

Graded Poetry: Seventh Year by Various

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Produced by Juliet Sutherland, Amy Overmyer and PG Distributed Proofreaders

GRADED POETRY

SEVENTH YEAR

Edited By:

Katherine D. Blake

Principal, Girls' Department Public School No. 6, New York City

and

Georgia Alexander

Supervising Principal, Indianapolis, Indiana

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INTRODUCTION

Poetry is the chosen language of childhood and youth. The baby repeats words again and again for the mere joy of their sound: the melody of nursery rhymes gives a delight which is quite independent of the meaning of the words. Not until youth approaches maturity is there an equal pleasure in the rounded periods of elegant prose. It is in childhood therefore that the young mind should be stored with poems whose rhythm will be a present delight and whose beautiful thoughts will not lose their charm in later years.

The selections for the lowest grades are addressed primarily to the feeling for verbal beauty, the recognition of which in the mind of the child is fundamental to the plan of this work. The editors have felt that the inclusion of critical notes in these little books intended for elementary school children would be not only superfluous, but, in the degree in which critical comment drew the child's attention from the text, subversive of the desired result. Nor are there any notes on methods. The best way to teach children to love a poem is to read it inspiringly to them.

The French say: "The ear is the pathway to the heart." A poem should be so read that it will sing itself in the hearts of the listening children.

In the brief biographies appended to the later books the human element has been brought out. An effort has been made to call attention to the education of the poet and his equipment for his life work rather than to the literary qualities of his style.

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SEVENTH YEAR--FIRST HALF

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

ENGLAND, 1564-1616

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls:
Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him
And makes me poor indeed.

--"OTHELLO," Act II, Sc. 3.

* * * * *

When daisies pied and violets blue,
And lady-smocks all silver-white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight.

--"LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST," Act V, Sc. 2.

* * * * *

This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,

This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise;
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war;
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands;
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.

--"RICHARD II," Act II, Sc. 1.

* * * * *

Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,
And merrily hent the stile-a:
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.

--From "WINTER'S TALE."

* * * * *

The Downfall of Wolsey

Farewell! a long farewell, to all my greatness!
This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hopes; to-morrow blossoms
And bears his blushing honors thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost;
And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a ripening, nips his root,
And then he falls, as I do. I have ventured,
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
This many summers in a sea of glory,
But far beyond my depth: my high-blown pride
At length broke under me; and now has left me,
Weary and old with service, to the mercy
Of a rude stream, that must forever hide me.
Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye:
I feel my heart new opened. O, how wretched
Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favors!
There is, betwixt that smile we would aspire to,
That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin,
More pangs and fears than wars or women have:
And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
Never to hope again.

--From "HENRY VIII."

* * * * *

BEN JONSON

ENGLAND, 1574-1637

THE NOBLE NATURE

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk doth make man better be;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere;
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night,--
It was the plant and flower of Light.
In small proportions we just beauties see,
And in short measures life may perfect be.

* * * * *

JOHN MILTON

ENGLAND, 1608-1674

SONG ON A MAY MORNING

Now the bright morning star, day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.

Hail, bounteous May, that dost inspire
Mirth and youth and warm desire!
Woods and groves are of thy dressing,
Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.
Thus we salute thee with our early song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

* * * * *

ISAAC WATTS

ENGLAND, 1674-1748

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home:

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,

From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

* * * * *

WILLIAM COWPER
ENGLAND, 1731-1800

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

John Gilpin was a citizen,
Of credit and renown,
A trainband captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
'Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

"To-morrow is our wedding day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton
All in a chaise and pair.

"My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

"I am a linendraper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender
Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, "That's well said;
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife;
O'erjoyed was he to find,
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folks so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
But soon came down again;

For saddletree scarce reach'd had he
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came downstairs,
"The wine is left behind!"

"Good lack!" quoth he--"yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise."

Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved
And keep it safe and sound.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipp'd from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which gall'd him in his seat.

"So, fair and softly," John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
Up flew the windows all;
And every soul cried out, "Well done!"
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin--who but he?
His fame soon spread around,
"He carries weight! he rides a race!
'Tis for a thousand pound!"

And still as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shatter'd at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seem'd to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced;
For all might see the bottle necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols did he play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay;

And there he threw the wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin!--here's the house,"

They all at once did cry;

"The dinner waits, and we are tired:"

Said Gilpin--"So am I!"

But yet his horse was not a whit

Inclined to tarry there;

For why?--his owner had a house

Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,

Shot by an archer strong;

So did he fly--which brings me to

The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin out of breath,

And sore against his will,

Till at his friend the calender's

His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see

His neighbor in such trim,

Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,

And thus accosted him:

"What news? what news? your tidings tell

Tell me you must and shall--

Say why bareheaded you are come,

Or why you come at all?"

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,

And loved a timely joke;

And thus unto the calender

In merry guise he spoke:

"I came because your horse would come;

And, if I well forbode,

My hat and wig will soon be here,

They are upon the road."

The calender, right glad to find

His friend in merry pin,

Return'd him not a single word,

But to the house went in;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig,

A wig that flow'd behind,

A hat not much the worse for wear,

Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
Thus show'd his ready wit,
"My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

"But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case."

Said John, "It is my wedding day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware."

So turning to his horse, he said,
"I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine."

Ah luckless speech, and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig:
He lost them sooner than at first,
For why?--they were too big.

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pull'd out half a crown;

And thus unto the youth she said,
That drove them to the Bell,
"This shall be yours, when you bring back
My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
By catching at his rein;

But not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frightened steed he frightened more,
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry:--

"Stop thief! stop thief!--a highwayman!"
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that passed that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town;
Nor stopp'd till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, "Long live the king,
And Gilpin long live he;"
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see!

* * * * *

ROBERT BURNS

SCOTLAND, 1759-1796

BANNOCKBURN

ROBERT BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed
Or to victorie!

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lower;
See approach proud Edward's power--
Chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa',
Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!--
Let us do or die!

* * * * *

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.
Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birthplace of valor, the country of worth:
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands forever I love.

Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.

* * * * *

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

ENGLAND, 1770-1850

THE SOLITARY REAPER

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland lass,
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
Oh, listen! for the vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chant
So sweetly to reposing bands
Of travelers in some shady haunt
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In springtime from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,

And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day,
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending.
I listened motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore
Long after it was heard no more.

* * * * *

SONNET

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPTEMBER 3, 1802

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theaters, and temples lie

Open unto the fields and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

* * * * *

WALTER SCOTT

SCOTLAND, 1771-1832

"SOLDIER, REST!"

Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows no breaking;
Dream of battle-fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking,
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows no breaking;

Dream of battle-fields no more,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armor's clang, or war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here,
Mustering clan, or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come,
At the daybreak from the fallow,

And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here;
Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping.

Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
While our slumb'rous spells assail ye,
Dream not with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveille.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen,
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;

Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye,
Here no bugle sounds reveille.

* * * * *

LOCHINVAR

Oh, young Lochinvar is come out of the west;
Through all the wide border his steed was the best;
And save his good broad-sword he weapon had none;
He rode all unarmed, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stayed not for brake, and he stopp'd not for stone,
He swam the Eske River where ford there was none;
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late;
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he enter'd the Netherby Hall,
Among bride's-men, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,

(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,)

"O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"--

"I long woo'd your daughter, my suit you denied;--
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide--
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar."

The bride kiss'd the goblet: the knight took it up,
He quaff'd off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She look'd down to blush, and she look'd up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar,--
"Now tread we a measure!" said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;
And the bride-maidens whisper'd, "'Twere better by far,
To have match'd our fair cousin with young Lochinvar."

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,

When they reach'd the hall-door, and the charger stood near:

So light to the croup the fair lady he swung,

So light to the saddle before her he sprung!

"She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;

They'll have fleet steeds that follow," quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Graemes of the Netherby clan;

Fosters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran:

There was racing and chasing, on Cannobie Lee,

But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.

So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,

Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

* * * * *

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY

AMERICA, 1780-1843

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER[1]

O say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,

What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming--

Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the clouds of the fight

O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming!

And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,

Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.

O! say, does the star-spangled banner yet wave

O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?

On that shore dimly see through the mists of the deep

Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,

What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,

As it fitfully blows, now conceals, now discloses?

Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,

In full glory reflected now shines on the stream;

'Tis the star-spangled banner; O long may it wave

O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore

That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion

A home and a country should leave us no more?

Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.

No refuge could save the hireling and slave

From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave;

And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave

O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

O! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand

Between their loved homes and war's desolation!

Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n rescued land

Praise the power that hath made and preserved us a nation.

Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto--"In God is our trust."
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

* * * * *

[Footnote:1. The song is taken as it appears in Stedman and Hutchinson's
Library of American Literature, vol. iv. p. 419. The text, slightly
different from the common one, corresponds to the facsimile of
a copy made by Mr. Key in 1840.]

THOMAS CAMPBELL
SCOTLAND, 1777-1844

HOHENLINDEN

On Linden when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow,
And dark as winter was the flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

But Linden saw another sight
When the drum beat, at dead of night,
Commanding fires of death to light

The darkness of her scenery.

By torch and trumpet fast array'd
Each horseman drew his battle-blade,
And furious every charger neigh'd,
To join the dreadful revelry.

Then shook the hills with thunder riven,
Then rush'd the steed to battle driven,
And louder than the bolts of heaven
Far flash'd the red artillery.

But redder yet that light shall glow
On Linden's hills of stained snow,
And darker yet shall be the flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

'Tis morn, but scarce yon lurid sun
Can pierce the war-clouds, rolling dun,
Where furious Frank and fiery Hun
Shout in their sulphurous canopy.

The combat deepens. On, ye Brave,
Who rush to glory, or the grave!
Wave, Munich, all thy banners wave!

And charge with all thy chivalry!

Few, few, shall part where many meet!

The snow shall be their winding-sheet,

And every turf beneath their feet

Shall be a soldier's sepulcher.

* * * * *

THOMAS MOORE

IRELAND, 1779-1852

THE HARP THAT ONCE THROUGH TARA'S HALLS

The Harp that once through Tara's Halls

The soul of music shed,

Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls

As if that soul were fled.

So sleeps the pride of former days,

So glory's thrill is o'er,

And hearts that once beat high for praise,

Now feel that pulse no more.

No more to chiefs and ladies bright

The harp of Tara swells:

The chord alone that breaks at night,
Its tale of ruin tells.
Thus freedom now so seldom wakes,
The only throb she gives
Is when some heart indignant breaks,
To show that still she lives.

* * * * *

GEORGE GORDON NOEL, LORD BYRON
ENGLAND, 1788-1824

CHILDE HAROLD'S FAREWELL TO ENGLAND

Adieu, adieu! my native shore
Fades o'er the waters blue;
The night-winds sigh, the breakers roar,
And shrieks the wild sea mew.
Yon sun that sets upon the sea,
We follow in his flight;
Farewell awhile to him and thee,
My native land--Good-night.

A few short hours and he will rise
To give the morrow birth;

And I shall hail the main and skies,
But not my mother earth.
Deserted is my own good hall,
Its hearth is desolate;
Wild weeds are gathering on the wall;
My dog howls at the gate.

"Come hither, hither, my little page!
Why dost thou weep and wail?
Or dost thou dread the billows' rage,
Or tremble at the gale?
But dash the tear-drop from thine eye;
Our ship is swift and strong;
Our fleetest falcon scarce can fly
More merrily along."

"Let winds be shrill, let waves roll high,
I fear not wave nor wind:
Yet marvel not, Sir Childe, that I
Am sorrowful in mind;
For I have from my father gone,
A mother whom I love,
And have no friends, save thee alone,
But thee--and One above.

"My father blessed me fervently,

Yet did not much complain;
But sorely will my mother sigh
Till I come back again."--
"Enough, enough, my little lad!
Such tears become thine eye;
If I thy guileless bosom had,
Mine own would not be dry."

* * * * *

THE NIGHT BEFORE WATERLOO

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gather'd then
Her beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

Did ye not hear it?--No; 'twas but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet

To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet.
But hark! that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! arm! it is--it is--the cannon's opening roar!

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness;
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated: who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise!

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
While throng'd the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering with white lips--"The foe!
They come! they come!"

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshaling in arms--the day
Battle's magnificently stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is cover'd thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and pent,
Rider and horse--friend, foe--in one red burial blent!

--From "CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE."

* * * * *

HENRY FRANCIS LYTE

ENGLAND, 1793-1847

ABIDE WITH ME

Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide:
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless:
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is Death's sting? Where, Grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes,
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

* * * * *

THOMAS B. MACAULAY

ENGLAND, 1800-1859

HORATIUS AT THE BRIDGE

The consul's brow was sad, and the consul's speech was low,

And darkly looked he at the wall, and darkly at the foe.

"Their van will be upon us before the bridge goes down;

And if they once may win the bridge, what hope to save the town?"

Then out spoke brave Horatius, the captain of the gate:

"To every man upon this earth death cometh, soon or late.

Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul, with all the speed ye may;

I, with two more to help me, will hold the foe in play.

In yon strait path a thousand may well be stopped by three.

Now who will stand on either hand, and keep the bridge with me?"

Then out spake Spurius Lartius--a Ramnian proud was he--

"Lo! I will stand at thy right hand, and keep the bridge with thee."

And out spake strong Herminius--of Titian blood was he--

"I will abide on thy left side, and keep the bridge with thee."

"Horatius," quoth the consul, "as thou sayest, so let it be."

And straight against that great array, forth went the dauntless three.

Soon all Etruria's noblest felt their hearts sink to see

On the earth the bloody corpses, in the path the dauntless three.

And from the ghastly entrance, where those bold Romans stood,

The bravest shrank like boys who rouse an old bear in the wood.

But meanwhile ax and lever have manfully been plied,

And now the bridge hangs tottering above the boiling tide.

"Come back, come back, Horatius!" loud cried the fathers all;

"Back, Lartius! back, Herminius! back, ere the ruin fall!"

Back darted Spurius Lartius; Herminius darted back;

And, as they passed, beneath their feet they felt the timbers crack;

But when they turned their faces, and on the farther shore

Saw brave Horatius stand alone, they would have crossed once more.

But, with a crash like thunder, fell every loosened beam,

And, like a dam, the mighty wreck lay right athwart the stream.

And a long shout of triumph rose from the walls of Rome,

As to the highest turret-tops was splashed the yellow foam.

And, like a horse unbroken, when first he feels the rein,

The furious river struggled hard, and tossed his tawny mane,

And burst the curb, and bounded, rejoicing to be free,

And battlement, and plank, and pier whirled headlong to the sea.

Alone stood brave Horatius, but constant still in mind;

Thrice thirty thousand foes before, and the broad flood behind.

"Down with him!" cried false Sextus, with a smile on his pale face.

"Now yield thee!" cried Lars Porsena, "now yield thee to our grace!"

Round turned he, as not deigning those craven ranks to see;

Nought spake he to Lars Porsena, to Sextus nought spake he;

But he saw on Palatinus the white porch of his home,

And he spoke to the noble river that rolls by the towers of Rome:

"O Tiber! Father Tiber! to whom the Romans pray,

A Roman's life, a Roman's arms, take thou in charge this day!"

So he spake, and, speaking, sheathed the good sword by his side,
And, with his harness on his back, plunged headlong in the tide.

No sound of joy or sorrow was heard from either bank;
But friends and foes, in dumb surprise, stood gazing where he sank,
And when above the surges they saw his crest appear,
Rome shouted, and e'en Tuscany could scarce forbear to cheer.

But fiercely ran the current, swollen high by months of rain:
And fast his blood was flowing; and he was sore in pain,
And heavy with his armor, and spent with changing blows:
And oft they thought him sinking--but still again he rose.

Never, I ween, did swimmer, in such an evil case,
Struggle through such a raging flood safe to the landing place:
But his limbs were borne up bravely by the brave heart within,
And our good Father Tiber bare bravely up his chin.

"Curse on him!" quoth false Sextus; "will not the villain drown?
But for his stay, ere close of day we should have sacked the town!"
"Heaven help him!" quoth Lars Porsena; "and bring him safe to shore;
For such a gallant feat of arms was never seen before."

And now he feels the bottom;--now on dry earth he stands;
Now round him throng the fathers to press his gory hands.

And now, with shouts and clapping, and noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the river gate, borne by the joyous crowd.

SEVENTH YEAR--SECOND HALF

ALFRED TENNYSON

ENGLAND, 1809-1892

EARLY SPRING

Once more the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And domes the red-plow'd hills
With loving blue;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The throstles too.

Opens a door in Heaven;
From skies of glass
A Jacob's ladder falls
On greening grass,
And o'er the mountain-walls
Young angels pass.

Before them fleets the shower,

And bursts the buds,
And shine the level lands,
And flash the floods;
The stars are from their hands
Flung thro' the woods.

The woods with living airs
How softly fann'd,
Light airs from where the deep,
All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
Heard by the land.

O follow, leaping blood,
The season's lure!
O heart, look down and up
Serene, secure.
Warm as the crocus cup,
Like snowdrops, pure!

Past, Future, glimpse and fade
Thro' some slight spell,
A gleam from yonder vale,
Some far blue fell,
And sympathies, how frail,
In sound and smell.

Till at thy chuckled note,
Thou twinkling bird,
The fairy fancies range,
And, lightly stirr'd,
Ring little bells of change
From word to word.

For now the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And thaws the cold, and fills
The flower with dew;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The poets too.

* * * * *

SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,

The splintered spear shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel;
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favors fall!
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall;
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bowed in crypt and shrine:
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair through faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns:
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice, but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,

The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chants resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain meres
I find a magic bark;
I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the Holy Grail;
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And starlike mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
Through dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.

I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight--to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams,
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armor that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touched, are turned to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And through the mountain walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
"O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near."
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;

By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All armed I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the Holy Grail.

* * * * *

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of death
Rode the six hundred.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!" he said;
Into the valley of death
Rode the six hundred.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
Was there a man dismayed?
Not though the soldier knew
Some one had blundered;
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die:

Into the valley of death

Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,

Cannon to left of them,

Cannon in front of them

Volleyed and thundered;

Stormed at with shot and shell,

Boldly they rode and well,

Into the jaws of death,

Into the mouth of hell

Rode the six hundred.

Flashed all their sabers bare,

Flashed as they turned in air

Sabring the gunners there,

Charging an army, while

All the world wondered.

Plunged in the battery smoke,

Right through the line they broke;

Cossack and Russian

Reeled from the saber-stroke--

Shattered and sundered.

Then they rode back, but not--

Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came through the jaws of death,
Back from the mouth of hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
Oh, the wild charge they made!
All the world wondered.
Honor the charge they made,
Honor the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred!

* * * * *

RING OUT, WILD BELLS

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light;
The year is dying in the night:

Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,

Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

--From "IN MEMORIAM."

* * * * *

ALFRED DOMETT

ENGLAND, 1811-1887

A CHRISTMAS HYMN

It was the calm and silent night!
Seven hundred years and fifty-three
Had Rome been growing up to might,

And now was queen of land and sea.
No sound was heard of clashing wars;
Peace brooded o'er the hushed domain:
Apollo, Pallas, Jove, and Mars
Held undisturbed their ancient reign,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago.

'Twas in the calm and silent night!
The senator of haughty Rome,
Impatient, urged his chariot's flight,
From lordly revel rolling home;
Triumphal arches, gleaming, swell.
His breast with thoughts of boundless sway;
What reaked the Roman what befell
A paltry province far away,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago.

Within that province far away
Went plodding home a weary boor
A streak of light before him lay,
Fallen through a half-shut stable-door
Across his path. He passed--for naught
Told what was going on within;
How keen the stars, his only thought;
The air how calm and cold and thin,

In the solemn midnight,

Centuries ago!

Oh, strange indifference! low and high

Drowsed over common joys and cares;

The earth was still--but knew not why;

The world was listening, unawares.

How calm a moment may precede

One that shall thrill the world for ever!

To that still moment none would heed,

Man's doom was linked no more to sever--

In the solemn midnight,

Centuries ago!

It is the calm and solemn night!

A thousand bells ring out, and throw

Their joyous peals abroad, and smite

The darkness--charmed and holy now!

The night that erst no name had worn,

To it a happy name is given;

For in that stable lay, new-born,

The peaceful Prince of Earth and Heaven,

In the solemn midnight,

Centuries ago!

* * * * *

ROBERT BROWNING

ENGLAND, 1812-1889

HOME-THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England

Now that April's there,

And whoever wakes in England

Sees, some morning unaware,

That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf

Round the elm tree bole are in tiny leaf,

While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough

In England--now!

And after April, when May follows,

And the whitethroat builds and all the swallows!

Hark, where my blossomed pear tree in the hedge

Leans to the field and scatters on the clover

Blossoms and dewdrops, at the bent spray's edge--

That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,

Lest you should think he never could recapture

The first fine careless rapture!

And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,

All will be gay when noontide wakes anew

The buttercups, the little children's dower--

Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

* * * * *

PHEIDIPPIDES

First I salute this soil of the blessed, river and rock!

Gods of my birthplace, daemons and heroes, honor to all!

Then I name thee, claim thee for our patron, co-equal in praise

--Ay, with Zeus the Defender, with Her of the aegis and spear!

Also ye of the bow and the buskin, praised be your peer,

Now, henceforth and forever,--O latest to whom I upraise

Hand and heart and voice! For Athens, leave pasture and flock!

Present to help, potent to save, Pan--patron I call!

Archons of Athens, topped by the tettix, see, I return!

See, 'tis myself here standing alive, no specter that speaks!

Crowned with the myrtle, did you command me, Athens and you,

"Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach Sparta for aid!

Persia has come, we are here, where is She?" Your command I obeyed,

Ran and raced: like stubble, some field which a fire runs through

Was the space between city and city; two days, two nights did I burn

Over the hills, under the dales, down pits and up peaks.

Into their midst I broke: breath served but for "Persia has come!

Persia bids Athens proffer slaves'-tribute, water and earth;
Razed to the ground is Eretria--but Athens, shall Athens sink,
Drop into dust and die--the flower of Hellas utterly die,
Die with the wide world spitting at Sparta, the stupid, the stander-by?
Answer me quick, what help, what hand do you stretch o'er
destruction's brink?
How--when? No care for my limbs!--there's lightning in all and some--
Fresh and fit your message to bear, once lips give it birth!"

O my Athens--Sparta love thee? Did Sparta respond?
Every face of her leered in a furrow of envy, mistrust,
Malice,--each eye of her gave me its glitter of gratified hate!
Gravely they turned to take counsel, to cast for excuses. I stood
Quivering,--the limbs of me fretting as fire frets, an inch from dry wood:
"Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and still they debate?
Thunder, thou Zeus! Athene, are Spartans a quarry beyond
Swing of thy spear? Phoibos and Artemis, clang them 'Ye must!'"

No bolt launched from Olympos! Lo, their answer at last!
"Has Persia come,--does Athens ask aid,--may Sparta befriend?
Nowise precipitate judgment--too weighty the issue at stake!
Count we no time lost time which lags thro' respect to the Gods!
Ponder that precept of old, 'No warfare, whatever the odds
In your favor, so long as the moon, half-orbed, is unable to take
Full-circle her state in the sky!' Already she rounds to it fast:
Athens must wait, patient as we--who judgment suspend."

Athens,--except for that sparkle,--thy name, I had moldered to ash!
That sent a blaze thro' my blood; off, off and away was I back,
--Not one word to waste, one look to lose on the false and the vile!
Yet "O Gods of my land!" I cried, as each hillock and plain,
Wood and stream, I knew, I named, rushing past them again,
"Have ye kept faith, proved mindful of honors we paid you erewhile?
Vain was the filleted victim, the fulsome libation! Too rash
Love in its choice, paid you so largely service so slack!

"Oak and olive and bay,--I bid you cease to enwreathe
Brows made bold by your leaf! Fade at the Persian's foot,
You that, our patrons were pledged, should never adorn a slave!
Rather I hail thee, Parnes,--trust to thy wild waste tract!
Treeless, herbless, lifeless mountain! What matter if slacked
My speed may hardly be, for homage to crag and to cave
No deity deigns to drape with verdure?--at least I can breathe,
Fear in thee no fraud from the blind, no lie from the mute!"
Such my cry as, rapid, I ran over Parnes' ridge;
Gully and gap I clambered and cleared till, sudden, a bar
Jutted, a stoppage of stone against me, blocking the way.
Right! for I minded the hollow to traverse, the fissure across:
"Where I could enter, there I depart by! Night in the fosse?
Athens to aid? Tho' the dive were thro' Erebos, thus I obey--
Out of the day dive, into the day as bravely arise! No bridge
Better!"--when--ha! what was it I came on, of wonders that are?

There, in the cool of a cleft, sat he--majestical Pan!
Ivy drooped wanton, kissed his head, moss cushioned his hoof;
All the great God was good in the eyes grave-kindly--the curl
Carved on the bearded cheek, amused at a mortal's awe
As, under the human trunk, the goat-thighs grand I saw.
"Halt, Pheidippides!"--halt I did, my brain of a whirl:
"Hither to me! Why pale in my presence?" he gracious began:
"How is it,--Athens, only in Hellas, holds me aloof?

"Athens, she only, rears me no fane, makes me no feast!
Wherefore? Than I what godship to Athens more helpful of old?
Aye, and still, and forever her friend! Test Pan, trust me!
Go, bid Athens take heart, laugh Persia to scorn, have faith
In the temples and tombs! Go, say to Athens, 'The Goat-God saith:
When Persia--so much as strews not the soil--is cast in the sea,
Then praise Pan who fought in the ranks with your most and least,
Goat-thigh to greaved-thigh, made one cause with the free and the bold!'

"Say Pan saith: 'Let this, foreshowing the place, be the pledge!'"
(Gay, the liberal hand held out this herbage I bear
--Fennel,--I grasped it a-tremble with Dew--whatever it bode),
"While, as for thee ..." But enough! He was gone. If I ran hitherto--
Be sure that the rest of my journey, I ran no longer, but flew.
Parnes to Athens--earth no more, the air was my road;
Here am I back. Praise Pan, we stand no more on the razor's edge!
Pan for Athens, Pan for me! I too have a guerdon rare!

Then spoke Miltiades. "And then, best runner of Greece,
Whose limbs did duty indeed,--what gift is promised thyself?
Tell it us straightway,--Athens the mother demands of her son!"
Rosily blushed the youth: he paused: but, lifting at length
His eyes from the ground, it seemed as he gathered the rest of his strength
Into the utterance--"Pan spoke thus: 'For what thou hast done
Count on a worthy reward! Henceforth be allowed thee release
From the racer's toil, no vulgar reward in praise or in pelf!'

"I am bold to believe, Pan means reward the most to my mind!
Fight I shall, with our foremost, wherever this fennel may grow,--
Pound--Pan helping us--Persia to dust, and, under the deep,
Whelm her away forever; and then,--no Athens to save,--
Marry a certain maid, I know keeps faith to the brave,--
Hie to my house and home: and, when my children shall creep
Close to my knees,--recount how the God was awful yet kind,
Promised their sire reward to the full--rewarding him--so!"

Unforeseeing one! Yes, he fought on the Marathon day:
So, when Persia was dust, all cried "To Akropolis!
Run, Pheidippides, one race more! the meed is thy due!
'Athens is saved, thank Pan,' go shout!" He flung down his shield,
Ran like fire once more: and the space 'twixt the Fennel-field
And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire runs through,
Till in he broke: "Rejoice, we conquer!" Like wine thro' clay,

Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died--the bliss!

So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word of salute

Is still "Rejoice!"--his word which brought rejoicing indeed.

So is Pheidippides happy forever,--then noble strong man

Who could race like a god, bear the face of a god, whom a god loved

so well,

He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and was suffered to tell

Such tidings, yet never decline, but, gloriously as he began,

So to end gloriously--once to shout, thereafter be mute:

"Athens is saved!"--Pheidippides dies in the shout for his meed.

* * * * *

HELEN HUNT JACKSON

AMERICA, 1831-1885

A SONG OF CLOVER

I wonder what the Clover thinks,

Intimate friend of Bob-o'-links,

Lover of Daisies slim and white,

Waltzer with Buttercups at night;

Keeper of Inn for traveling Bees,

Serving to them wine-dregs and lees,

Left by the Royal Humming Birds,
Who sip and pay with fine-spun words;
Fellow with all the lowliest,
Peer of the gayest and the best;
Comrade of winds, beloved of sun,
Kissed by the Dew-drops, one by one;
Prophet of Good-Luck mystery
By sign of four which few may see;
Symbol of Nature's magic zone,
One out of three, and three in one;
Emblem of comfort in the speech
Which poor men's babies early reach;
Sweet by the roadsides, sweet by rills,
Sweet in the meadows, sweet on hills,
Sweet in its white, sweet in its red,--
Oh, half its sweetness cannot be said;--
Sweet in its every living breath,
Sweetest, perhaps, at last, in death!
Oh! who knows what the Clover thinks?
No one! unless the Bob-o'-links!

--"SAXE HOLM."

* * * * *

LEWIS CARROLL

ENGLAND, 1832-1898

A SONG OF LOVE

Say, what is the spell, when her fledglings are cheeping,

That lures the bird home to her nest?

Or wakes the tired mother, whose infant is weeping,

To cuddle and croon it to rest?

What the magic that charms the glad babe in her arms,

Till it cooes with the voice of the dove?

'Tis a secret, and so let us whisper it low--

And the name of the secret is Love!

For I think it is Love,

For I feel it is Love,

For I'm sure it is nothing but Love!

Say, whence is the voice that when anger is burning,

Bids the whirl of the tempest to cease?

That stirs the vexed soul with an aching--a yearning

For the brotherly hand-grip of peace?

Whence the music that fills all our being--that thrills

Around us, beneath, and above?

'Tis a secret: none knows how it comes, or it goes--

But the name of the secret is Love!

For I think it is Love,

For I feel it is Love,

For I'm sure it is nothing but Love!

Say, whose is the skill that paints valley and hill,

Like a picture so fair to the sight?

That flecks the green meadow with sunshine and shadow,

Till the little lambs leap with delight?

'Tis a secret untold to hearts cruel and cold,

Though 'tis sung, by the angels above,

In notes that ring clear for the ears that can hear--

And the name of the secret is Love!

For I think it is Love,

For I feel it is Love,

For I'm sure it is nothing but Love!

* * * * *

ANDREW LANG

ENGLAND, 1844-

SCYTHE SONG

Mowers, weary and brown, and blithe,

What is the word methinks you know,

Endless over-word that the Scythe

Sings to the blades of the grass below?

Scythes that swing in the grass and clover,
Something, still, they say as they pass;
What is the word that, over and over,
Sings the Scythe to the flowers and grass?

Hush, ah hush, the Scythes are saying,
_Hush, and heed not, and fall asleep;
Hush_, they say to the grasses swaying;
Hush, they sing to the clover deep!
Hush--'tis the lullaby Time is singing--
Hush, and heed not, for all things pass;
Hush, ah hush! and the Scythes are swinging
Over the clover, over the grass!

* * * * *

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

ENGLAND, 1837-

WHITE BUTTERFLIES

Fly, white butterflies, out to sea,
Frail, pale wings for the wind to try,
Small white wings that we scarce can see,
Fly!

Some fly light as a laugh of glee,
Some fly soft as a long, low sigh;
All to the haven where each would be,
Fly!

* * * * *

RUDYARD KIPLING

ENGLAND, 1865-

RECESSIONAL

A VICTORIAN ODE

God of our fathers, known of old--
Lord of our far-flung battle line--
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine--
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget--lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies--
The captains and the kings depart--

Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget--lest we forget!

Far-called our navies melt away--
On dune and headland sinks the fire--
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget--lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe--
Such boasting as the Gentiles use,
Or lesser breeds without the Law--
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget--lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard--
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding calls not Thee to guard.
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy mercy on Thy people, Lord!

Amen.

* * * * *

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

AMERICA, 1794-1878

TO A WATERFOWL

Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean side?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast--
The desert and illimitable air--
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home and rest,
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

* * * * *

THE DEATH OF THE FLOWERS

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sear.
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the autumn leaves lie dead;
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread;
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrubs the jay,
And from the wood-top calls the crow through all the gloomy day.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprang and stood
In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?
Alas! they all are in their graves, the gentle race of flowers
Are lying in their lowly beds with the fair and good of ours.
The rain is falling where they lie, but the cold November rain
Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely ones again.
The windflower and the violet, they perished long ago,
And the brier rose and the orchis died amid the summer glow;
But on the hills the goldenrod, and the aster in the wood,
And the yellow sunflower by the brook, in autumn beauty stood,
Till fell the frost from the clear, cold heaven, as falls the plague
on men,
And the brightness of their smile was gone from upland, glade, and glen.

And now when comes the calm, mild day, as still such days will come,
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their winter home;
When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all the trees are still,
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the rill,
The south wind searches for the flowers whose fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.

And then I think of one who in her youthful beauty died,
The fair, meek blossom that grew up, and perished by my side.
In the cold, moist earth we laid her, when the forest cast the leaf,
And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief:
Yet not unmeet was it that one like that young friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers.

* * * * *

THANATOPSIS

To him who in the love of Nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides
Into his darker musings, with a mild
And healing sympathy, that steals away
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When thoughts

Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
Over thy spirit, and sad images
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart;--
Go forth, under the open sky, and list
To Nature's teachings, while from all around--
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air--
Comes a still voice--Yet a few days, and thee
The all-beholding sun shall see no more
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,
Where thy pale form was laid, with many tears,
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall claim
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
Thine individual being, shalt thou go
To mix for ever with the elements,
To be a brother to the insensible rock
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy mold.

Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world--with kings,

The powerful of the earth--the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun,--the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between;
The venerable woods--rivers that move
In majesty, and the complaining brooks
That make the meadows green; and, poured round all,
Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste,--
Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun,
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,
Are shining on the sad abodes of death,
Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom.--Take the wings
Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound,
Save his own dashings--yet the dead are there:
And millions in those solitudes, since first
The flight of years began, have laid them down
In their last sleep--the dead reign there alone.
So shalt thou rest, and what if thou withdraw
In silence from the living, and no friend
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care

Plod on, and each one as before will chase
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
Their mirth and their employments, and shall come
And make their bed with thee. As the long train
Of ages glides away, the sons of men,
The youth in life's fresh spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years, matron, and maid,
The speechless babe, and the gray-headed man,--
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,
By those, who in their turn shall follow them.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

* * * * *

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

AMERICA, 1803-1882

'Twas one of the charmed days
When the genius of God doth flow,
The wind may alter twenty ways,
A tempest cannot blow;
It may blow north, it still is warm;
Or south, it still is clear;
Or east, it smells like a clover-farm;
Or west, no thunder fear.
The musing peasant lowly great
Beside the forest water sate;
The rope-like pine roots crosswise grown
Compose the network of his throne;
The wide lake, edged with sand and grass,
Was burnished to a floor of glass,
Painted with green and proud
Of the tree and of the cloud.
He was the heart of all the scene;
On him the sun looked more serene;
To hill and cloud his face was known,--
It seemed the likeness of their own;
They knew by secret sympathy
The public child of earth and sky.
"You ask," he said, "what guide
Me through trackless thickets led,
Through thick-stemmed woodlands rough and wide.
I found the water's bed.
The watercourses were my guide;

I traveled grateful by their side,
Or through their channel dry;
They led me through the thicket damp,
Through brake and fern, the beaver's camp,
Through beds of granite cut my road,
And their resistless friendship showed:
The falling waters led me,
The foodful waters fed me,
And brought me to the lowest land,
Unerring to the ocean sand.
The moss upon the forest bark
Was pole-star when the night was dark;
The purple berries in the wood
Supplied me necessary food;
For Nature ever faithful is
To such as trust her faithfulness.
When the forest shall mislead me,
When the night and morning lie,
When sea and land refuse to feed me,
'Twill be time enough to die;
Then will yet my mother yield
A pillow in her greenest field,
Nor the June flowers scorn to cover
The clay of their departed lover."

--From "WOODNOTES."

* * * * *

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

AMERICA, 1807-1882

DAYBREAK

A wind came up out of the sea,
And said, "O mists, make room for me."

It hailed the ships, and cried, "Sail on,
Ye mariners, the night is gone."

And hurried landward far away,
Crying, "Awake! it is the day."

It said unto the forest, "Shout!
Hang all your leafy banners out!"

It touched the wood-bird's folded wing,
And said, "O bird, awake and sing."

And o'er the farms, "O chanticleer,

Your clarion blow; the day is near."

It whispered to the fields of corn,

"Bow down, and hail the coming morn."

It shouted through the belfry-tower,

"Awake, O bell! proclaim the hour."

It crossed the churchyard with a sigh,

And said, "Not yet! in quiet lie."

* * * * *

THE FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY OF AGASSIZ

May 28, 1857

It was fifty years ago

In the pleasant month of May,

In the beautiful Pays de Vaud,

A child in its cradle lay.

And Nature, the old nurse, took

The child upon her knee,

Saying: "Here is a story-book
Thy Father has written for thee.

"Come, wander with me," she said,
"Into regions yet untrod;
And read what is still unread
In the manuscripts of God."

And he wandered away and away
With Nature, the dear old nurse,
Who sang to him night and day
The rhymes of the universe.

And whenever the way seemed long,
Or his heart began to fail,
She would sing a more wonderful song,
Or tell a more marvelous tale.

So she keeps him still a child,
And will not let him go,
Though at times his heart beats wild
For the beautiful Pays de Vaud;

Though at times he hears in his dreams
The Ranz des Vaches of old,

And the rush of mountain streams
From the glaciers clear and cold;

And the mother at home says, "Hark!
For his voice I listen and yearn;
It is growing late and dark,
And my boy does not return!"

* * * * *

HYMN TO THE NIGHT

I heard the trailing garments of the Night
Sweep through her marble halls!
I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
From the celestial walls!

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,
Stoop o'er me from above;
The calm, majestic presence of the Night,
As of the one I love.

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,
The manifold, soft chimes,
That fill the haunted chambers of the Night,

Like some old poet's rhymes.

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air

My spirit drank repose;

The fountain of perpetual peace flows there,--

From those deep cisterns flows.

O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear

What man has borne before!

Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,

And they complain no more.

Peace! Peace! Orestes-like I breathe this prayer!

Descend with broad-winged flight,

The welcome, the thrice-prayed for, the most fair,

The best-beloved Night!

* * * * *

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

AMERICA, 1819-1891

LONGING

Of all the myriad moods of mind
That through the soul come thronging,
Which one was e'er so dear, so kind,
So beautiful as Longing?
The thing we long for, that we are
For one transcendent moment
Before the Present poor and bare
Can make its sneering comment.

Still, through our paltry stir and strife,
Glow down the wished Ideal,
And Longing molds in clay what Life
Carves in the marble Real;
To let the new life in, we know,
Desire must ope the portal;
Perhaps the longing to be so
Helps make the soul immortal.

Longing is God's fresh heavenward will
With our poor earthward striving;
We quench it that we may be still
Content with merely living:
But, would we learn that heart's full scope
Which we are hourly wronging,
Our lives must climb from hope to hope
And realize our longing.

Ah! let us hope that to our praise
Good God not only reckons
The moments when we tread His ways,
But when the spirit beckons,--
That some slight good is also wrought
Beyond self-satisfaction,
When we are simply good in thought,
Howe'er we fail in action.

* * * * *

THE FINDING OF THE LYRE

There lay upon the ocean's shore
What once a tortoise served to cover.
A year and more, with rush and roar,
The surf had rolled it over,
Had played with it, and flung it by,
As wind and weather might decide it,
Then tossed it high where sand-drifts dry
Cheap burial might provide it.

It rested there to bleach or tan,
The rains had soaked, the suns had burned it;
With many a ban the fisherman

Had stumbled o'er and spurned it;
And there the fisher-girl would stay,
Conjecturing with her brother
How in their play the poor estray
Might serve some use or other.

So there it lay, through wet and dry,
As empty as the last new sonnet,
Till by and by came Mercury,
And, having mused upon it,
"Why, here," cried he, "the thing of things
In shape, material, and dimensions!
Give it but strings, and lo, it sings,
A wonderful invention!"

So said, so done; the chords he strained,
And, as his fingers o'er them hovered,
The shell disdained, a soul had gained,
The lyre had been discovered.
O empty world that round us lies,
Dead shell, of soul and thought forsaken,
Brought we but eyes like Mercury's,
In thee what songs should waken!

* * * * *

JOHN BURROUGHS

AMERICA, 1837-

WAITING[1]

Serene, I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind, or tide, or sea;
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
For lo! my own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid the eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face.

Asleep, awake, by night or day,
The friends I seek are seeking me;
No wind can drive my bark astray,
Or change the tide of destiny.

What matter if I stand alone?
I wait with joy the coming years;
My heart shall reap where it has sown,
And garner up its fruit of tears.

The waters know their own, and draw
The brook that springs in yonder height;
So flows the good with equal law
Unto the soul of pure delight.

The stars come nightly to the sky;
The tidal wave unto the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,
Can keep my own away from me.

* * * * *

[Footnote 1: Used by courteous permission of the publishers,
Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., Boston.]

JOAQUIN MILLER

AMERICA, 1841-

COLUMBUS

Behind him lay the gray Azores,
Behind him the gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores,
Before him only shoreless seas.
The good mate said: "Now must we pray,

For lo! the very stars are gone.

Brave Admiral, speak; what shall I say?"

"Why, say: 'Sail on! sail on! and on!'"

"My men grow mutinous day by day;

My men grow ghastly wan and weak,"

The stout mate thought of home; a spray

Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.

"What shall I say, brave Admiral, say,

If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"

"Why, you shall say, at break of day,

'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!'"

They sailed and sailed as winds might blow,

Until at last the blanched mate said:

"Why, now not even God would know

Should I and all my men fall dead.

These very winds forget their way,

For God from these dread seas is gone.

Now speak, brave Admiral, speak and say--"

He said: "Sail on! sail on! and on!"

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:

"This mad sea shows his teeth to-night.

He curls his lip, he lies in wait,

With lifted teeth, as if to bite!

Brave Admiral, say but one good word:

What shall we do when hope is gone?"

The words leapt as a leaping sword:

"Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck,

And peered through darkness. Ah, that night

Of all dark nights! And then a speck--

A light! a light! a light! a light!

It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!

It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.

He gained a world; he gave that world

Its greatest lesson: "On! sail on!"

* * * * *

JOHN VANCE CHENEY

AMERICA, 1848-

EVENING SONGS[1]

I

The birds have hid, the winds are low,

The brake is awake, the grass aglow:

The bat is the rover,
No bee on the clover,
The day is over,
And evening come.

The heavy beetle spreads her wings,
The toad has the road, the cricket sings:
The bat is the rover,
No bee on the clover,
The day is over,
And evening come.

II

It is that pale, delaying hour
When nature closes like a flower,
And on the spirit lies,
The silence of the earth and skies.
The world has thoughts she will not own
When shade and dream with night have flown;
Bright overhead, a star
Makes golden guesses what they are.

III

Now is Light, sweet mother, down the west,
With little Song against her breast;
She took him up, all tired with play,
And fondly bore him far away.

While he sleeps, one wanders in his stead,
A fainter glory round her head;
She follows happy waters after,
Leaving behind low, rippling laughter.

IV

Behind the hilltop drops the sun,
The curled heat falters on the sand,
While evening's ushers, one by one,
Lead in the guests of Twilight Land.

The bird is silent overhead,
Below the beast has laid him down;
Afar, the marbles watch the dead,
The lonely steeple guards the town.

The south wind feels its amorous course
To cloistered sweet in thickets found;
The leaves obey its tender force,

And stir 'twixt silence and a sound.

* * * * *

[Footnote 1: From "Poems," published by Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin,
& Co., Boston.]

BLISS CARMAN

CANADA, 1861-

A VAGABOND SONG[1]

There is something in the Autumn that is native to my blood--
Touch of manner, hint of mood;
And my heart is like a rhyme,
With the yellow and the purple and the crimson keeping time.

The scarlet of the maples can shake me like a cry
Of bugles going by.
And my lonely spirit thrills
To see the frosty asters like smoke upon the hills.

There is something in October sets the gypsy blood astir;
We must rise and follow her,
When from every hill of fame
She calls and calls each vagabond by name.

* * * * *

[Footnote 1: From "Songs from Vagabondia," by Bliss Carman. Used
by the courteous permission of the author and the publishers,
Messrs. Small, Maynard, & Co.]

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

AMERICA, 1852-

OLD GLORY[1]

Old Glory! say, who,
By the ships and the crew,
And the long, blended ranks of the gray and the blue--
Who gave you, Old Glory, the name that you bear
With such pride everywhere,
As you cast yourself free to the rapturous air
And leap out full length, as we're wanting you to?--
Who gave you that name, with the ring of the same,
And the honor and fame so becoming to you?
Your stripes stroked in ripples of white and of red,
With your stars at their glittering best overhead--
By day or by night
Their delightfullest light
Laughing down from their little square heaven of blue!
Who gave you the name of Old Glory--say, who--

Who gave you the name of Old Glory?

The old banner lifted and faltering then

In vague lisps and whispers fell silent again.

Old Glory: the story we're wanting to hear

Is what the plain facts of your christening were,--

For your name--just to hear it,

Repeat it, and cheer it, 's a tang to the spirit

As salt as a tear;--

And seeing you fly, and the boys marching by,

There's a shout in the throat and a blur in the eye,

And an aching to live for you always--or die,

If, dying, we still keep you waving on high

And so, by our love

For you, floating above,

And the scars of all wars and the sorrows thereof,

Who gave you the name of Old Glory, and why

Are we thrilled at the name of Old Glory?

Then the old banner leaped like a sail in the blast,

And fluttered an audible answer at last

And it spake with a shake of the voice, and it said:

By the driven snow-white and the living blood-red

Of my bars and their heaven of stars overhead--

By the symbol conjoined of them all, skyward cast,

As I float from the steeple or flap at the mast,

Or droop o'er the sod where the long grasses nod,--

My name is as old as the glory of God

So I came by the name of Old Glory.

* * * * *

[Footnote 1: This and the following poems are used by the courteous permission of the publishers, Messrs. Bobbs, Merrill, & Co., Indianapolis.]

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

AMERICA, 1807-1882

KAVANAGH

Ah, how wonderful is the advent of the spring!--
the great annual miracle of the blossoming of Aaron's
rod, repeated on myriads and myriads of branches!
--the gentle progression and growth of herbs,
flowers, trees,--gentle, and yet irrepressible,--
which no force can stay, no violence restrain, like
love, that wins its way and cannot be withstood by
any human power, because itself is divine power. If
spring came but once a century, instead of once a
year, or burst forth with a sound of an earthquake
and not in silence, what wonder and expectation
would there be in all hearts to behold the miraculous
change!

But now the silent succession suggests nothing but necessity. To most men, only the cessation of the miracle would be miraculous, and the perpetual exercise of God's power seems less wonderful than its withdrawal would be. We are like children who are astonished and delighted only by the second-hand of the clock, not by the hour-hand.

In the fields and woods, meanwhile, there were other signs and signals of the summer. The darkening foliage; the embrowning grain; the golden dragonfly haunting the blackberry bushes; the cawing crows, that looked down from the mountain on the cornfield, and waited day after day for the scarecrow to finish his work and depart; and the smoke of far-off burning woods, that pervaded the air and hung in purple haze about the summits of the mountains, --these were the vaunt-couriers and attendants of the hot August.

The brown autumn came. Out of doors, it brought to the fields the prodigality of the golden harvest,-- to the forest, revelations of light,--and to the sky, the sharp air, the morning mist, the red clouds at evening. Within doors, the sense of seclusion, the

stillness of closed and curtained windows, musings by the fireside, books, friends, conversation, and the long, meditative evenings. To the farmer, it brought surcease of toil,--to the scholar, that sweet delirium of the brain which changes toil to pleasure. It brought the wild duck back to the reedy marshes of the south; it brought the wild song back to the fervid brain of the poet. Without, the village street was paved with gold; the river ran red with the reflection of the leaves. Within, the faces of friends brightened the gloomy walls; the returning footsteps of the long-absent gladdened the threshold; and all the sweet amenities of social life again resumed their interrupted reign.

The first snow came. How beautiful it was, falling so silently, all day long, all night long, on the mountains, on the meadows, on the roofs of the living, on the graves of the dead! All white save the river, that marked its course by a winding black line across the landscape; and the leafless trees, that against the leaden sky now revealed more fully the wonderful beauty and intricacy of their branches!

What silence, too, came with the snow, and what seclusion! Every sound was muffled, every noise changed to something soft and musical. No more trampling hoofs,--no more rattling wheels! Only

the chiming sleigh bells, beating as swift and merrily
as the hearts of children.

* * * * *

APPENDIX: BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

ENGLISH AUTHORS

GEOFFREY CHAUCER, the father of English poetry, was born in London in 1340. The colleges of Oxford and Cambridge both claim him as a student. He enjoyed the favor of King Edward the Third, and passed much of his time at court. In 1386 he was made a knight, and during the latter part of his life he received an annual pension. He died in 1400. His writings are in a language so different from modern English that many persons cannot enjoy their beauties. His principal poems are "Canterbury Tales," "The Legend of Good Women," "The Court of Love," and "Troilus and Cressida."

EDMUND SPENSER was born in London about 1553. He was graduated at Cambridge in 1576, and soon after wrote "The Shepherd's Calendar." Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Walter Raleigh were his friends and patrons. In 1598 Spenser was appointed a sheriff in Ireland, and not long afterward in a rebellion his property was destroyed and his child killed. He did not long survive this calamity. His best-known

poem is "The Faery Queen."

THE REIGN OF QUEEN ELIZABETH is often called the Golden Age of English literature. Not only did Spenser and Shakespeare live then, but a large number of minor poets also rendered the period illustrious. Among the dramatic poets Christopher Marlowe, Beaumont and Fletcher, who wrote together, and Ben Jonson hold an honorable position. The most noted lyric poets of the day were George Herbert, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sir Philip Sidney. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, the greatest of English poets, was born at Stratford-on-Avon in April, 1564. He is supposed to have been educated at the free school of Stratford. When he was about twenty-two, he went to London, and after a hard struggle with poverty, he became first an actor, then a successful playwright and theater manager. Having gained not only fame but a modest fortune, he retired in 1611 to live at ease in Stratford until his death in 1616. Besides the two long poems, "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece," which first won popularity for him, he has written thirty-seven plays, ranging from the lightest comedy, through romance and historical narrative, to the darkest tragedy. Whatever form his verse takes,--sonnet, song, or dramatic poetry,--it shows the touch of the master hand, the inspiration of the master mind. Of his plays those which are still most frequently acted are the tragedies "Hamlet," "Macbeth," "King Lear," and "Othello," the comedies "Midsummer-night's Dream," "The Merchant of Venice," "As You Like It," and "The Comedy of Errors," and the historical plays "Julius Caesar," "King Henry IV," "King Henry V," and "Richard III."

BEN JONSON was born at Westminster, England, about 1573. He was the friend of Shakespeare and a famous dramatist in his day, but his plays no longer hold the stage. His best play is "Every Man in his Humour." His songs and short poems are beautiful. He died in 1637. His tomb in Westminster Abbey is inscribed "O Rare Ben Jonson!"

GEORGE HERBERT was born in Montgomery Castle, Wales, April 3, 1593. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. Later he studied for the ministry and was appointed vicar of Bremerton. His "Sacred Poems" are noted for their purity and beauty of sentiment. He died in 1633.

JOHN MILTON was born in London, December 9, 1608. He was educated at Christ's College, Cambridge. Later he spent a year in travel, meeting the great Galileo while in Italy. He was an ardent advocate of freedom, and under the Protectorate he was the secretary of the Protector, Oliver Cromwell. When only forty-six, he became totally blind, yet his greatest work was done after this misfortune overtook him. As a poet he stands second only to Shakespeare. His early poems, "Comus," "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," and "Lycidas," are very beautiful, and his "Paradise Lost" is the finest epic poem in the English language. He died in 1674.

THE MINOR POETS of the age of Milton were Edmund Waller, Robert Herrick, George Wither, Sir John Suckling, and Sir Richard

Lovelace.

JOHN DRYDEN was born August 9, 1631. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. His poem in honor of the restoration of Charles II won him the position of Poet Laureate. His best-known works are the poetic "Translation of Virgil's Aeneid," "Alexander's Feast," "The Hind and the Panther," and the drama "The Indian Emperor." He died in 1700.

THE REIGN OF QUEEN ANNE was rendered brilliant by the writings of Alexander Pope, Joseph Addison, Edward Young, James Thompson, William Collins, Sir Richard Steele, Jonathan Swift, and Daniel Defoe. Not only were the poems of this period beautiful, but prose also reached a high development.

JOSEPH ADDISON was born at Milston, England, May 1, 1672. He completed his education at Queen's and Magdalen colleges, Oxford. He entered the diplomatic service and rose steadily, becoming one of the two principal secretaries of state two years before his death. He attained a higher political position than any other writer has ever achieved through his literary ability. With Steele he published _The Tatler_, and later _The Spectator_, at first a daily paper and afterward a tri-weekly one. He was a master of English prose, and his poems are elevated and serious in style. He died in 1719.

ISAAC WATTS was born at Southampton, July 17, 1674. He studied

for the ministry. He wrote nearly five hundred hymns besides his "Divine and Moral Songs for Children." Many of his hymns are still favorites. He died in 1748.

ALEXANDER POPE was born in London, May 21, 1688. Sickly and deformed, he was unable to attend school, but he was nevertheless a great student. His writings are witty and satirical. His best-known poems are "Essay on Man," "Translation of the Iliad," "Essay on Criticism," and "The Rape of the Lock." He died in 1744.

THOMAS GRAY was born in London in 1716. He was educated at Eton, and Peter-House College, Cambridge. He lived all his life at Cambridge, ultimately being appointed professor of Modern History. His most famous poem is the "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." He died in 1771.

WILLIAM COWPER was born at Great Berkhamstead, England, November 26, 1731. He was educated at Westminster School, and studied law at the Middle Temple, being called to the bar in 1754. He was very delicate and afflicted with nervousness that amounted to insanity at times. Not until 1780 did he seriously begin his literary career. Then for a period of a little more than ten years he worked with success and was happy. His most famous poems are "John Gilpin," "The Task," "Hope," and "Lines on my Mother's Portrait." In the latter part of his life his nervous melancholy again affected him. He died in 1800.

ROBERT BURNS was born at Ayr in Scotland, January 25, 1759.

He was the son of a poor farmer, and he himself followed the plow in his earlier days. He was about to seek his fortune in America when his first volume of poems was published and won him fame at once. His style is simple and sincere, with a fire of intensity.

His best poems are "Tam o'Shanter" and "The Cottar's Saturday Night."

He died July 21, 1796.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH was born at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, England, on April 7, 1770. He completed his education at St John's College, Cambridge, taking his degree of B A in 1791. He was appointed Poet Laureate in 1843, succeeding Robert Southey. He is the poet of nature and of simple life. Among his best known poems are "The Ode to Immortality," "The Excursion," and "Yarrow Revisited." He died April 23, 1850.

SIR WALTER SCOTT was born in Edinburgh, August 15, 1771. He was educated at Edinburgh University and afterward studied law in his father's office. His energy and tireless work were marvelous. He followed the practice of his profession until he was appointed Clerk of Session. His official duties were scrupulously performed, yet his literary work surpasses in volume and ability that of any of his contemporaries. Novelist, historian, poet, he excelled in whatever style of literature he attempted. His best-known poems are "The Lady of the Lake," "Marmion," and "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." He died

in 1832.

ROBERT SOUTHEY was born at Bristol, August 12, 1774. He was expelled from Westminster School for writing an article against school flogging. Later he studied at Balliol College, Oxford. He was an incessant worker, laboring at all branches of literature, from his famous nursery story, "The Three Bears," to "The Life of Nelson." He was appointed Laureate in 1813. His most successful long poems are "Thalaba," and "The Curse of Kehama." He died in 1843.

THOMAS CAMPBELL was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1777. He was educated at the university of his native town, and he was regarded as its most brilliant scholar, in his later life he was elected Lord Rector of the university. His best known poems are "The Pleasures of Hope," "Gertrude of Wyoming," and "Ye Mariners of England." He died in 1844.

THOMAS MOORE was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1779. He was educated at Trinity College, and afterward studied law at the Middle Temple, London. "Lalla Rookh," and his "Irish Melodies" have won for him a lasting fame as a poet. He died February 26, 1852.

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT was born near London in 1784. He left school when only fifteen to become a clerk in the War Office, where he remained until 1808, when he and his brother published The Examiner. From that time he was occupied as an editor and writer,

being connected with different periodicals. He was the intimate friend of Byron, Moore, Shelley, and Keats. One of his best poems, "Rimini," was written in prison, where he was condemned to remain for two years because he had published a satirical article about the prince regent. In his later years a pension of two hundred pounds was granted him. He died August 28, 1859.

GEORGE GORDON NOEL, LORD BYRON, was born in London, January 22, 1788. He studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, but did not remain to take his degree. While at the university he published a volume of poems, "Hours of Idleness," which he followed shortly by the satirical poem "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," which won him immediate recognition. He wrote many dramatic poems, but his most beautiful work is "Childe Harold." He was the friend of Shelley and Leigh Hunt, and together they published The Liberal. In 1823 he joined the Greeks in their struggle for freedom, and the exposure and exertion that he suffered in this war brought on the fever of which he died in April, 1824.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY was born at Field Place, England, August 4, 1792. He was entered at University College, Oxford, but was shortly expelled as an atheist. His life was a sad one, his first marriage was unhappy, and he was drowned when only thirty years old, in July, 1822. His longest and best works are "The Cenci," "Prometheus Unbound," "The Revolt of Islam," and "Adonais," an elegy on the death of his friend, the poet Keats, near whom he was buried.

JOHN KEATS was born in London, England, in 1795 or 1796. His poem "Endymion" was criticised severely in the Quarterly Review. Keats was so sensitive that this criticism is supposed to have aggravated his malady, and thus to be responsible for his early death. Among his other poems may be noted "Hyperion," "Lamia," and "The Eve of St Agnes." He died at Rome in 1821.

THOMAS HOOD was born in London, England, May 23, 1799. His humorous verses first attracted attention, but his serious poems have given him a lasting place in literature. Among these are "The Song of the Shirt," "The Bridge of Sighs," "Eugene Aram," and "Ode to Melancholy." He died in 1845.

THOMAS BABINGTON, LORD MACAULAY, was born in Leicestershire, October 25, 1800. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and studied law. He disliked his profession, greatly preferring literature. In 1830 he entered Parliament and was made Secretary of War in 1839. He was elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University and was raised to the peerage in 1857. He died in 1859. His best-known poems are "Ivry" and "The Lays of Ancient Rome."

THE REIGN OF QUEEN VICTORIA from a literary standpoint is second only to that of Elizabeth in brilliancy. The Victorian Age is usually applied to the whole century, during the better part of which Victoria reigned. The literature of this age is rich with the writings

of Robert Browning, Alfred Tennyson, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his sister Christina, William Morris, Matthew Arnold, Edwin Arnold, Jean Ingelow, Owen Meredith, Arthur Hugh Clough, Adelaide Procter, and a host of minor poets.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON, was born at Somersby, August 6, 1809. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. His first book of poems, written with his brother Charles, was published two years before he entered college; from that time until his death his literary work was continuous. In 1850 he succeeded Wordsworth as Poet Laureate, and thirty-four years later was raised to the peerage. His poems cover a wide range--lyrics, ballads, idylls, and dramas. His most important works are "The Princess," "In Memoriam," "Maud," and "The Idylls of the King." He died in 1892.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING was born at Durham, England, March 6, 1809. She was highly educated and was proficient in both Greek and Latin. She wrote her first verses at the age of ten, and her first volume of poems was published when she was but seventeen years old. In 1846 she was married to the poet Robert Browning. Her first known works are "Aurora Leigh," a novel in verse, "The Portuguese Sonnets," "Casa Guidi Windows," and "The Cry of the Children," a poem written to show the wretchedness of the little children employed in the mines and factories of England. She died at Florence, Italy, in June, 1861.

ROBERT BROWNING was born in Camberwell, England, in 1812. He was educated at the University of London. He married Elizabeth Barrett, the poet, and together they lived much of their time in Italy. They were deeply interested in the struggle of Italy for freedom, and both wrote on this subject. In his long life Browning wrote many volumes of poems, and it is difficult to choose among them. "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" is always a favorite with the young people, as are "How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix," "Herve Riel," and "Ratisbon." His most popular poems are "Pippa Passes," "The Ring and the Book," "A Blot on the 'Scutcheon," and "Saul." He died in 1889.

MARIAN EVANS, who wrote under the name of George Eliot, was born at Aubury Farm, near Nuneaton, England, November 22, 1819. She was carefully educated and was a most earnest student. While her poems are beautiful, her best work is in prose, and she ranks as one of England's greatest novelists. Her most famous novels are "Adam Bede," "The Mill on the Floss," "Silas Marner," and "Middlemarch." She married Mr John Cross, in May, 1880, and died December 22 of the same year.

JEAN INGELow was born at Boston, England, in 1820. She is known both as a poet and novelist. Her best-known poems are "Songs of Seven" and "The High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire." She died in 1897.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, son of Thomas Arnold of Rugby, was born at Laleham, England, December 24, 1822. He was educated at Rugby and Oxford. In 1857 he was elected professor of Poetry at Oxford. He is chiefly noted for his essays, though his poems are lofty in sentiment and polished in diction. "Sohrab and Rustum" is his most important poem. He died in 1888.

DINAH MARIA MULOCK CRAIK was born in Staffordshire, England, in 1826. She won her fame as a writer of novels, of which the best is "John Halifax, Gentleman." She died in 1887.

WILLIAM MORRIS was born in Walthamstow, March 24, 1834. He was educated at Exeter College, Oxford. Before he was thirty years old he founded an establishment for the manufacture of artistic materials for household decoration. His work in this direction has improved the beauty of all household fabrics, and has affected the taste in household art in both England and America. Nevertheless he is best known as a poet. His finest poems are "The Earthly Paradise," a series of Norse legends, "Three Northern Stones," translated from Icelandic poems, and his translations of "The Odyssey." He died in 1896.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE was born in London, April 5, 1837. He was educated partly in France, at Eton, and at Balliol College, Oxford. He left the University without a degree to spend several years in travel. He is a master of English, using a wider vocabulary

than any of his contemporaries, and the musical effects of his many varied meters have won for him a unique position in poetry. He has been called "the greatest metrical inventor in English literature."

His works in French and Latin show him to be a poet in three languages. His best-known works are "Poems and Ballads," "Songs before Sunrise," and "Mary Stuart." He is the greatest living English poet.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI was born in London, May 12, 1828. He studied art in the antique school of the Royal Academy, and became known as an artist before he won fame as a poet. His most widely known poem is "The Blessed Damozel." He died in 1882.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI, the sister of D.G. Rossetti, was born in London, December 5, 1830. She ranks as one of the greatest and most spiritual of English poetesses.

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD was born in Sussex, June 10, 1832. He was educated at King's College, London, and at University College, Oxford. He was appointed principal of the Government Sanscrit College at Poonah, India, and Fellow of the University of Bombay, and held these posts through the Sepoy Rebellion. Returning to London in 1861, he was one of the editors of the *Daily Telegraph*, and through his influence Henry M. Stanley undertook his first expedition into Africa to find Livingstone. Nearly all of his poetry deals with Oriental legends, and much of his time was spent in India and Japan.

His principal works are "The Light of Asia," "Pearls of the Faith," "Indian Song of Songs," "Japonica," and "The Light of the World."

RUDYARD KIPLING was born in Bombay, India, December 30, 1865.

He was educated partly in England, but returned to India when he was only fifteen, and there began his literary work and first won fame.

His writings are mainly in prose, and he is at his best when writing of India. His poems are all short, and "The Recessional" and "The Dove of Dacca" are especially fine. In prose the "Jungle Books," "The Naulakha," and "Kim" are the most popular.

AMONG THE MINOR POETS of the Victorian Age may be mentioned the following:--

John Henry, Cardinal Newman, 1801-1890. Author of many volumes of sermons and the hymn "Lead Kindly Light."

Henry Francis Lyte, 1763-1847. Author of many hymns, the most popular of which is "Abide with Me."

Alfred Domett, 1811-1887. Author of "Christmas Hymn."

Arthur Hugh Clough, 1810-1861. Author of "Bothie of Tober-na-vuolich."

Charles Mackay, 1814-1889. Author of many songs, among them "There is a Good Time Coming" and "Cheer, Boys, Cheer!"

AMERICAN AUTHORS

In the early days of this country the time and thought of the settlers were taken up in struggling with the difficulties of their surroundings, so that there was little opportunity for the establishment of an American literature. For art, poetry, and the beautiful in life, the colonists naturally turned to the mother country--to the home which they had so lately left. During the period before the French and Indian War the subject of religion and nice points of doctrine filled the minds of the Americans, hence we find that the first American writer who attained to a European reputation was the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, a distinguished divine and president of Princeton College. His books on "The Religious Affections" and "The Freedom of the Will" are still studied.

After the French and Indian War, politics became the absorbing topic of the day, and Benjamin Franklin was the first to achieve fame in this field of letters. His writings in "Poor Richard's Almanac," honest and wholesome in tone, exercised a marked influence upon the literature of his time. Among the orators who won distinction in the discussion of civil liberty are James Otis, John and Samuel Adams, and Patrick Henry. The writings of John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison in The Federalist secured the adoption of the

Constitution and survive to this day as brilliant examples of political essays, while the state papers of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson are models of clearness and elegance of style.

With the peace and prosperity that followed the establishment of our republic came the opportunity to cultivate the broader fields of literature. Relieved of the strain of the struggle for civil and religious liberty, the people could satisfy their inclinations toward the beautiful in art and life, and from that time until the present day the writers of America have held their own in the front ranks of the authors of the English-speaking peoples.

JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE, the first American poet to win distinction, was born in New York City in 1795. He was educated in Columbia College. He died prematurely when only twenty-five years old. His best-known poems are "The Culprit Fay" and "The American Flag." He was the intimate friend of Fitz-Greene Halleck, the Connecticut poet, author of "Marco Bozzaris." The last four lines of Drake's "American Flag" were written by Fitz-Greene Halleck.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT was born in Cummington, Massachusetts, November 3, 1794. He was educated at Williams College. He studied law and was admitted to the bar. His first poem was published when he was thirteen. His best-known poem, "Thanatopsis," was written when he was only nineteen and delivered at his college commencement. After practicing law for a short time, he became editor of _The

Evening Post_ and continued this work until his death. When he was seventy-two, he began his translation of Homer, which occupied him for six years. He died in 1878.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON was born in Boston, May 20, 1803. He studied at Harvard College, and after a period of teaching, became pastor of a Unitarian church in Boston for a short time. Later he settled in Concord, spending his time in writing and lecturing in this country and England. He was the founder of what has been called "The Concord School of Philosophy." His best-known poems are "The Concord Hymn," "Rhodora," "The Snow Storm," "Each and All," "The Days," and "The Humble Bee." He died in 1882.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW was born in Portland, Maine, February 27, 1807. He was educated at Bowdoin College and, after a period of study abroad, was appointed professor of Foreign Languages there. This position he gave up to become professor of Modern Languages and Literature at Harvard College. At Cambridge he was a friend of Hawthorne, Holmes, Emerson, Lowell, and Alcott. His best-known long poems are "Evangeline," "Hiawatha," "The Building of the Ship," and "The Courtship of Miles Standish." He made a fine translation of Dante's "Divine Comedy." Among his many short poems, "Excelsior," "The Psalm of Life," "The Wreck of the Hesperus," "The Village Blacksmith," and "Paul Revere's Ride" are continuously popular. He died in 1882. He was the first American writer who was honored by a memorial in Westminster Abbey.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER was born near Haverhill, Massachusetts, December 17, 1807. He was educated in the public school, working at the same time on his father's farm or at making shoes. Having left the academy, he devoted himself to literature. He was an ardent abolitionist, and many of his poems are written to aid the cause of freedom in which he was so deeply interested. His best-known poems are "Snow-Bound," "Barbara Frietchie," "Maude Muller," and "Voices of Freedom." He died in 1892.

EDGAR ALLAN POE was born in Boston, Massachusetts, January 19, 1809. The story of his life is as melancholy as was his genius. Wild, dissipated, reckless, he was dismissed from West Point. He alienated his best friends and lived the greatest part of his life in the deepest poverty, dying in 1849 from the effects of dissipation and exposure. His best poems are "The Raven," "The Bells," and "Annabel Lee."

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, August 29, 1809. He was educated at Harvard College and studied medicine, spending two years in the hospitals of Europe. He was successively professor of Anatomy and Physiology at Dartmouth College, a physician in regular practice in Boston, and professor of anatomy at Harvard College--this position he held from 1847 to 1882. He was nearly fifty before he became widely known as a writer, when "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" was published. He was successful as essayist, novelist, poet, a kindly wit playing through much of his

work. His best-known poems are "Old Ironsides," "The Chambered Nautilus," "The One-hoss Shay," "The Last Leaf," and "The Boys." He died in 1894.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, February 22, 1819. He was educated at Harvard College. He succeeded Longfellow as professor of Modern Languages and Literature at Harvard. He was also editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* and of the *North American Review*. He was appointed minister to Spain and later to England, where he was our ambassador for five years. His best-known poems are "The Vision of Sir Launfal," "Commemoration Ode," "The Biglow Papers," "The Present Crisis," and "The First Snowfall." He died in 1891.

WALT WHITMAN was born in West Hills, Long Island, May 31, 1819. He was unable to go to college. He served in various occupations, teacher, printer, writer, until in the great Civil War he volunteered as a war nurse. His exertions and exposure in this work destroyed his health, so that most of his remaining years he was dependent upon his friends. His most beautiful poem is "O Captain, My Captain," written after the assassination of Lincoln. He died in 1892.

CINCINNATUS HEINE MILLER, who wrote under the name of Joaquin Miller, was born in Indiana in 1841. While yet a boy he went to Oregon and later to California, where he led a wild life among the miners, fighting the Indians, practicing law, and becoming a county judge.

After several years in Europe and New York, he settled down as a fruit grower in California. He wrote "Songs of the Sierras," "Songs of the Sun-Lands," and "The Ship in the Desert."

AMONG THE MINOR AMERICAN POETS the following are worthy of note:--

Francis Scott Key, 1779-1843. "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Emma Hart Willard, 1787-1870. "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep."

John Howard Payne, 1792-1852. "Home Sweet Home."

Josiah Gilbert Holland, 1819-1881. "Bittersweet."

Julia Ward Howe, 1819-. "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

Alice Cary, 1820-1871. Phoebe Cary, 1824-1871. Joint authors of several volumes of poems. "Order for a Picture," A.C. "Nearer Home," P.C.

Thomas Buchanan Read, 1822-1872. "Drifting," "Sheridan's Ride."

John Burroughs, naturalist, 1837-. "Waiting."

Edward Rowland Sill, 1841-1887. "The Fool's Prayer," "Opportunity."

Sidney Lanier, 1842-1881. "The Song of the Chattahoochee," "The Marshes of Glynn," "A Song of the Future."

John Vance Cheney, 1848-. "Thistle Drift," "Wood Blooms," "Evening Songs."

James Whitcomb Riley, 1853-. "Rhymes of Childhood."

Eugene Field, 1850-1895. "With Trumpet and Drum," and "Love Songs of Childhood."