

in a fixed order and succession. The first, fourth, fifth and eighth lines should all rhyme with one another, and the second, third, sixth and seventh in like manner have but one rhyme among them. In the minor system either two or three rhymes are allowable. There should be a pause in the sense at the end of the eighth line, though Wordsworth, one of the very best sonneteers in the English language, is much given to running the subject-matter of the octave over into the sestet. It may be stated that there is scarcely a rule except that which limits the sonnet to fourteen lines which has not sometimes been transgressed with the result that not a few productions forfeit altogether the character and distinctive marks of a sonnet.

Of the forty sonnets contained in Mr. Egan's last volume of poems, it is difficult to select the best, so many of them are crowned with perfection. The following, taken however not from "Songs and Sonnets," but from the Easter number of *The Century Magazine* for 1895 is without a doubt one of Mr. Egan's choicest gems as well as one of the finest sonnets ever written in America. It may well be placed side by side with Longfellow's beautiful sonnet, "Nature."

RESURRECTION.

Trust gives sweet peace to every living thing :
The wavering robin that in space has flown
Finds its safe nest ; the germ of roses sown
Waits sure in darkness, for the touch of spring ;
The tendrils of the ivy blindly cling,
Stretching their brown threads towards the
wall unknown.

To find a place secure, where, spite the moan
Of rushing winds, they hang till soft airs sing.

We who love life fear most the mystic death,
Yet we in death the self same life shall live—
This very life we know,—but glorified ;
And the fair temple which now holds our breath
Shall simply take the glory seraphs give,—
Renew its joys, and say, "I have not died !"

No reader can fail to appreciate

the grace of touch, beauty of expression, and absolute perfection of art which characterize this sonnet to the Greek lyricist, Theocritus.

Dahlinis is mute, and hidden nymphs complain,
And mourning mingles with their fountains'
song ;

Shepherds contend no more, as all day long
They watch their sheep on the wide, cyprus
plain ;

The master-voice is silent, songs are vain ;
Blithe Pan is dead, and tales of ancient wrong
Done by the gods, when gods and men were
strong,

Chanted to reeded pipes, no prize can gain.
O sweetest singer of the olden days,
In dusty books your idyls rare seem dead ;
The gods are gone, but poets never die ;
Though men may turn their ears to newer lays,
Sicilian nightingales enraptured,
Caught all your songs, and nightly thrill the sky.

Sonnet-writing is the very best check to diffuseness, and if there is one characteristic more than another which marks Mr. Egan's literary work it is the economy of his words in the expression of thought. The narrow limits of a sonnet enforce concentration and condensation, and as Archbishop Trench in his lecture on the sonnet says, "Oftentimes a poem which, except for these, would have been but a loose, nebulous vapor has been compressed and rounded into a star."

Surely the delicacy and fancy in the following sonnet are exquisite. I pity anyone who does not, at first meeting, read it at least ten times, and drink in the expressive beauty of its life spirit :

OF FLOWERS.

There were no roses till the first child died,
No violets, nor balmy-breathed heart's ease,
No heliotrope, nor buds so dear to bees,
The honey-hearted suckle, no gold-eyed
And lowly dandelion, nor, stretching wide,
Clover and cowslip-cups, like rival seas,
Meeting and parting as the young spring breeze
Runs giddy races playing seek and hide :
For all flowers died when Eve left Paradise ;
And all the world was flowerless awhile,
Until a little child was laid in earth ;
Then from its grave grew violets from its eyes,
And from its lips rose-petals for its smile.
And so all flowers from that child's death took
birth.