

phrases were not those of the casual observer. The hedges were real hedges, with blackberries in them, or good twigs for burning, or straight branches for switches or walking-sticks. The dark nights were not made in theatres, but were bad for travellers, good for thieves. Men and women were men and women of the open air. There was something in every poem in the book that had the real blood and spirit of the country, something that made the book different from every other volume of the season. It was praised in half a dozen of the best papers, and the publisher, proud of his little romance, gave dinner parties, inviting distinguished guests to meet his poet.

Before the interest in him that the book had caused had died away, someone, more practical and more benevolent than most admirers of young poets, had got the boy permanent work as librarian of a small library in town. He settled in here among the books and students, and worked steadily from the autumn of one year to the June of the next. He had made other friends besides the distinguished people. There were several lodgings of poets as young and less fortunate than himself, where he used to come in the evenings and read his verses aloud, in an effective sing-song way, the manner, so he said, in which he composed them. He loved to listen to the old stories of Morte d'Arthur and the Mab-