

13.—THE POET IN WAR-TIME.

Sights innercent ez babes on knee,
 Peaceful ez eyes o' pastur'd cattle, 30
 Jes' cos they be so, seem to me
 To rile me more with thoughts o' battle.

Indoors an' out by spells I try ;
 Ma'am Natur' keeps her spin-wheel goin',
 But leaves my natur' stiff and dry 35
 Ez fiels o' clover arter mowin';
 An' her jes' keepin' on the same,
 Calmer 'n a clock, and never carin',
 An' findin' nary thing to blame,
 Is wus than ef she took to swearin'. 40

Snow-flakes come whisperin' on the pane,—
 The charm makes blazin' logs so pleasant,—
 But I can't hark to wut they're say'n',
 With Grant or Sherman ollers present ;
 The chimbleys shudder in the gale, 45
 Thet lulls, then suddin takes to flappin'
 Like a shot hawk ; but all's ez stale
 To me ez so much sperit-rappin'.

Under the yaller-pines I house,
 When sunshine makes 'em all sweet-scented, 50
 An' hear among their furry boughs
 The baskin' west-wind purr contented,
 While 'way o'er head, ez sweet an' low
 Ez distant bells thet ring for meetin',
 The wedged wil' geese their bugles blow, 55
 Further an' further south retreatin'.

Or up the slippery knob I strain
 An' see a hundred hills like islands
 Lift their blue woods in broken chain
 Out o' the sea o' snowy silence ; 60
 The farm-smokes, sweetes' sight on airth,
 Slow thru the winter air a-shrinkin',
 Seem kin o' sad, an' roun' the hearth
 Of empty places set me thinkin'.