

Norman Gale is an Oxford man, a Rugby master, and a little over thirty years of age. A few years ago he was known to a few book-lovers as the author of "Meadow Sweet." Then he issued a volume of essays, "Thistledown" in conjunction with his friend Charles Meade, who did the best work in the volume; but his first success began when his "Country Muse" came to town in 1890. That fascinating young woman won all hearts from her first appearance.

Norman Gale is the Watteau of poetry. He lives in Arcadia, or in the Forest of Arden, and he sings of shepherdesses, of brooks, and flocks of birds as daintily as a nineteenth century Herrick, and without a tinge of the coarseness that blurs some pages of Hesperides. He takes Nature more simply and lovingly than any other of our present-day poets, and that fact gives him his chief charm and distinction. The versifiers of this decade have written so much second-hand philosophy and morbid emotion into every phase of Nature that when we meet a poet to whom—

"A primrose by the river's brim,
A yellow primrose is to him,
And it is nothing more"

we feel like saying devoutly, "Thank heaven," and sitting down by the stream to admire it with him!

The whole book throbs with the love of country life. The poem, "A Creed," is too long to quote in full, but some verses may give an idea of the spirit that breathes through Gale's work.

"Give me no coat of arms, no pomp, no pride,
But violets only and the rustic joys
That throne content along the country side.

No subtle readings, but a trusting love,
A hand to help, a heart to share in pain,
And over all, the cooing of the dove.

I am for finches and the rosy lass
Who leads me where the moss is thick, and where
Sweet strawberry-balls of scarlet gleam in grass."

Love and country, sights and country joys, are the best things Life can bring us, so the "Country Muse" tells us over and over again.

"The gods who toss their bounties down
To willing laps
Conspired to mould a million shapes—
Crocus and grasses, seas and capes—
To make deep echoes in our hearts.
What rare divine imaginings
Conceived the ivy-spray that clings
To other miracles, the trees!
How magical those great decrees
That sent us roses, birds, and springs!

"The gods who toss their bounties down
To willing laps
Neither forgot the violets' scent,
Nor planets in the firmament—
The outposts of a mystery!
They gave to man the undefiled
Bright rivulets and waters wild,
They wrought at goodly gifts above,
And for the pinnacle of love,
They fashioned him a little child."

It is difficult to give any idea, by a few extracts, of the wholesome charm and poetic fancy that permeate the book. An orchid or a rose is perfect in itself, but a branch of hawthorn does not tell half the beauty of the hedge, blooming under the summer sky, nor a bunch of primroses represent fairly the meadow they came from, and it is in the book as a whole the attraction lies that makes it loved by all who love out of doors. This short poem will do as well as another to quote:

"The shyest blooms are best. The hidden bird
Can make a midnight melody of wrong;
And sweetest far the love that is not heard
Before a kindred soul demands its song.
How luring she that's simple-souled and staid!
And love is ever rarest half afraid.
The May tree has its white, the rose its red,
The brook gold lilies, and the pool its rush,
The graveyard has its unforgotten dead,
And life has beauty waking to a blush.
But Love has tenderness and all sweet things,
And throbs alike for Cotters and for Kings!"

There is only one poem in the book that makes us sad; it is the last one, in which our author tells us—

"No more where dying daylight shyly lingers
Will I make musical salute to spring
Who will may take Love's pipe from out my fingers,

Who will may sing the songs I used to sing,
But from my pipe hath poured its first love's splendour
Now will I dare the steep that bounds the plain,
Teaching my soul its duty stern and tender,
Singing the truth that only comes through pain,"

and we devoutly hope he will not keep his word! So many poets are already pledged to that depressing vocation.

"Books," wrote Dr. Johnson, "should teach us either to enjoy life or to endure it." Norman Gale, when he writes "by Nature," teaches us to enjoy life. May he never throw away his fairy gold, or try to turn his dear Arcadia into a scientific poem!

E. G.

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Silver and Gold.

AS Mr. Harkness has been good enough to notice my criticisms of his former paper, it may be advisable that I should say something in reply. And first of all I must deal briefly with one or two side issues.

Mr. Harkness complains that I insinuated that he had approached his subject in a partizan spirit. I am sorry I was misunderstood. What I objected to was his assuming, as I thought, that a partizan spirit in others was perfectly natural and altogether to be expected. The passage to which I referred was this (THE WEEK, 28th Feb): "Nearly all the economic writers in this country and in England are partizans of gold. We can understand this so far as the Englishmen are concerned, because theirs is a lending country and any appreciation in the price of that metal that does not destroy the paying power of borrowing nations but adds to their wealth. Canada, on the other hand, has to pay interest on foreign obligations amounting in the aggregate to six or seven hundred millions of dollars, and every cent that is added to the purchasing power of the gold dollar increases these obligations by six or seven millions. That, under these circumstances, Canadians should espouse the same cause seems to indicate that they have carefully cultivated the grace of self-sacrifice."

On the same date Mr. Harkness spoke of "the persistent efforts that have been and are being put forth by the Governments of money-lending countries to force up the price of the standard by which the values of commodities are measured."

I did not attack or even question this very broad and positive statement; I confined myself to asking where I could find the proof of it.

This is Mr. Harkness' answer (THE WEEK, 24th April): "In discussing subjects of general interest in a journal like THE WEEK, it is pre-supposed that readers will be fairly well informed, and it is not usually regarded as necessary to stop to explain well understood facts or conditions. A very little study of the economic history of Great Britain, from, say, 1815 to 1850, or of that of Western Europe during the early seventies, should have convinced Mr. Jemmett that his first question was entirely uncalled for; or, if he still had doubts, a glance at the agglomeration of States to the south of us, where the struggle between the borrowing and lending communities is still going on would surely have set them at rest."

I am sorry that my lack of general information should have been made so painfully apparent, and can only hope that some well-informed reader will give me the definite information which I have asked in vain from Mr. Harkness.

His answer to my question about the Indian Mints covers far too wide a field for me to discuss it here. But when it is noticed that amongst the causes of the financial crisis in the United States in 1893 he includes the expectation that the Sherman Act would be repealed. I think it must be allowed that Mr. Harkness' reading of its history differs from the version usually accepted.

Although Mr. Harkness appears to think that whatever part of his case he has not proved I have proved for him, it will be noticed that he never once comes to close quarters either with my facts or my arguments, although he uses some of my figures as basis for arguments of his own. He does not even refer to the argument of my third paper, "The Fall in Prices," except by way of very casual mention.

But although the greater part of my three papers passes absolutely unchallenged, Mr. Harkness claims a complete victory. As to this others must decide.

The whole of the argumentative part of his paper of