

Whittier's Last Poem.

BURNING DRIFTWOOD.

BEFORE my driftwood fire I sit,
And see with every waif I burn
Old dreams and fancies colouring it,
And folly's unalid ghosts return.

O ships of mine, whose swift keels cloft
The enchanted sea on which they sailed,
Are these poor fragments only left
Of vain desires and hopes that failed?

Did I not watch from them the light
Of sunset on my towers in Spain,
And see, far off, uploom in sight,
The Happy Isles I might not gain?

Did sudden lift of fog reveal
Arcadia's vales of song and spring?
And did I pass, with grazing keel,
The rocks whereon the sirens sing?

Have I not drifted hard upon
The unmapped regions lost to man,
The cloud-pitched tents of Prester John,
The palace domes of Kubla Khan?

Did land winds blow from jasmine flowers,
Where Youth the ageless Fountain fills?
Did love make sign from rose-blown bowers,
And Gold from Eldorado's hills?

Alas! the gallant ships that sailed,
On blind Adventure's errand sent,
How'er they laid their courses, failed
To reach the haven of Content.

And of my ventures, those alone
Which Love has freighted safely sped,
Seeking a good beyond my own,
By clear-eyed Duty piloted.

Oh mariners, hoping still to meet
The luck Arabian voyagers met,
And find in Bagdad's moonlit street
Haroun al Raschid walking yet!

Take with you, on your Sea of Dreams,
The fair, fond fancies dear to youth.
I turn from all that only seems,
And seek the sober grounds of truth.

What matter that it is not May,
That birds have flown, and trees are bare,
That darker grows the shortening day,
And colder blows the wintry air!

The wrecks of passion and desire,
The castles I no more rebuild,
May fitly feed my driftwood fire,
And warm the hands that age has chilled.

Whatever perished with my ships,
I only know the best remains;
A song of praise is on my lips
For losses which are now my gains.

Heap high my hearth! No worth is lost;
No wisdom with the folly dies.
Burn on, poor shreds, your holocaust
Shall be my evening sacrifice!

Far more than all I dared to dream,
Unought before my door I see;
On wings of fire and steeds of steam
The world's great wonders come to me.

And holier signs, unmarked before,
Of Love to seek and Power to save—
The righting of the wronged and poor,
The man evolving from the slave.

And life, no longer chance or fate,
Safe in the gracious Fatherhood.
I fold o'er-wearied hands and wait,
In calm assurance of the good.

And well the waiting time must be,
Tho' brief or long its granted days,
If Faith and Hope and Charity
Sit by my evening hearth fire's blaze.

And with them friends whom Heaven has spared,
Whose love my heart has comforted,
And, sharing all my joys, has shared
My tender memories of the dead.

Dear souls who left us lonely here,
Bound on their last, long voyage, to whom
We, day by day, are drawing near,
Where every barque has sailing room.

I know the solemn monotone
Of waters calling unto me;
I know from whence the airs have blown
That whisper of the Eternal Sea.

As low my fires of driftwood burn,
I hear that sea's deep sounds increase,
And, fair in sunset light, discern
Its mirage-lifted Isles of Peace.

Mission of the Flowers.

IN a certain city there is a lady who has been an invalid for six months. During her tedious illness, her friends—knowing her fondness for flowers—have kept her sick-room well supplied. One afternoon, a few weeks ago, she said to her physician—pointing to a magnificent rose which stood alone in a vase on the table:

"Doctor, I wish you would take that flower to some patient who would appreciate it. I have so many beautiful flowers here! That rare and exceptionally fine rose ought to be doing good somewhere."

"Well," said the physician, "I have in mind a patient who would dearly love to have it, but I fear she is too near death to realize its beauty." And then he told how, in another part of the city, in the back room of a comfortless tenement house, a little girl was tossing with a raging fever. She had been delirious for several days, and all through her delirium she had talked constantly of the flowers and trees and green grass of a country home where she had once lived.

The doctor carried the rose to his little sufferer, and placed it in her hand. Almost immediately her restlessness gave way to quiet. The forehead, contracted with pain so many days, became smooth; and over the wasted features faint traces of a smile flitted, as though an angel had soothed them with the balm of peace.

"She will go to sleep now," said the physician to the woman who watched at her bedside. "When she awakes, see that the rose is kept in her hand."

All through the night the little one lay motionless, with the flower pressed closely to her cheek, while its delicate fragrances filled the air; and when the morning came, she awoke from the first restful sleep she had had for weeks. She touched to her lips the velvet leaves of the rose, which seemed to breathe into her face with living sympathy the assurance of the recovery to health which afterward came. And thus the beautiful flower accomplished its mission.—*Selected.*

Fight the Good Fight.

EXCUSES are too often on a boy's lips: "I cannot help it; I try, but I fail." "If you lived where I do, you wouldn't be any better than I am." "You don't know my temptations."

These excuses should never be made. You can help it, and have no reason for falling in your Christian life, for the Lord is always waiting to help you. Where you live does not make a particle of difference. The Lord will live with you, no matter where your abode, if you only ask him to do so. Your temptations are never greater than the strength the Lord will give you to battle with them.

Remember how our Saviour was tempted, and resisted. Remember, too, that Satan did not say to him, "I will cast thee down," but "Cast thyself down." That is what he says to you: "Cast thyself down." If he could do it himself, he would do so very quickly, without waiting for any words

on the subject. There he is powerless, and he knows it. So he gives the command; and, oh! it is a command which is all too often obeyed! If you would only realize two things—how helpless Satan really is, and how strong the Lord is—you would oftener conquer. Instead of that, I sometimes fear boys think the other way.

As for your surroundings, they are nothing; your surroundings have nothing to do with it. The Lord is able to keep you pure, no matter where your life is cast. Only pray, and trust, and watch. It is all in your own hands and your Saviour's.—*Selected.*

Perfect Love.

PERFECT love restrains selfishness. Perfect love stills jealousy. Perfect love conquers conceit. Perfect love casts out anger. Perfect love is truthful. Perfect love is pure and gentle. Perfect love is charitable and forgiving. Perfect love is constructive, and not divisive. Perfect love is optimistic because God is. Perfect love endures all things. Perfect love reproduces the Christ. Perfect love deeply desires to be serviceable. Perfect love loves everybody. Perfect love is attractive. Perfect love secures easy and grateful recognition.—

Bits of Fun.

—Colorado Mother.—"Here, you Sal! 'Wot'er yo' doin'?"

Sally (aged nine), "Herdin' the baby."

—"Small girl—Rob, what's a widower?"

Small boy—"Why, Helen, I'm surprised at you. It's the husband of a widow, of course."

—Amateur Tenor.—"I shall just sing one more song, and then I shall go."

Sarcastic Friend—"Couldn't you go first?"

—While the influenza was at its height, a child was born in New York. The family were all down with the disease. The new arrival was a boy, and by unanimous consent he was named *Agrippa*.

—Before the Venus of Milo.—Smithers (reading sign): "'Hands off.' The poor idiots! Do they think any one could look at that statue and not know the hands were off?"

—"It is a shame, husband, that I have to sit here mending your old clothes."

"Don't say a word about it, wife; the least said the soonest mended."

—Little Lucie went with her father for a walk in the park. After awhile they became separated, when the child began to address the following question to all the persons she met: "Please, haven't you seen a gentleman without a little girl?"

—Hibernian Nurse—"Arrah, wake up: wake up!"

Hospital Patient (drowsily)—"What is it?"

Hibernian Nurse—"It's time for your slapping medicine, sir, so it is."

—Dental Item—Sufferer.—"Do you pull teeth without pain?"

Dentist.—"Well, not always. I sprained my wrist last time I pulled a tooth, and it hurts me yet occasionally."

—Stranger (to hotel clerk): "What are all those strange marks on this register? It looks as if fifty hens had been walking over it."

Clerk: "Keep quiet, sir; those are the autographs of the visiting editors."

—"Riches take unto themselves wings and fly away," said the teacher. "What kind of riches is meant?" And the smart bad boy at the foot of the class said he "reckoned they must be ostriches."