



***ELIA WILKINSON
PEATTIE***

***POEMS
YOU
OUGHT
TO KNOW***

Elia Wilkinson Peattie

Poems You Ought to Know

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FRANK.

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INTRODUCTION

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Each morning, for several months, THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE has published at the head of its first column, verses under the caption: "Poems You Ought to Know." It has explained its action by the following quotation from Professor Charles Eliot Norton:

"Whatever your occupation may be, and however crowded your hours with affairs, do not fail to secure at least a few minutes every day for refreshment of your inner life with a bit of poetry."

By publishing these poems THE TRIBUNE hopes to accomplish two things: first, to inspire a love of poetry in the hearts of many of its readers who have never before taken time or thought to read the best poems of this and other centuries and lands; and, secondly, to remind those who once loved song, but forgot it among the louder voices of the world, of the melody that enchanted them in youth.

The title has carried with it its own standard, and the poems have been kept on a plane above jocularly or mere prettiness of versification; rather have they tried to teach the doctrines of courage, of nature-love, of pure and noble melody. It has been the ambition of those selecting the verses to choose something to lift the reader above the "petty round of irritating concerns and duties," and the object will have been achieved if it has helped anyone to "play the man," "to go blithely about his business all the

day,” with a consciousness of that abounding beauty in the world of thought which is the common property of all men.

No anthology of English verse can be complete, and none can satisfy all. The compiler’s individual taste, tempered and guided by established authority, is almost the only standard. This collection has been compiled not by one but by many thousands, and their selections here appear edited and winnowed as the idea of the series seemed to dictate. The book appears at the wide-spread and almost universal request of those who have watched the bold experiment of a great Twentieth-Century American newspaper giving the place of honor in its columns every day to a selection from the poets.

For permission to reprint certain poems by Longfellow, Lowell, Harte, Hay, Bayard Taylor, Holmes, Whittier, Parsons, and Aldrich, graciously accorded by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., the publishers, thanks are gratefully acknowledged. To Charles Scribner’s Sons, for an extract from Lanier’s poems, and, lastly, to the many thousand readers, who, by their sympathy, appreciation, and help have encouraged the continuance of the daily publication of the poems, similar gratitude is felt.

TO SLEEP. BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

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William Wordsworth was born in 1770 and died at Rydal Mount in 1850. He was educated in Cambridge, where he graduated in 1791. He traveled on the continent before that, but he settled down for several years in Dorset. A visit from

Coleridge determined his career in 1796. He was again abroad in 1798, but returned the following year and went to live at Grasmere in the Lake District. He held several government positions and was poet laureate from 1843 to his death. His chief works are, "The Evening Walk," "Descriptive Sketches," "The Excursion," "White Doe of Rylston," "Thanksgiving Ode," "Peter Bell," "Waggoner," "River Duddon," A Series of Sonnets, "The Borderers," "Yarrow Revisited," and "The Prelude."

A flock of sheep that leisurely pass by
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;

I've thought of all by turns, and still I lie
Sleepless; and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first utter'd from my orchard trees,
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.

Even thus last night and two nights more I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep, by any stealth;
So do not let me wear tonight away;
Without thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES. BY CHARLES LAMB.

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Charles Lamb was born at London in 1775. His most successful writings are the "Tales from Shakespeare"

(written in collaboration with his sister), and his “Essays of Elia.” Lamb died in 1834.

I have had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school days—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a love once, fairest among women;
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her—
All, all are gone the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man;
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
Left him to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like I pace round the haunts of my childhood,
Earth seemed a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,
Why wert not thou born in my father’s dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces—

How some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

WHEN IN DISGRACE. BY WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.

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When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweepe my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee and then my state,
(Like to the lark at break of day arising,
From sullen earth), sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

“THOUGH LOST TO SIGHT, TO MEMORY DEAR.” THOMAS MOORE.

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Sweetheart, good-by! The fluttering sail
Is spread to waft me far from thee;
And soon before the favoring gale
My ship shall bound across the sea.
Perchance, all desolate and forlorn,
These eyes shall miss thee many a year;

But unforgotten every charm—
Though lost to sight, to memory clear.
 Sweetheart, good-by! One last embrace!
Oh, cruel fate, two souls to sever!
Yet in this heart's most sacred place
Thou, thou alone, shall dwell forever.
And still shall recollection trace
In fancy's mirror, ever near,
Each smile, each tear, upon that face—
Though lost to sight, to memory dear.

INTRA MUROS. BY MARY C. GELLINGTON.

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At last 'tis gone, the fever of the day—
Thank God, there comes an end to everything;
Under the night cloud's deepened shadowing,
The noises of the city drift away
Thro' sultry streets and alleys, and the gray
Fogs 'round the great cathedral rise and cling.
I long and long, but no desire will bring
Against my face the keen wind salt with spray.

 O, far away, green waves, your voices call;
Your cool lips kiss the wild and weedy shore;
And out upon the sea line sails are brown—
White sea birds, crying, hover—soft shades fall—
Deep waters dimple 'round the dripping oar,
And last rays light the little fishing town.

FATE.

BY SUSAN MARR SPALDING.

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Susan Marr Spalding was born in Bath, Me., and educated in a seminary there. From early girlhood she wrote verse, her sonnets being graceful and tender. At the death of her parents she lived with her uncle, a clergyman, in New York. She married Mr. Spalding, a literary man, and made her home in Philadelphia.

Two shall be born, the whole wide world apart,
And speak in different tongues, and have no thought
Each of the other's being; and have no heed;
And these, o'er unknown seas to unknown lands
Shall cross, escaping wreck; defying death;
And, all unconsciously, shape every act to this one end
That, one day, out of darkness, they shall meet
And read life's meaning in each other's eyes.

And two shall walk some narrow way of life
So nearly side by side that, should one turn
Ever so little space to right or left,
They needs must stand acknowledged face to face.
And yet, with wistful eyes that never meet.
With groping hands that never clasp; and lips
Calling in vain to ears that never hear;
They seek each other all their weary days
And die unsatisfied—and that is fate.

A HOLY NATION.

BY RICHARD REALF.

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Richard Realf was born in England in 1834 of poor parents and began writing poetry at an early age. His early work attracted the attention of Tennyson, Miss Mitford, Miss Jameson, Miss Martineau, and others, and they secured the publication of his volume, "Guesses at the Beautiful." He dabbled some in sculpture, and even studied agricultural science. In 1854 he came to New York, where he wrote stories of slum life and assisted in establishing some institutions for the relief of the poor. He joined the first free soil parties moving to Kansas and was arrested. He did newspaper work until he joined John Brown's party. He was Brown's secretary of state. He was arrested in connection with the Harper's Ferry affair, enlisted in 1862, was wounded, taught a black school in South Carolina in 1867, and for years led a hand to mouth existence, all that time writing poetry, some of it of the most exquisite beauty. Family troubles resulted in his suicide in San Francisco about 1875.

Let Liberty run onward with the years,
And circle with the seasons; let her break
The tyrant's harshness, the oppressor's spears;
Bring ripened recompenses that shall make
Supreme amends for sorrow's long arrears;
Drop holy benison on hearts that ache;
Put clearer radiance into human eyes,
And set the glad earth singing to the skies.

Clean natures coin pure statutes. Let us cleanse
The hearts that beat within us; let us mow
Clear to the roots our falseness and pretense,

Tread down our rank ambitions, overthrow
Our braggart moods of puffed self-consequence,
Plow up our hideous thistles which do grow
Faster than maize in May time, and strike dead
The base infections our low greeds have bred.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK. BY ALFRED TENNYSON.

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Alfred Tennyson was born at Lincolnshire in 1809. In 1828 he wrote, with his brother, the "Poems by Two Brothers." He went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he met his friend, Arthur Hallam, upon whose death he wrote "In Memoriam." When Wordsworth died in 1850, the laureateship was given to Tennyson; later he was made a Baron. He died at Aldworth, on the Isle of Wight, in 1892, and has been given a place in Westminster Abbey near the grave of Chaucer. Other of his longer poems beside the one mentioned above are: "The Princess," "Maud," "Enoch Arden," and the "Idyls of the King."

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O, sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O, well for the fisherman's boy
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O, well for the sailor lad
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on,
To the haven under the hill;

But O, for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!
Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O, sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

THERE IS NO DEATH. BY J. L. McCREERY.

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This beautifully touching poem is the creation of Mr. J. L. McCreery, a native of Iowa, and at one time editor of the Delaware County Journal, of that state. The poem was written in 1863 and was first published in Arthur's Home Magazine in July of that year. The authorship of the poem was for many years erroneously attributed to Lord Lytton, the English poet. A thorough investigation carried on by Lippincott's a few years ago fully established the authorship. The poem has been printed in every state of the Union, in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Canada, and even in Australia. It has gone into dozens of school books and been incorporated in scores of miscellaneous collections of poetry. It has been quoted in full or in part at least five times on the floor of Congress. Mr. McCreery has for the past few years been a resident of the national capital and his best poems have been collected into a volume entitled "Songs of Toil and Triumph."

There is no death, the stars go down
To rise upon some other shore,

And bright in heaven's jeweled crown
They shine forever more.

There is no death! the forest leaves
Convert to life the viewless air;
The rocks disorganize to feed
The hungry moss they bear.

There is no death! the dust we tread
Shall change, beneath the summer showers,
To golden grain, or mellow fruit,
Or rainbow-tinted flowers.

There is no death! the leaves may fall,
The flowers may fade and pass away.—
They only wait, through wintry hours,
The warm, sweet breath of May.

There is no death! the choicest gifts
That heaven hath kindly lent to earth
Are ever first to seek again
The country of their birth.

And all things that for growth of joy
Are worthy of our love or care,
Whose loss has left us desolate,
Are safely garnered there.

Though life become a dreary waste,
We know its fairest, sweetest flowers,
Transplanted into paradise,
Adorn immortal bowers.

The voice of bird-like melody
That we have missed and mourned so long
Now mingles with the angel choir
In everlasting song.

There is no death! although we grieve
When beautiful, familiar forms
That we have learned to love are torn
From our embracing arms.

Although with bowed and breaking heart,
With sable garb and silent tread,
We bear their senseless dust to rest,
And say that they are “dead.”

They are not dead! they have but passed
Beyond the mists that blind us here
Into the new and larger life
Of that serener sphere.

They have but dropped their robe of clay
To put their shining raiment on;
They have not wandered far away—
They are not “lost” or “gone.”

Though disenthralled and glorified,
They still are here and love us yet;
The dear ones they have left behind
They never can forget.

And sometimes, when our hearts grow faint
Amid temptations fierce and deep,
Or when the wildly raging waves
Of grief or passion sweep,

We feel upon our fevered brow
Their gentle touch, their breath of balm;
Their arms enfold us, and our hearts
Grow comforted and calm.

And ever near us, though unseen,
The dear, immortal spirits tread;

For all the boundless universe
Is life—there are no dead.

THE FOOL'S PRAYER.

BY E. R. SILL.

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Edward Rowland Sill was born at Windsor, Conn., April 29, 1841; died in Cleveland, O., Feb. 27, 1887. He was graduated from Yale in 1861; studied biology at Harvard, did literary work in New York City, taught school in California and Ohio, and was for eight years professor of English language and literature in the University of California. His poems were privately printed under the title "The Hermitage and Other Poems."

The royal feast was done; the king
Sought some new sport to banish care,
And to his jester cried: "Sir Fool,
Kneel now, and make for us a prayer!"

The jester doffed his cap and bells,
And stood the mocking court before;
They could not see the bitter smile
Behind the painted grin he wore,

He bowed his head, and bent his knee
Upon the monarch's silken stool;
His pleading voice arose: "O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!"

"No pity, Lord, could change the heart
From red with wrong to white as wool;
The rod must heal the sin; but, Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!"

“’Tis not by guilt the onward sweep
Of truth and right, O Lord, we stay;
’Tis by our follies that so long
We hold the earth from heaven away.

“These clumsy feet, still in the mire,
Go crushing blossoms without end;
These hard, well meaning hands we thrust
Among the heart-strings of a friend.

“The ill-timed truth we might have kept—
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung!
The word we had not sense to say—
Who knows how grandly it had rung!

“Our faults no tenderness should ask,
The chastening stripes must cleanse them all;
But for our blunders—O, in shame
Before the eyes of heaven we fall.

“Earth bears no balsam for mistakes;
Men crown the knave and scourge the tool
That did his will; but thou, O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!”

The room was hushed; in silence rose
The king, and sought his gardens cool,
And walked apart, and murmured low,
“Be merciful to me, a fool!”

ROCK ME TO SLEEP. BY ELIZABETH AKERS ALLEN.

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This is one of the songs which, as Longfellow said, gush from the heart of “some humbler poet.” In this country, at