

For me marks a different hour.  
 And when to the east on the prairies,  
 Where the evening shades earlier come,  
 Lies the reason my Elgin so varies—  
 I'm keeping the time of "back home."

Dear girl, though the time may be changing,  
 I am blind and the change cannot see;  
 Geographers in their mad ranging  
 Cannot take you further from me.  
 In the hour that you live away yonder,  
 You live in the heart of "your boy;"  
 There's a standard wherever I wander,  
 Which longitude cannot destroy.

There's a poem of the Gunnison, and a most characteristic one of "The Quakin' Aspen," and many other verses of the mountains and plains. But excellent as many of them are, these descriptive verses, and local and spirited as they all are, they do not compare with the poems of childhood. Undoubtedly Mr. Carl Smith's work is best in the verses of childhood, and from the many relating to boyhood it is difficult to make a selection. One becomes intimately acquainted with "Ulyssus Mendenhall" and "The Cunninghams" and "Charley Mulgridge," who played the fiddle. But undoubtedly the poems which are most appealing are the child-verses, some of which are written for children and others about children. Here is a good example of the latter class:

Lord Byron looks with a haughty stare  
 Straight out from the shelf at me.  
 With the broadest wave to his smooth bisque hair  
 That an artist would care to see.  
 And the proudest curl to his silent lip,  
 And the coldest and loftiest smile,  
 With his head set back at a lordly tip  
 O'er that collar of flaring style.

And down in the corner of that same shelf  
 As meek as a goat might be,  
 A white rubber goat—ashamed of himself—  
 Stands wobbling his head at me.  
 A white rubber goat that I happen to know  
 Has a wonderful whistle somewhere  
 Concealed in the region that's hid below  
 The wealth of his rubber hair.

The white rubber goat is a homely goat,  
 With eyes that are bloodshot and red,  
 And lumpy whiskers that hang from his throat  
 In a bunch like a beard of lead.  
 And the voice that he shrieks from his stomach is shrill  
 And his figure is awkward and squat,  
 But I ween that the white rubber goat can fulfill  
 An errand which Byron cannot.

Oh, Byron! Look down with your cold bisque eye,  
 And scorn the white goat if you will;  
 You never can quiet my baby's cry  
 With that countenance haughty and chill;  
 This critic of art with her rosy fist  
 Will pass you all scornfully by

For the goat whose red mouth into white has been kissed,  
 And whose voice is a squeeze whistle's cry.

There are many piquant and jaunty verses of childhood similar to these—poems which, once read, will have a trick of staying in the memory. Occasionally, the interpolation of something akin to dialect—something which at least comes under the head of inelegant colloquialism—is placed in a poem which is otherwise dignified, and mars it. As, for example, the use of the word "like" in place of "as" in a sentence involving a comparison. While such expressions have a certain homely charm, it is better, on the whole, that they should not be indulged in, excepting in verses which are written in dialect. That part of the public which is not acquainted with the author is apt to suspect him of a grammatical slip, instead of an intentional informality.

Some of the poems show a bad selection of subjects. "Dakota Divorces," is a clever and amusing thing, but is much more appropriate in the columns of a daily newspaper, where it may go along with other current remarks, than in a book of verse which the author uses as the expression of himself—and the best of him.

There are not many pathetic verses in the book, but such as there

are, they are genuinely pathetic, and in no maudlin sentiment that brings the tear to the eye, but involuntary sympathy, with a delicate and fine sentiment. There are some delightful poems of nature—mixed as a usual thing with a delineation of the most engaging part of nature—boy nature.

"Gil Blas," is the only poem on a literary subject, and it is so good that one wishes there might have been more of the same sort. It has certain resemblances in it to Eugene Field's work. A syllable of undue length in the last stanza reminds one that Mr. Smith might exercise more care in his versification. It is not that his ear is lacking, or his knowledge, but merely that he has not yet attained the patience which accompanies the cautious revision of his work.

Yes, it is far and away the best book ever issued from a Nebraska press. No part of the history of a state is more interesting than its literary history, and, since this is the first milestone on the road which, it is to be hoped, will be a stately and beautiful one, it deserves to be held in high esteem.

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### THE WICKEDEST WOMAN.

Talking of tortures, we hear a great deal at present about the wickedness of modern days and many sighs for the good old times. Yet Paris has just been edified by a work treating of the life of a lady of the sixteenth century, who carried her care for her beauty to the very utmost limits. This is not a fairy tale but a sober, historical fact, backed by many official documents of undoubted authenticity, and the lady's amiable weakness is described with a wealth of detail and forcible simplicity of description that it is apt to turn the reader sick.

The lady in question was named Elizabeth Bathory, Comtesse Nadasdy, having married at the age of fifteen in 1595 Comte Francois Nadasdy, who was not of too mild a nature himself, as, when his wife complained one day that her maid had been impertinent, he ordered the erring handmaiden stripped, smeared with honey and laid on a wasp's nest from the effects of which gentle admonition she subsequently died. The Countess Elizabeth was left a widow in 1604 and began simply at first to keep up the rigorous discipline enforced by her late husband. Unhappily, one day she struck her waiting maid, and so wounded her that her mistress' hand were covered with blood. When they were washed the Countess remarked that her hands were whiter and the skin more supple and firm, and thenceforward her naturally cruel nature was spurred by the frenzied desire to retain her waning beauty at any price. Odd though it may seem in the present day, she used as a cosmetic from that time a bath of human blood, and the tradition goes that anything so superb in its brilliant fairness as her complexion can not be imagined. She murdered all her waiting-maids, one by one, aided by three accomplices, her old nurse being one of them, and when she could get no woman to enter her service she coolly sent her emissaries to kidnap the peasant girls of the neighborhood.

At last, however, the ghastly scandal rose to such a pitch that even Hungary in the Middle Ages could not afford to close its ears to the wail of bereaved families; and the culprit's first cousin, Governor of the Province, entered the castle on Christmas eve, 1610, to inquire into the truth of these horrible stories, and discovered his fair and honored relative, her fair chin propped by her exquisite hand, calmly watching the death agonies of three girls, while her attendants were filling a bath tub with the life blood that was to preserve her beauty. The Countess herself was too great a personage to incur capital punishment, but for thirty years she was shut up in solitary confinement in the castle of Hungary, where she finally starved herself to death. As for her accomplices, they had their hands cut off, and were subsequently burned at the stake, as, being common people; there was no reason for sparing their lives. It is said that this fair dame sacrificed 600 girls to her radiance of skin, but the biographer states soberly that documentary evidence exists of the murder of only 250, which was a very respectable number to get rid of in six year's time; therefore we will give her the benefit of the doubt. Whether in after years she considered thirty years of solitary confinement too high a price to pay for six years of unimpaired beauty, it is hard to say, but the inference is that she did, since she killed herself at last. Although her idea was not patented, in spite of the alleged success of this queer cosmetic, there is no proof that it ever has been tried since. An account of the lady's proceedings has just been read before the French Academy of Medicine, and she has been pronounced to have been undoubtedly insane; but if so, it must be confessed that her madness was curiously methodical.