

Mary Newmarch Prescott

WORK

1

“Sweet wind, fair wind, where have you been?”
“I’ve been sweeping the cobwebs out of the sky;
I’ve been grinding a grist in the mill hard by;
I’ve been laughing at work while others sigh;
Let those laugh who win! ”

2

“Sweet rain, soft rain, what are you doing?”
“I’m urging the corn to fill out its cells ;
I’m helping the lily to fashion its bells ;
I’m swelling the torrent, and brimming the wells;
Is that worth pursuing?”

3

“Redbreast, redbreast, what have you done?”
“I’ve been watching the nest where my fledglings lie;
I’ve sung them to sleep with a lullaby ;
By and by I shall teach them to fly,
Up and away, every one!”

4

“Honey-bee, honey-bee, where are you going?”
“To fill my basket with precious pelf;
To toil for my neighbor as well as myself;
To find out the sweetest flower that grows,
Be it a thistle or be it a rose, —
A secret worth the knowing !”

5

Each content with the work to be done,
Ever the same from sun to sun, —
Shall you and I be taught to work
By the bee and the bird, that scorn to shirk?

6

“Wind and rain fulfilling His word!”
Tell me, was ever a legend heard
Where the wind, commanded to blow, deferred,
Or the rain, that was bidden to fall, demurred?

This poem is so easy to read that you will need little help. But there are a few words whose meanings you may need to learn. You would better learn them now so that you may not miss any meanings. Here they are:

hard by: near by

shirk: to avoid one’s work

fledglings: young birds just growing their feathers

legend: an old story

deferred: put off

pelf: riches. Here, of course, it means the bee’s riches, or honey.

demurred: objected