

to be made for his want of some other. A song, if written to any particular tune, may require a peculiar metre, taxing ingenuity. A song must be constructed for singing rather than for reading, and hence, to accommodate the vocalist, it should be built up of words having as many open vowels, and as free from guttural and hissing sounds, as possible, and in English these requirements are very difficult. Again, a song must suit the peculiar rhythm of some air, whence a disadvantage arises to the author when his song is read by those who have never heard the air to which it is adapted. The lines may be admirably fitted to the air, and sound most smoothly when sung, but when submitted to ordinary reading may appear rough, if not absolutely faulty in metre, and hence nearly all songs are less likely to be euphonious when read than when sung. A critic may consider a song to want grandeur or vigor of expression—a want which the writer himself has lamented, very probably, but he has been compelled to use good *singing* words, rather than *reading* ones; and this should be ever kept in mind when we read songs that have been made for singing. Now, every song in this collection was not only made for singing, but has been sung.

Judging from some of the highest literary evidence, we may conclude that to write a good song is no such easy matter (if by "song" we are to understand a *thing to be sung*), inasmuch as some of the greatest poets have failed in this particular. Take Milton's "Comus," for instance—that exquisite poem, which teems with lofty imagery and is perfectly gorgeous in language—there we find in the "song" of "The Lady"—

"And in the violet-embroider'd vale,  
Where the love-lorn nightingale  
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well."

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