

POETRY.

THE GOOD OF IT.

BY MARGARET J. PRESTON.

When any task my hands essay,
Wherewith to fill the eager day,
There rises to my thought alway,

This hindering question :—Whence the need
Of this thy lightly-weighted deed?
Forego it, and who taketh heed?

Perform it,—who will praise or blame,
Though it be wrought with purest aim?
Done or undone, 'tis all the same!

It cannot surely much behoove,
If, in thy life's so shallow groove,
Thou movest, or thou dost not move.

Amidst the thousand myriad lives
That overcrowd earth's human hives,
What matter if no work survives

Of thy small doing?—Who counts, alas,
One cricket chirping in the grass,
The less, when summer-time doth pass?

So keep thy song unwritten; spare
To spill thy music on the air;
Let go the stainless canvas bare.

The world is over-deaved with speech;
And who so out of wisdom's reach,
As yet to lack what *thou* canst teach?

O poor, proud reasoning? Shall the spray
Of fern beside the boulder grey,
Thrid with the morning's opals, say,—

“Whole winged flocks their nests have made
In yon great oak. Why should *my* blade
Afford an humble bee its shade.”