

## A RESCUED POEM.

"The Scrap Book" Resurrects from Distressing Obscurity a Gem  
That Might Otherwise Have Been Lost to Posterity.

**H**ISTORY records that in 1895 Mr. Langdon Smith, at that time connected with the Sunday edition of the *New York Herald*, wrote the first few stanzas of the following poem. They were printed in the *Herald*. Four years later, having joined the staff of the *New York Journal* in the interim, Mr. Smith came across the verses among his papers, and, reading them over, was struck with a sense of their incompleteness.

He added a stanza or two, and laid the poem aside. Later he wrote more stanzas, and finally completed it and sent it in to Mr. Arthur Brisbane, editor of the *Evening Journal*. Mr. Brisbane, being unable to use it, turned it over to Mr. C. E. Russell, of the *Morning Journal*. It appeared in the *Morning Journal*—in the middle of a page of want "ads"! How it came to be buried thus some compositor may know. Perhaps a "make-up" man was inspired with a glimmer of editorial intelligence to "lighten up" the page.

But even a deep border of "ads" could not smother the poem. Mr. Smith received letters of congratulation from all parts of the world, along with requests for copies. The poem has been in constant demand; and it has been almost unobtainable. Here for the first time it is given to the public in a suitable position, with proper recognition—proof once more that the true spark cannot long remain hid under a bushel.

Mr. Smith has caught a note of deep interest. He has linked evolution to the theory of soul-transmigration—has translated Wordsworth's ode on immortality into the terms of science. "The glory and the dream" come, not from another world, but from the Paleozoic period, in which existed the most ancient forms of life of which traces still remain. And the author gives us glimpses of man in several geological periods, showing him, finally, as the cave man of the Stone Age—whence it is comparatively a short jump to the twentieth century—and Delmonico's.

## EVOLUTION.

BY LANGDON SMITH.

**W**HEN you were a tadpole and I was a fish,  
In the Paleozoic time,  
And side by side on the ebbing tide  
We sprawled through the ooze and slime,  
Or skittered with many a caudal flip  
Through the depths of the Cambrian fen,  
My heart was rife with the joy of life,  
For I loved you even then.

Mindless we lived and mindless we loved,  
 And mindless at last we died;  
 And deep in a rift of the Caradoc drift  
 We slumbered side by side.  
 The world turned on in the lathe of time,  
 The hot lands heaved amain,  
 Till we caught our breath from the womb of death,  
 And crept into light again.

We were Amphibians, scaled and tailed,  
 And drab as a dead man's hand;  
 We coiled at ease 'neath the dripping trees,  
 Or trailed through the mud and sand,  
 Croaking and blind, with our three-clawed feet  
 Writing a language dumb,  
 With never a spark in the empty dark  
 To hint at a life to come.

Yet happy we lived, and happy we loved,  
 And happy we died once more;  
 Our forms were rolled in the clinging mold  
 Of a Neocomian shore.  
 The eons came, and the eons fled,  
 And the sleep that wrapped us fast  
 Was riven away in a newer day,  
 And the night of death was past.

Then light and swift through the jungle trees  
 We swung in our airy flights,  
 Or breathed in the balms of the froned palms,  
 In the hush of the moonless nights.  
 And oh! what beautiful years were these,  
 When our hearts clung each to each;  
 When life was filled, and our senses thrilled  
 In the first faint dawn of speech.

Thus life by life, and love by love,  
 We passed through the cycles strange,  
 And breath by breath, and death by death,  
 We followed the chain of change.  
 Till there came a time in the law of life  
 When over the nursing sod  
 The shadows broke, and the soul awoke  
 In a strange, dim dream of God.

I was thewed like an Auroch bull,  
 And tusked like the great Cave Bear;  
 And you, my sweet, from head to feet,  
 Were gowned in your glorious hair.  
 Deep in the gloom of a fireless cave,  
 When the night fell o'er the plain,  
 And the moon hung red o'er the river bed,  
 We mumbled the bones of the slain.

I flaked a flint to a cutting edge,  
 And shaped it with brutish craft;  
 I broke a shank from the woodland dank,  
 And fitted it, head and haft.  
 Then I hid me close to the reedy tarn,  
 Where the Mammoth came to drink;—  
 Through brawn and bone I drave the stone,  
 And slew him upon the brink.

Loud I howled through the moonlit wastes,  
 Loud answered our kith and kin;  
 From west and east to the crimson feast  
 The clan came trooping in.  
 O'er joint and gristle and padded hoof,  
 We fought, and clawed and tore,  
 And cheek by jowl, with many a growl,  
 We talked the marvel o'er.

I carved that fight on a reindeer bone,  
 With rude and hairy hand,  
 I pictured his fall on the cavern wall  
 That men might understand.  
 For we lived by blood, and the right of might,  
 Ere human laws were drawn  
 And the Age of Sin did not begin  
 Till our brutal tusks were gone.

And that was a million years ago,  
 In a time that no man knows;  
 Yet here to-night in the mellow light,  
 We sit at Delmonico's;  
 Your eyes are deep as the Devon springs,  
 Your hair is as dark as jet.  
 Your years are few, your life is new,  
 Your soul untried, and yet—

Our trail is on the Kimmeridge clay,  
 And the scarp of the Purbeck flags,  
 We have left our bones in the Bagshot stones,  
 And deep in the Coraline crags;  
 Our love is old, our lives are old,  
 And death shall come amain;  
 Should it come to-day, what man may say  
 We shall not live again?

God wrought our souls from the Tremadoc beds  
 And furnished them wings to fly;  
 He sowed our spawn in the world's dim dawn,  
 And I know that it shall not die.  
 Though cities have sprung above the graves  
 Where the crook-boned men made war,  
 And the ox-wain creaks o'er the buried caves,  
 Where the mummied mammoths are.

Then as we linger at luncheon here,  
 O'er many a dainty dish,  
 Let us drink anew to the time when you  
 Were a Tadpole and I was a Fish.