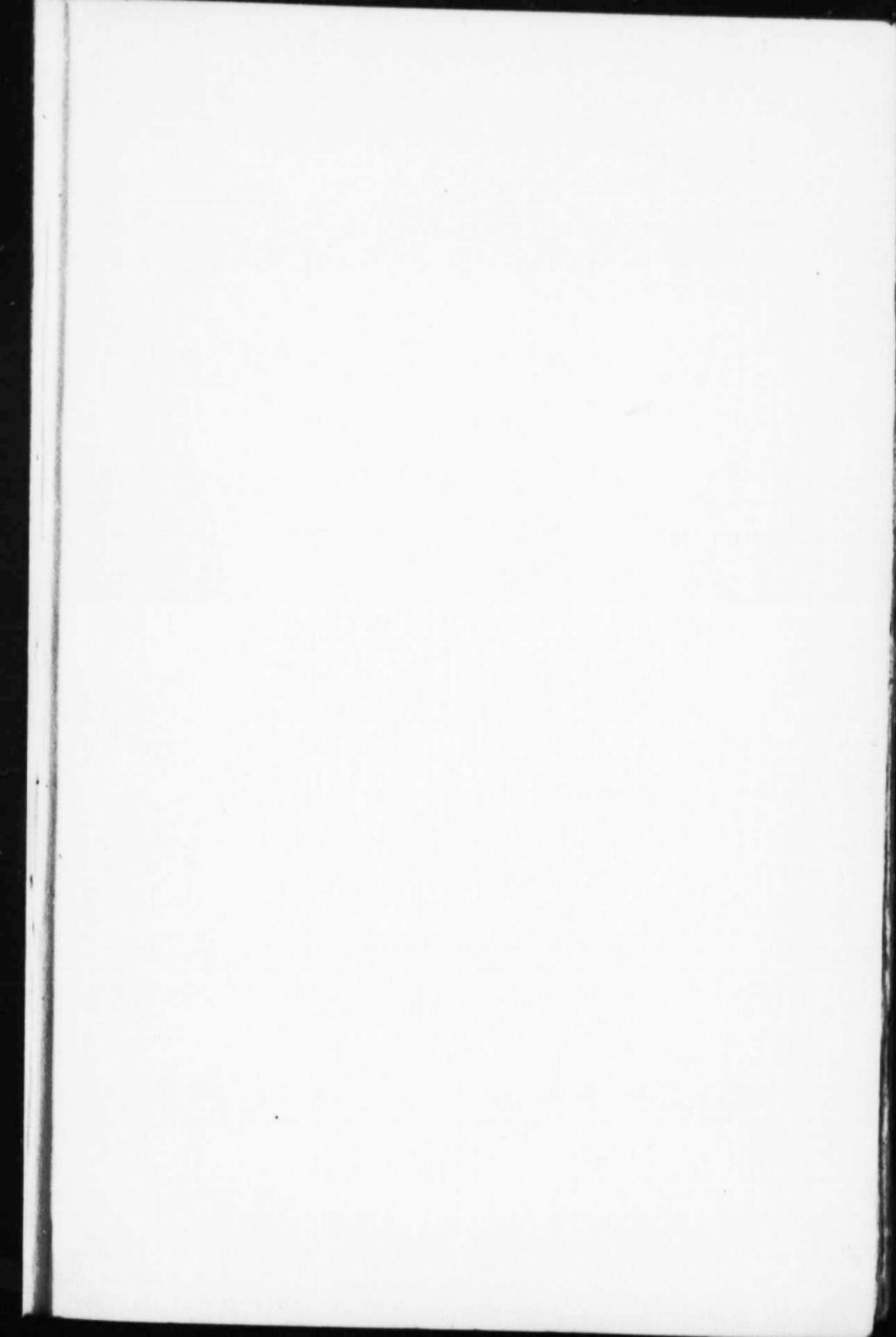


RANDOM POEMS

H. C. Black

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RANDOM POEMS

BY
HIBBERT CRANE BLACK

Forsan et haec olim meminisse juvabit.
—VIRGIL.

1909

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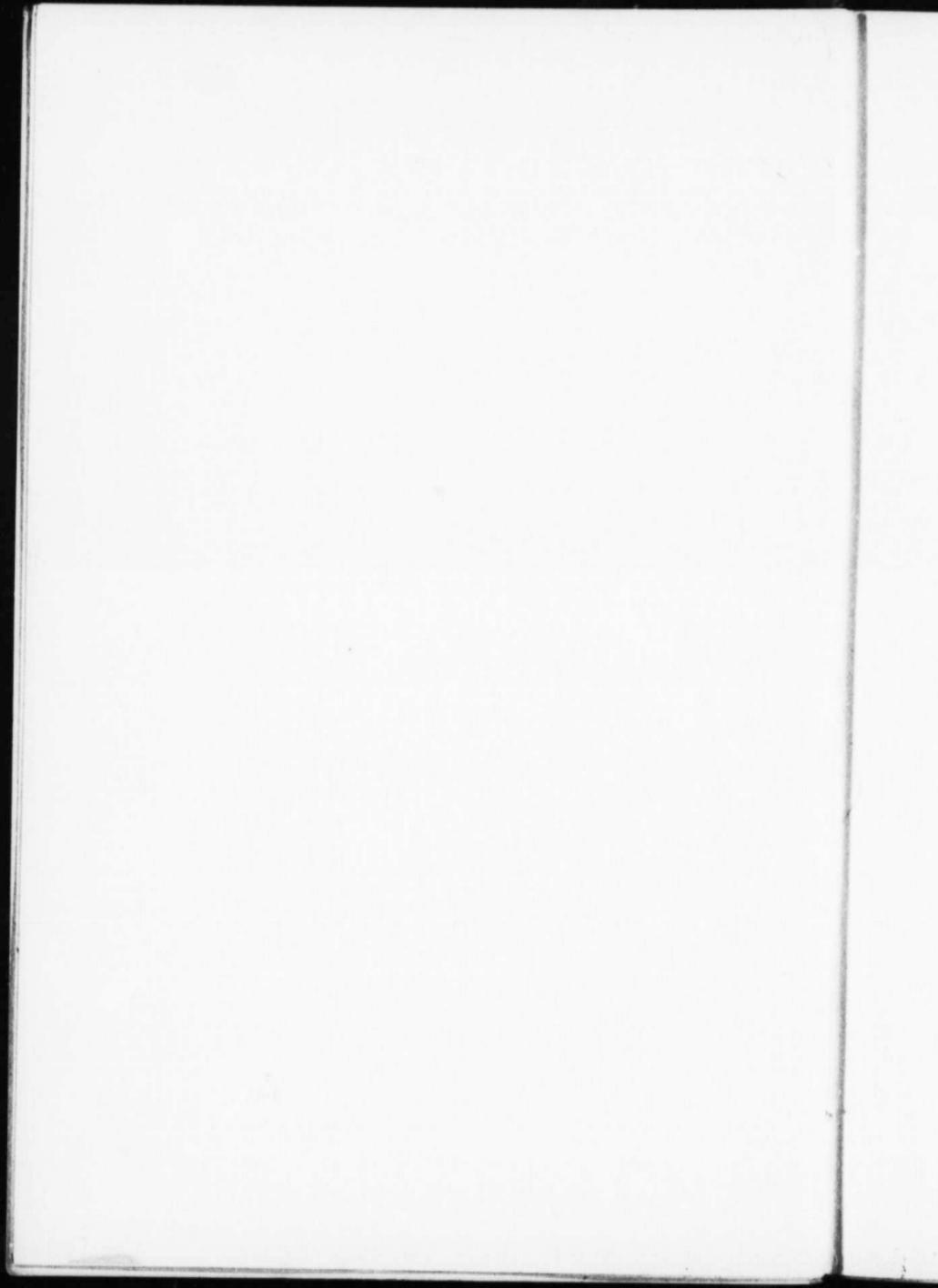
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Poetry is simply the most beautiful, impressive, and widely effective mode of saying things hence its importance.

MATTHEW ARNOLD
Essays in Criticism

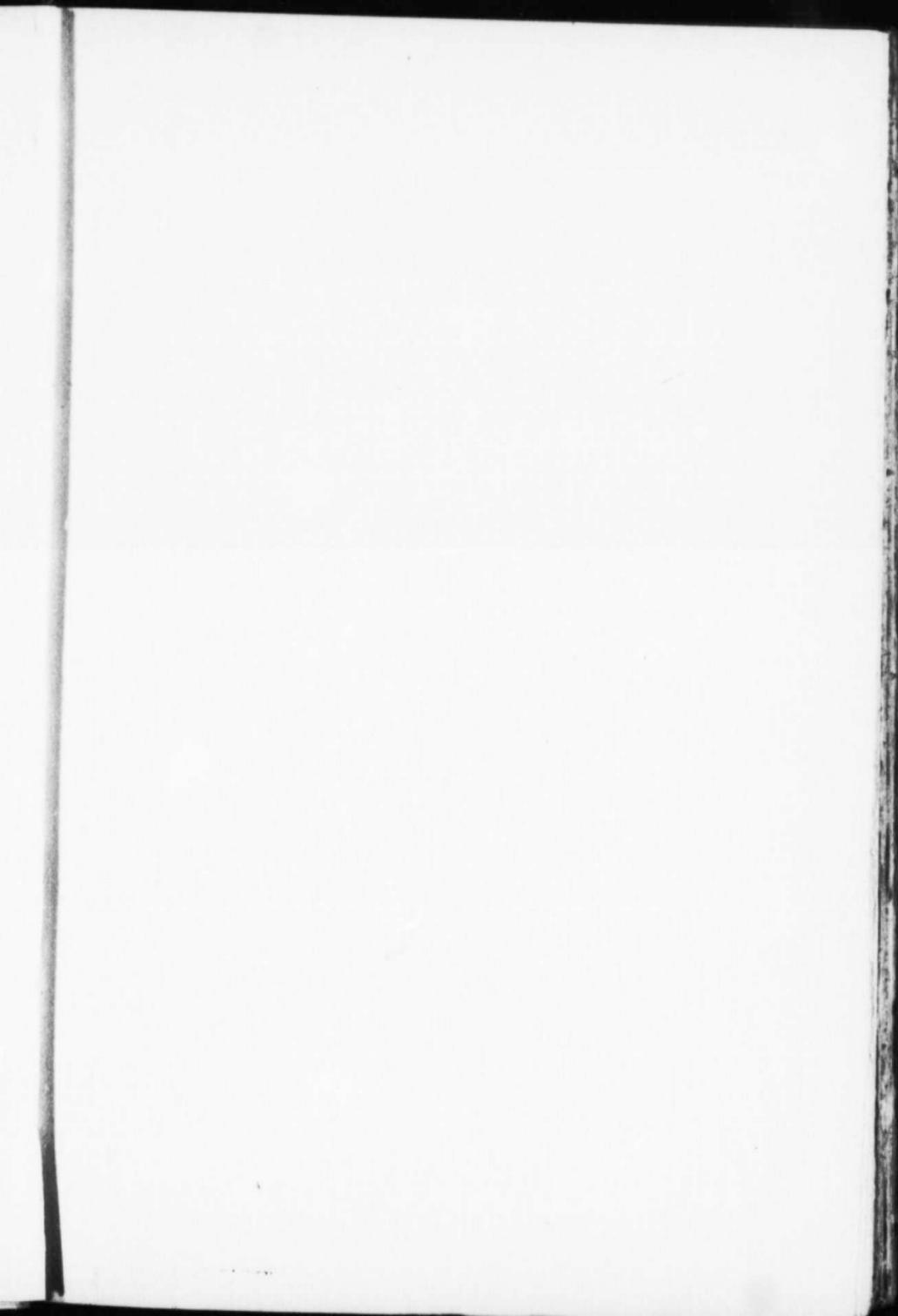
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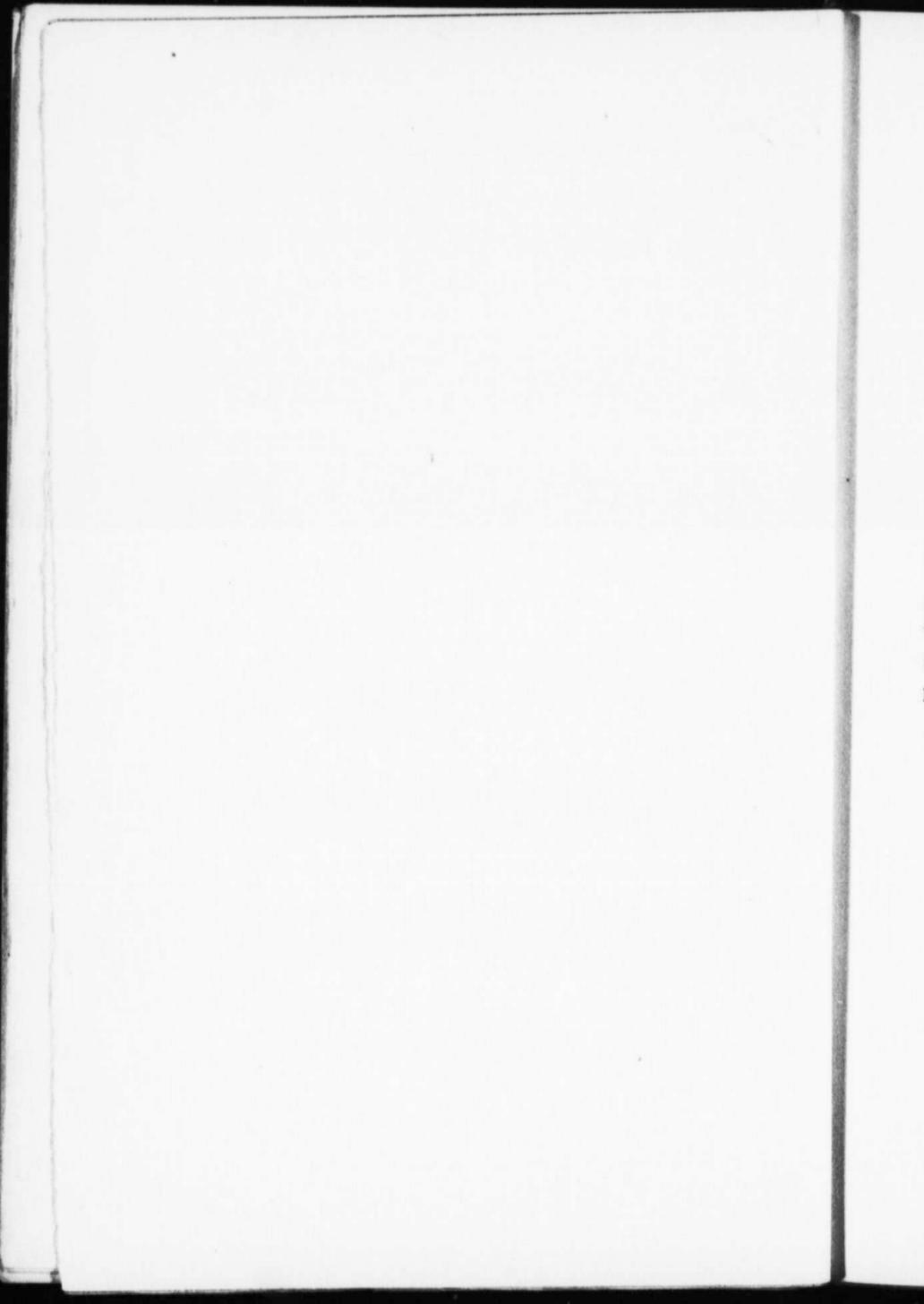
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PREFACE

TWENTY years ago the author published, exclusively for private distribution, a little book entitled "Anonymous Poems." Since its publication there have appeared at intervals more than a score of other poems on various subjects. Among these are a few breathing forth a patriotic or national sentiment, a larger number political in their character, and a half dozen of his best sonnets. To preserve these in a more permanent form and at the same time to give a little wider circulation than a single well-worn scrap-book affords, it has been deemed wise to publish the larger portion of them along with the "Anonymons Poems" in a sort of memorial edition. To this little volume the not in-appropriate name of "Random Poems" has been given. Several pieces have purposely been left out but their nature and setting were so distinctly local that their omission does not materially reduce the value of the collection. Because all the selections herewith presented were written for diversion rather than for criticism, and are now republished for private rather than for public perusal, no apology is necessary for the insertion of any. They are reproduced in precisely the same spirit as that mentioned in the preface to the "Anonymous Poems."

As an aid in turning them up readily and to give a certain system and solidarity to the whole, the poems have been arranged topically under six headings, in accordance with the well defined divisions which their subjects naturally suggested. Care has been taken as far as possible to correct those errors—chiefly typographical—which on account of hasty proof-reading crept into the earlier edition.

PUGWASH, NOVA SCOTIA,
March, 1909.



Preface to the "Anonymous Poems"

THE following poems were not written with a view to publication,—although some of them have appeared in newspapers,—but were composed as a relaxation from other, and more prosaic, duties and are not now printed for the public to criticise, but for more private, and the author trusts less critical, eyes.

March, 1889.

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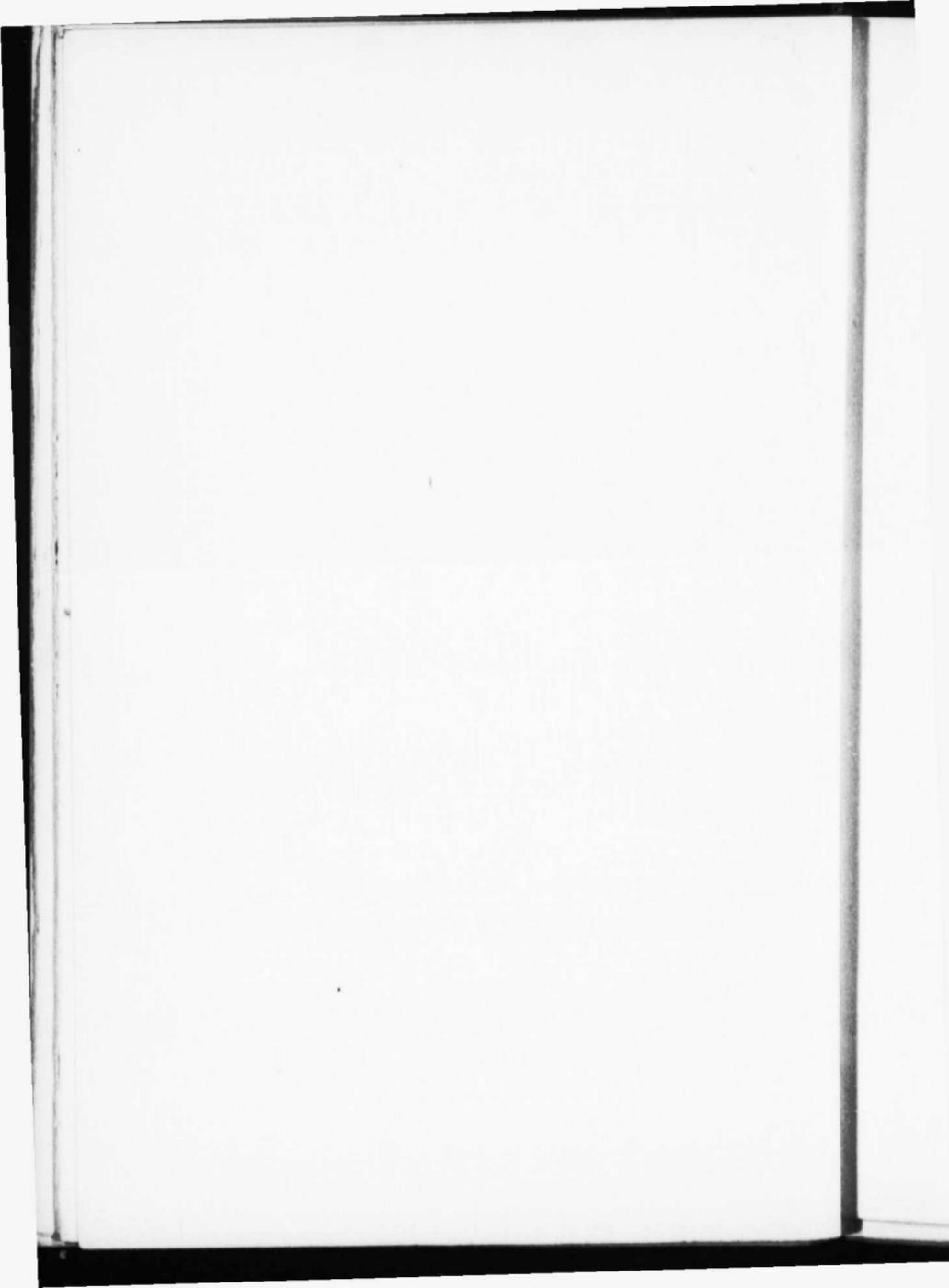
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Nature, and Other Poems

*There is a majesty and mystery in Nature,
take her as you will. The essence of poetry
comes breathing to a mind that feels from every
province of her empire.*

THOMAS CARLYLE.

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Random Poems

Nature

☉ NATURE! Fain would I thy realms explore,
And ever wander o'er thy boundless shore,
And learn thy laws, extending through all space,
Forever acting in mysterious ways,
How gravitation with its mystic force
Controls the planets in their circling course,
Or to the earth attracts the needed rain,—
The sun in vapor draws from yonder main;
That subtle power which no one comprehends,
We know it acts, but there our knowledge ends.
The mighty universe is thus sustained,
And countless rolling worlds in orbits chained,
With central suns dispensing heat and light,
Without whose rays they'd course in endless night,
And desolation ever reign supreme,
No ray of light to shed its gladdening beam,
No life existing—all a horrid gloom—
Each planet sharing in the common doom.

But Nature never labors thus in vain,
She links her wonders in an endless chain,
Her realms are lighted by those stars that roam,
In countless numbers through the azure dome,
(Each one the centre of some system, far
Beyond the influence of our solar star);
As on some cloudless night they seem to move,
Projected onward by some power above,
Illusion caused by our diurnal round
Upon earth's axis through yon space profound,
Thus causing day and night upon our world,
So every planet through vast space is hurled.
Are all those suns and systems but as blanks,
No living beings in their endless ranks?
And earth the only highly-favored spot
Where life exists? Our reason says, 'tis not.

Analogy must point to yonder spheres,
 And own that life there marks the coursing years.
 We cannot think those worlds were made for naught,
 Without an object into being brought,
 No sentient beings to adore that cause,
 That gave us breath, and Nature all her laws.
 And if analogy in this holds good,
 (We cannot see the reason but it should),
 There are intelligences exceeding far
 Man's vaunted powers, as star outrivals star.
 Though Nature governs on the grandest scale,
 Her laws in smallest matters never fail.
 The same great power that moulded countless suns,
 The dew-drop forms, and through all Nature runs.

What wondrous wisdom everywhere displayed
 In everything that Deity has made !
 He gives to birds their wings to soar away,
 The eagle mounts and dares the solar ray,
 The fishy shoals with fins are all supplied
 So they can through their native waters glide.
 The insect flits its hour upon the stage,
 Each living thing assigned its destined age.
 Some live their round of life within a day,
 Then into nothingness they melt away,
 While other forms exist for many years,
 But soon they pass. Thus all life disappears —
 The living forms which on our earth are seen
 Are but repeated from those which have been —
 A never-ending miracle of power ;
 We know this much about it,— nothing more.

The sculptor chisels forms that almost breathe,
 And men around his brow the laurels wreathe.
 But when the mandate comes :—Live, I command !
 The chisel then drops useless from his hand ;
 'Tis but a marble image, cold and dead,
 Like human clay when life from it has fled.
 The artist paints his forms with light and shade,
 In bold relief they seem—in beauty made ;
 They glow in living colors—bright and fair,
 Alas, but shadows!—soul is wanting there.

What art can match the rose's lovely bloom,
 Its leaves around dispensing sweet perfume,

Or paint the lily in its native bed,
As in the field it lifts its modest head?
Or who can catch the rainbow's glowing tint
That arches over yonder firmament?

That man must be an infidel indeed
Who can admit this doctrine in his creed:—
That Nature all by merest chance exists,
Allowing nothing to disperse those mists
That cloud his reason and benight his mind;
A soulless skeptic,—libel on his kind.

Could suns burst into light, and systems make?
Could worlds bring forth themselves and orbits take?
Could man create himself with all his powers?
Could roses bloom in Eden's fragrant bowers,
With no creator,—each its own "I AM" ?
The thought is senseless, and the creed a sham.
Our reason must a Higher Power own,
His works the universe—He God alone.

The Seasons

THE Seasons in their circuit slowly move
And true to Nature's laws forever prove.
Twelve months compose this solemn yearly round,
Like spokes in wheels that are by felloes bound.
By moons some barbarous nations count the year,
So thirteen months to their dull minds appear.
The twelve divisions, that by months we call,
But mark the yearly circuit of our ball,
The seasons we divide in simply four,
And see no reason we should make them more.

WINTER, majestic in our climate reigns,
In icy grasp he binds his wide domains;
December's frost congeals our many streams,
Till Sol in April sheds his lengthening beams;
With snowy carpet covers all the earth,
Till Spring appears, when Nature has new birth;
The sun these frozen fetters then dissolves,
As slowly round the season now revolves,

The icy king retreats towards the pole,
Again returns as other seasons roll.

The balmy *SPRING* succeeds this frozen reign,
And Nature smiles through all her vales again;
The earth is covered o'er with emerald green,
Her myriad charms on every hand are seen.
The farmer's herds now graze upon the hills,
The babbling brooks are fed by thousand rills;
These brooks go gliding onward through the plain,
Then mix with rivers that now seek the main.
The feathered songsters sing in leafy trees,
Their warbling notes are borne upon the breeze,
Through all the land their joyous accents ring,
And tell how grateful is the season, Spring.

Next, sultry *SUMMER*, with her lengthened days,
Brings down upon us scorching solar rays;
The juicy berries now in fields abound,
While flowers are strewed on all the hills around;
The new-mown hay its pleasant odour sends,
The growing fruit the spreading branches bends.

The *AUTUMN* next brings forth its golden grain —
The circling year is fast upon the wane,
Now amply laden with her various stores
Of ripened fruits, which she profusely pours
On all who till the generous, yielding soil,—
A rich reward for all their anxious toil.

The sun then backwards to the south retreats,
His slanting rays our earth obliquely meets;
The year has thus performed its wonted round,
And where it started now again is found.
The seasons thus forever come and go
In one continual, never-ending flow.

Time's Record

 MIGHTY past! We fain would read thy story,
Since time first dawned, or sun did rise or set,
Through centuries unknown, remote and hoary,
Refusing to give up thy secrets yet.

Long ere man trod this circling planet,
Or eve in Eden's sunny bowers was placed,
The earth existed, none but God to scan it,
His eye alone then viewed the dreary waste.

As age on age rolled on came many changes,
The seas and oceans took their destined place;
Dry land appeared, with towering mountain ranges,
To rib the earth, so time could ne'er efface.

Life now existed, though a low creation,
Shell-fish, or mollusk, in the slimy deep;
On land were things of various fashion
With legs and wings to walk, or fly, or creep.

Time still rolled on, and after many ages
New forms appeared of things till then unknown,—
A higher life, so read the rocky pages,
The only record of those cycles gone.

Thus on these leaves the story is recorded,
With Nature's pen, of each successive change,
In language universal, plainly worded,
Revealing hidden secrets, passing strange.

Convulsions shook the earth, upheaving strata,
Volcanoes belched out liquid fire and smoke,
Though when this time we have no certain data,
But 'tis recorded in volcanic rock.

This was an age when Nature's pent-up forces
 Their power displayed to shake the solid world;
 Rivers dried up, or took to other courses,
 And mountains were from their firm bases hurled.

Huge scaly reptiles crawled the earth, most hideous,
 Or bathed their slimy lengths in stagnant pools,
 With mammoth great, and mastodon prodigious,
 Giants indeed, if gauged by modern rules.

Then vegetation, too, was rank and ponderous,
 Trees mighty grew, 'twas the carbonic age;
 All Nature seemed composed of giant wonders,—
 Before nor since we read no similar page.

'Twas Nature's plan. Its wisdom we discover,—
 We bore the earth, and strike the sable mine,
 For man created,—stored with earthly cover,
 In wisdom placed by Architect divine.

At length the time arrives, Man is created,
 The solitary lord of sea and land,
 The world his empire, but to ruin fated,
 He sadly fell!—Eve stretched the erring hand.

The world is peopled,—tribes o'er earth are scattered,
 Man rules with iron hand and lordly sway,
 Towns rise, and mighty cities,—long since battered
 By time's effacing forces to decay.

Empires have come, and gone, with deeds of wonder,
 Of might, and power, and military fame;
 No more those ancient warlike captains thunder,
 Whose word obeyed, spread ruin in their train.

Thus time shall be in its eternal flowing;
 Empires shall rise and fall, as in the past;
 We shall be ancients, none of us e'er knowing
 How soon our glory crumbles into dust.

Among Greenwood's Tombs

Lines suggested on visiting Greenwood Cemetery, near New York

Ⓣ WAS standing on a height 'mong Greenwood's tombs,
While just beyond the living city looms,
Whose thousand spires each lifts its lefty head,
That city peopling this one with its dead,—
I mused on man, his aims, his end, his fate,
Myself within this ghastly city's gate.
The day was bright,—a lovely autumn sun
On hill, and field, and pointed turret shone;
Around were tombs which only wealth could build,
The vaults beneath with human bones were filled,—
Some polished marble, crowned with urns antique
As Romans used, or other forms unique;
Here, towering granite shaft some name records,
Such costly art as only wealth affords.
On every hand these monuments I view,
As now the silent streets I wander through.
Art rivals art in fashioning these stones
In stately forms above these human bones;
The winding pathways open to the gaze,—
Fresh works of art, and tombs in every place.
Though death reigns here, yet 'tis a lovely spot,
Rare flowers are planted, with forget-me-not,
O'er graves they bloom, watched by some skilful hand,
The grassy mounds are shorn at wealth's command,
Or garland on some new-formed grave there lay,
Placed by some loving hand, perchance, that day,—
The infant had its little, tiny tomb,
The man of fourscore met the common doom.
I asked myself the question—what is Death?
Is it but to resign this mortal breath?
An echo from the tombs I faintly heard,
"Your only light is in God's holy word."
I turned my eyes to yonder city fair,
The mart of nations,—life was busy there;
Her merchant princes palaces there rear,

Though soon their names will be recorded here.
Each day that city here its tribute brings,
The angel, Death, forever spreads his wings,—
Thus, one by one, they'll meet the common lot,
The proudest be to this lone city brought.

The Maiden and the Rose

I ASKED a sweet rose to answer me this,
As I gazed on its beautiful bloom,
With my maidenly lips I bestowed it a kiss,
As its fragrance now spread through the room,—

“Canst tell me who was it that gave thee thy beauty,
That made thee so lovely a rose;
To watch thy unfolding considers his duty,
Then trips off, as I come, I suppose?”

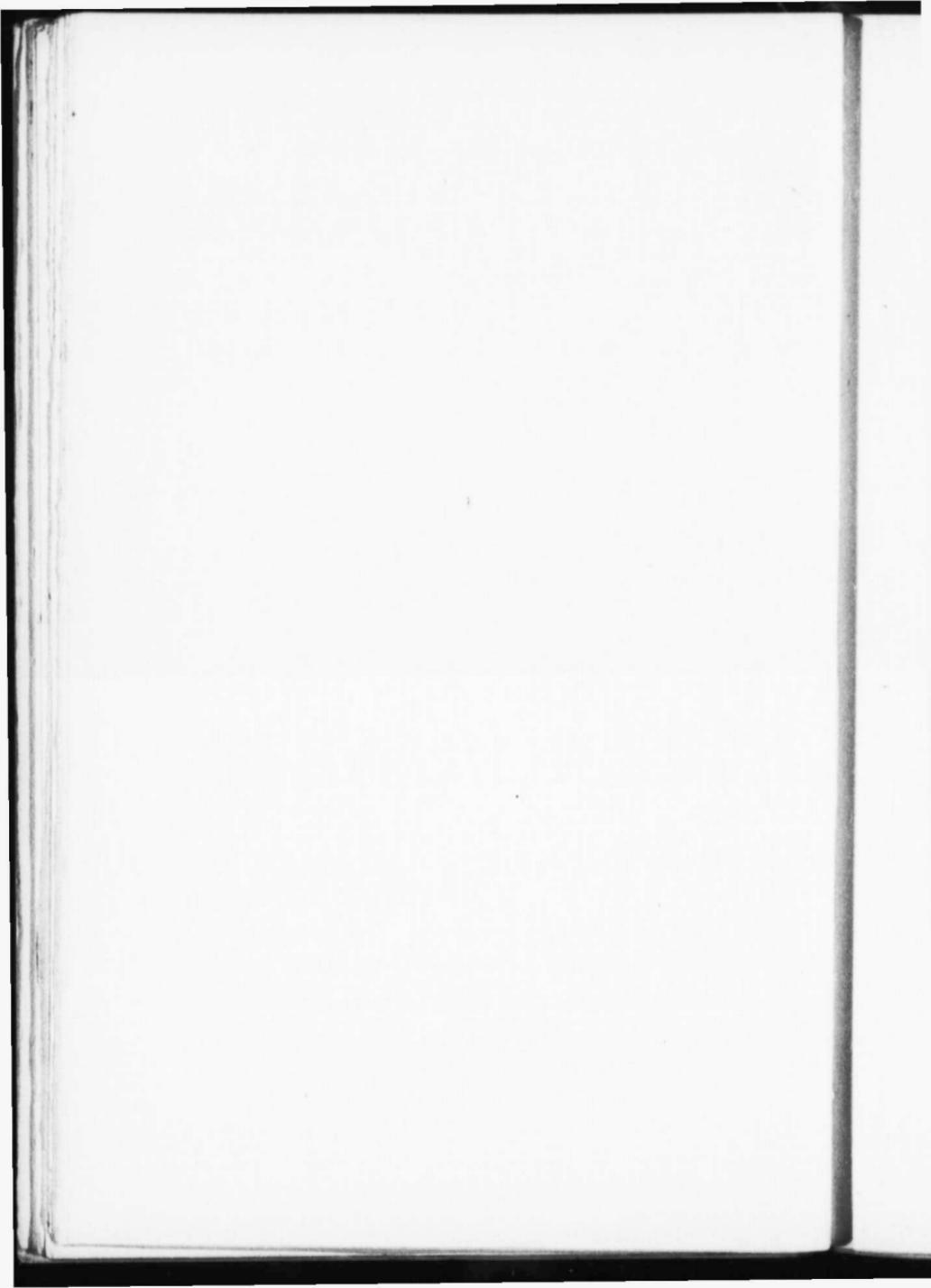
The rose answered back:—“To my Maker I trust,
To grant me my beautiful bloom;
He watches me alway,—so adore Him I must,
’Tis but incense I send through the room.”

This answer the blushes now brought to my cheek,
My faith was then weak, I suppose;
That through this sweet flower its Maker should speak,
And I should thus learn of the rose.

Our Lives

A Sonnet

OUR lives, what are they, but as empty dreams?
Or flitting shadows soon to disappear?
For quickly passes each revolving year,
And looking backward but a vision seems,—
Yea, more than shadows, for the future gleams
With radiant light from yonder rising Sun,
To guide us, till our work on earth is done,
With His effulgent and life-giving beams.
Our reason gives us but a feeble light,
And boastful science cannot lift the veil,
But leaves us groping in its rayless night,
While all our hopes its votaries assail.
But revelation sheds its light of glorious day,
And drives these gloomy shadows all away.



Religious

*Religion is the basis of civil society, and the
source of all good, and all comfort.*

EDMUND BURKE,

Reflections on the Revolution in France.

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What is Religion? *

WHAT is religion? who the righteous? and how told?
These questions from remotest centuries have rolled;
A thousand answers to them have been given,
As many avenues been opened up to heaven;
And each believer thinks his pathway is the best,
The surest, straightest, leading to that land of rest;
All others are mistaken on some special point,
Their minds benighted, and their doctrines out of joint.
In Egypt crocodiles were worshipped,—scaly gods,
Which took men straightway up to heaven.—so what odds?

While others thought themselves securely on the way,
By worshipping the moon, or else the god of day.
Some hewed out gods of wood, some fashioned them of
stone,

Their light was dim, no higher power to them was
known.

Were they condemned, not knowing nature's only God,
Because they groped so blindly on the heavenly road?
Who, like the Pharisee, will dare to judge these men?—
They used what light they had,—their fate's beyond
our ken.

The Jew had revelations from the Higher Power,
On Sinai Moses talked with God,—oh, solemn hour!
On stone His ancient laws were written for their guide,
Commandments ten;—by them the Jews both lived
and died.

Though favored thus, they also needed bullocks slain,
Or lambs on altars to atone the sins of men.
The robed priest around his burning censer swung,
The fragrant incense rising,—do we think *this* wrong?
We must approve,—this people was the chosen race,
Their prophets talked with the Eternal, face to face.

*[Suggested by a clergyman remarking to his wife at a social gathering that he thought it was time to leave when some lively music was played and an impromptu waltz indulged in by a young couple in an adjoining room.]

His angels guided them, as none but angels can,
And often spake with them, as we do,—man with
man ;

His presence then was manifest in many a place,
The Jewish ladder was the only road to grace.

But then a brighter day by far was yet to dawn,
The Christian dispensation now apace draws on ;
Shepherds by night, on Judah's plains espied from far,
O'er Bethlehem hanging a mysterious star.

A heavenly messenger to announce to earth
Another, brighter dispensation, now has birth.

"Peace and good will," the keystone of this noble arch,
To span the world, and stay the warrior's hostile
march,

The time when swords no more shall flash in bloody
strife,

But be to ploughshares turned, the spear to pruning
knife.

But is it so?—O, human nature, must I own
Thy good resolves like chaff before the wind are blown ?

What sin there is committed in religion's name !

How often bigots kindle the consuming flame !

In savage, wordy war, they thrust the envenomed lance,
And often widen breaches that might heal—perchance ;

Dispute and wrangle over non-essential forms,

And bring round their devoted heads religious storms.

One says you must be dipped, clean under in baptism ;

Unless you are, you're doomed to heresy and schism ;

While others say 'tis right to sprinkle, or to pour,

This is the surest way to open heaven's door.

Some persons having less religion, per'aps, than sense,

Say neither is required, 'tis of no consequence.

These self-same wranglers on these points perhaps may
say,

'Tis wrong to breathe the air of heaven on Sabbath
day,

To walk abroad o'er nature's verdant, flowery fields,

And drink the inspiration naught but nature yields ;

Though Christ went to the fields one dewy Sabbath
morn,

Rebuked the Pharisees, and sanctioned plucking corn ;

Or hold up hands in pious horror, if, perchance,

We join the young, and move in joyous mazy dance,
And even music comes beneath religious ban,
If played too quick,—dispute this solemn fact who can.
The fiddle, yes, that sweetest instrument of strings,
Is now condemned, the very worst of wicked things,
Though stringed instruments in Bible times, one knows,
Were used, and David played fast music when he chose.
He also danced,—we read it in God's holy word,
For when the ark was brought, he danced before the
Lord.

Some critics say this dancing was another kind,
A solemn dance, indulged to ease his holy mind.
I don't pretend to say they are not in the right,
But it is plainly said, "He danced with all his might."
Are we confined, then, to a rigid solemn creed,
No relaxation granted to us when we need?
Must man to reach the goal we all are seeking for,
Live like a hermit, and against all pleasure war?
Are not these blessings — granted sometimes to be
used,

Not to excess,—in moderation,—not abused?
Perhaps I'm wrong,—dogmatically I won't say
Which is the best, the safest, straightest, surest way.

The Eleventh Chapter of Ecclesiastes

A Paraphrase

CAST thy bread upon the waters,
It shall return in many days;
Give a portion to the needy,
Seek not after human praise.

If the clouds with rain are laden,
It will fall upon the earth;
The tree remaineth where it falleth,
Let it be to south or north.

He that but the wind observeth,
Shall his seed no longer sow;
Or he that the clouds regardeth,
To reap his fields he need not go.

As thou knowest not the spirit
How it works at nature's call;
So His works thou never knowest,—
Of the God who formed us all.

Sow thy seed in early morning,
At eventide stay not thy hand,—
Thou never knowest what shall prosper,
This, or that, through all the land.

Truly, light is sweet and pleasant,
How good a thing to see the sun;
The eyes are gladdened by his shining,
As he his daily course doth run.

But if man's years, perchance, are many,
And in them all he does rejoice;
Let him the darkness, too, remember,
It too will come,—there is no choice.

All is vain that ever cometh,—
In thy youth rejoice, young man;
Let thy heart now always cheer thee,
Walk in its ways through youth's short span.

But know thou that the God who judgeth,
Will not fail to judgment bring;
All that thy young eye beholdest,
Is each a vain and useless thing.

Therefore, put away thy sorrow,
Put the evil far from thee;
All is vanity in childhood,
And youth is also vanity.

Unfulfilled Prophecy

THE ancient prophet has foretold
That wars on earth should cease;
That swords to ploughshares should be turned,
And nations live in peace.

Two thousand years have rolled away
Since this decree was given,
Yet Christian nations drench the earth,
With blood that cries to heaven.

Contending armies take the field,
As in those ancient times,
And strew the earth with slaughtered dead,—
And other countless crimes.

These Christian rulers lead the van,
Each blasphemously prays,
That God may bless his arms again,
As blessed in former days.

Oh, when will that blest time arrive,
When wars on earth shall cease,
And swords be into ploughshares turned,
And nations live in peace?

Prejudice

How strong is slavish prejudice in man,
 As potent now as when the world began,
 Though boasting that we live in latter days,
 With light unerring to direct our ways.
 In our beliefs how plain this truth appears,
 Believing what we learned in tender years,
 Imbibed our doctrines with our infant food,
 And since have all vile heresies withstood.
 No matter what may be our faith or creed,
 Believe it true,—no further proof we need—
 'Tis all the same with Heathen, Christian, Jew,
 Their faith's inherited and must be true.
 And if you doubt, some miracle they quote
 That has been taught, as parrots learn, by rote.
 Mahomet's coffin mounts towards the skies,
 Which proves his creed and all assaults defies.
 The angel Gabriel came to him one night,
 And led him up to heaven to prove his doctrines right.
 When he had through the seventh heaven passed,
 Which was the highest and the very last,
 He says he with the Great Eternal talked,
 And round His throne on blazing sapphire walked:
 That hidden mysteries were there revealed,
 And thus was his prophetic mission sealed.
 All this the Mussulman through faith believes;
 To doubt its truth he but himself deceives.
 The faithful, too, must up to Mecca go,
 Or run the risk of everlasting woe;
 Though thousands leave their weary bones to bleach,
 Before this place of pilgrimage they reach.
 But 'tis their doctrine, and it must be done,
 If bones are left to bleach beneath the sun;
 'Tis little use their doctrines to assail,
 To doubt or cavil is of no avail.
 Their fathers up to holy Mecca went,
 Believed Mahomet was God's prophet sent,
 Could they be wrong? Impossible—absurd!

The Koran doubt? what,—God's most holy word?
O heretic, O infidel, thou doubly cursed!
Of reprobates thou art the vilest,—worst.
Before their father's holy faith they'll leave,
They'll die as martyrs, but its truths believe.

The wandering Jew, now scattered o'er the earth,
Believes his creed, denies Messiah's birth;
A temporal prince expects to come and reign,
His scattered tribes restored to power again.
This mighty prince will then the world subdue
And thus attest his ancient doctrines true.
All Christian nations have despised this race,
And persecuted them from place to place.
Was this the way to make the Jew believe
That Christ had come, that he might ever live,
When so-called Christians tracked him o'er the world,
And filched his gold, and curses at him hurled,
Or in their rage his crimson heart's-blood spilt,
Their dagger plunging through him to the hilt?
'Twas quite enough to make him doubt He came,
And hate and curse the Christian's very name.

The heathen world still gropes in blackest night,
Bows down to idols, thinking they are right,
With gods unnumbered scattered o'er the land,
And pagan temples reared on every hand.
The most disgusting rites they practise still,
While heathen worshippers their temples fill;
There spend their time in ribaldry and song,
To please their gods, and thus their rites prolong.
The learned Brahmin still his faith defends,
And for its truth with wily art contends,
Wards off all argument with subtle art,
Determined never with his faith to part.
'Twas handed down for many thousand years,
And nothing plainer to his mind appears.

Now, in conclusion, we at Christians glance,—
What various doctrines does each sect advance!
They each the text to suit their views expound,
And think they only have its meaning found;
A gulf impassable they often fix
Between themselves and all vile heretics;
They only are the holy and elect,

No others need salvation e'er expect.
 Are not so many creeds a stumbling block?
 How many souls have stranded on this rock!
 Each pilot pointing out a different way,
 Each sect protesting none are right but they.
 What wonder that so many are inclined
 To doubt, when thus the blind but lead the blind!
 When shall we see that day of purer light,
 And cease to doubt, and know that we are right?

The Ecumenical Council*

POPE Pius the Ninth is a jolly old fellow,
 The head of the Church Universal,
 If you're fond of a show, to Rome you must go,
 Where the farce is now under rehearsal.

This pontiff declares he's as good as St. Peter,
 His line of descent undisputed;
 To swallow this dose, you must shut your eyes close.
 His decisions must never be doubted.

Former popes may have been most notable sinners,
 Shedding blood, and fighting in battle;
 But they say this was right, for popes thus to fight,
 Mowing down unbelievers like cattle.

So Pius concluded to summon a council,
 None like it for years near three hundred;
 The world was in doubt at some dogmas just out,
 If confirmed 'twill show he's not blundered.

*[At this Council the dogma of the Infallibility of the Pope was proclaimed. Soon after the adjournment of the Council in 1870, the Italian army occupied Rome, and declared it the capital of the Kingdom of Italy, and in the following August the Emperor Napoleon, who had for years kept troops at Rome to protect His Holiness, withdrew them, and the temporal power of the Pope was at an end.]

His popeship though recently shorn of much power,
What is left by bayonets protected,
Convened his great show at St. Peter's, you know,
And his new-fangled dogmas projected.

He was very polite to outside dissenters,
Invited them to the discussion;
Some thought they would go to his holiness' show;
He replied, "You must come to confession."

As closing the door in their clerical faces,
He said "You must go the whole figure;"
They replied with a vow, "We are coming just now,
But will wait till our numbers grow bigger."

So the council commenced its regular sitting,
Arrayed in their robes and their mitres,
With jewels and laces, and clerical graces,
In their looks much in contrast to Peter's.

But then says the pope, "We must keep up appearance,
Make a show to attract the attention,
Confirm my decrees, let me do as I please,
Not a doubt of their truth you must mention.

"I have heard that some of my bishops are doubting,
I hope that no truth there is in it."
The bishops replied, "We are sadly belied,
We will kiss your great toe in a minute!"

So saying they formed up in pious procession,
And filed past his holiness,—solemn;
He stuck out his toe to kiss as they'd go,—
They kiss,—every man in the column.

These dogmas must ne'er be disputed here-after,
They're decreed in the orthodox manner.
Thus the council is ended, the creed is amended.
Who disputes is a heterodox sinner.

May, 1870.

This World is a Bubble

THIS world is a bubble,
 And do as we may,
 We can't avoid trouble,
 And always seem gay.

This bubble we follow
 Till it melts in thin air
 And proves itself hollow,
 Though it seems to be fair.

Thus phantoms we're chasing
 From childhood to age,
 And shadows embracing,
 Till we step from life's stage.

But "faith" points its finger
 To a better beyond,
 Where no phantom may linger,
 And all is atoned.

Our Life

OUR life like a river flows on to the sea,—
 The goal of our being,—whate'er it may be,
 Its source an enigma,—the future unknown,
 Each voyager must enter that ocean alone.
 This swift flowing river is bearing us on,
 To-day is fast passing, and yesterday gone.
 But with "faith" for our pilot, we safely will glide
 Down the stream of this life, with its turbulent tide,
 And the ocean before us our bark will receive,
 If we trust to our pilot, have faith, and believe.

In Memoriam

*I sing to him that rests below,
And since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whercon to blow.*

.

*Behold, ye speak an idle thing :
Ye never knew the sacred dust :
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing.*

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*Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth :
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, otherwhere.*

ALFRED TENNYSON,
In Memoriam.

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On the Death of Longfellow

A Sonnet

ANOTHER singer gone and 'round his bier
The nations stand, and grateful homage pay,
And lowly bending shed the mourners' tear
O'er the dead poet's all unconscious clay,—
Who now is gone but yesterday was here,
A noble singer of the deathless lay,
Though gone from sight, to mem'ry ever dear.
His harp now tuned in regions far away.
But what is fame, and what is life at best?
A passing shadow or a soon told tale;
Awhile we mount the billow's foaming crest,
Or trim our sails to catch the fav'ring gale.
How few there be who win a deathless fame,
But of that few will be thine honored name.

March, 1882.

To the Memory of the Late Hon. Alexander Mackenzie

A Sonnet

THIS modest chaplet to thy tomb I bring,
Thou noblest work of God, an honest man;
Whose years have numbered the allotted span,
And full of honors dies, an uncrowned king.
Not in the regal sense of thee I sing,
But kingly in thy sense of what was just;
And though austere, thee friend and foe could trust,
And calumny sat mute, with folded wing.
A builder was thy trade, and stones and men
Were squared and measured by thy plumb and line;
A nation owns thine aid in building, when
Our foremost statesmen joined their hands with thine.
Thy place stands high upon the scroll of fame,
And all will honor A. Mackenzie's name.

April, 1892.

On the Death of Sir John Thompson

A Sonnet

A NATION mourns our chieftain's tragic end,
 Within the shadow of the British throne.
 And all, with one accord his greatness own,
 Deplore the loss of statesman, patriot, friend.
 His body, borne in state across the sea,—
 A nation's tribute to departed worth,—
 With reverence we consign to mother earth,
 And bow submissively to God's decree.
 In death, today, all party strife is stilled,
 One common impulse has the nation moved,
 His tragic ending the whole empire thrilled;
 And here, in state, we bury him we loved.—
 Though now we mourn his death in grief and tears,
 His name we'll cherish through the coming years.
 December, 1894.

On the Death of Professor Huxley

A Sonnet

I N Huxley's death the world is called to mourn,
 A fallen giant in the field of thought,
 Who dared to think, and with keen weapons fought,
 And on his shield has many trophies borne.
 Some cry "Agnostic," and with pious scorn,
 Perchance may say, much evil has he wrought,
 Demolished idols, and false doctrines taught.
 But darkness always antedates the morn,—
 His keener vision saw in nature's laws
 One grand, unchanging, everlasting power;
 With reverence bowed before this Great First Cause,
 And claimed the right to think, his priceless dower.
 His work is ended, but his name will live,—
 He gave the world the best he had to give.
 July 3rd, 1895.

Joseph Howe Monument

A Sonnet

“JOE HOWE,”—what magic once was in that name!
 A statesman, poet, orator, and seer,
 Whose matchless eloquence once charmed the ear,
 And gave our province more than local fame.
 He fought for right, nor cared for praise or blame,
 To err is human, and he may have erred,
 As other mortals do, in deed and word,
 But greater men have often done the same.
 The weapons that he used were tongue and pen,
 He wielded each with equal power and skill,
 He swayed the multitudes to do his will,—
 A giant he, among the sons of men.
 A monument let Nova Scotians raise,
 That Howe's great name may live in future days.
 April 22nd, 1893.

The Dead Czar*

(The Flag at half-mast in Halifax)

THE flag of England by the Queen's command
 Was lowered to half-mast, mourning the dead Czar,
 Who kept the peace, restrained the dogs of war,
 Though held in check by a despotic hand.
 Had he no virtues, though on despot's throne?
 Contrast his life with others of his line,—
 Did not in him domestic virtues shine?
 Will these not for some other sins atone?
 Is freedom weakened by restraining power?
 His sire gave freedom to the toiling slave,
 And grateful Muscovy gave him as dower
 The deadly bomb that laid him in his grave.
 Freedom breeds license, which must be restrained,
 Or license will destroy what freedom gained.
 December 12th, 1894.

* [Written in reply to "M. H. N." See APPENDIX A.]

Elegy on the Year 1888

THE years, like mile-stones which we pass, are gliding,
But yesterday to Eighty-eight we bade adieu;
The record which it carries is abiding,
We cannot change it, whether false or true.

Backward our faces may be turned, regretting,
Perchance, how ill each one has done his part
Within the year that just has had its setting,
And left its record graven on each heart.

The retrospect, to most, may not be pleasant,
And but for future guidance vain must be;
The past is gone, we live but in the present,
The future all is veiled in mystery.

This century — now Eighty-eight — is waning,
We write the figures Eighty-nine to-day,
We cannot change them,—vain is our complaining,
And vain our wish the fleeting years to stay.

January 1st, 1889.

Patriotic

*Patriotism is the vital condition of national
permanence.*

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS
Harper's Magazine, September, 1889

A New Dominion Song

(As sung on a late festive occasion at Ottawa!)

A SONG I will sing of our fast rising nation,
This terrible giant—to be—of the North;
In war no doubt we can thrash all creation,
Make Yankees surrender when our armies march forth.

They can cage up their Eagle, quit their vain boasting,
Our Canada Beaver, with a switch of his tail,
Along with our navy we'll soon send a-coasting,
Can destroy them on land, and sink every sail.

In tactics of war we are all of us skilled,
But we plume ourselves most on the art of retreat,
In these masterly movements we are thoroughly drilled,
And challenge the world our brave warriors to beat.

Should the enemy dare our soldiers to follow,
Then their fate would most surely be death and disgrace,
Through snow-banks they certainly never could wallow,
We could take to our snow-shoes and win in the race.

From proud Nova Scotia away to Vancouver,
Our frontier is now a few thousand miles long,
By railway our soldiers we now can send over,
So fill up a bumper and join me in song.

From Atlantic we stretch to the distant Pacific,
Away from Lake Erie to the frozen-up pole,
Our nation most surely will soon be terrific,
And the pride of each native possessing a soul.

So hurrah for our flag, its emblem the beaver,
This terror of nations we will fling to the gale,
The cross of St. George waving with it forever,
Stand aside when our beaver but switches his tail!

Our Dominion

A Sonnet

THE Star of Empire rising in the east,
 Has westward through the ages slowly run,
 And now is hastening to the setting sun,
 With bones of nations strewn as from a feast.
 But our Dominion doomed not to be least,
 A mighty destiny has now begun,
 And half a continent to herself has won,
 And with the years her prestige is increased.
 Two oceans lave thy shores, and on thy brow
 The royal signet of our gracious Queen
 Who rules our hearts, and loyally we bow
 To noblest monarch that the world has seen.
 The British drum is heard around the world,
 From east to west her glorious flag unfurled.

The Rose and Thistle*

THE Royal Rose and Scottish Thistle
 Now are twined together,
 The rose transplanted to the north,
 To bloom with Scottish heather.

May gentle zephyrs fan the cheek
 Of this exotic flower,
 As it becomes the choicest plant
 In northern Scotia's bower.

May Scotia's soil receive this gift,
 A pledge of love intended,
 And may the Thistle and the Rose
 In unity be blended.

*[On the occasion of the marriage of the Princess Louise.]

Queen Victoria's Jubilee

1837-1887

God bless our gracious Queen, whose sea-girt throne,
Three hundred million subjects shall defend ;
To thee they turn, from every clime and zone,
And in this year their loyal greetings send.

For fifty years thy pure benignant reign
Has shed its lustre, our devotion won,—
Thy path unsullied, and without a stain,
From rising to the setting of the sun.

Thou Queen of monarchs, from whose lofty place
How many tottering thrones hast thou surveyed,
Rulers deposed, or vanquished in disgrace,
And now within their narrow tombs are laid !

Comment on greatness,—in those fifty years
No crown but thine now rests upon the brows
That ruled the world,—when, in thy maiden fears,
Thy prayers ascended with thy queenly vows.

Those prayers are answered.—In thy people's love
The surest bulwark of thy throne is found,
And round the world with loud acclaim will prove,
Thy empire in one brotherhood is bound.

God bless our gracious Queen, whose sea-girt throne
Three hundred million subjects shall defend,
To thee they turn from every clime and zone,
And in this year their loyal greetings send.
May, 1887.

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee

1837-1897

How large a segment of the circling years,
 Has our good Queen been seated on the throne;
 Our bulwark of defence in every zone,
 Her regal sceptre round the world appears.

Her trident stretching over sea and land,
 The ships of Britain cleaving every sea,
 Her commerce, world-wide, and will ampler be,
 As Greater Britain joins her hand in hand.

The Orient pearls that stud her empress crown,
 Are jewels plucked from eastern lands afar,
 And radiant shine, a bright resplendent star,
 Whose teeming millions her mild sceptre own.

Old Egypt, with its dim, mysterious past,
 Has felt the power of Britain's guiding hand,
 Her ships now sail where once was desert sand,
 Her statesmen saw the way,—the die was cast.

A continent is hers, in southern clime,
 With island jewels set in distant seas;
 Her empire swept by every passing breeze,
 The ripened fruitage of the hand of time.

The silken cord that will our empire bind,
 Is one of pride, of interest, and of love
 For the old land, and may it ever prove
 A lasting bond, and blessing to mankind.

The Orient and the Occident now meet,
 And send their greetings to our gracious Queen,
 Whose diamond jubilee we now have seen,—
 And lay our loyal tribute at her feet.

June, 1897.

The Funny Yankees*

A Ballad for the Times

THE Yankee is a funny man,
As funny as can be;
He used to claim the continent,
But now he claims the sea.

And when he goes a-fishing,
To catch the roving seal,
He claims he has exclusive right,—
His neighbors only steal.

The seal, he says, may travel off
A thousand miles or more,
But then he will return again
To Yankee-doodle's shore.

And any one that catches him
When he's away from home,
Must do so at the cannon's mouth,
For Yankee seals may roam.

And they mustn't be molested,
When swimming in the main,
For they are only on a trip
And will come home again.

He next will claim exclusive right
To birds that fly away,
The wild goose travels far from home,
But does not go to stay.

And other birds that go up north,
Must have a *modus* too,
For chickens will come home to roost,
Says Yankee-doodle-doo.

*[Written at the time of the Behring Sea controversy.]

The eagle is the only bird
That may roost on the pole,
And not return into the ark,
For this is but his goal.

So say these funny Yankees, —
But Britishers say nay,
For half the continent is ours,
And we are here to stay.

Didn't Know it was Loaded*

WHEN Grover aimed his blunder-buss,
He didn't know 'twas loaded,
But soon found out his great mistake,
For it at once exploded.

The damage done will not be great,
The scare will soon be over;
The British lion seemed surprised,
But not as much as Grover.

When all the smoke is cleared away,
We'll have some finer weather;
The lion will embrace the lamb,
And both lie down together.

The world is wide enough for both;
Let each perform its mission,
With banners waving side by side,
Improve the world's condition,—

Let all the jingoes take a rest,
And show more sense and reason,
Forget the past, and heal the breach
In this, our festive season.

December 30th, 1895

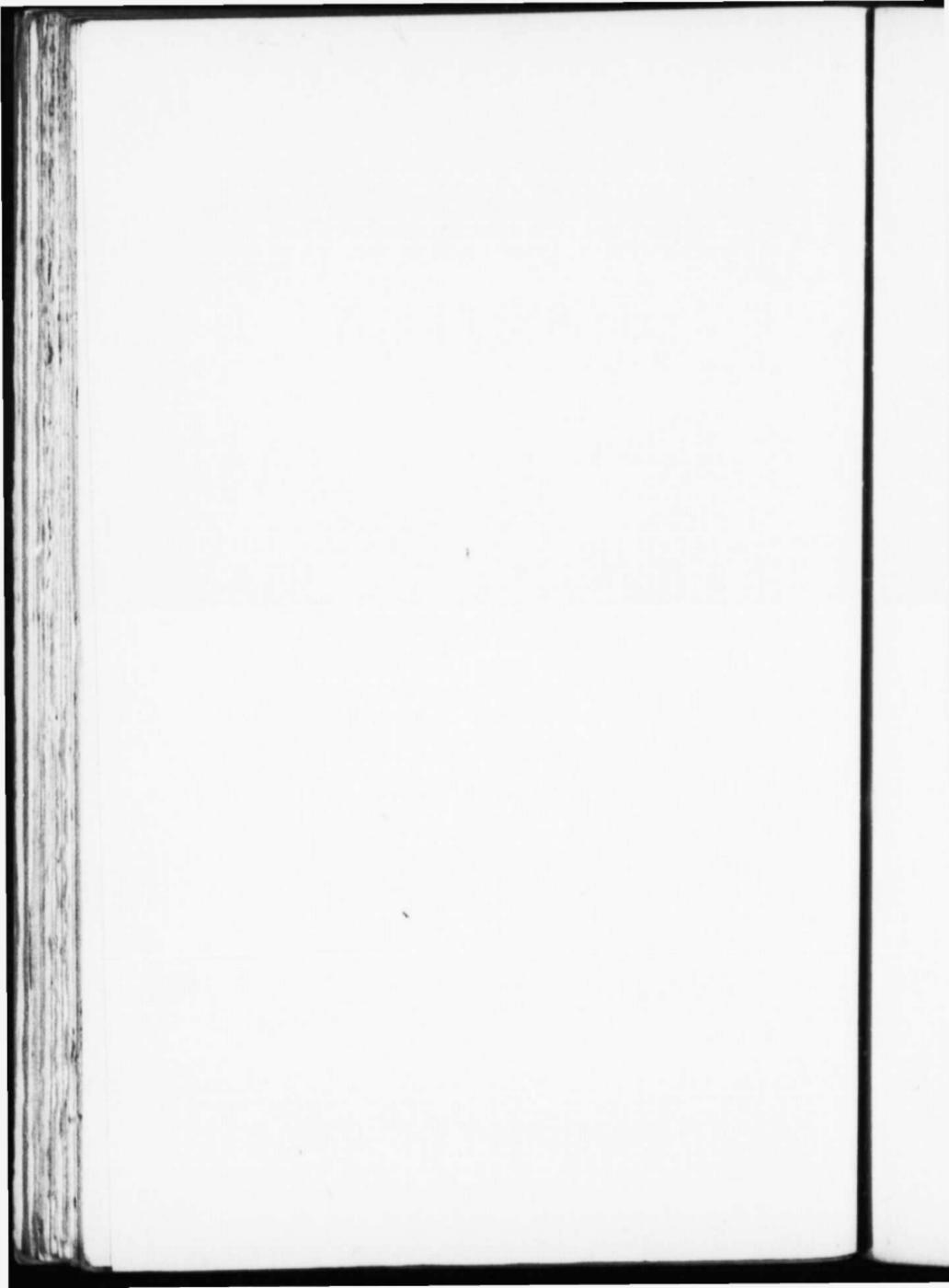
*[Written at the time of the Venezuelan boundary dispute when President Cleveland sent his war message to Congress.]

Miss Canada's Reply to Uncle Sam*

HAIR Canada would make reply,
That she is very coy and shy
Of her big uncle o'er the way,
And must decline to name the day.
His wooing has for her no charms,
She will not tumble to his arms;
For her he has no winning ways,
As lovers had in other days.
She much prefers her northern home,
And has no wish to southward roam —
Her Stars the jewels of the night,
Her Stripes the glorious Northern Light.

So Uncle, dear, please turn your eyes
Away from blushing, northern skies,
And try and mend your evil ways,
For being honest always pays.
And don't pretend the earth to own,
From torrid to the frigid zone,
As well as the surrounding seas,
The Polar Star and Pleiades.—
Miss Canada is your true friend,
And hopes to be so to the end,
But likes her mother o'er the sea,
And will not leave her willingly.

*[Written in reply to "Canada and Uncle Sam," by Sam Walter Foss in "The Yankee Blade" and reproduced in "The New York Tribune." See APPENDIX B.]



Political

And he gave it for his opinion, that whoever could make two ears of corn, or two blades of grass, to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country, than the whole race of politicians put together.

JONATHAN SWIFT,
Gulliver's Travels.

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On Sir John A. Macdonald's Patriotic Appeal to his Countrymen

An Acrostic Sonnet

JOIN hands, ye men of proud Canadian birth,
On this our noble chieftain's last appeal.
He calls to arms. With patriotic zeal
Now let us smite the traitors down to earth.
Armed doubly with just cause is surely worth
More than a traitor's craven heart can feel ;
And with your VOTES strike for your country's weal,
Confounding these base schemers of the north.
Did Spartans to the foe their country sell ?
On history's page stands out Thermopylæ.
Now strike for country — " Canada the free " —
And future ages will the story tell.
Long live our chief ! Long has his service been. —
Down with sedition, and God save our Queen !
February, 1891.

The Destruction of the Grits

(After Byron)

THE grits they came down like wolves on the fold,
" Unrestricted " their cry, and with boodle untold ;
For Mercier, the boodler, as you plainly can see,
Was the chief of the gang in this grit jubilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
These grits with their ballots at election were seen ;
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
These grits are now vanquished, all wither'd and strown.

For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed on the face of the grits as he pass'd.
And the eyes of the boodlers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their ranks are now broken, though they're boodlers still !

And there lay the "Rooster," with mouth open wide,
 But through it there roll'd not the *crow* of his pride,
 For the form of this rooster lay cold on the ground,
 And from him was heard neither crow, nor a sound.

And the remnant of grits are now loud in their wail,
 And their idols are broke in the temples of Baal;
 And their tents are all silent, their future unknown,
 Their hands are uplifted, their trumpets unblown.

1891.

In Memoriam

(On the untimely Death of "The Chronicle's" aged Rooster)

THAT Rooster's dead; no more we'll hear him crow.
 His end was peace; he died without a groan,
 The bye-elections laid this biped low,—
 His winding sheet the ballots that were thrown.

Poor Rooster! though you'll never crow again,
 We'll bury you with sound of muffled drum;
 And though you've been with paper ballots slain,
 With "unrestricted" sympathy we come.

Sweet be your slumber in that land of dreams,
 You've played your part upon your little stage,
 And though we lose you—oh, how hard it seems—
 We'll still respect you for your honored age.

Before we part we say a long farewell,
 With tearful eyes we wend our homeward way,
 And "Chronicle" our grief that thus you fell,
 To rise no more until the judgment day.

February 9th, 1888?

Mr. Fielding's Gastronomic Feats

OUR Fielding just now has a difficult task,
 Which may lay him flat out on the shelf,
 To hurry his tariff is too much to ask,
 Give him time, and he'll swallow himself.

Down here, his cry was for instant repeal,
 On this "jack-ass" he rode into power,
 Then swallowed this donkey, from ears down to heel,
 Which has never been seen since that hour.

Retrenchment was one of his principal planks,
 But himself he soon voted more pay,
 Having swallowed repeal, he now returns thanks,
 With seven thousand reasons they say.

When the tariff comes down, he will swallow free trade,
 With all of our coal mines thrown in,
 And swallow the pledges he solemnly made,
 And swear he's committing no sin.

For he's joined to a party expert at the game,
 Who can swallow themselves in a minute,
 "Ah Sin" is outdone, and his tricks are quite tame,
 For the "Heathen Chinee" is not in it.

April 12th, 1897.

What's in a Name?

WHAT'S in a name? has often been asked,
 And sometimes is plain to be seen;
 The sample I give is much to the point,
 And a good illustration, I ween.

When pro-Boer Bourassa in parliament spoke,
 He was a Boer-ass-(a) 'tis plain,—
 A play on his name but illustrates this,
 But he's squelched, and won't do it again.

1899.

Woman's Rights

THERE is a class of women,
In this enlightened land,
Who say they're born to govern,
And now their rights demand.

Declare they are degraded,
By man's unjust decree,
Been kept behind the curtain,
And now they will be free.

Their number is increasing,
Their banner is unfurled;
"Woman's Rights" their motto is,
They flaunt it to the world.

There mode of dress is reckoned
A symbol of their woes;
Some don the "Bloomer" costume,
While others want our clothes.

Miss Dickinson, the preacher,
A female of renown,
She stumps the great Republic,
And lectures in each town.

She says they want the franchise,
So they can cast their vote,
Or run for any office,
And into power float.

Their presence at elections,
Would close the rowdy's lips,
Their wisdom in the Senate
Their other sex eclipse.

Hurrah! for rights of woman,
Her banner is unfurled;
Don't dare to cross her pathway,—
She's bound to rule the world!

March, 1875.

Woman's Rights Again

A Ballad (Ballot?) for the Times

WHEN women get the ballot
And march up to the polls,
They'll cause a revolution,
Will these sweet, darling souls.

They'll do away with bribery
And stop the sale of rum,
And bring about what was foretold,
The bright millenium.

They'll make the laws to suit themselves,
And put them all in force
By constables and magistrates,—
All women—why, of course.

They'll run the city council
And wear the judge's gown,
They'll purify our politics
And rule each country town.

They'll man (?) our forts, wear uniforms,
And point the loaded gun,
And fire upon the enemy,
And scorn to turn and run.

They'll man our ocean steamers,
Our battle ships command,
And fight upon the ocean,
As well as on the land.

They lately showed their prowess,—
Just think what might have been!
They fought the battle to the gate,
And conquered—Crinoline!

April 17th, 1893.

About Tariffs

THE tariff is still a great bone of contention,
And the grits have had fads too numerous to
mention;

They've boxed the trade compass, and ruin depicted,
On all other tariffs, but trade "unrestricted,"
Or union commercial — but a step to annex us
To our southern neighbors, from Maine down to Texas,
Or free trade, — so-called, with enough of "veiled
treason,"

Just thrown in for spice, bearing fruit in due season.
Professor G. S.¹ and Principal G.²

Give advice which they think suits the case to a T.
And wisdom will die when these men are *non est*.
Though our country might still with their exit be blest.
So adieu, dear Professor, and Principal G.,
Annexation is dead, — but not the N. P.³

¹ Goldwin Smith.

² Principal Grant of Queen's University.

³ National Policy.

Miscellaneous

*Think naught a trifle, though it small appear;
Small sands the mountain, moments make the year.
And trifles life.*

EDWARD YOUNG

Love of Fame, the Universal Passion.

More about the "Heathen Chinese" *

The Chinaman's Defence against Bret Harte, and other Calumniators

"I'm a "Heathen Chinese," Ah Sin's brother,
From Yang Ching in China I came;
I jumped the great wall and no other,
With a view to a hand in some game.
My brother you know plays at euchre,
Of course with no eye to the lucre,—
I'm sure you can't think me to blame.

My brother advised me to travel,
To leave the old land of my birth,—
To come to the States to scratch gravel,
And dig out the gold from the earth.
So I took his advice and came over,
Now I find myself feeding in clover,
And cannot tell how much I'm worth.

Some whiskey I took just to try it,
Needing something to wash down the rice,
Which you know is our principal diet,—
With such dainties as rats, and fat mice.
The cooking done here I despise it,
So does every Celestial that tries it,
Besides,— we can live at half price.

To refer to the whiskey I spoke of,
With my approbation or praise;
Or even this subject to joke of,
Might confirm me in heathenish ways.
'Tis a sign you are Christians,— such liquor,
The sooner I name this the quicker;
Besides,— it's a business that pays.

*[See APPENDIX C.]

My pig-tail or cue you may laugh at,
Make fun of my almond-shaped eyes.—
And the gods that I worship may scoff at,
And our joss-house affect to despise.
The god that you worship is Mammon,
To say that you do not is but gammon,
And nothing but bunkum and lies.

You swear, steal, gamble, and cheat us,
Are guilty of lying and fraud,
And turn up your nose when you meet us,
Then on Sunday go worship your God.
The most of you act more like heathen,
Than any poor Chinaman breathin',
Or our forefathers under the sod.

We work on your railroads at present,
Make your shoes or dig in your mines,
And do other work not quite pleasant,—
Then get thrashed, which we think is hard lines.
But you're *Christians*, and this is the reason,
To rebel would be murder and treason,—
So the Heathen Chinees ne'er repines.

So long as we live here among you,
We intend to act honest and fair;
Have no disposition to wrong you,
We swear by our pig-tails of hair.
By these cues we are drawn up to heaven,
When we die, and our sins are forgiven,
And by nothing more holy can swear.

1871.

The Eastern Question

THE Eastern question seems to be
A bone of great contention.
We cannot touch on all its points,
But some of them may mention.

When France and Prussia went to war,
The Russian Bear got plucky,
His solemn treaties said he'd break,
And thought the war quite lucky.

His neighbor, Turkey, now he hoped,
Would be in such a hobble,
That he could make a raid down south,
And this old gobbler gobble.

This ancient Turkey flapped his wings,
And said: "Don't touch a feather;
The treaty shall remain intact,
Or you'll see stormy weather."

The British Lion wagged his tail,
And bade the bear defiance;
The Austrian bird got up his quills
And joined in this alliance.

The Russian Bear now thinks it time
To growl a little fainter,
And doesn't object to settle it
By Congress, during winter.

We don't know how this row will end;
Each one is on his mettle;
We hope they may not come to blows,
But amicably settle.

December, 1870.

A Donation Visit

☉ II, for the pen of Milton, or of Pope!
 That I might with this mighty subject cope,
 Describe this scene in solemn, measured verse,
 And each important incident rehearse.—
 The parson's flock from all the country round,
 With one accord are to his dwelling bound,
 The object to divide their ample stores,
 With this intent they now besiege his doors.
 From east, and west, and north, and south they come,
 With corn, and oats, and flour, and dollars,— some
 With quilts, and sheets, and knick-knacks, not a few,
 Lamps, oil, and candles all around they strew.
 Like bees returning laden to their hive,
 Now swarm on swarm they through his portals dive.
 The old and young, the solemn and the gay,
 Join in the fun, and mingle in the fray.
 The roar much like the heaving billow's wave,
 As on some rock-bound coast its surges lave,—
 Each room besieged, each nook with noisy group.
 While others 'round through halls and kitchen troop.
 As night approaches tea must be prepared,
 Which, when announced, each pilgrim amply shared:
 No lack was there of coffee, tea, and cake,
 The viands all the best that each could make;
 If plum-cake did not with your taste agree,
 The spicy doughnuts cried aloud, "Try me!"
 The pleasant waiters 'round the dishes passed,
 To tempt the palate to the very last.
 The board still groaned beneath its ample load,
 And fragrant tea, and amber coffee flowed,
 The odds were all upon the tables' side,
 So amply were they with good things supplied.
 At last, in sheer despair they rise and shout,—
 "It is no use to try and eat them out."
 Almost a miracle I'm sure was wrought,
 As more seemed left than was in baskets brought.
 When now their appetites were thus appeased,

They swarmed again, at random, as they pleased ;
 Up stairs and down, in bedroom and in hall,
 They flock around, or lean against the wall.
 Some courting on the sly, perchance, was done,
 If not in earnest, why, of course, in fun.
 A cash-box on a centre table sat,
 This mode preferred to passing round the hat ;
 The generous donors as they neared the box,
 Dived in their pockets and produced the "rocks ;"
 The jingling silver made a joyful sound,
 Like grateful music, cheering all around.

The evening wanes,—the time to leave has come,
 Each starts to reach a near or distant home ;
 A very pleasant evening has been spent,
 And none regretted that he thither went.

We Human Cards

WHEN human cards are ever being shuffled,
 Each month and year is sure some change to bring ;
 To-day we meet, each countenance unruffled,
 To-morrow's round may snap life's vital spring.

To Mary

WHEN Cupid wings his feathered dart,
 He seldom aims in vain ;
 The arrow finds the smitten heart,
 Which says,— "Please shoot again."

For Cupid is a naughty boy,
 And of his tricks I sing,
 And girls though trying to be coy,
 Admire his feathered wing.

But this may not apply to you,
 (I don't pretend to say)—
 But then again it may be true,
 And proved some other day.

A New Year's Greeting*

A "HAPPY NEW YEAR," is our wish most sincere,
 To your patrons and friends altogether;
 Its threshold we've crossed, through snowstorms and
 frost,
 And the howling of cold winter weather.

The Christmas just spent, on a Sunday was sent,
 So we kept the good day next Monday.
 The wave of the sea, long predicted to be,
 Did'nt roll up the great Bay of Fundy.

The tide did'nt reach, on our sand covered beach,
 The common spring-tides by some inches,
 With terror and fear, we arose feeling queer,
 Much chagrined :—here's where the shoe pinches.

To such prophets we say, keep yourselves far away,
 Let the waves come and go at their pleasure;
 Let the tides ebb and flow, and this false prophet go
 And repent of his sins at his leisure.

An earthquake, 'tis said, shook some folks in bed,
 Not long ere the old year departed.
 Though we lay wide awake, we heard not the quake,
 And the wife of our bosom ne'er started.

Yet it may be quite true, that the earth shook a few—
 Some require much more shaking than others;
 Still we stick to our text, though somewhat perplexed,
 And our brain this "quake" story still bothers.

*[Occasioned by an unfulfilled prophecy regarding the repetition of the Saxby gale of October 5th, 1869.]

No startling event, has this New Year been sent,
 To scare us quite out of our senses;
 Though enough yet may come, to make us feel glum,
 Ere another New Year well commences.
 January 4th, 1871.

Prologue to a Masonic Supper*

AROUND the festive board we meet again,
 To carve and eat these geese and turkeys slain,
 Prepared with highest culinary art,
 Each plump and savory in its every part.
 Each dish an altar from which smoke ascends,
 Our stomachs to appease, its fragrance lends;
 This unsubstantial air we sniff to-night,
 Which only whets our growing appetite.
 Not only geese and turkeys here abound,
 But every needed condiment is found,—
 The choicest catsup and most spicy pickle
 Are here supplied, and will our palates tickle;
 With vegetables, too, in covered dishes,
 Will all be served to suit our varied wishes.
 The sideboard there its ponderous load reveals,
 And to our stomachs temptingly appeals;
 When this first course of meats is wholly through
 We'll make a raid on those choice dishes too.
 The knife and fork must conquer here to-night,
 If we remain till morning's rosy light;
 A valley of Jehoshaphat we'll make it,
 And we can do so if we undertake it.
 The whitened bones shall strew this lengthy table,
 If every man but does what he is able;
 On your heroic courage we rely
 To nobly conquer or to nobly die.
 The flowing bowl shall go this table round
 With purest nectar in the fountain found;
 The crystal water must our deeds inspire

*[This Masonic Supper was given by the late T—W—, on the occasion of his being presented with a Past Master's Jewel.]

And Adam's ale our drooping courage fire,
 Our generous host who gives this sumptuous spread
 Sits like a hero at the table's head ;
 The English blood which courses through his veins
 To strike his flag, or to succumb, disdains,—
 A very Ajax in such battlefields,
 Will die in harness ere his spear he yields.
 Though less in bulk we other warriors feel,
 We'll meet the foe with polished, glittering steel,
 And metaphoric blood shall drench the plain,
 Ere we surrender, or our vows profane.

My prologue now is very nearly ended,
 I've said much more than I at first intended ;
 To further tantalise your palates is a sin,
 Now to the charge ! with knife and fork,—pitch in !

January, 1872.

Prologue to a Temperance Concert

TO-NIGHT we meet for music — not debate —
 Our choir will entertain you ; if you'll wait
 Till this brief prologue is addressed to you,
 To keep good order, hear the programme through.
 Don't let applause o'erstep the bounds of reason,
 Advice now tendered at this proper season ;
 We think it best to give this sage advice
 Before commencing, hoping 'twill suffice,
 And no disturbance mar our present meeting,—
 These few remarks we make by way of greeting.
 We all should thank the ladies of the choir
 For thus responding to the club's desire
 To give a concert, and thus nobly aid
 The temperance movement in our village made.
 These darling creatures, when they pull together,
 Can charm us out in fair or stormy weather,
 And, like the wand of some far-famed magician,
 Can rule our hearts and claim our meek submission.
 This frank confession we here make to-night
 And think such candor is but just and right ;

Who will not to their charms this tribute own,
Should walk the dreary road of life alone.
The fifteen cents you paid out at the door,
You'll get the worth of, and a good deal more;
For music far outweighs in every sense
So small a fee; — the choir will now commence.

A Visit to a Skating Rink

THE Skating Rink some ladies think
A paradise of pleasure,
With "acme" skates they choose their mates,
And glide to music's measure.

With hand in hand, each looking bland,
Not fearing any danger,
They carve the ice, in strange device,
Quite puzzling to a stranger.

One pleasant day, I took my way,—
Forgetting other duties;
I could not skate, so 'twas my fate,
To watch these skating beauties.

As I stepped in, 'tis true as sin,
I saw a gent a-squeezing
A lady fair with flaxen hair,
Who forthwith took to sneezing.

The reason was, no doubt, because
She just then was a-falling;
The ice was cold, so he took hold,
To keep his dear from sprawling.

The act was kind, quite to my mind,
I looked on much approving;
But just to think, within the rink,
To see a sight so moving.

As I advanced, I felt entranced,
To see these skaters gliding,
Now circling round, now backwards bound,
So joyous and confiding.

Just by me sat a lady fat,
A gent her skate adjusted ;
Her ankle neat, and foot so sweet —
He noticed,— I mistrusted.

Away they glide, he by her side,
His hand now clasps her digits,—
How hard my fate, that I can't skate,
Which quite gives me the fidgets.

A scream I hear!— a lady near
Has come to grief, just yonder,—
With curious eye, I now espy
The scene,— and on it ponder.

A lovely miss, too sweet to kiss,
Lay on the ice extended ;
This little duck, her head first struck,
Though by false hair defended.

Her steel-shod feet were very neat,
Her ankles I won't mention ;
To speak of these, excuse me, please,
I have no such intention.

As prone she lay, I moved away,
Outside the cold enclosure,—
And wondered why these girls should sigh
For downfalls and exposure.

To a "Christian Scientist," on her Birthday

SEND to you this birthday greeting,
My mind with yours in "Science" meeting;
But though the years go swiftly by,
And *erring* mortals all must die,
True "Science" keeps us ever young,
Immortals,—of whom poets sung.
Your birthdays will go on forever,
Just like the flowing of a river;
And when a thousand years are past,
You'll be as young as at the last.
Thus "Science" shall assert her sway,
In the incoming, brighter day.

The Swell Loafer

THE loafer is a nasty cus—
Tomer, you often meet;
Go where you will, you'll always find
Him loafing 'round the street.

He knows the news, is always up
For gossip or to bore;
And if you turn a corner quick,
He dodges round before.

He likes a drink, is very fond
Of smoking your cigar,
Will tender you his sage advice
On trade, finance, or war.

A ladies' man he often is,
He struts and swings a cane;
His tailor's bill, perhaps, unpaid,
Though dunned and dunned again.

His beaver just the angle is,
 His lady friends to please;
 He thinks the most engaging cant,
 Just forty-five degrees.

This anti-mule I do detest,
 Perhaps this is not right;
 Can you respect this cus —
 Tomer that loafs from morn till night?

The "Girl of the Period" after Marriage

THE girl of the period, sad to relate,
 Is a subject of slander, gossip, and prate;
 The crusty old maid with the bachelor vies,
 To show up such damsels as seen by their eyes.
 They make no allowance for youth or for beauty,
 But run them all down as a Christian-like duty,
 Say they flirt and get married, as a matter of course,
 Then go to Chicago, and get a divorce,—
 That is, if their husbands stay out after ten,
 Or go to their club-room to talk to the men,
 Or are seen on the street to speak to a woman —
 Which latter offence, by the way, is quite common —
 Or don't find the cash for sufficient new dresses,
 Or foot up their bills for paint, powder and tresses.
 These charges are brought, with a great many more,
 Trumped up by the dozen, perhaps by the score.
 Of course this is all most villainous slander,
 The ravings of some green-eyed salamander.
 My object is not to defame, nor traduce,—
 Such scandalous conduct is clearly no use;—
 For the more you villify, scold, and refuse them,
 The more they cry out you but want to abuse them.
 Their way they will have, you may do as you please,
 So you better surrender, and come to your knees.
 You had better "cave in" than act like a rebel,
 And always be steeped in hot water and trouble.
 'Tis truly absurd for a man but to mention

That a note in the bank requires his attention,
That the funds he's not got wherewith to "retire" it,
And he fears he can't beg, steal, borrow, or hire it,
That bankruptcy stares him right square in the face,
And nothing is left him but debt and disgrace.
Why bother *their* brains by thus talking of lucre?
Your dimes became her's when in marriage you took her;
You may pay up your notes the best way you can;
She must have her new dresses, and drive out her span.
Mrs. Shoddy, her neighbor, spends freely her money;
If *you* can't do likewise, she thinks it quite funny.
Her "pa," she says, gave her what money she wanted,
Her "ma" to her neighbors this fact always vaunted.
Their daughter must dress in the height of the fashion,
And have plenty of cash to handsomely dash on,
Though if starving to death her dinner can't cook,
Reads all the new novels, and no other book.
The sweet little dears, notwithstanding, quite charm you,
And if you complain, by some means disarm you.
If to be more prudent you have no means to force her,
You can go to Chicago, and there can divorce her.

In Nature

IN Nature we see, o'er the wide world extended,
The charms of its beauty in everything blended,—
The trees of the forest, the rivers in motion,
Rolling their floods along to the ocean,—
The beautiful women, the charming young ladies,
Who dress in the "bend," which so good for our trade is,
With panniers so ample, and skirts so extended.
O, beautiful women! in dresses most splendid,—
Surely the ancients is chiselling a Venus,
Didn't know what addition dry goods to a queen is!

December, 1870.

Ancient and Modern Toilets

YOU little nymph of Venus, come,
 Till I arrange your toilet,
 And don't let some unskillful chum
 Attempt, or she may spoil it.

First, then, a tepid bath enjoy,
 And wash with nimble fingers,
 But don't let laziness decoy,
 While any spot yet lingers.

You'll now stand forth as pure as Eve
 Did in that ancient garden;
 No one could surely e'er believe
 You'd any sins to pardon.

But since that time how things have changed!
 Fig leaves are out of fashion;
 A modern belle would go deranged,
 With but Eve's dress to dash on.

She now must have her flowing dress,
 Her satins, silks, and laces,
 Though she may think she's born to bless,
 She sometimes has two faces.

At least so say some crusty beaux,
 The matter never sifting,
 Who go through life unto its close,
 Like snags on rivers drifting.

Who never seek a rib to bless,
 Have no young child to dandle,
 No lovely Eve them to caress,
 So take to talking scandal.

As I have said, the fashions change,—
 I think 'tis for the better—
 The leaf would now appear so strange,
 I'm sure 'twould cause a titter.

Some prudish miss might say she thought
 A modern dress much neater;
 But then, fair dames, it matters not,
 If bound by fashion's fetter.

It matters not what is the mode,
 From Eve's to modern dresses;
 If but the goddess, Fashion, nod,
 The world at once caresses.

The Old Bachelor

A BACHELOR sat in his rickety chair,
 While smoking his horrible pipe,
 The fumes of tobacco polluting the air,
 His brow he would now and then wipe.

His stockings were out at the heels and the toes,
 His neck-tie was put on awry,
 The buttons were fast taking leave of his clothes,—
 The look of despair in his eye.

This bachelor mused on his terrible fate,
 He thought what a fool he had been
 To spend his existence, ne'er seeking a mate,
 Now given to sorrow and spleen.

His thoughts wandered back to when he was young,
 To the girls that then he had known;
 They troop to his fancy, like pearls that are strung,
 But soon this fair vision is gone.

He sees his vain life is fast ebbing away,
 A petrified fossil is he;
 Let him smoke, sigh, and groan, as long as he may,
 His sin's on his head,—let him be.

This epitaph write o'er his mortal remains,
 When this wretch is done with his life,—
 "He died as the fool, sadly wanting in brains;
 He lived without getting a wife."

An Old Maid's Lament

WHEN I was young,—about sixteen—
 I had my troops of beaux;
 I thought I'd flirt, and wait awhile,
 So turned my Roman nose.

My faithful glass revealed the fact
 That I was young and pretty,
 Without a rival, so I thought,
 In country, or in city.

So I concluded I would flirt
 Till I was two and twenty,
 When I could marry whom I pleased,
 As beaux were then so plenty.

David, we read, ten thousand killed,
 Samson his thousand slew;
 A lady Samson I would be,
 And slay my thousand too.

The instrument don't think the same,
 (But let this trifle pass);
 I slew my flirting,—David used
 The jaw-bone of an ass!

When two and twenty had arrived,
 I thought I still would flirt
 Till I was thirty—'twas so nice
 To kill,—myself unhurt.

When thirty came, my beaux, I found,
 Through killed and wounded, were
 Reduced—how hard 'tis to confess—
 To just one single pair.

And these, I must admit, were not
 Just suited to my mind,—
 John Brown was deaf, and somewhat lame,
 Jim Snodgrass partly blind.

My looking-glass less faithful was,
 It showed that I was fading,
 Reflected crows'-feet round my eyes ;
 I knew this *false* — yet jading.

The roses, too had left my cheeks,
 My hair was getting thinner ;
 Of course, the *glass* was all to blame,
 And not this flirting sinner.

Another decade soon was passed,
 The fleeting years ne'er tarried ;
 John Brown is dead, and I am told
 Jim Snodgrass has got married.

So now, my friends, I have no beaux,
 The world shows me no pity ;
 Next June I'll be just forty-two,—
 So ends my doleful ditty.

To Miss Rebecca —

REad how Rebecca was found at the well,
 And made such good use of her pitcher,
 That Isaac was smitten, and deep in love fell,
 And made up his mind he would catch her.

We know he succeeded, and happy they lived,
 Their example is oftentimes quoted,
 But if they had spats it must be believed
 That *mostly* on "Beckey" he doted.

The moral is this: Your pitcher use right,
 And *your* Isaac you'll hold with a spell
 That time will not mar in its on-rushing flight,
 Like Rebecca of old at the well.

To Fannie W. Brine

An Acrostic

FAIR charmer, you ask an *Acrostic* from me,
And I fear you'll be *cross* with the *stick* which you'll
see.

No doubt but you think I'm a very *cross stick*,
Now the subject is *cross*, so this subject I pick,
I don't mean you're *cross*, 'tis the '*crostic* I mean,
Every one has some *cross*, as may plainly be seen.
When *Across* this fair page your name you may find,
Be so good as to bear this *cross stick* in mind.
Remember the *stick* I refer to isn't you,
I refer to the '*crostic* so plainly in view.
Now, with these remarks this ACROSTIC I'll finish,
Ever wishing your shadow may grow, not diminish.

To Miss Emma

An Acrostic

WHEN mother Eve the apple took,
How foolish was old Adam,
Oh, if he'd only cast a look,
And said: "No thank you, madam."

Each girl would then an angel be,
Much less the change in fashion,
Most likely wings are all we'd see,
A belle would have to dash on.

A Christmas Greeting

ACCEPT this Christmas token,
 Emblem of faith unbroken,
 From your true, loving friend;
 Though distance doth us sever,
 May friendship endure, ever,
 And Christmas greetings blend.

To Miss Frances — *

A New Year's Greeting

FEAST OF LANTERNS.—poem charming,
 Criticism quite disarming,
 Worthy of a Burns or Byron,
 Or a Hemans, sweetest siren.
 I wish to compliment the latter,
 But with no desire to flatter,
 For I like a lady poet,
 And I don't care who may know it.
 Christmas, with its joyful greeting,
 Now is in the past retreating,
 While the New Year yet advances,—
 May it dawn on you, Miss Frances,
 Every earthly blessing bringing,
 Ushered in by *bell(e)s* a-ringing,
 Door bells pulling, sleigh bells jingling,
 All in sweet confusion mingling;
 Boys and girls—which not amiss is—
 Greeting with their New Year's kisses.
 No doubt you've a *beau* of *promise*,
 Charming, sweet, and dear Adonis,
 Who *archly* will be favors claiming
 (You know my meaning without naming),
 For *rain-bows* always heaven kiss,
 And never think of it, *a-miss*.
 December, 28.

*[In reply to a Christmas card, with poem entitled "Chinese Christmas Feast of Lanterns."]

Lines for a Young Lady's Album

An album is a place where all
 Who think they have the talent,
 Their panegyric verses scrawl,
 To show they're each a gallant.

The sense is lost to make the rhyme,
 A compliment is buried
 In some discordant, senseless chime,
 For which its author worried.

My muse is not upon the wing,—
 Perhaps it is no pity,
 For I might do the self-same thing,
 And think myself quite witty.

So I'll lay down my prosy pen,
 Declare you are a beauty,
 There is more sense in this, than when
 One rhymes from sense of duty.

Pray don't this declaration take
 As any part of rudeness;
 This plain confession which I make,
 Accept,—please have the goodness.

To Flossie

An Acrostic

FROM small streams the rivers flow,
 Little girls to women grow;
 On the stream of life they're borne,
 Some are happy, others mourn.
 Sunshine does not always last,
 In our path are shadows cast,
 Ere we know it, life is past.

Santa Claus

THE child in "Santa Claus" believes,
This fiction its young mind deceives,
But, growing older, doubts invade,
And soon within the tomb is laid,
Which buries many a childish dream
As we are carried down life's stream.

Thus, one by one, our idols perish,
And age rejects what youth doth cherish.
Will *all* our hopes like bubbles fair,
Please for a time, then melt in air?

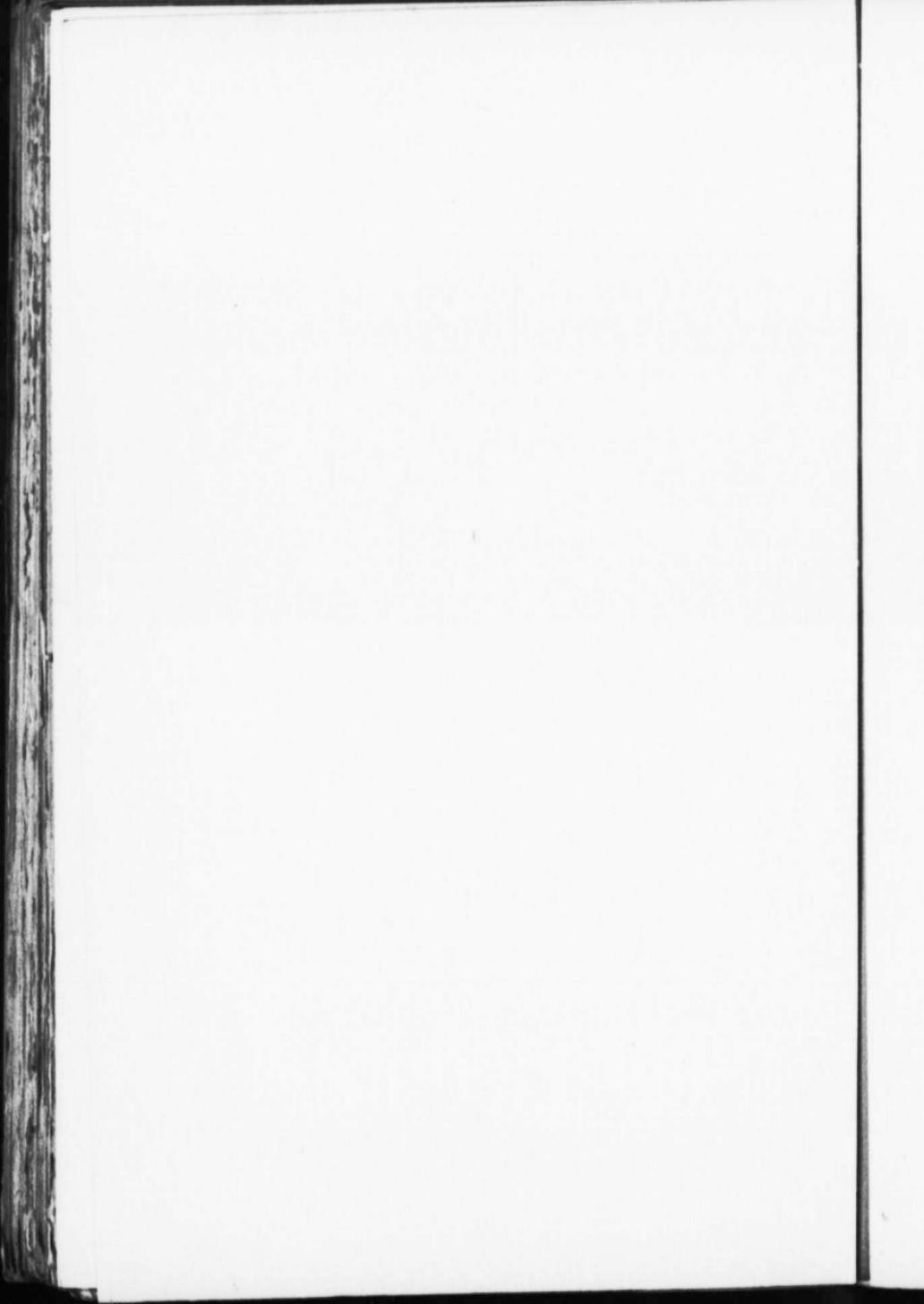
To Daisy

IN your Album, Miss Daisy, you ask me to write,
With your wish I comply, but it bothers me quite
To know what to say to a Daisy so fair,—
For what other flower with thee can compare?

In chivalrous days the daisy was borne
By ladies and knights, in their tournaments worn,
Of fidelity emblem and pledge of true love;
May you, my dear Daisy, your faithfulness prove.

As day follows night, and night succeeds day,
And as years run their rounds and vanish away,
May your thoughts to your "brother" in constancy run,
As the daisy that watches the course of the sun.

When spring-time is passed and summer is gone,
And autumn and winter creep stealthily on,
May you, my sweet Daisy, continue to bloom,
And may some fair daisy embellish my tomb.



Appendix A

For the Czar

(The Flag at half-mast in Halifax)

WHAT means the flag of England drooped and blown
At mid-staff, trailing down the blithesome breeze,
Which is not mindful here, as over-seas,
To pipe a dirge around a vacant throne?
Whatever feeling by that sign is shown,
It looks like freedom weakened in the knees
And sorry for the Czar, that God's decrees
Of banishment are mightier than his own.
That glorious ensign reached its eagle height,
Only because it flaunted to accord
Justice to all,—to every man his right.
Why should it flutter for the frozen lord
Of Muscovy, whose mission was to smite
His liege-men sore, on whom alone he warred?

M. H. N.

Clark's Harbor.

Appendix B

Canada and Uncle Sam

(From the New York Tribune)

FAIR CANADA a maiden sweet,
As those with roses at their feet,
Stands half reluctant — cold, but fair —
The gleaming snowflakes in her hair —
Behind her stream in frosty nights
Her ribbons of the Northern Lights,
Her cape, the winds blow free and far,
Is fastened with the Polar star;
The Pleiades are diamonds fair
With which she pins her streaming hair,
And thus with frost-kissed cheek of rose
Stands the fair Maiden of the Snows.

And Uncle Sam has turned his eyes
Toward those blushing northern skies,
And the coy shivering beauty there
Seems very sweet and very fair.
But he is patient and will bide
Until she comes a willing bride,
And the old Mother o'er the sea
Shall give her daughter willingly.
She need not through the coming years
Stand sobbing, weeping frozen tears,—
But though she pouts and turns away,
He'll wait for her to name the day.

— Sam Walter Foss in "The Yankee Blade."

Appendix C

"The Heathen Chinees"

JOHN HARTÉ'S poem entitled "That Heathen Chinees," written in 1870, is a humorous and subdued satire of the "American selfishness," which was, to use the words of *The Spectator*, "the main strength of the cry against the 'cheap labor' of the Chinese," who at that time were emigrating in large numbers to the Pacific Coast States. In it he represents Bill Nye and himself playing at euchre with Ah Sin, "that heathen Chinees," who pretended not to understand the game. Despite "the state of Nye's sleeve which was stuffed full of aces and bowers" to cheat the Chinaman, the Americans were not only outwitted but outplayed as well. Ah Sin won by practising the same artifice of deception which the others were foolish enough to think they were concealing from him, the *pseudo*-"soft" Oriental,—for "in his sleeves which were long, he had twenty-four packs." The concluding stanza runs thus:—

"Which is why I remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark,
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinees is peculiar —
Which the same I am free to maintain."