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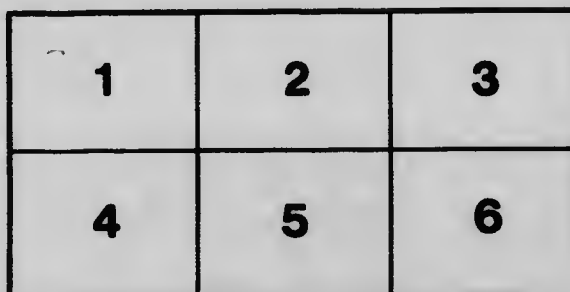
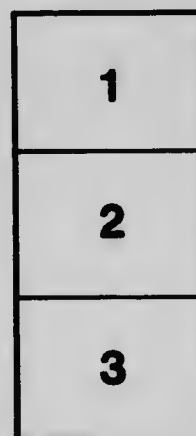
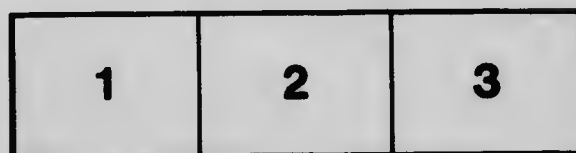
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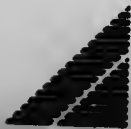
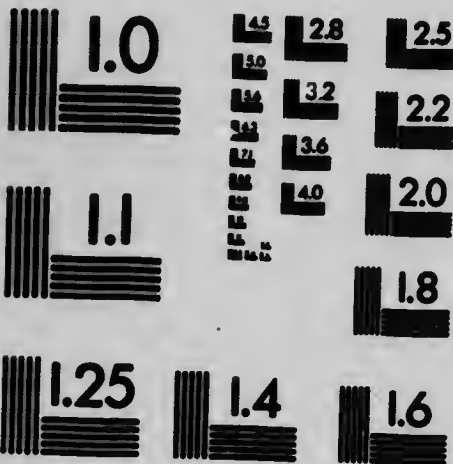
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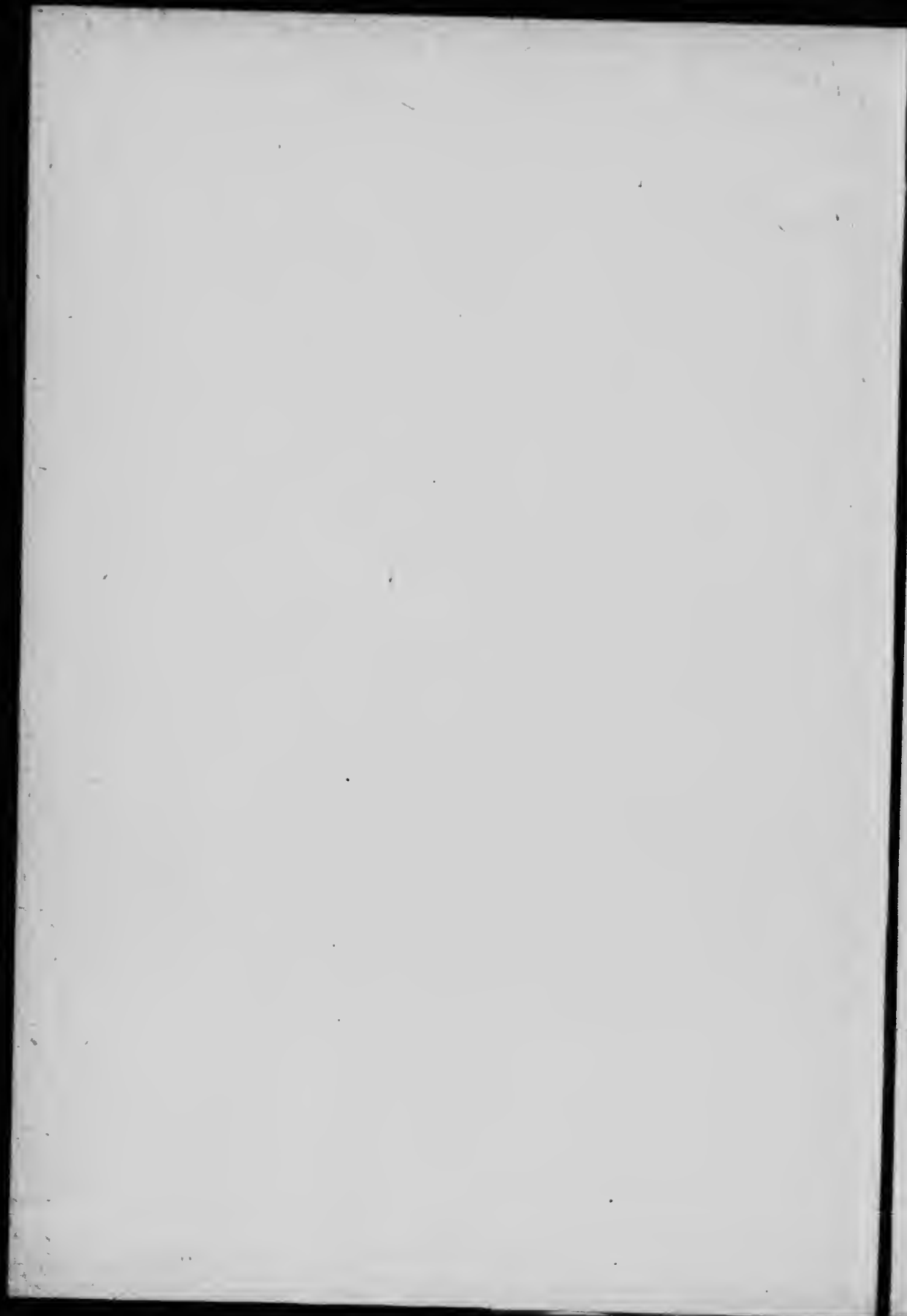
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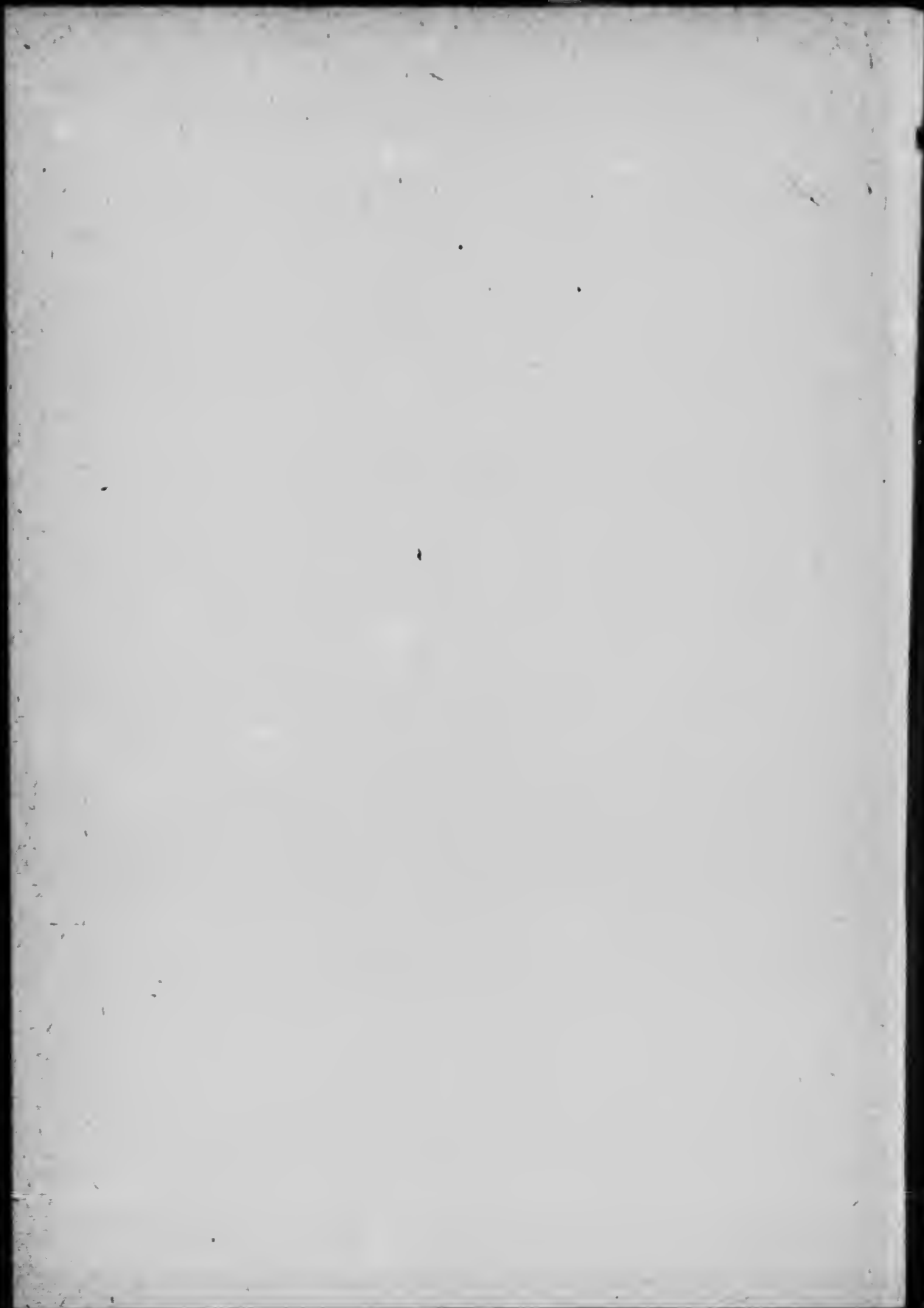
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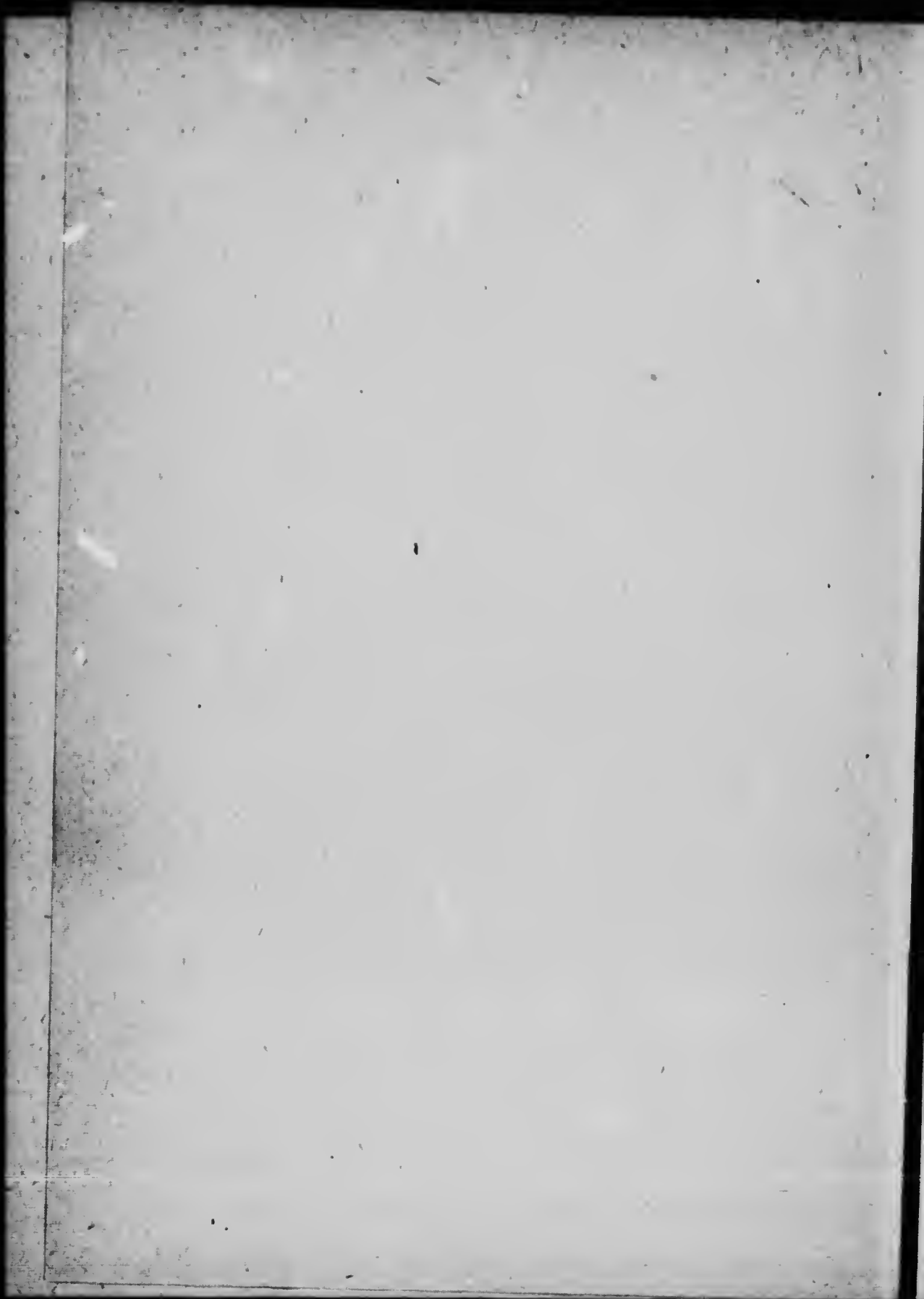
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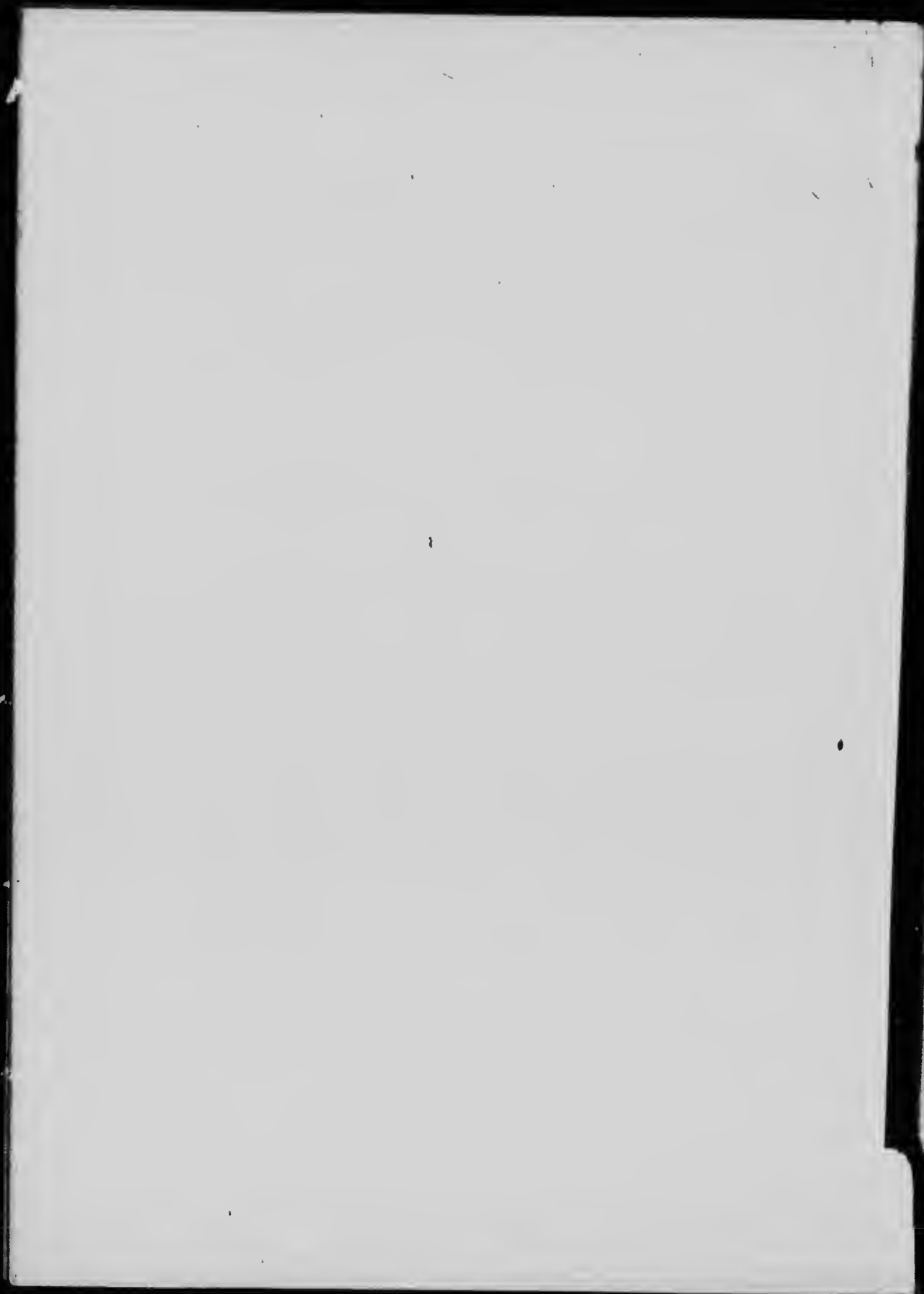


ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

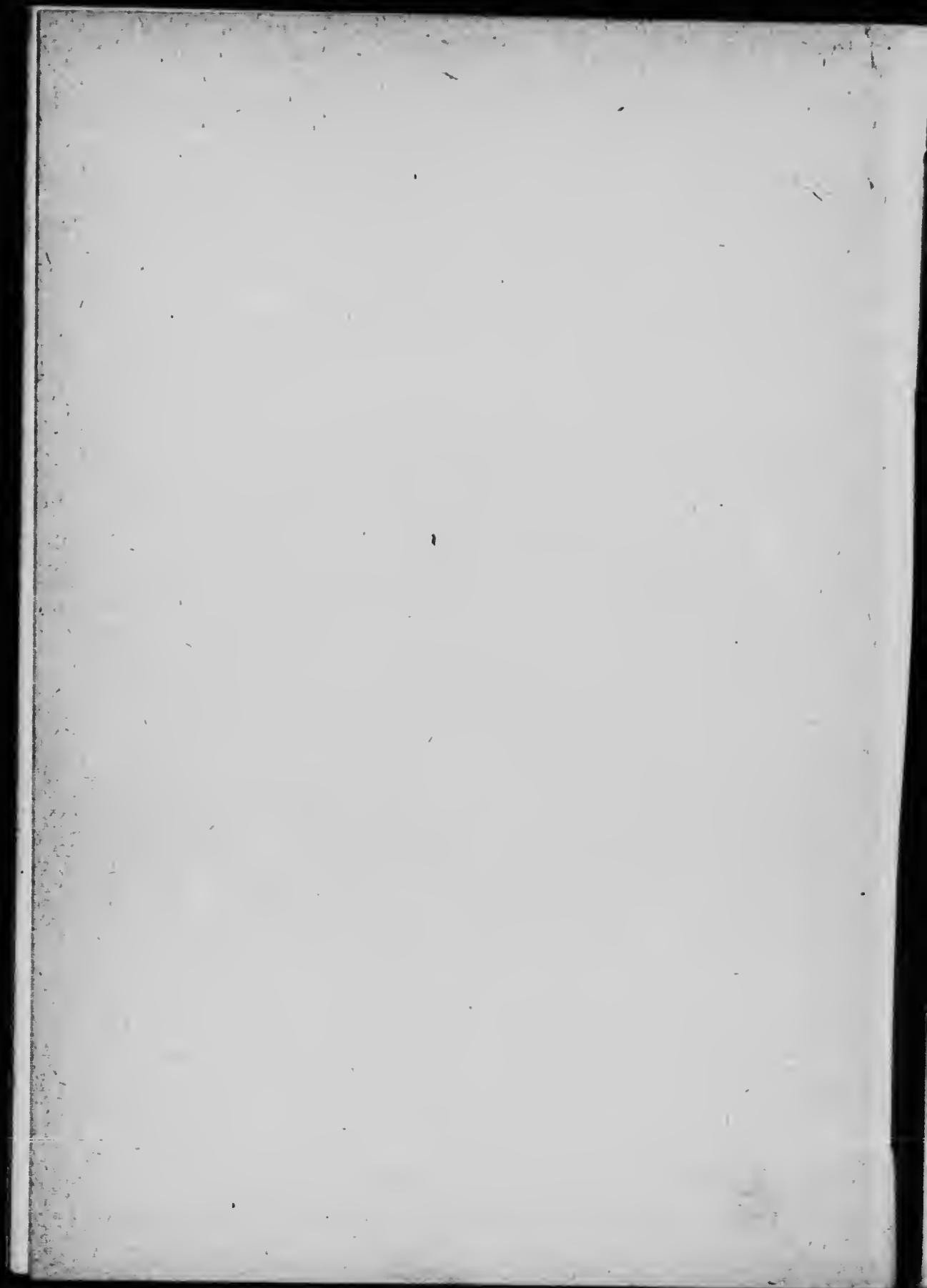




ROBERT ELLIOTT



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ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

-- EDITED BY --

JOHN DEARNESS, M. A.

--AND--

FRANK LAWSON

PUBLISHED UNDER THE
AUSPICES OF

THE BACONIAN CLUB

LONDON

LONDON
LAWSON & JONES
1904

P58459

L36

R63

1904

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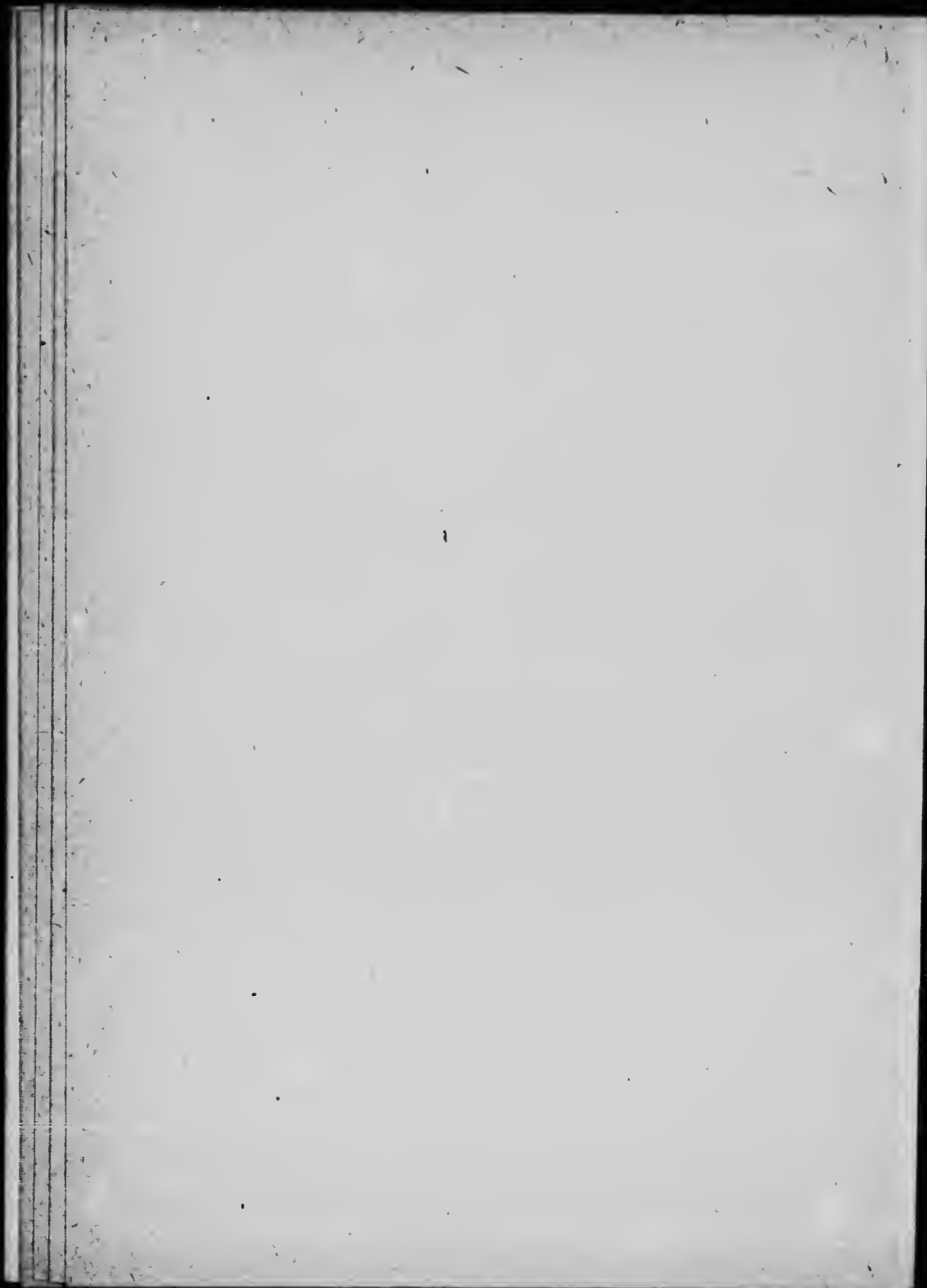
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TO THE READER :

Why were the lyrics in this collection written ?
Why are they published ?

The answers may be none the less interesting despite the fact that the questions might never occur to the reader. They will show the extent of the author's responsibility and excuse him from faults of judgment in selection and shortcomings in revision for publication.

No one holds the opinion more firmly than did Robert Elliott that what the world needs—the English-speaking world at least—is not so much more poetry as a closer study of, a wider acquaintance with, and a higher appreciation of the grand anthology which it already possesses. He did not take his pen to gain applause or otherwise advance his self-interest ; he did not feel himself inspired with a message which he was constrained to deliver. He sought intellectual and spiritual improvement in poetical literature, and he learned how much the appreciation of good poetry—of a sonnet for example—is increased in trying to write it. His observant mind and sympathetic heart occupied with the events and phenomena embraced by his own experience arrived at truths which he felt a pleasure in expressing in the lyrical form. He found that this mode of statement gave pleasure to others ; and hence with the genuine altruism characteristic of his nature he wrote poetry to please others when not merely to improve or please himself.

To those who knew him intimately—and they were not a few—his beautiful life itself was a benefi-

cent poem. His mind to him a kingdom was. One of his friends* happily compared him with Channing, fighting invalidism with infinite patience and working out his ideals "content to live with small means, seeking refinement rather than fashion, true wealth rather than riches ; to listen to stars and birds, babes and sages with open heart ; to think quietly, act frankly, talk gently, await occasions, hurry never ; in a word to let the spiritual unbidden and unconscious grow up through the common." Those who thus knew him cherish his memory. To be a welcome memento to them is sufficient reason for the publication of this chaplet of verse.

Thus offering to his friends this tribute to his memory the editors have not considered either the professional critic or the general public, and yet they entertain the hope that it may prove like him whom it commemorates in this particular—that while he loved society, using the word in its best sense, he never obtruded himself. He stood not on ceremony nor offered apology for using any opportunity that came in his way to please or benefit a stranger as well as an acquaintance or to execute a public service.† In like manner may these poems not only maintain the memory of a cherished friendship but also bring pleasure or profit to some—nay, to many—who never felt the gentle personal influence of their author.

Considering his birth, education and home environment it is not extraordinary that Robert Elliott

*Mr William Thompson, Editor of *The Farmers' Advocate*. In seven successive Christmas numbers of this journal the place of honor was given to a poem by Robert Elliott. With permission these are all republished in this collection.

†In every local organization—of School, Church, or Municipality—at one time or another he discharged duties of trust and responsibility.

wrote his thoughts in verse. In the past, life on a Canadian farm has not afforded much leisure for literary work; but our author being the youngest of four brothers and not of robust constitution was not tied by the regular routine of farm duties. He intended to be a teacher and actually entered the normal training school at Toronto, but shortly after the opening of the term severe illness obliged him to relinquish a course he never afterwards resumed. He inherited the poetical temperament from his mother whom he ardently loved and who worthily enjoyed the respect and affection of every one in the wide range of the family acquaintance. He used to relate that among his earliest recollections were those of the pleasure it gave him to hear his father read or repeat from memory passages from the poems of the Ayrshire bard. It may be added that although both parents were born on the west side of the channel that receives the waters of the Doon; yet in few, if any, Scottish homes was Burns better known and appreciated than in John Elliott's. That home, too, was the travellers' rendezvous. Many a belated migrant was directed to the two tall poplars that marked the gate. There even the ilk of Mike Kehoe found food and shelter, the only return given being the unconscious one, the recital of the story of a tramp's life. In brief it was the home of Auburn's Village Preacher transplanted to Canadian soil.

His home was known to all the vagrant train ;
He chid their wanderings but relieved their pain :
The long remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast ;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there and had his claims allowed ;
The broken soldier kindly bade to stay
Sat by h's fire and talked the night away,

Wept o'er his wounds or tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch and showed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe ;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Even though Robert Elliott had never written a line of poetry his life was worth knowing and studying. He was a discriminating student of nature in general as well as of human nature. Not even Gilbert White knew his parish of Selborne, better than Robert Elliott knew the beautiful and winding Thames in the neighborhood of the valley that he named Plover Mills. Its birds and wild flowers, its reptiles and mammals, were almost as familiar as the farms and farmers. He had access to scientific books and he knew how to use them ; but it was just because he knew their proper use that he made so little use of them. Nature, to him, was her own interpreter. He knew the joy of discovery unalloyed by the fear that he was not the first to make it. He was the true naturalist who found spiritual as well as intellectual delight in that sympathetic communion with nature which woos her to reveal her secrets. His spirit was not of the kind that says "I shall not study the robin ; that has been done already." He knew that no individual robin was exactly like any other robin and that the study of any work of nature will never be exhausted. He went to nature for education, not for knowledge,—for happiness, not for facts.

"He whistled to a whistling quail
The bird called back to him,"

in Cy Warman's beautiful tribute, gives the key note to his attitude towards nature. It was Charles

Kingsley who said that the man is a thoroughly good naturalist who knows his own parish thoroughly. By that standard Robert Elliott was certainly a thoroughly good naturalist.

He had attained but little more than half his father's age when the closing days of the same December garnered both, and although his brief life held much sunshine it was crossed by dark shadows. These various experiences served to show how vigorously the graces of humility, patience and courage flourished in his character. To those who were much with him and knew him well and to all who may yet learn something of his interesting life and beautiful character

though dead he yet speaketh.

J. D.

TO THE SINGER OF PLOVER MILLS.

Who lives thy sylvan life may always hear
Sweet melodies in sounds from everywhere.
His heart vibrates at purple dawn or even
While birds sing carols at the gate of Heaven.
He listens, rapt, as strains from out the trees
Come varying with the temper of the breeze.
He e'en exults in winter's swelling blast
O'er frozen wolds and through the forests vast.
To sleep and pleasant dreams he's gently sent
By thousand voices of the rain bespent
On roof and casement; has no dread nor sighs
Though thunders crash athwart the darkened skies.
With awe he hears the ocean's mighty roar—
Of waves resounding on the tide-swept shore.
And sweet delight—his soul is still attune
To the rippling tinkle of the brook in June.
Rich, sympathetic chords stir in his breast;
In vibrant voice his feeling is expressed;
While Pipes of Pan do joyously rehearse
The oratorios of the universe.

J. N. Elliott Brown.

ROBERT ELLIOTT.

Died December, 19th 1902.

“Lightly weave the wheaten garland for the brow of one
we love,
With it twine the gracious maple, touch'd with light from
Heaven above.”

'Twas Robert's joy to be the herald
(With pleasing fancy fraught)
Of tributes just and true;
He asked no homage of the world—
And so the world forgot
That homage was his due.

He filled the thicket and the glen
With flames of sacred fire,
And glory gave to gloom :
He cheered the weary hearts of men,
With sweet consoling lyre,
O'er many a cheerless tomb.

A world bowed down, with vision dim,
Soul-filled with grief and love,
Should weave, with saintly care,
A garland for the brow of him
Who many garlands wove,
Yet deemed his own brow bare.

FRANK LAWSON.

ROBERT ELLIOTT.

We rambled where a river winds
By an abandoned mill ;
Where forest-flowers and Northern pines
The air with fragrance fill.

A wild rose bloomed beside the trail,
A bird sang on a limb ;
He whistled to a whistling quail,
The bird called back to him.

God tuned his soul and set his song,
And clarion-clear it rang ;
He walked the woodland, summer long,
And with the song-birds sang.

He wandered on across the hill
Where Death's dark shadow creeps ;
The wild rose died—his voice grew still,
And with the rose he sleeps.

Cy WARMAN.

London, Canada, June 2, 1903.

Robert Elliott was the one man in the London District who seemed to take such an intelligent and enquiring interest in each branch of natural history that every specialist took profit as well as pleasure out of intercourse with him.

Ornithology was the science in which my intimacy with him was cultivated and it was perhaps his specialty, if a man of such keen interest in so many subjects could be said to have a specialty; and while a few local ornithologists may have had acquaintance with a larger number of species of birds, none knew so many varieties with such intimacy and detail as he.

But certainly a large share of the value of his life work lay in the encouragement and impetus which his associates received from him. He seemed more delighted if his friend made a discovery than if he had made it himself, and the results of all his work were given to anyone who could use them, with the utmost freedom and generosity.

The influence of such a man will long endure and his friends will cherish his memory while they live.

W. E. SAUNDERS.

The temple of Canadian Poetry has been made more sacred by the presence of Robert Elliott. Through her gates he passed with bowed head, but the white fire of his Spirit has shed a radiant glow on lofty arch and noble column. Canadian life is richer through the touch of such simple, trustful, loving hands.

M. PARKINSON,
(Editor Canadian Teacher.)

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

A SONNET TO CANADIANS.

Canadians, planting for the time to be
A mighty nation in the north ; God-speed
To your imperial emprise ; may the seed
Of your wingéd messenger—the maple tree—
Be foster'd by kind hands on hill and lea,
Till, growing like the oaks on Runnymede,
They catch the smile of heaven above and feed
The earth below with joy their strength to see.
Love is the soil to plant in—Love that starts
The dullest life to higher purpose—Love
That binds the earth below to heaven above,
That bows the head beneath the chastening rod,
That lifts the wearied hopes of saddest hearts
To yearn for home and fellowman and God.

CANADA YET.

When challeng'd by a trump of fame
That hopes to 'list the spheres,
We turn to read a nation's name
Writ large across the years,
We hurry back to greet our own,
Now high in honor set,
And proudly cry with flashing eye,
"It's Canada, Canada yet."

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

When vaunts a land her sunny skies,
Green fields and waters clear,
Unfolding beauty's sweet surprise
Each day through all the year ;
Nor envy wakes within our hearts,
Nor grief nor wild regret,
But carol we from sea to sea,
"It's Canada, Canada yet."

When lauds a bard the maidens fair
Who grace a foreign shore,
From twinkling feet to sunlit hair
Heart-rich in love's sweet lore,
To lights of home we fondly turn
Till each our Queen has met,
Then murmur low, while souls o'erflow,
"It's Canada, Canada yet."

When tales of valor proudly told
Recall the stricken field,
Men of the Maple Leaf, behold
The sullen Cronje yield !
Before your guns at Mafeking
See brutal Snyman fret
To hear that cry pierce Afric's sky,
"It's Canada, Canada yet."

Though yon bold nation's proud and great,
Though that is fair and true,
Though both together, spite of fate,
May stoutly dare and do ;

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Still we surrounding Freedom's throne
On craggy mountain set,
Must say our say, and, come what may,
"It's Canada, Canada yet."

THE UNION JACK.

Thou'd Banner, flown on ev'ry sea,
Belov'd or fear'd in every clime,
What subtle charm hath render'd thee
Impervious 'gainst the tooth of time?

The Grecian standard long has dropt
Into the black lethean night,
Long since the Roman eagle stopt
Her lofty and imperial flight.

Yet through a thousand battles thou
Hast flapp'd above—a glorious fold—
Still higher art thou flying now
Than ever in the days of old.

Light follows in thy wake, and power
Takes pride in firmly planting thee,
'Round earth's wide rim, wherever tower
Rocks circl'd by the free-born sea.

How many a time the salt sea-mist—
The eager wave—the laughing foam—
Borne down the winds have wildly kist
Thee welcome to thy ocean home.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

The battle smoke has ne'er displac'd
Thy beauty, nor have alien hands
Wrought thee dishonor 'mid the waste
Of stormy seas, or foreign strands.

Proud register of gallant hearts,
Old guardian of our dearest rights,
What soul but into fervor starts
To see thee crowning Freedom's heights.

Though some there are who fear or hate,
Yet more there are who truly love,
To see thee floating grand and great,
A mighty empire's throne above.

Then shall we fear for thee should spleen
Drive half the world to drag thee down,
A thing to mock a dying queen,
A tatter'd rag to hide her crown?

And some say "Yes," in bitter scorn,
While as for us we fiercely cry,
"As British subjects were we born,
So British subjects will we die!"

And standing firm despite of fate,
Through valor born of holy love,
We'll keep thee floating grand and great,
A mighty empire's throne above.

THE PIONEER.

Full sixty years ago he came
In sailing-ship across the sea ;
The wilderness he faced, nor feared
The gaunt wolf in her lair to beard,
Nor fiercer famine ; yet for years
The fight was hot, 'tween hopes and fears.
He felled the trees ; he cleared a space,
And built thereon a dwelling-place.
In lapse of time the sun could smile
O'er hill and dale, for mile on mile.
The giant trees gave place to grain,
That wrapt with "cloth of gold" the plain ;
The footpath blazed thro' tangled dale
Past hunter's camp and Indian's trail,
Became a road. The summer breeze
Found flowers to kiss on lattices
Of rustic framework made for her
Who followed him without demur
From home of childhood—heaven-blest—
To grace a hearthstone in the West.
The consciousness of work well-done
Fill'd him with happiness. He won
Fair fortune from the stubborn soil,
And quiet ease repaid his toil.
He pass'd away, and o'er his bones,
The beech, he spared, in broken tones,
Day after day, thro' all the year,
Sings softly o'er the Pioneer.

THE STRAIN OF THE WINTER WREN.

In a cool recess, where the watercress
And the velvet mosses grow,
By the swamp's dim bed, at a fountain's head,
A sylvan seat I know ;
And there you may hear, sweet, strong and clear,
At the early dawn, or when
The twilight dews their stars diffuse,
The strain of the winter wren.

A Naiad's song to the reeds among—
Love's carol across the hills—
A lilting tune o' light-heart June
Along the hurrying rills ;
All these and more fling out their store,
Which meet together when
There breaks on the ear, sweet, strong and clear,
The strain of the winter wren.

Brown bit of clay, no soul could stay
For long in that narrow part ;
Thy breast it fills, and then it thrills
The greater human heart ;
It ripples forth to gladden earth—
The theme of some eager pen ;
And the ages hear, sweet, strong and clear,
The strain of the winter wren.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

HONEY-BEES IN APPLE BLOOM.

Honey-bees in apple-bloom,
Bobolinks in clover,
Rippling water laughing by,
White clouds floating over.
Sweet are these, and very sweet,
Till I hear the tinkling feet
Of dear Cassie, then they seem
But the shadows of a dream.

Stinging sleet from leaden skies,
Darkness quickly falling,
Tortur'd winds among the hills
Out of caverns calling.
Drear are these, and very drear,
Till fair Cassie's voice I hear,
Then their wildest terrors seem
But the echoes of a dream.

THE AXE AND THE SPINNING WHEEL.

O farmer strong and farmer bold!
O farmer rich and free!
Linger beside this shanty old
That's crumbling o'er the lea;
Here where the wheat has wrapt with gold
The land so fair to see.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

The "binder" ticks off yellow sheaves
Like clock-strokes, keeping time
For Progress, as the vale *he* leaves
And mounts the heights sublime;
Yet rest we here beneath these eaves
To weave a simple rhyme.

Around this doorway, like the flowers
That gladly kist the feet
Of those who, here, in olden hours,
Were wont, perchance, to meet.
Wild roses, pluck'd in forest bowers
All bound with bitter-sweet,

Summon the past as there you stand
Beside the little door—
Built by your father's youthful hand
In eighteen twenty-four—
When gaunt Starvation stalk'd the land,
And Hope could hope no more.

Think of the fight within, without,
To keep the heart and soul
From parting ways, as there the rout
Of wolves, and here the roll
Of Death's sharp thunder, turn about,
Around this dwelling stole.

'Tis mete you learn that by this hearth,
(Which Pity pleads you spare),
Your mother suffer'd bitter dearth
That blanch'd your father's hair;
While, half in tears, she feign'd mirth
That he might crush Despair;

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Till broke the morn—that morn so dear
When, shrieking Winter past,
The Spring, their fainting hearts to cheer,
Lit up the woods so fast,
And Joy laugh'd off the thought of Fear,
And Peace came hono: at last.

Then cheery work in house and field,
And work from year to year
Its guerdon fair began to yield,
Till o'er their eyes, came here
Celestial Light, by God unseal'd,
Life's clouded skies to clear.

Now well they sleep beneath the beech
That still in broken tones—
Too eloquent for human speech—
A namel's sorrow moans,
While violets in tears beseech
Rest for their honest bones.

Look back again; you haply may
See glint of subtle steel
Flash 'gainst an oak, that—well-a-day!—
Your father makes to reel
And groan and fall, while—far away—
Your mother's spinning wheel

Like music heard in dreams, may come
Across the wind-kist wheat,
Charming the noisy Present dumb,
Calming your hot heart's beat,
And wak'ning Memory with its hum,
Like Love's voice, low and sweet.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

The vision pauses ; bow your head,
Prepare remorse to feel ;
See 'fore the hearth in grimy bed
Rusts Valor's tested steel,
While spiders spin Oblivion's thread
On Virtue's silent wheel !

These symbols take from such a place,
Some dullard they may thrill,
Or give to him of noble race
A nobler impulse still ;
So, with their splendid presence, grace
Your mansion on the hill.

At head of hall these trophies hang,
More worthy this are they
Than many a sword that fiercely rang
'Gainst shield in bloody play,
Of which belike some minstrel sang
His loud-resounding lay.

There to your little ones relate
In glowing words the tale
Of that old axe that baffled Fate
And clove the three-fold mail
Of sullen Cold, and wolfish Hate,
And wild Starvation pale.

Then tenderly the thread of Love,
That only love can feel,
Draw from the distaff these above,
And when the shadows steal
Around you, weave the story of
The dear, old spinning wheel.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

With *that* your father forc'd the light
Of morn to bless the glade,
As, *slashing* trees to left and right,
The shanty first was made,
And strong and true in Fate's despite
The old roof-tree was laid.

With *this* your mother enter'd in
That hurtling autumn day,
Old Fortune's stubborn heart to win
While slipt the hours away,
As to and fro she stept to spin
The homely hoddén-gray.

The axe recalls a valor keen
To strike a ready blow
At all things cold, or hard, or mean,
That dares a front to show ;
The spinning wheel with voice serene
Seems Virtue singing low.

Show Valor rousing half a-craze
Some horrid foe to meet,
Pause ! turn aside in tangled maze,
To pluck the wild rose sweet,
That crown'd the joy of all her days
By kissing Virtue's feet.

Present him with that favor worn
That all the world may see
Him, Gareth-wise, rejoicing, turn
Love's own true knight to be,
And through a hostile phalanx burn
A path to victory.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Show Virtue, flow'r-like, half afraid
Of Summer's wooing breath,
Grow strong against a world array'd,
And fill'd with joyous faith,
Rove Eden here, and, undismay'd,
Quit that to rove with Death.

Where'er it list him, knowing this—
That wheresoe'er they rove,
Whate'er betide—should e'en the kiss
Of angel lips above
Be long denied, still left there is
Love, and forever, Love.

O, ask not whence love springs or where,
The place to which it goes,
Suffice for us that passing fair
Is summer's willing rose,
That freely on the yearning air
Her fervent heart bestows.

Love touch'd these symbols—there's enough—
For Love gives hoden gray
A glint of satin sheen, and bluff
Old Winter has a way
To cherish safe the stalk so rough,
That bears a rose to-day.

The axe may rust there overhead
Nor Valor lack for steel ;
The distaff when the years have fled
The tooth of Time must feel ;
Still may we softly draw Love's thread
From Virtue's spinning wheel.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

And well may all the lesson learn
And well the lesson teach,
That Love that makes the dull earth yearn
In blossoms 'neath the beech,
May crown with light the stars that burn
Beyond earth's utmost reach.

So train your children that they may
For those mementos feel,
A love as sweet as summer day,
A valor true as steel,
And be their coat of arms for aye,
The Axe and Spinning Wheel.

Thence shall their lives grow rich in deed,
As well's in word and thought,
Their souls renew'd for ev'ry need
To wider purpose wrought,
With not a whit of that high creed
Changed, doubted or forgot.

Though prigs their petty souls may fret
By flinging silly jeers
At all who sweet affection set
On those unpolish'd years,
Yet Heaven forefend that we forget
Our nation's pioneers.

And proud be those who draw life's flame
From this ancestral line,
That up the dark old forest came
With Freedom's torch divine,
And made around their country's name
Its light forever shine.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

LIGHTLY WEAVE THE WHEATEN GARLAND.

Lightly weave the wheaten garland for the brow of
one we love,
With it twine the gracious maple touch'd with light
from Heaven above,
Crown Our Lady all resplendent with those symbols of
her power,
Wheat and maple softly blending, as her own and
rightful dower !
Canada reveals bright visions, but there's none of all
more sweet
Than the plainmen busy gleaning o'er her boundless
fields of wheat. '1

Fair and stately shone the pageant when King Solo-
mon, array'd
In his glory, welcomed Sheba's queen with all her
cavalcade ;
New and dazzling was the splendor when those feudal
kings of old,
Brilliant human suns of glory, lit that field — "the
cloth of gold !"
Yet our eager eyes turn gladly now a fairer scene to
greet,
'Tis the plainmen busy gleaning 'mid the boundless
fields of wheat.

Ah! the better day is breaking! — now the earth a
shadow flings
Like the phantom of old Sorrow on those revels of
her kings ;
For their diamonds, gold and pearls sought in desert,
pit and flood,

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Speak of tears of bitter sorrow, bearing yet the trace
of blood ;

While 'tis ours to sing of freedom, never slave with
fetter'd feet,

Pining, breathes a sigh to Heaven from our bound-
less fields of wheat.

Wealth appears in forms protean, wearing still a new
disguise,

Flying far when need is sorest, bringing oft a glad
surprise,

Stealing now in shape alluring from the wood, the
sea, the mine,

Yet if ever out of Eden she has worn a form divine,

'Twas when sprang in Manitoba, all with magic
power replete,

Blessed earnest of our future, that first ripen'd stalk
of wheat.

All its need was loving nurture : finding that the
harvest grew

'Neath the sunny smile of morning, 'neath the touch
of starry dew,

Till young Canada, enraptur'd at the radiance of the
gleam,

'Mused amid the golden glory of the promise of her
dream,

If 'tis thus so bright and early while the night and
morning meet,

Noon shall see the nations feasting on the gleanings
of our wheat !

Scarce uplifted is the curtain to display the rolling
plains

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Conquer'd by a stalwart people having freedom in
their veins,
Having freedom in their veins as the peaceful scene
unrolls,
Having freedom in their veins which inspireth mighty
souls,
Mighty souls that, high and holy, as Time's throbbing
pulses beat,
Praise their God, the Lord Almighty, for the blessings
of the wheat.

Lightly weave the wheaten garland for the brow of
one we love,
With it twine the gracious maple, touch'd with light
from Heaven above,
Crown Our Lady all resplendent with those symbols
of her power,
Wheat and maple softly blending, as her own and
rightful dower ;
Canada reveals new visions, but there's none of all
more sweet
Than the plainsmen busy gleaning 'mid the boundless
fields of wheat.

W. McG.

Within a home, where Peace has often found
A place of rest with all her friends around,
Behold a father—worthiest the name—
With stealthy Death o'ermastering his frame !
Those tender eyes have look'd with pitying gaze
On all the errors 'compassing Life's ways,
They joyed to see a gleam of Heaven's light—
Shall they not see the hidden path aright ?

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Those helping hands that reached to aid Distress,
That ne'er were raised to anger but to bless,
That held a host in Friendship's happy band—
Shall they refrain to take Death's chilly hand?

That noble heart, so full of happy life,
That throb'd with love for children and for wife,
That beat obedient to a Saviour's will—
Shall it repine when He shall say, "Be still!"

No, no! upon that heart from realms above
Now falls the oil of Peace, the balm of Love;
The storms of life are o'er, the billows cease,
And Heaven's haven smiles in sunny peace.

Farewell to thee—thou residue of clay—
Farewell, oh spirit, passed from earth away—
Farewell, dear friend, thy memory shall be
Like to a beacon shining o'er the sea:

A beacon, casting far a lucid light
Across the wave and filling all the night
With gleams of brightness, till the glowing ray
Effulgent shines clear unto perfect day.

TWILIGHT FIELDS.

A quail's clear whistle, tremulous,
With broken beat now floats across
The shadowy mead, all odorous
With trampled grass and bruised moss;

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

A falcon to the white clouds soars,
A squirrel chatters in the tree,
And bees now seek their honeyed stores
From all the flowers that bless the lea.

The cardinal lobelia nods,
Amid the marish weeds, and by
The running stream the golden rods
Nod to the choral harmony.
Of wind and wave. The gossamers,
Seen in the sun's departing ray,
Glimmer like mists around the firs
That bend above the little bay.

Then come, my love, and let us leave
The village din, the dusty road;
Come let us in this haunt of Eve
Pilfer the sweets of Cere's load.
Ere yet the halcyon like a shaft
Of flashing light shall seek his home,
We may of nectar quaff a draught,
As these the twilight fields we roam.

PLOVER MILLS.

A winding road around a hill
Will lead you to an inlet still
Where willows nodding o'er the stream
Scarce dare disturb the lily's dream.
A wooden bridge afar is seen
Amid a mist of summer green,

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

While 'neath the cedars, clear and cool,
Comes bubbling up the drinking-pool;
And when the twilight breezes blow
Athwart the tree-tops, downward go
Along the path the quiet cows,
To drink below the scented boughs.
Red-cherry with her yellow horns,
Breaks thro' a hedge of scatter'd thorns;
While Daisy follows Brindle down
O'er tangl'd roots and beech leaves brown.
The unseen hand of Time casts o'er
The mellow sky a starry shower;
And heralded by Eurus bold,
And crowned with beauties manifold,
Queen Dian mounts her skyey throne ;
The bee across the mead has flown;
The halcyon has found his cave,
The eglantine forgets to crave
Apollo's kisses, and the bats
Reel in the shadows o'er the flats
Like wither'd leaves from smitten oak;
Sweet Day in Night's enduskéd cloak
Enwrapped, implores the silent queen
For glowing smile and opal sheen,
And all the blessings of the dawn
Once more to be around her drawn,
While ceaselessly between the steeps
The river to its far rest creeps.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

TO J. D.

My friend, the day has been when we
Have met and mus'd the hours away
Beneath a broad-leav'd linden-tree
That bends above the bay ;
That hour has fled, the tree is dead,
The hills are brown, the skies are gray,
And yet I turn with mem'ry back
To live once more that day.

Within my heart a welcome home
I keep for many a happy hour
As dwells within the honey-comb
The nectar of the flower ;
And like the bees, that in the blast
Bethink them of their honey'd store,
I, wearied, turn and from the past
Draw pleasure evermore.

How glow'd the columbine beneath
The cedar on the rugged hill !
How fair the creeper hung a wreath
Above the silver rill !
The harebell in her beauty drest
Bow'd gracefully to every breeze,
And pleasures sang within my breast
Like birds among the trees.

Forgiving Time, we caught the sound
That trembled from his eagle-flight,
And framing there an idyl, found
A tune to fit it right ;

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

The fly that glittered on the leaf,
The hawk that sought the limpid sky,
Had ne'er a thought the day was brief,
And why should you or I?

And so, although the day has fled,
And brown the hills and gray the skies,
And all may see the linden dead,
Yet memory never dies.
So over all the hills of Time
The joys uplift for me to-day,
And now I put the thoughts in rhyme
That will not pass away.

WHEN IT CLEARS OFF CLOUDY.

O! Jiram Green he'd ey'd ther skies
Until he wus reckon'd weather-wise,
And no new turn gave him a surprise
For Jiram allus allow'd he
Mos' gen'ally noticed you were apt ter fin'
When the rain-clouds broke their big combine,
Then slack'd down slow 'twas a cheerin' sign,
Ef it clear'd off cloudy.

On the other hand, so Jiram sed,
Ef it clear'd off clear, an' the sun jus' shed
A steady glare—'ith a shake o' the head,
The cautious Jiram allow'd he
Mos' gen'ally look'd for a cuttin' frost,
With likely es not the barley lost,
'Cep' it darken'd down an' up an' acrost,
An' so clear'd off cloudy.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

An' the rule holds true in the most of things,
From the fates of beggars to those of kings ;
Ef ther troubles fled with a flash of wings
 Why then, ol' Jiram allow'd he
Most allus remark'd the 'dazzlin' sun
Ov a sudden joy made the hot blood run
'Gin an iceberg sure, when the day was done,
 Unless it clear'd off cloudy.

Firs' creep, 'en walk, 'en run, 'en fly—
On a rainbow-bridge keep yer weather eye—
Don't fret ef a cloud comes over yer sky—
 'Twas thus ol' Jiram allow'd he
Mos' gen'ally allus found ther spell
Come 'round et laßt thet held on—well,
So long thet its charms no words could tell,
 'Cause it clear'd off cloudy.

DEATH AND THE MOONLIGHT.

Sir Andrew Clarke said Lord Tennyson's death was the most glorious he had ever seen. There was no artificial light in the chamber, but a flood of moonlight poured through a Western window, and fell across the bed on which the dying poet lay. All was silent save the requiem played by the winds upon the trees surrounding the house.

—Midnight 5th Oct., 1892.

The laurel glimmers in the moonlight pale,
The autumn winds sob low ;
O'er one-half earth on pinions torn and frail
Weird shadows come and go.

They hurry through the halls of Camelot,
They o'er the sea reeds sweep,
Flying the moonbeams, down the crags, distraught
They into caverns creep.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Yet with her floods of light fast shimmering down
Do all Diana can,
There lurks beneath the laurel's silver crown
"The Shadow fear'd of man."

One sees that looming phantom and the while
The watchers watch his face,
An inner sunshine issues in a smile
That glorifies the place.

Death's but Life's shadow. Wherefore should he fear?
The key-hand at the door
Of pent-up temple brings the presence cheer,
By bringing light once more.

The soul that flesh-bound sweeps beyond a star
Knows peace, but tarries here—
O, sweet to learn earth's own may soar so far,
Or Heaven's stoop so near!

Immortal minstrel of all courtesy,
Knight peerless, good it were
That each and all of such fair end might be
A true interpreter.

We, blind, the truth may happily surmise,
And down the moonbeam pale,
As to one pure knight be knew of, 'fore his eyes
Perchance the Holy Grail

Appear'd at last—an earnest of the Dawn—
A promise that the way
Lay ready for his feet, and leading on
To pure and perfect Day.



THE FARMER'S JUBILEE.

This year of grace a Lady old,
With sweet and stately mien,
Mow'd 'mongst her people manifold,
Who cried—"The Queen! The Queen!
May Heaven bless her!"—till it roll'd—
The anthem of the free—
And kindred all
Took up the call
To crown her Jubilee.
Then we of Canada, with pride,
Drew closer 'round the throne,
To meet the kin from far and wide,
Where'er the flag is flown ;

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEM

And ranging near Britannia's side,
How narrow seem'd the sea!—
All thine was mine,
All mine was thine,
And *ours* the Jubilee!

Now let me sing a simple strain
Of one in lowly guise,
Who wrought to make this broad domain
Smile under changing skies,
Throughout Victoria's glorious reign,
Till now the fruits we see—
A nation great—
To celebrate
The Farmer's Jubilee.

A backward look through sixty years—
Behold a shanty lone—
A beaver-meadow with the spears
Of brown sedge overgrown—
A forest whence the woodman hears
The wolves howl hungrily—
There only dreams
Could give him gleams
Of far-off Jubilee.

Now from his mansion o'er the hill,
He hears the shrep's low bleat,
Or down the valley, near the mill,
He sees the growing wheat ;

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

The Christmas chimes peal out "good-will"
To all on earth that be,
The Christ above
Makes bright with love
The Farmer's Jubilee.

No glittering squadrons clatter by,
For him no cannon roar,
Yet there is that beneath the sky
Has power to please him more :—
The Iron Horse that strives to fly
To lade the ships for sea,
His Klondyke farm,
His own right arm,
Make up his Jubilee.



ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

LA TRANCHEE.

(The old French name for the Canadian Thames.)

Babbling o'er each bar of stone
In a sylvan undertone
Slips La Tranchee River ;
Sweetly, lighty flowing
To its far home going,
Reaching never
That fair rest for which 'tis yearning,
Softly 'round each island turning,
Sometimes laughing, sometimes mourning,
Ever, ever
Down the valley,
Treading silver mazes, musically
Moves La Tranchee River.

Nymphs there may be 'mong the reeds,
Naiads wearing jewel weeds,
Dryads setting oak leaves' light a-shiver ;
Yet from mortal eyes they keep
Ever hid, and if they creep
From their coverts 'tis to lull asleep
Sweet La Tranchee River ;
And some soft midsummer night,
The pure moon in vesture white,
Creeping, oh ! so still,
Lightly 'round the quiet hill
Where the aspens quiver,
May be given glimmering view
Of that airy, classic crew
Nigh La Tranchee River.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Doth Titania with her fays
Ever troop along the braes,
 Bearing lucent dewes for ladies' tresses,
 With which the glad June dresses
The long La Tranchee shore?
 Speak the fire-fly well, he will
Haply show thee as he lights
Wild-wood cloisters in the nights,
 When the clouds enfold the hill
And the near-by Whip-poor-will
 Makes the dim moths shiver
As they flutter 'round the linden's honey'd store,
 When he chants his curious vespers o'er and o'er
 Sweet La Tranchee River.

Sure the twilight heron hears
 Ariettas rising from the shallows,—
 After caught and copied by the swallows,
As a greeting to the summer Morning Sun,
That would gladden human ears,
 That would set the heart a-quiver
To do honor to that wild, ethereal one,
 That being fresh and fair,
 Not of water, earth or air,
But the life, the soul, the spirit that forever
 Fills the valley lone
 With a beauty all their own
Near, too near, to find it,
Far, too far, to bind it,
 Sorrow soother, pleasure giver,
Sitting like a queen upon a throne,
 By La Tranchee River.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS



CANADA, THE LAND WE LOVE.

**O fair Dominion! Yule-tide weather!
Again together, a people free,
On Love's quick pinion, thanks send Heaven
For blessings given them and thee.**

**Fair land and fertile, harvest-laden,
Dear land of Aiden, all lands above,
Instead of myrtle, maples flourish,
Charm, shield and nourish the land we love.**

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Through yon hoar woodland, quickly changing,
Our king is ranging—the pioneer—
All o'er that good land, once wild prairie,
Toil—our best fairy—spreadeth cheer.

Toil, still uplifting and adoring
With blush o' morning, lands erstwhile lone :
The dark cloud rifting! Man seeks Duty,
Finding Beauty! Life, a rose—new-blown!

Nor frowning mountain yet may stay him,
Nor flood affray him, nor sullen cold,
Till shines the fountain, shedding honor,
Fame, wealth, upon her—the land of gold.

Toil taps the royal fount of honor,
Dawn bursts upon her, her flocks increase ;
Strong, free and loyal, upward-tending,
Still ascending sunny paths of peace.

Yet quick a thrilling call comes stealing,
Stern stress revealing beyond the wave :
We answer willing "For sake o' mother
We give, oh, brother! our best—the brave."

May they returning bring home glory
To brighten story, good work, well done :
Their Queen is yearning (Heaven smile upon her!)
For peace with honor—an Empire, *one*.

Godspeed the flying to this Dominion
On snowy pinion of that holy dove
Of Peace undying, to leave us never,
But to bless forever the land we love.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

THE PENDULUM OF LIFE.

An owl in an elm broods sad and grim,
With hunger her owlets cry,
As the eerie light of the moon grows dim
And the white morn draweth nigh.

An old gray mouse with her children three
In her nest, all under the dew,
Sleeps in peace, at the foot of the tree,
As if sorrow she never knew.

Through the dusky light of the dawn
Two soft wings fan the grass ;
A swoop—a thud—a beak all blood—
And the hours unheeding pass.

Lo now at the foot of the tree
Falls a shade from the nest above,
Where the sun's rays now the owl may see
Asleep like a brooding dove.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

Beyond the shades of Time we see
A shepherd-lad from Arcady ;
Apollo gave the youth a reed,
Fair Venus met him on a mead,
And piloted the singer o'er
The classic seas to Britain's shore,
And now he wanders on the green
With Spenser and the Fairie Queen.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

At tilt of tourney next we see
A noble knight of high degree ;
The vestal flame that lights his eyes,
Burns, mounts and melts in sapphire skies ;
The prince of all that gallant rout,
He yet nor hears the herald's shout,
Nor turns to take the daunting glove,
For Stella keeps the Court of Love.

See from that dusky cloud of war
A plume drop like a falling star
Down to the depth of that dark sea—
Ah, stricken soldier ! Arcady
To-day will gain, and Britain lose
A hero's soul ; the ghastly dews
That fall at eve of life e'en now
Fast settle on that smitten brow.

He calls for drink, the draught is brought—
'Tis given him—he tastes it not—
A wounded man with face of pain
Is carried past him on the plain,
Then Sidney says with voice divine
"Thy need is greater yet than mine ;
Take thou the cup, my life is done !"
Thus fair, the goal of Fame he won.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

A WEASEL'S VICTORY.

An eagle flapping o'er a dim ravine,
Watching a weasel on the brown earth creep,
Like Thor's fierce hammer strikes adown the deep,
Clutches the prey, then mounts the heights serene ;
But lo ! the lithe beast turns from ravin keen,
And as they near the topmost, tow'ring steep,
Grips sharp the royal neck and checks the sweep
Of those imperial wings. The eyrie, lean
Of foray, glimmers in the mother's eyes—
A weary waft—the rock is won—her brood
Clamours the air, then death shuts out the skies;
Abysmally she falls, while hot with blood
The other sniffs the nest : yet shall no more
A weasel seek the vale—an eagle soar.

MY LOVE'S BREATH.

O violet erst nourish'd in the vale
Of Avon, where in shining days of old
The calm-ey'd, high-brow'd, great-heart Shakespeare
stroll'd.
Lo, as I greet thee close, my powers fail
To utter in men's ears the antique tale
Thy soul is pouring thro' my painéd mould—
(Too coarse a clay thy subtle sweets to hold,—
Too fine to mure them in such narrow pale)
I met my Love, I sought thee, when I met
Thee, better did I know my odorate Love ;
Her breath was thine, thine hers, and closer yet
Both bound me to the higher life—I strove
To mix with thee, O Love ! O violet !
My better self with all the Good above.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

THE LOSS OF THE WARSHIP VICTORIA.

BRITANNIA'S LAMENT.

Above the limpid wave
That laps the Syrian shore,
Britannia mourns her brave
Sea sons who nevermore
Shall gather with the royal fleet
In joyance 'round her sea-kist feet.

Beside their silent guns,
Low on the old sea floor.
Resteth full well her gallant ones
In peace forever more,
While salty tears within her eyes
From sorrow's bitter fountain rise.

"For me the ties you broke
That bound to England's shore,
For me, oh, chosen hearts of oak,
My colors far, you bore.
For me you kept beside your guns
Despite of death,—my trusty ones.

No more to range the deep
When sullen billows roar!
No more at duty's call to leap,
Ah, never, nevermore,
To wake the sleeping thunders of
The guns your hearts had learn'd to love!

For this my soul doth yearn,
My breast is stricken sore,

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

I still must look for your return
Though you return no more,
Must wait, must watch across the foam
For my sea-rovers turning home.
Yet God's above, my own ;
His word is wafted o'er
The Syrian seas from Lebanon
That shall at last restore
Each soul to those they love, when He
Shall roll away the cruel sea.

A MILKING SONG.

Along the path beside the eglantine
And at his heels old Rover,
Robin merrily moves where browse the kine
Amid the sweet, white clover,
At the dim wood-edge, the strawberries shine
Set in many a tangle.
From the swamp rings the chime o' the milking time,
The veery clingle-clangle,
High then, Cherry !
Brindle, trudge along !
Bell in echo answers
Back the veery's song.
Across the ripples o' lush green oats
The meadow larks are calling.
A thin cloud over the new moon floats,
The early dews are falling,

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

But Robin stays not to count the stars
That lightly gild the heaven;
For see! he's letting down the bars
And home the cows are driven.
There no longer linger
Roan wi' the white face;
Daisy, dear, remember
The old milking place.

Who is tripping in twilight along the lane
What round her kirtle clinging?
Lilting o' love in a witching strain,
'Tis Marion softly singing,
With fingers deft she flingeth the gate
Wide open to the herd,
And Robin is paid by the milking maid
With a smile and a kind, kind word.

Gentle then, good Brindle,
Yield your milk to me,
So, so, Cherry, spare your best
To serve for Robin's tea.

OLD IRELAND DEAR.

(Written on returning from a visit to the Emerald Isle.)

Old Ireland dear, the day shall be
(That I return to seek my home)
When all in vain I'll look for thee
Beyond the tossing foam.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Then shall I, musing o'er the hours
I've spent within thy borders green,
Pine sadly for thy birds and flowers,
Soft airs and skies serene.

The shining bough, the heather hill,
The blacken'd moss, the castle old ;
The ivied church, the water mill,
The gray rocks grim and cold.

The mead, the edge, the fairy lane,
The stone well 'neath the sycamore ;
Wild roses clust'ring 'round the pane,
Laburnums 'round the door.

Soft voices, friendly palms, and all
That's made the time on fast wings flee,
Remembrance shall to me recall
When far beyond the sea.

A NIGHT WI' BURNS.

A cold, cold night—in Canada it fell,
A snow-chok'd path, a man of many years,
Guarding dear life (ah, piteous tale to tell !)
Against the blast with awful doubts and fears,
The threats of Death are ringing in his ears.
Home he has none, and friendless and apart,
What wonder life seems slipping from his heart ?
That awesome night the glittering winter-king
Ruled field and flood, and held the land in thrall ;

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

The north wind, from his cave on icy wing,
Revelled in rage above each hut and hall;
From shrouded swamp the owl was heard to call,
And forth the fox, nigh famished, yet in dread,
Crept from the copse and stole anigh the shed.

By God's good grace, before a farmer's door,
The old man stood, and, trembling, asked to bide
Until the tempest's terror had blown o'er.
The bleak domain, anear his ingle-side;
Nor was the lowly plea for long denied—
A friendly palm, a cheery voice, a chair
Beside the fire, and life again grew fair.

His long life-tale, a strangely tangl'd skein,
Slowly he told, with many a pause the while,
At times there crost his face a wave of pain;
Then haply his good hearers to beguile,
Around his lips there ran a merry smile,
And ever would he sing, or sigh or croon,
Half to himself, "I'm frae the banks o' Doon."

Another hand-shake, Farmer Tom bethought
O' rippling wave, sweet dell and birchèn brae
Where for the first his infant eyes had caught
The joyous light of Life's young dawning day—
"And hast thou heard the Doon sing by the way,
And pluckt the daisy, daughter of the same
That Burns had linkt forever with his name?"

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

"Welcome art thou beside my fire to-night ;
Wild winds may blow, na dread o' them hae we :
Frae far-off skies there fall' a flood o' light
That crowns the hours as merrily they flee :
A frien' o' Burns'! a singer thou maun be ;
Hearken, dear wife and children, to the strain
That calls me back to Ayrshire hills again !"

Full pensively the old man sang the songs
That breathe of liberty's most precious tone,
Ringing anon with bitter human wrongs,
Turning at times to make a plaintive moan,
Yet hovering longest 'round Love's flowery throne,
Dropping a ray of light—a flash of flame—
A gem to deck the diadem of Fame.

"And once," the stranger said, "this side the sea,
The steel-gray sea that lifts its frivolous foam,
I, musing long on Robert Burns, ah me !
Nurs'd in my heart sweet thoughts of him and
home,
Which, taking root, go with me as I roam,
A simple song outwelling from a heart
That cannot from its first dear love depart."

SONG.

His form is in Scotland, com-mingling with clay ;
His spirit shines bright with the brightness of day,
While the daisy looks up to the dew-dropping sky,
While the billow rolls over the sea,
While the sweet thrush sings and the winds go by
The memory of Burns shall be.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

His form is in Scotland, com-mingling with clay,
His name o'er the heart of mankind holds sway,
While a man remembers his native land,
While a soul still yearns to be free,
While love and sweet youth walk hand in hand
The memory of Burns shall be."

A FAREWELL

Oh, I must tempt the hungry foam
For lands beyond the sea,
And I must leave my Irish home
Delightful though it be!
So I upon this lonely day
Send forth a bitter cry,
To think that Fate can make me say,
"Old Ireland, dear, good-by!"

How oft along thy shining rills,
With lightsome step I've stray'd;
How oft among thy bright, green hills,
A merry child I've play'd!
And now a weight is at my heart,
A salt tear in mine eye,
The hour is near, I must depart,
"Old Ireland, dear, good-by!"

Oh, other lands may promise fair,
But ah! the heartless sea
Shall loom like Fate forever there
Between my home and me!

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

When this I muse on, thro' my breast
Upwells a choking sigh,
And sad I say and sore distress'd,
"Old Ireland, dear, good-by!"

Where'er in future years my feet
Through alien fields may roam,
In memory I'll cherish sweet
My early, happy home.
Oh, scenes so dear, so free from care,
Be with me till I die,
Home of my youth, forever fair,
"Old Ireland, dear, good-by!"

TEMPTATION.

THE BREEZE TO THE VIOLET :

"From thy bed 'mid the mosses, sweet flow'ret, arise,
The sun-circled clouds are afloat in the skies,
From yon tall Balm o' Gilead listen and hear
The robin arousing the slumbering year."

Gladly the violet lifted her head
Over the mosses that curtained her bed,
Hearken'd the song of the robin, and heard
A pitiful plaint from the heart-broken bird.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

THE ROBIN :

"Sleep gentle violet, sleep in thy nest,
Murky the clouds are that sail in the west ;
Wait for the joys in the future to be,
Where May in her slumber is dreaming of thee."

THE BREEZE :

"Come to me, violet—violet, come ;
Here 'neath the willows I've built thee a home ;
Here will I bless thee with balmiest air,
Love thee, caress thee, and make thee my care."

THE ROBIN :

"Stay, I emlore thee, dear violet, stay,
Chill is the dark night, and dreary the day ;
I will depart to return with the May,
So stay in thy cozy nest, violet, stay !"

THE BREEZE :

"Come, pretty violet ; scatter the gloom
By the smile of thy beauty, the breath of thy bloom ;
All the flowers of the forest that grow at thy side
Shall own thee their empress, their joy and their
pride !"

Soon the poor violet bloom'd in the dell—
Soon on her beauty the blighting frost fell ;
And when the bright robin came back with the May,
The wan little blossom lay cold on the clay.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

SIMON.

The honey of Hybla clogs his tongue,
His breath is a lure to the bee,
He scatters fresh roses for old and young,
With the world he is sure to agree ;
 Yet sweet as he is,
 And complete as he is,
We often own to ourselves alone,
That too sweet to be wholesome is he.

'Tis a shame to dream of a fault or a flaw
To be found where no fault you can see,
Yet a man standing close 'neath the shield of the law
May stab to the heart equity ;
 So right as he is,
 And bright as he is,
We often own to ourselves alone,
That too good to be righteous is he.

That he's human at all we never were sure,
For from sin he avers he is free,
And lies told by others he cannot endure
Unless good to himself they may be :
 Yet fine as he is,
 Benign as he is,
We often own to ourselves alone,
That too fine for a workaday world is he.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Yet could we the lights and shadows and all
Through Simon's own spectacles see,
We might say he was right, and honestly call
Him as near to perfection as we ;
Who complain without cause
Of the man without flaws,
While we might own to ourselves alone,
That Simon is human and so are we.

REASON VERSUS LOVE.

"Chopping !—Tom, man, can't you feel
'Tis a danger to your broken wrist?"

"Yes, I feel it, but a dollar
From my purse would soon be missed,
And besides, sir, there's a bride, sir,
(Oh, I know whereof I speak),
And I wait no longer for my heart is stronger
Than a broken bone is weak."

"Good man Tom, the heart's not all, sir,
Heart needs hand and head ;
Haste is folly, often patience
Swifter to fair end has sped."

"But the lassie, bonnie Cassie—
You know not the one I seek—
She is willing, she is waiting,
And we marry Easter week."

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

"There is need for care, dear fellow,
Time may weave a hidden snare ;
Grim the skies may grow and dreary,
And some hour spring up despair"—

"Be all these things as they may, sir,
I shall neither pine nor peak,
If dear Cassie, my own lassie,
Marries me in Easter week."

"But, my man, in all things Reason
Should your guide and helper be"—

"Reason's good, but there's another
Better rule than that for me—
That is Love—the sure-foot fellow—
He is all the guide I seek ;
Care says 'tarry'—love says 'marry,'
And we marry Easter week."

AT THE RAILWAY STATION, LONDON.

ONE SPEAKS :

Part where? Ah! yes, it must be!
Old Time sweeps us on! Hark the bell!
"All aboard for the east." Marjorie,
Is it thus that we bid farewell?
Dost remember the days, long ago,
When we in the murmurous dell
Dreamt of parting, yet never could know
How our lips would utter farewell?

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

There shrieks the whistle now. Hark!
Listen! the feverish jar
Of many feet hurrying, dark
Comes an ominous mist from afar,
Enfolding my life with a cloud—
A cloud that no hope can dispel;
So here in the midst of the crowd
I leave thee, my lost one—farewell!

ANOTHER SPEAKS.

"Train due in ten minutes." How slow
Creeps old time! Will it come?
Yes, there starts the smoke, see it grow!
Hark to the rush and the hum
Of wheels swiftly speeding! Now here
Is mine, never again to roam,
Welcome, my darling, with kindest cheer
Welcome home! welcome home!

Thou art weary, my dear, yet the rest
Is nigh thee; now listen me sweet,
Henceforth together caress'd
By joy, we will oftentimes meet
At eve, 'neath the star-dotted sky,
That bends o'er the murmurous dell;
And there shall we vow, thou and I,
Never to speak of farewell.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

GEORGIE.

With joyful heart he met the flying hours
That bear the blossoms—Innocence and Truth—
With happy thought he pluck'd the blessed flowers
And with them crown'd his youth.

Whether up hill he toiled or sought the dale,
Smiling he met the world at ev'ry turn,
Learning the lessons, many older, fail
With all their years to learn.

Oft pausing in his play, he broke the bars
That bind to earth, and musing, spent his time
In thoughts about the skies—the golden stars—
The universe sublime.

The sun of Hope had risen high for him ;
He followed glad where wisdom led the way ;
Till suddenly the firmament grew dim,
And shadows fill'd his day.

Awhile life lingered 'tween his praying lips,
Then left the dwelling built of mortal clay ;
Awhile he darkling passed through Death's eclipse :
Then Heaven's eternal day

Broke far beyond the stars, and he was there
With Him who is the Lord of Love and Light
Forever safe, where down the valleys fair
The angels walk in white.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

EVA.

Great sorrow seized us when our dear one lay
Sick unto death upon her moaning bed,
Tears dropp'd like rain when we were forced to say—
“Our little Eva 's dead.”
The shadows gathered into darkness deep,
Yet folded in the everlasting arms,
She reach'd the place where sweetly she might sleep
Safe from the world's alarms.
Jesus had need of her, and so came He,
Soft as a ray of light to our sad door,
Beyond the stars he carried her, where she
Shall dwell forevermore.
There where the river of life flows softly past
The Heavenly Throne all crown'd with purest light,
Where, ranging up and down the valleys vast,
The angels walk in white.
When we remember this, with lowly head
We turn to Him who pities and forgives,
And say “Praise God, not dead, oh no, not dead !”
Our little Eva lives !
Lives in the light that is the joy of all,
Lives with the Lord, Oh let us strive for this !
Lives where no pain can enter, or tear fall,
Lives in eternal bliss.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

ROBERT BURNS.

Across the hills of Time behold
In clearest guise, a manly form
That careless, fearless, strong and bold,
Walks on in sun and storm.

We see him in the lordly hall
Beneath the scented birch's bough ;
Upon the lea, where flowers call,
Behind the lowly plough.

And walk where e'er he will, the same
Brave gait he ever keeps ; nor ever stays
To doff his bonnet to a name,
Or stoop to gather praise.

A trembling daisy, dying, turns
A glance that meets his eagle-eye ;
That glance within his bosom burns—
The flower shall never die.

He meets a man of broken heart—
His own is saddened with the tale—
He blunts the point of Sorrow's dart
And stills the poor man's wail.

Dark Error fronts him on the way ;
A lusty arm that levels walls
Is bared before the foe of Day
Who, shrinking, fears and falls.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Fair Freedom, from her craggy seat,
Drops laurels from her loosened hand,
And Wisdom from her dim retreat
Waiks up and down the land.

Then merrily he laughs and moves
Right onward to his lofty goal.
He meets a maid ; at once he loves
And Love illumes his soul.

Yet, on his happiest moments break
The bigot sneer, the silly scorn ;
He many a taunt is forced to take,
Nor is it always borne.

As 'mid the ice the bubbling spring,
Choked by the dirt that fain would drown,
Afar the rotten mass will fling,
Then, sobbing, settle down ;

So, when the filth of Hate and Wrong
Is heaped upon his rugged breast,
Out gush the fiery founts of song
And then his soul has rest.

He sings the joys, the hopes, the fears
That beat in all the breasts around ;
The startled world the music hears
Enraptured at the sound.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

His muse—an eagle seeks the sky—
Or in the vale a tender dove,
On gentle pinion, flutters nigh
The flowery throne of Love.

In far-off lands, thro' his renown,
The heather-bell a-gaily blows—
Ayr, rippling through his rhymes, adown
Full many a valley flows.

RELENTLESS.

Lizard in the water
Happy as a king,
Never thinks of coming out
To hear the robin sing.

Robin in the hazel,
Singing all alone,
Cares not for the lizard
Underneath the stone.

Lo, a hungry heron
Wades the sandy shore
Erstwhile happy lizard
Happy now no more.

Lo, a hungry falcon
Stoops a pointed wing ;
Never more the robin
Merrily shall sing.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

COLUMBINES.

Midway up the face of yon rough steep,
Where antler'd sumachs bear the crimson cone,
Where mosses, patch with green each stepping stone,
Where hazels cluster and where cedars sweep
Athwart the ledge their shadows dark and deep
Wild Columbines are wont to bloom alone—
To all the world save bees and I unknown—
From all the flowers content afar to keep,
So that when Morning gilds their golden bells
The bees may flit along the summer air
Across the river, up the hillside, where
The nectar they distil for silver cells
Is shining in the cup of that fair flower
I wander far to find in twilight hour.

AN AUGUST EVENING.

An August even fills the glade
With faintest earnest of the Night,
The river rolls in filmy shade
The hills are crowned with rosy light;
Far down the South, in rich array,
Tall cliffs of clouds, by sunlight kist—
A gift of gold and amethyst.
Along the slope the yellow wheat
Is rippled by the forest breeze,
The rapids gurgle low and sweet,
The Shadows deepen round the trees;
The night-hawks swoop adown the strath,
While 'neath the cedars, clear and cool,
The cows, sweet-breath'd, pass down the path
That leads them to the drinking-pool.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

DISCONTENT.

One time a rose upon a rocky height
Saw low adown the dale a lily fair,
With beauty bloom in May's divinest air,
Shedding on all around a tender light
Of purity, as shines in murkiest night
A star above a desert bleak and bare.
Yet in the lily's heart a wan Despair
'Gan reign and therewith did her beauty blight.
For, discontented with her lot, she sighed
All for the freedom of the rose above,
Who, now being humbled from his haughty pride,
For quiet of the dale expressed his love!
Thus, in men's hearts, creeps Discontent, whereof
Grows weariness, of which have many died.

INDIAN SUMMER.

Sweet Summer, flying to the South, afraid
Of hasting Autumn, said a sad farewell
To all the flowers that bloomed within the dell,
To all the trees that grew within the glade—
That time in flush of beauty, sweet-arrayed,
The weeping flowers their sorrows then 'gan tell
The trees bemoaned that on their leaves now fell
The wrath of Autumn; sadly Summer stayed
Her flight; returning to her weary Love
She fought with Autumn in the mazy mood;
To stay the tyrant's arm she wildly strove.
A truce was called; both back returned and blood
Stained wide the flowers below—the leaves above—
And Indian Summer reigned in quietude.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

ON THE SEA SHORE.

At eventide a silver mist up-roll'd
Afar, above the swelling, curling crest
That flowed in peace into the smiling West,
Where passing sunbeams turn'd the mist to gold ;
And billows, flowing far, gave manifold
Sweet sounds that lull'd the listener to rest.
Yet nearer, by the darkness deep opprest,
The waves rushed seething up the cavern cold.
And wild the winds shrieked, as they swept anigh—
Thus seem the sights and sounds of human life.
Nearby is naught but shadows, sin and strife,
Dark'ning with discord all the Present sky,
Whilst far the Future days look bright and seems
Their music like the sounds of maidens' dreams.

TRIFLES.

A lily from a clod looks up
To Heaven, and Heaven fills her cup.
A daisy dies, yet dying earns
A glance of love from Robert Burns.
One ray of light has pierc'd a pine
And cheer'd a drooping Columbine.
A breeze has brush'd a pallid face
And fill'd the falling heart with grace.
A star has shone across the sea,
Till, past the rock, the boat went free.
A word of comfort, like a seed,
Has grown a harvest great indeed.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

THE BUTCHER-BIRDS.

In a shaggy oak at the foot of the lane
Two Butcher-Birds have built a nest
Of thorns and wool—a tangled skein
That, rough to the world, is soft to the breast.

And there when the earliest blink of dawn
Turns the green-leav'd oak to a shining tower
The birds o'er the dew have come and gone
For quest of food from hour to hour.

O, the robin that sang to his brood last night
This morn will bemoan his brood all dead,
And the mouse that found in her home delight
Now finds black ruin there instead.

And the hot sun comes and the brown bee hums
And the wind blows over the lea,
And the Butcher-Birds thro' the summer day
Live a life of love in the old oak tree.

TO M.

In the morn when o'er the meadow,
Like a very fount of song,
Floats the Bobolink with music
"Merry as the day is long,"
When from out the empyrean
Bright Apollo pours his ray

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

On the lindens by the river
And the shells on shallows gray—
All alone with joy I wander
Where thy beauty used to be,
And the smiles of all around me
Call up images of thee.

When the evening wraps her mantle
'Round the hawthorn in the dell,
When the whippoorwills around me
Tales of joy and sorrow tell,
When Diana, in the gloaming,
Sheds her witchery of light
On the rapids in the valley
And the poplars on the height—
All alone with joy I wander
Where thy beauty used to be
And the smiles of all around me
Call up images of thee.

When the midnight folds the weary
In the arms of gentle sleep
Visions of thy gladsome beauty
Into every landscape creep—
On the hill-top, down the valley,
O'er the foot-path, in the glen,
Into every place thou hast been :
Comest thou to me again—
So in phantasy I wander
Where thy beauty used to be
And the smiles on all around me
Call up images of thee.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

THE BOBOLINK.

The sunlight sheen on meadow bloom is thrown,
The birch-leaves stir beneath the breath of June,
The laughing shallows of the river croon
An arietta o'er each bar of stone,
While thick amid the linden-flowers are sown
The bees that drowse away the hours of noon—
Now sweet and clear, now bold as Gothic-rune,
Now faint, as if by far-off breezes blown
Down colonnades of cedars cool and dim,
The song of Bobolink is borne to me
Across the meadows and the river-rim.
Oh, bird ! could poet write or painter limn
This summer scene, in truth, there yet would be
The lack of that sweet song that flows from thee.

TO MOTHER ACROSS THE SEA.

O, Mother, it's no so bonny asailing o'er the sea,
Yet I wish and I wish I were back again
To my Irish home and thee ;
For I am sick of the sea, Mother,
And I am sick of the foam,
And fain and fain would I be, Mother,
For good and all at home.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Oh, Mother, when night came stealing down
Along the Irish shore
I look'd and look'd again, Mother,
Till I could look no more,
For a mist came over my eyes, Mother,
And a mist came over the sea,
And so with a sigh and a sad good-bye,
I took farewell of thee.

And now am I in a foreign land,
And sad to my heart, it seems,
That thy face I cannot see, Mother,
Save during all my dreams.
But, Mother dear, remember me
Whenever thou kneel'st to pray,
And I shall still remember thee
Though far enough away.

MATTY.

'Mid mint and crisp cresses,
With lithe drooping tresses,
With feet like a fairy's and eyes like a fawn ;
With lips like a cherry,
With smile bright and merry,
Behold bonny Matty, the queen of the Dawn.
Yet cold as the flint that
She spurns in the glint that

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Reflects from her eyes when she looks upon me,
O, Matty, remember
I am but an ember
That smoulders to ashes without breath from thee.

Then breathe though but lowly
Before I shall wholly
Be lost in the darkness of utter despair ;
One breath from thy bosom
Shall brighten to blossom
My life that is crost with the shadow of care.

O, WHERE AND WHEN SHALL WE MEET ?

O, where and when shall we meet,
And what shall my tongue declare ?
Shall you hear my hot heart beat,
Shall your face be yet so fair ?
Still light as the elfin fay's your feet,
Still bright as the gold your hair.

O, Matty, I hear in a dream
The wee river that runs by your door,—
Then, sudden, instead of the stream
I hear the ocean roar,—
And a wild voice over the billows scream
We shall meet—ah ! nevermore !

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Yet I cannot believe it, dear,
And I cannot all despair,—
For at times I still may hear,
In a tone that would deaden care,
The voice of a maiden carol clear—
We shall meet, but when or where?

WHEN CHRISTMAS HALTS BY THE WAY.

No merry bells, save blue-jay calls,
Are rung at the break of day
Around the lowly shanty-walls,
Half hid in the hollow gray,
To rouse the woodman's children four
From their rustic couch in the forest hoar,
When Christmas halts by the way.

No cultured prima donna rare
Has a word to sing or say,
The only song on the early air
Is a cheery roundelay,
By a gray-dressed, black-capp'd chickadee,
From the sunny side of a cedar tree,
When Christmas halts by the way.

No cards, embossed in green and gold,
With wreathed verses stray—
To the humble door of the dwelling old

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Where the little children play ;
But a tinted leaf from the tangled brake,
They in the stead of all these take,
When Christmas halts by the way.

No mellow organ-notes arise
For them on this holy day,
As they walk beneath the snowy skies
Or kneel by the hearth to pray ;
Yet they hearken, hush'd, to the piping lines
The north-wind plays among the pines,
When Christmas halts by the way.

No clap of the hand in light applause
From the queen of fashion gay,
Greet thou who scorn the galling laws
She would upon them lay ;
But a father's smile and a mother's kiss
Draw them to the very brink of bliss,
When Christmas halts by the way.

O, some great gifts may linger long,
And some refuse to stay,
Some lure us far on the road to wrong,
Then turn to common clay ;
But Nature's voice and Love's right hand,
Bring the dearest gifts in all the land,
When Christmas halts by the way.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

MAPLE LANE.

A bit of Eden, springing green,
Along the dusty way
"Fit home for love"—the fairy queen
Titania might say
Such must of Maple Lane be said
When Mattie comes to call
The cattle to the milking-shed
As early shadows fall
"Tirra, lirra!" now oh, robin,
Learn some new refrain.
Light as breeze the lily tilting
Mark young Mattie with her liting,
Thrilling Maple Lane.

A joy unfelt before is here,
A sense of something won
Not from the bird-song far or near,
Not from the setting sun,
Not from the balm-dew streams this grace
With peace akin to pain,
But 'tis that one sweet human face
Draws love to Maple Lane.
"Clingle-Clangle!" ah you veery—
Broken seems your strain,
Since a carol coming after
Mellow peals of airy laughter
Rang through Maple Lane.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

All you who follow fleeting shows
Troop down the dusty way,
Fair quittance 'tween us I propose
Till Mattie says me "nay";
Yon primrose-flower make sweet the hour
That brings the lassie nigh,
Yon star above grant me her love,
And let the world go by.
Music breathe on empyrean!
Earth take up the strain
Mattie's word is this—no other—
We're to walk with one another
Down Life's Maple Lane.

LEAR'S LAMENT FOR HIS FOOL

Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee.....
And my poor fool is hanged."—Lear.

The saddest word my ears have heard
In all my days of dool—
Like a hero's sigh or a sick bird's cry—
Is Lear's lament for his fool.
In his utter strait this potentate,
Without a realm to rule,
For a time forgot his own sad lot
To speak of his dear dead fool.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Cordelia lay like a hawthorn spray,
Fast with'ring 'gainst his heart ;
Lag-footed Death still spared his breath,
Withholding long his dart.
And Hope and Despair flew down the air ;
Still, even when Fortune's tool,
There yet was a tear in desolate Lear
For an absent friend—his fool.
O love still lives for love forgives ;
Love all but love forgets
The bitter wit—that rapier hit—
No more his sick heart frets.
So one thing true this poor perdu
Has taught in life's rude school—
Though hard the lot there should be a thought
For a friend, yes even a fool.

A TRAMP.

Died Biddulph, March —, 1889.

Stealing from its house of clay,
Life immortal slips away,
On the journey all must go
To what dwelling none may know.
Just a tramp that underground
Takes a good long sleep and sound,
Just an eyesore out of sight
Leaving the horizon bright.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

Not a flag to half-mast falls,
Not a bell in dolor calls,
Haply not a tear is shed,
When the world hears Mike is dead.

Is it then a black disgrace
That the bleak winds scarr'd his face,
That the thorns caught at his coat
And adversity him smote ?

Still a kind one here and there
Kept the wanderer with care ;
Sent him, grumbling thanks, away,
Sooth'd him on his dying day.

Yet what matters it to Mike ?
Bane or blessing's all alike ;
Jeering word or closed door
Surely trouble him no more.

For, 'tis likely, shuffling through
Winter drift and summer dew,
Seeking shelter, begging food,
Mike was scarcely understood.

But he's gone where he may tell
All his story through and—well,
Christ in Heaven may call him good,
When he's fully understood.



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



1.4

1.5

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10



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

IN MEMORIAM.

Amid a sad earth's dust and din
A flower of innocence she grew
Set in the soil of earthly sin,
Yet bath'd with heavenly dew.

Behold this bud unfold to greet
The blessing of an early sun,
Live life and pass through death complete
Before the day is done.

The balmy breeze, tempestuous rain,
Or threat of frost, alike will prove
That flower to hold in spite of pain
A Soul of living love.

Such have we here in very truth
The dearest flower on Flora's page,
A wreath to crown the brow of youth
And cheer the heart of age.

A rose was Maggie in her time,
A violet of scented breath,
A morning glory in her prime,
A lily in her death.

Ah ! who has nurs'd with tender care
Such blossom thro' its little day,
Can calmly see Death come and bear
Root, branch and all, away ?

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

ERIN.

Fair Erin, alannah, with heart-felt emotion,
I saw thee arise in a mist from the ocean.
With joy I beheld thee, the dearer the rarer,
With joy I beheld thee, the nearer the fairer,
I twined thy wild roses and vetches together,
I watch'd the pewee sailing over the heather,
I crept 'neath the hedge when the soft rain was
 falling,
I stood on the stile when the corn-crake was
 calling,
From the cross of Ardboe to the lovely Rostrevor,
From the lofty Shingallan to Gortigal river,
I stray'd while the summer, array'd in her glory,
With fervor recounted to me her sweet story
Of thee, fairest island—and now by thy mountains
Thy loanin', thy river, thy valley and fountains
By the shamrock below—and the brown lark
 above thee
Dear, and dear as the heart in my bosom, I love thee.

ROBERT ELLIOTT'S POEMS

DIVINITY.

Divinity is known in any guise
These words but echoed of the one word are
That tells the throbbing and exultant star
To keep on shining in her proper skies
Until the end. Sometime shall man be wise !
Then shall he find, without his peering far
With no thick dust his happy sight to mar,
God walking near him as in Paradise.
Love binds in one all things below, above,
Within, without, around, at home, abroad
To earth, to rest, to oriole of the grove
To man unbridled or beneath the sod
The mountain thunder bellows "God is Love"
The still small voice low whispers "Love is God."





NATURAL HISTORY



NATURAL HISTORY.

Concerning Woodpeckers.

Read before the Ornithological section of the Entomological Society of Ontario.

While mentally reviewing in detail the attractions of this or that group of birds, I can scarcely single out one and allow it to claim special honor as a favorite family. Yet somehow I have always felt drawn toward the Woodpeckers.

A Great Blue Heron in his proper element—fishing, for instance, in the summer twilight at the foot of the shallows—typifies for me the utmost grace of form. A Chickadee in a midwinter slashing has been to me an associate more charming in manners than any Chesterfield of them all. A Cerulean Warbler tastefully arrayed in blue and white brings to my eyes, even on the hottest of days, a cooling, restful influence. A Wood Thrush in the high June forest, in pure tones chanting his morning anthem, refines and ennobles the lyric outburst which heralds the coming in of summer.

How stands it with the Woodpeckers? Form angular, voice harsh, manners doubtful, colors sometimes brilliant, but often barbarously laid on! Still I like them. Gracefulness of form? Why, that would be out of place on a rail fence or the dead crown of a beech—things in themselves the very acme of angularity. Good manners? Sometimes it serves mankind right to be treated with suspicion or passed by with indifference. Harmoni-

ous blending of colors? Surely in looking at the infinite variety of hues in which nature dresses herself there will at times spring to the lips the cry, "Motley's the only wear!" Melodious tones? Ay, in June I grant you. But when against my face the angry north is spitting sleet; when over the snowdrifts comes the sharp bark of the lean and hungry fox; when the frost king, hurling his blue javelin, smites and splits with metallic clang the "gnarled and unwedgable oak," give me to hear the fierce, the ringing stroke of the Pileated Woodpecker pounding in the shrouded swamp, or the brave, if strident, calls of the Redheads foraging among the beeches for their hard-earned daily bread. Yes, the Woodpeckers fit in with nature even in her sternest mood—surely a sufficient passport to the naturalist's heart.

The *Picidae* being almost necessarily forestine, we might expect the family to be well represented in Middlesex, more especially that we have such a variety of trees here which can naturally supply the needs of more species than would a larger area of uniform forest. We have, in fact, eight species in this county, exactly double the number found in Great Britain.

Ours are: Hairy, Downy, Arctic Three-toed, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Pileated, Red-headed, Red-bellied, and Flicker.

Two (the only others occurring in Ontario) may yet be found here, as very rare winter visitors from the North. These are: Northern Hairy, and American Three-toed.

I have been asked to write of the habits of these birds, and I find at the outset the subject much too large for the limits of a single paper, and

indeed beyond my capacity in any number of papers. I could write better of the snakes of Ireland. Who could say, for instance, what a Redheaded Woodpecker would or would not do in certain given circumstances? A farmer once came to me to indignantly protest and complain of the havoc the Redheads were wreaking on his barn. In vain I deprecated all responsibility. I was forthwith brought to the spot and shown where the birds had battered holes through the roof to get at (as he mournfully averred) his peas. As a matter of fact, the hungry fellows were treating his barn as they would an old stub, but it was in order to get at the farmer's pea beetles, which in myriads were swarming inside. Another day the Redheads might be sampling sweet apples, for instance, or darting out for insects in true flycatcher style, thus giving us in good measure of the spice, variety.

So let it be with this paper. I have a comprehensive text, and, like the Rev. Solomon Peter Hale, who, in opening up one of his celebrated lectures, gravely announced his intention to confine his remarks to the "Past, the Present and the Future," I shall run the less risk of getting away from my subject, and whatever else it contains, I shall be sure to supply sufficient variety.

Hardiness of constitution is a feature I admire in any bird, and taken altogether, our Woodpeckers are a hardy lot. The Downy and Hairy keep a uniform hold on the country. Superior to mere changes in the weather, they are, if never numerous, never absent—good representatives of our rather small class of resident birds. The Redhead and Red-belly in some ways act much alike—the Redhead being at most times the more numerous. Both are summer residents. When bechnuts are plentiful both re-

main in considerable numbers throughout the winter. The kind of winter has nothing to do with it, the supply of beechnuts alone deciding the question. The Redhead stores many nuts in September in out-of-the-way places, an act of fore-thought I have not observed the other perform. Then again the Red-belly frequently comes to the orchard for frozen apples, which I have never seen a Redhead doing—perhaps at that time he falls back on the larder he stocked early in the fall. Mr. Beal, of Washington, writing of the Red-bellied Woodpecker, says, "It is not known to breed north of the Carolinian fauna," and again, "Curiously enough, it sometimes migrates north of its breeding range to spend the winter." As bearing on this latter statement, I may say I have noticed the Redhead in greater abundance during September than any other month in the year; and in view of the fact that it is really a Southern bird, I have for some time doubted that these numerous September individuals came from the north of us. Yet they have been recorded by Mr. Schoenan as quite common in Bruce county. If they breed there the species is not characteristic of the Carolinian fauna, for the Bruce peninsula is certainly Alleghanian, with a strong element of the Canadian fauna in its general features.

The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, tipping at his sap wells, is a curious though common sight. My friend Mr. Joseph Beck, who is not only a close observer of birds in general but is especially well qualified to speak of Woodpeckers, assures me he has seen this bird in midwinter. It is, however, mainly migratory, commonest in spring and fall, and a rather common summer resident. In its fondness for cambium it often removes considerable fresh bark. I have seen several fine Norway spruce ruined in this way. Yet

it cannot live on sap alone, nor even on cambium. It feeds largely on insects, many of which (chiefly *Diptera*) are attracted to the oozing sap, and fall an easy prey.

The Arctic Three-toed, a rare visitant from the North, is, in regard to the structure of its feet, an aberrant form, apparently able, however, to get along with its three toes as well as any of its four-toed relatives. I have seen one taken some years ago in a cedar swamp near here. Mr. Saunders has more recently captured an example and seen others. Its winter wanderings are no doubt more prompted by the state of the food supply than they are by the severity of the Northern climate. From personal knowledge, I can add nothing on its habits.

The Pileated has suffered more in consequence of the advent of civilization than any other member of the family. Originally a common resident, his great size and magnificent presence have brought him more difficulties than his marvelously acute senses of sight and hearing have been able to surmount. While in some of our larger swamps he still holds royal court, his throne is rudely shaken, his rule one of critical though "splendid isolation."

Even were he not hunted at all, it is doubtful that he could maintain himself in numbers in our sadly depleted forest. Highly specialized in the art of wood cutting—chiseling large and deep "mortise holes," for instance, in a live white ash in order to secure a colony of ants—he has proved unable to adapt himself, like the Redhead, to the rapidly changing conditions of the country.

The Flicker is pre-eminently an ant-eater, and I think it is less to avoid the rigor of our winters than to satisfy an insatiable craving for formic acid which prompts the sturdy yet amiable yellowshaft to betake

himself to milder climes. My latest record for the species here is the twenty-second of December—a bleak and bare day. Indeed, the snow and the Flickers are seldom seen together, for, although often perching high and feeding on many wild fruits, they are, after all, birds of the bare earth.

I transcribe the following from my "bird's calendar," bearing date April 6, 1889: "Snow 6 inches deep, with high drifts beside. All this snow fell since yesterday noon. This morning is calm and mild, with a strong sun shining, and no doubt the snow will rapidly pass away, yet surely none too soon for the poor birds. Saw Flicker for first time, in maple at edge of orchard. Later saw another on ant hill eating medium-sized ants which have a brownish head and thorax and black abdomen. Think of the storm last night and the hot sun to-day. When the ant hill is bare of snow the inmates sally out, the hungry Flicker comes and the great question crops up: Which is to live? How eagerly the ants were working to clear away the accumulated debris! How prettily the Flicker's plumage shone in the light of the western sun!"

On the approach of cold weather our resident Woodpeckers make for themselves snug retreats, in which they not only spend the nights, but also the very stormy days. These "winter shelters" are worthy of critical study. They are made shallower than the nest, and are generally closer to the ground. The first half dozen or so which I discovered happened not only to face the south, but were also situated on the southern edge of the woods. Later, however, I have seen too many exceptions to this to allow me to generalize.

The Downy, the Hairy and the Pileated are the only species I know of as making these solitary cells. As-

suming that only one is made or used by an individual in a season, it must restrict his foraging ground to a rather limited area, and a Hairy Woodpecker, for example, may not be such a winter wanderer as somehow I have always considered him to be.

Most birds of the cloister lay white eggs ; with the Woodpeckers this rule is invariable. The Hairy is the earliest nester, the Red-bellied, perhaps, the latest. The Redhead has the greatest vertical range, sometimes nesting as high as 75 feet and on the other hand, in an instance I observed myself, as low as 15 inches from the ground. In choice of material to work in, the Red-bellied selects the most decayed wood ; the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker the greenest and hardest.

Of the five nests of the Pileated which I have seen in the county, two were in beech, two in elm, and one in white pine. The first one examined was in a beech tree which stood within 100 yards of a school house, "New Swamp College". The nest was placed at a height of 45 feet, and on May 20 contained two fresh eggs. These measure in millimeters as follows : 36 x 24 and 35 x 25—the gems of my small oological collection. The second nest found was in an elm stub in thin woods—the hole close to the top and not more than 30 feet from the ground. When examined on May 27 it contained five newly hatched young. The other nests proved inaccessible. The prettiest Woodpecker home I ever saw was found by Mr. Beck and myself while pottering around a pleasant woods near the River Thames. It belonged to a Downy, and besides displaying the well-known neatness of that artistic wood-worker, the whole interior was lined as white as snow with what we decided to be the mycelium of the dryrot fungus.

Of course, we left undisturbed the demure little creature in her fairy hall, leaving her still to keep watch and ward over the crystal orbs containing the fruition of her fondest hopes.

I have spoken of the harsh quality of the picine voice. Even here there is saving grace. The hi, hi, of a first Flicker is a pleading, an inspiring, call to the lagging spring. The soft koor-r of the red-bellied adds another charm to even the memories of sugar making. The minor tones of the April Pileated are rare and sweet, the staccato notes of the great forest ranger changing in the spring, becoming lower, tenderer—softened and subdued by love.

But music has other mediums than the voice with which to express the emotions. This the Woodpeckers well know, and so have learned the value of instrumental music. Given a hard, dry and splintéred stub, a Redheaded Woodpecker—especially in the spring of the year—will by a series of rapid strokes produce a rolling call, suggesting the not unpleasant din of a snare drum. The music depends more on the resonant quality of the sounding board than on the expertness of the performer. Once in a while, by a lucky chance, an altogether unusual instrument is discovered. The thought of one of these recalls an incident of my school days.

Swamp College, long since removed, and now a granary on a neighboring farm, was at the time I write of a store house, where we boys intermittently trudged to procure some scattered grains of wisdom, mixed, I fear, with an altogether undue amount of chaff. The building was constructed of logs, having the top of each gable end weather-boarded. Boys passing at safe hours could seldom deny themselves the luxury of throwing a stick or stone at the thin boards of the gable end. Not to satisfy a grudge

against the building or teacher was this done, but merely to waken the echoes, asleep in the surrounding woods. On some such occasion as this a Red-headed Woodpecker, sitting disconsolate on a sodden stub, must have heard the long drawn out rattle, and hearing, received an inspiration. On a day in spring during school hours, above the hum of the school room sounded a loud tattoo. The teacher, half-frightened, thought at the worst it was merely some new and temporary freak of the boys. But no ; the boys, although delighted at the diversion, were as much mystified as the teacher. Then Miss W., stepping softly, went out, and on her return—gracious young lady that she was—allowed the pupils to tiptoe by twos and threes to the open door to see the mystery explained. I remember thinking the Woodpecker more frightened at his own stupendous success in making a noise than he was at the school watching him at such close quarters.

The whole upper and vacant chamber of a school house for a drum ! Why, he simply beat the other Woodpeckers all hollow. The teacher grew to like him, and yet, returning often, he became a nuisance. Volunteers readily came forward, offering to capture or kill him by snare or sling, or the hundred and one ways suggesting themselves to eager and active boys. Such schemes were vetoed in turn. We bore the additional racket, and when it finally ceased Swamp College even grew melancholy.

I once watched a Hairy Woodpecker drumming on a post to which a wire clothesline was attached. The vibrations, running along the line, made this the most pleasing performance I ever heard made by a Woodpecker. I was told he returned (from a cedar swamp, evidently his home, and a quarter of a mile away) three or four times daily for more than a week,

thus proving himself a good judge of stringed instruments.

The most interesting tattoo I know of remains to be told. A rather new frame house near Plover Mills some five years ago was occupied by its owner, a young bachelor—that is, occupied at meal times and some evenings—it was, in short, his domicile. One morning he was awakened by a rat, tat, tap, at the front door. On his opening the door to receive company, his visitor, after one good look, immediately took to the woods. The bachelor examines the door and the sequel rapidly develops. The demand for vengeance—the loaded shot gun—patient hiding—furtive peeps around corners—return of visitor—renewal of tattoo—unerring aim—loud report—and a male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker lies dead in the very heyday of his ambitious hopes.

A little later I was given a chance to examine the handiwork of my friends, the birds, and truly I had not a word to throw at a dog. A circle two or three inches in width around the door knob was battered and dented to the depth of an inch or more. This loosened the screws which held the door plate, and no doubt the Woodpecker at each rally raised considerable of a jingle. Yes, and he had drummed up a mate, too, and she, to show her appreciation of the musical abilities of the master, had made a nest in the adjoining casing of the door. This was the easier done, for by simply cutting through an inch of pine a cavity was reached that had for bottom the door sill, four feet below. It was clearly the intention of the birds to have nested there, but, as I have shown, love's young dream was suddenly ended, and an incipient race of door-rapping Woodpeckers was thus prevented from disturbing the peace and quietness of our rural homes.

In conclusion, let me add that I shall be deeply gratified should anything written herein lead other observers to take increased interest in the many curious happenings, as yet unchronicled in the annals of the Woodpecker world.

