

Helderberg Harmonies

Magdalene Merritt

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*HELDERBERG HARMONIES*







THE TORY SPY'S CAVE

*Frontispiece*

# Helderberg Harmonies

BY

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Edited by

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Voorheesville, N. Y.

M. MERRITT

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*To*  
LOVERS OF THE  
HELDERBERG





## PREFACE

THE real feeling of all who with each new morning have instinctively turned their eyes toward the Helderberg—ever the same, serene, smiling, friendly mountain—finds best expression in the words of a friend of mine, a noble woman, who said, “I want always to live within sight of the Helderberg.”

It is perhaps no more than natural that I, as a child of the valley, who played among the lights and shadows and fed upon the history and tradition of the mountain, should desire to share these feelings with a wider audience than my voice can reach. So I have selected such of my poems as I believe best breathe the spirit of the hill country, and here present them in permanent form.

To Mr. Simon Winne, of Indian Ladder, I am indebted for facts regarding “The Tory Spy,” and so am able to present a picture of the entrance to the actual cave in which this man took refuge from the Revolutionary soldiers. From my own family history I have drawn the character of The Sheriff, who was Christopher Batterman, my father’s brother-in-law. In some minor details the story differs from accounts given in



histories and books of reference; but whether these are due to tradition or to actual errors, I have been unable to determine. (See Patroon, Anti-Rentism, Van Rensselaer in encyclopedias.)

Through the kind courtesy of the Springfield *Republican*, *The American Agriculturist*, *Christian Work and Evangelist*, and other newspapers and periodicals, I am permitted to reprint some of the shorter poems which have appeared in their columns. From my former volume, "Songs of the Helderberg," long since out of print, I have reprinted "Nature's Voices," "The Hound," and "The Butterfly."

Thanks to Mr. Clayton Le Gallez, the landscape photographer of Albany, N. Y., I am permitted to present the half-tone views of some of the most interesting parts of the mountain.

M. M.

VOORHEESVILLE, N. Y.

*December 1, 1909.*



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## FAIR HELDERBERG

O MOUNTAIN fair, blue line against the sky!  
Thy wooded steeps, thy cool secluded trails,  
Thy dells, thy caves, and laughing waterfalls,  
All rainbow-haloed in the mellow light—  
How fondly turn thy loyal sons to thee  
With pure delight to greet thy sylvan joys!  
How tranquil are thy breathing solitudes  
Among the chaos of thy constant rocks,  
Dropped from the beetling battlements above,  
Or nature-hewn by ever-toiling force!  
From age to age these ancient stones proclaim  
In fossil forms through ages speaking yet  
A life that was, enduring through thee still.

The sea, fair hill, that hid thee from the sight  
With troubled waves, but deathless witness left!  
Ah, time hath healed and hid thy early wounds,  
And docile peace broods gently on thee now.  
No more, no more a direful flood may wreck  
Thy sunny wooded slopes, thy mighty cliffs!  
For thee, O mountain, gentler hands may twine  
A fairer garland for thy noble brow,  
A crowning sky of crimson and of gold.



In calm, in storm, or 'neath the galaxy,  
No purple pomp nor pageantry of man,  
Nor trumpet voice proclaims thy majesty!  
More grand the hallowed silence of thy crest  
Than aught that human splendor e'er essayed!  
Though floods may rend, and summer's heat may sear,  
Though autumn gay transmute thy green to gold,  
Though winter wrap thee in his arctic robe,  
In memory thou'rt clad in ever-verdant spring.

And so, All hail, Fair Helderberg, All hail!  
Thou livest in the hearts of all thy sons,  
Unchanged by time, by tide, by tempest rude,  
Embosomed deep in fondest memory  
And held in everlasting joy and love.

## CHILD'S PRAYER

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I know Thou, Lord, Thy watch wilt keep  
All through the dark and dreary night,  
And when shall break the morning light  
I pray Thee, Lord, that I may wake  
To serve Thee still for Thy dear sake.



## THE HOUND

HARK! hear the sound of the baying hound!  
Along the round of the mountain;

The echo calls, then it falls and falls

Like the water of a fountain.

Oh, mournfully sad and strange and deep

The voice of the hound along the steep.

The bare cliffs rise till they touch the skies

With the thin white mists upon them;

And cedar-trees in the morning breeze

Wave spectral-like adown them,

Oh, hear it from out the woods again,

The cry that echoes from hill to plain.

The white clouds float like a phantom boat

Till farther and farther going;

Toward the sky they airily fly

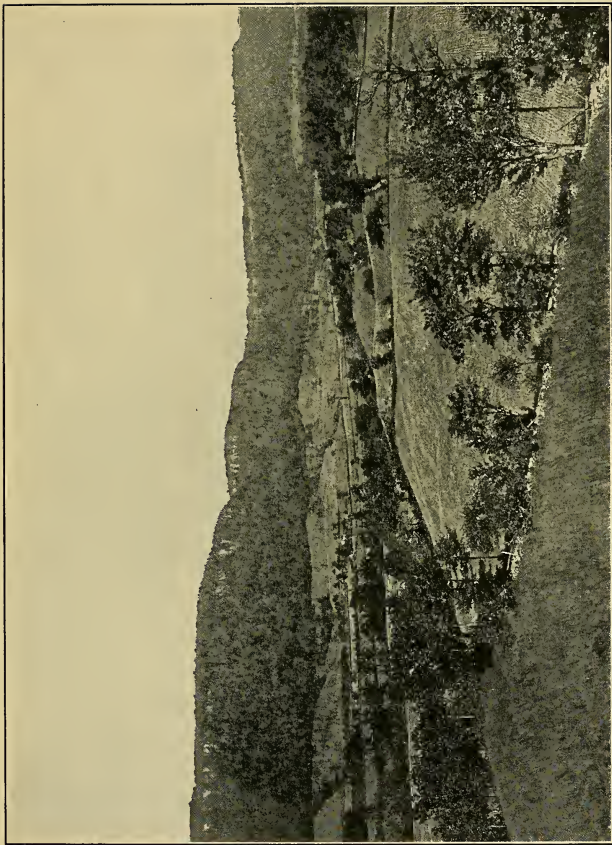
In the west wind gently blowing.

And clearer the hound's deep bay rolls down

While from crag to crag the echoes bound.







**HELDERBERG MOUNTAINS**

*"Blue line against the sky."—Fair Helderberg*



## MORNING IN SUMMER

SOFT shines the light on the gray dewy meadows,  
Sweet blows the breeze at the breaking of  
morn,

Faintly away fly the last of night's shadows,  
Earth welcomes gladly a day newly born.

Slowly the rays of the sunlight are streaming,  
Sparkling like jewels the dew on the flowers,  
Far on the mountain its glory is beaming,  
Matchless in beauty with morn's golden hours.

Mists from the valley arise like a billow,  
Airy white ghosts mid the tops of the trees,  
Hiding the brook and the shadowy willow,  
Wafting away on the breath of the breeze.

Rapturous notes floating in from the woodland,  
Red bird and robin and chattering wren,  
Joyfully back from the fair sunny Southland,  
Thrilling the woods with their voices again.

There on the hilltop, the field, in the bramble,  
Myriad numbers of free, joyful things,  
Care-free and happily each one may ramble,  
Insect that creepeth, and wild bird that sings.



Gaily the creatures are risen and moving,  
Bee on the blossom and hare in the wood,  
Feeble their labor but cheerfully proving,  
Life is a seed-time and harvest of good.

Never can artist paint fair morning's shining,  
Never can singer voice more than a part,  
All of their best can but leave the heart pining,  
Yearning and striving to reach nature's heart.

Fair is the earth as the blessed Eternal,  
Faint are its far gleams revealed in the light,  
Joyous the heavenly, truly supernal  
Touches the world in the radiance bright.

## LISTENING STILL

Though oft I wander in the woods  
By day and after dark,  
I never yet have caught the sound  
Of any dogwood's bark.

—*M. G. K.*



## HELDERBERG SCENERY

WHAT! Nebo's lonely heights by Moses scaled  
Reveal a prospect of the promised land  
More exquisite than this!

Nay! All God's earth  
Is ripe with promise—full fruition! Here  
On Helderberg's deep-seamed and thoughtful brow,  
Which aeons long has faced the elements,  
We stand in breathless transport at the view.

Unveiled through misty distance, dark and blue,  
The Adirondacks rear their sturdy heights,  
Yet higher still, and grander to the eye  
Vermont's Green Mountains pierce the fleecy clouds  
And scratch the yielding azure with their spikes,  
While far against the pale horizon's rim  
The Berkshire Hills erect their purple peaks,  
By soft remoteness mellowed, faint but sure  
In calm eternal and immovable.

Far borne upon the mountain's furrowed front  
The crystal springs o'erflow in trickling rills  
That rush together confluent, at last  
To dash among the rocks in some cascade





Or leap the sounding waterfall and straight  
Remount to heaven in a cloud of spray—  
Of diamond-flashing, rainbow-tinted cloud.

How rush the raging torrents with a roar  
When spring has loosed the chain of winter's snow  
Upon the rugged crags and ragged cliffs!  
What mighty voices speak the maddened plunge  
Among the rough and jagged rocks below!  
Amid terrific thunders and the flash  
Of lightning, dropping back like countless thoughts  
Dispersed, and thus returning in the march  
Of their existence, joyfully they bless  
The lowly, heaving bosom of the earth.  
Through fertile valleys sure they thread their way  
To join the noble Hudson, peaceful stream,  
Like lovely child in quiet, healthy sleep  
Between the hostile, battled phalanxes  
Of foot-hills sundered by his flowing tide.

Here meadows broad and rich with waving grain,  
There stately woods or luscious pasture-lands  
Between the crystal winding brooks appear,  
And orchards bending, serried row on row



Outspread their branches near the rural homes  
With promise of a harvest plenteous.  
The narrow highways fleeing from the mount  
Embroidered deep with lacy emerald  
Entice the mind to wander far with them—  
To what fair goal of mystery and joy?

Where glistening point the church-spires heavenward  
The quiet villages play hide-and-seek  
Amid embowered, billowed greenery.  
When night drops down upon the sleepy day  
And all the dome is spangled thick with stars,  
See twinkling up in smiling mockery  
The bright electric planets, mimic suns  
And satellites, of towns and villages.  
With cheerfulness they glimmer through the night  
And homeward ever lead the wanderer.

At morn the Hudson skyward sends his mist  
A cloudly billow hiding his fair course.  
By fog enwrapped, the spreading landscape seems  
A quiet sea, an archipelago  
Whose isles are tree-tops thrust above the rack.  
When soon the sun ascends the faint blue line



That marks where earth recedes and sky begins  
The cloud, dispersed as by a magic hand,  
Reveals the earth in lovely freshness decked—  
In calm, in grandeur, and in quietude,  
And heaven it greets with smiling matin face  
In silence eloquently praising God.

Blessed vale where man may live in sweet content  
In ever youthful days, beside his hearth!  
Here, close to God, behold each year glad life  
Renewed through earth's great pulsing parent heart.  
A guarding sentinel keeps watch unchanged  
Amid the storm and stress of waxing centuries.  
God speaks a message through the still, scarred rocks,  
The trickling streams, the breathing of the trees,  
The raging tempest and the listening calm  
That broods upon hale Helderberg for aye,  
Or down the valleys pours a boundless wealth,  
A flood of love and joy for all who heed.



## TO A SONG SPARROW

“SWEET, sweet, sweeter, sweetest,” you sing  
When shy and fitfully the spring  
Comes lagging from the south to bring  
    The pleasant days,  
While gaily through the hedge you wing  
    With song of praise.

So happily and light, dear bird,  
You trill your song, the clearest heard,  
While yet the sap has hardly stirred  
    In brush or tree,  
Glad your return was not deferred  
    You’re telling me.

Is it the warming sky of blue,  
Or shelter of the spreading yew  
When sudden winds their utmost do  
    To bid spring stay,  
That “sweet, sweet,” still, though chilled quite  
    through,  
    You pipe your lay?





How rippling come the notes pell mell,  
So quick the bird makes haste to tell!

“’Tis echo of a southern dell

I voice in song

And knowing you would love it well,

Brought it along.”

Is “sweeter” small eggs in the nest,  
Cuddled beneath your mate’s warm breast?

Does wifey brood at your behest

From morn till night,

While just to sing is your whole quest

In gay delight?

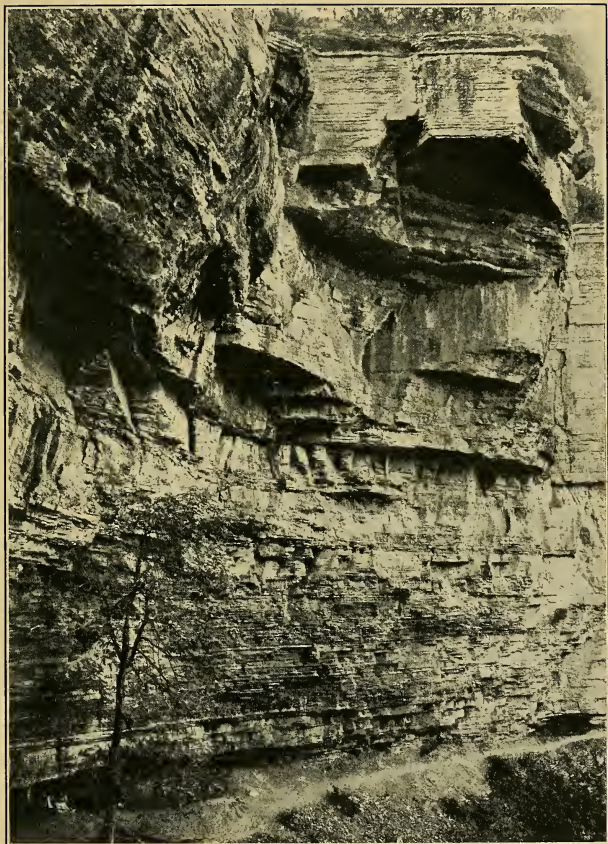
“My mate and I, a happy twain,  
Make welcome every soft spring rain  
That falls when for a home again

We make our quest.

And then I sing a sweeter strain

About the nest.”





BEAR PATH NEAR RAINBOW FALLS



Well, what is "sweetest"? I would hear  
A language you could speak more clear.  
I do not understand, I fear,  
                    A single word,  
And yet I love you well, you dear,  
                    You bonny bird!

"Why, I have told you all along"  
(Pipes back the bird in happy song)  
"How can you get the story wrong  
                    In stupid way?  
That 'sweetest' is a nestling throng,  
                    That's what I say."

## THE HUSKING BEE

Some people think the husking bee  
An insect very funny,  
For all he does is just to buzz  
And steal his fill of honey.

—M. G. K.



## I LIFT MY HEART TO THEE

O GOD, I lift my heart to Thee!  
Grant I may ever see Thy face.  
Grave doubts and fears come tempting me.  
Save me from all by Thy rich grace,  
And keep me close to Thee.

One step I cannot see ahead.  
O bend Thee down to hear my cry,  
When earthly passions flaming red  
Would move to put Thee, Saviour, by,  
And bow with shame my head.

Dear Lord, without Thy constant love,  
Without Thy ever watchful eye,  
I cannot all my moments prove,  
Or feel Thou hast not passed me by  
And shut from me Thy love.

And yet, dear Lord, I'll do my part  
Each day through confidence in Thee,  
Assured if I but lift my heart  
Thy blessing freely waits for me  
And will not e'er depart.





## THROUGH STORMY DAYS

THROUGH stormy days when all is gray  
With wind and cloud and flying spray,  
When dashing on the window-pane  
We hear the patter of the rain  
Tattoo its pleasant rhythmic play,  
How sweet to know through all the day  
Life's truest joys can never wane  
Through stormy days!

Through every cloud must pierce the ray,  
Transmute the somber clouds to gay,  
And nature sound a blithesome strain  
And man take up the glad refrain,  
For all that's good must ever stay  
Through stormy days.



## NATURE'S VOICES

SUNNY summer morning  
Sweet and fair,  
Birds are singing gaily  
Matins on the air.  
Robins, wrens, and thrushes  
One full chorus raise  
Till the air is laden  
With their praise.

Roses shed their perfume  
All around,  
Flinging dainty petals  
On the mellow ground;  
Roses red and yellow,  
Pink, and white, and blush  
Till the garden seemeth  
All aflush.

Lightly gentle breezes  
Kiss the trees,  
Drowsy sounds the humming  
Of the busy bees,



All of sweets seem blended  
To the sense and sight  
On the clear cool morning  
Fair and bright.

Cometh all this beauty  
From above,  
Kind and good and gracious  
Is our God of love;  
Nature's countless voices  
Ever speak His praise,  
Human heart, repeat it,  
All thy days.

## THE SAWBUCK

The sawbuck's very docile,  
On it the wood is cut;  
I've never seen it rampant,  
Nor have I seen it butt.

—M. G. K.



## THE TORY SPY

A GAMBREL house, low, rambling, weather worn,  
The homestead where my ancestors were born,  
Stood in an orchard where a running brook  
Oft drew the angler with his fly and hook.  
The brook remains and murmurs as of yore,  
But gone the house within whose open door  
One autumn day I ran in childish glee  
On hearing grandsire call me to his knee.

Beside the hearth where glows the back log's fire  
I see him in his fine old-time attire  
Sit straight and stately in his high-backed chair,  
His ruffled shirt-front, curled and powdered hair,  
His waistcoat small, knee-breeches prim and tight,  
And silver buckles flashing in the light.  
He looked a man who boasted some degree  
Of learning, riches and authority.

I see the andirons in the flickering light,  
The copper kettles shining smooth and bright,  
The heavy timbers black with age and smoke,  
And mantle clock from which a cuckoo spoke,





The candlesticks, the pewter plates and mugs,  
The oaken floor o'erspread with home-made rugs,  
And where the sunbeam through the window flits  
With distaff there my grandame spinning sits.

I feel once more the magic of that room,  
Its corners dark with mystery and gloom;  
I hear again the tale my grandsire told  
In thrilling tones of one both brave and bold,  
The while I sit upon his knee so prim  
And hear his words in childlike awe of him.  
I see these pictures still before my eye  
Just as I tell his story of the spy.

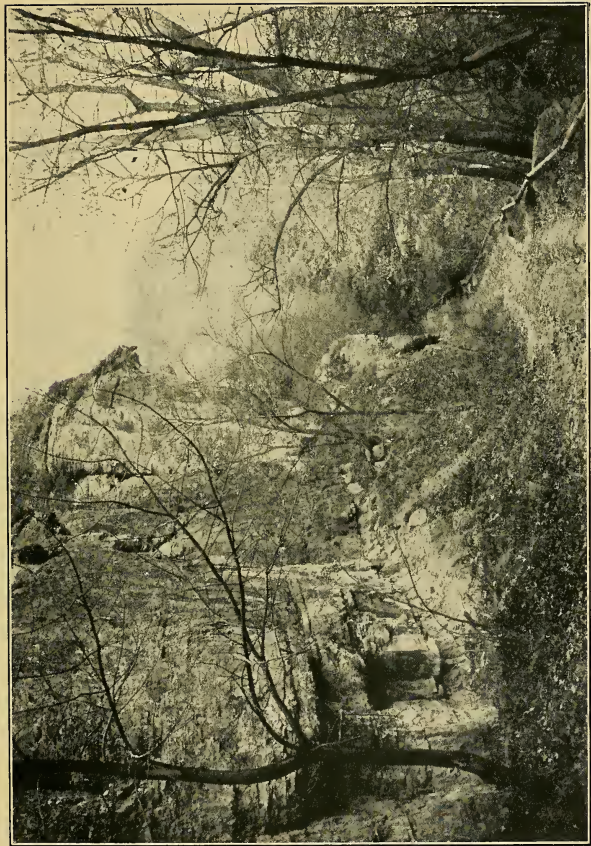
Long years ago, when over all this scene  
Lay dreamy haze and mellow ripened air  
Of autumn days, dear nature's quiet breast  
Was calmly waiting for the winter's rest.  
The trees denuded of their leaves stood tall,  
And straight, and sentinel against the cliffs  
Without a stir of twig in silence deep.  
No longer hidden by its summer green,  
Asleep the mountain seemed; yet never life  
Spake strong to mortal sight nor more serene.  
A misty veil enwrapped the azure heights



Of Helderberg's majestic solemn face,  
Deep-seamed by mountain floods. The setting sun  
Long shadows cast upon the rugged hill  
And dropped the mists to valley and to plain.

What creeps amid the deeper shadows lone,  
So stealthily, so silently alert?  
A human form, the feet in moccasins,  
Treads light the narrow path. The feathered head  
Turns oft to glance about, and every twig  
Is placed by careful hands as it had been.  
At dropping of a single shriveled leaf  
He crouches by a rock, a man in fear  
Aroused by every faint and harmless sound.  
He waits in dread suspense, then starts again  
To reach a refuge safe, for him secure.  
Up then with sudden tiger leap he springs  
To clutch a ledge and disappears from sight.  
When passed the entrance to the cave he throws  
The deerskin blanket and the feathered band  
Upon the rocky floor. In that faint light,  
Dim though it is, no Indian chief it shows.  
No hardy, fearless pioneer is he,  
But one of England's loyal Saxon sons!





THE BATTLEMENTS AND INDIAN LADDER ROAD



Oh, wild the time of bloodshed and of strife,  
Revolted colonists, and parent hand  
Outstretched with war to conquer and subdue!  
And is this man, then, hiding in disguise  
A Tory spy? He is! This royal head,  
This form so straight and tall, and lithe of limb,  
A very god to look upon! His eye  
With courage flashing cool, the heritage  
Of victor ancestors, both strong and bold.  
The brooding brow, the beardless chiseled chin  
Set firm, the active hands and tawny hair.  
The quiet, watchful, daring worthy foe!  
No weakling thus would risk to act the spy!  
With touch of sadness on his face he stands  
Alone upon the mountain-side with God,  
To watch the shadows lengthen into night.

This spot is sacred, too, for here there lived  
A tribe of Iroquois, the Mohawks called.  
With Tories oft they smoked the calumet  
And fought as loyal brothers side by side.  
This night of which I speak, when silently  
The spy attained the rocky hiding-place,  
It chanced at eve that I, when trudging home,  
Came suddenly upon a camp above





The hanging cliffs that overlook the vale.  
But twelve my years, and mortal fear of foes  
Quick caused my heart to faint, so late alone.  
That morn no one was there. In dread I hid  
And watched the group so near their words I heard.  
But little understood I Mohawk speech;  
Yet still I learned enough to know they talked  
Of someone near who waited for their meal.  
Above the fire a steaming kettle swung  
From which a squaw dipped tender bits of game  
And filled a basket. This she gave a chief,  
Who slipped away a shadow 'mid the trees,  
While breathlessly I watched the course he took,  
And down a ladder disappear from view.  
As dusk drew down the somber shades of night  
I crept away unseen and fled like deer  
Toward my home and told what I had seen.

My father heard my story with concern,  
“We drove the Tories out three weeks ago,  
What makes the Mohawks now return?” he said.  
“They know each spot in all this wilderness.  
And can it be a spy returned with them  
To stay in hiding now in some dark cave  
Among the cliffs? I must report the thing.”



At dawn the Colonel wakened from his rest  
To learn the startling news:

“A spy concealed  
In Helderberg!” he cried. “Arouse the camp,  
And send at once a party for the search!”  
The bugle sounded, soldiers came in haste  
The meaning of this new alarm to learn.  
With anger and amaze they heard the news  
And burned each one when starting on the quest  
In vengeance on a vanquished foe who dared  
Return within their bounds to spy on them.  
No trained and well-appointed soldiers they  
But brave and earnest men each one who fought  
As for himself. Well might a foeman quail  
To meet in battle patriots like them.  
For days they searched and watches left at night  
To guard each path. What unknown dangers faced,  
The beasts untamed that roamed the mountain wild,  
Deceitful redmen camping high above.  
What dark and gloomy cave but might conceal  
The one they sought, unseen yet seeing them.

In vain they search! From out a hidden cave,  
The entrance like to many others more  
Of crevices among the placid rocks,



The spy looked down and grimly watched secure  
Their every act as fearlessly they moved;  
Nor knew their danger. Dearly would he sell  
His life if found, this strange and silent foe!

A month elapsed. They found his hiding-place,  
But his escape in safety had been made.  
The meager remnants of the food he left  
Bespoke the tortures grim he had endured  
Through fearsome days the redman dared not come.  
Had he e'er dreamed of banquets in his home  
To wake and find himself alone, alone?  
What dreadful fear and anguished loneliness  
Heart-breaking groans for human friends and kin!  
No record left! But if the rocks could tell  
That silent cave would ring the echoes back  
Of speechless thoughts and hopes and sighs and  
prayers.

Forgot, O Spy, thy name and ancestry!  
But Helderberg can ne'er forget. His rocks  
And waterfalls are tuneful with thy praise.  
No foe is he who lives in noble deeds  
The promise of his steadfast loyalty,  
Nor stops to offer e'en his life devote



If need be for the cause he loves and serves.  
Forever do the true, the good, the great  
Live through their deeds like blazing beacon fire!  
Thy act, O Spy, shines out from Helderberg  
To turn our gaze forever to its heights.

## A WISE PLAN

WHEN the golden sun is shining  
Brightly all the day  
It is easy to be happy  
If at work or play;  
But when days are dark and cloudy,  
In the stormy weather,  
Then how nice if storm and sunshine  
Could but come together.

I have planned a little something  
Seems to me just right,  
It is when the days are dreary  
I will be so bright  
People will be saying gaily  
When we come together:  
"What a lovely bit of sunshine  
In this stormy weather."





## AN OLD-FASHIONED GARDEN\*

**I**N an old-fashioned garden glad Time stays his flight  
From the blushes of morn to the tear-drops of  
night;

For the odorous breath of the Lily and Rose

Have a fragrance far sweeter than some would sup-  
pose,

And remembrance is tinted with youthful delight

When the halos of childhood return with the sight  
Of Forget-me-not loyal and Sweet William bright;

And the zephyrs old scenes, ever-changing, disclose  
In an old-fashioned garden.

When the Ruby-throat darts in his jewels bedight  
From Campanula's bells to lank Larkspur's blue height  
Every vision is realized; loved long-agoes

Instant fuse with the present and joy overflows

At the beauty resplendent these flashes unite  
In an old-fashioned garden.

—M. G. K.

\* Written after visiting the poet's garden in June, 1908.



## LITTLE ONE

You are here within my heart to stay,  
Little One, Little One.

I will never let you go away,  
Little One, Little One.

Oh, I would not if I could,  
For I love you as I should,  
You are growing dearer every day,  
Little One, Little One.

Many years I longed to have you here,  
Little One, Little One.

For I knew you would be sweetly dear,  
Little One, Little One.

Oh, the joyfulness I know,  
Just to keep you warmly so,  
Where no harm can come to you, nor fear,  
Little One, Little One.

You are happy in the peaceful rest,  
Little One, Little One.

Safely and beloved in my breast,  
Little One, Little One.



Oh, the best that I can do,  
Is not good enough for you,  
Fair and lovely spirit of the blest,  
Little One, Little One.

## ECHO

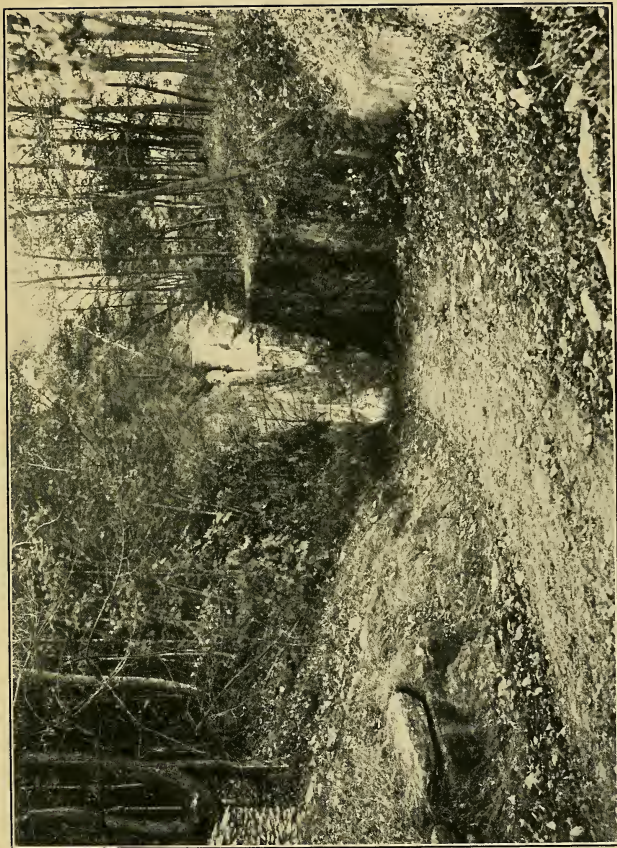
**E**LOATS a murmur faint and airy,  
Hark! 'tis echo calling  
Like the whisper of a fairy  
On the mountain falling.  
Echo, maid, where is thy dwelling?  
It is where thy note is welling  
Soft and tremulously knelling  
Light as summer air?

Art thou true an aerie spirit?  
Thy elusive voice—I hear it—  
Yet I ne'er can get a-near it—

\* \* \* \* \*

Echo, art thou there?





THE SUMMIT OF INDIAN LADDER ROAD





## IN THE HOLLOW OF HIS HAND

**I**N the hollow of His hand, in the hollow of His  
hand,

Oh, the Lord will ever keep us till we reach the better  
land,

Every day each new-found treasure but reveals His  
constant care,

All the bounties of His blessings that surround us  
everywhere.

Can we fail to love and praise Him, that in safety we  
may stand

Assured of His enfolding love, in the hollow of His  
hand?

In the hollow of His hand, oh, the peace and happiness  
When amid life's stormy billows all its care and eager  
stress,

Knowing that whate'er befalls us, nothing yet can do  
us harm,

When above, and all around us, reaches the Almighty  
arm,

Raising in our hearts an anthem that is solemn, sweet  
and grand,

Praising Him for His protection, in the hollow of His  
hand.



In the hollow of His hand, in the little things or great,  
He will yet reveal His meaning, if we joyfully but wait.  
For He loves us as a father, and He constant will defend,  
So what cause have we to murmur at whatever He  
may send,  
For the blessings that He gives us are but foretastes  
of that land  
Where some day He will transport us, in the hollow of  
His hand.

## NOT I

In spring I'm afraid to venture about—  
Indeed, I am often dismayed—  
For every big bud is ready to shoot,  
And I'm such a coward I surely would scoot  
Should ever a flower its pistil present  
In fun or in earnest. I'd not be content  
To watch the young grass as it brandished its  
blade,  
Nor quietly stand when the bull-rush is out.  
Not I.

—M. G. K.



## MEMORIES

**D**EAR friend, you said that all is good  
That day we spent together.  
The time was fragrant month of June  
And sunny was the weather.  
We talked of people, places, things,  
Of life, and love, and duty,  
And all the choicest thoughts of men  
And of this fair world's beauty.

Your way lies 'mid the marts of life,  
Where hearts of men oft harden,  
Mine in a quiet, peaceful spot,  
An old-time country garden.  
But unto each that perfect day  
Came as a bit of leaven;  
You minded me of bustling life,  
To you my home seemed heaven.

Sweet breathing-places in our lives,  
Dear memories to treasure,  
To bind them fondly on our hearts  
Those hours of purest pleasure.



Our lives may flow, the years may pass  
And other friends surround us,  
But never from that time can leave  
The magic spell that bound us.

## FOR THY CARE

**O**H, LORD, we thank Thee for Thy tender keeping  
O'er all our lives Thy loving watchful eye,  
With ne'er a fear in waking or in sleeping  
Sweet, calm and peaceful, for Thou e'er art nigh.

We lift our hearts in grateful adoration  
And humbly, prayerfully, invoke Thy love;  
We bow before Thee, wonderful Creator,  
Whose daily mercies evermore we prove.

Oh Father, grant that every day our living  
May show we daily live to serve but Thee;  
A song of praise or word of love be giving  
To teach some waiting child to come to Thee.





## SPRINGTIME

**I**T is springtime, come the bluebird and the robin  
on the wing

And their mating notes are calling everywhere,  
And the glad new life is starting fresh and bright on  
everything

With the pure and thrilling rapture of the air.

Scent the fragrance of the furrow as the farmer turns  
the sod,

Daily following the plow with tireless feet;  
While his horses tread the stubble piling mellow clod  
on clod

Rises up that welcome scent enticing sweet.

With the balmy air about him and the green upon the  
trees

And the sky above a calm and peerless blue,  
From afar a promise greets him on the breath of every  
breeze

As a blessing on his labor good and true.

Harvest time and barns o'erflowing, eventide of peace-  
ful rest,

These his cheerful, honest toiling to repay;



While the mystery of growing from the fields enlivened  
breast  
Nature's new and varied wonders day by day.

Golden sunbeams shining brightly, flood the valley, hill  
and plain,  
Lighting every quiet glade with glimmer fair,  
All creation is rejoicing in a gay exultant strain  
For the rousing throb of life is in the air.

From the earth it comes upspringing, with a joyous-  
ness for all  
Sending forth anew with each succeeding spring;  
From her warm and mystic bosom comes her soft in-  
sistent call  
Blessing new with life and love each fertile thing.

Oh, the magic of the leaflets swelling fast on bush and  
tree,  
Oh, the beauty of the perfect bud and flower,  
Shedding fragrance on the breezes, luscious nectar for  
the bee,  
Freely lavishing their sweetness every hour.



Every mother bird is brooding gently, warm upon her  
nest;

Like a flame her lover flashes up above,  
While each thrilling note of gladness that o'erflows his  
gallant breast

Tells the tender story full of life and love.

On the soft and grassy meadows frisk the lambs in  
happy play

While the ewes re-echo oft their loving cry,  
And the bobolink is singing as he upwards mounts away,  
Dropping rich and limpid laughter from the sky.

On the water, gleaming shadows from the leaning trees  
above,

Shade the quiet pools where flashing fishes play,  
And from out the leafy distance comes the note of  
turtle dove

In a tender mellow calling day by day.

Tuned to harmony, and peerless, the beguiling charm  
of spring

Is a paradise of beauty to the sight,  
Every dulcet sound and blossom, each alert and living  
thing

Fill the hymeneal cup of Spring's delight.



## MY RICHES

OH, give me the woods for my pillow,  
The blue sky overhead,  
While I watch the tree-tops billow  
From my soft and mossy bed.

Oh, give me the verdurous thickets  
Where sweet wild berries hang,  
While I hark to strident crickets  
As they sound their rasping twang.

Oh, give me the forest-land flowers,  
The calm of dingle, dell,  
While I rest 'neath oaks' tall towers  
Where the squirrels love to dwell.

These, these are my richest possessions,  
More dear than wealth of Rome,  
They are gifts whose rich accessions  
Make the dear old earth a home.

And there where the water is falling  
With tinkle clear and bright,  
May I hear dear voices calling—  
Happy laughter gay and light.





Oh, gladly I'll share all my pleasures  
If friends will come and see,  
All these gifts, yea, all my treasures  
Yet of priceless worth to me.

So freely and lavishly given  
The Father's blessings fall,  
Free as dew that drops from heaven  
Come His endless gifts to all.

## WHY?

Whip-poor-Will? Why should I do it?  
If I flog I'll surely rue it.  
Tell me not that Will is vicious  
Through his poverty pernicious.  
Whipping is against my preaching—  
And I practise all my teaching!  
Chastisement is out of season  
When it lacks a valid reason.  
Tell me, therefore, or be still,  
Why should I whip, *whip*, poor Will?

—M. G. K.



## THE SHERIFF

Do, child, 'twas when I was a boy  
In troublous eighteen-forty-one.  
Your father's Uncle Christopher  
Was sheriff in the Helderberg  
All through the anti-rent revolt.  
He was—

What was the cause of strife?

Oh, that is history. I think  
'Twas nigh three hundred years ago  
When Kilian Van Rensselaer  
Bought all the land for miles around  
To found a farmers' settlement.  
Perhaps to feed his vanity,  
Or maybe to perpetuate  
His name, he called the great estate  
His Rensselaerwick. Now the land  
You'll find by looking on the map,  
Makes three great counties, Rensselaer,  
Columbia, and Albany.

With almost curbless privilege  
Each new Patroon, as he was called,  
Assumed the right to rule and tax,



For none there was to hinder him.  
At last, in eighteen-thirty-nine,  
When Stephen, last of the Patroons,  
Was laid away, the heirs essayed  
To sue the tenants for back rent;  
But straight the farmers stanch opposed,  
And, hence, revolt.

Well, Christopher,  
As I began, was known to be  
Intrepid, never would he halt,  
Or hesitate when duty bade;  
So when the heirs their papers filed  
To dispossess Hans Stuyvesant,  
Jan Bensdorp, Schuyler Ghent, Van Wyck,  
(I don't recall his Christian name),  
And Hendrick Voorhees for arrears,  
Our Uncle Christopher rode forth  
Arrayed in legal dignity  
To serve the notices himself,  
For well he knew the attitude  
Maintained against the heirs-at-law  
And scarce he'd trust another hand  
To do important work for him.



With little parley every man  
Destroyed the papers in his sight,  
And threw the fragments for the breeze  
To blow where'er it would.

Van Wyck,

I should have said, was burning brush  
When Uncle Batterman arrived.  
He thrust the paper in the fire  
And lit his pipe! Our uncle's ire  
Arose to boiling-point. Said he:  
"Van Wyck, were I not sheriff sworn  
No man in Helderberg would dare  
Insult me as he has to-day.  
My oath is sacred, but for once  
I'll lay aside my sheriff's vow  
And meet you as a man. Your size,  
Your age and strength may equal mine  
But I will teach you manners, sir,  
You will not soon forget, I'll—"

"Stop!"

Commanded calm Van Wyck, "stop! stop!  
You must not think that we intend  
The least affront to you. Sit down





And hear me through. I'll not be long.  
Now, Batterman," Van Wyck began  
When Uncle Christopher had sat,  
"The farmers are agreed to pay  
No further tax and no arrears  
Upon the basis which, you know  
As well as I, has made us poor.  
For more than sixty years Patroons  
Have had no right to exercise  
Or hold control as formerly;  
But still they've forced us to comply,  
Yes, forced us into servitude,  
To own yet not to own our land,  
To labor without pay from them,  
To pay excessive fees for sales,  
Excessive rent, excessive tax.  
We'll stand no more. We have resolved  
To rise and exercise our rights.  
We will not recognize the law  
Which claims that might is right;  
But we will prove that right is might.  
So, Batterman, mark well my words:  
Toward you as man we have no grudge,  
But if, as sheriff, you attempt  
To force illegal law, beware!"



“Beware? Of whom shall I beware?”  
Our uncle cried as up he leaped,  
“Of you, Van Wyck, or Bensdorp, Ghent,  
Of Stuyvesant, or Voorhees? No!  
Not one, nor all of you combined  
Can swerve me. When I come again,  
As come I will unless you pay  
Before the designated time,  
I’ll come with force to move you all.  
So be prepared to sally forth  
With goods and chattels, otherwise  
I’ll go the limit of the law  
To move you out. You know me well!”  
And vaulting on his horse he turned  
And galloped home.

His speech was heard  
By Ghent and Bensdorp who had joined  
Van Wyck. Indignant these three stood  
And glared their ire at horse and man  
As long as they remained in sight.  
Then spoke Jan Bensdorp: “I declare  
I will not pay; nor will I move.  
My home shall be my fort. I’ll fight  
Whoever tries to put me out.”



“The heirs are wrong,” said Schuyler Ghent.  
“We all know that. They know it, too,  
But think we’ll cringe as aye before.  
No more shall I. The wheat I raise  
Shall no more go for rent while I  
Subsist on rye. My boys and girls  
No more shall double yarn at night,  
Long after they should be in bed,  
For blankets to be sold for rent.  
Nor shall my wife raise hens and ducks,  
Nor slave like me from dawn till dark  
With but a single aim, to fill  
A landlord’s hungry money-chest.  
I’ll fight the sheriff ere I’ll leave.”

“There’ll sure be need of violence,”  
Declared Van Wyck. “The countryside  
Is all aroused. Bold Batterman  
Will surely come with officers;  
But mark my words, he’ll not evict  
A single man. We’ve organized  
(You know of this he’s not aware)  
To stand upon our rights, and soon  
Shall Helderberg shake off the yoke  
That spite of plenty keeps us poor.”



With further parley off they went  
To tell the other farmers all  
That had occurred, and with them plan  
How best to meet the sheriff's men  
Should Batterman essay to come  
To force them from their little farms.

The day arrives, and Batterman  
Sets out with ten or twelve picked men  
To oust the five whose names I've told  
And take possession for the heirs.  
The bracing air, the noble horse,  
The road, the quest, all aim to please  
Our Uncle Christopher, and so,  
A horseman true, he spurs his steed  
And canters at good pace ahead,  
Until he reaches Bendsdorp's farm,  
The nearest of the five. His men  
All join him at the farm and ride  
Like cavalry upon parade.  
Arriving at the barn they halt  
And Uncle calls. Jan Bendsdorp comes  
And saunters slowly toward the group,  
Not in the least disturbed.







RAINBOW FALLS IN WINTER



Says he,  
“Good-morning, Sheriff Batterman,  
What brings you out with all your friends  
So early in the day?”

“You know.  
I’ve come to get your rent arrears  
Or, if you do not choose to pay,  
To seize your stock and property  
And move you out perforce. Now, sir,  
Which shall it be?”

“I will not pay,”  
Rude Bensdorp roars. “I owe no rent,  
Nor can you prove I do. No, sir!  
I’ve lived upon this little farm  
Which father cleared, and worked, and stocked,  
And now, you know the farm is mine.  
I will not pay,” he roars again.

The sheriff angered at the shout,  
Dismounts in haste and leaves his horse  
Untied. He walks toward the house  
And calls his men to follow him.  
But scarce he goes a dozen steps  
When he is startled by a shout,



And looking forward to the right  
He sees advancing from the wood  
Threescore of painted savages,  
Or so they seem, who, yelling, rush  
With tomahawks, and bows, and spears  
Across the intervening field.

The men and horses take affright  
And off they dash with speedy hoofs,  
Among them, frightened like the rest,  
The sheriff's roadster runs at large.  
In vain our uncle whistles shrill,  
In vain he seeks a place to hide.  
Jan Bensdorp runs into the house  
And bangs the door in Uncle's face.  
Then Uncle leaps into the well  
To hide—the only place he finds—  
But all too late; the redmen see  
And quick they gather at the curb  
And pull him to the top again.

Oh, what an act that then ensued!  
A drama climax, no mistake,  
When Uncle stood among the pack  
And thundered imprecations fierce



Because he found himself entrapped!  
By redmen? No! By farmers all,  
But all disguised.

In shorter time  
Than I can tell they hurry him  
Across the yard behind the barn.  
Some strip him bare of all his clothes,  
Some roll a barrel full of tar,  
And others bring a feather tick  
Which has been airing in the yard,  
And still another set appear  
With bulging bags of turkey plumes.  
And then with tar they plaster him  
And deck him out with coat of down.  
Upon his shoulders, arms and head  
They stick the plumes as ornaments  
Then turn him loose to wander home.

But why portray what more occurred?  
Our Uncle Batterman fared well  
For he escaped a harder fate.  
'Twas but a single incident  
In eight years' struggle for the right,  
When tyrants tried to force their sway





But failed because the right must rule.  
For more than sixty peaceful years  
The Helderberg has now been free,  
And men may buy, and sell, and rent  
Upon a basis equable.

## THE REDBIRD

THE woods and the morn give thee greeting,  
Brilliant bird with the tender lay;  
My glimpse of thy beauty was fleeting,  
But I give thee a welcome to-day.  
Unasked thou hast come and unbidden  
In the lofty tree-tops to sing,  
Where safe from the curious hidden  
Is the sheen of thy scarlet wing.

No recompense thine but the gladness  
Of a life that is unknown to care;  
Oh, bird, I rejoice that no sadness  
Mars thy notes that are thrilling the air.  
Some day when thy gay wing hath taken  
The flight that the South bids thee start,  
Thy song will my memory waken—  
A dream of thy joy in my heart.



## FRIENDSHIP

I HAVE thy friendship! It is what I crave,  
For it demands the best there is of me.  
With thy approval all things fair I see.  
I know that thou art learned, quiet, grave;  
And when of all thy store thou freely gave  
To me, then I in spirit bent the knee,  
And prayed with deep desire that I might be  
Forever on the heights where fair thoughts wave.

I have thy friendship! All I hold most dear  
Exultant greets this priceless gift of thine.  
This gift will aye encourage me to do  
My work and triumph over doubt and fear.  
For since I know thy friendship speaks to mine  
My every fondest hope and dream comes true.



## THE BUTTERFLY

A BUTTERFLY while flying low  
Addressed a rose as white as snow,  
And 'mid the stamens lemon yellow  
He murmured soft, the saucy fellow:  
"I love, I love, I love you, Rose,  
The sweetest flower of all that grows."

He fluttered next, and not in vain  
To woo a lily moist with rain.  
He sipped from her corolla long  
And sang another dainty song.  
"Oh, fairer flowers cannot grow  
Than golden lilies, ah, I know."

The honeysuckle's trumpet cup  
Then held this fickle fellow up.  
He drank his fill of nectar sweet,  
But paused a moment to repeat:  
"The honeysuckle is more dear  
Than any garden flower here."



Then off he flew with languid grace  
To kiss a pansy's gentle face.  
He soft caressed her leaves of gold,  
Then breathed again the story old  
And while the south wind softly blew,  
The happy pansy calmly grew.

From flower to flower all day he went  
And flattery on each he spent.

## WHEN I AWAKE

*Psalm xvii, 15*

WHEN I awake! As dawn's clear tide  
Aye melts the gloom like snowy flake  
Dropped silent on the ocean wide,  
When I awake;  
So everlasting Truth shall break  
This mortal dream that seems to hide  
The heavenly day. I'll then forsake  
Whate'er the vision false descried,  
Forget its terror and its ache;  
For then I shall be satisfied—  
When I awake.

—M. G. K.





## SOLITUDE

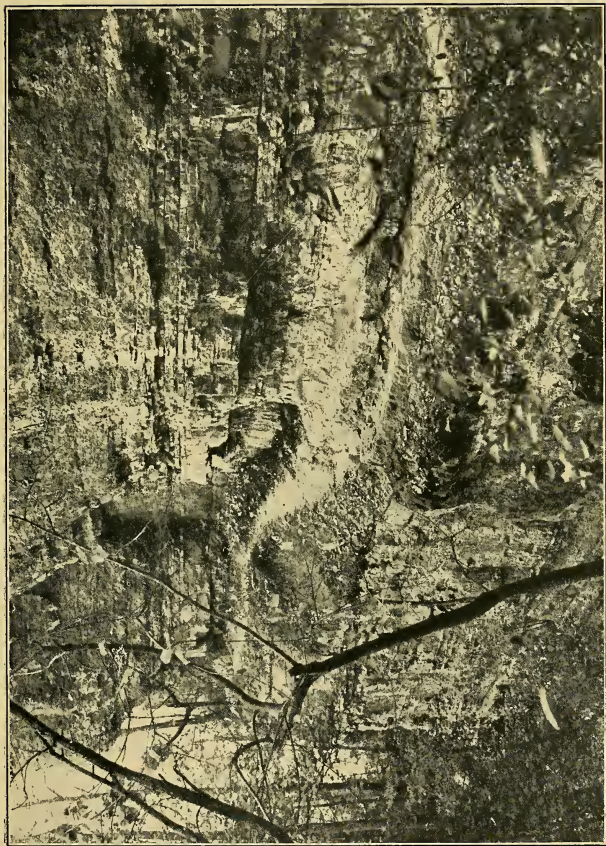
THE bittern cries when night comes on,  
I hear its mournful voice once more  
Rise through the dusk and then 'tis gone,  
The plaintive wail across the moor.

It loves the wild and solitude  
Of lonely marsh and tangled brake,  
The voiceless stillness of the wood,  
And shiny shores of forest lake.

And to my heart the bittern's cries  
A message bring but faint yet far.  
In deeps where haunted silence lies  
Is where my own possessions are.

They, they bring peace, the quiet ways  
That nature's God makes great and good,  
And nature's tangled, knotted maze,  
Is through them fully understood.





BEAR PATH ON THE FACE OF THE CLIFF



## THE BIRD

AWAY have I gone in the clear light of morning,  
In the fair sunny South my swift wings I shall  
fold,

I have left the sere meadows all brown with dead  
clover,

To seek for a far brighter spot than the wold.

I sought you and found you when spring wafted fra-  
grance

From meadows and forests and fair northern flow-  
ers;

And through the long summer my love found its  
treasure

In daintiest gardens and beautiful bowers.

The flowers are gone, but I treasure their beauty,

They gave me my dearest, my chiefest delight;

But now the cold winds fill their places with sighing,

My spirit with sadness was filled by the sight.

So far I have come over vale and o'er mountain,

From cold chilling blasts have I hastened to flee,

Once more in a garden of languorous beauty

I joy in the sweets that are open to me.



I loved you the more that your bright days were fleet-  
ing.

You were part of my life yet I bid you adieu.  
But still 'mid these scenes of new pleasure I cherish  
More fondly each hour my remembrance of you.

## THE PATH

WHAT'S beyond the sudden turn?  
Down the path gay Jennie trips;  
Guide or staff her light feet spurn,  
Laughing words upon her lips.

Lacy ferns and stately trees,  
Fallen rocks and waterfall  
These are what blithe Jennie sees,  
These and nature—lovely all.

Narrow, winding, woodland way  
Maid with heart as light as air,  
Lucky mountain hides to-day  
One sweet treasure in its snare.





## TO A GOLDFINCH IN FEBRUARY

COLD skies and snow-clad fields around,  
And biting winds with warning sound  
Sweep o'er thee, Goldfinch, on the ground  
    Here at my door.  
Few are the crumbs, I fear, thou'st found;  
    Come, search for more.

I knew thee best through summer days,  
When caroling thy limpid lays,  
A bird of joy and witching ways  
    To please the eye;  
But now I view thee with amaze,  
    And needs must sigh.

Thou tiny thing so weak to bear  
The burden of this wintry air  
Thou sure wast made for days more fair,  
    So seems to me,  
Since thou wast ever debonair  
    And bright with glee.

But now the one beseeching note  
That trembles from thy tender throat  
Seems calling from that time remote



A friend to-day,  
Yet only may its echo float  
On thy lone way.

Thy gay companions long have fled  
Where skies of heavenly blue are spread,  
And fragrance of sweet flowers is shed  
Upon the wind.  
What strange desire possessed thy head  
To stay behind?

Didst thou so love this land of ours—  
None sweeter are than northern flowers!—  
That loath to leave familiar bowers  
Thou heededst not  
The warning of the waning hours  
And wert forgot?

Didst thou exchange thy black and gold  
For this gray suit to match the cold—  
For thy black cap that made thee bold  
Thou wearest red—  
And doth this tiny flame enfold  
To warm thy head?



Thy soft gray down in pity sweet  
Flutters to shield thy fragile feet;  
For green boughs made, lo, here they meet  
But cold and snow.

When comes the cutting hail and sleet  
Where wilt thou go?

Since thou hast braved so long this chill,  
I know thou hast undaunted will  
To greet the Power that helps thee still  
Bravely to live.

What destiny dost thou fulfil,  
What lesson give?

Here at my door this wintry day  
Thou'st found to help thee on thy way,  
And cheerfully henceforth I'll lay  
Crumbs for thy food.

What treasures, when those thrown away  
Have done thee good!

Small bird, encircled by His care  
That keeps thee safely everywhere,  
May I achieve through hope and prayer  
That light divine.

And bravely learn to do and dare  
In faith like thine.



## THE WOMAN WHO WEARS A SMILE

GIVE me the woman who never frowns,  
Whose face is an open book,  
Who smiles right at me frank and fair  
With a sort of chummy look,  
Whose happy eyes are bright and clear,  
With never a trace of guile,  
Oh, the woman I hold so good and dear  
Is the woman who wears a smile.

I know a woman who ever smiles ;  
Her heart is a mint of gold.  
It matters not what her name may be  
Or whether she's young or old.  
'Tis enough to know she will never fail  
If a cause be true and just.  
Such the matchless grace of the constant heart  
In whom I have put my trust.

The world is better, the day more fair,  
Less thorns are in our path  
When we meet the woman who wears a smile,  
When we hear her happy laugh.  
God bless the woman who wears a smile,  
God bless her every day,  
And bless the people whose tired lives  
She brightens along the way.





## THE ASSESSOR

ON a tall cattail clung a lithe little elf—  
He was pulling some wool for his hose  
And was merrily humming:  
“The winter is coming;  
I must guard against freezing my toes.  
My wife she will spin, she will knit stockings, too.  
She will knit me a nice tight cap  
With a good big flap,  
And I’ll care not a rap  
When the frost king comes with a snap.”

But the cattail said: “Go along with you,  
And pillage the milkweed’s down.  
Have you no feeling  
My wool to be stealing  
To leave me a poor bald crown?  
For the milkweed can cover her head with her cap,  
But how all the people would stare,  
At my poll all bare  
To the wintry air.  
Little elf, do you call that fair?”

With pockets so full they were bulging out  
The merry elf hopped to the ground.



With a cute little wiggle,  
He said with a giggle:  
“How like you that grumble does sound!”  
For you know you don’t need any wool at all  
As the days of winter are told.  
With your roots in the mold,  
Like a lamb in the fold  
You are safe from the snow and cold.

“But for me and my kind, oh, many the days  
When ’tis cold for frolic and fun.  
While you are wrapped deep  
In your long winter sleep  
We are busy from sun to sun.  
I am sure you are growing too proud, cattail,  
And you have no reason at all,  
With your leaves thin and tall,  
Where the jolly frogs call,  
And your little brown bob in the fall.

“It was I who pointed your beauty to folks.  
Where you grow ’mid the wiry sedge  
You give quite an air  
To the landscape fair  
As you stand at the water’s edge.”





THE NEIGHBORS' HOUSES



The little elf paused and winked his eye;  
Then he said, "Now, my friend, you must surely see  
That each autumn to me  
You must yield joyfully  
When I come here to claim my fee."

He turned with a mischievous grin on his face.  
In a twinkling he sped away  
And the cattail said  
With a shake of its head,  
"What a fearful levy to pay!"  
So now when you see him standing forlorn,  
His bob in a wilful pout,  
You may know without doubt  
That the elves are about  
And are pulling his soft wool out.

## WHEN?

When does the henbane cackle,  
Her wattles all aglow?  
And I should so much like to know  
When does the haycock crow?

—*M. G. K.*





## MY NEIGHBORS

ONE spring a bluebird came to me  
And asked me from my tall ash-tree  
To build a house where he might rear  
His youngsters for the coming year.  
Perhaps you think a bird can't speak  
Because he has to use a beak.  
But when he sat an hour straight  
Upon one bough thus to relate  
In birdlike way by peering 'round,  
First in the tree, then on the ground,  
And calling, calling, pleadingly,  
I knew he said that very tree  
Was just the place if only I  
Would fix a house for him up high.

Some shingles, and a painted board  
I rummaged from my attic hoard.  
A house I made with small round door,  
A sloping roof, and smooth tight floor.  
I snugly made each joint to fit,  
Then placed it where he wanted it  
And when 'twas done, that selfsame day



He and his mate began to lay  
The straws to build their little nest,  
He in his dainty-colored vest  
Of gray and tan and coat of blue  
That gleamed with beauty as he flew.  
The nest was done. His wife I'd see  
Upon her eggs sit tenderly.  
And when the feeble chirps were heard  
From every little nestling bird  
He'd help all day to bring them food—  
A tender father, kind and good.  
Then both the birds with watchful eye  
Soon taught the young ones how to fly.

Well, after they had reared this brood,  
When by my rustic gate I stood,  
I heard the master tell his wife:  
"This is a merry, joyous life;  
Let's raise some other youngsters, dear,  
So they may reap the summer's cheer."  
She fluttered gay from fence to limb,  
And thus she blithely answered him:  
"I'm ready, husband; straight away  
I'll go into our house and lay."



The summer sun was waxing hot,  
The grass burned in the pasture lot  
When brood the second, one, two, three,  
Flew to a near-by orchard tree.  
The early fruit was hanging there,  
The harvest apple and the pear,  
While down along the fence there grew  
A mulberry with fruit like dew.

The father and the mother bird,  
Each on a fence-post hardly stirred.  
Once more they had a little talk;  
I listened from the garden walk:  
“My wife,” said father, “winter time  
Is yet afar, we’re in our prime,  
The house looks empty and forlorn  
Where our eight fledgling young were born.  
We yet have time, I know, to rear  
Still one more brood this happy year.”

Oh, my! with fire how flashed her eye!  
At once she flew and passed him by  
Across the road in rapid flight,  
Upon an apple bough to light  
And chirp these snappy words (I heard):



“You surely are a foolish bird!  
Your vest is faded and your coat  
Is tattered from your tail to throat.  
Then I am weary as can be  
Of living longer in that tree.  
Its leaves are shriveled up and dry.  
These shady fruit trees take my eye.  
Our younglings here are having fun  
From early morn till set of sun.  
I’ll live with them, that’s what I’ll do.  
If you are wise, sir, so will you.”

She flew away, quite out of sight;  
He did not follow her swift flight,  
But sat dejected in the sun  
And preened his feathers one by one.  
Then having prinked the best he could,  
He followed as a wise bird should.





## THE ORIOLE

CLEAR notes full sweet and mellow  
Arising in a glad exultant strain  
Reveal the oriole, in coat of yellow,  
Down in the shady lane.

A gleam of gold his darting  
Like flame whene'er he ventures on the wing!  
What wondering thoughts in mortals will be starting  
When he essays to sing.

His fabric nest is swinging  
Amid the branches of the old elm-tree,  
Where brooding calm, his mate lists to the ringing  
Of his rich melody.

Whence came his song of gladness?  
From what rich fount o'erflowing with delight  
Hath he achieved the golden, sweetened madness  
That marks his happy flight?

Is love the tender story  
He warbles in his jubilant loud notes,  
A crystal stream of glad triumphant glory  
That upward gaily floats?



Or came it from the Giver

Of that great opulence whence blessings spring,  
Who sends the sunbeams with their warming quiver  
Of life for everything?

Again that note is calling

As on the topmost bough he sings and sways,  
While blushing petals noiselessly are falling  
All through the balmy days.

He knoweth naught of sorrow,

For free and gay he ever doth rejoice;  
Nor needeth yet of any bliss to borrow.  
Deep joy swells in his voice.

When others sit repining,

And rain is blessing every bush and tree,  
From out the orchard where his coat is shining  
He sings his melody.

Through sunny days he ever

Outpours the music of his gladsome strain;  
All other birds may sing, but they will never  
Excel his blithe refrain.



Blest bird, each year returning  
With all the myriad beauties of the spring,  
For thee my heart is ever fondly yearning  
To hear thee sweetly sing.

A bit of heaven descended,  
To dwell a living joy among my trees;  
No melodies nor beauties e'er were blended  
More perfectly than these.

## THE FOREHEAD OF THE HILL

**T**EACHER often declares in geography class,  
So sincerely I cannot impeach her:  
“On the face of the hill you will find only one  
Very evident, prominent feature;  
It's the brow of the hill,” she asserts with a smile,  
“And on steep hills it's always a high-brow;  
But on hills big or little, you'll never observe  
Anything you'd mistake for an eyebrow.”

—M. G. K.



# THE WOODS

## SPRING

WHO loves the spirit of the woods  
Or understands their changeful moods;  
The vibrant life of early spring,  
The green aroused on everything,  
Where trilling from the tree-tops tall  
The birds send forth their madrigal,  
The very mold beneath the feet  
Sends forth a subtile fragrance sweet.  
Life, life, is moving everywhere  
And comes with every breath of air.  
Each spirit answers to the call:  
This priceless gift is free to all,  
Free as the sun that shines to bless,  
Free as the zephyr's soft caress.

From nature, lavishly there pour  
Rich blessings in an endless store  
Where flow the trickling woodland brooks,  
From out the moss in quiet nooks,  
The sweet Arbutus opes her flowers  
Beneath the sun's first warming hours,  
And sends the fragrance of her voice:





“The spring has come! Rejoice! Rejoice!”  
Bright on the pines the sunbeams play,  
The maples hide their tints of gray  
And stand in vivid scarlet drest  
To woo the robin in her nest.  
Each quiet nook and sunny space  
Shows an alluring eager face  
For nature’s beings everywhere  
Admit the magic of the air.

## SUMMER

How still the woods in summer lie  
Beneath the sun’s fierce sultry eye.  
But when night’s cooling shade comes on  
Their pensive quietness is gone.  
Æolian harps the breezes tune  
Among the tree-tops, where the moon  
Casts over all her silver light  
To brighten somber shades of night.

In darkened spots what spirits wait  
Where light hath failed to penetrate!  
Fantastic forms and shapes they seem,  
Yet vanish if a single beam



Of light creeps to their hiding-place  
To show—but quiet, empty space.  
Yet still upon the silent air  
They trip their dances everywhere,  
And eagerly each darkened spot  
Is searched to find that which is not  
To human erring sight. But they,  
Elusive, take their mocking way  
To murmur in the waiting ear  
Strange whisperings one may not hear.  
Though quick he turns the startled head  
He finds the witching spirit fled,  
With ne'er a form nor proof behind  
To greet the active, searching mind.

What are these spirits of the wood,  
That man has never understood?  
All through the night in quiet woods  
They play their pranks in sportive moods,  
And hide behind each darkened tree  
To mock the passer-by, when he  
Alarms himself at twigs that break  
And thus the ghostly echoes wake.  
The spirits catch the startling sound  
And toss it past him with a bound,



Until he flies in dread to hear  
Such witchlike noises in his ear.  
They gaily dance among the trees  
And gambol with the passing breeze  
And mock the hoot owl passing by  
With human infant's wailing cry.  
They sportive play and revel make  
Until the morn begins to break  
And then the light reveals the wood  
In all its silent solitude.  
And peaceful, most alluring fair  
In the inviting morning air.  
Its quiet charm is all its own;  
The spirits of the night have flown.

## AUTUMN

The glimmering sun with slanting beams  
Through baring boughs sends golden gleams,  
And lights the wood with luster rare.  
Then mellow fragrance fills the air  
From fruitage of the ripened year.  
And tuneful fall proclaims good cheer.  
Here, safely gathered ripened sheaves;  
There, rainbow-hued October leaves.



The trees an added strength betray  
Out-garnered from each summer day  
Of heat and showers and grateful dew  
To fare the winter bravely through.  
Serene and bright their gray bark shines  
Amid the verdure of the pines  
That towering heavenward, lifted high,  
The message bright catch from the sky,  
Reflecting in their changeless dress  
The Love that ever shines to bless.

Come with me to the gladsome wood  
And learn of something great and good.  
With whirl of wing, with startled eye  
A woodcock flashes wildly by  
With constant faith in nature's power  
To guard him thus in fearsome hour.  
He quickly drops amid the brush  
Nor moves to break the listening hush.  
Have they, the living of the wood,  
Learned more than man has understood?  
Forgetting self to touch the spring  
That moves with life each living thing?  
How can Intelligence then prove  
A better way wherein to move





Than keeping closely to this Power  
To learn these secrets every hour?

## WINTER

Strong, cold, enwrapped in glistening snow,  
Their life sap buried far below,  
The woods defy each wintry blast  
That sweeps amid them fierce and fast,  
Like howling demons through their limbs  
Or grand, majestic funeral hymns.  
The Storm King throws his challenge out;  
His whirlwinds toss the trees about.  
They, moaning, writhe and bend each way,  
Their outer branches wildly sway  
In rhythm weird and tempest's glee,  
That shouts in keenest ecstasy  
Until the darkened heavens quake.  
And down the drifting storm clouds shake  
Tremendous sighs and groans that sound  
Like rumbling drums, as, bound on bound,  
They leap like tyrants in their power  
Then burst and scatter out a shower  
Of hissing screams that cut the air  
To voice a depth of wild despair.



Now with a lull they murmur low  
And breathe unutterable woe,  
Soft, tremulous, and far and faint  
Protests the broken, pleading plaint  
Far in the distance vanishing  
A mystical and witchlike thing.

Then with a sudden furious rush  
Shrieks back upon the sudden hush  
A blast that voices louder still  
Its triumph and unvanquished will.  
What power the mighty tempest wields!  
Before its strength the strongest yields  
And bends like reed before its sway  
When roars the storm like fearful prey.

But when its rage is spent and done  
And shines the bright benignant sun  
Upon the quiet of the wood,  
Fair nature smiles serene and good,  
Because obedient to that Will  
That silent bids it: "Peace, be still."



## CHEERFUL LAMPS

**R**ATYDIDS and crickets here  
Keep up a din,  
And from out the thickets near  
Where they'd crept in,  
Fireflies are flashing out,  
Dancing like the elves about  
Each little flame.  
See them quickly come and go  
While I vainly long to know  
What is their game.

Happy they must surely be,  
Gay little sprites;  
Flitting so, so merrily  
On summer nights.  
Silent! not a voice have they,  
Nor another choice but play  
Without a sound.  
Every one a tiny lamp  
Glowing, flashing 'mid the damp  
Darting around.

Ho! you little fireflies  
What do you see?





You are surely very wise  
It seems to me,  
Carrying your lamps along  
So you may not travel wrong  
When 'tis so dark.  
Flowers bloom when days are bright,  
You ne'er open in the light  
Your flowery spark.

Here, and there, and everywhere  
Flash, flash you go,  
In the damp and dewy air  
How burn you so?  
Instant here and then afar  
Like a brightly gleaming star  
Shining on me.  
What! has something gone awry—  
One I miss, he's ceased to fly—  
Where can he be?

Oh, you little struggling one  
Down in the grass.  
Hurt perhaps and quite undone,  
I fear. Alas!  
Carefully I'll rescue you  
From the chilly drenching dew.





My! how you squirm!  
Why! you're not a firefly  
Struggling in my hands so spry!  
You're a glowworm.

Creep away, you tiny mite,  
Feebly and slow.  
Sending forth your yellow light  
Pale as you go.  
Join your comrade fireflies,  
Make men ope their wondering eyes  
As free you give  
Sparkling lights the nights to bless,  
Giving them bright cheerfulness  
Long as you live.

## A FITTING NAME

Were I to give a truer name  
To any butterfly  
I'd call it something much the same—  
I'd call it flutter-by.

—M. G. K.



## SIGNS OF RAIN

**A** LITTLE elf in a jacket red,  
He slapped his knee, and he bobbed his head  
And said to his wife, he said, said he:  
“It surely must rain quite soon. I see  
The leaves of the ash are upside down;  
There’s a whirl of dust on the road to town—  
Went opposite way the sun has gone—  
We’ll surely have rain before the dawn.”

The stars hid away at the fall of night,  
The moon gave never a bit of light  
And the tree-toads called from tree to tree:  
“It is going to rain, we can plainly see.”  
The lightning flashed where the stars had been,  
And the thunder crashed where the moon crept in  
From the rain that quickly came with a dash  
On the thirsty earth and the road splash, splash.

But the little elf in his jacket red  
Went out for a walk without hat on head  
And was caught in the shower before he knew  
And it soaked his raiment through and through.



Then he hurried home at a rapid pace,  
But said to his wife with an odd grimace:  
“When the signs are right for rain, I say,  
One can take a bath almost any day.”

## A SONG OF GLADNESS

SING a song of gladness,  
Wear a happy smile,  
Laugh away all sadness,  
That's the proper style.  
Start it in the morning  
Soon as day is light;  
Every trouble scorning—  
Keep it up till night.  
When the day is dreary  
Sing it loud and clear;  
No one will be weary  
Of a song of cheer.  
People will be singing  
Joining in the song,  
Setting echoes ringing  
All day long.

—M. G. K.



## OLD FRIENDS GROW DEAR

OLD friends grow dear and dearer yet,  
Their presence brings no vain regret.  
Each truth in us they fondly see  
With friendship's loving loyalty.  
So many years faith's seal hath set

We would not break it, nor forget  
The days that passed so happily  
And brought the heart-unlocking key:  
Old friends grow dear.

Amid new scenes our friendship's debt  
Unmeasured is. Then fondly let  
Our hearts grow young again to be  
Once more in that dear company,  
The while we feel with eyes dew-wet,  
Old friends grow dear.





## LARKSPUR

OH, LOVELY flowers tossing high  
Your spires of shaded blue,  
To sport with zephyrs passing by  
And smile from dew to dew!  
As bright amid the green you sway  
All graceful in the sun,  
The butterflies flit down each day,  
To greet you one by one.

Oh, light as thistledown they drift,  
So beautiful, so free,  
While petals frail you gently lift,  
Sweet faces, modestly.  
Oh, blooms of blue, oh, wings of gold,  
Could breath of summer air,  
A more bewitching beauty hold  
To grace a garden fair?

Dear Larkspur, answer me to-day  
The thing I long to know  
While through the trees the breezes play  
And murmur, murmur low.



Pray tell me, Larkspur, can you see  
From out your countless eyes?  
And will you tell confidently  
How I can be as wise?

Oh, voiceless life! Nay, whisper swells  
A thought I know divine,  
And to my inmost heart it tells  
Your creed—the same as mine!  
No questionings! To do and be  
A part of all the Good,  
To meet each moment joyfully  
Since fully understood.

## DAILY BREAD

**T**O-DAY I'll give what good I have,  
Nor think about to-morrow,  
Content to know my sure supply  
Will come. I need not borrow.  
Because I sow the best I have  
And keep on planting daily,  
My daily harvest will be rich.  
My sheaves I'll carry gaily.  
—M. G. K.



## MY GARDEN'S GUEST

HERE, in my little garden plot,  
On walks of velvet grasses,  
Grow sprays of dear forget-me-not  
To please her as she passes.

The purple iris, royal bloom,  
In regal ranks is showing,  
And on the air its rich perfume  
The gentle breeze is blowing.

And pink and blue the columbines  
Have ope'd with springtime weather,  
And buttercups and eglantines  
Are smiling close together.

The birds outpour their sweetest songs  
From bending trees above it,  
And honey-bees in eager throngs  
Come, too, because they love it.

The bridal wreath shows double rows,  
A happy omen truly;  
It whispers, "Courtship's near its close,  
I'll wreathe the bride's brow duly."



The lilacs nod, the tulips raise  
Their cups to greet her sweetly,  
And lily-of-the-valley pays  
Its tribute here discreetly.

And down each perfumed winding walk  
She passes like a fairy  
With gentlest cadence in her talk  
And steps so light and airy.

Oh, sweet my garden was ere she  
I took to wander through it  
But now it breathes more fragrantly  
Than e'er before she knew it.

## WEALTH

**T**HE golden-rod  
May wave and nod  
To show its pleasant charms;  
But does its gold  
Upon the wold  
Distinguish gilt-edged farms?

—M. G. K.















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