

POETRY IN THE PARKS.

HOW TO BRING ON POETIC MOODS AT A SMALL OUTLAY.

The Encouraging Experiment of One Versifier—People Who Haunt the Parks—Lovers in the Gloaming—A Sad Sample of Park Poetry.

If one is determined to feel poetic and to experience sensations in the city parks, there are plenty of sights and sounds to help along his illusions. The next time you feel particularly yearning take a little walk into the nearest park and sit down on the grass under the largest tree, and if you try real hard you will after a while imagine that you are really in your native wild. Get a position where the great staring brick buildings around are not visible, and if possible don't look at any of the benches. The benches, simply to look at, are not poetic. There are (or were earlier in the season) the mowers and the rakers of hay, and the boys throwing stones at the birds, the lovers sauntering down shady lanes, the ousts and crickets, and more than all else there are the bugs, the country bugs. There is nothing that reminds one so much of the happy days down on the farm as the bugs.

Of course, there are drawbacks, but a truly powerful imagination will easily overcome them. The mowers don't use scythes much in the city parks. The machines are more convenient. They don't stand together under the trees and sing songs to the merry music of their whetstones either, as the stage mowers do; but then the real countrymen don't do that. Maud Muller can have in the city. She is generally an old Irish woman though, with a bag over her shoulder which she fills for her goat at home. Sometimes she is colored. The bag of grass for the goat is the nearest approach to the hayrick which was so dear to your young heart. The boys are the same. They are just as dirty and ragged. They use just as many bad words, and do as much mischief as you did.

Don't be discouraged if at first these little differences get the best of you and you keep painfully aware of the clattering street cars on the nearest street and of the generally conventional air of the lovers and the park policemen. I have the word of a real poet that he has overcome all of these inconveniences. He had to write a poem about August not long ago for a magazine, and he followed the plan that I have outlined with surprisingly good results. He couldn't afford to go to the real country, but I doubt if one person in a hundred would ever know the difference. He made a really admirable forest out of the two rows of cedar trees, and he excelled himself on the soft song zephyrs that whispered sweet woodland poetry to each other. The lowing herd was excellent, and no one would imagine that the goat was alone responsible.

My poet not only wrote this August poem but also a sonnet "In the Twilight" and another about "The Mighty Sea." The mighty sea was suggested, of course, by the fountain and also partially by the sign "Please Keep Out of the Fountain Basin." The fountain is in front of the entrance to a public building and evidently is of a very wild and stormy disposition. Imagine a fountain so eager to rush on the brick walls that the authorities have to request all passers-by to help keep it away. The sea is nothing to it. Some of the finest pastoral poems in existence were composed in parks. I haven't any references here now but I am confident of it.

This is all supposed to be in the daytime. At night the delusion is much less difficult. Any ordinary man can do it with ease. But even if you don't want to be poetic the parks are interesting. Lots of peculiar people go to them. I know a man who has not done any work for two years except sit in parks. He is a strong looking man, in the prime of life, but you come across him at all hours of the day leaning back on the benches and smoking bad cigars. The cigars are awful. I would remember them even if I forgot him. He always has a two-days-old red beard on his face and always wears the same clothes. The boys call him "Doc." He must be a very deep thinker for he never reads nor talks with any one. He is evidently working out some very weighty problem.

There are the old gentlemen who bring their books and pipes out, too, and there are the nurserymaids and babies, and the lovers, and the Sunday crowds. The Sunday crowds are different from the every-day people. If they are young ladies they have on pretty dresses and they usually find a good deal. If they are little girls they have on light, squeaky boots and they walk primly up and down the paths in mortal terror of the watchmen, never daring to run on the grass. The Sunday young men are a bad lot. They usually come to the parks to make every one else miserable. They sit four on a bench, and smoke cigarettes, and tell naughty stories, and comment on the passers-by.

But it is at night, too, when the philosopher as well as the poet will be most interested perhaps. You stroll slowly along on the grass so as not to make any noise and presently hear something like the following conversation carried on in two very low voices which proceed from two dusky forms very close together on a bench:

"Mabel, may I kiss you, now?"
 "No."
 "Please."
 "No."
 "Why not?"
 "See that man."
 "He's not looking this way."
 "Well, Harry, I don't want you to kiss me yet. Wait till it gets a little darker."
 "But Harry don't wait. You hear a very loud kiss and then Mabel moves to her end of the bench. But Harry soon has his arm around her again and says: "There, nobody saw us, and if they did, who cares? They wouldn't know who we were."
 "Yes, they would, too. Any one would know this red dress, and besides you kiss so loud. I don't like people who kiss so loud."
 Harry tries again, and then asks if that was loud. Mabel says it won't be a loud again, and then they snicker and do it some more. He always holds her hand and sits very close to her. Generally they change rings, and sometimes they say poetic things about the moonlight, and the trees, and the breeze, but not often. These young people detest the man who lights the gas lamps.

Mabel is not always with Harry. You will sometimes see her with three or four different young men in one week. She don't seem to have any very strong preferences.

There is an atmosphere of sighs and whispers, and kisses, and moonlight, and zephyrs, and all that kind of thing, at about 9 o'clock in almost any park, that is very inspiring.

Several months ago I found under a bench

In Judiciary Square the following poem on "Despair." It shows what can be done in parks.

DESPAIR.

A few brown-tinted leaves are on the trees, And underneath upon the rain-soaked earth The wreck of all the summer pageantry: Three nickels jingling always sad refrains Within the pocket of my well-worn vest, Naught else to show that I, a child of wealth, Have lingered in the lap of luxury. Except these mockeries, forever unredeemed, The tickets of Jakeheimer's three-ball store; The wind lamenting to the bare cold boughs, And drawing from their arms reluctant leaves That sadly glide within her chill embrace Who now to them is the angel of Death. A yellow summer derby placed awry Upon a head that sinks within my breast; A coat tight buttoned up around my neck To hide the linen worn beyond repair; A dark gray sky with black and low'ring clouds That hide the sun fast sinking in the west; A cold park bench and coppers on the watch To drive one on if he but rests a while; And always now the doubt, which shall it be, A lowly bed for fifteen cents or else a drink And afterward the cold and cruel night. 'Tis twilight in the world, but night in thought; My spirits sink neath the down-weighting pall Of blackness, blankness, misery, and despair.

I am not a critic of poetry myself but I took it to a friend of mine who has read a great many poems and he said it was certainly remarkably wretched. In fact, he had never seen so much wretchedness in one poem before in his life. I suppose the author would be very happy if I could only find him.
 HARRY C. BURSLEY.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The West End High School has not only grown but the accommodations for pupils have been vastly improved during the summer vacation. Last year the High School numbered fifty-six pupils. This year it is one hundred and twenty-five. The study hall has been furnished with a new floor, besides new desks and seats. A HERALD reporter observed in this room a novel feature. On the blackboard back of the teacher's platform was inscribed "News of the Week," and for each day of the week some important event was chronicled. In one column was a notice that on a certain Tuesday "The Daughters of the American Revolution had resolved to purchase Valley Forge as an historical point of interest;" another announced the death of Parnell; a third had something new to tell of the doings of the Ecumenical Council. The embryo reporters take turns in keeping the news-boards supplied with items. Miss Westcott, the principal, said "that every morning either boys or girls read paragraphs of their own writing on topics of public interest written in as brief a manner as possible." There are three other lady teachers besides the principal on the West End High School rolls. Miss Robinson, of the German and history class; Miss Buckley, teacher of science and mathematics; and Miss Olney, teacher of English and literature. Miss Westcott has charge of the Latin classes. The improvements referred to are most noticeable in the laboratory, where the whole outfit seems to be new and complete, with a work-bench on one side of the room for the pupils to make tools necessary for their work. In the drawing room the desks are adjustable to any height. Pupils in the Curtis Building have the advantage of the use of the books and reading-room of the Peabody Library, and the facilities for research and study are not surpassed by any other school in the District. Mr. Mirch, principal of the Fifth Division, and Mr. Janney, supervising principal, are proud of the work accomplished in Georgetown.

It is interesting to note the number of veteran teachers on the Washington public school rolls. Mr. J. H. Daniels has taught vocal music in the public schools for over thirty years; L. A. Bradley follows one behind; Mrs. Martin having taught thirty-two years, Miss V. L. Nourse, principal of the Lenox, has been in the schools twenty-five years, and Miss Anna Van Horn twenty-three, Miss J. A. Brown twenty-five, Miss Mary Awkward twenty-nine, S. E. Wise thirty-one, Emily Robinson thirty years, H. P. Johnson twenty-seven, M. A. Tait twenty-five, A. M. West twenty-two years. It will be seen from this that many women—these are mostly women—do chose teaching for a life profession, and when they do, they advance steadily from grade to grade, also showing that they do not give up their studies as the years go by, but keep pace with the improvements and up in the new studies. Another thing, the veteran teachers are appreciated and not jostled out of their seats by aspirants fresh from the Normal schools. There is a certain proportion of resignations or deaths every year and it is in these vacancies that the recruits fresh from school are principally placed.

School Notes.

A course of winter lectures will be begun in the Georgetown High School on November 1. The subjects have not yet been announced. Miss Westcott looks after the health of her pupils in a commendable manner.

Principal Cook, of the Seventh and Eighth Divisions, says that there are fifteen more schools this year in these two sections than last season, and that no child that applies for admission is ever turned away, room being found for it somewhere. There are fourteen regular teachers in these divisions six of whom are teaching two half-day schools.

Mr. Clayton, of the Franklin Building, has organized a class of boys into a glee club. There are sixteen of them, all picked voices. He has also organized a chorus, consisting of girls and boys to the number of ninety. Also a female octette of second year girls. All this gathering of the musical clans means a concert early in December to buy a piano for the use of the Franklin School.

The enrollment of the public white schools aggregate over 23,000 pupils, an estimated increase of from 1,000 to 1,500.

There is a little free kindergarten held in the upper story of the building where the High School cooking classes meet on O street.

Reduced Rates to Virginia State Fair via Pennsylvania Railroad. For the Virginia State Fair, at Richmond, October 27 to 30, the Pennsylvania Railroad will sell round-trip tickets, including admission to the fair, from October 25 to 28, valid to return until November 2, at the rate of \$4 from Washington and \$3.88 from Alexandria.

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IN EFFECT JULY 19, 1891.

Trains leave Washington from Station corner of Sixth and B streets as follows: For Pittsburg and the West, Chicago Limited Express of Pullman Vestibule Cars at 10.50 A. M. daily. Fast Line, 10.50 A. M. daily to Chicago, Columbus, and St. Louis, with Parlor Car Harrisburg to Pittsburg and Sleeping Cars from Pittsburg to Indianapolis, Pittsburg to Columbus, Altoona to Chicago, St. Louis and Cincinnati Express, 4.30 P. M. daily; Parlor Car Washington to Harrisburg and Sleeping Cars Harrisburg to St. Louis, Chicago, and Cincinnati and Dining Car Harrisburg to St. Louis, Chicago, and Cincinnati. Western Express, at 7.40 P. M. daily, with Sleeping Cars Washington to Chicago and St. Louis, connecting daily at Harrisburg with through Sleepers for Louisville and Memphis; Pullman Dining Car Pittsburg to Richmond and Chicago. Pacific Express, 10 P. M. daily for Pittsburg and the West, with through Sleeper to Pittsburg and Pittsburg to Chicago.

BALTIMORE AND POTOMAC RAILROAD. For Kane, Canandaigua, Rochester, and Niagara Falls, daily except Sunday, 8.10 A. M. For Erie, Canandaigua, and Rochester, daily; for Buffalo and Niagara, daily except Saturday, 10.00 P. M., with Sleeping Car Washington to Rochester.

For Williamsport, Rochester, and Niagara Falls, 7.40 P. M. daily except Saturday, with Sleeping Car Washington to Rochester. For Williamsport, Renova, and Elmira, at 10.50 A. M. daily except Sunday.

For Philadelphia, New York, and the East, 7.20, 9.00, and 11.00 A. M., 12.15, 2.10, 3.15, 4.20, 10.00, and 11.35 P. M. On Sunday, 9.00 and 11 A. M., 12.15, 2.10, 3.15, 4.20, 10.00, and 11.35 P. M. Limited Express of Pullman Parlor Cars, with Dining Car to New York, 9.40 A. M. daily except Sunday.

For New York only, Limited Express, with Dining Car from Baltimore, 4.00 P. M. daily. For Philadelphia only, Fast Express, 8.10 A. M. week days and 3.45 P. M. daily. Accommodation, 5.00 A. M. daily. Express, 5.40 P. M. daily.

For Boston without change, 3.15 P. M. every day. For Brooklyn, N. Y., all through trains connect at Jersey City with boats of Brooklyn Annex, affording direct transfer to Fulton street, avoiding double ferriage across New York City. For Atlantic City, 9.40, 11.00 A. M., 12.15 P. M. week days, 11.35 P. M. daily.

For Baltimore, 5.00, 6.35, 7.20, 8.10, 9.00, 9.40, 10.00, 10.50, 11.00, and 11.50 A. M., 12.15, 2.10, 3.15, 3.45, 4.00, 4.20, 4.30, 5.40, 6.14, 7.40, 10.00, 11.15 and 11.35 P. M. On Sunday, 5.00, 9.00, 10.05, 10.50, 11.00 A. M., 12.15, 1.00, 2.10, 3.15, 3.20, 3.45, 4.00, 4.20, 4.30, 5.40, 6.14, 7.40, 10.00, and 11.35 P. M.

For Pope's Creek Line, 7.20 A. M. and 4.30 P. M. daily except Sunday.

For Annapolis, 7.20 and 9.00 A. M., 11.50 and 4.20 P. M. daily except Sunday. Sundays, 9.00 A. M. and 4.20 P. M.

WASHINGTON SOUTHERN RAILWAY. IN EFFECT SEPTEMBER 6, 1891.

For Alexandria, 4.30, 6.35, 7.45, 8.40, 9.45, and 10.45 A. M., 12.01 noon, 1.00, 2.09, 3.28, 4.25, 5.07, 5.37, 6.15, 8.02, 10.05, and 11.39 P. M. On Sunday, at 4.30, 7.45, 9.45, and 10.45 A. M., 1.00, 2.43, 6.15, 8.02, and 10.05 P. M.

Accommodation for Quantico, 7.45 A. M. daily. For Richmond and the South, 4.30 and 10.57 A. M. daily. 5.07 P. M. week days.

Trains leave Alexandria for Washington, 6.05, 7.05, 8.00, 9.10, 10.15, 11.17, and 11.44 A. M., 1.20, 2.06, 3.00, 3.45, 5.05, 5.45, 6.13, 7.05, 9.15, 10.50, and 11.08 P. M. On Sunday, at 9.10, 10.15, 11.17, and 11.44 A. M., 2.06, 5.05, 7.05, 7.40, 9.15, and 10.50 P. M.

Tickets and information at the office, northeast corner Thirteenth street and Pennsylvania avenue, and at the station, where orders can be left for the checking of baggage to destination from hotels and residences.

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BALTIMORE & OHIO RAILROAD.

Schedule in Effect AUGUST 30, 1891. Leave Washington from Station corner of New Jersey avenue and C street:

For Chicago and Northwest, vestibule Limited Express trains 11.30 A. M., 8.30 P. M., daily. For Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Indianapolis, Vestibule Limited, 8.30, Express 11.30 P. M. daily.

For Pittsburg and Cleveland, Express daily, 9.30 A. M. and 8.45 P. M. For Lexington and Staunton, 11.40 A. M. For Winchester and Way Stations, 7.30 P. M. For Luray, 8.30 8.45 P. M.

For Roanoke, Knoxville, Chattanooga, and Memphis, 10.50 P. M., daily; Sleeping Car through to Memphis.

For Baltimore, week days, 4.05, 5.00, 6.35, 7.20, 7.50, (8.00, 45-minutes), 8.30, 9.30, (10.00, 45-minutes), 11.55 A. M., 12.10, 2.05, 2.45, (3.15, 45-minutes), 3.25, 4.25, 4.31, 4.55, (5.10, 45-minutes), 5.30, 5.35, 6.20, 6.25, 7.30, 8.30, 9.00, 10.00, 11.30, and 11.35 P. M. Sundays, 4.05, 7.30, (8.00, 45-minutes), 8.30, 9.30, (10.00, 45-minutes), 11.55 A. M., 1.00, 2.05, 2.45, 3.25, 4.31, 4.55, (5.10, 45-minutes), 6.20, 6.25, 7.30, 8.30, 9.00, 11.30, and 11.35 P. M.

For Annapolis, 7.20 and 8.30 A. M., 12.10 and 4.28 P. M. Sundays, 8.30 A. M. and 4.31 P. M.

For Frederick, 11.30 A. M., 1.15, 1.30, and 1.30 P. M. For Hagerstown, 11.40 A. M. and 1.30 P. M.

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For Atlantic City, 4.05, 10.00, and 11.55 A. M. Sundays, 4.05 and 11.55 A. M. For time of suburban trains see time tables to be had of all ticket agents.

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