

THE RAIL ROAD FLOWER.

A little flower of lustrous hue
 Within a public rail track grew.
 A poet, passing, in surprise,
 Fixed on it his reproachful eyes.
 "Oh wherefore here, in dust and heat,
 Should dwell a thing so pure and sweet?
 Thy home, thou gentle flower, should be
 Far off beneath some green wood tree;
 Within some soft and perfumed glade,
 All spread with dew, and cool with shade;
 Where thou no ruder sound shouldst hear,
 Than winds and waters murmuring near;
 Where birds should sing to thee, and bees
 Should bear thy sweets upon the breeze."

The flower with earnestness replied,
 "Where God has placed me, I abide,
 Content in some way to impart
 Pure feeling to one worldly heart;
 Proud, if the merchant, worn with gain
 Through me a backward glance obtain,
 A retrospect of joyous youth,
 And simple wants and artless truth;
 Prouder, if folly in the maid
 Assume for me a thoughtful shade;
 If sorrow, weeping, lift her eye
 By my example, to the sky.

"And, Poet, now one word to thee;
 Where should *thy* home and labor be?
 Art thou repining in the heat
 For some more lone and cool retreat?
 Some refuge from the careless throng,
 Where thou canst feed thy soul with song?
 Oh be content where God requires
 To wake thy harp, and feed thy fires;
 And if some worldly notes float in,
 Some echoes of the ceaseless din,
 Some groans from bleeding slaves, and cries
 From infancy, that, starving, dies,
 Oh deem not that thy strain, young bard,
 By these discordant notes is marred;
 The Master Minstrel's hand through such
 Achieves, they say, its mightiest touch;
 And thou mayest shake the sturdiest wrongs,
 By some bold outbreak of thy song.
 Then be content, where God requires,
 To wake thy harp, and feed thy fires!"

The Poet stooped and kissed the flower
 Wiser and better from that hour.

S. C. E. M.

