

necessarily drag in with them inharmonious elements. Often his metaphors are the merest jingle of unmeaning words. This stanza from a poem entitled "Winter" may be cited as an example of his descriptive powers:

Wide is the arch of night, blue spangled with
fire,
From wizened edge to edge of the shrivelled-
up earth,
Where the chords of the dark are as tense as the
strings of a lyre
Strung by the fingers of silence ere sound had
birth,
With far-off, alien echoes of morning and
mirth,
That reach the tuned ear of the spirit, beaten
upon
By the soundless tides of the wonder and glory
of dawn.

What image of a star-lit night is left behind by this jumble of high-sounding words! The imagination comes to a full stop at these impossible comparisons, express and implied. What is meant by the chords of the night being tense? Can any one picture the strings of a lyre strung by the fingers of silence ere sound had birth? What image is awakened? It is, perhaps, hypercritical to object that the poet has made alien echoes in the distance attributes of the dark, like its tenseness. The epithet shrivelled may, possibly, be passed over, because it may express the idea which the poet had in his mind, whatever that may be. The meaning given to the word wizened by dictionaries is thin and dried. No careful writer, much less a poet of refined taste, would have forgotten its particular application, and dared to introduce into the imposing picture which he had in hand the wizened face of an old woman. When fancy takes such flights as these it soars beyond the possibility of artistic effect.

Most readers will prefer such poems as "Unabsolved," because they deal with life and possess some strength of dramatic interest. Yet the pleasure will be greatly marred by their high-soundingness, and by the lack of deli-

cacy in the expression of sentiments in themselves original and interesting. In these days of liberal thought, a poet even may go a long way in satirizing the clergy without giving offense. But the reader of poetry is disposed to be very manly, and will find his pleasure destroyed by the iteration of an unfriendly sentiment, where it is spoken gratuitously and not addressed to an offensive individual suffering poetic justice.

The same unrefined taste shows itself in his poem entitled "The Mother," which has won the unstinted applause of a Chicago newspaper. It is a poem dealing with a subject of the most intense human interest—a mother's love for her first-born. It is too long for reproduction in full. These are the opening stanzas:

It was April, blossoming spring,
They buried me when the birds did sing ;

Earth, in clammy wedging earth,
They banked my bed with a black, damp girth.

Under the damp and under the mould,
I kenned my breasts were clammy and cold.

Out from the red beams, slanting and bright,
I kenned my cheeks were sunken and white.

I was a dream, and the world was a dream,
And yet I kenned all things that seem.

I was a dream, and the world was a dream,
But you cannot bury a red sunbeam.

She narrates further that, lying "stark and white," she knew the changes of seasons, the alternation of day and night, the whispering wind and the blossoming flowers:

Though they had buried me dark and low,
My soul with the season's seemed to grow.

There is, then, a retrogression in time:

I was a bride in my sickness sore ;
I was a bride nine months and more,

when death came. "But under the sod," she dreamed of her baby; his rest was broken in wailings on her "dead breast." She could not sleep in her "cold earth bed," and rose from