

THE
COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS
OF
**JAMES
WHITCOMB
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And I tell you, when I find a
Bunch out whur the sun kin strike
'em,

It allus sets me thinkin'
O' the ones 'at used to grow
And peck in through the chinkin'
O' the cabin, don't you know!

And then I think o' mother,
And how she ust to love 'em—
When they wuzn't any other,
'Less she found 'em up above 'em!
And her eyes, afore she shut 'em,
Whispered with a smile and said
We must pick a bunch and putt
'em
In her hand when she wuz dead.

But, as I wuz a-sayin',
They ain't no style about 'em
Very gaudy er displayin',
But I wouldn't be without 'em,—
'Cause I'm happier in these posies,
And hollyhawks and sich,
Than the hummin'-bird 'at noses
In the roses of the rich.

123

THE EMPTY SONG

“WHAT have we but an empty
song?”
Said the minstrel, as he bent
To stay the fingers that trailed along
The strings of her instrument.

“The clasp of your hand is warm in
mine,
And your breath on my brow is
wet—

I have drunk of your lips as men drink
wine,
But my heart is thirsty yet.”

The starlight shivered a little space,
And the sigh of the wind uprose
And blew a cloud o'er the moon's wan
face,
And swooned back in repose.

The years ooze on in a stagnant pool
One drifts as the winds allow,
And one writes rhymes with his heart
own blood,
But his soul is thirsty now.

124

A ROSE IN OCTOBER

AN IMITATION OF MAGAZINE POETS

I

I STRAYED, all alone, where the
Autumn
Had swept, in her petulant wrath
All the flowers, that had bloomed in the
garden,
She had gathered, and flung in the
path.

And I saw the dead face of the lily
Struck down, by the rain and the
sleet,
And the pink, with her lashes
weeping,
Drooped low in the dust, at my feet.

II

The leaves on the branches still swayed
ing,
Were blanched with the crimson of
death;

And the vines that still clung to the
trellis,
Were palsied, and shook at a breath.
And I sighed: “So hath fate, like the
Autumn,
Swept over my path, till I see,
As I walk through life's desolate gar-
den
Not a rose is left blooming for me!”

III

“Heigho!” said a voice of low laugh-
ter—
“How blind are you poets!” And
there,
At the gate, just in front of me, lean-
ing,
Stood Rosalind May, I declare!
I stammered, confused, for the mo-
ment;
But was blest for the rest of my life,
For my Rose of October there prom-
ised
She'd bloom for me aye, as—my
wife.

125

ROMANCIN'

I BEN a-kinde' “*musin'*,” as the feller
says, and I'm
About o' the conclusion that they hain't
no better time,
When you come to cipher on it, than
the times we ust to know
When we swore our first “*dog-gone-it'*”
sore solum-like and low!

You git my idy, do you?—*Little tads,*
you understand—

Jest a-wishin' thue and thue you that
you on'y wuz a *man*.—
Yit here I am, this minit, even sixty, to
a day,
And fergittin' all that's in it, wishin'
jest the other way!

I hain't no hand to lectur' on the times,
er *dimonstrate*
Whare the trouble is, er hector and
domineer with Fate,—
But when I git so flurried, and so pes-
tered-like and blue,
And so rail owdacious worried, let me
tell you what I do!—

I jest gee-haw the hosses, and onhook
the swingle-tree,
Whare the hazel-bushes tosses down
theyr shadders over me;
And I draw my plug o' navy, and I
climb the fence, and set
Jest a-thinkin' here, i gravy! tel my
eyes is wringin'-wet!

Tho' I still kin see the trouble o' the
presunt, I kin see—
Kindo' like my sight wuz double—all
the things that *ust* to be;
And the flutter o' the robin and the
teeter o' the wren
Sets the willer-branches bobbin'
“howdy-do” thum *Now to Then!*

The deadnin' and the thicket's jest
a-bilin' full of June,
Thum the rattle o' the cricket, to the
yallar-hammer's tune;
And the catbird in the bottom, and the
sapsuck on the snag,
Seems ef they can't—od-rot 'em!—jest
do nothin' else but brag!

They's music in the twitter of the blue-bird and the jay,
And that sassy little critter jest a-peckin' all the day;
They's music in the "flicker," and they's music in the thrush,
And they's music in the snicker o' the chipmunk in the brush!

They's music *all around* me!—And I go back, in a dream
Sweeter yit than ever found me fast asleep,—and in the stream
That ust to split the medder whare the dandylions growed,
I stand knee-deep, and redder than the sunset down the road.

Then's when I b'en a-fishin'!—And they's other fellers, too,
With theyr hick'ry-poles a-swishin' out behind 'em; and a few
Little "shiners" on our stringers, with theyr tails tiptoein' bloom,
As we dance 'em in our fingers all the happy jurney home.

I kin see us, true to Natur', thum the time we started out,
With a biscuit and a 'tater in our little "round-about"!—
I kin see our lines a-tanglin', and our elbows in a jam,
And our naked legs a-danglin' thum the aperrn o' the 'dam.

I kin see the honeysuckle climbin' up around the mill,
And kin hear the worter chuckle, and the wheel a-growlin' still;
And thum the bank below it I kin steal the old canoe,
And jest git in and row it like the miller ust to do.

W'y, I git my fancy focused on the past so mortul plane
I kin even smell the locus'-blossoms bloomin' in the lane;
And I hear the cow-bells clinkin' sweeter tunes 'n "Monkey-musk"
Fer the lightnin'-bugs a-blinkin' and a-dancin' in the dusk.

And when I've kep' on "musin'," as the feller says, tel I'm
Firm-fixed in the conclusion that they hain't no better time,
When you come to cipher on it, than the *old* times,—I de-clare
I kin wake and say "dog-gone-it!" jest as soft as any prayer!

126

THE LITTLE OLD POEM THAT NOBODY READS

THE little old poem that nobody reads
Blooms in a crowded space,
Like a ground-vine blossom, so low in the weeds
That nobody sees its face—
Unless, perchance, the reader's eye
Stares through a yawn, and hurries by,
For no one wants, or loves, or heeds
The little old poem that nobody reads.

The little old poem that nobody reads
Was written—where?—and when?
Maybe a hand of goodly deeds
Thrilled as it held the pen:

Maybe the fountain whence it came
Was a heart brimmed o'er with tears of shame,
And maybe its creed is the worst of creeds—
The little old poem that nobody reads.

But, little old poem that nobody reads,
Holding you here above
The wound of a heart that warmly bleeds
For all that knows not love,
I well believe if the old World knew
As dear a friend as I find in you,
That friend would tell it that all it needs
Is the little old poem that nobody reads.

127

A SLEEPING BEAUTY

AN alien wind that blew and blew
Over the fields where the ripe grain grew,
Sending ripples of shine and shade
That crept and crouched at her feet and played.
The sea-like summer washed the moss
Till the sun-drenched lilies hung like floss,
Draping the throne of green and gold
That lulled her there like a queen of old.

ii

Was it the hum of a bumblebee,
Or the long-hushed bugle eerily

Winding a call to the daring Prince
Lost in the wood long ages since?—

A dim old wood, with a palace rare
Hidden away in its depths somewhere!

Was it the Princess, tranced in sleep,
Awaiting her lover's touch to leap

Into the arms that bent above?
To thaw his heart with the breath of love—

And cloy his lips, through her waking tears,
With the dead-ripe kiss of a hundred years!

iii

An alien wind that blew and blew.—
I had blurred my eyes as the artists do,

Coaxing life to a half-sketched face,
Or dreaming bloom for a grassy place.

The bee droned on in an undertone;
And a shadow-bird trailed all alone

Across the wheat, while a liquid cry
Dripped from above, as it went by.

What to her was the far-off whir
Of the quail's quick wing or the chipmunk's chirr?—

What to her was the shade that slid
Over the hill where the reapers hid?—

157

WHERE SHALL WE LAND?

Where shall we land you, sweet?
—SWINBURNE.

ALL listlessly we float
Out seaward in the boat
That beareth Love.
Our sails of purest snow
Bend to the blue below
And to the blue above.
Where shall we land?

We drift upon a tide
Shoreless on every side,
Save where the eye
Of Fancy sweeps far lands
Shelved slopingly with sands
Of gold and porphyry.
Where shall we land?

The fairy isles we see,
Loom up so mistily—
So vaguely fair,
We do not care to break
Fresh bubbles in our wake
To bend our course for there.
Where shall we land?

The warm winds of the deep
Have lulled our sails to sleep,
And so we glide
Careless of wave or wind,
Or change of any kind,
Or turn of any tide.
Where shall we land?

We droop our dreamy eyes
Where our reflection lies
Steeped in the sea,
And, in an endless fit

Of languor, smile on it
And its sweet mimicry
Where shall we land?

“Where shall we land?” God’s grace
I know not any place
So fair as this—
Swung here between the blue
Of sea and sky, with you
To ask me, with a kiss,
“Where shall we land?”

158

HOPE

HOPE, bending o’er me one day
snowed the flakes
Of her white touches on my face
sight,
And whispered, half rebuking,
“What makes
My little girl so sorrowful to-night?”

O scarce did I unclasp my lips
lift
Their tear-glued fringes, as we
blind embrace
I caught within my arms the messenger
gift,
And with wild kisses dappled
her face.

That was a baby dream a day
ago:
My fate is fanged with frost and
tongued with flame.
My woman-soul, chased naked through
the snow,
Stumbles and staggers on
an aim.

160

DEATH

LO, I am dying! And to feel the
King
Of Terrors fasten on me, steeples all
sense
Of life, and love, and loss, and every-
thing,
In such deep calms of restful indo-
lence,
His keenest fangs of pain are sweet to
me
As fused kisses of mad lovers’ lips
When, flung shut-eyed in spasmed
ecstasy,
They feel the world spin past them in
eclipse,
And so thank God with ever-tighten-
ing lids!
But what I see, the soul of me forbids
All utterance of; and what I hear and
feel,
The rattle in my throat could ill re-
veal
Though it were music to your ears as
to
Mine own.—Press closer—closer—I
have grown
So great, your puny arms about me
thrown
Seem powerless to hold me here with
you;—
I slip away—I waver—and—I fall—
Christ! What a plunge! Where am I
dropping? All
My breath bursts into dust—I can not
cry—
I whirl—I reel and veer up overhead,
And drop flat-faced against—against—
the sky—
Soh, bless me! I am dead!

And yet, here in my agony, sometimes
A faint voice reaches down from
some far height,
And whispers through a glamouring
of rhymes,—
“What makes my little girl so sad
to-night?”

159

THE LITTLE TINY KICKSHAW

—*And any little tiny kickshaw.*
—SHAKESPEARE.

O THE little tiny kickshaw that
Mither sent tae me,
To sweeter than the sugar-plum that
repens on the tree,
Wi’ deary flavorin’s o’ spice an’ musky
rosemarie,
The little tiny kickshaw that Mither
sent tae me.

To luscious wi’ the stolen tang o’
fruits frae ower the sea,
Wi’ its fragrance gars me laugh
wi’ langin’ lip an’ ee,
Tae its frazen scheen o’ white maun
nethen hinnie be—
So weel I luv the kickshaw that
Mither sent tae me.

O I luv the tiny kickshaw, an’ I
smack my lips wi’ glee,
An’ mair do I luv the taste o’ sic a
luxurine,
But mair I luv the luvein’ han’s that
could the giftie gie
O the little tiny kickshaw that Mither
sent tae me.

161

TO THE WINE-GOD MERLUS

A Toast of Jucklet's

HO! ho! thou jolly god, with kinkèd lips
 And laughter-streaming eyes, thou liftest up
 The heart of me like any wassail-cup,
 And from its teeming brim, in foaming drips,
 Thou blowest all my cares. I cry to thee,
 Between the sips:—Drink long and lustily;
 Drink thou my ripest joys, my richest mirth,
 My maddest staves of wanton minstrelsy;
 Drink every song I've tinkered here on earth
 With any patch of music; drink! and be
 Thou drainer of my soul, and to the lees
 Drink all my lover-thrills and ecstasies;
 And with a final gulp—ho! ho!—drink me,
 And roll me o'er thy tongue eternally.

162

THE GINOINE AR-TICKLE

TALKIN' o' poetry,—There're few men yit
 'At's got the stuff b'iled down so's it'll pour
 Out sorgum-like, and keeps a year and more
 Jes' sweeter ever' time you tackle it!

Why, all the jinglin' truck at her writ
 Fer twenty year and better is so per
 You can't find no sap in it no more
 'N you'd find juice in puff-bell—
And I'd Quit!
 What people wants is facts, I apprehend;
 And naked Natur is the thing to give
 Your writin' bottom, eh? And I intend
 'At honest work is allus bound to live.
 Now them's my views; 'cause you can recommend
 Sich poetry as that from end to end.

163

A BRIDE

"O I AM weary!" she sighed
 Her billowy
 Hair she unloosed in a tress of gold
 That rippled and fell o'er a figure
 Willowy,
 Graceful and fair as a goddess
 Old:
 Over her jewels she flung beads
 Drearily,
 Crumpled the laces that snowed
 Her breast,
 Crushed with her fingers the laces
 Wearily
 Clung in her hair like a dove in a nest.
 —And naught but her shadow
 Form in the mirror
 To kneel in dumb agony
 And weep near her!

"weary?"—of what? Could we
 fathom the mystery?—
 Lest up the lashes weighed down by
 her tears
 And wash with their dew one white
 face from her history,
 Set like a gem in the red rust of
 years?
 Nothing will rest her—unless he who
 died of her
 Stared from his grave, and, in place
 of the groom,
 Tapping her face, kneeling there by the
 side of her,
 Drained the old kiss to the dregs of
 his doom.
 —And naught but that shadowy
 form in the mirror
 To kneel in dumb agony down
 and weep near her!

164

STANZAS FOR A NEW SONG

WHISTLE us something old, you
 know!
 Pucker your lips with the old-time
 twist,
 And whistle the jigs of the long
 ago,
 Or the old hornpipes that you used
 to whist.
 Some old, old tune that we oft
 averred
 Was a little the oldest thing we'd
 heard
 Since "the bob-tailed nag" was a
 frisky colt,
 In the babbling days of old "Ben
 Bolt."

Whistle us something old and gray—
 Some toothless tune of the bygone
 years—
 Some bald old song that limps to-day
 With a walking-stick this vale of
 tears.
 Whistle a stave of the good old
 days,
 E'er the fur stood up in a thou-
 sand ways
 On the listener's pelt as he ripped
 and tore,
 And diddle-dee-blank-blanked
 Pinafore.

CHORUS

Whistle us something old, you know!
 Pucker your lips with the old-time
 twist,
 And whistle the jigs of the long ago,
 Or the old hornpipes that you used
 to whist.

165

LINES TO AN ONSETTLED
YOUNG MAN

"O, WHAT is Life at last," says
 you,
 "'At woman-folks and man-folks too,
 Cain't oncomplainin', worry through?"
 "An' what is Love, 'at no one yit
 'At's monkeyed with it kin forgit,
 Er gits fat on remember'n hit?"
 "An' what is Death?"—W'y, looky
 hyur—
 Ef Life an' Love don't suit you, sir,
 Hit's jes' the thing yer lookin' fer!

166

PLANTATION HYMN

HEAR dat rum'lin' in de sky!
 Hol' fas', brudders, till you git dah!
 O, dat's de good Lord walkin' by,
 Hol' fas', brudders, till you git dah!

CHORUS

Mahster! Jesus!
 You done come down to please us,
 And dahs de good Lord sees us,
 As he goes walkin' by!

See dat lightnin' lick his tongue?
 Hol' fas', brudders, till you git dah!
 'Spec he taste de song 'ut de angels
 sung—
 Hol' fas', brudders, till you git dah!

De big black clouds is bust in two,
 Hol' fas', brudders, till you git dah!
 And dahs de 'postles peekin' frue,
 Hol' fas', brudders, till you git dah!

Know dem angels ev'ry one,
 Hol' fas', brudders, till you git dah!
 Kase dey's got wings and we'se got
 none,
 Hol' fas', brudders, till you git dah!

CHORUS

Mahster! Jesus!
 You done come down to please us,
 And dahs de good Lord sees us,
 As he goes walkin' by!

167

LAWYER AND CHILD

HOW large was Alexander, babe
 That parties designate
 The historic gentleman as rather
 Inordinately great?

Why, son, to speak with reverence
 Regard for history,
 Waiving all claims, of course,
 heights pretentious—
 About the size of me.

168

THE LOST KISS

I PUT by the half-written pen,
 While the pen, idly trailed a
 hand,
 Writes on,—“Had I words to complete
 it,
 Who'd read it, or who'd under-
 stand?”

But the little bare feet on the stairs
 And the faint, smothered laugh in
 the hall,
 And the eery-low lisp on the silence,
 Cry up to me over it all.

So I gather it up—where was broken
 The tear-faded thread of my dream
 Telling how, as one night I sat
 writing,

A fairy broke in on my dream,
 A little inquisitive fairy—
 My own little girl, with the gold
 Of the sun in her hair, and the deep
 Blue eyes of the fairies of old.

Was the dear little girl that I
 scolded—
 “For was it a moment like this,”
 I said, when she knew I was busy,
 To come romping in for a kiss?—
 Came romping up from her mother,
 And clamoring there at my knee
 For One little kiss for my dolly,
 And one little uzzer for me!”

God pity the heart that repelled her,
 And the cold hand that turned her
 away,
 And take, from the lips that denied
 her,

The answerless prayer of to-day!
 The Lord, from my mem'ry forever
 That pitiful sob of despair,
 And the patter and trip of the little
 bare feet,
 And the one piercing cry on the
 stair!

I put by the half-written poem,
 While the pen, idly trailed in my
 hand,
 Writes on,—“Had I words to complete
 it,
 Who'd read it, or who'd under-
 stand?”

And the little bare feet on the stairway,
 And the faint, smothered laugh in
 the hall,
 And the eery-low lisp on the silence,
 Cry up to me over it all.

169

MICHAEL FLYNN AND THE
BABY

LOOK a'erc, ould baby,—who
 Shak's the fist av 'im at you?
 Who's the spalpeen wid the stim

Av his poipe a pokin' 'im?
 Who's the divil grinnin' 'ere
 In the eyes av yez, me dear?
 Arrah! darlint, spake and soy
 Don't yez know yer feyther—boy?

Wheer's the gab yer mither had
 Whin she blarneyed yer ould dad
 Wid her tricks and 'ily words
 Loike the liltin' av the birds?
 Wheer's the tongue av Michael Flynn,
 And the capers av the chin
 He's a-waggin' at yez?—Hoy?
 Don't yez know yer feyther—boy?

Arrah! baby, wid the eyes
 Av the saints in Paradise,
 And Saint Patrick's own bald pate,
 Is it yer too howly swate
 To be changin' words because
 It's the hod, and not the cross,
 Ornamints me showlder?—soy?
 Don't yez know yer feyther—boy?

170

ON A SPLENDUD MATCH

[On the night of the marriage of the
 foregoin' couple, which shall be
 nameless here, these lines was ca'mly
 dashed off in the album of the happy
 bride whilse the shivver-ree was goin'
 on outside the residence.]

HE was warned against the
 womern—
 She was warned against the man.—
 And ef that won't make a weddin',
 W'y, they's nothin' else that can!

You smiled so sweetly, Miriam Wayne,
I could not help but love your smile,
And fair as sunshine after rain
It glimmered on me all the while;
Why, it did soak as summer light
Through all my life, until, indeed,
I ripened as an apple might
From golden rind to seed.

Fate never wrought so pitiless
An evil, as when first your eyes
Poured back in mine the tenderness
That made the world a Paradise—
For Miriam, remembering
The warm white hands that lay in
mine
Like wisps of sunshine vanishing—
Your kisses, spilled like wine

Down over forehead, face and lips,
Till I lay drunken with delight
From crown of soul to finger-tips—
. . . Shriek, Memory, in mad
affright!—
Howl at the moon like any hound!
Yelp "love" and "liar" every breath,
And "Heaven is lost and hell is
found!"
So moan yourself to death!

180

TO ROBERT BURNS

SWEET Singer that I loe the maist
O' ony, sin' wi' eager haste
I smacket bairn-lips ower the taste
O' hinnied sang,
I hail thee, though a blessed ghaist
In Heaven lang!

For, weel I ken, nae cantie phrase,
Nor courtly airs, nor lairdly ways,

Could gar me freer blame, or praise
Or proffer hand,
Where "Rantin' Robbie" and his
Thegither stand.

And sae these hamely lines I send
Wi' jinglin' words at ilka end
In echo o' the sangs that wend
Frae thee to me
Like simmer-brooks, wi' mony a beak
O' wimplin' glee.

In fancy, as, wi' dewy een,
I part the clouds aboon the scene
Where thou wast born, and grew
atween,
I see nae spot
In a' the Hiellands half sae green
And unforgot!

I see nae storied castle-hall,
Wi' banners flauntin' ower the wall
And serf and page in ready call.
Sae grand to me
As ane pair cotter's hut, wi' all
Its poverty.

There where the simple daisy grew
Sae bonnie sweet, and modest too
Thy liltin' filled its wee head fu
O' sic a grace,
It aye is weepin' tears o' dew
Wi' droopit face.

Frae where the heather bluebells grew
Their sangs o' fragrance to the breeze
To where the lavrock soars to see
Still lives thy strain,
For a' the birds are twittering
Sangs like thine ain.

And aye, by light o' sun or moon,
By banks o' Ayr, or Bonnie Doon.

The waters lilt nae tender tune
But sweeter seems
Because they poured their limpid rune
Through a' thy dreams.

Wi' brimmin' lip, and laughin' ee,
Thou shookest even Grief wi' glee,
For had nae niggart sympathy
Where Sorrow bowed,
Thou gavest a' thy tears as free
As a' thy gowd.

And sae it is we loe thy name
To see bleeze up wi' sic a flame,
That a' pretentious stars o' fame
Maun blink asklent,
To see how simple worth may shame
Their brightest gient.

181

HER VALENTINE

SOMEBODY'S sent a funny little
valentine to me.
It's a bunch of baby-roses in a vase of
filigree,
And hovering above them—just as
cute as he can be—
Is a tawny cupid tangled in a scarf of
poetry.

And the prankish little fellow looks so
knowing in his glee,
With his golden bow and arrow, aim-
ing most unerringly
At a pair of hearts so labeled that I
may read and see
That one is meant for "One Who
Loves," and one is meant for me.
But I know the lad who sent it! It's
as plain as A-B-C!—

For the roses they are *blushing*, and the
vase stands *awkwardly*,
And the little god above it—though as
cute as he can be—
Can not breathe the lightest whisper
of his burning love for me.

182

SONGS TUNELESS

I

HE kisses me! Ah, now, at last,
He says good night as it should
be,
His great warm eyes bent yearn-
ingly
Above my face—his arms locked fast
About me, and mine own eyes dim
With happy tears for love of him.

He kisses me! Last night, beneath
A swarm of stars, he said I stood
His one fair form of womanhood,
And springing, shut me in the sheath
Of a caress that almost hid
Me from the good his kisses did.

He kisses me! He kisses me!
This is the sweetest song I know,
And so I sing it very low
And faint, and O so tenderly
That, though you listen, none but
he
May hear it as he kisses me.

II

"How can I make you love me
more?"—
A thousand times she asks me this,
Her lips uplifted with the kiss

294

AT DUSK

A SOMETHING quiet and subdued
 In all the faces that we meet;
 A sense of rest, a solitude
 O'er all the crowded street;
 The very noises seem to be
 Crude utterings of harmony,
 And all we hear, and all we see,
 Has in it something sweet.

Thoughts come to us as from a
 dream

Of some long-vanished yesterday
 The voices of the children seem
 Like ours, when young as they,
 The hand of Charity extends
 To meet Misfortune's, when it
 blends,
 Veiled by the dusk—and oh, my
 friends,
 Would it were dusk always!

295

ANOTHER RIDE FROM GHENT TO AIX

WE sprang for the side-holts—my gripsack and I—
 It dangled—I dangled—we both dangled by.
 “Good speed!” cried mine host, as we landed at last—
 “Speed?” chuckled the watch we went lumbering past;
 Behind shut the switch, and out through the rear door
 I glared while we waited a half hour more.

I had missed the express that went thundering down
 Ten minutes before to my next lecture town,
 And my only hope left was to catch this: “wild freight,”
 Which the landlord remarked was “most luckily late—
 But the twenty miles distance was easily done,
 If they run half as fast as they usually run!”

Not a word to each other—we struck a snail's pace—
 Conductor and brakeman ne'er changing a place—
 Save at the next watering-tank, where they all
 Got out—strolled about—cut their names on the wall,
 Or listlessly loitered on down to the pile
 Of sawed wood just beyond us, to doze for a while.

’Twas high noon at starting, but while we drew near
 “Arcady,” I said, “We’ll not make it, I fear!
 I must strike Aix by eight, and it’s three o’clock now;
 Let me stoke up that engine, and I’ll show you how!”

At which the conductor, with patience sublime,
 Smiled up from his novel with, “Plenty of time!”

At “Trask,” as we jolted stock-still as a stone,
 I heard a cow bawl in a five o’clock tone;
 And the steam from the saw-mill looked misty and thin,
 And the snarl of the saw had been stifled within:
 And a frowzy-haired boy, with a hat full of chips,
 Came out and stared up with a smile on his lips.

At “Booneville,” I groaned, “Can’t I telegraph on?”
 Not Why? “’Cause the telegraph-man had just gone
 To visit his folks in Almo”—and one heard
 The sharp snap of my teeth through the throat of a word,
 That I dragged for a mile and a half up the track,
 And strangled it there, and came skulkingly back.

Again we were off. It was twilight, and more,
 As we rolled o’er a bridge where beneath us the roar
 Of a river came up with so wooing an air
 I mechanic’ly strapped myself fast in my chair
 As a brakeman slid open the door for more light,
 Saying: “Captain, brace up, for your town is in sight!”

“How they’ll greet me!”—and all in a moment—“che-wang!”
 And the train stopped again, with a bump and a bang.
 What was it? “The section-hands, just in advance.”
 And I spit on my hands, and I rolled up my pants,
 And I clumb like an imp that the fiends had let loose
 Up out of the depths of that deadly caboose.

I ran the train’s length—I lept safe to the ground—
 And the legend still lives that for five miles around
 They heard my voice hailing the hand-car that yanked
 Me aboard at my bidding, and gallantly cranked,
 As I groveled and clung, with my eyes in eclipse,
 And a rim of red foam round my rapturous lips.

Then I cast loose my ulster—each ear-tab let fall—
 Kicked off both my shoes—let go arctics and all—
 Stood up with the boys—leaned—patted each head

As it bobbed up and down with the speed that we sped;
Clapped my hands—laughed and sang—any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix we rotated and stood.

And all I remember is friends flocking round
As I unsheathed my head from a hole in the ground;
And no voice but was praising that hand-car divine,
As I rubbed down its spokes with that lecture of mine,
Which (the citizens voted by common consent)
Was no more than its due. 'Twas the lecture they meant.

296

THE RIPEST PEACH

THE ripest peach is highest on the tree—
And so her love, beyond the reach of me,
Is dearest in my sight. Sweet breezes,
bow
Her heart down to me where I worship now!

She looms aloft where every eye may see

The ripest peach is highest on the tree.
Such fruitage as her love I know, alas!
I may not reach here from the orchard grass.

I drink the sunshine showered past her lips
As roses drain the dewdrop as it drips.
The ripest peach is highest on the tree,
And so mine eyes gaze upward eagerly.

Why—why do I not turn away in wrath
And pluck some heart here hanging in my path?—

Love's lower boughs bend with thee—
but, ah me!
The ripest peach is highest on the tree

297

BEDOUIN

O LOVE is like an unarm'd steed!—

So hot of heart and wild of speed,
And with fierce freedom so in love,
The desert is not vast enough,
With all its leagues of glimmering sands,

To pasture it! Ah, that my hands
Were more than human in their strength,

That my deft lariat at length
Might safely noose this splendid steed
That so defies all conquering!
Ho! but to see it whirl and reel—
The sands spurt forward—and is in
The quivering tension of the throat
That throned me high, with its
and song!

To grapple tufts of tossing manes—
To spurn it to its feet again,
And then, sans saddle, rein or bit,
To lash the mad life out of it!

298

A DITTY OF NO TONE—

Spiced to the Spirit of John Keats

I

WOULD that my lips might pour
out in thy praise
A fitting melody—an air sublime,—
A song sun-washed and draped in
dreamy haze—
The floss and velvet of luxurious
rhyme:
A lay wrought of warm languors, and
o'er-brimmed
With balminess, and fragrance of
wild flowers
Such as the droning bee ne'er
wearies of—
Such thoughts as might be hymned
To thee from this midsummer land
of ours
Through shower and sunshine,
blent for very love.

II

Deep silences in woody aisles where—
through
Cool paths go loitering, and where
the trill
Of remembered birds hath some-
thing new
Is cadence for the hearing—linger-
ing still
Though all the open day that lies be-
yond;
Reaches of pasture-lands, vine-
wreathen oaks,
Majestic still in pathos of decay;—
The mad—the wayside pond

Wherein the dragon-fly an instant
soaks
His filmy wing-tips ere he flits
away.

III

And I would pluck from out the dank,
rich mold,
Thick-shaded from the sun of noon,
the long
Lithe stalks of barley, topped with
ruddy gold,
And braid them in the meshes of my
song;
And with them I would tangle wheat
and rye,
And wisps of greenest grass the katy-
did
E'er crept beneath the blades of,
sulkily,
As harvest-hands went by;
And weave of all, as wildest fancy
bid,
A crown of mingled song and
bloom for thee.

299

THE SPHINX

I KNOW all about the Sphinx—
I know even what she thinks,
Staring with her stony eyes
Up forever at the skies.

For last night I dreamed that she
Told me all the mystery—
Why for æons mute she sat:—
She was just cut out for that!

344

THE COUNTRY EDITOR

A THOUGHTFUL brow and face
—of sallow hue,
But warm with welcome, as we find
him there,
Throned in his old misnomered
“easy chair,”
Scrawling a “leader,” or a book-review;
Or staring through the roof for some-
thing new
With which to lift a wretched rival’s
hair,

Or blow some petty clique in empty
air
And snap the party-ligaments in the
A man he is deserving well of
thee,—
So be compassionate—yea, pay the
dues,
Nor pamper him with thy spare
poetry,
But haul him wood, or something he
can use;
And promptly act, not tamely
when he
Gnaweth his pen and girdle
rabidly.

345

WORTERMELON TIME

OLD wortermelon time is a-comin’ round ag’in,
And they ain’t no man a-livin’ any tickleder’n me,
Fer the way I hanker after wortermelons is a sin—
Which is the why and wharefore, as you can plainly see.

Oh! it’s in the sandy soil wortermelons does the best,
And it’s thare they’ll lay and waller in the sunshine and the dew
Tel they wear all the green streaks clean off of their breast;
And you bet I ain’t a-findin’ any fault with them; air you?

They ain’t no better thing in the vegetable line;
And they don’t need much ’tendin’, as ev’ry farmer knows;
And when theyr ripe and ready fer to pluck from the vine,
I want to say to you theyr the best fruit that grows.

It’s some likes the yeller-core, and some likes the red,
And it’s some says “The Little Californy” is the best;
But the sweetest slice of all I ever wedged in my head,
Is the old “Edingburg Mounting-sprout,” of the West.

You don’t want no punkins nigh your wortermelon vines—
’Cause, some-way-another, they’ll spile your melons, shore;—

I’ve seed ’em taste like punkins, from the core to the rines,
Which may be a fact you have heerd of before.

But your melons that’s raised right and ’tended to with care,
You can walk around amongst ’em with a parent’s pride and joy,
And thump ’em on the heads with as fatherly a air
As ef each one of them was your little girl er boy.

I joy in my hart jest to hear that rippin’ sound
When you split one down the back and jolt the halves in two,
And the friends you love the best is gethered all around—
And you says unto your sweethart, “Oh, here’s the core fer you!”

And I like to slice ’em up in big pieces fer ’em all,
Espeshally the childern, and watch theyr high delight
As one by one the rines with theyr pink notches falls,
And they holler fer some more, with unquenched appetite.

Boys takes to it natchurl, and I like to see ’em eat—
A slice of wortermelon’s like a frenchharp in theyr hands,
And when they “saw” it through theyr mouth sich music can’t be beat—
’Cause it’s music both the sperit and the stummick understands.

Oh, they’s more in wortermelons than the purty-colored meat,
And the overflowin’ sweetness of the worter squashed betwixt
The up’ard and the down’ard motions of a feller’s teeth,
And it’s the taste of ripe old age and juicy childhood mixed.

Fer I never taste a melon but my thoughts flies away
To the summer-time of youth; and again I see the dawn,
And the fadin’ afternoon of the long summer day,
And the dusk and dew a-fallin’, and the night a-comin’ on.

And thare’s the corn around us, and the lispin’ leaves and trees,
And the stars a-peekin’ down on us as still as silver mice,
And us boys in the wortermelons on our hands and knees,
And the new-moon hangin’ ore us like a yeller-cored slice.

Oh! it’s wortermelon time is a-comin’ round ag’in,
And they ain’t no man a-livin’ any tickleder’n me,
Fer the way I hanker after wortermelons is a sin—
Which is the why and wharefore, as you can plainly see.

346

A SONG OF THE CRUISE

O THE sun and the rain, and the
rain and the sun!
There'll be sunshine again when the
tempest is done;
And the storm will beat back when the
shining is past;
But in some happy haven we'll anchor
at last.

Then murmur no more,
In lull or in roar,
But smile and be brave till the voyage
is o'er.

O the rain and the sun, and the sun
and the rain!
When the tempest is done, then the
sunshine again;
And in rapture we'll ride through the
stormiest gales,
For God's hand's on the helm and His
breath in the sails.

Then murmur no more,
In lull or in roar,
But smile and be brave till the voyage
is o'er.

347

MY PHILOSOFY

I AIN'T, ner don't p'tend to be,
Much posted on filosofy;
But there is times, when all alone,
I work out idees of my own.
And of these same there is a few
I'd like to jest refer to you—
Pervidin' that you don't object
To listen clos't and rickollect.

I allus argy that a m.
Who does about the best he can
Is plenty good enough to suit
This lower mundane institute—
No matter ef his daily walk
Is subject fer his neighbor's talk
And critic-minds of ev'ry whim
Jest all git up and go fer him!

I knowed a feller onc't that had
The yeller-janders mighty bad—
And each and ev'ry friend hed
Would stop and give him some
Fer cuorin' of 'em. But he'd er
He kindo' thought they'd go aw
Without no medicin', and boast
That he'd git well without one dose.

He kep' a-yellerin' on—and they
Perdictin' that he'd die some day
Before he knowed it! Tuck his head
The feller did, and lost his head,
And wondered in his mind a spl—
Then rallied, and, at last, got well,
But ev'ry friend that said he'd die
Went back on him eternally!

It's natchurl enough, I guess,
When some gits more and some gits
less,
Fer them-uns on the slimmed side
To claim it ain't a fare divide;
And I've knowed some to lay and was
And git up soon, and set up late,
To ketch some feller they could ha
Fer goin' at a faster gait.

The signs is bad when folks com
A-findin' fault with Providence,
And balkin' 'cause the earth don't
shake
At ev'ry prancin' step they take,
No man is grate tel he can see
How less than little he would be

Er stripped to self, and stark and bare
He hung his sign out anywhere.

My doctern is to lay aside
Contentions, and be satisfied:
Let do your best, and praise er blame
That follers that, counts jest the same.
I've allus noticed grate success
Lamued with troubles, more er less,
And it's the man who does the best
That gits more kicks than all the rest.

348

WHEN AGE COMES ON

WHEN Age comes on!—
The deepening dusk is where
the dawn
Once glittered splendid, and the
dew,
In honey-drips from red rose-lips,
Was kissed away by me and you.—

And now across the frosty lawn
Black footprints trail, and Age comes
on—

And Age comes on!
And biting wild-winds whistle
through
Our tattered hopes—and Age comes
on!

When Age comes on!—
O tide of raptures, long withdrawn,
Flow back in summer floods, and
fling
Here at our feet our childhood sweet,
And all the songs we used to
sing! . . .

Old loves, old friends—all dead and
gone—
Our old faith lost—and Age comes
on—

And Age comes on!
Poor hearts! have we not anything
But longings left when Age comes
on?

349

THE CIRCUS-DAY PARADE

O! the Circus-Day Parade! How the bugles played and played!
And how the glossy horses tossed their flossy manes and neighed,
As the rattle and the rhyme of the tenor-drummer's time
Filled all the hungry hearts of us with melody sublime!

How the grand band-wagon shone with a splendor all its own,
And glittered with a glory that our dreams had never known!
And how the boys behind, high and low of every kind,
Marched in unconscious capture, with a rapture undefined!

How the horsemen, two and two, with their plumes of white and blue
And crimson, gold and purple, nodding by at me and you,
Waved the banners that they bore, as the knights in days of yore,
Till our glad eyes gleamed and glistened like the spangles that they wore!

How the graceless-graceful stride of the elephant was eyed,
And the capers of the little horse that cantered at his side!
How the shambling camels, tame to the plaudits of their fame,
With listless eyes came silent, masticating as they came.

How the cages jolted past, with each wagon battened fast,
And the mystery within it only hinted of at last
From the little grated square in the rear, and nosing there
The snout of some strange animal that sniffed the outer air!

And, last of all, The Clown, making mirth for all the town,
With his lips curved ever upward and his eyebrows ever down,
And his chief attention paid to the little mule that played
A tattoo on the dashboard with his heels, in the Parade.

Oh! the Circus-Day Parade! How the bugles played and played!
And how the glossy horses tossed their flossy manes and neighed,
As the rattle and the rhyme of the tenor-drummer's time
Filled all the hungry hearts of us with melody sublime!

350

WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN

WHEN the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock,
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-cock,
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the hens,
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;
O, it's then's the times a feller is a-feelin' at his best,
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful rest,
As he leaves the house, bareheaded, and goes out to feed the stock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

They's something kindo' harty-like about the atmustere
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is here—
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossums on the trees,
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the bees,
But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the haze
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airy autumn days

Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

The husky, rusty russel of the tossels of the corn,
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves, as golden as the morn;
The stubble in the furries—kindo' lonesome-like, but still
A-preachin' sermons to us of the barns they grewed to fill;
The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;
The hosses in their stalls below—the clover overhead!—
O, it sets my hart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock!

Then your apples all is gethered, and the ones a feller keeps
Is poured around the celler-floor in red and yellor heaps;
And your cider-makin' 's over, and your wimmern-folks is through
With their mince and apple-butter, and theyr souse and sausage, too! . . .
I don't know how to tell it—but ef sich a thing could be
As the Angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around on me—
I'd want to 'commodate 'em—all the whole-indurin' flock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock!

351

THAT NIGHT

YOU and I, and that night, with its
perfume and glory!—
The scent of the locusts—the light
of the moon;
And the violin weaving the waltzers a
story,
Eameshing their feet in the weft of
the tune,
Till their shadows uncertain
Reeled round on the curtain,
While under the trellis we drank in
the June.
Saxed through with the midnight the
cedars were sleeping,
Their shadowy tresses outlined in
the bright

Crystal, moon-smitten mists, where the
fountain's heart, leaping
Forever, forever burst, full with de-
light;
And its lisp on my spirit
Fell faint as that near it
Whose love like a lily bloomed out
in the night.

O your glove was an odorous sachet of
blisses!
The breath of your fan was a breeze
from Cathay!
And the rose at your throat was a nest
of spilled kisses!—
And the music!—in fancy I hear it
to-day,
As I sit here, confessing
Our secret, and blessing
My rival who found us, and waltzed
you away.

352

THE BAT

I

THOU dread, uncanny thing,
With fuzzy breast and leathern
wing,
In mad, zigzagging flight,
Notching the dusk, and buffeting
The black cheeks of the night,
With grim delight!

II

What witch's hand unhasps
Thy keen claw-cornered wings
From under the barn roof, and flings
Thee forth, with chattering gasps,
To scud the air,
And nip the ladybug, and tear
Her children's hearts out unaware?

III

The glowworm's glimmer, and the
bright,
Sad pulsings of the firefly's light,
Are banquet lights to thee.
O less than bird, and worse than
beast,
Thou Devil's self, or brat, at least,
Grate not thy teeth at me!

353

ON THE DEATH OF LITTLE
MAHALA ASHCRAFT

"LITTLE Haly! Little Haly!" cheeps
the robin in the tree;
"Little Haly!" sighs the clover, "Little
Haly!" moans the bee;

"Little Haly! Little Haly!" calls the
killdeer at twilight;
And the katydids and crickets holler
"Haly!" all the night.

The sunflowers and the hollyhaws
droops over the garden fence;
The old path down the garden walk
still holds her footprints' dent;
And the well-sweep's swingin' back
seems to wait fer her to come
And start it on its wortery errand down
the old beegum.

The beehives all is quiet, and the big
Jersey steer,
When any one comes nigh it, acts a
lonesome-like and queer;
And the little Banty chickens hobb
cutters faint and low,
Like the hand that now was laid
'em was one they didn't know.

They's sorrow in the wavin' lawn
of all the apple trees;
And sorrow in the harvest-sheaves, and
sorrow in the breeze;
And sorrow in the twitter of the sw
lers 'round the shed;
And all the song her redbird sang
"Little Haly's dead!"

The medder 'pears to miss her, and the
pathway through the grass
Whare the dewdrops ust to kiss her
little bare feet as she passed;
And the old pin in the gate-post seems
to kindo'-sorto' doubt
That Haly's little sunburnt head
ever pull it out.

Did her father er her mother er
love her more'n me,

er her sisters er her brother prize her
love more tendurly?
Question—and what answer?—only
tears, and tears alone,
And every neighbor's eyes is full o'
teardrops as my own.

"Little Haly! Little Haly!" cheeps the
robin in the tree;
"Little Haly!" sighs the clover, "Little
Haly!" moans the bee;
"Little Haly! Little Haly!" calls the
killdeer at twilight,
And the katydids and crickets hollers
"Haly!" all the night.

354

THE MULBERRY TREE

OF ITS many's the scenes which is
dear to my mind
As I think of my childhood so long
left behind;
The home of my birth, with its old
punchon-floor,
And the bright morning-glories that
grew round the door;
The warped clabboard roof whare the
rain it run off
And the streams of sweet dreams as I laid
in the loft,
And all of the joys that was dear-
est to me,
And a thinkin' the most of the mul-
berry tree.

And to-day as I dream, with both eyes
wide-awake,
I can see the old tree, and its limbs as
they shake,
And the long purple berries that
rained on the ground

Whare the pastur' was bald whare we
trommpt it around.
And again, peekin' up through the
thick leafy shade,
I can see the glad smiles of the friends
when I strayed
With my little bare feet from my own
mother's knee
To foller them off to the mulberry tree.

Leanin' up in the forks, I can see the
old rail,
And the boy climbin' up it, claw,
tooth, and toenail,
And in fancy can hear, as he spits on
his hands,
The ring of his laugh and the rip of
his pants.
But that rail led to glory, as certin and
shore
As I'll never climb thare by that rout'
any more—
What was all the green laurels of
Fame unto me,
With my brows in the boughs of the
mulberry tree!

Then it's who can fergit the old mul-
berry tree
That he knowed in the days when his
thoughts was as free
As the flutterin' wings of the birds
that flew out
Of the tall wavin' tops as the boys
come about?
O, a crowd of my memories, laughin'
and gay,
Is a-climbin' the fence of that pastur'
to-day,
And a-pantin' with joy, as us boys ust
to be,
They go racin' acrost fer the mulberry
tree.

Peals without or rings within—
Baby coos nor laughing calls
On the stairs or through the halls—
Just Great Hushes to and fro
Pace the Land of Thus-and-So!

"Oh! the Land of Thus-and-So!
Isn't it delightful, though?"
"Yes," lisped Willie, answering me
Somewhat slow and doubtfully—
"Must be awful nice, but I
Ruther wait till by and by
'Fore I go there—maybe when
I be dead I'll go there *then*.—
But"—the troubled little face
Closer pressed in my embrace—
"Le's don't never *ever* go
To the Land of Thus-and-So!"

508

THE HOSS

THE hoss he is a splendud beast;
He is man's friend, as heaven
desined,
And, search the world from west to
east,
No honest er you'll ever find!

Some calls the hoss "a pore dumb
brute,"
And yit, like Him who died fer you,
I say, as I theyr charge refute,
"Fergive; they know not what they
do!"

No wiser animal makes tracks
Upon these earthly shores, and
hence
Arose the axium, true as facts,
Extolled by all, as "Good hoss-
sense!"

The hoss is strong, and knows his
stren'th,—
You hitch him up a time er two
And lash him, and he'll go his way
And kick the dashboard out fer you

But, treat him allus good and kind,
And never strike him with a stick,
Ner aggrivate him, and you'll find
He'll never do a hostile trick.

A hoss whose master leads him
And worders him with daily care,
Will do your biddin' with delight,
And act as docile as you are.

He'll paw and prance to hear your
praise,
Because he's learnt to love you well,
And, though you can't tell what he
says,
He'll nicker all he wants to tell.

He knows you when you stand at
gate
At early dawn, upon your way
Unto the barn, and snorts clear,
To git his corn, er oats, er hay.

He knows you, as the orphan know
The folks that loves her like her
own,
And raises her and "finds" her dates
And "schools" her to a wuzer
grown!

I claim no hoss will harm a man,
Ner kick, ner run away, cawer,
Stump-suck, er balk, er cawer,
Ef you'll jes' treat him as you are.

But when I see the beast abused,
And clubbed around as I've
some,

509

A OLD PLAYED-OUT SONG

IT'S the curiousest thing in creation,
Whenever I hear that old song
"Do They Miss Me at Home," I'm so
bothered,

My life seems as short as it's long!—
Fer ev'rything 'pears like adzackly
It 'peared in the years past and
gone,—

When I started out sparkin', at twenty,
And had my first neckercher on!

Though I'm wrinkelder, older and
grayer

Right now than my parents was
then,

You strike up that song "Do They
Miss Me,"

And I'm jes' a youngster again!—
I'm a-standin' back thare in the furries
A-wishin' fer evening to come,
And a-whisperin' over and over
Them words "Do They Miss Me at
Home?"

You see, *Marthy Ellen she* sung it
The first time I heerd it; and so,
As she was my very first sweetheart,
It reminds me of her, don't you
know;—

How her face ust to look, in the twi-
light,

As I tuck her to Spellin'; and she
Kep' a-hummin' that song tel I ast
her,

Pine-blank, ef she ever missed *me!*

I can shet my eyes now, as you sing it,
And hear her low answerin' words;
And then the glad chirp of the crickets,
As clear as the twitter of birds;

I want to see his owner noosed,
And jes' yanked up like Absolum!

Er more they's differunce in stock,—
A hoss that has a little yeer,
And tender build, and shaller hock,
Can beat his shadder, mighty near!

Take one that's thick in neck and
chest

And big in leg and full in flank,
That tries to race, I still insist
He'll have to take the second rank.

And I have jes' laid back and laughed,
And rolled and wallered in the grass
To see some heavy-draft
Lead out at *first*, yit come in *last!*

Each hoss has his appinted place,—
The heavy hoss should plow the
soil—

The hooded racer, he must race,
And win big wages fer his toil.

I never bet—ner never wrought
Upon my feller man to bet—
And yit, at times, I've often thought
Of my convictions with regret.

I bless the hoss from hoof to head—
From head to hoof, and tale to
mane!—

I bless the hoss, as I have said,
From head to hoof, and back again!

I bless my God the first of all,
For Him that perished on the
cross,

And next, my wife,—and then I fall
Down on my knees and love the
hoss.

And the dust in the road is like velvet,
 And the ragweed and fennel and grass
 Is as sweet as the scene of the lilies
 Of Eden of old, as we pass.

"Do They Miss Me at Home?" Sing
 it lower—
 And softer—and sweet as the breeze
 That powdered our path with the
 snowy
 White bloom of the old locus' trees!
 Let the whipperwills he'p you to sing
 it,
 And the echoes 'way over the hill,

Tel the moon boogles out in a thorn
 Of stars, and our voices is all

But, oh! "They's a chord in the east
 That's missed when her roars
 away!"

Though I listen from midnight in
 morning,
 And dawn tel the dusk of the eve
 And I grope through the dark boxes
 up'ards
 And on through the heavenly dees
 With my longin' soul singin' an
 sobbin'

The words "Do They Miss Me at
 Home?"

510

LITTLE ORPHANT ANNIE

INSCRIBED

WITH ALL FAITH AND AFFECTION

*To all the little children:—The happy ones; and sad ones;
 The sober and the silent ones; the boisterous and glad ones;
 The good ones—Yes, the good ones, too; and all the lovely bad ones.*

LITTLE Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay,
 An' wash the cups an' saucers up, an' brush the crumbs away,
 An' shoo the chickens off the porch, an' dust the hearth, an' sweep
 An' make the fire, an' bake the bread, an' earn her board-an'-keep
 An' all us other childern, when the supper-things is done,
 We set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun
 A-list'nin' to the witch-tales 'at Annie tells about,
 An' the Gobble-uns 'at gits you

Ef you
 Don't
 Watch
 Out!

Wunst they wuz a little boy wouldn't say his prayers,—
 An' when he went to bed at night, away up-stairs,
 His Mammy heerd him holler, an' his Daddy heerd him bawl,
 An' when they turn't the kivvers down, he wuzn't there at all!
 An' they seeked him in the rafter-room, an' cubby-hole, an' press,
 An' seeked him up the chimbley-flue, an' ever'wheres, I guess;
 An' all they ever found wuz thist his pants an' roundabout:—
 An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you

Ef you
 Don't
 Watch
 Out!

An' one time a little girl 'ud allus laugh an' grin,
 An' make fun of ever' one, an' all her blood-an'-kin;
 An' wunst, when they was "company," an' ole folks wuz there,
 She mocked 'em an' shocked 'em, an' said she didn't care!
 An' just as she kicked her heels, an' turn't to run an' hide,
 They wuz two great big Black Things a-standin' by her side,
 An' they snatched her through the ceilin' 'fore she knowed what she's about!
 An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you

Ef you
 Don't
 Watch
 Out!

An' little Orphant Annie says, when the blaze is blue,
 An' the lamp-wick sputters, an' the wind goes woo-oo!
 An' you hear the crickets quit, an' the moon is gray,
 An' the lightnin'-bugs in dew is all squenched away,—
 An' better mind yer parunts, an' yer teachurs fond an' dear,
 An' chunsh them 'at loves you, an' dry the orphant's tear,
 An' he'p the pore an' needy ones 'at clusters all about,
 An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you

Ef you
 Don't
 Watch
 Out!

511

A DOS'T O' BLUES

I GOT no patience with blues at all!
And I ust to kind o' talk
Ag'inst 'em, and claim, tel along last
Fall,

They wuz none in the fambly stock;
But a nephew of mine, from Eelinoy,
That visitud us last year,
He kind o' convinct me differunt
Whilse he wuz a-stayin' here.

From ev'ry-which-way that blues is
from,

They'd pester him *ev'ry*-ways;
They'd come to him in the night, and
come

On Sund'ys, and rainy days;
They'd tackle him in corn-plantin'
time,

And in harvest, and airly Fall,—
But a dos't o' blues in the *Winter*-time,
He 'lowed, wuz the worst of all!

Said "All diseases that ever *he* had—
The mumps, er the rhumatiz—

Er ev'ry-other-day-aigger—bad
As ever the blame thing is!—
Er a cyarbuncle, say, on the back of his
neck,

Er a felon on his thumb,—
But you keep *the blues* away from
him,

And all o' the rest could come!"

And he'd moan, "They's nary a leaf
below!

Ner a spear o' grass in sight!
And the whole wood-pile's clean under
snow!

And the days is dark as night!

You can't go out—ner you can't
in—

Lay down—stand up—ner eat
And a tetch o' regular tyloid blues
Would double him jes' clean!

I writ his parunts a postal card
He could stay tel Spring-time
And Aprile—*first*, as I rickollat—
Wuz the day we shipped him
Most o' his *relatives*, cence then
Has eether give up, er quit
Er jes' died off; but I understand
He's the same old color yet!

512

THE TRAIN-MISSER

At Union Station

L where in the world my eye be
bin—

Ef I hain't missed that train ag'inst
Chuff! and whistled and tuck
ring!

But blast and blister the durned
How it does it I can't explain!
Git here thirty-five minutes
The durn thing's due!—and, durn
thing!

It'll manage to git past—shore!

The more I travel around, the more
I got no sense!—To stand right
And let it beat me! 'Til ding
I got no gumption, ner nothin' to
Ticket Agent's a dad-burned
Sell you a ticket's all they kee!
Ticket Agents ort to all be
Prosecuted—and that's jes' what!

How'd I know which train's fer me?
But how'd I know which train was
not?

Here and comin' and gone astray,
And backin' and switchin' ever'-which-
way!

Ef I could jes' sneak round behind
The durn train, where I could git full swing,
I'd hit my coat, and kick, by jing!

But I jes' got jerked up and fined!—
For here I stood, as a durn fool's apt
to do, and let that train jes' chuff and
go.

Right apast me—and mouth jes'
gaped

Like a blamed old sandwich warped
in twal

513

THE PLAINT HUMAN

SEASON of snows, and season of
flowers,

Seasons of loss and gain!—
Grief and joy must alike be ours,
Why do we still complain?

Let our failing, from sun to sun,
O my intolerant brother:—
We want just a little too little of one,
And much too much of the other.

514

WHICH ANE

WHICH ane, an' which ane,
An' which ane for thee?—
Here thou hast thy vera choice
Which sall it be?—

Ye hae the Holy Brither,
An' ye hae the Scholarly;
An', last, ye hae the butt o' baith—
Which sall it be?

Ane's oot o' Edinborough,
Wi' the Beuk an' Gown;
An' ane's came frae Cambridge;
An' ane frae scaur an' down:
An' Deil tak the hindmaist!
Sae the test gaes roun':
An' here ye hae the lairdly twa,
An' ane frae scaur an' down.

Yon's Melancholy—
An' the pipes a-skirlin'—
Gangs limp an' droopet,
Like a coof at hirlin',—
Droopet aye his lang skirts
I' the wins unfurlin';
Yon's Melancholy—
An' the pipes a-skirlin'!

Which ane, an' which ane,
An' which ane for thee?—
Here thou hast thy vera choice:
An' which sall it be?—
Ye hae the Holy Brither,
An' ye hae the Scholarly;
An', last, ye hae the butt o' baith—
Which sall it be?

Elbuck ye'r bag, mon!
An' pipe as ye'd burst!
Can ye gie's a waur mon
E'en than the first?—
Be it Meister Wisemon,
I' the classics versed,
An' a slawer gait yet
E'en than the first?

Then gie us Merriment:
Loose him like a linnet

Teeterin' on a bloomin' spray—
 We ken him i' the minute,—
 Twinklin' is ane ee asklent,
 Wi' auld Clootie in it—
 Auld Sawney Lintwhite,
 We ken him i' the minutel

An' which ane, an' which ane,
 An' which ane for thee?—
 For thou shalt hae thy vera choice,
 An' which sall it be?—
 Ye hae the Holy Brither,
 An' ye hae the Scholarly;
 A' last, ye hae the butt o' baith—
 Which sall it be?

515

REGARDIN' TERRY HUT

SENCE I tuk holt o' Gibbse's Churn
 And be'n a-handlin' the concern,
 I've traveled round the grand old State
 Of Indiany, lots, o' late!—
 I've canvassed Crawfordsville and
 sweat
 Around the town o' Layfayette;
 I've saw a many a County-seat
 I *ust* to think was hard to beat:
 At constant dreenage and expense
 I've worked Greencastle and Vin-
 cennes—
 Drapped out o' Putnam into Clay,
 Owen, and on down thataway
 Plum into Knox, on the back-track
 Fer home ag'in—and glad I'm back!—
 I've saw these towns, as I say—but
 They's none 'at beats old Terry Hut!

It's more'n likely you'll insist
 I claim this 'cause I'm prejudist,

Bein' born'd here in ole Vygo
 In sight o' Terry Hut;—but no,
 Yer clean dead wrong!—and I main-
 tain
 They's nary drap in ary vein
 O' mine but what's as free as air
 To jes' take issue with you there—
 'Cause, boy and man, fer forty year,
 I've argied *ag'in*st livin' here,
 And jawed around and traded be
 About our lack o' enterprise,
 And tuk and turned in and agreed
 All other towns was in the lead,
 When—drat my melts!—they couldn't
 cut
 No shine a-tall with Terry Hut!

Take, even, statesmanship, and wa,
 And gineral git-up-and-git,
 Old Terry Hut is sound clear
 through!—
 Turn old Dick Thompson loose, o'
 Dan
 Vorchees—and where's they any more
 Kin even hold a candle to
 Their eloquence?—And where's a
 clean
 A fi-nan-seer as Rile' McKean—
 Er puorer, in his daily walk,
 In railroad er in racin' stock!
 And there's 'Gene Debs—a man o'
 stands
 And jes' holds out in his two hands
 As warm a heart as ever beat
 Betwixt here and the Judgment Seat—
 All these is reasons why I put
 Sich bulk o' faith in Terry Hut.

So I've come back, with eyes 'at see
 My faults, at last,—to make my peac
 With this old place, and trinit
 swear—

Like General Tom Nelson does,—
 They han't no city anywhere
 On God's green earth lays over us!"
 Our city govament is *grand*—
 'Ner is they better farmin'-land
 So-kised"—as Tom goes on and
 says—
 "Er dower'd with sich advantages!"
 And I've come back, with welcome
 tread,
 From journeyin's vain, as I have said,
 To settle down in ca'm content,
 And cus the towns where I have went,
 And brag on ourn, and boast and strut
 Around the streets o' Terry Hut!

516

A TALE OF THE AIRLY DAYS

Oh! tell me a tale of the airy
 days—
 Of the times as they ust to be;
 "Filer of Fier" and "Shakespeare's
 Plays"
 Is a most too deep fer me!
 I want plane facts, and I want plane
 words,
 Of the good old-fashioned ways,
 When spech run free as the songs of
 birds
 Way back in the airy days.
 Tell me a tale of the timber-lands—
 Of the old-time pioneers;
 Somepin a pore man understands
 With his feelin's 's well as ears.
 Tel of the old log house,—about
 The loft, and the puncheon flore—

The old fi-er-place, with the crane
 swung out,
 And the latch-string through the
 door.

Tell of the things jest as they was—
 They don't need no excuse!—
 Don't tetch 'em up like the poets
 does,
 Tel theyr all too fine fer use!—
 Say they was 'leven in the fambily—
 Two beds, and the chist, below,
 And the trundle-beds that each helt
 three,
 And the clock and the old bureau.

Then blow the horn at the old back-
 door
 Tel the echoes all halloo,
 And the childern gethers home onc't
 more,
 Jest as they ust to do:
 Blow fer Pap tel he hears and comes,
 With Tomps and Elias, too,
 A-marchin' home, with the fife and
 drums
 And the old Red White and Blue!

Blow and blow tel the sound draps
 low
 As the moan of the whipperwill,
 And wake up Mother, and Ruth and
 Jo,
 All sleepin' at Bethel Hill:
 Blow and call tel the faces all
 Shine out in the back-log's blaze,
 And the shadders dance on the old
 hewed wall
 As they did in the airy days.

517

THE ROSSVILLE LECTUR' COURSE

[Set down from the real facts of the case that come under notice of the author whilse visitun far distunt relatives who wuz then residin' at Rossville, Mich.]

FOLKS up here at Rossville got up a Lectur' Course:—
All the leadin' citizens they wuz out in force;
Met and talked at Williamses', and 'greed to meet ag'in;
And helt another corkus when the next reports wuz in:
Met ag'in at Samuelses'; and met ag'in at Moore's
And Johnts putt the shutters up and jest barr'd the doors!—
And yit, I'll jest be dagg-don'd! ef't didn't take a week
'Fore we'd settled whare to write to git a man to speak!

Found out whare the "Bureau" wuz; and then and thare agreed
To strike whilse the iron's hot and foller up the lead.—
Simp wuz Secatary; so he tuk his pen in hand,
And ast 'em what they'd tax us fer the one on "Holy Land"—
"One of Colonel J. De-Koombs's Abelust and Best
Lectur's," the circ'lar stated, "Give East er West!"
Wanted fifty dollars and his kyar-fare to and from,
And Simp wuz hence instructed fer to write him not to come.

Then we talked and jawed around another week er so,
And writ the "Bureau" 'bout the town a-bein' sorto' slow—
Old-fogey-like, and pore as dirt, and lackin' interprise,
And ignornter'n any other, 'cordin' to its size:
Tel finully the "Bureau" said they'd send a cheaper man
Fer forty dollars, who would give "A Talk About Japan"—
"A Reg'lar Japaneese hise'f," the pamphlet claimed; and so,
Nobody knowed his language, and of course we let him go!

Kindo' then let up a spell—but rallied onc't ag'in,
And writ to price a feller on what's called the "violin"—
A Swede, er Pole, er somepin'—but no matter what he wuz,
Doc Cooper said he'd heerd him, and he wuzn't wuth a kuss!
And then we ast fer *Swingse's* terms; and *Cook*, and *Ingersoll*—
And blame! ef forty dollars looked like anything at all!
And then *Burdette*, we tried fer *him*; and Bob he writ to say
He wuz busy writin' ortographts and couldn't git away.

At last—along in Aprile—we signed to take this-here
Bill Nye of Californy, 'at wuz posted to appear
"The Comicaest Funny Man 'at Ever Jammed a Hall!"
So we made big preperations, and swep' out the church and all!
And night he wuz to lectur', and the neighbors all wuz thare,
And strangers packed along the aisles 'at come from ev'rywhare,
Committee got a telegraph the preacher read, 'at run—
'Got off at Rossville, *Indiandy*, 'stid of Michigun."

518

HER BEAUTIFUL EYES

HER beautiful eyes! they are as
blue as the dew

On the violet's bloom when the morn-
ing is new,

And the light of their love is the gleam
of the sun

Over the meadows of Spring where the
quick shadows run:

As the morn shifts the mists and the
clouds from the skies—

So I stand in the dawn of her beautiful
eyes.

And her beautiful eyes are as midday
to me,

When the lily-bell bends with the
weight of the bee,

And the throat of the thrush is apulse
in the heat,

And the senses are drugged with the
subtle and sweet

And delicious breaths of the air's lulla-
lies—

So I swoon in the noon of her beauti-
ful eyes.

O her beautiful eyes! they have smit-
ten mine own

As a glory glanced down from the
glare of The Throne;

And I reel, and I falter and fall, as
afar

Fell the shepherds that looked on the
mystical Star,

And yet dazed in the tidings that bade
them arise—

So I grope through the night of her
beautiful eyes.

519

WANT TO BE WHUR
MOTHER IS

"WANT to be whur mother is!
Want to be whur mother
is!"

Jeemses Rivers! won't some one ever
shet that howl o' his?

That-air yellin' drives me wild!
Cain't none of ye stop the child?
Want yer Daddy? "Naw." Gee
whizz!

"Want to be whur mother is!"

"Want to be whur mother is! Want
to be whur mother is!"

Coax him, Sairy! Mary, sing somepin'
fer him! Lift him, Liz—

Bang the clock-bell with the key—
Er the *meat-ax!* Gee-mun-nee!

Listen to them lungs o' his!
"Want to be whur mother is!"

"Want to be whur mother is! Want
to be whur mother is!"
Preacher guess 'll pound all night on
that old pulpit o' his;
'Pears to me some wimmin jest
Shows religious interest
Mostly 'fore their fambly's riz!
"Want to be whur mother is!"

"Want to be whur mother is! Want
to be whur mother is!"
Nights like these and whipperwills
allus brings that voice of
his!
Sairy; Mary; 'Lizabeth;
Don't set there and ketch yer
death
In the dew—er rheumatiz—
Want to be whur mōther is?

520

BABE HERRICK

AS a rosebud might, in dreams,
'Mid some lilies lie, meseems
Thou, pink youngling, on the breast
Of thy mother slumberest.

521

TO A JILTED SWAIN

GET thee back neglected friends;
And repay, as each one lends,
Tithes of shallow-sounding glee
Or keen-ringing raillery:
Get thee from lone vigils; be

But in jocund company,
Where is laughter and acclaim
Boisterous above the name.—
Get where sulking husbands sip
Ale-house cheer, with pipe at lip,
And where Mol the barmaid saith
Curst is she that marrieth.

522

KNEELING WITH HERRICK

DEAR Lord, to Thee my heart is bent.—
Give me content—
Full-pleasured with what comes to me,
Whate'er it be:
An humble roof—a frugal board,
And simple hoard;
The wintry fagot piled beside
The chimney wide,
While the enwreathing flames up-
sprout
And twine about
The brazen dogs that guard my hearth
And household worth:
Tinge with the embers' ruddy glow
The rafters low;
And let the sparks snap with delight,
As fingers might
That mark deft measures of some treat
The children croon:
Then, with good friends, the rest
few
Thou holdest true,
Ranged round about the blaze, to share
My comfort there,—
Give me to claim the service meet
That makes each seat
A place of honor, and each guest
Loved as the rest.

523

IN THE SOUTH

THERE is a princess in the South
About whose beauty rumors hum
Like honey-bees about the mouth
Of roses dewdrops falter from;
And O her hair is like the fine
Clear amber of a jostled wine
In tropic revels; and her eyes
Are blue as rifts of Paradise.

Such beauty as may none before
Kissed daringly, to kiss the tips
Of fingers such as knights of yore
Had died to lift against their lips:
Such eyes as might the eyes of
gold
Of all the stars of night behold
With glittering envy, and so glare
In dazzling splendor of despair.

524

THE HAPPY LITTLE CRIPPLE

I'M thist a little crippled boy, an' never goin' to grow
An' git a great big man at all!—'cause Aunty told me so.
When I was thist a baby onc't I falled out of the bed
An' got "The Curv'ture of the Spine"—'at's what the Doctor said.
I never had no Mother nen—fer my Pa runned away
An' dassn't come back here no more—'cause he was drunk one day
An' stobbed a man in thish-ere town, an' couldn't pay his fine!
An' nen my Ma she died—an' I got "Curv'ture of the Spine"!

I'm nine years old! An' you can't guess how much I weigh, I bet!—
Last birthday I weighed thirty-three!—An' I weigh thirty yet!
I'm awful little fer my size—'I'm purt' nigh littler nan
Some babies is!—an' neighbors all calls me "The Little Man"!

So, were I but a minstrel, deft
At weaving, with the trembling
strings
Of my glad harp, the warp and weft
Of rondels such as rapture sings,—
I'd loop my lyre across my breast,
Nor stay me till my knee found rest
In midnight banks of bud and
flower
Beneath my lady's lattice-bower.

And there, drenched with the teary
dews,
I'd woo her with such wondrous art
As well might stanch the songs that ooze
Out of the mockbird's breaking heart;
So light, so tender, and so sweet
Should be the words I would re-
peat,
Her casement, on my gradual
sight,
Would blossom as a lily might.

An' Doc one time he laughed an' said: "I s'pect, first think you know,
You'll have a little spike-tail coat an' travel with a show!"
An' nen I laughed—till I looked round an' Aunty was a-cryin—
Sometimes she acts like that, 'cause I got "Curv'ture of the Spine!"

I set—while Aunty's washin'—on my little long-leg stool,
An' watch the little boys an' girls a-skipin' by to school;
An' I peck on the winder, an' holler out an' say:
"Who wants to fight The Little Man 'at dares you all to-day?"
An' nen the boys climbs on the fence, an' little girls peeks through,
An' they all says: "'Cause you're so big, you think we're 'feard o' you!"
An' nen they yell, an' shake their fist at me, like I shake mine—
They're thist in fun, you know, 'cause I got "Curv'ture of the Spine!"

At evening, when the ironin' 's done, an' Aunty's fixed the fire,
An' filled an' lit the lamp, an' trimmed the wick an' turned it higher,
An' fetched the wood all in fer night, an' locked the kitchen door,
An' stuffed the old crack where the wind blows in up through the floor—
She sets the kittle on the coals, an' biles an' makes the tea,
An' fries the liver an' the mush, an' cooks a egg fer me;
An' sometimes—when I cough so hard—her elderberry wine
Don't go so bad fer little boys with "Curv'ture of the Spine!"

An' nen when she putts me to bed—an' 'fore she does she's got
My blanket-nighty, 'at she maked, all good an' warm an' hot,
Hunged on the rocker by the fire—she sings me hymns, an' tells
Me 'bout The Good Man—yes, an' Elves, an' Old Enchanter spells,
An' tells me more—an' more—an' more!—tel I'm *asleep*, purt' nigh—
Only I thist set up ag'in an' kiss her when she cry,
A-tellin' on 'bout *some* boy's Angel-mother—an' it's *minel* . . .
My *Ma's a Angel*—but I'm got "The Curv'ture of the Spine!"

But Aunty's all so childish-like on my account, you see,
I'm most afeard she'll be took down—an' 'at's what bothers *me*—
'Cause ef my good old Aunty ever would git sick an' die,
I don't know what she'd do in Heaven—till I come, by an' by—
Fer she's so ust to all my ways, an' ever'thing, you know,
An' no one there like me, to nurse an' worry over so!—
'Cause all the little childerns there's so straight an' strong an' fine,
They's nary angel 'bout the place with "Curv'ture of the Spine!"

525

HAS SHE FORGOTTEN?

I

HAS she forgotten? On this very
May
We were to meet here, with the birds
and bees,
As on that Sabbath, underneath the
trees
We staid among the tombs, and
stapped away
The ones from these old granites, cold
and gray—
And yet, indeed, not grim enough were
they
To stay our kisses, smiles and ecstasies,
Or close voice-lost vows and rhapso-
dies.
Has she forgotten—that the May has
won
Its promise?—that the bird-songs from
the tree
Are sprayed above the grasses as the
sun
Waltz in the dazzling dew down
showeringly?
Has she forgotten life—love—every
one—
Has she forgotten me—forgotten me?

II

See, low down in the violets I
press
Me up and whisper to her. Does she
hear,
And yet hold silence, though I call her
dear,
But as of old, save for the tearful-
ness

Of the clenched eyes, and the soul's
vast distress?

Has she forgotten thus the old caress
That made our breath a quickened at-
mosphere

That failed nigh unto swooning with
the sheer

Delight? Mine arms clutch now this
earthen heap

Sodden with tears that flow on cease-
lessly

As autumn rains the long, long, long
nights weep

In memory of days that used to be,—
Has she forgotten these? And, in her
sleep,

Has she forgotten me—forgotten me?

III

To-night, against my pillow, with shut
eyes,

I mean to weld our faces—through the
dense

Incalculable darkness make pretense
That she has risen from her reveries

To mate her dreams with mine in
marriages

Of mellow palms, smooth faces, and
tense ease

Of every longing nerve of indolence,—
Lift from the grave her quiet lips, and
stun

My senses with her kisses—draw the
glee

Of her glad mouth, full blithe and
tenderly,

Across mine own, forgetful if is done
The old love's awful dawn-time when
said we,

"To-day is ours!" . . . Ah, Heaven!
can it be

She has forgotten me—forgotten me!

Watchin' Jim on dress-parade—
Tel finally he rid away,
And last he heerd was the old man
say,—

"Well, good-by, Jim:
Take keer of yourse'f!"

Tuk the papers, the old man did,
A-watchin' fer Jim—
Fully believin' he'd make his mark
Some way—jes' wrapped up in
him!—

And many a time the word 'u'd come
'At stirred him up like the tap of a
drum—

At Petersburg, fer instunce, where
Jim rid right into their cannons there,
And tuk 'em, and p'inted 'em t'other
way,

And socked it home to the boys in
gray,
As they scooted fer timber, and on and
on—

Jim a lieutenant and one arm gone,
And the old man's words in his mind
all day,—

"Well, good-by, Jim:
Take keer of yourse'f!"

Think of a private, now, perhaps,
We'll say like Jim,
'At's clumb clean up to the shoulder-
straps—

And the old man jes' wrapped up in
him!

Think of him—with the war plum'
through,

And the glorious old Red-White-and-
Blue

A-laughin' the news down over Jim,
And the old man, bendin' over him—
The surgeon turnin' away with tears
'At hadn't leaked fer years and years,

As the hand of the dyin' boy clung
His father's, the old voice in his ear—
"Well, good-by, Jim:
Take keer of yourse'f!"

568

OUR OLD FRIEND NEVERFAIL

IT'S good to ketch a relapse
richer and don't run
When you holler out to hold up, and
joke and have his fun;

It's good to hear a man called bad
then find out he's not,
Er strike some chap they call late
warm 'at's really red-hot;

It's good to know the Devil's pun-
jes' a leetle black,
And it's good to have most infat-
pat you on the back;—

But jes' the best thing in the world
our old friend Neverfail,
When he wags yer hand as honest as
an old dog wags his tail

I like to strike the man I owe the
same time I can pay,
And take back things I've borrow'd, and
su'prise folks thataway;

I like to find out that the man I
fer last fall,
That didn't git elected, was a stran-
drel after all;

I like the man that likes the poor
he'ps 'em when he can,
I like to meet a ragged tramp 'at's
a gentleman;

But most I like—with you, my boy—
our old friend Neverfail,
When he wags yer hand as honest as
an old dog wags his tail!

569

DAN O'SULLIVAN

DAN O'SULLIVAN: It's your
lips have kissed "The Blarney,"
sure!—

To be trillin' praise av me,
Droppin' swate wid poethry!—
No that I'd not have ye sing—
Don't lay off for anything—

It's be aisy whilst the fit
Av me head shwells up to it!

Like and thru, I'm not the man,
Whist yer singin', loike ye can,
To cry shlop because ye've blesht
My songs more than all the resht:—

It's not be the b'y to ax
Av shur to wane or wax,
Or ax any clock that's woun'
To run up inshtid av down!

Wax ye! Dan O'Sullivan!—
It's that made the Irishman
Kiss the birds in wid the dough,
And the dew and mistletoe
Wed the whusky in the quare
Wags av us—and here we air,
Two parts right, and three parts
strong,
Spiced wid beauty, wit and song!

570

AT "THE LITERARY"

FOLKS in town, I reckon, thinks
I They git all the fun they air
havin' loose 'round!—but, 'y jinks!
We got fun, and fun to spare,
Laid out here amongst the ash

And oak timber ever'where!
Some folks else kin cut a dash
'Sides town-people, don't fergit!—
'Specially in winter-time,
When they's snow, and roads is fit.
In them circumstances I'm
Resig-nated to my lot—
Which putts me in mind o' what
'S called "The Literary."

Us folks in the country sees
Lots o' fun!—Take spellin'-school;
Er ole hoe-down jamborees;
Er revivals; er ef you'll
Tackle taffy-pullin's you
Kin git fun, and quite a few!—
Same with huskin's. But all these
Kind o' frolics they hain't new
By a hunderd year' er two
Cipher on it as you please!
But I'll tell you what I jest
Think walks over all the rest—
Anyway it suits *me* best,—
That's "The Literary."

First they started it—"y gee!"
Thinks-says-I, "this settle-ment
'S gittin' too high toned fer me!"
But when all begin to jine,
And I heerd Izory went,
I jest kind o' drapped in line,
Like you've seen some sandy, thin,
Scrawny shoat putt fer the crick
Down some pig-trail through the thick
Spice-bresh, where the whole drove's
been

'Bout six weeks 'fore he gits in!—
"Can't tell nothin'," I-says-ee,
" 'Bout it tel you go and see
Their blame 'Literary'!"

Very first night I was there
I was p'inted to be what

They call "Critic"—so's a fair
 And square judgment could be got
 On the pieces 'at was read,
 And on the debate,—“Which air
 Most destructive element,
 Fire er worter?” Then they hed
 Compositions on “Content,”
 “Death,” and “Botany”; and Tomps
 He read one on “Dreenin' Swamps”
 I p'nonced the boss, and said,
 “So fur, 'at's the best thing read
 In yer 'Literary'!”

Then they *sung* some—tel I called
 Order, and got back ag'in
 In the critic's cheer, and hauled
 All o' the p'formers in:—
 Mandy Brizendine read one
 I fergit; and Doc's was “Thought”;
 And Sarepty's, hern was “None
 Air Denied 'at Knocks”; and Daut—
 Fayette Strawnse's little niece—
 She got up and spoke a piece:
 Then Izory she read hern—
 “Best thing in the whole concern,”
 I-says-ee; “now le' 's adjourn
 This-here 'Literary'!”

They was some contendin'—yit
 We broke up in harmony.
 Road outside as white as grit,
 And as slick as slick could bel—
 I'd fetched 'Zory in my sleigh,—
 And I had a heap to say,
 Drivin' back—in fact, I driv
 'Way around the old north way,
 Where the Daubenspeckses live.
 'Zory allus—'fore that night—
 Never 'peared to feel jest right
 In my company.—You see,
 On'y thing on earth saved me
 Was that “Literary'!”

571

SHE “DISPLAINS” IT

“HAD, too!”
 “Hadn't, neither!”
 So contended Bess and May—
 Neighbor children, who were brag-
 ing
 Of their grandmamas, one day.

“Had, too!”
 “Hadn't, neither!”
 All the difference begun
 By May's saying she'd *two* grand-
 mas—
 While poor Bess had only one.

“Had, too!”
 “Hadn't, neither!”
 Tossing curls, and kinks of frizl—
 “How could you have *two* grand-
 muvvers
 When ist *one* is all they is?”

“Had, too!”
 “Hadn't, neither!—
 'Cause ef you had *two*,” said Bess,
 “You'd *displain* it!” Then May an-
 swered,
 “My gran'mas wuz *twins*, I guess!”

572

DEAD, MY LORDS

DEAD, my lords and gentlemen!—
 Stilled the tongue, and sward
 the pen;
 Cheek unflushed and eye unlit—
 Done with life, and glad of it.

Curb your praises now as then:
 Dead, my lords and gentlemen—
 Dare ye not smile back again?
 Dead, my lords and gentlemen—
 Dare ye not smile back again?
 What he wrought found its reward
 In the tolerance of the Lord.
 Low he lies, yet high and great
 Looms he, lying thus in state.—
 Ye who fain had barred his path,
 How exalted o'er ye when
 Dead, my lords and gentlemen!
 Dread ye now this look he hath?—

573

A MAN BY THE NAME OF BOLUS

A MAN by the name of Bolus—(all 'at we'll ever know
 Of the stranger's name, I reckon—and I'm kind o' glad it's so!)—
 Got off here, Christmas morning, looked 'round the town, and then
 Got off here, Christmas morning, looked 'round the town, and then
 Kind o' sized up the folks, I guess, and—went away again!

The fac's is, this man Bolus got “run in,” Christmas-day;
 The town turned out to see it, and cheered, and blocked the way;
 And they dragged him 'fore the Mayor—fer he couldn't er *wouldn't* walk—
 And socked him down fer trial—though he couldn't er *wouldn't* talk!

Drunk? They was no doubt of it!—W'y, the marshal of the town
 Laughed and testified 'at he fell *up*-stairs 'stid o' *down*!
 This man by the name of Bolus?—W'y, he even drapped his jaw
 And snored on through his “hearin’”—drunk as you ever saw!

One feller spit in his boot-leg, and another 'n' drapped a small
 Little chunk o' ice down his collar,—but he didn't wake at all!
 And they all nearly split when his Honor said, in one of his witty ways,
 To “chalk it down fer him, ‘Called away—be back in thirty days!’”

That's where this man named Bolus slid, kind o' like in a fit,
 Flat on the floor; and—drat my ears! I hear 'em a-laughin' yit!
 Somebody fetched Doc Sifers from jes' across the hall—
 And all Doc said was, “Morphine! We're too late!” and that's all!

That's how they found his name out—piece of a letter 'at read:
 ‘Your wife has lost her reason, and little Nathan's dead—
 Come ef you kin,—fergive *her*—but, Bolus, as fer *me*,
 This hour I send a bullet through where my heart *ort* to be!’

Man by the name of Bolus!—As his revilers broke
 Fer the open air, 'peared-like, to me, I heerd a voice 'at spoke—

Man by the name of Bolus! git up from where you lay—
 Git up and smile white at 'em, with your hands crossed thataway!

574

THE TRAVELING MAN

I

COULD I pour out the nectar the
 gods only can,
 I would fill up my glass to the brim
 And drink the success of the Travel-
 ing Man,
 And the house represented by him;
 And could I but tincture the glorious
 draught
 With his smiles, as I drank to him
 then,
 And the jokes he has told and the
 laughs he has laughed,
 I would fill up the goblet again—

And drink to the sweetheart who gave
 him good-by
 With a tenderness thrilling him this
 Very hour, as he thinks of the tear in
 her eye
 That salted the sweet of her kiss;
 To her truest of hearts and her fairest
 of hands
 I would drink, with all serious
 prayers,
 Since the heart she must trust is a
 Traveling Man's,
 And as warm as the ulster he wears.

II

I would drink to the wife, with the
 babe on her knee,
 Who awaits his returning in vain—
 Who breaks his brave letters so tremu-
 lously
 And reads them again and again!
 And I'd drink to the feeble old mother
 who sits

At the warm fireside of her son
 And murmurs and weeps o'er the
 stocking she knits,
 As she thinks of the wandering one

I would drink a long life and a health
 to the friends
 Who have met him with smiles and
 with cheer—
 To the generous hand that the land
 lord extends
 To the wayfarer journeying here,
 And I pledge, when he turns from the
 earthly abode
 And pays the last fare that he can
 Mine Host of the Inn at the End of
 the Road
 Will welcome the Traveling Man

575

THE ABSENCE OF LITTLE
WESLEY

SENCE little Wesley went, the place
 seems all so strange and still—
 W'y, I miss his yell o' "Gran-pap" as
 I'd miss the whipperrwill!
 And to think I ust to scold him fer his
 everlastin' noise,
 When I on'y rickollect him as the best
 o' little boys!
 I wisht a hunderd times a day 'at he
 come trompin' in,
 And all the noise he ever made me
 twic't as loud ag'in—
 It 'u'd seem like some soft music
 played on some fine instrument,
 'Longside o' this loud lonesomeness,
 sence little Wesley went!
 Of course the clock don't tick no louder
 than it ust to do—

In now they's times it 'pears like it
 'u'd bu'st itse'f in two!
 'U'd let a rooster, suddent-like, crow
 somers' clost' around,
 'U'd seem's ef, mighty nigh it, it 'u'd
 lift me off the ground!
 'U'd come with all the cattle when they
 hawl around the bars,
 In the red o' airly morning, er the
 dusk and dew and stars,
 When the neighbors' boys 'at passes
 never stop, but jes' go on,
 'Whadin' kind o' to theirse'v's—sence
 little Wesley's gone!

And then, o' nights, when Mother's
 settin' up oncommon late,
 'U'd pears er somepin', and I set
 and smoke and wait,
 'U'd see the moon out through the winder
 don't look bigger'n a dime,
 'U'd see things keeps gittin' stiller—stiller
 tiller all the time,—
 'U'd see I touched myse'f a-wishin' like—as
 I dumb on the cheer
 'U'd see the clock, as I hev done fer
 more'n fifty year—
 'U'd see 'at the time hed come fer
 us to go to bed,
 'U'd see our last prayers, and our last
 year, sence little Wesley's dead!

576

WHEN THE GREEN GITS BACK
IN THE TREES

IN spring, when the green gits back
 in the trees,
 And the sun comes out and stays,
 And yer boots pulls on with a good
 night squeeze,

And you think of yer barefoot days;
 When you ort to work and you want
 to not,

And you and yer wife agrees
 It's time to spade up the garden-lot,
 When the green gits back in the
 trees—

Well! work is the least o' my
 idees

When the green, you know, gits
 back in the trees!

When the green gits back in the trees,
 and bees

Is a-buzzin' aroun' ag'in
 In that kind of a lazy go-as-you-please
 Old gait they bum roun' in;
 When the groun's all bald whare the
 hay-rick stood,

And the crick's riz, and the breeze
 Coaxes the bloom in the old dogwood,
 And the green gits back in the
 trees,—

I like, as I say, in sich scenes as
 these,

The time when the green gits back
 in the trees!

When the whole tail-fethers o' Winter-
 time

Is all pulled out and gone!
 And the sap it thaws and begins to
 climb,

And the swet it starts out on
 A feller's forred, a-gittin' down
 At the old spring on his knees—

I kindo' like jest a-loaferin' roun'.

When the green gits back in the
 trees—

Jest a-potterin' roun' as I—durn—
 please—

When the green, you know, gits
 back in the trees!

577

HOW IT HAPPENED

I 'GOT to *thinkin'* of her—both her parunts dead and gone—
 And all her sisters married off, and none but her and John
 A-livin' all alone thare in that lonesome sorto' way,
 And him a blame' old bachelor, confirm'der ev'ry day!
 I'd knowed 'em all, from childern, and they daddy from the time
 He settled in the neighborhood, and hadn't ary a dime
 Er dollar, when he married, fer to start housekeepin' on!—
 So I got to *thinkin'* of her—both her parunts dead and gone!

I got to *thinkin'* of her; and a-wundern what *she* done
 That all *her sisters* kep' a-gittin' married, one by one,
 And her without *no* chances—and the best girl of the pack—
 A' old maid, with her hands, you might say, tied behind her back!
 And *Mother*, too, afore she died,—*she* ust to jest take on,
 When none of 'em wuz left, you know, but Evaline and John,
 And jest declare to goodness 'at the young men must be bline
 To not see what a wife they'd git ef they got Evaline!

I got to *thinkin'* of her: In my great affliction she
 Wuz sich a comfert to us, and so kind and neighborly,—
 She'd come, and leave her housework, fer to he'p out little Jane,
 And talk of *her own* mother 'at she'd never see again—
 They'd sometimes *cry* together—though, fer the most part, she
 Would have the child so rickonciled and happy-like 'at we
 Felt lonesomer'n ever when she'd putt her bonnet on
 And say she'd raily *haf* to be a-gittin' back to John!

I got to *thinkin'* of her, as I say,—and more and more
 I'd think of her dependence, and the burdens 'at she bore,—
 Her parunts both a-bein' dead, and all her sisters gone
 And married off, and her a-livin' thare alone with John—
 You might say jest a-toilin' and a-slavin' out her life
 Fer a man 'at hadn't pride enough to git hisse'f a wife—
 'Less some one married *Evaline* and packed her off some day!—
 So I got to *thinkin'* of her—and—It happened *thataway*.

578

GLADNESS

MY ole man named Silas: he
 Dead long 'fo' ole Gin'l Lee
 Sradah, whense de wah wuz done.
 Taks dey tuk de plantation—
 Was high-handed evah you see!—
 De rack round, an' fiah an' bu'n,
 In 'em de beds wid deir bay-net-gun,
 To swah we niggahs all scotch-free,—
 As Massah John C. Pemberton
 Das tuk an' run!

"Owd Armighy, marm," he 'low,
 "He'p you an' de chillen now!"
 Den track out 'n de roof inside
 De big house all das charified!
 Sotke roll out 'n de ole haymow
 In de wa'house do'—an' de fiah das
 roah—
 As all dat backer, 'bout half dried,
 Hit smell das fried!

Wah my ol'est boy, an' John,—
 Den de baby das wuz bo'n,
 Longse dem times, an' lak ter 'a'
 died,
 As Silas he be'n slip an' gone
 Den eight weeks ter de Union side,—
 Den two boys dey start fo' ter fine
 In 'em deir fader acrost de line.
 Outseah he wade an' tromp
 Inch-which-way fo' to track 'em
 down—
 In de bloodhoun' fro' de swamp—
 In bring de news dat John he
 drown'—
 But dey save de houn'!

Den way ner Nelse git fru'
 In fight fo' de ole Red, White, an'
 Blue,

Lak his fader is, ter er heart's delight—
 An' nen crope back wid de news, one
 night—
 Sayes, "Fader's killed in a scrimmage-
 fight,

An' saunt farewell ter ye all, an' sayes
 Fo' ter name de baby 'Gladness,' 'caze
 Mighty nigh she 'uz be'n borned free!"
 An' de boy he smile so strange at me
 I sayes, "Yo' 's hurt *yo'se'!*" an' he
 Sayes, "I's killed, too—an' dat's all
 else!"

An' dah lay Nelse!

Hope an' Angrish, de twins, be'n sole
 'Fo' dey mo' 'n twelve year ole:
 An' Mary Magdaline sole too.
 An' dah I's lef', wid Knox-Andrew,
 An' Lily, an' Maje, an' Margaret,
 An' little gal-babe, 'at's borned dat new
 She scaisely ole fo' ter be named yet—
 Less'n de name 'at Si say to—
 An' co'se hit *do*.

An' I taken dem chillen, evah one
 (An' a-oh my Mastah's will be done!),
 An' I break fo' de Norf, whah dey all
 raised free
 (An' a-oh good Mastah, come git me!).
 Knox-Andrew, on de day he died,
 Lef' his fambly er shop an' er lot ber-
 side;
 An' Maje die ownin' er team—an' he
 Lef' all ter me.

Lily she work at de Gran' Hotel—
 (Mastah! Mastah! take me—do!)—
 An' Lily she ain' married well:
 He stob a man—an' she die too;
 An' Margaret she too full er pride

Ter own her kin tel er day she died!
 But Gladness!—'t ain' soun' sho'-nuff
 true,—
 But she teached school!—an' er white
 folks, too,
 Ruspec' dat gal 'mos' high ez I do!—
 'Caze she 'uz de bes' an' de mos' high
 bred—
 De las' chile bo'n, an' de las chile dead,
 O' all ten head!

Gladness! Gladness! a-oh my chile!
 Wa'm my soul in yo' sweet smile!
 Daughter o' Silas! o-rise an' sing
 Tel er heart-beat pat lak er pigeon-
 wing!
 Sayes, O Gladness! wake dem eyes—
 Sayes, a-lif' dem folded han's, an' rise—
 Sayes, a-coax me erlong ter Paradise,
 An' a-hail de King,
 O Gladness!

579

THE WIFE-BLESSED

IN youth he wrought, with eyes ablur,
 Lorn-faced and long of hair—
 In youth—in youth he painted her
 A sister of the air—
 Could clasp her not, but felt the stir
 Of pinions everywhere.

She lured his gaze, in braver days,
 And tranced him siren-wise;
 And he did paint her, through a haze
 Of sullen paradise,

With scars of kisses on her face
 And embers in her eyes.

And now—not dream nor wild ac-
 ceit—
 Though faltering, as before—
 Through tears he paints her, as is now,
 Tracing the dear face o'er
 With liliated patience meek and sweet
 As Mother Mary wore.

580

ROBERT BURNS WILSON

WHAT intuition named thee—
 Through what thrill
 Of the awed soul came the command
 divine
 Into the mother-heart, forefear-
 thine
 Should palpitate with his whose re-
 tures will
 Sing on while daisies bloom and bir-
 rocks trill
 Their undulating ways up through
 the fine
 Fair mists of heavenly reaches? Thy
 pure line
 Falls as the dew of anthems, quiet
 still
 The sweeter since the Scottish song
 raised
 His voice therein, and, quit of every
 stress
 Of earthly ache and longing and
 despair,
 Knew certainly each simple thing he
 praised
 Was no less worthy, for its lowliness,
 Than any joy of all the glory
 There.

581

MONGST THE HILLS O'
SOMERSET

MONGST the Hills o' Somerset
 Wist I was a-roamin' yet!
 Wist I won't get usen to
 These low lands I'm trompin' through.
 Wist I could go back there, and
 make the long grass with my hand,
 And o' like my sweetheart's hair
 smoothed out underneath it there!
 Wist I could set eyes once more
 On our shadders, on before,
 Comin', in the airy dawn,
 Up the slopes 'at love growed on
 As the violet
 Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

Wist I'd rest a man like me
 In 'bout an hour to be
 In there where the morning air
 Lead reach out and ketch me there!—
 Catch my breath away, and then
 Catch and give it back again
 From a dew, and smellin' of
 The old pinks I ust to love,
 And a flavor'n' ever' breeze
 From mist hints o' mulberries
 And May-apples, from the thick
 Brown-lands along the crick
 Where the fish bit, dry er wet,
 Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

Like a livin' pictur' things
 All comes back: the bluebird swings
 In the maple, tongue and bill
 In his glory fit to kill!
 In the orchard, jay and bee
 Across the first pears fer me,
 And the "Prince's Harvest" they
 Tangle to me where I lay

In the clover, provin' still
 "A boy's will is the wind's will."
 Clean fergot is time, and care,
 And thick hearin', and gray hair—
 But they's nothin' I ferget
 'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

Middle-aged—to be edzact
 Very middle-aged, in fact,
 Yet a-thinkin' back to then,
 I'm the same wild boy again!
 There's the dear old home once more,
 And there's Mother at the door—
 Dead, I know, fer thirty year',
 Yet she's singin', and I hear;
 And there's Jo, and Mary Jane,
 And Pap, comin' up the lane!
 Dusk's a-fallin'; and the dew,
 'Pears like, it's a-fallin' too—
 Dreamin' we're all livin' yet
 'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

582

A PASSING HAIL

LET us rest ourselves a bit!
 Worry?—Wave your hand to it—
 Kiss your finger-tips and smile
 It farewell a little while.

Weary of the weary way
 We have come from Yesterday,
 Let us fret us not, instead,
 Of the weary way ahead.

Let us pause and catch our breath
 On the hither side of death,
 While we see the tender shoots
 Of the grasses—not the roots,—

While we yet look down—not up—
 To seek out the buttercup

All thou lackest she hath still
Near thy finding and thy fill.
Yield her fullest faith, and she
Will endow thee royally.

Loveless weed and lily fair
She attendeth here and there—
Kindly to the weed as to
The lorn lily teared with dew.
Each to her hath use as dear
As the other; an thou clear
Thy cloyed senses thou may'st see
Haply all the mystery.
Thou shalt see the lily get
Its divinest blossom; yet
Shall the weed's tip bloom no less
With the song-bird's gleefulness.

Thou art poor, or thou art rich—
Never lightest matter which;
All the glad gold of the noon,
All the silver of the moon,
She doth lavish on thee, while
Thou withholdest any smile
Of thy gratitude to her,

Baser used than usurer.
Shame be on thee an thou seek
Not her pardon, with hot cheek,
And bowed head, and brimming eye
At her merciful "Arise!"

601

TO HATTIE—ON HER BIRTHDAY

WRITTEN IN "A CHILD'S GARDEN OF
VERSES"

WHEN your "Uncle Jim" was
younger,
In the days of childish hunger
For the honey of such verses
As this little book rehearses
In such sweet simplicity,—
Just the simple gift that this is
Would have brimmed his heart with
blisses
Sweet as Hattie's sweetest kisses,
On her anniversary.

602

DOWN TO THE CAPITAL

I 'BE'N down to the Capital at Washington, D. C.,
Where Congress meets and passes on the pensions ort to be
Allowed to old one-legged chaps, like me, 'at sence the war
Don't wear their pants in pairs at all—and yit how proud we are!

Old Flukens, from our deestrick, jes' turned in and tuck and made
Me stay with him whilse I was there; and longer 'at I stayed
The more I kep' a-wantin' jes' to kind o' git away,
And yit a-feelin' sociabler with Flukens ever' day.

You see I'd got the idy—and I guess most folks agrees—
'At men as rich as him, you know, kin do jes' what they please;

A man worth stacks o' money, and a Congressman and all,
And livin' in a buildin' bigger'n Masonic Hall!

Now mind, I'm not a-faultin' Fluke—he made his money square:
We both was Forty-niners, and both bu'sted gittin' there;
I weakened and onwindlassed, and he stuck and stayed and made
His millions; don't know what I'm worth untel my pension's paid.

But I was goin' to tell you—er a-ruther goin' to try
To tell you how he's livin' now: gas burnin' mighty nigh
In ever' room about the house; and ever' night, about,
Some blame reception goin' on, and money goin' out.

They's people there from all the world—jes' ever' kind 'at lives,
Injuns and all! and Senaters, and Ripresentatives;
And girls, you know, jes' dressed in gauze and roses, I declare,
And even old men shamblin' round and a-waltzin' with 'em there!

And bands a-tootin' circus-tunes, 'way in some other room
Jes' chokin' full o' hothouse plants and pinies and perfume;
And fountains, squirtin' stiddy all the time; and statutes, made
Out o' puore marble, 'peared-like, sneakin' round there in the shade.

And Fluke he coaxed and begged and pled with me to take a hand
And sashay in amongst 'em—crutch and all, you understand;
But when I said how tired I was, and made fer open air,
He follered, and tel five o'clock we set a-talkin' there.

"My God!" says he—Fluke says to me, "I'm tireder'n you;
Don't putt up yer tobacker tel you give a man a chew.
Set back a leetle funder in the shadder—that'll do;
I'm tireder'n you, old man; I'm tireder'n you.

"You see that-air old dome," says he, "humped up ag'inst the sky?
It's grand, first time you see it; but it changes, by and by,
And then it stays jes' thataway—jes' anchored high and dry
Berwixt the sky up yender and the achin' of yer eye.

"Night's purty; not so purty, though, as what it ust to be
When my first wife was livin'. You remember her?" says he.
I nodded-like, and Fluke went on, "I wonder now ef she
Knows where I am—and what I am—and what I ust to be?"

"That band in there!—I ust to think 'at music couldn't wear
A feller out the way it does; but that ain't music there—
That's jes' a' *imitation*, and like ever'thing, I swear,
I hear, er see, er tetch, er taste, er tackle anywhere!

"It's all jes' *artificial*, this-'ere high-priced life of ours;
The theory, *it's* sweet enough, tel it saps down and sours.
They's no *home* left, ner *ties* o' home about it. By the powers,
The whole thing's artificialed'n artificial flowers!

"And all I want, and could lay down and *sob* fer, is to know
The homely things of homely life; fer instance, jes' to go
And set down by the kitchen stove—Lord! that 'u'd rest me so—
Jes' set there, like I ust to do, and laugh and joke, you know.

"Jes' set there, like I ust to do," says Fluke, a-startin' in,
'Peared-like, to say the whole thing over to hisse'f ag'in;
Then stopped and turned, and kind o' coughed, and stooped and fumbled fer
Somepin' o' 'nuther'in the grass—I guess his handkercher.

Well, sence I'm back from Washington, where I left Fluke a-still
A-leggin' fer me, heart and soul, on that-air pension bill,
I've half-way struck the notion, when I think o' wealth and sich,
They's nothin' much patheticker'n jes' a-bein' rich!

603

JAP MILLER

JAP MILLER down at Martins-
ville's the blamedest feller yit!
When *he* starts in a-talkin' other folks
is apt to quit!—
'Pears like that mouth o' his'n wuzn't
made fer nothin' else
But jes' to argify 'em down and gether
in their pelts:
He'll talk you down on tariff; er he'll
talk you down on tax,
And prove the pore man pays 'em all
—and them's about the fac's!—

Religen, law, er politics, prize-fightin'
er baseball—

Jes' tetch Jap up a little and he'll pos
you 'bout 'em all.

And the comicalist feller ever tild
back a cheer

And tuk a chaw tobacker kind o' like
he didn't keer.—

There's where the feller's strength
lays,—he's so common-like and
plain,—

They hain't no dude about old Jap
you bet you—nary grain!

They 'lected him to Council and a
never turned his head.

604

JOHN TARKINGTON JAMESON

and didn't make no differunce what
anybody said,—

He didn't dress no finer, ner rag out
in fancy clothes;

But his voice in Council-meetin's is a
rurrer to his foes.

He's fer the pore man ever' time!
And in the last campaign

He stumped old Morgan County,
through the sunshine and the
rain.

and helt the banner up'ards from
a-trailin' in the dust,

and cut loose on monopolies and
cuss'd and cuss'd and cuss'd!

He'd tell some funny story ever' now
and then, you know,

Tel blame it! it wuz better'n a Jack-
o'-lantern show!

And I'd go furder, yit, to-day, to hear
old Jap norate

Than any high-toned orater 'at ever
stumped the State!

Wuz that-air blame Jap Miller, with
his keen sircastic fun,

He's got more friends than ary candi-
date 'at ever run!

Don't matter what *his* views is, when
he states the same to you,

They allus coincide with you'n, the
same as two and two:

You *can't* take issue with him—er, at
least, they hain't no sense

is startin' in to down him, so you bet-
ter not commence.—

The best way's jes' to listen, like your
humble servant does,

And jes' concede Jap Miller is the best
man ever wuz!

JOHN JAMESON, my jo John!

Ye're bonnie wee an' sma';

Your ee's the morning violet,

Wi' tremblin' dew an' a';

Your smile's the gowden simmer-
sheen,

Wi' glintin' pearls aglow

Atween the posies o' your lips,

John Jameson, my jo!

Ye hae the faither's braidth o' brow,

An' synes his look benign

Whiles he hings musin' ower the burn,

Wi' leestless hook an' line;

Ye hae the mither's mou' an' cheek

An' denty chin—but O!

It's maist ye're like your ain braw sel',

John Jameson, my jo!

John Jameson, my jo John,

Though, wi' sic lovers twain,

Ye dance far yont your whustlin' frien'

Wha laggart walks his lane,—

Be mindet, though he naps his last

Whaur kirkyird thistles grow,

His ghaist shall caper on wi' you,

John Jameson, my jo!

605

HENRY W. GRADY

ATLANTA, DECEMBER 23, 1889

TRUE-HEARTED friend of all
true friendliness!—

Brother of all true brotherhoods!—

Thy hand

And its late pressure now we understand
 Most fully, as it falls thus gestureless
 And Silence lulls thee into sweet excess
 Of sleep. Sleep thou content!—Thy loved Southland
 Is swept with tears, as rain in sunshine; and
 Through all the frozen North our eyes confess
 Like sorrow—seeing still the princely sign
 Set on thy lifted brow, and the rapt light
 Of the dark, tender, melancholy eyes—
 Thrilled with the music of those lips of thine,
 And yet the fire thereof that lights the night
 With the white splendor of thy prophecies.

606

IN THE EVENING

I

IN the evening of our days,
 When the first far stars above
 Glimmer dimmer, through the haze,
 Than the dewy eyes of love,
 Shall we mournfully revert
 To the vanished morns and Mays
 Of our youth, with hearts that hurt,—
 In the evening of our days?

II

Shall the hand that holds your own
 Till the twain are thrilled as now,—

Be withheld, or colder grown?
 Shall my kiss upon your brow
 Falter from its high estate?
 And, in all forgetful ways,
 Shall we sit apart and wait—
 In the evening of our days?

III

Nay, my wife—my life!—the gloom
 Shall enfold us velvet-wise,
 And my smile shall be the groom
 Of the gladness of your eyes:
 Gently, gently as the dew
 Mingles with the darkening morn,
 I shall fall asleep with you—
 In the evening of our days.

607

THOUGHTS ON THE LATE WAR

I WAS for Union—you, ag'in it
 'Pears like, to me, each side was
 winner,
 Lookin' at now and all 'at's in it.
 Le' 's go to dinner.

Le' 's kind o' jes' set down together
 And do some pardnership forgittin'—
 Talk, say, for instance, 'bout the
 weather,
 Or somepin' fittin'.

The war, you know, 's all done and
 ended,
 And ain't changed no p'int o' the
 compass;
 Both North and South the health's as
 splendid
 As 'fore the rumpus.

The old farms and the old plantations
 Still occupy the'r old positions.
 Le' 's git back to old situations
 And old ambitions.

Le' 's let up on this blame', infernal
 Tongue-lashin' and lap-jacket vauntin',
 And git back home to the eternal
 Ca'm we're a-wantin'.

Such kind o' sort o' suits my diet—
 When women does my cookin' for me;
 Ther wasn't overly much pie et
 Durin' the army.

608

THE OLD BAND

IT'S mighty good to git back to the
 old town, shore,
 Considerin' I've b'en away twenty year
 and more.
 Since I moved then to Kansas, of
 course I see a change,
 A-comin' back, and notice things that's
 new to me and strange;
 Especially at evening when yer new
 band-fellers meet,
 In fancy uniforms and all, and play out
 on the street—
 . . . What's come of old Bill Lindsey
 and the Saxhorn fellers—say?
 I want to hear the *old* band play.

What's come of Eastman, and Nat
 Snow? And where's War Bar-
 nett at?
 And Nate and Bony Meek; Bill Hart;
 Tom Richa'son and that
 At brother of him played the drum
 as twict as big as Jim;

And old Hi Kerns, the carpenter—
 say, what's become o' him?
 I make no doubt yer *new band* now's
 a *competenter* band,
 And plays their music more by note
 than what they play by hand,
 And stylisher and grander tunes; but
 somehow—*anyway*,
 I want to hear the *old* band play.

Such tunes as "John Brown's Body"
 and "Sweet Alice," don't you
 know;
 And "The Camels Is A-Comin'," and
 "John Anderson, My Jo";
 And a dozent others of 'em—"Num-
 ber Nine" and "Number 'Leven"
 Was *favo-rites* that fairly made a feller
 dream o' Heaven.
 And when the boys 'u'd saranade, I've
 laid so still in bed
 I've even heerd the locus'-blossoms
 droppin' on the shed
 When "Lilly Dale," er "Hazel Dell,"
 had sobbed and died away—
 . . . I want to hear the *old*
 band play.

Yer *new* band ma'by beats it, but the
old band's what I said—
 It allus 'peared to kind o' chord with
 somepin' in my head;
 And, whilse I'm no musicianer, when
 my blame' eyes is jes'
 Nigh drowned out, and Mem'ry
 squares her jaws and sort o' says
 She *won't* ner *never will* fergit, I want
 to jes' turn in
 And take and light right out o' here
 and git back West ag'in
 And *stay* there, when I git there,
 where I never haf' to say
 I want to hear the *old* band play.

Its rainy weather, and cheeks likewise,
And age, hard-hearin' and rheumatiz.—

We're not a-faultin' the Lord's own
plan—

All things 's jest
At their best.—

It's a purty good world, old man!

809

ON A YOUTHFUL PORTRAIT
OF STEVENSON

A FACE of youth mature; a mouth
of tender,
Sad, human sympathy, yet some-
thing stoic
In clasp of lip: wide eyes of calmest
splendor,
And brow serenely ample and heroic:

The features—all—lit with a soul
ideal . . .

O visionary boy! what were you see-
ing,

What hearing, as you stood thus midst
the real

Ere yet one master-work of yours had
being?

Is it a foolish fancy that we humor—
Investing daringly with life and spirit
This youthful portrait of you ere one
rumor

Of your great future spoke that men
might hear it?—

Is it a fancy, or your first of glories,
That you were listening, and the
camera drew you

Hearing the voices of your untold
stories

And all your lovely poems calling to
you?

810

PROEM

WE found him in that Far-away that yet to us seems near—
*We vagranis 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.*

*Ay, 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 saddle-bags behind, and guise all human-like.*

*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.*

811

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

I

IF 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 mil'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 jamboree;

vi

Er when the lightin' 's struck some harebrained 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-dol!*"

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' wuzn't shore
Doc didn'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—"ongratefulest o' *men!*"

x

'Mongst *all* the women—mild er rough, splendiferous 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 pleasant 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

Same 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 mil'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 compass: said, he s'pose
You couldn't lose Doc in the woods the darkest night that blows!

xix

Said, Doc'll tell you, purty clos't, by underbresh 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 hadn'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 or 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 *yourse'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 wouldn't vote ag'in' 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'racted 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 consecrate your vow!"

XXX

Without a-claimin' *any creed*, Doc's rail religious views
Nobody knows—ner got no *need* o' knowin' whilse he choose
To be heerd not of man, ner raise no loud, vain-glorious 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-sleepin' 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 hissef—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 doz'n' off to sleep, and yit not dope him with *morpheen*.—
He won't tell *what*—jes' 'lows 'at he has 'airnt 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' 'nitiation* 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

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 ag'in,—and, as he stood on it
And stomped and grinned, he says to Ike, "I s'pose now, purty soon
Some lightin'-bug, indignant-like, 'll 'vestigate 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 omnipotent 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!"

XLIII

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 plaguy *few*.—But Doc
He's one o' *them*.—And same, i jing! with *childern*;—they jes' flock
Round Sifers *natchurll*—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 mother,—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'ot, and go on thinkin' way *some* mother-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 couldn'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!

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 spry, jes' write me that recei't
You have fer bein' *happy* by,—fer that 'ud 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 *natchurll* 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* whisky—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 practise; ner don't, wilful, 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 hadn'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
Professional!—It's jes' a shame 'at Doc hisse'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 *medicine*.—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' Sifer's practise 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' socialbility—
A dad-burn bee 'ud 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.—Dee-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 *million* 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'ed 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 employed
No *druggist* would, on *no* account, 'a' lavished and destroyed!

LXXII

Doc tracked a blame-don burglar down, and *nailed* the scamp, to boot,
But told him ef he'd leave the town he wouldn'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' *sympathizin'*, 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 mercies 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' *lunacy*, 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 penitetchury."

LXXXVII

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 defective chimblies down:

LXXXVIII

Er durin' any public crowd, mass-meetin', er big day,
Where ladies ortn'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."

LXXXIX

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.—
Ring-master 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 loudest mouth pervails.—
A' all-one-sided quarr'l 'll make me *biassed*, 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' ecal 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 wuzn't won so much in line o' fight
 As line o' work and nussin' done the wownded, day and night.—
 His wuz the hand, through dark and dawn, 'at bound their wownds, and laid
 As soft as their own mother's on their forreds 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 'crost the winder-sill.

XCI

And some's a-limpin' round here yit—a-waitin' Last Review,—
 'Ud 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'tense*
 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' disapp'intin' *me*—
 He talked so common-like, and brought his mind so cle'r in view
 And simple-like, I put' nigh thought, 'I'm best man o' the two!'"

XCIV

Yes-sir! Doc's got convictions and old-fashioned 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 flappin' 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,
 Bareheaded, 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, 'ud 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 eyesight; *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—sometimes'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 raily 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.

TAMAM

812

WHERE THE CHILDREN USED
TO PLAY

THE old farm-home is Mother's yet
and mine,
And filled it is with plenty and
to spare,—
But we are lonely here in life's decline,
Though fortune smiles around us
everywhere:
We look across the gold
Of the harvests, as of old—
The corn, the fragrant clover, and the
hay;
But most we turn our gaze,
As with eyes of other days,
To the orchard where the children
used to play.

*O from our life's full measure
And rich hoard of worldly treasure
We often turn our weary eyes
away,
And hand in hand we wander
Down the old path winding yon-
der
To the orchard where the chil-
dren used to play.*

Our sloping pasture-lands are filled
with herds;
The barn and granary-bins are bulg-
ing o'er;
The grove's a paradise of singing
birds—
The woodland brook leaps laughing
by the door;
Yet lonely, lonely still,
Let us prosper as we will,

Our old hearts seem so empty every
way—
We can only through a mist
See the faces we have kissed
In the orchard where the children
used to play.

*O from our life's full measure
And rich hoard of worldly treasure
We often turn our weary eyes
away,
And hand in hand we wander
Down the old path winding yon-
der
To the orchard where the chil-
dren used to play.*

813

MR. FOLEY'S CHRISTMAS

*There's nothing sweet in the city
But the patient lives of the poor.*

—JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY

I

SINCE pick av them I'm sore de-
nied
'Twixt play or work, I say,
Though it be Christmas, I decide
I'll work whilst others play:
I'll whistle, too, wid Christmas pride
To airn me extry pay.—
It's like the job's more glorified
That's done a-holiday!

Dan, dip a coal in dad's pipe-bowl;
Kate, pass me dinner-can:
Och! Mary woman, save yer sowl,
Ye've kissed a workin'-man—

Tilt the cap of Boyhood—yea,
Where no "forelock" waves, to-day,—
Back, in breezy, cool excess,
Stroke it with the old caress.

Let us see as we have seen—
Where all paths are dewy-green,
And all human-kind are kin—
Let us be as we have been!

963

THE LOVELINESS

AH, what a long and loitering way
And ever-lovely way, in truth,
We travel on from day to day
Out of the realms of youth!

How eagerly we onward press
The lovely path that lures us still
With ever-changing loveliness
Of grassy vale and hill:

Of groves of May and morning-lands
Dew-diamonded and gemmed with
bloom;
With amber streams and golden sands
And aisles of gleam and gloom;

Where lovely little Fairy-folk,
In careless ambush, pipe and call
From tousled ferns 'neath elm and oak
By shoal and waterfall:

Transparent even as the stream,
The gnarled prison-tree reveals
Its lovely Dryad in a dream
That scarce itself conceals;

The sudden redbird trips the sight
And tricks the ear—or doubtless we
With happy palms had clapped the
Sprite
In new captivity.

On—on, through all the gathering
years,
Still gleams the loveliness, though
seen
Through dusks of loss and mists of
tears
That vainly intervene.

Time stints us not of lovely things—
Old Age hath still a treasure-store,—
The loveliness of songs and wings
And voices on before.—

And—loveliness beyond all grace
Of lovely words to say or sing,—
The loveliness of Hope's fair face
Forever brightening.

964

A PARTING GUEST

WHAT delightful hosts are they—
Life and Love!
Lingeringly I turn away,
This late hour, yet glad enough
They have not withheld from me
Their high hospitality.
So, with face lit with delight
And all gratitude, I stay
Yet to press their hands and say,
"Thanks.—So fine a time! Good
night."

965

"OUT OF REACH"

YOU think them "out of reach,"
your dead?
Nay, by my own dead, I deny
Your "out of reach."—Be comforted:
'Tis not so far to die.

O by their dear remembered smiles
And outheld hands and welcoming
speech,
They wait for us, thousands of miles
This side of "out of reach."

966

MY FOE

MY Foe? You name yourself, then,
—I refuse
A term so dark to designate you by.
To me you are most kind and true;
and I
Am grateful as the dust is for the dews
That brim the dusk, and falter, drip
and ooze
From the dear darkness of the sum-
mer sky.
Vex not yourself for lack of moan
or cry
Of mine. Not any harm, nor ache nor
bruise
Could reach my soul through any
stroke you fain
Might launch upon me,—it were as
the lance
Even of the lightning did it leap
to rend
A ray of sunshine—'twould recoil
again.

So, blessing you, with pitying counte-
nance,
I wave a hand to you, my helpless
friend.

967

SOME IMITATIONS

I

POMONA

(Madison Cawein)

OH, the golden afternoon!—
Like a ripened summer day
That had fallen oversoon
In the weedy orchard-way—
As an apple, ripe in June.

He had left his fishrod leant
O'er the footlog by the spring—
Clomb the hill-path's high ascent,
Whence a voice, down showering,
Lured him, wondering as he went.

Not the voice of bee nor bird,
Nay, nor voice of man nor child,
Nor the creek's shoal-alto heard
Blent with warblings sweet and wild
Of the midstream, music-stirred.

'Twas a goddess! As the air
Swirled to eddying silence, he
Glimpsed about him, half aware
Of some subtle sorcery
Woven round him everywhere.

Suavest slopes of pleasance, sown
With long lines of fruited trees
Weighed o'er grasses all unmown
But by scythings of the breeze
In prone swaths that flashed and shone

Like silk locks of Faunus sleeked
This, that way, and contrawise,
Through whose bredes ambrosial
leaked

Oily amber sheens and dyes,
Starred with petals purple-freaked.

Here the bellflower swayed and swung,
Greenly belfried high amid
Thick leaves in whose covert sung
Hermit-thrush, or katydid,
Or the glowworm nightly clung.

Here the damson, peach and pear;
There the plum, in Tyrian tints,
Like great grapes in clusters rare;
And the metal-heavy quince
Like a plummet dangled there.

All ethereal, yet all
Most material,—a theme
Of some fabled festival—
Save the fair face of his dream
Smiling o'er the orchard wall.

II

THE PASSING OF A ZEPHYR

(Sidney Lanier)

UP from, and out of, and over the
opulent woods and the plains,
Lo! I leap nakedly loose, as the nudest
of gods might choose,
For to dash me away through the
morning dews
And the rathe Spring rains—
Pat and pet the little green leaves of
the trees and the grass,
Till they seem to linger and cling, as
I pass,

And are touched to delicate contempo-
raneous tears of the rain and the
dew,

That lure mine eyes to weeping like-
wise, and to laughter, too:

For I am become as the balmiest,
stormiest zephyr of Spring,

With manifold beads of the marvelous
dew and the rain to string

On the bended strands of the blos-
soms, blown

And tossed and tousled and over-
thrown,

And shifted and whirled, and lifted un-
furled

In the victory of the blossoming
Of the flags of the flowery world.

Yea, and behold! and a riotous zephyr,
at last,

I subside; I abate; I pass by; I am past:
And the small, hoarse bass of the bum-
blebee

Is my requiem-psalm,
And I fling me down to a listless, loiter-
ing, long eternity
Of amiable calm.

III

EF UNCLE REMUS PLEASE TER 'SCUSEN ME

(Joel Chandler Harris)

DEY wunce wuz er time which I
* gwineter tell you 'bout it—

An' it's easy ter believe it sho'ly ez it is
ter doubt it!—

So des you pick yer "ruthers" whilse I
tell how ole Br'er Rabbit

Wunce know de time when he git de
fightin' habit.

Co'se he ain't no bragger, des a-rippin'
an' a-rarin'

An' a-darin' all de beestus an' a-des
a-double-darin'

Sich ez Mr. Jonus Lion, er Sir Mr.
Twister Tagger,

Er Sister Hisstopottomus, er A'nt Fer-
jenny Ja'gger!

Yit, des de same, he layin' low an'
know he got de muscle

What sho' ter s'prise mos' any size
what crowd 'im fer a tussle.—

But speshully he 'spise de *Dawg*, an'
sight er one des make 'im

Fergit hisse'f an' run 'em down an'
grab 'em up an' shake 'em!—

An', mo' 'n dat, ef 'twuzn't fer de
Dawg-law den ag'in it,

He'd des a-kilt off ev'y Dawg dat's
chasin' him dis minute!

IV

A RHYME FOR CHRISTMAS

IF *Browning* only were here,
This yule-ish time o' the year—

This mule-ish time o' the year,
Stubbornly still refusing

To add to the rhymes we've been using
Since the first Christmas-glee

(One might say) chantingly
Rendered by rudest hinds

Of the pelt-clad shepherding kinds
Who didn't know Song from b-

U-double-l's-foot!—pah!—
(Haply the old Egyptian *ptah*—

Though I'd hardly wager a baw-
Bee—or a *bumble*, for that—

And that's flat!) . . .
But the thing that I want to get at

Is a rhyme for *Christmas*—
Nay! nay! nay! nay! not *isthmus*—

The t- and the h-sounds covertly are
Gnawing the nice auricular

Senses until one may hear them gnar—
And the terminal, too, for *mas* is *mus*,

So *that* will not do for us.
Try for it—sigh for it—cry for it—die

for it!
O *but* if *Browning* were here to apply

for it,
He'd rhyme you *Christmas*—

He'd make a *mist pass*
Over—something o' ruther—

Or find you the rhyme's very brother
In lovers that *kissed fast*

To *baffle the moon*—as he'd lose the
t-final

In *fas-t* as it blended with *to* (mark the
spinal

Elision—tip-clipt as exquisitely nicely
And hyper-exactly sliced to precisely

The extremest technical need): Or he'd
twist glass,

Or he'd have a *kissed lass*,

Or shake 'neath our noses some great
giant *fast-mass*—

No matter! If *Robert* were here, *he*
could do it,

Though it took us till *Christmas* next
year to see through it.

V

VAUDEVILLE SKITS

I

SERENADE AT THE CABIN

Oh, my little *Sadie Sue*, I's a-serenadin'
you—

Fer you's de onliest lady-love o' mine;
De *White Folk's* dance done over, I has

still a chune er two
Below your winder's mohnin'-glory-

vine.

Your good ole mammy's gyarden is, fer
shore, a ha'nted place,
Dis midnight whilse I's cropin'
'mongst de bloom;
Yit de moon dah 'bove de chimbly ain'
no fairer dan de face
What's hidin' 'hind de curtain o'
your room.

Chorus

Den wake, my colored blonde with
eyes o' blue,
An' lips ez red ez roses renshed with
dew;
Yo' hair ez fair an' fine
Ez de skeins o' June sunshine,
My little, light-complected Sadie Sue!
In de "Gran's" old dinin'-hall, playin'
fer de White Folk's ball,
I watch deir pick o' ladies ez dey
glide,
An' says I, "My Sadie Sue she 'ud
shorely best you all
Ef she 'uz here a-waltzin' by my
side!"
Den I laugh all to myse'f-like, ez I
swipe de twangin' strings
An' shet my eyes in sweetest dreams
o' you,—
Fer you're my heart's own music dat
forever beats an' sings—
My soul's own serenade—my Sadie
Sue!

Chorus

Den wake, my colored blonde with eyes
o' blue,
An' lips ez red ez roses renshed with
dew;
Yo' hair ez fair an' fine
Ez de skeins o' June sunshine,
My little, light-complected Sadie Sue!

2

CHUCK'S HOODOOS

Chuck's allus had de Hoodoos bad!—
Do what he kin to lose 'em,
Dey track dat coon, by sun er moon,
Des like dey cain't uxcuse 'im!
An' more he gyaurd 'em off, more
hard
Hit 'pear-like dat they press 'im—
De onliest luck dey 'low ole Chuck
Is dis enough to 'stress 'im!

He taken care—no matter where
He's walkin' long de street an'
See any ladder leanin' there,
Er cross-eyed man he's meetin'—
Dat eye o' his ketch wher' dey is,
An', quick as "scat," Chuck's hittin'
De curb outside, an' watch wile-eyed
Fust lef'-han' place to spit in!

He' got toenails o' bats; an' snails
Shet hot in deir shell-houses
Wid sealin'-wax; an' little backs
O' turkles in his trouse's:
A moleskin-pu's'; an' possum's han'—
Des ever' charm an' wonder—
An' barber-chair o' shore hosshair—
An' hoss-shoe hangin' under!

"An' yit," says Chuck, "I got no
luck:—

De Hoodoos still a-bafflin'
Dis po' ole saint what knows he ain't—
'Twix' shootin' craps an' rafflin'
No overcoat—ner underwear,—
Right on de aidge o' winter
I's up aginst de wust layout
Dey's ever got me inter!"

968

THE ROSE-LADY

TO THE ROSES

I DREAM that you are kisses Allah
sent
In forms material, that all the earth
May taste of you and guess of
Heaven's worth,
Since it can waste such sweetness with
content,—
Seeing you showered o'er the Battle-
ment—
By Angel-hands plucked ripe from
lips of mirth
And flung in lavish clusters, yet no
dearth
Of rapture for the Anthem! . . . I
have bent
Above you, nestled in some low re-
treat,
Pressing your velvet mouths against the
dust,
And, ever nurturing this old con-
ceit,
Have lifted up your lips in perfect
trust
Against my mouth, nor found them
the less sweet
For having kissed the dust beneath
my feet.

969

A HOOSIER CALENDAR

JANUARY

BLEAK January! Cold as fate,
And ever colder—ever keener—
Our very hair cut while we wait
By winds that clip it ever cleaner:

Cold as a miser's buried gold,
Or nether-deeps of old tradition—
Jeems January! you're a cold
Proposition!

FEBRUARY

You, February,—seem to be
Old January's understudy,
But play the part too vaudeville-y,—
With wind too moist and snow too
muddy—
You overfreeze and overthaw—
Your "Hos'ler Jo"-like recitation
But hints that you're, at best, a raw
Imitation.

MARCH

And, March, you've got no friends to
spare—
Warm friends, I mean—unless coal-
dealers,
Or gas-well owners, pipin' where
The piper's paid—above all spielers;
You are a month, too, of complex
Perversities beyond solution—
A sort o' "loveliest of your sex"
Institution!

APRIL

But, April, when you kind o' come
A-sa'nterin' down along our road-
way,
The bars is down, and we're at home,
And you're as welcome as a show-
day!
First thing we know, the sunshine falls
Spring-like, and drenches all Crea-
tion
With that-ere ba'm the poets calls
"Inspiration."