

April 2016

# Caroline Davenport Swan Correspondence

Maine State Library

Caroline Davenport Swan 1841

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SWAN, CAROLINE DAVENPORT.

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Born Dec. 2, 1841 at Gardiner, Maine.  
Died in South Portland, April 4, 1938.

Dec. 13, 1922

Dear Miss Swan:

Your friend Mr. Milliken of Gardiner was in my office this afternoon and presented me with a copy of your book, "The Unfading Light".

I have not read this book but will take it home with me and read in it this evening.

I have no way to properly tell you how much I appreciate your generous gift and I am especially grateful to your friend for suggesting it to you.

I think you will be pleased to know that we are making a collection of books by Maine authors and I shall place your book in this special collection.

Can you send me some biographical notices and some facts about your own life, that will furnish us with material for an article in the Library Bulletin. We have the article which appears in the poets of Maine.

I am sending you a copy of our Library Bulletin which tells you about the collection.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would send me a photograph of yourself, I want this for our special Maine collection.

Again, thanking you for your courtesy and kindness, I am,

Sincerely yours,

Henry E. Dunnack,  
Librarian.

Carolyn Davenport Swan,  
South Portland, Maine.

My dear Mr. Dunnack;—

At the time you wrote me I noted your request for a photograph of mine to add to your collection. But I had none then and have but just succeeded in procuring one—through the kindness of Mrs. Milliken, of Gardiner.

I therefore send it by to-day's mail and trust it will reach you safely.

There was a critical article in a St. Louis magazine for Aug. C. Sara Kountz Diethelm—formerly City Librarian in Toledo, O.—entitled "The Book of Verses Underneath The Bough". It is a discussion of the scope and quality of the verse put forth by some half-dozen recent writers.

Among the names mentioned are those of the late Joyce Kilmer, Sumner Quinsey, Rev. Chas. O'Donnell, C.S.C. and about one third of the space is given to "the glorious sonnets of Caroline Davenport Swan." - For my part, I am most grateful for this very kind appreciation of my work.

With many thanks to you also I am, my dear Mr. Dummack,

Yours sincerely,  
Caroline D. Swan.

112 Harriet St.

So. Portland,  
Maine.

August 17, 1923

Dear Mrs. Swan:-

Again you have placed me under very great obligation for your courtesy in forwarding me the autographed photograph of yourself. This will be an invaluable addition to our Maine collection.

I am writing for the St. Louis Magazine so that this article may be added also. I am,

Sincerely yours,

Henry E. Dunnack.  
Librarian.

Mrs. Carolyn D. Swan,  
112 Harriet St.,  
South Portland,  
Maine.

To Librarian State Library, Augusta  
Maine. —

My dear Mr. Dunnack: —

As the author of the  
article which refers to me, in St. Louis  
Magazine, has not been any more  
successful than I in getting copies  
of it, I fear you may also be un-  
successful. She now sends me  
the last copy she had and I en-  
close it for you, adding corrections  
of typographic errors. "Immortal"  
is given as "immoral" — and two words  
are omitted in the little poem, "Leaf-  
Buds". I give correct version of  
the latter, which loses its sprightliness  
through the omission of its second  
verse. It should be re-inserted

and the words "but you" restored  
to their place at close of Line 6,  
Verse I.

As it stands, the whole thing misses  
its point, as you see.

With many thanks for your kindness,  
I am yours, sincerely,  
Caroline D. Swan.

112 Haverist St.  
South Portland,  
Maine.



August 25, 1923

Mrs. Caroline D. Swan,  
112 Harriet Street,  
South Portland, Maine.

My dear Mrs. Swan:

Your communication of recent date, together with enclosure, has been received. Since receiving your former letter I have been trying to locate this article, but I have had no satisfactory response. I had about decided it would be impossible to secure it. Please accept my sincere thanks for your kindness in forwarding this copy for our files.

I am especially grateful for the correction of "Leaf-Buds". The little poem was sadly named without that second verse.

I am very grateful for your interest in the matter, and for your cooperation in making our list as complete as possible.

Sincerely yours,  
MAINE STATE LIBRARY

Librarian.

HED/HF

## Leaf-Buds.

Curled up on the boughs of a poplar tree  
 O little gray buds of the Spring,  
 Do you feel the cheer and the bliss that  
 Lies  
 In the sudden promise of sapphire skies  
 And the Blue-Bird's riotous carolling.  
 "Why surely we do! And who doubts it but  
 you?"  
 Said the little gray buds of the Spring.

"Do you worry o'er shadows and storms to be,  
 O little red buds of the Spring?  
 So bright on the maples, so tenderly frail,  
 Can you face all undoubting, a possible gale  
 And trustfully, hopefully cling?"  
 "If we couldn't, we shouldn't deserve to be  
 The little red buds of the Spring."

# A Book of Verses Underneath the Bough



TODAY, in a world of chaos and unrest, poetry seems more essential than ever. Knocking gently at the portals of the soul, it pleads to enter that it may delight our sensibilities with its melody and message. But the average man is too preoccupied with matters mundane to appreciate the phantasies of the poet. Lacking the insight of the seer, he is slow to discover evidence of the spiritual in the grandeur of nature or to seek counsel in the impassioned music of the bard.

It was Francis Thompson, in his masterly essay on Shelly, who bade us to "shelter poetry under the rafter of faith." He pleaded for a return of the glory of poetry, which he averred had been relinquished to aliens during two centuries. Yet even as he was lamenting the exit of the muse from the Church, a renaissance of Catholic poetry was slowly making its influence felt.

Holy Mother Church, in all the splendor of her liturgy and symbolism, affords an imposing background for a group of lyrists whose noble and often incomparable verse bears witness to the undying flame of a faith long cherished by their forbears, and for another group who sing in glorification of a faith that is theirs by adoption. Thus the great treasury of Catholic literature is adorned by the profound and noble lines of Aubrey de Vere; the exalted lyrics of Lionel Johnson; the unadorned, mystic craftsmanship of Gerard Hopkins, S.J.; the delicate artistry of Alice Meynell; the austere stanzas of Coventry Patmore and Richard Crashaw; the masterful lyrics of Ven. Robert Southwell, S.J.; the rich imagery of Francis Thompson; the fanciful creations of Louise Imogen Guiney; the versatile poems of Joyce Kilmer, the poet of faith and hope and love; Cardinal Newman's intensely spiritual "Dream of Gerontius"; the contemplative songs of Edward F. Garesché, S.J.; the deeply religious verse of the blind Father Tabb; the exquisite color tones of Rev. Charles O'Donnell, C. S. C.; the glorious sonnets of Caroline Davenport Swan; the delightful cradle songs of Katherine Tynan; and the music of a score of lesser singers.

A splendid index to the work of some of the best Catholic poets will be found in Joyce Kilmer's "Dreams and Images." It is a book for personal possession because of the treasures it contains, and though it has been criticised for not being entirely representative, yet it fulfills the purpose for which it was compiled. Its very existence proves the great need for a complete Catholic anthology—aye, here is a task that awaits the patience and skill of some devotee of the Faith and of the muse.

The soldier poet's preface, which is a fine bit of literature, explains that he had attempted to bring together his favorite poems that were written by Catholics since the middle of the nineteenth cen-

By

SARA KOUNTZ DIETHELM

tury, and that when a Catholic attempts to reflect in words some of the beauty of which as a poet he is conscious, he cannot be far from prayer. My understanding of the delight and enthusiasm which Kilmer brought to his task was greatly enhanced by a letter he wrote me from the heart of the battlefield, in which he said, "I am delighted to know that 'Dreams and Images' pleases you and has the advantage of your generous aid in coming to the attention of the public. The task of selecting the poems that fill it I greatly enjoyed, and I felt it an honor to attempt such a work." And so it is pleasant to avail myself of this opportunity to arouse fresh interest in the anthology.

Joyce Kilmer's work is too well known to need more than passing mention. Yet for the poet who wrote that he would rather write "moderately well about the faith that was his by adoption than magnificently well about anything else" we must find a brief space in this paper, which proposes to consider American Catholic poets.

It is well-nigh impossible to read Kilmer's poems without sensing his chivalry and his lofty ideals, his ardent worship of beauty and his keen appreciation of the romance that lies hidden in the most ordinary things of life. He wove pretty fancies about commuters' trains and about empty houses and snowmen. Those who weary of the colorless round of daily routine will find a world of cheer in "Delicatessen." After all our tasks are what we make them, and with effort and optimism we can glorify them and, with the departed poet, see

*Beneath the shopman's clumsy dress  
The splendor of humanity.*

The love poems are tender and touching, possessing a bit of the courtly spirit of knighthood days and being written mostly in praise of Aline. In his sacred lyrics we find Kilmer chanting of the souls who are striving for communion with the supernatural, and he lends his creative gift to help bring back the robust faith that was a part of medieval times.

The allusion, in the preface of "Dreams and Images," to the relation between poetry and prayer recalls to mind that Archbishop Spalding once wrote that poetry is the natural language of all worship and that when we are deeply moved prose no longer satisfies. This sentiment is beautifully exemplified in the poems of Father Edward Garesché—prayer poems, they might be termed, coming as they do from the heart of a priest.

Father Garesché, through his activity in civic and religious affairs, and through his devotional books, has brought the beauty of holiness to multitudes. In "The

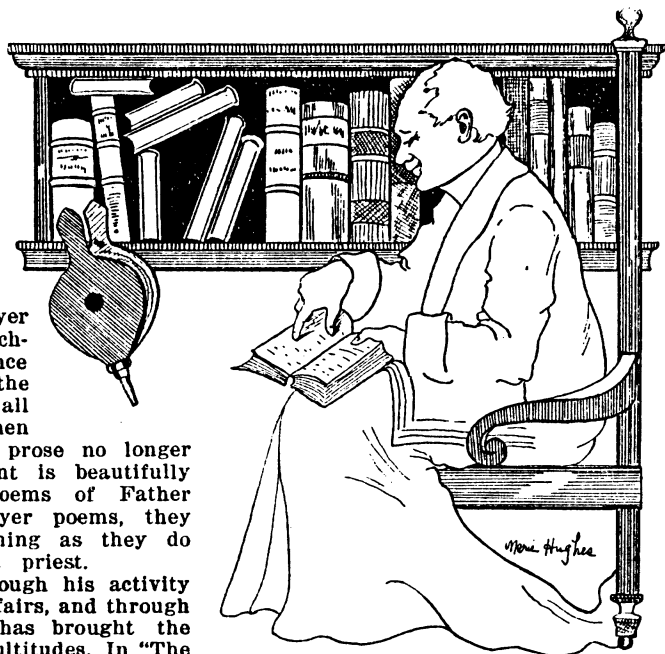
Four Gates," whose title is symbolical of the seasons, the religious element is in the ascendancy. Salutory lessons are to be found within the confines of this little volume. One might designate them little lamps of spiritual wisdom illuminating the traveler's path along the highways and byways of life's journey. One little lamp, "As Angels See," contains a powerful sermon.

*A little deed, a little prayer,  
So slight we scarcely heed the while;  
A moment's love—and what is there  
To make an angel smile?*

*A little guile, a little sin,  
So brief our hearts no memory keep;  
A moment's hate—ah, what is there  
To make an angel weep?*

"The World and the Waters" contains delightful songs of childhood and nature and reveals the lyrelike quality of Father Garesché's verse. "Niagara" is an ode rich in metaphor and sublime in its interpretation of the poet's theme. Vastly different is "Horizons," which impresses the reader with the wonder of the wide and sweeping spaces that confront the eye as he scans the visible universe. Another poem, "Raining," was reprinted in the *Literary Digest* with the comment that it was an example of its author's marked felicity of expression when dealing with nature. "To Rose in Heaven" invites repeated perusal. To me it appears to be the magnum opus of Father Garesché's creative genius. Joyce Kilmer, whose little dead daughter inspired it, did not hesitate to pronounce it one of the noblest elegiac poems in our language. Its stately measured cadences suggest the influence of the sublime and lofty sentiment of Coventry Patmore, whose magnificent odes are characterized by some of the most profound meditations on death and immortality of which our language boasts.

There are times when the soul wearies of the old familiar phrases and when time-worn petitions yield not one whit of sensible fervor. For such moments why



not try to memorise a few of the poems in "The Four Gates," perhaps "Mother of Sorrows" or "Give It Me" or "A Son's Petition." And there are many worth remembering in other poems, for the Church is singularly blessed in her poet priests, each of whom has fostered his creative power as something sacred, a gift destined to reflect the omnipotence of Him who vouchsafed it.

One of this little band, Father Charles O'Donnell, C. S. C., professor of English literature in the University of Notre Dame, recently glorified the treasury of Catholic poetry with a volume of verse that will at the outset arrest the attention of the discriminating. "Cloister and Other Poems" is a book to own, indeed to cherish, for it is a distinct addition to American literature. The book embraces lyrics of unusual quality, quatrains unique in their interpretation of the subjects chosen, and a few longer poems—all conceived in an intensely exalted mood. In the nature group we find vivid pictures completed in a few deft strokes that delight the heart and the mind with visions unforgettable of "the earth and the fullness thereof," "The Earth Hour," "In Late Spring," "On Indian Lake" and "Harvest Fields" are manifestly the result of keen, patient, loving observation. "Drought" is full of the music of bees silently droning in the arid, dusty summer as "falls no drop of rain or quickening dew."

In the quatrains one marvels at the discipline which culminates in a restraint that climbs to the heights of transcendent artistry. Like the echoes of a mighty chorus of sacred music the melody and richness of each verse lingers to delight the senses. I love the matchless art of "Magi," which reveals a cloud picture of wondrous beauty, recalling my childish habit of seeking for fantastic visions in the clouds.

*Three clouds of sunset gather with their gold.*

*What strange persuasion does their half light bring!*

*Just now I thought they grew like camels, each*

*With purple slung, and carrying a king.*  
What an enchanting bedtime tale for the children! Set to music, it would be a fitting prelude to the story of the Three Wise Men and their quest for a lonely cave at Bethlehem.

"Raiment" and "Scourged and Crowned" urge the heart toward meditation on Golgotha and the tragedy consummated there. Repeated over and over they cannot but help one to enter into the spirit of Holy Week.

Like Chesterton and Newman, Father O'Donnell cherishes a profound respect for the traditions and culture of the Middle Ages, and his "Cloister" is certain to endure in American poetry. To me it is an exemplar of that noble type of poetry which was defined by the beloved Father Tabbas

*A gleam of heaven; the passion of a star  
Held captive in the clasp of harmony;  
A silence, shell-like, breathing from afar  
The rapture of the deep, eternity.*

What tender, blessed thoughts the name of John Bannister Tabb evokes! It is a name to be revered and loved in every Catholic household. First there are his child poems, collected in one volume. The little ones seem instinctively to grasp their meaning, because Father Tabb possessed the happy faculty of sensing childish sorrow and childhood's bubbling joys. I appeal to mothers who may read this paper to teach their children to love

such delicate child fancies as are found in "Foot Soldiers," "The Time Brood," "High and Low," "The Tryst" and "An Idolator." I cannot resist quoting the merry song of the squirrel.

*Who combs you, little squirrel?  
And do you twist and twirl  
When someone puts the papers on  
To keep your tail in curl?  
And must you see the dentist  
For every tooth you break?  
And are you apt from eating nuts  
To get the stomach-ache?*

"Confided" is the anguished cry of a desolate mother heart, yet is it full of solace for her whose babe is safe in the arms of the Shepherd.

Father Tabb's mastery of the quatrain is unquestioned. His quatrains are like gleaming jewels in the ethereal setting which he has so exquisitely wrought from his close communion with nature and the supernatural. A letter received from a professor in Manchester, England, to whom I sent a copy of the lyrics, contained this beautiful tribute: "Letters from America seem to bring something with them beside their contents—a sense of things from a world conditioned differently from ours. D'abord I've to thank you for that beautiful little book of Father Tabb's. I think these snatches of wood and soul music quite apart from anything of their kind written. They are rich in spiritual suggestion and are conceived in an intensely human and sympathetic atmosphere. 'Tis well to know that a sweet singer of the finer things of life could develop and deliver his message amidst the hustle and rush of America."

We read Father Tabb with the same sheer abandon of joy with which we read Tennyson and Keats and Shelly. Dr. Henry VanDyke wrote recently that the blind poet priest had the exquisite art of the Greek epigram at his command, in one of his delicately finished poems "Keats-Sappho," which I quote:

*Methinks when first the nightingale  
Was mated to thy deathless song  
That Sappho, with emotion pale,  
Amid the Olympian throng,  
Stood listening with lips apart  
To hear in thy melodious love  
The pantings of her heart.*

But Father Tabb's worship of beauty was ever tempered by dignity and by the light of his glorious faith. He loved art not only for art's sake, but because through it he could deliver his message. His poems have been fittingly called gems of the sanctuary, because it was in the great feasts of the liturgical year that he found some of his holiest inspiration. The shadowy depths of Gethsemane, the triumphant glory of Easter and the magic of the Holy Night all found glorification in Father Tabb's mastery of the canons of poetry, and those who learn to appreciate the value of his poems will feel the influence of his teachings, even as his friends and pupils felt the benediction of his kindly presence.

One of my very dear friends in the literary world is Caroline Davenport Swan, a dear "old lady" as she styles herself, who lives on the shore of beautiful Casco Bay on the rugged Atlantic coast.

It was in the little town of Gardiner, Maine, a beauty spot on the Kennebec River, which has been immortalized by Nathaniel Hawthorne in his delightful American Notes, that Miss Swan was born. The daughter of a fine old New England family, she was reared in an atmosphere of culture. Extensive travel and scholarly pursuits qualified her well for her chosen craft, and being an artist

of the brush as well as master of German, French, Italian and Latin, she has brought to her work an enriched mentality, and a highly developed sense of the aesthetic.

Miss Swan reminds me of the little arbutus flower, "which comes to its perfection of purity and perfume beneath the snow and out of sight." With characteristic modesty, she has assured me upon more than one occasion that she did not care for notoriety, but that she did prize excellence. Her indifference to the plaudits of the world is testified in a line from her "Fame and the Poet," in which she says that eulogy of the poet is "at best a tinsel crown."

Miss Swan's impassioned love of nature has been undoubtedly influenced by her long worship at the feet of the muse, and Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson and Cowper were early loves of this cultured and womanly poetess.

I cannot imagine anything more beautifully expressive of the first warm pulse of spring in the earth than the lilting melody of "Leaf Buds," a poem that represents a playful, whimsical mood.

*Curled up on the boughs of a poplar tree.*

*Oh, little gray buds of the spring,  
Do you feel the cheer and the bliss that lies*

*In the sudden promise of sapphire skies  
And the bluebird's riotous carolling?  
"Why surely we do, and who doubts?"*

*Said the little gray buds of the spring.*

Miss Swan's sonnets appear frequently in the Catholic World, and are often reprinted in the Literary Digest and elsewhere. Though it was late in life that she entered the Church, her deeply religious verse had always made a strong appeal to Catholic hearts. A number of her beautiful sonnets and lyrics are collected in a volume called "The Unfading Light," in which the poems are divided into such attractive groups as "Easter-Tide," "Sea-Drift," "Christmas-Tide," and "Bird Flight," exhibiting a wide range of imagination.

Miss Swan has a marked genius for word painting, but it is not merely the delicate chastity of her diction that fascinates her readers; it is rather the sterling religious sentiments underlying her exquisite pen pictures.

In the Easter group "In Ecclesia" vibrates with the joy of the Resurrection, while a sonnet, "From Shade to Sun," sings gloriously of the Easter miracle. In nearly all the poems a prayer is embodied, or mayhap a thought that will console the weary amid the storm and stress of life. The Christmas verses teach with a beautiful simplicity some of the lessons unfolded at Bethlehem when the glad tidings flashed across the "heavenly hills." In this group it is difficult to decide which will make the biggest appeal. My own favorites are "Singing Stars," "Stars of Cheer," "A Star Song" and "The Royal Babe."

Miss Swan believes that "poetry is the divinest of all arts; for it is the breathing or expression of that principle or sentiment which is deepest or sublimest in human nature." In her sonnet "A Soul's Awakening," with which this paper concludes, it is easy to discern the lofty character of her thought and to understand the underlying motives of the poet, who is seer as well as singer, as he weaves a magic thread of thought through his creations. Moreover, if he be true to his best impulses, his work will be full of religious sentiment and beautiful philosophy, even though his pattern

(Continued on page 223)

which founded Canada, the old and the new.

### "A Book of Verses Underneath the Bough"

(Continued from page 202)

be now fanciful and again serious, so that, if the reader be in the right spirit to appreciate the song of the bard, he will cherish his immortal verse as one of his most precious possessions.

*I wandered lone beneath the starry skies  
In early days of springtime when the  
dark*

*Is all pulsation. Through the dusky  
park*

*Shy, scarlet maple buds with sleepy eyes  
Hung drooping overhead. In rapt surprise  
I felt the stirring life, whose hidden  
spark*

*Of strange, mysterious fire awakes the  
lark*

*And bids the frail anemone arise.  
Then came a melting fragrance unawares,  
The breath of violets, which softly rose  
From out their dewy purple of repose,  
Sweetening the dark. "O Love," I cried,*

*"that dares  
Reveal itself to darkened souls like  
mine,*

*I feel Thee, clasp Thee, Jesu, Lord Di-  
vine!"*

BY A WELL-KNOWN [REDACTED]  
WRITER OF VERSE

**The  
Unfading Light**

By

Caroline Davenport Swan

*112 Harriet st  
& Portland*

Boston  
Sherman, French & Company  
1911

*Milliken*

## THE UNFADING LIGHT

BY

CAROLINE DAVENPORT SWAN

A deeply devout as well as poetic spirit manifests itself in this volume of verse. One catches the religious symbolism of many of these lines as through cathedral windows. The hallowed light of trust and worship pervades them all. The purity of things sacred, the adorable in all that is divine, the aspiration toward the holy mind and heart have received sympathetic and understanding expression.

And it is with this same sensitiveness of feeling and perception of inward beauty and truth that nature is observed and interpreted. In color, form and finish we have the work of a literary

artist,—the sonnets, in particular, being rich and full of charm.

Many expressions of appreciation upon the appearance of not a few of these poems in religious and secular periodicals evince their stimulating and suggestive helpfulness. The editor of a weekly journal speaks thus highly of the author's work:

"There is no one familiar with her beautiful verses who does not appreciate the important position which she holds among the foremost writers of the present day. Her poetry has inspired and consoled many: it has been as a refreshing balm to the weary and heavy-laden. Religious fervor prevails throughout all her works. Is it to be wondered, then, that they are so sublime and full of hopeful inspiration?"

We offer this book, so truly Catholic in tone, to Clergy and laity "in full assurance of faith."

Cloth; 12mo.; \$1.25 net; by mail, \$1.35  
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6 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts

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6 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts



*A. J. Reynolds*

*GARDINER, ME.*



CAROLINE DAVENPORT SWAN

Author of:

The Unfading Light

Inscription:

Presented to the Maine State Library by  
the Author,

Caroline Davenport Swan,

So. Portland,  
1922.

Peems ;Clippings and manuscript with letter giving list  
of poems.

Received sometime after August 1923.

112 Harriet St.,  
So. Portland?

My Dear Mr. Dunnack; -

Maine.

Many thanks for your kind letter and offer to place my book, "The Unfading Light," in your special collection. - As to the personal sketch, I will send you one or two that have appeared variously, but have none that are very recent.

Yet a good deal of my best work has found print in late years. I am now writing essays, stories and verse for the "Irish Catholic," Dublin, which has an immense Colonial circulation and goes all round the world. Also for the "Franciscan Review," Montreal, the "Register," Toronto, "Orphan's Friend," Boston and the "Parachute," Pa. These regularly. And a host more, semi-occasionally.

My verse has had fine notices; the sonnets in particular, of which I have some two hundred. The late editor of the San Francisco Monitor, Charles Phillips, made an exhaustive study of the sonnet and its structures, by the best English writers; then wrote me that he had compared mine therewith and that "they would stand."

- I was very proud of that,

I do not care much for notoriety, but

do prize excellence.

In the "Unfading Light" you will see a variety of measures, long and short, - the latter, the more difficult, - one Rondeau ("Bloom and Sky"), forty-eight Sonnets and some Blank Verse.

I do not use all these, now, - But I know my lesson.

As for poetic thought and power, I can only say that some of my poems have been copied twelve or fourteen times, to my knowledge, in as many papers & in as many cities - and that the old ones have a way of re-appearing.

I have a whole book full of notices - kind words from such men as Dr. O'Hagan, of Canada, Dr. Block of Chicago, Dr. Maurice Egan - recent U.S. Minister to Denmark - Monsignor A. E. Burke, Dr. Bird, of Oscott College, England - and Cardinal Vanutelli.

I have not pushed my work at all; - and have ~~lost many years of valuable time~~ from having sickness on my hands and the care of aged relatives. - But I am thankful for my spared life and the ability to do the work I am producing in these latter days.

With best respects, I am  
Yrs Sincerely,  
Caroline D. Swan.

Mrs Henry E. Dunsack,  
Maine State Librarian,  
Augusta.

Caroline Davenport Swan's recently published volume of poems, "The Unfading Light," is one of the most graceful, tender and spirit-dowered treasures of poetic thought that have appeared from the press for some time. I am not surprised to learn that it has been so favorably received by critics and lovers of true poetry everywhere.

For many years the author of this excellent and charming volume of verse has been a contributor to our religious and secular journals and quietly and unobserved has sung her way into the hearts of her readers her sweet and reverent thoughts, abiding and nestling in their souls like doves of peace and prayer sent out from the ark of God's love.

Rarely have I read a volume of poems published in our day containing so little poetic dross, so full of the sweet sanctity of thought, so dowered with poetic feeling, grace, and that fine spirit which holds the key to the inner temple of song.

It is essentially a woman's soul inspired by the divine beauty of our holy faith, and the service of religion that plans and fashions the lyrics and sonnets within the covers of this delightful little volume. Caroline D. Swan is as reverent in her poetic spirit as that English Catholic singer who is so popular in our hearts and homes, and whom Charles Dickens, the great novelist, so much admired—the gentle and serene songstress of our sacred groves—Adelaide Proctor.

Miss Swan divides or classifies her poems under six heads: Luce Oriente Sonnets, Christmastide, Sea-Drift, Easter-ide and Bird-Flights. Her volume comprises one hundred and seventeen poems—the work, I presume, of a lifetime, and a work creditable, too, indeed, to her fine poetic gifts and admirable literary workmanship.

Her genius, it is true, never takes what might be termed lofty or daring flights. Her upper lift of song is the calm, serene atmosphere of the soul devoid of the lurid light of passion or the sharp thunder of vexing clouds. The beauty of God is ever spread about her and she never loses sight of the tapers of faith upon His altar. Morning, Noon and Night are full of the anthems of His love and the ritual of Spring and Autumn minister to her heart as Nature stands vested at the altar over which floats the incense of peace and prayer.

I would like to set before our readers something of the beauty and grace and spiritual apperception found in the poems of Miss Swan. Perhaps the spirit and method of her work are best exemplified in the very opening poem in the volume, "The Earthly Shepherd." It certainly

breathes a devotion and tenderness, a trusting faith that are truly characteristic of all her work:

### The Earthly Shepherd.

I see One coming across the wold,  
My gracious Lord!  
Whiter than snow is He—is He!  
And tender the gaze that He bends on me,  
O blest reward  
For all my labor, for all my pain,  
O feel I dwell in His heart again!  
How shall I welcome my gracious Lord,  
Now He is here?  
Sudden a-tremble, passionate, dim,  
The tear-stained face that I turn to Him  
In anxious fear.  
He proffers pardon. O joy divine!  
Bliss of forgiveness! His love is mine.

"What can I do for Thee, Lord? My Lord!"

His word is nigh:

"Gather my sheep and the lambs a-cold,  
Luring them back to the blessed Fold!"

Quick! Ere they die.

They have wandered far in the snow  
and rain;

I hear their moaning, I feel their pain!"

Over the crags and the pathless plain  
They softly come.

Breathless and blissful I lead them on,—  
For love, it is mighty to rest upon!—

In silence dumb;

Thine is the Voice which they love and know;

I only guide them through sleet and snow.

Ever Thy tenderness fills the gloom  
With life and cheer.

Help us and welcome us, Lord of the Fold!

Show us Thy radiant City of Gold,

Swung close a-near!

Windless, unruffled, Thy luminous Sea,  
Ever reflecting the rose-warmth of Thee.

Let me now turn for a moment to a consideration of Miss Swan's Sonnets. She has many of the gifts requisite for a good sonnet writer—compression, delicacy of thought and artistry. We think the following one of her best sonnets:

### Sunrise in June.

Through the faint glimmer of the  
shadow-lands,

Across the silver meadows, dank with rain,

A far, fine line of light illumines the plain.

It wakes the world, its sudden sway expands,

The Sun-god flames adown th' exultant sands,

And woe and doubt and misery are slain:

His loving touch is on our mounds of pain,

And none his blaze ineffable stands.

The birds the rapturous miracle proclaim  
In their green palaces! The brilliant bees

Sip nectar from the chalices of June!

Sweet princess of the year! Her spirit's flame

Brightens our lives to kindred rhapsodies

And with the lark we sing her heaven-set tune.

From the section of Miss Swan's poems known as "Christmastide," we take this beautiful poem, redolent of the joyous season when the Babe of Bethlehem brings kneeling to the crib the Christian world with sweet spices and frankincense and prayer. These hallowed lines are full of the fragrance of prayer, and devotion and reveal the beautiful spiritual nature of their author:

### The Children of the Kingdom.

There are baby voices carolling, and baby eyes aglow,

And dimpled cheeks, whose tender flush the Christmas roses know;

O children of our weary earth, ~~about~~  
fearlessly and sing

For He is come, the Jesus-Babe! O hail Him, Lord and King.

And we think of blessed Bethlehem, that night beneath the stars;

O Mary Mother melt our hearts, efface their stinging scars!

The waxen touch of Love Divine the Holy Child bestows;  
O bid His blessing fall on us, like rose-light on the snows.

Through all our earthly sorrowing His innocence can pass,  
And make a whiteness in our souls bright as the Sea of Glass,  
Where, full aflame in emerald light, the Lamb for sinners slain,  
Eternally reflected, shall forever live and reign.

There are baby angels carolling across that soundless sea;  
Exultant, in a silver flood of light and holy glee,  
In the everlasting Presence of the Christ they knew below,—  
O tearless eyes, O wondrous peace, which earth may never know!

For here are crowns of briars; but immortal roses cling  
To brows illumined by the light of endless worshiping.  
We walk in sorrow-laden wilds; but oh, the lilled plains!  
Their dewy glow, perpetual grace! O misty, golden rains!

Smile on our children here below, O Mary Mother dear!  
O Virgin-born Redeemer, bless all their baby cheer!  
Oh, clasp them ever close to Thee and calm our wearied eyes—  
But ah, no tears for those who keep their Christmas in the skies!

The publishers, Sherman, French & Co. of Boston, in bringing out Miss Swan's poems, have done their work well. The volume, I understand, sells for one dollar and twenty-five cents. It is a valuable addition to the poetry of our land, and its gifted author has laid us all under obligation through her sweet, ministry of song.

THOMAS O'HAGAN.