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DEVOTED TO THE PROPAGANDA OF FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

Heredity or Environment, Which?

(By Joseph Rogers.)

The very humble cot besides the sea,
That stands unmoved by hate of wind or waves
Must oft have heard the storm exact the fee
The drowning pay, in shrieks, for ocean graves.
A pile of stone! It braves for years the fray,
While man, its builder, crumbles quick away.

The stories told inside its solid walls
Were salted with the flavor of the deep;
Adieus that paled the lips of sinking souls,
Who saw approach the herald of eternal sleep,
Were told again about the fisher's fire
By him who saw the doomed ones expire.

A question asked about how big a "catch"
The nets would gather from to-morrow's tide;
Or how the gale did move the roof of thatch,
Were problems that their counsels did decide.
So through the struggles tied to passing years,
They lived alone with their own hopes and fears.

I knew the cottage best when old John Bird
Did limp about the town to sell his fish;
His cry, "Fresh fish," a thousand times I've heard,
And oft has he filled my earthen dish.
Excited! he'd shake his stick at a boyish prank,
Then turn to calmly bargain with some crank.

The sea that gave the purpose to his life,
Was no more varied in its moods than he;
One moment giving peace of mind the knife,
The next as pleasant as a man could be.
Always dependent on the change of weather,
His passions tied or cut away their tether.

Of men who loom, like shadows, in the past,
The form of John the clearest outlines show,
For 'round it clings the shades and lights that cast,
Emphatic tones scarce other one did know;
Not common with the crowd it draws the eye,
From off the throng that, near it, hurry by.

The call of ocean tuned the tastes of youth,
And won his nature for its changing moods
To mold the traits and prove the shining truth
That seas add men as nurslings to their broods.
His whims were not the kind that can be bred
By folks the land had borne, then reared, and fed.

Old "Now. for," another product of the sands
Approached Bird as close as anyone I knew,
But he, like John, had kissed Neptune's hands,
And stood his baptism where the waters flew.
Their lives and thoughts were off a similar cast,
They differed only where Heredity ruled the past.

Their cursings, hates, and scores of other faults
Were haubles gather'd from the tossing sea;
On sun-lit waters restling o'er their vaults,
They gleaned the virtues to a great degree.
But playthings burnt and forged by Nature's laws,
They showed the virtues welded to the flaws.
Salt Lake City, Utah.

J. V. Parker
High and Abland East Side
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