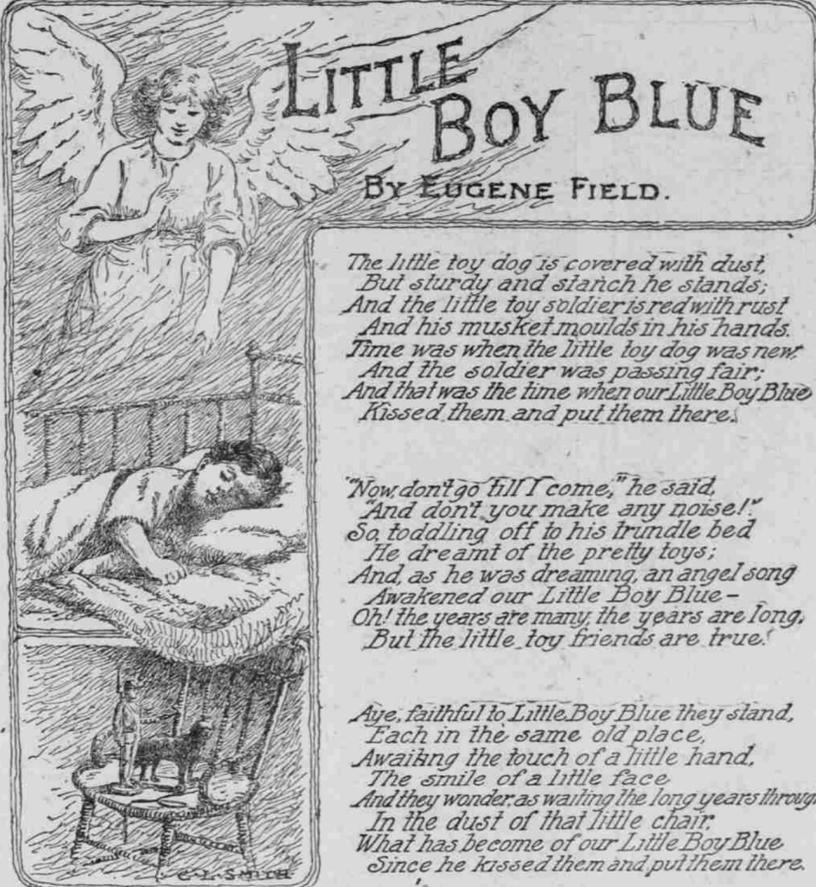


POETIC GEMS CULLED BY CHANCE FROM MANY SOURCES

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

A 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.

With crosier and mitre and rochet and cope, Fit to appear 'fore our fader the Pope. 'Now, welcome, sire abbot,' the King he did say, 'Tis well thou'rt come to keep thy quest, For and if thou canst answer my questions three, Thy life and thy living both saved shall be.



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 Were 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.

From her, but this has been reprinted already. "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 the Lord's; 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 stilling 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 shined 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 Or 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 air Before his door were motionless. The least of the sweet aloes and the clustering vines Which half concealed his threshold met his eye. Unchanged and beautiful, and one by one The balm, with its sweet distilling stems, And the Circassian 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.

Mary was very popular half a century ago: WE ARE COMING, SISTER MARY. On a stormy night in Winter, When the wind blew cold and wet, I heard some strains of music That I never shall forget. I was sitting in my cabin, With my Mary, fair and young, When a light shone in the window, And a band of singers sung: CHORUS: We are coming, Sister Mary, We are coming by and bye, Be ready, dearest Mary, For the time is drawing nigh. I tried to call my Mary, But my tongue would not obey. 'Till the song so strange had ended, And the singers flown away; Then I woke her from her slumber, And I told her everything. But I could not guess the meaning Of the song I heard them sing. CHORUS: We are coming, Sister Mary, We are coming by and bye, Be ready, dearest Mary, For the time is drawing nigh. When the next night came, I heard them, And the third night, too, they sung. As I sat beside the pillow Of my Mary, fair and young; As I watched I heard a rustle, And now I'm very lonely From Summer round to Spring, And oft in midnight slumbers, I seem to hear them sing: CHORUS: We are coming, Sister Mary, We are coming by and bye, Be ready, dearest Mary, For the time is drawing nigh. Mrs. H. H. Smith sends the following Will Carlton story of "The Stylish Church."

THE OLD MAN IN THE STYLISH CHURCH. Well, wife, I've been to church today—been to a stylish one—And seeing you can't go from home, I'll tell you what was done. You would have been surprised to see what I saw there today: The sisters were fixed up so fine they hardly bowed to pray. I had on these coarse clothes of mine—not much the worse for wear—but, then, they knew I wasn't one they'd call a millionaire; So they led the old man to a seat away back by the door; 'Twas bookless and uncushioned—a reserved seat for the poor. Pretty soon in came a stranger with gold rings and clothing fine; They led him up to a cushioned seat far in advance of mine; I thought that wasn't exactly right to seat him up so near. When he was young and I was old, and very hard to hear. But there's no accounting for what some people do. The finest clothing nowadays oft gets the finest pew; But when we reach the blessed home, and, undefiled by sin, We'll see wealth begging at the gate, while poverty goes in. I couldn't hear the sermon, I sat so far away. So through the hour of service, I could only "watch and pray"; Watch the doins of the Christians sitting near me, round about; Pray that God would make them pure within, as they were pure without. While I sat there, lookin' all around upon the rich and great, I kept thinkin' of the rich man and the beggar at the gate. How, by all but dogs forsaken, the poor beggar's form grew cold.

And the angels bore his spirit to the mansions built of gold. How, at last, the rich man perished, and his spirit took its flight. From the purple and fine linen to the home of endless night; There he learned, as he stood gazing at the beggar in the sky, "It isn't all of life to live, nor all of death to die." I doubt not there were wealthy sires in that religious fold. Who went up from their dwellings like the chariots of old, For when returned home from their worship with a head uplifted high, To spurn the hungry from their door with naught to satisfy. Out, out with such professions; they are doing more today. 'Till the rustling of a wing, From the books of infidels; than all that has been tried since Christ was born in Bethlehem—since Christ was crucified. How simple are the works of God, and yet how very grand—The shells in ocean caverns—the flowers on the land—of evenin' with gold-light from his throne—Not for the rich man only, nor for the poor alone. Then why should man look down on man because of lack of gold? Why send his rustling of a wing, because his clothes are old? A heart with nobler motives—a heart that God has blessed—May be beaten heaven's music 'neath that faded coat and vest. I'm old—I may be childish—but I love simplicity: I love to see it shinin' in a Christian's piety. Jesus used it in his sermon, in Judea's mountain wild. He that wants to go to heaven must be like a little child. Our heads are growing gray, dear wife, your hearts are beating slow—in a little while the Master will call for us to go. When we reach the pearly gateways and look in with joyful eyes, We'll have a stylish worship in the temple of the skies. Fred O. Ellis, of Brantree, Mass., has sent the following "Ballad of the North," similar to the song of "The Northwest Passage," published some time ago: A SONG OF THE NORTH. (By Elizabeth Doten, 1854.) "Away! away!" cried the stout Sir John, "While the blossoms are on the trees; For the Summer is short and the time speeds on. As we sail for the Northern Seas, Ho! Gallant Crozier, and brave Fitz James! We will startle the worm, I trow, When we find a way through the Northern Seas. That never was found till now! A good, stout ship is the Erebus, As ever outfitted a sail, And the Terror will match with us, As ever outrode a gale. So they bade farewell to their pleasant homes, To the hills and valleys green, With three hearty cheers for their native land. And three for the English Queen. They sped them away beyond cape and bay. Where the day and night are one—Where the blazing light in the heavens grew bright, And flamed like a midnight sun. There was naught below save the fields of snow, That stretched to the icy pole; And the Eskimo in his strange canoe Was the only living soul. Along the coast, like a giant host, The glittering icebergs frowned, Or they met on the main, like a battle plain, And crashed with a fearful sound! The seal and the bear, with a curious stare, Looked down from the frozen heights, And the stars in the skies, with their great wild eyes,

Peered out from the northern lights. The gallant Crozier and the brave Fitz James, And even the stout Sir John, Felt doubt like a chill through their warm hearts thrill. As they urged the good ships on. They sped them away beyond cape and bay, Where even the tear drops freeze; But no way was found, by strait or sound, To sail through the Northern Seas. They sped them away, beyond cape and bay, And they sought, but they sought in vain! For no way was found through the ice around To return to their homes again. But the wild waves rose and the waters froze, Till they closed like a prison wall, And the icebergs stood, in the silent night. Like jailers grim and tall! O God! O God!—It was hard to die in that prison-house of ice! For what was fame or a mighty name When life was the fearful price? The gallant Crozier and the brave Fitz James, And even the stout Sir John, Had a secret dread, and their hopes all fled. As the weeks and months passed on, Then the ice king came, with his eyes of flame, And they looked on the fated crew; His chilling breath was as cold as death, And it pierced their warm hearts through! A heavy sleep that was dark and deep Came over their weary eyes, And they dreamed strange dreams of the hills and streams, And the blue of their native skies; The Christmas chiming of the good old time. Were heard in each dying ear, And the darling feet and the voices Of their wives and children died. But it faded away—away—away— Like a sound on a distant shore, And deeper and deeper came the sleep, Till they slept to wake no more! O, the sailor's wife and the sailor's child! They weep and watch and pray; And the Lady Jane, she will hope in vain. As the long years pass away! The gallant Crozier and the brave Fitz James, And the good Sir John have found An open way to a quiet bay. "Away! away!" cried the stout Sir John, Let the waters roar on the ice-bound shore. That circles the frozen pole, But there is no sleep and no grave so deep That can hold the human soul. One of the most powerful of N. P. Willis' poems is "Hagar." Willis is better known to readers of 40 years ago than to the modern generation, but his position among American poets is still most secure. Ruth Luce contributes the copy.

HAGAR IN THE WILDERNESS. BY N. P. WILLIS. The morning broke, light stole upon the dawn, With a strange beauty. Earth received again Its garments of a thousand dyes, and delicate blossoms, and the painted flowers, And everything that bendeth to the dew. And stirrth with the daylight, lifted up Its unity to the breath of that sweet morn. All things are dark to sorrow; and the light And loveliness and fragrant air were so. To the dejected Hagar. The moist earth was pouring odor from its spicy pores, And the young birds were singing as if life Were a new thing to them; but music came Upon her ear like discord, and she felt That, bleeding amid things it loved so well,