

An Original Poem.

[The poem published below was written by the late W. J. Gilbert, of Willow Farm, Dorchester, N. B., about two months before his death. Mr. Gilbert succeeded Mr. B. E. Paterson as editor of this journal, but died suddenly at the early age of twenty-one years, on the 7th of February last, a few weeks after assuming that position, as was announced in these columns at the time. The first part of the poem refers to the home of his childhood, and the latter portion to the Gilbert monument standing upon the family burial plot in the Dorchester cemetery. The last verse is almost prophetic. The lines:—

"And beneath that rock that was cleft,
And that cross and bended knee,
Is the rest and sleep I am seeking:
The only slumber for me:"

were verified within a short time after being written. The mortal remains of the young author now lie beneath the shadow of the very monument he described.]

AN EVENING'S SOLILOQUY.

As the light of another day
Was dying in the west,
And another night was coming
To give the weary rest,
And the ripples on the water
Gently stirred its golden breast:

I was walking in that sunshine,
In that glorious fading light,
I was walking—walking slowly—
Wrapt in thought so deep, that night
Seemed to lose its soothing influence
On my soul's ungentle plight.

The village across the water,
Lay in the twilight dim,
And softly the breeze brought over
The sound of the evening hymn,
Which rose and fell like the sighing
Of the wind through the forest limb.

Ah! those solemn strains of music
Rendered sweet by distance far:
Floating onward, upward, outward,
Over hillside, strand and bar,
Ought to clothe with radiant glory
Thoughts which life's rough echoes mar.

Oh! how that beautiful home of yore,
That home of flowers, youth and light,
Shines through the gloom of other years,
And scatters far their deepest night:
Changing to joy the saddest thoughts
That dull the brain and dim the sight.

Again I hear the music swell:
The songs of old we used to sing;
Again the lighted lamps within
Across the lawn their radiance fling;
And in my ears again I hear
That merry, merry laughter ring.

I had left the world's great bustle,
Left its thronging thoroughfare,
Breathed again its simple freshness
Of my own sweet native air.
But the pleasures of my childhood
I was seeking, were not there.

Like one in a dream I was walking,
And thinking with sad delight;
While the landscape around me was deepening
In the shades of coming night,
And the music had ceased in the village,
And the landscape had faded from sight.

Calm night! the time of nature's sleep,
When nature's toils are o'er,
When peace and quiet reign around
The poor man's fast closed door,
And nought night's solemn silence breaks
Along the darkened shore.

Calm night! like the calmer nights
That breathed their blessings round
That little home; where the weary
Sought their rest, and its comforts found:
Can never again such slumbers be,
Such sleep so sweet and profound?

Beneath the rugged branches
Of a churchyard's stately trees
The soft moonlight is passing
Over the grass by degrees,
Over the grass of that churchyard
Lingering as it flees.

Drawing long, deep shadows
Across each narrow bed;
Lighting with quiet splendour
The tombstones at the head;
While the wind is softly sighing
O'er the city of the dead.

One tomb I like to picture,
Half hidden by many a tree,
A child's sweet sculptured figure
Is clinging with bended knee
To a cross, the "Rock of Ages"
That 'tis written "was cleft for me."

And beneath that rock that was cleft,
And that cross, and bended knee,
Is the rest and sleep I am seeking:
The only slumber for me:
While the music will come from the village
And the sunset will brighten the sea.

Country Roads.

The bearing of the road question upon the growing distaste for farm life should be more widely recognized, says the New York Evening Post. Many a person who asks why people are deserting the outlying farms would be surprised if somebody should reply, "Because country roads are so bad." Yet there is no doubt that this is an influential element. It is the solitude of farm life from which many men and women flee, and this solitude is largely due to the fact that they are debarred from association with other people through a great part of the year by the bad condition of the highways. When a trip to the village or a call upon a friend involves a tedious drive over a muddy road, the farmer takes the drive no oftener than necessity compels, and gradually he finds that his family are becoming discontented with a home which cuts them off from all society so much of the time. The drift from the farm will never be arrested so long as the road to the farm continues almost impassable.

The Scotch Grey Fowl.

Amongst all the different breeds of birds, one of the least known south of the border is that described as a "large, handy cuckoo Dorking without the fifth toe," but they are rather longer in the leg than the Dorking, and scarcely so square in the body. Yet the description given is not very far from the truth, for the Scotch Grey partakes of the Dorking type more than of any other. The cock weighs from 8 to 9½ lbs. when a year old, and the hens, as a rule, about a pound less. The groundwork of the plumage is a beautiful blue-grey, with neat moons of a metallic black on every feather. In both male and female the pencilling or marking should be equal all over, from the tiny feathers on the face to the sickles, though of course it is easier in this respect to say what is wanted than to obtain it.

The Scotch Grey is a first-class all-round fowl, and for that reason very suitable indeed for farmers. It is a good layer of large eggs, well-flavoured, not, of course, rivalling any of the non-sitting varieties, but laying an average of over 100 eggs per annum, which is by no means a bad total for a hen that attends to maternal duties, and is also a good table fowl. It must be remembered that 100 eggs of the size and flavour the Scotch Greys produce are quite equal to 150 of some other breeds. They are eggs which require a larger eggcup than the Staffordshire potteries are accustomed to make. Scotch Greys are also capital mothers, not clumsy, are good sitters, and are very attentive to their chicks. As table fowl they are very little, if at all, inferior to Dorkings in the quality of their meat. The frame is not quite so large, and perhaps the keel, or breast-bone, not so deep as in the Dorking, but there are very few persons who could tell the difference between one and the other when on the table. The Scotch Greys have a very decided advantage over their cousins, if we may term the Dorkings by this name, in that they are much harder, and can therefore stand cold soils where the others would die off. They are wonderfully healthy, and are small eaters. They cannot be said to bear confinement well, but farmers seldom expect that, and they need not regard this as a weakness. Scotch Greys are small eaters, but there is one thing they must have, and that is green food. If they do not get this they do not thrive, and often contract the habit of feather eating. But when space and green food can be given we know of no better fowl than this for farm purposes, and can therefore strongly recommend them.—
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