

A SWEET SINGER.

POETS are not made, we are sure of that, but are nurtured. And what is the best nurture for poets? The child's soul breathed upon by certain influences will quicken the germs of poetic power, but what are those influences—apart the divine—as such; what breezes will soonest and most surely bring them to vigorous bloom? The answer to these queries cannot come to us from the practical, mechanical wise ones who are now boasting so loudly of the “triumph of reason.” While waiting for that answer let us observe that poets come out of most unlikely places. The seed, chance-sown, springs up after its kind, and grows into mignonette or morning glory, though on a heap of refuse in a cramped and neglected corner. Perhaps it takes a deeper tint or a richer fragrance from the rank elements that nourish it. But we do not look for this. The words instinctively spoken here are: How does such a flower flourish in such a spot? It is to the plant rooted in genial soil, with room to grow, that we look for large and vivid bloom, and it is to the poet nurtured under happy influences that we look for the charm that gives rest, if not forgetfulness. Such among several of the poets of the nineteenth century is the sweet singer now thought of—*Celia Thaxter*. Reading one of her books is like being taken from the jostling turmoil of a city into a quiet, sunny meadow, fragrant with sweet-brier and cool with the breath of the sea, a whole hemisphere of blue above and the voices of birds and children mingling with the rustle of the wind-swept grass. The serenity of nature is in her work, a serenity born not alone of a happy temperament, or victory over self and sorrow, but of a childhood blessed with love and free to take to itself all that unstinted sunshine, far-reaching ocean and boundless sky could give, or the winds could bring to her from every corner of the earth.

Celia Laighton was born at Portsmouth, N.H., twenty-ninth of June, 1835. When she was very young her father went to keep the lighthouse on White Island, one of the “Isles of Shoals,” nine miles from the coast. These islands were inhabited by fish-