A MADRIGAL.

I.

Before me careless lying,
Young Love his wares come crying;
Full soon the oft uninjured
His pack of pains and pleasures,
With regrets are
He bids me buy
From out his pack of treasures.

II.

His wallet's stuffed with blisses,
With true-love-knots and kisses,
With ringlets red and flaxen,
And sugared vows and letters;—
He bids them out
With boyish flout,
And bids me try the fetters.

III.

Nay, Child (I cry) I know them;
Where little I need to buy of them!
Too well for new believing
I know their pearl deceiving,—
I am too old
(I say) and cold,
To day, for new believing!

IV.

But still the wanton presses,
With lures of sweet caresses,
And still, to my undoing,
He wins me with his wooing,
To buy his wares
With all their snares,
Their sorrow and undoing!

—*Belgravia.*

WHISKY BOB'S CLAIM.

Whisky Bob was dead broke, very tired, and wanted to sit down and study out his situation and what was best to be done. He put down his rocker and pack carefully on the grass; his blankets were strapped in it, with pick, shovel, tin wash-pan and frying-pan, with a bag containing his pork, ham, flour and tin pot for his coffee, and peeping from the roll of blankets was the very little coarse jug bottle. He had stopped at the bottom of a high mountain ridge, not far from the Yuba river, that ran along for miles. It was well wooded and shaded by old trees, had little underbrush, and just below him there ran a creek amid the bushes clear and cool, over the pebbles, which was very plain not to see and hear in the hot weather of Summer.

'Here I be again, the same darned fool as ever, ruined by whisky, after making piles of money; I just deserve it. What does the second jackass a human can make himself with whisky.'

Taking up his pack, Bob toiled slowly up the ridge under the trees until he came to the top, where it flattened out in little level places and slight depressions. Birds were singing and flowers blooming around him; and, as he sat down to rest, he heard, to his astonishment, not very far off, the clear, sweet voice of a female, singing.

Peeping cautiously under the young pine trees, there, in a little open flat, sitting on a rock, was the singer. It was a pleasant picture to look at for a lonely man—a tall, shapely, buxom young girl, with light golden hair, blue eyes, and very regular, pretty features. She was dressed in a short calico dress, with moccasins on her feet and a sun-bonnet thrown back from her head. Her hand rested on a long Kentucky rifle. She was a representative of the better class of Western girls, who were coming in those early days arriving in the mountains of California from the long trip over Nevada, or settling in families from Kentucky and other States.

Whisky Bob listened to the song with delight, and gazed at the singer in admiration; and then, with his pack on his shoulder, coolly walked out into her presence, and, putting the pack down not far from her, sat down himself. The young girl looked at him a little surprised, but sat composed and still, only patting her hand carelessly on the stock of her rifle. Then she spoke to him.

'Well, mister, who might you be, that walks into a young lady's drawing-room, without knocking, even on the back of a tree?'

'Please, Miss, I'm called Whisky Bob—out prospecting,' said he.

'No miss about it, Mr. Bob, please. My name, for short, is Nell Green to my friends, and to others—well, I'm a shooting fool,' said the girl, and continued: 'Your name of Whisky is a bad one, young man, and, I reckon, shows you are being ruined by corn juice. Is that so?'

'Well, Nell, that's a fact—but rather rough,' said Bob, who saw the girl had a half smile on her face.

She was not in the least bold or forward, or wanting in modesty; but the company of rough men, danger, and scenes in the wilderness had taught her to be self-composed and self-reliant.

'Now, Mr. Bob—without the Whisky—it seems to me,' said Nell, 'you're throwing yersel' away; and there might be something better for yer, if yo'd seek it.' And she looked at him with an expression of some interest.

'I know it, Nell, if I could only do it.'

'Got no folks, no family, to keer for you?' said Nell.

'Nary one,' replied Bob: never had. I toted myself and pack up this ridge to jest seek my luck once more, and quit the corn juice and whisky for good.'

'Well, Bob, if yo could only meet a woman anywhere in these diggings, and stake out a claim together, she should, it would bring ye fresh luck, ye might turn over a new leaf, and be somebody once more. And here, sure enough, I've met you.'

'Ye mean right, I'm sure,' said Nell, softly. 'But down the trail away yonder I see my folks are coming along, with their fixings and plunder, pan, man, and the rest ov 'em. I must put out, stranger; but, Mr. Bob, let me say a kind word to ye on parting from a sheer acquaintance. If ye say a word it brings ye luck every time. Now I jest hope I'll bring good fortune to yer, and you may take yer pile out of this 'ere spot, though I cast see where it is. And, Mr. Bob,' said the girl hesitating, 'if yo do find it, and act up to your good intentions about the corn juice—well, then, Bob, I'm a lone lass, with long log houses and shed fixings down on the opening at the foot ov the creek, away there ye may see them in the trees. We mean to locate.' And walking up to Bob, she put her hand on his shoulder, 'and, Mr. Bob, if ye raise yer pile ye can bring jest a little piece of gold down for Nell to remember she brought a better life for ye.'

Bob was confused, and seemed to feel a tear in his eye, but he caught the little hand and kissed it, while Nell, blushing, hurried away with a step like an antelope's.

Whisky Bob was a believer in luck, destiny, or whatever we may choose to call it, and more particularly, he had a strong half in his own good luck, especially in its relations to the fair sex.

He took his rocker and put it in running order down the ridge by a little pool of water, fed by a small stream from the hill, and, filling his dirt and wash out for half an hour, and then pack down more while the pool was filling with water again.

Next he went and rolled away the rock where Nell had been sitting and singing by the dry pebbles of the rivulet, and, taking his pick, commenced digging out a ditch in the grass, about two feet deep and two feet wide, down stream, and took the dirt to his rocker. He worked until sunset, only finding about six bits of coarse gold, but he had put a good solid piece of gold, weighing three ounces. This encouraged him, and brightened his hopes for the future. There was gold there now he found to be a fact.

In the morning he arose by daylight, and after his breakfast of fried pork and coffee, ending with the usual smoke of his pipe, he went to work again, determined to work the claim out for Nell's sake, if he did not make a fortune.

He worked hard and steady through the day, only stopping at noon for pone coffee and a smoke beneath the pine-tree camp. The sun was very hot, but he didn't mind it. At night, when he washed out the result of the day's hard toil, he only had a dollar's worth of coarse gold, but he found a little piece of blue ribbon Nell had lost from her hair. This consoled him amply, as he kissed it and said to himself, 'Bob, better luck to-morrow.' His claim was 'what miners call very spotted,' for the gold was scattered in spots, here and there. The next day and the next his labors brought him the same results—about enough to pay expenses, or, as the miners call it, 'grub money.'

The fourth day, just before he washed out, in his last rocker of dirt, at sunset, he found two pieces of gold—one worth $150, the other full $200. Bob was happy that night; and tied the blue ribbon with a leather string round his neck, so that it could rest on his heart. The next two days brought no big pieces, but the seventh he took enough out of the claim to pay for the merit weighing about $700. It was dark-colored gold, pretty solid, and worth $16 the ounce, or $16 the bit. He