

which follows largely the route of the old post-road, is now nearing completion. The western end of the road is so far finished that travellers may proceed from St. Petersburg to Kolivan, a distance of 1,800 miles, in less than five days, without change of cars. When completed, the Trans-Siberian will be the longest stretch of continuous railway track ever laid—4,700 miles. The construction was begun in 1891. The western section of the road runs through the most fertile grain-growing part of Siberia, a region which is expected to be not only the granary of Russia, but which may also compete for the trade of the world. Other sections in Siberia have already been completed, and it is hoped that by next autumn the 1,100 miles through Central Siberia will be finished. Of the Pacific section 250 miles have been constructed. The hardest work has been done in the severest climate, that of the Yablonoboi Mountains, where in summer the temperature rises to 77 degrees in the day time, and falls to 23 degrees at night. Only during a quarter of the year is the temperature above freezing. In the val-

ley of the Chita the depth to which the soil freezes is said to average 23½ feet. We are told that in the summer the topsoil is thawed to a depth of about twelve feet, the remaining depth being always frozen. The labour used on the railway has been partly imported; as many as 160,000 labourers have been employed at one time during the summer. It is estimated that the total cost of the undertaking will reach nearly \$300,000,000. Both in military and in commercial possibilities this gigantic railway will be of surpassing importance.

Not only Siberia, with its great plains and mineral wealth, but Manchuria with its arable lands, rich pasture and energetic population, is brought into close touch with Europe. It is estimated that, by July 1st, 1904, trains will be running clear through to the Japan Sea. The distance from London will be reduced to nine days and two hours, instead of twenty-eight or thirty-eight days as at present. To-day a ticket from London by Brindisi and the Suez Canal to Yokohama costs \$428. By the Siberian Railway it will cost, aside from food and berth, \$119.

AUTUMN.

Thou burden of songs the earth hath sung
 Thou retrospect in time's reverted eyes,
 Thou metaphor of everything that dies,
 That dies ill-starred, or dies beloved and young,
 And therefore blest and wise—
 O be less beautiful or be less brief,
 Thou tragic splendour, strange and full of fear!
 In vain her pageant shall the summer rear!
 At the mute signal, leaf by golden leaf,
 Crumbles the gorgeous year.

Ah, ghostly as remembered mirth, the tale
 Of summer's bloom, the legend of the spring!
 And thou, too, flatterest an impatient wing,
 Thou presence yet more fugitive and frail,
 Thou most unbodied thing,
 Whose very being is thy going hence,
 And passage and departure all thy theme;
 Whose life doth still a splendid dying seem,
 And thou at height of thy magnificence
 A figment and a dream.

Stilled is the virgin rapture that was June,
 And cold is August's panting heart of fire;
 And in the storm-dismantled forest choir
 For thine own elegy the winds attune
 Their wild and wizard lyre;
 And poignant grows the charm of thy decay,
 The pathos of thy beauty, and the sting,
 Thou parable of greatness vanishing!
 For me, thy woods of gold and skies of gray
 With speech fantastic ring.

—William Watson.