

Poetry.

TALK WITH TIME,
AT THE CLOSING OF THE YEAR.

BY MRS. LYDIA H. SIGOURNEY.

Time, Old Time, with the forelock gray,
While the year in its dotage is passing away,
Come sit by my hearth, ere the embers fail,
And hang thy scythe on yon empty nail,
And tell me a tale, 'neath this wintry sky,
Of the deeds thou hast done, as its months swept by.

"I have cradled the babe, in the church-yard wide,
From the husband's arms I have taken the bride,
I have cloven a path through the ocean's floor,
Where many have sunk to return no more,
I have humbled the strong, with their dauntless breast,
And laid the old on his staff to rest.

"I have loosened the stone on the ruin's height,
Where the curtaining ivy was rank and bright,
I have startled the maid on her couch of down,
With a sprinkle of white 'mid her tresses brown,
I have rent from his idols the proud man's hold,
And scattered the hoard of the miser's gold."

"Is this all? Are thy chronicles traced alone
In the riven heart and the burial stone?"

"No. Love's young chain I have twined with flowers,
Have awakened the song in the rose-crowned bowers,
Have reared the trophy for wealth and fame,
And paved the road for the cars of flame."

"Look to the child—it hath learned from me
The word that it lisps at the mother's knee;
Look to the sage—who from me hath caught
The kindling fires of his heavenward thought;
Look to the saint—who hath nearer trod
Toward the angel-host at the throne of God.

"I have planted seeds in the soul that bear
The fruits of Heaven in a world of care;
I have breathed on the tear till its orb grew bright
As the diamond drops in the fields of light;
Ask of thy heart, hath it e'er confest
A germ so pure, or a tear so blest."

The clock struck twelve, from the steeple gray,
And seizing his hour-glass, he strode away,
But his hand, at parting, I feared to clasp,
For I saw the scythe in its earnest grasp,
And read in the glance of his upward eye,
His secret league with Eternity.

LOVE UNCHANGING.

And is it just or kind, my mother,
To break my heart to soothe thy own?
And would you give me to another
Than him I love, and love alone?
Shall I be false to every feeling,
To every plighted word untrue—
And with poor smiles my thoughts concealing,
Bestow this wedded heart anew?

I never loved but once—no, never!
And when a heart like mine is given,
It fondly loves, and lives forever,
Unchanging as the truth of Heaven.
Before the sacred marriage altar,
With Him alone, hand linked in hand,
Sustained by truth that cannot falter,
Dear mother, will your daughter stand!

Then deem not that such love will perish,
By any change, or time, or chance—
For I can never cease to cherish
The thoughts you vainly call "romance."
Undimmed will grow my true devotion,
Now rendered to his dearest name—
Unfaded bloom each sweet emotion,
Through life, through life—the same, the same.

THE FISHERMAN.

It was as calm an evening as ever came from Heaven,
—the sky and the earth were as tranquil as if no storm
from the one had ever disturbed the repose of the other;
and even the ocean—that great highway of the world—
lay as gentle as if its bosom had never betrayed,—as if
no traveller had ever sunk to death in its embrace.
The sun had gone down, and the pensive twilight would
have reigned over nature, but for the moon which rose
in full orb beauty, the queen of an illimitable world,
to smile upon these goodly things of ours, and to give a
radiance and a glory to all she shone upon. It was
an hour and a scene that led the soul to the contempla-
tion of Him who never ceases to watch over the works
he has made, and whose protecting care displays itself
alike upon the solid land and the trackless waste of the
deceitful sea.

On the western coast of the county of Devon, which
has been termed, and it may be added, justly, "the garden
of England," upon such an evening, a group had
assembled around one of the fishermen's cottages. The
habitation was built in the style of the olden time, when
comfort was the principal object of the projector. At
either side of the door were scattered the lines and nets
and baskets that betokened the call of the owner, and
the fisherman was taking his farewell for the night of
his happy, loving family, who were bidding him "God
speed on his voyage." A fine old man was leaning his
arms on the railing, and talking to an interesting girl
whose hand lay upon the shoulder of a younger sister.
The stout fisherman, dressed in his rough jerkin, and
large boots that reached far above the knees, was in the
act of kissing a little cherub, who seemed half terrified
at being elevated as high as his father's legs; while the
wife and mother, with the infant nursing on her lap,
was looking anxiously upon her husband as she breathed
the parting blessing and prayed for his safe return. A
little boy, the miniature of his father in countenance
and dress, bearing a huge boat-cloak across his shoulders,
and the lantern to give light when the moon departed,
completed the group—if we except a noble Newfoundland
dog, some steps in advance of the party, watching for the
nod to command his march to a kind of pier where the
fisherman and his boy were to embark. "Good luck, good
luck!" exclaimed the old man, "good luck and safe home
again, John; ye want no more but God's blessing, and that
ye may have for asking; but ye may as well take mine too.
God bless ye, and good by to ye."

The blessing was heartily echoed by his kind partner
and his children, and whistling as he went with his
boat-hook on his shoulder, his dog Neptune before, and
his boy following, trudged along the beach.

With the earliest dawn of morning the fisherman's
family were astir: the elder girl was busily engaged
arranging their little parlour, while the younger was pre-
paring the breakfast table, and the mother spreading be-
fore the fire the clothes of her husband and her boy. An
hour passed, and she grew somewhat uneasy that he re-
mained abroad beyond the usual period of his return.
Another hour had elapsed, when she said to her father,
"Father, go out to the billock, and try if you can see
his sail upon the water; he seldom stays out so long
when the weather is fair and the sea calm; my little
boy was not quite well last night, and this alone should
have hastened him home."

The old man went forth, and one by one his grand-
children followed him, until the mother was left alone,
rocking the cradle of her unconscious babe. After the

lapse of another hour, her daughter entered with news
that a neighbour had spoken to her father in the night,
and that he would certainly be home soon.

"God grant it!" said she, and she spoke in a tone of
deep anxiety—"he never was away so long but once,
and that was when he saved the crew of the ship Mary;
and then the whirl of the sinking vessel well nigh made
his grave."

Again she stirred the fire, again arranged the clothes
before it, and poured some hot water into the tea cups.
Still the breakfast remained untouched.

The sun was now soaring to his meridian height, and
when once more the family assembled in their humble
dwelling, the prop of the whole was yet wanting. They
sat down to a cheerless meal, the seats at either side of
the wife remaining vacant. The old man was the only
person who appeared to anticipate the evil; but he has-
tily finished his breakfast and went forth.

The morn was rapidly passing, and the sun had al-
ready given tokens of the glory of his departure, when
the fisherman's wife, having lulled her infant to sleep,
went to the hill that commanded an extensive view of
the wide-spread ocean. All the little household soon
assembled on the spot, but no boat was seen on the
waters—nothing that could give hope except the aspect
of the waves, which looked too placid to be dangerous.

Their deep dread was no longer to be concealed;
and while the old man paced to and fro, looking earnestly
at brief intervals over the lonely sea, the mother and
daughter were sobbing audibly.

"Fearless let him be whose trust is in his God!" ex-
claimed the father. The sentence was uttered involuntarily,
but it had its effect.

"Ay, ay," said the mother, "he always trusted in his
God, and God will not forsake him now."

"Do you remember, Jane," continued the old man,
"how often Providence was with me amid the storm and
the wreck, when help from man was far off, and would
have been useless if near?" And they cheered and en-
couraged one another to hope for the best—to submit to
the decree of heaven, whether it came as the gentle dew
to nourish, or as the heavy rain to oppress. From that
hillock, which overlooked the ocean, ascended the mingled
prayers that God would not leave them desolate.

The fisherman—the object of their hopes and fears—
had been very successful during the night, and at
day-break, as he was preparing to return home, he re-
membered his promise to bring with him some sea-weed
to manure the potato-plot behind his cottage. He was
then close to the rocks, which were only discernible at
low water; and pulling for them, jumped on shore, fast-
ened the painter of his boat to a jutting part of the cliff,
and took his boat-hook with him.

He collected a sufficient quantity of weed, but in his
eagerness to obtain it, had wandered from the landing
place, when he heard his boy loudly hallooing and ex-
claiming that the painter was loose. He rushed instan-
tly towards the boat, which was then several yards off.
The boy was vainly endeavouring to use both the oars,
and Neptune, the faithful dog, was running backward
and forward, and howling most fearfully, as if conscious
of his master's danger—at one moment about to plunge
into the waves and join him, and the next licking the
hands and face of the child, as if he saw that for him
his protection would be most needed.

The fisherman perceived at once the desperate nature
of his situation; the tide he knew was coming in rapidly,
and his hope of escape was at an end, when he per-
ceived that his boy, in his effort to use the oars, had let
one of them fall overboard. "Father, father," exclaim-
ed the poor lad, "what shall I do?"—the boat was at
this time so far distant that his distracted parent could
scarcely hear the words, but he called out to him as
loud as he could to trust in God, the father of the father-
less. He then stood resigned to the fate which awaited
him, and watched the drifted boat in peril from the fatal
rocks. He had offered up a brief prayer to the throne
of mercy, when in an instant, a light broke upon his
mind. "Great God!" he exclaimed, "I may yet be
saved." With the energy of hope battling with despair,
he collected all the stones around him, and heaped them
rapidly upon the highest ledge of rocks—it was in-
deed wonderful how he could have gathered so many in
so short a time, but the Almighty gave strength to his
arm, and he was labouring not for life merely, but for
beings still dearer to him. The tide came on, on, on,
and soon obliged him to quit his work. He then mount-
ed the pile he had heaped, placed the boat-hook firmly
in one of the crevices of the cliff, and prepared to struggle
for existence; but his heart failed him, when he con-
sidered how slight was the possibility that the water
would not rise above his head. Still, he determined to
do all he could to preserve life. The waves were not
rough, and the boat-hook supported him. The awful
moment rapidly approached; the water reached his
knees; but he stood firmly, and prayed that he might
be preserved. On, on, it came, slowly and gently,
but more fearfully than if it had raged around its destined
prey; soon it reached his waist, and he prayed that it
might go no higher. On, on, it came, and his shoulders
were covered; hope died within him, and he thought
of himself no longer, but of those who were so dear to
him—his wife, his children, and his father—it was for
blessings on them that he implored heaven. Still on,
on, on it came, and he was forced to raise his head to
keep as long as possible from death; his reason was al-
most gone, his breath grew feeble, his limbs chilled;
he panted, and his prayers became almost gurgling
murmurs. The blood rushed to his head, his eye-balls
glared as if they would start from their sockets. He
closed them with an effort, and thought for the last time
on the home that would soon be wretched! Horrible
images were before him; each swell of the waves seem-
ed as if the fiends were forcing him downward, and the
cry of the seabird was like their yells over their victim.
He was gasping, choking, for he had no strength to
keep his head above the water; every moment it was
splashing upon him, and each convulsive start that fol-
lowed only aroused him to the consciousness, if con-
sciousness it could be called, that the next plunge would
be his last.

Merciful powers!—at the very moment when the
strength and spirit of man had left him, and the cold
shudder of death had come on, he felt that the tide rose
no higher. His eyes opened, and a fearful laugh trou-
bled the waters! They eddied in his throat, and the
bubbles floated around his lips—but they rose no higher
—that he knew—again and again his bosom heaved
with a deep sob, and he drew in his breath, and gave
it forth in agony. A minute had passed since the salt
sea touched his lips; this was impossible if the tide
still flowed—he could reason so much. He opened his
eyes, and faintly murmured forth—"O God be merciful."
The flow of the ocean had indeed ceased; there he
stood motionless, but praying and weeping, think-
ing of his beloved home, and hoping his place there

might not be forever vacant. The waters in a short
time subsided, and he was enabled to stretch his chilled
limbs, and then to warm them by exercise. Soon the
rock was left dry as before, and the fisherman knelt
down upon that desolate spot among the billows—hid
his face in his hands, and praised and blessed his Creator—
his Preserver.

Oh! it was the well-known bark of his faithful dog
he had heard above the waves; in another moment the
creature was licking his pale cheek. He was saved—
he was saved: for his own boat had touched the shore,
and his own boy was in his arms! He had been drifted
to the land, and had easily found those who had rowed
hard for the chance of saving his father's life.

"Now homeward, homeward!" he exclaimed,
Homeward, homeward echoed the child, and Neptune
jumped and barked at the welcome sound.

The fisherman's family was still supplicating Provi-
dence, upon the hillock that overlooked the deep, when
the old man started from his knees, and exclaimed, "We
are heard! there is a speck upon the distant waters."

"Where, where!" was echoed by the group, and he
pointed out what he had hoped to be the absent boat.
They eagerly strained their eyes, but saw nothing; in a
few moments, however, all perceived a sail; still it was
impossible to tell the direction in which its course lay.

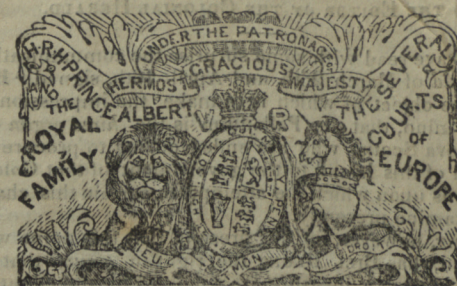
Then was the agony of suspense; it continued, how-
ever, but for a short time; a boat was evidently advanc-
ing toward the shore; in a few minutes they could clearly
perceive a man at the bow waving his hat above his
head, and soon after the well-known bark of Neptune
was borne to them by the breeze. The family rushed
to the extremity of the rude pier, and the loud hurra of
the fisherman was answered by the "welcome, welcome,"
of his father, and almost inarticulate "thank God" of
his wife.

And now all was joy and happiness in the cottage
where there had been so much wretchedness, the fisher-
man, his boy, and his dog, were safe from the perils of
the great deep; but he would return no answer to ques-
tions, as to what had detained him so long beyond the
usual period of his return. "Wait, my wife," said he,
"until we have dressed and refreshed ourselves, and you
shall know all; but before we do either, let us bless God
for his mercy, for out of great danger hath he preserved
me."

Never was there a more sincere or more earnest
prayer offered up to the Giver of all goodness than
ascended from that humble dwelling. And when the
fisherman had told his tale, how fervently did they all
repeat the words that had given them so much consol-
ation in the morning.

"Fearless let him be whose trust is in his God."
People's Advocate.

THE BATTLE OF BOROINO.—"Before daybreak,"
says Labanme, a French officer, "the two armies were
drawn up in order of battle, and 260,000 men waited,
in awful suspense, the signal to engage. At six o'clock,
the thunder of artillery broke the dreadful silence. The
battle soon became general, and raged with tremendous
fury. The fire of 200 pieces of cannon enveloped
both armies in smoke, and mowing down whole battal-
ions, strewed the field with the dead and the wounded.
The latter fell to expose themselves to a death still more
terrible, and to accumulated sufferings. How agonizing
was their situation! Forty thousand dragoons, crossing
the field in every direction, trampled them under foot,
and dyed the horses' hoofs in their blood! The flying
artillery, in rapid, alternate advance and retreat put a
period to the anguish of some, and inflicted new torments
on others who were mangled by their wheels. A re-
doubt in the centre of the Russian army was several
times taken and retaken, but finally remained in the
possession of the French. The interior of the redoubt
presented a frightful scene; the dead were heaped on
each other, and amongst them were many wounded
whose cries could not be heard. Night alone separ-
ated the combatants, and left on that memorable field no
less than 80,000 men sacrificed on the shrine of mad
ambition! As we passed over the ground which the
Russians had occupied, we were able to judge of the im-
mense loss they had sustained. In the space of nine
square miles, almost every spot was covered with the
killed and the wounded! In many places, the bursting
of the shells had promiscuously heaped together men
and horses. The fire of our howitzers had been so de-
structive, that mountains of dead bodies were scattered
over the plain; for the few places that were not encum-
bered with the slain, were covered with broken lances,
muskets, helmets, and cuirasses, or with grape-shot and
bullets as thick as hail-stones after a violent storm.
But the most horrid spectacle was the interior of the
ravines. Almost all the wounded who were able to
drag themselves along, had taken refuge there to avoid
the shot. These miserable wretches, heaped one upon
another, and almost suffocated with blood, uttering the
most dreadful groans, and invoking death with most
piercing cries, eagerly besought us to put an end to their
torments!" Let us look at that field, after the lapse of
two months, as described by the same eye-witness. The
most horrible sight was the multitude of dead bodies
which had been fifty-two days unburied, and scarcely
retained the human form! My consternation was at its
height on finding near Borodino, the 80,000 men who
had been slaughtered there, lying where they fell! Car-
casses of men and horses—of the latter alone there were
more than 25,000 killed—covered the plain, intermingled
with garments dyed in blood, with bones gnawed
by dogs and birds of prey, and with the fragments of
arms, drums, helmets and cuirasses. As we were
marching over the field of battle, we heard at a distance
a pitiable object who demanded our assistance. Touched
by his plaintive cries, many of the soldiers drew nigh
the spot, and, to their great astonishment, found a French
soldier stretched on the ground with both his legs broken.
'I was wounded,' said he, 'in the great battle and
finding myself in a lonely place, where I could gain no
assistance, I dragged myself to the brink of a rivulet,
and have lived near two months on grass and roots, and
on some pieces of bread which I found among the dead
bodies. At night, I have lain in the carcasses of dead
horses, and with the flesh of these animals, have dressed
my wounds!' Having heard you at a distance, I collect-
ed all my strength, and have advanced sufficiently near
to make myself heard." Such is war—war, not only
in ancient times, but in the nineteenth century; war,
not merely among pagans and savages, but among men
calling themselves civilized and Christians!—Is such a
custom necessary to Christendom, to nations of reputed
Christians? Will they allow it to continue under the
full blaze of the Gospel? How long will real Christians,
sincere followers of the Prince of Peace, lend their
countenance, or refuse their combined, vigorous efforts
for its abolition?—American Paper.



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