

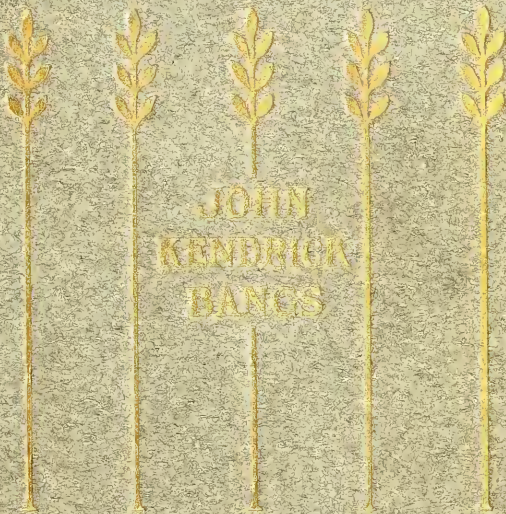
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SONGS
OF
CHEER



JOHN
KENDRICK
BANGS



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SONGS OF CHEER



SONGS
OF CHEER
BY JOHN
KENDRICK
BANGS



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TO
THE ROSE-LADY
M. G. B.

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SONGS OF CHEER

AFFINITY

ONCE in a garden in the East
A zephyr blew across the close,
And as it swept the floral feast
It lost its heart unto the rose.
But duty held it on its way,
And called it north, and south, and west —
Returning on a Winter's day
It found its love at rest.

The ages passed, and still the soft
Enamored breeze held on its path;
Now near to earth, and now aloft
It cut its fate-appointed swath;
But never in its pilgrimage
Forgot that beauteous garden-close,
Nor in the later days of age
Its heart-ache for the rose.

So I in that lost other state
Wherein my heart first met the tide
Of Life and Love — ah, blesséd fate! —
A rose of beauty once espied;
And though the myriad years have passed
Since first on her my soul was set,
Again I come to her at last,
My own true love as yet!

THE WORD

TO-DAY, whatever may annoy,
The word for me is Joy, just simple Joy;
The joy of life;
The joy of children and of wife;
The joy of bright blue skies;
The joy of rain; the glad surprise
Of twinkling stars that shine at night;
The joy of wingéd things upon their flight;
The joy of noon-day, and the tried
True joyousness of eventide;
The joy of labor and of mirth;
The joy of air, and sea, and earth;
The countless joys that ever flow from Him
Whose vast beneficence doth dim
The lustrous light of day,
And lavish gifts divine upon our way.
What'er there be of Sorrow
I'll put off till To-morrow,
And when To-morrow comes, why then
'Twill be To-day and Joy again!

A SMILING PARADOX

I'VE squandered smiles to-day,
And, strange to say,
Altho' my frowns with care I've stowed away,
To-night I'm poorer far in frowns than at the
start;
While in my heart,
Wherein my treasures best I store,
I find my smiles increased by several score.

THE GIFTS DIVINE

FROM earth, and sky, and sea,
Let cheer come unto me,
And mirth, and tenderness,
And all the things that bless,
That I may pass them on to those
Who suffer woes ;
Not keep them for mine own,
Nor joy in them alone,
But share them to the uttermost in deed,
And thought, in all good will, with them that
need ;
So that when at the end of this, my earthly
day,
Whence I have come returning, all the world
will say :
“ He richly lived, and lavishly he gave
Of wealth that knows no ceasing with the grave,
But reaches on into the presence of
The Throne Eternal—gifts of Cheer and
Love ! ”

THE KINGDOM OF MAN

O WHAT of the outer drear,
As long as there's inner light;
As long as the sun of cheer
Shines ardently bright?

As long as the soul's a-wing,
As long as the heart is true,
What power hath trouble to bring
A sorrow to you?

No bar can encage the soul,
Nor capture the spirit free,
As long as old earth shall roll,
Or hours shall be.

Our world is the world within,
Our life is the thought we take,
And never an outer sin
Can mar it or break.

Brood not on the rich man's land,
Sigh not for the miser's gold,
Holding in reach of your hand
The treasure untold

That lies in the Mines of Heart,
That rests in the soul alone —
Bid worry and care depart,
Come into your own!

THE VOYAGE

OUT, out upon the sea we sail
To brave the tempest and the gale;
To seek some golden shore afar
Where Fortune and her favors are.

By some the harbor ne'er is won,
Despite the journey well begun;
The storm besets, and ruin lies
Where yesterday were fairest skies.

For others, blest with kindlier winds,
The speedy ship the harbor finds —
A haven safe where all is well,
And Fortune stands as sentinel.

For me, my craft is sailing on,
Through mists to-day, clear seas anon.
Whate'er the final harbor be
'Tis good to sail upon the sea!

A WINTER SONG

WINTER hedges me about,
All the scene is cold and white.
Clouds are laden all with doubt,
And the day hath much of night.

Yet I hold secure within
Thoughts of spring and summer days,
And above the north-wind's din
Rise the thrush's roundelays.

Hints of daffodil and rose,
Memories of busy bees;
Pictures of the morning glows
Of the sunlight through the trees.

There I dwell from care apart,
In a sweet and cozy spot —
In the Land of Happy-Heart,
Where the winter cometh not!

A THANKSGIVING

FOR summer rain, and winter's sun,
For autumn breezes crisp and sweet ;
For labors doing, to be done,
And labors all complete ;
For April, May, and lovely June,
For bud, and bird, and berried vine ;
For joys of morning, night, and noon,
My thanks, dear Lord, are Thine !

For loving friends on every side ;
For children full of joyous glee ;
For all the blessed Heavens wide,
And for the sounding sea ;
For mountains, valleys, forests deep ;
For maple, oak, and lofty pine ;
For rivers on their seaward sweep,
My thanks, dear Lord, are Thine !

For light and air, for sun and shade,
For merry laughter and for cheer ;
For music and the glad parade
Of blessings through the year ;
For all the fruitful earth's increase,
For home, and life, and love divine,
For hope, and faith, and perfect peace,
My thanks, dear Lord, are Thine !

SUNLIGHT

ICE and snow are cold, I know —
Pain and sorrow too are chill.
Ever notice how the glow
Of the sun on ice and snow,
On your wintry window-sill,
Melts away the snow and ice —
Sends it tripping in a trice?
So with every ill!

So with every chilling storm —
All will melt away
If you'll only let the warm
Streams of sunlight play
In and all about your room.
Enemy to sin,
Enemy to care and gloom —
Let the sunlight in!

A PHILOSOPHER

TO take things as they be —
That's my philosophy.
No use to holler, mope, or cuss —
If they was changed they might be wuss.

If rain is pourin' down,
An' lightnin's buzzin' roun',
I ain't a-fearin' we'll be hit,
But grin thet I ain't out in it.

If I got deep in debt —
It hasn't happened yet —
And owed a man two dollars, Gee!
Why I'd be glad it wasn't three!

If some one come along,
And tried to do me wrong,
Why I should sort of take a whim
To thank the Lord I wasn't him.

I never seen a night
So dark there wasn't light
Somewheres about if I took care
To strike a match and find out where.

TWO DOORS

THERE is a door that opens on
A chamber darkened, full of gloom.
A ghostly light shines in upon
The dwellers in this spacious room.
Here Fear and Trouble pace about ;
Anxiety and Woe and Grief ;
Foreboding, Weariness, and Doubt,
And Worry that escapes relief.
This door I call "Forgetfulness"—
In letters deep the word is cut —
And though the dwellers madly press,
I keep it ever tightly shut.

This other door "Remembrance" is.
It opens on a cheerful scene —
Past joys, and little tastes of bliss,
And happy moments that have been.
Dear Peace, and Sweet Content, dwell here,
And little deeds of kindness done ;
And Hope and Love, and Faith, and Cheer,
And blessings that my life hath won.
This door is open all the while,
Flung wide that every one may share
Possessions that make life a smile,
And put to rout all thoughts of care.

AGE-PROOF

SECOND childhood came a-knocking,
For the aged man athirst,
But he met it with a mocking
“I suppose,” said he, “’tis shocking
Your arrangements to be blocking,
But I’m hardly through my first!

“I presume it is outrageous,
And I doubt not you will scold,
But in all the many stages
Of my life, bright and umbrageous
Youth has aye been so contagious
That I’ve failed to grow up old!”

Whereupon I’m glad to tell, O,
He escaped a senile role.
In the sere and in the yellow
This dear, happy-hearted fellow
Kept a beautifully mellow
Touch of boyhood in his soul!

THE RICHER MINES

WHEN it comes to buying shares
In the mines of earth,
May I join the millionaires
Who are rich in mirth.

Let me have a heavy stake
In fresh mountain air —
I will promise now to take
All that you can spare.

When you're setting up your claim
In the Mines of Glee,
Don't forget to use my name —
You can count on me.

Nothing better can be won,
Freer from alloy,
Than a bouncing claim in "Con-
Solidated Joy."

You can have your Copper Stocks,
Gold and tin and coal —
What I'd have within my box
Has to do with Soul.

GARDENING

TO dig and delve in nice clean dirt
Can do a mortal little hurt.

To live 'mongst lush and growing things
Is like to give the spirit wings.

Who works 'mongst roses soon will find
Their fragrance budding in his mind,

And minds that sprout with roses free —
Well, that's the sort of mind for me!

IF

If I were fire I'd burn the world away.
If I were wind I'd turn my storms thereon,
If I were water I'd soon let it drown.

— *Cecco Angolieri.*

IF I were fire I'd seek the frozen North
And warm it till it blossomed fairly forth
And in the sweetness of its smiling mien
Resembled some soft southern garden scene.
And when the winter came again I'd seek
The chilling homes of lowly ones and meek
And do my small but most efficient part
To bring a wealth of comfort to the heart.

If I were wind I'd turn my breath upon
The calm-bound mariner until, anon,
The eager craft on which he sailed should find
The harbor blest toward which it hath inclined.
And in the city streets, when summer's days
Were withering the soul with scorching rays,
I'd seek the fevered brow and aching eyes
And take to them a touch of Paradise.

If I were water it would be my whim
To seek out all earth's desert places grim,
And turn each arid acre to a fair
Lush home of flowers and oasis rare.

Resolved in dew, I'd nestle in the rose.
As summer rain I'd ease the harvest woes,
And where a tear to pain would be relief,
A tear I'd be to kill the sting of grief.

If I were gold, I'd seek the poor man's purse.
I'd try to win my way into the verse
Of some grand singer of Man's Brotherhood,
And prove myself so pure, so fraught with good,
That all the world would bless me for the cup
Of happiness I'd brought for all to sup.
And when at last my work of joy was o'er
I'd be content to die, and be no more!

THE BOOKS OF SPRING

I FIND it hard to read
These fresh spring days.
I cannot pay due heed
To well worn bays.

I cannot fix my mind
On Romance themes,
Or the rare jewels find
In poets' dreams.

The music of the fields
Is calling me —
The rich and choral yields
Of yon blue sea ;

And all the books I know,
My treasure-trove,
Are Nature's all aglow
With joy and love.

“DON'T CARE” AND “NEVER MIND”

‘**D**ON'T Care” is no friend of mine.
I “don't care” for him.

When he comes it is a sign
Sense is growing dim.
He is not the thing of pride
Some folks seem to think.
Folly is his constant guide,
Bread and meat and drink.

Not to care when things go wrong,
Not to care when ill
Rises up to check your song,
And your heart to chill —
That were foolishness indeed
Of an arrant sort.
Nothing is too slight to heed
On the way to port.

But the sunny “Never Mind,”
He's a different wight.
Helps us when the day's inclined
Not to treat us right;
Softens every bitter blast,
Warms us when we're cold;
When the sky is overcast,
Keeps us blithe and bold.

Bids all sorrow go its way.
Helps us stay our tears,
And when life seems drear and gray,
Quiets all our fears.
When it comes to share and share,
I shall be resigned
If some other gets "Don't Care"—
I'll take "Never Mind!"

AS TO EPITAPHS

WHO cares for fulsome epitaphs,
Cold, stony, staring paragraphs,
In marble letters carved to rear
Their praises in some graveyard drear,
Where none come by save those who weep
For others in eternal sleep?

Who dreams of statues in some place
Where worried humans madly race,
In bronze or brass, or hewn in stone,
Set proudly high, aloof, alone —
Shrunk from a thing of life and wit
Into insensate counterfeit?

When comes the time that I shall stand
Within the mystic shadowland,
May it be mine to find my name
In letters writ in living flame,
Simple, devoid of striving art,
Deep in some fellow being's heart.

Not on a shaft to pierce the skies,
But in the tears from loving eyes;
Not on some icy marble scroll,
But in some comrade's wistful soul,
Who takes the name and fame of me
And treasures it in memory!

AFTER THE TIFF

THAT every rose should have its thorn
Is Mother Nature's way,
And hence it is I do not mourn
At finding out to-day
That Daphne, whom I love so much,
For whom there is no match,
For all her soft and tender touch,
Can scratch!

The thing to do is not to moan
Because I've learned the fact,
But let her rosy sweets atone
The slightly feline act.
No man who has the slightest wit
Because the thorn is there
Condemns the rose, but handles it
With care.

Hence when my rose hath come again
My frown she shall not see.
She'll find me smiling gaily when
Once more she comes to me.
She'll find the love I testify
No bubble is, forlorn,
To perish when 'tis punctured by
A thorn!

AN UNSELFISH HERMIT

'TIS sometimes good to be alone —
Deep thinkers frequently affirm it —
To seek some spot afar, unknown,
And dwell there as a very Hermit.

For me, I'm not at all inclined
To frown on folks who go in hiding,
There to restore a wearied mind,
Or to escape a world too chiding.

Indeed, I think that loneliness
Instead of, as some say, distressing,
Is often truly more or less
A source of comfort, and a blessing.

But I'm no selfish wight, and so
When I'm alone I so prepare it
I have a brown-eyed lass I know
Along with me — to share it!

MY NEIGHBOR

“**S**ET down,” said he,
 When greeting me.
“I’m glad to see ye back. Bring up a cheer,
 An’ set down here.”
 Straightway I did
 As I was bid,
And taking up the most convenient chair
I drew it nigh the genial stove, and “set” down
 there.

 We talked and laughed,
 And grinned and chaffed.
He joked with me, and till the light grew dim
 I joked with him.
 And when ’twas o’er
 I sought the door,
And walked home through the evening clear
Convinced that he did well to call a chair a
 “cheer”—
 ’Twixt you and me
 That’s what it “be”
With whole-souled neighbors such as he!

WINTER FLOWERS

SOME seek for blossoms in the south,
Where fragrant garden-closes are,
By some lush river's verdured mouth
In lands afar.

But not beneath those balmier skies

Seek I my floral dividends.

I find them in my children's eyes.

I find them in the smile I prize

Beyond all life's felicities,

And in the hearts of friends!

THE PINE

LET others have the maple trees
With all their garnered sweets.
Let others choose the mysteries
Of leafy oak retreats.
I'll give to other men the fruit
Of cherry and the vine.
Their claims to none will I dispute
If I can have the pine.

I love it for its tapering grace,
Its uplift straight and true.
I love it for the fairy lace
It throws against the blue.
I love it for its quiet strength,
Its hints of dreamy rest,
As stretching forth my weary length
I lie here as its guest.

No Persian rug for priceless fee
Was e'er so richly made
As that the pine hath spread for me
To woo me to its shade.
No kindly friend hath ever kept
More faithful vigil by
A tired comrade as he slept
Beneath his watchful eye.

But best of all I love it for
 Its soft eternal green ;
Through all the winter winds that roar
 It ever blooms serene ;
And strengthens souls oppressed by fears,
 By troubles multiform,
To turn amid the stress of tears
 A smiling face to storm !

EXORCISED

SPIED a bit of Care to-day,
Looked as black as anything,
But as he came up the way,
I began to sing.

Songs and trills that thrilled with glee,
Songs of joy, and peace, and dawn —
Then I peeped out warily —
Mr. Care had gone!

THE SEASON OF YOUTH

I FEAR there's little hope for me —
On age I'll never sup.
It makes no difference where I be,
When Spring-time first I chance to see,
And birds about me trill their glee,
I simply can't grow up!

My soul's so full of verve and snap,
My heart's so filled with joy,
Despite in years I'm quite a chap
In noisy rout I toss my cap,
And, spread out flat on Nature's lap,
I holler like a boy!

O three times blesséd time of Spring,
Your praises have been sung
Since birds first flew upon the wing,
Since mortal man learned how to sing,
Because the blessings that you bring
Keep us forever young!

LAUGHTER

WORRY stalked along the road,
 Trouble sneaking after;
Then Black Care, and Grief, and Goad —
 Enemies to Laughter.

But old Laughter with a shout
 Rose up and attacked 'em;
Put the sorry pack to rout,
 Walloped 'em and whacked 'em.

Laughter frivols day and night;
 Sometimes he's a bubble,
But he hath a deal of might
 In a bout with Trouble!

FRIENDS

MAY I be friends to all the trees ;
To birds, and blossoms and the bees ;
To things that creep, and things that hide
Through all the teeming countryside ;
On terms with all the stars at night,
With all their playful beams of light ;
In love with leafy dales and hills,
And with the laughing mountain rills ;
With summer skies, and winter snows ;
With every kind of breeze that blows ;
The wide sea, and the stretching plain,
The tempest, and the falling rain —
If I were thus what need had I
To fear Death's solemn mystery
That takes me from the world's alarms
And lays me in earth's loving arms ?

PHILOSOPHY

IF there's no Sun, I still can have the Moon;
If there's no Moon, the Stars my needs suffice;
And if these fail, I have my Evening Lamp;
Or, Lampless, there's my trusty Tallow Dip;
And if the Dip goes out, my Couch remains,
Where I may sleep and dream there's Light
again.

AD ASTRA

I'VE talked with Woe, and in my deep distress
Have learned from her the way to happiness.

With Failure I've communed, and in her frown
Have read how those who strive may win the
crown.

And face to face with Sin, deep in her eyes,
I've glimpsed the hint that leads to Paradise!

RELINQUISHMENT

TO Arcady let others go,
I do not seek the way.
I do not pine to wander through
Her meadows bright and gay.
Her wondrous joys let others take,
Her songs let others sing —
The songs with which the birds awake
The blossoms of the spring.

I care naught for her floral treats,
Nor for the pleasures rare
With which each passing moment greets
The dweller over there.
There's much of bliss in Arcady,
And happiness prevails,
And all from woe and care are free
Within her pleasant dales.

Her mien is smiling all the time;
Her glance holds soft caress;
Her voice hath music of the chime,
And spangled is her dress.
And yet despite her wealth of cheer,
Unenvied is her lot,
For I have that to hold me here
That Arcady hath not!

A floral feast in Some One's eyes,
Pure bliss in Some One's lips ;
Care-Freedom in the glad surprise
Of Some One's finger-tips.
There's song enough in Some One's voice
To fill the Heart of me
With music that shall ne'er rejoice
The vales of Arcady!

ON A GLOOMY DAY

DEPRESSED to-day? Well, so am I.
Deep hid in clouds the Heavens lie,
And all the earth is merged in mist
By sun as yet unkist,
And gloomy is the weather —
But here's a rope,
Not made of hemp, but weft of Hope
For brighter skies,
And joy to come that somewhere lies
Beyond our present gloomy view,
Let down to help us two!
Grip hold! We'll climb to peace together!

A SYLVAN HOME

GIVE me a place deep in some tangled
woody glade
Where in the days gone by some vagrom fairy
strayed,
Some happy, care-free, and contented little
gnome
To whom 'twas home.

Clothe all the trees in soft, soul-resting, spring-
time green —
A sort of bower lustrous with scintillant sheen —
Whose waving branches call the flying bird to
rest
And build her nest.

Quite close at hand I'd have a babbling silver
brook
To fill with music sweet my quiet sylvan nook ;
And deep within its pools let trout or salmon be,
Unharm'd of me !

Let deer and fox and all the woodland creatures
come
And be my neighbors, unafraid and frolicsome ;
To sport about my door-step gaily, as one
spends
A day with friends.

And in the night, when all the wood is still,
 may I
Find smiling visitors arriving from the sky —
The dancing moon-rays, and the star-beams full
 of glee
For company!

PERSISTENCE

HERE'S my heart for you, my Sweet.
See, I lay it at your feet.
Do with it whate'er you will —
Treat it well, or treat it ill;
Break it if you please, and then
I will have it fixed again,
And within a day or two
Send it back, my Love, to you.

MAY IT BE MINE

IF any round about me play,
And dance and sing in glad array,
And laugh and cheer,
May it be mine to see and hear.

If any toil at noble things,
And strive the higher levellings
To reach and win,
May it be mine to join therein.

If any grieve or suffer pain,
And tears fall like the summer rain
From troubled skies,
May it be mine to sympathize!

IN THE LIBRARY

WHAT joy to sit at eve among
The treasures of a library!
To hear the songs undying sung
By singers with the silver tongue
Who've climbed unto the highest rung
Of Immortality!

To see the heroes of Romance
March forth in glorious array;
The cavaliers of ancient France,
With vizor down, and poiséd lance,
As here and there their chargers prance
All eager for the fray.

To hear old Boswell's prattle fine
Of Johnson and his cronies great;
To watch Columbus and his line
Of caravels speed o'er the brine;
To rest with Omar 'neath the vine;
And chum with men of State.

To chat with noble Washington,
With Cæsar and with Cicero;
To study birds with Audubon;
To walk with Scott and Marmion;
To stroll with Lamb and Emerson,
With Carlyle and Thoreau!

If you on happiness would look,
On happiness that's true and blue,
Just glance within this little nook
By all the madding crowd forsook
Where I am sitting with my book —
And One to read it to!

TIME'S BANQUET

THE past hath had its meed from me
While it was passing ;
The present, therefore, I'll not be
Harassing
With thoughts of things that were, or might
have been.
I've time and inclination but to win
The best the hours imminent prepare ;
Insure the future with a present care,
And feast my soul upon the fruit and wine
Of Opportunity, on which 'twere well to dine
With zest,
As doth become the grateful guest
Of Time, who in his onward flight
Hath set a table rare to wait on appetite.

THE ELOQUENCE OF SILENCE

I LOVE the vast tranquillities
Of Nature's silences:
The silence of the deep,
Resistless power wrapped in restful sleep;
The silence of the storm-swept hills
Serene in face of bitter ills;
The silence of the skies so deeply blue,
That smile the live-long summer through;
The silence of the stars that shine by night
And ease the dark with flash of friendly light;
The silence of the glens and dales,
Sequestered nooks and deep-verdured vales;
All eloquent
Of peacefulness and true content;
The silence of the forest wild that sings
The tranquil songs of growing things;
The silence of the meadows soon to bear
The fruitage of the harvest; and the rare
Sweet silence of the setting sun
That tells of labor done;
And love as great as that of Paradise
Is whispered surest by the silent eyes!

ON FILE

IF an unkind word appears,
File the thing away.
If some novelty in jeers,
File the thing away.
If some clever little bit
Of a sharp and pointed wit,
Carrying a sting with it —
File the thing away.

If some bit of gossip come,
File the thing away.
Scandalously spicy crumb,
File the thing away.
If suspicion comes to you
That your neighbor isn't true
Let me tell you what to do —
File the thing away!

Do this for a little while,
Then go out and burn the file.

THE NOTE WITHIN

I HAVE a song within my heart that I shall
never sing.
I know 'tis there for I can feel its joyous fluttering.
Just how it goes, I do not know; and what it is about,
Though I have tried and tried again I cannot quite make out —
But this I know: when days are dark, and sullen is the air,
It does not vex my soul at all, because that song is there!

NATURE'S HIRED MAN

DIGGIN' in the earth,
Helpin' things to grow,
Foolin' with a rake,
Flirtin' with a hoe;

Waterin' the plants,
Pullin' up the weeds,
Gatherin' the stones,
Puttin' in the seeds;

On your face and hands
Pilin' up a tan —
That's the job for me,
Nature's hired man!

Wages best of all.
Better far than wealth.
Paid in good fresh air,
And a lot o' health.

Never any chance
Of your gettin' fired,
And when night comes on
Knowin' why you're tired.

Nature's hired man!
That's the job for me,

With the birds and flowers
For society.

Let the other feller
For the dollar scratch —
I am quite contented
With my garden-patch.

THE SMILE OF PLENTY

WHEN Plenty smiles the world seems fair,
And sweet content rests everywhere,
Save when with laughter in her eye
She smiles on Want — and passes by.

'Tis not thy smile that proves thee blest,
O Plenitude. Thou art at best
When on thy luscious lips we see
The quivering touch of Sympathy.

Thy crown will not rest sure until
Thou hast redeemed the world from ill,
And ta'en the smile thy courtiers vaunt
And placed it on the lips of Want!

BY SPECIAL DELIVERY

WHEN I've a quarrel in my mind
 With one who's far away,
To scorching letters I'm inclined,
 In which I say my say.

And then I take those seething screeds
 So full of ink and ire,
In which I threaten awful deeds,
 And mail them — in the fire!

THE KINDLY MOON

THE red moon rises from the sea
And seems to pave a path for me,
As if inviting me to come
And join it in its distant home.

A sparkling ladder made of gold
It throws athwart the ripples cold,
And bids me climb to starry heights
There to partake of its delights.

And when perchance it comes to know
That while I would I may not go,
It smiles benignly on me still,
And lingers on my window-sill.

It peeps in at me through the pane
Until the night is on the wane,
And at the coming of the day,
Still smiling back, tiptoes away.

A RECIPE FOR HAPPINESS

BEGIN the day with smiling eyes ;
Pursue the day with smiling lips ;
Through clouds perceive the smiling skies
Up where the smiling sunbeam trips.

Let smiling thoughts within your mind
Drive gloom and cold despair apart,
And promptings of a genial kind
Keep ever glowing in your heart.

Meet trouble with a cheery mien,
Be jovial in the face of care —
He routs all mischief from the scene
Who greets it with a jocund air.

A CHOICE

IF you must sit and sigh,
And have the blues,
 Why don't you try
 To realize
That there are sighs and sighs,
 And blues and blues,
 From which to choose?
There's Heavenly blues, and blues of tranquil
 seas,
Both pleasant — if you have them, pray have
 these;
And when you sigh, be like the turtle-dove,
Who knows not grief, and merely sighs for love.

AMBITION

NO bay for me that critics may deny
In distant ages ; no position high
To win me others' envy, but a place
Among the men of service to my race ;

To earn the meed of praise that comes to one
Who sees at eve his daily labor done,
And done so well no hostile eye can find
A flaw in it, or fault of any kind.

To spread a note of cheer where'er I stray,
To lead the joyless to a brighter day.
To fill the hearts of sufferers with song.
To stand alway a sturdy foe to wrong.

To win the love of those with whom I toil.
To keep as close as may be to the soil
Whence came my strength and power, and anon
When it must be to die with harness on !

THE TEACHERS

GIVE me a tree that I may watch it rise
Up, ever upward to the eternal skies,
And learn from it the lesson it doth teach
In patience e'er for higher things to reach.

Give me a tiny rill, a rivulet
That speeds along unmindful of regret;
That dashes onward to the mighty sea
Athirst of that great whole a part to be!

Give me the sturdy peak that proudly rears
Its head aloft whatever storm appears,
To fill my soul with that great strengthfulness
That holds it steadfast in the hour of stress!

Give me a star to look at far above,
A star that sheds its radiant rays of love,
And sparkles fairest in the blackest night,
And sends down through the dark its song of
light!

THE ROAD TO MEMORY

UPON the Road to Memory
I lingered long to-day,
And O the things that I did see
Upon that precious way!

A little chap with dark brown eyes,
With others, came along;
He was not big, nor very wise,
But happy was his song.

He sang of days that were to come,
When he should be a man;
They made a truly wondrous sum,
The things that he did plan.

But when he looked me in the face,
'Twas with a wistful eye;
Then turned and gazed far into space,
And gave a little sigh.

And then he spoke. His voice was kind,
His words — ah, they were good.
He whispered softly, “Never mind —
We’ve done the best we could!”

For on that Road of Memory,
That leads to Yesterday,
He was the lad I used to be
Before my locks were gray!

MY TREASURES

I DREAMED last night a Spirit came to me
And placed within my hand the golden key
Of Fortune. "Life's best treasures wait
For thee," quoth he, "beyond the Sunrise
Gate."

I wandered through the night with visions rare
Of finding stores of gold and silver there;
Of lustrous drifts of scintillating gems
Fit to adorn some monarch's diadems.

Then when the dawn lit up the eastern sky
And I awoke to find the dream gone by,
The Sunrise Gate before mine eyes swung ope,
And there my treasures lay — Love, Health,
and Hope!

THE FRIENDLY NIGHT

NIGHT falls, and darkness comes apace;
The earth in mystic shadow lies;
A veil hath covered Nature's face,
And seems to hide her eyes.

The fading light tiptoes away;
The laggard hours softly creep,
As with the passing of the day
The world is hushed in sleep.

A vast sweet stillness covers all;
A quietude unvexed and blest
Now sounds a scarcely whispered call
That summons us to rest.

Gateway to dreams! Gone care and pain;
Gone sorrow, sighs; gone tears and blight;
Pathway from Light to Light again —
God's blessings on thee, Night!

SUPPOSE

SUPPOSE your mind a garden were,
All ready for the spring,
And everything you planted there
Would soon be blossoming.

Suppose that evil thoughts were weeds
That rankly grew apace,
And every dream of selfish deeds
Should blossom in disgrace;

While every impulse to be kind,
To ease some other's woes,
Should bud and blossom in your mind
A fair and fragrant rose.

Suppose that every idle whim,
And every thought of scorn,
Should find its fruitage in a grim
And poison-laden thorn;

While every purpose to uplift
Your soul from sordid ways
Should burst into a snow-white drift
Of tender lily-sprays.

'Tis surely with no danger fraught
Supposing things like this —
And maybe here's a seed of thought
To flower forth in bliss.

ON THINKING GLAD

NEVER mind a change of scene —
Try a change of thinking.
What if things seem sordid, mean,
What's the use of blinking?
Life's not always storm and cloud,
Somewhere stars are shining.
Try to think your joys out loud,
Silence all repining.

By degrees, by thinking light,
Thinking glad and sweetly,
You'll escape the stress of night,
Worry gone completely.
Get the habit looking for
Sunbeams pirouetting,
Tapping gaily at your door —
Surest cure for fretting.

Needn't fool yourself at all,
For there's no denying
E'en above a prison wall
Song-birds are a-flying.
Wherefore hearken to the song,
Never mind the prison,
And you'll find your soul ere long
Unto freedom risen.

THE ESCAPE

ESCAPE from your shop for a little,
No matter just where it may be.
Go out in the green woods and whittle,
Or wander along by the sea.
Fly forth from the turbulent city
And all of its clangorous ills,
And list to the jovial ditty
Of birds on the burgeoning hills.

No matter how much you enjoy it,
Drop work for a moment and dance;
Go out for a little and "boy" it —
Give old Mother Nature a chance.
Be noisy and fresh, and be jolly;
Build castles of nothing but air;
Drop worry and black melancholy —
Escape from vexation and care.

Go lie on the grass and just holler;
Go laze by the babbling streams;
Forget there's a thing called a dollar,
And live in your visions and dreams.
Like mists of the night, like a bubble,
Will vanish unquiet and fear,
And out of the sea of your trouble
Will rise the warm sunlight of cheer!

TO MELANCHOLY

MELANCHOLY,
Melancholy,

I've no use for you, by Golly!
Yet I'm going to keep you hidden
In some chamber dark, forbidden,
Just as though you were a prize, sir,
Made of gold, and I a miser —
Not because I think you jolly,
 Melancholy!

Not for that I mean to hoard you,
Keep you close and lodge and board you,
As I would my sisters, brothers,
Cousins, aunts, and old grandmothers,
But that you shan't bother others
With your sniffing, snuffing folly,
 Howling,
 Yowling,
 Melancholy!

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