AN HOUR WITH THE EDITOR

MONOTHEISM.

The generally received idea in Christendom was, and perhaps it we reckon by numbers and not by scholarship now is, that a belief in one God is of comparative recent origin, and that for very many centuries before Christ it was confined to a single race, namely, the descendants of Abraham. This is in part due to the fact that until very recently the very great majority of people, even among the educated, had very little knowledge of what has transpired in the past outside of a very narrow field, and in part to confusion arising from an imperfect understanding of the religious cults of ancient peoples. There also has been a very natural disposition to attach too much importance to names. Thus many people think that the actual name of the Deity is Jehovah, just as the actual name of the King is Edward. Hence a missionary in India signed series of letters on the beliefs of the Hindus "Om," a mystic word of not very defined meaning, but approaching very closely what Christians regard as that aspect of the Trinity, which is termed the "Holy Ghost." It never occurred to this missionary that he was guilty of an act, which deserved severe condemnation. If a Hindu had written letters from England signed by the name of the third person in the Trinity, all the churches would have been deeply scandalized. This well-meaning missionary had mistaken the name, which his particular sections of mankind ascribes to the Deity, for the Deity himself. One of the practices of the Buddhists by which they reach a state of which they claim to be, and apparently are, superior to all material surroundings, is the constant repetition of the word "Om," coupled with a fixed position of the body and the concentration of the mind upon the source of all wisdom and power. We are disposed to regard such things as foolish, but if we would take some of the practices inculcated by Christian teachers, and substitute an algebraic sign for the name of the Deity in one or the other of His three-fold aspects, and do the same thing with some of the practices taught by the Buddhists, placing an algebraic sign in the place of names, it would be apt to puzzle the most learned of ecclesiastics to tell which precept was Christian and which pagan.

Taking a world-wide view and going as far back historically as is possible, there seems to be good authority for saying that monotheism is the basis of all religious cults. Some writers suggest that it was evolved from a more ancient pantheism, but the line of demarcation between the two is not sufficiently distinct to tell where one begins and the other ends, and in our very imperfect knowledge of the beliefs of the earliest historic races it is practically impossible to determine accurately whether they were monotheists or pantheists. Pantheism, it may be added, identifies the Deity with the Universe; Monotheism considers him as distinct from the Universe and yet controlling it. No argument is necessary to show how easily one of these views might be mistaken for the other, especially in comparing the very fragmentary and imperfect records which have come down from the remote past, all of which are preserved in a language with which modern scholarship is necessarily only imperfectly familiar. Hence to say that the original belief of mankind was pantheistic and later became monotheistic in some nations is simply an expression of opinion which may or may not be founded in fact. How very easily it is possible to mistake the true nature of religious belief will be evident from the fact that the great protest of Mahommedanism against Christianity was that the latter did not teach the essential principle that there is but one God. There are writers today, who hold that the Christian religion cannot properly be called monotheistic; but that seems about as unreasonable as it would be to say that a block of wood is three blocks of wood because it has length, breadth and thickness.

One of the most interesting features about the Christian religion is that it is the modern expression of the monotheistic idea as held by Abraham fully four thousand years ago. It may have at times been obscured by false doctrines, but it has remained substantially unimpaired during these forty centuries. Whence Abraham received the idea is not material, nor could we determine it, if it were material. The Book of Genesis tells us more about Abraham than any other writing, and it introduces "the Lord" without any words of preface. It takes it for granted that its readers will know who is meant. At what date Genesis was originally written no one can tell. In its present form it dates from the time of Ezra, who compiled it after the Babylonian captivity. Ezra was expounding the law to a monotheistic people, and as there would have been no difficulty in confuting him if he taught what had not previously been accepted by them, we may infer that the presentation of the father of the Hebrew race as being a monotheist was true enough. All the great Hebrew teachers, including Jesus, taught the same thing. Therefore, while we are without any documentary evidence that Abraham himself taught that there was only one God, we have sufficient indirect evidence to establish the fact. Hence we may feel sure that monotheism is at least forty centuries old. Corroborative evidence is found in the teachings of Zoroaster. Just at what date this great teacher flourished is uncertain, but it was more than twenty centuries ago. Some claim that he lived before the time of Abraham, but be this as it may, he claims in his teachings not to have invented any new doctrine, out to be simply reviving the ancient belief of the Persian people. So obscure is the personality of this wonderful man, that some contend that he was not an actual individual, just as some claim that Abraham was not. It is urged in regard to these great teachers of mankind that they represent really epochs in the history of their respective countries, but this is quite immaterial for the purpose which we now have in mind, because the point which we seek to establish is that in Persia, Mesopotamia and Eastern Asia generally monotheism was the oldest religious cult of which we have any trace.

When we turn to India we find a field in which, among the mass of speculation and learning preserved from antiquity, it is exceedingly difficult to discover whether there is a monotheistic idea of any theistic idea whatever. Buddhism is a philosophy, a moral code and a vast compilation of speculative ideas, but it is difficult to say that it is based upon a theology. One might say that it presupposes a Deity, rather than teaches that one exists. In point of fact, when once the existence of a Supreme Deity is conceded, the idea that He should be worshipped seems to follow as a matter of course. As was pointed out recently in these columns, the Ten Commandments do not specially inculcate the worship of the one true God. They simply forbid the worshipping of other gods. The Hebrew observances were chiefly in commemoration of the fact that God had brought the people out of Egypt. Hence the absence of anything in the teachings of Buddhism, which calls for the recognition and worship of God, does not by any means imply that founders of Buddhism were not monotheists. Indeed a belief in Nirvana seems to imply monotheism necessarily. The failure of Buddhism to lay stress upon worship is its great weakness. Its code of morality is of the highest type, and it seems as if it is the absence of this great feature, so conspicuous in the Hebrew religion, which gave rise to the confused polytheism that has such a hold upon the people of India. So, too, when we examine into the writings of the early Chinese teachers, we find little or no evidence of a belief in a Supreme Deity, but rather the assumption that one must exist. In Norse mythology, as in that of the Ancient Greeks, there is always present the idea that there is one supreme God. We may not always feel quite sure whether Woden, in the one case, or Jupiter, in the other, is really regarded as occupying such a place, or if there is not some power behind the whole grotesque fabric of gods and demi-gods from which they all derive power and to which they are all subservient.

Therefore we think it may be safely assumed by those persons, who do not like to accept any religious doctrine simply because the Church teaches it, that the belief in one supreme and omnipotent Deity "who upholds all things by the word of His power," is not merely the invention of the priests of a particular people, but is a part of the common inheritance of humanity. The person who says that he does not believe in God, sets himself up in antagonism to the consensus of mankind in all ages. It is immaterial for the purposes of the argument that nearly every people has drifted from the conception of a spiritual power supreme above the material; for it is also true that in proportion as peoples, modern as well as ancient, have fallen away from this thought and from the obligations and practices, which it necessitates, they have lost in national strength and permanence. It would be no exaggeration to write upon the epitaphs of the vanished empires of the past: "They fell because they forgot God."

WOMEN IN HISTORY.

The part played by women in history is far from having been subordinate. She has certainly divided the honors pretty equally with men, and perhaps, if we could get at the inner facts, we would see that hers has been the major share in influencing the lives of men and the destiny of nations. Prevented by her return from taking a prominent part at all times in public life, restricted by her sex from a conspicuous part in the wars, which have formed most of the material of written history, she has nevertheless been far from inconspicuous. Indeed there have been certain crucial epochs, when she has shone out resplendent among her contemporaries. We can know very little of the secret influence, which women have exercised, often for good, often doubtless for evil. There have been Delilahs, who have shorn the locks of many Sampsons; there have been many Kadidjas, who have inspired and strengthened Mohammeds. We do not hear of most of them, because usually they played their part behind the scenes; but their influence has been none the less because skilfully concealed. One of the greatest arts possessed by women is that of being able to exert her power without the fact being known. It is not always the woman who is the most conspicuous who is the most influential. Perhaps the truth lies rather in the other direction. We hear of many self-made men: probably if the truth were told they were "made" by some good woman, of strong commonsense and plenty of that marvellous capacity for self-sacrifice, which is one of the glories of what men are fond of calling the weaker sex. But we cannot, and would not if we could, alter that quality in our mothers, wives, sisters and daughters, which makes them a hidden force in the world rather than one that is constantly in evidence. It is quite possible that they do not know their power; it is also quite possible that if they exercised their power more openly, if for example, they should all decide to become suffragettes and demand the ballot, they might find their influence weakened; but this thought, which might be an interesting one to follow out, is quite outside the purpose of this article. We are dealing with the women, whose names have found a place in history, not of what women may become in the future, when she ceases to be man's superior and becomes his equal.

It is the intention of the Colonist to present a series of articles in which reference will be made to some of the women, whose names stand out conspicuously in the history of their times, and as we have no fixed programme laid out, if any reader would like some one to be spoken of, we shall do what is in our power to obtain some interesting information about her. It is not likely that on every occasion only one woman will be dealt with in an article, because there are many about whom it is not possible to say very much, yet concerning whom it would be well if we all knew something. Some of the world's heroines are the representatives of periods in human progress; others occupy a less important place; but there are many of whom it will be possible to find something interesting to say. If while the series is running, any readers desire to ask questions concerning women, who have a place in history, and it is not found possible or expedient to deal with them at any great length, we shall be glad to append to the article for the week foot notes, answering such questions. Much of the interest of the proposed series will depend upon readers of the Colonist. The first article will appear on Sunday next.

We have no doubt that the proposed series would be much more valuable if some of the Colonist's readers contributed something towards it, and we invite letters with that object. To assist contributors, and in order that each subject may be treated at one and the same time, we shall announce a week in advance who the leading character in the next article will be. We shall begin the series with Victoria, that great and good queen whom we all revered. Sufficient time has elapsed since her death to permit of something like a discriminating judgment being formed as to her influence upon the nation and her place in history. The letters need not be signed. It will be very pleasing if some of the High School pupils would join with us in this study of Women in History.

UNKNOWN LANDS.

Third Article.

The vast area in Asia, which lies east of what is called the Pamir Plateau, sometimes spoken of as "the Roof of the World," and its extension, the Tien-Shan mountains, north of the Himalayas, south of the Altai mountains and west of the ranges in which the great rivers of China take their rise, is one of the little known parts of the world. It includes Tibet and the western part of the Chinese Empire. It is a vast plateau, the most elevated continuous region in the world, its altitude for the most part varying from 9,000 to 17,000 feet in height, but with a great depression to the east, where the altitude does not exceed 3,000 feet. Its area is approximately 2,500,000 square miles, and doubtless if the neighboring unexplored regions were taken into account there would be found to be in this part of the great eastern continent fully 4,000,000 square miles concerning which the world is far from being well-informed. A part of it is occupied by the great desert of Gobi, a region, which resembles in some respect the southern part of the province of Alberta, that is to say, it is hardly a desert proper, being rather of the class more properly described as semi-arid. In some years there is considerable rainfall, but the average does not exceed 10 inches. It differs from Alberta in being greatly broken up by barren mountains and rocky table lands, but the more level areas are covered during the summer with abundant grass for sheep and cattle. Its elevation causes the winters to be cold and the absence of clouds renders the summers hot; nevertheless it is a region, which might be made very productive by irrigation at least in the more favorably situated localities. Scattered all over the region now under consideration are numerous lakes, but none of them have outlets to the sea. The water is removed by evaporation only, and the probability is that most of them are brackish. The population, of all this vast area is for the most part nomadic. The number of inhabitants, including Tibet, is estimated to be about 40,000,000, of whom about 4,000,00 are credited to that country. Nearly all the region is nominally under the rule of China, the remainder being more or less a part of the Russian Empire, although eastern Turkistan yet claims to be independent. Lines of demarcation are not very closely drawn in this isolated part of the world, and many of the tribes really do not admit the sovereignty of any ruler. Doubtless the country possesses great mineral wealth, although very little is known on the subject. It is a vast region, wherein there may be many surprises for mankind in general. It will be recalled by most readers that some seventeen or eighteen years ago George Kennan attracted the attention of the world to Southern Siberia in a series of articles in the Century Magazine, in which he completely upset all preconceived ideas of that part of the Czar's dominions. We learned a few years ago that the supposed waste regions, through which the Yukon flows were far from valueless. We are only just beginning to learn the extent of valuable land in our own country. Therefore we may well preserve an attitude of suspended judgment as to the economic value of the great Asiatic tableland.

It is in this part of the world that many people have been accustomed to locate the aboriginal home of mankind, and it is singular how many traditions seem to point to it as the region where most of the dominant races were bred. It must always be remembered, however, that traditions are usually susceptible of various interpretations. However this may be, it is a part of the world, which at one time and another has played an exceedingly important part in history. The present inhabitants of India, that is the dominant races of natives, undoubtedly came originally from the great plateau north of the Himalayas. This region was included in Tartary, that great kingdom which at one time gave laws to the whole known world. Here it was that eight centuries ago, Genghis Khan recruited his forces after the conquest of China and set out on a western march, which was only interrupted after he had laid nearly all southern Asia and southwestern Europe under subjection. This great warrior began his western tour of conquest with an army of 700,000 men, and led them across the region of which this article treats. Accompanying them was the great retinue of the conqueror himself, consisting of five hundred wives and concubines and thousands of servants. There perhaps never was in all history such a campaign. Compared with it the wars of Napoleon sink into insignificance in point of the magnitude of the leader's plans, the number of men, who followed him and the measure of success, which attended his efforts. When he died he divided nearly all Asia and the eastern part of Europe between his sons. Here also Timur, more frequently spoken of as Tamerlane, a century later, raised the troops with which he emulated the wonderful career of his great-grandfather just mentioned, and swept over the country from Egypt on the west almost to the Pacific seaboard of China on the east; no one can tell where his march would have ended, if death had not terminated it. The region, which formed the base of such operations as these, although it may not be well known to the world at large, is far from being a negligible quantity.

History has a remarkable faculty of repeating itself. Most of this little-known land is a population of nearly 400,000,000 people. Many of them are not warlike, but we would make a mistake if we judged of the whole Chinese race by the coolies of Canton or the merchant class, who live amongst us. In the interior of the Empire are stalwart tribes, who under proper leadership might accomplish as great things as were done under the conquerors named above. "The great plateau, of which we have been speaking, has kept the Chinese largely to themselves. They have not felt equal to the task of spreading westward. For that reason it may be said to have had an exceedingly important bearing upon the political history of the world. If the hived-up millions, who dwell nearer the sea, had been the kind of men, who of their own accord would overcome the difficulties presented by western migration, the history of the world would have been very different from what it has been. But eastern China has been awakened. America has taught the people the value of wheat as a food. Frequent famines have developed problems, which the government might disregard in the old days, but must consider now. In the higher lands west of China proper are vast areas where wheat can be grown, and where relief can be found for the overcrowded population of the eastern provinces. Therefore a western migration of the Chinese may be looked for as among the probabilities of the very near future. When it begins nothing can arrest it. It may not be rapid, any more than the progress of a glacier is rapid, but it will be as certain and relentless as the latter. Central Asia, little known as it is to the civilized world, will almost certainly again become a theatre of events that will profoundly affect mankind.

Roosevelt's Future

"The most remarkable social and political phenomenon observable in this Republic today," says the New York Times, "is the immense and growing popularity of President Roosevelt." Thus it begins an editorial comment upon the result of a quest among the Republican editors of the United States in search of information on the strength of the President with the people. The canvass was not complete when the statement was made, but it was plain that President Roosevelt was stronger than ever with the men whose favor has made him President, and would, perhaps, do so again, remarks a writer in the Toronto Mail and Empire. In another year the parties will nominate their candidates for the Presidency; the political pot is beginning to bubble all over the country, and to boil in some States, but the question that subordinates all others in the opinion of both politicians and the people themselves is "What about Roosevelt?"

The unwritten law of the United States declares that a man shall not be thrice President. General Grant was a kind of demiged in his day, but in 1880 he could not get a renomination for a third time; no President ever has done so. Apart from this custom, President Roosevelt has stated in the strongest possible terms that he will not be a candidate again. The problem of decently and profitably disposing of its ex-Presidents is an interesting one with the United States. Nine of them out of ten may be expected to finish their term of office when they are yet strong and active, and capable of giving the State their very best service. Custom debars them from continuing as President, and a half-dozen reasons keep them from remaining in public life as subordinates. It has happened that sudden death has made the problem an academical one in the past thirty years or so, although it was practical as far as Cleveland was concerned.

Cleveland, however, had no such hold on the affections of the people as Roosevelt. What happened to him was a matter of relatively small importance. The President now enjoys the affection and admiration of the plain people in a greater extent than any President in history. He has made plenty of enemies, but for each a dozen friends have sprung up to take his place. He has done nothing to offend the rank and file of Democrats, and that party having been so bedevilled by bad leadership for the past few years, it has little enthusiasm for any particular politician of its own stripe. It is boldly asserted that Roosevelt could poll one-third of the Democratic votes in the United States. Naturally, then, the future career of a man who possesses to so great a degree the good-will of both political parties is a matter of concern to his fellow-citizens.

Apart from the Times, several papers and magazines have been testing their readers on the subject of the President's future, and several have been boldly campaigning for the purpose of having a renomination thrust upon him, against his wishes. Indeed, critics have not hesitated to say that the President himself has chosen this method of sounding the public, and that he may reconsider his position on the subject of another term if the public demands it. Some of his admirers say that he should be the next Governor of the State of New York. Others declare that he should be a member of the next President's Cabinet, and take the war portfolio. The hope of others is that he should enter the Senate. Thousands deem him the one man to take charge of the work of building the Panama Canal, which is likely to be named for him. A minority recommends the unconstitutional office of "adviser to the Government." The presidency of Harvard is still another position that he is deemed highly competent to fill. It is plain that the people of the United States hate to let him go.

There can be no doubt that President Roosevelt could have any of these posts if he cared to make the right kind of a deal for the one he chose. It seems almost certain that a Roosevelt man will get the nomination of the Republican Party, if Roosevelt himself refuses to make a play for it. For the sake of his endorsation the prospective candidate would be glad enough to hand any lesser plum to his patron. At the moment the likeliest successor to Theodore Roosevelt is William Taft, Secretary of War, and formerly Governor of the Philippines. The President has made no secret of his great regard for Taft; and the other day his son-in-law, Congressman Longworth, announced publicly that he was for Taft for President. Taft is a man of the strenuous Roosevelt school, and is expected to carry out the Roosevelt programme with reference to the "interests," as they are called. He will stand for the "Square Deal."

Taft, however, has plenty of rivals, if not in the esteem of the President, then among the politicians in his own party. Senator Penrose, of Pennsylvania; Senator Foraker, of Ohio, and Senator Knox, of Pennsylvania, are the most prominent, not to mention Vice-President Fairbanks, Speaker Cannon, and Elihu Root, the ablest of them all, who is not mentioned prominently as a possibility in this respect. Senator Knox was a member of the Cabinet before he resigned to enter the Senate, and he is rather a favorite of the President's. Were it not for Taft, and the fact that Senator Knox comes from the State where the machine element has become a reproach, he might be the President's nominee. Senators Penrose and Foraker are considered anti-Roosevelt men, and may be said to represent the traditional Republican sentiment of high protection and general conservatism. They are equally opposed to the radicalism of the present administration. The latter is considered the successor to Mark Hanna, and no doubt inherited, with the toga, Senator Hanna's deep distrust of Rooseveltism. These men are now drawing together for a great political fight, which will probably make one of them the next President of the United States.

Editor—Threatening to sue us for libel! What for?

Manager—Through some mistake we described her as being in evening dress at a five o'clock tea.—Harper's Bazar.

The Story Teller

Mark Twain and the Chestnut.

(Harper's Weekly.)

The Boston people are telling a new story about Mark Twain, and it is this, and a good one it is for some people to recall on occasion. Mark was telling stories, strangely enough, and some young gentleman—Perkins, let us call him—after the manner of the very young, was trying to cap them, but he always began with that mock-modest preface: "You must have heard this before, Mr. Clemens," repeating the phrase at intervals through his so-called story. Finally Mark is said to have said this:

"Perkins, that's no way to tell a story. One night I was at supper with Henry Irvin', and he had the same old trick that you have, Perkins—'You must have heard this before'—or, 'You certainly have heard this.' He began a story this way, and I said, politely, 'No, Irvin', I haven't,' though I didn't know, of course, what his story was about. After he had used this miserable phrase three times, I said to him, 'Irvin', I was born and raised in Missouri, where truth is at a discount, and courtesy is above par. When a friend begins a story, as you do with 'You must have heard this story,' courtesy prevails and we say no, no matter what the truth may be; and a second time we say no; but when it comes like now, to the third time, then truth asserts herself. Yes, Irvin', I've heard your old chestnut many, many times: I invented it.'"

One on Sir Thomas

The Reader.

"It requires a vast deal of courage and charity to be a philanthropist," Sir Thomas Lipton was saying the other day, apropos of one of Andrew Carnegie's Book-Bounties. "I remember when I was just starting in business. I was very poor, and making every sacrifice to enlarge my little shop. My only assistant was a boy of fourteen, faithful and willing, and honest. One day I heard him complaining, and with justice, that his clothes were so shabby that he was ashamed to go to chapel.

"'There's no chance of my getting a new suit this year,' he told me. 'Dad's out of work, and it takes all of my wages to pay the rent.'

"'I thought the matter over, and then took a sovereign from my carefully hoarded savings and bought the boy a stout warm suit of blue cloth. He was so grateful that I felt repaid for my sacrifice. But the next day he didn't come to work. I met his mother in the street and asked her the reason.

"'Why, Mr. Lipton,' she said courtesying, 'Jimmie looks so respectable, thanks to you, sir, that I thought I would send him round town today to see if he couldn't get a better job.'"

"Weel Set Doon."

Speaking of the "rearin' game," a writer in one of the magazines says he knows of no other where good fellowship so universally prevails. So far is this carried that it is not etiquette for any one ever to be blamed for anything. The skip, eager to acclaim a well-played shot, will not admit a shot to be ill-played. "The ice is getting cleaner," he will say, by way of excuse, if you are strong; or, "Your stone stopped very suddenly," when you are short. He has asked you for a long guard, the gentlest and most cautious of shots, and you have come rearing up the ice and banked into the "house," bringing utter devastation in your wake. As you come forward with a beating heart, to see what damage you have done to his well-balanced "head," the vociferous joy of the opposing skip is in your ears. Your own skip eyes the wreck more in sorrow than in anger. His guards are lying to the right and left, his winner is up against the bank, and his opponent has two shots near the tee. But he will turn to you with a cheerful smile. "Man," he will say, "that was unfortunate. But it was no your blame. It was awfu' weel set doon!"

North Carolina Wit.

Some years ago, while the writer was returning from Raleigh, North Carolina, on an excursion train over the Seaboard Air line, he was accosted by the conductor of the train, one who had evidently spent his youth in keeping away from anything that pertained to education, and who proceeded to unfold the following example of "Downhome" wit:

"I declare some people can ask the most foolishest questions I ever see. What do you suppose some woman asked me just now?"

I replied that I was unable to guess, and requested him to enlighten me. He then proceeded to tell his story, which ran as follows:

"While I was passing through a coach just now some woman stopped me and asked me how far we were from Weldon. I replied that we were about fifty-five miles from Weldon. She then asked, 'This side or the other side?'"—Harper's Weekly.

Alexander Harrison, the famous painter of marine pieces, has a studio in Brittany, and a young woman who met him there in the early summer said:

"I asked Mr. Harrison if he thought American art students did well to come abroad to study.

"He looked from his window at the picturesque scene, and he said that undoubtedly the atmosphere was more artistic in Europe than in America.

"He thought, though, that Paris, as a city to study and work in, was over-rated. To illustrate his meaning, he said that a certain rich man's son, after three years in Paris, wrote home to his father in St. Joseph:

"'Dear Father—I have made up my mind to set to work. Please let me know at your earliest convenience whether it was painting, architecture or music I came to Paris to study.'"

Etta was fond of playing everything was "mamma and baby." One morning she was eating pancakes and had got down to two pieces, which immediately were called "mamma and baby." She took the smaller piece up and ate it. Then she said, "Don't cry, baby, your mamma will be down in a minute," and then ate the larger piece.—Chicago Tribune.

Mark Twain recently told this story as an illustration of his reason for not talking when he dined with the Kaiser: A man was reproached by a friend, who said: "I think it a shame that you have not spoken to your wife for fifteen years. How do you explain it? How do you justify it?" The poor man said: "I didn't want to interrupt her."—Argonaut.

Current Verse

Canada to England

(A reply to William Watson.)

Sang one of England in his island home;
"Her veins are million, but her heart is one."
And looked from out his wave-bound homeland isle
To us who dwell beyond its western sun.

And we among the northland plains and lakes,
We youthful dwellers in a younger land,
Turn eastward to the wide Atlantic's waste,
And feel the clasp of England's outstretched hand.

For we are they who wander far from home
To swell the glory of an ancient name;
Who journeyed seaward on an exile long,
When fortune's twilight to our island came.

But every keel that cleaves the midway waste
Binds with a silent thread our sea-cleft strands,
Till ocean dwindles and the sea-waste shrinks,
And England mingles with a hundred lands.

And weaving silently all far-off island shores,
A thousand singing wires stretch round the earth,
Or sleep still vocal in their ocean depths,
Till all lands die to make one glorious birth.

So we remote compatriots reply,
And feel the world-task only half begun:
We are the girders of the aging earth,
Whose veins are million, but whose heart is one.

—Arthur Stringer.

In Boy-Book Land.

The child-heart has its pleasures that never come again,
Except to bloom in memories of the white bloom after rain;
Old playtime hours of summer and sweet dreams in a nook,
With phantom friends in pages of golden Story Book—
Ah, would that once could wander in child-heart fancies still!
Ah, would that one could summon again the wonder thrill,
When, deaf to childhood sorrows and blind to child-heart griefs,
A little lad sat poring o'er Jane Porter's "Scottish Chiefs."

Hearts kindled with adventure, eyes gleaming with desire,
Souls lit with rays of splendor, breasts warm with hero fire—
Oh, gentle years that shaddowed and guided with all trust
The little feet that wandered through realms of venture-dust
Through happy vales of Rookland and o'er far hills of song
Where shadows of the knighthood of a sweet old world belong!
Ah, little heart that fluttered at touch of wonder spells
Wrought by the eerie beauty of the Froissart Chronicles!

Ah, still mid all the shadow, with Childhand in my hand,
I love to seek the valleys of lovely Boy-book Land,
And there with Cooper's Indians and Scott's wild Highland clans
Dream o'er the old dream-glory, drink still the old dream-dews!
O brave Sir Henry Stanley, and dear lost Livingstone,
How often have your ventures in dreams around me flown!
How deep in Afric jungles and o'er strange desert space
A little lad has wandered with the dream-joy on his face!

To Boy-book Land of heroes, of knightly men and true,
O little comrade readers, let me wander still with you!
A loved book and an armchair, outside the falling rain,
The old desire of venture in the heart of youth again!
The Boy-book Land of beauty, o'er valley and o'er hill,
A little child-heart wanders as in old days sweet and still,
A little lad sits poring o'er travel and o'er tale
Of Gulliver and Sinbad and the isle of Crusoe's sail!

—Baltimore Sun.

The Waking World

Open the window wide, wide, wide,
Open the window wide,
A mocking bird on a bough outside
Is looking faint, he's tried
So hard to reach me through the pane
With his lilting song and glad,
Where he sings out there in the summer rain
On a bough all newly clad.

Tomorrow out on the prairie burns
We'll hear the plover call,
And where the bayou twists and turns,
And leaf-thick shadows fall,
The trout will jump for the dropping fly
And make the reel to sing;
Oh, open the window to the sky
And listen the voice of spring.

Last night the thunder grumbled loud,
This morn the rain comes down;
Outside a long, umbrelled crowd
Winds through the dripping town
The while the mocking bird in glee
Laughs loud and sweet and long,
And the scent that the breezes bring to me,
Is sweet as a mother song.

There'll be an arching rainbow soon,
Arched clear across the sky,
And a breath as sweet, as the soul of June,
In brushing softly by
Had breathed a kiss on the upturned lips
Of a world, tiptoe and sweet,
And glad and young from her finger tips
To her blossom-kissing feet.

A world as young as the day is young;
And that never will grow old;
As young as the song the mock bird sung—
Oh, I know there's a bag of gold
At the end of the rainbow over there,
And a haven no griefs shall cloy,
Just as mother said as she stroked my hair
When I was a little boy.

—J. M. Lewis, in Houston Post.

Spring in the South

As Iras took the last warmth of those lips
That Antony had found so long divine,
So we, when winter's star moves toward eclipse,
Take the first warmth of thine!

Ours the first violets that herald thee,
The first delicious tokens in the air,
The thousand mingled, delicate odors free
Blown backward from thy hair!

The first songs of the birds, enchanting grief,
Blithe harbingers of Spring in field and town,
First miracle of burgeoned bud and leaf
Within a world of brown.

What wonder that we hold thee for our liege,
Spring's lady, that so prodigally dowers,
After the months of barren Winter's siege,
This faithful land of ours?

What marvel, when thine airy trumpeters
Are all abroad to bid the world rejoice,
A joyful echo in the bosom stirs,
As at a long-loved voice?

—New Orleans Times-Democrat.