POETRY OF THE TIMES.

Lent.

The season called Lent is not remote,
Already the cock crows with cheer,
And says, chanticleer out my throat
And sing for the good time that's near
When poultry of all kinds is free—
From gracing the epicure's dish—
And we view with the greatest of glee
The raid which is made upon fish."
—Oshkosh Advocate.

The Vanquished Clerk.

A lady once, of fascinating mien,
Ent'ring a store, desired to get a bow;
At which the clerk, with visage quite serene,
Threw himself back, as if to say, "I'll go!"
And he did say, I'm at your service, ma'am!"
Meaning, of course, that he her beau would be.
(Self-confident and quite polite I am,"
No doubt he thought.) "Will you accept of me?"
Could he have guessed the lady's quick retort
That should so soon annihilate his pun—
Had he but known a woman's power to thwart
Such wit as his, he would not thus have done.
As quick as wink the lady thus replied:
"I do not want a green one, but a buff!"
At which the clerk proceeded to subside,
And seemed to think his joke was poor enough.

E. R. LATTA.

Mary's Siam.

Mary had a little sled
On which she used to scoot;
One day as down the hill she sped,
She fell and peeled her snoot.
Her Johnny now, with bitter tear,
Says: "Ah! how sad are those!
I dare not kiss my little dear
For fear I'll hurt her nose!"

In a Quandary.

ANXIOUS BRIDE.

"We've come now, Mr. Preacher,
As others oft have done;
And I am very anxious
For you to make us one.
The wedding-ring is ready—
The license, too, is here;
Our right to be united,
To every one is clear."

MINISTER.

"O say not so, my lady,
When, to his shame, I find
This man is now in liquor,
And does not know his mind!
But come again to-morrow,
When he has sober grown,
And I shall surely wed you,
And he shall be your own."

BRIDE.

"Show pity, Mr. Preacher,
And wed us *now*, I pray,
And do not keep us waiting
Until another day;
For if, upon the morrow,
The man should sober be,
And know what he was doing,
He would not marry me!"
—[Chicago Tribune.

An Illinois Obituary.

She heard the angels calling her,
From that celestial shore;
She flopped her wings, and away she went
To make one angel more.

FEDI'S BLOOD BATH.

New York Dispatch.

On the evening of July 11, 1866, Martin Fedi, a released convict, going on foot from Toulon to his home in the Vosges, reached the village of Balliere. He exhibited his papers to the gendarme, and was permitted to enter the village tavern, where he procured food and a bottle of wine. The landlord, however, learned that he was an ex-convict, and refused to give him a bed. Fedi was indignant, and a fight between him and the host was imminent, when the latter's friend came to his aid and hustled the galley-slave into the street. He purchased a flask of brandy at a shop near by, and went off muttering profane threats of vengeance, which were heard by many.

An hour later, that is to say, at 7 o'clock, the landlord went out, saying that he had important business with the village lawyer. He did not return. His wife went at day-light to the lawyer's house. He was greatly surprised to learn of her husband's absence. He had not seen him, he said, for two days. His housekeeper had informed him that he had called last evening, but found him, the speaker, absent, and had gone away promising to return, but had not done so. What the business of importance could be the lawyer could not conjecture.

Several other villagers had seen him, but none could suggest a clew to his present whereabouts.

The frightened woman now caused a thorough search to be made. The searching party found asleep against the wall of the church, which stood on the outskirts of the village, a man. His face and hands were besmeared with blood, and there were traces of it on his clothing. The heavy knobbed end of a knotted stick beside him was also stained with gore. In the grass near by was an empty flask which had contained brandy. When aroused, the sleeper exhibited every token of having been on a vast debauch. He could give no coherent account of himself, but he was recognized as a belligerent ex-convict. His appearance and the recollections of his savage threats against the missing man were considered quite sufficient causes to authorize his arrest.

A search of the church discovered in the loft of the belfry where a lot of pigeons had taken up their quarters, the corpse of the landlord, with his brains beaten out, and his throat cut. The bell room below bore traces of a desperate struggle, and the floor had been deluged and the walls bespattered with blood.

Martin Fedi was put on trial for the murder of Jean Jacques Lassier, publican.

He declared himself innocent, and told, as nearly as he could recall them, his adventures of the fatal night. He had, he said, set out after purchasing the brandy, intending to walk to the next village and get a bed there. But he was weary of his journey of the day, and the night being pleasant he concluded to spend it in the churchyard. He had emptied his bottle and gone to sleep near where he was found. During the night he had been awakened by a stream of water, as he supposed, deluging his face. He was too drunk to bother himself about it, and wiped his face dry, and, shifting his position, went to sleep again.

This explanation was regarded as so preposterous that the judge laughed at it. Martin Fedi was sentenced to death, with the recommendation to mercy usual in French criminal trials. He was accorded it, and sent back to the jail he had left the week before to remain there for life.

In the middle of the year 1869 the widow of Jean Jacques Lassier was amazed to receive the following

TO HER, INCOMPREHENSIBLE LETTER:

"DEAR SISTER—The newspapers we occasionally receive even in this section of the world have conveyed to me the information of your terrible bereavement. My poor brother! would it had been in my power to have lain hands on his butcherly assassin! The law would have been spared a most unnecessary trouble. It is the more painful to think that death overtook him at the very time it fell in my power to return to him a portion of the favor he so generously extended to me ten years ago. I complete the restoration by forwarding to the same agent by the same mail as carries this letter the remaining 15,000 francs of the 60,000 which fell to Jean's share. The mine is prospering, and there will be still further returns from it."

This puzzling epistle was signed "Hector Bouchet," and dated from Gimpie Creek, Australia.

The Widow Lassier in her perplexity went to Monsieur Castine, the lawyer, for advice. All she could tell was that her husband had spoken to her casually of a half-brother, to whom, on his father's death, he had given up his own share of the small fortune the latter left to start him in business in Australia, whither he emigrated. She had never heard Lassier allude to the matter again, and as to his having received any such sum as the latter alluded to he had, on the contrary, died, leaving no assets but the inn.

Monsieur Castine undertook, if possible, to discover the mysterious agent spoken of in the letter, and he advised his client meantime to keep her own counsel in the matter. Her husband had probably died without receiving the money from his brother, and the agent, finding no call made upon him for the sum, had quietly devoted it to his own use. The only way to capture him and recover the money was to remain silent, and so give him no warning that his crime was discovered.

Madame Lassier acquiesced in this very reasonable suggestion. On her return home it struck her, however, that it would be just as well to write to Hector Bouchet for the name of his agent in France. She accordingly did so, and mailed the letter herself, telling her lawyer nothing about it.

Three months passed. Monsieur Castine, who was constantly on the eve of discovering the culprit, never got further. At last a reply arrived from Australia to the widow's letter.

The name of Hector Bouchet's agent, to whom 60,000 francs had been sent for Jean Jacques Lessier, was Monsieur Victor Castine, advocate, at Belliere. The lawyer who was assisting Madame Lassier to discover the thief was the criminal himself.

Madame Lassier was a woman of some education and great resolution. She locked the letter up and carried a copy of it to the lawyer in person. Castine at first laughed at her charge, but when she threatened to place the case in the hands of the police he lost his nerve and proposed a settlement. The money, he acknowledged, had reached him on the very day Jean Jacques Lassier had been found dead.

The latter had probably received a notification of its arrival the day before, and it was doubtless on that business that he had called to see the lawyer on that night which had ended so fatally for him. Finding himself in possession of what was to him such a princely sum, Castine had struggled long between duty and devil, and succumbed at last to the evil counselor.

He was perfectly willing to make restitution. He had the sum intact, and if the widow would pledge herself not to prosecute him, and would give up the original of the criminating letter, he would render up to her the stolen fortune sou for sou. Madame Lassier was too anxious to recover her money to haggle over the terms. She acceded unhesitatingly to Castine's proposition, and the latter proposed to go with her to her house,

TO GET THE LETTER.

"No! no!" she replied. "You get the money ready, while I bring the letter. It will save time."

Half mad with excitement she hurried home, secured the letter, and returned to the lawyer's house. As she left the inn her head waiter called after her to ask her about something which had to be attended to at once. She either did not hear or did not pay any attention to him, and he hurried after her. She gained the lawyer's house in advance of him, and the door was opened for her by the old housekeeper who slammed it immediately to again. The man was about to ring when a piercing shriek reached his ears. It came from the interior of the house, and was followed by another and another.

Recognizing his mistress's voice, the honest fellow threw himself bodily against the door. It was burst from its fastenings, and he staggered into a broad hallway. Through the open door of a room at the end came the noises of a furious struggle. The man bounded into this apartment just in time to seize the arm of the lawyer as he raised a knife to plunge it into Madame Lassier's body, while the old housekeeper held her with her arms around her throat. A terrific struggle followed. The lawyer inflicted several wounds on his assailant with the knife, when the latter succeeded in wrenching it from him and driving it again and again into his body. The old woman had her hands full attending to the muscular widow. As the lawyer rolled, bleeding, on the floor, a number of villagers whom the noise of the combat had attracted to the house, came to the assistance of the widow and her defender, and the wounded miscreant and his accomplice were arrested.

The remainder of the story, as it was elicited at what became one of the most famous of historic trials in the land of criminal romances, is easily told.

Victor Castine was the murderer of Jean Jacques Lassier. Hector Bouchet, who had known the lawyer previous to his departure from France, and who was ignorant of his brother's exact whereabouts, had chosen to make him the medium of returning to Lassier the money he had borrowed from him, with the liberal interest that the profits of the speculation he had invested it in had provided. He had forwarded the money in Bank of England notes, and notified his brother by the same mail, to the address of a friend in Rouen, that if he would call at the lawyer's he would learn of something to his advantage. The letter was forwarded at once by the friend to its destination. Castine, who had already made up his mind to appropriate the money to his own use, denied all knowledge of its meaning, and under pretense of arguing the matter undisturbed, had induced Lassier to stroll as far as the village church with him. The door of the sacristan's room had been left open by accident and the inn-keeper went to close it. As he leaned forward to call if any one was in the church the lawyer aimed a furious blow at him with a heavy cane he carried.

It missed Lassier's head and descended on his shoulder. The inn-keeper staggered forward into the church and hearing the steps of his murderer behind him ran blindly forward. Castine pursued him. The faint light of the dying day which found its way down the belfry stairs directed the fugitive's flight, and he contrived to gain the bell floor before his assassin overtook him.

Then he turned at bay and screamed for help. He uttered but one cry. Before a second could escape him the murderer felled him with a ferocious blow. Even then Lassier, who was a very powerful man, fought desperately, and only succumbed when Castine, having battered his head to pieces, cut his throat with his hunting knife. His blood deluged the floor, and streaming out through the gargoyled waterspout provided to carry off the water, which in the rainy season blew in the belfry, it pattered down on the drunken tramp below, and dyed him with the damning marks which had cost him his liberty and almost his life. Having assured himself that his victim was dead, Castine had stowed him away in the lott overhead, and gone home. His first work was to instruct his housekeeper and the course in case of inquiry which she had pursued. The old woman was devoted to him, and obeyed him to the letter. Then he wrote to Bouchet, signing his victim's name, and acknowledging the receipt of the money. When the widow made the discovery she did, he determined to get her out of the way, too, and flee. That he did not was no fault of his.

He died of his wounds in prison. The old woman was sentenced to a long penal term for her complicity with him. His scapegoat was not released from his unmerited confinement for the single reason that he had already released himself by the process of suicide.

As for the widow she did not marry her preserver, as she ought in all logical literary justice to have done. On the contrary, she charged him on the first discovery of certain peculiarities of his, and had him sent to prison for theft. He has abandoned the life-saving business for good since.

The Terrible Snow.

FOR THE BEE.

Where shall I turn for solace to-night—
The snow has obscured all from my sight;
Its mantle o'n covers hills and dales,
And to our windows it has left demi veils.

And we sigh for relief, here below,
From the maelstrom, which is all aglow;
It is sparkling, and fleecy, too, I ween,
But its depths before I ne'er hath seen.

Defend us from the terrible snows,
Whose chilling thraldoms are mundane woes—
And the sequence will be mud and mire,
Filling our souls with bitterest ire.

But what 'ere is sent, or weal or woe,
Is in nature's code—"The Beautiful Snow!"
Then why rebel, or even complain,
Though the snow should reach our eves again.
—ADA F. BOYCE.