and far beyond the Goomtee
Rose and fell the piper's blast
Then a burst of wild thanksgiving
Mingled woman's voice and man's;
"God be praised!--the march of Havelock!
The piping of the clans!"

Louder, nearer, fierce as vengeance,
Sharp and shrill as swords at strife,
Came the wild MacGregor's clan-call,
Stinging all the air to life.
But when the far-off dust-cloud
To plaided legions grew,
Full tenderly and blithesomely
The pipes of rescue blew!

Round the silver domes of Lucknow,
Moslem mosque and Pagan shrine,
Breathed the air to Britons dearest,
The air of Auld Lang Syne.
O'er the cruel roll of war-drums
Rose that sweet and homelike strain;
And the tartan clove the turban,
As the Goomtee cleaves the plain.

Dear to the corn-land reaper
And plaided mountaineer,--
To the cottage and the castle
The piper's song is dear.
Sweet sounds the Gaelic pibroch

O’er mountain, glen, and glade;
But the sweetest of all music
The Pipes at Lucknow played!
1858.

TELLING THE BEES.

A remarkable custom, brought from the Old Country, formerly prevailed in the rural districts of New England. On the death of a member of the family, the bees were at once informed of the event, and their hives dressed in mourning. This ceremonial was supposed to be necessary to prevent the swarms from leaving their hives and seeking a new home.

HERE is the place; right over the hill
Runs the path I took;
You can see the gap in the old wall still,
And the stepping-stones in the shallow brook.

There is the house, with the gate red-barred,
And the poplars tall;
And the barn’s brown length, and the cattle-yard,
And the white horns tossing above the wall.

There are the beehives ranged in the sun;
And down by the brink
Of the brook are her poor flowers, weed-o’errun,
Pansy and daffodil, rose and pink.

A year has gone, as the tortoise goes,
Heavy and slow;
And the same rose blooms, and the same sun glows,
And the same brook sings of a year ago.

There’s the same sweet clover-smell in the breeze;
And the June sun warm
Tangles his wings of fire in the trees,
Setting, as then, over Fernside farm.

I mind me how with a lover’s care
From my Sunday coat
I brushed off the burrs, and smoothed my hair,
And cooled at the brookside my brow and
throat.

Since we parted, a month had passed,--
To love, a year;
Down through the beeches I looked at last
On the little red gate and the well-sweep near.

I can see it all now,--the slantwise rain

Of light through the leaves,
The sundown’s blaze on her window-pane,
The bloom of her roses under the eaves.

Just the same as a month before,--
The house and the trees,
The barn’s brown gable, the vine by the door,--
Nothing changed but the hives of bees.

Before them, under the garden wall,
Forward and back,
Went drearily singing the chore-girl small,
Draping each hive with a shred of black.

Trembling, I listened: the summer sun
Had the chill of snow;
For I knew she was telling the bees of one
Gone on the journey we all must go.

Then I said to myself, "My Mary weeps
For the dead to-day;
Haply her blind old grandsire sleeps
The fret and the pain of his age away."

But her dog whined low; on the doorway sill,
With his cane to his chin,
The old man sat; and the chore-girl still
Sung to the bees stealing out and in.

And the song she was singing ever since
In my ear sounds on:--
"Stay at home, pretty bees, fly not hence!
Mistress Mary is dead and gone!"
1858.

THE SWAN SONG OF PARSON AVERY.

In Young’s Chronicles of Massachusetts Bay front 1623 to 1636 may be found Anthony Thacher’s Narrative of his Shipwreck. Thacher was Avery’s companion and survived to tell the tale. Mather’s Magnalia, III. 2, gives further Particulars of Parson Avery’s End, and suggests the title of the poem.

WHEN the reaper’s task was ended, and the
summer wearing late,
Parson Avery sailed from Newbury, with his wife
and children eight,
Dropping down the river-harbor in the shallop
"Watch and Wait."

Pleasantly lay the clearings in the mellow summer-morn,
With the newly planted orchards dropping their fruits first-born,
And the home-roofs like brown islands amid a sea of corn.

Broad meadows reached out 'seaward the tided creeks between,
And hills rolled wave-like inland, with oaks and walnuts green;--
A fairer home, a--goodlier land, his eyes had never seen.

Yet away sailed Parson Avery, away where duty led,
And the voice of God seemed calling, to break the living bread
To the souls of fishers starving on the rocks of Marblehead.

All day they sailed: at nightfall the pleasant land-breeze died,
The blackening sky, at midnight, its starry lights denied,
And far and low the thunder of tempest prophesied.

Blotted out were all the coast-lines, gone were rock, and wood, and sand;
Grimly anxious stood the skipper with the rudder in his hand,
And questioned of the darkness what was sea and what was land.

And the preacher heard his dear ones, nestled round him, weeping sore,
"Never heed, my little children! Christ is walking on before;
To the pleasant land of heaven, where the sea shall be no more."

All at once the great cloud parted, like a curtain drawn aside,
To let down the torch of lightning on the terror far and wide;
And the thunder and the whirlwind together smote the tide.

There was wailing in the shallop, woman's wail and man's despair,
A crash of breaking timbers on the rocks so sharp and bare,
And, through it all, the murmur of Father Avery's prayer.

From his struggle in the darkness with the wild waves and the blast,
On a rock, where every billow broke above him as it passed,
Alone, of all his household, the man of God was cast.

There a comrade heard him praying, in the pause of wave and wind
"All my own have gone before me, and I linger just behind;
Not for life I ask, but only for the rest Thy ransomed find!

"In this night of death I challenge the promise of Thy word!--
Let me see the great salvation of which mine ears have heard!--
Let me pass from hence forgiven, through the grace of Christ, our Lord!

"In the baptism of these waters wash white my every sin,
And let me follow up to Thee my household and my kin!
Open the sea-gate of Thy heaven, and let me enter in!"

When the Christian sings his death-song, all the listening heavens draw near,
And the angels, leaning over the walls of crystal, hear
How the notes so faint and broken swell to music in God’s ear.

The ear of God was open to His servant’s last request;
As the strong wave swept him downward the sweet hymn upward pressed,
And the soul of Father Avery went, singing, to its rest.

There was wailing on the mainland, from the rocks of Marblehead;
In the stricken church of Newbury the notes of prayer were read;
And long, by board and hearthstone, the living mourned the dead.

And still the fishers outbound, or scudding from the squall,
With grave and reverent faces, the ancient tale

recall,
When they see the white waves breaking on the
Rock of Avery's Fall!
1808.

THE DOUBLE-HEADED SNAKE OF NEWBURY.

"Concerning ye Amphisbaena, as soon as I received your commands, I made diligent inquiry: . . . he assures me yt it had really two heads, one at each end; two mouths, two stings or tongues."--REV. CHRISTOPHER TOPPAN to COTTON MATHER.

FAR away in the twilight time
Of every people, in every clime,
Dragons and griffins and monsters dire,
Born of water, and air, and fire,
Or nursed, like the Python, in the mud
And ooze of the old Deucalion flood,
Crawl and wriggle and foam with rage,
Through dusk tradition and ballad age.
So from the childhood of Newbury town
And its time of fable the tale comes down
Of a terror which haunted bush and brake,
The Amphisbaena, the Double Snake!

Thou who makest the tale thy mirth,
Consider that strip of Christian earth
On the desolate shore of a sailless sea,
Full of terror and mystery,
Half redeemed from the evil hold
Of the wood so dreary, and dark, and old,
Which drank with its lips of leaves the dew
When Time was young, and the world was new,
And wove its shadows with sun and moon,
Ere the stones of Cheops were squared and hewn.
Think of the sea's dread monotone,
Of the mournful wail from the pine-wood blown,
Of the strange, vast splendors that lit the North,
Of the troubled throes of the quaking earth,
And the dismal tales the Indian told,
Till the settler's heart at his hearth grew cold,
And he shrank from the tawny wizard boasts,
And the hovering shadows seemed full of ghosts,
And above, below, and on every side,
The fear of his creed seemed verified;--
And think, if his lot were now thine own,
To grope with terrors nor named nor known,
How laxer muscle and weaker nerve
And a feebler faith thy need might serve;
And own to thyself the wonder more

That the snake had two heads, and not a score!

Whether he lurked in the Oldtown fen
Or the gray earth-flax of the Devil's Den,
Or swam in the wooded Artichoke,
Or coiled by the Northman's Written Rock,
Nothing on record is left to show;
Only the fact that be lived, we know,
And left the cast of a double head
In the scaly mask which he yearly shed.
For he carried a head where his tail should be,
And the two, of course, could never agree,
But wriggled about with main and might,
Now to the left and now to the right;
Pulling and twisting this way and that,
Neither knew what the other was at.

A snake with two beads, lurking so near!
Judge of the wonder, guess at the fear!
Think what ancient gossips might say,
Shaking their heads in their dreary way,
Between the meetings on Sabbath-day!
How urchins, searching at day's decline
The Common Pasture for sheep or kine,
The terrible double-ganger heard
In leafy rustle or whir of bird!
Think what a zest it gave to the sport,
In berry-time, of the younger sort,
As over pastures blackberry-twined,
Reuben and Dorothy lagged behind,
And closer and closer, for fear of harm,
The maiden clung to her lover's arm;
And how the spark, who was forced to stay,
By his sweetheart's fears, till the break of day,
Thanked the snake for the fond delay.

Far and wide the tale was told,
Like a snowball growing while it rolled.
The nurse hushed with it the baby's cry;
And it served, in the worthy minister's eye,
To paint the primitive serpent by.
Cotton Mather came galloping down
All the way to Newbury town,
With his eyes agog and his ears set wide,
And his marvellous inkhorn at his side;
Stirring the while in the shallow pool
Of his brains for the lore he learned at school,
To garnish the story, with here a streak
Of Latin, and there another of Greek
And the tales he heard and the notes he took,
Behold! are they not in his Wonder-Book?

Stories, like dragons, are hard to kill.

If the snake does not, the tale runs still
In Byfield Meadows, on Pipestave Hill.
And still, whenever husband and wife
Publish the shame of their daily strife,
And, with mad cross-purpose, tug and strain
At either end of the marriage-chain,
The gossips say, with a knowing shake
Of their gray heads, "Look at the Double Snake
One in body and two in will,
The Amphisbaena is living still!"
1859.

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