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RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS  
BY JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

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AN OLD SWEETHEART OF  
MINE.





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RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS  
BY JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

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ILLUSTRATED  
BY  
C. M. RELYEA



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Copyright, 1897,  
By JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

THE DE VINNE PRESS.

TO

DR. FRANKLIN W. HAYS

THE LOYAL CHUM OF MY LATEST YOUTH  
AND LIKE FRIEND AND COMRADE STILL  
WITH ALL GRATEFUL AFFECTION OF

THE AUTHOR.





---

*WE FOUND him in that Far-away that yet to us  
seems near —  
We vagrants of but yesterday when idlest youth  
was here,—  
When lightest song and laziest mirth possessed us  
through and through,  
And all the dreamy summer-earth seemed drugged  
with morning dew :*

*When our ambition scarce had shot a stalk or  
blade indeed :  
Yours,—choked as in the garden-spot you still  
deferred to “weed” :  
Mine,—but a pipe half-cleared of pith—as now  
it flats and whines  
In sympathetic cadence with a hiccough in the  
lines.*

*Aye, even then—O timely hour!—the High Gods  
did confer  
In our behalf:—And, clothed in power, lo, came  
their Courier—  
Not winged with flame nor shod with wind,—  
but ambling down the pike,  
Horseback, with saddlebags behind, and guise all  
human-like.*

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*And it was given us to see, beneath his rustic  
rind,  
A native force and mastery of such inspiring  
kind,  
That half unconsciously we made obeisance.—  
Smiling, thus  
His soul shone from his eyes and laid its glory  
over us.*

. . . . .

*Though, faring still that Far-away that yet to  
us seems near,  
His form, through mists of yesterday, fades from  
the vision here,  
Forever as he rides, it is in retinue divine,—  
The hearts of all his time are his, with your hale  
heart and mine.*



RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS  
BY JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY



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I

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RUBÁIYÁT  
OF  
DOC SIFERS

I

EF you don't know DOC SIFERS I 'll jes argy,  
here and now,  
You 've bin a mighty little while about here,  
anyhow!  
'Cause Doc he 's rid these roads and woods—  
er *swum* 'em, now and then—  
And practised in this neighborhood sence hain't  
no tellin' when!

## II

In radius o' fifteen mile'd, all p'int's o' compass round,  
No man er-woman, chick er child, er team, on top o' ground,  
But knows *him*—yes, and got respects and likin' fer him, too,  
Fer all his so-to-speak dee-fects o' genius showin' through!

## III

Some claims he 's absent-minded; some has said they wuz afeard  
To take his powders when he come and dosed 'em out, and 'peared  
To have his mind on somepin' else—like County Ditch, er some  
New way o' tannin' mussrat-pelts, er makin' butter come.

---







## IV

He 's cur'ous — they hain't no mistake about  
it! — but he 's got

Enough o' extry brains to make a *jury* — like  
as not.

They 's no *describin'* Sifers,— fer, when all is  
said and done,

He 's jes *hisse'f Doc Sifers* — ner they hain't  
no other one!

## V

Doc 's allus sociable, polite, and 'greeable, you-  
'll find —

Pervidin' ef you strike him right and nothin'  
on his mind,—

Like in some *hurry*, when they 've sent fer  
Sifers *quick*, you see,

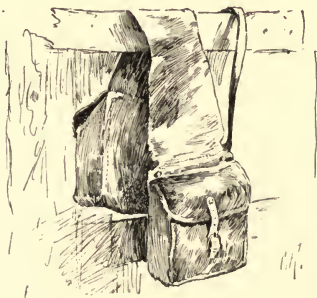
To 'tend some sawmill-accident, er picnic jam-  
boree;

## VI

Er when the lightnin' 's struck some hare-  
brained harvest-hand; er in  
Some 'tempt o' suicidin'—where they 'd ort  
to try ag'in!

I 've *knowed* Doc haul up from a trot and  
talk a' hour er two

When raily he 'd a-ort o' not a-stopped fer  
“*Howdy-do!*”







## VII

And then, I 've met him 'long the road, a-  
*lopin'*,—starin' straight

Ahead,—and yit he never knowed me when  
I hollered "*Yate,*

*Old Saddlebags!*" all hearty-like, er "*Who*  
*you goin' to kill?*"

And he 'd say nothin'—only hike on faster,  
starin' still!

## VIII

I 'd bin insulted, many a time, ef I jes wuz n't  
shore

Doc did n't mean a thing. And I 'm not  
tetchy any more

Sence that-air day, ef he 'd a-jes a-stopped to  
jaw with *me,*

They 'd bin a little dorter less in my own  
fambily!

## IX

Times *now*, at home, when Sifers' name comes  
up, I jes *let on*,  
You know, 'at *I* think Doc 's to *blame*, the  
way he 's bin and gone  
And disapp'inted folks—'Ll-*jee-mun-nee!* you 'd  
ort to then  
Jes hear my wife light into me—“*ongrateful-  
est o' men!*”









## X

'Mongst *all* the women—mild er rough, splen-  
diferous er plain,  
Er them *with* sense, er not enough to come in  
out the rain,—  
Jes ever' shape and build and style o' women,  
fat er slim—  
They all like Doc, and got a smile and plea-  
sant word fer *him!*

## XI

Ner hain't no horse I 've ever saw but what 'll  
neigh and try  
To sidle up to him, and paw, and sense him,  
ear-and-eye:  
Then jes a tetch o' Doc's old pa'm, to pat 'em,  
er to shove  
Along their nose—and they 're as ca'm as  
any cooin' dove!

XII

And same with *dogs*,—take any breed, er  
strain, er pedigree,  
Er racial caste 'at can't concede no use fer  
you er me,—  
They 'll putt all predju-dice aside in *Doc's* case  
and go in  
Kahoots with him, as satisfied as he wuz kith-  
and-kin!

XIII

And Doc 's a wonder, trainin' pets!—He 's  
got a chicken-hawk,  
In kind o' half-cage, where he sets out in the  
gyarden-walk,  
And got that wild bird trained so tame, he 'll  
loose him, and he 'll fly  
Clean to the woods!—Doc calls his name—  
and he 'll come, by-and-by!

---





## XIV

Some says no money down ud buy that bird  
 o' Doc.—Ner no  
 Inducement to the *bird*, says I, 'at *he 'd* let  
*Sifers* go!  
 And Doc *he* say 'at *he 's* content—long as  
 a bird o' prey  
 Kin 'bide *him*, it 's a *compliment*, and takes  
 it thataway.

## XV

But, gittin' back to *docterin'*—all the sick and  
 in distress,  
 And old and pore, and weak and small, and  
 lone and motherless,—  
 I jes tell *you* I 'preciate the man 'at 's got  
 the love  
 To “go ye forth and ministrate!” as Scriptur'  
 tells us of.

## XVI

*Dull* times, Doc jes *mianders* round, in that old  
rig o' his:  
And hain't no tellin' where he 's bound ner  
guessin' where he is;  
He 'll drive, they tell, jes thataway fer maybe  
six er eight  
Days at a stretch; and neighbors say he 's  
bin clean round the State.

## XVII

He picked a' old tramp up, one trip, 'bout  
eighty mile'd from here,  
And fetched him home and k-yored his hip,  
and kep' him 'bout a year;  
And feller said—in all *his* ja'nts round this  
terreschul ball  
'At no man wuz a *circumstance* to *Doc!*—he  
topped 'em all!—







XVIII

Said, bark o' trees 's a' open book to Doc, and  
vines and moss  
He read like writin'—with a look knowed ever'  
dot and cross:  
Said, stars at night wuz jes as good 's a com-  
pass: said, he s'pose  
You could n't lose Doc in the woods the  
darkest night that blows!

XIX

Said, Doc 'll tell you, purty clos't, by under-  
bresh and plants,  
How fur off *warter* is,—and 'most perdict the  
sort o' chance  
You 'll have o' findin' *fish*; and how they 're  
liable to *bite*,  
And whether they 're a-bitin' now, er only  
after night.

XX

And, whilse we 're talkin' *fish*,—I mind they  
formed a fishin'-crowd  
(When folks *could* fish 'thout gittin' *fined*, and  
seinin' wuz allowed!)

O' leadin' citizens, you know, to go and seine  
“Old Blue”—

But had n't no big seine, and so—w'y, what  
wuz they to do? . . .

XXI

And Doc he say he thought 'at *he* could *knit*  
a stitch er two—

“Bring the *materials* to me—'at 's all I 'm  
astin' you!”

And down he sets—six weeks, i jing! and  
knits that seine plum done—

Made corks too, brails and ever'thing—good  
as a boughten one!

---





XXII

Doc 's *public* sperit — when the sick 's not  
takin' *all* his time

And he 's got *some* fer politics — is simple yit  
sublime :—

He 'll *talk* his *principles* — and they air *honest* ;—  
but the sly

Friend strikes him first, election-day, he 'd  
'commodate, er die !

XXIII

And yit, though Doc, as all men knows, is  
square straight up and down,

That vote o' his is — well, I s'pose — the  
cheapest one in town ;—

A fact 'at 's sad to verify, as could be done on  
oath —

I 've voted Doc myse'f — *And I was criminal  
fer both !*

---

## XXIV

You kin corrupt the *ballot-box* — corrupt *your-*  
*se'f*, as well —  
Corrupt *some* neighbors,—but old Doc 's as  
oncorruptible  
As Holy Writ. So putt a pin right there!—  
Let *Sifers* be,  
I jucks! he would n't vote agin his own worst  
inimy!

## XXV

When Cynthy Eubanks laid so low with fever,  
and Doc Glenn  
Told Euby Cynth 'ud haf to go — they sends  
fer *Sifers* then! . . .  
Doc sized the case: “She 's starved,” says  
he, “fer *warter* — yes, and *meat*!  
The treatment 'at she 'll git from *me* 's all  
she kin drink and eat!”







XXVI

He orders Euby then to split some wood,  
and take and build  
A fire in kitchen-stove, and git a young spring-  
chicken killed;  
And jes whirled in and th'owed his hat and  
coat there on the bed,  
And warshed his hands and sailed in that-air  
kitchen, Euby said,

XXVII

And biled that chicken-broth, and got that  
dinner — all complete  
And clean and crisp and good and hot as  
mortal ever eat!  
And Cynth and Euby both 'll say 'at Doc 'll  
git as good  
Meals-vittles up, jes any day, as any *woman*  
could!

---

XXVIII

Time Sister Abbick tuk so bad with striffen  
o' the lung,  
P'tracted Meetin', where she had jes shouted,  
prayed and sung  
All winter long, through snow and thaw,—  
when Sifers come, says he:  
“No, M'lissy; don't poke out your raw and  
cloven tongue at me!—

XXIX

“I know, without no symptoms but them  
*injarubber-shoes*  
You promised me to never putt a fool-foot in  
ner use  
At purril o' your life!” he said. “And I  
won't save you *now*,  
Unless—here on your dyin' bed—you con-  
secrate your vow!”

---

## XXX

Without a-claimin' *any creed*, Doc's rail reli-  
gious views  
Nobody knows—ner got no *need* o' knowin'  
whilse he choose  
To be heerd not of man, ner raise no loud,  
vainglorious prayers  
In crowded marts, er public ways, er—i jucks,  
*anywheres!*—



## XXXI

'Less 'n it *is* away deep down in his own  
heart, at night,  
Facin' the storm, when all the town 's a-sleep-  
in' snug and tight—  
Him splashin' hence from scenes o' pride and  
sloth and gilded show,  
To some pore sufferer's bedside o' anguish,  
don't you know!

## XXXII

Er maybe dead o' *winter*—makes no odds to  
*Doc*, — he 's got  
To face the weather ef it takes the hide off!  
'cause he 'll not  
*Lie* out o' goin' and p'tend he 's sick hisse'f  
—like *some*  
'At I could name 'at folks might send fer  
and they 'd *never* come!





## XXXIII

Like pore Phin Hoover — when he goes to  
 that last dance o' his!  
 That Chris'mus when his feet wuz froze — and  
 Doc saved all they is  
 Left of 'em — "'Nough," as Phin say now,  
 "to *track* me by, and be  
 A *advertisement*, anyhow, o' what Doc 's done  
 fer me! —

## XXXIV

"When *he* come — knife-and-saw" — Phin say,  
 "I knowed, ef I 'd the spunk,  
 'At Doc 'ud fix me up *some* way, ef nothin'  
 but my *trunk*  
 Wuz left, he 'd fasten *casters* in, and have  
 me, spick-and-span,  
 A-skootin' round the streets ag'in as spry as  
 any man!"

## XXXV

Doc sees a patient 's *got* to quit—he 'll ease  
him down serene  
As dozin' off to sleep, and yit not dope him  
with mor-*pheen*.—  
He won't tell *what*—jes 'lows 'at he has "airn't  
the right to sing  
'O grave, where is thy victory! O death,  
where is thy sting!'"

## XXXVI

And, mind ye now!—it 's not in scoff and  
scorn, by long degree,  
'At Doc gits things like that-un off: it 's jes  
his *shority*  
And total faith in Life to Come,—w'y, "from  
that *Land o' Bliss*,"  
He says, "we 'll haf to chuckle some, a-lookin'  
back at this!"









## XXXVII

And, still in p'int, I mind, one *night o' 'niti-  
ation* at  
Some secert lodge, 'at Doc set right down on  
'em, square and flat,  
When they mixed up some Scriptur' and wuz  
*funnin'*-like — w'y, he  
Lit in 'em with a rep'imand 'at ripped 'em,  
A to Z!

## XXXVIII

And onc't — when general loafin'-place wuz  
old Shoe-Shop — and all  
The gang 'ud git in there and brace their  
backs ag'inst the wall  
And *settle* questions that had went onsettled  
long enough,—  
Like “wuz no Heav'n — ner no torment” —  
*jes talkin' awful rough!*



## XXXIX

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There wuz Sloke Haines and old Ike Knight  
and Coonrod Simmes — all three  
Ag'inst the Bible and the Light, and scoutin'  
Deity.

“*Science*,” says Ike, “it *dimonstrates* — it  
takes nobody’s word —  
*Scriptur*’ er not, — it *’vestigates* ef sich things  
could occurred !”

## XL

Well, Doc he heerd this, — he ’d drapped in  
a minute, fer to git  
A tore-off heel pegged on agin, — and, as he  
stood on it  
And stomped and grinned, he says to Ike,  
“I s’pose now, purty soon  
Some lightnin’-bug, indignant-like, ’ll ‘’vesti-  
gate’ the moon! . . . .”

---

## XLI

“No, Ike,” says Doc, “this world hain’t saw  
no brains like yourn and mine  
With sense enough to grasp a law ’at takes a  
brain divine.—  
I ’ve bared the thoughts of brains in doubt,  
and felt their finest pulse,—  
And mortal brains jes won’t turn out omni-  
potent results!”

## XLII

And Doc he ’s got respects to spare the *rich*  
as well as *pore* —  
Says he, “I ’d turn no *millionaire* onsheltered  
from my door.”—  
Says he, “What ’s wealth to him in quest o’  
*honest* friends to back  
And love him fer *hisse’f*? — not jes because  
he ’s made his jack!”









## XIII

And childern.— *Childern?* Lawzy-day! Doc  
*worships* 'em!— You call  
 Round at his house and *ast* 'em!— they 're  
*a-swarmin'* there — that 's all! —  
 They 're in his *Lib'ry* — in best room — in  
 kitchen — fur and near, —  
 In office too, and, I p'sume, his operatin'-  
 cheer!

## XLIV

You know they 's men 'at *bees* won't sting?—  
They 's plaguey *few*, — but Doc  
He 's one o' *them*.— And same, i jing! with  
*childern*; — they jes flock  
Round Sifers *natchurl!* — in his lap, and in  
his pockets, too,  
And in his old fur mitts and cap, and *heart* as  
warm and true!

## XLV

It 's cur'ous, too, — 'cause Doc hain't got no  
childern of his own —  
'Ceptin' the ones he 's tuk and brought up,  
'at 's bin left alone  
And orphans when their father died, er mo-  
ther, — and Doc he  
Has he'pped their dyin' satisfied. — “The child  
shall live with me







## XLVI

“And Winniferd, my wife,” he ’d say, and  
stop right there, and cle’r  
His th’oat, and go on thinkin’ way *some* mo-  
ther-hearts down here  
Can’t never feel *their own* babe’s face a-pressin’  
’em, ner make  
Their naked breasts a restin’-place fer any  
baby’s sake.

## XLVII

Doc's *Lib'ry* — as he calls it, — well, they 's  
ha'f-a-dozen she'ves  
Jam-full o' books — I could n't tell *how* many  
— count yourse'ves!  
*One whole she'f's* Works on Medicine! and  
most the rest 's about  
First Settlement, and Indians in here, — 'fore  
we driv 'em out. —

## XLVIII

And Plutarch's *Lives* — and life also o' Dan'el  
Boone, and this-  
Here Mungo Park, and Adam Poe — jes all  
the *lives* they is!  
And Doc 's got all the *novels* out, — by Scott  
and Dickison  
And Cooper. — And, I make no doubt, he 's  
read 'em ever' one!



Doc's Lib'ry





## XLIX

Onc't, in his office, settin' there, with crowd  
o' eight er nine  
Old neighbors with the time to spare, and  
Doc a-feelin' fine,  
A man rid up from Rollins, jes fer Doc to  
write him out  
Some blame p'scription—done, I guess, in  
minute, nigh about.—



L

And *I* says, “Doc, you ’pear so s’pry, jes  
write me that recei’t  
You have fer bein’ *happy* by,—fer that ’u’d  
shorely beat  
Your *medicine!*” says I.—And quick as *s’cat!*  
Doc turned and writ  
And handed me: “Go he’p the sick, and putt  
your heart in it.”

LI

And then, “A-talkin’ funder ’bout that line  
o’ thought,” says he,  
“Ef we ’ll jes do the work cut out and give’  
to you and me,  
We ’ll lack no joy, ner appetite, ner all we ’d  
ort to eat,  
And sleep like childern ever’ night — as puore  
and ca’m and sweet.”

---

LII

Doc *has* bin 'cused o' *offishness* and lack o' talkin' free

And extry friendly; but he says, "I 'm 'feard o' talk," says he,—

"I 've got," he says, "a natchurl turn fer talkin' fit to kill.—

The best and hardest thing to learn is trick o' keepin' still."

LIII

Doc *kin* smoke, and I s'pose he *might* drink licker—jes fer fun.

He says, "*You* smoke, *you* drink all right; but *I* don't—neether one"—

Says, "I *like* whiskey—'good old rye'—but like it in its place,

Like that-air warter in your eye, er nose there on your face."

---

LIV

Doc 's bound to have his joke! The day he  
got that off on me  
I jes had sold a load o' hay at "Scofield's  
Livery,"  
And tolled Doc in the shed they kep' the  
hears't in, where I 'd hid  
The stuff 'at got me "out o' step," as Sifers  
said it did.

LV

Doc hain't, to say, no "*rollin' stone*," and yit he  
hain't no hand  
Fer '*cumulatin'*.—*Home* 's his own, and scrap  
o' farmin'-land—  
Enough to keep him out the way when folks  
is tuk down sick  
The suddentest—'most any day they want him  
'special quick.

---





## LVI

And yit Doc loves his practice; ner don't, wil-  
ful, want to slight  
No call — no matter who — how fur away — er  
day er night.—  
He loves his work — he loves his friends —  
June, Winter, Fall, and Spring:  
His *lovin'* — facts is — never ends; he loves jes  
*ever'*thing. . . .

## LVII

'Cept — *keepin'* books. He never sets down no  
accounts. — He hates,  
The worst of all, collectin' debts — the worst,  
the more he waits. —  
I 've knowed him, when at last he *had* to dun  
a man, to end  
By makin' him a loan — and mad he had n't  
more to lend.

LVIII

When Pence's Drug Store ust to be in full  
blast, they wuz some  
Doc's patients got things frekantly there,  
charged to him, i gum!—  
Doc run a bill there, don't you know, and allus  
when he squared,  
He never questioned nothin',—so he had his  
feelin's spared.

LIX

Now sich as that, I hold and claim, hain't  
'*scusable*—it 's not  
*Perfessional!*—It 's jes a shame 'at Doc his-  
se'f hain't got  
No better *business*-sense! That 's why lots 'd  
respect him more,  
And not give him the clean go-by fer *other*  
doctors. Shore!

---







## LX

This-here Doc *Glenn*, fer instance; er this little  
jack-leg *Hall*;—

They 're *business*—folks respects 'em fer their  
*business* more 'n all

They ever knowed, er ever *will*, 'bout *medi-*  
*cine*.— Yit they

Collect their money, k-yore er kill.— They 're  
*business*, anyway!



## LXI

You ast Jake Dunn;—he 's worked it out in  
*figgers*.—He kin show  
*Statistics* how Doc 's airnt about *three* fortunes  
 in a row,—  
 Ever' ten-year' hand-runnin' straight—*three*  
 of 'em—*thirty* year'  
 'At Jake kin count and 'lucidate o' Sifers'  
 practice here.

## LXII

Yit—"Praise the Lord," says Doc, "we 've  
 got our little home!" says he—  
 "(It 's raily *Winniferd's*, but what she owns,  
 she sheers with me.)  
 We' got our little gyarden-spot, and peach-  
 and apple-trees,  
 And stable, too, and chicken-lot, and eighteen  
 hive' o' bees."





## LXIII

*You* call it anything you please, but it 's  
*witchcraft*—the power

'At Sifers has o' handlin' bees!—He 'll watch  
 'em by the hour—

Mix right amongst 'em, mad and hot and  
 swarmin'!—yit they won't

Sting *him*, er *want* to—'*pear* to not,—at least  
 I know they *don't*.

## LXIV

With *me* and bees they 's no *p'tense* o' social-  
 bility—

A dad-burn bee 'u'd climb a fence to git a  
 whack at *me!*

I s'pose no thing 'at 's *got* a sting is raily  
 satisfied

It 's *sharp* enough, ontel, i jing! he 's honed  
 it on my hide!

## LXV

And Doc he 's allus had a knack *inventin'*  
things.—Dec-vised  
A windlass wound its own se'f back as it run  
down: and s'prised  
Their new hired girl with *clothes-line*, too, and  
*clothes-pins*, all in *one*:  
Purt'-nigh all left fer *her* to do wuz git her  
*primpin'* done!

## LXVI

And onc't, I mind, in airly Spring, and tappin'  
sugar-trees,  
Doc made a dad-burn little thing to sharpen  
*spiles* with — these-  
Here wood'-spouts 'at the peth 's punched out,  
and driv' in where they bore  
The auger-holes. He sharpened 'bout *a mil-*  
*lion* spiles er more!









## LXVII

And Doc 's the first man ever swung a *bucket*  
on a tree  
Instid o' *troughs*; and first man brung *grained*  
sugar — so 's 'at he  
Could use it fer his coffee, and fer cookin',  
don't you know.—  
Folks come clean up from Pleasantland 'fore  
they 'd *believe* it, though!

## LXVIII

And all Doc's stable-doors *onlocks* and locks  
*theirse'ves* — and gates  
The same way ; — all rigged up like clocks, with  
pulleys, wheels, and weights,—  
So, 's Doc says, “drivin' *out*, er *in*, they 'll  
*open*; and they 'll *then*,  
All quiet-like, shet up ag'in like little gentlemen!”

## LXIX

And Doc 'ud made a mighty good *detective*.—  
Neighbors all  
Will testify to *that* — er *could*, ef they wuz  
legal call:  
His theories on any crime is worth your  
listenin' to.—  
And he has hit 'em, many a time, 'long 'fore  
established true.





## LXX

At this young druggist Wenfield Pence's trial  
fer his life,  
On *primy faishy* evidence o' pizonin' his  
wife,  
*Doc's* testimony saved and cle' red and 'quitted  
him and freed  
Him so 's he never even 'peared cog-nizant  
of the deed!

## LXXI

The facts wuz — Sifers testified, — at inquest he  
had found  
The stummick showed the woman *died* o'  
pizon, but had downed  
The dos't *herse'f*, — because *amount* and *cost*  
o' drug imployed  
No *druggist* would, on *no* account, a-lavished  
and distroyed!

## LXXII

Doc tracked a blame-don burgler down, and  
    *nailed* the scamp, to boot,  
But told him ef he 'd leave the town he  
    would n't prosecute.  
He traced him by a tied-up thumb-print in  
    fresh putty, where  
Doc glazed it. Jes *that* 's how he come to  
    track him to his lair!

## LXXIII

Doc 's jes a *leetle* too inclined, *some* thinks,  
    to overlook  
The criminal and vicious kind we 'd ort to  
    bring to book  
And punish, 'thout no extry show o' *sympa-*  
    *thizin'*, where  
*They* hain't showed none fer *us*, you know.  
    But he takes issue there:









LXXIV

Doc argies 'at "The Red-eyed Law," as *he*  
says, "ort to learn  
To lay a mighty leenient paw on deeds o' sich  
concern  
As only the Good Bein' knows the wherefore  
of, and spreads  
HIS hands above accused and sows His mer-  
cies on their heads."

---

LXXV

Doc even holds 'at *murder* hain't no crime we  
got a right  
To *hang* a man fer — claims it 's *taint* o' *lu-*  
*nacy*, er *quite*. —  
“Hold *sich* a man responsibul fer murder,”  
Doc says, — “then,  
When *he* 's hung, where 's the rope to pull  
them *sound-mind* jurymen?”

LXXVI

“It 's in a nutshell — *all* kin see,” says Doc, —  
“it 's cle'r the *Law* 's  
As ap' to err as you er me, and kill without  
a cause:  
The man most innocent o' sin *I* 've saw, er  
'*spect* to see,  
Wuz servin' a life-sentence in the peniten-  
tchury.”

---





## LXXVII

And Doc 's a whole hand at a *fire!*—directin'  
how and where  
To set your ladders, low er higher, and what  
first duties air,—  
Like formin' warter-bucket-line; and best man  
in the town  
To chop holes in old roofs, and mine defec-  
tive chimblies down:

## LXXVIII

Er durin' any public crowd, mass-meetin', er  
big day,  
Where ladies ort n't be allowed, as I 've heerd  
Sifers say,—  
When they 's a suddent rush somewhere, it 's  
Doc's voice, ca'm and cle'r,  
Says, "Fall back, men, and give her air!—  
that 's all she 's faintin' fer."



## LXXIX

The sorriest I ever feel fer Doc is when some  
show  
Er circus comes to town and he 'll not git a  
chance to go.  
'Cause he jes natchurly *delights* in circuses—  
clean down  
From tumblers, in their spangled tights, to  
trick-mule and Old Clown.



## LXXX

And ever'body *knows* it, too, how Doc is,  
thataway! . . . .

I mind a circus onc't come through — wuz  
there myse'f that day.—

Ringmaster cracked his whip, you know, to  
start the ridin'—when

In runs Old Clown and hollers "*Whoa!*—  
Ladies and gentlemen

## LXXXI

"Of this vast audience, I fain would make  
*inquiry* cle'r,

And learn, find out, and ascertain—*Is Doctor  
Sifers here?*"

And when some fool-voice bellers down:

"He is! He 's settin' in

Full view o' ye!" "*Then,*" says the Clown,  
"*the circus may begin!*"

## LXXXII

Doc 's got a *temper*; but, he says, he 's  
learnt it which is boss,  
Yit has to *watch* it, more er less. . . . I  
never seen him cross  
But onc't, enough to make him swear;—  
milch-cow stepped on his toe,  
And Doc ripped out "*I doggies!*"—There 's  
the only case I know.

## LXXXIII

Doc says that 's what your temper 's fer—  
to hold back out o' view,  
And learn it never to occur on out ahead o'  
*you*.—  
"You lead the way," says Sifers—"git your  
*temper* back in line—  
And *furdest* back the *best*, ef it 's as mean a  
one as mine!"





## LXXXIV

He hates contentions — can't abide a wrangle  
er dispute  
O' any kind; and he 'ull slide out of a crowd  
and skoot  
Up some back-alley 'fore he 'll stand and  
listen to a furse  
When ary one 's got upper-hand and t' other  
one 's got worse.

## LXXXV

Doc says: "I 'spise, when pore and weak and  
awk'ard talkers fails,  
To see it 's them with hardest cheek and loud-  
est mouth prevails.—  
A' all-one-sided quarr'l 'll make me *biased*,  
mighty near,—  
'Cause ginerly the side I take 's the one I  
never hear."

## LXXXVI

What 'peals to Doc the most and best is  
    "seein' folks *agreed*,  
And takin' ekaal interest and universal heed  
O' ever'body *else*'s words and idies—same as  
    we  
Wuz glad and chirpy as the birds—jes as  
    we 'd *ort* to be!"

## LXXXVII

And *paterotic!* Like to git Doc started, full  
    and fair,  
About the war, and why 't 'uz fit, and what  
    wuz 'complished there;  
"And who wuz *wrong*," says Doc, "er *right*,  
    't 'uz waste o' blood and tears,  
All prophesied in *Black* and *White* fer years  
    and years and years!"







## LXXXVIII

And then he 'll likely kind o' tetch on old John  
Brown, and dwell  
On what *his* warnin's wuz; and ketch his  
breath and cough, and tell  
On down to Lincoln's death. And *then*—  
well, he jes chokes and quits  
With "I must go now, gentlemen!" and grabs  
his hat, and *gits!*

## LXXXIX

Doc's own war-rickord wuz n't won so much  
in line o' fight  
As line o' work and nussin' done the wounded,  
day and night.—  
His wuz the hand, through dark and dawn, 'at  
bound their wovnds, and laid  
As soft as their own mother's on their for-  
reds when they prayed. . . .

## XC

His wuz the face they saw the first—all dim,  
but smilin' bright,  
As they come to and knowed the worst, yit  
saw the old *Red-White-  
And-Blue* where Doc had fixed it where  
they 'd see it *wavin'* still,  
Out through the open tent-flap there, er  
'cros't the winder-sill.

## XCI

And some 's a-limpin' round here yit—  
a-waitin' Last Review,—  
'U'd give the pensions 'at they git, and pawn  
their crutches, too,  
To he'p Doc out, ef he wuz pressed financial'—  
same as he  
Has *allus* he'pped them when distressed—ner  
never tuk a fee.







## XCII

Doc never wuz much hand to pay attention  
to *p'tence*

And fuss-and-feathers and display in men o'  
prominence:

“A raily *great* man,” Sifers 'lows, “is not the  
out'ard dressed —

All uniform, salutes and bows, and swellin'  
out his chest.

## XCIII

“I *met* a great man onc’t,” Doc says, “and  
shuk his hand,” says he,  
“And *he* come ’bout in *one*, I guess, o’ dis-  
app’intin’ *me*--  
He talked so common-like, and brought his  
mind so cle’r in view  
And simple-like, I purt’-nigh thought, ‘*I ’m*  
best man o’ the two!’”

## XCIV

Yes-*sir!* Doc ’s got convictions and old-fash-  
ioned kind o’ ways  
And idies ’bout this glorious Land o’ Freedom;  
and he ’ll raise  
His hat clean off, no matter where, jes ever’  
time he sees  
The Stars and Stripes a-floatin’ there and flap-  
pin’ in the breeze.







XCV

And tunes like old "Red, White and Blue" 'll  
fairly drive him wild,  
Played on the brass band, marchin' through  
the streets! Jes like a child  
I 've saw that man, his smile jes set, all kind o'  
pale and white,  
Bare-headed, and his eyes all wet, yit dancin'  
with delight!

XCVI

And yit, that very man we see all trimbly,  
pale and wann,  
Give him a case o' *surgery*, we 'll see another  
man! —  
*We* 'll do the trimblin' then, and *we* 'll git  
white around the gills —  
He 'll show us *nerve* o' nerves, and he 'ull show  
us *skill* o' skills!

XCVII

*Then* you could toot your horns and beat  
your drums and bang your guns,  
And wave your flags and march the street,  
and charge, all Freedom's sons! —  
And Sifers *then*, I bet my hat, 'u'd never flinch  
a hair,  
But, stiddy-handed, 'tend to that pore patient  
layin' there.

XCVIII

And Sifers' *eye* 's as stiddy as that hand o'  
his! — He 'll shoot  
A' old-style rifle, like he has, and smallest  
bore, to boot,  
With any fancy rifles made to-day, er expert  
shot  
'At works at shootin' like a *trade* — and all  
*some* of 'em 's got!

---





XCIX

Let 'em go right out in the *woods* with Doc,  
and leave their "traps"  
And blame glass-balls and queensware-goods,  
and see how Sifers draps  
A squirrel out the tallest tree.— And 'fore he  
fires he 'll say  
Jes where he 'll hit him — yes, *sir-ee!* And  
he 's hit thataway!

C

Let 'em go out with him, i jucks! with fishin'-  
pole and gun,—  
And ekal chances, fish and ducks, and take  
the *rain*, er *sun*,  
Jes as it pours, er as it blinds the eye-sight;  
*then*, I guess,  
'At they 'd acknowledge, in their minds, their  
disadvantages.

---

CI

And yit *he 'd* be the last man out to flop his  
wings and crow  
Insultin'-like, and strut about above his fallen  
foe! —  
No-*sir!* the hand 'at tuk the wind out o'  
their sails 'ud be  
The very first they grabbed, and grinned to  
feel sich sympathy.

CII

Doc gits off now and then and takes a huntin'-  
trip somewhere  
'Bout Kankakee, up 'mongst the lakes—some-  
times 'll drift round there  
In his canoe a week er two; then paddle clean  
on back  
By way o' old Wabash and Blue, with fish—  
all he kin pack,—

---



CIII

And wild ducks—some with feathers on 'em  
yit, and stuffed with grass.  
And neighbors—all knows he 's bin *gone*—  
comes round and gits a bass—  
A great big double-breasted “rock,” er “black,”  
er maybe *pair*  
Half fills a' ordinary crock. . . . Doc's *fish* 'll  
give out there

CIV

Long 'fore his *ducks!*—But folks 'll smile and  
blandish him, and make  
Him tell and *tell* things!—all the while enjoy  
'em jes fer sake  
O' pleasin' *him*; and then turn in and la'nch  
him from the start  
A-tellin' all the things ag'in they railly know  
by heart.

---







## CV

He 's jes a *child*, 's what Sifers is! And-  
 sir, I 'd ruther see  
 That happy, childish face o' his, and puore  
 simplicity,  
 Than any shape er style er plan o' mortals  
 otherwise —  
 With perfect faith in God and man a-shinin'  
 in his eyes.


 TAMÁM.
 

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