

Arbor Day Exercises.

THE MAPLE.

OH, tenderly deepen the woodland glooms,
 And merrily sway the beeches;
 Breathe delicately the willow blooms,
 And the pines rehearse new speeches;
 The elms toss high till they brush the sky,
 Pale catkins the yellow birch launches,
 But the tree I love all the greenwood above
 Is the maple of sunny branches.

Let who will sing of the hawthorn in spring,
 Or the late-leaved linden in summer;
 There's a word may be for the locust tree,
 That delicate, strange new-comer;
 But the maple it grows with the tint of the rose
 When pale are the spring-time regions,
 And its towers of flame from afar proclaim
 The advance of winter's legions.

And a greener shade there never was made
 Than its summer canopy sifted,
 And many a day, as beneath it I lay,
 Has my memory backward drifted,
 To a pleasant lane I may walk not again,
 Leading over a fresh, green hill,
 Where a maple stood just clear of the wood—
 And oh, to be near it still!

—Charles G. D. Roberts.

“WOODMAN, SPARE THAT TREE.”

MOST teachers will probably be familiar with the touching account given by G. P. Morris, of the circumstances which led him to write the beautiful lines commencing as above.

The *Popular Educator* suggests that the teacher should tell the story to the pupils, and have them memorize the verses, and recite or sing them on Arbor Day.

Mr. Morris, in a letter to a friend, dated New York, February 1, 1837, gave in substance the following account:—Riding out of town a few days since, in company with a friend, an old gentleman, he invited me to turn down a little romantic woodland pass, not far from Bloomingdale. “Your object?” inquired I. “Merely to look once more at an old tree planted by my grandfather long before I was born, under which I used to play when a boy, and where my sisters played with me. There I often listened to the good advice of my parents. Father, mother, sisters—all are gone; nothing but the old tree remains.” And a paleness overspread his fine countenance, and tears came to his eyes. After a moment's pause he added: “Don't think me foolish. I don't know how it is: I never ride out but I turn down this lane to look at that old tree. I have a thousand recollections about it, and I always greet it as a familiar and well-remembered friend.” These words were scarcely uttered when the old gentleman cried out, “There it is!” Near the tree stood a man with his coat off, sharpening an axe. “You're not going to cut that tree down, surely?” “Yes, but I am though,” said the woodman. “What for?” inquired the old gentleman, choked with emotion. “What for? I like that! Well, I will tell you. I want the tree for firewood.” “What is the tree worth to you for firewood?” “Why, when down, about ten dollars.” “Suppose I should give you that sum,” said the old gentleman, “would you let it stand?” “Yes.” “You are sure of that?” “Positive.” “Then give me a bond to that effect.” We went into the little cottage in which my companion was born, but which is now occupied by the woodman. I drew up the bond. It was signed, and the money paid over. As we left, the young girl, the daughter of the woodman, assured us that while she lived, the tree should not be cut. These circumstances made a strong impression on my mind, and furnished me with the materials for the song I send you.

WOODMAN, spare that tree!
 Touch not a single bough!
 In youth it sheltered me,
 And I'll protect it now.
 'T was my forefather's hand
 That placed it near his cot;
 There, Woodman, let it stand;
 Thy axe shall harm it not.

That old familiar tree,
 Whose glory and renown
 Are spread o'er land and sea,—
 And wouldn't thou hack it down?
 Woodman, forbear thy stroke!
 Cut not its earth-bound ties;
 O, spare that aged oak,
 Now towering to the skies!

When but an idle boy
 I sought its grateful shade;
 In all their gushing joy,
 Here, too, my sisters played.
 My mother kissed me here:
 My father pressed my hand—
 Forgive the foolish tear;
 But let that old oak stand.

My heart-strings round thee cling,
 Close as thy bark, old friend;
 Here shall the wild-bird sing,
 And still thy branches bend.
 Oid tree! the storm still brave!
 And, woodman, leave the spot;
 While I've a hand to save,
 Thy axe shall harm it not.

—G. P. Morris.

PLANTING THE OAK.

IN mellowing skies the mated robins sing,
 The west winds blow the flag of clustered stars,
 And showers of roses waft the skies of spring
 O'er bloodless fields and monuments of wars,
 The waters purling flow the green woods through,
 The hermit moons ascend the glimmering sea,
 Peaceful, as when war's silver trumpets blew
 A truce of God or pastoral jubilee.

Here, as we gather on this festal day,
 To plant the acorn, heir of centuries old,
 The oak of warrior kings and courtiers gay,
 Of airy dryads and the age of gold,
 What war scenes rise,—what navies dark and grand,
 With peaking oars and serried shields and bows,
 What Roman roads with bannered eagles spanned,
 And cooled with shades of pendant mistletoes!

O acorn, acorn! Fancy sees again
 Memorial hills and forests cool and broad,
 Where villeins cluster 'mid the rosy rain
 O'er darkening sunsets 'round the feudal lord;
 Sees the rude arkwrights with their trenchers white,
 Old Norman barons, knights of gay Gasconne,
 And palgraves tall with battle axes bright,
 And marching palmers,—gone, forever, gone!

I hear grand Nelson's cry,—“Strike, hearts of oak!”
 And see the smitten Dane-ships strew the shore,
 And, from the Baltic roll the battle smoke
 O'er deep-sea graves of mourning Eginore;
 Before the oaks I see Gibraltar fall,
 And Trafalgar, and from the Tagus sweep
 The Genoese, on oak-ribbed caravel,
 To pluck the golden empires of the deep.

O oaks of old, where wandered kirtled maids,
 When swung the orioles in the sunlit rain,
 I see thee gathered for the palisades,
 From which gonfanon never yet was ta'en;
 I see thy trunks once spun with gossamers,
 Where fanchons sung, in rows defiant rise,
 And cavaliers with golden stars of spurs,
 Their shelter seek, with battle-wearied eyes!

Mother of cradles, where the infant dreams!
 Father of ships, that thunder on the sea!
 The soldier's lance above whose steel tongue gleams
 Or Cross, or Crescent, or the Fleur-de-lis!
 Couch of the victor, who no more shall wake!
 The dead king's throne, when, 'mid the hush of prayers,
 The dark lords pass, their last, quick look to take,
 The mullioned windows towards the altar stairs,

We plant the acorn,—open here the mould,
 The violets break while thrushes flute and sing,
 Earth's new-made vesture let the spade unfold,
 We plant the acorn in the breath of spring.
 The sun will find it, and the April rain,
 The jocund June, and summer's wandering wind;
 Life's resurrected powers renew again
 The embryo oak, and nature's chain unbind.

Like her, the maid of far Mauritius' palms,
 Virginia, in Provence tale of love,
 Whose simple history still the worn world charms,
 Who 'mid the citron shades was wont to rove,
 And tamarinds cool, and fans of cocoanuts gay,
 And planted there a seed in gratitude
 For every fruit she tasted,—so, to-day,
 We plant the acorn, grateful for the wood.

Rise, acorn, rise, the south wind's breath shall blow,
 Among thy lobed and sinuated leaves,
 As in the Vosges, where the child oaks grow,
 Or Javan valleys where the sea wind breathes,
 The showers thy buds, regenerate, shall baptize,
 And earth shall feed thee like a mother strong,
 Heir of the sun, the cloud, the eternal skies,
 And earth's new ages, eloquent and long.

The heir of peace,—the dove descends and falls
 From Christ's own hand upon young Freedom's brow;
 We weave the garlands of new festivals,
 Like poets old, to lay upon the plough,
 No more for dragon-ship, or palisade,
 The young tree rises by the crumbling wood,
 But children plant the royal oaks to shade
 The councils sweet of human brotherhood!

—Hezekiah Butterworth in *Youth's Companion*

A DANGER.

BUT I behold a fearful sign,
 To which the white man's eyes are blind.
 Before these fields were sown and tilled,
 Full to the brim our rivers flowed,
 The melody of waters filled
 The fresh and boundless wood.
 And torrents dashed and rivulets played,
 And fountains spouted in the shade.
 These grateful sounds are heard no more,
 The springs are silent in the sun,
 The rivers, by the blackened shore
 With lessening currents run;
 The realm our tribes are crushed to get
 May be a barren desert yet.

—Bryant.

FOREST SONG.

TUNE—“Work for the Night is Coming.”

A SONG for the beautiful trees,
 A song for the forest grand,
 The pride of His centuries,
 The garden of God's own hand.
 Hurrah for the kingly oak,
 The maple, the forest queen,
 The lords of the emerald cloak,
 The ladies in living green.

For the beautiful trees a song,
 The peers of a glorious realm,
 So brave, and majestic, and strong,
 The linden, the ash, and the elm.
 Hurrah for the beech tree trim,
 The hickory staunch at core,
 The locust so thorny and grim,
 And the silvery sycamore.

So long as the rivers flow,
 So long as the mountains rise,
 And shelter the earth below,
 May the forest sing to the skies.
 Hurrah! for the beautiful trees,
 Hurrah! for the forest grand,
 The pride of His centuries,
 The garden of God's own hand.

—Adapted from Prof. W. H. Venable.
 —The Moderator.