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The Eugene Field
I Knew by Francis
Wilson 



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The Eugene Field
I Knew ♪ ♪ ♪





Swate friends, for mercy's sake forbear

To criticize ys visage here;

But read's my bookes,

which, spite my lookes,

Ben full of mightie plaisurunt cheere.

Rayne Field.

July 15, 1891

The Eugene Field
I Knew 🍀 🍀 🍀 🍀 🍀
By Francis Wilson



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To
my daughters
Frances and Adelaide
this book about their good
friend and mine is
affectionately
inscribed

Note

I am very glad to avail myself of the privilege of a Note in which to express my thanks to James Whitcomb Riley, George W. Cable, Mrs. Julia Field, Roswell M. Field, Leon H. Vincent, Rev. Dr. Frank M. Bristol, De Witt Miller, Frank M. Morris, W. Irving Way, George M. Millard, Otto Fleischner, Ralph Meeker, Melville E. Stone, Marvin Eddy, and others, for courtesies shown me with respect to this publication.

F. W.

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EUGENE FIELD

BORN AT ST. LOUIS, MO., SEPTEMBER 3, . . .	1850
STUDENT AT WILLIAMS COLLEGE,	1868
FRESHMAN CLASS	
STUDENT AT KNOX COLLEGE,	1869
SOPHOMORE CLASS	
STUDENT AT COLUMBIA (MO.) UNIVERSITY, .	1870
JUNIOR CLASS	
SPENT SIX MONTHS IN EUROPE,	1872
REPORTER ON ST. LOUIS JOURNAL,	1873
CITY EDITOR ST. JOSEPH (MO.) GAZETTE, . .	1875-76
EDITORIAL WRITER ON ST. LOUIS JOURNAL AND ST. LOUIS TIMES-JOURNAL,	1876-80
MANAGING EDITOR KANSAS CITY TIMES, . .	1880-81
MANAGING EDITOR DENVER TRIBUNE, . . .	1881-83
FREE LANCE ON CHICAGO RECORD (FORMERLY DAILY NEWS),	1883-95
SPENT THE YEAR IN EUROPE,	1889
DIED AT CHICAGO, NOVEMBER 4,	1895

The Eugene Field I Knew

THERE were many Eugene Fields. Like the Apostle, he was all things to all men and much to many. Curiously enough, the Eugene Field of Julian Hawthorne was diametrically the opposite of George W. Cable's Eugene Field.

He was well-nigh idolized in Chicago, where he delighted to live, and from which place "gold, silver, jewels and precious stones" could not tempt him permanently.

To "Bill Nye" he was an eccentric but charming companion, and James Whitcomb Riley, wondering at his ver-

The Eugene Field I Knew

satility of talent, found Field "an isolated character running counter to any prior opinion that might have been formed of him." He was a terror to politicians, a Homer to the children, and different to, as well as from, everybody. He bore unique relations to each of his friends and acquaintances, as many of them have eloquently and affectionately testified. As Field came to be a conspicuous literary figure, it was most interesting to observe his keen enjoyment of growing reputation. He played the lion with admirable modesty and the tact of a Talleyrand. If the situation required it, he could "aggravate his voice so that he would roar you as gently as any sucking dove."

Possessed of a sonorous bass voice, an unconventional manner, and much magnetism, he easily made himself the

The Eugene Field I Knew

centre of any group in which he chanced to mingle. He constantly attracted people who were as far removed as possible, seemingly, from any interest in the work in which he was engaged; then his missionary labors began; and in a few weeks, under the stimulating guidance of their poetic friend, his new acquaintances would be collecting books and rapidly developing into gentle bibliomaniacs. In this conversion of an indifferent soul into an enthusiastic worshipper at the shrine of literature, Eugene Field rejoiced.

His devotion to his friends was beautiful. With a great degree of truth it is said that his recreation consisted chiefly in the task of illuminating poems, or of writing dedicatory addresses in presentation copies of books which he gave them. He would give hours to the em-

The Eugene Field I Knew

bellishment of a letter which it had taken him but ten minutes to write. He was fierce and uncompromising in the denunciation of shams; he mercilessly lampooned pretension and ignorance; but so winsome was the man's nature, so much was he loved by those with whom he came into personal contact, so touched were they by his tender strains in the praise of childhood, so convinced were all of his earnestness and honesty, of his civic pride, so drawn to him by his magnetic power, that many of those whom for years he publicly ridiculed stood with bowed heads about his coffin.

The Eugene Field whom I knew had but little about him that was not of the brightest, sunniest character. Being human, he had his moments of sadness, but even through these temporary shad-



Field, Riley and Nye

The Eugene Field I Knew

ows the radiance of his buoyancy would shine. He had a wonderfully keen appreciation of the humorous and the ridiculous, and a facility for turning a proposition from grave to gay and from gay to grave as unusual as it was diverting.

To know Field in his happiest moods was to sit as audience to him while with book in hand he read aloud some such production as the poems of the Sweet Singer of Michigan, and commented thereon. His dry, sly little chuckle (I never heard him laugh heartily) attracted you, if you were observing, while his criticisms were irresistible.

His "Oh, is n't that lovely!" as he would crow and narrow his shoulders in delight, when he met some especially crude line; as,

While on earth he done his duty,

The Eugene Field I Knew

and the mock-seriousness with which, still reading, he would troll out :

And now, kind friends, what I have wrote,
I hope you will look o'er,
And not criticise as some have done,
Hitherto, herebefore,

and his unique way of hunching himself into various comic positions on his chair, were very mirth-compelling.

He was not unmindful of the effect which he was producing, and grinned good-naturedly all the while at your helpless emotion—the tribute of laughter serving but to stimulate his “antic disposition.”

Every occasion was seized upon by Field's Puritan relatives to provide him with a full store of biblical knowledge. As a child he was encouraged by his grandmother, a devout Congregationalist, to write sermons, for every one of

The Eugene Field I Knew

which, as a reward of merit, he was given ninepence—a very substantial sum in those days, in New England, to a boy of nine.

A number of these childish homilies was made, the surviving one of which testifies to his neatness and intelligence. The writer has often heard him read the sermon, and Field never failed to chuckle over the jumble—the Græco-Roman tussle—of the pronouns, and to smile approvingly at the ambitious effort at fine writing of his younger self.

The “I remark secondly” and the “Oh, it is indeed hard for sinners to go down to perdition over all the obstacles which God has placed in his path” greatly amused him. He did not care much to commit Bible verses to memory—he was fonder of recitations—but grandma’s insistence, and grand-

The Eugene Field I Knew

ma's ninepences, gave him a knowledge of the Scriptures of which, later, he was very proud.

NOTES OF SERMON BY E. P. FIELD.¹

TEXT IN PROV., CHAP. 13, VERSE 15.

The life of a Christian is often compared to a race that is hard, and to a battle in which a man must fight hard to win; these comparisons have prevented many from becoming Christians. But the Bible does not compare the Christian's path as one of hard labor. But Solomon says, Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. Under the word "transgressor" are included all those that disobey their Maker, or in shorter words, the ungodly. Every person looking around will see many who are transgressors and whose lot is very hard.

I remark secondly that conscience makes the way of transgressors hard, for every act of pleasure, every act of guilt his conscience smites him. The last of his stay on earth will appear horrible to the beholder. Sometimes, however, he will be stayed

¹ Chagrined that, unlike most boys, he had no middle name, Field assumed the "P," which stood for Phillips — Wendell Phillips — of whom Field was a great admirer.



At Twelve



At Eighteen



At Nineteen



At Nineteen

Early Portraits of Eugene Field

The Eugene Field I Knew

in his guilt. A death in a family of some favorite object, or be attacked by Some disease himself, is brought to the portals of the grave. Then for a little time, perhaps, he is stayed in his wickedness, but before long he returns to his worldly lust. Oh it is indeed hard for sinners to go down into perdition over all the obstacles which God has placed in his path. But many I am afraid do go down into perdition, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.

Suppose now there was a fearful precipice and to allure you there your enemies should scatter flowers on its dreadful edge. Would you if you knew that while you were strolling about on that awful rock that night would settle down on you and that you would fall from that giddy height, would you, I say, go near that dreadful rock? Just so with the transgressor, he falls from that height just because he wishes to appear good in the sight of the world.

But what will a man gain if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

Field began to write, in an amateur way, for newspapers in 1871, when he was twenty-one and a Sophomore at

The Eugene Field I Knew

Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois. To "The Register," a paper published in the town, he made frequent contributions, which were recognized and eagerly read. His literary talent was acknowledged even at this early date, and his future success was thought to be assured. He is remembered as carelessly dressed, wearing his hair rather long, and smoking a cob pipe. His room was a resort for the college boys; he was very popular with the students, who were attentive listeners to his droll stories. It is unnecessary to say he was concerned in all the college pranks. At that early date he was a collector of books; but these beginnings of a library were unfortunately destroyed by fire. His kindness, honesty, and sincerity are also remembered.

Field was an inveterate practical

The Eugene Field I Knew

joker, but his jokes had the rare quality of endearing him all the more to those upon whom they were practised. It was waggery pure, but not always simple, for it was oftentimes of the most elaborate character — fancifully conceived and carefully wrought. It seldom stung, and it rarely ever failed to tickle. One felt flattered to be the object of so much time, attention, and skill as his conceits frequently involved.

Field was very fond of the proprietor of a certain underground bookshop in Chicago, and the feeling was cordially reciprocated. He would go down to this place of an evening. When the doors were closed the proprietor and he would repair to the back of the shop, and Field would put his feet upon the table and sing old songs and tell stories at the top of his tremendous voice. He

The Eugene Field I Knew

said of this friend, with genial satire, that he had in him "the making of a delightfully unscrupulous and successful robber." A trip from his home on the north side to the city proper always included a visit to the "Book Shop," which meant impromptu utterances with congenial folk on books and collectors. Indeed, it was in this underground shop, at the corner of Madison and State streets, that the gathering began of the Saints and Sinners' Club. There Field would come in his boyish, breezy way and talk *at* the customers—fashioning his remarks to their supposed character, of which, as it often proved, he was an excellent off-hand judge.

Now he would stiffen the back of a straightlaced dame by demanding, in a loud voice, an unexpurgated copy of Mrs. Hemans's poems; or, if the visitor

The Eugene Field I Knew

scanned the theological books, perhaps Field would declare that Paine's "Age of Reason" was orthodox by comparison with the religious belief to which he surmised the newcomer adhered. This rarely failed in its effect upon the newcomer. During one of these visits the proprietor was away, and Field, finding a print of him, wrote under the picture in his microscopic handwriting:

This is the robber as sure as you 're born,
Against whose guile I fain would warn
The bibliomaniac, tattered and torn,
Who pauses to look at some second-hand book
That lies on the shelf all covered with dust,
And is marked "four dollars, for cash, no trust,"
In a gloomy corner that smells of must,
Down in the shop that Morris built.

Eugene Field.

This he carefully laid away between the leaves of a book, where it was discovered some days later.

The Eugene Field I Knew

In "A Little Book of Western Verse," belonging to "the robber," he wrote :

Believe me, by all those endearing old charms
With which your quaint shop is provided,
I shall honor the trade by whose help I have
made

A collection of freaks that 's derided.

And, if you believe me, why, then I 've to ask,
That, till Fortune betimes readjust me,
With dollars and dimes for my yarns and my
rhymes,

You shall still continue to trust me.

October, 1889.

Here is the uniquely humorous way in which Field addressed the envelope of a letter to his friend Edmund Clarence Stedman :

There is herein a plaintive ditty
For E. C. Stedman, New York city ;
In Broadway, 66, fourth story,
You 'll find the same in all his glory.
So take this packet to that Stedman,
Or, by St. Hocus ! you 're a dead man!

The Eugene Field I Knew

Field was very fertile in jocular invention and very swift to seize upon a suggestion.

He was one of the journalists who once accompanied Carl Schurz from St. Louis on a political campaign through Missouri. At one of their halting places the gentleman who was to introduce Mr. Schurz did not put in an appearance. It was suggested that Field make the introductory remarks. The audience was large and expectation ran high. Field puffed out his chest and, assuming a super-dignified manner and a strong German accent, addressed the meeting as follows :

Ladies and Chentlemens :

I have such a severe colt dot I cannot make me a speedg to-night, but I haf die bleasure of to introduce to you my prilliant young chournalistic gompanion, Mr. Eucheene Fielt, who will speak in my blace.

The Eugene Field I Knew

With this Mr. Schurz was presented, it is said, in no very pleasant frame of mind. The explanation which followed caused uproarious laughter. One can but marvel at Field's temerity, for he was wholly unknown at the time.

In seeking a verification of this story the following letter was received from Mr. Schurz :

Whether the Eugene Field anecdote you mention in your letter is literally true, I do not now remember. But I should not wonder if it were. He and another gentleman accompanied me on a "stumping" tour in Missouri in 1874, and he constantly amused and sometimes astonished us with his humorous pranks. The one you speak of may well have been one of them.

Here is an illustration of the readiness with which he extricated himself from an embarrassing situation. He had invited some friends to a Sunday dinner at his home on Fullerton Ave-

The Eugene Field I Knew

nue. His waitress, guided by that incomprehensible vagary that seizes upon serving folk at the most inopportune times, suddenly "turned up missing." This seemed to give him no concern, and in the few minutes' chat before the meal was announced, it was noticed that he made a pleasant but gratuitous allusion to "Camille" — the serving maid. This, though not remarked upon, was thought to be a rather romantic name for a servant. Occasionally Field would mysteriously disappear in the direction of the kitchen and anon return and pick up the threads of conversation.

When he opened the dining-room doors it was seen that soup was already served; this course finished, the bell was rung for "Camille." But no "Camille" appeared. Field went to

The Eugene Field I Knew

the door and called: "Camille!" first softly, and then very loudly,—but still no "Camille" appeared. There was an awkward pause and an interrogatory exchange of frigidities between host and hostess. Just as the guests had settled down to the unpleasant conviction that they were to witness an exceedingly embarrassing family jar, Field, with the remark that he would shame "Camille," gathered up the empty soup dishes and dashed into the kitchen. There was some nervous speculation as to what would happen next. There were disputatious voices from the culinary department which those of the dining-room tried to drown in a rambling chatter. Suddenly the door opens and a huge platter of roast beef comes smoking into view. It is steered by Field, wearing the most expansive of



Field as the Waitress "Camille"

The Eugene Field I Knew

foreign smiles, a cook's white cap and a muslin apron tied high up under his arms in the most ridiculous fashion.

“Camille” had arrived! It was all a joke — the tension was loosened and hilarity reigned. He was radiant with the success of his trick, which was many times more amusing in the happening than it could possibly be in the narration. Everybody's enjoyment of it was very keen. Dotted over a period of years, and thus showing his appreciation of appreciation, would come in Field's letters some such allusion as: “I will now repair to the kitchen to help Camille bail soup for the vesper meal”—or, “Eighteen years ago I was so happy! And now upon this anniversary we are to have fried sausages for dinner. I think I will step down into the pantry and lick Camille.”

The Eugene Field I Knew

The plan hit upon to gain a much-needed increase in salary from his employer, the proprietor of the "Daily News," was as original and as successful a bit of fooling as Field ever conceived and carried to completion. He was of too sensitive a nature to invite the shock of a direct refusal, and so absenting himself from the office for a few days, he finally returned with four of his children, who, with himself, were in as dilapidated a condition as it was possible for mortals to be and still retain a measure of dignity and self-respect. Once in the presence of his employer the five went through a series of appealing gestures and glances, never speaking, until Field at length pitifully asked: "Please, Mr. Stone, can't you see your way to raise my salary?"

Field's estimate of his long-time pa-

The Eugene Field I Knew

tron may be gathered from this quaint inscription in a book :

To Melville E. Stone, once my employer, always my creditor, eternally my friend.

The more unusual the situation, particularly if it partook of the ludicrous, the more enthusiastically he surrendered himself to its requirements.

It was the custom at the office of the "News" at Christmas-time to give a turkey to each of the employees. Field wrote the head of the paper that he should prefer the Yuletide courtesy in his own case to take the form of a suit of clothes. Here was so good a chance to joke the joker that it must not be neglected. In compliance with the letter of his request, a full suit of convict's clothes was sent to him. For a long time after this, whenever strangers came to

The Eugene Field I Knew

the "News" office, Field would don this prison suit, and with shovel and coal-scuttle in hand, having somehow managed to engage the visitors in conversation, he would, in perfect keeping with the character which he was portraying, descant volubly upon the wisdom and economy of convict labor.

At Denver, Field gave himself over to even wilder boyish pranks, as when arrayed in a velveteen coat and knee-breeches, and with a huge sunflower in his hand, he rode through the city in an open barouche, being mistaken by the wondering populace for a well-known esthete who was hourly expected.

He was a very clubable as well as a very neighborly man. Few people of importance went to Chicago who were not entertained by him at the Union

The Eugene Field I Knew

League. He was a much sought-for neighbor, and always very welcome. At his home in Buena Park, a suburb of Chicago, one would always be sure on any summer's day to find a crowd, and Field, the central figure, hilariously entertaining them. The children flocked about him, and he won their little hearts by the narration of most marvellous tales, invented on the spot. He joked his neighbors in public and in private. If they affected dogs, he wrote droll stories of their pups. If they were fond of plants, he would take them slips with extraordinary botanical names; these, with great ceremony, he planted on their lawns, and then underwent much good-natured scolding when the plants proved to be Canada thistle.

He sometimes figured at a disadvantage in a joke, but the uncommon good

The Eugene Field I Knew

humor with which he accepted the situation greatly heightened the enjoyment of it, as the following incident will show.

Dressed in a new white flannel suit, and acting as escort and guide to a party of eastern friends at the Columbian Exposition, Field halted them, en route, at a druggist's, for soda water. Owing to the heat of the day, and the better to enjoy the beverage, he sat down on the ledge of the low window-shelf generally used by the druggist for the display of wares. Unfortunately, and as a matter of course unconsciously, he sat on a large piece of molasses-like fly-paper.

When he rose to place his empty glass upon the counter, the fly-paper rose with him. Its infatuation for his person was extravagant, its adjustment

The Eugene Field I Knew

thereto perfect. Not a corner was rumpled. Not a fly escaped. Poor Field had just been introduced to a young woman of the party to whom he was especially gallant. When he became aware of the state of affairs, rudely warned as he was by the snickering of the assembled people, he was divided between chagrin and a proper appreciation of the comic side of the situation. Happily the latter prevailed, and by dint of much strength and perseverance the druggist succeeded in disembarassing him of his impromptu plaster. His coat stuck to his trousers, his trousers stuck to him; and during the continuance of the journey it was very amusing to see Field surreptitiously pull aside his constantly clinging garments.

He had been jesting that day over a friend who hyphened his own name.

The Eugene Field I Knew

Next morning he received a note bearing the following superscription :

*Eugene Fly-paper-Fly-paper Field, Esq.,
Buena Park,
Ills.*

The association of Field and Mr. George W. Cable in a lecturing tour though interesting for the public, was about as quaint and strange a combination as one can well imagine. Cable is all gentleness and suavity; Field, on the other hand, was bristling and boisterous. It is likely that Cable never quite knew just what unusual thing Field was going to do next. Certain it is that Field gave him many anxious moments. It was not that Field meant to worry his companion, but he was

The Eugene Field I Knew

aware that Cable regarded him as a strangely composite creature, and he could not resist the mischievous delight which he found in corroborating such an estimate. It was understood that Field had presented Mr. Cable with a book containing a humorous inscription, and in the hope of eliciting some fresh word anent his "partner," a letter was addressed to him on the subject, and there was received the following reply:

Northampton, Mass., 24 September, 1896.

I seize with eagerness the opportunity you give me to speak a word of tribute to the winning personal qualities of Eugene Field. His eccentricities were so many and so droll that one need not dwell a moment upon them, save to say that with them all he was still, in work, in travel, and in sojourn, a companion of unfailing and irresistible charm. I doubt if I could name another man of my acquaintance who so deftly and unfailingly, or with such apparent unconsciousness, adapted others to himself and himself to them at one and the same time.

The Eugene Field I Knew

During one season we journeyed much together, lodged in the same hotels and homes, were comrades alone and guests in large companies; but I never saw the hour when he was not in buoyant spirits, mirthful, kind, and witty.

The inscription spoken of is in a book of his own which he gave me, and reads as follows :

“To my beloved but wicked partner, George W. Cable, from Eugene Field.”

Yours truly,

G. W. Cable.

While Field and Cable were lecturing at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, desiring to greet the former, I slipped back of the scenes and found him tilted in a chair, feet on table, book in hand, reading over the poem which he was about to recite. The Cable-Field reading was in the afternoon, and Lottie Collins, the serio-comic vocalist, was to occupy the theatre in the evening. It was in Miss Collins's room that Field was sitting,

The Eugene Field I Knew

and stage paraphernalia were all about. A glittering hat-pin was remarked in the lapel of Field's coat, and he was questioned about it. "You see," he said, "I am making a collection of rhinestone hat-pins; and, travelling as I am, lecturing in various theatres, I have exceptional opportunities for picking up such souvenirs at a very low price."

While it could hardly be said that Field was of the kind who "never kept a professional, nor broke a social, engagement," he certainly delighted in his reputation for eccentricity. Once when the reading was about to begin, Mr. Cable was pained to receive a telegram from Field announcing his sudden illness, which would prevent his presence at the entertainment. Sorrowing for his associate, Cable got through the evening as best he could. The following

The Eugene Field I Knew

morning, meeting one of the business staff, Cable inquired anxiously for Field, and felt sure the illness must have been of a serious nature. "I think not," replied the gentleman addressed, "I did n't notice anything unusual. I sat next to him last night in the theatre in Philadelphia."

"Why, Field," exclaimed Cable, when they met, "how could you do so? Do you know you disappointed over a thousand people?"

"Cable," said Field, solemnly, "I don't care a snap about the thousand people; it is on your account and yours only that I am deeply contrite." "And," added Cable, "he said it as if that explanation really explained."

"When we were in Minneapolis," went on Mr. Cable, "we were asked to be the guests of a very dear friend of Field's,

The Eugene Field I Knew

Mr. Sol Smith Russell. Mr. Russell, on account of his professional engagements, could not be at home to welcome us, but Mrs. Russell was there to do us honor. With both Field and myself to entertain, I feared we were crowding the limits of her hospitality. Imagine, if you please, my astonishment when Field introduced a third member of our party, a seven-foot relative, with the off-hand remark, 'This is only my cousin—put him anywhere, he 'll be satisfied!'"

Blessed with unusual mimetic power, a retentive memory, much magnetism, a strong love and knowledge of dramatic climaxes, sensitively impressionable and able faithfully to depict the thing seen or imagined, Field in all likelihood would have achieved no little success as an actor.

The Eugene Field I Knew

Indeed, at one time Field was very ambitious for histrionic honors. On coming into his patrimony one of the first things he did was to provide himself with a complete outfit of theatrical costumes for such characters as *Hamlet*, *Lear*, *Othello*, etc. These costumes he exhibited to his friends with great pride. He organized a company of his own in conjunction with his friend Marvin Eddy, who tells of a comedy Field wrote in which the heroines were impersonated by Field himself to the heroes of the only other acting member of the cast—Mr. Eddy. A Madame Saunders was the orchestra or, rather, the pianist, and Monsieur Saunders painted the posters which announced the coming of the “great and only” entertainment. Rehearsals were held in the parlors of the hotels, and the

The Eugene Field I Knew

“show” was given in the hotel dining-rooms. While a darky carried a placard of announcement, the result of Saunders’s artistic handiwork, the local band, specially engaged, played in front of the principal places in town. Mr. Eddy recalls that Field had a sweet bass voice which he used with much effect both in songs and recitations.

The season, confined to such towns in Missouri as Carrollton, Richmond, etc., lasted about two weeks and was what the papers would call a *succès d’estime*. A consultation was held as to the advisability of giving the people of Kansas City an opportunity to judge of the new histrion’s quality, but it was concluded that Kansas City had done nothing to warrant such an invasion — which proves unusual wisdom on Field’s part at so early an age — twenty-two.

The Eugene Field I Knew

It was a tradition of the family that the brothers would prosper either as musicians or actors, and if his lot had been cast with the players, Field would have risen far above mediocrity. Such, at least, was the impression gathered by his friends of the dramatic art, some of the exponents of which he would mimic with startling fidelity. Here was confirmative evidence of the man's versatility of talent, of his being much to everybody and dissimilar to all. For his friends of the cloth he wrote the most beautiful prayers and made charming paraphrases of the psalms. He thought the desire of those who wanted him to be a minister had got into his blood; for, as he said, he had always to preach some little verses, else he could not get through Christmas-tide. He delighted in his power of adaptability, and made

The Eugene Field I Knew

its results increasingly happy. Irrespective of circumstances, he bore himself with admirable judgment and adequate knowledge of his part. He was no niggard with his talents, and gave liberally of the best he could command. He was ambitious to excel and strove hard to lead, a trait especially characteristic of him from youth to manhood.

In his later years he suffered from an aggravated form of nervous dyspepsia. It would seem that this had been brought about by his excessive indulgence in tobacco, and by a lack of sufficient outdoor exercise. He was passionately devoted to reading in bed, when, like Charles Lamb, his "midnight darlings" were indeed his treasured books. He would smoke the while; then, in the small hours, extinguishing the light and folding himself

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chiefly in the fumes of tobacco, he would go to sleep. Naturally this made such inroads upon his constitution that, when it was too late, he gave up tobacco and travelled for his health to Europe, to New Orleans, to San Francisco, but it was all of little avail.

While in California, Field visited some relatives at Alameda, near San Francisco. He had heard a good deal of "the glorious climate," and, after his arrival, a never-ending clamor about it. Certainly he was a fit subject for its beneficent effect, but the low tone of his health, the sluggishness of his blood, made it impossible for him to keep warm. He saw no glory in the climate, and, sadly enough, it held no curative qualities for him. He grew discouraged, and denounced the country and everything concerning it with great

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bitterness. One morning he was found in a closet of his room hugging a gas stove, striving to extract enough heat to dispel the chill in his bones.

It was hoped he had slept well. He had n't done any such thing; his rest had been disturbed with a wretched dream. He had dreamed that his host and cousin had died and gone to heaven. At the gates of the celestial city St. Peter was encountered, and permission to enter had been refused unless the applicant's name were on the heavenly records.

“What was the name?”

“Field.”

“Oh, yes; *Gene* Field!” said the saint, enthusiastically. “Walk in, Mr. Field! Very glad, indeed, to welcome you. There are hosts of children awaiting your coming.”

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“No,” replied the other, “unfortunately I am not Eugene Field, but I am his cousin, Henry Field.”

“Pardon me,” replied St. Peter, “I must look over my book.”

A careful examination failed to find the name, and the applicant was told that he must go down-stairs, and down below the cousin was obliged to go.

At the door of Hades sat his Plutonic majesty, with horns and hoofs and forked tail.

“I suppose,” said the cousin, “that there is little need to ask if my name be inscribed upon your books? It must be.”

“We ’ll see,” said the Devil. But here again was disappointment, for Satan could not find the name of Field’s relative, and Cousin Henry was told, with a shake of the head, that he could not enter.

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“What!” shrieked he, in absolute despair, “is it possible that, after all, I must go back and live in Alameda!”

It is not claimed that Field was the originator of this story; he may only have adapted it to his purpose, but it was an actual occurrence with him, and, as such, illustrative of the sufferer’s grim humor, it is here presented.

Latterly Field became more thoughtful and serious. We are told that in his last year he seemed to be making an unconscious preparation for the life beyond. Not to have known him in that year is never to realize the full beauty of his nature.

It is easy to believe that this “sweetening of a character already lovable to an unusual degree” took place; for who can suppose that any man could speak so directly from the heart, and not be

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the better for the tender nobility of his utterances?

Why may it not be frankly said that Eugene Field was as full of human nature as are most men? He had his weaknesses and his strengths. In common with the rest of mankind, he said and did things which he might have wished unsaid and undone; Field was what he was, and Uncle Toby was not the only one whose unconventional English the Recording Angel might be willing to blot out with a tear. We love a man, not because of his faults, but despite them. When we come to be weighed in the balance of friendship, we may count ourselves fortunate indeed if the measure of our shortcomings is not in excess of what we knew Field to possess. He was a great, manly, talented, tender-

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hearted, lovable fellow, whose kindnesses and courtesies were many and frequent.

He had no squeamishness, yet I never heard him tell a coarse story; he appeared only to see the point of a joke without respect to the possible offensiveness of its setting.

It is to be doubted if Field ever did anybody an injury in the whole course of his life; and if I know anything about him at all, I know that even a slight injustice would have been more painful to him than to the person upon whom he might have inflicted it.

Nothing could have been worse for Field than his trip in 1889 to London, where the weather and the frequent invitations to dine, which he knew not how to refuse, told severely upon him. "Talk about weather," he writes from

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London, "this is the most abominable climate I ever experimented with. Elsewhere I should have been well long ago; but I am so nervous that I dread travel and the excitement incident thereto. My inclination is to stay in the house, keep warm, read and write, and digest my simple food."

And again :

What exceeding folly was it that tempted me to cross the sea in search of what I do not seem able to find here — a righteous stomach? I have been wallowing in the slough of despond for a week, and my digestive apparatus has gone wrong again. I have suffered tortures that would have done credit to the inventive genius of a Dante; and the natural consequence is, that I am as blue as a whetstone.

He seemed always to have had the inclination to "stay in the house, keep warm, and read and write," and it was this sedentary practice in early life, as I have said, which worked him such

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injury. He seemed never to be able to keep comfortable, and he once declared he had written everything thus far "freezing to death."

The insinuating mists and fogs of London would have tried sufficiently his waning health; but when he threw himself into the swirl of gastronomic London, where everything, even a birth or a death, is seized upon as a pretext for a dinner, he was guilty of the extreme of dietetic indiscretion.

On these occasions Field met most of the English literary world, and the descriptions he wrote to his friends of these feasts and those who attended them make racy reading. Indeed, since he was one of the most interesting and careful of letter-writers, a published selection of these letters would not fail to attract a host of readers. One can

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imagine the surprise of Mrs. Humphry Ward, who had asked him about the manners and customs of the people of America, when Field replied that when he was first caught he was up a tree !

His characterization of a number of the London booksellers as robbers was as true as it was quaint. His favorite browsing-place while in London was Sotheran's, where he found "a vast number of second-hand books at reasonable prices." He did not fail to observe that the prices took a strong upward tendency when the dealer suspected his customer to be an American. He railed against this to the dealers, and in no measured terms.

A friend who was in London with Field, "in the fall of '89," says :

One episode there was particularly dear to Field. An American, on the

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eve of sailing, found himself with but a few dollars, after buying his ticket to America. He dropped around to Field's house for a loan. He got it.

Two hours later an express wagon left a load of presents at the little house in Alfred Place. There were pictures and trinkets for the ladies, expensive Paris umbrellas for the girls, a big rocking-chair for Eugene, books and other things for the boys. They were picturesquely strewn about the sitting-room. Field took in the situation with a comprehensive glance, his face beaming as he read a note from his departing friend, thanking them all for their kindnesses, and begging the acceptance of the presents with his friendship and love.

“Is n't he a jewel!” exclaimed Field. “I adore that man. His presents have

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cost me just one hundred dollars! In his simplicity Charley thinks I will never know that my money paid for them. He has forgotten by this time that he ever borrowed it. We'll never hear of it again. That 's what I call humor—true American humor. All the family are pleased with their presents, Charley is sailing home with a heart full of joy and gratitude, and I'm tickled to death. He has repaid me a thousand times and made us all happy. God bless his dear old Connecticut soul!"

It was at this period, in London, that Field wrote his patriotic poems "Stoves and Sunshine" and "John Smith."

His health had improved but little at the time of his return to America. However much the knowledge of his condition weighed upon him in private,

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he appeared the same fun-loving, vivacious companion as of old, and he stood nobly by his resolve not to let his ailment jaundice his work. Later his complaint increased so greatly that he was obliged to deny himself the privilege of dining at his own table. Stouter hearts than his would have quailed under so much suffering, yet he had little or no fear of the result. The idea of death was as far from Eugene Field's thoughts as it is to most men in full habit and health. In the sketch of his life which he wrote for inquiring friends, Field declared that if he lived, as he unquestionably thought he should, he would do his best literary work when he was a grandfather.

He was the moving spirit in the meeting of a set of congenial people — ministers, literary men, actors, lecturers,

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and bookmen—at McClurg's store in Chicago; and he called this motley gathering the "Saints and Sinners," and the place of their meeting the "Saints and Sinners' Corner."

Wherever Field lived, he was always a well-known character to booksellers. When he came to Chicago in 1883 he was drawn irresistibly toward McClurg's book-store.

The gentleman who had charge of the rare-book department soon learned Field's name, and the fact that he was connected with the "Daily News." Field's enthusiasm for books was evident, and before long he was on terms of intimacy with all the frequenters of the place, and, additionally attracted by the charm of Field's personality, they became very regular in their attendance. Thus, without further ceremony, about

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the year 1883 came into being the "Saints and Sinners' Club." There was much merriment at the gatherings, which were purely impromptu; and Field took to reporting them in his "Sharps and Flats" column of the "News." The sayings were cleverly amplified and edited, and oftentimes existed only in the imagination of the reporter; but each man's fad was carefully set forth and cleverly adhered to, and thus Field found a pleasant way to furnish material for his paper and to gratify his friends by kindly public utterances.

Not long before his death he strolled into the "Corner" and said most pathetically that he wished Mr. Millard would send up one of the low chairs of the Saints and Sinners' Corner. On being asked what on earth he could want

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with one of the chairs, Field replied that some of the members of the Club would be dying off one of these days, and he would like a chair as a souvenir. It was sent to him, but how little he dreamed that of the pleasant gathering of friends, of which he was the acknowledged leader, he himself would be the first to cross the Stygian ferry!

Field was very much attached to the Rev. Dr. Frank M. Bristol and the Rev. Dr. Frank Gunsaulus. These two, with the Rev. Dr. Stryker, were the Saints of the Saints and Sinners' Corner. Field was very circumspect in their presence, and took great pains to please them, both as a man and as a writer. He was equally desirous that his friends and acquaintances who visited the Corner with him for the first time, and met the Saints, should appear well in their

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eyes. Once, when a certain gentleman inadvertently used the word "damn" in their presence, Field appeared shocked, and apologetically observed that he had never heard the gentleman use that word before. This was all very grotesque to those who knew Field, when the fever was upon him, to be a most fertile producer of expletives both forcible and picturesque.

At times his ecclesiastical book-loving friends, tiring of some of their literary possessions, would seek cheap access to "fresh woods and pastures new" in the world of books by swapping. This greatly amused Field, who used to take pains to point out to "the parsons," as he called them, what he believed to be the error of their ways. Sometimes it would be by a few lines laid in books which he knew they were likely to

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read, or by some such method as follows. On a blood-red sheet of paper enclosed in a blood-red envelope, and left in the Saints and Sinners' Corner, was written:

IN TRUST FOR THE PREACHERS.

THE EPISTLE OF

ST. EUGENE TO ST. FRANCIS.

A. D. 1893.

PUBLISHED BY THE CHICAGO TRACT SOCIETY
(ELEVATED).

And then, with borders of black and gold, came

THE EPISTLE.

When man forsakes the narrow path
Which righteous Presbyterians tread,
He dons the ribald garb of wrath
And flaunts the wicked color, red.

His hat and socks of carmine hue
Offend his brethren's startled gaze;
His shoes are red, his kerchief too
With vanities, vermilion blaze.

Dear brother Saint: An examination into the lines referred to yesterday proves that the first line in the first stanza lacks a foot. The line as it was originally written, ran thus:

"Out yonder in the moonlight mist wherein God's - Acres lie".

When I came to the revision I fancied that the line was dignified by the omission of the word "mist"; and I still think so. Concede that "flower" is a monosyllable (and it is, factually), and you will find that

the first lines of the 2nd and 3rd stanzas follow the first line of the 1st stanza, closely:

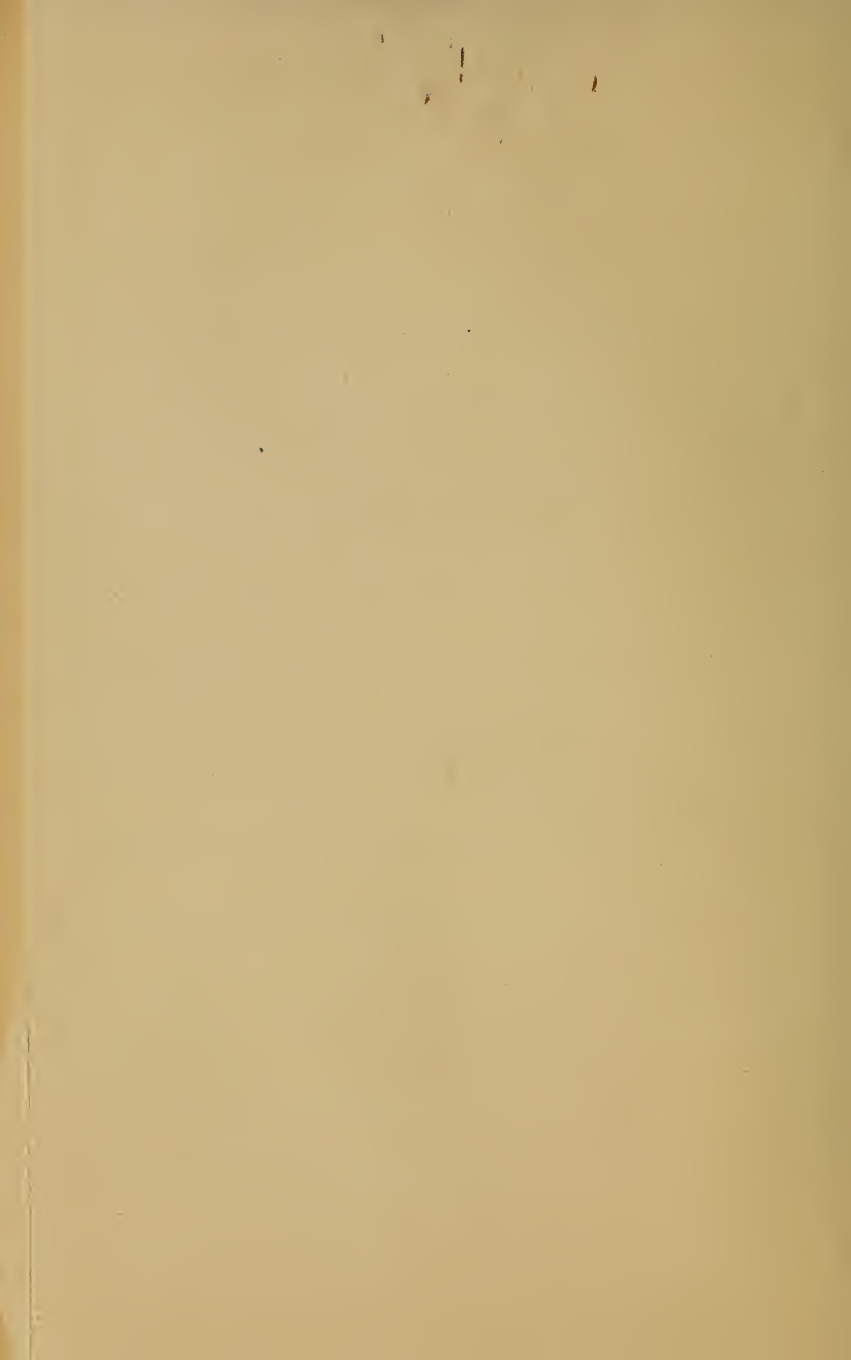
		2	3	4	5	6	7							
1 -	Out	yon der	in	the	moon light	mist	wherein	God's - Acres	lie -					
2 -	The	flow ers	with in	God's - Acres	see	that	gain	and	non formo	light -				
3 -	From	an	get	and	from	flow er	the	years	have	learned	that	soothe	ing	song -

Inasmuch as the caesura falls in the first line (1st stanza) after "light", I take it that the foot which I have intentionally omitted is not necessary to the rhythm.

Your brother in Sin, yet for Light,

Erasmus Lieber

420 Fullerton Avenue, October 16th, 1891.



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And flaming thus from head to foot,
He boldly stalks from bad to worse,
Pining to paint creation red —
And all is read except his verse.

Pastors, I know whereof I speak ;
Oh ! shun Damnation's yawning brink,
And orthodox salvation seek
In cream-white note and violet ink.

The accompanying fac-simile letter to the Rev. Dr. Frank M. Bristol is a characteristic exposition of the thorough understanding Field had of his art and its tools, of the care he took in composition, and also of the extent to which he would go to prove a disputed literary point. Note the touch of humor in the concluding lines.

Not infrequently with him, as with most book-hunters, it happened that a volume which he ferreted out and coveted would be held at a price higher than the one for which he fancied by

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patient waiting and judicious silence it might be acquired ultimately. And it also happened to him, as to most book-hunters, that the chance to purchase at any price was lost because the book would be snapped up by some prowling bibliophile. This would grieve him and, if he knew the purchaser, he would often lament in verse on the "end papers," as, after the following fashion, he did in a curious old book by Dr. William King, called "The Art of Cookery In Imitation of Horace's Art of Poetry":

So Wilson gets this curious book ;
Well, he is my Mæcenas,
And, maybe, he will send it me —
Though this is quite between us.

But otherwise let his gentle spouse
Peruse it with attention,
And duly seize on recipes
Too numerous to mention.

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Then when I come she 'll fix me up
With classic tarts and jellies ;
And that 's the food that bodeth good
For all dyspeptic bellies.

In a costly volume near the Saints
and Sinners' Corner was found a slip of
paper, on which was written this para-
phrase of the inscription on Shake-
speare's tomb :

Swete friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
To buy ye boke thou findest here,
For that when I do get ye pelf,
I meane to buy ye boke my selfe.

Eugene Field.

The spirit which urged Field on to
such pranks was the spirit we knew
and loved and applauded.

The annual home-coming from Eu-
rope of the head of McClurg's rare-book
department, with a consignment of Hor-
aces, Hazlitts, Leigh Hunts, and Lambs,
and even a lot of "plug" Keimscotts,

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was once thus celebrated by Field in the "Daily News":

George Millard is home!
Come, ye maniacs, as of yore,
From your musty, dusty hidings,
And in answer to the tidings
Crowd the Corner full once more.
Lo, from distant England's shore,
Laden down with spoils galore,
Such as bibliophiles adore —
Books and prints in endless store,
Treasures singly or in set
(Labelled "jkt" and "net") —
George returns to gratify
All who have the means to buy
Things that glad the heart and eye.
Ye who seek some rare old tome—
Maniacs shrewd or imbecilic,
Urban, pastoral, or idyllic,
Richly clad or dishabillic—
Heed the summons bibliophilic:
"George Millard is home!"

Field was almost theatrical in his love of effect, and would take great pains to bring about the conditions

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necessary to the successful outcome of any of his serious or humorous projects.

He was very fond of surprises. One of the most impressive of the many he gave his friends was the reading of one of his best poems. He had summoned, by written invitation, all the Saints and Sinners who were in Chicago on New Year's Eve, 1891. A goodly number responded. As the hands of the clock were on the verge of midnight, he rose, and turned out the gas. The store was sepulchrally dark. Then for the first time he recited, by the light of a single candle, "Dibdin's Ghost."

Field's mind and heart were wide open to the sunshine of humor and the joy of laughter. He declared that the man who neglected an opportunity to laugh was as injudicious as he who denied himself a proper amount of fresh

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air; then, with fatal inconsistency, he himself revelled in laughter, but stayed indoors. His boyish sport was contagious; it was as if one's glee longed to take on a personal form and shake hands with his equally personified merriment. He characterized those wet blankets, those assassins of mirth, who refuse to believe that the cheerful man can be possessed of a refined sensibility, as drones in the hive of happiness, and he thought they merited the fate of their insect confrères. Viewed in the light of policy alone, he believed in laughter, and thought it the surest way to make people kind. What misfortune, he said, was ever made the lighter by grief? What misfortune ever made the heavier by laughter? Since when are people attracted by sighs? Since when are

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people repelled by smiles? If one is patronized merely because one smiles, how easy to repay one's patrons with a smirk!

But so varied were Field's talents that he not only repaid his public with smiles, but with tears. Such poems as "Little Boy Blue," "Martha's Yunkit," the dedicatory lines of his first book of verse, "A Lyttle Boy," the lines inscribed to his wife in the "Second Book of Verse," the more serious of his stories in "A Little Book of Profitable Tales," such as "The First Christmas Tree," "The Coming of the Prince," "Margaret, a Pearl," "The Oak Tree and the Ivy," "The Little Yaller Baby," amply and sweetly confirm his capacity for tenderness. The subtle, sympathetic power to touch the heart and moisten the eye was his indeed, and noble use he made of it.

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From those who knew him but slightly, his youthful spirit, with its love of practical jokes, brought him less credit as a scholar than he deserved. He was "a hard sitter at books," or, rather, a hard liar at them, for nearly all his reading, which covered a wide range, was done in bed. He was constant in his love for Horace, who retained until the very last the warmest place in his affections, and he owned many important editions of this poet's works. He read and remembered much folk-lore and fairy literature, and professed a belief in ghosts and witches — a belief in which he was scarcely sincere, but toward which he was finely sympathetic.

Field knew much Latin and some Greek. He made paraphrases of French songs, and his knowledge of Béranger

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and Heine was both wide and accurate. Hans Christian Andersen stood high in Field's literary appreciation, and all the fairy books of various hues which Andrew Lang has given us, Field nearly knew by heart. He learned early and practised assiduously the art of plucking out the heart of the books which he meant should serve him. He had a perfect nose for scenting the arrival at the Saints and Sinners' Corner of all volumes on quaint subjects. He was a book-lover of a pronounced type, and, like the sister of the Canon of Canterbury, he was much given "to the drug called learning."

He especially delighted in children who, like himself, were fond of fairy-tales, folk-lore, and mythology, who loved Santa Claus, and who had sufficient imagination to see things at night.

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In the chapter headed "The Luxury of Reading in Bed," in his "The Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac," there is an inviting résumé of the literature of the subject. He believed, with Beecher, that love of knowledge comes with reading and grows upon it, that children learn to read by being in the presence of books; and he felt that a house without books was a Sahara. No family, no individual, ever came to know Eugene Field whose enthusiasm on the subject of reading was not thereby augmented. Few books, he thought, were written in vain. He had no sympathy whatever with the latter-day cry of over-production in books, and he felt that it was with them, as with individuals, a simple matter of the survival of the fittest. He agreed, on the other hand, with Austin Dobson that

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. a book was still a book,
Where a wistful man might look,
Finding something through the whole,
Beating—like a human soul.

Though he did not lack in piety, such was his love of a good book that he felt with Charles Lamb that grace before Milton, or grace before Shakespeare, or grace before any author whose work has enriched the world, was as essential as grace before meat.

In the treatment of books he had all the delicacy of the great Bishop of Durham, who thought that one ought to care far more diligently for a book than for a boot. With the Bishop he inveighed against the presumption of touching them with "an unclean hand," of opening them in headlong haste and "throwing them away" without first closing them. He was always amused

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by the incident of the Bishop's botanical student who was "a neglector rather than an inspector" of books, who would stuff his book with the violet, the primrose, and the rose, and who would then "apply his watery hands, all damp with sweat, to turning over the volumes, and with his finger gloved in long used leather, will hunt o'er the pages, line by line. Then, at the nip of the biting flea, the holy book is flung aside and is scarcely shut within a month, but becomes so swollen with dust that has fallen into it that it cannot obey the effort of one who would close it."

Field was indeed a book-lover who revelled in all the delight and all the anguish of bibliomania. Even the odor which his books exhaled gave him pleasure, and furnished him with a theme for this little poem:

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My garden aboundeth in pleasant nooks,
And fragrance is over it all;
For sweet is the smell of my old, old books
In their places against the wall.

.

In Walton the brooks a-babbling tell
Where the cheery daisy grows,
And where in meadow or woodland dwell
The buttercup and the rose.

.

Come, pluck with me in my garden nooks
The posies that blow for all;
Oh, sweet is the smell of my old, old books
In their places against the wall!

.

He never talked much of his own writings, but would not submit to an obvious misconception respecting them. A friend who was making a list of books for a collection of "Juvenilia," asked Field for as many titles as he could recall that should also include "A Little Book of Profitable Tales."

"But," said Field, "'A Little Book

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of Profitable Tales' was not written for children."

Many of his stories, and some of his poems, show a familiarity with technical medical phrases which he used humorously. Suffering as he did a good part of his life from a weak stomach, which he characterized as his "rebellious midriff," it is not remarkable that he should have turned his attention to pathology and therapeutics. His knowledge of their nomenclature, "as writ in books," not only astonished the reader, but was even unusual.

Chaucer's works he knew inside out and upside down; also straight ahead, as most of us would like to know him. He has given us numerous imitations and paraphrases of Chaucer's style and forms of expression, as well as those of Sir John Suckling and Edmund

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Spenser. He was upon terms of great intimacy with Boccaccio's writings, and the poem describing the discovery of the "brown-paper copy" of the great Italian's "Decameron" is alike humorous and pathetic :

One day, upon a topmost shelf,
I found a precious prize indeed,
Which father used to read himself,
But did not want us boys to read.

.

I never heard that name before,
But in due season it became
To him who fondly brooded o'er
Those pages, a beloved name!

So rest you there upon the shelf,
Clad in your garb of faded brown;
Perhaps, sometime, my boy himself
Will find you out and take you down.

Then may he feel the joy once more
That thrilled me, filled me, years ago,
When rev'rently I brooded o'er
The glories of Boccaccio!

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He quite agreed with the most of mankind that Boswell's "Life of Johnson" and Lockhart's "Life of Scott" were the great models of biographical writing, and he was not sure that Mrs. Gordon's memoir of her father, John Wilson, was not a worthy companion work. He was the constant recipient of books from friends and mere acquaintances; and as far as these related to the biographical or the curious, he was industrious in their perusal, especially the latter.

The following excerpt from a letter dated "Chicago, Nov. 21, 1891," will give a clear notion of the catholicity of his taste, as well as the variety of his reading:

The amount of reading I am doing appals me. I fear its variety demoralizes me. With biographies of Landor, Peter Parley, Coleridge, Wordsworth,

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Leslie (the painter), Burns, Congreve, and Lamb, I am mixing up Baker's "Wild Beasts and their Ways," divers works on dyspepsia and nervous diseases, Miller's "Songs of the Sierras," Jeaffreson's "Doctors," and a multitude of other books treating of all subjects from fairy mythology down to scatologic rites. I am wondering whether from this curious mass I shall expiscate anything of use to me in my work. My Muse has had a month's rest. I am beginning to think of giving the old girl another whirl. I am inclined to try my hand at a series of Russian lyrics, having become much interested in Ralston's "Folk-Songs."

But it must not be forgotten that besides being an author, Field was a newspaper man, a very alert one, and that the daily demand upon him for copy was onerous and important. He had therefore to be constantly on the watch for subjects,—“on the prowl for plunder,” as he expressed it,—and this accounts for the eccentric character of the books which formed his library. De-

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spite declarations to the contrary by those who should have known better, his "fool books" had great bearing upon his work; and while many of these volumes have little or no intrinsic value to others, they furnished many a sapient and humorous suggestion to Eugene Field.

It is true that in the housing and arrangement of his books he would place some poor production in comic juxtaposition with a writer of great renown, as, for instance, "The Philosophy of Drunkenness" shoulder to shoulder with "Paradise Lost"; but such an arrangement was unusual, and intended only to catch the eye and provoke the laughter of friend or acquaintance. The intimation, therefore, that his library contained few, if any, worthy volumes is a libel.



Field Writing

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Field was a conscientious artist. He selected his material with great care and gave unusual thought to its expression. The mere physical labor of writing out his matter, as he did, in a minute and beautiful hand consumed much time.

The fact, as he once told his guardian, from whom he was beguiling a loan, that he had spent the seventy-five dollars, given him the day before, for postage-stamps, and the fact that at another time he had exchanged rent money for an ill-used dog or for a box of mounted butterflies, might give the impression that he was without a sense of the proper value of money. Indeed, many of his actions would seem to justify this view. But Field was too strong mentally not to know his limitations and not to be warned by them. With a

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commendable knowledge of his weakness he refused to become interested in painting and sculpture and again and again did he refrain even from looking at certain coveted books, the price of which was beyond him, lest he be tempted to his undoing.

Here, written in the early part of an acquaintance with him, is an extract from a letter of advice on book-collecting, in which Field also gives an ingeniously humorous summing up of his characteristics in this direction :

I hope that you will keep right along collecting, but do not buy too many French, German, Latin, and Italian books; that is not particularly profitable. You ought to be able to get together a splendid lot of American first editions, and if I were you I would certainly do that. In time Americana will be immensely valuable. Keep on piling up autograph letters, and don't forget to keep the letters you get from contemporaneous people; these may in time become of great interest and value. The

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fad of extra-illustrating has never possessed me, and I am hoping that it will not, for the reason that I could never make it profitable, since I never dispose of what I secure. I have absolutely no sense of barter—no, I am simply a royal and unmitigated sucker.

You know that when Diogenes returned from his cruise about Athens, under the auspices of a lantern, his friend Socrates asked him what his racket had been. "I have been hunting for an honest man," replied he of the tub. "Indeed!" queried Soc.; "and did you find any?" "No, that I did not," quoth Diog.; "but I ran across a heap of—fools." "So?" saith Soc., "and now, by Pallas! tell me the names of them." "That were a tedious job," answered Diogenes; "but I don't mind telling you that the chiefest and veriest—fool of 'em all was a gangling, cadaverous, lantern-jawed, lop-eared, flat-footed Missourian named Field!" "By the dog, you speak truly!" cried Soc. "When it comes to the quintessence of dampoolery, Eugene does indeed take the cake!"

Nothing seemed too insignificant, certainly nothing too curious, for the man to collect. If he became interested in a subject, physical or mental,

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he wanted to know all about it, to pursue it to the farthest possible extent.

Among the unusual things in his collection of curios were bottles of all sizes, and in all shapes of men and beasts, unlike anything "that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth"; a few of these vials contained colored liquids, the better to display their grotesque outlines. He had a collection of envelopes such as were used during the War of the Rebellion, all handsomely mounted and bound in book form; copies, in sheets, of music which once stirred the popular heart, as: "Away Down South in Dixie," "Annie Laurie," "When Johnnie Comes Marching Home Again," "Battle Cry of Freedom," "Maid of Athens," "Rally Round the Flag, Boys," "Rock

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Me to Sleep, Mother," "Sweet Ellen Bain," "Marching Through Georgia"; other ditties, procured because of the affectedly sentimental character of their titles, such as: "Be Good to your Mother, John," "Father's a Drunkard and Mother is Dead"; still others, which he sought because their titles were extraordinary, were: "Never Kick your Mother When She's Down," "Papa's Teeth are Plugged with Zinc," "Baby's Food is Filled with Tacks," and "Kiss the Hand that Raised the Lump." Especially were these songs attractive to him if the title-pages contained crude designs weirdly illustrative of the text, and he thought the unconscious humor of these clap-trap bits of sentiment much finer than any premeditated effort at fun.

He had a collection of bells, the ring-

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ing of which caused their handles, made in the shape of old men and women, sprites and freaks, to perform all sorts of laughable tricks, such as sticking out the tongue, shaking the head, and what not. He was very fond of mechanical toys. They were a great attraction to children, whom he took especial pains to entertain, and though he revelled in the delight of the children, their enjoyment of these toys never exceeded his.

An extract from a letter written at Hanover in 1889 well illustrates his interest in oddities, and the hold which the love of collecting, particularly things of an unusual kind, had upon him :

Though I have been about but little, I have made several purchases. In Amsterdam I picked up an old English bull's-eye watch of the date of 1617. This pleases me immensely. I have a rosary and crucifix specially blessed by the Pope, several quaint bits of china, a small assortment of walking-

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sticks, several autograph letters, and a few books. Among the last-named are: Two novels bearing the book-plates of Rev. Sydney Smith; a curious little work on duelling (1823, Dublin); Binns on Sleep; "The Hair and Beard" (curious!); "Final Reliques of Father Prout"; one of Froude's early pamphlets, "The Rose," etc., etc. I am buying mostly of the curious in literature. I have letters to Charles Dickens, Jr., and through him I hope to pick up some mementos of his father. My *chef d'œuvre*, however, will be to secure one of the famous axes with which Mr. Gladstone hews down trees in the Forest of Hawarden.

Field got his axe, and with it a postal card in attestation of its genuineness from Gladstone. This axe, and the editorial scissors presented to him by Charles A. Dana, were the most valued articles in his collection.

It was because of his enjoyment of the odd and unusual, and because of the fact that they could be of service in furnishing material for his daily

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work, that he could write thus appreciatively of them :

Of antique swords and spears I saw a vast and dazzling heap,
That Curio Fenton offered me at prices passing cheap ;
And, oh, the quaint old bureaus, and the warming-pans of brass,
And the lovely hideous freaks I found in pewter and in glass !
And, oh, the sideboards, candlesticks, the cracked old china plates,
The clocks and spoons from Amsterdam that antedate all dates !
Of such superb monstrosities I found an endless mine
When I was broke in London in the fall of '89.

For a number of years the craze for books and relics relating to Napoleon did not interest him, and he gave away such as came to him ; but he underwent a change in this matter, and his library possessed a goodly number of standard books on the subject.

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He was a liberal man in all respects, but a very prodigal in the presentation of his own delicately illuminated manuscripts to his friends and acquaintances, even to strangers; and it has happened, much to his disgust, that one of these gifts, daintily wrought and generously bestowed, turned up "for sale" in some bookshop.

It fretted him somewhat, but it furnished him with the subject of a little poem wherein the transaction is humorously set forth:

One day I got a missive,
Writ in a dainty hand,
Which made my manly bosom
With vanity expand.
'T was from a "young admirer,"
Who asked would I mind
Sending her "favorite poem"
In autograph and signed.

.

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But a catalogue from Benjamin's
Disproves what things meseemed—
Dispels with savage certainty
The flattering dreams I dreamed.
For this poor "favorite poem,"
Done and signed in autograph,
Is listed in "cheap items
At a dollar and a half."

There was nothing especially precocious about Field's genius. True, he versified rather early as a boy, but it is somewhat remarkable that he was nearly forty years of age before he wrote verse steadily. At all events, he could console himself with the pleasing reflection that some of the greater writers, notably Scott and George Eliot, had reached the same age before they produced the works which gave them fame.

Field wrote and published his first bit of verse in 1879. It was called "Christmas Treasures."

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I count my treasures o'er with care—
The little toy my darling knew;
A little sock of faded hue,
A little lock of golden hair.

.

It reminds one of "Little Boy Blue," which is popularly thought to have been suggested by the loss of one of Field's children.

About ten years later, 1889, Field began to write verse very frequently. In 1880 he wrote and published in the "Kansas City Times," "A Little Peach," which, "warmed by the sun and wet by the dew," grew so fatally for "Johnny Jones and his sister Sue." The poem travelled all over the world, and was found anonymously printed in the corner of an obscure country paper, by Hubbard T. Smith of Washington. It was set by him to an ear-tickling

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melody. Because of the exigency of the music Mr. Smith added the refrain :

Hard trials for them two —

Johnny Jones and his sister Sue.

Boo, hoo! Boo, hoo!

Listen to my tale of woe.

In 1888 I was in London, and visiting an old book-store in High Holborn, I chanced upon a copy of the song, brought it back to America, and had Mr. John Braham of Boston compose a dance for it. The words were credited to an English versifier; neither Mr. Smith nor I knew at the time that Field was the author of them. It was sung first, publicly, as a duet in the opera of "Nadjy," at Boston, and instantly became popular. The song was afterward introduced into the opera "The Oolah." For years the poem

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went the rounds of the papers in their humorous departments. Field himself thought very little of it, and only to set at rest its disputed authorship, published it in his book, "Culture's Garland." A small fortune was netted from the sale of the music — thousands upon thousands of copies being sold. The poem had never been copyrighted by Mr. Field, and years before its success as a song, Mr. Smith had sold his rights to a music-dealer in Washington for ten dollars.

Many of Field's poems were credited frequently to others, and in one instance, at least, he jocularly so arranged it. "The Wanderer" appeared in the Chicago "Morning News" as a poem written by Madame Modjeska. Madame, it is said, did not rise to a full appreciation of the subtleties of this species

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of American humor, and was very angry; but she was speedily reconciled, and until Field's death remained his steadfast friend and admirer.

"Our Two Opinions" travelled and travels all over the country credited to James Whitcomb Riley, whose style it closely resembles.

Roswell M. Field is authority for the interesting statement that "Mr. Dana of the New York Sun" was founded upon fact. "Cantell Whoppers," the hero of the story, he who "worked with Dana," afterward took the Keeley cure, and is to-day one of the great temperance leaders in the West.

Field was very fond of the writings of Dr. Conan Doyle, and there were interchanges of bookish courtesies between the two authors. In a copy of

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“A Second Book of Verse,” Field wrote :

Accept, dear Conan Doyle, this “Second Book of Verse” ;

And, though it is but paltry stuff, thank God it is no worse !

It comes from one who in seclusion at Buena Park, Has read your “Sherlock Holmes,” “The Refugees,” and “Micah Clarke” ;

Your “Captain of the Polar Star,” and — but why enumerate ?

In all your genius has produced I ’m fully up to date! I wish to God I knew you — could press you by the hand ;

I wish I could have met you in your own dear native land !

Ah, had we met on t’other side, what happiness were mine —

For I was broke in London in the fall of ’89 !

Eugene Field.

Buena Park, Oct. 12, 1894.

Later Dr. Doyle and Field met, and an ardent friendship sprang up between them.

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The "Tribune Primer," Denver, 1882, the first of Field's publications in book form, is an 18mo of forty-eight pages, with pink paper covers.

It appears that a series, to be called "The Tribune Pamphlet Issue," was projected. An unfavorable estimate of Colonel R. G. Ingersoll by O. H. Rothacker, the editor-in-chief of the Denver "Tribune," was issue No. 1; Field's contribution was No. 2; and with this covering of the field of tragedy and comedy the series ended.

In the same year much of the contents of the "Tribune Primer" was reprinted by a Brooklyn publisher, who added pictures by "Hop" and audaciously copyrighted the whole thing. This publication was called "The Model Primer." It is a small square 16mo, with light salmon-colored paper

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covers. It is without pagination, and the front cover bears an illustration of a dunce laughing over an A-B-C book. Field is credited on the same page with the authorship. It is composed of twenty-five leaves, including both covers. The illustrations are capital. In a copy of the book owned by one of his friends, Field wrote :

The "Model Primer" is composed of about half the little paragraphs to be found in the "Tribune Primer." Tredwell, the publisher, pirated the matter and produced it without consulting me, though subsequently he wrote me saying that he meant to share the profits with me. I suppose there were no profits, for I have not heard from Tredwell again. A copy of this edition of the "Primer" sold at the Libbie sale in Boston, in 1893, for \$7. The bidders must have been under the erroneous impression that it was one of the original "Tribune Primers." The little sketches appeared originally in the Denver "Tribune" in the fall of 1881 and winter of 1882. The whole number printed did not exceed fifty. I quit writing

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them because all the other newspapers in the country began imitating the project.

Very cordially yours,

Eugene Field.

Buena Park, Ill., Aug. 7, 1894.

Nineteen dollars was recently paid for a copy of "The Model Primer," while the Denver "Tribune Primer" is so infrequently offered for sale as to command almost any price asked for it.

Confident of the ascendancy of Field's star, and believing that sooner or later his publications, especially those privately printed and those of which only a few copies had been or might be issued, would be very scarce and difficult to obtain, I set off on a long, and what proved to be a fruitless, search for a copy of the Denver "Tribune Primer." I was hampered by no less a person than Field himself, who, from love of mischief, threw every possible obstacle in the

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way. This state of affairs continued for ten years. Field would send seductive advertisements of dealers from whom the book might be procured, having carefully scissored away the name of the city and street. He ostentatiously, provokingly, and continuously flaunted his own copy, and otherwise behaved so exasperatingly that at length it became necessary to threaten him with condign punishment unless he surrendered the particular information which he was at the moment withholding. Field replied as follows :

Your note of warning came too late. Miller is already on the trail of the possessor of the "Primer." Way did n't know I meant to keep the thing secret in order to have fun with you, and he bla-a-ted the whole business to Miller, who intends to hunt up the "Primer" owner the next time he goes West.

E. F.

Jan'y 11, 1895.

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The joy of receiving from a very dear friend at Christmas, 1895, a copy of this rare little book was tempered by the thought that Field could not know of the acquisition. He had been dead but a few weeks.

Field's next publication was "Culture's Garland." It is a 12mo, paper covers, 325 pages.

The publishers were Ticknor & Co., Boston, 1889. In addition to the ordinary publication, there was an issue of six uncut copies. The book was made up of extracts from the author's newspaper work. The poem "A Little Peach" appears here for the first time in any book.

Field seemed to have been in almost constant doubt as to the merit of this work. More than once he said he re-

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gretted having permitted it to be published. One day he expressed the wish that he had all the copies that had been issued, so that he might destroy them. Shortly after this, my belief in his sincerity as to this wish was shaken by his sending to me a copy of the book containing the following inscription :

There were only six uncut copies of "Culture's Garland" issued. This is one of them. It may be worth keeping.

Eugene Field.

Chicago, Feb. 24th, 1891.

No. 1.

The fact is, he blew hot and cold on the subject. The critics had not received the book kindly, and in a letter from London, in 1889, he humorously observed that the Chicago champions of international copyright, before looking out for his interests abroad, should foster his local interests by buying up

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the copies of "Culture's Garland" which lumbered the shelves at McClurg's.

In his own copy of the book is the following:

1891.

You read the book and call it stuff—
Yes, I am free to say 't is tough.
"A sorry failure," critics vote it,
So I am sorry that I wrote it.
It never yet has paid expenses,
Therefore my sorrow more intense is.

E. F.

With the growth of his fame began a search by collectors for his earlier books, a fact which greatly elated Field. It also served to raise his estimate of this, his second book. Two communications to a friend in Boston concerning it are worth recording:

I 'll be glad to do anything for you that you may ask. I start for California about a week from now; so if you are going to send your copy of "Culture's

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Garland," you must hurry it along, or it will not get to me in time. How happened you to be prowling around for that work? It was the error of my youth. You may be interested to know that the book was edited by Tom Ticknor. I simply sent on a lot of my stuff, and the folks at the other end picked out what he wanted, and ran it as he pleased. The alleged advertisements at the end of the volume are its best feature, I think. I have not yet ventured out of doors. I went down-stairs to dinner yesterday for the first time in six weeks.

Cordially yours,

Eugene Field.

Buena Park, Ill., Dec. 3d, 1893.

No time was lost in forwarding the volume, in which Field wrote as follows :

I am not ashamed of this little book, but, like the boy with the measles, I am sorry for it in spots. You are welcome to what is good in it, and I subscribe myself, Dear Sir, with every high regard.

Your reformed,

Obedient,

Willing

and abject servitor,

Eugene Field.

Chicago, Dec. 8, 1893.

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The "alleged advertisements" spoken of by Field are overlooked generally by the readers of "Culture's Garland." A reproduction of them is given herewith.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich was not pleased at being called "Colonel" Aldrich throughout an article which Field had written for "The News," and which he afterward incorporated in "Culture's Garland." Field seemed hurt, and could scarcely believe that "a man of Mr. Aldrich's intelligence and humor should take exception to so patent a bit of 'damphoolery.'"

Field's next publication, and, for the vastly increased reputation it brought him, the most important in his life, was: 1. "A Little Book of Western Verse." 2. "A Little Book of Profitable Tales."

W. H. DEVINE,

(Indorsed by Theodore Thomas,)

*Wholesale Dealer in
Cream, Milk, etc.*

Chicago, Ill.

Parties, Clubs, Societies, and Festivals furnished with suppers or lunches at living rates. Has provided Refreshments for the Thomas Concerts for three seasons.

DEVINE'S PINK LEMONADE.

A Noble Beverage, which cheers, but does not intoxicate. Whets the appetite for classic music, and will remove grease-spots from the finest fabric.

VETERINARY HOSPITAL.

940 HEBERN AVE., CHICAGO.

POLYCARP SEARS, V.S.

Summer Semester begins July 5.

*Spavin, Glanders, and all
other Equine Ailments*

SUCCESSFULLY TREATED.

MAL DE MARE a specialty. We

also learn coachmen and
footmen the ART OF

ETTIQWET.

PROF. WM. GILMAN.

*Card and Letter
Writer,*

Chicago, Ill.

THE BEST SOCIETY CIRCLES
PATRONIZE HIM!

WILL COMPOSE

LETTERS, ESSAYS, SPEECHES,
EPIC POEMS, ETC.,

CHEAP FOR CASH.

N. B.—A fine line of LETTERS
OF CONDOLENCE now in
stock.

Send for Catalogue.

TO EXCHANGE.

I HAVE on hand a complete set of British Half-calf Poets (120 vols.), in prime condition, which I will exchange for a St. Bernard Pup. Must be warranted to have had the distemper also, 1 folio Shakespeare.

ANDREW J. WHISTLEWHITE,
CHICAGO, ILL.

ART SCHOOL.

Mme. CAMILLE BEAUCLERQ,
PRINCIPAL.

Fall Term begins Sept. 19, 1887.

Wax Flowers a Specialty;

ALSO CRAYON DRAWING.

We produce work that defies the
Old Masters.

Leave orders at Livermann's cigar-store.

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Published together, privately, for subscribers. Chicago, 1889. 8vo, half white linen covers.

The first book has 196 pages, and contains a list of subscribers. The second book has 286 pages. Both volumes are on hand-made paper, and have rubricated titles. Two hundred and fifty numbered copies of each were made and signed "T." (Slason Thompson, a Chicago publisher). Field was in Europe when these two volumes came from the press.

"A Little Book of Western Verse" has attained a greater popularity than any other of Field's works.

"A Little Book of Profitable Tales" probably does not appeal so much to children as to those who love children, and something of a mistake is made in supposing it to be a child's book. Chil-

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dren, as a rule, become discouraged when in the course of a single volume of tales, however beautifully written, so many of their little heroes and heroines die. The skill of construction, the delicacy of expression, which appeal to the maturer mind, are lost upon the average boy or girl, who grasps only the broader features of the story.

In 1890 Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, issued a popular edition (16mo, blue cloth, gilt tops) of the foregoing two volumes, and Eugene Field's reputation became national. The Scribner issue of "A Little Book of Western Verse" has gone through twenty editions (1898), making a total sale of nearly 40,000 copies. The same issue of "A Little Book of Profitable Tales" has reached, up to date, a total sale of 25,000 copies.

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This publication was followed by :

“Echoes from the Sabine Farm,
Being certain Horatian
Lyrics now for the first
Time Discreetly and
Delectably Done Into
English by
Eugene and
Roswell M.
Field.

With sundry little picturings
by Edmund H. Garrett, and
published in this pleasant wise
by Francis Wilson, The Or-
chard, New Rochelle, 1891.”

One hundred copies were made, thirty
on Japan, seventy on hand-made paper.
The title-page was etched, the initials
were rubricated throughout, and there
was a vignette head-piece over each

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poem. For each of the copies on Japan paper, Eugene and Roswell Field wrote autograph poems. The copies were numbered and signed. None was for sale.

This is the inscription Field wrote in copy No. 1 of the Japan-paper issue :

You should not have sent me this No. 1. I enclose it to you because you alone are entitled to it. You have been collecting first copies of my books, and why should you deprive yourself of this first copy of the little poems you have clothed so very beautifully? We are so very grateful to you—my brother and I are—for this superb recognition of our work; you have done what you have done so gracefully that our sense of obligation is all the keener. I hope you will live forever, and I should like to live one day longer to write your epitaph. It is so hard to tell one to his face how much we love him, but as words are the only things that live forever, perhaps these lines which I now utter from a full heart will testify, long after old edax rerum has made dust of me, to my gratitude and affection for you.

Eugene Field.

Chicago, January 23d, 1893.

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As a gift to his friends Field printed: "The Symbol and the Saint." A Christmas Tale by Eugene Field, Illustrated by J. L. Sclauders, 1886. First appeared (in Chicago "Daily News"), 1886. Printed as a brochure, 1892.

Square 18mo, unstitched paper covers (held together with pink ribbons in the perforations). This book is a facsimile reproduction of the original manuscript with illustrations breaking through the text. Only a few copies were made.

"With Trumpet and Drum" was published in 1892, by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

There were three issues:

1. Twelve presentation copies printed for the author upon Imperial Japanese paper.

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2. Two hundred and fifty copies on hand-made paper. For these Mr. E. H. Garrett drew, and Mr. W. H. W. Bicknell etched, the title-page.

3. A smaller unnumbered edition, 12mo, blue cloth, gilt top. The copyright is in the name of Field's daughter, Mary French Field.

In the No. 1 (of the issues on hand-made paper) after copying a verse with evident difficulty, from the initial poem, he appended the following characteristic rhymes:

Dear Wilson, I write to inquire if you think
I 'm going to put up with this damnable ink,
And these horrid pens which these landlords
provide?

To Tophet with them and their torments, I say!
The fellows are chattering around me — beside
I 'm trembly and shaky from Camden, N. J.
I 'll finish the task you require of me when
I come to eat turkey with you once again!

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“The Second Book of Verse” was published privately by Melville E. Stone, Chicago, 1892.

1. Twelve copies on Japan paper for the author.

2. Three hundred copies, small 8vo, on hand-made paper.

The book is copyrighted in the name of Field's wife, Julia Sutherland Field, and the prefatory poem to her is one of the daintiest of Field's efforts :

A little bit of a woman came
Athwart my path one day ;
So tiny was she that she seemed to be
A pixy strayed from the misty sea,
Or a wandering greenwood fay.

“Oho, you little elf!” I cried,
“And what are you doing here?
So tiny as you will never do
For the brutal rush and hullabaloo
Of this practical world, I fear.”

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“Voice have I, good sir,” said she,—
“’T is soft as an angel’s sigh,
But to fancy a word of yours were heard
In all the din of this world’s absurd,”
Smiling, I made reply.

“Hands have I, good sir,” she quoth,—
“Marry, and that have you?
But amid the strife and tumult rife,
In all the struggle and battle for life,
What can those wee hands do?”

“Eyes have I, good sir,” she said,—
“Sooth, you have,” quoth I;
“And tears shall flow therefrom, I trow,
And they, betimes, shall dim with woe
As the hard, hard years go by!”

That little bit of a woman cast
Her two eyes full on me,
And they smote me sore to my inmost core,
And they held me slaved forevermore
Yet would I not be free.

That little bit of a woman’s hands
Reached up into my breast,
And rent apart my scoffing heart
And they buffet it still with such sweet art
As cannot be expressed.



Julie S. Field



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That little bit of a woman's voice
Hath grown most wondrous dear ;
Above the blare of all elsewhere
(An inspiration that mocks at care)
It riseth full and clear.

Dear one, I bless the subtle power
That makes me wholly thine ;
And I 'm proud to say that I bless the day
When a little woman wrought her way
Into this life of mine !

An ordinary edition of the "Second Book of Verse" was published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1893.

Next followed "Echoes from the Sabine Farm," 500 numbered copies, post 8vo, 149 pages, gilt top, cloth, McClurg, Chicago, 1893.

The publisher having objected to the personal character of "Mæcenas in Chicago," as printed in "The Orchard"

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(1891) edition (page 50 *et seq.*), two new paraphrases were substituted — “To His Book” and “Fame *vs.* Riches,” the former by Roswell M. Field, and the latter by Eugene Field.

For this edition Field wrote “Ad Lectorem,” a five-page explanation of how these Horatian paraphrases and adaptations — “more in a spirit of playfulness than otherwise” — came to be written.

The next publication was “The Holy Cross and Other Tales,” Stone and Kimball, 16mo, Cambridge, 1893. There were issued of this —

1. Twenty copies on Japan paper, five of which were for sale. Signed, “Stone & Kimball.”

2. Large white paper edition of one hundred and ten copies, one hundred

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of which were for sale. Numbered, and signed, "Stone & Kimball." The title-page and the page bearing the printer's imprint are upon Japan paper.

3. Ordinary edition, 16mo, cloth, gilt top. The book is copyrighted in Field's name.

The dedicatory poem is to his brother Roswell:

The homestead and the pickerel pond,
The maple-trees and the pasture lot,
The Pelham hills away beyond,
Brother of mine, have you forgot?

"Dibdin's Ghost" first appeared in the "Book-Lover's Almanac," Duprat & Co, New York, 1893. Twenty-five separate and special copies of the poem were struck off for the author, and numbered and signed by him; it was printed by De Vinne & Co.; 16mo, paper.

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The next publication with which Field was identified was "First Editions of American Authors, A Manual for Book-Lovers; Compiled by Herbert Stuart Stone, with an Introduction by Eugene Field."

1. Fifty copies on large paper.
2. Ordinary edition, 16mo, cloth; 500 copies made. Cambridge, 1893.

After the year 1893 Charles Scribner's Sons became Mr. Field's publishers.

Two leaves or four unnumbered pages of "Facts, Confessions, and Observations" were privately printed by Field in 1894. The same was published, with an introduction by Francis Wilson, under the title of "Eugene Field,—An Auto-Analysis," 8vo, Chicago, 1896.

Of this item, as printed by Field, there were two issues:

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1. Eight copies on Japan paper, numbered and signed by the author.
 2. Ordinary issue on white paper.
- The No. 1, in possession of the writer, is dated April 5, 1894.

There followed "Love Songs of Childhood," Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1894. Of this were issued:

1. Fifteen copies on Japan, printed for the author, numbered i-xv. Printed on one side of the page, 8vo, loose boards.
2. One hundred and six copies on Whatman paper, numbered 1-106. Printed on one side of the page, 8vo, vellum.
3. Ordinary edition, the type for which was completely reset, 16mo, blue cloth, gilt top.

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The next was "Tribute to the Memory of Ruth C. Gray," privately printed, St. Louis, 1894. Square 8vo. It is gilt top, cloth, and has a portrait of Mrs. Gray. The first tribute is by Field, and covers thirty-one pages. The other nine pages are devoted to an "Extract from the Paper of Miss Martha N. Mathews," and a "Tribute by Mrs. Diana Pike."

The concluding lines of Field's tribute are :

. . . As the last night wore away, . . . they saw upon her glorified face no shadow of the Valley, but the shining light of the Eternal City. And through the windows streamed the summer sunshine; and it was morning.

Mrs. Gray was the wife of Melvin L. Gray, who on the death of Field's father became executor of the Field estate, and the Field boys, just coming of age, found Mrs. Gray's "prudent

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counsel and disinterested friendship” of great value.

This publication is not well known to collectors.

On one of the “end papers” of a copy of the book Field has written :

Here 's a bit of Fieldana that will sometime be rare. At any rate, you will value it, because it tells of a lady who was dear to me.

Eugene Field.

Chicago, July 20, 1894.

It was Mr. Gray to whom Field dedicated “Echoes from the Sabine Farm”:

Come, dear old friend, and with us twain
To calm Digentian groves repair.

Next in order was “Echoes from the Sabine Farm,” Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1895, New York, of which 1500 copies were made.

This edition has the two odes: “To

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His Book," and "Fame vs. Riches," as in the McClurg issue of 1893, and also the ode "To Mæcenas in Chicago," which appeared in "The Orchard" edition.

The "Echoes" was followed by "The Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac," Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

1. One hundred and fifty numbered copies on large paper. 8vo, half white vellum.

2. Ordinary edition. 12mo, blue cloth, gilt top. 1896. This was succeeded by "The House," an episode in the lives of Reuben Baker and of his wife Alice. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

1. One hundred and fifty numbered copies on large paper, 8vo, half white vellum.

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2. Ordinary edition, 12mo, blue cloth, gilt top, 1896.

Then came "Songs and Other Verse," Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1896. 8vo, half white vellum.

1. One hundred and fifty copies on large paper.

2. Ordinary edition, 12mo, blue cloth, gilt top.

Then followed in the order named: "Second Book of Tales," Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1896.

1. One hundred and fifty copies on large paper, 8vo, half white vellum.

2. Ordinary edition, 12mo, blue cloth, gilt top.

"The Holy Cross, and Other Tales," Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1896,

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containing five new tales; twenty large-paper copies issued; 12mo, blue cloth, gilt top.

“Eugene Field, An Auto-Analysis.” Introduction by Francis Wilson; Chicago, Frank M. Morris, 1896.

1. One hundred and fifty copies on Japanese paper.

2. Three hundred and fifty on deckle-edge paper; square 18mo, boards.

Eugene Field to Francis Wilson. “Some Attentions.” Privately printed by Francis Wilson, “The Orchard,” New Rochelle, N. Y., 1896.

One hundred copies were made, none of which was for sale; illustrated, 16mo, boards, gilt border.

“The Writings in Prose and Verse of Eugene Field.” Charles Scribner’s

The Eugene Field I Knew

Sons, New York, 1896. Sabine Edition, 10 volumes.

Of this publication of the complete works there were two issues:

1. One hundred numbered copies on Japan paper. Duodecimo. Bound in quarter white vellum. The individual or distinctive title to each volume and the initial letter to the text of each volume are rubricated.

2. The ordinary unnumbered issue, of which the first edition, printed from the same types as the limited edition, consisted of 5000 copies, on white paper. Duodecimo. Bound in green cloth with gold lettering on back and gold fillet on side, enclosing a design from Field's bookplate—a sheaf of wheat above a bar, in gold. The Japan-paper copies, \$40; Green cloth edition, \$15.

The Eugene Field I Knew

“Field Flowers,” Chicago, 1896. 8vo, green cloth covers.

This volume is composed of a facsimile reproduction of the original manuscript of “Little Boy Blue” and of sixteen of Field’s poems, to each of which artist friends—A. B. Frost, George Wharton Edwards, Frederic Remington, F. Hopkinson Smith, A. B. Wenzell, Eric Pape, E. W. Kemble, and others—have contributed one, and sometimes two, illustrations.

Stanford White drew the design for the cover and title-page. The book was issued under the auspices of the Field Monument Fund Committee. The volume is not as satisfactory a specimen of book-making as it should have been, considering the artistic material so generously and gratuitously contributed.

The Eugene Field I Knew

“Songs of Childhood.” Verses by Eugene Field. Music by Reginald de Koven and others. Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, 1897, small 4to, boards. The introduction, or “prelude,” is by Mr. De Koven.

“Florence Bardsley’s Story: The Life and Death of a Remarkable Woman,” by Eugene Field. Chicago, W. Irving Way, 1897.

Twenty-five copies on Japan paper and one hundred and fifty copies on Dutch hand-made paper were printed. This is the only publication in book form of another of Field’s literary jokes. It is Eugene Field’s delightful review of an alleged essay by Whitelaw Reid on a mythical book entitled “Un Aperçu de la Vie de Mme. la Comtesse de la Tour.” The review appeared first

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in the "Sharps and Flats" column of the Chicago "Daily News."

"Some letters of Edgar Allan Poe to E. H. N. Patterson of Oquawka, Illinois, with comments by Eugene Field." There were issued one hundred and eighty-six copies on American hand-made paper, and three copies on Japanese vellum. This is the only publication in book form of Field's article, "Poe, Patterson, and Oquawka," which originally appeared in "America," a literary journal published in Chicago and edited by Slason Thompson. It includes the correspondence of Poe and Patterson relative to the establishing of a literary magazine, "The Stylus," in Oquawka. The six manuscripts of Poe are in fac-simile.

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One of the most amusing of Field's conceits was the method he employed to beguile Mr. Shackelford, the cashier of "The News," to advance a portion of his weekly salary. Field, referring later to the letters to Mr. Shackelford,¹ said that he put upon them seventy-five dollars' worth of work to get an advance of five dollars.

It is interesting to note the frankness with which, in the "Auto-Analysis," the creator of "Little Boy Blue" defends his attitude toward children.

It is a great mistake to suppose that he loved all children. Such was not the case. As he says, he tried to analyze his feelings with respect to them, and found that he loved them in so far as he could make pets of them. He

¹ See end of volume.

The Eugene Field I Knew

thought this all out carefully, and wrote it down with much additional and extremely interesting matter about himself in that curious pamphlet already mentioned, which he published and sent broadcast to people who were constantly importuning him for personal information. This is the document which appeared subsequently with additional matter, under the title of the "Auto-Analysis."

The following will illustrate Field's patience as well as his inventiveness in efforts to amuse his children. His youngest son, "Pody," came to him every morning about eight o'clock for a romp. Almost the first thing "Pody" did was to seize a toy gun and "shoot the cat." That he might always be successful in his aim, Field had the toy cat set up on a shelf in the room, and

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tied a string to the leg of the animal, so that when the baby cried "Bang!" Field pulled the string, down tumbled the cat, and great was the joy of "Pody." This would be kept up until the child craved some new diversion, which, considering the unerring aim of "Pody" and the delighted surprise of "papa," was not soon.

Field was a great lover of pets of all kinds, to which, with his fertile imagination, he gave names of peculiar significance.

His brother, Roswell Field, says that the first lines of verse Eugene ever wrote were inspired by one of these pets, the family dog, whose conventional name of "Fido" was changed by Field to "Dooley," because it was thought the dog's face possessed certain Hibernian traits.

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“Oh, had I the Wings of a Dove” was the title of a then very popular song, and the boy Eugene parodied it, making “Dooley” the speaker:

Oh, had I the wings of a dove, I would fly,
Away from this world of fleas;
I 'd fly all around Miss Emerson's yard,
And light on Miss Emerson's trees.

The Miss Emerson mentioned was the music teacher at Amherst of the Field boys, Eugene and Roswell.

Field revelled in this personification of pets, and also in the application of peculiar names to them. Each chicken in the New England home was carefully instructed to respond to a peculiar call, and “Finnikin,” “Minnikin,” “Dump,” “Poog,” and “Boog” were some of the names employed. Later, when Field's children took the place of his boyish pets, he gratified his whim for strange names by ignoring those



The Field Children—"Sister Girl" and "Pody"

The Eugene Field I Knew

given at the baptismal font, and by substituting nicknames of his own riotous fancy. To the writer, as to all the friends of the family, the nicknames Field used are the only real ones, and it is difficult for them to realize that the name of Field's eldest daughter, "Trotty," is Mary French; that the three sons, "Pinney," "Daisy," and "Pody," are respectively Eugene, Frederick, and Roswell Francis; and that his youngest child and second daughter, "Sister Girl," is Ruth E. Field.

Field's sympathy was broad and deep, and was always to be enlisted in a deserving and sometimes, unknowingly, in an undeserving cause. Few people came to him for aid and went away empty-handed. His last public appearance, just three weeks before his death, was in the cause of charity.

The Eugene Field I Knew

The bill of announcement is given herewith in fac-simile. His brother writes :

Enclosed you will find a program, or rather the bill of Eugene's last appearance before the general public. Glencoe is a little town on the Northwestern Railway, about seven miles above Evanston. Mel. Stone lived there, and this was a sort of benefit performance for a woman. We were all in great spirits, and had no end of fun. I rarely saw Eugene more "unlimbered," so to speak.

It is too early to determine what place, if any, the evolution of our literature will assign to Eugene Field. It remains to be seen whether or not the books of quotations, those not always infallible tests of familiarity or popularity, while giving space to Paul Moon James, Ellen Sturgis Hooper, Eliza Cook, N. P. Willis, and Jefferson Davis, and denying it to John G. Saxe,

MR. EUGENE FIELD

—AND—

MR. OPIE P. READ

will recite selections from their own writings

AT A

Complimentary Benefit Entertainment,

TO BE TENDERED

MRS. EVA JAMES CLEMENTI,

—AT—

GLENCOE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

Saturday Evening, October 12, 1895,

AT 8 O'CLOCK.

Mr. Melville E. Stone will preside.



MRS. L. W. HILTMAN, who has in her specialty a reputation equal to that of the celebrated Mrs. Shaw will whistle a number of airs.

MR. ROSWELL FIELD

Will play several selections upon the piano.

Mrs. Clementi will sing one number.



ADMISSION 50 CENTS.

NO RESERVED SEATS.

TICKETS FOR SALE BY _____

BEN JORDAN Glencoe; GEO. B. CUMMINGS, Highland Park,
GARRISON BROS., Winnetka, and at the door.



The Eugene Field I Knew

Stephen A. Douglas, Henry Ward Beecher, William Edgar ("Bill") Nye, James Whitcomb Riley, and W. H. Gilbert, will find a quotable line in the works of Eugene Field.

As far as can be judged from a wholly popular point of view, "A Little Book of Western Verse" will dwell longest in the hearts and minds of the multitude.

It is more nearly representative of Field's varied powers than any other single volume. It contains examples of his dialect poems, paraphrases, translations, and adaptations from Horace, Chaucer, Spenser, Hugo, Béranger, Heine, occasional verse, and "Little Boy Blue," a poem which, more than anything else he ever wrote, brought him into popular favor. It also contains many of his tenderest lullabies, which have endeared him to the moth-

The Eugene Field I Knew

ers and to the children of the land. In this book also are some of the finest and most humorous of Field's poems on books and book-lovers, and from these considerations this volume is not unlikely to outlive all the others.

Field himself was not of this opinion. He thought "Echoes from the Sabine Farm" set down for that distinction. These "Horatian Odes" were very near and very dear to Field, as was, in fact, everything in connection with the famous Latin lyrist, an affection inherited from his father. His own home was called the Sabine Farm, and the final collection and issue of his works was happily termed the "Sabine Edition." The "Echoes" were a labor of love, with no mercenary incentive either in the creation or in the putting forth.

But the "Echoes" are not for the

The Eugene Field I Knew

multitude. They were written to be read more than once, and with no thought or effort to make the many admire them. In their composition the advice of the great Venusian was taken — to blot frequently, and to rest content with a few judicious readers. It may be that the “Echoes” will fulfil Field’s prediction for them, though authors are not always the best judges as to which of their own productions will appeal directly and successfully to the public.

It is far more likely that these paraphrases of Horace will give place, in point of popularity at least, to “A Little Book of Western Verse,” the lullabies of which have crowned their creator the “bard of Babylon.”

But for me the star of Eugene Field’s genius shines in another heaven, and

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lights toward another haven. With all due justice to his exquisite child's verse, the tenderness of which is unexcelled; with due recognition of the merit of his Horatian strains, than which nothing of their kind has yet appeared more graceful, nor, in a surprising number of examples, more faithful; for the ability, wit, and versatility of his newspaper productions, over which all journalists wax enthusiastic, and of which he himself was outspokenly proud, he must be conceded much and a deserved applause. But there is a little coterie of souls, the very core of whose hearts he has touched, to the very tendrils of whose inner feelings he has penetrated, with his "Bibliomaniac's Prayer," "The Bibliomaniac's Bride," "Dibdin's Ghost," "Odors which My Books Exhale," "Boccaccio," the lilting

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“Truth about Horace,” and the “De Amicitiiis”; and these folk will keep green the memory of Field’s “Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac” as book-lovers throughout the world keep alive the “Philobiblon” of Richard de Bury.

The “Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac” is the Bandusian Spring which flows from the mind of the observant traveller and ripened scholar. It is the story of mental growth, and it depicts the joys found in books, “those sacred vessels of wisdom,” from the Genesis of “Robinson Crusoe” to the Revelations of the Odes of Horace. To the lover of books, and to the lover of what they contain, upon this volume is founded the supreme hope of a place in literature for the writings of Eugene Field.

“Can this man be dead? Not, I am sure, while any of us who knew him

The Eugene Field I Knew

remain alive. Only the least part of him is really gone ; but how ill can we spare even that ! ”

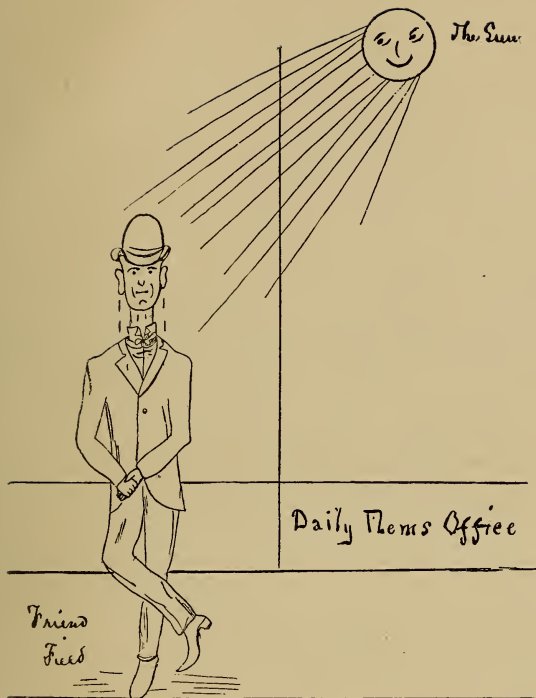
With breath of many winds his name
Is blown about the world, but to his friends
A sweeter secret lies behind his fame ;
And love steals shyly through the loud acclaim
To murmur a “ God bless you ! ” and there ends.



Dear Mr. Shackelford - Will you please hand my envelope and its contents
to Mr. Charles H. Brown today? Writing myself many happy returns of the
year, I remain, as ever, your obliged friend and obedient servant.

Ernest Reed -

Christmas Eve, 1888.



"Sweating and frowning, more dead than alive,
He solemnly waits for his usual five"

- From Heart-Throbbings "

Evening-Hymn.

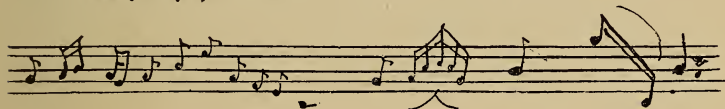
Con espressione.

Opus MDLXIII.



Oh, Shackelford, if you would see

Your own true friend survive



By this same small boy send to me

A necessary "ficus."

A-men!

Brist; Epit; in imitatione Skeltonis - circa 1530.



Under y^e stone (bet none deface it!)

Santissimus vir in pace jacet;

Bibliothecam habens, moriens donavit

Pro unum Regem quum amavit;

"Memento. Wger," ipse dixit,

"If my epitaph's xxrit, be sure you fix it.

And say to y^e dampned and y^e fiends y^e rule'em

D^e diabolus osculet mei culum!"

Explicit

Eugenius Wger fec. 3



o. fire can rear the tender heart

'Til it be blind to pain,

Nor can sweet love by any art

Be bound in Terror's chain.

When Field approaches Baskelford

And craves his Wednesday-five,

That friend will grant the needed hoard,

As sure as you're alive !





Behold our Country's Honored Son —

The proud, immortal Washington!

Oh, but for him where now would be

A Shackelford to succor me!

And where would be that faithful friend

Who pleads with Shackelford to send

A "fiver" by the bearer back

That now I need to worry Shaak!

April 29th, 1889

OCT 25 1903

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