

There is a grotesqueness which is characteristic, and which, in this instance, is not rashly to be construed as profane. The quaint lines leave upon the mind an indelible impression; and the poet was no doubt painting from life when he pictured the devout child, with the poor, blue, little hands lifted in his simple grace. Poor little hands, "cold as frogs!" that is the meaning given in the glossary.

In the lines, "To his dear God," he manifests a spirit of resignation to his lot:

"I'll learn to be content  
With that small stock Thy bounty gave  
or lent."

And in other of his poems we see the homeliness of his country life under the care of his housekeeper, Prue. "A Thanksgiving to God for His House" presents a vivid picture of his domestic economy:

"Lord, Thou hast given me a cell  
Wherein to dwell;  
A little house, whose humble roof  
Is weatherproof,  
Under the spars of which I lie  
Both soft and dry;  
Where Thou, my chamber for to ward,  
Hast set a guard  
Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep  
Me while I sleep.  
Low is my porch, as is my fate,  
Both void of state,  
And yet the threshold of my door  
Is worn by th' poor,  
Who thither come and freely get  
Good words or meat."

And so on, through many more lines, he recounts his blessings, the bounty of his country lot, and closes with:

"All these, and better Thou dost send  
Me, to this end,  
That I should render, for my part,  
A thankful heart,  
Which, fired with incense, I resign,  
As wholly Thine;  
But the acceptance, that must be,  
My Christ, by Thee."

But Herrick's religious verse is

lacking in the passionate fervour of that of George Herbert.

Herrick was a humourist, and there is in the British Museum an almanack entitled, "An Almanack after a New Fashion; written by Poor Robin, Knight of the Burnt Island, a well-willer to the Mathe-maticks." We give one or two quotations; here is one, an observation for the month of February, 1664:

"We may expect some showers of rain either this month or the next, or the next after that, or else we shall have a very dry Spring."

From the almanack for the year 1667, we quote a perfectly delicious couplet:

"When the rain raineth, and the goose  
winketh,  
Little wots the gosling what the goose  
thinketh."

Tradition ascribes the authorship of this almanack to Herrick. If Herrick didn't write it—who did?

There are among his poems verses to Ben Jonson, the idol of the young poets of his day, verses to the River Thames, to Candlemas Day, to His Winding Sheet, to The Untuneable Times, to The Hock Cart, and to many another object or subject; the titles to his pieces often being as full of poetic suggestion as the lines themselves. There are poems also to the King, for, as we said, Herrick was a Royalist, and during the Commonwealth had to forfeit his living at Dean Prior, only to be returned to it at the Restoration.

His verses, "To his Book," betray a touch of apprehension which posterity shows little signs of justifying; we quote them:

"Go thou forth, my book, though late,  
Yet be timely fortunate.  
It may chance good luck may send  
Thee a kinsman or a friend,  
That may harbour thee, when I,  
With my fates neglected lie.  
If thou knowest not where to dwell,  
See, the fire's by. Farewell."