AN HOUR WITH THE EDITOR

AN ERA OF DISASTER

A year or two ago, after San Francisco, Kingston and several other places had suffered from earthquake, and islands had been thrown up from the sea in several parts of the world, a good deal was said in the press and elsewhere about the severity of the period through which the earth was passing, and many timid people were under the impression that the end of all things was not far away. Ideas of this kind are not new, for at many times in historical periods people have feared that we were on the eve of some tremendous catastrophe. Perhaps there never was any occasion in which there was as much justification for such a belief as in the reign of the Roman Emperor Justinian. The first cause of popular alarm was the appearance in A.D. 531 of a remarkable comet. Its head was in the west and its tail extended across the northern sky. For twenty days it remained in its place in the heavens, and all the people were in terror of the fearful things which its presence portended. They expected wars and calamities of all kinds. The former were not slow in materializing; the others were a little delayed, but the popular dread was heightened when in A.D. 530 a greater comet appeared. The head of this was in the eastern sky and its tail extended across the zenith to the west. It was a magnificent object, and well calculated to inspire fear in minds not wholly ignorant and to fill with alarm the masses of the people. Astronomers believe they have identified this comet with that which appeared shortly after the death of Caesar, also with one that appeared in 618 B.C. and filled the Persian empire with alarm. It was probably this wonderful celestial visitor which in 1,106 inspired the prayer made in all the churches of Christendom for protection against "The Devil, the Turk and the Comet." It has appeared once since then, and is due to arrive again in A.D. 2,255. To add to the terror produced by the comet in Justinian's time, the light of the sun grew pale and so continued for a considerable time. It is not difficult to believe that if such a sequence of events should occur in such time a feeling of alarm would be very general.

Coincident with these celestial phenomena was a succession of earthquakes of an appalling character. Gibbon says that every year of Justinian's reign was marked by frequent earthquakes "of uncommon violence." For forty days at one time Constantinople was in the clutch of one of these earth-spasms. Some of the shocks were local; others so widespread that they were severely felt in all parts of the Roman Empire. Great chasms opened in the earth, vast masses were thrown into the air; tidal waves carried the sea far below its ordinary level and hurled it back again high upon the land. Where the Mountain of Lebanon came down to the sea a huge crag was detached from it and precipitated into the water, creating a new harbor. The city of Berytus on the coast of Phoenicia, the seat of the greatest institutions of learning then existing, where the finest of the youth of the Roman Empire were engaged, many thousands in number, in prosecuting their studies, was destroyed, and in its ruins perished nearly the whole population. But while in one sense this was the greatest blow that could have befallen Rome, for it extinguished in a moment so many lives that might have been useful to the State, it was not numerically so destructive as the earthquake of Antioch which occurred in A.D. 551. That city was filled with multitudes of visitors, who had assembled to take part in the festival of the Ascension, when the terrible calamity happened. In one day two hundred and fifty thousand people were killed and the property loss was enormous.

But awful as was the alarm caused by the comets, frightful as was the loss of life due to the earthquakes, they were as nothing compared to the visit of the plague. In A.D. 542, this pestilence made its appearance in Egypt near the eastern mouth of the Nile. Its spread was not very rapid at first, for it was two years in reaching Constantinople, but it extended its terrible sway both westward along Northern Africa and over Europe and eastward over Asia. The medical science of the day was paralyzed. The whole population of some cities fell before it. Nothing seemed able to stay its progress, and it pursued its terrible course alike in the heat of summer and the cold of winter. There is no reason for surprise in the fact that many people believed its ravages would only be stopped when the last of mankind had fallen a victim to it. For fifty-two years it reaped its terrible harvest. Throughout Italy the fields remained untilled. In Constantinople for months together the death rate was from 5,000 to 10,000 a day. How many victims this plague claimed can never be ascertained. Estimates vary, some of them being as high as 200,000,000—a figure which certainly seems excessive. Statistics on the point were never available, for there was no means of ascertaining how far its ravages extended. That it reached India and China there is no doubt, and that its consequences materially affected the history of mankind is beyond all question.

INFALLIBILITY

A Protestant minister once asked a layman if his infant child had been baptized. When the latter replied in the negative, and asked for a reason why it should be, the minister replied: "It is sufficient for you to know that I say it ought to be!" This is an illustration of an assumption of infallibility which has done as much as anything else to lessen the influence of the Church among people of intelligence. It is not always, and perhaps not often, quite as bald as in the instance cited, but it is usually only very thinly veiled. Although the Founder of Christianity prefaced one of His statements with the words, "Come let us reason together," the leaders of the Church were not long in stamping an appeal to reason as one of the grossest forms of infidelity, and today we see them occupying the same attitude. As an example, take the remark of the Anglican Bishop of Westminster, made a few days ago. He said that it was just as wrong for a man to marry his deceased wife's sister as it would be his own sister. This is a proposition that can be sustained neither by an appeal to reason or by ecclesiastical precedent, or by the most violent perversion of Scriptural teaching. It is simply an assumption on the part of one man to dictate how others shall think. It is remarkable that the clergy have at all times claimed a liberty of thought which they have denied to the laity. The Apostles had no sooner begun their ministry than differences of opinion arose between them, not on points having any relation to the teachings of Jesus Christ, but upon matters, which regarded from our distant view point, seem trivial. We wonder how there could have been disagreements between Peter and Paul as to the position of Gentiles under the new dispensation, but there were doubtless many heartburnings over this question at the time. So as we follow the record of Church history down to our own time, we find so-called heresies creating discord, and being suppressed sometimes with awful severity. None of these heresies really touched anything which, tried by the test of reason, had any bearing upon the fundamental truths of Christianity as taught by Christ Himself. They had to do only with the views propounded by clergymen who, we now know, were hopelessly ignorant on almost every subject whatever that had any bearing upon the welfare of mankind. Today the Christian world is divided into sects along cleavage lines created by men, whose opinions we would not now accept upon any other subject whatever.

The truth of the matter is, that Christianity has been in process of evolution ever since the followers of Jesus attempted to make the world comprehend the truth of the Gospel. If we think a little while about it, we will not be surprised at this. A small company of men, not all of them educated even in the narrow education of those days, set out to evangelize a part of the world, which at that time had reached a remarkable stage in civilization. In some respects we are not today as "advanced" as were the people of the Roman Empire nineteen hundred years ago. That was an age of great deeds, an era of an almost impenetrable materialism, a time when might was right to a degree which to us is incomprehensible. The wonder is not that Christianity attacked his formidable fabric and emerged from it somewhat disfigured, but that it had the courage to attack it in the first instance, and the inherent strength which enabled it to conquer. Scarcely was this terrific combat ended, when another was precipitated. Those people whom we call the Northern Barbarians began to hammer at the frontiers of Rome. The result was the overthrow of the ancient civilization and the inauguration of an era of intellectual darkness, peopled with all the strange shapes which the superstitions of the Teutonic races had conjured up in their Northern forests. That Christianity should have survived this period in its history is remarkable in the highest degree; that it should have been overlaid with some of the weird fancies of the new rulers of Europe is by no means remarkable. One of the first effects perhaps it would be more nearly accurate to say one of the principal causes of the Renaissance was a revival of liberty of thought in religious matters, and since that time there has been steady progress, not away from the teachings of Christ, but rather towards them. Christianity is rising above the mists of mediaeval ecclesiasticism into the clear sunlight of truth, and its progress upwards would be more rapid and the effect of this progress more general, if those who are charged with the responsibility of leading the thoughts of men, would assume less of the role of infallible teachers, employ more of their own reasoning powers, and appeal more to the reasoning powers of those whom they seek to guide.

The movement towards Church Union is, in this view of the case, a very healthy sign of the times. Unity may yet be some time away, but it is a great thing that it is being seriously considered, for one of the first things, which will have to be settled before union is possible, is that there may be a divergence of opinion in regard to matters which are non-essential. We fancy that when men sit down, carefully and prayerfully, to consider what parts of Christian dogma as it is presented by the various branches of the Church, can be eliminated without affecting the vital principles of Christianity, the result will be a surprise. For ourselves, we do not look for any sudden results. Men hold to their ideas, prejudices and beliefs with tremendous tenacity. It is hard to break away from old traditions, and not always desirable to do so until something has arisen to take their places. One of the most difficult things for the Church to surrender will be the idea of infallibility—not the infallibility of the Pope, which forms no part of what we are now discussing, but that idea of ecclesiastic infallibility which, though never openly taught, completely dominates the minds of many religious teachers, and perhaps the majority of them. Its existence may even be denied by those whom it influences, but the great mass of the people recognize it, and that is one of the reasons why so few men go to church.

MARIA EDGEWORTH

The literature of a country has a great influence upon the development of the character of its people. We do not now mean those books which treat of political subjects, and are read by the few, but those that deal with every day matters and are read by the many. In the latter class comes fiction, which, while professing only to present the sayings and doings of imaginary people, is often more real and truer to actual life, than history or biography. For historians are rarely uninfluenced by the partisan feelings of their time, and biographers have a natural tendency to gloss over the weaknesses of their subjects, and they rarely essay an analysis of motives. The novelist is under no limitations. He writes as he chooses. He may have a dominant idea in his mind, as Dickens had in all his stories, and he may never for a moment lose sight of this, but his effort is to make his characters play natural parts. Hence a novel is a mirror held up in which society may see itself as the novelist sees it, and in proportion as the novelist's view is elevating, or the reverse, so is the influence of the popular novel. If in a novel virtue is shown to be humdrum, and insipid and vice brilliant and attractive, if the family tie is held up as something to be regarded lightly, if godlessness is shown to be fashionable and characters are made interesting in proportion to the openness with which they violate the Ten Commandments, and especially one of them, the effect is necessarily bad, and the national character developed under the influence such writings is sure to be unstable and irresponsible. The fact that in France today it is proposed seriously to permit of trial marriages shows that the influence of the French novel is sapping the moral vitality of the people. On the other hand, if the fiction of a nation is wholesome in tone, the character of the people will be wholesome, and it was singularly fortunate for the British people that at a time when Europe was passing through a period of stress and storm, and doubt was being raised in millions of minds whether there were any laws human or divine, to which obedience should be rendered, their character was being molded by the writings of writers of whom the subject of this sketch was representative. Madame de Stael said of Miss Edgeworth, that her writings were marred by their "dull utility." To the brilliant Swiss, whose views of life had been formed in the luxurious and immoral court of Louis XVI, the domestic virtues and rude vices of which the English authoress told were uninteresting. They were common-place; they lacked the finish and the finesse of the follies and wickedness of high life in France. But perhaps the fact that France had its Revolution, with all its attendant horrors, while in Great Britain the problem of constitutional government broadened down from precedent to precedent, and the people were able to bear, with unflinching courage and determination, the tremendous responsibilities cast upon them in the last quarter of the Eighteenth and the first quarter of the Nineteenth century, may have been due to the fact that in British lands the simple and homely virtues were cultivated, while in France they were despised, at least by those in whose hands was the fate of the nation. Therefore we say that the British people owe a debt of gratitude to such women as Joanna Baillie, Hannah More and Maria Edgeworth. They were literary gyroscopes, which kept the good ship steady amid the awful tempests, which lashed Europe with a rain of lead and a blinding spray of blood.

Maria Edgeworth was the daughter of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, of Edgeworthtown, Langford, Ireland. She was born in England, where her father was temporarily residing in 1767. She was educated under the close supervision of her father, and her first works were written in collaboration with him, although his share in them does not appear to have been great. She made her entrance into literature when she was 28, in a book entitled "Letters to Literary Ladies"; to this followed educational and juvenile works, in which her father's views as to the duties of parents and children were elaborated. In 1800 appeared "Castle Rackrent," her first and best Irish novel. This had a great vogue and when "Belinda" followed, and after this a joint essay by her father and herself on "Irish Bulls," her reputation as a writer became international. She visited France shortly after and was the recipient of many attentions. At this time the only romance of her life occurred, for she was sought in marriage by a Swedish nobleman, but declined his offer, and this appears to have been the only one of which she was the recipient. On her return to Ireland she engaged actively in literary work, producing a number of stories of Irish life, of which "The Absentee" is the best known and has been ranked by some even higher than "Castle Rackrent." Her last novel, "Helen," was written in 1834, at which time she was 67 years of age, and it is as full of charm and grace as her earlier productions.

Miss Edgeworth was exceedingly small in stature and her features were by no means beautiful, but she was endowed with a charm of manner which made her hosts of friends. Her sense of humor was admirably developed, as her Irish stories show. Sir Walter Scott was among those who enjoyed her friendship, and he has left it on record that she inspired him to write the Waverley Novels. Byron delighted in her company, and Macaulay greatly admired her. Recently her letters have been printed, and they give an excellent idea of the distinguished men who were her contemporaries, and with whom she lived on terms of close friendship. It would be impossible in this place to give any illustrations of her style of writing that would convey an adequate idea of it, for she was not blessed with the faculty of graphic description, nor that species of imagination which permitted her to draw word-pictures. She did her work under very unusual circumstances, writing in the family sitting room, oblivious to what was transpiring around her, a method of composition which may contribute towards directness of style, but is not calculated to lead to flights of fancy.

SOCIAL AND MORAL REFORMERS

N. de Bertrand Lugrin.

Dante's Life and the Divine Comedy

When a giant tree, having fulfilled its life, falls in the forest, all about where it lies the tall, sweet leaves spring up, filling the woods around with a delightful fragrance, and the children call them the "Sweet-in-death." So it is, and so it has been since the beginning of time, with those whose names have come down to us in history, men who have spent their years in study, research and meditation, the better to instruct and to enlighten mankind; when the breath of their life has gone out, it has indeed meant the death of their bodies, but the God-inspired messages they have brought to the world cannot die. The thoughts of their hearts live after them, and, like the leaves of the "sweet-in-death," diffuse a gracious fragrance, as pure and beautiful as it is lasting.

It has been very justly said that there are only a few fundamental, moral truths, and that they are as old as eternity. Yet it is not given to all of us to understand these truths clearly, of ourselves, even though we may be aware that they exist. Our interest and our imagination require an external stimulus, either from being directly inspired by the contemplation of nature, or from communicating with those who have mastered the truths, and who, from that insight, are enabled to portray them in such a manner that our intelligence becomes quickened thereby, and our perception capable of full appreciation of the great moral laws. Then, at once, what is as old as eternity becomes to us as new and fresh and lovely as the break of day, and we are the broader and the happier men and women for the knowledge thus gained. Men may make new laws for every generation; science may continue to discover principles hitherto unknown, that change our views of many material things; but the great moral truths remain the same yesterday, today and forever.

When we try to recall the names of those whom we consider as the leaders of moral thought, we speak of Confucius, Zoroaster, Guatama, Jesus the Christ, Paul and Mohammed glibly enough, and we have some knowledge of a few Roman and Grecian leaders as well. Probably in this matter, as in most other matters, distance lends an enchantment, and the farther back we look in history the greater the dignity given to the research, and the greater the credit accorded to those whose lives we seek to study. But there are scores of men, who have lived in comparatively modern times, to whom we do not, perhaps, give credit enough, for the wonderful influence they have exerted upon mankind in their lifetime, and in the years that have passed since their death. From time to time there arises among us one who stands out distinct from the rest, as a leader of thought, as a public benefactor, as a social reformer. It is the purpose in this series of articles to try and select those who are thus distinguished, to give a short review of their life and work, and a brief outline, when possible, of their teachings. If in thus looking over the lives of those who have fulfilled their missions and gone before, we gain an impetus to nobler thoughts, the time thus spent will not be wasted.

Dante—His Life

I.

"It is the imagination," writes Charles Eliot Norton, in his life of the great Italian poet, "which lifts man from the petty, transient and physical interests that engross the greater part of his time and thought in self-regarding pursuits, to the large, permanent and spiritual interests that ennoble his nature, and transform him from a solitary individual into a member of the brotherhood of the human race. In the poet the imagination works more powerfully and consistently than in other men, and thus qualifies him to become the teacher and inspirer of his fellows. . . . Is is needful to know Dante the man in order fully to appreciate him as a poet. He gives us his world not as reflection from an unconscious and indifferent mirror, but as from a mirror that shapes and orders its reflections, for a definite end beyond that of art and extraneous to it. And in this lies the secret of Dante's hold upon so many and so various minds. He is the chief poet of man as a moral being."

There is very little known of Dante's family. He was born in Florence sometime in the spring of 1265, and of his early years we have no account. But of Dante, the man, a description is given by the Chronicler of Florence, Giovanni Villani, a contemporary. "Dante," wrote Villani, "was an honorable and ancient citizen of Florence. . . . He was a great master in almost every branch of knowledge, although he was a layman; he was a supreme poet and philosopher, and a perfect rhetoritician alike in prose and verse, as well as a most noble orator in public speech, with the most polished and beautiful style that has ever been in our language."

While he lived in Florence, Dante held office and showed himself a man of eminent practibility. He was intensely patriotic, and loved his birthplace with all the loyalty of which his poetic nature was capable. We can imagine what his feelings must have been when he was banished from his country, following the order of Charles II. of Naples, who had undertaken to reduce to obedience the refractory opponents of the Pope in Tuscany. Dante was accused of refusing obedience to the Church and to Charles. In a most touching passage, near the beginning of the "Convito," he thus describes his exile, an exile that was to last as long as life itself, for he was never permitted to return to his beloved Florence: "From the time it pleased the citizens of that fairest and most famous daughter of Rome to cast me out from her sweetest bosom . . . . . to almost all the regions to which our tongue extends I have gone a pilgrim, almost a beggar, displaying against my will the wound of fortune, which is wont often to be imputed unjustly to him who is wounded. Truly I have been a bark without sail and without rudder, borne to divers posts and bays and shores by that dry wind which grievous poverty brings forth, and I have appeared mean in the eyes of many, pho perchance through some report had imagined me in other form; and not only has my person been lowered in their sight, but every work of mine, whether done or to be done, has been held in less esteem."

The earliest of Dante's works is the ("Vita Nouva") "New Life." In it he relates, both in prose and verse, how he met and was influenced by Beatrice. It would only be fair to state here that many people do not believe Beatrice to have been a person at all, but rather an ideal of the poet, or a source of his inspiration. Beatrice literally means "making happy." There have been many pretty tales woven around his subject, but their authenticity is doubtful. According to Dante himself there were no interviews between them, no love tokens exchanged. He tells us that when he was only nine years of age he saw a lovely little maiden of such grace and unconscious dignity, and whose eyes mirrored such purity of soul, that from the moment of their first meeting love reigned in his heart. About her he wove all his loveliest thoughts and fancies. Not until nine years after their first meeting did she speak to him, and then it was only to salute him in passing. She died when Dante was twenty-five. Under the narrative embodied in this first work lies an allegory of the power of love to transform earthly things into the likeness of heavenly, and to lift the soul from things material and transitory to things spiritual and eternal.

After Beatrice's death he sought for comfort and forgetfulness in worldly things, "devoting himself to the acquisition of the wisdom of the earth, and to the neglect for a time of the teaching of Divine revelation. He was attracted by the allurements of life. He married. He took office. He shared in the pleasures of the day. . . . But at last a change came. He awoke to consciousness of how far he had strayed from that good of which Beatrice was the type; how basely he had deserted the true ideals of his youth. He took up his writing again with renewed vigor, preparing for the great work of his life."

THE STORY TELLER

Why?

An English journal arises to ask, "Why is Canada like courtship?" and replies in the next breath: "Because it borders on the United States."

Which?

During a political campaign in Mississippi, the Hon. Jeff Truly was one of the unsuccessful aspirants for the suffrage of his fellow-citizens. Prohibition doctrine figures in the struggle and seemed very important. "Brother Truly," said a minister, "I want to ask you a question. Do you ever take a drink of whiskey?"

"Befo' I answer that," responded the wary candidate, "I want to know whether it is an inquiry or an invitation."—Short Stories.

Heroic Treatment

A Canadian senator, talking of suffragettes and their gentle ways, told of a strenuous sister who was recently addressing an audience on the subject of happy homes.

"Do you think," demanded the speaker, who was of alarming height and weight, "that when my husband comes home intoxicated that I storm and scold and jeer at his helpless state? No, my friends, I run to him and throw my arms about his neck and—"

"Serves him right, mum, serves him right," ejaculated a humble hearer with fervid approval.

A Word for Dufferin

The recent visit of the Governor-general to Toronto caused an elderly citizen to indulge in certain reminiscences of former representatives of the British sovereign.

"I've nothing to say against any of them," he said condescendingly, "though it seemed as if Lady Aberdeen did too much of the governing, when her husband was at Rideau Hall. Earl Grey is one of the best and is more in sympathy with Canadians than most of the governors who have come our way. But you should have seen Dufferin when he'd come down here 'way back in the seventies.' I remember a banquet he gave in the old Parliament Buildings and the echo of that laughter is in my ears yet. It was a great night, I tell you! And Dufferin had brought his own wine down from Ottawa with him—some of it old Austrian stuff such as I haven't tasted since. Well, I swore off long ago and, of course, local option is a fine thing; but he brought his own special port and—oh, Dufferin was a gentleman."

Unstated

Hon. G. E. Foster is a statesman whose eloquence is as dazzling as January sunshine on a field of snow. Years ago, when the Scott Act was young and untried, the Fosterian oratory would turn a cup of cold water into a beverage as enticing as champagne and with no ensuing "head." As the Foster periods flowed on, even the city water which comes bemicrobed from ten thousand taps turned into a thing of harmlessness and a liquid joy forever. Mr. Foster is still in demand as a speaker on inspiring themes. Recently he gave an address before an audience of Upper Canada College boys who applauded his ringing remarks in a fashion to bring happiness to the heart of any jaded M. P.

"Well, how did you like the speech, my boy?" asked an authority who had not been present.

"Fine," said one of the smallest boys.

"What was the subject?"

"He didn't tell us, if you please, sir."—Canadian Courier.

The Greatest Ever

Mr. E. A. Evans, general manager of the Quebec Railway Light and Power Company, tells many an interesting yarn about visitors to the Ancient Capital. Some years ago a Methodist Conference was being held in the city of Quebec and it was proposed to give the visiting clergymen a complimentary trip to some historic point of interest. Ste. Anne de Beaupre was suggested but it was feared that the followers of Wesley might consider the spot unorthodox. However, they were approached with the project and about three hundred of them accepted the invitation with alacrity. Mr. Evans accompanied the clerical tourists to Ste. Anne where Father Holland, a jovial Irish priest, soon made them feel quite at home. They spent an hour or two at the shrine and Father Holland accompanied them to the station on their departure. There are not a few Irishmen in the ministry of the Methodist church and one of these sons of Erin said with a twinkle in his eye:

"Now, Father Holland, you must have seen many miracles in your day. What do you consider the greatest wonder of them all?"

Father Holland appeared to be in deep reflection for a moment and then said slowly: "Well, I've never seen anything to equal the miracle this afternoon when three hundred Methodist ministers were gathered at this sacred spot." The visitors appreciated the reply and parted from their new friend with due regret.

WITH THE POETS

The Hand of Lincoln

Look on this cast, and know the hand
That bore a nation in its hold;
From this mute witness understand
What Lincoln was—how large of mold.

The man who sped the woodman's team,
And deepest sunk the plowman's share,
And pushed the laden raft astream,
Of fate before him unaware.

This was the hand that knew to swing
The axe—since thus would Freedom train
Her son—and made the forest ring,
And drove the wedge, and toiled amain.

Firm hand, that loftier office took,
A conscious leader's will obeyed,
And when men sought his word and look,
With steadfast might the gathering swayed.

No courtier's, toying with a sword,
Nor minstrel's, laid across a lute;
A chief's uplifted to the Lord,
When all the kings of earth were mute.

The hand of Anak, sinewed strong,
The fingers that on greatness clutch,
Yet, lo! the marks their lines along
Of one who strove and suffered much.

For here in knotted cord and vein
I trace the varying chart of years;
I know the troubled heart, the strain,
The weight of Atlas—and the tears.

Again I see the patient brow
That palm erstwhile was wont to press;
And now 'tis furrowed deep, and now
Made smooth with hope and tenderness.

For something of a formless grace
This molded outline plays about;
A pitying flame, beyond our trace,
Breathes like a spirit—in and out.

The love that cast an aureole
Round one who, longer to endure,
Called mirth to ease his ceaseless dole,
Yet kept his nobler purpose sure.

Lo as I gaze, the statured man,
Built up from that large hand, appears;
A type that Nature wills to plan
But once in all a people's years.

What better than this voiceless cast
To tell of such a one as he,
Since through its living semblance passed
The thought that bade a race be free!

La Belle Dame Sans Merci

"O, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

"O, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

"I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew,
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth, too."

"I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

"I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets, too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

"I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long;
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.

"She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said,
'I love thee true!'

"She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sigh'd full sore;
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four.

"And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill's side.

"I saw pale kings and princes, too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all,
Who cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!'

"I saw their starved lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke and found me here
On the cold hill's side.

"And this is why I sojourn hrre
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing."

—John Keats (1795-1821.)

Could We But Know

Could we but know
The land that ends our dark, uncertain travel,
Where lie those happier hills and meadows low—
Ah! if beyond the spirit's inmost cavil
Aught of that country could we surely know—
Who would not go?

Might we but hear
The hovering angels' high imagined chorus,
Or catch, betimes, with wakeful eyes and clear,
One radiant vista of the realm before us,
With one rapt moment given to see and hear,
Ah! who would fear?

Were we quite sure
To find the peerless friend who left us lonely,
Or there, by some celestial stream as pure,
To gaze in eyes that here were love-lit only—
This weary mortal coil, were we quite sure—
Who would endure?

An Important Call.

"Hello, there, Central! do you know
Who 'tis that says to you Hello?
I'm mamma's little girl, Louise,
And won't you send the doctor, please?
'Who told me?' No one; I'm alone,
And climbed and ringed our telephone,
Because I want the doctor, quick,
For Butterball is dreadful sick.
No, not a dolly, nor a horse—
My yellow chicken 'tis, of course.
What! you don't think he'll come at all?
I know he would if mamma'd call;
He comed quick when I had the croup;
And Butterball's on our back stoop,
All scrooched up in a yellow heap,
I think it's croup, or some such thing,
And that is why I climbed to ring.
You say that he can't come—then I—
I'm 'fraid my Butterball will die!"

—Cora A. Matson Dolson.

ebruary 11, 1908.

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