

THE MONK AND THE BIRD.

"There is one fable," says Stevenson, "that touches very near the quick of life: the fable of the monk who passed into the woods, heard a bird break into song, hearkened for a trill or two, and found himself on his return a stranger at his convent gates; for he had been absent fifty years, and of all his comrades there survived but one to recognize him."

Long ages gone, so doth the legend tell,
There lived a novice who, with zeal and trust,
Sought truth and wisdom in an abbey cell;
And with his holy brethren from the lust
Of worldly eyes secure, and guarded well
By mighty woods, wherein no zephyr etrayed,
Nor gleam of sun, nor the pale glimmering light
Of stars an entrance found, he toiled and prayed,
And penance did full many a day and night.