



PLANTATION SONGS

Ruth McEnery Stuart





Class PS2960

Book P6

Copyright N^o _____

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

PLANTATION SONGS



“Oh, shoutin’s mighty sweet.”

PLANTATION SONGS

AND OTHER VERSE

BY
RUTH McENERY STUART

Author of "Sonny," "Carlotta's Intended," etc.



Illustrated by E. W. KEMBLE

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
NEW YORK LONDON

1916

PS 2960
.76

COPYRIGHT, 1916, BY
RUTH McENERY STUART



Printed in the United States of America

JUL -6 1916

16-14815

© Cl. A 433626

1.25

11.16

CONTENTS

PLANTATION SONGS

	PAGE
BEAUTY-LAND	3
WASH-DAY	6
LADY MIS' EVE	8
APRIL	9
STARS AND DIMPLES	10
THE PARADISE-BIRD	12
ADAM'S APPLE	17
WHEN DE SUN SWINGS LOW	18
PLANTATION HOE SONG	20
LADY-BABY	24
WHY?	29
JUNIOR-MAN	31
OL' MAMMY MUMBLE-LOW	35
THE SISTERS	36
JES HER WAY	39
THE FORTUNE-TELLER	43
REVEREND MINGO MILLENYUM'S ORDINATION	46
ROSES	51
COME ALONG, MISS NANCY	53
TIGER-LILIES	55
LUCINDY	57
OH, LOVE'S MY MEAT	62
WINNIE	64
WASHERWOMAN'S HYMN	68
DE STAR IN DE EAST	70
OH, SHOUTIN'S MIGHTY SWEET	72
VOICES	74

CONTENTS

	PAGE
O MY SOUL, YOU MUS' BE WALKIN' IN YO' SLEEP	77
OH, DE LORD, HE WALKED DE WATERS	80
OH, HEABEN'S MIGHTY CLOSE	82

SONGS OF LIFE AND LOVE

THE SEA OF PEACE	85
CONSECRATION	87
ALLEGIANCE	89
DISARMAMENT	90
BEWARE THE LEAVEN	92
MARY	93
BETHLEHEM	95
THE GENTLING YEARS	97
SITTING BLIND BY THE SEA	99
COMPANIONSHIP	102
APRIL DREAMING	103
THE BLUE	104
SERVICE	105
THE CYCLE	
I. NATURE'S RHYTHM	106
II. THE MOSAIC LAW	108
III. THE GOSPEL	110
BROTHERHOOD	112
LIFE'S ARRAIGNMENT	117
LIFE AND THE VISION	122

JUST FOR FUN

YE MERRY PEACEMAKERS	125
OCTOBER	129
THE MAN IN THE MOON	133

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

“Oh, shoutin’s mighty sweet”	<i>Frontispiece</i> ✓
	PAGE
“Ol’ Marse Adam”	15 ✓
“So wid my hoe I go— Row on row, row on row—”	21 ✓
“Tell ’em mammy’s black an’ ol’, Human sins is on ’er soul, But she gyards de chillen’s fol’—”	25 ✓
“He’d call dem Scriptures out”	47 ✓
“Tell de trufe, Lucindy’s ways Gits me so upsot some days—”	59 ✓

PLANTATION SONGS

BEAUTY-LAND

A LULLABY

KIVER up yo' eye, my baby, wid yo' mammy's
sleeve,

When de windy elemints is callin' out aloud,
Dat's de way de stars dey go to sleep, I do
believe:

Mammy Night she kivers up her babies wid
a cloud.

White mamma, lady mamma, she's so
mighty gay,

Beauty's boun' to dance at de ball;
But black mammy, nigger mammy,
ain't a-gwine away,

Nuver leave 'er sleepin' baby 't all.

All about in Slumber-lan' dey's beauty layin'
roun'—

Layin' loose, a-waitin' for de chillen to come
in;

PLANTATION SONGS

Yisterday my baby went, an' what you think
she foun'

But dem creases in 'er wris'es an' dat dimple
in 'er chin?

White mamma, lady mamma, she's so
mighty gay,

Satins boun' to rustle at de ball;

But black mammy, nigger mammy,
nuver gwine away—

Ain't expected nowhar else at all.

Lady mamma walked in Beauty's garden as a
babe;

Same ol' nigger mammy settin' watchin' at
de gate,

Trusted wid de treasure dough dey say she was
a slabe—

Oh, chillen, quit yo' foolin', 'caze de times is
gittin' late.

White mamma, lady mamma, she's so
mighty gay,

Boun' to greet de gov'ner at de ball;

But black mammy, nigger mammy,
ain't a-gwine away—

No, sir, Mister Angel, don't you call.

BEAUTY-LAND

Baby 's gone to Beauty-lan'—de pinky gates
is shet—

So mammy gwine a-noddin', too, to gyar-
dens in de sky,

To view de heavenly mansions whar de golden
streets is set,

An' mammy an' her babies will be gethered,
by an' by.

White mamma, lady mamma, she's so
mighty gay,

Boun' to grace de 'casion at de ball;

But black mammy, nigger mammy,
ain't a-gwine away—

Nuver leave 'er sleepin' baby 't all.

WASH-DAY

Oh, de sunrise, but it's sweet!
An' de dew-grass licks my feet
When I balamces my bundle on my head,
An' I sa'nters to de spring
Whar de risin' bubbles sing
In de chiny-grove behin' de cattle-shed.

Oh, dey's lather in soap,
An' dey's bubbles in hope;
But my love he's in de shed amongs' de calves,
An' he'll meet me by de mill
At de risin' o' de hill—
'Caze he knows I totes my bundle tied in
halves.

He's a skimpy little nigger,
But I wouldn't have him bigger;
He's de figger an' de face o' my desire:
Jes as sweet an' dry an' spindlin'
As my pine he splits for kindlin'—
Takes a mighty little thing to light a fire.

WASH-DAY

When de dusk brings out de edges
O' de west'ard-growin' hedges,
An' each gou'd-flower on de stable is a sun,
F'om de fiel' beyon' my bleachin'
Comes a cow-song, so beseechin'
Dat I fools aroun' untel de milkin's done.

Clo'es is sweeter once dewed over
Layin' out upon de clover,
An' a night-shower nuver does 'em any harm;
So, at sundown, shadder-figgers
Of two empty-handed niggers
Dances, tall, across de medders, arm in arm.

An' we watches 'em an' giggles,
An' I dodges an' I wriggles,
So de shadder-man can't tech de lady's wais'
Till he reaches wid a motion
Dat's perzac'ly to my notion;
Den I 'bleged to let him span it to his tas'e.

.
Yas, de risin' sun is sweet,
But de goin' down's complete;
On'y trouble is it seems to come too soon;
But dey's allus one dark minute
Wid de tas'e o' heaven in it—
Jes' a kissin'-space, betwix' de sun an' moon.

LADY MIS' EVE

OLE Cap'n Devil tuk a walk in Paradise—

Lady Mis' Eve she's a-walkin', too—
Hoped to meet Mars' Adam, she was steppin'
mighty nice—

Lady Mis' Eve she's a-walkin', too—

Dis was 'fo' de fig-time, so my lady picked a
rose—

Lady Mis' Eve she's a-walkin', too—
An' she helt it 'g'inst de sunlight, as she felt de
need o' clo'es—

Lady Mis' Eve she's a-walkin', too—

Den she shuk 'er yaller ringlets down an'
'lowed dat she was dressed—

Lady Mis' Eve had a walkin' fit—
Cap'n Devil come a-quoilin'—ever'body knows
de rest—

Lady Mis' Eve she's a-walkin' yit.

APRIL

ON THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI

Ol' Jack Frost he sneaks, a-creepin',
While Sis' Snow she's dwindled, sleepin';
April 's blinkin' yonder, weepin',
 Wid a rainbow 'g'inst her hair,
 So dey mus' be sun somewhere.

Heavy fogs lays on de river
Whar de greenin' willers shiver
Tell gray blankets wrop an' kiver
 All de trimblin' branches bare—
 An' no sign o' sun nowhere.

Bright new ginghams in de churches,
Schoolmarms trimmin' limber birches,
Ol' man diggin' bait for pyerches,
 Hummin', "Fishes sho to bite,
 Ef dis sun don't shine too bright."

Boys an' gals all out a-co'tin',
Lots o' fun an' music floatin'
Out amongst de rafts an' boatin';
 Oh, dey's plenty sunshine there
 Whether skies is dark or clair!

STARS AND DIMPLES

OL' Sis Cow was jes' a-perishin' to laugh,
So she had to chaw hard on her cud
When she come a-trudgin' home wid a little
spotted calf
Dat she 'lowed she had found in de wood.

Three white stars like its mammy's on its ears—
Cow, she took de number wid a grin,
Same as de chillen's mammy, tickled mos' to
tears
At her dimples breakin' out in baby's chin.

Six white stars down a-waitin' at de gate—
Sundown drappin' into dark—
Calfie ambles middlin' stiddy, spotted head
agin' its mate;
Wonder do it reco'nize de mark!

Wonder do de Baby know de mammy-dimples,
too,
When he doubles up his fist to pound 'em in,

STARS AND DIMPLES

A-crowin' an' a-preachin', wid a high ol' hulla-
baloo,

Whilst dey interchange de secret, chin to
chin.

THE PARADISE-BIRD

HOW HE GOT HIS COLORS AND LOST HIS SONG

OH, de Paradise-bird in de knowledge tree
In Eden's gyarden, he sez, sezee:
"I better roost high, I do believe,
'Caze ruction's brewin' 'twix' Adam an' Eve;
Dey's apples in 'er cheek an' hunger in 'is eye.
Oh, yas," he 'low, "I better roos' high!"
(Whilst Adam an' Eve, like chillen strayed
Aroun' dat apron-fig-tree's shade.)

De bird was gray as de pyerchin' limb,
So he could look down an' dey couldn't see him,
Yit he roosted high like a wisdom bird,
But he saw what he saw an' he heard what he
heard;
He heard dat snake when he sclaimed, sezee:
"I blegged to squirm aroun' dis apple-tree!"
(To see what's what, e'vesdrop on Eve,
An' fin' what Adam got up 'is sleeve.)*

* He tuk dat word f'om 'is sarpint sight,
'Caze he seen how he'd soon have 'em dressed, all right.

THE PARADISE-BIRD

Den de Paradise-bird, he tried to hum,
But de talkin' snake had skeered 'im dumb;
And de Bible facts, dey rushed so fast,
He sca'cely sensed when de apple passed—
Wid de angel o' wrath—an' de flamin' sword—
An' de call for "ADAM!" in de voice o' de
Lord;

(An' him an' Eve hid back in de corn,
Sewin' fig-leaf clo'es wid a o'ange thorn).

Brer Paradise-bird looked on untel
He teetered on 'is limb tel he all but fell;
Still, he kep' 'is color tel Adam, sezee:
"Dis lady, O Lord, wha' you loaned me,
She tempted me so'e wid a bait o' fruit,
An' we back heah, sewin' a proper suit.

(Den he heerd ol' Adam chuckle an' say:
"Dat apron-fig-tree saved de day!")

He spoke sort o' hoa'se, lak 'is throat was so'e,
'S ef 'is words got clogged 'ginst de apple-
co'e;

An' it sounded so mean to de Paradise-bird,
After all he'd seen an' all he'd heard,
Dat he felt 'isself turn all green in de face
('Caze a he-bird feels any man's disgrace).

PLANTATION SONGS

An' he trimbled an' he shivered, wid no
pertense,
An' he turned ev'ry color, an' he ain't sung
sence!



“Ol’ Marse Adam.”

ADAM'S APPLE

OL' Marse Adam! OL' Marse Adam!
Et de lady's apple up an' give her all de blame.
Greedy-gut, greedy-gut, whar is yo' shame?
OL' Marse Adam, man, whar is yo' shame?

OL' Marse Adam! OL' Marse Adam!
Caught de apple in 'is neck an' made it mighty
so'e.
An' so we po' gran'chillen has to swaller roun'
de co'e.
OL' Marse Adam, man, whar is yo' shame?

OL' Marse Adam! OL' Marse Adam!
Praised de lady's attitudes an' compliment 'er
figur'—
Did n't have de principle of any decent nigger.
OL' Marse Adam, man, whar is yo' shame?

OL' Marse Adam! OL' Marse Adam!
Et de lady's apple up an' give her all de blame.
Greedy-gut, greedy-gut, whar is yo' shame?
OL' Marse Adam, man, shame on you, shame!

WHEN DE SUN SWINGS LOW

LOOK out for Mister Swaller when de sun
swings low—

Watch him swoop an' sway!
He keeps a mighty dippin', like he don' know
whar to go,
A-saggin' every way.
He starts sort o' nimbly,
But he settles mighty wimbly
When he scurries for de chimbley
When de sun swings low.

Does you see a cloud a-risin' when de sun
swings low?

Listen ef it sings;
Hit's a swarm o' gray muskitties, 'bout a mil-
lion strong or so,
A-sharpenin' up dey stings.
Dey keeps a mighty filin',
An' dey tries to sing beguillin',
But de 'skitties' song is rilin'
When de sun swings low.

WHEN DE SUN SWINGS LOW

Oh, de woods is all conversin' when de sun
swings low—

Bird an' beast an' tree;

Dey all communes together in de languages
dey know,

An' sperits rise to see.

De nightmares prances,

An' de wull-o'-wust dances,

When de moonlight advances

An' de sun swings low.

PLANTATION HOE SONG

HEAH wid my hoe I go—
Row on row, row on row—
 Hoein' my corn:
Five stalks for every hill—
One for de rust to kill,
One for de cutworm's bill,
 Three for de barn.

Red-waistcoat robin sings
Up 'mong's' de greenin' things,
 Mate on de nest;
My pardner's nestin' too,
Nestin' like humans do—
Got lonesome, same as you,
 Robin Redbreast.

So wid my hoe I go—
Row on row, row on row—
 Proud as a king.
Dry-rot an' damp mildew
Mus' share in all I do;
But Gord's my pardner, too—
 Dat's why I sing.



“So wid my hoe I go—
Row on row, row on row—”

PLANTATION HOE SONG

Robin, he "knows it all,"
'Ca'se he can sing an' call—
 Dat's on'y half;
Maybe a bird can shirk,
Singin' like lazy clerk,
But on'y men dat work
 Knows how to laugh.

Whilst his slim mate an' him
Built on de apple limb,
 I sowed my lan',
Three grains in every hole:
One for de shovin' mole,
One for de devil's toll,
 One for to stan'.

So wid my hoe I go—
Row on row, row on row—
 Laughin' along;
Let robin sing at ease
Whilst I hoes corn an' peas:
Gord plants him cherry trees
 Jes for his song.

LADY-BABY

LULLABY

Go to sleep, my lady-baby, please, ma'am!
Dream about de purty t'ings,
Silky frocks an' finger-rings,
Fit to dazzle queens an' kings;
Take yo' pick, my purty little lady-baby,
please, ma'am!

Refrain

Don't be 'fraidy, baby,
Mammy's little lady-baby—
Bye—oh, bye—oh, bye!

Go to sleep, my lady-baby, please, ma'am!
Angels waits to fly wid you
All de heavenly dream-lan' th'ough—
Twix' de stars an' up de blue—
Sail away, my lily-one, my lady-baby, please,
ma'am!



“Tell ’em mammy’s black an’ ol’,
Human sins is on ’er soul,
But she gyards de chillen’s fol’—”

LADY-BABY

Refrain

Don't be 'fraidy, baby,
Mammy's little lady-baby—
Bye—oh, bye—oh, bye!

Go to sleep, my lady-baby, please, ma'am!
Little prince wid yaller hair
Waitin' for my chil' somewhere,
Whilst she's growin' tall an' fair;
Sleep an' grow, my co'tly little lady-baby,
please, ma'am!

Refrain

Don't be 'fraidy, baby,
Mammy's little lady-baby—
Bye—oh, bye—oh, bye!

Go to sleep, my lady-baby, please, ma'am!
Walk in dreams wid angels white,
Rainbow-dressed an' crowned wid light,
Smile an' mammy'll see de sight—
Don't forgit to tell 'em 'bout ol' darky-
mammy, please, ma'am!

PLANTATION SONGS

Refrain

Don't be 'fraidy, baby,
Mammy's little lady-baby—
Bye—oh, bye—oh, bye!

Tell 'em, yas, oh, tell 'em, tell 'em, please,
ma'am!

Tell 'em mammy's black an' ol',
Human sins is on 'er soul,
But she gyards de chillen's fol'—
Tell 'em Gord done trus' 'er wid dis lady-baby,
please, ma'am!

Refrain

Don't be 'fraidy, baby,
Mammy's little lady-baby,
Bye—oh, bye—oh, bye!

WHY?

“How come?” an’ “Why?” an’ “What’s de
use?”

Is handy words for a lame excuse,
But dey’s mighty few words, ef you swing ’em
right,
But’ll open doors an’ let in light.

“How come mammy-nuss mus’ wash my face?”
“Oh, why does high shoes have to lace?”
“What is de use of bonnet or hat?”
Dey’s some nice chillen dat talks like dat.

Mos’ little folks is full o’ “whys?”
All disp’oportioned to dey size,
But I knows one, I’s proud to say,
Dat swings his “whys” de other way:

“How come mammy-nuss so good to me?”
“What makes a bird sing in a tree?”
“How big must I make my balloon
When we go sailin’ roun’ de moon?”

PLANTATION SONGS

Now "whys" like dese ain't onpolite,
An' mammy she always answers right;
So when his "whys" is all explained,
De junior's bathed, an' dressed—*an' trained.*

JUNIOR-MAN

JUNIOR-MAN is Mammy's boy,
Don't keer ef he do destroy
Boughten kites an' 'spensive clo'es,
Dat's de way de juniors *grows!*
But he plays so swif', some days,
I jes' holds my bref an' prays.
Lamed hisself las' week, po' dunce,
Tryin' to ride two dogs at once,
An', betwix' de two, dey flung
Man so hard he bit his tongue!

Junior's on'y gwine on seven,
Tall enough to be eleven;
Grows so fas' befo' my eyes,
I can't keep up wid 'is size.
Got to rise up tall an' straight
An' take on a noble gait
Fit to tote dat Randolph grace,
'Gin' he takes his papa's place!

Little toes is bruised wid knocks,
Man will hide 'is shoes an' socks;

PLANTATION SONGS

Den, when Jack Fros' sniff's aroun',
On de white-hot crackly groun',
Nothin' does but red-top boots
On his little freckled foots;
Plegged his mama an' his aunts
Tel dey put 'im in dem pants,
So we laid his kilts away
Tel mo' company comes to stay.

Man, he'd ruther play wid Micks
An' learn dey little Irish tricks
Dan set up, quiet as a mouse,
An' talk good grammar in de house;
One thing sho, his mammy-nurse
She gwine teach 'im to converse
Jes' de way she hears his pa
Set down talkin' wid 'is ma!
Co'se, I has to do it slow,
Caze he's constant runnin' so!

Allus ketchin' doodle-bugs,
'R pullin' out de bung-hole plugs—
Lettin' good molasses was'e,
Jes' to track it roun' de place.
Now he's swallerin' o'ange-seeds,
D'rec'ly tastin' cuyus weeds,

JUNIOR-MAN

Smokin' corn-silk, chewin' spruce,
Laws-a-mussy! what's de use
Gittin' flustered up an' vexed,
Dreadin' what he gwine do next.
Wonder is to me, I say,
Man ain't pizened every day!
Tripped, dis mornin', crost de rugs,
Tryin' to smother me wid hugs
Whilst he hid my tukky-fan—
Sly, mischievius Junior-man!

Man kin squeeze hissself, he say,
Any place a hen kin lay!
Bruised 'is little arms an' legs
Crawlin' 'neath de barn for eggs;
Got wedged in, one day, so tight,
Nuver got 'im out tel night,
But he hugged 'is little hat,
Filled wid eggs, all whole, at dat!
Man ain't nuver yit give in
Over what he'd once-t begin!
All my prayer to Heaven is,
"Spare my life, Lord, tel he's riz!"
Wouldn't want no other han'
Leadin' up our Junior-man!

PLANTATION SONGS

But I nuver feels jes' right
Tel Man's in his bed at night.
Time he got los', here las' week,
All I thought of was de creek,
An' befo' dey rung de bell,
I had snook an' searched de well;
Co'se I know dat's lack o' faith,
Jes' de way de Scripture saith,
But sometimes Man acts so sweet,
Like a cherubim, complete,
An' dem innocent blue eyes
Seems like pieces o' de skies,
Whilst he questions me so queer
Like he sca'cely b'longs down here.
Dat's howcome my heart's so light
When he's safe-t in bed at night.

Allus begs to set up late,
But at bedtime, 'long 'bout eight,
I don't sca'cely smooove my lap
'Fo' he starts to blink an' gap;
An' I totes him up de stairs,
Too far gone to say his prayers;
So, *I* prays his soul to keep,
Whilst *I* lays him down to sleep.

OL' MAMMY MUMBLE-LOW

A PORTRAIT

Ol' Mammy Mumble-low,
What mek you grumble so?
Shoes on yo' feet,
Good bread an' meat,
No work to do
De long day th'ough;
Yit, Mammy Mumble-low,
All day long you grumble so—
Ol' Mammy Mumble-low!

Ol' Mammy Mumble-low,
I know huccome she grumble so;
Her foots can't fin'
De way she gwine,
Becaze her wits
Dey jes' fergits;
An' dat's huccome she mumble so
An' stumble so, an' tumble so—
Po' ol' Mammy Mumble-low!

THE SISTERS

OL' black Moll, she ain' no doll;
She ain' got ways an' manners
Lak Silvy Grace dat steps in lace
An' totes de s'ciety banners.

Moll's black's a chimbly-back,
An' short an' fat an' chunky;
Game-makin' folks casts cruel jokes
An' calls 'er "Molly-monkey."

Silvy Grace, she 'iles 'er face
Wid goose-grease an' pomatum,
An' wrops dem kinks becaze she thinks
Dem tallered strings'll straight 'em.

Moll sweeps de yard; her hands is hard
As her ol' shuck-broom handle;
Her pallet-bed's in granny's shed
Whar de win' blows out de candle.

THE SISTERS

De chillen knows who'll men' dey clo'es
To save 'em gittin' lickin's;
Dey finds Moll's do', jes same as po'
Weak calves an' pippy chickens.

Silvy's slim's a poplar-limb,
An' when she starts a-rockin',
She clair forgits how minutes flits—
Her clocks is on 'er stockin'.

Black Moll's wais' is any place
Her secon'-handed frocks is,
Which ain't a bit mo' neater fit
'N what 'er shoes an' socks is.

Silvy Grace, she leads de place
In shoutin' 'bout salvation;
She rips dem suits dat Molly flutes,
An' wakes de whole plantation.

Moll, she say, she hopes some day
To study high behavior,
An' when ol' gran' don't need 'er han',
She 'lows to seek de Savior.

When Silvy Grace lif's up 'er face
She prays wid monst'ous yearnin'

PLANTATION SONGS

For Gord to "*call on po' lost Moll*
An' snatch 'er f'om de burnin'!"

An' Moll, po' wit, say she ain' fit
To climb no golden stairs;
But ef she do, *she'll know it's th'ough*
De power o' Silvy's prayers!

JES HER WAY

OH, I loves a little widder, an' 'er name's Melindy Jane,

An' she love me lakwise also—so she say;
But you can't put no dependence on my lady
'Lindy Jane,

'Caze she talks to all de ge'men dat-a-way;

An' she looks so pleadin',

An' she ac's so misleadin',

But I don't keer what de high and
mighties say,

Caze she don't mean to sin

When she tecks de ge'men in,

Hit's only jes her way.

When I see a stalk o' sugar-cane a-swayin' in
de breeze,

Wavin' "No," but noddin' "Yas" wid all its
tips,

Hit 'minds me o' my lady when she greets me
wid a freeze,

Whilst de love-words hangs a-trimblin' on
'er lips.

PLANTATION SONGS

Oh, she's cold as December,
An' she's warm as September,
Or she's off an' on jes like a April day;
But to figgurfy de munts,
She'll perform 'em all at once,
But it's only jes her way.

Dey's o' purty gals a plenty, down a-hoein' in
de cane;

Twenty of 'em I could marry any day;
But I'd ruther be fooled by my lady 'Lindy
Jane,

Jes to work by 'er side in de hay,
When she rakes so keerless,
An' she flirt so fearless,
When she drawin' for 'er labor by de
day;
But she don't mean no harm
When she swindles on de farm;
Hit's only jes her way.

When she crouches on de mo'ners' bench wid
sinners seekin' grace,
An' she whispers to me, "Hol' me, lest I
fall!"

JES HER WAY

I sustains 'er sinkin' sperit wid my arm aroun'
'er wais',

An' I hopes she'll be de las' to git de call.

But I nuver holds 'er long

'Fo' she busts into song—

She kin git a call for glory any day;

Yit she dances back to sin

When de fiddle-notes begin,

But it's on'y jes her way.

She's a mighty scrumptious lady when you
meets her on de block

Gwine to chu'ch in all 'er secon'-handed
clo'es;

But I'd ruther set beside 'er in 'er cotton-pick-
in' frock,

When she gethers clover blorsoms wid 'er
toes.

She's a saint an' she's a sinner,

An' she ain't no new beginner

When it comes to mixin' righteousness
an' play;

But de devil couldn't tame 'er,

An' I doubt ef Gord'll blame 'er,

'Caze *He made 'er jes dat way.*

PLANTATION SONGS

I ain't got but one objection to my lady
 'Lindy Jane;
Hit's 'er widderhood I hates wid all my
 might;
So we argufies de topic, holdin' hands along
 de lane,
 Whilst I begs to kyore 'er only fault in sight;
 An' my courage come a-floodin'
 ('Caze she always marries sudden),
 An' I coaxes 'er to settle it *today*;
 But she answers wid a titter
 Dat I "needn't 'spec' to git her!"
 But dat's *only jes her way*.

THE FORTUNE-TELLER

AS DESCRIBED BY TRIFLIN' SAM

SHE's my lily-o'-de-valley,
But she lives upon de hill,
An' 'er valley hit's de alley
Twix' de brick-yard an' de kiln;
 But she sa'nters 'mong's' de fan-pa'ms
 An' she reads out all de man-pa'ms,
An' she tells each one a fortune wuth a hun-
 dred-dollar bill.

But she'll tell it for a quarter
When de boys is short o' change,
'Caze she say de seventh daughter,
Wid a gif' to kyore de mange,
 Is ordained by signs an' wonders,
 Midday moons, an' summer thunders,
To distribute prophesyin' everywhar within 'er
 range.

She kin feel de river risin'
For a week befo' de boom,
Whilst she brews a pot o' pizen
An' she hums a chant o' doom

PLANTATION SONGS

Tel she sees de cuss is lifted—
Dat's de way my Lily's gifted!
Does you wonder dat I loves 'er lak a valley-
lily bloom?

She's de color of a lemon
Wid a little tinge o' brown,
An' she interviews de gem'en
In a mighty cuyus gown;
When you hear dem earrings jingle,
You kin feel yo' goose-skin tingle,
An' you trimbles lak de almonds o' yo' ears is
fallin' down!

She's a queen an' fit to dazzle
When she wears dat crescent crown;
An' she'll gether sprigs o' basil
An' she'll 'stribute 'em aroun',
Whilst she'll promise one a marri'ge
An' to one a horse an' carri'ge
An' she'll "glimpse de White House loomin'"
for de mayor o' de town.

Me, I sca'cely ever sees 'er,
Less dey 's lots o' men aroun';
But Gord knows I strives to please 'er,
'Caze I loves 'er walkin' groun'.

THE FORTUNE-TELLER

But I's wo'e out to a frazzle
C'lectin' rabbit-foots an' basil
An' dem sarpent-toofs an' conjure-bones she
dangles on 'er gown.

An' I wades de swamps for pizens
Though I sho is feared o' snakes,
An' dark nights I views uprisin's
Of de sperits in de brakes,
'Caze she say a cross-eyed nigger
Of my spindle, bow-leg figger
Is ordained to 'sciver conjures in de ma'shes
an' de lakes.

An' so dat's de way I *do* do—
Love don't mind a thing lak that—
An' I spec' I is a hoodoo,
But I don't know whar I's at
When she calls me "yaller sweetness,"
But de height o' love's completeness
Is de way she'll even trus' me whilst I pass
aroun' de hat.

REVEREND MINGO MILLENYUM'S
ORDINATION

AS RELATED BY HIMSELF

WHEN I was a little pickanin',
Down on Sweet-gum Plantation,
I used to hear de preacher preach,
An' screech an' screech an' screech an' screech,
Expoundin' out salvation.

He'd open up dat Bible-book
Befo' de congergation,
An', Sir, he'd call dem Scriptures out,
An' shout an' shout an' shout an' shout,
Widout no education.

He nuver knowed 'is A, B, C's,
Much less pernunciation,
But when he'd focus on a page,
An' rage an' rage an' rage an' rage,
Gord sent interperatation.



“He’d call dem Scriptures out.”



REVEREND MILLENYUM.

He'd show de devil's forked tail
Out clair, in his noration,
He'd h'ist dat pitch-fork up on high,
An' cry an' cry an' cry an' cry,
An' p'int insinuation,

An' I'd brace up an' clench de pew,
An' try to keep my station,
Whilst he'd light up de fumes of hell,
An' yell an' yell an' yell an' yell,
Tel we could smell damnation!

One day, I swooned off in a tranch,
F'om brimstone suffocation,
An' red-hot Sins wid forked tails
Riz up wid wails an' wails an' wails,
An' stopped my circulation.

Den I slid bumpin' down to Hell,
My senses on vacation;
An' when I got whar Satan is,
Whar sinners bile an' sizz an' sizz,
For his partick'lar ration,

PLANTATION SONGS

I warn't no mo'n a cushion o' pins
Big as de whole creation,
An' every pin was a red-hot Sin,
A-stickin' in an' a-stickin' in—
Tel I los' all sinsation.

I come th'ough on de tranch-room flo',
Wid de seekers on probation;
An' when I heerd 'em screech an' screech
“*A babe an' sucklin' called to preach!*”
Dat was my ordination!

ROSES

PLANTATION LOVE SONG

OH, my Rose ain't white,
An' my Rose ain't red,
An' my Rose don't grow
On de vine on de shed,

But she lives in de cabin
Whar de roses twines,
An' she wrings out 'er clo'es
In de shade o' de vines.

An' de red leaves fall,
An' de white rose sheds,
Tell dey kiver all de groun'
Whar my brown Rose treads.

An' de butterfly comes,
An' de bumble-bee, too,
An' de hummin'-bird hums
All de long day th'ough.

PLANTATION SONGS

An' dey sip at de white,
An' dey tas'e at de red,
An' dey fly in an' out
O' de vines roun' de shed

While I comes along
An' I gethers some buds,
An' I mecks some remarks
About renchin' an' suds.

But de birds an' de bees
An' de rest of us knows
Dat we all hangin' roun'
Des ter look at my Rose.

COME ALONG, MISS NANCY

OH, Nancy Ann is hard to beat—

Come along, Miss Nancy!

Shuffle right along an' twis' yo' feet—

Come along, Miss Nancy!

She wears number 'leven, but it fits 'er neat,

An' 'er mouf is a rose an' 'er lips as sweet

As de sugar-cane juice when it turns to *cuite*—

Come along, Miss Nancy!

Oh, Miss Nancy,

You's my fancy!

You is de neates'

An' de fleetes'

An' de sweetes'

Gal in town!

My white folks is rich as a cup o' cream—

Come along, Miss Nancy!

Dey money flows out in a silver stream—

Come along, Miss Nancy!

Dey'll give us a dance eve'y Sat'd'y night,

An' a boat on de river when de moon is bright,

An' you won't know de diffe'nce but what
you's white—

PLANTATION SONGS

Come along, Miss Nancy!

Oh, Miss Nancy,

You's my fancy!

You is de neates'

An' de fleetes'

An' de sweetes'

Gal in town!

TIGER-LILIES

OH, my little yaller Lily wid de freckles 'crost
'er nose,

An' 'er purty yaller ruffles roun' de aidges
of 'er clo'es,

She's my speckled tiger-lily,

An' I giggles tell I'm silly

When she nods to me a-passin' f'om de win-
der whar she sews.

An' I looks at my bare foots, an' at my dirty
gallus strings,

An' I knows de mules is waitin' for me at de
cattle springs,

But wild horses couldn't hinder

Me from buzzin' to her winder,

An' a-sayin' 'bout a million dozen honey-softie
things.

You may talk about yo' daisy, you may brag
about yo' rose,

But de spotted tiger-lily is de sweetest flower
dat grows.

PLANTATION SONGS

All de yether blooms looks jaded,
An' dey colors seems all faded,
When hit kurtsies to de gyarden in its yaller
furbelows.

Ef you seen my Lily standin' on 'er little yal-
ler toes
Out behin' de cedars 'mongst de tiger-lily
rows,
'Cep'n' dat de gal is taller,
An' de flowers' bonnets smaller,
You couldn't designate 'er when she's hangin'
out 'er clo'es.

Once-t I called her "Tiger-Lily," des to see de
way she'd do,
An' she up an' 'spon', "I ain't a bit mo' yal-
lerer 'n you!"
An' wid dat she sudsed me over,
Den she rolled me in de clover.
Oh, she's a tiger an' a lily, an' a tiger-lily too.

LUCINDY

I

WHEN Lucindy's eye do shine
Lak a ripe, ripe muscadine,
 An' 'er lips sticks out
 In a tantalizin' pout,
I counts Lucindy mine.

II

When she droop 'er eyes so shy,
Lak she gwine ter pass me by,
 An' des afore she pass
 Drap 'er hankcher on de grass,
My courage rises high.

III

When she sets up in de choir,
An' 'er voice mounts higher an' higher,
 In unisom wid Jim's,
 A-singin' o' de hymns,
I sets back an' puspire.

PLANTATION SONGS

IV

When she lean down on 'er hoe,
'N' dig de san' up wid 'er toe,
 An' look todes me an' sigh,
 Des lak she 'mos' could cry,
I don't know whar ter go.

V

When she walk right down de aisle
At de cake-walk wid a smile,
 An' she an' yaller Jake
 Ketch han's an' win de cake,
I steam an' sizz an' bile.

VI

While she claim me for her beau,
An' den dance de reel wid Joe;
 An' when she swing me by
 Squeeze my han' on de sly—
I don' know whe'r or no.

VII

Tell de trufe, Lucindy's ways
Gits me so upsot some days
 Dat, 'cep'n dat I knew
 Dat's des de way she do,
I'd do some damage, 'caze



“Tell de trufe, Lucindy’s ways
Gits me so upsot some days—”



LUCINDY

VIII

Some days when she do de wus',
Ef 'twarn't dat I hates a fuss,
 An' loves 'er th'ough an' th'ough
 Wid all de ways she do,
De least I'd do'd be cuss.

OH, LOVE'S MY MEAT

OH, love's my meat, oh, love's my drink,
Oh, love's my daily fare;
Asleep, awake, forgit or think,
I breathes it in the air!

Oh, love,

I hear

You hummin' 'mong's' de bees!

Oh, love,

I hear

You singin' in de trees!

Oh, love an' me goes hand in hand,
When I got a hand to spare!
A loveless life's a sinkin' sand,
A drowndin' soul's despair.

Oh, love,

I hear

You hummin' 'mong's' de bees!

Oh, love,

I hear

You singin' in de trees!

OH, LOVE'S MY MEAT

Love made St. Peter walk de sea,
It built ol' Noay's ark,
It lit de stars fer you an' me
To squench de blindin' dark.

Oh, love,

I see

You buzzin' 'mong's' de bees!

Oh, love,

I hear

You singin' in de trees!

WINNIE

WHEN Winnie steps out o' de stable,
You nuver would know—*less you knowed*—
Dat she had been, sence she was able
To reach on tiptoe to de table,
De biggest humbugger dat growed!

When she warn't no bigger'n a minute,
I follered 'er roun' like a pup;
We'd sneak to de creek an' wade in it—
She'd tuck up 'er frock an' I'd pin it—
An' dat's des de way we growed up.

One day when she tromped on a briar,
'Way down by de gin-wagon track,
I stepped in de bramble right by 'er,
Wid my foots a-stingin' like fire,
An' toted 'er home on my back.

Of co'se, I was des like 'er brother—
I'm fetchin' dis up des for proofs—
We could o' sot down close together
An' pulled out de thorns for each other,
Excep'n' n'air one had front toofs.

WINNIE

An' so she helt on ter my shoulder,
An' talked 'er sweet talk in my ear:
Let on dat she liked me to hol' 'er,
An' all sech as dat, tell I tol' 'er—
Well, 'tain't no use tellin' it here.

But when we got down ter de open,
Instid o' me cross-cuttin' short,
I tuck de long road, an' it slopin',
An' limped all de way, des a-hopin'
She'd 'preshuate me like she ought.

But after me packin' 'er keerful,
An' settin' 'er down at 'er do',
Instid o' her thankin' me cheerful,
De way she cut up was des fearful.
She slid f'om my back to de flo',

An' 'fo' I could gether my senses
Dat gal she was dancin' a jig;
She des had been makin' pertences!
An' here I had clumb over fences
Wid her—an' she weighed like a pig.

PLANTATION SONGS

Of co'se dis was whilst we was chillen,
But when we growed up it was wuss;
De way she'd pervoke me was killin',
Tell sometimes I'd feel like a villain,
An', Lord, but I'd in'ardly cuss!

She'd ax me to tote 'er pail for 'er,
An' walk by my side, an' she'd laugh,
An' tell me some joy or some sorrer
Dat fretted 'er min'. Den to-morrer
She'd git me ter hol' off de calf

Whilst Pete, a big boy dat I hated,
Would come an' stan' clost by 'er side
An' stiddy de cow, while I waited
'Way off 'crost de yard, so frustrated
Dat some days I purty nigh cried.

Dey wasn't no principle in 'er,
Come down ter sech doin's as dat,
'Caze Pete was a miser'ble sinner,
An' 'cep' I was littler an' thinner,
Some days I'd o' laid 'im out flat!

WINNIE

Well, sir, dat's de way Winnie acted—

She fooled me straight th'ough all my life;
An' when she had got me *clair 'stracted*,
Tell *I run at Pete*, an' got *whacked*,
She turned roun', an'—well, she's my wife.

L'ENVOI

My 'spe'unce wid Peter was bitter,
But sometimes it pays ter git hit;
'Caze Winnie's a curious critter,
An' 'cep' I had resked all ter git 'er,
I'd be holdin' off de calf yit.

WASHERWOMAN'S HYMN

"THE LORD WALKED IN THE GARDEN"

HE walked in de gyarden in de cool o' de day—

O Lord, whar kin dat gyarden be?

I'd turn my weary foots dat way

An' pray Thee cool de day for me.

Lord, Lord, walkin' in de gyarden,

Open de gate to me!

I'd niver be afeard o' de flamin' sword,

Ef I could walk wi' Thee.

He walked in de gyarden in de cool o' de day;

He sa'ntered 'mong's' de shrubbery;

He niver turned aroun' to look dat way—

I wusht He'd watched dat apple-tree.

Lord, Lord, trouble in de gyarden!

Ev'-ry-bod-y knows

Dat sins begins wid needles an' pins

An' de scan'lous need o' clo'es.

He walked in de gyarden in de cool o' de day—

My bleachin'-grass ain't fittin' for Thee;

But dat Bible gyarden's so far away,

So, Lord, come bless my fiel' for me!

WASHERWOMAN'S HYMN

Lord, Lord, come into my gyarden!

Ev'-ry-bod-y knows

*How Eve's mistake when she listened to de
snake*

Still keeps me washin' clo'es.

He walked in de gyarden in de cool o' de day—

Ef I could stand an' see Him pass,

Wid de eye o' faith, as de Scripture saith,

I'd shout heah on my bleachin'-grass.

Lord, Lord, my little gyarden

Ain't no place for Thee;

But come an' shine wid a light divine

An' fix my faith for me!

Glo-ry, glory, hallelujah!

Peter, James, an' John,

Behol' de Light—an' de raiment white!

Yo' visiom 's passin' on!

DE STAR IN DE EAST

DEY's a star in de eas', on a Chris'mas morn,
Rise up, shepherd, an' foller!
Hit'll lead yer to de place whar de Savior's
born,
Rise up, shepherd, an' foller!
Ef you tek good heed to de angel's words,
You'll forgit yo' flocks an' forgit yo' herds,
An' rise up, shepherd, an' foller!
Leave yo' sheep, an'
Leave yo' lamb, an'
Leave yo' ewe, an'
Leave yo' ram, an'
Rise up, shepherd, an' foller!
Foller, foller, foller, foller,
Rise, O sinner, rise an' foller,
Foller de star
F'om near an' far—
Foller de star o' Bethlehem!

Oh, dat star still shines dis Chris'mus day,
Rise, O sinner, an' foller!
Wid 'n' eye o' faith you can see its ray,
Rise, O sinner, an' foller!

DE STAR IN DE EAST

Hit'll light yo' way th'ough de fields o' fros'
By way o' de stable to de shinin' Cross.

Rise, O sinner, rise an' foller!

Leave yo' father,

Leave yo' mother,

Leave yo' sister,

Leave yo' brother,

An' rise, O sinner, an' foller!

Foller, foller, foller, foller,

Rise, O sinner, rise an' foller,

Foller de star

F'om near an' far—

Foller de star o' Bethlehem!

OH, SHOUTIN'S MIGHTY SWEET

PLANTATION PARTING HYMN

OH, shoutin's mighty sweet
When yer shout when yer meet,
An' shek han's roun', an' say:
"Bless Gord fur de meetin'!
Bless Gord fur de greetin'!"
Shoutin' comes mighty easy dat a-way.

But ter shout when yer part,
An' ter shout f'om yo' heart,
When yer gwine far away, far away,
Wid a lettin' go han's
An' a-facin' strange lan's,
Shoutin' comes mighty hard sech a day.

"Glory" sticks in yo' th'oat
At de whistle o' de boat,
Dat cuts lak a knife thoo yo' heart;
An' "Hallelujah" breaks
At de raisin' o' de stakes
Dat loosens up de ropes ter let 'er start.

OH, SHOUTIN'S MIGHTY SWEET

But ef yer fix yo' eye
On de writin' in de sky,
Whar de far'wells is all strucken out,
An' read de promus clair
Of another geth'rin' there,
You kin say far'well, my brothers, with a shout.

Den shout, brothers, shout!
Oh, tell yo' vict'ry out,
How neither death nur partin' kin undo yer.
Look fust at yo' loss,
But last at de Cross,
Singin' glory, glory, glory hallelujah!

VOICES

I RECKON I is, lak you say, sir,
Pa'lized an' half 'stracted an' blin',
An' maybe de voice dat I hear *is*
De win' when it comes thoo de pine.

I can't 'spute no white pusson's knowledge,
I don't know de hows nor de whys,
An' when I hears heavenly voices,
Dat *seem* like dey comes f'om de skies,

I don't fret myself wid book questions,
But listens ter ketch eve'y note,
An' ef a bird plays me harp music,
Don't s'picion de shape of 'is th'oat.

De katydid, close-t to my shoulder,
I knows he des saws wid 'is wings,
But when de Lord sends 'im ter cheer me,
He sets in de vines an' *he sings!*

He sings songs I half disremember,
An' all o' mammy's ol' hymns
She used ter hum whiles she was washin'
Right onder deze same ol' tree limbs.

VOICES

An' even de brook dat's all dried up,
Dat used ter run down f'om de springs,
De katydid mixes its tricklin'
Right in wid de songs mammy sings,

An' often she'll stop in a measure,
An' I'll hear 'er dip down 'er clo'es,
An' wring 'em an' bat 'em an' rench 'em—
All keepin' good time as she goes.

Yas, I knows de katydid's music
Ain't no mo'n shufflin' o' feet,
But dat niver hindered 'im learnin'
To sing other folks's songs sweet.

Dis ol' pine-tree over my cabin
Dat's growed th'ough a hole in de shed,
I knows it's all blighted an' knotted,
An' half of its needles is dead.

I know whar de thunder-bolt struck it
Its heart is split open an' bare,
An' folks say de spiders is tuck it
An' swung dey gray webs ever'where.

PLANTATION SONGS

But when de night win' passes th'ough it,
An' all de plantation's asleep,
Hit sings me some heavenly promise
To 'mind me I'm in de Lord's keep.

Dey ain't a dry twig or a needle
But sings its purtikilar note,
An' even de holler dat's blasted
Seem like it turns inter a th'oat.

Yas, I knows I's pa'lized an' blinded,
An' half 'stracted, des lak you say,
An' co'se I ain't got education
To splain all my comforts away.

So when a ol' bumble-bee fetches
Some story 'bout when I was young,
Dat I done forgot, 'cep' in snatches—
I don't make 'im show me 'is tongue.

I don't ax no impident questions;
Jes listens ter ketch eve'y note,
An' when a bird sings me harp music,
Don't s'picion de shape of 'is th'oat.

O MY SOUL, YOU MUS' BE WALKIN' IN YO'
SLEEP

O MY soul, you mus' be walkin' in yo' sleep,
'Caze you nuver seems to heed de danger
lines;

When you skirts de verges whar de water's
deep,

An' you leads my foots to thorns an' tangled
vines—

Yas, I's feared you sho is walkin' in yo' sleep.

Walkin', walkin'—gropin', gropin'—

Gropin' in yo' sleep;

O my soul, I's hopin', hopin'

Dat you'll wake befo' you stumble in yo' sleep.

O my soul, you mus' be walkin' in yo' sleep,

Or you wouldn't dast to stray so fur from
home,

Whar de gurglin' laugh and playin' fountains
leap

PLANTATION SONGS

Tel de conscience-call is drowned in de
foam.

Better quit dis rackless strayin' in yo' sleep!

Walkin', laughin'—laughin', gropin'—

Gropin' in yo' sleep;

O my laughin' soul, I's hopin'

Dat yo' laugh won't turn to weepin' in yo'
sleep.

O my soul, you mus' be walkin' in yo' sleep

'Les' you'd reco'nize de tempter by yo' side

Wid de sugar tongue an' swishin' flounces'
sweep—

Look ag'in, my soul, befo' you take a bride!

O my soul, you better wake up f'om yo' sleep.

Walkin', walkin'—gropin', gropin'—

Gropin' in yo' sleep;

O my blinded soul, I's hopin'

Dat you'll reco'nize yo' danger in yo' sleep.

Yas, you better wake, my soul, wake f'om yo'
sleep,

'Fo' you signs away yo' freedom in a dream;

Rub yo' eyes an' look—Oh, look befo' you
leap!

An' beware de pleasu'e boats on Jordan's
stream!

O MY SOUL

Wake, my soul, an' stop yo' walkin' in yo'
sleep;

Gropin', walkin'—walkin', gropin'—
In de dark o' sleep;

Soon you'll wake, I's hopin', hopin',
'Caze it's mighty dang'ous walkin' in yo' sleep.

OH, DE LORD, HE WALKED DE WATERS

OH, de Lord, He walked de waters—oh, de
Lord, He trod de sea—

Be still, ye waves, be still!

Ol' Peter tried to foller, but his faith was weak
o' knee—

Be still, ye waves, be still!

Be still—be still—

Oh, surgin' tide, be still!

Though yo' heart is troubled waters an' yo'
soul, it is a sea;

Be still—be still,

An' fear no storm or ill,

An' de feet dat ca'med de sea will bless de
waves o' life for thee.

Oh, de Savior healed de blind an' tol' de rich
man "Foller Me"—

Be still, my heart, be still;

An' ol' Zachaeus, he watched 'Im f'om a sycamory
tree—

Be still, my heart, be still;

HE WALKED DE WATERS

Be still—be still—

Oh, doubtin' soul, be still;

Plenty trees of observation on de way to
Jericho—

Be still—be still—

Cas' yo' eyes above de hill;

An' de Savior'll see you watchin' an' He'll
call to you, I know.

Be still—be still—

Oh, surgin' life, be still,

For yo' heart is troubled waters an' yo' soul,
it is a sea;

Be still—be still—

An' fear no storm or ill,

Let de feet dat blessed de ocean ca'm de
waves o' life fer thee.

OH, HEABEN'S MIGHTY CLOSE

Oh, Heaben's mighty close,
 Yas, close, yas, close,
Ef you got a yeah to listen
 To de hos', to de hos',
Ef you got a yeah to listen to de sto-ry!

Oh, Heaben's mighty nigh,
 Yas, nigh, yas, nigh,
Ef you got a' eye fer visions
 In de sky, in de sky,
Ef you got a' eye fer visions o' de glo-ry!

SONGS OF LIFE AND LOVE



THE SEA OF PEACE

I STAND above a white-rimmed sea:
Its deeps are mine, its mirrored height;
Mine its low plaint of mystery,
All mine its glee-song of delight.

Mine its strong soul; its body mine;
I lave me in its kind embrace;
In dreams upon its buoyant brine
It gives me back a cherished face.

Mayhap it helps me understand
The language of infinity,
The secret of the shifting sand,
The testimony of the sea.

I am above all circumstance,
I am beyond all power to hurt;
No more I shrink from sorrow's lance
So with all strength am I begirt.

SONGS OF LIFE AND LOVE

I've tasted of the bitter sup;
Earth's bulwarks all are proven frail;
Yet sweetened now is life's low cup,
All hallowed: 'tis my Holy Grail.

Above its wrecks of ships and men
The placid ocean shows no scars;
Above my deeps where storms have been
My tranquil soul reflects the stars.

CONSECRATION

WERE I a crevice in a crumbling wall,
Mayhap some bird would let me hold her
nest;

O blessed consciousness of home and rest!
I'd feel the throbbing of her tender breast
And hear her answer to her fond mate's call.

Or, failing this, I'd be the empty space;
'Twere better than a fullness less than best,
And reverent longing for a homeless guest
Would fill me, till my emptiness were blest:
Where welcome waits is ne'er a cheerless place.

To be the darkness when the lamp is out—
To free tired eyes from tyranny of light
Which limits them to trivial things in sight—
To hold the kiss of Love and know no
fright—

O blessed darkness, thou art Love's redoubt!

I'd be the dark, earth's confidence to own;
The venerable darkness, first to hear

SONGS OF LIFE AND LOVE

God's spoken word, and, trembling, disappear;

The first His clemency to know—to wear,
In equal reign with light, a star-gemmed
crown.

I'd be the silence, rather than the song—
The stillness which abides when it is sung;
And, better than the sun, its moons among,
I'd be the azure space in which are flung
All constellations which to God belong.

I'd be that last abstraction which abides,
Diffused, invisible, through time and space—
Which thinks the roses—holds the stars in
place—
Which shines in radiance from a mother's
face,
And, shy as opal flame, illumines the bride's.

I'd be the stir of life within the clod
When it conceives the image of a flower;
I'd be the throbbing secret of the bower;
Yes, *I'd be Love—my nothingness all
power;*
But, wait! How dare one say, "I would be
GOD!"

ALLEGIANCE

To be a broken promise? Hideous thing!
Yet who am I to all God's ethics know?
If grandsires promised for me æons ago
That I should quibble thus or simper so,
As broken pledge I fain would meet my king.

I'd e'en disown the vow myself had made,
If yesterday I let the tempter in
And he and I a compact did begin
Committing this frail vessel unto sin—
I'd be that pledge's forfeit, undismayed.

For I am not mine own, but hold in trust
Myself, slight emanation of high God,
And though my human guardianship may
 nod,
Till conscience wakes it with a sharpened
 prod,
I render Heaven its own, because I must.

DISARMAMENT

FAINT doubters of Life's brooding constancy,
Lay reverent ears against the heart of her
In joyous Springtime—when her soul's
astir
With vestal tremors o'er the mystery.

List her maternal throb, ye carping host,
In Summer drowse and languor, while the
blaze
Of sun returned in daisies stars the haze
Foreboding Autumn's titillating frost.

Mark ye her bounding pulse when Winter's
blades
Come charging for her heart—to find it fire,
And all his swords are melted in desire,
Safe in Life's holy hibernating shades.

Awaiting thus the resurrection morn
Of Spring again with age-long surety,
Neath Winter's truce, in all security—
So cycling immortality is born.

DISARMAMENT

What fires lie hidden in the heart of Life
Be they not lit of God, Himself to prove,
Be they not dross-consuming fires of Love?
'Tis fire divine must fuse the swords of strife.

O heart of man, invite the enemy
But to disarm him with Love's holy flame,
Forever putting enmity to shame,
And ye remain as brothers, thou and he!

BEWARE THE LEAVEN

EXTREME abasement oft is vanity;
'Tis conscious selfhood begs to be effaced;
Proud ego would be formally erased,
As if it mattered how were atoms placed.
Beware the leaven of the Pharisee.

Better the field at sunrise and the plow;
By earth and sky both arm and courage
nerved;
The day's rewards were aye to him who
served,
And bread precarious to such as swerved.
Man's royal gems are sweat-beads on his brow.

MARY

To Judah's maid an angel came:

Prepare, dear heart, prepare.

When the angel came to the little maid,
And she heard his voice, she was sore afraid
At the sorrowful, beautiful words that he said:
"O Mary, maid, prepare."

Maid Mary waits at the stable door;

Prepare, dear Lord, prepare

A little bed for Thy maid to rest,
For she stands without by Thy strange be-
hest—

Begs but a place to lay Thy guest—

For Mary, Lord, prepare.

A mother-maid lies white within,

God's circle round her hair.

Dumb kneeling brutes the wonder see;

A star attests the mystery,

While sage and shepherd reverently

Bring praise and incense rare.

SONGS OF LIFE AND LOVE

A virgin-mother-queen's in state,
Her ermine robe her hair.
The stable dim a palace is;
Its moss-rimmed troughs are chalices;
There lips whereon no malice is
Drink to the royal heir.

BETHLEHEM

Oh, Bethlehem, starred Bethlehem,
Bright with the coronation gem
Upon thy brow through history,
Whose eyes have seen the mystery,
Hail brow and eyes and diadem—
Hail, Bethlehem!

Dear Bethlehem, old Bethlehem,
'Twas thine the tide of time to stem.
The world was tired; its grizzled folk,
Hope-weary, heard the centuries' stroke,
When cry of birth arrested them
From Bethlehem.

Hence, Bethlehem, young Bethlehem,
Thine ancient days thou mayst contemn
While all the cycles since engage
To celebrate thy youthful age.
Earth's years are young; she counteth them
From Bethlehem.

Oh, Bethlehem, Queen Bethlehem,
Of hallowed lap and diadem,

SONGS OF LIFE AND LOVE

Thy Kohinoor, it is a star;
Thy hands are white as lilies are;
Thy song is sorrow's requiem,
 Queen Bethlehem.

THE GENTLING YEARS

ALL my days I will go softly, softly down the
homeward slope,
Crimson certitudes of childhood tempered now
to amber hope
Shining through the seaward gate,
While the kindly winds are blowing
And the gentling years come snowing—
Snowing on my willing pate.

Faith in life and faith in loving—faith in des-
tiny supreme,
Led my soul through dreary marshes, as a star
seen in a dream
Brightened through its dim estate;
Precious star still clearly glowing
Though gray gentling years are snow-
ing—
Snowing on my bended pate.

What would life be but for dreaming, with a
faith-star e'er in sight?
Think of naught beyond its stillness of a some-
times starless night,

SONGS OF LIFE AND LOVE

In the awful calm of *fate!*
So I praise the fitful blowing
Of the gentling years which, snowing,
Bid my eager spirit wait.

And I bear their truce to battle—truce to sor-
row and despair,
Silent gift of winds and weather—conquerors
of my rebel hair—
As I near the little gate;
In my face cool sea-spray blowing
Through pale gentling years which,
snowing,
Lay white hands to bless my pate.

L'ENVOI

If my soul be white as snow is, clear as light
my spirit's ray,
When at last it strikes the prism of the ocean,
on its way
Through the gate against the sea,
Voila! Colors for my sailing!
Rainbow stripes o'er stars prevailing;
Who says death shall conquer me!

SITTING BLIND BY THE SEA

OH, sing me a song of the sea, my son—

Oh, sing me a song of the sea!

For my eyes they are blind and I peer in the
dark,

But my man-heart leaps when the sea-dogs
bark;

Can thy young eyes follow the yelping pack?
Wild, bounding streaks of yellow and black,
Do they track over meadows of seething foam?
And will they be fetching the white gulls
home?

Mayhap they'll retrieve one to me—

To me, sitting blind by the sea.

To me in my door by the sea, sitting blind,

To me, sitting blind in my door,

Days be when a battle is raging afar,

And the tramp of the cavalry crossing the bar

Comes nearer and clearer with many a gun,

So plain to my ears while I sit in the sun

SONGS OF LIFE AND LOVE

That I'm sure there'll be many a rainbow at
play
In and out of the manes and the tails of the
spray,
As the chargers plunge down in the roar
To me, sitting blind in my door.

To me, sitting blind in the night by the sea,
Sitting blind by the sea in the night,
Times be when she purrs, a gray cat, at my
knee—

Oh, the glow on the hearth and the mother
and thee!

'Twas a hitch in her rocker that memory kept,
And I'd know when it eased that our wee lad-
die slept.

The sea has it all, to the creak in her chair,
And I, peering blind, see the glint in her hair;
And it floods my lone soul with delight,
Sitting dark in my door in the night.

To me, sitting dark by the sea in my door,
To me, by the sea sitting blind,
Rare times comes a silence as still as a cave,
And I know 'tis His night when He walks on
the wave;

SITTING BLIND BY THE SEA

And, "strong in the faith," with my feet on the
land,

My soul speeds beside Him. I'd strive for
His hand

To lay on my eyes, but ah! ever before
I reach Him, He's gone—and I back in my
door,

All alone, by a whiff of the wind,
In my door by the sea, sitting blind.

Still it's sing me a song of the sea, my son—

Oh, sing me a song of the sea!

And sorrow's slow leaven I'll nurse nevermore,
For the soul of the sea signals mine on the
shore,

Deep calling to deep, high answering high,
Till my bosom, like Ocean's, is gemmed with
the sky;

And when the moon comes—crown pearl of
Night's crest,

Thy mother's white soul lies again on my
breast;

And with this Decoration—and thee—
I am knighted and rich by the sea.

COMPANIONSHIP

BESIDE a winter sea I held her hand;
The sun, low sunken in a molten glare,
Revealed a flitting radiance in her hair
When darkness fell; then turned we to the
land;
Reluctantly we climbed the oozing sand
With tightened grasp, and, loving, scorned
to care
That moaning waves' complaining stilled us
there
Against the din of earth's incessant band.

O vast eternity, thou roaring sea
Which through both day and darkness call-
est on—
O noisy time which babblest constantly
In earthly clamorings from sun to sun—
What if, hushed by ye twain, they silenced be,
If two may fare together—walk as one?

APRIL DREAMING

IMPULSE of violets wakes the air
In vestal shade where dozes
On down of mist miladi fair,
And when shy sunbeams gem her hair
She smiles into the rainbow there;
'Tis April, dreaming roses.

Bright wings of unborn butterflies
And leaves of daffodillies
Drift gaily through her dreamland skies,
While dim and white and angelwise,
On filmy moon-wings float and rise
The souls of Easter lilies.

THE BLUE

My childhood eyes
Loved flecked skies
 With fancy-varied scenes,
Where vision clear
Or far or near
 Surveyed Hope's fair demesnes.

In womanhood
When life was good,
 Its round horizon "ours,"
We loved, we two,
The steadfast blue;
 Our knees were 'mongst the flowers.

So, God of light,
When looming night
 Impairs my lonely view,
Take Thou away
My sense of gray
But spare my starlit blue.

SERVICE

To be a knot upon a fallen log
Were no mean thing, if my slight eminence
Were clad in green for some poor worm's
defense;
Or, I might be, O happy recompense,
A sunny isle for creatures of the bog;

The timid tortoise would essay my crown
To prison glints of sunshine in his shell,
And birds the world calls dumb would come
and tell,
With breasts to mine, their joys and sorrows
fell,
And they and I a common kinship own.

THE CYCLE

I

NATURE'S RHYTHM

In ebb and flow, with come and go,
Incessant, o'er and o'er,
By wave and tide, as man a bride,
The ocean woos the shore.

So soft caressed, so urged, so pressed,
The willing sand is won
To Neptune's bed; the twain are wed,
And continents are born.

In flash of fire, flame-tongued desire
Takes heaven by assault;
One lurid breath, then—is it death?
Is law of life at fault?

Each frenzied flare of sentient air,
Ripe for this fiery kiss,
Sends teeming waves of passion slaves
Down destiny's abyss.

THE CYCLE

Begot of flame and brides *sans* name,
The amorous breeze is theirs
Which blows your curl, O heedless girl,
To his, who waits your snares.

Two living wires, spiraled desires—
A heedless interlock—
The marvel's done—the “two as one”—
Unhurried ticks Life's clock.

Its pendulum, with slow humdrum,
Swinging mid grime and rust,
A thresher is of destinies,
In grains of living dust.

There's quickening mold in mummy-fold;
Not e'er our “dead” are dead;
We free in clod a germ of God
With each “destroying” tread.

So goes the tide—a man, a bride—
In heaven 'tis sun and moon
Which alternate to re-create
The midnight and the noon.

II

THE MOSAIC LAW

COMPENSATION

What saith the law, in formal awe?

“An eye for an eye—no more
Nor less, forsooth, than tooth for tooth”;
Cool justice keeps the score.

Praise Father God who quicked the clod,
Praise Mother Earth, for birth,
Man, son of both, and nothing loath,
Seize Heaven with holy mirth.

This gift divine, thy countersign,
Is e'en a royal dole;
Thou, else, as sod, by “breath of God”
A living, laughing soul.

Then laugh, oh, laugh, mirth's chalice quaff
Thou master at Life's feast;
The tinkling cup is his to sup
Who dominates the beast.

THE MOSAIC LAW

Yet rue, oh, rue the balance true,
For laughter sways to tears;
High hopes, soul-born in man's first morn,
Found complement in fears.

From joy to pain, from boon to bane,
From youth to whitened hair,
The swing's the same, whate'er its name;
Life's gamut all is there.

Crawled, in the wake of God, the snake
In Eden's primal dell;
'Gainst faith all fair looms black despair;
Even Heaven bespeaks a hell.

So saith the law, in formal awe,
"An eye for an eye—no more
Nor less, forsooth, than tooth for tooth";
For justice keeps the score.

III

THE GOSPEL

EMANCIPATION

Came a day when man grew weary—came a
day when man complained:

“How long, O Lord, how long!

Vestal-fair our souls at sunrise, at each going
down are stained;

Are battles to the strong?

Sitting at the feet of Wisdom, in her seven-
pillared hall,

Hear the stranger-women clamour to entice
us with their call

To the groves of stolen waters, troubled foun-
tains and corrupt;

Lord, how dare we lift our voices, when with
harlots we have supped!

A dirge must be our song.

“‘Wisdom’s ways are ways of pleasantness
and all her paths are peace,’

Yet Life is dense and far;

THE GOSPEL

Can we rout the Philistines or gather in a golden fleece

In fields where lilies are?

Grant thy people, Lord, a *vision*, lest they perish by the way,

Weary of Life's rocking cradle, day for night and night for day;"

He who sitteth in the heavens, Master of part of life's plan,

Listened—loved—and loving, *pitied*: 'Cross man's prayer the current ran,

And flashed in Beth'lem's star!

BROTHERHOOD

I

WHAT'S become of the Star in the East?
Has battle-smoke of wars
Obscured its beam in the crown of night,
While doomed men in red-darkness fight
(With a groping sense of wrong or right)
And clench and die, by the lurid blight
Of the bloody eye of Mars?

Where are the reverent Wise Men gone
Who followed the Bethlehem star?
Did they flee in fright from its gleaming road
When dim at its end the dark Cross stood?
Have they lost their way in the bleak, black
wood?
Have they ridden to hounds and tasted blood?
Are the Wise Men gone to war?

Where is the little manger-bed
Where the Prince of Peace was born?

BROTHERHOOD

They found it lost in slime and weeds,
Where pestilential famine breeds,
And they've made it a trough where the war-
horse feeds,
In a stable "reclaimed for his country's needs,"
By a lord of war and scorn.

Where are the flames of prophecy,
Lighted at Pentecost
To flash Love's word through every tongue?
In conflict's Babel, all unstrung,
Are theirs the alien curses flung
Across grim battle-lines—which rung
As taught of Holy Ghost?

Where's sweet Mother Mary now,
Who bided last at the Cross?
Behold, she waits as she waited then,
Her soul in travail of birth again,
For every woman's a mother of men,
And each her son, when a man is slain,
Be she maid in her vestal floss.

Where are the angel guards who said,
"He is risen from the tomb"?
With wings adroop and joyance fled,
Low on his breast drops each his head

SONGS OF LIFE AND LOVE

In sorrow, while he moans instead,
“Despair, O man, thy Lord is dead;
His grave thy final doom”?

Ah no, joy, no! Love’s star still gleams
Above Faith’s hostelry
Where God-in-man’s enshrined for aye;
A living world keeps Easter Day;
Star-led, come wise men still to pay
Rich tribute in their newer way
To haloed mystery.

Anointing thus the long-foretold,
By star of Love enticed,
Crowning the lowly “newborn son
Of humble virgin, stable-born,”
As King—by prophecies forerun—
Came out the Wise Men, every one
Himself a healing Christ.

To heal, to lift, to bind, to save—
Ordained to ministry
By laying on of infant hand,
Come still earth’s little faithful band
Of those who love and understand
The *brotherhood of man*—on land
And sailing every sea.

BROTHERHOOD

What matter, Teuton, Slav, or Gaul,
Or Anglo-Anything,
If this, their watchword, be not lost
Through tongues confused and kinship
glossed?
Heaven send another Pentecost,
Till BROTHERHOOD all tongues has crossed
From peasant unto king.

II

The little brother to the Czar—
The serf in battle slain,
Conscripted oft without his will
In able manhood—*fit to kill*—
And his frail comrade, weak and ill,
Retained the heavy lands to till—
Both brand their king as Cain!

If first and best are sacrificed
And epileptics thrive,
Begetting by their feeble strain
In pale successors of the slain
Whose sons within their loins have lain
In soldiers' trenches—whence again
Will virile men arrive?

SONGS OF LIFE AND LOVE

Why not send idiots to fight?

Conscript the leper camps?

Wipe out the White Plague on the field?

Soldiers of courage it would yield!

Perhaps our murderers might be healed

By overwork—and kindly shield

From prisons' gloom and damp.

If kill we must, let's wisely kill,

Cast out the world's "unfit";

Force paupers to "a noble chance

To win renown," with gun and lance;

Insane asylums would advance

All needed generals—and dance

With glee of doddering wit!

But now's no time for cap and bells

(Though fools' words oft are good).

Father of mercy, grant surcease

Of strife, and send a quick release

To men in bonds to kings' caprice;

Let all earth's travail bring forth peace

Conceived in BROTHERHOOD.

LIFE'S ARRAIGNMENT

LIFE'S GENERAL ARRAIGNMENT

GRIM god of carnage, armed with spear and
shield,

Craven equipment, this, thy godship wears,
Thou whose theatre is the reddened field
Where Tragedy thy comedies prepares,

List, LIFE'S ARRAIGNMENT, whilst
thy crimes it bares!

Call, for a moment's space, thy war-dogs in
While fertile fields confront thee with their
tares

And Hunger mocks thee with her bony
grin!

Let widows, orphans, sonless men begin

As creditors preferred in equity;
Stalwart young souls who passed in smoke
and din

Arise as astral shades to challenge thee!

SONGS OF LIFE AND LOVE

BLACK-ROBED WIDOWS WITH CHILDREN, SOME IN ARMS

We, thy comedians' widows, wed and left
With *these* to rear, some e'en to bear alone,
That thou mightst feast and laugh at us,
bereft,
The father's lightnings blast thee on thy
throne

Till fallen 'neath thy bloody star, alone,
Cursed by each opal of the milky way,
All bane be thine save death and senseless
bone!
This take from wrongéd motherhood at bay!

THE DEAD

We are the dead, thy plantings of the field;
Above the din of guns and o'er the shout
Of Victory thy ribald laughter pealed;
We heard its mocking while our souls went
out

And knew ourselves thy fools with no redoubt.
Thou callest brave men to an easy task,

LIFE'S ARRAIGNMENT

“To die for Truth!” Thy sophistries we flout!
And know thee *tyrant* through thy noble
mask.

“To *live* for Truth!” In this let heroes bask!
To offer unto Heaven LIFE'S battle-
scars!

“Hearts broken?” Aye, and bleeding hands
they'd ask,
With heads uncovered underneath the stars.

THIN GRAY WOMEN WITH WISTFUL EYES

We are thy spinsters, childless and unwed;
Where are our mates? Our sons and
daughters? Say,
Thou monster who darest rob the marriage
bed
To make thyself a pagan holiday!

“Give us our men?” Ah, nay, the time's away;
Our breasts are dry and cold, though hearts
afame

Arraign thee thus! Yet wreaths for us today
Of rue and rosemary are all we claim.

Of rosemary for each loved hero's name
Writ in our hearts in deathless memory;

SONGS OF LIFE AND LOVE

E'en in this dim gray underside of Fame,
Our sorrow's crown we needs must take of
thee.

DIM CHERUB FACES, PEERING THROUGH BARS

We are the unborn at the gate of life,
Sons of these gentle spinsters robbed by
thee
Of Motherhood and honored name of Wife;
Where are our Fathers whom thou heldst
in fee?

Our mothers' patient eyes we dimly see,
And read of LIFE in prisms of their tears;
Our phantom fingers touch theirs constantly
With wistful longing through the silent
years.

ALL

Oh, Holy Spirit, Dove of Peace, arise!
Beyond war's crimson flood where demons
wait,
Cull Thou the olive branch to glad wet eyes
Waiting deliverance from untoward fate.

God of our fathers, Thou, Jehovah, great,
God of our mothers, Jesu, Mary's Son,

LIFE'S ARRAIGNMENT

Dethrone for aye War's gruesome god of
Hate,
And see Thy reign of LOVE and PEACE
begun!

LIFE AND THE VISION

REMOTE and dim uprears the apex pale
Of yonder heaven-communing mountain
crest,
White clouds, like lost birds, homing on its
breast;
Warm, pulsing life waits low within the vale
In ardent soil whence purpling lilies hail,
And joy in love is sung from every nest;
Here, clapping hands, the hills their glee attest,
While reed-brooks purl contentment in the
dale.

So is Life's mountain at its broadest girth,
All big and bringing forth, yea, pregnant
eke
With flower and song, its ground-streams
chanting birth,
Unconscious of the vision at the peak
Where, rapt, the poet, for the sons of earth,
Sings LIFE and LOVE—nor recks his
lone height bleak.

JUST FOR FUN



YE MERRY PEACEMAKERS

DOES the dog-star guard the diamonds in
Orion's shining belt?

Did Capricorn butt through the Milky
Way?

Did Mars turn red to show the moon how mor-
tified he felt

When the shooting stars went skirmishing
for play?

Oh, I'm sorely, sorely puzzled,
And the puzzle-solver's muzzled;

Does the dog-star—did Capricorn—did
Mars

In the ways above propounded?

Oh, I'm puzzled and confounded,

For I'm starting up an interest in the
stars.

Do the Dryads go joy-riding in Aurora's rosy
car,

Through the forests while her ladyship's
asleep?

JUST FOR FUN

Speeding back before she rises with the early
morning star,

Her engagement with the jealous sun to
keep?

Oh, I wonder and I wonder,

Would a Dryad dare such plunder?

For to "swipe" a ride is worse than steal-
ing pelf,

With no chance at restitution

And the direst retribution

Throwing joyers daily out upon the shelf!

Does one need to see the sea to get a notion
of an ocean? [deep?

Do the moon-fish and the star-fish light the
When the sword-fish fall in battle, do the dag-
gers get promotion?

Do their widows mourn in sea-weeds while
they weep?

Oh, such agitating question

Is impairing my digestion,

Even threatening interference with my
sleep,

So I'm striving and contriving

For investigating diving,

For I'm deeply interested in the deep.

YE MERRY PEACEMAKERS

Do the spear-fish mount sea-horses in the cav-
alry brigade,

When they quell an insurrection of the Fins?
Are the sea-wives and the mermaids in at-
tendance at parade? [begins?

Do the trumpet-fish blow when the show
Does their military clatter

Go "Ra—ta—ta—ta—ta—ta—ta!"

When the drum-fish sound the morning
reveille,

While the moon-fish go in hiding

And the sun-fish loom presiding,

And the ray-fish "douse their glims" and
swim away?

Do the saw-fish and the hammers keep the sea-
wall in repair?

Is the king-fish democratic for a whim?

Does he spurn the seals and crests and all the
heavy swells forswear,

Just because the little fish are in the swim?

Oh, I'm puzzled, sorely puzzled,

And the puzzle-solver's muzzled;

Do the sky- and field- and sea-folk great
and small,

In the ways above propounded?

JUST FOR FUN

Oh, I'm puzzled and confounded,
For I'm always interested in them all!

So, let's build an incombustible,
Invisible, adjustable,
Amphibious machine, with searchlight
small,
And steer without commotion
Through the woods and sky and
ocean,
Dear Inventors, then we'll understand
them all!

We'll plunge beneath each submarine, and
learn its bottom fact;
Play leapfrog with the Zeppelins in the air;
For, as we'll be invisible, there'll be no need for
tact, [be fair.
Though, of course, as neutral nations, we'll
Still, if they're *too* iniquitous,
We'll make ourselves ubiquitous,
And flabbergast, with windy, noisy stunts,
All vessels of hostility,
Until, in awed humility,
They'll hoist their truce and sue for peace
at once.

OCTOBER

A FANTASY

THE Autumn god swears he is sober,
Tho' purple his cheek as the vine,
While he toasts "Octo-to-to-to-to-ber"
In queer apple juice and new wine.

The cider-mills whir on the hillside,
While Robin, half drunk in the tree,
Throws madrigals over the millside,
Ecstatic in rollicking glee;
His red vest distended with berries
Distilled in the spirit of greed,
His pomp as a gay janizary's—
He chants a convivial creed.*

Then sudden, the whistle of Boreas,
Knife-edged, shrieks a warning of blight,
And Robin's bravado victorious
Is hushed—while a ribbon of white

* The robin becomes drunk from eating certain berries, sometimes falling from the tree. In the South, the late china berries intoxicate him.

JUST FOR FUN

Encroaches, as 'nouncement of dolor
To riot—a symbol of peace;
And wilder the orgies of color
Flare, death-mad, refusing surcease.

The ribbon grows wider and tangled,
Throws whipcords and bow-knots of frost,
Till Revelry, hopelessly strangled,
Lies panting—delirious and lost.
At this, all the vines on the hillside
Drop every last grape in the hay,
While Robin, grown grave on the millside,
Sings softly a different lay.

He tightens his vest o'er those berries
And toasts, with a hypocrite throat,
All sea-craft and house-boats and ferries
Where white-ribbon sails are afloat;
For birds aren't so different from people,
And Robin's a gay politician,
The song one pours out from a steeple
(So much may depend on position)
Is not like his perched-on-a-still song.
In politics, how could it be?
We've all heard a peace-and-good-will song
From candidates up in a tree.

OCTOBER

The Autumn god winks at the bird-song;
It gives him a chance to brace up;
He calls it "the queerest-e'er-heard" song,
Yet, listening, he turns down his cup,
Remarking, "There's mockery in it!"
He's foreseen the decline of his day,
And it stopped his hiccoughs in a minute—
They're occasionally cured in this way.

Human-like, he is dashed with amazement
That his reign in one season should run,
When, out through his westerly casement,
He views his broad realm in the sun:

Sees forests of gold and of amber,
Sees bushes aflame as on fire,
Sees tawny-hued vines as they clamber
O'er boulder and turret and spire;
Sees orchards all red with fruition,
Sees meadows of yellowing hay,
Sees fullness of all rich condition,—
Sees *realization* at play.

And he cries, "Praise ye frosts, I am sober!
With Revelry joined to the saints,
I must tend my own fires-of-October,
And twist my last tubes of their paints;

JUST FOR FUN

Yon mountain, dishevelled and drunken,
Serene, with a clove in its throat,
More low than its valley is sunken—
A color-debauch for a coat!

“Ye gods! Yes, it’s great to be sober!
That mountain I’ll merge in the view
With purples for royal October—
I must sober my landscape up, too!
Then, slowly, I’ll cover each ember
With ashes of wild-roses gray,
E’er wind-blown and weeping November
Comes splashing my colors away;
E’er querulous, weak-kneed November
Looms, clad in a nimbus of weather,
In which, how I’m chilled to remember,
That he and I pass out together.”

THE MAN IN THE MOON

If you watch him long enough
And never bat your eye,
The old man in the moon will come
And turn you to a pie;
But when he starts to eat you,
If you'll firmly hold your breath,
He'll choke upon your upper crust
And cough himself to death.

I can't exactly vouch for this
As honest, Bible truth,
Though I've often tried to prove it
In experimental youth;
My trouble was I always felt
Afraid of luney men,
And when he'd stir, I'd bat my eye
And have to start again.

Still, there's no harm in trying,
Though one caution I advise:
If you should wish to change your mind,
Be sure to bat your eyes

JUST FOR FUN

Before you're quite turned to a pie
Without an eye to blink,
For then, should you be short of breath——?
I do not like to think!!!!

But, if the worst should threaten
And he'd get you in his vest,
A little swallow on a lark,
Be brave and do your best;
Don't lose your nerve but keep repeating:
"I am always I,
No matter though I seem to be
Just middle-man or pie."

Then, think on Jonah and the whale.
Your case is not the first,
Keep Jonah's image in your mind
(This may not be "the worst").
And e'er you know what's doing,
You'll be equal in renown,
Though, as you'll be already *up*,
You'll have to be thrown *down*.

And yours the greater honor
If you ever get your rights,
For Jonah *sank* to depths unknown—
You will have scaled the *heights*;

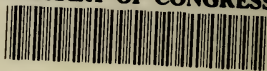
THE MAN IN THE MOON

And still one more advantage
To your credit there will be,
His story's pis-ca-to-ri-al—
Yours is AS-TRON-O-MY!

(1)



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0000904162A

