

Beranger, the prince of song writers ; ballads from Greece, the land where the singer's art sprang at once to perfection ; songs from Italy, where Dante shewed that the vulgar tongue could touch the heart as effectively as the classic speech of the Cæsars ; and the ballads of Poe, Longfellow, Whittier, and Lowell in the new world ; of which no mention can be made. Regretfully one turns from these : for at hazard stanzas by the score might be taken, that have made life brighter, toil pleasanter, and the world better.

The modern ballads by Goethe, Scott, Schiller, Wordsworth, Uhland and Tennyson, need no comment. Gems of song from the treasury of the master singers of the century need no commendation. They are as wine that needs no bush ; and they will delight readers without end in the days to come. The ballads of the olden time, like those by and for whom they were sung, bear a composite character in which good and evil are curiously blended. But their sturdy merit bears scrutiny, and fears no criticism. There is no cause to exaggerate their merits, or screen their defects. In some will be found coarseness of thought and expression ; while others are common-place and abound in puerilities that are wearisome. But in many, may be found a combination of force, sweetness, and pathos unsurpassed, and but rarely equalled in literature. Sir Phillip Sydney could be moved by Chevy Chase, however rudely recited, as by the blast of a trumpet ; and, in this practical age, to thousands the past brings no remembrance of sweeter pleasure than that of the hours of childhood, spent at the knee of some venerated, though perhaps illiterate, member of the early home, who at the cottage hearth, in the evening gloaming, by oft-repeated recital of these old ballads, made the young heart dance with joy never to be forgotten.