



THE SPIRIT LAMP.

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The Spirit Lamp.

No. V.

JUNE 3, 1892.

THE HUMOURS OF DRYASDUST.

"MR. PITT," said the wits at Brooks', "rises at nine. The first thing he does is to eat no breakfast." When Jones rises I know not, but since he has nought to say I would he would say it. Instead thereof Jones says much. He has been by turns our last new poet, essayist, critic, wit. He scorns mere recorders of facts, Dryasdust and his clan. He cuts me now, for in a frank moment I confessed a preference for Dryasdust. Treat Dryasdust aright and you shall find him inaptly named, all humour at the core, liquescent wisdom, a flood, a deluge. What melts him is—save the mark!—scissors. Cut him therewith and note the liquefactions. "He was raised to the peerage in 1618, but died the same year." Beside this, of what worth is Jones' Essay on Death in its black cover with lettering of gold, hues symbolic of departure and return, the seed and the springing plant? Here in the fulness of brevity is the theme of a hundred poets, a thousand moralists. "There is no armour against fate," sang Shirley. "What shadows we are," cried Burke, "and what shadows we pursue." Jones fills a volume with the theme, the certainty of the end and the vanity of prophylactics; yet how empty his clumsy amplifications, labyrinthine similes, polycephalous sermons, beside the weird monosyllable, the pregnant conjunction, of our Dryasdust.

Here is another liquefaction. "Amongst his other honours he was a Knight of the Garter." When Jones can reach this satiric touch I will accord him my admiration. Figure you, I pray, this nobleman, as he sits surrounded by his honours, shadowy creatures whom he deems his slaves and finds his masters. He is a Knight of the Garter, but only so long as he abides among his other honours. He were fain to quit him of burdensome honours, to be no more sheriff, justice of peace, or coram, and yet write him eq. aur. in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation. Yet this too vanishes with the others. Those quit of, the garter grows thin on his shank, the star pale on his breast. Scarce may he be armigero, scarce have hatchment over his tomb. Could Jones express so much in so little?

"His son," says Dryasdust, "was educated at Eton and took his degree at Cambridge." Volumes have been written on that University, and Dryasdust gives them all in one crisp contrast. Ah, Jones, Jones, you also took your degree at Cambridge; but, for the place of your education, it is a mystery that no man has solved, a riddle unanswered, a maze untracked, a secret undiscovered, a puzzle and a dubitation for ever.

AD ISIDEM.

ONE point the *Isis* has, it must be said:
 First thirteen days of hope that it is dead;
 One fourteenth day of disappointment, then
 The thirteen days of hope begin again. J.

A FILLIP FOR FELICIA.

"INFINITELY sweet, elegant and tender," said Lord Jeffrey of Mrs. Hemans' poems; why did the learned and gallant reviewer add the cruel qualification "it may not be the highest poetry"? Not the highest poetry! What higher poetry is possible, we should like to know, than the fluent exhortations to patriotism, the fragrant praises of an unruffled morality, the eloquent mastery of italics which adorn,

may which constitute the work of the Sappho of the nineteenth century? Not the highest poetry! Must Dr. Watts then still be first? But indisputably the second place must be given to the author of such beautiful, rustling, black-silk, sabbatical verse as that of Felicia Hemans.

Felicia! the very word is as a bell (a dressing-bell, or a muffin-bell) to toll me back from her verse to herself. There is hardly more poetry in all her seven volumes than lies in her name; it is fraught with fragrant meaning; the very sound of it suggests all that is delicious and felicitous. The wit of man could have devised no more appropriate name for the author of the "*Homes of England*."

It is in the cruel nature of things that of a writer so voluminous (a writer who, so to speak, names her first production *Gad*), much must perish in oblivion; in fact of the seven volumes of Mrs. Felicia she will be lucky if seven pieces survive. But some there are which we cannot suppose the world will easily let die; some that will live as long as the parlour table remains an institution.

Of course the carping critic will object that it is poetry only for one time, that it is out of date. Shallow and captious objection! No; Mrs. Hemans freely divulged the secret of her art; she left a precious legacy of her method—not a set of rules, a body of canons baldly stated, but a principle, a formula incorporated in all her writings; it may be applied to any theme, to any circumstances. Give her what subject you will, and you know exactly how she will treat it; the hemanizing influence of versified commonplace is the same whatever its object may be. In other words you may always bring her up to date, with a moral certainty that you are doing her no injustice; you always are sure what she would have said.

Take those same "*Homes of England*": has the undergraduate sighed that he found no place in that elegant catalogue of British domiciles? Let him dry his tears, and make out for himself what Mrs. Felicia would have written; let him simply clothe the permanent skeleton of the Hemanesque with the form appropriate to the special case—and what does he get? Just this:

The College homes of England,
 All scattered up and down ;
 They are smiling on the three main streets
 Thro' all the gas-lit town ;
 From College-gardens forth they peep,
 Each piglike in a poke ;
 And fearless there the scholars sleep
 Like grubs within the oak.

Poor lady ! Unappreciated Felicia ! We shall one day know your true worth ; when the new humour has banished laughter, when Mr. J. K. Jerome has still further eclipsed the gaiety of nations—then, athirst for the lost luxury of cachinnation, we shall turn to the “ Child’s first grief,” and thank the fluent female who wrote, or who might have written—for after reading her you get a kind of disease, a Felicia on the forefinger, which drives the pen you know not how, and sometimes makes you doubt whether you are transcribing Mrs. Hemans or bringing her up to date ; the reader must determine—

Child. Oh ! call my brother back to me,
 I cannot play alone.

Felicia. I’d not have bought thee games for two,
 If I had only known !

Felicia. He would not hear thy voice, fair child,
 He may not come to thee.

Child. My dear mamma, you drive me wild
 With **all** your frumpery !

Child. And by the brook and in the glade
 Are all our wanderings o’er ?

Felicia. Five pounds for that go-cart I paid—
I wish I’d known before ! (ad lib.)

Observe again the telling effect of the concluding italics ; you may wrap your moral in flummery, you may couch your powder in jam, but a powder there must be, and no true poetry was ever written yet without a moral.

We have selected but little from the mountainous writings of Felicia ; but by the single bone you shall often be able to reconstruct the whole beast in imagination.

One word more.

“No man,” says in effect the same noble reviewer, who thought Wordsworth and Coleridge would ‘never do,’ “no man could have written these poems.”

How exquisitely true! How sublimely penetrating! But it is not all. If he could, would he?

PHILIPPUS.

NOCTURNE.

SLEEP that is sweet comes soon;
Love dies; the waves that weep
Chant to the low red moon
The burden of the deep.
Sleep comes; the heart of June
Beats faint; I long to sleep.

G.

MELEAGER.

The Garland of Boyhood's Flowers.

(From the Greek Anthology.)

EROS for Cypris wove a garland rare,
And gathered all the flowers of boyhood fair,
And joined a wreath that should all hearts ensnare.

For Diodore he plucked the lily bright,
For Asclepiades a violet white,
And culled a thornless rose for Heraclite.

Dion he gave the blossom of the vine,
And set therewith for thee, sweet Theromine,
A crocus golden as those locks of thine!

Thyme for Oudiades; an olive spray
For curly-haired Muiscus, and the bay,
Virtue's fair evergreen that blooms alway.

O happy Tyre, all other isles above,
Where lies the sacred incense-breathing grove,
Garden of beauteous boys beloved of Love!

P. L. O.

CAUSERIES DU VENDREDI.

No. IV.—Fore-Words on Barrack-Room Ballads.

MR. KIPLING has often been called crude and coarse, both of which he is; but he has lately been insulted by being called vigorous.

He is not vigorous.

He is simply *vulgar*. Vulgar in a good sense—vulgar and sensible and natural. . . .

But Mr. Kipling, like a few other geniuses, has a way of baffling epithet.

Just as you think you have at last got him into a corner, or fitted him neatly into a paragraph, he bobs up impertinently at the other side of the literary round table with a definite and defiant yah! that, to change the metaphor, forces you to dismount your microscope and lean back regretting your inability to analyze him, and still half afraid and half ashamed to appreciate him frankly.

No; epithet will not do for Mr. Kipling.

He is inevitable in everything he does; and he does and makes a good many good things, one of which good things, almost forgotten in our hurry to talk about it, lies before us, in a good red skin like Mr. Kipling's, and with a good sensible back like his too.

Everybody has read it, and everybody has reviewed it except the *Spirit Lamp*.

Let us take a look inside.

But before indulging in the pleasure of quotation from a book that will bear quoting from almost at random, we must give some idea of the sort of atmosphere it breathes.

One said somewhere, and very well, that the man who wrote the cockney ballads published in *Punch*, must have been able to think in cockney.

And so it is with these Barrackroom Ballads. The man who wrote them must have been able to think in Atkins.

At this point the reader will, nay, must quiff: "Why, the fool hasn't read Departmental Ditties"!

The fool *has* read them, but prefers to keep to his point and examine these ballads, as he thinks every work ought first to be examined—by itself, and with as few prepossessions (derived from earlier works) for or against the author as possible—in one word, to treat the book as anonymous.

But to return to our book.

The author has dived long and deeply into the bilge water

of the barrack-room as Mr. Kipling, and has risen as some cleanly and dripping Triton whom the foul water has been powerless to sully.

And this Triton can sing too; and although he has but one song, sings it uncommonly well, for he sings the scarlet and squalor of soldiering, and sings it, as it should be sung, in *slang*.

The absurd theory current a few years ago that this was inadmissible in literature has been criticized too often for us to do more than allude to it here.

Had there been no defence of slang before to-day, the rapier-thrust of one of these ballads, if we must choose one from a book that is itself a whole armoury of such weapons, the ballad named "Snarleyow," would have been sufficient to put the dying theory out of its agony.

The boldness with which this usually cumbrous weapon is handled is one of the wonders of the book.

It is indeed, perhaps, owing to this very boldness, joined to an absolute mastery over his rhyme, that we are able to tolerate its harshness.

We are so hurried on by the gallop of the verse, that it is absolutely only on a second careful reading that we note with surprise such words and phrases as "mortal," "blomin'" battle, "tuckin' down the brow," and "you may lay your Monday head." This may, of course, be put down to very high art indeed, or to Mr. Kipling's unconscious identification of himself with the life of a private. Which-ever of the two it be, it is *natural* and elastic in the highest degree, and therefore could hardly be bettered. . . .

The book then has one theme—the soldier; and is written in one language—slang.

Of course it would be unjust to put down all the sentiments in it as Mr. Kipling's own, but finally neglecting the theory about previous work which we had the hardihood to enunciate a few lines back, it seems fair to say this—that beneath the cheap and sometimes nasty cynicism to which Atkins is allowed to treat us, we may at all events detect two threads of thought that runs through most of

Mr. Kipling's earlier books—a bitter contempt for women as a class, and a still more bitter contempt for the Anglo-Indian administration of justice. This limits it immensely, but then of course in spite of what we have previously said, Mr. Kipling is immensely limited.

But we have perhaps been too serious, and certainly too long.

Let us end with two or three quotes that will serve as good examples of two phases of this talent. Here is the opening verse from "Cells":—

"I've a head like a concertina ; I've a tongue like a button stick ;
I've a mouth like an old potato, and I'm more than a little sick ;
But I've had my fun o' the corporal's guard ; I've made the
cinders fly,
And I'm here in the Clink for a thundering drink and blacking
the corporal's eye."

Or again—

"'E's a daisy, 'e's a ducky, 'e's a lamb !
'E's a injia-rubber idiot on the spree,
'E's the on'y thing that doesn't give a damn
For a regiment o' British Infantee !"

Mr. Kipling is not at his best in serious verse (at any rate in this book), but here is something surely far above the average—

The black log crashed above the white,
The little flames and lean,
Red as slaughter and blue as steel
That whistled and fluttered from head to heel
Leaped up anew, for they found their meal
On the heart of the Boondi Queen.

By the way, why does this last verse irresistibly suggest Mr. Swinburne?

MR. B.

THE SHAVELING'S STORY.

(Just to shew how it's done.)

How did I get my name, sir ? my reputation you mean.
(My name I got from my father, and jest as it's always been) ;
But as for my reputation, why it ain't so very much ;
I'm only an amature, but perhaps not bad as such.

Well, here is my story.—Fame, sir, came to me all of a heap,
No wake-up-and-find-yourself-famous—I never went to sleep.
You see, my ballads were famous—I printed them pamphlet-like,
And my family bought 'em by scores till the printers threatened to
strike.

You've seen the *Stoker's Story*? In the style of Dagonet;
'Taint very hard to master—I'll do more in that line yet.
But let me come back to my story, and I'll do my best as I go
To shew you some of the merits that make people take to me so.
(By the way I must really mention I'm an excellent drawing-room
wag,
And at Smokers—but then of course you've seen all that in the *Mag*.)

'Tis a lovely night in winter three years ago come June,
Cigarettes like stars in the streets, and above sich an 'eavenly moon;
(Observe my gift of *description*—one of my fortes, you know),
I'm a-sauntering down the High Street, tralaring as I go
Off to the Musical Union to play my own Quartett;
Expecting a crowd—they've heard of the Oxford Dagonet.
I goes in quite confused, and knowing they're staring at me,
(I'm a modest man, but I knew what they came there to hear and
see);

I felt myself quite uncivil not to be making a speech,
Though nobody called upon me; when all of a sudden-screech
Goes the fiddle of little Jiffer (he was playing along of me),
And we all begins tuning like mad—myself and the other three.
And when we was tuned and ready, I says to 'em “wait a sec.,”
And I clears my mellifluous throat, and cranes out my shapely neck,
“A few well-chosen words” says I, “comes never amiss,
“And the long and short of the business, gents and ladies, is this:
“Don't be too 'ard on a novice, but hear me out to the end,
“And kindly mention yours truly if you should have a musical
friend;”

And then I turns to my comrades and says, “We can't start too soon,
“I don't believe in the 'armony, just you stick to the tune.”
And up they strikes a-fiddling as mad as a pantomime,
For I was a tidy fast player and soon should be out of time.
Holy Moses! I was quickening, they were quite three bars behind,
But the tune's the thing, says I, and I smiles 'em a ‘never mind.’

And my goggles fell off my eyes, and the sweat ran down my face,
 It weren't so much like a tune, as a sort of a kind of a race ;
 (Plenty of go's my style—I'm none of your 'armony blokes),
 I plays like a favourite (which I am) in the last few yards of the Oaks.
 And when we stops a-playing and looks around for applause,
 I caught an 'orrible silence, and couldn't imagine the cause ;
 So I puts my spectacles on, and jest looks round the room,
 And bless my soul, the place was as quiet as the tomb ;
 And I looks again, and then I says, " Why, Jiffer, don't you see,
 " I know what's the matter with 'em—my fault—'ow silly of me ;
 " You remember how I asked 'em to mention my name to a friend,
 " They're all gone off to do it—but *they didn't wait till the end !*'

O. T. M.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A Brand from the Burning.

To the Editor of the " Spirit Lamp."

SIR,—I hold it a sure thing that he who writeth a letter to a Periodical giveth hostages to the *Review of Reviews* ; which figure if I have used before in another place, it is no matter ; there is no man that hath been long dead, but shall sometimes repeat his good things.

But lest you suppose me illbred or at all Uncivill, who write to you without Acquaintance ; it were best I set forth the Cause and Intent of this my letter. For I write not so much of my own private Mind as for others, as one deputed by many, the Secretary to a Multitude. You must know Talk hath been here very busy touching certain new Prints current in Oxforde : of which it is said that they are the *Vena Porta* of young Wit ; and this opinion very generally obtains. Whereas others liken them to Sores and *Whelks* that are outward Signs of a foul and uncleanly habit of the Body Academick. And indeed *Galen* and *Pliny* (I mean the Younger) very stoutly maintain that equal parts of *Sconce* and *Mercury* (these be Simples) have been known very saving in the like Case. For my part I hold this but a

passing Spleen of the Physician and his friend against this new and Sovereign Cure for the *Dyspepsy* or *Blues*.

The Wise King pronounced it that A great Book is a great Evil; and truly so is a great Paper. For here none of us save certain Old Bores (as who should say Master William Wordsworth) ever read the *Times*; and even he cannot stomach this *Isis*. Which tho' it be not very big, is yet sadly swollen with Vanity and Emptiness, and very ill esteemed among us, insomuch that many have declared it Asses' Provender, and no Gentleman's perusing. But if that be thought too heavy Damnation, take this in Comfort, that I give a Copy once in fourteen days to my Scout's Boy for his privy Reading.

But Digression is a Path whence return is more painful the longer it be delayed; and the Business of my Letter recalls me.

In our Ordinary, you have been much spoken of; and very good Wits have told me "they had a mind to contribute posthumously to the *Spirit Lamp*," but feared to be rebuked for making of it a *Departed Spirit Lamp*.

But in sooth my pen slips too fast. I shall therefore now recite what Alexander Pope hath well said of the *Isis*—

Still with abuse thy vapid pages cram;
Spite without wit ne'er made an epigram.

And for myself add "Play the man Master *Spirit Lamp*; you shall by God's grace kindle such a Conflagration as shall not be put out in a Day nor in a Term."

And with that subscribe myself

Your devoted Obedient Servant,

FRANCIS BACON.

Post Scriptum.—Master William Congreve bids me say that the *Rattle* is naught, and the *Isis* only fit for *Miss Prue*; but that the *Spirit Lamp* is the stuff for one who would do good in his Generation; and he would add much concerning Prudery and the Hollowness of it, which in the interest of *Purdour* I will not send. Lastly, for my part, look that you do not say that I am the Authour; for indeed *vixere fortes* besides me; neither love I those who make of Literature a Bun and me the one Plum in it.

THE COMING OF THE NIGHT WIND.

The broad blue sky into purple darkens,
 the sapphire glory of ocean fades,
 the panting earth for the Night wind hearkens,
 and the temple pillars cast longer shades :

the warm strong life of the sun is failing,
 whose fiery kisses smote flower and tree,
 and the white moon over the palms is sailing,
 a phantom ship on a waveless sea.

Now the earth is still, as a heart whose beating
 is stayed a moment through hope or fear,
 but the great stars glow with a golden greeting,
 and the pilot Cross to the south is clear :

till a silver flash on a far wave breaking,
 a stir as the grasses begin to nod,
 and the nervous rustle of palm leaves shaking,
 herald the Night wind that flies from God.

Ceylon, 1891.

PERCY ADDLESHAW.

A HIGH STREET REVERIE.

GEORGE LORD BYRON and Mr. Pater of Brasenose have very much to answer for. They are motor men. Mr. Ruskin may be taken as authority for the first part of our opening sentence, and the position of the second writer in literature is well-known to all who are familiar with recent works in artistic and literary criticism. The peer talked of harems and corsairs, of pirates and outlaws—his dialect was filled with scimitars, yataghans, peris and bulbuls. But the school he founded could only copy the external Byron without possessing his great force; they copied the collar, they missed the charm. So it is with the school of writing and of art-criticism of which Mr. Pater is the founder, the oracle and hierophant. His dress is the dress of other men. He affects no external idiosyncrasies. His speech is polished and lucid, and his top-hat is as prosaic as that of the Vice-Chancellor.

But the school he has founded—for of the æsthetic movement and the æsthetic school and cult he is the real head and founder—has degenerated into such latter-day freaks of manner, speech and costume as cannot but move the laughter of their friends. “My dear,” said Sydney Smith to a little girl who had torn her frock, “tearing frocks is *in itself* not a sign of genius, and young men who despise,

or are unfitted for, the most ordinary duties of life, regard their home as Boulogne." We ourselves take a genial interest, as bystanders, in the oddities and the fribbles of our golden youth, though we fear that in their eyes we who love a good hot day are but degraded Philistines, who will not pull down the blind to exclude from our rooms the burning rays of that ribald and buoyant optimist the April sun!

"Oh! Paul, Paul,"—says De Jones of Magdalen to us the other day—"have you read that last little thing by Daudet or Soubise?"

De Jones, we may here remark, is one of the tribe that reverses the feelings of those who provoked the wrath of Horace; and in esoteric essay-societies will read a "Note on three French stylists of the last decade." To his query we have, to our confusion and disgrace, to reply in the negative.

"Do then at your earliest," says De Jones. "It is perfect; since Flaubert or Cherbuliez left us we have had nothing like it. The opening is supremely consummate, and the *dénouement* is consummately supreme—so chiselled, so rich, so jewelled."

Our language is rich in words of ambiguous sound—the last epithet is a case of this, and we looked a modest point of interrogation.

"Vous vous écarterez de la question," said our critic gently but wearily. "But read it. He is one of our sweetest and of our swiftest. His lyre has all the chords. He has sat at the feet of the masters, and has been behind the veil. Perhaps nothing has been left us so delicately perfect, and yet withal so pulsating with pullulating life and the weirdest witchery of a gorgeous fancy, since we lost Ho-hi-ko, the great master of Japanese keramic, who lived five hundred years before the Hegira, and who flung his fluttering passion on the tints of a fan, to last till the daedal stars are reft from their spheres."

De Jones groaned. Let us note in passing the tendency of these ecstatic youths to date by heathen or Mohammedan marks of time. They have resigned Christianity. They say it wearies them. They have Buddha, Confucius, and Blavatsky. Theirs, too, is the Zend-avesta. Here, De Jones suddenly inserts a limp finger into our palm, and crawls pensively away.

The sun has just sunk in the High Street. The men are coming up from the river. They are not æsthetic, these men. We own to a shudder of conviction that they do

not read Mr. Pater, that their aspirations are not of the sweetest and the swiftest, that they are not behind the veil. We freely concede to the weary æsthete by our side that the old Greek dress was more poetic than what he has to designate with a sepulchral groan as "togs." Like the dying Agricola we too miss a something that is lacking in refinement in their knees and bare calves. We are in this sombre, half relenting mood, when there is another voice on the air, and we see Perkins of Trinity.

"Oh! Paul, Paul," he says impulsively, taking our irresponsible arm, "have you heard that last thing by Popplewowski of Cracow?"

Here we again remark that with our sweetest and swiftest, Mozart and Beethoven are "tuney" and fit (in the ears and eyes of these soulful creatures) only for the music-hall.

"Turner," said Perkins to us one day impressively, "was a fellow who was just equal to painting Admiral Vernon on a sign-board; and as for Landseer, you may throw him 'like physic to the dogs.' Millet and Millais—*Arcades ambo*—little to choose between them. In this year's Exhibition in Paris——"

But we digress. Again we had to our great humiliation and contrition to express our regret that we had not yet heard the great master.

"*Maestro*," said Perkins in a gently-censorious and correcting tone, "you may well call him. So dramatic in conception, yet so exquisitely finished in smallest parts—like the Bacchante in the Dresden Gallery. What undertones of weird sadness, yet replete with joyous cadences, breaking through the thundergloom of his genius! He is at the height of Art with——"

"Händel, Bach, Meyerbeer, Weber," we said unconsciously.

Perkins sighed. "These are Philistines, Paul. But you *will* come?" And he looked withal so earnest and so yearning in our eyes that though that night we had fully resolved to be elsewhere, we could not but reply that we should be delighted to have the pleasure of listening to the strains of Mazurkas *à la hongroise*, or studies in the glirigleri and tom-tomby, some Helvetian or Cingalese composer whose name was now towering above the western pines, or to some *fantaisie* or *rhapsodie* by some Tyrolese genius who had eclipsed Rubinstein in limpid simplicity, and Liszt in intelligibility.

"Here is a delicious gem I have by me," said Tomkyns

of Balliol to us lately, "a little thing in his own style by Chung Sing — *the coming man*, don't you know? His '*Leaves from the Yang-tse-Kiang*,' and the thing that made him—his lyric on Qung-lung in his '*Souvenirs of the Woang-ho*'—have been deliberately pirated by an American firm."

Yes, we repeat it. Our great countryman, George Lord Byron was a genius. His namesake of the No-Popery-Riots posed as a Protestant and died a Jew. The Peer has written things that will die with the language, and his school has produced verses that Macaulay would have stigmatized as too bad for the bellman. Mr. Pater is a man of learning and insight. His essay on Winckelmann in his "Studies in the Renaissance" is already classic on the subject. But his school has reached a Nadir beyond which that of Byron has never sunk. His followers have not his force, his dignity nor his manner. They affect the gorgeous, the *bizarre*, the jewelled. We are inclined to think Professor Freeman is right in warning young men against "brilliant" writing. Professor Jowett has reiterated the same warning, and we think, as we remember what Johnson said of the writing of Addison, that chairs of poetry and Newdigate Prize poems have a good deal to do with this decline of good English prose and of an unaffected style.

A SOFT, SWEET SORROW.

SKIRTING the long, low river-mead
I paced beneath the willows:
Of jousts, and junketings, and joys;
Of dons, and eke of donkey-boys
I dreamt—and armadilloes.
The scented summer breezes slept;
A fleeting shower had passed; the sky
Was laughing bright: I wondered why
The weeping willows wept.

A scarlet omen, lank and long,
Upon a bench had halted;
Upon the bench a maiden fair,
Of ruby lips and ruby hair,
And status unexalted;
Her gown his curls ambrosial decked—
A harmony in yellow—
Her arm his neck encircled like
A cobra di capello.

Ah! Well and truly might they weep,
For wonder wide and pity deep:
Yea sad and softly did they weep:
The willows weep, to see it.

A youth discreet and unbeguiled,
 Of aspect meek and saintly :
 And arm-a-linked a curate mild
 And habited so quaintly,
 Who waxed warm in high discourse
 And flushed a green carnation,
 Debating a disputed point
 Anent predestination.

*Ah ! Well and truly might they weep,
 For wonder wide and pity deep :
 Yea sad and softly did they weep :
 The willows weep, to see it.*

A tiny boy, a tinier girl,
 Of summers four and three ;
 And earnest eyes ; a fearsome frog :
 —Dramatis personae.
 With arm outstretched he held the thing—
 A love-gift ; with it went
 Entreaty inarticulate
 From eyelets eloquent.

*Ah ! Well and truly might they weep,
 For wonder wide and pity deep :
 Yea sad and softly did they weep :
 The willows weep, to see it.*

Still are the scented breezes sleeping :
 The fleeting shower has passed ; the sky
 Is laughing bright ; yet bitterly
 The gentle willows weep—and I
 Must leave them weeping.

M. B.

NOTICES.

THE columns of the *Spirit Lamp* are open to all the talents. We shall be glad to receive contributions in Prose or in Verse. They should be written on *one* side of the paper only, and sent in not later than the *Wednesday before publication*, to

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