

his brother! In spontaneity and simplicity the songs of the New England poet have much in common with the Scottish one who so strongly influenced him. Had Whittier's early life been cast amid an abundance of literature and literary influences, as was that of his friend, Oliver Wendell Holmes, he might doubtless have been more of an artist; but perhaps we should have lost the most spontaneous singer of New England life. The idyl of "Snowbound" is the "The Cotter's Saturday Night" of Massachusetts; its portraits as characteristic of a simple home life, now all but vanished. And "The Poor Voter on Election Day" is no unworthy American rendering of "A Man's a Man for a' That." It may have been only fancy that traced, in a youthful portrait of Mr. Whittier that hung in his study, a certain resemblance to Burns, but certainly the strong current of their human sympathies run, in the main, in the same direction.

Mr. Whittier pointed out, in an adjoining room, the pictures of his mother and of the beautiful and beloved sister, to whose early death he so touchingly refers in "Snowbound," as well as a painting in his study of the old homestead at Haverhill, six miles from Amesbury, where he lived until sometime after his father's death, when his mother came to settle in Amesbury. Between this old home and his picturesque woodland residence of Oak Knoll at Danvers, some twelve miles distant, he now divides his time—no longer feeling strong enough for seeking his favourite haunts among the Adirondacks.

He pointed out also two other portraits—one of "my friend, Ralph Waldo Emerson," the other of his favourite hero, General Gordon, with whose noble spirit he has naturally strong sympathy. No student of Whittier needs to be told of his aversion to theological rigidity, and the too elaborate definitions of creeds, which have become the Shibboleths of ecclesiastical divisions. His remarks on the Briggs "heresy case" were what might have been expected from the author of the "Vision of Echard," and he put the question of toleration very tersely when he said: "God isn't going to judge us by our heads, but by our hearts. If He had been going to judge us by our heads He would have made them all alike!" And he quoted with earnest sympathy the lines from "In Memoriam," beginning:—

Our little systems have their day.

The "law of love," the "sum of the law" and the prophets" is far more to him than the mere technical orthodoxy of doctrine which, with so many, stands for Christianity. He referred, with warm appreciation, to Henry Drummond's charming booklet, "The Greatest Thing in the World," which he said he had been helping to circulate among his friends. No one could touch with greater patience and tenderness than he, on the sad epidemic of doubt which paralyzes the faith of so many in our questioning age. He said that he did not wonder—in view of the awful mystery of life, its apparent injustice, the cruelties and oppression that crush so many helpless lives—that there is so much scepticism, especially among young and impatient minds. He rather wonders that there should be, nevertheless, so much faith! But, while some of his own earlier beliefs have dropped from him, he still holds firmly to the faith he has so beautifully expressed in "The Divine Goodness," and "The Master." In his old age he is left much alone. Nearly all his immediate relatives are gone, though he still has multitudes of friends. "I love the friends I have," he said, "and am thankful for them, but I do not forget those who have passed away—and I am just waiting"—Waiting in the attitude he has put into music for us in the stanzas:—

I long for household voices gone,  
For vanished smiles I long;  
But God hath led my darkness on,  
And He can do no wrong!  
And so, beside the silent sea  
I wait the muffled oar;  
No harm from Him can come to me,  
On ocean or on shore.  
I know not where His islands lift  
Their fringed palms in air,  
I only know, I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care!

Happy faith and trust! And happy evening to a long life of pure thought and life, and loving service to God and his fellows. As the door of the quiet house closed, after his kind farewell and loving benediction—it seemed as if it were the door of a sanctuary, into which nothing evil or unholy might enter—the type of the higher sanctuary awaiting the "pure in heart!"

The last hour before the leaving of our train was spent in a stroll about the quaint little town, with its winding Merrimac, nestling amid picturesque banks fringed with cedar and alder—and its equally winding roads leading out of the town, between foliage-embosomed houses, and up the "green hill slope" referred to in the opening of his poem of "Miriam." If anyone desires to see the view from thence most graphically described, he can look at those lines, of which space limits, already overrun, forbid the quotation here. Then, passing again the poet's unpretending abode, with its overshadowing maples, we find ourselves at the little station once more, and the train soon bears us away—feeling that we have had one of the greatest pleasures, and secured one of the most sacred memories that human intercourse, in this imperfect life, can possibly afford!

FIDELIS.

A CONSCIENTIOUS person should beware of getting into a passion, for every sharp word one speaks lodges in one's own heart; and such slivers hurt us worse than any one else.—Harriet Beecher Stowe.

## ALL SAINTS' DAY.

AS October wears itself away, and the skies grow hazier and the leaves yellower, there comes the expectation of those two autumn days that seem to embody all that is told by shortening days and falling leaves—the great Catholic festival and fast of All Saints' and All Souls' Days. As they come I recall the various associations that these days bring to me. I see again the muddy Paris streets under low grey skies, with their throng of holiday folk setting towards the various cemeteries. I see the approach to the slopes of Montmartre, the steep road lined with booths, at which every variety of wreaths are sold, from the costly one composed of deep purple pansies and white camellias, or the slightly cheaper tribute of violets down to the horror of the circle of black and white beads with a common artificial flower in the centre under glass, or the few sous' worth of yellow and black immortelles. Within the cemetery there was hardly a grave without one, at least, of these fresh tributes, while the alleys were thronged by those who had brought them. But the picture of that day that memory has photographed on my mind is of one circular patch of grass, at the meeting of several alleys. In the centre of it rose one tall column, and this was hung, and the ground around it covered, with every variety of wreath from the costliest to the humblest. Before I read the inscription on this column I wondered at the sullen resentment and gloom of the faces of those who stood around it—*flâneur* of the Boulevards and blue-bloused workmen alike; but when I had read it I wondered no longer, for beneath that column rested the bodies of some of the victims of the *Coup d'état* I only wondered how many a widow's and orphan's curse was then following that last of the Bonaparte rulers to his exile grave in England.

But I see a pleasanter picture than those gloomy faces, and Montmartre under dull November skies. I see the perfect beauty of sea and sky around Venice on that great festa:—

Column, tower, and dome, and spire,  
Shine like obelisks of fire,  
Pointing with inconstant motion  
From the altar of dark ocean  
To the sapphire-tinted skies;  
As the flames of sacrifice  
From the marbled shrines did rise  
As to pierce the dome of gold  
Where Apollo spake of old.

I see the luminous church of St. Marks, and the pomp of High Mass celebrated by the Patriarch himself, with rites that are a unique commingling of Eastern and Western usage. I see the long procession of black gondolas, out over the shining splendour of the lagoons to St. Michele, the island cemetery—gondolas, crowded to their utmost capacity of chairs and stools with chattering women, with great masses of uncovered black or red hair, and wrapped in the inevitable dun-coloured shawls. Everywhere there are great bunches of white chrysanthemums—in the women's hands for sale—on the graves in the little island, crowded with Venice's dead at the steps where one alights from one's gondola. The crowd throng so through the narrow alleys and veil their customary animation so slightly that it is not easy to feel the scene anything but a gay one; and then, returning, when the evening splendour opalizes sea and sky, and the great white Alps shine in the northern distance, the calm and beauty harmonize all those scattered bits into the mosaic of the memory of a perfect day. But after all it is in the north—"dark and true and tender"—that the legends of the dead have taken deepest root.

It is a very real thing to me now, the stillness that I seemed to hear settle down on our little Breton village after vespers on the Eve of All Souls, for then in every farmhouse and fisher cottage along the lonely coast of Finistère, the logs are piled high on the hearth, the oatcake and black bread set out on the table, the door left ajar for the coming of the silent guest, whom it is death, within the year, to see.

Then, over the gorse-covered "landes," and by the granite cliffs, is heard a weird, wild chant. It is the "Song of Souls" which wandering beggar folk go to sing at every hamlet and farm:—

Awake! awake! It is Jesus who sends me!  
He bids you awake and pray for your dead!  
You are at ease in bed; the poor souls suffer!  
You lie softly; the poor souls are in pain!  
A white sheet, five boards, a pillow of straw, and five feet of earth,  
These are all worldly goods that are left to us!  
Ah Blessed Mary! what sorrowful cries! Jesus! send us help!  
Perchance your father, your sister, or brother are burning in purgatory,  
There on their knees, flames above and below, they cry to you for  
your prayers,  
Once in the world, I had friends and dear ones,  
Now, dead, I have neither friends nor dear ones!  
Come, spring from your beds, barefooted, and pray, pray!

Thus for centuries has echoed that weird Celtic chant, in its harsh Breton voicing, over the country. I am not ashamed to confess to the fact that the feeling of that midnight welcome to the dead took such hold upon me that when that November night came round I, too, piled up the logs on the hearth and set the window ajar, and even now, when I am far from "the lone coast of Brittany," I cannot bear to let the fire die down on the Eve of All Souls. It seems, too, like leaving the beloved dead to be chilled by our forgetfulness.

It is in such nooks and corners of Celtic lands that the signs of the Druidic origin of this, as of others of our church festivals, are preserved. True, the week after Pentecost was, and still is in the Greek Church, the time of special commemoration of the dead. True, the official institution of All Saints' Day took place in Rome on the 13th of May, A. D. 609, when Boniface IV. ordained it

in celebration of the consecration of almost the only remaining pagan temple in that city, the Pantheon, to "St. Marie, semper Virginius, ed omnium Martyrum," when the bones of martyrs from the various cemeteries and catacombs were taken in twenty-eight carriages to the church. But, by the year 835, the observance of the festival in England, France and Germany had so generally passed to the first of November that Gregory IV. issued, in that year, an ordinance commanding the custom to become universal, and there can be little doubt that the celebration of that day had sprung from the attachment of the northern nations to the great autumn Druidic fire festival, which occurred on the 1st November. That night was consecrated to Samhein, who represented the sun, and was a night of special intercession, by the living, for the souls of those who had died within the preceding year. For the office of Samhein was to judge those souls, and award them their place of reward or punishment, and he was also called Bal Sab, or the Lord of Death.

At this harvest festival he only required offerings of the fruits of the earth, and his name, Samhein, denotes peace fire. The day is still known in Ireland as Samhein, or the feast of the sun, and on the eve of the first of November all manner of old games are played there, as in Scotland, where, though All Saints' Day is forgotten, the old heathen festival has taken the name of Hallow E'en. In Perthshire the bonfires kindled on that night still go by the name of the bale-fires, recalling the custom of extinguishing and re-lighting the household fires, for a settled price, from the ever-burning Druidic fires, and it is a very easily noticed fact that among all the variety of Hallow E'en games each one has some connection with divination of the future. These facts intensify to me, if possible, the meaning of All Saints' Day, and help me to realize how, when we use the words of our Anglican collect, "Almighty God, who hast knit together Thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of Thy Son, Christ, our Lord," we carry on, in our Christian worship, the yearning of dim, unknown ages of the world's twilight towards

The land of the great departed, the silent land,  
at the time of the falling of the leaf, and the death of nature.

ALICE JONES.

## SONNETS TO THE NIGHTINGALE.—I.

IF that prosaic lover of plain unvarnished tales, the scientific enquirer into Nature's ways and workings, shall ever penetrate the domicile of poetry with the rigid determination of putting that pleasure-house in order, there will be some fine old pictures burned and splendid vases shattered. Many antique images, before which worshippers of the Muses have bowed down in unquestioning veneration for centuries, will be rudely pulled from their pedestals and destroyed by the puritanical Truth-Lover. The Iconoclast will leave his mark in Poet's Corner. There will be no sentiment felt and no mercy shown; all respect for rare delights of golden song will have vanished, and such time-honoured figures as the Phoenix and the Salamander will be regarded as frauds, while the Music of the Spheres and the Tapers of Heaven will be deemed follies. Poems alluding to the Mermaid or the Dragon will be recorded in the "Index Librorum Expurgandum," the offensive passages being duly excerpted. Poetic conceits will go the way of those precious fairy tales of our childhood which have been recently stripped of their gossamer garments and covered with ready-made suits of science that spoil the simple charm of their fabulous existence in order to make them of the fashion. The fashion of to-day is Fact.

Among the minor conceits to be thus ruthlessly sacrificed will be some of the old and pretty attributes and qualities invented by the poets for the Nightingale, and, as certainly as Cinderella has become a sun-myth, so Philomel will become a moon-myth. From a scientific point of view the poetic descriptions of the Nightingale are strangely absurd and startlingly untrue. The natural history of this widely attractive favourite of the woods is fairly well known. Like the typical English rustic, its habits are simple and its wants are few. Its appearance is not particularly attractive; but (here the analogy with Corydon ceases) it is graceful; its *habitat* is irregular, but well-defined; its migration is regular, but ill-defined; its song is limited as to variety rather than compass; there is no mistaking its notes for those of any other bird—no Swedish or American—not to say Irish—nightingale can counterfeit them; and yet, despite all the accurate knowledge which has accumulated about this bird, the Nightingale of Nature and the Nightingale of Poetry are so dissimilar that they cannot be identified in many respects as the same bird. "The honey-throated warbler of the grove" is not recognizable as the Linnæan *Motacilla Luscinia*, which the Rev. Gilbert White observed about Selborne so often, and which has been more lately re-christened *Daulias Luscinia*, for good and sufficient reasons, no doubt, and in spite of Mr. Ruskin's diatribes against all such hideous nomenclature.

Drummond wrote a sonnet to the Nightingale at Hawthornden, and Dyer, in his poem "Grongar Hill," located the bird in Carmarthenshire; but as a matter of fact the singer of the night does not warble as far north as Scotland or as far west as Wales. William Dunbar, in "The Merle and the Nightingale," speaks of

A Nightingale, with sugared notes new,  
Whose angel feathers as the peacock shone.