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And you used to say I never would make a farmer.

Wayside Poems

For Old and Young

✓ By

E. W. VAN SLYKE

Author of

HOME MELODIES

and Other Poems

Illustrated

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Preface

The poems contained in my first volume, "Home Melodies," published a year ago, were the work of less than three months; and during that time I was extremely busy with the duties of other business, which never pressed harder upon me than then. But in the lulls during business hours, in the office, on the railways, in the evenings at home, or wherever I chanced to be and could find an idle moment, a short poem was the result. Many of the poems were of an impromptu character, and in an unguarded moment I put the manuscript in the hands of a publisher, and almost before I had realized what I had done, the book was printed verbatim, and placed on the market. The large sale that followed, together with numerous letters received complimenting the little book and urging me to further efforts along the same line, and the deep appreciation my friends and neighbors manifested for the book have induced me to issue this second volume, "Wayside Poems," hoping it may meet with as much favor as the other. I can give no better preface to the bagatelles I offer here, than the beautiful poem to Mr. Longfellow's "Waif:"

"The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an Eagle in his flight.

"I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me,
That my soul cannot resist;

"A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

“ Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of day.

“ Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of time.

“ For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life’s endless toil and endeavor;
And to-night I long for rest.

“ Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start;

“ Who through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

“ Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

“ Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

“ And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares, that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.”

Dedicatory Letter

To My Father :

In dedicating the trifles contained in this book to you, I am not unmindful of the probability that you will read this inscription with a mingled feeling of awe and apprehension after all the advice and warning you have given me against the pitfalls set for the unwary poet. I will candidly admit to you that you have given me the best of advice in the matter, and only for that wise counsel that I have tried hard to follow, my whole life might have been spent in a field for which my education had not fitted me, and which might have kept me on the ragged edge of penury. I wish to take this occasion to thank you for that counsel. But now that I have reached the age of ripe manhood and have attained some success in business, I feel that you may easily forgive me for this departure in publishing a few of the little "Wayside" poems, written in my leisure moments. Also for dedicating the same to you, for you must know that writing has been the fondest dream of my whole life. Wherever I have gone and whatever I did, the muses were constantly at my elbow, whispering to my senses sweet messages that I am unable to transcribe in writing—yet write I must, for their power over me is such that I cannot shake it off entirely. In youth I thought it might be only a fancy common to all, that I could live down or outgrow. But with the passing years I find it has only grown more clamorous for expression. I have been ashamed of its possession many times and have written hundreds of poems just for the secret pleasure they gave me, and then destroyed the manuscript before any one should see it. I felt guilty at having it known that I even tried to do anything of the kind. But to better show you how I have had to struggle to restrain myself from the writing of verses, I will quote Longfellow's poem:

The Poet and His Songs

As the birds come in the spring,
We know not from where:
As the stars come at evening
From depths of the air;

As the rain comes from the cloud,
And the brook from the ground;
As suddenly low or loud
Out of silence a sound;

As the grape comes to the vine,
The fruit to the tree;
As the wind comes to the pine,
And the tide to the sea;

As come the white sails of ships,
O'er the ocean's verge;
As comes the smile to the lips,
The foam to the surge;

So come to the poet his songs,
All hitherward blown:
From the shadowy realm that belongs
To the vast unknown.

His, and not his are the lays
He sings: and their fame
Is his and not his; and the praise
And the pride of a name.

For voices pursue him by day
And haunt him by night,
And he listens and needs must obey
When the angel says "write."

I have felt the power of those voices since childhood. It grew a part of my nature to love the poetic and fanciful.

The real things of life, however, have most strenuously manifested a claim for first consideration. That I should know where my next meal was coming from was imperative. Also that the children were properly clothed, shod, and schooled; how bills, bank notes and a thousand other petty matters were to be attended to; all of which are very galling to the poetic mind, and most of which were quite likely to be overlooked in the nobler work of listening to the muses and trying to interpret what they say.

You can remember how as a boy on our prairie farm, I used to go after the cows each night without being told — if I didn't forget it. How you used to wake me up many a night to ask if I had forgotten to feed the hogs or bring in the wood, or milk the cow, any or all of which I was quite likely to do.

How I used to love to go into the field to plow, where I would hitch the team in some secluded spot and proceed to admire the beauties of nature. And you used to say I never would make a farmer.

But I liked the farm — all but the work. Ah, there's the rub. To go out into the pleasant sunshine, with the fields aflower and birds warbling their magic carols around me, and the cool shade of the cotton-wood tree overhanging the delightful old swimming hole, beckoning silently but irresistibly in the distance; to be in the midst of such delights as it were, and then be expected to just work. It was a severe shock to my sense of the fitness of things.

To hill-up the hateful and commonplace potato vines, and hoe the smartweed and parsley out of the uninteresting corn, to know when it was time to feed and water the clamorous swine, to split the kindling and fill the wood-box every night of my life, in winter to husk that same prosaic corn, with cold aching fingers, when the rabbits, quail and squirrels in a thousand nooks and corners were waiting for me to take a gun and go after them.

Such were a few of the trials of my early life, which you, sir, may have thought I considered fun. Many were the humiliations and reprimands I suffered from my unconquerable forgetfulness.

But there were things I never forgot. I noted and remembered which way every pig on the farm curled his tail. I knew just how many eggs were under the old blue hen, and when they would hatch to a minute; and I usually had an even number of long and round eggs under each hen, so half would be pullets and half roosters. Someone had told me the oblong eggs hatched roosters and the round ones pullets. I never forgot that and my experiments to prove the same were deep and interesting.

I knew every hen on the premises at a glance, and the roosters I knew without looking at them, by their crow. I never tired of admiring the beautiful varieties of their plumage, and never forgot to see them all safely housed for the night, all with their heads turned the same way on the roost, and placed alternately, a hen between two roosters.

I knew in short every animal and fowl on the farm, and the peculiarities of each. I knew the hole in the straw stack where every egg lay hidden for two weeks before Easter, and just which farmer in the neighborhood had the earliest watermelons.

I could tell when it was going to rain too hard to work but would be just right to go fishing. I knew just how fast every horse on the farm could run; for I had often ridden them against every other horse in the neighborhood, though I don't remember that I mentioned it to you at the time.

So you can easily see, sir, with so much to remember (and I haven't told the half of it), and with my brain filled with so much knowledge of vital importance to me, how it was that I always appeared to you to be so forgetful and absentminded about a few of the little things that were expected of me, and which you seemed to consider of some consequence. This may explain to you why I was frequently so tired out that I would lie down under a tree and go to sleep when I was supposed to be hoeing beans, and why I planted the pumpkin seeds all in one hill to save going across the field so many times.

It may also make clear to you why when I used to go on foot after the cows, I would ride one of them home, or nearly so, for I remember I used to dismount just before I got in sight of the house, so possibly you did not notice me. O, but I did have tired spells in those days, when there was so much work to be done.

But the epoch of my young life came with the spring succeeding the terrible drought that ruined the corn crop, and our large drove of hogs was left without food for their subsistence and you

gave me the easy and pleasant task of herding the hateful creatures (now become a blessing) on the broad expanse of wild prairie where they could browse on the tender grass, and "root hog or die." Ah, those were blessed days to me, when you did all of the farm work and I could be alone with nature and the hogs, and sit in the shade of a friendly linwood by the "run," and pore over the writings of my favorite poets, while the swine wallowed contentedly in the series of muddy pools that marked the course of the "run" in the rainy season.

How I did enjoy that spring time, studying the ways of nature on the flowering heather, filled with sunshine and song that my young and sensitive heart absorbed and never forgot.

Then when the young and thrifty new crop of corn had grown to the ear, so as to provide subsistence for the swine, you will recall that I was given the task to herd on the range a drove of 250 Texas steers, and provided with a fine pony, a broad brimmed hat and a whip with a lash sixteen feet long. That was indeed the climax of felicity to me. It suited my taste to a dot, and was about the first work I had been given to do, up to that time that I fell in love with, and I did not neglect it, or let my mind wander from it.

The beauteous nights of that summer and autumn, as well as the days found me watchful and attendant to my coveted work. The heat of midday found me in some shady nook poring over a book, with pony lazily grazing near me and most of the herd standing in the shady pool, switching at the flies that seemed to come in swarms. Sometimes a restless scamp of a steer would grow desperate over either the flies or the monotony of things, I never knew which, and would start things going for a merry time, and there were always plenty of others to follow him, and away they would run over the rolling prairie. Then the pony and whip came into play, and my spirits rose to the occasion, as I raced madly toward the leaders, standing erect in the stirrups, and playing the long lash over the heads of the foremost steers to turn their

course and "wind them up to a stand still." I forgot all danger. The gopher hills and boroughs that might cause my pony to stumble and throw me beneath the thundering hoofs of the herd had no place in my mind.

I felt the cool wind on my hot face, and so true and swift did the little broncho bear me it seemed as if I were flying, and my spirits rose exultant over material forces, so it seemed, and my heart was full of the keenest delight, and satisfaction with my prowess.

With a blanket to sleep on how often did I spend a restful night on that broad expanse of prairie, with the stars of heaven twinkling above me, and the majestic moon sitting upon her throne looking serenely down upon my happiness.

The alert and faithful broncho grazed near me or lay by my side where she could poke an inquisitive nose under my blanket at times to make sure I was there, and I would feel her warm breath for a moment on my face, with the pleasurable sensation of security a child feels when a watchful mother bends over its little bed and kisses it.

At a little distance the contented cattle lay chewing the cud and heaving many a sigh for stomachs over loaded, and the rattle of their long horns, one against another, as they lazily swung the head at an imaginary fly was the reveille that awoke me in the morning, and the notes of frogs in the bayou, and of whip-poor-wills in the edge of the marsh, and the song of the ever-present katy-did and cricket constituted the love songs that lulled me to sleep at night.

In looking back over the vista of years these seem to have been my happiest days. The peacefulness and serenity of nature and beauties she unfolded to my eyes, both in the daytime, under the glaring light of a semi-tropic sun, and in the night as I lay on my back studying the wonderful and mystical planetary system, until all would grow indistinct and I would wander off into the land of sleep.

Also as I look back upon those old days I can but be impressed with the rapid flight of time. You, who were then in the prime of life have grown white haired and more feeble, and are nearing life's dim border-land, where the hand of time begins to relax its hold upon the soul, which, weary with the vicissitudes and sinfulness of the flesh looks almost yearningly out over the rim of material existence, and is resigned to be separated from its crumbling habitation of clay, whenever an All-Wise Providence may direct, and take up that other and better existence that is beauteous and eternal.

I had not intended to write such a long letter, and I fear there is little in it that is really pertinent to the case in hand, and it will be a very unique dedication for a volume of poems. But the circumstances are unique under which this book has been produced. After all of your admonitions and my own struggle to banish the muses, they have remained steadfast through joy and sorrow, and have made me happy under some conditions that else would have been unbearable, and I am determined now not to go back on my life long friends that have helped so much to cheer my life. My nature seems not to have changed much since the old days, and their joy is still fresh in my heart, and through it all I trace your love and kindness like a guiding star of truth and wisdom. Whether we may ever meet again in this life is uncertain, on account of the distance that divides us; but in dedicating this little book to you I only wish to assure you of my undying love and esteem, and my admiration for your noble traits of character, that I would to God I could imitate. That modest and unassuming integrity and honesty of purpose that moves firmly and steadily toward the accomplishment of each worthy object, which you possess to so large a measure, has been of inestimable benefit to me in trying to shape my own course in life, though I have fallen far short of that ideal that I have ever found exemplified in you.

ELMER W. VAN SLYKE.

The Prologue

Look not for talent in these simple lines,
You will not find it here, I ween;
'Tis but the upper strata of the mines
Whose wealth is still unseen.

Still unexplored. The delver's hand is weak
To grapple with the arduous task
That still remains to him ere he can seek
One jewel to unmask.

The classic song to him is still unknown.
His is to sing the humbler lay
Of only common-places round him thrown,
Or gathered by the way.

Still, e'en the croaking of a frog may please
An impluse of the restless heart;
So will I hope such rhymes as these,
Some pleasure may impart.

And if they shall some rays of joy contain,
To make a happier hour for one,
Who, by their reading, counts it gain,
'Twere not so badly done.

But should the critic roast them on his fork,
Over his candle, scientific,
May Satan aid him in the work!
They'll find a field prolific.

A Wildwood Idyl

In summer when the woods are green,
And leafy boughs are swaying,
How peaceful is the sylvan scene,
Where gentle winds are playing.

The dark trees nod their lofty crests
To greet the cloud that passes,
And birds go winging to their nests
Deep in the dark morasses.

The ground is carpeted with leaves
As soft as velvet Brussels,
That each recurring season weaves
Till footstep scarcely rustles.

The wild birds sing a roundelay,
When rosy dawn is breaking :
And bull-frogs in the marshes grey
Are joyous tumult making.

The red doe with her pretty fawn
Glides down among the rushes,
By cooling water, thither drawn
That from the mountain gushes.

The wild flower droops a pretty head,
Like to a bashful maiden
When blushes on her cheeks lie red--
Tell-tale of heart love-laden.

And wild-wood odors on the air,
Sweet as the breath of roses,
Constrain our thoughts to wander there
Where nature's charm reposes.



A FISHERMAN I KNEW



A fisherman I once did know,
And he was fond of fishing,
But little else he cared to do,
Except a lot of wishing.

He lived within a little hut,
Close by the flowing river ;
His wife was good at working ; but
Toil gave his heart a shiver.

So she toiled on, o'er suds and soap
To fill the meager larder,
But he would sit betimes and mope,
And smoke his pipe the harder.

I never knew him swear, or steal,
Nor e'er give way to passion;
So even ran his balance-wheel,
He seemed quite out of fashion.

In calm repose, I've marked him lie
Upon the greensward smoking;
And thoughts of work ne'er came a night
Despite the neighbors' joking.

He never grumbled at his fare,
Nor chided any neighbor;
His theme of life was, "I don't care,
So that I keep from labor."

And when the wind was in the north,
And winter blizzards blowing;
Where e'er he could be holding forth,
I had no means of knowing.

But sure it was, the first spring day
That augured, "fish were biting,"
You'd see him by the water-way,
The likeliest places sighting.

With rusty hook and willow pole,
And line of doubtful tissue,
He tried the merits of each hole,
Expectant of the issue.

And every time he felt a "bite."
That fish was his already;
His luck was simply "out of sight."
And he was cool and steady.

With gilded rod and silken line,
I sometimes fished beside him,
But he would beat me every time--
Appearance so belied him.

And when I homeward turned to go,
His fish looked so inviting,
I'd buy them for a "plunk" or so,
And send my own a kiting.

So, thanks to thee, my humble friend,
I went in exultation;
Your life had served a noble end;
You saved my reputation.



The Light of Hope

I cherished a golden hope in my heart,
With a fortress, walled it about,
'Till I thought it secure in every part,
And I rested safe from doubt.

Youth painted the future in roseate hue,
And the picture was fair to see,
And my heart was happy when life was new,
Yet it seemed not so to me.

Like a magic glass I would hold this hope,
Where it tinted all to my sight,
'Till the future seemed a kaleidoscope
Of the land of pure delight.

But the weeds grew up by my fortress wall ;
Yet I reckoned not of decay ;
For it seemed so strong that it could not fall,
As I careless dreamed away.

Manhood came on, and the wall was still there,
Looking staunch in its ivy green,
That the fingers of Time had knit with care,
'Till the rifts could scarce be seen.

But another hope in my bosom grew ;
So I built a new wall in pride,
And the crumbling wall that my youthtime knew,
I left with the hope that died.

Then feverish hopes came following fast,
And my walls were hurried and frail,
But still I had ever believed the last,
The one that would never fail.

But ruinous Time, at work in the land,
Bade each one, it its turn to fall;
But he still supplied with a lavish hand,
New strength to rebuild them all.

But now all the castles in ruins lie,
Where the joys of my heart have died--
Marking my course, as the years go by,
Like mile-posts by life's wayside.

With sweet recollections, scattered between,
To go with me adown the years,
That shall keep fond memories fresh and green,
Bedewed by remorseful tears.

Brave hopes! and vain, they are living yet,
But the walls that I built in pride,
In ruins lie dark, like a vain regret,
Repented and cast aside.

Poor, weak humanity, built upon sand,
These walls, too, shall crumbling be,
But the soul is linked to a holier land,
That our hopes can dimly see.

Who knows? The future we see in our youth,
All seeming so fair and near,--
Who knows but that is the heaven, in truth,
We thought would be ours here?

Hope carries the light and we follow on,
 'Till we stand by the waters chill,
And over the tide its gleam has gone,
 But it leads, it leads us still.



An Evening on the Old Ranch

The cricket sang out from a hidden spot
A song with a lonesome refrain;
The whip-poor-will answered across the lot
In tones my maturer years had forgot,
Till I dreamed of the old days again.

The bull-frog was croaking a bold bassoon
In the pond where the lilies sleep,
And the coyote wailed at the rising moon
In his lair far over the dark lagoon
Where the wild summer roses creep.

The "whirr" of a startled grouse on the air
And the shot from a hunter's gun--
A crackling sound and a fire's red glare
Leaped out of the gathering darkness there,
On the prairie across the run.

The balmy breath of the prairie breeze
And the odor of burning grass,
Came wafting in through the cotton wood trees
And quickened my heart to old memories
Of the days that too quickly pass.

I listened long to the voices of night
And dreamily puffed my cigar,
While visions came to my sensitive sight,
Recalling those early scenes of delight
Like loved ones returned from afar.

Simeon Greene's Automobile



PELL MELL, IN A PANIC. A DOG HE RAN DOWN.

Our Simeon Greene brought home a machine--
'Twas an automobile sure as sin.
Says he, "Now B'gosh, they'll see 'f I'm a Josh
When past their old trotters I spin."

"I'll get there or bust and take nobody's dust
And I'll give them the merry go-by--
With their horses and traps they'll wonder perhaps
'F I'm a meteor out of the sky.

“An’ won’t they all stare an’ say, I declare
Ef thet r’ aint old Simeon Greene
I s’posed he’s too tight to spend such a sight
Fur a new fangled flyin’ masheen.

“They’ll open their eyes I guess in surprise
But I’ll sit there and not care a durn
An’ swell up in pride as past them I glide
While I give them bright handles a turn.

“O, ain’t she a bird? these levers I’ve heard
Are as easy to work as can be;
An’ I understand about their command
Fur the feller explained it to me.

“Samanthy, come here, I’ll show you my dear
A kerrige that is right up to date
'F you’re afraid to get in, I’ll take a short spin
An’ I’ll stop fur you here at the gate.

“I’ll show you,” said he, “It’s safe as can be,
So I’ll just take a turn up the pike,
You wait fer me here, I’ll stop fer you, dear
An’ take you to church if you like.”

Firm on the seat; his hand on the lever
Simeon sat there feeling so clever.
Samanthy, his wife, quite approving looked on
While he touched the lever and off he was gone.
But he could not keep his machine inside
The road that he always considered wide.
And the fowls that basked in the sun that day
Flew frightened and cackling out of his way.

As he capered and curved from fence to fence
He felt the excitement growing intense ;
 And somehow he couldn't obtain control
 Of the apparatus, to save his soul,
And he came full nigh upsetting the thing
As he turned about on a "pigeon wing"--
 Topsy Turvy, his vehicle tipping
 Two wheels up and the other two slipping
But it righted up as he caught the pike,
And he swore he never had seen the like
 Of how those levers get mixed in one's mind
 For the one he wanted he couldn't find.
So away he went with bobble and lurch
Forgot Samanthy and goin' to church
For to stop the thing was his only care,
But the speed increased till his flowing hair
And beard commingled, all backward blowing
Losing his head as the speed kept growing.
While Samanthy, dumb with affright stood still,
As he disappeared o'er a distant hill.
Zipping and skipping and tipping he went,
Tugging away at the lever now bent,
Pell mell, in a panic, a dog he ran down,
And chuffing and puffing he threatened the town ;
That lay in the valley in Sabbath repose,
And the people he passed, by the dust that arose
Knew some dire calamity dashed down the hill,
And wisely drew far to one side and stood still.
As the dust-covered Simeon, tugging in vain,
Still battled with levers his speed to restrain ;
Hatless, he wrought with the zeal of despair,
As he flew past his neighbors, grinning there--

“Go it! You’ll get there in time,” said one--
“Gee! Haw!” cried another, “That was well done”
He geed and hawed, a reeling and spieling,
Which gave him a sort of a dizzy feeling,
And the faster he flew down the ruddy hill,
The more he dreaded the inevitable spill.
And was casting around for a timely jump;
When the wheel struck a boulder with a thump!--
Just where the road to the town branches off,
And he went k’splash in the watering trough.
While with many an angular turn and gyration
The auto’ menaced the whole creation--
At least, thereabout, charging left and right
Smashing and crashing! a wonderful sight!
Regardless of fences and right of way,
It reeled thro’ the garden of Deacon Gray,
Tipped over his smoke house and six swarms of bees
But, not to be daunted by things like these,
It ran over a cow and a Jersey calf--
Split Thompkinses chicken coop half in half;
And a Sabbatharian wash spread out,
Plucked up by the wheels was wound about
Till sheets, pillow cases and shirts galore,
Were flaunted on Sunday as ne’er before,
Then, into the street through the picket fences
It frightened church-goers out of their senses,
With its flying sails and destructive spirit,
It splashed and spattered every one near it,
A flying splinter hit good Elder Spratt,
And he turned heels up, in his new silk hat,
While sweet sister Prudence, more scared that hurt
Caught a swat in the face from a mud soaked skirt.

Then it followed the road on out of the city,
Just missed running over a tramp, more's the pity--
It killed two sheep and upset Jones's surry,
Helping him out in somewhat of a hurry,
And did a whole lot that I need not mention;
Acting in short like the de'il's own invention.

'Til it struck an oak stump,
With a thud and a bump,
And into a lake it went, with a jump.

Some have made a shrewd guess,
There's a hole, bottomless,
Where it sank far out from the shore;
But, be that as it may,
It is planted to stay,
For it never was seen any more.

They say Greene and his wife
Are still happy in life,
And consider the old way the best
But they're "rigging" him still
On the "Black Demon's" spill
And the neighbors can tell you the rest.

T. De Witt Talmage

Talmage is dead! The world may hear no more
The rhythmic eloquence his voice could wield
Portraying thoughts, drawn from that magic well.
Of God-given intellect, to move men's hearts.

This generation saw none mightier than he,
To hurl a Gospel truth against the foe.
His ardent soul, linked to a matchless mind,
Explored each avenue that led to God.

He rent the veil, revealing to men's eyes
The marvelous Beauty-land we see in dreams
And courage lent to many a doubting heart,
To feel assured of God's unfailing love.

No creed he knew. His was to preach the Word.
Vain theories he left for smaller minds.
He soared above them all, believing God,
And from His work, deep inspiration drew.

In flower and tree, and depth of ocean blue,
And constellary lights of heaven's dome.
His eye could trace the beautiful and true;
His genius mount the heights whence angels come.

Impressions from Poe's Poems

O, master minstrel with thy magic art,
What harmony your measures beat,
In thrilling notes which reach the heart,
With sweetest melody replete.
In the story of "The Bells"
Loud and high, or softly ringing
I can mark the changing swells,
And can hear them in your singing
I can feel their very beating,
All the melody repeating,
In the song you sang so well,
'Til my very heart in rhyme
Beats their time--
'Til they thrill me and they fill me
With their chime.

O, sweetest singer of a sad refrain,
Fresh from the wells of human thought,
The measures of thy subtle strain
Deep impress on my feelings wrought,
In thy dream about "The Raven,"
With its grim and dismal setting,
That strange tale is still engraven
On my mind, beyond forgetting--
How he perched above your door,
With that message, "Nevermore--"
Many a time within my fancy,
This odd bit of necromancy,
Whispering of the lost Lenore,

With its words of mystic sadness,
Like a shadow fraught with madness--
Still to plead, and to implore,
Tells me that each vain tomorrow,
Half of joy and half of sorrow,
To my heart shall ne'er restore,
Save in dreams my broken idol--
Broken here for evermore.



Hope of Tomorrow

O, Sweet To-morrow, on thy breast
Our burdens we can lay
That press too hard today,
And gain a night of precious rest.

To-morrow! What a wealth of weal--
When hopes triumphant rise--
What victories to my eyes
Can fair to-morrow still reveal.

What balm there is to human hearts
In that one word to-morrow,
How oft it heals the cruel smarts
Our fears today would borrow.

O, blissful Hope! We still may wistful wait
To pluck our joys within tomorrow's gate.





I
By the glowing fireside sitting,
 Where the light and shade are flitting,
 An old man's dreamland fancies are at play;
 For though loved ones true and tender,
 Bid him live with them in splendor,
 He hears a spectral voice that seems to say:

II
CHORUS
 "He is so old and so helpless,
 His useful days have gone by;
 Take him away to the poor house!"
 In his fancy he hears, with a sigh,
 And a welled-up tremulous tear drop
 Fell from the dreamer's eye.

III
 While he dreamed his dream of sadness,
 Someone clasped his face in gladness:
 "Why, grandpa you were snoring, I declare!
 Supper 's on the table dearie;
 Mamma said, 'you must be weary'
 And you 're sitting in your birthday chair."

IV
 With a laugh his dream was banished,
 And that skulking spectre vanished
 In the brightness of the supper table gleam,
 And the little child's caressing—
 When he asked the evening blessing,
 He thanked the Lord that it was but a dream.

Spring Hill

On the brow of a prairie knoll
There stood and is standing still
 The school house dear, known far and near
To the wise ones as "Old Spring Hill."
 And my memory often wanders
 To that spot where long ago
I had more joy as a barefoot boy
 Than my manhood e'er can know.

The girls I knew were angels ;
I imagined them nought but good,
 And one was fair with auburn hair
In the bud of sweet maidenhood.
 She used to wait and walk with me
 And it gave my heart a thrill.
For I loved her true as children do
 In the school house at Old Spring Hill.

All the world was innocent then
To my unsuspecting eyes,
 And life was sweet in trust complete
That I lost e'er I learned to prize.
 But over the years of mist I see
One spot that is sacred still,
Where love was pure and will endure
 Forever at Old Spring Hill.

The girl of my childish fancy
To Heaven was borne away,
 With youth's clean page unsoiled by age
And untarnished by sin's decay.
 But memory hangs like a halo
 Where I may wander at will
Adown the glen with her as then
 In that paradise--Spring Hill.



One Whom I Dearly Love

A great joy my heart has entered
Since you gave the kiss of love;
In you all my life has centered
As my faith to you shall prove.

You are fairest of all earth's creatures
And your smiles are all to me;
Heaven's light shines in your features--
May its blessings rest on thee.

O, thou object of my affection,
More than all the power above
Thrills my heart at recollection
Of one whom I dearly love.

You have entered my life forever
Your love I have cherished with care,
From my heart you shall go, ah, never
You are planted forever there.

How sweet is the thought, my darling
That we never more may part.
How sweet is the love, my darling
Of one faithful trusting heart.

Or, if distance divides us, my darling
And my heart shall sorrowful be,
It will bound with joy, my darling
At thought of again seeing thee.

Or e'en if chilled by death's cold wave,
You should join that choir above
I will write in tears upon your grave
"One whom I dearly love."



Life's Battle

(A Ballad on Working and Shirking.)

The man who keeps honestly working away
Sort of steady and slow
Saving up something from every week's pay
Tho' his clothes are tattered--be that as it may--
He'll be somebody first thing you know.

His hat may be faded, but under the rim
Is a brain that's all right,
And envy of others ahead in the swim
Casts never a shadow of gloom over him;
But he buckles right into the fight.

His vest may be minus, but under his shirt
Is a strong-beating heart,
That stoops not to sicken at every small hurt,
Nor questions to toil in the grime and the dirt
If Dame Fortune assigns him the part.

Whatever she brings to his hand is well-wrought--
His employers can see
How his work engrosses the best of his thought
And they find he's the very man they had sought,
And will give him a "raise" presently.

But here is another of different mien--
Hearty fellow, well met :--
His desire is to keep his hands white and clean
Nor cares if his burden on others shall lean
You might call him a "living regret."

He never gets into a place that will fit--
For it's always too small.
But himself is the only one that sees it
And when he goes after a better, gets "nit"--
Then he faints and does nothing at all.

L'envoi

Prince I have found them on many a field
Fighting life's battle as on they go.
Reaping the harvest their actions yield--
Each with his burden of weal or woe.



The Lover's Soliloquy

O, butternut tree, with spreading boughs
Close by my window sill,
I note thy leaflets peeping forth,
This sunny day, and still.

I have watched thy naked branches, tossed,
By winter's snowy blast,
When my heart, as barren and restless
Made life too bitter to last.

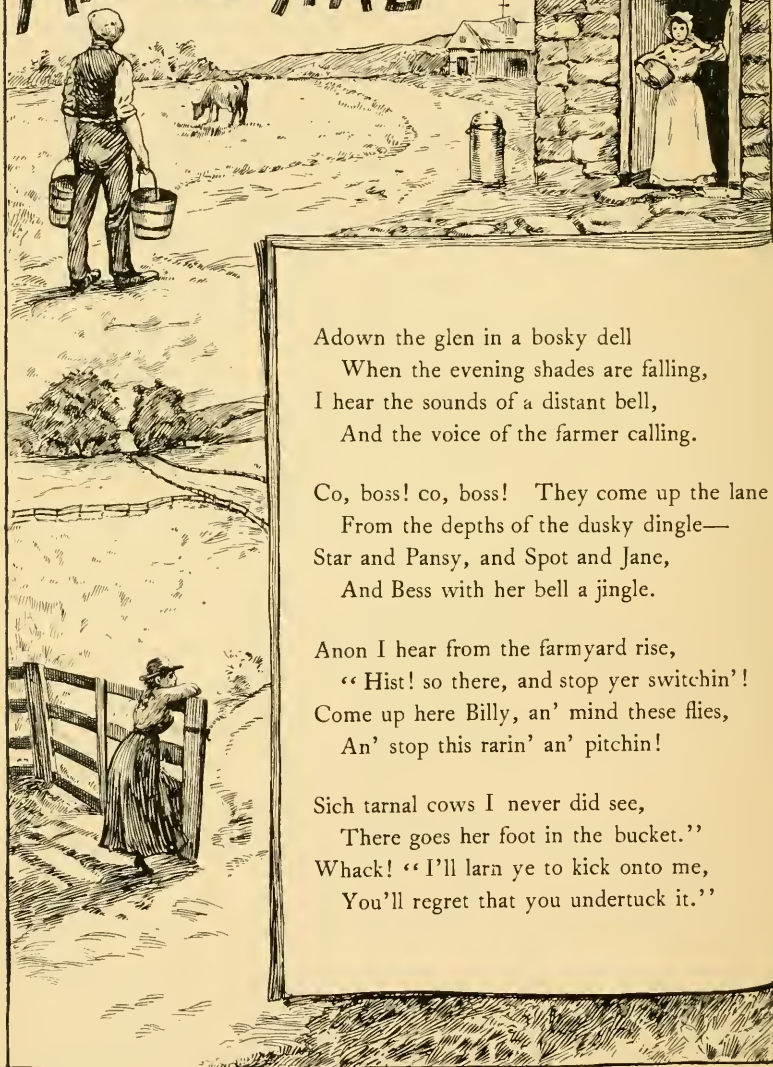
And the moaning wind in thy branches
Found echo within my breast;
Filled with a tide of misgivings--
With hope and fear distressed.

But the dreary days as they come and go
Bring little of cheer to me;
So I envy thy hopes in the bursting buds,
O, beautiful butternut tree.

Yet, firm as thy roots are emplanted
In the bosom of the earth,
Are grown my affections around the heart
That to my love gave birth.

But since my love unrequited is,
Let it die and crumble away,
Like a fire-touched oak of the forest
That succumbs to a slow decay.

MILKING TIME

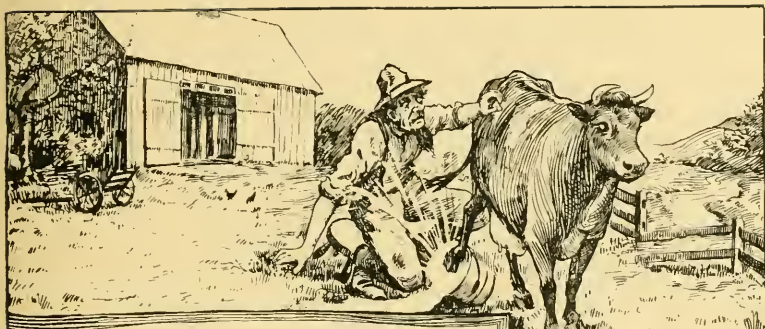


Adown the glen in a bosky dell
When the evening shades are falling,
I hear the sounds of a distant bell,
And the voice of the farmer calling.

Co, boss! co, boss! They come up the lane
From the depths of the dusky dingle—
Star and Pansy, and Spot and Jane,
And Bess with her bell a jingle.

Anon I hear from the farmyard rise,
“Hist! so there, and stop yer switchin’!
Come up here Billy, an’ mind these flies,
An’ stop this rarin’ an’ pitchin’!

Sich tarnal cows I never did see,
There goes her foot in the bucket.”
Whack! “I’ll larn ye to kick onto me,
You’ll regret that you undertuck it.”



“So there, Jane, you had better stand still!”

Comes to me over the paling.

Say, maw,” I hear in a treble shrill,

“Paw just gave Pansy a whaling.”

“Come, Johnny! its time you was in bed,

An’ wash your feet you young Paddy?

Tom! what ye doin’ out in the shed?

You oughter be helpin’ yer daddy.”

Whay! Git along there, you ugly thing,

You’re allus bound to be hookin’—

“Sary, fetch some water from the spring!

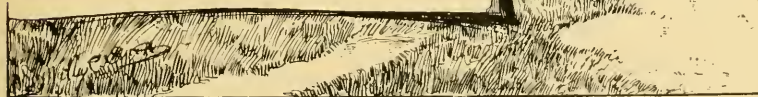
Gin we do our mornin’ cookin’.”

“Well, mother, I guess the chores are done—

O, no, I forgot the chickens—

I must be up two hours before sun;

I tell ye farmin’s the dickens.”



The Soul

Mysterious origin of the soul!

The inner self that grows into our lives

To make us higher than the other beasts;

For beasts we are, save for the Divine spark

That, breathed from the Creator, blends with life--

And yet a life within itself complete.

A guardian angel chained unto a beast

To make him more God-like while here he lives

And bid him know there is a God in Heaven.

Purely it pleads within the carnate heart

And is not stifled, nay, nor stained by sin;

For, being Divine, it cannot be defiled.

Though all the heart be rotted out with sin,

When Death unfolds its pinions, back it flies

To Him who breathed it into sinful man,

To live a part of God forever more.

Men vainly try to solve its weal or woe,

But God in wisdom gives us not to know.



In the Night

In the night, by the moonbeams bright
As I stroll for an hour alone,
I forget the strife of day
When evening fancies play,
And where cooling winds are blown
In the night.

In the night, with cigar alight,
I wander for a happy hour ;
And my spirits rapturous rise
Neath the star bespangled skies,
And I feel their soothing power
In the night.

In the night, absent-minded quite,
Where I'm walking I very little reck
And the clothes line in our yard,
Stops me rather quick and hard,
When I get it in the neck
In the night.



Staunch and strong on its sills of oak,
Where the tall elm-trees their shadows throw
The dear old homestead is standing there,
Firm as it was in the long ago.
And the gravel walk is fringed with flowers
Just as in childhood I saw them grow.

I saw the wrens on its ivied wall
 Flit in and out as they used to do,
And the chimney swallows still were seen
 Darting about in the azure blue.
And even the tree where I carved my name
 Bore that impress the long years through.

I wandered down by the orchard well
 Where lady-slipper and blue-bell met,
And the morning sun made silver beads
 Where the dew drops clung to each leaflet wet.
And the robin sang from the pippin bough
 As in days I can ne'er forget.

The brook where speckled trout used to leap,
 Inviting to try with a hook my skill
How sadly shrunken by passing years--
 I find it only a little rill,
But the same sweet song it sang to the child
 To the man it is singing still.

The well was there but the wind-swept leaves
 Had choked it up as the years went by,
Like the heart of man, I said, alas,
 When the fountains of youth run dry,
And the hope and trust that our childhood knew
 Are forsaken and left to die.

Sadly I strolled 'round the dear old place,
 Lingering o'er each familiar scene;
Tired of the city and life's turmoil
 I longed for the old time joys serene,
That divided lay from my wistful heart
 By the years that had rolled between.

Voices of Evening

When the toil of day is ended
And the sunset shadows fall,
Casting restless pictures, blended
On my humble cottage wall,

Comes a troop of merry Fancies
At the peaceful close of day,
And with sportive songs and dances
'Round my chair they ceaseless play.

And like homing doves descending
Come the Muses, flitting fast;
I can feel them o'er me bending,
Hear them whisper as they pass.

And my heart is full to bursting
With the thoughts I would portray;
But the words my lips are thirsting
Still elude me day by day.

I can see the fields Elysian
Where eternal blisses reign,
But they vanish like a vision,
And my written thoughts are vain.

But the voices still pursue me
When the evenings 'round me twine,
And their thoughts go thrilling through me
Still their language is not mine.

And She Is Gone

(In memory of my Mother.)

And she is gone; the one I loved, revered;
Who bade me live, and soothed my every woe;
At middle age, before life's leaf had seared,
She wandered forth as one full loth to go.

Her blest Redeemer held her by the hand,
And she was cheered by faith she long had known,
And feared no ill to enter that strange land,
For He was near, she need not go alone.

Her latest looks and prayers but feebly said,
Spoke worlds of love she held too dear to leave;
Still, bade she all who lingered 'round her bed,
To bravely bear, and not too sorely grieve.

Her spirit passed. O, God; I would not now
Think on that scene of anguish, all too deep;
Or call to mind that dear, but death-cold brow,
As last they saw her lie in dreamless sleep.

Hide from my sight the garments of the tomb!
Let me forget the darkness and decay!
Let me forget all but the flowers that bloom,
In mem'ry green, she planted by the way.

Sympathy For Dad

My ma she dresses fit to kill,
And sisters dress some too,
But poor old dad he foots the bills;
'Tis all that he can do,
And every night he sits and smokes,
Like he was kind o' blue.

He never dresses up at night
Nor acts the least bit spry
When all the rest are gay and bright,
I've often wondered why
He'd rather sit alone and act
Like he's about to cry.

I ast him once what made him so;
He only shook his head,
A sayin,' "Sometime I would know."
And then he went to bed
A mutterin' 'bout some bills to pay--
I guess that's what he said.

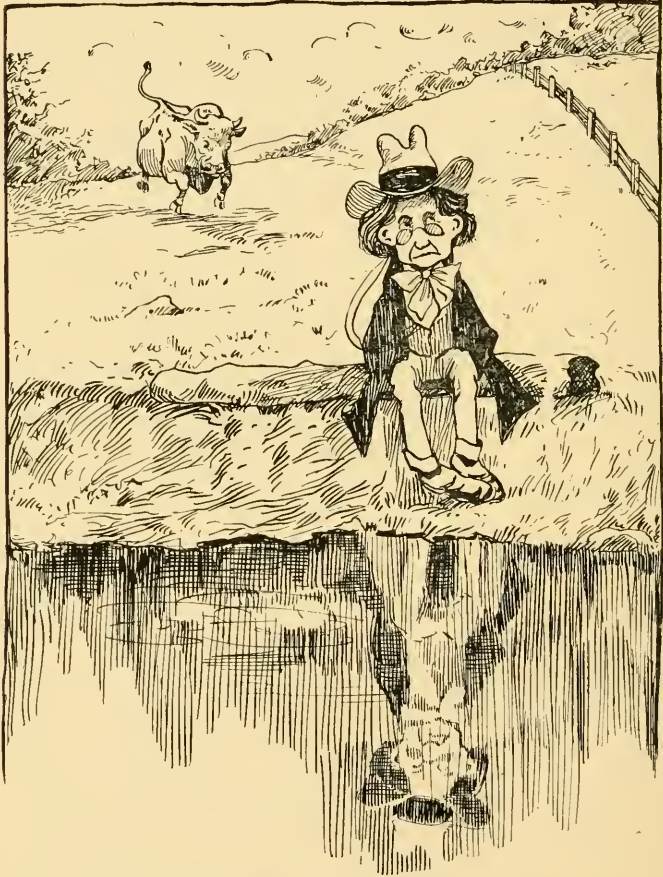
I heard a neighbor t'other day
Commentin' on my dad,
A-wondrin' ma could be so gay,
When pa was always sad;
And how he worked jist like a slave,
So ma could dress and gad.

I guess I've got it figgered out,
About my daddy's ills,
These stylish things I see about,
And fancy frips and frills;
They keep him tired about to death,
A payin' of the bills.

The Sparrow House

O, chirping sparrow, basest tramp of all
Building your nest wherever chance decrees,
Living a tuneless life of silly ease,
But marked by the Creator when you fall.
What wonder you were chosen as the most
 Abject, insipid thing for an example
To show how nothing in His plan is lost.
 In you the writer found a worthy sample.
So mayhap He will not despise the deed
Should I put up this box, where you can breed.

The Man Who Was a Genius



A Genius sat down on a log, in glee
By the side of the river's brink,
To exult o'er the happy thought that he
Had been born on purpose to think.

He thought and thought and stroked his hair,
And was lost to surroundings quite,
But the fierce old bull that was grazing there
Was "onto his nibs" all right.

In calmest composure the Genius sat,
With a far away look on his face,
Giving ponderous problems grave combat
Unaware of his dangerous place.

He rummaged the loft of his intellect
The how of the whichness to find;
For he deemed his mission was to direct
The uplifting of all mankind.

And he formed a plan and tucked it away
In a pigeon-hole of his thought;
And gloated to think how the world some day
Should envy the work he had wrought.

But his plan did not carry. Simply this,--
His deductions left out the bull,
And his calculations went all amiss
Just as though he were any fool.

For the angry beast took a lift at him
And his theories great and small,
And in the dark river "doused his glim"
And that was the end of it all.

Our Own

The fondest words our love can frame
Should fall to those around our hearth,
For there are none in all the earth
Can ever be to us the same.

Peace and good will should center here--
Love rule the home with gentle sway;
The harsh words left unsaid each day
Will banish many a bitter tear.

So let the best that we can give
Be lavished on our own--
Dear hearts, who make it joy to live
When other friends have flown.

For fascinating strangers may beguile
But our dear own, they love us all the while.



A Sinner's Soliloquy

I do not care for church, like some,
Who never miss a chance to go,
I somehow ruther stay to hum
An' sit around an' watch things grow.

I s'pose folks think I'm wicked, too,
Cause when the rest to church have gone
I sometimes find odd bits to do
A putterin' round the barn and lawn.

I never hev but this one day
To rest and do jist as I please,
An' so I kind o' like to stay
Among my flocks an' flowers an' bees.

There's joy and sunshine in my heart
Within these bounds where long I've trod;
More than the sermons can impart
That tell about the wrath of God.

I uster like the church quite well
Till Elder Sackcloth cum along,
A preachin' from his texts on "Hell"
Which set me sort of goin' wrong.

Somehow the sermons w'ant jist right--
They kind o' filled me up with gloom,
Instid of making things more bright
They pintoed to an awful doom.

I couldn't stan' it to go there
A feelin' I's about the worst,
Nor that I'd climb the Golden Stair
An' see some other soul accurst

It pained me jist the same to learn
Though I were of the saintly few--
That other souls in wrath must burn
To prove that God is just and true.

So I'll be happy while I can,
A hopin' of the best for all
An' trustin' His good-will to man
Who even marks the sparrow's fall.



A Spoiled Romance

In a novel she was reading,
 Drooping low her pretty head;
From behind, her lover stealing,
 Slyly "rubbered" while she read.

And he watched her crimson blushes
 That were playing hide and seek,
When the hero to his sweetheart
 Burning words of love did speak.

How he knelt to tell the story
 And implore her to be his,
When her rich old irate daddy
 Bade him go about his biz.

O! the heart break of the heroine
 When the pretty play was spoiled,
And the beau her pa selected.
 Was a villian to be foiled.

How he conquered all the forces
 That the fates could hold in store!
Just to see her love-light kindle
 When he knelt to her once more.

"O how lovely," sighed the maiden
 As she laid her book aside,
"O to be so warmly courted
 By a hero true and tried."

“He must win me by devotion
Be my slave, and handsome be,
Tall and princely in his bearing
With no thought aside from me.”

So she murmured, happy dreaming
While her lover ran away--
That was fifteen years ago sir,
And she's single yet they say.



De Ole Man Raise Mah Pay

I weahs mah hair pahted in de middle,
All you wooly-head coons, get away!
I don't 'sociate wid plain-top niggahs,
Sence de ole man gib me a raise in pay.
Cho.

O don't you see dem patent-ledder boots?
And ketch onto de red cravat!
I weahs mah obercoat on mah arm,
An' I carries a high silk hat.

Wen I sanTERS into church a Sunday mornin',
De ladies all forget about der prayers,
An' de low-down, cotton-pickin' niggahs,
Dey whispers roun' "Jes see him put on airs."

In society Ise jes de proppah figgal,
Wen de cake-walks an' pahties am in bloom,
An' shore dey couldn't get along without me,
'Cause I's de finest chromo in de room.

De ladies come smilin', an' a smirkin',
An' jealous coons go sneakin' out de doah,
An' I takes mah pick ob de whole sweet bunch,
'Cause I aint a cheap niggah any more.

Dear Old John

Now, Farmer John, a likely lad
Of twenty years and two,
Went wooing with a fair coquette
Whose eyes were heavenly blue;
And though she smiled on other beaux,
His heart to her was true.
Cho.

Dear Old John; but his heart was in its place;
Just a little slow to be sure,
But always in the race.
He is not much for beauty,
And his blood--it is not blue,
But none can compare to dear old John,
With his heart so true.

She married with a selfish man,
For sake of wealth and pride,
But soon she felt to her regret,
She better far had died;
For he was recreant and false,
And she an unloved bride.

Her old friend, John, as time went on,
In grief bemoaned his fate,
And though the years had made him rich,
He never took a mate;
For something ever told his heart
To still hope on and wait.

Neglect and poverty, at length,
Had claimed her as their own,
When husband, pride and wealth had gone,
And erstwhile friends had flown.
O, then she thought of one true heart
That mourned for her alone.

He searched her out and dried her tears--
"Forgive me, John" she cried,
"How can you ask of one so false
To now become your bride?"
But dear old John, he caught right on
And wouldn't be turned aside.

A Wise Old Mink

(*A Fable.*)

A sly old mink with a wink and a blink
Near a tempting chicken sat down to think;
And he did not tread 'neath the hanging bait
For he feared some danger might lay in wait,
It was so unnatural for men to bring
And place for his good such an easy thing
As a fresh-killed chicken upon a stake
Where it would be easy for him to take.
So he sniffed the air and circled with care
And never a leaf did he rustle there
For he thought mayhap, there's a lurking trap
That unwise footsteps might spring with a snap.
Ah, he was a wise old mink, I should think
And when he got home he took pen and ink
And wrote for his children a maxim true,
"Don't touch what your enemies offer to you."

My Honey Jo

I's jes a gwine back to my ole honey,
Cause she aint gwine to 'buse me any more,
She wrote dat I needn't earn de money,
Ef I'd love her like I did before.

CHORUS.

Well, Ha! Ha! He! He! What do you think?
Den I'll have nuffin to do--
She cooks th' vittles, she earns de chink,
While I's de High-Cock-a-doodle-do.

My clo's theys a gettin' mighty tattered
An' my lan'lady duns me fer de dough
An' my frens dey's gettin' sort o' scattered
So I's gwine back to you, my honey Jo.

You banged my head and you tol' me to "git,"
When de yallar gal kissed me on de sly,
But now dat you says yous sorry for hit,
I couldn't turn you down if I should try.

So honey my Jo, I's comin' back to you,
Where deres plenty for to eat an' to wear
I'll forgive you honey like I ought to do
For I haven't such a "cinch" any where.

Discouraging Prospects

W'en de days grow shorter an' de air am chill,
An' de hail comes peltin' on de pane,
Den ole brer rabbit am layin' mighty still
For he drudder wear his furs dan go plain.

De possum am hidin' in de tall gum-tree,
Darkey gwine to cotch him if he can;
Raccoon am a snoozin' safe as he can be,
An' he likes it better dan de fryin' pan.

Corn cake it am plenty, but it's sorter dry,
W'en T'anksgivin' day's a comin' on,
Turkeys dey am lubly, but dey roos' too high
An' de w'ite man am a watchin' wid a gun.

De chicken might do, but he cry too shrill
An' de fedders get scattered on de way,
An' de ole watch dog, he will nebber keep still,
An' here it am a most T'anksgivin' day.



A Whale Story

When the dew on the grass is falling
And the man in the moon is in sight
I hear a wee voice that is calling,
“Tum in here an’ tiss me dood night.”

“Tum tiss me and tell me a story.”
O, you rogue I will tell you a tale
Of a man who went out in a dory
And captured a monstrous old whale.

Now, a whale is as big as this house,
And he lives away down in the sea,
Now just keep as still as a mouse
And I’ll tell you how that can be.

The sea is as big as our yard,
Or a little bit larger, perhaps;
And the old whale’s tail is so hard
He can knock a big boat all to scraps.

This man went out in a boat one day,
When along came the biggest old whale;
And there the boat was! Right in the way,
Where he wiggled and waggled his tail!

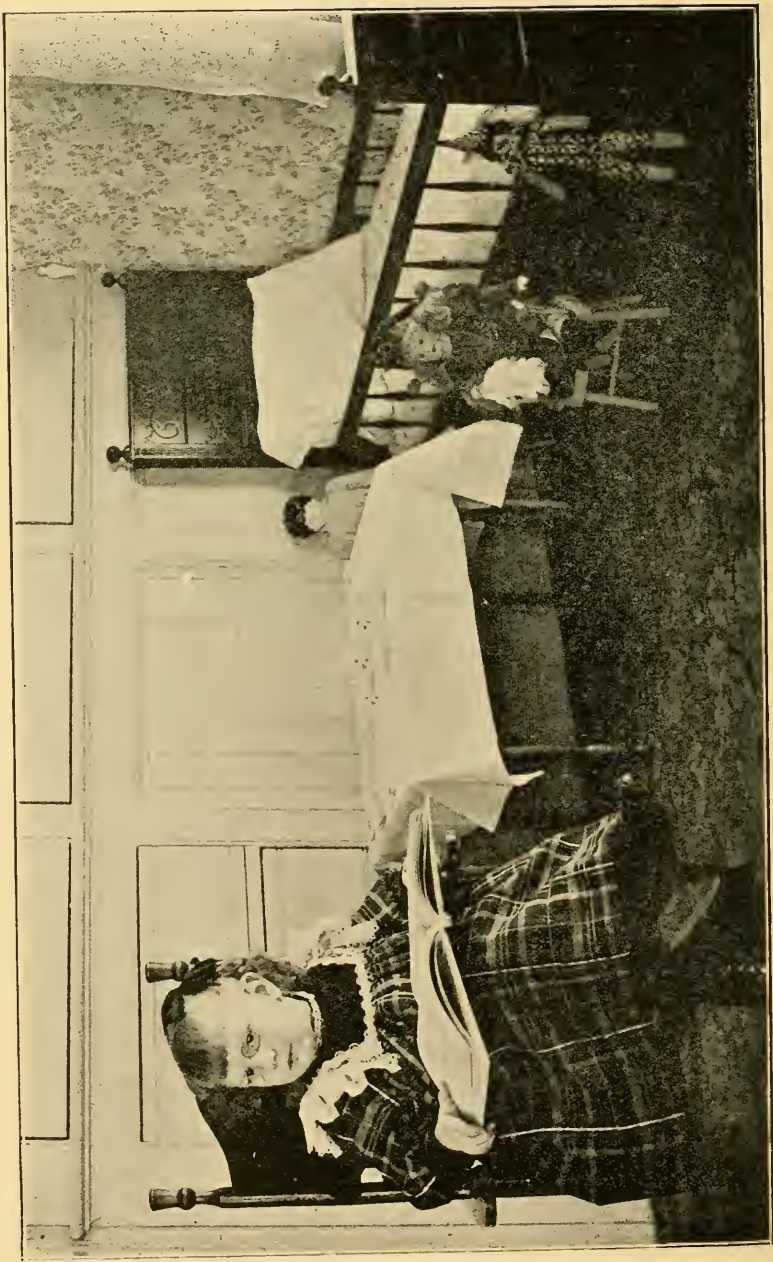
And he flapped the man out into the sea,
But I guess he was sorry then,
For the man just swallowed him, slick as could be
And then swam back to the shore again.

Playing Grandma

Baby Teresa is Grandma now,
As she sits in the great arm-chair,
And over her book with a sidelong look
She speaks to her children there;
“Now don’t ‘oo ‘tillens make any noise
Or else I shall send you to bed,
For dood dirls and boys don’t make any noise,”
In her sweet baby voice she said.

The china doll with the yellow hair
At the soldier-boy stole a look,
And they both kept still as good children will
When Grandma is reading a book.
But the sailor boy was so taken back
By the sternness of Grandma’s way
That he stubbed his toe and over did go,
And flat on the floor he lay.

The cow with a wobbly head looked round
At the spectacles Grandma wore,
And with mute surprise in her dreamy eyes
She wheeled herself out of the door.
And dark Diana over there
In the corner felt so blue,
That she didn’t speak for more than a week
Which I think was a shame, don’t you?



Over her book with a sidelong look

The pickaninny with goo-goo eyes
Crawled under the trundle bed.
He was 'fraid of the spook, I guess, in the book
That Grandma had sometimes read.
And what a sad time for them all,
When they had to keep still as mice.
I think don't you, it makes children blue?
And it isn't the least bit nice.



All in Innocent Play

Little Tommy Brown
Of meddlesome renown,
Went fooling with a gun one day,
For he wished to know
If the thing would go,
And 'twas all in innocent play.

He first tried the lock
To see if 'twould cock,
And he found that it worked quite well.
Then he tried to see
What inside might be,
And the rest I dislike to tell.

I'll not tell the rest--
You've already guessed;
So take heed little boys I say;
Don't meddle at all
For disasters befall
When it looks like innocent play.



The Little Boy Who Died

His little dumb watch I found today,
And the chain was red with rust;
And the battered drum he used to play
Useless and mute in the corner lay,
Neglected and white with dust.

And a pair of little shoes are here,
Worn out at the heel and toe.
That covered his feet in a far-off year
When he was a baby sweet and dear,
In the happy long ago.

Covered with dust, in the attic dim
As here they forgotten lie,
My heart is full to the very brim
And tearful memories follow him
Through the golden days gone by.

Baby feet that they used to hold,
Dimpled feet that here have pressed;
Baby shoes with the clinging mold
How they awaken the joys of old,
When he romped upon my breast.

Where are now the wee little feet
That down the Valley one day,
Wandered forth with our darling sweet
To where this life and the other meet,
And followed the Angel away?

Bitterly weeping I knelt on the floor,
Bitterly over each trinket I cried,
Kissing them over again and o'er,
Each precious one that in days of yore
Were loved by the boy who died.

Little by Little

Little by little the snowflakes fall;
Each tiny one almost nothing at all.
But soon they unite in a drift so high
That big locomotives can scarce go by.

Little by little the rain-drops too
Gather to form the great ocean so blue;
Where mighty war-vessels can safely ride
With nothing but water on every side.

Little by little our acts unite
To build a character wrong or right,
And every small act for each passing day
Is sealed in the structure forever and aye.

So let us build of the best at hand
A tower of strength that will storms withstand;
The foundation of friendship, truth and love
Well bonded by faith in our God above.

Timothy Titus

When I was little, long ago--
About four years of age, or so,
There was a patch of woods close by,
We children never dared go nigh,
For fear of Timothy Titus.

For we were told by older folk--
And I remember 'twas no joke--
"A monster dwelt within that wood
Who'd bite us if we were not good;"
His name was Timothy Titus.

They told us in a hollow tree
This monster lived, and he could see
When little boys were naughty and
Some day we'd fall into his hands;
This dreadful Timothy Titus.

If I forgot and played too near
That wood, I used to flee in fear
When some mean older boy would shout,
"Timothy Titus is coming out
Look out for Timothy Titus."

A big boy said to me one day
"I don't believe a word they say;
They ain't no Timothy Titus there
And if they is what do I care?"
And he yelled out, "Timothy Titus."



Then how I would scoot for the house!

“Timothy, Timothy Titus
Come out of the woods and bite us”
Then how I would scoot for the house
Like a timorous trembling mouse
In fear of Timothy Titus.

The bravest act I ever tried
Was when one day I softly cried,
So low I hoped he wouldn't hear,
(Besides the house was rather near)
“Timothy, Timothy Titus.”

“Timothy, Timothy Titus
Come out of the woods and bite us.”
But Timothy would not come out
And at that I began to doubt
If there was a Timothy Titus.

Still I've heard that in every wood,
He lives just to make children good,
So 'tis best to always do right
And save ourselves from the bite
And the fright of Timothy Titus.



Our Midget



Our Midget is the cutest pup
That ever wagged a tail;
She always comes cavorting up,
With many a joyful wail,
Coaxing for a romp and play,
When Yuna comes from school each day.

Then it's "Midget, come here my dearie;"
And, "Midget, go chase the ball;
"And do not fear my dearie,
The bad boys shan't get you at all;
You and I will race and run,
With no one near to spoil our fun.

“Now jump the hoop, and catch this stick,
And do not barking stand,
But don't you nip so high and quick,
That time you caught my hand!
Ouch! I did not think you could,
Naughty Midget! You don't play good!

“Well, Yuna didn't mean to scold;
Come right here and never mind--
Course you had to catch a hold
Any place that you could find.
Come and I will hug you dear,
Kiss away your trembling fear.

“Nicie little doggie mine,
Let me pat your fright away,
Till your eyes with pleasure shine,
It was only just in play;
Besides it didn't bleed a bit,
And I don't care one cent for it.

“You didn't mean to bite at all--
Come and you may have a bone,
Then we'll play at chase the ball,
When your trembling fears are flown,
And soon we both will joyful be,
For I love you, and you love me.”

Johnny Black

Little Johnny Black had a pain in his back
So bad that he couldn't go to school;
But after it was nine, he took a hook and line
And fished all day in the pool.
Little Johnny Black at eventide came back;
His father met him at the woodshed door--
And the pain that befell, made Little Johnny yell,
"I ain't goin' to do it any more."
Old Johnny Black now laughs to look back
On the wallopings that youthtime spurned,
And the truth he'll tell, for he knows right well
That he didn't get half he earned.

Tommy Fisher

Tommy fishing in the pool
Happily sits blinking;
How he ran away from school
Does not mar his thinking.

For beneath his jacket he
Will wear a pad of cotton,
So his whipping soon will be
Easily forgotten.

My Little Lady

Most five years old; how fair and sweet,
Where babyhood and girlhood meet,
Bright blue eyes and golden hair,
She is my little Lady Fair.

Running and playing the whole day long,
Filling our house with sunshine and song;
She is papa's darling and mamma's pride
And we love her more than the world beside.

At night when she lays her sunny curls
On her pillow--sweetest of little girls,
She kisses us both a loving good night
And the same repeats with morning light.

Some times the wee feet wander astray,
And the little rogue's will usurps its sway,
But the tender heart of my Lady Fair,
Is soon won back by a smile or tear.

So may she ever be drawn by love--
Have faith in God, who rules above,
And shunning vices that are human
Grow up a good and useful woman.

Home from the War

Jack comes home from the war tonight,
Tune the fiddle and spread a feast,
Flood the house with a joyous light,
To welcome him home from the East.

Jack is our brother so blithe and gay,
Tall and handsome, big and strong,
How we cried when he went away,
And the time has seemed so long.

How we waited with fear and dread
News from each battle bravely fought;
How we searched o'er the list of dead,
Fearing to find the name we sought.

Now he is coming home, Hurray!
But the old clock goes so slow;
I've watched its hands the livelong day
But he's almost due, I know.

Tune the fiddle and look your best,
Lads and lassies gather round,
Our hero is speeding to the West
Our darling is homeward bound.

Joy shall reign in the home tonight,
Loving eyes shall look proudly on;
Love and laughter and tears tonight
Shall welcome our brother John.

Go Bear a Message

O, hyacinth, with fragrant bloom,
Go bear a message to my fair,
And breathe your sweetness in her room,
When Easter sounds are in the air.

And when she bows her comely head
To catch the odor of your breath,
Whisper the words my heart hath said,
"I will be true to you till death."

Here is a kiss for each pink cheek,
And be sure that you place them there,
And more of love than my tongue can speak
That I send to my fairest fair.

She will know that you come from me,
And will welcome the sweet surprise,
Go, bear this message and you shall see
The love-light in her mild blue eyes.



O, Tender Heart That Pity Moved

You placed a flower upon her grave,
Who sleeps on yonder sunny hill;
I hold thee dear in mem'ry still;
Such joy to me thy kindness gave.
Tho' you are far, I can't forget--
Thy gracious act I still revere;
That silent sympathetic tear
I hold in fond remembrance yet.
O, tender heart that pity moved
To honor thus the one I loved;
Should you be called ere I, to go,
I'll seek that spot, or far, or near,
Where rests thy noble heart below,
And do thee homage, tear for tear.



Easter Melody

Christ is risen! The glad refrain
Is borne on the wings of song,
And our hearts respond to the joyful strain
Caught up by a countless throng.

Christ is risen! Long, long ago
This message so sweetly true
Burst like dawn on His followers low--
The weeping but faithful few.

Christ is risen! How much portent
It bore to the sad hearts there--
This golden message from heaven sent
To answer their agonized prayer.

Christ is risen! His enemies knew,
And they trembled in shame and fear;
And even to them, as the faithful few
Came His words of love and cheer.

“Peace on earth! Toward men good will!”
He conquered their hearts by love,
And the message He gave is potent still
In earth and in heaven above.

Constancy

Light of my lonely way, my love
Though all unseen your smile
I am waiting here the while
Till you return again my love.
Till you return again; ah me
The time has been so long
My hope that was so strong
Now droops and pines at thoughts of thee.
You said you'd come to claim again
The love I hold in trust
God help me bide the time till then
In yearning though I must.
Still, this my hope to share with you at last
Some blissful moments, shall atone the past.



Obstinate Polly

I sometimes dream I'm in love with her yet,
Just the same as before our hearts grew cold;
For a space the bitterness I forget
When I dare to think of the days of old.

But when I awake to the cold gray fear
That little of love can fall to my part,
And feel the repugnance of doubtings drear
I fain would banish her out of my heart.

And then I remember with pain and shame
The sins of my heart that have made her doubt
But her bitter words of reproach and blame--
I cannot quite blot their remembrance out.

They are rooted deep in a fertile mold
Of self-condemnation mingled with pride--
And stronger than bars of iron to hold
Aloof from the heart that is quick to chide.

But I have my dreams, which are mine alone,
Of the way a milder course would have wrought
If both at the outset had only known,
And acted as only true lovers ought.

So both are to blame and both may regret
The obstinate folly that breaks the heart.
For though time should heal our repinings--yet
Our lives have been robbed of the sweeter part.

Reverie of a Selfish Person

The house is dark and still. The window quakes
With each sad breeze that wails from out the night,
Laden with whisperings of sins my life has wrought,
To paint their gloomy pictures on my mind.

Wakeful I lie and think. It will not cease.
I travel o'er the scenes of many years
On the wings of conscience that will not down;
Years that have borne no fruit to bless one heart;
But, like an evil dream of things half-real,
The years that should be dead, come back again,
To tell my sinful heart, "The dream is true."

The high resolves I knew--where are they now?
Where are the hopes that once beat in my breast?
Dead! Stifled in regret. All the long years
I meant to live each better, but the good thought
Travelled too far ahead to be o'ertaken.

My life is empty now. I've ceased to hope;
Empty save for remorse that cannot die.
I've nought of pleasure in a backward glance,
Where all the years lie draped in selfishness,
And nothing here remains to make me glad.

The ones I should call friends, all look askance,
As if I were a beast to be repulsed,
Or coldly nod the head and turn away,
Till human sympathy is dead to me,
And past and future blend in present woe.

An Old Time "Husking Bee"

*(Farmer Jones's Confession to a Love Episode that Happened
Forty Years Ago.)*

Seems like young folks now, dear wife
Have not half the fun we knew,
When the husking bees were rife
And I was a courtin' you.

I remember that last bee
And I guess you ain't forgot--
In the fall of sixty-three
We were married, was it not?

You and Jim were thick, you know
Till I cut him out that night--
First I thought I wouldn't go,
But I changed my mind all right.

For I couldn't stay away,
Though I had a grudge at Jim;
So I formed a plan that day
To surprise both you and him.

You was sort of hangin' out--
Givin' Jim the inside track--
Though I never had a doubt
You would like to get me back.

Still your pert, coquettish way
 Stirred me up to some degree,
When I heard a neighbor say
 You was "foolin' Jim and me."

Yes, they said a city chap--
 That you met in school you know--
"Had in you an easy 'snap'
 That was why you let me go."

Said you'd got the city "airs"
 And no "Ruebens" need apply--
That Jim wasn't anywheres,
 Much less such a "Jake" as I.

Well, it roused me up a bit,
 Since we'd been "engaged" so long,
And, what aggravated it
 They would hint you did me wrong.

And they sort of pitied me
 Cause I couldn't hold my own;
When 'twas plain enough to see
 I was leaving you alone.

But I hankered, just the same
 For to make it up with you.
When the proper moment came
 That would help me so to do.

For I guessed exactly right
 (Though it was not then so plain)
That as like as not you might
 Have a little jealous vein.

Then I thought of Bessie Gray--
How she always smiled on me,
So I called on her that day--
Bade her to the huskin' bee.

You never liked her then, nor now,
But she was pretty I'll declare;
And it pleased me I allow
That I might escort here there.

She was something of a "catch,"
Said the neighbors all around--
Nought she cared though for a "match,"
As full many a lover found.

Jim had courted her, you know
And it nearly broke his heart
When she took another beau.
And you sort of took Jim's part.

I somewhat disliked Jim's way
Cause he grew so sweet on you,
And I thought you ought to say
A discouraging word or two.

But your will was pretty strong
And my own was 'bout the same--
Each believed the other wrong,
So it was our quarrel came.

But I thought you would next day
Come and make it up again,
For that always was your way
When we quarreled now and then.

But you did not seem to care
As the Sundays came and went--
Jim was hangin' on "for fair"
While I drooped in ill-content.

Then I thought of Bessie Gray--
Ah! The lucky thought for me--
How she beamed on me that day
Talking of the huskin' bee.

"Oh the roads are smooth and dry
What a lovely time to ride"
Said she with a little sigh,
" 'Twill be lovely by your side."

"I was wishing just today
(But of course I should not tell)
You would happen 'round this way
And I think you're looking well."

"Oh I dote on husking bees
And I would not miss this one
There will be so much to please--
We shall have a world of fun."

O, the witchery of her way
As captivating glances fell;
I had never till that day
Seen her looking half so well.

She advised an early start
As the drive was rather long,
So I hastened to depart
With my pulses beating strong.

I secured the finest trap
And a pair of dapple bays--
Finest ever seen mayhap
Round that place in many days.

And I drove back feeling gay,
Bessie looked a very queen,
I was proud of Bessie Gray--
Sweetest girl I'd ever seen.

O, that was a lovely ride
In the balmy evening air,
With sweet Bessie by my side
Cuddled so confiding there.

And the moon looked down so calm,
And all nature seemed at peace--
O, it seemed a kind of balm
Bidding my dejection cease.

So I "spooned" with Bessie Gray,
While the miles went slowly by,
And her glib speech rolled away
Till it turned on you and I.

She had glamoured o'er my mind
With such sweet and stunning ways,
When she spoke of you unkind
'Twas almost as good as praise.

And she dropped a hint or two
That was pleasing quite, to me--
She was glad I'd jilted you--
That was plain enough to see.

And she spoke so low and sweet,
Tender love-looks in her eyes,
I began to feel quite "beat,"
Wondering if I'd acted wise.

I was not in earnest, quite,
When I said some foolish things;
Toying with her hand, so white,
Making talk about her rings.

She was all in earnest though,
And I feared it was not right,
To trifle with her feelings so,
While I "spooned" with her that night.

But I felt a new-born pride,
And 'twas pleasing quite, to see
Such a beauty by my side
Head and ears in love with me.

When we passed your home that day,
And you saw us going by,
I was feeling proud and gay
But it gave my heart the lie.

I was steadfast all the while,
As I've told you, dear, before,
But sweet Bessie's witching smile
Seemed to draw me more and more.

But you know my dear, that I
Wasn't a bit in love with Bess,
Though it gave my heart a try
To withstand her loveliness.

It was strange I do declare
For I'd known her many a year--
But she never seemed so fair
As that day she did appear.

I had always been afraid
Of a pretty girl till she
Led me on that day and made
A bold lover out of me.

Never knew I had the "grit"
To brace up to such as she,
And I wouldn't have had a bit
Had she not encouraged me.

I was feeling "out of sight"
With our trap and dapple bays,
When we drove into the light
Of the farmyard's lanterned place.

We came later than the rest,
Having had so long a ride,
And the people--how they guessed
To see Bessie at my side.

Jim was standing there by you
Feeling rather pleased I guess,
But you seemed a little "blue"
When you saw me there with Bess.

Then we mingled with the crowd
Where the merry huskers sped
And above their task was bowed
Many an eager bobbing head.



Wondering if I'd acted wise.

When the corn in heaps was piled,
 Busy fingers were at play,
And the boys in rapture smiled
 - When a red ear came their way.

For you know each garnet ear
 That the lucky husker found,
Bade him kiss the lassie near
 And we sometimes passed it round.

Maids were happy, lads were gay,
 While the happy moments flew
Till the "fiddlers" tuned to play,
 Then our joy no limit knew.

On the new barn's spacious floor,
 Fragrant with the scent of hay
Each, his lovely partner bore
 Dancing there till break of day.

But you would not dance a set,
 And I sort of pitied Jim
Hanging like a blanket wet,
 Where the lights were rather dim.

I could see your angry pout,
 While I circled round with Bess.
Through the changes in and out--
 And your thoughts were plain to guess.

Then I asked you for a dance
 And you didn't give consent;
Jim was looking on askance,
 So away with Bess I went.

O, but you was blue that night,
For you thought I did not care
And I acted happy, quite,
But poor Jim was in despair.

You were angry, too, at me,
But your spite was aimed at Jim,
It was plain enough to see
That you had no use for him.

So my heart was light and gay,
For you were as good as won,
Jealousy of Bessie Gray--
That was how the trick was done.

And the triumph of the thing
Joggled up my pride a bit
Made me feel a very king,
From my point of viewing it.

All the wretched weeks I'd spent
Mourning for you still, in vain,
This sweet hour of triumph meant
Recompense for every pain.

Recompense for every "slight"
You had practiced heretofore,
When I loved with all my might
Fearing you had "thrown me o'er."

And I guessed you right, my dear,
(Though it was not then so plain)
All your love through jealous fear
Roused in that one night of pain.

And when next I met you, Well!
You were meek enough and I
Was quite ready, truth to tell,
To make up and pass it by.

So I've always blessed the day
We attended that last Bee
For the help of Bessie Gray,
Fixed our quarrel up, you see.

Robert Burns

O, Robert Burns, fair Scotland's pride,
Thy songs of vale and hill
That bounteous nature rich supplied
To thy prolific quill--
Millions of hearts have felt their power
And bless thy memory still.

Thy songs of love will ever live--
Thy "Cotter's Saturday Night"
And "Tam-O-Shanter's Ride" will give
A thrill of pure delight.
And keep our hearts still warm for thee
Who could such songs indite.

Realm of the Soul

“In sky and earth and sea, strange things there be.”

Around us though unseen by human eyes
A world ethereal lies,
That is not of the earth whereon we tread.
Home of the countless dead!

Home of the millions freed from earth and sin
Souls that have entered in,
And left the heavy burdens, and the woe
Buried in earth below.

This earth whereon we crawl--poor sinful worms--
Our brief allotted terms
Is but a speck of dust, a grave, or worse;
In God's great Universe.

The sun, the moon, the boundless realms of space
What flights may fancy trace,
To link the soul with fairer climes above
Through God's eternal love.

But of those realms there is no history
They lie in mystery.
Still in each heart eternal hope doth reign
That death will prove our gain.

Dewey's Victory at Manila

Each sailor stood at his post that day,
When Dewey's ships came into the bay
 In the dawn of early morning.
Silently steering with lights abaft,
All unawares came the deadly craft
 With never a sign of warning.

“Now what is that on the waves I see?”
A Spanish watch cried sleepily,
 “Is it a dream deceives my eyes?”
A fleet of ships, as I live!” Boom! Boom!
Reverberates in the silent gloom.
 To announce the dreadful surprise.

“The Yankee dogs! They have passed our guard!”
On fair Manila they're steering hard.
 Boom! Boom! Let the torpedoes go.
Rouse the gunners and signal To Arms!
And sound the terrible war alarms!
 With Death! Death to the foreign foe!

Too late! Too late! Hear the cannons roar!
The Spanish hulks roll up on the shore,
 Dismantled, afire, and guns hushed.
Hurrah! Hurrah! from the Yankee lips--
Not a man is missing from Dewey's ships
 And the pride of Spain has been crushed.

“Hush! Do not cheer, men!” a sailor said
“See the poor Spaniards dying and dead.”
“Let us go to their aid” cried all.
Gently they cared for the fallen foe,
And wept like children over the woe
That was wrought in the Spanish fall.

You Loved too Little, I too Well

I would not now at this far distant time
Bemoan the fate that our two ways divided,
Though haply if in youth's more sunny clime
Forbearance each to each our steps had guided
The incident that set our ways apart
Else had been destiny to link us heart to heart.

I would not now that it had different been
Though error oft the truest love can sever,
Each started on a way, though unforeseen
That separated our two hearts forever.
So if one sigh within my heart doth dwell
'Tis that you loved too little, I too well.

The Factory Slave

Weary she works in the dusty shop
As the dreary days come and go,
With little chance for a restful stop
As she battles with want and woe.
So its "Work away, no time for play
And a bare existence shall be your pay."

Daily she toils like a bonded slave
Till her eyes grow haggard and dim,
Nor reckes her master the task he gave
For a master is over him.
Can remorseful dart ne'er touch the heart
Of employers, playing so mean a part?

Sickened with toil she is striving still
For the pittance her work will give
And bravely goes on with a resolute will,
That her little loved ones may live.
"What matter," thinks he, "is this to me
When I by her toil will the richer be."

What matter to him? O, baneful thought!
Let his guardian angel weep!
Beware the woes by avarice bought
When conscience is put to sleep.
Beware of the woes for deadly foes
Thrive in the shadow such infamy throws.



Out in the heat of the noonday sun
Went Farmer Brown with a jug and gun,
For all the morning he'd watched the crows
Plucking his corn from the furrowed rows.
So, sitting down 'neath a chestnut tree
Where, half secreted, he still could see,
He swore a good Baptist oath, "God Durn,"
"I'll kill the critters when they return.
I've stood their doin's long as I can
They light right onto my dummy man,
An' nothin' skeers 'em, but 'fore I'm through
Crows will be skurcer by quite a few."
But the cautious crows went circling 'round

And never came nigh that patch of ground,
Where Farmer Brown 'neath the chestnut tree
Peered through his whiskers expectantly.
He poured at times from the earthen jug
A yellowish something into a mug
Which he " 'lowed" 'twaint any harm to take
A little drop for the stomach's sake.
Besides it will sort of keep me awake
And help to steady my nerves you know
So every shot will bring down a crow."
He sat with his back against the tree
Watching the sky till he scarce could see,
Where the wary crows were circhug 'round
Too far away from that patch of ground
To tempt his wasting a charge of shot,
And only frighten them from the lot.
But they cawed and cawed, and flew away
And wouldn't come nigh his corn that day
Unless, at the farthest edge perchance,
To perch a moment with eye askance
Ready to fly at the slightest move
Of something hid in the chestnut grove.
And Brown could not understand this fear
For here tofore they would come quite near
And he could not make them fly three rods
When he tried to pelt them off with clods.
But now, botheration take it all!
He sat in wrath at their distant call
And wondered how crows could be so wise
As to always know where danger lies.
The balmy zephyrs, that sultry day
Blew through his whiskers where he lay
Propped up by the friendly chestnut tree,

Doling the measures of yellow tea.
And either the tea or the balmy breeze
That softly rustled the chestnut trees
Made the air so sweet with restful sound
To the tired farmer upon the ground,
Whose thoughts went flying to other themes



Not far remote from the land of dreams,
That the lazy caw of the distant rook
Mingled somehow with the gurgling brook.
As he sat there nodding and blinking
And anon from the brown jug drinking--
He gazed on the growing corn a-row

And there on the nearest hill--A CROW!
Trembling he reached for the old shot gun
And aimed it just as he should have done
And touched the trigger, but strange to tell
No mangled crow in the furrow fell.
Nor even deigned he to wing his flight
Which same was a most uncommon sight
Another strange thing--the old shotgun
Seemed not to work as it should have done.
He was not even sure it exploded--
Though he could swear he had it loaded--
At any rate the cheeky old crow
Pecked on and didn't appear to know.
He tried it over again and again,
But still his efforts were futile; when,
To make the matter still more trying
Other crows came flying and crying
Lighting in flocks by their dusky mate
And the tender corn they ate and ate .
In sheer contempt of his presence there;
Till their ghoulish orgies filled the air,
With discordant notes which boded ill
To him, bereft of his power to kill.
But in righteous wrath rose Farmer Brown
He tried with his gun to club them down,
But, whenever a crow he seemed to kill
A dozen arose its place to fill,
Flapping their wings in his whiskered face;
He fought like a giant in deep disgrace--
Called to his wife and the hired man--
Smiting the crows as he fought and ran
Till all exhausted he seemed to sink
All in a heap by the brooklet's brink.

Then one old crow more bold than the rest,
Hopped up and perched on his heaving breast,
And pecked at his nose with wings upraised
As in helpless fear the farmer gazed
Subdued and breathless there on the ground,
While the jolly crows stood cawing 'round
Each one ready to pluck out his eyes
And none to answer his feeble cries.

They seemed to mock his woeful plight
And, what was there about his sight?

He rubbed his eyes in mute surprise
And would you believe such a transformation
Could happen to anything under creation?

What do you suppose? Those terrible crows
By some dark practice of legerdmain
Hatched in some evil demoniac brain--

Like human things, with sable wings
Were standing erect and stalking around
Grinning and pointing at him on the ground,

With their bony claws; and fiendish caws
From a thousand great protruding beaks
Were shrilling around in threatening shrieks,

And filling the air they gathered there
To pluck his flesh in their fiendish glee,
While like a palsied coward lay he.

Then, suddenly the scene had shifted
The farmer felt that he was lifted
And borne up, up in the air so high
That clouds below him went sailing by,

Till nothing of earth he could see
And the crows were his company.

With huge wings flapping the air
They bore him leagues and leagues away
Into the land of "Heart's Despair"
Where demons hide from the light of day.
Away to a lonely place--
A grotto deep by a dark morass
They took him where no eye could trace
The flight they winged o'er the mountain pass.
At last they had him safe, he knew
In a gruesome den where demons dwell
And all but the dampness like clinging dew
Made him think of the regions of hell.
And those awful things
With their shady wings
Now enfolding their forms like a shroud
Came thundering in
Like visions of sin
Shot out of an angry cloud.
Their feet on the stones
Were of fleshless bones
And the clatter was dreadful to hear,
As they filled the place
And each hideous face
Leered up with a fiendish sneer.

Then silence, when all had gathered 'round
Deep as a dream of death. No sound
But heavy breathings in the air
To break the awful stillness there.



A blast terrific! What was that?
He woke up with a start.
“Why Cyrus Brown! What are you at?
You’ve nearly broke my heart.

At supper time I blew the horn
And couldn’t make you hear.

I've hunted through the woods and corn--
And such a storm, O dear.

You're just as soaked as you can be,
How could you sleep right through?
And Cyrus, Deacon Brown! I see
A jug right here by you!

I blew this horn right in your ear
To wake you from your lark,
And just to think I find you out here
Two hours after dark."



Somewhere

Somewhere up in the realm of light,
Beyond the reach of earthly sight,
 Where sweetest of mysteries lie;
Abides a land of beauty rare
That gently woos the spirit there,
 When the shades of earth pass by.

To us the beauties of that land
Are sealed. We cannot understand
 Till over its rim we wander;
Leaving this tenement of clay
To awake in a brighter day
 Awaiting somewhere up yonder.

The saddest day and darkest night
Of earthly pain can not affright
 The soul whose trust is up there;
Though with faltering limbs he may stand
On the brink of the Unknown land,
 He feels there is joy, somewhere.

Loved ones gone to that mystic shore,
There we shall be with them once more
 Beyond the reach of sorrow.
And the broken threads that are here
Shall be golden memories, dear,
 Some where in a sweet tomorrow.

Somewhere hearts shall be pure and true
In love as chaste as the mountain dew,
 Beyond this world of sinning,
And the goal we missed upon earth
Mayhap shall contain more worth
 Somewhere by the winning.

When Johnny Loops-de-Loop

When Johnny dons his cycle suit
 And waves his hand before he starts,
We stretch our necks to see him scoot,
 And try to still our thumping hearts.

A moment's pause! We hold our breath,
 And watch him poising for the dive,
Where fools within his den, beard death--
 Wondering if he'll come out alive.

How pale our cheeks! How still we keep,
 Suppose he should happen to swerve?
How would he land if he missed the sweep
 Of that treacherous pig-tail curve?

Then, all we see is a streak of light
 Shoot down and curl up with a swoop--
And we breathe again when he lands all right,
 For Johnny has Looped-de-Loop.

A Tale of Infelicity

How oft we see a little thing
 Rend happy hearts asunder,
And petty family bickering
 Develop full-grown thunder;
The entering wedge of discord start
 In rifts worth little mention,
To split at last the home apart
 In wrangling and dissention.

There was a worthy couple who
 In wedded bliss had traveled,
Till one unlucky trait or two
 The marriage knot unravelled.
She got religion, so she thought,
 And tried to bring him to it
But soon with wrathful words they fought
 Because he still would "Pooh!" it.

He earned by toil an honest meed,
 For earthly needs sufficient,
But little cared for any creed,
 While she grew more proficient
In all that points the heavenly way,
 And she could pray for sinners
While he trudged home from work each day
 To cook the children's dinners.

She worked for God. He toiled for bread,
And oft was sorely guessing,
While she the Gospel meetings led--
His many sins confessing.
She lectured him his soul to save,
With warnings of disaster;
He spurned the counsel that she gave
And went his way the faster.

She called him many an ugly name
When argument seemed idle.
Her righteous wrath burned like a flame
And nought her tongue could bridle.
Till he, poor sinner, in distress,--
His love grew cold and colder,
And what he did's an easy guess--
Gave her the frigid shoulder.

He began dreaming of old days
And wishing they had tarried;
And thought of one with kindly ways
He knew before he married.
He thought of one who held him dear,
Ere he was bound in wedlock,
And for the other cast a sneer
Who held him in a deadlock.

He thought of her whom kindness moved
To grant his smallest wishes;
Then of the one, alas, unloved
Who made him wash the dishes!
E'en while he cooked the children's fare

And munched his part in sadness,
That other form would hover there
A vision of lost gladness.

But trouble runs its course at last ;
Their's ended in due season,
And now lies buried in the past,
We may believe in reason.
For soon his erstwhile saintly wife
Eloped with Deacon Skinner--
He wed the vision of his life
And still remains a sinner.

There is no moral here, I guess,
Unless the happy sequel,
Shows how too much self-righteousness
Sometimes divides things equal.



The Old Trysting Place

I know of a sweet sequestered nook
Where the wintergreen used to grow,
And lining the mossy banks of the brook
With its laughter soft and low--
Sweet ferns caressed by the gentle breeze
Their subtle perfume throw.

More thickly and brighter the pansies grew
Than the twinkling stars of night,
Upturning their dreamy eyes of blue
To the mellow and gladsome light.
And the song birds caroled joyously
As they winged their busy flight.

Ah, there on the mossy knoll for hours
In the sunshine she and I--
How often we sat amid the flowers
Where the babbling brook went by.
And happily chatted of future days,
Where no shadows seemed to lie.

She talked of fern and stream and wold,
But I thought her form more fair--
She admired the buttercups of gold,
And I the gold of her hair.
And the delicate blue of the pansy
With her eyes could not compare.

O, sweet was the blossoming heather,
And the songs of bird and bee,
And sweet was the summer weather
In Nature's high revelry.
And the sound of her merry laughter
Was sweeter by far to me.

But summer's a season only
And the flowers will droop and die,
And hearts will grow sad and lonely
When love in the grave doth lie.
For we read not aright our future
In those happy days gone by.

Now when I visit the trysting place
The songs of the birds and rill
Awaken memories of her sweet face
And a voice forever still;
And I fain would rest beside her
'Neath the myrtle on the hill.



A Few Testimonials

HOME MELODIES.

A pretty volume of poems has come to our desk entitled "Home Melodies," for fireside perusal, written by E. W. Van Slyke, of Binghamton, N. Y. In reading this book we are impressed with the idea that the author is healthy and happy and has a clear conscience. There is nothing cynical, morbid or critical about his book. He loved the joys of childhood so dearly that the joy has never been effaced, and his references are both humorous and realistic. He is a lover of home and country and his lines breathe of patriotism and love of home. Indeed the thoughts throughout the book are of a very high and poetical nature. We take great pleasure in commending this book to our readers.—*The Farmer's Advocate*.

WINS RENOWN AS A POET.

Supervisor E. W. Van Slyke, who now lives in Lestershire, N. Y., and who was quite well known throughout Allegany county as a contracting builder prior to 1891, has issued a book of original poems that is attracting much favorable comment by the press and the public, especially in Binghamton and vicinity, where he is prominent in business and politics. This book comes as a happy surprise to his many friends and has been written during the leisure moments of his unusually busy life. The work is carefully prepared and brilliantly illustrated with pen drawings made under his personal supervision. The poems are humorous, pathetic, sentimental and songs of childhood, and cannot fail to reach a responsive cord in every breast.—*Wellsville Reporter*.

WHOLESOME SENTIMENT.

Home Melodies, a modest little book of hymns, by E. W. Van Slyke, expresses with the facility of rhyme wholesome sentiment for the home; the familiar scenes, the old friends, with here and there a touch of humor, as in "Fisherman's Luck," "Swapping and Backing Out," "Some Snap Shots," "Them 'Ere Boys," etc. The volume is prettily bound and is published by E. W. Van Slyke of Binghamton, N. Y.—*Albany Argus*.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JR.,

Wishes to thank Mr. E. W. Van Slyke for his book of poems. He appreciates this kind thought and also the good wishes for a speedy recovery.—*White House, Feb. 29, 1902*.

A U. S. CONGRESSMAN'S THANKS.

Mr. E. W. Van Slyke:

My Dear Sir,—Please accept my hearty thanks for a copy of "Home Melodies." It is indeed an attractive and entertaining volume and shows great thought on your part, and a deep appreciation of human nature. Your delineations of the fisherman's disappointments bring memories of my youthful days, when I too, with pin and angleworm—the best tackle my pecuniary resources would permit, stood beneath the "green boughs a' swishing." I am sure that all who are so fortunate as to secure a copy will feel amply repaid for its perusal.—*Geo. W. Ray*.

A MASTER PIECE.

We have received a neatly printed and bound book of poems entitled "Home Melodies," composed by our Supervisor, E. W. Van Slyke of Lestershire, N. Y. This book is already becoming very popular and highly appreciated, and is receiving many kind words from the public and press. Some literary people even claim that it is a master piece and equal to the best ever produced.—*Union News*.

A PROFESSOR'S OPINION.

"Home Melodies," by our fellow townsman and pioneer of Lestershire, is a book which very favorably impressed me. The writer, in a style distinctively his own, has written many short and thoroughly interesting poems just suited for fire-side reading, which, while natural and lifelike in conception, have often a touch of the humorous. "Tom Creek" shows a liberal appreciation of the events common to childhood, and its bearing on mature years in moments of reflection.—*E. T. Graves, Principal Lestershire Academy.*

A NEAT VOLUME.

The "Globe" extends thanks for a copy of "Home Melodies," by E. W. Van Slyke. Mr. Van Slyke is a prominent resident of Lestershire, and Supervisor for the town of Union. His contributions to the press have attracted much attention, a poem appearing in the "Globe" two weeks ago. Mr. Van Slyke's work deals with home life and his poems bear the fragrance of the apple blossoms and the clover.—*Utica Saturday Globe.*

From every side E. W. Van Slyke is receiving great praise for the richness of his book of poems entitled "Home Melodies." The more one studies Mr. Van Slyke's poetical gems the stronger grows the love for the homely verses that are worthy to enrich the best of libraries. What author has more fittingly dedicated his work than has Mr. Van Slyke? Here is the dedication:

"To you, my townsmen, whom daily in my walks I meet
In business intercourse or greetings on the street—
In social pleasures or within the banquet hall,
Or when we weep together o'er some loved one's pall—
To you whose long-familiar faces make more dear
Than any spot on earth our Lestershire,
In thankfulness and love for friends I've found so true
I dedicate, with fond regards, this book to you."

It will be seen that Mr. Van Slyke rings true, not only for all his friends but for his home town. Well may Lestershire feel elated for having such a gifted son, and Broome county for possessing true literary genius as one of her Supervisors.—*The Sunday Star.*

We have received a volume entitled "Home Melodies," the first published collection of poems from the pen of Elmer W. Van Slyke of Lestershire, N. Y., who formerly resided for a number of years in and near Hamilton, where he has many warm friends. Readers of this paper will recall numerous poems published heretofore in these columns from the pen of Mr. Van Slyke, which are included in this volume. The reader follows willingly as the poet's memory turns backward to boyhood days, and old associations, and the joy the poet feels in living pulses through each vivid picture. He is a lover of nature and patriotism; love of home and family ties, and a bright hopeful view of the perplexities of life, and human sorrows, breathe forth from the little book, until one is delighted and uplifted by its reading.—*The Hamiltonian.*

LETTER FROM A MINISTER.

In looking over "Home Melodies" the first thing that impressed me was the splendid photograph of the author. One is impressed with the bright, clean and true picture, which would make one think there are other attractions further on. Nor is one disappointed in this, for I have found all through the book that which was interesting to me and which I think will be to others. "Fisherman's Luck"

can hardly fail to send us back over our own efforts to secure some of the finny tribe, with a vividness that will be surprising, and almost at my time of life makes me wish to take the tackle and start. "Them 'Ere Boys" is so true to nature I could not resist reading it over and over. "Songs My Sweetheart Sang" is worth the price of the book. It awakens memories that cannot die. But I could hardly help thinking as I read "My Den Around the Corner" that the author might possibly know more of cards than is proper for a member of the M. E. Church.—*J. M. Crandall, Pastor of Lestershire Baptist Church.*

That Mr. Van Slyke is a poetical genius of no small merit has been conceded by all who have had the pleasure of looking over the advance sheets of his book. He has not aspired to long and classical poetry. He has written poems that he thought would please the great mass of people, a book that can be picked up in leisure moments; in short, a book for fireside perusal, as is stated in the subject title. Mr. Van Slyke is to be congratulated upon his success and the Herald predicts for his "Home Melodies" a large sale.—*Binghamton Evening Herald.*

Much to the delight of the many friends of Supervisor E. W. Van Slyke his volume of poems is being exceptionally well received, both by the reading public and the literary critics. This is not surprising to those who have devoted a little time to the careful reading of his works, for they cover a wide range of topics, and every poem, even the shortest, rings with a depth of feeling and hearty good cheer. Every topic, whether sentimental, humorous or juvenile is treated in a manner that is thoroughly satisfying and praiseworthy. Some of his child poems would have graced the pen of our national favorite, Eugene Field, or James Whitcomb Riley, as many of their readers have attested. Lestershire, as well as Mr. Van Slyke's many friends, are to be congratulated upon possessing in him a true genius, and one who is bound to win renown in the field of literature.—*Binghamton Evening Leader.*

A new star in the galaxy of American poets is E. W. Van Slyke of Lestershire, N. Y., and his poems are becoming very popular with lovers of good literature. His style of writing is simple, direct, and highly captivating, and his quiet good humor, judiciously distributed, keeps the reader in a pleasant frame of mind throughout, in anticipation of what is coming next. The wonder is, that during his extremely busy life he has found time to write so much. But the quality is inherent in him, and his writings are purely a work of love on his part.—*Allegany County Republican.*

The author feels a deep appreciation for the many other pleasant notices his book has received from various newspapers in all parts of the country, and especially from those near his home, which space forbids to use here. The "Lestershire Record," "Montrose Democrat," "Elmira Telegram," "Whitney's Point Reporter," and dozens of others, as well as hundreds of personal letters bear testimony to the merit of "Home Melodies," as a book for the home.

"Home Melodies" or "Wayside Poems" will be sent to any address in the United States upon receipt of \$1.00.

If the two volumes are ordered together to one address they will be sent neatly packed in a fancy box upon receipt of \$2.00. The box is a gem of beauty and suitable to place in a book case, keeping the books together in tidy form. No more attractive article for a present to a friend. Address should be written plainly, and send all orders to

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