

LULLABY CASTLE

AND OTHER POEMS



BLANCHE MARY CHANNING





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BY

BLANCHE MARY CHANNING

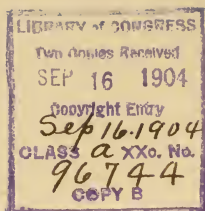
AUTHOR OF

“WINIFRED WEST,” “A HEROINE OF 1812,” ETC.

BOSTON

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY

1904



PS 1289
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Published October, 1904



THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE, U. S. A.

a. m. c. 1, May 31, 1921.

DEDICATED TO
LOUISA HIGGINSON PUTNAM
AND
FRANCES CABOT PUTNAM

P R E F A C E.

THESSE little poems were written by one who was with us, and who has left us; by one who in simplicity, purity of heart, and innocence of mind was a very child herself.

She saw clearly,— child-nature was no mystery to her; and, in what she has written for children, so perfectly, so intimately has she entered into their thoughts and feelings, that the appeal to them is immediate, irresistible.

And to the rest of us, who must look back upon our childhood, the years roll away, while the child which dwells in us all, hidden,— sometimes, alas! forgotten,— awakes again and responds to the charm and delicate appeal of these little poems, while, because of them, the days seem longer, the sun shines more brightly, and the shadows sink back and are forgotten.

To us, who were given the privilege of knowing this greatly gifted woman whose ideals were so high

and who lived always so close to them, these and other poems and stories, which were left as a precious heritage, are a consolation now, while in the future they will be our constant inspiration toward "greater grace of living."

ALICE ASPINWALL.

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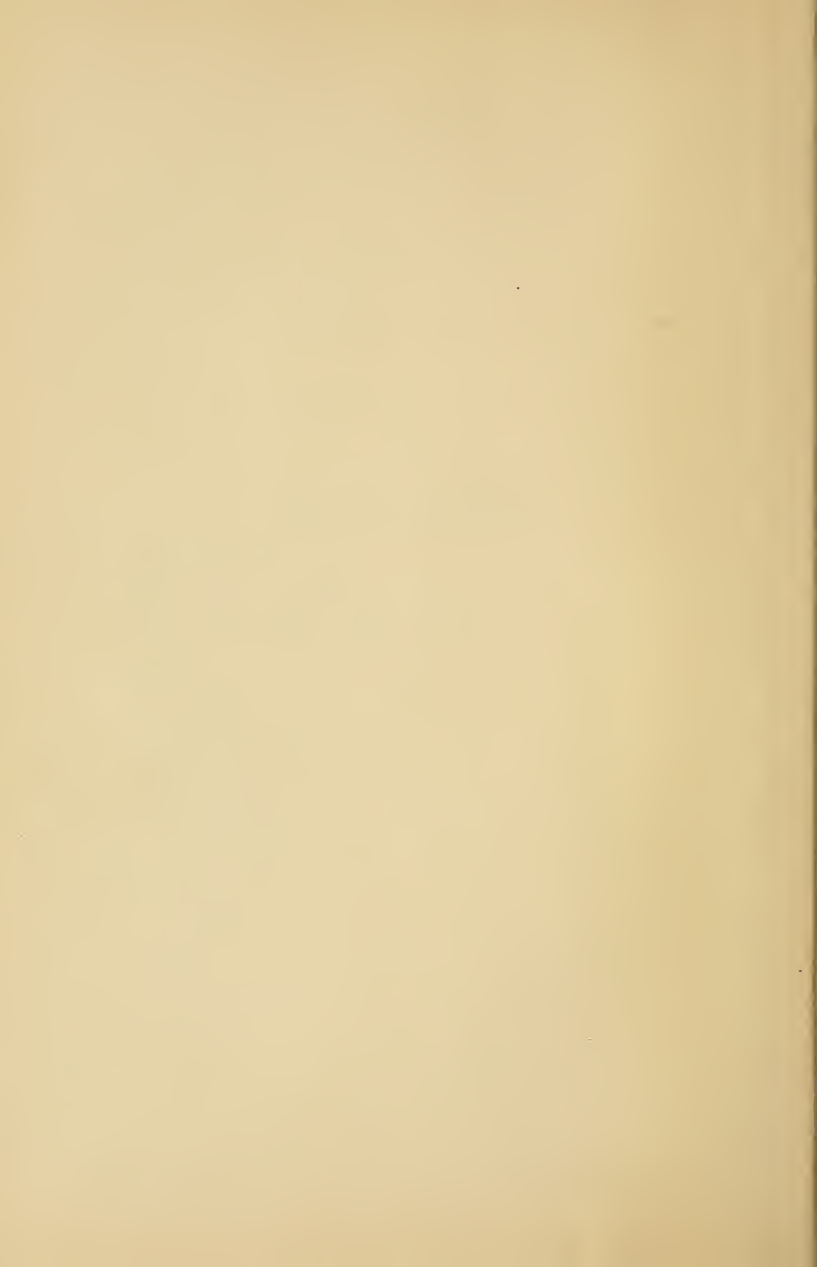
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I.

Lullaby Castle.



LULLABY CASTLE.

LULLABY Castle is strong and high,
With turrets that soar to the purple sky.
Lullaby Castle is strong and deep,
With moat and drawbridge and donjon-keep;
And the stairs wind up and the stairs wind down
At Lullaby Castle in By-low Town.

All the babies of all the world —
Babies straight-haired and babies curled —
Babies dark-skinned and babies fair,
All the babies from everywhere,
Black-eyed and blue-eyed and gray-eyed and brown,
Know Lullaby Castle in By-low Town.

When the long day droops to its sleepy hour,
When the petals close in the little flower,
Over the drawbridge and through the gate,
Some of them early and some of them late,
Along the corridor — up the stair —
To the big, big bedroom of “otherwhere,”

The beautiful room so warm and white,
Where the star-lamps shine with a softened light,
The babies go to their nests of down,
At Lullaby Castle in By-low Town.

THE DREAM-GATE.

“ **L**ITTLE white gate, little white gate,
Swing on your hinges and let me go through !
I see the green gardens, I smell the green gardens,
Children are there, and I want to come too !
Swing on your hinges and let me go through,
Little white gate !

“ Little white gate, little white gate,
Swing on your hinges and shut out the day —
The task and the trouble, the sums that look double,
The books and the lessons — oh, shut them away !
Swing on your hinges and shut out the day,
Little white gate !

“ Little white gate, little white gate,
Keep you tight closed, now you've let me go
through !
The gardens are bright with the lily-bells white,
The ruddy-cheeked roses are jewelled with dew.
Keep you tight closed, now you've let me go
through,
Little white gate !”

THE DREAM-SHIP.

THE Dream-ship minds no stormy gales,
Her masts are all of gold,
With splendor of wide silken sails,
Red-rosy, fold on fold.
They spread below, they spread aloft,
They're never reefed nor furled,
And they will bear us safe and soft,
The other side the world.

We shall not see the shadow crew
That work among the spars,
But watch the topmast sailing through
The shoals of shining stars.
From point to point of silver light,
Through purple gulfs and bays,
As we below a-gliding go
Along the water-ways.

THE SEA OF SLEEP.

THE sea of sleep is exceeding deep,
And wide as the starry sky,
The rocks are rough and the slopes are steep,
The rivers run and the small brooks creep,
But they rest there by-and-by.
And we will sail on the sea of sleep,
Little sweetheart and I !

The sea of sleep stretches far, so far,
Though they start in their strength and pride,
Each stately ship, with its guiding star,
Standing away from the harbor-bar,
None reaches the other side.
But many and many the voyagers are
At full of the slumber-tide.

And the beautiful Dream-ship lingers yet,
Waiting for you and me,
Her spars are stout and her sails are set,
Her decks are dry, but her prow is wet
With the kiss of the clasping sea.
We will sail to the islands of Fair-forget
And the island of Yet-may-be !

THE BIRD'S LULLABY.

“HUSH! hush! hush!”

H Sings the beautiful big brown thrush
To his drowsy mate on the nest,
With the warm eggs under her breast.

“Hush! hush! hush!”

Sings the beautiful big brown thrush.

“Hark! hark! hark!”

How the bright brook runs in the dark!
It will not stop nor stay,
It never will lose its way —

Hark! hark! hark!

How the bright brook runs in the dark!

“Still, still, still,

The white moon sits on the hill.

Her face is kind and fair

In the mist of her silver hair.

Still, still, still,

The white moon sits on the hill.

“ Sleep, sleep, sleep,
Till the young day comes to peep,
Till his rosy fingers touch
The nest that I love so much,
Till the young day comes to peep —
Sleep, sleep, sleep !”

BABY'S COUNTING.

“ ONE little, two little, three little sheep,
Down where the clover grows rich and
deep —
Three little sheep in the purple clover,
Count them, Baby, over and over —
Four little, five little, six little sheep,
Where the sweet blossoms grow thick and deep —
Seven little, eight little, nine little sheep,
Nibbling heads of the purple clover —
Hush ! the baby is fast asleep
And so the counting is over ! ”

SLEEPY-TIME.

“**W**HAT'S the matter, Pansy-face?
Can't you keep awake
When I tell a story
For the story's sake?”
(Nod goes the curly head —
Bright eyes blink ;
The Sandman has been on his rounds,
I think !)

“Come away, then, Pansy-face!
Come away to bed.
That's the very safest place,
For the curly head —”
(Tripping, tumbling up the stairs, —
Stepping on my dress ;
The Sandman has been on his rounds,
I guess !)

HOW THEY PLAYED "DRAGON."

LITTLE Ah Lee and little Oh Me
Played in the shade of a mulberry-tree.

Said little Ah Lee to little Oh Me :

"A terrible dragon I'm going to be,
And I'll catch you and eat you up, little Oh Me!"

"Please don't, and I'll give you a rosebud," said
she.

"But dragons don't care about rosebuds," said he.

"Then I'll give you my tiny silk slippers," said she.

"Why, dragons don't ever wear *shoes!*" laughed Ah
Lee.

"Then I'll give you my necklace of coral," said she.

"But dragons don't want any coral, you see!"

"How silly of dragons! Then how would it be
If I gave you a big currant cake?" asked Oh Me.

"Why, that would be splendid!" cried little Ah
Lee.

THE FAIRY'S BIRTHDAY.

TITA was a fairy fair ;
Eyes like blue Forget-me-not ;
Like the Daffodils, her hair,
Blooming in a sunny spot.

When her birthday came around,
Sitting on a toadstool red,
Little Tita might be found,
With her presents round her spread.

For the Fairies, far and near,
Hurrying on sheeny wings
Flew to carry Tita dear
Many, many pretty things.

Brought her necklaces of dew ;
Early frost's fern-patterned lace ;
Sapphire rings of gentian blue ;
Cowslip thimble in a case ;

Acorn-cups in saucers green ;
Oak-leaf for a tennis bat ;
(Such a ball was never seen ;
Fairies use a pea for that !)

But she likes her doll the best,
With its tiny roseleaf wings,
And she holds it to her breast,
While she rocks herself and sings : —

“ By-by, lullaby,
When the stars are in the sky,
When the sun 's behind the hill,
When the little birds are still,
When the silver moon is high,
By-by, lullaby ! ”

“FIGHT YOUR OWN SIZE.”

GRANDPA, he says, says he —
 (Grandpa, he knows ;
Smart as a man can be ;
 What he says, goes —)
Grandpa, he says to me :
 “Sonny, be wise :
Ef ye *must* fight,” says he,
 “Fight your own size !

“Thet little feller thar, —
 Him with the curls,
Fauntleroy collar, an’
 Face like a girl’s, —
Say he plays monkey-tricks,
 Tells tales, an’ lies ?
Wal, he ’s too small to fix ;
 Fight your own size !

“Thet little lass of ten —
 Yes, she is breezy !
Plague of your life ; but then
 Best take it easy.

Ef a girl treats ye bad,
Treat the girl kinder.
' Makes ye so tearin' mad ?'
Wal, never mind her !

" Manhood ain't growin' tall ;
It 's bein' manly ;
For them that 's weak an' small,
Standin' up gran'ly.
Like them old knights, ye know,
It 's to despise
Meanness an' wrong, an' so,
Fight your own size ! "

DAT LITTLE COON BABY OB PETE'S.

DAT little coon baby ob Pete's —
Ah tell yuh fer true, she is smaht !
She knows bofe her hans, an' her feets,
An' her face — she knows ebery paht,
She 'll pint to her eyes, an' her nose ;
An' when yuh say, "Where is yuh mouf?"
She larfs out so pretty, an' shows
De cutest two teef in de Souf.

Dat little coon baby ob Pete's —
She coos, an' she goos, an' she smiles.
He call her "his sweetest ob sweets!"
Dere ain't not a wish ob dat chile's
But what he mus' do it right soon.
Ef she took in her haid she would cry
Fer dat big silber dollah, de moon, —
He 'd want ter climb inter de sky !

An' Pete — he warn't allers dat way :
Sometimes he were ugly an' mean ;
Like de sun on a gloomisome day,
Dat little coon baby hab been.

De way she've improved up her paw, —
clar' but de record it beats!
An' she gwine ter improve him some more,
Dat little coon baby ob Pete's.

The Christmas Baby and Other
Poems.

THE CHRISTMAS BABY.

LONG since our cradle ceased to rock ;
We laid the baby clothes away, —
The dainty white, long-skirted frock,
The knitted blanket, soft and gay.

“ We have no babe.” The Christ-Child heard,
And Mary Mother in the skies,
A Christmas gift their hands prepared —
A wondrous, beautiful surprise,

God’s greatest miracle and best,
His tenderest thought, — a little child ;
A new bird in the empty nest ;
The past and present reconciled.

And blest the babe with special dower,
The love laid up thro’ all the years,
Slow-growing, breaks in sudden flower —
A thing of mingled smiles and tears.

And now the cradle rocks once more ;
Above it bends the sturdy brother ;
The fair young sister learns its love,
Herself a tender second-mother.

And once again a little child
 Shall teach the old immortal story :
Good-will to men, and mercy mild ;
 Peace be on earth ; to God be glory !

THE BABY'S BLESSING.

IT was a day when heart and mind
Within me waged a kindred strife,
And both their subtle force combined
To cast a gloom on life ;
The sunny skies seemed hard as brass ;
All nature spread her stores in vain ;
I trod the dewdrops on the grass
As though they caused me pain.

While fretful thus and ill at ease,
I wandered on with no intent,
I came upon a grove of trees,
Where sunbeams came and went
And made a golden net to catch
The dancing flight of purple shade ;
It was a pretty wrestling match,
By light and shadow played.

And here, amid a bower of green,
His starlike eyes upraised to mine,
There stood an angel, as I ween,
He seemed so near divine.

And yet he wore a poor disguise,
The robe of earthly babyhood,
As, fairer than his parent skies,
On alien soil he stood.

Then, as he saw my wondering face,
Fixed on him with look amazed,
He softly made the sign of grace,
With tiny hand upraised.
A smile, half bred of heaven's calm,
Half arch with human feeling rife,
Smote, friendly as the righteous balm,
Upon my inner life.

That sign of blessing which he made,
An instant impulse, unawares,
Drove from my heart its gloomy shade
And peopled it with prayers.
It told me that the Lord was near,
E'en present in His little child,
And, hid behind my doubting fear,
Eternal pity smiled.

Oh, infant soldier of the Cross,
Who held Christ's blessing up to view,
How many a soul is saved from loss
By ministers like you !

Go on, unconscious angel band,
Keep spotless robes and hearts as white,
Lead older spirits by the hand,
Into the world of light.

THE REGIMENT BABY.

OUR little Regiment Baby
Was one of the rank and file,
Safe in the baggage wagon,
She journeyed many a mile.
She never was sick nor sorry
And never gave up nor cried,
But watched us march, we fancied,
With nearly our Colonel's pride !

She admired the yellow braiding,
And the scarlet coats so gay ;
And she used to pull our buttons
In a really charming way !
She woke with the early bugle,
And she loved the fife and drum,
And thought the little drummer
A bit of a baby chum.

She helped to keep us steady,
With those clear blue eyes of hers,
And often preached us sermons
As good as a minister's.

We never dared go near her,
If we 'd had too much to drink ;
She kept us from the Guard House
Many a time, I think !

God bless the Regiment Baby !
She did us a lot of good.
We wanted to keep her with us,
And we used to hope we should ;
But they needed baby Yonder,
And the bugle called " Retreat ! "
Or ever the world's long marches
Had wearied her little feet.

We miss her smile and her prattle,
The touch of her rose-leaf hand ;
But we know 't is well with " Baby,"
At peace in the tearless land.
It was hard for us to lose her,
But maybe — we cannot tell —
Our baby had won promotion
Because she had done so well.

THE CORAL-AND-BELLS.

IT lay in the window 'mid scores of old things, —
Old ruddy-gold lockets and bracelets and rings ;
Old miniatures, faded, of faces once fair
(The back sometimes holding an old lock of hair) ;
Old fans and old feathers ; old satin ; old lace
(A time-mellowed marvel of intricate grace) ;
Old sandal-wood carvings ; old coins and old shells ;
And there, in the midst, the old "Coral-and-Bells" !

I looked at it once, and I looked at it long.
It seemed to my fancy a meanness — a wrong —
Which might be regretted, long after, too late,
To leave this old Coral-and-Bells to its fate.

I sauntered in slowly, and questioned the price ;
I took up the trinket and laid it down twice ;
Determined to leave it, accounting it dear,
Then turned back again, as a voice in my ear
Had whispered, "Go buy it! 't is well worth the
cost!"
(And, oh, had I left it, what had I not lost ?
The whisper which ever most wisely impels
Surely drew me to buy that old Coral-and-Bells.)

I carried it home and there at leisure surveyed.
'T was chased and embellished and daintily made ;
The baby who owned it had used it in truth,
And left on the silver the dint of a tooth.

Who was it, I wondered, — some prim little man
Of the quaint-dressing days of my lady, Queen Anne,
With stiffly-starched apron, and cap of soft lace,
Surrounding the curve of his peach-blossom face?

Or, maybe, no boy, but a sweet baby-girl,
The down on her forehead beginning to curl,
With dimpled pink cheeks, and brown, starry-bright
eyes,
And mouth like a rosebud for color and size ?

The vision was fair, but it faded away.
My big empty house seemed more empty that day ;
I wished, in the superabundance of space,
For some one to come and enliven the place.

The loneliness pressed on my spirits at night ;
It pressed on me still by the next morning's light.
The longer I waited, I felt it the more ;
I wondered I never had felt it before !

That Coral-and-Bells ! It had started a train
Of musings which could not be silenced again,
The end of which found me set out on my way
To visit an Orphanage long that very day.

Oh, pitiful spectacle! Childhood bereft!
Wee, wistful young faces on right hand and left;
Some dull and indiff'rent; some weary and sad;
Some passively patient; some thoughtlessly glad.

But there, in the midst of a long, crowded room,
Fresh-hued as a daisy in infantile bloom,
Her hazel eyes bright with a luminous gleam,
There stood my girl-baby — the child of my dream!

What need to say more? She is perched on my
knee,
"To watch Mama writing," — and, laughing with
glee,
Sets seal to the record my manuscript tells
By patting my cheek with the Coral-and-Bells!

REFLECTIONS.

MY baby sat on the floor.
His big blue eyes were full of wonder,
For he had never seen before
That baby in the mirror-door,
What kept those two, so near, asunder?

My baby smiled; those rosy lips
At once returned the pretty greeting;
He touched them with his finger-tips,
The shining surface moves and slips.
What kept their outstretched hands from
meeting?

At last he sighed; there stole a shade
Across his face, perplexed and troubled,
And then he laughed, though half afraid,
Diverted half, and half dismayed,
To see his every gesture doubled.

He leaned forward that golden head
The mirror's border framed within,
Until two cheeks, like roses red,
Lay side by side, then softly said:
"I can't get out, can you come in?"

Oh, do we never when in doubt,
Or burdened with a sense of sin,
From our perplexed selves look out,
And call to pleasant things without:
“I can't get out, can you come in?”

We feel disheartened and confined
In dungeons by ourselves erected,
With self-raised motes of worry blind,
While all within us seems combined
To hush the answer we expected.

The good we want and cannot reach,
We see through darkened glass within,
And call upon it in the speech
My baby little thought to teach:
“I can't get out, can you come in?”

THE LITTLE FACE AT THE WINDOW.

IT came with the glint of the sunshine,
And flutter of cherry-bloom white ;
A fair little face at the window,
As tender and spotless and bright.

And when all the blossoms were scattered,
And ripe, rosy fruit took their place,
The same little face at the window
Peeped out through the curtains of lace.

The snowflakes fell fast in the garden ;
The leaves were all faded and sere,
And the same little face at the window
Smiled out on the darkening year.

Oh, innocent eyes at the window,
Oh, eyes that are guileless and gay,
Will you always look forth so serenely,
As the seasons of life roll away ?

Look up to the face of your Saviour ;
Go forth in the light of His Sun ;
And life shall be bright at its ending,
As now when its days are begun.

“AN ANGEL UNAWARES.”

SHE came when summer roses threw
A crimson blaze across the lawn,
And summer skies, serenely blue,
Glowed down on golden fields of corn.
She came, an answer to our prayers,
To be an angel unawares, —

A sweet, pure presence in the place ;
A bright embodiment of day ;
The secret of a simple grace
To smooth the furrows of the way ;
A loving heart for others' cares,
An infant angel unawares.

The lustre of two soft, gray eyes,
The echo of a laugh of glee,
The beauty of a glad surprise,
Are all that time has spared to me,
For I am left with tears and prayers
To mourn my angel unawares.

Yet ever through the minor chords
To which I tune my shattered days,
There comes a whisper of sweet words,
A sadder swell of love and praise ;
And whence these strange and heavenly airs,
But from my angel unawares ?

Hope's rainbow spans the fading sky,
Where youth's bright sun is sinking low,
And peaceful fields of promise lie
Beyond the golden after-glow,
Where, safe from earth and worldly cares,
Abides my angel unawares.

A FLOWER GATHERED FOR HEAVEN.

HE was like the flower that blossoms,
Fresh and pure, amid the snows,
Born to shed a fragrance round him
Like the tender Christmas Rose ;
And ere long the sacred dewdrops
From his brow had died away,
He was gathered for the gardens
Of the Palace far away.

We were left, and he was taken ;
We were left, we thought, alone ;
But a glory shone around us
From the jewels of the throne.
And when in the night we wakened,
With a feeling of despair,
Breaths of heaven fanned our faces,
And we felt that he was there !

It was sad to lose our darling —
He, our first-born and our boy ;
But we feel our sorrows lightened
In the knowledge of his joy.

For we know that he is happy
In the Shepherd's loving arms,
Safe from blight of sin and sorrow,
Sheltered from earth's rude alarms.

Gentle eyes are ever watching
From the city's pearly gates,
Little hands stretched out to beckon
To the loving heart that waits ;
He is watching, looking, longing,
For the breaking of the day.
He will meet us in the morning,
When the shadows flee away.

“WHY NOT?”

HE leant against the window pane,
With brimming eyes too full to see
The crystal javelins of rain
Or me.

He did not note the busy birds ;
The world seemed one wide, wat'ry blot ;
His sweet lips pouted forth the words :
“ Why not ? ”

“ Why not ? ” The murmur once again
Between two sobbing breaths came low :
“ I might go out in this warm rain,
I know ! ”

I went and knelt beside the child ;
I kissed his soft cheeks, dewy red ;
Until he ceased to pout, and smiled
Instead.

And presently the summer shower,
Spanned by a rainbow, passed away.
My boy was out in half an hour
At play.

I heard his merry shouts of glee,
Which told the recent trial forgot ;
And yet his words came back to me,
“ Why not ? ”

The question we too often ask,
With bitter tears and rebel heart,
When God has set for us a task
Apart.

That hardest task, to watch and wait,
To hear the distant battle strife,
Like blind men sitting at the gate
Of life.

And so we faithlessly complain,
With brimming eyes too full to see
How God's great love and our great pain
Agree.

But let us wait, when life's last hour
Brings near the dawn of perfect day,
And sorrow passes — like the shower —
Away.

God's mercy, shining on our tears,
Shall rainbow tint the darkest spot,
And solve the problem of the years —
“ Why not ? ”

THE ANGEL OF THE NURSERY.

HE sits in the shadowy corner,
With wings of a silvery sheen,
Our beautiful nursery angel,
Whose presence is felt, but not seen.

We know he is there in the morning ;
When the red light creeps o'er the sill,
His kisses fall warm with the sunbeams
On childish brows slumbering still.

We know he keeps guard by our darlings ;
All through the long watches of night
The silvery wings are unfolded
Above the bed-canopies white.

But we feel him most near in the gloaming,
And fancy his starry blue eyes
Shine out, in the purpling twilight,
With looks that are loving and wise.

Our beautiful nursery angel,
The first little bird in our nest, —
We thought he was lost when God called him ;
He's nearer to us than the rest.

For we feel how God lets him revisit
The scenes of his babyhood's joys,
And watch o'er his brothers and sisters
At play with his own little toys.

And we think, though he is now an angel,
The lips which are hallowed to praise
Unfolded from their flowerlike sweetness
To smile on such innocent plays.

Our nursery basks in the sunlight ;
It echoes with laughter and mirth ;
And we thank God for each of our children,
But most for our angel on earth.

MEMORIES.

I USED to meet her by the burn
That runs o'er silver shingles,
With many a bend, and many a turn,
Among its mossy dingles, —

A little maid with startled eyes,
And cheeks as brown as berries,
Lips parted in her shy surprise,
And red as ripened cherries.

She was a grave and silent child,
And yet she liked our meeting.
She seldom spoke, but always smiled
An answer to my greeting.

She brought me harebells, blue and white,
And sprays of purple heather,
And stems of foxgloves, crimson bright,
And wild rose tied together.

Full many a year has passed since then,
But still I see before me
The vision of that Highland glen,
And memories crowd o'er me.

I see again those startled eyes,
 And cheeks as brown as berries,
Lips parted in a shy surprise,
 And red as ripened cherries,

And fancy breathes, in fresh delight,
 The scent of purple heather,
And sees the harebell, blue and white,
 And wild rose tied together.

TO THE LINNET.

MERRY, cheerful, thoughtless linnnet,
Heaven bless thy trilling song!
Heartfelt, thankful joy is in it,
Dropping music all day long.

Light as thistledown or feather,
Borne aloft on summer breeze,
Caring not for wind or weather,
Dweller in the woodland trees!

Bird, thou dost possess a treasure
(Little guessing of its worth),
In thy true and healthy pleasure,
In thine all unclouded mirth,

Knowing nought of care and sorrow,
Flying free o'er heather braes,
Trusting to a tranquil morrow,
Thus to spend thy golden days!

TO A HAREBELL.

A LITTLE breath of azure life that swings
Upon an airy filament of green,
To which, all tremulous, it partly clings ;
Like to a pair of folded fairy wings
Drooped on the dancing shoulder of their queen.

Methinks the fresh and merry breeze might rend
Thee from thy stem, and carry thee away.
But, no ! I see thy graceful blossoms bend,
As if to list the whisper of a friend,
And bow thyself, assenting, to his sway.

Oh, if mine ears were not so dull and poor,
I might thy silvery chimes at night discern,
And see across the moonlit stretch of moor, —
If but mine ears were wide awake and pure, —
The elfin circles traced among the fern !

Enough, I am but mortal and must bear
My mortal weakness without complaint ;
Take thou my love, oh, harebell ! flowret fair, —
Immortal in immunity from care,
A child of earth, without an earthly taint !

SUMMER-LAND.

ROUND the house the rude winds blow,
Hooting, hurling sleet and snow ;
Through the gray gloom of the sky,
Clouds, like storm-birds, hurry by ;
But my thoughts are out of hand,
Wandering in summer-land.

There forever sapphire seas
Flash through gracious groves of trees ;
Baby-waves, with laughter sweet,
Play and prattle at their feet,
Lapping, lapping on the strand,
White and warm, of summer-land.

Rose and pink and mignonette,
Honeysuckle, violet,
New-mown hay, and balsam pine
Blended in one essence fine, —
Perfume of no mortal brand, —
Makes the breath of summer-land.

Now, I seem to lie and float,
Cradled in a little boat,
Reedy river-reaches through,
Under skies of smiling blue, —
Float, nor need to stir a hand,
Drifting down thro' summer-land.

Cat-tails guard the gliding bank ;
Golden buttercup grows rank ;
Silver circlets splash and spread,
Where a shy fish lifts his head ;
Blue and yellow iris stand,
Ankle-deep, in summer-land.

Far away the wood-thrush sings ;
Everywhere 's a whirr of wings.
Bees o'er purple clover croon
Endless slumber songs of June ;
Jewelled flies dance saraband
To the pipes of summer-land.

Faint and fainter on my ear
Comes the thrush-note sweet and clear ;
In an opal-tinted haze
Swims the vision as I gaze.
Sleep has bound me, foot and hand,
Prisoner in summer-land.

Soft and softer — slower — so,
Let the drowsy voyager go ;
Heavy-lidded, lulled from pain,
Soon enough to wake again.
Rouse not yet with rough command
From the dream of summer-land.

IN AUTUMN.

THE smokeless chimneys, void and cold,
Stand sentry on the silent roof,
Where nesting sparrows, blithe and bold,
Have summered safe, without reproof.

The white hydrangea wastes its mass
Of ivory blossom, flushed like morn,
Above the riot of the grass,
The tangle of wild weeds, unshorn.

A few dry leaves drift through the porch, —
The first to fade, the first to fall ;
The ivy fires its carmine torch,
And flames against the western wall.

Soon shall the empty dwelling stir,
Thrill with the throbbing life it lost,
Break open like a chestnut-burr,
At the first coming of the frost !

A FAREWELL TO MY COUNTRY-HOUSE.

FAREWELL, my Country-House! The days
Of golden lights and flashing seas,
And fanning flicker of the trees,
Are lost in autumn's misty haze.

Across the white porch-pillars glow
The dying creeper's crimson leaves ;
With the last harvest-home of sheaves
The heavy-wheeled farm-wagons go.

My little room seems lone and bare,
The books and trinkets packed away ;
The screens of peacocks' feathers gay
No longer light the fragrant air.

Hampers and trunks stand packed for town,
And summer things put out of sight.
The gleeful children, all delight,
With burdened arms, run up and down.

And still the monthly roses kiss
The window-panes, as sweet and fair
As when the summer's beauties were,
It seemed — so far away from this!

I shed some secret tears, apart ;
All changes seem as things to fear ;
And our delightful summer here
Is warm against my clinging heart.

But, O my foolish soul, be strong !
Life has no room for idle hands ;
And I must follow His commands
Who daily leads my feet along.

Another spring is on its way,
Weaving, thro' all the snow and cold
Of winter months, the blue and gold
And glory of another May.

There is no winter for the soul
That walks before its God in light ;
There is a day without a night,
Set in the summer of the goal !

SNOW.

A COMING darkness in the western sky,
A fringed tattered banner folds unfurled,
And white-shod couriers falling as they fly,
Upon the dusky bosom of the world.

They issue, frail as infant souls untried,
Swift speeding to the unknown plains below,
Unconscious of the dangers that betide, —
The greedy mire and cart-wheels grinding slow.

Now with the rush of mounted legions fleet,
The dazzling atoms charge in mimic fray,
Cooling the lurid air with frozen feet,
And flinging wide their glancing spires of spray.

Now in a calm and languid eddy sweep,
Slow circling in a whirlpool round and round,
Till, wearied by their flight, they sink to sleep,
Upon the silent carpet of the ground.

They drop more slowly now, the feathered flakes,
By twos and threes, and through a misty rift
In you gray cloud a sudden sunbeam breaks
And gilds the fairy feathers as they drift.

'Tis gone! The sunlight glitters bright and warm
Upon a thawing landscape from a sky
Blue with the after freshness of a storm,
And cloudless as a morning in July.

And nought is left of that great host of snow,
But melting heaps, and watery paths and pools,
Which footsteps fast, and cart-wheels grinding
slow,
Reduce within the common roadway's rules.

So melt our dreams in youth, as pure and bright.
Enough, if we may water with our tears
Some plant which, rescued thus from dust or blight,
May give us fragrance in our after years.

THE NEST.

IT sways against the shining sky,
Tossed by the romping breeze.
The yellow swirl of leaves sweeps by,
Torn from the bending trees.
Ah, warm love-life of last July!
Ah, passion of "mad minstrelsy!"

Nay, but the budding wings that grew
Strong for their splendid flight,
Straight-stretched across long leagues of blue,
For realms of far delight.
The nest grows old in frost and dew,
But Love and Life are always new.

LOOKING BACK.

I.

I KNEW him once whom they call Love. He
came

Not when spring's daisies decked the open lea,
Nor when the summer's tropic heats, aflame,
Drew on in glorious glow, Love came to me.

He came in laughing guise when scarlet leaves
Made carpet rich for our unheeding feet ;
He throned us on the gold of gathered sheaves,
And crowned us with grape-tendrils, fair and
sweet.

He pelted us with beech-nuts ripened brown ;
He lost us in the brambles' witching maze,
And shook the red and russet apples down
Upon us in those splendid autumn days.

II.

I cannot tell the time they ceased to be,
Nor when the frosts first nipped their guileless
joy ;
I woke from drifting on an opal sea,
To find a wintry world, and I — a boy !

I only know that they are far away,
 Not lost — God never gives His gifts in vain,
But stores them for us, where, some future day,
 We may enjoy them without fear of pain,

Where, in the endless season of His love,
 All things are perfect, and without a flaw ;
And in the glory of that life above,
 Perchance my autumn days will live once more !

“WORK FOR THE MASTER.”

THE Master calls ; while yet the early dawn
Hangs on the eyelids of the golden day.
Bright dewdrops gem the ripened ears of corn ;
Cool breezes all the vines’ sweet tendrils sway ;
Soft radiance silvers over land and sea :
“Why stand ye idle ?” “Come and work for me.”

The Master calls ; and now the sultry noon
Burns in the cloudless azure of the sky.
In the dim distance whirls the wild simoon,
And heat doth reign in sullen sovereignty.
Through the still air comes the commanding plea :
“Why stand ye idle ?” “Come and work for me.”

The Master calls ; and now the languid sun
Sinks slowly o’er the parched earth’s sandy rim ;
The toil, the pleasure of the day is done ;
The cedar casts its spiry shadow slim ;
Th’ eleventh hour is come. Once more to thee,
The Master calleth : “Come and work for me.”

HE WILL NOT BE EXTREME TO MARK.

“If Thou . . . shouldst be extreme to mark iniquities,
O Lord, who shall stand?”

“IF HE should be extreme to mark —”

O greatest, tenderest heart of all!
Immortal eyes that pierce the dark,
Nor miss a single sparrow's fall, —
He will not be extreme to mark!

So take I comfort to my soul;
My sorry soul that errs and slips,
A thousand times turned from its goal;
Sinning with heart and hands and lips, —
My weak, unstable, faithless soul!

He will not be extreme to mark
The barren years, the blighted crop,
The sterile vineyard, dry and stark,
Though the sun shines, the soft rains drop.
He will not be extreme to mark.

Bright shines my hope against the dark;
He doth not judge as Man, nor quench
The smoking flax' half-smothered spark.
So, when He calls, I need not blench.
He will not be extreme to mark.

“KEEP THOU MY HAND.”

KEEP Thou my hand : I gave it Thee
When first the dews of earthy years
Begemmed my fancy's pastures free,
And when mine eyes, undimmed by tears,
Gazed fearless on those hills of time
Which glowed so bright at morning prime.

And when I found that I must drop,
As faded buds that could not blow,
Some of those hopes, I might not stop
To grieve o'er shattered joys below,
Then Thine the hand whose friendly grasp
Returned my weak and nervous clasp.

Keep Thou my hand when life's long day
Draws to the sunset of its close,
And lengthened shadows span the way
Which leads me to my calm repose, —
Keep Thou my hand, nor leave my side
When crossing Jordan's solemn tide.

Then, when I rise to droop no more,
 Young with an everlasting youth,
And find the misty dreams of yore
 A living glory and a truth, —
Keep Thou my hand and lead me still,
When perfect in Thy perfect will.

"IN THERE."

I CALLED my two years' baby girl
From all-absorbing play,
To ask her of the whereabouts
Of one long leagues away, —
In idle curiosity
To know what she would say.

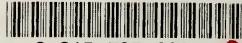
She pushed aside the tumbled curls
From off her forehead fair,
Looked smiling up into my face,
With bright, confiding air,
And pointing to a half-closed door,
Said happily: "In dere!"

Ah! child, I thought, my eyes grown wet,
If always I might be
As sure about the ones who sailed
Out on the unknown sea,
As sure about the further side
Of Death's great mystery!

No need to measure time or space,
 To speak of "here" and "there";
The Father's arms, the Father's love
 Make Heaven everywhere, —
And while our dear dead seem so far,
 Perhaps they 're just "in there!"

SEP 16 1964

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