

A MELANGE FOR THE HOUR.

[Written for THE COURIER.]

ACROSS the somber prairie there creeps a hint of tendergreen. The willows begin to change their pinkish shade for one of emerald. Along the creeks the water-cresses begin to creep on the water and here and there a tiny bunch of violet leaves show fresh and bright beside a decayed tuft of dead grass. On some tall old gum weed a meadow lark pours forth his tumultuous song that in its joyousness seems almost to burn his little throat. The gophers are busily at work throwing up their little black mounds in the fields, preparing for the spring campaign in the cornfields, digging out the corn that the farmer has laboriously planted. The gentle rain falls and washes the dust of the winter out of the skies. The soft breeze kisses our cheeks with an affectionate kiss like that of a lover. Across the wide expanse of sky a huge black arrow shoots southward and down from its point we hear the sonorous kook, kook, of the wild goose as he leads his little army through the pathless fields of the sky, and we know that spring is here.

Lady Jonquil, tell me pray
Where you got your fine array.
Surely, surely you never found
That handsome dress in the ugly ground.
I think some fairy wove for you
With wof of sunshine, warp of dew
The yellow robe you wear
With such a queenly air.

Lady Jonquil answers not
Far too proud she is I wot
But I'll take the lady gay
To my love this very day
She I know without a doubt
Will find the Jonquil's secret out.

Easter time is nearing. How anxiously in days gone by we looked forward to the coming of Easter. For weeks beforehand we hid the eggs in some safe place in the haymow and when the long looked for Easter came we brought a great basket full of fresh eggs to the house as a surprise. Sometimes we made nests near the house, the night before Easter, so the rabbits could lay colored eggs for us and we always found the nest heaping full of bright colored eggs the next morning. It was strange that some of the eggs had patterns on them, just like those on mother's new calico gown. We would eat eggs for breakfast, for dinner and for supper. The one who ate the most was accounted a hero. For weeks the old what-not in the parlor would be decorated with red, blue and variegated eggs. And wonder of wonders, sometimes a good, kind person would take a pin and draw the prettiest things on the eggs and put our names around the middle. But accidents would happen. Sometimes when we were sent in to dust off the what-not we would drop one of the precious eggs on the floor and it was gone. Again our playmates would slyly smuggle them away and soon the last colored egg was gone. And so go the bright fancies of our youth. One by one they fade and are destroyed, but new fancies come to take their places and we go on and are happy.

Away up high in the old hay mow
Where the spiders had groined and arched with gray
The underside of the steep old roof,
I always climbed at close of day
And looked high and low for fresh-laid eggs,
In the fragrant heaps of new mown hay.

I climbed the cross beams strong and rough
And balanced myself for a moment there,
Then leaped far out on the heaps of hay,
And the rush through the fragrant dusty air
Made me feel akin to the swallows outside
That circled and wheeled through the summer air.

I searched and found the nesting place
Of the yellow-legged hens, and in my hat
I placed the thin shelled globes of white,
And down from the mow like a dusty rat,

With the hat in my mouth, I backward climbed
To the floor below with its hay strewn mat.

I would give the world if I might go
Back to that dusty hay-mow gray,
And hunt the eggs and leap and roll,
And be as happy and free and gay,
As I was in that long past happy time
When I hunted the eggs in the fragrant hay.

Young poets write what they know; what life has taught them. If life has been a pleasant teacher, has given them sunshine and few clouds, roses with few thorns, then the young poet sings cheerful songs, of love, of violets and of hope. But if life has been a stern teacher and has bound a crown of poverty on the singer's head, has laid the dreadful scourge of a broken body upon him, has rooted his sweetest hopes from his heart then, must his song be changed from the high clear soprano of happiness to the deep solemn pathetic alto. If to him once in a while is vouchsafed a glimpse of violets, in his lady's eyes, he says so and rejoices, but the violets soon fade. There be those who can understand and appreciate the mournful song of the young poet; they are of his kin, with broken hearts, blighted hopes and heavy burdens.

—WILLIAM REED DUNROY.

A GENTLE HINT.

"Mr. Stalate," she murmured, "do you remember when, in 1894, we sat up to watch the new year come in?"

"Yes," he replied, rapturously.

"Well, don't you—don't you—"

"Don't I what?"

"Don't you think we are beginning rather early this year?"

EASILY TRANSLATED.

There is a young man in town who will shortly pay for a new hat which he will not wear himself.

"Do you read French?" asked a friend.

"As well as English," said the young man.

"A hat you can't read this," and the tempter wrote on a slip of paper, "Pas de lieu Rhone que nous."

"That's nonsense," said the young man, passing his eye over the line, "and I'll bet the hat that you can't read it, either."

"Oh, that's all I wanted you to say. Here's where I win the hat," and he read:

Paddle your own canoe.

TO BE A CHILD AGAIN.

(Written for THE COURIER.)

If you could be the child again
That stood at mother's knee,
So sweet and pure and undefiled,
How happy you would be.

With earnest look into her face
For answer yes or no,
No higher author need be asked
If mother said 'twas so.

Before you knew the power of sin,
Or heard the tempter's voice,
When mother's smile was all your need
To make your heart rejoice.

Alas, we may not shun life's sins,
Nay, would not as we go,
But looking backward from the end
We wish it had been so.

And then to be the little child
That stood at mother's knee,
So sweet and pure and undefiled,
How happy we would be.

—ISABEL RICHEY.