

POETRY

TO THE APPENINES.

BY WILLIAM C. BRYANT.

Your peaks are beautiful, ye Appenines!
In the soft light of these sereneest skies;
From the broad highland region, black
with pines,
Fair as the hills of Paradise they rise,
Bathed in the tint Peruvian slaves be-
hold.
In rosy flushes on the virgin gold.

There, rooted on the aerial shelves that
wear
The glory of a brighter world, might
spring
Sweet flowers of heaven to scent the un-
breathed air,
And heaven's fleet messengers might
rest the wing,
To view the earth in its summer sleep,
Silent, and cradled by the glimmering
deep.

Below you lie men's sepulchres, the old
Etrurian tombs, the graves of yesterday;
The herd's white bones lie mixed with
human mould,
Yet up the radiant steeps that I survey
Death never climbed, nor life's soft breath
with pain,
Was yielded to the elements again.

Ages of war have filled these plains with
fear,
How oft the hind has started at the
clash
Of spears, and yell of meeting armies here
Or seen the lightning of the battle flash
From clouds that rising with the thun-
der's sound,
Hung like an earth-born tempest o'er the
ground.

Ah me! what armed nations—Asian horde
And Lybian host—the Scythian and
the Gaul,
Have swept your base and through your
passes poured,
Like ocean-tides uprising at the call
Of tyrant winds—against your rocky side
The bloody billows dashed, and howled,
and died.

How crashed the towers before the be-
leaguering foes,
Sacked cities smoked, and realms were
rent in twain,
And commonwealths against their rivals
rose,
Trode out their lives and earned the
curse of Cain;
While in the noiseless air and light that
flowed
Round your fair brows eternal Peace
abode.

He repealed the impious hymn, and altar
flames
Rose to false gods, a multitudinous
throng;
Jove, Bacchus, Pan, and earlier, fouler
names,
While, as the unheeding ages passed
along,
Ye, from your station in the middle skies,
Proclaimed the essential Goodness, strong
and wise.

In you the heart that sighs for freedom
seeks
Her image; there the winds no barrier
know,
Clouds come and rest and leave your fairy
peaks;
While even the immaterial Mind, be-
low,
And Thought, her winged offspring,
charm'd by power,
Pine silently for the redeeming hour.

(From the Edinburgh Review.)

INFLUENCE OF COMETS.

We recommend all those who have been
speculating on the probable influence
of Halley's Comet, to peruse the fol-
lowing extract:—

One of the most common effects attrib-
uted to these bodies, is an influence
over the temperature of our season. It
would be easy to expose such an error,
by showing upon general physical prin-
ciples that there is no reason whatever
why a Comet should produce such an in-
fluence; but it will perhaps be more sat-
isfactory to refute it by showing, that it
is not in conformity with observed facts.
M. Arago has given a table, in which he
has exhibited in one column the tempe-
ratures of the weather at Paris for every
year, from 1737 to 1831 inclusive; and

in juxtaposition with those he has stated
the number of Comets which appeared,
with their magnitude and general appear-
ance. The result is, that no coincidence
whatever is observed between the tem-
peratures and the number or appearance
of Comets. For example, in 1737, al-
though two Comets appeared, the mean
temperatures was inferior to that of the
preceding years, during which no Comet
appeared. The year 1765, in which no
Comet appeared, was hotter than the
year 1766, when two Comets appeared;
the year 1775, in which no Comet appear-
ed, was hotter than the year 1780, which
was marked by the appearance of two Co-
mets; and the temperature was still
lower in the year 1785, in which two
Comets appeared; while on the other
hand the temperature of the year 1781
was greater, which was likewise marked
by the appearance of two Comets.

This question, of the supposed con-
nection between the temperature and the
appearance of Comets, has been com-
pletely sifted by M. Arago. He has given
not only the general temperatures, but
also a table of the years of greatest cold
—of the years in which the Seine has
been frozen over, and also of the years
of the greatest heat—and he has shewn
that the corresponding appearances of
Comets have been varied without any
connection whatever with these vicissi-
tudes of temperature.

We should have hoped that the absurd
influences attributed to Comets would,
at least in our times, have been confined
to physical effects, in which the excuse
of ignorance might be pleaded with a
less sense of humiliation. But will it be
believed that within a few years persons
could be found among the better classes
of society, and holding some literary and
professional station—and in our own
country too—who could attribute to the
influence of Comets every prevalent dis-
ease, local or general, by which, since
the commencement of the Christian era,
not the human race only was afflicted,
but even the lower species of animal?

The splendid Comet of 1811 was, on
the Continent, considered as the imme-
diate cause of the fine vintage of that
year, and the produce was distinguished
as the *wine of the Comet*. But with us
still more extraordinary effects was as-
cribed to that Comet. In the 'Gentle-
man's Magazine' for 1818, we were told
that its influence produced a mild winter,
a moist spring, and a cold-summer: that
there was not sufficient sunshine to ripen
the fruits of the earth; that, nevertheless
(such was the cometic influence), the
harvest was abundant, and some species
of fruits, such as melons and figs, were
not only plentiful, but of a delicious fla-
vour, that wasps rarely appeared, and
flies became blind and died early in the
season; that, in the neighbourhood of
London, numerous instances occurred of
women bearing twins, and it even hap-
pened, in one instance, that the wife of a
shoemaker in Whitechapel had four chil-
dren at a birth!

So recently as the year 1829, a work
appeared upon epidemic diseases, by Mr.
Forster, an English practitioner, in which
it is asserted that, since the Christian era,
the most unhealthy periods have been
precisely those in which some great Co-
met appeared; that such appearances
were accompanied by earthquakes, vol-
canic eruptions, and atmospheric com-
motions, while no Comet has been ob-
served during healthy periods. Not
contented however, with the influences
formerly attributed to comets, Mr Fos-
ter says M. Arago, has so extended in his
learned catalogue, the circle of imputed
cometary influences, that there is scarce-
ly any phenomenon which he does not
lay to their charge. Hot seasons and
cold, tempests, earthquakes, volcanic
eruptions, hail, rain and snow, floods
and droughts, famines, clouds of midgets
and locusts, the plague, dysentery, the
influenza, are all duly registered by Mr
Forster; and each affliction is assigned
to its comet, whatever kingdom, city, or
village the famine, pestilence, or other vi-
sitation may have ravaged. In making
thus, from year to year, a complete in-
ventory of the misfortunes of this lower
world, who would not have foreseen the
impossibility of any comet approaching
the earth, without finding some portion
of its inhabitants suffering under some
affliction; and who would not have grant-
ed at once, what Lobienietzki has written
a large work to prove, that there never
was a disaster without a comet, nor a co-
met without a disaster.

Nevertheless, even the credulity and
ingenuity of Mr Foster were in one, or
two cases a fault, to discover correspond-
ing afflictions for some of the most re-
markable comets;—that of the year 1680
for example, which was not only one of
the most brilliant of modern times, but
the one which of all others approached
nearest to the earth. The utmost delin-
quency with which he can charge this
comet, was that of producing a cold win-
ter, followed by a dry and warm summer
and of causing meteors in Germany.—To
the comet of 1665, he ascribes the great
plague of London; but he does not fa-
vour us with any reason why Edinburgh,
Dublin, and Paris, not to mention vari-
ous English towns and villages were
spared from its malignant influence. The
crowning absurdity, however, is the effect
imputed to the comet of 1688. It ap-
pears, according to Mr Forster, that the
influence of this body 'made all the cats
in Westphalia sick!'

Though our countryman probably
stands alone in the degree of his absurd-
ity on this subject, still society in gen-
eral, including even the classes reputed
most enlightened, cannot be altogether
acquitted of ignorance in regard to it.—
'I would have wished,' says M. Arago,
'for the honour of modern philosophy,
to be freed from the necessity of taking
serious notice of such absurdities; but I
have acquired personal knowledge that
some refutation of them is not useless,
and that the advocates have no inconsi-
derable number of followers. Listen
when you are present at one of those
brilliant assemblies where you meet what
is called good society:—listen to the talk
of which the approaching comet furnish-
es the subject, and then decide if we ought
to boast of that diffusion of knowledge,
which so many declare to be the charac-
teristic feature of our times.'

A PHYSICIAN EXTRAORDINARY.

Archibald Wallace Bruce, an old
Scotchman, bald, ragged, and humpback-
ed, who described himself as "Physician
extraordinary to his Majesty's Navy, and
Doctor of Medicine," was put to the bar,
charged with having wilfully broken a
pane of glass in the house of Mr. Miller,
of the Duke of York, Oxford-street.

From the landlords' statement, and
from what was previously known of the
habits of the various little personage at
the bar, it appeared that the Doctor had
unquestionably a greater predilection for
prying into the mysteries of Bacchus than
practising those of Esculapius, and that,
after he had performed his devotions to
the first-named deity, it became a matter
of equal danger to come within the range
of his crab-stick, or to take of his pre-
scriptions. On the afternoon in question
he went into the defendant's house in
search of patients, his practice lying
mostly in wine-vaults; and thus having
effectually prescribed for himself, he
walked out and deliberately smashed one
of the windows.

Mr. Chambers—What are you, Mr.
Bruce?

Doctor—What am I, do ye speer?—
Hoot, do ye ken I'm a doctor o' medicine,
an' gin ye doot the fac I've gie ye a pre-
scription.

Mr. Chambers—What do you mean by
breaking the landlord's windows?

Doctor—I'll no deny I broke the win-
dy. I did it just a' purpose, an' I wad
do the lik sax times a day, gin ony mair
o' sic indignity was pit upon a mon o' my
reputation. Ye maun ken I went into
my freend Miller's to wait on my patients,
an' was just supping a wee thoct o' rum,
when ane scoondrel boddie knockit my
bat clean ower my harns. Weel, blude
was up ye ken an' I lid about lik mad
wi' this bit stick (holding up a formida-
ble blackthorn), but this gar'd em gang
on their awfu' gait just waur and waur.—
The blackgard loons pelted me wi' meal
pocks, smothered me wi' tobacco reek,
and ding'd a' the pipes and pots at my
head whilk they could lay hand on. As
fac as I'm a doctor o' medicine, I thoct
they wad o' brain'd me. I flung out the
hoose, an' then I lifted my stick and
banged it through the windy.

Mr. Chambers—But you was very
drunk.

Doctor—Drunk did ye say—hoo's that
possible. Why, when I was here aboot
sax weeks ago didna I offer to gie ye a
prescription that in case ye got fou wad
make ye sober in a brace o' shakes?—
Here (pulling out a piece of some queer-
looking composition and swallowing a
bit), ye see, I've only to take ane or twa

soaks at this, an' if I was as drunk as a
Scotch pipet it wad mak me as sober as
I was on Sunday.

Mr. Chambers—I let you off the last
time. I shall now make you pay the fine
of five shillings. Have you got the mo-
ney?

Doctor—Five shillings! Hoot awa,
ye may kick me frae here till Edinbree,
but deil a baubee wad ye find in my
pockneuk.

Mr. Chambers—If you don't pay the
money you shall find bail.

Doctor—An' what'll my patients do?
Theres sax or seven waiting for me the
noo, but if ye do send me to prison, deil
hae me when I come out if I dinna gie
the hail pack o' loons wha misused me
the "garse o' Goladerem."

The Doctor was then handed into one
of the lock-up places.

WHO IS A GENTLEMAN?—Coleridge in
his 'Table Talk,' thus describes a gen-
tleman. It is a vivid delineation:

'Whoever is open, generous, and true;
whoever is of humane and affable demean-
our; whoever is honourable in himself,
and candid in his judgment of others,
and requires no law but his word to make
and fulfil an engagement: such a man is
a gentleman, and such a man may be
found among the tillers of the earth.'

ANECDOTE OF THE LATE SIR EDMUND
NAGLE.—When a young man, travelling
in a post chaise up Shooters-hill, a high-
wayman rode up, presented a pistol into
the window, and demanded money or life.
Sir Edmund, then a very athletic man,
seized the arm of the ruffian, twisted the
pistol from it, dragged him in through
the window, and placing him beside him
desired him to sit quiet, and ordered the
post-boy to drive on. The humble sup-
plications of the highwayman was an-
swered with, 'Be easy boy, be easy, I
won't hurt ye.' Still the conscience-
stricken robber kept pleading, till at length
the chaise reached the captain's lodgings,
when he handed the fellow out of the
coach, walked him up to a garret, and
locked themselves 'in. He then took off
his coat, and said, 'Now, sir, I neither
mean to hang ye nor hurt ye, but I'll just
give you a broth of a bating,' which hav-
ing accomplished, he opened the door,
bade the robber be off, and the next time
he stopped a coach to tap at the window,
and ask if Pat Nagle was inside, before
he ventured to poke his pistol into it.

A SCALE OF AGES OF THE ANIMAL CREATION.

ANIMAL	AGE
A hare will live	10 years
A cat	10
A goat	8
An ass	30
A sheep	10
A ram	15
A dog, from	14 to 20
A bull	15
An ox (a curious fact)	20
Swine will live	25
A peacock	25
A horse, from	20 to 30
A pigeon	8
A turtle dove	25
A partridge	25
A raven	100
An eagle	100

Of a goose, the following may be relied
on as a fact;—There is a family living in
Scotland, who are able to ascertain that a
goose had been in the family seventy
years; they know it must be still older,
but they fix this period as being able to
prove it incontestably.

DERIVATION OF "OH MY EYE BETTY MARTIN!"

Many of our popular vulgarisms have
had their origin in some whimsical per-
version of language or fact. St. Martin
was one of the worthies of the Roman
Calendar, and a form of prayer to him
commences with these words "Oh mihi
beate Martine" which by some desperate
fellow, more prone to punning than pray-
ing, was rendered "Oh my eye, Betty
Martin!"

A Lady in the course of conversation,
happening to say varzation, was remind-
ed by Paddy O'Bramble, that the word
was variation. The lady observed, that
it was all the same thing, and seemed a
little offended, until Paddy said, "Oh!
Madam, Heaven forbid there should be
any difference between U and I."

Dr. Franklin used to say, that the per-
son who is good at excuses is generally
good for nothing else.

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