

# The Children of the Night<sup>1</sup>

By Theodore Roosevelt

President of the United States

THE "twilight of the poets" has been especially gray in America; for poetry is of course one of those arts in which the smallest amount of work of the very highest class is worth an infinity of good work that is not of the highest class. The touch of the purple makes a poem out of verse, and if it is not there, there is no substitute. It is hard to account for the failure to produce in America of recent years a poet who in the world of letters will rank as high as certain American sculptors and painters rank in the world of art.

But individual poems appear from time to time, by Mr. Madison Cawein, by Mr. Clinton Scollard, by Dr. Maurice Egan, and others; and more rarely a little volume of poetry appears, like Bliss Carman's "Ballads of Lost Haven." Such a book is Edward Arlington Robinson's "The Children of the Night."

It is rather curious that Mr. Robinson's volume should not have attracted more attention. There is an undoubted touch of genius in the poems collected in this volume, and a curious simplicity and good faith, all of which qualities differentiate them sharply from ordinary collections of the kind. There is in them just a little of the light that never was on land or sea, and in such light the objects described often have nebulous outlines; but it is not always necessary in order to enjoy a poem that one should be able to translate it into terms of mathematical accuracy. Indeed, those who admire the coloring of Turner, those who like to read how—and to wonder why—Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came, do not wish always to have the ideas presented to them with cold, hard, definite outlines; and to a man with the poetic temperament it is inevitable that life should often appear clothed with a certain sad mysticism. In the present volume I am not sure that I understand

"Luke Havergal;" but I am entirely sure that I like it.

Whoever has lived in country America knows the gray, empty houses from which life has gone. It is of one of these that "The House on the Hill" was written.

"They are all gone away,  
The House is shut and still,  
There is nothing more to say."

Through broken walls and gray  
The winds blow bleak and shrill:  
They are all gone away.

Nor is there one to-day  
To speak them good or ill:  
There is nothing more to say.

Why is it then we stray  
Around that sunken sill?  
They are all gone away,

And our poor fancy-play  
For them is wasted skill:  
There is nothing more to say.

There is ruin and decay  
In the House on the Hill:  
They are all gone away,  
There is nothing more to say."

The next poem, "Richard Cory," illustrates a very ancient but very profound philosophy of life with a curiously local touch which points its keen insight. Those who feel poetry in their marrow and fiber are the spiritual heirs of the ages; and so it is natural that this man from Maine, many of whose poems could have been written only by one to whom the most real of lives is the life of the American small town, should write his "Ballade of Broken Flutes"—where "A lonely surge of ancient spray told of an unforgetful sea;"—should write the poem beginning:

"Since Persia fell at Marathon,  
The yellow years have gathered fast:  
Long centuries have come and gone;"

and the very original sonnet on Amoryllis, the last three lines of which are:

"But though the trumpets of the world were glad,

<sup>1</sup> *The Children of the Night*. By Edward Arlington Robinson. Richard G. Badger & Co., Boston.

It made me lonely and it made me sad  
To think that Amaryllis had grown old."

Some of his images stay fixed in one's  
mind, as in "The Pity of the Leaves,"  
the lines running:

"The brown, thin leaves that on the stones  
outside  
Skipped with a freezing whisper."

Sometimes he writes, as in "The  
Tavern," of what most of us feel we  
have seen; and then again of what we  
have seen only with the soul's eyes.

I shall close by quoting entire his  
poem on "The Wilderness," which could  
have been written only by a man into  
whose heart there had entered deep the  
very spirit of the vast and melancholy  
northern forests:

"Come away! come away! there's a frost  
along the marshes,  
And a frozen wind that skims the shoal where  
it shakes the dead black water;  
There's a moan across the lowland and a  
wailing through the woodland  
Of a dirge that sings to send us back to the  
arms of those that love us.  
There is nothing left but ashes now where  
the crimson chills of autumn  
Put off the summer's languor with a touch  
that made us glad  
For the glory that is gone from us, with a  
flight we cannot follow,  
To the slopes of other valleys and the sounds  
of other shores.

Come away! come away! you can hear them  
calling, calling,  
Calling us to come to them, and roam no  
more.  
Over there beyond the ridges and the land  
that lies between us,  
There's an old song calling us to come!

Come away! come away! for the scenes we  
leave behind us  
Are barren for the lights of home and a flame  
that's young forever;

And the lonely trees around us creak the  
warning of the night-wind,  
That love and all the dreams of love are away  
beyond the mountains.  
The songs that call for us to-night, they have  
called for men before us,  
And the winds that blow the message, they  
have blown ten thousand years;  
But this will end our wander-time, for we  
know the joy that waits us  
In the strangeness of home-coming, and a  
faithful woman's eyes.

Come away! come away! there is nothing  
now to cheer us—  
Nothing now to comfort us, but love's road  
home:—  
Over there beyond the darkness there's a  
window gleams to greet us,  
And a warm hearth waits for us within.

Come away! come away!—or the roving  
fiend will hold us,  
And make us all to dwell with him to the end  
of human faring:  
There are no men yet can leave him when his  
hands are clutched upon them,  
There are none will own his enmity, there are  
none will call him brother.  
So we'll be up and on the way, and the less  
we brag the better  
For the freedom that God gave us and the  
dread we do not know:—  
The frost that skips the willow-leaf will again  
be back to blight it,  
And the doom we cannot fly from is the  
doom we do not see.

Come away! come away! there are dead  
men all around us—  
Frozen men that mock us with a wild, hard  
laugh  
That shrieks and sinks and whimpers in the  
shrill November rushes,  
And the long full wind on the lake."

Mr. Robinson has written in this little  
volume not verse but poetry. Whether  
he has the power of sustained flight  
remains to be seen.

# Admiral Togo<sup>1</sup>

By George Kennan

Special Correspondent of The Outlook in the Far East

JAPAN has given the world many surprises since she entered upon her "era of enlightenment" and began to adopt the methods and appliances of Western civilization; but it may well be doubted whether, in all the long list of her achievements and triumphs, anything is more extraordinary and astonishing than her rapid creation of a navy and her wonderful exhibition of fighting capacity in the field of naval warfare. If, twenty years ago, Captain Mahan had ventured to predict that an Asiatic people—a people almost universally regarded as semi-barbarous—would shortly have a navy of the first rank, would completely crush the sea power of one of the greatest States in Europe, and would produce a naval commander worthy to take rank with Nelson, his prediction would have been regarded as too wild and absurd for discussion. People would have said, "Preposterous! The Chinese and Japanese, only thirty years ago, were going to war in high-sterned wooden junks propelled by sails. How are they going to create a modern navy, learn the art of naval warfare, and produce a commander like Nelson, in a single generation? The most gifted and civilized nation in Europe could not do it. It's a long step from gongs, firecrackers, and wooden junks to high-powered guns and armored battle-ships; and as for a commander worthy to take rank with Nelson—you might as well look to Asia for a yellow-skinned Napoleon!"

Such a judgment as this in 1885 would have been regarded as reasonable and conclusive by nine Americans out of ten; and yet, at that very time, the Japanese navy was in process of creation; Japanese naval officers were learning in England and Germany how to make high-powered guns; and the Asiatic Nelson, after seven years of training in Great Britain, was serving as a lieutenant in the Japanese cruiser Asama. How

quickly the Asiatic islanders assimilated the knowledge that the Occident could give them, and how thoroughly and effectively they put it into practice, we may see from a brief review of the results of the present war. Since the 1st of February, 1904, the newly created navy of this small Asiatic empire, with some co-operation from the army at Port Arthur, has sunk or captured sixty-five Russian vessels, including fourteen battle-ships of the first class, twelve armored or protected cruisers, four auxiliary cruisers, three coast-defense ironclads, eleven gunboats, and twenty-one torpedo-boats and destroyers. It has also killed or captured eleven Russian admirals, and has taken as prisoners about ten thousand men of the naval rank and file. It has not suffered a single defeat, and although twelve of its vessels have been destroyed by accidental collisions and percussion mines, it has not lost, in action, a single ship larger than a torpedo-boat, and it is probably stronger and more efficient now than it was a year ago. Such a record as this is not only extraordinary, but absolutely unparalleled; and when we consider the fact that these results have been attained, not by accident or luck, but by organization, practice, good judgment, and consummate skill, we must give Japan credit for producing not only good seamen and gunners, but naval commanders worthy to take rank with the first in the world.

Among the men who have been identified with the Japanese navy from the very beginning, who have been most active in its training, and who have contributed most to its efficiency, is the distinguished admiral whose name stands at the head of this article. Other officers, perhaps, have had more influence in shaping the maritime policy of Japan, in creating her fleet, and in perfecting her naval organization; but Togo, Kamimura, Uriu, Kataoka, Shimamura, and Dewa have given to the men of the navy

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