

silent graves,—beyond these flows the placid river, the distant hills growing ever fainter. In this peaceful valley lie the dead,—resting. How quiet it is! How solemn! Ah, here Death comes very close to us,—yet we shudder not, but commune in calmness with the Spiritual and meditate upon the fair aspect of those immeasurable ages, succeeding this one instant, of eternity. And then we read this old romance—you have heard it—and, reading, hear constantly the sombre-sounding bell, suggesting no incongruity in whatever part of the story, only the slow, sure, steady measuring-out of the troubled time of life, and through all the feeling grows: “Lo, it is good!” The other, minor refrain, showing the harmony of Nature and her devout submission to the will of the Supreme, we hear and read,

“ Oh, the little birds sang east,  
And the little birds sang west,  
    *(Toll slowly.)*  
And I read this ancient Rhyme  
In the churchyard, while the chime  
Slowly tolled for one at rest.”

The story read, the book laid down, again we see the churchyard and hear those reconciled refrains of Nature and Death. And our thoughts leap away from the tragedy and comedy and wilfulness of human life to the serenity and all-sufficiency of God. The object of the whole soul-renewing poem is to impress and commend the thought of the two concluding stanzas of the epilogue,

“ Oh, the little birds sang east,  
And the little birds sang west,  
    *(Toll slowly.)*  
And I said in under-breath,  
‘ All our life is mixed with death,  
And who knoweth which is best ?’

“ Oh, the little birds sang east  
And the little birds sang west,  
    *(Toll slowly.)*