

as an errand boy, and found opportunity for reading. This was the beginning of a new world, so to speak. He tells us:—

“Till then I had often wondered why I lived at all—whether

‘It was not better not to be,
I was so full of misery.’

Now I began to think that the crown of all desire, and the sum of all existence, was to read and get knowledge. Read! read! read! I used to read at all possible times, and in all possible places; up in bed till two or three in the morning—nothing daunted by once setting the bed on fire. Greatly indebted was I also to the book stalls, where I have read a great deal, and returning the next day to continue the subject; but sometimes the book was gone, and then great was my grief! When out of a situation, I have often gone without a meal to purchase a book. Until I fell in love, and began to rhyme as a matter of consequence, I never had the least predilection for poetry. In fact, I always eschewed it; if ever I met with any, I immediately skipped it over, and passed on, as one does with the description of scenery, &c., in a novel. I always loved the birds and flowers, the woods and the stars; I felt delight in being alone in a summer-wood, with song, like a spirit, in the trees, and the golden sunbursts glinting through the verdurous roof; and was conscious of a mysterious creeping of the blood, and tingling of the nerves, when standing alone in the starry midnight, as in Gods own presence-chamber. But until I began to rhyme, I cared nothing for written poetry. The first verses I ever made were upon ‘Hope,’ when I was utterly hopeless; and after I had begun I never ceased for about four years, at the end of which time I rushed into print.”

DOCTOR.—Having “rushed into print,” how did the young poet fare? Has he drawn a prize in the lottery of the republic of letters?

MAJOR.—Yea, verily! Within a brief space three large editions of his volume have been reprinted in England, and I hold in my hand a Yankee reprint of the same.

LAIRD.—There, now, enough about editions! The success of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is a clear and humbling proof that clap-trap can tickle the lang-lugged million out o’ their bawbees, faster and mair effectually than genius can!

MAJOR.—Not utterly devoid of truth is your remark, but still it has no bearing upon the case in hand. I think you will agree with me that there is something far superior to clap-trap in the following stanzas. They form the prologue of—

THE BRIDAL.

She comes! the blushing Bridal Dawn,
With her Auroral splendours on!
And green Earth never lovelier shone.

She danceth on her golden way,
In dainty dalliance with the May,
Jubilant o’er the happy day!

Earth weareth heaven for bridal ring,
And the best garland of glory, Spring,
From out old Winter’s world can bring.

The green blood reddens in the rose:
And underneath white-budding boughs
The violets purple in rich rows.

High up in air the Chesnuts blow,
The live-green Apple-tree’s flush bough
Flouteth a cloud of rosy snow!

Cloud-shadow-ships swim fairly
Over the greenery’s sunny sea,
Whose warm tides ripple down the lea.

The Birds, a-brooding, strive to sing,
Feeling the life warm ’neath the wing;
Their love, too, burgeons with the Spring!

The winds that make the flowers blow,
Heavy with balm, breathe soft and low,
A budding warmth, an amorous glow!

They kiss like some endearing mouth,
More sweet than the Sabeian South,
And balm the splendor’s drooping drouth.

Such a delicious feel doth flood
The eyes, as laves the burning bud
When June-raisus feed ambrosial food.

O, merrily doth Life revel and reign,
Light in heart, and blithe in brain!
Running like wine in every vein.

LAIRD.—Ye were richt, Crabtree! There’s nae clap-trap there! Gerald has got the root and fang o’ the matter in him, as my brither elder, Ezra Crookshanks, would say!

MAJOR.—What I am about to read is equally fine. The poet is describing the

BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM.

Sumptuous as Iris, when she swims
With rainbow robe on dainty limbs,
The Bride’s rare loveliness o’erbrims!

The gazers drink rich overflows,
Her cheek a liveller damask glows,
And on his arms she leans more close.

A drunken joy reels in his blood,
He wanders an enchanted wood,
His ranges realm of perfect good.

Dear God! that he alone hath grace
To light such splendor in her face,
And win the blessing of embrace!

She wears her maiden modesty
With tearful grace touch’d tenderly,
Yet with a ripe Expectancy!

Her virgin veil reveals a form,
Flowering from the bud so warm,
It needs but break the *Cestus*-charm.

Last night, with weddable, white arms,
And thoughts that throng’d with quaint alarms,
She trembled o’er her mirror’d charms,

Like Eve first glassing her new life:
And the Maid startled at the Wife,
Heart-pained with a sweet worm strife.