

Verse Old and New

Nirvana.

Nirvana is not nothingness, no, not at all to me;
I place it in a summer isle, embraced by azure sea.
Nor must I follow Buddha's faith if I would have a chance
To reach his highest recompense, the Great Deliverance.
I find that in my snug retreat, where worldly bustlings cease;
Whose ways are ways of pleasantness, where every path is peace.
A drowsy, bowered hermitage, whose vistas never tire;
A realm of Latophagi, the Land of Heart's Desire.
The South Sea sings its cradle-song my Shore of Sleep around,
And warm winds, drowsing dreamily, this chorus seem to sound:
"There's nothing half so sweet in life, in sooth, as our ease;
Its perfume brings oblivion's serene forgetfulness.
Come, rest you, all you weary ones! oh, stumber, all you sad!
So shall you quit disquietude, and, waking, shall be glad."
For it is fixed that he who gains the gift of Nature's kiss
Knows everlasting peacefulness, and peacefulness is bliss.
And bliss is but Nirvana, briefly put, in English phrase,
So I may find my Paradise before I end my days.
I need not chance Elysium, my Paradise is where
The surf foams white on coral walls that fence a garden fair
And fruitful as that floral dream which Milton's stanzas limit,
Where Man the First knew happiness ere Woman came to him.
Its spell attends a some-day's glad translation to bestow
Appasement on a yearning soul that loved it long ago.
And, though its charmed name and site I don't precisely state,
Lest others rush my Eden-nook until its charms abate,
There is no ringed monopoly in rare and radiant goals,
Though seeing eyes must seek for them, and men are mostly moles;
For somewhere sure waits Paradise on earth for every man.
If only he can win to it; ah, if he only can!
Nirvana is not nothingness, nor need one die to find
The best of all beatitudes, tranquility of mind.
N.S.W. —Talefau.

Escape.

Oh for space, sweet air, clean rain!
How these streets lie reeking!
Love, let's be our own again.
Hear our own souls speaking,
Let us get these walls beyond,
To wave, and star, and heather;
Feel once more the primal bond
That binds the world together.
Free white road and wild free life,
What could we win better?
Never a touch of town-bred strife,
Never a feel of fetter.
Yet, full service still to give
A world that thousands sigh in,
Aye, with larger scope to live,
And lighter air to die in.
Deep hid in the old grass lanes
Leaps out tent-side fire,
While the western rose-light wanes,
A gold moon gliding higher;
Bluecap sings our supper through,
Mating in the willow,
Then two brown arms, my mate, for you,
A brown breast for my pillow.
To rolling stones no moss shall come,
Creaks the worldling ever;
Tell him, sweet, no clogging scum
Mar the running river!
Oh! let wisecrackers wag the head—
I watch my wood-smoke wreathing,
Happy in my ferny bed,
Beside your quiet breathing.

HABBERTON LULHAM.

Spring Shopping.

It was the busy hour of four
When from a city hardware store
Emerg'd a gentleman who bore
A screen, 50 feet of garden
hose, 1 rake, 1 wheelbarrow.
This gentleman with air distraught
A big department shop then sought
And there invested in, or bought
40 yards mosquito netting,
1 hammock, 1 croquet set.

His business next our hero leads.
Unto a place which retails seeds
It takes to satisfy his needs
24 packages assorted annuals,
10 rose bushes, 1 peck mixed
bulbs.

The sun was low behind a hill
When he got to Lonelyville
And then his wife in accents shrill
Pointed out that he'd forgotten
the sprinkling can, the pruning
shears, and the lawnmower.
"Louisville Courier Journal."

The Spooners.

Together we sat in a tete-a-tete,
The prettiest girl and I.
The light was out and the hour was late,
For time, you know, will fly! By Jove,
How rapidly time will fly!

Together we sat in the welcome gloom
Alone, unheard, unseen,
Though her mother was in the other room
With a thin portiere between.

I knew that her mother in ambush lay—
As mothers do, it seems—
To carry the prettiest girl away,
Away to the land of dreams. By Jove!
To the wonderful land of dreams.

But the cherry-like lips of the pretty
miss,
Alas, were a tempting sight,
And I ventured to beg for a tiny kiss—
Just one, before "Good-night."

But the prettiest girl resented that
In a way I'd never dreamed,
For she airily sprang from where we sat
And, what do you think? She screamed!
By Jove!
She certainly did, she screamed!

I caught the coquette in my arms—Alack,
For such is the way of men—
And gruffly demanded of her a smack,
And then—and then—and then—

Her mother came cruelly in with a light
And—what do you think she said?
"Oh, come little lady, kiss daddy good-
night."

And carried her off to bed, by Jove!
And carried the babe to bed!
—The Bohemian Magazine.

The Man With the Spade.

"What are the chickens laughing for?"
said Suburbs, with a spade.
"To see you dig, to see you dig," the
City Cynic said.
"What makes 'em wait, what makes 'em
wait?" said Suburbs with a spade.
"They're waiting for the seed you plant,"
the City Cynic said.
For they love a country garden, with
room to scratch and play;
They hope you'll keep on diggin' and a-
rakin' clods away,
An' when you start to plantin' veget-
ables they'll be gay,
For they're ready to start scratchin'
in the mornin'!

"What are the roosters crowin' for?" said
Suburbs with a spade.
"And hear the hens a-cockin'!" "Oh,
yes!" the Cynic said.
"They're glad to see those packages of
seed you brought from town,
An' so they're sendin' tidings of the good
times up and down!"
For they know you'll never see 'em
when another sun shall rise,
Although it's growin' weather and the
summer's in the skies;
It's buyin' feed for chickens every seed
a fellow buys,
For they're ready to start scratchin'
in the mornin'!

Brentlow Bard.

Complaints.

I would have been a poet of the sun,
Singing day's honour in deep summer's
green;
But with the dawn (the day hour scarce
begun),
Dusk closed around with twilight
screen.
And yet a singer of the sun,
I would have been.

I would have been a poet of great joy,
Singing joy's sweetness and her grace
serene;
But through the prelude notes, I, joy's
envoy,
Heard the slow tears that fell between.
And yet a singer of great joy
I would have been.

I would have been a poet of love's crown,
Singing within his aureole unseen;
But in love's spring life trod love down,
Bayleaf nor myrtle mine to glean.
And yet a singer of love's crown
I would have been.

A dusk forlorn at daybreak for my light,
And for great joy a sorrow swift and
keen;
Between my song and me, in love's May-
night
A barren hope did intervene.
And yet a singer of life's light
I would have been.

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