

## NOTES ON SCHOOL READERS.

BY THE EDITOR.

## THE FIGHTING TÊMÉRAIRE.

(By request.)

The author of this poem is Henry Newbolt, English barrister and author, who was born in 1862. He is well known by his spirited lyrics and ballads, many of them patriotic, such as *Drake's Drum*, *Admirals All*, *Hawke*.

The *Téméraire* was launched at Chatham dockyard in 1798, and was the second ship in Nelson's division at Trafalgar. At that battle the British fleet went into action in two lines, about a mile apart, the one led by Nelson in the *Victory*, the other by Collingwood in the *Royal Sovereign*.

Behind the *Victory* was the *Téméraire* under Captain Harvey. Anxious for Nelson's safety, Captain Blackwood of the *Euryalus* and others urged that the *Victory* should not lead, but when the *Téméraire* overtook the Admiral's ship, Nelson himself gave the order, "I'll thank you, Captain Harvey, to keep your proper station, which is astern of the *Victory*." Captain Harvey and his crew distinguished themselves in the great battle.

In 1838, the *Téméraire* was sold out of the service, and as she was being towed down the Thames from Sheerness to Rotherhithe, she was seen by the famous artist, J. W. M. Turner. A friend suggested to him that it was a good subject for his brush, and he painted the well-known picture which appeared in the Academy of 1839, called, "The Fighting *Téméraire* tugged to her last berth to be broken up, 1838." Newbolt's poem was probably suggested by this picture.

The first four verses tell of the ship as she was in the battle of Trafalgar; the last two, as she appeared to the painter in 1838, when she was "fading down the river." A critic of the picture says: "The vessel has a ghostly unearthly look, as if already more a melancholy vision of the past than any present reality."

The poem should be read or recited with full value given to the swing of the lines. It is emphatically to be apprehended by the ear rather than by the eye alone. Notice how the "ringing" and the "singing" of verses 1 and 3 are echoed in verse 5.

*Eight bells.* On shipboard, time is marked by a bell, which is struck eight times at 4, 8, and

12 o'clock. Half an hour after it has struck "eight bells" it is struck once, and at every succeeding half hour the number of strokes is increased by one, till at the end of the four hours which constitute the ordinary watch, it is struck eight times.

*The morning watch.* From 4 a. m. to 8. These explanations will be more interesting and better remembered, if one or more of the pupils get them from a sailor, and bring them to class.

*Noontide ringing.* The battle of Trafalgar began about noon. The *Victory* came under fire at 12.30.

*Linstock.* A pointed stick shod with iron, to hold a lighted match for firing cannon. Are cannon fired in this way now?

## ROBIN REDBREAST.

Good-by, good-by to Summer,  
For Summer's nearly done;  
The garden smiling faintly,  
Cool breezes in the sun;  
Our thrushes now are silent,  
Our swallows flown away,—  
But Robin's here, in coat of brown,  
And ruddy breast-knot gay.  
Robin, Robin, Redbreast,  
O Robin, dear!  
Robin sings so sweetly,  
In the falling of the year.

Bright yellow, red and orange,  
The leaves come down in hosts;  
The trees are Indian princes,  
But soon they'll turn to ghosts;  
The leathery pears and apples  
Hang russet on the bough;  
It's Autumn, Autumn, Autumn late,  
'Twill soon be Winter now,  
Robin, Robin Redbreast,  
O Robin, dear!  
And what will this poor Robin do?  
For pinching days are near.

The fireside for the cricket,  
The wheatstack for the mouse,  
When trembling night-winds whistle  
And moan all round the house.  
The frosty ways like iron,  
The branches plumed with snow,—  
Alas! in Winter dead and dark,  
Where can poor Robin go?  
Robin, Robin Redbreast,  
O Robin, dear!  
And a crumb of bread for Robin,  
His little heart to cheer.

— William Allingham.