

Classic Poetry Series

Martha M Simpson

- poems -

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To an Old Grammar

Oh, mighty conjuror, you raise
The ghost of my lost youth --
The happy, golden-tinted days
When earth her treasure-trove displays,
And everything is truth.

Your compeers may be sage and dry,
But in your page appears
A very fairyland, where I
Played 'neath a changeful Irish sky --
A sky of smiles and tears.

Dear native land! this little book
Brings back the varied charm
Of emerald hill and flashing brook,
Deep mountain glen and woodland nook,
And homely sheltered farm.

I see the hayrick where I sat
In golden autumn days,
And conned thy page, and wondered what
Could be the use, excepting that
It gained the master's praise.

I conjugate thy verbs again
Beside the winter's fire,
And, as the solemn clock strikes ten,
I lay thee on the shelf, and then
To dreams of thee retire.

Thy Saxon roots reveal to me
A silent, empty school,
And one poor prisoner who could see,
As if to increase her misery,
Her mates released from rule,

Rushing to catch the rounder ball,
Or circling in the ring.
Those merry groups! I see them all,
And even now I can recall
The songs they used to sing.

Thy syntax conjures forth a morn
Of spring, when blossoms rare
Conspired the solemn earth to adorn,
And spread themselves on bank and thorn,
And perfumed all the air.

The dewdrops lent their aid and threw
Their gems with lavish hand
On every flower of brilliant hue,
On every blade of grass that grew

In that enchanted land.

The lark her warbling music lent,
To give an added charm,
And sleek-haired kine, in deep content,
Forth from their milking slowly went
Towards the homestead farm.

And here thy page on logic shows
A troop of merry girls,
A meadow smooth where clover grows,
And lanes where scented hawthorn blows,
And woodbine twines and curls.

And, turning o'er thy leaves, I find
Of many a friend the trace;
Forgotten scenes rush to my mind,
And some whom memory left behind
Now stare me in the face.

Ah, happy days! when hope was high,
And faith was calm and deep!
When all was real and God was nigh,
And heaven was "just beyond the sky",
And angels watched my sleep.

Your dreams are gone, and here instead
Fair science reigns alone,
And, when I come to her for bread,
She smiles and bows her stately head
And offers me -- a stone.

Martha M Simpson