Three Musicians, The.

By Beardsley, Aubrey .

Along the path that skirts the wood,

The three musicians wend their way,

Pleased with their thoughts, each other's mood,

Franz Himmel's latest roundelay,

The morning's work, a new-found theme, their breakfast and the summer day.

One's a soprano, lightly frocked

In cool white muslin that just shows

Her brown silk stockings gaily clocked,

Plump arms and elbows tipped with rose,

And frills of petticoats and things, and outlines as the warm wind blows.

Beside her a slim gracious boy

Hastens to mend her tresses' fall,

And dies her favour to enjoy,

And dies for reclame and recall

At Paris and St Petersburg, Vienna and St James's Hall.

The third's a Polish Pianist

With big engagements everywhere,

A light heart and an iron wrist,

And shocks and shoals of yellow hair,

And fingers that can trill on sixths and fill beginners with despair.

The three musicians stroll along

And pluck the ears of ripened corn,

Break into odds and ends of song,

And mock the woods with Siegfried's horn,

And fill the air with Gluck, and fill the tweeded tourist's soul with scorn.

The Polish genius lags behind,

And, with some poppies in his hand,

Picks out the strings and wood and wind

Of an imiginary band,

Enchanted that for once his men obey his beat and understand.

The charming cantatrice reclines

And rests a moment where she sees

Her chateau's roof that hotly shines

Amid the dusky summer trees,

And fans herself, half shuts her eyes, and smoothes the frock about her knees.

The gracious boy is at her feet,

And weighs his courage with his chance;

His fears soon melt in noonday heat.

The tourist gives a furious glance,

Red as his guidebook grows, moves on, and offers up a prayer for France.