REALISM IN STORIES

MR. BRANDER MATTHEWS CHATS OF THE ART OF TELLING THEM.

Compression, Ingenuity, Originality and Fantasy All Needed in a Tale Worth Reading.

New York Commercial Advertiser.

In a certain unpretentious looking house in Eighteenth street, New York, lives Prof. Brander Matthews, of Columbia College. Inside, the first floor suggests the house of a literary workman—the library and the table seem to say to the rest of the furnishings, "We are of the first importance."

Professor Matthews himself is one of the busiest of men, yet by the assistance of method he accomplishes a vast deal. He always has time for any new interest which may arise, as also to respond to any unexpected demands made upon him in connection with his regular work, whether professional or literary.

In his den the writer of "Vignettes of Manhattan" sat one morning talking with a Boston Herald reporter about the art and philosophy of short-story writing in general, and about his stories in particular. He is particular to use the expression "short story" to distinguish an example of one of the highest forms of literature from the worthless story which is short.

The first point brought up was the distinction between the short story and the novelette on the one hand, and between the short story and the sketch on the other. The real distinction, Prof. Matthews holds, is, in the first case, that the story is read at a single sitting, and must, therefore, be short. The difference is chiefly in length rather than in character. The short story read at a single sitting creates one impression, to "totality." If you make it too long it creates a complicated impression and lacks unity of vision. Again, a novel needs some powerful motive to hold it together. Few motives except love are powerful enough to hold the reader's attention to the end of a story of 100,000 words, consequently the novels in the world which are not held together by that force can almost be numbered on the fingers. The short story does not need that motive. It can be founded on any incident of sufficient dramatic interest to hold the attention of the reader to the end; yet, of course, love is frequently brought into requisition.

"In the other case," said Professor Matthews, "the distinctions are not so fine. A short story, properly so-called, often ends with a climax which leaves the reader with a pleasant surprise. It is the crack of the whip at the end, and it gives dramatic finish to the narration. The sketch is a more vague, indefinite creation. Sometimes it is little more than a bit of description—a piece of mosaic work or a bit of local color. Perhaps we may say that while the sketch may be still life, the short story embodies action; yet the two forms merge into each other, and can hardly be distinguished. Nor is it useful to attempt to distinguish them. You might have a short story devoid of dramatic ending; to try to differentiate it from a sketch would be apt to lead to profitless discussion.

"In brief, the sketch merges into the novel, through the short story and the novelette, by almost imperceptible gradations. Yet the difference between the novel and the short story is essentially a difference in kind. And the latter is not a chapter out of a novel nor is it a condensed novel; it deals with a single character, a single event, a single emotion or a series of emotions called forth by a single situation.

"A short story, then, must relate a dramatic incident, but it does not necessarily have a dramatic ending.

THE REAL SHORT STORY.

"But it is of the very first importance to distinguish between the short story and the story which is short. The real short story is no more a synopsis of a novel than it is a chapter from a novel. The novelist may give his readers a cross section from everyday life; the writer of short stories must bring to his work compression, ingenuity, originality, and, perhaps, fantasy. Usually the last follows from the other three. He must take some incident of real dramatic interest, some incident which is not a suitable basis for a novel, for a short story in which nothing happens is merely a story which is short.

"Having chosen a subject of which it is possible to form a short story, the writer must work into it those qualities of which I spoke; but if his work is to take high rank he must also have an exquisite sense of form. Conception and execution must be equal in excellence. As the result of the absence of the latter quality we find many works which are novelettes in length, but short stories in essence; while many stories which are short are merely little novels. But the sense of form and the gift of style are secondary to the idea, the subject, which must always be an incident suitable for expression in a short story and unsuitable for expression in any other shape."

"Whence come your subjects for short stories?" inquired this visitor after the topic had been pretty thoroughly searched.

Professor Matthews thought a minute and then replied, with delightful frankness, "I haven't the faintest idea."

"Let us take particular instances then. What suggested the plot of 'At a Private View?'"

"One evening I was present at the opening of an exhibition of the American artists. It was a very large gathering I remember, and the rain came down in bucketfuls while we were looking at the pictures. The atmosphere of the whole scene—the peculiar quality of the conversation which one hears on such occasions, the character and the attitude of the people present—appealed to me as being 'copy.' It seemed, too, that it was a fairly new background. Then the incident came to me as something I had heard in another connection, and, by putting the two together, 'At a Private View' was the result. Yet here you note the fact that it is not a whole story. The real story is left to the reader's imagination. Yes, I suppose it is really told, to all intents and purposes, but only by results; it is not exactly a narrative. You reproduce the causes from the effects. The last sentence, of course, leaves the reader with something to think about and gives the key to the story. Without it the piece might, I suppose, be called a sketch."

"Would you call 'In Search of Local Color' a short story?"

"Yes, that's a short story. Of course, it records a number of experiences which I had while visiting the slums for color for a story of which the scene was to be laid in that part of the city. I introduced a novelist (Rupert De Ruyter) whom I had used before, yet I was careful to take the point of view of the public. It would be a sketch, as you suggest, without the incident at the end.

"The story for which I wanted local color on the occasion when I took those rambles was published under the title of 'Before the Break of Day.' 'In the Midst of Life' was also an incident which came to my notice.

HIS OWN STORIES.

"'The Speech of the Evening' was an unusual compilation. I had always wanted to write a story of which the central thought should be the fact that the typical New Yorker of prominence is an importation. The real scene described is that of the dinner given to Mr. Burnham, of Chicago, by representatives of the allied arts. The speech was amplified from one I had made myself at a Good Government Club meeting held to discuss points in the history of New York city. On that occasion I made a speech (a thing I very seldom do.) I am not a successful speaker, but on this occasion my remarks seemed to be received with favor. I jotted down what I could remember of the speech, and afterward worked it over."

"It seems to me that we are getting at the source of some at least of your stories?"

"My stories generally relate to New York life. I take three or four incidents which have come to my knowledge at some time and unite them by some thread, or against some background which suggests itself. I keep a commonplace book; that is to say, I jot down material of all sorts—incidents or types of suggestions—from time to time on bits of paper. These I put into a drawer. About once a year I clear out the drawer and classify the material, putting into one envelope those incidents which seem to fall under one heading. You see that such material can be classified indefinitely. When I want to write a story I take one of these groups and think over the whole subject, projecting it against some background. I go out a good deal, and when I see anything which seems to deserve treatment in a story it generally occurs to me that such and such another incident fits into it—belongs there, as it were."

"Do you rewrite and polish your work very much?"

"No, for the simple reason that I do the polishing in my head before I begin to write. I think out the whole story to the last detail before putting pen to paper. Polishing is dangerous unless it is done with just the right touch. For illustration: I am just reading a new novel by a young writer. It is a creditable piece of work; but she has polished it by hard labor. You feel that every word has been put there by main strength. If she had omitted the polishing the story would perhaps have made up for its lack of solidity by its spontaneity. If, on the other hand, she had put more hard work into it and had removed the traces of elbow grease it would have been an admirable book. But as it stands it misses both ways.

"I go over my manuscript with great care, for a word that can be dispensed with is an undeniable blemish. You see in this page of writing which I have just revised that the corrections consist for the most part in omissions."

"Does it seem to you that any rules, no matter how vague, can be laid down for the form in which a short story should be told?"

"No more than you can lay down rules for the subjects which shall be treated in such stories. It would be absurd to attempt to state what part dialogue, or description, or time, or place, or period should play. Some stories are entirely dialogue. Others are merely related. Some might happen anywhere or at any time. In other cases the background, while still remaining the background, is of the highest importance. Without it the lights and the shadows lack distinctness. The only point is that the author is bound to use the method which best tells that particular story.

THE LEADING MOTIVE.

"In regard to the substance of a story you can say that the element of love is less necessary than in a novel; yet you will notice that the majority of short stories have that for their leading motive. And there are compensations for the enforced brevity; you can use the element of fantasy. Introduced into a novel it would be tedious, if not fatal; it can be employed to excellent advantage in a short story. Again, your audience must be considered. If you are writing a story for men the element of love can be disregarded. But women are the chief novel readers; I suppose they constitute four-fifths of the readers of novels in the country. It is almost necessary to make love your chief interest if you wish to appeal to women, and if you appeal only to men your sales will be comparatively insignificant.

"Take 'His Father's Son' for example. That is at once a novel of business and a story in which love is not the leading element. Therefore, it is impossible that it should achieve any considerable success. Women don't like business, and they do like love; therefore it won't go with them; and men don't read novels to any great extent. Moreover, it originally appeared in the chief periodical for men in the country—Harper's Weekly.

"There is another point in regard to this mercenary phase. A story, long or short, must end happily—marriage bells in the distance and that sort of thing. Books (novels or short stories) attain their circulation in this way: People tell their friends that such and such a book is 'a good story.' But if the story leaves a sad impression they are loath to recommend it, perhaps because their friends will not thank them for suggesting such a story.

"Again, there is the point as to whether a run in a magazine helps or hinders the sale of fiction in book form. That, it seems to me, depends upon the author's audience. It is better for his pocket, of course, to sell his work to a magazine first, and that is what a deplorably large number of writers have to think about. They have families to support."

"How did you happen to write 'In the Twinkling of an Eye?'"

"I happened to see an item in an English paper many years ago telling how a camera had been used for detective purposes. I saved the item with the idea of using it. I worked it into one of my early plays, which was never acted. When the prize was offered I said to myself that it would be caught by some one with an original idea. Then I introduced the hint as to the guilty party to throw the readers off the track, and the story was complete in outline. Mr. Aldrich wrote to me: 'I've read the first chapter of your story, and I know the major didn't do it because you suggest to me that he did.'"

"Just what did you mean when you wrote 'A Cameo and a Pastel?'"

"A good many people have found more in that story than I ever meant to put into it. To begin with, there was the contrast in color. In the first half all is white, or exceedingly light, with the single exception of that splotch of blood, which I wanted. In the second white is almost excluded and all the deep colors come in. The first, of course, was a purely imaginative description of a dinner at a villa in the environs of Rome, at which dancers were introduced; the second was a scene in a New York studio at which Carmencita danced. I saw her twice. The first time I somehow couldn't see how the scene could be utilized in literature, but later it was put into the story that you know. I told Mr. Warner about it, and he used it in the 'Golden House.' Mr. Hamilton Aide has also put it in his international story."

SAFETY OF RAILROAD TRAVEL.

Statistics Show that a Man May Travel 181 Years Before Being Killed.

John Gilmer Speed, in Ladies' Home Journal.

The most remarkable achievements of modern civilization, probably, are those which affect traveling, making it at once quick, comfortable and secure. We cross States and continents at the rate of thirty miles an hour, with greater security against accident than our grandfathers enjoyed in their stage coaches, and we have, even when on the cars, comforts unknown in the palaces of kings when our grandfathers' grandfathers were young. * * * During the year (from Interstate-commerce Commission's report for year ending July 1, 1894), one passenger was killed for every 1,585,153 passengers carried, and one was injured for every 183,822 carried. This surely is as safe as living ordinary humdrum lives in large cities. The report further shows that a man's chances against injury were such that he would have to travel 4,406,659 miles before getting hurt, and go 47,583,966 miles before being killed. At the rate of thirty miles an hour a man could travel, if nature permitted, on American railways for one hundred and eighty-one years, without leaving the cars, before being killed, or with the same amount of security against accident he could go round the earth 1,903 times before meeting his death by accident, and 178 times before getting hurt.

THEY WORK MIRACLES

OR, AT LEAST, THAT IS WHAT SIMPLE-MINDED BELIEVERS THINK.

Sacred Relics Found in Some of the Canadian Shrines—The Rib of St. Blaise—Shrine of St. Donat.

Quebec Letter in New York Post.

The New Yorker who is interested in miracle-working shrines will find a typical French Canadian one at the village of Grande Ligne, seventeen miles north of the international boundary at Rouse's Point. Grande Ligne is a cluster of wooden houses, with a Grand Trunk station, a fine stone church dedicated to Saint Blaise and a stone presbytere or manse for the cure, Father Bonin. The country for miles around is a plain, where a great deal of hay is grown for the New York and Boston markets. Just now it is covered with snow, disappearing under that drying wind which, according to the weather wisdom of the habitant, presages a fat year:

Hale de mars,
Pluie d'avril,
Rosee de mal,
Remplissent le grenier.

Abbe Bonin and his predecessors have had a lot of trouble. The ecclesiastical parish of Saint Blaise, which belongs to the diocese of Montreal, was erected a few years ago. It is composed of territory taken from the old parishes of Saint Jean de Dorchester and Saint Valentin. The habitants, imbued with what is known here as the New England spirit, undertook to tell the archbishop of Montreal that there was no necessity for erecting a new parish, and, anyhow, his procedure was illegal because he had not allowed all the duly qualified freeholders interested to vote on the dismemberment of Saint Jean and Saint Velentin. A law suit followed in which, however, they were worsted. Then a number, out of pique, and in order to escape the fabrique assessment levied for the construction of the church and manse of Saint Blaise, turned Baptists, the Baptists having a college near by, and proclaimed the doctrine that salvation was just as easy outside the Roman Catholic communion as in it. "Strange to say," remarked a habitant to me, "they have had good crops ever since."

Diphtheria is a common complaint in French Canada, and nearly every one has sore throat during the changeable winter weather. The Church of Saint Blaise contains a piece of the saint's rib. It is five inches long and was procured from Rome in 1894, through the good offices of Mgr. Pifferi, sacristan of the Pope. "Since then," says the little hand book sold to pilgrims, "no fatal case of diphtheria or other throat malady has occurred in this neighborhood, which formerly had to deplore many fatal cases." The relic is preserved under the altar and is exhibited twice a year, on the saint's day, Feb. 3, and on Sept. 5, the day it was officially deposited in the church. Ordinarily the miracles are performed by means of candles. The sufferers kneel outside the altar rail and the priest inside passes the flame of a lighted candle close to their throats, saying, "Through the intercession of Saint Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God free thee from sickness in the throat and all other evils." The candles thus used are of a peculiar shape. Common candles brought by pilgrims are blessed inside the rail and carried home, to be lighted while the patient or his friends are invoking the aid of the saint. The interior of the church is plain, the only ornaments on the walls being the pictures of the stations of the cross to be found in all Catholic churches. But by and by Abbe Bonin expects ex-voto gifts from those who have been cured, and is in hopes also of getting money enough to pay a debt of $24,000 on the building.

MARVELOUS TALES.

The statue of the saint is much frequented. The handbook does not give any account of the miracles wrought, but the villagers are full of them. A man who had neglected his Easter duty for twenty years, un renard de paques, as they call such, and who was suffering from chronic sore throat and rheumatism, resolved to lead a better life, and last fall prayed before the statue, had his throat blessed and took home some candles, with the result that in a few days he was cured of his bodily ailments and is now a regular attendant at church. In these winter evenings, when time hangs heavy and there is no game of cards or fricot de famille, supper among the neighbors, on hand, the people of Grande Ligne tell any number of stories of this kind. They have stories, too, about the cures wrought upon cattle by Saint Blaise. He lived for a long time on a mountain in Armenia and was beloved by the wild beasts; they never disturbed him when he was praying, but waited till he was through for his blessing, and he often healed their sores. Hence his affection for animals and the prayer of the pious farmers of Grand Ligne, "Nous vous demandons de preserver par votre puissance nos troupeaux de tout calamite," etc.

Another shrine which the summer traveler from the United States should not miss is the "aerial chapel" in the Church of Notre Dame de Bon Secours at Montreal, which last year obtained a facsimile of the Santa Casa of Loretto. The facsimile is of wood and was prepared under the direction of Mgr. Andrenelli, custodian of the house of Loretto, who in a certificate vouches that "it is decorated within in strict conformity with the actual decoration of the holy house, has received the blessing with the holy cup (used by the Holy Family at Nazareth) therein preserved, after having been deposited for some time in the interior of the holy house and having touched the walls thereof." The "aerial chapel" is a small room at the top of the tower of the Church of Notre Dame, the oldest in Montreal. In the regular chapel, on a level with the street, may be seen an ex voto from the late Archbishop Bourget in commemoration of the miracle wrought by Our Lady in staying an outbreak of typhus in 1847. The tower is surmounted by a colossal statue of Our Lady, with hands uplifted as if in the act of blessing the St. Lawrence, which flows by three hundred feet below. The facsimile is already credited with several miraculous cures, and few sea captains leave Montreal without lifting their hats to the statue and muttering an ave in honor of the "old mother." The library under the tower contains some old paintings and a bust of the venerable Soeur Bourgeoys, who was instrumental in having the church built in 1657-75.

SAINT DONAT.

North of Montreal a few miles off the railway running to Saint Jerome and Labelle is the rather famous shrine of Saint Donat. It is a pretty spot on the shore of Lake Ouareau, where the pilgrim, when not engaged in the church, can revert to apostolic habits and fish, with the certainty of filling his basket. Last year a number of miracles were reported. A doctor at Saint Jerome inquired into one which attracted some attention, the cure of a lady named Paquette of consumption, and acknowledged its genuineness; but he is a Roman Catholic, and his verdict did not carry weight among the Protestant visitors, who attributed her recovery to the fresh air, fresh milk and odorous pine woods. In the adjacent county of Labelle there is a parish dedicated to Saint Andre Avelin, with a church in his honor. He is invoked all over French Canada as a protector against apoplexy and sudden death. Some doctors think that the long winter, during which the people with their large families are penned in small houses heated with stoves, is responsible for the apparent increase of apoplexy and heart disease and neuralgic pains. In towns as well as in the country the houses are equipped with double windows and door cloths to keep out the cold; the bedrooms, with their old-fashioned French counterpanes, are particularly stuffy. At Saint Andre and almost all the best parishes in the province there is a convent, and the nuns know how to make themselves agreeable to visitors.

Les petits soins, les attentions fines,
Sont nes, dit-on, chez les Visitandines.

When I was there the other day they were troubled about a young fellow born in New England of French Canadian parents who had come for a holiday to see his relatives on the Ottawa whom he had never seen before. He could speak French, but would pass anywhere for a Yankee, and was disposed to scoff at the old religion. Visitors of this sort are becoming more numerous every year, and the clergy look askance at them. In fact, the so-called New England spirit is slowly working a revolution in this province. In a recent work, "Les Canadiens Francais de la Nouvelle-Angleterre," Father Hamon, a Jesuit, fancies that the immense migration of habitants and mechanics is part of a providential design for the conversion to Catholicism of the land of the Puritans. It may be so, but it is very certain that the reflex influence of Puritanism is opening the French Canadian mind to new ideas, gradually weakening the cradle beliefs of the people and sapping the power of the church. They are not any happier for this; on the contrary, I should say the race is not so light-hearted as it was five and twenty years ago, nor on the whole so moral. But perhaps this change of character is due in part to the depression of agriculture, which is almost as severe here as in the adjoining States of Vermont and New Hampshire.

BANK NOTE AS A DETECTIVE.

A Bank of England Precaution Causes a Murderer's Arrest.

London Letter, in Chicago Times-Herald.

Four or five weeks ago in a London suburb a murder of uncommon atrocity was committed, the victim being an elderly recluse, a gentlemen of private fortune, who had no other servant than his gardener. The desperate murderer secured a large sum of money in gold and bank notes, and though there were evidences of a dreadful struggle between the old man and his assailant the only thing in the way of a clew left by the murderer was a lantern found in the grounds. The police, however, were unable to make a detective use of this article, and despite the most strenuous and diligent efforts to get trace of the miscreant the case bade fair to become one of the unsolved mysteries of criminal annals. But at this juncture a precaution long ago adopted by banking concerns to protect themselves against counterfeiters proved serviceable to the discovery of the perpetrator of a more heinous crime. A bank of England note for £10 was the means of guiding the police to the identification of the probable murderer not yet under arrest.

It has been observed, of course, by all visitors to England that the bank notes—square pieces of especially made paper with a simply engraved face and a plain back—are scrupulously white and clean, because they are invariably new. These notes do not remain in circulation long, and are never reissued by the bank; and in passing from one person to another a record is made of them. For example, you have cashed a check at your bankers, receiving notes of various denominations, from £5 up. Now, when you come to present one of these notes in payment of goods purchased, or if you tender it at another bank or at a postoffice to be changed, you will be asked to write your name and address on the back of the note, or at least to give your name and address to be entered on a memorandum of the note's number. If, therefore, a note returned through ordinary channels to the Bank of England is found to be a forgery, the officers can follow it back over its course to the original holder, a process so prompt that it has discouraged counterfeiters from wasting their ingenuity and energies upon the very simple looking Bank of England notes. It happened providentially that the murdered man referred to was known to have had in his possession, on the very day of the murder, a particular £10 note, which was a part of the money stolen. This fact was communicated to the bank and all the receiving tellers were instructed to keep their eyes open for the return home of the note. A few days ago it came in, and in very short order it was traced back to the bar of a public house, and very reluctantly the publican gave information as to the man from whom he had taken it, a notorious character in the neighborhood. The custom of countersigning notes in this processional fashion may have originated in the latter part of the last century, or some time after 1780, when that extraordinary rascal, Charles Price, alias Patch, so successfully imposed upon the public and cheated the bank. He was certainly one of the most remarkable characters of the age in which he lived. The son of a tailor, he early tired of the humdrum experiences of lowly honesty, and while no more than a mere lad began to put a rather marked cleverness to the service of knavery, his first exploit being a trick by which he defrauded a sailor of six guineas in the sale of a suit of clothes worth barely two guineas. He proved such a rascal that his father kicked him out and disinherited him, so that Price began to live by his wits. He went as gentleman servant to Sir Francis Blake, and in that capacity made the tour of Europe, informing his intelligence and refining his faculties, and by degrees became an expert in the art of deception and the practice of various confidence games. He became a comedian on his return to England, for the chief purpose, it is supposed, of becoming skilled in the use of disguises. He thus became acquainted with the celebrated Samuel Foote, whom he adroitly cheated out of £500; and not long afterward, in one of his disguises, he defrauded a gentleman out of £5,000, representing himself to be a rich brewer. He became an adept in swindling, but contrived, in an incomprehensible way, to avoid all legal consequences of rascality.

Finally, after having been a speculator on 'Change, a promoter of financial schemes and the keeper of a lottery (lotteries were the rage in those days), he turned his ingenuity to forging bank notes, and made his first attack on the Bank of England in 1780. So fine was his work (every bit of which was done by himself) in engraving, in signature, in watermarks and all, that the note passed unchallenged through numerous hands in the bank until it came to a certain department through which, says a writer of sixty years ago, "no forgery whatever can pass undiscovered." Of course, there was the greatest consternation among the directors as forgery after forgery came flooding in, and no scheme for the detection of the forger could be devised. There was no possibility of discovering the perpetrator of the felony, for Price worked without a partner, doing all his own engraving, making his own paper, doing his own printing and then, variously disguised and employing different messengers, he distributed his forgeries by sending to the several lottery companies notes for the purchase of tickets, the change being his profit. One of these tools was arrested at length and gave a minute description of the man who had employed him. But as Price was "made up" the description availed little, and, despairing of capturing him by private means, the bank issued handbills proclaiming the forgery, describing the forger and offering £200 for information leading to the apprehension of the rogue. The forgeries stopped for a time, but after some months were resumed.

Long immunity in his unlawful pursuits bred in Price an overconfidence in his ability to dupe his fellow mortals, and he was emboldened to raise tickets of deposit by adding a figure or a cipher, a fraud so impudently practiced that he was arrested. He was adroit enough even then to nonplus the officials, for there was no direct or positive proof against him. Taunting the officers upon their stupidity, he laughed at their having missed, in searching him, a £10 note which he had hidden in his fob. He exultingly held it to view. This was a fatal bit of braggadocio, for the note was one of the very ones that had been paid out on the raised ticket. Price was committed to prison, but promptly hanged himself in his room, after having successfully carried on his forgeries for six years, during which time he was one of the most familiar figures about town. Price was buried in the crossroads, the fate imposed upon suicides by English law. With Price's demonstration of possibilities, the practice of identifying a bank note by autographs is an excellent precaution.

OFFERINGS OF THE POETS.

A Distinction.

I was talking one day with a snowy haired
friend
Whose soul was dead ripe for the death
angel's sickle;
Whose days of devotion to self were at end,
And who heartily loathed the inconstant
and fickle.

I said: "Aged brother, thou knowest full
well
Many things deeply hidden from us that
are youthful;
The difference 'twixt 'liberal' and 'orthodox' tell;
And I know your reply will be honest and
truthful."

With a smile that was wisdom, and reverence, too—
Expressions that truly are always found
blended—
He made me reply that was faithful and
true,
Which I give as it was, neither altered
nor mended:

"The orthodox—generally speaking, you
know—
Says 'live as you please—your belief must
be proper;'
While the heterodox creed is, 'Believing may
go
As it will; so you live right, we don't care
a copper.'"

Richmond, Ind. —S. W. Gillilan.

A Pantheistic Mood.

All in the pagan forest,
Where shapes have tongues like men,
My soul sinks down to worship
The things of earth again.
Most passionate adorer,
Truest of devotees,
I kneel to singing waters,
Bow down to talking trees!
The forest's whispering language
With mystic meaning teems,
The sinking sun a censer
Before the (woods:god) seems;
Each blossom is an idol,
The brooklet, clear and sweet,
It is a fair libation
Poured out before their feet.
Here, in the pagan forest,
Where'er my feet have trod
Fair images confront me—
I find no room for God.
Most passionate adorer,
Truest of devotees,
I kneel to singing waters,
Bow down to talking trees!

Rockville, Ind. —Juliet V. Strauss.

A Moonlight Night.

Oh, magic moon and silent starlit sky!
Oh, Nature sweetly sleeping in the glow!
The hour is one of quietude below,
Of radiance and mystery on high!
No note of bird, not any softest sigh
Of winds that restless wander through
the night,
And, wand'ring, fleck the shade with
playful light—
In voiceless rest the hidden echoes lie.
Oh, God! thou regal shinest in yon moon,
Thou glancest from the faintest little star,
Thou speakest in the whole entrancing
sight!
Whate'er thy glories be at morn or noon,
Howe'er they gleam from sinking suns
afar,
To me, O Lord, thou loveliest art at
night!

Terre Haute, Ind. —Ed. P. Bell.

Recompense.

We are quite sure
That He will give them back—
Bright, pure and beautiful—
We know that He will but keep
Our own and His until we fall asleep;
We know he does not mean
To break the strands reaching between
The Here and There.
He does not mean—though heaven be fair—
To change the spirits entering there,
That they forget
The eyes upraised and wet,
The lips too still for prayer,
The mute despair.
He will not take
The spirits which He gave, and make
The glorified so new
That they are lost to me and you.
I do believe
They will receive
Us, you and me, and be so glad
To meet us that when most I would grow
sad
I just begin to think about the gladness
And the day
When they shall tell us all about the way
That they have learned to go—
Heaven's pathways show.
My lost, my own, and I
Shall have so much to see together by
and by.
I do believe that just the same sweet face,
But glorified, is waiting in the place
Where we shall meet, if only I
Am counted worthy in that by and by.
I do believe that God will give a sweet surprise
To tear-stained, saddened eyes
And that his heaven will be
Most glad, most tided through with joy
For you and me,
As we have suffered most.
God never made
Spirit for spirit, answering shade for
shade,
And placed them side by side—
So wrought in one, though separate, mystified,
And meant to break
The quivering threads between.
When we shall wake
I am quite sure, we shall be very glad
That for a little while we were so sad.

—George Klingle, in Western Christian Advocate.

The Old Barn.

Low, swallow-swept and gray,
Between the orchard and the spring,
All its wide windows overflowing hay,
And crannied doors a-swing,
The old barn stands to-day.

Deep in its hay the Leghorn hides
A round, white nest; and, humming soft
On roof and rafter, or its log-rude sides,
Black in the sun-shot loft,
The building hornet glides.

Along its corn-crib, cautiously
As thieving fingers, skulks the rat;
Or, in warped stalls of fragrant timothy,
Gnaws at some loosened slat,
Or passes shadowy.

A dream of drought made audible
Before its door, hot, smooth and shrill
All day the locust sings. . . What other
spell
Shall hold it, lazier still,
Than the long day's, now tell?—

Dust and the cricket and the strain
Of tree-toad and of frog; and stars
That burn above the rich West's ribbed
stain;
And dropping pasture bars,
And cow-bells up the lane.

Night and the moon and katydid,
And leaf-list of the wind-touched boughs;
And mazy shadows that the fire-flies thrid;
And sweet breath of the cows;
And the lone owl here hid.

—Madison Cawein.

The Gospel of the Ground.

To-day I stretch me on the shadowed grass,
And hear my heart say yet again to me
How sweet it is to let the bad world be.
Float, float, it says, with lightest things that
pass;
Leap with the gauze-winged vaulters; glass
to glass,
Drink with the bees—mix in the revelry
Of those the mother loveth tenderly,
Her own, to whom she giveth all she has—
Ay, heart, we will forswear the old vain
round,
Forstall wise death, betake us to the ground.

—John Vance Cheney.

To a Singer.

Thou hast a gift of gifts: go seek for bliss.
In far, strange lands, through long and
weary years,
Thou wilt not find a sweeter boon than
this—
The power to move thy listeners to tears.

—Clarence Urmy, in Lippincott.

Mary's Lamb.

Buffalo Courier.

The Mary that had the lamb is still alive in Massachusetts, and some of the critter's snow-white fleece has been preserved. Mary is now known as the widow Tyler, and she lives in the village of Sterling. It was nigh on to eighty years ago that the lamb kicked up the immortal rumpus in the schoolhouse. Mrs. Tyler was recently a participant in a fair at the Old South, in Boston, and while there she told the true and prosaic story of the celebrated lamb. Her father was a farmer named Sawyer, and among the lambs born on the homestead one night was a weakling which gave no promise of living to be a day old. Mary felt such compassion for it that she begged to be permitted to try and nurse it into strength. She carried it into the kitchen and tended it so carefully that it began to improve, and was soon as strong as any other of the flock. As the creature grew its attachment to its mistress increased. The story of its visit to the school is true. The poem which the incident inspired was written by one of Mary's schoolmates, whom Bartlett has wantonly ignored in his compilation of "Familiar Quotations." The lamb reached maturity, had lambkins of its own and other distracting cares, but its affection for Mary never altered. One day when she went for the cows it tagged on as usual. A vicious cow took offense at its presence in the pasture, gored it and tossed it in the air. It fell dead at Mary's feet. Mary's grief was so deep that she could with difficulty be prevailed upon to eat her share of it at next Sunday's dinner, though every one declared that it was just as good in death as in life. The fleece was carefully saved. She spun it with her own hands, and it is said that she knit from the yarn a pair of stockings which she afterwards presented to Daniel Webster. Some of the yarn she has always kept, and at the fair in Boston the other day she sold a few skeins of it. It was cut into short lengths and fetched, all told, $75.

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New York Commercial Advertiser.

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