

Old  
Time  
Pictures  
AND  
SWEET  
LEAVES OF RHYME.

BENJ. F. TAYLOR

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# OLD-TIME PICTURES

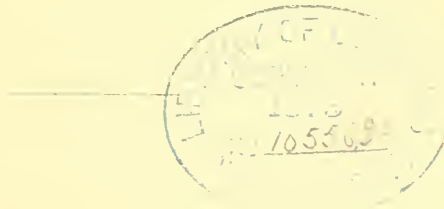
AND

SHEAVES OF RHYME.

BY

*Benj. S. Taylor*

Author of "JANUARY AND JUNE," "LIFE AND SCENES IN THE ARMY," etc.



CHICAGO:  
S. C. GRIGGS & COMPANY,  
1874.

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*June Seventh,*

*1852.*

TO HER FOR WHOM TWENTY YEARS HAVE NOT DIMMED THE  
MEMORY OF THAT LONG-GONE DAY, THIS  
LITTLE BOOK IS

Most Affectionately Inscribed.





## P R E F A C E .

---

SET adrift in the newspapers, like thistle-down in the Fall wind, a few poems of mine have "lodged" at last between the lids of a book.

Never thinking seriously about it until it was too late to think at all, I find myself fearing that their meaning to me is a sort of personal property I cannot make over to anybody, and that I should have slipped them in among the leaves of the Family Record, between the book of Malachi and the Gospel according to St. Matthew, as being the very place in a world of sinners about the safest from perusal.

A friend once sent me some withered pansies, but he brightened and humanized the faded things by writing a single line: "From the grave of Hamlet.

Prince of Denmark." Ah, how beautiful they turned, and what treasures they became!

Less fortunate than the pansies, this sheaf of rhymes has nobody to write the single line. Only this: I suspect one or two of them of being better than I once thought, because several clever people have stolen and never returned them.

## THE SHEAF.

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*AN OLD - TIME PICTURE.*

JULY 4TH, 1776 — JULY 4TH, 1873.

LET us roll back the world on its axle of fire.  
Let us halt, if we can, just a breath or two  
nigher

The sweet simple time when they halved every  
trouble,

Ere pinks were carnations and roses all double !

We will watch for a roof with a slope down behind.  
Like a sun - bonnet blown partly off by the wind.  
Till the tresses of brown turn to gold one by one.  
As they shake out of shadow and shine in the sun —

For a chimney as broad as the curb of a well  
Where the ember-red maple leaves eddied and fell,  
That volcanic plumed up with its volumes of smoke  
That were crimson and gold when day brightened  
and broke :—

For a neighborly porch with the brow of a Greek  
That will make you as welcome as if it could speak,  
With a vine that runs up like a creature alive,  
And as brisk as a bee that is bound from the hive  
It goes rambling about with inquisitive leaves,  
And then swings in a frolic along the low eaves ;—

For a rusty-gray curb, round a rugged stone well,  
Where with dangle of bucket the sweep rose and  
fell

O'er the disc of still water, a silent black eye  
That unsleeping, unwinking, is watching the sky ;  
Now a star shines along, drops a beam down below,  
Now a drift of noon cloud sheds a fleck of its  
snow,

Now a shadowy face smiling up to the brink  
Where a girl smiling down has forgotten to drink ;—

For the hives of a fashion quaint, classic, and old,  
Where the bees went and came with their burdens  
of gold —

'T was an African village of straw-woven cones  
Within humming range of those myrtle-draped  
stones,



Of two borders of pinks, Sweet Williams and  
thyme,

That led out to the gate like a couplet in rhyme,—  
Of the pæony's glow and the prince's own feather—  
Of the four-o'clocks timing the dullest of weather,  
Of the meek little asters, Earth's studies for stars,  
And the love-lies-a-bleeding there close by the  
bars,—

Of the languid white poppy the dream-angels keep,  
With its quaint-covered cup of the powder of  
sleep,

And sunflower and hollyhock, stately and tall,  
And the cluster of lilacs beside the gray wall,  
And the daffodils, columbines, roses, and all  
That were kindred of Eve's without sinning at  
all:—

For the flinty old fields where the vicious-edged  
hoe

Always struck out a weed and a spark at a blow:—  
For the pastures where mulleins and butter-cups  
grew,

And the white-legged sheep gnawed the summer  
all through:—

For a fringe of deep woods with a sugar - camp in it,  
And the memories sweet as the song of a linnet ;  
And the drum of the partridge can summon my  
soul,

Like the drum of a drummer - boy beating the roll ;  
Ah, the thought of the " red - bird's " small flicker  
of fire

Can yet startle my pulses and kindle desire,—  
And the green, plashy place where the slim rushes  
grew,

And the pendulum reeds, when the summer winds  
blew,

Set the bird with an epaulette swaying and swinging  
'Till the bobolink's bells fell to rocking and ringing !

Ah, the fire of the camp as it threaded the trees,  
And the smoke like a canopy swung by the breeze,  
And the young moons of April and young girls of  
old,

How they flock to the heart like the lambs to the  
fold ;

Ah, the dainty white flowers with their feet in the  
loam,

And as clean as an angel a minute from home !—

For the strawberry meadow so haunted with bees,  
Where the boys and the girls crept about on their  
    knees

And became — of each other — devout devotees ;  
Where the monarchs of twilight for ages had stood  
And pronounced benediction with branches abroad,  
Hark, the stroke of an axe like the tick of a clock :

    There 's a burst of broad sunshine, a crushing of  
    flowers ;

Hark, the crash of the giants with shiver and shock :

    There 's the chime of the wilderness striking the  
    hours !

Lo, their monuments here that the mowers mow  
    round

With a glint of the scythes that are rasping the  
    ground ; —

For the quilt of a field where the cradlers went in,  
And their free swinging sweep seemed as easy as  
    sin ;

On the skeleton fingers the grain was laid down  
Like the Babes in the Wood, far away from the  
    town,

And the rakers and binders came rollicking after,  
With their heads thatched with straw and their  
    hearts full of laughter —

And perhaps the old farmer of Pomfret is one,  
With a ring to his jokes like the flash of his gun ;  
And perhaps Molly Stark shades her eyes with  
    her hand,

As she watches the boys that are sweeping the  
    land ; —

For a sky-line that rises and falls like the deep,  
Lies as light on the hills with its tremulous sweep  
As a mantle of blue on an infant asleep !

And the watch is all over — the picture is given,  
And the scene is ringed in with a scollop of heaven.

The wide door on the latch opening full to the  
    south

Is as sweet as the smile of an eloquent mouth.  
When you swing on its hinges that neighborly door  
A broad carpet of sunshine unrolls on the floor,  
And a bee and a butterfly, freed from the fold —  
And they must have been in it before it was rolled —

Like two figures escaped from a tapestry loom,  
Are just drifting about in the rambling old room.

There 's a touch of green caraway charming the air,  
There 's a low, loving ceiling, with a hook here  
and there,

Whence festoons of dried apples and pumpkins  
have hung

That the " bees " in checked aprons had quartered  
and strung ;

There 's a spotless white table, a broad open palm,  
That has grown with the mouths like the swell of  
a psalm —

'T is a small hand of Providence, laden and spread,  
That has answered the prayer of three ages for  
bread !

There 's a thrush on the linden, a goldfinch adrift,  
And a lark going up on a musical lift ;

There 's a girl in the garden, a " fellow " to love  
her,

And a robin in song in the maple above her ;  
There 's a tin horn in tether adorning the wall,  
And its twang, sharp and nasal, is sweeter than all !

There 's a box on the window-sill, awkward and  
square,  
“ Live-forever ” defiant is clustering there :  
Ah, the *true* “ live-forevers ” are haunting the  
place,  
And are thronging my soul with ineffable grace.

Let us rummage the drawers and the desolate  
“ till ”

For the snowy white cap, like a lily in frill,  
And the string of gold dew-drops that beaded a  
neck,  
And a bit of a dress in the blue and white check,  
And the scalloped vandyke that the grandmothers  
wore,  
And the short-gown and petticoat never seen more,  
And the green silk calash, like the top of a chaise,  
They could throw back at will in the dull, cloudy  
days  
And then lift it again when the sky was a-blaze ;  
And the faded red “ sampler,” the work of Jane  
Ann,—  
You can see with your heart how the alphabet ran —



And the year and *her* year: " '37, — *age eleven,*  
And no older to-day, for she went young to  
Heaven!

The old room has grown human in all the long  
years —  
Has been brightened by happiness, hallowed by  
tears ;  
By the brides on the hearth who will bless it no  
more,  
By the cradles kept rocking like boats on the shore.  
And that old-fashioned hearth with a flare to the  
jamb,  
And a throat full of midnight to swallow the flame,  
And a crane, like a witch's long slender black  
tongue,  
In the yawn of red fire horizontally swung ;  
And a brace of tough fire-dogs, their feet in the  
coals,  
Looking out from beneath the broad volume that  
rolls  
Like the burst of a sunset in glory and gold,  
That the touch of no Titian could ever have told.

Ah, the Arctic old hearts are alive that remember  
All that splendor of fire in the perished December,  
And the flicker and flash of the musketry rattle  
When the hemlock and birch blazed away in sham  
battle,

And the sturdier glow of the hickory bank,  
Reinforced with rock - maple in front and in flank,  
When the surges rolled up and the rubies dropped  
down

Like the gems that are struck from a conquered  
king's crown,

Till the rush - bottomed chairs falling back in good  
order,

As the leaves flush apart in a wild rose's border,  
All around the horizon the cider and song,  
And the Baldwins and Greenings went circling  
along,

And the touching of hands and the whisper aside,  
All the charms that survived it when Paradise died !  
With the thought of that ingleside Eden is near,  
Long deserted and cozy old corners of cheer !

See the jambs worn away by the shovel and tongs,  
As the marble at Mecca was kissed by the throngs

That just pressed their live lips to the lips of the  
stone

'Till marble with mortal had blended and gone.

Ah, those long iron fingers to handle the fire  
Were not made by the maker of Amphion's lyre,  
But the sturdy old smith at the forks of the road  
Smote them out of the bar as it sparkled and  
glowed,

Like the besom of Lucifer flourished the brand

'Till he swept out the dark with his angry right  
hand,—

And the kiss of the sledges fell fiercely and fast,  
And the fingers were fashioned and finished at last;  
With a sigh of relief they were plunged in the  
water,

And the tongs were baptized rough Vulcan's rude  
daughter.

Ah, the print of his hammer is plainer to-day  
Than his name that they graved on a tablet of gray!

There's the ghost of a clock, with its body all gone,  
Where it stood in a corner so ghastly and wan,  
With a pallor of face that so haunted the wall  
You felt like enshrouding the shape in a pall.

It was wound with a string, and its shadowy beat  
Fell a faint and deliberate vision of feet.  
How it marched through the night with an echo-  
less tread,  
Like unshrived and unshodden impenitent dead !

On the mantel two candlesticks, iron and old,  
That have lifted their glimmer long winters untold.  
Ah, the slender white shafts, with their finish of  
flame,  
That were lighted by those that old monuments  
name,  
And the snuffers served up on a salver of tin,  
When the crickets came out and the neighbors  
came in !

On the wall hangs the almanac, ledger of time,—  
At the tail of each page is a ringlet of rhyme,  
At the top is the sun, with a flare to his hair,  
And the moon, from the shield to the sickle, is  
there,  
And along the brief column's zodiacal blaze  
Is the roll of the age's battalion of days

On the stand lies the Bible, that Day - Book so broad  
It embodies the reckoning of mortals with God.  
When the last of fourteen — just the lines in a son-  
net! —

Is first seated at table, a twenty - pound man,  
They just swing down the Book and enthrone him  
upon it,  
And it brings him in range with the platter and  
pan.

On its cover the razor is cautiously strapped,  
And within it the route of old Moses is mapped,  
With the noblest of Sermons and sweetest of  
Psalms,

And the greenest of cedars and grandest of palms,  
While Saint Matthew and Malachi guard the old  
story

Of the son that was born and the sire gone to glory —  
Of the twain that were one, with an altar above it —  
Of the darling that died, with a willow to love it ;  
'Tis the Blotter of tears for the mother and wife,  
And belongs to the Ledger and Day - Book of Life !

On the gnarled wooden hooks, over mantle and all,  
Is a battered Queen's Arm at a trail on the wall ;

And that filbert-brown gun Saratoga has heard ;  
It has come to the shoulder at WASHINGTON'S  
word —

What was saucy to kings is as dumb as a sword !

In the blessed home-room, and that dreamy June  
day,

On the hearth were two children together at play :  
One, a shrivelled gray man, shrunk away in his  
wear,

One, a boy like a distaff, with tow for his hair ;  
And one brought as he could the dead embers  
together,

And one blew for his life like a blast of March  
weather.

But the grizzled old boy was a-shiver in June,  
And his mate's puckered lips sadly lacking a tune.

He never heard the birds outside,  
He never felt the drifting tide  
Of song and fragrance mingled so,  
As strangely blent they float along,  
You think you *hear* the roses blow,  
And *smell* the robin's scented song.



Ah, the pulse that is dull with a dying desire  
Can be warmed never more by an old kitchen fire !  
But the shrivelled gray man dreamed his way back  
to life ;

In the howl of December he heard the wild strife,  
When the grand ragged regiments stood to the  
shock,  
And the troopers came down like the wave on the  
rock.

So all things around helped his dreaming along,  
And they rallied his heart like young Hopkinson's  
song.

E'en a kettle of samp that was lazily swung  
On a hook's smutty finger, contentedly hung,  
With its bubbles of gold, as they shattered and  
broke,

Made him think of the far-away musketry smoke,  
When the field was red-edged with the troopers'  
red drift,

Like a border of cloud with a ray in the rift,  
And the Georges in surges of scarlet did run  
Like a line of shore-billows pursued by the sun !  
And the lift of the lid at the touch of the steam  
Was as measured and slow as a drum in a dream !

Of the boys on the hearth one was yet on his knees,  
When the calm ruffled up with a breath of a breeze,  
And a posy of girls blossomed into the room,  
All the threads of their talk like the woof in a  
loom.

The old man looked round in a querulous way  
On the exquisite grouping, as if he should say,  
“Don’t you s-e-e?— Here I am, in my ninetieth  
year!”

And he hollowed his hand till it fitted his ear.

“Oh, my grandfather dear,” cried a willowy girl,—  
And a pair of forefingers nimbly ran up a curl—  
“I was saying ‘next week is the **FOURTH OF  
JULY.**’”

Then the faded gray eye had a dawn like the sky,  
Then the drowsy old heart gave an audible knock,  
And he said, “I will pick the old flint in the  
lock—

“Ah, she never missed fire— there’s a spark in  
her yet,

“And the rattling old talk she can never forget!”  
Then the poor bended figure grew stately and tall,  
For again he was hearing the bugler’s old call;

The one hand was uplifted, the other was laid  
On the thistle-down head with whom he had  
played,

And he murmured, "My boy, in whatever you do  
"Be as right and as ready—the gun is for you—  
"She's a quick-witted jade, but she's trusty and  
true."

Then a hush like a ghost that is here without  
coming,

Set the hearts of the maidens all halting and  
drumming,

And the breeze held its breath that was filling the  
room.

'T was as if one had spoken direct from the tomb.  
With no charnel to rend and no coffin to rive,  
And the First Resurrection had found them alive!

And the day broke at last, with its bunting and  
thunder.

And the eyes of the Thistle-down rounded with  
wonder;

A big anvil was pounding away in the road,  
From the ridge of the barn a red banneret flowed;

On the pine in the yard perched an eagle benighted,  
By a hand-breadth of stars in blue calico lighted.  
And the "trainers" went by in white legs and  
blue breasts,  
All their plumes tall and straight, and with blood  
on their crests,  
And the riflemen green, in their fringes and frocks,  
"Shutting pan" down the line like the ticking of  
clocks;  
And the troopers rode on in fierce coat and fur  
frown  
That had covered a bear, till it burdened them  
down.

With the ruffle and roll of the double drum corps,  
And the fifes warbling up in the rumble and roar,  
Like a bird half bewildered caught out in a storm,  
Lo, there stood on the threshold the shrivelled  
gray form,  
With the battered Queen's Arm — ah, the darling  
old girl!  
And then, just as the wind blew the flag out of  
furl,

He was up with the musket and rattling away :  
It was three and three more for the Deed and the  
Day,  
And three rounds for the comrades that lay where  
they fell,  
In the front of the battle, the border of hell ; .  
And three guns for the Flag, and a toll for the dead  
Old Commander who rode in the tempest and said,  
“Blaze away there, my men ! Are you *saving* your  
lead ?”  
So the clock struck thirteen—’t was an old-time  
salute,  
And the smoke rolled away, and the musket was  
mute.

And the shadows were traveling eastwardly all,  
They were shed from the trees in a lengthening  
fall,  
They were reaching so lovingly over the land,  
And were waving so strange when the forests  
were fanned,  
You would fancy them fingers of pitiful Night,  
That were gleaning the fields for a handful of light ;

And they lay like a hand on the Veteran's head,  
And he sat in his chair till the heavens were red,  
And the musket and Thistle-down lay at his feet,  
And his years were in sheaf like a bundle of wheat;  
He had grounded his arms, and the Soldier was  
dead!

Ah, the world never halted, but trampled right  
on—

Not so much as a pansy for him that had gone,  
And the grasses grew rank and the tablet grew  
small

Till the name on the stone had no meaning at all,  
And the FOURTH OF JULY yet revolved like the  
Light

As it flashes to sea, intermitting the night.

There was growling of thunder low down in the  
sky,

And the crown of calamity lifted on high,  
Every thorn was crushed home upon Liberty's  
brow—

Valley Forge's own imprint had bloodied its snow!



Then the trumpet of rally! The terrible tramp!  
The blue skies had all fallen! The world was a  
camp!

Then the columns spread wide like the limbs of a  
larch,

And grew grander and broader. The world was  
a-march!

Then the crashing of cannon as batteries wheeled,  
And the shock of the legions! The world was  
a-field!

And the bullets flew fiercer and farther and faster  
In the storm equinoctial of death and disaster,  
Till the gardens of Eden were mantled in gloom  
And the world was a Ramah and Rachel at home!

And again it was June. The porch door was  
swung wide,

And the sunshine rolled in with a wonderful tide  
Of the breath of the birds and the blossoms outside.  
Framed by threshold and lintel, a picture of grace,  
Stood a model of manhood, his heart in his face;  
And the fellow was made on an exquisite plan.  
With the eye of a woman, the mouth of a man;

And his mother stood near in white apron and arm—  
And her silver - white hair did her beauty no harm —  
With a wide maple bowl where she patted and  
rolled

With a broad wooden ladle an ingot of gold,  
And then lifted the ball to a platter of delf;  
It was Thistle-down's mother and Thistle-down's  
self!

While her locks were turned white, his were  
deep'ning to brown —

Then she nervously said, "What's the news from  
the town?"

"Oh, my mother," he cried, "there's a call for  
more men!

"And they've made it before—I can't *hear* it  
again!

"And no more 't would mean *me* had they called  
out my name!"

And his eyes were in tears, though his cheeks were  
afame.

"Did they *lie* when they said that a man-child was  
born?

"It could never be *me*, and I hid in the corn!—



“ All the boys march by bugle, and I by that horn ! ”

And he turned back a thumb at the pitiful thing,  
Where it hung to the wall by its halter of string —

“ Oh, my mother, say ‘ yes, ’ ” and he bent low  
above her,

And he swallowed his heart like a pleading young  
lover ;

“ Do you mind of that FOURTH in old grandfather’s  
time !

“ ’ T was the half of a couplet — I ’ ll *finish* the  
rhyme. ”

Then she lifted her face with a shiver of pain,  
For the surge from her heart had rolled back from  
her brain,

And she said, “ The Lord gave, and — ” “ Oh, no, ”  
he broke in,

“ Let the sentence be ended right where you begin.

“ Oh, not ‘ taken away ’ but just *borrowed* awhile ; ”

And then murmuring low, with a far-away smile,

“ I ’ ll come back in the blue, and we ’ ll bless Him  
together,

“ And we ’ ll talk it all over, — this dark heavy  
weather.

“ I will go — it is duty — the way the thing looks ;”  
And he took down the gun from the brown wooden  
hooks,  
And he said, “ I WILL KEEP MY OLD GRAND-  
FATHER’S FOURTH !”  
And he blent with the blue of the broad azure  
North.

Then the June came again, and the bee and the  
bird,  
And the Thistle-down too, but he uttered no  
word,  
Though he came in the blue, as he said he would  
come,  
But with wailing of fife and the moaning of drum.

And the mother sat still in the sunny old porch,  
And her eyes had burned down like a perishing  
torch,  
But she took up the verse at the very same  
word :  
“ And has taken away, and be blessèd the  
Lord !”

Do you think that the **FOURTH OF JULY** can go  
down

While a Thistle-blow lives long enough to be  
brown?

It will yet be a child at an hundred years old!

Lo! the columns of Centuries grandly unfold!

Rear rank, open order! and front rank, about  
face!

And the Ages salute as they stand in their place,

And the **DAY** passes through with an eloquent  
grace!

See it shine down the lines with unquenchable  
light —

Good morn, Boy in Blue! Continental, **GOOD**  
**NIGHT!**

*THE CHILD AND THE STAR.*

O H, feel in your bosom, my darling,  
If the flutter is there as of old,  
The pant of Sterne's captive, the starling,  
When this old - fashioned story is told.  
Oh, the days sparkling up to the rim  
That bounds the one world by the other!  
Oh, your heart even full to the brim  
With love like the love of your mother!  
When you knew nothing more about sorrow or sin  
Than the buttercups knew that she held to your  
chin,  
While she watched with a smile your small secret  
unfold,  
As it tinted the white with a glimmer of gold!  
We stood in the pasture together  
With the clover - breath over our heads,  
Right down from the Lord came the weather,  
Right up went the larks from their beds;

And we longed for a goldfinch's billow  
As it rode the invisible flood —  
An oriole swung from a willow,  
And the daisies were bowing to God!  
But the year was a harp, and like David the king's,  
And the graver the cadence the longer the strings —  
One by one went the days, growing briefer and  
fewer,  
And we told them all off, and no tale could be  
truer,—  
So we watched out the time with no thought of a  
sigh,  
For our hearts danced and sang, "Merry Christmas  
is nigh!"

Oh, honey-bee, gypsy of summer,  
There 's a flower that is sweeter than thine!  
For thee there 's an Angel for comer,  
With the sweep of a pinion divine.  
Oh, Day on the hem of December!  
And oh, Star of old Bethlehem's brood!  
Shine down in my heart like an ember  
With a glow from the altar of God.

Oh, fairest of flowers in the garden  
That dost blossom the brightest and last,  
When our Eden has furloughed its warden,  
And the roses and lilies are past ;  
When Euroclydon's fingers so sculpture the snow,  
That you hardly can tell if the sleeper below  
Is just waiting for Spring, or the Trumpet to blow ;  
When the marble in motion and the Parian blend,  
'Till the sexton must say where " God's acre "   
should end,  
And 'mid these from the quarry and those from the  
cloud,  
Must declare which they are that are wearing a  
shroud !

Sit here by my side like a lover,  
Let us turn down the flare of the lamp,  
And talk the dear story all over  
'Till around us the shadows encamp.  
As we did in the days of the olden,  
We will light a dim candle again,  
For the blaze of a chandelier golden  
Never shone from the Now to the Then.

We will blow a dull coal to its glowing,  
As we blew it long ages ago,  
While the Lord of the Harvest is sowing  
With His tempest out there in the snow.

Do you see that gray roof, strangely drifted with  
leaves,  
And the moss all along on its low northern eaves?  
'Tis as if Robin Redbreast, on duty again,  
Would have covered my dead from the vision of  
men.

Each side of the gate a bold Lombardy stands,  
As stately as warders, as graceful as wands,  
That I watched long ago, while they swept the  
blue sky

All clear of the clouds that were loitering by!  
I there in my cradle slowly rocking and dream-  
ing.

They clearing the road where the angels were  
gleaming.

Now I pause on the threshold the loving feet trod  
That have walked upon thorns, that have gone up  
to God—



All traced here and there on threshold or stair  
But the one pair that left not a print anywhere —  
Ah, the little bare feet that had never been shod !

Oh, heart of the house, my dead Mother,  
Give your boy the old greeting once more  
That I never have heard from another  
Since Death was let in at the door.  
I can reach up my hand to the ceiling  
Of the rooms once the world's greater part —  
Who wonders I cannot help feeling  
They have narrowed to fit to my heart !

Ah, these little green panes let the morning in late  
But it never was stained by the emerald gate —  
And the clock has run down in its desolate place, —  
How we counted it in with its moon of a face,  
When we said "Four were born but the *clock* is  
alive,"  
And the household forever was numbered at five.  
And dumb is the bell that did toll off the hours  
And the boys and the blessings, the birds and the  
flowers,



And dead are the hands that were lifted a space  
When the noon seemed to halt while the father  
said grace !

Here 's the place on the jamb where we "reckoned"  
at night,

There 's a mark on the wall where we measured  
our height,

And a line on the sill where the sunbeam swung  
round

Like a ship on a bar, as 't was nearing the  
ground.

Ah, how slowly it crept when some day was to-  
morrow !

Ah, how swiftly it went I have learned to my  
sorrow !

Oh, if Gibeon's sun could have shone there of  
old,

And burnished the sill with unperishing gold !

The air is alive with a shiver —

There 's a wandering chill in the room —

There 's a foot that has forded the river —

There 's a hand feels for mine from a tomb !

I take it in silence, unshrinking,  
And I warm it again in my grasp,  
There is nothing of sadness in thinking  
Two worlds may have met in the clasp.  
My heart strangely longs as I linger,  
To be decked with some darling old word,  
Be clasped as a ring clasps a finger  
By a trinket my boyhood had heard —  
Some fragment of speech by love broken,  
As the emblem was broken by Christ,  
That, passed round the homestead in token  
Would a soul from a sod have enticed!

Ah, the chimney 'draws' still! It is drawing my  
heart,  
And that rudest of things ever fashioned by art  
Does so kindle my soul with intensest desire  
To become as a child and see faces in fire,  
That I never can wonder the curling blue smoke,  
As dull water was wine when Divinity spoke,  
Always turned into crimson the instant it broke  
Like a glory unrolled into sunshine and air  
And then floated abroad like an archangel's hair!  
For that chimney was ever the top of the stair

Where *my* Angel came down in the dear Christmas  
Eve ;

Oh, set back the old clock and still let me believe  
That the saint of my childhood, Saint Nicholas  
came

Down that tunnel of glory, the route of the flame !  
Here the stockings were swung in their red, white,  
and blue,

All fashioned to feet that were light as the dew,  
For they walked upon flowers without crushing a  
bud,

That have trampled the flint 'till it blushes with  
blood.

Ah, the fragrant old faith when we watched the  
cold gray

Reluctantly line the dim border of day,  
When we braved the bare floor with our little bare  
feet —

No shrine to a pilgrim was ever so sweet.

When each heart and each stocking was burdened  
with bliss —

On the verge of two worlds there is nothing like this  
But a mother's last smile and a lover's first kiss !

“Merry Christmas,” we cried, and in answer to  
prayer,

The glad greeting came back like a gush of June  
air,

That had lurked out the night in those bosoms of  
theirs

To waylay us at dawn when we stole down the  
stairs.

God pity the man who has naught to remember,  
With no heart anywhere if not in December,  
Who abandons the Cross because Romans adore it,  
And yet longs for the crown that is carried before it ;  
Who declaring the birth - day of Christ is uncertain  
Would let down on the Manger Oblivion’s cur-  
tain —

Unheeding the birth of the Heir to the Throne  
While he tells off the years, and then honors his  
own!

Shuts the door on the angels commissioned by  
Heaven

To belong to the children for one blessed even,  
Locks out of their hearts the invisible land,  
And tarnishes time with the touch of his hand.

Where the birds had the freedom of window and  
eaves,  
And the walls were all garnished with Bethlehem's  
sheaves,  
The bright straw with its amber bestrewing the  
floor,  
The great eyes of the oxen like lamps at the door,  
And their breath clouding up the dim air of the  
place  
As if censers were swinging round altars of grace,  
Was the PRINCE of all worlds in humility born,  
Who created the Christmas and crowned the new  
morn.

There were ANGELS without but a flash from the  
throne,  
With the flow of their robes as two mornings in  
one,  
For those angels without brought their glory along,  
And they sang to the planet its first Christmas  
Song.  
The Star in the East took its place in the choir,  
While the Seraph sang alto the Angels sang air,

And they said : “ Unto God all the glory be given ! ”  
Ere it ended on earth it had mounted to heaven —  
And they said, and the cadence is lingering still,  
“ Be His peace evermore to the men of good will ! ”

There were SHEPHERDS hard by when the carol  
arose,

And they came as they were, in their every - day  
clothes ;

All above in the blue lay the Lord’s shining sheep,  
And below in the green were their own fast asleep ;  
And their hearts of themselves just beginning to sing  
What had fluttered to earth like a lark with one  
wing,

But the anthem’s grand surge swept it up to the  
King !

And that first Christmas Party stood out in the  
moon

As they watched the transfigured and glorified  
tune.

And the Magi were seeking the Christmas that day,  
And the Star went before them and blazoned the  
way —

Ah, the children and Christmas together belong,  
As the melody marries the words of a song  
That can float us right up where the Seraphim  
    throng.

With their hands in a tremble the Magi unfold  
All their treasures of myrrh and their tokens of gold,  
And they swept the brown manger with beards  
    like the drift,  
As the cloud turns to snow with the moon in the  
    rift,  
And they led off the world with their first Christ-  
    mas Gift.

And the Star and the Manger, the Carol and Child  
Have been gladdening the planet since Bethlehem  
    smiled.

Bid the singers begin, and the Manger's old chorus  
We will sing as *they* sang through the ages before  
    us :

Oh, lift your dull heart from its pillow,  
    Let me hold it awhile in my hand,  
Till it warms at the sight of the willow  
    As the sailor at sight of the land ;



'Till it rallies some soul from its sorrow,

'Till it smiles the dark winter away,

Lights the hope of a better To - morrow

With the glow of a brighter To - day.

Let us bid for a cloud to be lifted,

For a bed that is nothing but straw,

For a hearth that is ashen and drifted

For a debtor disastered by law ;

That the tables of stone may be broken

And the hearth be an altar of gold,

And the pillow of Bethel betoken

Not a couch but the Dreamer's of old !

What song was born out of the grieving,

What a faith in its splendor began,

What worship of God by believing

In the angel that lingers in man !

Oh, awake in your chambers, ye bells every-  
where,

Overturn, oh, ye goblets, and empty in air

All the music that swells to your resonant brims,

'Till ye throb like our hearts, and it blends with  
our hymns !



Now be thanks to our God that this Eve of the  
Christmas,

Uniting two worlds with its radiant Isthmus,  
And joining again what transgression had riven,  
Is the children's own road to the Kingdom of  
Heaven!

Oh, bells that are iron! Oh, hearts that are  
human!

Oh, songs that are sweet as the loving of woman!  
Be ye blent all the while in a chorus sublime  
As the carol of stars by the cradle of Time!

And oh, spare us an angel from Bethlehem's choir,  
Let him bring the same song that he helped to sing  
there,

Be the grand old beatitude sounded again,  
And to earth everywhere, Merry Christmas,  
AMEN!

*THANKSGIVING.*

LAY out the earth in a sheet of snow,  
There is nothing at all to harm below,  
Where men dream out the world together,  
And pansies sleep 'till pleasant weather —  
The safest place in all the land  
Is the narrow realm of the folded hand !  
Then THANKS to God that a flower will die,—  
'T was made to time Thanksgiving by :  
Breathe as it falls — prophetic thing ! —  
“ There 'll be an April in the Spring ! ”  
Then THANKS to God for a sister there  
To stand on Glory's diamond stair,  
And THANKS again, though I go late,  
A mother gone shall smiling wait,  
Shall breathe three names with reverent tone,  
The Child's, the Virgin's, and her Own,  
And lift the latch of Mercy's gate !

## II.

Rouse up the fire to a costly glow,  
'Till the maple parts and the rubies show !  
Swing back the curtains now if ever,  
And, rich and warm, the slender river  
Shall cleave Thanksgiving - Night in twain  
As the mantle parted the old Red Main !—  
Ah, never fear—shine as it will,  
Enough is left to cheer us still.  
Perhaps some wanderer going past,  
Who tried all sorrows but the last,  
And wonders why he dares to live,  
And thinks he has no thanks to give,  
May see that glimmer on the ground,—  
His old dead heart give glad rebound,—  
It looks so like the road of gold  
He trod himself in time of old—  
Look up and see Thanksgiving found !

## III.

Bring out the chairs from the empty wall,  
Where fitful shadows used to fall,

The shapes of father, sister, mother,  
Of slender sweetheart, friend, and brother.  
No painted window half so fair  
As the old home-room with its shadows there ;  
No pictured hall, at king's desire,  
Could match that group before the fire,  
Who never cast a shade beside,  
But on that wall, and when they died !  
And some went up at break of day,  
Some waited longer by the way ;—  
Let them who will thank God for light,  
Such shadows never made it night.  
Come one, come all, there yet is room,  
THANKS be to God, from heaven to home  
Is nothing but a flash of flight !

## IV.

Wheel forth the table, a laden palm,  
We'll all give thanks and we'll sing a psalm —  
Some song old-fashioned, of Forever,  
That floated safe across the river,  
No note lost out, no cadence gone,  
They warbled, died, and sang right on !

The girls shall come in their white and blue  
As if they broke God's azure through,  
Played truant to the realms of light  
To be with us Thanksgiving night.  
The boys are thronging through the hall,  
They've not grown old these years at all!  
Some marched away to muffled drum  
But fling no shadows as they come—  
Without a sorrow or a sin  
E'en Death himself would let them in—  
Oh, Sweethearts! Comrades! Welcome home!

*A POET'S LEGACY.*

PAST twenty - one and Love's of age,  
Has lost his wings and gained his eyes,  
Looks down on life's unended page,  
Looks up and sees the azure skies.  
He's safe to stay while we abide,  
His time for flight forever past,  
'T will be we three whate'er betide,  
While roses blow and lilacs last.  
No bankrupt Firm is this of ours,  
But rich as June in suns and showers.

Bring out the ledger! Every thing  
That men call gains shall be for sale —  
Ay, let them go for what they'll bring,  
We'll keep our losses till we fail!

Of old when Judah's children wed,  
They pledged their faith in crimson wine,  
Then broke the crystal as they said :  
    " No lips shall touch its brim but mine !  
    " This shall no meaner love profane ! " "  
The shattered symbol fell like rain.

None stooped to pick the fragments up —  
All knew the thing the token meant :  
Behold, one love had crowned the cup,  
No matter where the goblet went !  
And so, my wife, in Judah's way  
We've drank life's golden draught of wine,  
And strown the vase's glittering clay —  
See where the sculptured fragments shine !  
The ledger now ! Let it be known  
How rich and grand this Firm has grown.

The flock of clouds we always keep  
Are marked with rainbows every one,  
We know our own celestial sheep  
That throng the blue and graze the sun ;  
'Tis fine to see them trooping home,  
Their fleeces tangled thick with stars ;



'Tis fine to watch them as they come  
And wait at Evening's golden bars ;  
Their shadows fall upon our way,  
As if old Night had walked by day

And left her foot-prints as she went ;  
Some look like graves of friends that died,  
Whose sunken mounds the sward indent,  
Of babe and gallant bridegroom's bride,  
Of golden tress and silver hair,—  
And some like hopes our hearts have shed,  
That fell as leaves in autumn air  
And crush beneath our thoughtful tread.  
Dear wife, we have no clouds to sell,  
They make the sunshine *show* so well!

An angel troop this Firm commands,  
A score and one they stand in line,  
And swing aloft in radiant hands  
A score and one of Eves divine !  
Of Christmas Eves and Christmas bells  
And Christmas gifts with blessing twice  
That bring us all, by mystic spells  
In kissing range of Paradise !



My wife, we would not give them up  
To mend again the shattered cup!

A score and one of kindling Junes,  
The warm and blushing brides of Time,  
Are ranged along like notes in tunes,  
And keep our hearts in rhythmic rhyme.

We own a score of belfried towers  
Where bird-like wishes bred and born  
Are singing songs — those birds are ours —  
We count our twentieth New Year's morn!  
No birds to sell, nor songs nor chimes,  
We'll keep them all till harder times!

We have some castles gray and grand  
That cloudless suns do shine upon,  
Along their halls retainers stand  
And speak Castilian every one.  
Nobody dies who dwelleth there,  
They have a clime where tempests swoon,  
No graves to make, no empty chair,  
And Christmas in the month of June!  
I'll make the deeds — you'll sign them sure,  
And castles twelve we'll give the poor!

We've had a wealth of dreams as rife  
As corn along the bladed west,  
We have them still in broider'd life  
Like flowers upon a wedding vest.  
There comes a little sounder sleep,  
There comes a richer flush of dawn,  
'Till then we'll keep our flocks of sheep,  
No castle, cloud, or angel gone.  
Down flag of red! We'll make no sale  
But hold our losses till we fail!

To make all sure my Will behold:  
"To her who kept this Firm alive  
"I now bequeath my clouds of gold,  
"My angel choir, my castles five,  
"My score of belfries, all my sheep,  
"The fragments of the sculptured vase,  
"To have and hold and ever keep!"  
And yet I've done no act of grace,  
They all are yours, but whose are you?  
I freely give and keep them too!

*THE SONG OF THE AGE.*

**W**OULD ye know the grand song that shall  
sing out the age —

That shall flow down the world as the lines down  
the page —

That shall break through the zones like a North  
and South river,

From winter to spring making music forever ?

I heard its first tone by an old-fashioned hearth —

'T was an anthem's faint cry on the brink of its  
birth !

'T was the tea - kettle's drowsy and droning refrain  
As it sang through its nose as it swung from the  
crane.

'T was a being begun and awaiting its brains —  
To be saddled and bridled and given the reins.

Now its lungs are of steel and its breathings of  
fire

And it craunches the miles with an iron desire ;  
Its white cloud of a mane like a banner unfurled,  
It howls through the hills and it pants round  
the world !

It furrows the forest and lashes the flood  
And hovers the miles like a partridge's brood !

Oh, stand ye to-day in the door of the heart,  
With its nerve raveled out, floating free on the air,  
And feeling its way with ethereal art,  
By the flash of the telegraph everywhere,  
And then think, if you can, of a mission more grand  
Than a mission to LIVE in this time and this land,  
Round the world for a sweetheart an arm you can  
wind,  
And your lips to the ear of the listening mankind !

*JUNE.*

THE world is in June and it ripples in rhyme,—  
June! Sweetheart of Life and own darling  
of Time.

The year, with glad laughter, plays truant to  
Death,

Goes back so near Eden she catches its breath,  
And follows that airy old fashion of Eve's,  
And rustles abroad in an apron of leaves!

She holds her cheek long to the kiss of the sun,  
Days widen and warm like some volume begun,  
Narrow night like a ribbon just marking the  
page

Where some eloquent thought shall last out the  
age.

Every bush has a blossom, a bee, or a bird,  
A beauty to blow or a hum to be heard—  
Battalions of legs—all eyes or all stings—

And billions of monsters, musquitoes, and "things,"  
And needles like cherubs, with nothing but wings.  
There 's a promise to plead or a bill to present,  
A grave to be opened, a shroud to be rent,  
For they rise without trump; resurrections in  
June

Are as blithe as the lark and as bonny as Doon.  
From the tick of a heart in the breast of a wren  
To the trumpets that make Agamemnons of men,—  
From the tear drop that trembles unflashed from  
its brim

To the surly old storm that rolls over earth's rim,  
Tramples out the white stars as daisies are trod,  
While its red plumage shakes with the drum-beat  
of God,

Till green world and blue world by tempest are  
riven

And the lightnings' dread squadrons charge right  
up to Heaven,

As Sheridan went—as if grim Mission Ridge  
With its arches of fire were the pier of a bridge  
Somebody had built to the gates of the sky  
And he bound to go up without waiting to die—

Everything, everywhere, struggling up in the strife,  
Is beginning to climb that strange ladder of life,  
With an angel alight on its uppermost round  
And an atom alive where it touches the ground.  
From the blue music-box of the robin's old wife  
A burglar breaks through into mansions of life.

Hearts are trumps here in June : heart of lion and  
lark,  
Heart of Richard and Rachel and Joan of Arc ;  
Heart of iron and oak, steady, sturdy, and true,  
When through lines of red fire broke the jackets  
of blue ;  
A world of life's rivers all ebbing and flowing,  
A world full of hearts like hammers all going,  
Yet instead of our *hearing* these drummers of  
wonder  
With their ruffle and roll pulsing out into thunder,  
The earth is, for all of this turbulent crowd,  
As still as a star, or the shape in a shroud.

I think it was June when the maiden looked down  
On the dear little Moses just ready to drown,



And, his basket of bulrushes rocked by the Nile,  
That Columbus of Canaan looked up with a smile!

When summer's green surges roll over the land  
Till you hardly can tell as they break on the  
strand,

Where this world doth end or the other begin,  
They so hide all the graves, the first footprints of  
sin,

Is it strange that Earth's singers should drift out  
of June,

As if lifted by chance on the swell of a tune,  
And fairly float over life's musical bars,  
When the birds can go with them half way to the  
stars?

So went Sontag and Weber — magnificent pair! —  
He was clerk to the angels and she sang in the  
choir;

He recorded in score, but she passed down the  
word

Till a turbulent world grew human and heard.

Ah, talk of the eye unsleeping, unweeping,  
Undaunted, undying, its watch and ward keeping,

To whose glance telescopic raveled midnight is  
given—

You can see to Orion, but you *hear* into Heaven !

So went they in June who with wonderful art  
Put in English and rhythm the beat of the heart—  
The bard of Sweet Hope and the bard of Sweet  
Home.

They wronged thee, oh Sexton ! They tenant no  
tomb,

For Campbell shall live when the tartan is dim.  
And Payne walk the world that is chanting his  
hymn.

How came they in June who the rainbow unbent  
And laid it alive on the fold of a tent ;  
With fingers immortal the curtain withdrew  
And the canvas was kindled and faces looked  
through—

Lips ruddy and ripe with the old loving glow  
Somebody was kissing three ages ago !  
So Rubens, June born, the grand master of art,  
With a nerve in his pencil strung straight from his  
heart,

At whose touch the Evangels gave Calvary up,  
The Christ and the Cross and the Crown and the  
Cup—

And Hebrew and Greek fell away from the story  
And left it sublime in its gloom and its glory!

And that Spaniard, June born, whose fame shed a  
gleam

Ere Plymouth had pilgrim or Bunyan a dream—  
With no drop of blue blood in breast or in brain,  
By a right far diviner than Philip's of Spain,  
Was own king of colors—whose banners so brave  
Never lowered unto death, never struck to the  
grave;

Pride and pomp of the realm the Armada went  
down,

Cleared the face of the sea like a vanishing frown,  
But some child that he painted, its journey un-  
done,

Makes the transit of ages as Venus the sun!

Christ lay in thy manger, oh, fairest of stars!  
June rocks in thy cradle, oh, brighter than Mars—

God walked in thy garden — man sprung from thy  
dust —

Ah, who would not hold thy grand story in trust,  
That no blade would be wielded nor battle be  
born,

But the green waving sabres by ranks of young  
corn?

Yet what broods of grim thunders have nested in  
June,

Swooped from eyries of blue in the broad summer  
noon,

Splashed the greenest sod red with the color of  
fame,

Flared the flags into flower with their breathings  
of flame,

And growled the world dumb — all its eloquent  
words,

The laugh of its girls and the songs of its birds.

Marengo roars down the long highway sublime,

'Tis the Corsican clocks striking Bonaparte's  
time —

The grumble of guns that had hidden the stars  
From the sands of the Nile to the land of the Czars ;

Old Monmouth breaks in with its rattle and rain  
To the flash of the flint and "mad Anthony  
Wayne."

And Cromwell the trooper, half lamb and half lion,  
For the wicked King Charles and the blessed  
Mount Zion—

Two hundred years nearer Time's morning than  
now,

Rode into the storm naked blade and bare brow,  
Wheeled his surly old squadrons as the Lord wheels  
a cloud—

Their hearts and their cannon all throbbing aloud—  
And rode down the King with a cavalry shock  
That smote off his crown, bent his head to the  
block,

Made royalists tremble and monarchy rock!

But the throb of no battery ever has stirred  
The world's mighty heart like some stout English  
word,

Wherein a brave utterance sandaled and shod  
Has marched down the ages for Freedom and God!

'Mid the splendor of June the roar of the Shannon  
Roused something more grand than the Chesapeake's cannon,

For she wrung out the words from Lawrence's lip  
That shall linger for ever: "Do n't give up the  
ship!"

Ah, the click of flint locks is not half so divine  
As the click of the type as they fall into line,  
The audible step of unfaltering feet  
To a mightier tune than our bosoms can beat.

I remember the heroes who sailed out of June,  
Ross, Harvey, and Franklin, and Hudson's "Half  
Moon,"

Into realms where the sea has breathlessly stood  
Like the scalps of the Alps dumb and white before  
God;

Who have bended the oar and have lifted the  
wing,

Fairly fled the dominions of caliph and king,  
Broken out of horizons as old as mankind,  
Shatter'd shells of the worlds they were leaving  
behind.



Aye, Harvey, who stood by the brink of a heart,  
And saw it brim over, turn crimson and start,  
And discovered a river as truly God's own  
As the river of crystal that flows by His throne.

Bear away, ye tall ships, farewell and all hail!  
Cloud up, main and mizzen, weigh anchor, and sail!  
Be lifted blue Heaven! Let the admirals through,  
There's a lubber ashore that is grander than you!  
Born of rags and flung down on a marvelous  
street,

All rough with the prints of a million of feet,  
And cradled in iron and trampled with ink,  
This poor dingy creature, I venture to think,  
The frailest and feeblest of fluttering things,  
As easily crushed as a butterfly's wings,  
Has more power, oh, ye ships, than your canvas of  
white

To let out the world and to let in the light,  
And swing from their hinges the portals of night.

Let the ashes of Smithfield tell, if they can,  
When this gift of the Pentecost fell upon man.



It was born out of doors in that faded old June  
When the chime of Christ's ages struck twelve  
o'clock noon,  
And the barons of John plucked the heart of this  
thing,  
The Charter of Liberty, warm from the King. .

Imperial June of the emerald crown !  
When angels had read the Lord's weather-roll  
down,  
They found but one June in all Heaven to spare,  
And direct by the route of the answer to prayer  
From the glory above thou didst fall through the  
air.

*OCTOBER.*

I.

I WOULD not die in May :  
When orchards drift with blooms of white like  
    billows on the deep,  
And whispers from the Lilac bush across my senses  
    sweep,  
That 'mind me of a girl I knew when life was  
    always May,  
Who filled my nights with starry hopes that faded  
    out by day —  
When time is full of wedding - days, and nests of  
    robins brim,  
'Till overflows their wicker sides the old familiar  
    hymn —  
The window brightens like an eye, the cottage  
    doors swing wide,  
The boys come homeward one by one and bring a  
    smiling bride,

The fire - fly shows her signal light, the partridge  
beats his drum,

And all the world gives promise of something  
sweet to come —

Ah, who would die on such a day ?

Ah, who would die in May ?

## II.

I would not die in June :

When looking up with faces quaint the pansies  
grace the sod,

And looking down, the willows see their doubles  
in the flood —

When blessing God we breathe again the roses in  
the air,

And lilies light the fields along with their immor-  
tal wear

As once they lit the Sermon of the Saviour on the  
Mount,

And glorified the story they evermore recount —

Through pastures blue the flocks of God go troop-  
ing one by one,

And turn their golden fleeces round to dry them  
in the sun —

When calm as Galilee the grain is rippling in the  
wind,

And nothing dying anywhere but something that  
has sinned —

Ah, who would die in life's own noon?

Ah, who would die in June?

III.

But when OCTOBER comes,

And poplars drift their leafage down in flakes of  
gold below,

And beeches burn like twilight fires that used to  
tell of snow,

And maples bursting into flame set all the hills  
a-fire,

And Summer from her evergreens sees Paradise  
draw nigher —

A thousand sunsets all at once distil like Hermon's  
dew,

And linger on the waiting woods and stain them  
through and through,

As if all earth had blossomed out, one grand Co-  
rinthian flower,

To crown Time's graceful capital for just one  
gorgeous hour!

They strike their colors to the king of all the  
stately throng—

He comes in pomp, OCTOBER! To him all times  
belong:

The frost is on his sandals but the flush is on his  
cheeks,

September sheaves are in his arms, June voices  
when he speaks—

The elms lift bravely like a torch within a Grecian  
hand,

See where they light the Monarch on through all  
the splendid land!

The sun puts on a human look behind the hazy  
fold.

The mid-year moon of silver is struck anew in  
gold,

In honor of the very day that Moses saw of old,  
For in the Burning Bush that blazed as quenchless  
as a sword

The old Lieutenant first beheld OCTOBER and the  
LORD!

Ah, then, October, let it be—

I'll claim my dying day from thee!

*TORNADO SUNDAY.*

**T**HE winds sweetly sung  
In the elms as they swung,  
And the woods were in time and the robins in tune ;  
One cloud just forgiven,  
Lay at anchor in heaven.  
And Iowa asleep on the threshold of June !

All the air a great calm,  
And the prairie a palm,  
For the Lord when He blest, left the print of His  
hand —  
All the roses in blow,  
All the rivers a-glow,  
Thus the Sabbath came down on the bud-laden  
land.

On the bride and the bold,  
On the clay and the gold,

On the furrow unfinish 'd, on fame to be won.  
On the turbulent tide,  
On the river's green side  
Where the flocks of white villages lay in the sun.

All the world was in rhyme —  
Bid good morning to Time!  
Oh, sweet bells and sweet words of the dear golden  
Then!  
It is fair all abroad  
From blue sky to green sod!  
Let us pray while we can: blessèd Sabbath, Amen!

Not a murmur in air,  
Nor lament anywhere,  
And no footfall of God on the ledges of cloud:  
'T was a breath, and it fled —  
Song and Sabbath were dead,  
And the threads of gold sunshine the woof of the  
shroud.

Oh, words never spoken,  
Oh, heart and hearth broken.



Oh, beautiful paths such as loving feet wear!  
All erased from the land,  
Like a name in the sand—  
As the thistle-down drifts on a billow of air!

Like the sighing of leaves  
When the winter wind grieves,  
Like the rattle of chariots driving afar,  
Like the wailing of woods,  
Like the rushing of floods,  
Like the clang of huge hammers a-forging a star!

Like a shriek of despair  
In the shivering air,  
Like the rustle of banners with tempest abroad,  
Like a soul out of heaven,  
Like a tomb trumpet-riven,  
Like a syllable dropp'd from the thunder of God!

Then these to their weeping,  
And those to their sleeping,  
And the blue wing of heaven was over them all!  
Oh "sweet south" that singeth,  
Oh, flower girl that bringeth  
The gushes of fragrance to hovel and hall!

Oh, blue - bird, shed Spring  
With the flash of thy wing,  
Where December drifts cold in the bosom of June—  
Set our hearts to the words,  
Dear as songs of first birds:  
We are Brothers at night that were strangers at  
noon!

*THE SKYLARK.*

I HELD in my hand a wonder—a hymn of a  
thousand years ;  
It was born in an English meadow—it was older  
than English cheers —  
'T was a hymn for the Roman eagles and a psalm  
for the Norman Line—  
It was sung through the wars of the Roses, when  
the York turned red as wine—  
It was heard on Bosworth field, when Gloster's  
flint struck fire,  
And Richard's soul to Richmond's steel did glim-  
mer and expire ;  
When the peans for the thane drowned the dirges  
for the thing,  
And *he* swept across the planet on fame's eternal  
wing,  
Who waged the battle as an earl but won it as a  
king,

And plucked the crown of England from the haw-  
thorn where it hung,  
And lightly to his longing brow Golconda's clus-  
ter swung,  
The crown upon the coronet, till the light of its  
pearls grew thin  
And pale as a morning star that has led the day-  
light in.

Charge! and Marston Moor was a drum by gal-  
loping cavalry beat,  
Halt! and each iron rank brought up with a clank,  
and each trooper sat still in his seat.  
Hark! and down from the blue to the red was  
floating that exquisite strain,  
As if every rider had ridden, and never drawn sabre  
or rein,  
Right out of the hell of the battle to the door of  
heaven ajar,  
And thought he heard before his time the singing  
of a star,  
And thought he saw in the downy cloud the truant  
from the choir,  
As it hung in sweet libration — an anthem in the air.

And I held in my hand that wonder — a book  
with a single psalm,  
That would not brim the hollow of a woman's  
loving palm ;  
And the lyric was brown breasted, and the lids of  
the book were wings,  
And the bird was an English skylark, and the  
feeblest of God's things,  
That had fallen out of the azure like a mote from  
a mighty eye,  
And had shared the fate of the sparrow, for the  
Father saw him die.  
Oh, bravest bird of Britain! — a little ounce of  
death —  
Oh, song born out of heaven! — a clod without a  
breath.

And then my soul grew reverent — my heart beat  
strong and grand,  
As I thought of the broad commission of the atom  
in my hand ;  
That the Admiral of the fleets at anchor off the world,  
Flung out his pennant with a touch that little pin -  
ion furled —

Unrolled the scrolls of thunder, 'twixt the seraph  
and the sod,  
Dashed down a word of fire in the running hand  
of God,  
And stamped the stormy margins with His ring so  
broad and brave,  
One half is in the welkin — the other in the wave :  
By Him to meet that bird mid - air, the misty morn  
was driven,  
Lest it should break away from earth and sing it -  
self to heaven ;  
He sowed the Grand Armada like grain upon the  
breeze,  
But gave to lark and lightning the freedom of the  
seas !

---

The cattle asleep in the meadow and the shadows  
asleep on the hill,  
And the mists, like gray Franciscans, all standing  
ghostly still —  
And the stars are drowsily shutting their eyes as  
weary watchers will —

And the crescent moon in the west shows the flash  
of a silver shoe,  
As the steed that brought over the midnight is  
bearing it down the blue,  
And out of the silence and shadow there quivered  
the slenderest song,  
And a bird going up in the morning exultantly  
followed along —  
And the mountains stood down in their places and  
the clouds all timidly clung,  
But a strand of Jehovah untwisted whereon the  
lost Pleiads are strung,  
When this bird with its music and motion, ere the  
dawn had blooded its breast,  
Up direct from the sod to the glory of God, tri-  
umphantly burst from the nest.



*BUNKER HILL.*

TO the wail of the fife and the snarl of the drum  
Those Hedgers and Ditchers of Bunker Hill  
    come,  
Down out of the battle with rumble and roll,  
Straight across the two ages, right into the soul,  
And bringing for captive the Day that they won  
With a deed that like Joshua halted the sun.  
Like bells in their towers tolled the guns from the  
    town,  
Beat that low earthen bulwark so sullen and  
    brown,  
As if Titans last night had plowed the one bout  
And abandoned the field for a Yankee redoubt;  
But for token of life that the parapet gave  
They might as well play on Miles Standish's grave!  
Then up the green hill rolled the red of the  
    Georges  
And down the green vale rolled the grime of the  
    forges —

Ten rods from the ridges hung the live surge,  
Not a murmur to meet it broke over the verge,  
But the click of flint-locks in the furrows along,  
And the chirp of a sparrow just singing her song.  
In the flash of an eye, as the dead shall be raised,  
The dull bastion kindled, the parapet blazed,  
And the musketry cracked, glowing hotter and  
higher,

Like a forest of hemlock, its lashes of fire.  
And redder the scarlet and riven the ranks,  
And Putnam's guns hung, with a roar on the flanks.  
Now the battle grows dumb and the grenadiers  
wheel,

'Tis the crash of clubbed musket, the thrust of  
cold steel,

At bay all the way, while the guns held their  
breath,

Foot to foot, eye to eye, with each other and  
Death.

Call the roll, Sergeant Time! Match the day if  
you can:

Waterloo was for Britons—Bunker Hill is for man!

*THE OLD VILLAGE CHOIR.*

I HAVE fancied sometimes the Bethel-bent beam  
That trembled to earth in the Patriarch's  
dream,  
Was a ladder of song in that wilderness rest  
From the pillow of stone to the blue of the Blest,  
And the angels descending to dwell with us here,  
“ Old Hundred ” and “ Corinth ” and “ China ”  
and “ Mear.”

All the hearts are not dead nor under the sod  
That those breaths can blow open to Heaven and  
God.

Ah, “ Silver Street ” flows by a bright shining  
road,—

Oh, not to the *hymns* that in harmony flowed,  
But the sweet human psalms of the old-fashioned  
choir,

To the girl that sang alto, the girl that sang air.

“Let us sing to God’s praise!” the minister said:  
All the psalm-books at once fluttered open at  
“York,”  
Sunned their long dotted wings in the words that  
he read,  
While the leader leaped into the tune just ahead,  
And politely picked up the key-note with a fork,  
And the vicious old viol went growling along  
At the heels of the girls in the rear of the song.

Oh, I need not a wing; — bid no genii come  
With a wonderful web from Arabian loom,  
To bear me again up the river of Time,  
When the world was in rhythm and life was its  
rhyme,  
And the stream of the years flowed so noiseless  
and narrow  
That across it there floated the song of a sparrow;  
For a sprig of green caraway carries me there,  
To the old village church and the old village choir,  
Where clear of the floor my feet slowly swung  
And timed the sweet pulse of the praise that they  
sung,

Till the glory aslant from the afternoon sun  
Seemed the rafters of gold in God's temple begun!

You may smile at the nasals of old Deacon Brown  
Who followed by scent till he ran the tune down,  
And dear sister Green, with more goodness than  
    grace,

Rose and fell on the tunes as she stood in her  
    place,

And where "Coronation" exultantly flows,  
Tried to reach the high notes on the tips of her  
    toes!

To the land of the leal they have gone with their  
    song,

Where the choir and the chorus together belong.  
Oh! be lifted, ye gates! Let me hear them again,  
Blessèd song! Blessèd Singers! forever, Amen.

*GOING HOME.*

**D**RAWN by horses with decorous feet,  
A carriage for one went through the street ;  
Polished as anthracite out of the mine,  
Tossing its plumes so stately and fine,  
As nods to the night a Norway pine.

The passenger lay in Parian rest,  
As if, by the Sculptor's hand caressed,  
A mortal life through the marble stole,  
And then till an Angel calls the roll  
It waits awhile for a human soul.

He rode in state, but his carriage-fare  
Was left unpaid to his only heir;  
Hardly a man from hovel to throne  
Takes to this route in coach of his own,  
But borrows at last and travels alone.

The driver sat in his silent seat,  
The world as still as a field of wheat  
Gave all the road to the speechless twain,  
And thought the passenger never again  
Should travel that way with living men.

Not a robin held its little breath,  
But sang right on in the face of death ;  
You never would dream to see the sky  
Give glance for glance to the violet's eye,  
That aught between them ever could die.

A wain bound East met the hearse bound West,  
Halted a moment, and passed abreast ;  
And I verily think a stranger pair  
Have never met on a thoroughfare,  
Or a dim by - road, or anywhere :

The hearse as slim and glossy and still  
As silken thread at a woman's will,  
Who watches her work with tears unshed,  
Broiders a grief with needle and thread,  
Mourns in pansies and cypress the dead ;



Spotless the steeds in a satin dress,  
That run for two worlds, the Lord's Express —  
Long as the route of Arcturus's ray,  
Brief as the Publican's trying to pray,  
No other steeds by no other way  
Could go so far in a single day.

From wagon broad and heavy and rude  
A group looking out from a single hood :  
Striped with the flirt of a heedless lash,  
Dappled and dimmed with many a splash,  
“ Gathered ” behind like an old calash,

It made you think of a schooner's sail  
Mildewed with weather, tattered by gale,  
Down “ by the run ” from mizzen and main —  
That canvas mapped with stipple and stain  
Of Western earth and the prairie rain.

The watch - dog walked in his ribs between  
The hinder wheels with sleepy mien ;  
A dangling pail to the axle slung ;  
Astern of the wain a manger hung —  
A schooner's boat by the davits swung.

The white - faced boys sat three in a row,  
With eyes of wonder and heads of tow ;  
Father looked sadly over his brood :  
Mother just lifted a flap of the hood ;  
All saw the hearse — and *two* understood.

They thought of the one - eyed cabin small,  
Hid like a nest in the grasses tall,  
Where plains swept boldly off in the air,  
Grooved into heaven everywhere —  
So near the stars' invisible stair

That planets and prairie almost met —  
Just cleared its edges as they set !  
They thought of the level world 's "divide,"  
And their hearts flowed down its other side  
To the little grave of the girl that died.

They thought of childhood 's neighborly hills  
With sunshine aprons and ribbons of rills,  
That drew so near when the day went down,  
Put on a crimson and golden crown  
And sat together in mantles brown ;

The dawn's red plume in their winter caps,  
And Night asleep in their drowsy laps,  
Light 'ning the load of the shouldered wood  
By shedding the shadows as they could,  
That gathered round where the homestead stood.

They thought — that pair in the rugged wain,  
Thinking with bosom rather than brain;  
They 'll never know till their dying day  
That what they thought and never could say,  
Their hearts throbbed out in an Alpine lay,  
The old Waldensian song again:  
Thank God for the mountains, and Amen!

The wain gave a lurch, the hearse moved on —  
A moment or two, and both were gone;  
The wain bound East, the hearse bound West,  
Both going home, both looking for rest,—  
The Lord save all, and His name be blest!

*THE DEAD GRENADIER.*

ON the right of the battalion a grenadier of  
France,  
Struck through his iron harness by the lightning  
of a lance,  
His breast all wet with British blood, his brow with  
British breath,  
There fell defiant, face to face with England and  
with death.  
They made a mitre of his heart—they cleft it  
through and through—  
One half was for his legion, and the other for it  
too!  
The colors of a later day prophetic fingers shed,  
For lips were blue and cheeks were white and the  
*fleur de lis* was red!  
And the bugles blew, and the legion wheeled, and  
the grenadier was dead.

And then the old commander rode slowly down  
the ranks,  
And thought how *brief* the journey grew, between  
the battered flanks ;  
And the shadows in the moonlight fell strangely  
into line  
Where the battle's reddest riot pledged the richest  
of the wine,  
And the camp-fires flung their phantoms—all  
doing what they could  
To close the flinty columns up as old campaigners  
would !  
On he rode, the old commander, with the ensign  
in advance,  
And, as statued bronzes brighten with the smoky  
torch's glance,  
Flashed a light in all their faces, like the flashing  
of a lance,  
When, with brow all bare and solemn, " For the  
King ! " he grandly said,  
" Lower the colors to the living—beat the ruffle  
for the dead ! "

And thrice the red silk flickered low its flame of  
royal fire,

And thrice the drums moaned out aloud the  
mourner's wild desire.

Ay, lower again thou crimson cloud—again ye  
drums lament—

'Tis Rachel in the wilderness and Ramah in the  
tent!

“Close up! Right dress!” the Captain said, and  
they gathered under the moon,

As the shadows glide together when the sun shines  
down at noon—

A stranger at each soldier's right—ah, war's wild  
work is grim!—

And so to the last of the broken line, and Death at  
the right of him!

And there, in the silence deep and dead, the Ser-  
geant called the roll,

And the name went wandering down the lines as  
he called a passing soul.

Oh, then that a friendly mountain that summons  
might have heard,

And flung across the desert dumb the shadow of  
the word,  
And caught the name that all forlorn along the  
legion ran,  
And clasped it to its mighty heart and sent it back  
to man !

There it stood, the battered legion, while the Ser-  
geant called the roll,  
And the name went wandering down the lines as  
he called for a passing soul.  
Hurrah for the dumb, dead lion ! And a voice for  
the grenadier  
Rolled out of the ranks like a drum-beat, and  
sturdily answered " HERE !"  
" He stood," cried the sons of thunder, and their  
hearts ran over the brim,  
" He stood by the old battalion, and we 'll always  
stand by him !  
" Ay, call for the grand crusader, and we 'll answer  
to the name."  
" And what will ye say ?" the Sergeant said.  
" DEAD ON THE FIELD OF FAME !"



And dare ye call that dying? The dignity sub-  
lime  
That gains a furlough from the grave, and then  
reports to Time?  
Doth earth give up the daisies to a little sun and  
rain,  
And keep at their roots the heroes while weary  
ages wane?

Sling up the trumpet, Israfeel! Sweet bugler of  
our God,  
For nothing waits thy summons beneath this bro-  
ken sod;  
They march abreast with the ages to the thunder  
on the right,  
For they bade the world "GOOD MORNING" when  
the world had said "GOOD NIGHT!"

*RHYMES OF THE RIVER.*

O H River far - flowing,  
How broad thou art growing !  
And the sentinel head - lands wait grimly for thee ;  
And Euroclydon urges  
The bold - riding surges,  
That in white - crested lines gallop in from the sea

O bright - hearted river,  
With crystalline quiver,  
Like a sword from its scabbard, far - flashing  
abroad !  
And I think, as I gaze  
On the tremulous blaze,  
That thou surely wert drawn by an angel of God !

Through the black - heart of night,  
Leaping out to the light,

Thou art reeking with sunset and dyed with the  
dawn ;  
Cleft the emerald sod —  
Cleft the mountains of God —  
And the shadows of roses yet rusted thereon !

Where willows are weeping,  
Where shadows are sleeping,  
Where the frown of the mountain lies dark on thy  
crest ;  
Arcturus now shining,  
Arbutus now twining,  
And “ my castles in Spain ” gleaming down in thy  
breast ;

Then disastered and dim,  
Swinging sullen and grim,  
Where the old ragged shadows of hovels are  
shed ;  
Creeping in, creeping out,  
As in dream, or in doubt,  
In the reeds and the rushes slow rocking the  
dead.

When all crimson and gold,  
Slowly home to the fold  
Do the fleecy clouds flock to the gateway of  
even,  
Then, no longer brook - born,  
But a way paved with morn,  
Ay, a bright golden street to the city of Heaven !

In the great stony heart  
Of the feverish mart,  
Is the throb of thy pulses pellucid, to - day ;  
By gray mossy ledges,  
By green velvet edges,  
Where the corn waves its sabre, thou glidest  
away.

Broad and brave, deep and strong,  
Thou art lapsing along ;  
And the stars rise and fall in thy turbulent tide,  
As light as the drifted  
White swan 's breast is lifted,  
Or a June fleet of lilies at anchor may ride.

And yet, gallant river,  
On - flashing forever,  
That hast cleft the broad world on thy way to the  
main,  
I would part from thee here,  
With a smile and a tear,  
And a Hebrew, read back to thy fountains again.

Ah, well I remember,  
Ere dying December  
Would fall like a snow - flake and melt on thy  
breast,  
O'er thy waters so narrow  
The little brown sparrow  
Used to send his low song to his mate on the nest.

With a silvery skein  
Wove of snow and of rain,  
Thou didst wander at will through the bud - laden  
land,—  
All the air a sweet psalm,  
And the meadow a palm,—  
As a blue vein meanders a liberal hand.

When the school - master's daughter  
With her hands scooped the water,  
And laughingly proffered the crystal to me,  
Oh, there ne'er sparkled up  
A more exquisite cup  
Than the pair of white hands that were brimming  
with thee!

And there all together,  
In bright summer weather,  
Did we loiter with thee along thy green brink ;  
And how silent we grew  
If the robin came too,  
When he looked up to pray, and then bent down  
to drink !

Ah, where are the faces,  
From out thy still places,  
That so often smiled back in those soft days of  
May?  
As we bent hand in hand,  
Thou didst double the band,  
As idle as daisies — and fleeting as they !

Like the dawn in the cloud  
Lay the babe in its shroud,  
And a rose-bud was clasped in its frozen white  
hand :—  
At the mother's last look  
It had opened the book,  
As if sweet-breathing June were abroad in the  
land !

O pure placid river  
Make music forever  
In the gardens of Paradise, hard by the throne !  
For on thy far shore,  
Gently drifted before,  
We may find the lost blossoms that once were our  
own.

Ah, beautiful river,  
Flow onward forever !  
Thou art grander than Avon, and sweeter than Ayr ;  
If a tree has been shaken,  
If a star has been taken,  
In thy bosom we look — bud and Pleiad are there !



I take up the old words,  
Like the song of dead birds,  
That were breathed when I stood farther off from  
the sea :  
When I heard not its hymn,  
When the headlands were dim :—  
Shall I ever again weave a rhythm for thee ?

*L A Z Y*

UNDER the maple tree lying supine,  
Timing the beat of a pendulum vine,  
Swinging the Delawares turning to wine.

Gazing straight upward a mile in the blue,  
Watching a cloud that has nothing to do,  
Wishing a deed for an acre or two ;

Nothing to do but come down in the rain,  
Born of the mist unto Heaven again,  
Nothing to sow and no reaping of grain.

Watching a bee in his pollen pant'loon  
Droning him home in the chrysolite noon,  
Ghost of a drummer - boy drumming a tune.

Watching a jay on the cherry tree nigh,  
Stranger to love, with its cruel bright eye ;  
What of that jacket as blue as the sky ?

Splashing his crest with the cherry's red blood,  
Jauntiest robber that ranges the wood,  
Nothing will name him but blue Robin Hood.

Hearing a bird with her English all right  
Calling somebody from morning till night,  
Waiting forever the mystic "Bob White."

Woman's own cousin since Adam began,  
Beautiful Voice that is wanting a man,  
Quail in a coif of the time of Queen Anne.

Counting the leaves as they drift from the rose  
Strowing with fragrance my place of repose ;  
Dying? Ah no, only changing its clothes.

Watching a spider pay out her last line,  
Working at Euclid's Geometry fine,  
Web is all woven and weaver will dine!

Watching a fly laze along to its doom,  
Silken the meshes but death in the loom,  
Shrouded and eaten but never a tomb!

Watching a butterfly slowly unfold,  
Crowning a post with a blossom of gold  
Strange as the rod that did blossom of old.

Hinged on a life is the duplicate page,  
Lettered in light by a wiser than sage,  
Lasting a summer and read for an age.

Burst from the bonds ! For that coffin was *thine*,  
Tenantless thing where the sycamores shine,  
Riven and rent and the worm is divine !

Born from the dust and its veriest slave,  
Hail to the herald direct from the grave !  
Pinion of beauty, resplendently wave !

Bringing from far, what no angel could say,  
Something of them who have vanished away,  
Left me alone on this amethyst day.

Rent is the chrysalis hid in the sod,  
All the dear tenantry dwelling abroad,  
Gone through the gate of the glory of God !

*DEARBORN OBSERVATORY.*

**F**ROM my chamber last night I looked out on  
the sky

No mortal can reach without waiting to die,  
And I saw a few ships of Infinity's fleet,  
And the light at their bows lit the dew in the street  
That dying men crush with irreverent feet.  
Broadside to this port ridged and roughened with  
graves,

Not a boat from the shore, not a gun from the  
waves,

There they lay off and on in the Blue of the Blest  
Like the thoughts of the Lord in His sabbath-day  
rest!

Are we chained here for life? Are we bound to  
the clod

When the lark with a song springs direct from the  
sod

To the breakers of day and the glory of God?

Have you heard of the man who was calling the roll  
Of the stars till the Seraphim called for his soul?  
Who began the Lord's census and prayed for clear  
    night

While he counted for life the squadrons of light?  
Do you know how the Pleiads made sail at the  
    word

And Arcturus bore down, till he fancied he heard  
The wash of the sky as it rocked off a shore

It never had touched at a signal before!

Port of Entry for stars! Where great admirals  
    come

And flotillas report to a Herschel at home —

In that wonderful tower whose window commands  
Not a thing in the universe fashioned with hands.

There's an eye at the window that never can sleep,  
That no ages can dim and that never can weep —

Always gazing at life, never seeing the graves,  
Though the land with its tombs mocks the sea with  
    its waves —

That beckons a world and it dawns into sight,  
Gives a glance at the blue and it sparkles with  
    light,

Sweeps a field that the Lord had forgotten to sow  
When He scattered the worlds like His treasures  
of snow,

And a sun blossoms out of the infinite space  
Like the first flower of Spring in God's garden of  
grace.

Oh, second Fort Dearborn ! Oh, Lookout sublime !  
Stand fast till God's morning shall break upon time !



*JENNIE JUNE.*

**L**IKE a foundling in slumber, the summer day  
lay

On the crimsoning threshold of even,  
And I thought that the glow through the azure-  
arched way

Was a glimpse of the coming of Heaven.  
There together we sat by the beautiful stream,  
We had nothing to do but to love and to dream  
In the days that have gone on before,  
These are not the same days, though they bear the  
same name,

With the ones I shall welcome no more.

But it may be that angels are culling them o'er  
For a Sabbath and summer forever ;  
When the years shall forget the Decembers they  
wore,

And the shroud shall be woven, no, never.

In a twilight like that, Jennie June for a bride,  
Oh! what more of the world could one wish for  
beside,

As we gazed on the river unrolled,  
Till we heard, or we fancied, its musical tide  
When it flowed through the gateway of gold!

“Jennie June,” then I said, “let us linger no more

“On the banks of the beautiful river;

“Let the boat be unmoored, and be muffled the  
oar,

“And we ’ll steal into heaven together.

“If the angel on duty our coming descries,

“You have nothing to do but throw off the disguise

“That you wore while you wandered with me,

“And the sentry shall say, ‘Welcome back to the  
skies,

“‘We long have been waiting for thee.’”

Oh, how sweetly she spoke, ere she uttered a word,

With that blush, partly hers, partly even’s;

And a tone like the dream of a song we once heard,

As she whispered, “This way is not heaven’s,

“ For the river that runs by the realm of the blest  
“ Has no song on its ripple, no star on its breast :  
    “ Oh ! *that* river is nothing like this :  
“ For it glides on in shadow, beyond the world’s  
    West,  
    “ Till it breaks into beauty and bliss.”

I am lingering yet, but I linger alone,  
    On the banks of the beautiful river :  
’Tis the twin of that day, but the wave where it  
    shone  
    Bears the willow - tree’s shadow for ever.

*BURNS' CENTURY SONG.*

I.

**H** OPE, her starry vigil keeping  
O'er a Campbell by the Clyde—  
By the Tweed a " Wizard " sleeping—  
" Shepherd " by the Yarrow's side—  
Land of glory, song, and story,  
Land of mountains and of men,  
Did ye dream that Song could die?  
Banks and braes be glad again,  
ROBERT BURNS is passing by!

Everywhere, everywhere,  
Smiles will break and tears will start,  
Making rainbows round the heart,  
Ploughman, Brother, BARD OF AYR!

II.

Heart of leal ! Can this be dying,  
    Coming thus sublimely down !  
Lo, an hundred winters sighing  
    Leave unstrawn thy holly crown !  
Not in sorrow dawns thy morrow,  
“ Bonny Jean ” is by thy side,  
    Making life and love keep time ;  
Beauty be thy deathless bride,  
    Weaving all our hearts in rhyme !

III.

Heavy heart and smoky rafter  
    Growing light with Burns's song —  
Calmer tears and clearer laughter —  
    Plaided bosoms brave and strong ;  
Birds are singing, blue - bells ringing,  
Naked Heart in open palm !  
    With thy “ days of auld lang syne,”  
With thy Cotter's evening Psalm,  
    Thou hast made all ages thine.

## IV.

Now the thrush's silver sonnet  
Trembling from the blossom'd thorn,  
Winter floating white upon it—  
Sweetest Lyric ever born!  
BRUCE is breaking—WALLACE waking,  
From the clasp of mighty Death,  
Morven swells the Doric song!—  
Lads' and lassies' blended breath,  
Gushes sweet all summer long!

## V.

O'er the daisy in the furrow  
Bending low with loving words—  
By the mouse's broken burrow—  
Songs of burnies and of birds—  
Breezes blowing—rivers flowing—  
Hark, the beat of bonny DOON,  
LOGAN, DEVON, AFTON, AYR,  
Braided in a pleasant tune,  
“HIGHLAND MARY” in the choir!

Everywhere, everywhere,  
Smiles will break and tears will start,  
Making rainbows round the heart,  
Ploughman, Brother, BARD OF AYR!



*THE COLORED MARBLE.*

**O**N marble beds where violets die  
And the moss rose pillows its pride,  
The marble looks like an azure sky  
Where a cloudless day has died.

The years go by, and out of the shroud  
The statue stands naked in noon ;  
Out of the tint and out of the cloud  
Of a long - forgotten June !

*FLOWERS.*

**F**LOWERS bloom in Christ's Sermon, and all  
the year long  
You can gather a "Sharon" from Solomon's Song.

*THE NEW CRAFT IN THE OFFING.*

'T WAS a beautiful night on a beautiful deep,  
And the man at the helm had just fallen  
asleep,  
And the watch on the deck, with his head on his  
breast,  
Was beginning to dream that another's it pressed,  
When the look-out aloft cried, "A sail! ho! a  
sail!"  
And the question and answer went rattling like  
hail :  
"A sail! ho! a sail!" "Where away?" "No'th-  
no'th-West!"  
"Make her out?" "No, your honor." The din  
drowned the rest.

There indeed is the stranger, the first in these seas,  
Yet she drives boldly on in the teeth of the breeze.

Now her bows to the breakers she steadily turns,  
Oh! how brightly the light of her binnacle burns!  
Not a signal for Saturn this rover has given,  
No salute for our Venus, the flag-star of heaven;  
Not a rag or a ribbon adorning her spars,  
She has saucily sailed by "the red planet Mars;"  
She has doubled triumphant the cape of the Sun  
And the sentinel stars, without firing a gun!  
"Helm a-port!" "Show a light!" "She will  
run us aground!"  
"Fire a gun!" "Bring her to!" "Sail a-hoy!"  
"Whither bound?"

Avast there, ye lubbers! Leave the rudder alone:  
'T is a craft in commission—the Admiral's own;  
And she sails with sealed orders, unopened as  
yet,  
Though her anchors she weighed before Lucifer  
set.  
Ah, she sails by a chart no draughtsman could  
make,  
Where each cloud that can trail and each wave  
that can break;

Where that sparkling flotilla, the Asteroids, lie,  
Where the scarf of red Morning is flung on the sky ;  
Where the breath of the sparrow is staining the  
    air —

On the chart that she bears you will find them all  
    there !

Let her pass on in peace to the port whence she  
    came,

With her trackings of fire and her streamers of  
    flame !

*THE VANE ON THE SPIRE.*

THERE'S an arrow aloft with a feather'd shaft  
That never has flown at the bow-string's  
draft,  
And the goldsmith has hidden the blacksmith's  
craft.

For its heart is of iron, its gleam of gold,  
It is pointed to pierce and barbed to hold,  
And its wonderful story is hardly told.

It is poised on a finger from sun to sun,  
And it catches the glimmer of dawn begun,  
And is floating in light when the day is done.

And it turns at the touch of a viewless hand,  
And it swings in the air like a wizard's wand,  
By the tempest whirled and the zephyr fanned.

And the sinewy finger that cannot tire  
Is the lifted hush of the old church spire  
That vanishes out as heaven is nigher ;

And the arrow upon it the rusted vane  
As true to its master as faith to fane,  
That is swinging forever in sun and rain.

Right about to the North ! And the trumpets blow  
And the shivering air is dim with snow,  
And the earth grows dumb and the brooks run slow ;

And the shaggy Arctic, chilled to the bone,  
Is crouching the world with a human moan,  
And the clank of a chain in the frozen zone ;

And the world is dead in its seamless shroud,  
And the stars wink slow in the rifted cloud,  
And the owl in the oak complains aloud.

But the arrow is true to the iceberg's realm,  
As the rudder staunch in the ghastly whelm  
With a hero by to handle the helm !



Is it welded with frost as iron with fire?  
Up with a blue-jacket! Clamber the spire  
And swing it around to the point of desire!

It sways to the East! And the icy rain  
With the storm's "long roll" on the window pane  
And a diamond point on the crystal vane.

And the cattle stand with the wind astern,  
And the routes of the rain on eave and urn —  
As the drops are halted and frozen in turn —

Are such pendants of wonder as eave and mine  
Never gave to the gaze when the torches shine,  
But right out of Heaven and half divine!

Ah, it swings due South to the zephyr's thrill!  
In the yellow noon it lies as still  
As a speckled trout by the drowsy mill,

While the bugle of Gabriel wakes the sod  
And the beautiful life in the speechless clod,  
'Till the crowded June is a smile for God!

Resurrection to-day ! For the roses spoke !  
Resurrection to-day ! For the rugged oak  
In a live green billow rolled and broke.

And the spider feels for her silken strings,  
And the honey - bee hums and the world has wings,  
And blent with the blue the bluebird sings.

While the cloud is ablaze with the bended bow,  
And the waters white with the lilies' snow,  
On the motionless arrow, all in a row,

Are four little sparrows that pipe so small  
Their carol distils as the dew - drops fall,  
And we only *see* they are singing at all !

Now the arrow is swung with a sweep so bold  
Where the Day has been flinging his garments gold  
'Till they stain the sky with a glow untold.

Ah, the cardinal point of the wind is West !  
And the clouds bear down in a fleet abreast,  
And the world is as still as a child at rest !

There's a binnacle light like an angry star,  
And the growl of a gun with its crash and jar,  
And the roll of a drum where the angels are !

And it tumbles its freight on the dancing grain,  
And it beats into blossom the buds again,  
And it brightens a world baptized in rain,

And it gladdens the earth as it drifts along,  
And the meadow is green and the corn is strong,  
And the brook breaks forth in the same old song !

And I looked for the arrow — it hung there yet,  
With the drops of the rain its barb was wet,  
And the sun shone out in a crimson set ;

And behold, aloft in the ruddy shine  
Where the crystal water again was wine,  
And it hallowed the dart like a touch divine !

Under the sun and under the moon,  
Silver at midnight, golden at noon,  
Could Dian have lost it out of her hair ?  
Phœbus's quiver have shaken it there ?  
That wonderful arrow sweeping the air !

*DECORATION DAY.*

**O**H, be dumb all ye clouds  
As the dead in their shrouds,  
Let your pulses of thunder die softly away,  
Ye have nothing to do  
But to drift round the blue,  
For the emerald world grants a furlough to-day !

Bud, blossom, and flower  
All blended in shower,  
In the grandest and gentlest of rains shall be shed  
On the acres of God  
With their billows of sod  
Breaking breathless and beautiful over the dead !

They do flush the broad land  
With the flower-laden hand,

Drift the dimples of graves with the colors of even ;  
Where a BOY IN BLUE dreams  
A " Forget-me-not " gleams —  
No rain half so sweet ever fell out of Heaven !

From no angel was caught  
The magnificent thought  
To pluck daisies and roses, those *bravest* of things,—  
For they stand all the while  
In their graves with a smile,—  
And to strew with live fragrance dead lions and  
kings !

It was somebody born,  
It was Rachel forlorn,  
'T was the love they named Mary, the trust they  
called Ruth ;  
'T was a *woman* who told  
That the blossoms unfold  
A defiance to death and a challenge for truth ;  
That the violet's eye,  
Though it sleep, by and by  
Shall watch out the long age in the splendor of  
youth.

Ah, she hallowed the hour  
When she gathered the flower ;  
When she said, “ This shall emblem the fame of  
my brave ! ”  
When she thought, “ This shall borrow  
“ Brighter azure to -morrow ; ”  
When she laid it to -day on the crest of a grave !

*A WINTER PSALM.*

A SONG for the meek old Mountains—the  
Mountains grand and strong,  
That lifted winter clear of earth all spring and  
summer long,  
And made it gay with evergreen, and then with  
one accord  
They shouldered the snows in silence and stood  
before the Lord.

They did it for the roses' sake — that robins might  
be born,  
And Indian gold might flash along the rank and  
file of corn,  
And sheafy wigwam everywhere lift up its tawny  
cone,  
And Rachel sing the harvest home where harvest  
moons had shone ;



They did it for the little graves— bade flowers  
and children say,  
We'll smile together by and by and fill the world  
with May!

Well done for the grim old Mountains! And well  
for the King who laid  
Upon their shoulders stout and brave his gold and  
crimson blade.  
'T was meet that the princely Morning, with ban-  
ners all unfurled,  
Should knight them with his royal touch across  
the blushing world.

As softly as on mountain air beatitudes were  
shed,  
As gently as the lilies bud among the words He  
said,  
So did the dear old Mountains lay the sparkling  
winter down  
Upon the poor dumb bosom of a world so bare and  
brown —

So noiselessly and silently, such radiance and rest!  
As if a snowy wing should fold upon a sparrow's  
breast.

Far through the dim uncertain air, as still as asters  
blow,

The downy drowsy feet untold tread out the world  
we know ;

Upon the pine's green fingers set, flake after flake  
they land,

And flicker with a feeble light amid the shadowy  
band ;

Upon the meadows broad and brown where maids  
and mowers sung ;

Upon the meadows gay with gold the dandelions  
flung ;

Upon the farmyard's homely realm, on ricks and  
rugged bars,

Till riven oak and strawy heap were domes and  
silver spars ;

The cottage was an eastern dream with alabaster  
eaves,

And lilacs growing round about with diamonds for  
leaves ;

The well-sweep gray above the roof a silver accent  
stood,

And silver willows wept their way to meet a silver  
wood ;

The russet groves had blossomed white and budded  
full with stars,

The fences were in uniform, the gate-posts were  
hussars ;

The chimneys were in turbans all, with plumes of  
crimson smoke,

And the costly breaths were silver when the laugh-  
ing children spoke ;

And gem and jewel everywhere along the tethers  
strung

Where mantling roses once had climbed and morn-  
ing glories swung.

So through the dim, uncertain air, as still as asters  
blow,

The downy drowsy feet untold tread out the world  
we know.

The glimmer of the violet's eye goes out beneath  
their tread,

White silence lines the ringing street and drifts  
around the dead,

But more than all they trample out the crooked  
paths of men,

And make the stained and wrinkled world all clean  
and young again!

The summer rain hath won sweet song from many  
a tuneful soul

Since God did paint day's alphabet upon the cloudy  
scroll,

But who for the snow shall give us one grand  
angelic psalm,

The beautiful feet of the snow — the feet so pure  
and calm?

Thanks be to God for winter time! That bore the  
Mayflower up,

To pour amid New England snows the treasures  
of its cup,

To fold them in its icy arms, those sturdy Pilgrim  
sires,

And weld an iron brotherhood around their Christ-  
mas fires!

Thanks be to God for winter time ! How strong  
the pulses play,  
And ah, the pulses of the bells are not less sweet  
than they !  
Dear heart of winter, throb again with old melo-  
dious beat,  
Around thy glow for ever heard the play of  
childhood's feet,  
Worn smooth and beautiful the Rock where later  
Pilgrims come  
To harvest all their loves and hopes around the  
hearth of home !

*SAILING OF COLUMBUS.*

IMMORTAL they made it, if anything could,  
That wonderful day when Columbus's brood  
Slipped silently out from the earth's azure eaves,—  
Like a flock of young swallows when summer-time  
leaves,

And plumed up their pinions and parted the blue,  
And the sky was unrent, and the trinity through!  
Shook off the old world and shook out for the new!  
Were they shrived ere they went? Were their  
sins all forgiven?

For they'll flutter their wings at the windows of  
Heaven!

Hark! The Admiral's hail: "World ahoy! Whither  
bound?"

And the answer comes back on a breaker of sound,  
And the flag of the Andes in fire is unfurled,  
And Niagara's thunder of welcome is hurled,  
"We're at anchor, your honor! It is Liberty's  
World!"

*THE CHRYSALIS.*

A COFFIN gray and spotted with gold  
With a mulberry leaf for bier,  
And silken shroud with a silver fold,  
On a shelf is lying near.

They say when April comes to the door,  
And the blue-eyed foundlings wake,  
The humble thing that was dead before  
From its silken sleep shall break ;

A folio flower, in duplicate done,  
Like the face in the eyes of a wife,  
Two leaves shall open slow in the sun  
With a dissyllabic life.



*THE FLAG.*

O H, glimpse of clear heaven,  
    Artillery riven,  
The Fathers' old fallow God seeded with stars,  
    Thy furrows were turning  
    When plowshares were burning,  
And the half of each bout is redder than Mars !

    Flaunt forever thy story  
    Oh, wardrobe of glory !  
Where the Fathers laid down their mantles of blue.  
    And challenged the ages,—  
    Oh, grandest of gages !—  
In covenant solemn, eternal, and true.

*THE HERO OF NEW HAMBURG.*

THE grandest charge of cavalry  
That ever was seen or sung  
The solitary trooper made  
Who spoke in the Latin tongue,  
Bring out your Roman rider  
Who carried the Gulf by storm,  
And the dumb earth closed forever  
And shrouded his vanished form ;  
Sowed like the seed that has fallen,  
'Mid the multitude's acclaim,  
How it blossomed through the ages  
Till it ripened into fame !

I can *match* your daring rider,  
Tell the Roman not to wait !  
There 's another hard behind him  
Drawing rein at Glory's gate !

Comes the deathless Engineer,  
Clears the ages at a leap,  
Crowds the flock of years together  
As a shepherd folds his sheep —  
Right across historic pages  
With a clatter and a clank,  
Craunches time to scintillations,  
Closes up the broken rank,  
Smites the Roman in the flank !

Nevermore shall mighty boatswain  
Pipe all hands with panting fire ;  
Sweep thy soul, oh lion-hearted,  
As Apollo swept the lyre !  
Loose thy grasp, immortal Brakeman !  
Flinging free the iron rein,  
Earth ! be taught articulation,  
Learn by heart the dread refrain,  
Jar and thunder back again !  
Dare ye quench Elijah's chariot,  
Lightning touch and Titan tread ?  
Abandon every wheel and axle,  
Furl forever, flags of red !

Halt him not with battle lantern,  
Show a light as white as day !  
Let him pass, O signal stations,  
His for aye "THE RIGHT OF WAY!"

Flanked by rugged rock and river,  
Death and double side by side —  
Hand upon the mighty bridle,  
See the gallant horseman ride ;  
See the ponderous creature coming,  
Sway and swing along the track,  
Brave postilion in the saddle,  
Flying chambers at his back —  
Chambers bright with hope and dreaming,  
Chambers dark with terror dire —  
Chambers ? Altars for a demon's  
Dreadful sacrifice of fire !

On it comes, the sinewed being,  
With its rider grand and calm,  
Watch and heart keep steady beating  
Like an old long-meter psalm !

Stolen out of Eastern story,  
Garbed in brass, this Arab's dream  
Plunges through the tunneled thunder,  
Cambric needle through a seam ;  
Flickering dimly in the distance,  
Flaring broadly into sight  
With his dawn of human making,  
Break of day in heart of night !  
Grumbling in the lairs of mountains,  
Roaring down the valley broad,  
Rounding out a sturdy headland,  
Blazing like a Grecian god !

Now this rider strangely changes—  
Touch him with a wizard's wand,  
He shall seem a wondrous gunner  
With the lanyard in his hand ;  
Taking sight across the kingdoms,  
Cloud by day, by night a flame,  
He trains his winged artillery,  
At a target taking aim,  
Sure to watch if not to pray.

Drift December, blossom May,  
At a target night and day,  
Full a thousand miles away  
Taking aim !

Columned smokes built high and mighty  
Colonnade the dome of night ;  
Kindles like a face the dial  
With the bursts of furnace light,  
And the rider at his window,  
Watching with a pleasant smile,  
Sees the friendly world to meet him  
Coming down the track the while,  
Sixty seconds make a mile !

Halt him on your rounds, ye Angels,  
Swinging wide the lights of God !  
Watchmen, flash afar the signal,  
“ Death is waiting down the road ! ”  
Halt him with your dropping lanterns,  
Shed like stars from ripened sky —  
Halt him, glances red and lurid,  
Glaring like an angry eye !

All run down the clocks of danger,  
Dials with the sunshine passed !  
Come the keen shrill cry and challenge,  
Death and Duty meet at last !  
Now transfigured stands the rider,  
Flinging down his rude disguise,  
Sturdy hand upon the bridle,  
Telling how a hero dies.  
“ Hold her hard,” he bade the brakeman,  
Clutched the monster by the throat  
Till the bell with sudden clangor  
Tolled as if the sexton smote.  
And the grand rebellious creature  
Plunged into the empty air,  
Swung him out to resurrection  
Clad in Fame’s immortal wear !  
Born alive to song and story  
Comes this Engineer again,  
Comes this man to plead for honor  
As the gage of kingly men ;  
Pleading that the grace of dying  
Is the rarest grace of all ;  
That the earth’s sublimest heroes  
Never heard a bugle call ;



That the clock of Christ's own ages  
Never yet had sounded "one,"  
If this planet's grandest jewel  
Had been nothing but a crown!

To his steed they *lashed* Mazeppa,  
Smithfield clanked with martyrs' chains,  
But this man, bound round with honor,  
Gathering up the iron reins,  
Free as Chimborazo's eagle  
Flaps his pinion over head,  
Charged forlorn at utter danger  
As if Death itself were dead!  
Halt him not with battle lantern,  
Show a light as white as day!  
Let him pass, O signal stations,  
His for aye "THE RIGHT OF WAY!"

*THE GOSPEL OF THE OAK.*

WAR TIME, 1863.

UP to the Sun magnificently near,  
The Lord did build a Californian oak,  
And took no Sabbath in the thousandth year,  
But builded on until it bravely broke  
Into that realm wherein the morning light  
Walks to and fro upon the top of night !  
Around that splendid shaft no hammers rang.  
Nor giants wrought nor truant angels sang,  
But gentle winds and painted birds did bear  
Its corner-stones of glory through the air ;  
Grand volumes green rolled up like cloudy weather.  
And birds and stars went in and out together ;  
When Day on errands from the Lord came down,  
It stepped from Heaven to that leafy crown !

God's mighty mast with all its sails unfurled.  
That ought to make a Druid of the world,

Some Vandal girdled with a zone of death,  
A life of ages perished in a breath !  
Good night, Live Oak ! Proud admiral, farewell !  
The world has wailed when meaner monarchs  
fell !

The year went on, and with it marched sublime,  
Month after Month, the journeymen of Time.  
Then came the May, such wings as angels wear,  
Buds in her hands and blossoms in her hair :  
Above that oak she shook her flowing sleeves —  
*The poor dead tree laughed out with living leaves !*  
Thank God ! Too vast, too grand to die forlorn  
It lived right on ! Brave heart of oak, good  
morn !

I'd be a Roman for the omen grand  
That thunders on the left through all the land —  
God and the Fathers' tree forever stand !  
Oh, growth immortal, reddened in the rain  
That beats out hearts as tempests beat the grain,  
All wrongs died out like breath upon a blade,  
A hunted world fled panting to thy shade,—

Thy roots have searched earth's bosom all around,  
Felt out the graves that make it holy ground —  
Like living hands with love and faith been laid  
In benediction on the sleeping dead !

*THE TWO JOHNS.*

**D**O you think we are crushed out of loving and  
living

By the fall of a clod, when the planet is giving  
To the delicate foot of an ounce of a wren,  
And then surges right up as she lifts it again?  
Oh, Gibeon's Sun! He is yet under orders,  
You can halt him to-day on death's gloomy bor-  
ders ;

Bid brave thoughts and grand deeds the dead  
Joshua play —

“Stand still, mighty Sun!” and the blaze shall  
obey.

Take a page of blind JOHN that angels have  
tramped

Till it looks as if stars broke ranks and encamped —

So strown about with fine gold from Ormus and  
    Ind

That you wonder how angels could ever have  
    sinned,

When old English brocade at such exquisite cost.

To tell the strange story of "Paradise Lost"

Did bankrupt the bard, so nothing remained

To tell us the story of Eden "Regained."

Look down on the page and declare if you can

What business the grave-digger had with the  
    man!

Dare Hamlet's own sexton, or one of his tribe,

Lay an ounce of dead clay upon Cromwell's old  
    scribe?

Those angels of his—they have put them to  
    rout!

Those angels of his—they have lifted him out!

As free of the ages as the winds of the waves,

And abolished that gloomy old fashion of graves!

In this Christendom's realm, in some year of our  
    Lord,

Men attacked with a fagot the soul of a word;

Ah, hundreds of years Christmas carols were sung,  
Ere they dwelt in this world and spoke in our  
tongue

Who groped in the ashes where martyrs were  
chained,

If perchance a live coal of the embers remained,  
And they blew it to life in the name of the kings,  
And the books of this MILTON all took to their  
wings

Like his own bird-of-paradise, crimson and gold,  
And the princes grew warm as the ashes grew cold!  
'T was as if some old Vandal should vainly aspire  
To strike David dumb by just burning his lyre ;—  
The books played Elijah—left their mantle be-  
hind,

And it fell and unfurled, till it kindled mankind.

And that Prince of all Pilgrims, the other twin  
JOHN,—

He will walk in his sleep till the ages are gone ;  
Blow softly, oh Angel ! Let him slumber right on.  
With the swing of the sledge for the music of flutes  
He beat up the world for celestial recruits ;—



He dreamed himself through to the “ Beautiful  
Gate,”

With “ Christian ” for comrade and “ Mercy ” to  
wait.

Time’s sentries cry “ halt ! ” Hark the sturdy  
reply :

Oh, be lifted, ye gates, for old BUNYAN goes by !

Pass on, grand crusader ! Hearts warm to thy  
name —

Good night to thy form but good morn to thy fame !

*BEAUTIFUL "MAY."*

O H, have you not seen on some morning in June,  
When the flowers were in tears and the  
forest in tune,  
And the billows of dawn broke bright on the air,  
On the breast of the brightest a star clinging there?  
Some Sentinel Star, not ready to set,  
Forgetting to wane and watching there yet?  
How you gazed on that vision of beauty awhile,  
How it wavered till won by the light of God's  
smile,  
How it passed through the portals of pearl like a  
bride,  
How it paled as it passed, and the Morning Star  
died!  
The sky was all blushes, the world was all bliss,  
And the prayer of your heart, "Be my ending like  
this!"

So my beautiful MAY passed away from life's even,  
So the blush of her being was blended with Heaven ;  
So the bird of my bosom fluttered up to the dawn —  
Ah, a window was open — my darling was gone —  
A truant from time, from tears, and from sin,  
For the angel on watch took the wanderer in !  
When she warbles to me the New Song that she  
    sings,  
I shall know her again notwithstanding her wings,  
By those eyes full of heaven — by the light on her  
    hair —  
And the smile she wore here she will surely wear  
    there !

*THE NORTHERN LIGHTS.*

**T**O claim the Arctic came the Sun,  
With banners of the burning zone ;  
Unrolled upon their airy spars  
They froze beneath the light of stars ;  
And there they float, those streamers old,  
Those Northern Lights, forever cold !

*INDIAN SUMMER.*

**T**HEN past the yellow regiments of corn  
There came an Indian Maiden, autumn born,  
And June returned and held her by the hand,  
And led Time's smiling Ruth through all the land :  
A veil of golden air was o'er her flung,  
The South wind whispered and the robins sung.

*THE SHATTERED RAINBOW.*

WHEN blazed the trinket of the cloud abroad,  
The bent and broken jewelry of God,  
That fragment of a ring — its *other* part  
Was lost, I dreamed, within the forest's heart.  
And when October came with eager clasp,  
The jewel shivered in his frosty grasp  
And showered the maples with celestial red —  
The oaks were sunsets though the days were dead,  
The green was gold, the willows drooped in wine,  
The ash was fire, the humblest shrub divine.

*FIRE AND WATER.*

**M**AGNIFICENT AGE! When water and fire,  
The lamb and the lion, together conspire,  
And the atom of rain the robins are drinking  
Can set the dull iron to throbbing and thinking.  
It enters the heart of a ship in her sleep —  
There's a cloud on the sky — a wake on the deep —  
There's a soul in the oak that would kindle a  
king,  
And she crashes away without lifting a wing!

Take the old "Franklin press," where the dead  
were laid out,  
And the printer in mourning went plodding about,  
Till a creak and a groan broke the pages' repose,  
And the specters in sheets, one by one, in their  
clothes,  
To a late resurrection reluctantly rose!



Now inspire the machine with flood and with flame,  
And call it a brother and give it a name !

It comes down to the work with a will and a  
clank,

Strikes the types in the face and the wrongs in the  
flank ;

In the flash of an eye the creature has caught  
And kindled and glowed with the life of the  
thought !

Stand clear of the thing ! It is nearing the brink  
Where a being unborn is beginning to think !

It flutters its plumage, and drifts the world white—  
And it snows down the ages its treasures of light !

It flutters its plumage—this marvelous bird,—

Put a lock on your heart and beware of the word  
That *it* pulses abroad, for creation has heard.

The lightning's vernacular thunder, is dumb,

The bolts strike the word, talk English and come ;

The surge tells the billow, the breakers repeat,

Till the waves of the sea wash the words to your  
feet,

Dry-shod from the anchorage down in the brine,  
Swung up by the cable, a creature divine.

See the forge's first-born with its sinews of steel,  
A nerve at each lever and axle and wheel,  
All ready to fly and just ready to feel,  
Pluck out of its caskets great handfuls of power,  
The flocks of mankind all shorn in an hour  
And the fleeces just granted this Thing for a dower,  
To weave as it went a wonderful robe  
To be flung on the sea and apparel the globe !  
Born last of a furnace and first of a dream,  
It learned elocution from eagles that scream ;  
Lo, the flash of its eye as it kindles the track  
With the wild at its front and the world at its  
back !

I beg you to think of the pioneer's stroke  
That the sleep of the wilderness lazily broke :  
The blow of that axe was the beat of the clock  
That timed the whole route from Plymouth's gray  
rock.

Now you bend your ear down to the marvelous  
wire,  
That orbit man strung for articulate fire,—  
For globe and for lightning a nerve and a lyre,—

And you start at a grander chronometer's beat,  
As strong and distinct as a step in the street,  
Away there in the desert, away here in the mart,  
So near that you think it the beat of your heart,  
When the silver-bound laurel lay fast in its place,  
And they gave to the work its finishing grace,  
And you heard with your soul, when the hammer  
let fall,

Drove the golden spike home for good and for all!  
That couplet of iron—match the line if you can,  
The grandest of epics yet uttered by man—  
Has heaved up the sky, reft the blue from the  
green!

See the western horizon sublimely careen  
To let in the East and its kingdoms between!

*" ATLANTIC."*

**A**Y, build her long and narrow and deep!  
She shall cut the sea with a scimeter's sweep,  
Whatever betides and whoever may weep!

Bring out the red wine! Lift the glass to the lip!  
With a roar of great guns, and a "Hip! hip!  
"Hurrah!" for the craft, we will christen the ship!

Dash a draught on the bow! Ah, the spar of  
white wood  
Drips into the sea till it colors the flood  
With the very own double and symbol of blood!

Now out with the name of the monarch gigantic  
That shall queen it so grandly when surges are  
frantic!

Child of fire and of iron, God save the ATLANTIC!

All freighted with power below and above,  
The heart of a fiend and the wing of a dove—  
Tumble in the brave cargo of life and of love!

Good for a thousand souls! Hustle them in!  
Your mother and mine shall the census begin;  
Then tell off the children too little to sin!

With furnace of fire and forest of mast,  
She can conquer the calm and rally the blast;  
But fuel is costly! Coal-heavers avast!

Ah, those ebony heaps that cumber the hold  
Can never be reckoned in silver and gold—  
Ten lives to the ton, and an anguish untold!

Alas for the lack of a handful of coals;  
Alas for the ship that is haunted with souls;  
Alas for the bell that eternally tolls!

All aboard, my fine fellows! "Up anchor!" the  
word—

Ah, never again shall that order be heard,  
For two worlds will be mourning ye gone to a third!

To the trumpet of March wild gallops the sea ;  
The white-crested troopers are under the lee —  
Old World and New World and Soul-World are  
three

Great garments of rain wrap the desolate night ;  
Sweet Heaven disastered is lost to the sight ;  
"ATLANTIC," crash on in the pride of thy might !  
With thy look-out's dim cry, "One o'clock, and  
all right !"

Ho, down with the hatches ! The seas come  
aboard !

All together they come, like a passionate word  
Like pirates that put every soul to the sword !

Their black flag all abroad makes murky the air,  
But the ship parts the night as a maiden her  
hair —

Through and through the thick gloom, from land  
here to land there,

Like the shuttle that weaves for a mourner to  
wear !

Good night, proud "ATLANTIC!" One tick of  
the clock,  
And a staggering craunch and a shivering shock—  
'T is the flint and the steel! 'T is the ship and  
the rock!

Deathless sparks are struck out from the bosoms  
of girls,  
From the stout heart of manhood in scintillant  
whirls,  
Like the stars of the Flag when the banner un-  
furls!

What hundreds went up unto God in their sleep!  
What hundreds in agony baffled the deep—  
Nobody to pray and nobody to weep!

Alas for the flag of the single "White Star,"  
With light pale and cold as the woman's hands are  
Who, froze in the shrouds, flashed her jewels  
afar,  
Lost her hold on the world, and then clutched at a  
spar!



God of mercy and grace ! How the bubbles come  
up  
With souls from the revel, who stayed not to sup ;  
Death drank the last toast, and then shattered the  
cup !

*Who* crushed these poor hearts that wild terror  
environ ?—  
Atlantic of water ? Atlantic of iron ?  
The den where they bearded the granite old  
lion ?  
The God of the sparrows ? A breath from Mount  
Zion ?

Bring the World into court ! Bid the verdict be  
given !  
" To this true word we render, resistlessly driven,  
" And so say we all — NOT GUILTY, 'fore Heaven ! "

Poor handful of carbon ! Call humanity's roll  
For the fellow who thought, " Ah, how costly is  
coal ! "  
He loses who bids *any* price for his soul !

And Christ died for this man — this pitiful creature !

Made like the noblest in fashion and feature —  
Saint John the Belov'd and the Wilderness  
Preacher !

Too sordid for soul and too subtle for sod,  
Let us lock out of heart the poor animate clod,  
And leave the new Cain and his brother with God !

---

In the clash of the leaves of the frantic woods,  
And the turbulent whirl of the angry floods,  
And the rumble and roar of the cloudy broods,

In the height of the storm, you have sometimes  
heard

The melodious voice of an unseen bird,  
And so clear and so brave that your heart was  
stirred ;

It seemed to be Faith set anew to a song,  
That the weakest of things need never fear wrong  
If they only believe in the true and the strong.

In that bitterer storm, when the plunge of the  
wreck

Tossed the white forms at will that were strewing  
the deck,

As the foam-flakes are tossed on a war-horse's  
neck,

And men growing grim in their hunger for life.  
And husband in frenzy abandoning wife  
To struggle alone in the desperate strife.

Then a voice brave and young rose sweet through  
the din :

"Lend a hand ! I'm alone with a lifetime to win !"  
'T was the song of an angel rebuking the sin.

Then the brute that's in men slunk back to its  
lair —

Strong fingers were wound in the boy's curly  
hair —

"Pass the lad right along ! My chance he shall  
share !"

*THE CAVALRY CHARGE*

**H**ARK! the rattling roll of the musketeers,  
And the ruffled drums and the rallying  
cheers,

And the rifles burn with a keen desire  
Like the crackling whips of a Hemlock fire,  
And the singing shot and the shrieking shell  
And the splintered fire of the shattered hell,  
And the great white breaths of the cannon smoke  
As the growling guns by batteries spoke;  
And the ragged gaps in the walls of blue  
Where the iron surge rolled heavily through,  
That the Colonel builds with a breath again  
As he cleaves the din with his "Close up, men!"  
And the groan torn out from the blacken'd lips,  
And the prayer doled slow with the crimson drips,  
And the beaming look in the dying eye  
As under the cloud the STARS go by,

“ But his soul marched on,” the Captain said,  
For the Boy in Blue can never be dead !

---

And the troopers sit in their saddles all  
Like statues carved in an ancient hall,  
And they watch the whirl from their breathless  
ranks,

And their spurs are close to the horses' flanks.  
And the fingers work of the sabre hand —  
Oh, to bid them live, and to make them grand !  
And the bugle sounds to the charge at last,  
And away they plunge and the front is passed !  
And the jackets blue grow red as they ride,  
And the scabbards too, that clank by their side,  
And the dead soldiers deaden the strokes iron shod  
As they gallop right on o'er the plashy red sod —  
Right into the cloud all spectral and dim,  
Right up to the guns black-throated and grim,  
Right down on the hedges bordered with steel,  
Right through the dense columns, then “ right  
about wheel ! ”

Hurrah ! A new swath through the harvest again !  
Hurrah for the Flag ! To the battle, Amen !

*FORT DEARBORN.*

THE OLD — *October 8th, '71.*    THE NEW — *October 8th, '73.*

BORN of the prairie and the wave — the blue  
    sea and the green,  
A city of the Occident, CHICAGO lay between ;  
Dim trails upon the meadow, faint wakes upon  
    the main,  
On either sea a schooner and a canvas-covered  
    wain.

I saw a dot upon the map, and a house-fly's filmy  
    wing —  
They said 't was Dearborn's picket-flag when  
    Wilderness was king ;  
I heard the reed-bird's morning song — the In-  
    dian's awkward flail —  
The rice tattoo in his rude canoe like a dash of  
    April hail —

The beaded grasses' rustling bend — the swash of  
the lazy tide,  
Where ships shake out the salted sails and navies  
grandly ride !

I heard the Block-house gates unbar, the column's  
solemn tread,  
I saw the Tree of a single leaf its splendid foliage  
shed  
To wave awhile that August morn above the  
column's head ;  
I heard the moan of muffled drum, the woman's  
wail of fife,  
The Dead March played for Dearborn's men just  
marching out of life,  
The swooping of the savage cloud that burst upon  
the rank  
And struck it with its thunderbolt in forehead and  
in flank,  
The spatter of the musket-shot, the rifles' whistling  
rain —  
The sand-hills drift round hope forlorn that never  
marched again !



I SEE in tasseled rank and file the regiments of  
corn,

Their bending sabres, millions strong, salute the  
summer morn ;

The harvest - fields, as round and red as full - grown  
harvest - moon,

That fill the broad horizons up with mimic gold of  
noon ;

I count a thousand villages like flocks in pastures  
grand,

I hear the roar of caravans through all the blessed  
land —

CHICAGO grasps the ripened year and holds it in  
her hand !

“ Give us this day our daily bread ! ” the planet’s  
Christian prayer ;

CHICAGO, with her open palm, makes answer  
everywhere !

I hear the march of multitudes who said the map  
was wrong —

They drew the net of Longitude and brought it  
right along,



And swung a great Meridian Line across the  
Foundling's breast,  
And the city of the Occident was neither East  
nor West!  
Her charter is no dainty thing of parchment and  
of pen,  
But written on the prairie's page by full a million  
men ;  
They use the ploughshare and the spade, and end-  
less furrows run,  
Line after line the record grows, and yet is just  
begun ;  
They rive the pines of Michigan and give them to  
the breeze —  
The keel-drawn Charter's draft inscribes the  
necklace of the seas,  
'Tis rudely sketched in anthracite, engraved on  
copper plate,  
And traced across the Continent to Ophir's Golden  
Gate !  
The Lord's Recording Angel holds the Charter in  
his hand —  
He seals it on the sea, and he signs it on the land !

Unroll the royal Charter now! It "marches"  
with the West,  
Embossed along its far frontier, Sierra's silver  
crest;  
Along its hither border shines a sacred crystal  
chain:  
God cursed of old the weedy ground, but never  
cursed the main,  
As free to-day from earthly sin as Eden's early  
rain!

"I found a Rome of common clay," Imperial  
Cæsar cried;  
"I left a Rome of marble!" No other Rome be-  
side!  
The ages wrote their autographs along the sculp-  
tured stone —  
The golden eagles flew abroad — Augustan splen-  
dors shone —  
They made a Roman of the world! They trailed  
the classic robe,  
And flung the Latin toga around the naked  
globe!

“ I found Chicago wood and clay,” a mightier  
Kaiser said,  
Then flung upon the sleeping mart his royal robes  
of red,  
And temple, dome, and colonnade, and monument  
and spire,  
Put on the crimson livery of dreadful Kaiser Fire!  
The stately piles of polished stone were shattered  
into sand,  
And madly drove the dread simoon, and snowed  
them on the land!  
And rained them till the sea was red, and scorched  
the wings of prayer!  
Like thistle-down ten thousand homes went drift-  
ing through the air,  
And dumb Dismay walked hand in hand with  
frozen-eyed Despair!  
CHICAGO vanished in a cloud—the towers were  
storms of sleet,  
Lo! ruins of a thousand years along the spectral  
street!  
The night burned out between the days! The  
ashen hoar-frost fell,

As if some demon set ajar the bolted gates of hell,  
And let the molten billows break the adamantine  
bars,

And roll the smoke of torment up to smother out  
the stars !

The low, dull growl of powder - blasts just dotted  
off the din,

As if they tolled for perished clocks the time that  
*might* have been !

The thunder of the fiery surf roared human accents  
dumb ;

The trumpet's clangor died away a wild bee's  
drowsy hum,

And breakers beat the empty world that rumbled  
like a drum.

O cities of the Silent Land ! O Graceland and  
Rosehill !

No tombs without their tenantry ? The pale host  
sleeping still ?

Your marble thresholds dawning red with holo-  
caustal glare,

As if the Waking Angel's foot were set upon the  
stair !

But ah, the human multitudes that marched before  
the flame,  
As 'mid the Red Sea's wavy walls the ancient  
people came !  
Behind, the rattling chariots ! the Pharaoh of Fire !  
The rallying volley of the whips—the jarring of  
the tire !  
Looked round, and saw the homeless world as  
dismal as a pyre—  
Looked up, and saw God's blessèd Blue a firma-  
ment so dire !  
As in the days of burning Troy, when Virgil's  
hero fled,  
So gray and trembling pilgrims found some younger  
feet instead,  
That bore them through the wilderness with bold  
elastic stride,  
And Ruth and Rachel, pale and brave, in silence  
walked beside ;  
Those Bible girls of Judah's day did make *that*  
day sublime—  
Leave life but *them*, no other loss can ever bank-  
rupt Time !

Men stood and saw their all caught up in chariots  
of flame —  
No mantle falling from the sky they ever thought  
to claim,  
And empty - handed as the dead, they turned away  
and smiled,  
And bore a stranger's household gods and saved a  
stranger's child !  
What valor brightened into shape, like statues in  
a hall,  
When on their dusky panoply the blazing torches  
fall,  
Stood bravely out and saw the world spread wings  
of fiery flight,  
And not a trinket of a star to crown disastered  
night !

“ Who runs these lines of telegraph ? ” A clock-  
tick made reply :

“ ‘ The greatest of the three ’ has brought this  
message from the sky,

“ **The Lord will send an Angel down to work these  
lines to-day !** ”

Charge all the batteries good and strong ! Give  
GOD the right of way !

And so the swift evangels ran by telegraphic time,  
And brought the cheer of Christendom from every  
earthly clime ;

Celestial fire flashed round the globe, from Norway  
to Japan,

Proclaimed the MANHOOD of the race, the BROTHER-  
hood of man !

Then flashed a hundred engines' arms — then flew  
the lightning trains ;

They had that day the right of way — gave every  
steed the reins —

The minutes came, the minutes went — the miles  
fled just the same —

And flung along October night their starry flags  
of flame !

They all were angels in disguise, from hamlet,  
field, and mart,

CHICAGO'S fire had warmed the World that had  
her woe by heart.

“ Who is my neighbor ? ” One and all : “ We see  
her signal light,



“ And She our *only* neighbor now, this wild October night ! ”

“ I found CHICAGO wood and clay,” the royal  
Kaiser cried,  
And flung upon the sleeping mart the mantle in  
his pride ;  
It lay awhile — he lifted it, and there beneath the  
robe  
A city done in lithograph, the wonder of the globe ;  
Where granite grain and marble heart, in strength  
and beauty wed,—  
“ I leave a mart of palaces,” the haughty Kaiser  
said.

Now, thanks to GOD, this blessèd day, to whom  
all thanks belong—  
The clash of silver cymbals, the rhyme of the little  
song—  
Whose Hand did hive the golden bees that swarm  
the azure dome,  
Whence honey-dews forever fall around this  
earthly home—



Did constellate the prairie sod and light it up with  
flowers —

That Hand defend from fire and flood this Prairie  
Flower of ours !

This volume of the royal West we bring in grate-  
ful gage,

We open at the frontispiece and give it to the Age,  
Who wrote the word CHICAGO *twice* upon the  
title - page !

*THE ISLE OF THE LONG AGO.*

O H, a wonderful stream is the River Time,  
As it flows through the realm of Tears,  
With a faultless rhythm and a musical rhyme,  
And a broader sweep and a surge sublime  
As it blends with the ocean of Years.

II.

How the winters are drifting like flakes of snow !  
And the summers like buds between ;  
And the year in the sheaf—so they come and  
they go  
On the River's breast with its ebb and flow,  
As they glide in the shadow and sheen.

III.

There 's a magical Isle up the River Time  
Where the softest of airs are playing ;  
There 's a cloudless sky and a tropical clime,  
And a voice as sweet as a vesper chime,  
And the Junes with the roses are staying.

IV.

And the name of this Isle is the Long Ago,  
And we bury our treasures there ;  
There are brows of beauty and bosoms of snow —  
They are heaps of dust, but we loved them so !  
There are trinkets and tresses of hair.

V.

There are fragments of song that nobody sings,  
And a part of an infant's prayer,  
There 's a harp unswept and a lute without strings.  
There are broken vows and pieces of rings,  
And the garments that she used to wear.

VI.

There are hands that are waved when the fairy  
shore  
By the mirage is lifted in air ;  
And we sometimes hear through the turbulent  
roar  
Sweet voices we heard in the days gone before.  
When the wind down the River is fair.

## VII.

Oh, remembered for aye be the blessed Isle  
All the day of our life till night,  
And when evening comes with its beautiful smile,  
And our eyes are closing in slumber awhile,  
May that "GREENWOOD" of soul be in sight.

*THE ROSE AND THE ROBIN.*

THE yellow rose leaves falling down  
Pay golden toll to passing June,  
The robin's breast of golden brown  
Is trembling with an ancient tune.

The rose will bloom another year,  
The robin and his wife will come,  
But he who sees may not be here,  
And he who sings be dumb.

Thy grace be mine, oh yellow rose!  
My heart like thine its blossoms shed,  
Grow fragrant to the fragrant close,  
And sweetest when I'm dead.

And so like thee I'll pay my way  
In coin that time can never rust,  
And footsteps sound another day  
Though feet have turned to dust!

Thy gift be mine, oh singing bird !  
My song like thine round home and heart :  
To Song, God never said the word  
“ To dust return, for dust thou art ! ”

## *N O T E S.*

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**TORNADO SUNDAY.**—The memorable tornado that swept over Iowa, destroying the village of Camanche and leaving across the State a broad track of death and desolation. A meeting for the relief of the sufferers was held in Chicago, and the poem was written for the occasion.

**THE HERO OF NEW HAMBURG.**—On the night of February 6th, 1871, an oil train was wrecked on the track near the bridge at New Hamburg, on the Hudson River Railroad. The Express train bound West ran into the wreck, the bridge took fire and fell, and twenty - one persons in the Buffalo sleeping car were killed. The Engineer, E. H. SIMMONS, remained upon his engine, doing what he could to avert the threatened disaster, and failing in this, looked death in the face, chose it to desertion, and perished at his post.

**GOING HOME.**—A poor disheartened emigrant returning to his Eastern home from the far West, met in the streets of La Porte, Indiana, a hearse on its way to the City of the Silent. He turned aside, halted, and, with his wife and children, watched the sad procession. The poor fellow had told his story to some one never suspected of a spark of poetry, who, as he watched the meeting from the sidewalk, said, "Well, one is going East and the other going West, but they're bound the same way after all—both going home!"

**THE VANE ON THE SPIRE.**—During the bitter and death-dealing days of the winter and spring of 1872 I often watched the gilded

arrow that swings upon the spire of the Methodist Church. And it always had a meaning for me — sometimes sad, a few times glad, and always true. Day after day, week after week, that arrow pointed North — pointed East : *always* North, always East — like the finger of Fate. The chill winds blew ; the cold storms came ; there were beds of languishing ; there were new-made graves. Frost, sorrow, and death ruled the air in company. And all the while, the arrow told the story,

At last there came some genial days, when flowers blossomed, birds sang, the weak grew strong, and the graves were green.

The arrow on the spire had swung round to the South ; it told the story still. It was no longer the finger of Fate, but a thing of beauty — a piece of aerial jewelry. It had eloquence enough to inspire a little song, had there been anybody to write it.

FIRE AND WATER.—All being ready to connect the two grand divisions of the Union Pacific Railroad, delegations from the Atlantic and Pacific coasts met, and the last spike was driven with simple but impressive ceremonies. The tie was silver-bound laurel and the spike of Californian gold. The wires of the telegraph were so connected that the fall of the hammer was echoed at nearly the same instant in offices thousands of miles away.

“ATLANTIC.”—The steamship “Atlantic,” struck a rock on the morning of April 1st, 1873, and was wrecked, with a fearful sacrifice of human life. The ship was out of her course, and if any reason existed for the fatal variation it was the fear that the supply of coal was insufficient to take it into its destined port. The incident of the saving of the lad, John Hanly, awakened universal interest and sympathy.











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