

These lines describe simply yet accurately the rough but hearty welcome given to the storm-staid traveller :

" Dinner'll be ready in half a minute ;  
Th' old woman's bilin' the half er a ham,  
'N thur's turmots, 'n cabbage, 'n taters, 'n jam ;  
Load up the stove with hickory, Sam—  
Stranger, draw up to the fire."

" Jim, hang up the gentleman's overcoat ;  
Ye come from the city I see, like's not—  
Yer welcome to stay and share what we've got.  
Mother, what's that bubblin' top of the pot ?  
Dumplings? Dumplings !  
Stranger, draw up to the fire."

The Khan excels in portraying these peculiarly rustic scenes and events, with which, as a farm-bred boy, he was so familiar. In describing inanimate nature he again shows strength combined with delicacy of touch. His descriptions are not elaborate. An apt word or expression, and the scene is before you.

" The bushes and the trees  
Spread the old brown blanket ;  
Snugly round their knees  
Lies the old brown blanket ;  
And the saucy flowers hide  
'Neath its folds, to there abide  
Till they hear the robin red-breast and the blue-bird sing.  
Yes, they'll snuggle down and sleep  
In a slumber soft and deep,  
'Neath the old brown blanket, till the Spring."

Mr. Kernighan evidently knows what it is to " knock about " in the world. He has been " a Bohemian for twenty years," and understands human nature with some thoroughness, although he seems at times to be rather too cynical. Here is a characteristic verse from " The Popular Thing to Do " :

" My head is quite level :  
Good Lord or good devil !  
On either I'm ready to call ;  
If he doesn't get off  
I'm ready to scoff ;  
If he does I will cheer him, that's all.  
If they crush him I'll hiss him,  
If they don't I will kiss him,  
And at his reception attend ;  
If he's guilty, I'll chase him,  
If not I'll embrace him  
And swear I was always his friend.  
For Smith has got into trouble ;  
There's a terrible hullabaloo !  
And now the quandary's bothering me :  
What's the popular thing to do ? "

He is proud of his native land. No one can read his patriotic poems and doubt it. There is an inspiring ring about them that makes one's heart beat faster.

" Oh, we are the men of the Northern Zone,  
Where the maples their branches toss,  
And the Great Bear rides in his state alone,  
Afar from the Southern Cross.  
Our people shall aye be free,  
They never will bend the knee,  
For this is the land of the true and leal,  
When freedom is bred in the bone—  
The Southerner never shall place his heel  
On the men of the Northern Zone."

Whatever else is challenged, the Khan is indisputably a master of wit. Possessing a keen sense of the ridiculous he writes " funny pieces " that are irresistible. I cannot

do better in closing this imperfect review than to quote some fragmentary selections which lose much, however, from being taken out of their setting.

" Of all the things in nature that afflict the sons of men,  
There is nothing that I know of beats the depredating  
hen ;

If you see a wild-eyed woman firing brick-bats from the  
shed,

You can bet a hen has busted up her little flower bed.  
She plunders and she scratches, she cackles and she  
hatches,

And forty thousand cowboys couldn't keep her in a pen :  
She was sent on earth to fret us, to excoriate the lettuce ;  
She's a thoro'-going nuisance, is the depredating hen."

And three verses from " Gentle Spring " :

" I sit with my feet in the oven,  
My nose close up to the pipe ;  
I'm as jokey as any spring robin,  
That's fresh and is rather unripe."

" I still wear my ear muffs and cap ;  
I still to my overcoat cling ;  
Yet I feel it my duty to sit  
And warble of Beautiful Spring."

" But my warble is husky and harsh,  
And my melody suffers from cracks ;  
For the froglets down there in the marsh  
Are shivering with humps on their backs."

The following is taken from a sarcastic poem entitled  
" The Trooly Good Man." It explains itself.

" He in the Amen corner sits  
On Sundays all alone,  
And when the preacher shakes the tongs  
He'll look around and groan ;  
He cried, ' O, Lord, I have no lot  
With publicans and thieves ;  
But, O, the horse he sold to me  
Is troubled with the heavens.' "

I make one more selection from a poem entitled  
" Mandy Ann McGowan." To understand the piece the following explanation is necessary. " Mandy Ann, the sweetest girl in all the earth, in telling her ' expeeryunse ' in class-meeting, announces, after the manner of Paul, that she is the greatest of sinners. Her lover, Bill Dunn, knows better than that, and is naturally very indignant."

" In class-meetin, my Mandy Ann  
She riz, and made my blood run cold :  
She said, ' I am a sinner, Lord—  
The biggest sinner in the fold ! '  
Right here I make a big complaint  
Agin sich foolish talk es that ;  
It makes me sick to see a saint  
Stand up a talkin thro' her hat !  
Now, Lord, I'm sayin this to you ;  
I know my Mandy, deed I do :  
Look here ! in all the righteous clan,  
From Saint Bersheba down to Dan,  
Ther's nary woman, no—ner man,  
Kin put a patch on Mandy Ann—  
On Mandy Ann McGowan."

We cannot deny that the Khan's poems lack the element of culture. So do the verses of Burns Yet who would belittle the poetry of the Scottish bard whose name is honored the world over, because, forsooth, he shows no evidence of a University education ? True poets obtain their gift as a birth-right, and I think that no one can read Mr. Kernighan's book without feeling that the author possesses a very unusual amount of this natural poetic ability.

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