

church sessions press an examination beyond the limits stated ; if so, they simply transcend their authority. Such has been the custom since the reunion, and a wise measure it is ; in this respect we are the most apostolic of all christiandom. The Congregationalists vary, and may submit a creed to which Paul himself could not give an intelligent assent. The Methodists keep their applicants out on the front porch for six months ; the Episcopalians require an ability to recite at least the apostle's creed ; while the Presbyterian church simply asks : Dost thou believe on the Christ ? This is the shibboleth of the New Testament ; it was the only key that unlocked the apostolic church, and is all that God requires in admission to the church above. It seems really strange that one should require for a church membership more than Christ ever exacted as a condition of salvation. I recall my own church profession as the severest test of my life. There were twenty or thirty young people that day, now twenty years ago, who stood up and declared we believed in the Confession of Faith ; the two Catechisms ; the Testimony of the church ; the Form of Government and Directory of Worship. The Confession of Faith is a compendium of the most scholarly research, and, if believed in by any boy, it must be on the authority of the church : the very essence of Rome. The relative merits of the Presbyterian Form of Government no one concerned himself about, not even the Session ; and as for the Directory of Worship, it was in jeopardy already and has since been repealed. Why were all these appendages nailed to the cross and made as essential as the cross itself ? The purpose was to guard against error perhaps, but by stultifying the soul and building a wall about the well of truth. I have often reflected on the inconsistency of the church as I knew it. We were told to examine all things, and then asked to accept of creeds on the authority of the church. We were warned against secret societies because they exacted a promise in the dark ; but no poor blind candidate was ever asked to assume more beyond his knowledge than did we in that old United Presbyterian Church twenty years ago. Creeds are a growth and we grow with their belief. Much of the Westminster Confession none of us believed or disbelieved. It was a sea whose waters we did not know. We have since learned to believe that venerable symbol, but it required years to do it. The church has wisely taken it away from the threshold of the church and laid it at the foot of the pulpit, and before the elders' chairs ; there let it remain. Much of it belongs to grace, growth, and experimental

knowledge. It lies in the future, and cannot be exacted of one whose only attainment is a faith God-born but untaught.—*New England Presbyterian.*

POETIC GEMS FOR YOUNG AND OLD.



HEN marshaled on the nightly plain,
The glittering host bestud the sky,
One star alone, of all the train,
Can fix the sinner's wandering eye.

Hark ! hark !—to God the chorus
breaks,
From every host, from every gem ;
But one alone the Saviour speaks—
It is the Star of Bethlehem.

Once on the raging seas I rode ;
The storm was loud, the night was dark—
The ocean yawned—and rudely blowed
The wind that tossed my foundering bark.

Deep horror then my vitals froze ;
Death-struck, I ceased the tide to stem—
When suddenly a star arose—
It was the Star of Bethlehem.

It was my guide, my light, my all ;
It bade my dark forebodings cease ;
And through the storm and danger's thrall,
It led me to the port of peace.

Now safely moored—my perils o'er—
I'll sing, first in night's diadem,
Forever and forevermore,
The Star—the Star of Bethlehem !
HENRY KIRK WHITE.

WHY HE LOVED A HOMELY GIRL.

To careless eyes she is not fair ;
This verdict careless lips declare,
And wonder why, against the charm
Of beauty vivid, rich and warm,
The face they deem so cold and dull,
To him should be so beautiful.

Are they too dull to see aright ?
Hath he a quicker, keener sight ?
Or is it that indifference
Than love hath clearer, truer sense ?
Nor is he right or wrong ? Oh, say,
Doth he behold her face or they ?

Her eyes into his own eyes shine
With strange illumining ; a sign
Is on her brow ; a palimpsest,
To his own gaze alone confessed ;
On him, in gravely gracious mood,
She smiles her soul's beatitude.

This is the face she turns to him,
O say not 'tis a lover's whim
That finds it fair ; nor are they dull
Who say she is not beautiful.
For, strangest of all mysteries,
They never see the face he sees—
The face no artist's skill can limn—
The love-fair face she turns to him.

CARLOTTA PERRY.