

POETIC GEMS CULLED BY CHANCE FROM MANY SOURCES

Lovers of Verse Contribute Poems on Varied Subjects for Enjoyment of The Oregonian Readers.

NUMBER of contributors sent in New Year poems, which arrived too late for the New Year page. Among these were copies of belated Christmas poems also. The limits of space make it impossible for us to continue these seasonal poems, but we desire to acknowledge our indebtedness to the contributors for their interest.



The little toy dog is covered with dust, But sturdy and staunch he stands; And the little toy soldier is red with rust And his musket moulds in his hands. Time was when the little toy dog was new And the soldier was passing fair; And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue Kissed them and put them there.

"Now don't go till I come," he said, "And don't you make any noise!" So toddling off to his trundle bed He dreamt of the pretty toys; And as he was dreaming, an angel song Awakened our Little Boy Blue— Oh! the years are many, the years are long, But the little toy friends are true.

Aye, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand, Each in the same old place, Awaiting the touch of a little hand, The smile of a little face, And they wonder as waiting the long years through In the dust of that little chair, What has become of our Little Boy Blue Since he kissed them and put them there.

The poems of Eugene Field which have nestled into the hearts of the American people are legion, but among all of them, "Little Boy Blue" probably is best remembered. It is one of the most perfect examples of the delicate touch of the artist who created it. Mrs. A. G. Wallace has furnished the copy used here.

Would have some sign of sadness as they pass. She stood at Abraham's tent. Her lips were pressed. Till the blood started; and the wandering reins. Of her transparent forehead were swelled out. As if her pride would burst them. Her dark eyes. Was clear and tearless, and the light of heaven, Which made its language legible, shot back. From her long lashes, as it had been a flame.

"JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER."

BY N. P. WILLIS. And Jephtha vowed a vow unto the Lord and said: "If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatever cometh forth from the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be thine. And I will offer it up for a burnt offering."—Judges, xi:30, 31. She stood before her father's gorgeous To listen for his coming; her loose hair Was resting on her shoulders, like a cloud Floating around a statue, and the wind Just swaying her light robe, revealed a shape Praxiteles might worship. She had clasped Her hands upon her bosom and had raised Her beautiful, dark, Jewish eyes to heaven. Till the long lashes lay upon her brow. Her lip was slightly parted, like the cleft Of a pomegranate blossom; and her neck Just where the cheek was melting to the throat, curved With the unearthly beauty sometimes there, Was shaded as if light had fallen off, Its surface was so polished. She was smiling. Her light, quick breath to hear; and the white rose Scarce moved upon her bosom, as it swayed, Like nothing but a lovely wave of light. To meet the arching of her queenly neck. Her countenance was radiant with love. She looked like one to die for it—a being Whose whole existence was the pouring out Of rich and deep affections. Onward came the laden tramp of thousands. Clarion notes Rang sharply on the ear at intervals; And the low, mingled din of mighty hosts. Returning from the battle, poured from afar. Like the deep murmur of a restless sea. They came as earthly conquerors always come With blood and splendor, revelry and weal. The stately horse treads proudly—he hath trod The brow of death, as well. The chariot wheels Of warriors roll magnificently on— Their weight hath crushed and fallen. Man is there— Majestic, lordly man—with his sublime Had elevated brow and godlike frame, Lifting his crest in triumph—for his heel Hath trod the dying like a winepress dross. The mighty Jephtha led his warriors on Through Mizpah's streets. His helm was proudly set And his stern lip curled slightly, as if praise Were for the heroes' scorn. His step was firm. But free as India's leopard, and his mail Whose shakels none in Israel might bear, Was like a cedar's tassel on his frame. His crest was Judah's kinglet's, and the look Of his dark, lofty eye and banded brow Might quell the lion. He led on; but thoughts Seemed gathering round which troubled him. The veins Grew visible upon his swarthy brow And his proud lip was pressed as if with pain. He trod less firmly and his restless eye Glanced forward frequently, as if some ill He dared not meet were there. His home was near. And men were thronging with that strange delight They have in human passions, to observe The struggle of his feelings with his pride. He gazed intensely forward. The tall fins Before his door were motionless. The leaves Of the sweet alor and the clustering vines Which half concealed his threshold met his eye. Unchanged and beautiful, and one by one The balsam, with its sweet distilling stems, And the Cirsian rose, and all the crowd Of silent and familiar things stole up. Like the recovered passages of dreams. He strode on rapidly. A moment more And he reached his home; when lo! there appeared One with a bounding footstep, and a brow Of light, to meet him. Oh, how beautiful Her dark eye flashing like a sunlit gem And her luxuriant hair—twas like the sweep Of a swift wing in visions. He stood still. As if the slight had withered him. She threw Her arms about his neck; He heeded not. She called him "Father," but he answered not. She stood and gazed upon him. Was he worth There was no anger in that bloodshot eye. Had sickness seized him? She unclasped his helm And laid her white hand gently on his brow. And the large veins felt stiff and hard. The touch aroused him. He raised up his hands And spoke the name of God, in agony. She knew that he was stricken then, and rushed Again into his arms, and with a flood Of tears she could not stay, she sobbed a prayer That he would breathe his agony in words. He told her—and a momentary flush Shot o'er her countenance; and then the soul Of Jephtha's daughter awakened; and she stood Calmly and nobly up, and said "twas well— And she would die. . . . The sun had well nigh set. The fire was on the altar; and the priest Of the High God was there. A pallid man, Was stretching out his trembling hands to heaven. As if he could have prayed, but no words— And she who was to die, the calmest one In Israel at that hour, stood up alone And waited for the sun to set. Her face Was pale, but very beautiful—her lip Had a more delicate outline, and the tint Was deeper; but her countenance was like The majesty of angels. The sun was set— And she was dead—but not by violence.