

ans would not receive me. I am a fallen idol like Depew among men and Pausanias among the shades. I smell to Heaven, Charon thy name is carrion! Woe, woe is me, men are bubbles, shades are bubbles, and I am neither man nor shade but a broken bubble. O Niobe and ye seven sisters of Phaethon your copious tears of stone and amber fell not so thickly nor so fast as my own salt bitter tears of black despair. *αἰαὶ ὄροτοί* I weep, I weep.

Hermes—Charon we are old friends. These many years have I brought custom to thy bark and have been thy passenger agent in many lands. Ever do I work for thy good, never for thy ill. It is not I who have done this but the reporters, the sons of Cadmus who persecute the daughters of Mnemosyne and defame honest old gentlemen. My hand on it.

Charon—I do believe thee, Hermes, and take thy hand in reconciliation. This tribe of parodists and slanderers, Lucian and Fénelon at their head, buzz around me like a swarm of bees filling me as full of holes as an old shield.

Hermes—Shall we then behold the sights together as of old? What wish you to know?

Charon—Tell me only this. I have read the law of libel of late and I fear to ask more. In the words of Homer,

"What is yon stately pile that fronts the sun
With marbled dome and pillared porticoes?"

Is it a mausoleum where they bury the mighty of the land? It is nearly as large as Achilles' barrow.

Hermes—'Tis true. Some say it is the grave of reputations but when finished it will be rather a place of resurrections and premature births than of burials. To it each year in solemn procession they will drag old men from retirement to deliver speeches and declare young men born into the fullness of the state who, as Socrates says, have not yet passed the mid-wife. However, the dome is not marble as you think, but tin. If your questions are done what say you if we seek refreshment?

Charon—Right willingly, for, as Homer says,

"The wine doth add fresh strength to weary men,"

and I am weary. But stop, this is a strange town, if all they say be true, a strange, unnatural town. I am old and have gray hairs to keep unspotted. Can this be done without a scandal?

Hermes—Leave that to me. I know the ropes, as well as you know your old coble's planks. Here we are,—Charon, your health and may Zeus drop in the wine better days and release from all your troubles. I have not seen you of late, tell me how goes the trade.

Charon—People are beginning to cry "Monopoly" and to talk of "People's Rights." It takes many an obol to preserve my rights. So far I have been successful, for our legislators cannot resist the obol's chink. Then again the Diana Purity Union is getting up an agitation to compel me to allow the shades two articles of clothing free of baggage charges. By Apollo and the

lads of the Gymnasium this would ruin me. If I don't strip them they will strip me of house and boat and home. They must go naked or I go naked. My little boat will hold but few at the most and if I have to carry baggage I'll never pay running expenses. What's more, even if it were money in my pocket I couldn't desert the traditions of my trade. The shades have always paid an obol and shall always pay an obol. They have always crossed the ferry naked and they shall always cross naked as long as I am ferryman.

Old Plutus and Croesus and a few more of these rich fellows have caused me a lot of trouble lately. That old rascal Ixion has got over them with his tale of woe and they are trying to secure water-power in order to run his wheel. At least that is their pretence, but then these capitalists always mask their rascalities with benevolent intentions. A plague on such lazy rascals say I. Don't I keep sailing and rowing all the time, why can't he keep wheeling? However, I have undoubted riparian privileges dating from the time of Saturn and they shan't have any water from my river. Let 'em go to Hades, I say. They can't bullyrag me. If I gave way, very soon they would drain the Styx and every unburied shade could walk over without his passport and an honest man would be out of employment.

Hermes—Take heart, my honest ferryman. But why art thou rising? As Horace says, "Tempus erat."

Charon—Nay, I must go.

"The boat rocks at the pier of Lethe,
Fu loud the wind blows frae the ferry."

You know Bobby Burns, one of our late arrivals, who has created quite a furore among Anacreon, Simonides and that set. Moreover I am in bad odor with the citizens here and must depart before I am discovered. Good-bye, my dear Hermes, and promise on your word of honor, if you meet any of the poets or town criers, to give "no word of Charon."



THE BIRDS' HOUR

By Ethelwyn Wetherald.

The world at noon belongs to the sun,

At eve to the home-coming herds;

But while the dew is pearly, very very early,

The world belongs to the birds.

As still as in a dream lie the meadow and the stream,

'Neath the soaring and outpouring of the birds.

Long, long before there is life at any door,

Or smoke at any roof, or laughing words

Of children fresh from sleeping, the outer world is steeping

In the heaven-given rapture of the birds.

Not a thought of grief or care can enforce admission there,

Through the winging and the singing of the birds.