

Meanderings of a Poem.

[In the winter of 1876 a disconsolate youth seated in a saloon in San Francisco, his last cent gone, and with none in prospect, filled with remorse, perhaps, for his own dreary past, wrote the following doggerel lines and called it "One of the Boys." An editor on the Chronicle of that city was shown the poem and gave him five dollars for the production, and the embryo poet went his way. Thirteen years afterwards he is one of the prosperous citizens of Lincoln. A parody on the poem is sent to THE COURIER by Mr. Dalzel, proprietor of the New York Truth, called the "Dying Dud." The author of "One of the Boys," notices the poem. "That parody is taken from my own," says he, and turning to an old scrap book produced the original, bearing the date of December 20th, 1876. The author, for business reasons does not wish to pose as a poet thinking that it detracts from what is expected of sterner qualities of the man of business. Respecting this THE COURIER thinks otherwise and deems the poem worthy of reproduction, especially as its author has since won reputation with such magazines as the "Century," "Harpers" and the "Currant," and has been identified as the author of some of the best sensational stories sent from the West. With this explanation and apology for withholding the name of the author, the poem is herewith presented.

-ED. COURIER]

"ONE OF THE BOYS."

Lower the curtains Jack, softly,
And light up the chandelier;
Stir up the fire, there, lightly,
Now draw to my bedside here.
I've something to say at parting,
The shadows are stealing nigh,
So bow your head while I whisper
And listen to me while I die.

Prop up the pillows Jack, gently,
Then give me your hand in mine,
No creak of glittering glasses,
No flowing of amber wine;
I've got a few words to say, lad,
'Bout the times we two have seen,
When, filling the crystal goblets,
We drank to "Woman," our queen.

Ah, many a night, old fellow,
As the time flew swift along,
We've flooded the air with laughter,
And filled the hours with song.
We've pledged our friends and our sweet-
hearts,
We've drunk to our true love's eyes,
To the blue, the black and the hazel,
Till the stars faded from the skies.

We two have roamed home together
Full many a morn, my lad,
Shouting the echoing chorus
Roostering, reckless and glad.
We've tasted life's sweets together,
We've drunk at its springs of joy,
But, Jack, the curtain is falling,
I'm dying tonight, my boy.

I lived while I lived, for pleasure,
I filled my cup to the brim,
Nor thought of the solemn shadows,
The spectres and phantoms grim
That waited below my vision,
That cluster around me now,
That touch with their sable pinions,
My aching and fevered brow.

E'er true to the ties that bound us,
Old friend you alone are here.
Of all who joined us in revel
To watch mid the shadows drear.
Beyond gay voices are ringing
And eyes gleam joyous and bright,
Say, Jack, do they know I am dying
Here in my chamber tonight?

As freely the red wine bubbles,
And foams in the crystal glass,
Do they give a thought I wonder,
To me, as the hours pass;
Do they think mid the parking bumpers
Of old Bourbon and old Rye
That I am lying in the shadow,
Do they toast me as I die?

Will they miss me at the banquet,
Will they miss me, think you Jack,
And upon the old times faded,
Will their eyes look kindly back?
Will they think of when we gathered
In the moonlight on the hills,
Drinking red wine and catawba,
Careless, thoughtless of life's ills?

Ah, well, 'twas a fleeting pleasure,
The wine and the laughing eyes,
The blue, the black and the hazel,
When the luring love-lights rise;
For you, old chum, they are waiting,
From me they have flown away,
The nights on the gleaming hill-tops
Have gone from my life for aye.

I've been thinking, Jack, old fellow,
That my days have gone to waste,
That my revels and carousings
Were the fruit of pampered taste,
Through all the years that have faded
I never have known a care
And now, as the death gloom gathers,
I can't remember a prayer.

I've been nursing the hollow beauties,
I've cherished the fleeting joys,
My life has been spent in seeking
A bliss that burdens and clogs.
Past honors seem strangely barren
Of good in my clouded sight,
And Jack, the future looks misty,
And dark as I die tonight.

Remember some times old fellow,
Our friendship, when I am dead,
When the bright hued bird of summer
Sing sweetly above my head,
You'll think of our days together,
Of rollicking times now past
But, Jack, don't tie to their glamour;
The shadows fall 'round at last.

Prop up the pillows, Jack, gently,
Then give me your hand in mine.
No creak of glittering glasses,
No flowing of amber wine,
We've tasted life's sweets together,
We've drunk at its springs of joy;
But, Jack, the curtain is falling,
I'm dying tonight, my boy.

1867. THE 1891.

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