



A Song.

By James Simmonds.

Old Time may come with his wintry hand.

He may turn my black locks gray,
But what care I for snow, on the land,
If my heart be warm as May?
Let him wrinkle my brow as much as he will,

Let beauty with youth depart,
But as long as I live, oh! let him not kill,
The Springtime of my heart

Let transient friends whom I thought sincere,

Depart when most I need them,
Yet let me think there are others dear,
And I will never heed them.
Oh let me not sail on life's perilous sea,
With faith blotted from my chart,
For I'd rather my bark should shipwrecked be,
Than the Springtime of my heart.

Bryant's Poetry.

By J. E. Lattimer.

[Those who have read Souvestre's "Un Philosophe Sous les Toits," or a translation of it ("An Attic Philosopher"): will remember that most excellent French writer's comments on the seeming paradox that the best of soldiers are so often peculiarly appreciative of the finer things of life, music and poetry, for instance. Following out this thought, it will add not a little to the interest with which the essay given below is read to know that its author, Lieut. Lattimer, is a Canadian soldier, who is now preparing to "go to the front." Lieut. Lattimer, who is a graduate of the O. A. C., is known to many of our subscribers who have come into touch with him in connection with his work as Agricultural Representative in various parts of Ontario.—Ed.]

Some people complain that it costs too much to live in the present age, while others argue that it is worth it. Others urge that the high cost of living is nothing compared with the high cost of loving. Whatever may be our ideas on this subject, whether our ambition includes aerial navigation or if we are satisfied with some less lofty flight, all will agree that the most enviable man (if we may be allowed to refer to anyone in that way) is he who finds his greatest pleasure and his most permanent enjoyment in the simple life.

Such a man was William Cullen Bryant. Of him it may be truly said that "he saw books in running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything." Particularly did he see "good in everything"; for that reason we should cultivate his acquaintance as far as possible.

It is especially characteristic of this poet to draw the most valuable lessons from simple occurrences. This is prominent throughout all his writings, but perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in that selection entitled, "An Old Man's Counsel." In this he describes a walk through the wood with a white haired ancient who told me much that books tell not, and I shall n'er forget." In this walk the flight of a pheasant is inspiration for the following lines where the sound increasing in rapidity is taken as a fitting symbol of human life.

Slow pass our days
In childhood, and the hours of light
are long
Betwixt the morn and eve: with swifter
lapse
They glide in manhood, and in age
they fly:

Wisely, my son, while yet thy days
are long,

And this fair change of seasons passes
slow,
Gather and treasure up the good they
yield—
All that they teach of virtue, of pure
thoughts
And kind affections, reverence for thy
God
And for thy brethren: so when thou
shalt come
Into these barren years, thou may'st
not bring
A mind unfurnished and a withered
heart."

Were we granted the age of a
Methuselah we might with impunity read
much of the fiction to-day so popular.
As it is there is scarcely time. With
printer's ink so profusely used it is
hard to discern what not to read. Yet
in an age when so much is required of
all, where there is room at the top and
little elsewhere, it should be patent to
all that if we feed on fiction to the ex-
clusion of literature devoted to those
fundamental truths so absolutely neces-
sary in the development of men that
stand "four square to every wind that
blows" we are running a very grave
chance of bringing—"into these barren
years a mind unfurnished and a withered
heart—" I venture this opinion though
fully aware that—

"Of all the good things in this good
world around us,
The one most abundantly furnished and
found us,
And which for that reason we least
care about
And can best spare our friends' is good
counsel no doubt."



Some Snow in Quebec City.

It is rather remarkable
that Bryant wrote what is
generally considered his best work in
his 18th year. Although noted for
precocity, (it is said that he could read
quite well when four years old) splendid
use of his youth must have been made
to enable him at such an early age to
express in the simplest and most em-
phatic language the goal of human effort
as agreed to by all the master minds
from Cicero's time till now, but no
where more concisely put than in
Thanotopsis the closing lines of which
though probably familiar to all will
bear repetition here—

So live that when thy summons comes
to join

The innumerable caravan, that moves
To that mysterious realm where each
shall take
His chamber in the silent hall of
death,
Thou go not like the quarry - slave at
night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sus-
tained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy
grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his
couch
About him and lies down to pleasant
dreams."

Bryant devoted only a small part of
his time to poetry. He was a journal-
ist, and from this training he no doubt
derived some of the qualities which en-
abled him to make his poetry appeal to
many. For instance condensation. He
is remarkably economical of his read-
er's time. His writing usually con-
tained an excellent point and he does
not tire you with a preamble before he
entrusts you with it, but divulges it in
the simplest, most forcible and most
concise manner possible. Condensation
is one of the most valuable qualities a
writer can now possess. When we have
short cuts to culture popularized by
such authorities as Dr. Elliott, of Har-
vard, who claims that a five-foot shelf
of books will provide for a liberal edu-
cation, provided we let him do the
selecting, and when reader's and
student's time is becoming daily more
valuable, the art of condensing material
can scarcely be overvalued. In this art
Bryant excelled.

Great variety of verse form is charac-
teristic of the poetry of this poet. He

In such a bright, late quiet, would
that I
Might wear out life like thee, 'mid
bowers and brooks,
And dearer yet, the sunshine of kind
looks,
And music of kind voices ever nigh:
And when my last sand twinkled in
the glass,
Pass silently from men as thou dost
pass."

The subjects of his poems are as varied
as the forms of his verse though free-
dom and nature were apparently the
favorite inspiration of his muse, and it
is undoubtedly the matter rather than
the form of his verse that is the most
attractive. Many of his best selections
were inspired by natural objects. In
comparing these with somewhat similar
poems by some of our greatest writers
of poetry and prose we will find that
Bryant was by no means the least
among the poets of nature.

Hamilton W. Mabie claims that a man
may acquire a fair education from a
ramble in the wood, unless the man be,
to use a Carlylean phrase, "a pair of
spectacles behind which there is no eye."
Emerson says, "One will never see
Christianity from a catechism; from a
boat on the pond, or from among sing-
ing wood-birds one may,"

The English poet of nature, Words-
worth, declares—

"One impulse from a vernal wood,
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can."

Lord Byron Claims—
"There is a pleasure in the pathless
woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar,
I love not man the less but nature
more
From these our interviews in which I
steal
From all I may be or have been before,
To mingle with the universe and feel
What I can n'er express yet cannot all
conceal."

Tennyson in that wonderful poem,
"The Two Voices," which starts in such
a melancholy strain,

"A still small voice said unto me,
Earth is so full of misery
Were it not better not to be?"
Silences such suspicions in this way—
"And forth into the fields I went,
And nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent."

I wondered at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers,
You scarce could see the grass for
flowers.

I wondered while I paced along:
The woods were filled so full with song
There seemed no room for sense of
wrong.

So variously seemed all things wrought,
I marvelled how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought."

Carlyle asks the pertinent question, in
his great book Sartor Resartus: "Is
not immensity a temple and history
one grand evangel?" Bryant sees this
question answered in the affirmative by
all nature, and many of best poems are
about the forests which are to him "one
grand evangel." For instance, in the
"Forest Hymn," note:

"The groves were Gods first temples.
Thou has not left
Thyself without a witness, in these
shades,