

THE COMING OF SPRING.*

BY ROBERT, LORD LYTTON.

THE green grass-blades aquiver
 With joy at the dawn of day
 (For the most inquisitive ever
 Of the flowers of the field are they)
 Lisp'd it low to their lazy
 Neighbours that flat on the ground,
 Dandelion and daisy,
 Lay still in a slumber sound :
 But soon, as a ripple of shadow
 Runs over the whisperous wheat,
 The rumour ran over the meadow
 With its numberless fluttering feet :
 It was told by the water-cresses
 To the brooklet that, in and out
 Of his garrulous green recesses,
 For gossip was gadding about :
 And the brooklet, full of the matter,
 Spread it abroad with pride ;
 But he stopp'd to gossip and chatter,
 And turn'd so often aside,
 That his news got there before him
 Ere his journey down was done ;
 And young leaves in the vale laugh'd o'er him,
 " We know it ! THE SNOW IS GONE !"
 The snow is gone ! but ye only
 Know how good doth that good news sound,
 Whose hearts, long buried and lonely,
 Have been waiting, winter-bound,
 For the voice of the wakening angel
 To utter the welcome evangel,
 " The snow is gone : reärise,
 And blossom as heretofore,
 Hopes, imaginings, memories,
 And joys of the days of yore !"

What are the tree-tops saying, swaying
 This way altogether ?
 " The winter is past ! the south wind at last
 Is come, and the sunny weather !"

The trees ! there is no mistaking them,
 For the trees they never mistake :
 And you may tell, by the way of the stem,
 What the way is the wind doth take.
 So, if the tree-tops nod this way,
 It is the south wind that is come ;
 And, if to the other side nod they,
 Go, clothe ye warm, or bide at home !
 The flowers all know what the tree-tops say ;
 They are no more deaf than the trees are
 dumb.
 And they do not wait to hear it twice said
 If the news be good ; but, discreet and gay,
 The awaked buds dance from their downy bed,
 With pursed-up mouth, and with peeping head
 By many a dim green winding way.

'Tis the white anemone, fashioned so
 Like to the stars of the winter snow,
 First thinks, " If I come too soon, no doubt
 I shall seem but the snow that hath staid too
 long,
 So, 'tis I that will be Spring's unguessed scout."
 And wide she wanders the woods among.
 Then, from out of the mossiest hiding-places,
 Smile meek moonlight colour'd faces
 Of pale primroses puritan,
 In maiden sisterhoods demure ;
 Each virgin flowret faint and wan
 With the bliss of her own sweet breath so pure.
 And the borage, blue-eyed, with a thrill of pride,
 (For warm is her welcome on every side)
 From Elfland coming to claim her place,
 Gay garments of verdant velvet takes
 All creased from the delicate travelling case
 Which a warm breeze breaks. The daisy
 awakes
 And opens her wondering eyes, yet red
 About the rims with a too long sleep ;
 Whilst, bold from his ambush, with helm on
 head
 And lance in rest, doth the bulrush leap.

* From "Fables in Song," by Robert, Lord Lytton, author of "Poems by Owen Meredith." Copy-right edition. Toronto : Hunter, Rose & Co. 1874.