

FIELD EUGENE

SECOND BOOK
OF VERSE

Eugene Field
Second Book of Verse

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Second Book of Verse:

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Eugene Field

Second Book of Verse

A little bit of a woman came
Athwart my path one day;
So tiny was she that she seemed to be
A pixy strayed from the misty sea,
Or a wandering greenwood fay.

"Oho, you little elf!" I cried,
"And what are you doing here?
So tiny as you will never do
For the brutal rush and hullabaloo
Of this practical world, I fear."

"Voice have I, good sir," said she. —
"'Tis soft as an Angel's sigh,
But to fancy a word of yours were heard
In all the din of this world's absurd!"
Smiling, I made reply.

"Hands have I, good sir" she quoth. —
"Marry, and that have you!
But amid the strife and the tumult rife
In all the struggle and battle for life,
What can those wee hands do?"

"Eyes have I, good sir," she said. —
"Sooth, you have," quoth I,
"And tears shall flow therefrom, I trow,
And they betimes shall dim with woe,
As the hard, hard years go by!"

That little bit of a woman cast
Her two eyes full on me,
And they smote me sore to my inmost core,
And they hold me slaved forevermore, —
Yet would I not be free!

That little bit of a woman's hands
Reached up into my breast
And rent apart my scoffing heart, —
And they buffet it still with such sweet art
As cannot be expressed.

That little bit of a woman's voice
Hath grown most wondrous dear;
Above the blare of all elsewhere
(An inspiration that mocks at care)
It riseth full and clear.

Dear one, I bless the subtle power
That makes me wholly thine;
And I'm proud to say that I bless the day
When a little woman wrought her way
Into this life of mine!

FATHER'S WAY

MY father was no pessimist; he loved the things of earth, —
Its cheerfulness and sunshine, its music and its mirth.

He never sighed or moped around whenever things went
wrong, —

I warrant me he'd mocked at fate with some defiant song;
But, being he warn't much on tune, when times looked sort
o' blue,

He'd whistle softly to himself this only tune he knew,

Now mother, when she heard that tune which father whistled
so,

Would say, "There's something wrong to-day with Ephraim,
I know;

He never tries to make believe he's happy that 'ere way
But that I'm certain as can be there's somethin' wrong to pay."

And so betimes, quite natural-like, to us observant youth
There seemed suggestion in that tune of deep, pathetic truth.

When Brother William joined the war, a lot of us went down
To see the gallant soldier boys right gayly out of town.

A-comin' home, poor mother cried as if her heart would
break,

And all us children, too, — for *hers*, and *not* for *William's* sake!
But father, trudgin' on ahead, his hands behind him so,

Kept whistlin' to himself, so sort of solemn-like and low.

And when my oldest sister, Sue, was married and went West,
Seemed like it took the tuck right out of mother and the rest.
She was the sunlight in our home, – why, father used to say
It wouldn't seem like home at all if Sue should go away;
But when she went, a-leavin' us all sorer and all tears,
Poor father whistled lonesome-like – and went to feed the
steers.

When crops were bad, and other ills befell our homely lot,
He'd set of nights and try to act as if he minded not;
And when came death and bore away the one he worshipped
so,
How vainly did his lips belie the heart benumbed with woe!
You see the telltale whistle told a mood he'd not admit, —
He'd always stopped his whistlin' when he thought we noticed
it.

I'd like to see that stooping form and hoary head again, —
To see the honest, hearty smile that cheered his fellow-men.
Oh, could I kiss the kindly lips that spake no creature wrong,
And share the rapture of the heart that overflowed with song!
Oh, could I hear the little tune he whistled long ago,
When he did battle with the griefs he would not have *us* know!

TO MY MOTHER

HOW fair you are, my mother!
Ah, though 't is many a year
Since you were here,
Still do I see your beauteous face,
And with the glow
Of your dark eyes cometh a grace
Of long ago.
So gentle, too, my mother!
Just as of old, upon my brow,
Like benedictions now,
Falleth your dear hand's touch;
And still, as then,
A voice that glads me over-much
Cometh again,
My fair and gentle mother!

How you have loved me, mother,
I have not power to tell,
Knowing full well
That even in the rest above
It is your will
To watch and guard me with your love,
Loving me still.
And, as of old, my mother,

I am content to be a child,
By mother's love beguiled
From all these other charms;
So to the last
Within thy dear, protecting arms
Hold thou me fast,
My guardian angel, mother!

KÖRNER'S BATTLE PRAYER

FATHER, I cry to Thee!

Round me the billows of battle are pouring,

Round me the thunders of battle are roaring;

Father on high, hear Thou my cry, —

Father, oh, lead Thou me!

Father, oh, lead Thou me!

Lead me, o'er Death and its terrors victorious, —

See, I acknowledge Thy will as all-glorious;

Point Thou the way, lead where it may, —

God, I acknowledge Thee!

God, I acknowledge Thee!

As when the dead leaves of autumn whirl round me,

So, when the horrors of war would confound me,

Laugh I at fear, knowing Thee near, —

Father, oh, bless Thou me!

Father, oh, bless Thou me!

Living or dying, waking or sleeping,

Such as I am, I commit to Thy keeping:

Frail though I be, Lord, bless Thou me!

Father, I worship Thee!

Father, I worship Thee!
Not for the love of the riches that perish,
But for the freedom and justice we cherish,
Stand we or fall, blessing Thee, all —
God, I submit to Thee!

God, I submit to Thee!
Yea, though the terrors of Death pass before me,
Yea, with the darkness of Death stealing o'er me,
Lord, unto Thee bend I the knee, —
Father, I cry to Thee!

GOSLING STEW

IN Oberhausen, on a time,
I fared as might a king;
And now I feel the muse sublime
Inspire me to embalm in rhyme
That succulent and sapid thing
Behight of gentile and of Jew
A gosling stew!

The good Herr Schmitz brought out his best, —
Soup, cutlet, salad, roast, —
And I partook with hearty zest,
And fervently anon I blessed
That generous and benignant host,
When suddenly dawned on my view
A gosling stew!

I sniffed it coming on apace,
And as its odors filled
The curious little dining-place,
I felt a glow suffuse my face,
I felt my very marrow thrilled
With rapture altogether new, —
'Twas gosling stew!

These callow birds had never played
In yonder village pond;
Had never through the gateway strayed,
And plaintive spissant music made
Upon the grassy green beyond:
Cooped up, they simply ate and grew
For gosling stew!

My doctor said I mustn't eat
High food and seasoned game;
But surely gosling is a meat
With tender nourishment replete.
Leastwise I gayly ate this same;
I braved dyspepsy – wouldn't you
For gosling stew?

I've feasted where the possums grow,
Roast turkey have I tried,
The joys of canvasbacks I know,
And frequently I've eaten crow
In bleak and chill Novembertide;
I'd barter all that native crew
For gosling stew!

And when from Rhineland I adjourn
To seek my Yankee shore,
Back shall my memory often turn,
And fiercely shall my palate burn
For sweets I'll taste, alas! no more, —

Oh, that mein kleine frau could brew
A gosling stew!

Vain are these keen regrets of mine,
And vain the song I sing;
Yet would I quaff a stoup of wine
To Oberhausen auf der Rhine,
Where fared I like a very king:
And here's a last and fond adieu
To gosling stew!

CATULLUS TO LESBIA

COME, my Lesbia, no repining;
Let us love while yet we may!
Suns go on forever shining;
But when we have had our day,
Sleep perpetual shall o'ertake us,
And no morrow's dawn awake us.

Come, in yonder nook reclining,
Where the honeysuckle climbs,
Let us mock at Fate's designing,
Let us kiss a thousand times!
And if they shall prove too few, dear,
When they're kissed we'll start anew, dear!

And should any chance to see us,
Goodness! how they'll agonize!
How they'll wish that they could be us,
Kissing in such liberal wise!
Never mind their envious whining;
Come, my Lesbia, no repining!

JOHN SMITH

TO-DAY I strayed in Charing Cross, as wretched as could be,
With thinking of my home and friends across the tumbling
sea;

There was no water in my eyes, but my spirits were depressed,
And my heart lay like a sodden, soggy doughnut in my breast.
This way and that streamed multitudes, that gayly passed me
by;

Not one in all the crowd knew me, and not a one knew I.
"Oh for a touch of home!" I sighed; "oh for a friendly face!
Oh for a hearty hand-clasp in this teeming, desert place!"
And so soliloquizing, as a homesick creature will,
Incontinent, I wandered down the noisy, bustling hill,
And drifted, automatic-like and vaguely, into Lowe's,
Where Fortune had in store a panacea for my woes.
The register was open, and there dawned upon my sight
A name that filled and thrilled me with a cyclone of delight,

The name that I shall venerate unto my dying day, —
The proud, immortal signature: "John Smith, U. S. A."

Wildly I clutched the register, and brooded on that name;
I knew John Smith, yet could not well identify the same.
I knew him North, I knew him South, I knew him East and
West;

I knew him all so well I knew not which I knew the best.
His eyes, I recollect, were gray, and black, and brown, and blue;

And when he was not bald, his hair was of chameleon hue;
Lean, fat, tall, short, rich, poor, grave, gay, a blonde, and a brunette, —

Aha, amid this London fog, John Smith, I see you yet!

I see you yet; and yet the sight is all so blurred I seem
To see you in composite, or as in a waking dream.

Which are you, John? I'd like to know, that I might weave
a rhyme

Appropriate to your character, your politics, and clime.

So tell me, were you "raised" or "reared"? your pedigree
confess

In some such treacherous ism as "I reckon" or "I guess."

Let fall your telltale dialect, that instantly I may
Identify my countryman, "John Smith, U. S. A."

It's like as not you air the John that lived aspell ago
Deown East, where codfish, beans, 'nd *bona-fide*
schoolma'ams grow;

Where the dear old homestead nestles like among the
Hampshire hills,

And where the robin hops about the cherry-boughs 'nd trills;
Where Hubbard squash 'nd huckleberries grow to powerful
size,

And everything is orthodox from preachers down to pies;
Where the red-wing blackbirds swing 'nd call beside the
pickril pond,

And the crows air cawin' in the pines uv the pasture lot
beyond;
Where folks complain uv bein' poor, because their money's
lent
Out West on farms 'nd railroads at the rate uv ten per cent;
Where we ust to spark the Baker girls a-comin' home from
choir,
Or a-settin' namin' apples round the roarin' kitchen fire;
Where we had to go to meetin' at least three times a week,
And our mothers learnt us good religious Dr. Watts to speak;
And where our grandmas sleep their sleep – God rest their
souls, I say;
And God bless yours, ef you're that John, "John Smith, U.
S. A."

Or, mebbe, Col. Smith, yo' are the gentleman I know
In the country whar the finest Democrats 'nd hosses grow;
Whar the ladies are all beautiful, an' whar the crap of cawn
Is utilized for Burbon, and true awters are bawn.
You've ren for jedge, and killed yore man, and bet on Proctor
Knott;
Yore heart is full of chivalry, yore skin is full of shot;
And I disremember whar I've met with gentlemen so true
As yo' all in Kaintucky, whar blood an' grass are blue,
Whar a niggah with a ballot is the signal fo' a fight,
Whar the yaller dawg pursues the coon throughout the
bammy night,
Whar blooms the furtive possum, – pride an' glory of the
South!

And anty makes a hoe-cake, sah, that melts within yo' mouth,
Whar all night long the mockin'-birds are warblin' in the
trees,

And black-eyed Susans nod and blink at every passing breeze,
Whar in a hallowed soil repose the ashes of our Clay, —
H'yar's lookin' at yo', Col. "John Smith, U. S. A."

Or wuz you that John Smith I knew out yonder in the West, —
That part of our Republic I shall always love the best!

Wuz you him that went prospectin' in the spring of '69
In the Red Hoss Mountain country for the Gosh-all-Hemlock
mine?

Oh, how I'd liked to clasped your hand, an' set down by your
side,

And talked about the good old days beyond the Big Divide, —
Of the rackaboar, the snaix, the bear, the Rocky Mountain
goat,

Of the conversazzhyony, 'nd of Casey's tabble-dote,
And a word of them old pardners that stood by us long ago, —
Three-fingered Hoover, Sorry Tom, and Parson Jim, you
know!

Old times, old friends, John Smith, would make our hearts
beat high again,

And we'd see the snow-top mountains like we used to see 'em
then;

The magpies would go flutterin' like strange sperrits to 'nd
fro,

And we'd hear the pines a-singin' in the ragged gulch below;
And the mountain brook would loiter like upon its windin'

way,

Ez if it waited for a child to jine it in its play.

You see, John Smith, just which you are I cannot well recall;

And, really, I am pleased to think you somehow must be all!

For when a man sojourns abroad awhile, as I have done,

He likes to think of all the folks he left at home as one.

And so they are, – for well you know there's nothing in a name;

Our Browns, our Joneses, and our Smiths are happily the same, —

All represent the spirit of the land across the sea;

All stand for one high purpose in our country of the free.

Whether John Smith be from the South, the North, the West, the East,

So long as he's American, it mattereth not the least;

Whether his crest be badger, bear, palmetto, sword, or pine,

His is the glory of the stars that with the stripes combine.

Where'er he be, whate'er his lot, he's eager to be known,

Not by his mortal name, but by his country's name alone;

And so, compatriot, I am proud you wrote your name to-day

Upon the register at Lowe's, "John Smith, U. S. A."

ST. MARTIN'S LANE

ST. MARTIN'S LANE winds up the hill,
And trends a devious way;
I walk therein amid the din
Of busy London day:
I walk where wealth and squalor meet,
And think upon a time
When others trod this saintly sod,
And heard St. Martin's chime.

But when those solemn bells invoke
The midnight's slumbrous grace,
The ghosts of men come back again
To haunt that curious place:
The ghosts of sages, poets, wits,
Come back in goodly train;
And all night long, with mirth and song,
They walk St. Martin's Lane.

There's Jerrold paired with Thackeray,
Maginn and Thomas Moore,
And here and there and everywhere
Fraserians by the score;
And one wee ghost that climbs the hill
Is welcomed with a shout, —

No king could be revered as he, —
The *padre*, Father Prout!

They banter up and down the street,
And clamor at the door
Of yonder inn, which once has been
The scene of mirth galore:
'Tis now a lonely, musty shell,
Deserted, like to fall;
And Echo mocks their ghostly knocks,
And iterates their call.

Come back, thou ghost of ruddy host,
From Pluto's misty shore;
Renew to-night the keen delight
Of by-gone years once more;
Brew for this merry, motley horde,
And serve the steaming cheer;
And grant that I may lurk hard by,
To see the mirth, and hear.

Ah, me! I dream what things may seem
To others childish vain,
And yet at night 'tis my delight
To walk St. Martin's Lane;
For, in the light of other days,
I walk with those I love,
And all the time St. Martin's chime
Makes piteous moan above.

THE SINGING IN GOD'S ACRE

OUT yonder in the moonlight, wherein God's Acre lies,
Go angels walking to and fro, singing their lullabies.
Their radiant wings are folded, and their eyes are bended low,
As they sing among the beds whereon the flowers delight to
grow, —

"Sleep, oh, sleep!
The Shepherd guardeth His sheep.
Fast speedeth the night away,
Soon cometh the glorious day;
Sleep, weary ones, while ye may, —
Sleep, oh, sleep!"

The flowers within God's Acre see that fair and wondrous
sight,
And hear the angels singing to the sleepers through the night;
And, lo! throughout the hours of day those gentle flowers
prolong
The music of the angels in that tender slumber-song, —

"Sleep, oh, sleep!
The Shepherd loveth His sheep.
He that guardeth His flock the best
Hath folded them to His loving breast;

So sleep ye now, and take your rest, —
Sleep, oh, sleep!"

From angel and from flower the years have learned that
soothing song,
And with its heavenly music speed the days and nights along;
So through all time, whose flight the Shepherd's vigils glorify,
God's Acre slumbereth in the grace of that sweet lullaby, —

"Sleep, oh, sleep!
The Shepherd loveth His sheep.
Fast speedeth the night away,
Soon cometh the glorious day;
Sleep, weary ones, while ye may, —
Sleep, oh, sleep!"

DEAR OLD LONDON

WHEN I was broke in London in the fall of '89,
I chanced to spy in Oxford Street this tantalizing sign, —
"A Splendid Horace cheap for Cash!" Of course I had to look
Upon the vaunted bargain, and it was a noble book!
A finer one I've never seen, nor can I hope to see, —
The first edition, richly bound, and clean as clean can be;
And, just to think, for three-pounds-ten I might have had that
Pine,
When I was broke in London in the fall of '89!

Down at Nosedas, in the Strand, I found, one fateful day,
A portrait that I pined for as only maniac may, —
A print of Madame Vestris (she flourished years ago,
Was Bartolozzi's daughter and a thoroughbred, you know).
A clean and handsome print it was, and cheap at thirty bob,
—
That's what I told the salesman, as I choked a rising sob;
But I hung around Nosedas as it were a holy shrine,
When I was broke in London in the fall of '89.

At Davey's, in Great Russell Street, were autographs galore,
And Mr. Davey used to let me con that precious store.
Sometimes I read what warriors wrote, sometimes a king's
command,

But oftener still a poet's verse, writ in a meagre hand.
Lamb, Byron, Addison, and Burns, Pope, Johnson, Swift, and
Scott, —

It needed but a paltry sum to comprehend the lot;
Yet, though Friend Davey marked 'em down, what could I
but decline?

For I was broke in London in the fall of '89.

Of antique swords and spears I saw a vast and dazzling heap
That Curio Fenton offered me at prices passing cheap;
And, oh, the quaint old bureaus, and the warming-pans of
brass,

And the lovely hideous freaks I found in pewter and in glass!
And, oh, the sideboards, candlesticks, the cracked old china
plates,

The clocks and spoons from Amsterdam that antedate all
dates!

Of such superb monstrosities I found an endless mine
When I was broke in London in the fall of '89.

O ye that hanker after boons that others idle by, —

The battered things that please the soul, though they may vex
the eye, —

The silver plate and crockery all sanctified with grime,
The oaken stuff that has defied the tooth of envious Time,
The musty tomes, the speckled prints, the mildewed bills of
play,

And other costly relics of malodorous decay, —

Ye only can appreciate what agony was mine

When I was broke in London in the fall of '89.

When, in the course of natural things, I go to my reward,
Let no imposing epitaph my martyrdoms record;
Neither in Hebrew, Latin, Greek, nor any classic tongue,
Let my ten thousand triumphs over human griefs be sung;
But in plain Anglo-Saxon – that he may know who seeks
What agonizing pangs I've had while on the hunt for freaks —
Let there be writ upon the slab that marks my grave this line:
"Deceased was broke in London in the fall of '89."

CORSICAN LULLABY

BAMBINO in his cradle slept;
And by his side his grandam grim
Bent down and smiled upon the child,
And sung this lullaby to him, —
This "ninna and anninia":

"When thou art older, thou shalt mind
To traverse countries far and wide,
And thou shalt go where roses blow
And balmy waters singing glide —
So ninna and anninia!

"And thou shalt wear, trimmed up in points,
A famous jacket edged in red,
And, more than that, a peaked hat,
All decked in gold, upon thy head —
Ah! ninna and anninia!

"Then shalt thou carry gun and knife.
Nor shall the soldiers bully thee;
Perchance, beset by wrong or debt,
A mighty bandit thou shalt be —
So ninna and anninia!

"No woman yet of our proud race
Lived to her fourteenth year unwed;
The brazen churl that eyed a girl
Bought her the ring or paid his head —
So ninna and anninia!

"But once came spies (I know the thieves!)
And brought disaster to our race;
God heard us when our fifteen men
Were hanged within the market-place —
But ninna and anninia!

"Good men they were, my babe, and true, —
Right worthy fellows all, and strong;
Live thou and be for them and me
Avenger of that deadly wrong —
So ninna and anninia!"

THE CLINK OF THE ICE

NOTABLY fond of music, I dote on a sweeter tone
Than ever the harp has uttered or ever the lute has known.
When I wake at five in the morning with a feeling in my head
Suggestive of mild excesses before I retired to bed;
When a small but fierce volcano vexes me sore inside,
And my throat and mouth are furred with a fur that seemeth
a buffalo hide, —
How gracious those dewes of solace that over my senses fall
At the clink of the ice in the pitcher the boy brings up the hall!

Oh, is it the gaudy ballet, with features I cannot name,
That kindles in virile bosoms that slow but devouring flame?
Or is it the midnight supper, eaten before we retire,
That presently by combustion setteth us all afire?
Or is it the cheery magnum? – nay, I'll not chide the cup
That makes the meekest mortal anxious to whoop things up:
Yet, what the cause soever, relief comes when we call, —
Relief with that rapturous clinkety-clink that clinketh alike
for all.

I've dreamt of the fiery furnace that was one vast bulk of
flame,
And that I was Abednego a-wallowing in that same;
And I've dreamt I was a crater, possessed of a mad desire

To vomit molten lava, and to snort big gobs of fire;
I've dreamt I was Roman candles and rockets that fizzed and
screamed, —

In short, I have dreamt the cussedest dreams that ever a
human dreamed:

But all the red-hot fancies were scattered quick as a wink
When the spirit within that pitcher went clinking its clinkety-
clink.

Boy, why so slow in coming with that gracious, saving cup?
Oh, haste thee to the succor of the man who is burning up!
See how the ice bobs up and down, as if it wildly strove
To reach its grace to the wretch who feels like a red-hot
kitchen stove!

The piteous clinks it clinks methinks should thrill you through
and through:

An erring soul is wanting drink, and he wants it p. d. q.!
And, lo! the honest pitcher, too, falls in so dire a fret
That its pallid form is presently bedewed with a chilly sweat.

May blessings be showered upon the man who first devised
this drink

That happens along at five a. m. with its rapturous clinkety-
clink!

I never have felt the cooling flood go sizzling down my throat
But what I vowed to hymn a hymn to that clinkety-clink
devote;

So now, in the prime of my manhood, I polish this lyric gem
For the uses of all good fellows who are thirsty at five a. m.,

But specially for those fellows who have known the pleasing
thrall

Of the clink of the ice in the pitcher the boy brings up the hall.

THE BELLS OF NOTRE DAME

WHAT though the radiant thoroughfare
Teems with a noisy throng?
What though men bandy everywhere
The ribald jest and song?
Over the din of oaths and cries
Broodeth a wondrous calm,
And mid that solemn stillness rise
The bells of Notre Dame.

"Heed not, dear Lord," they seem to say,
"Thy weak and erring child;
And thou, O gentle Mother, pray
That God be reconciled;
And on mankind, O Christ, our King,
Pour out Thy gracious balm," —
'Tis thus they plead and thus they sing,
Those bells of Notre Dame.

And so, methinks, God, bending down
To ken the things of earth,
Heeds not the mockery of the town
Or cries of ribald mirth;
For ever soundeth in His ears
A penitential psalm, —

'T is thy angelic voice He hears,
O bells of Notre Dame!

Plead on, O bells, that thy sweet voice
May still forever be
An intercession to rejoice
Benign divinity;
And that thy tuneful grace may fall
Like dew, a quickening balm,
Upon the arid hearts of all,
O bells of Notre Dame!

LOVER'S LANE, SAINT JO

SAINT JO, Buchanan County,
Is leagues and leagues away;
And I sit in the gloom of this rented room,
And pine to be there to-day.
Yes, with London fog around me
And the bustling to and fro,
I am fretting to be across the sea
In Lover's Lane, Saint Jo.

I would have a brown-eyed maiden
Go driving once again;
And I'd sing the song, as we snailed along,
That I sung to that maiden then:
I purposely say, "as we *snailed* along,"
For a proper horse goes slow
In those leafy aisles, where Cupid smiles,
In Lover's Lane, Saint Jo.

From her boudoir in the alders
Would peep a lynx-eyed thrush,
And we'd hear her say, in a furtive way,
To the noisy cricket, "Hush!"
To think that the curious creature
Should crane her neck to know

The various things one says and sings
In Lover's Lane, Saint Jo!

But the maples they should shield us
From the gossips of the place;
Nor should the sun, except by pun,
Profane the maiden's face;
And the girl should do the driving,
For a fellow can't, you know,
Unless he's neglectful of what's quite respectful
In Lover's Lane, Saint Jo.

Ah! sweet the hours of springtime,
When the heart inclines to woo,
And it's deemed all right for the callow wight
To do what he wants to do;
But cruel the age of winter,
When the way of the world says no
To the hoary men who would woo again
In Lover's Lane, Saint Jo!

In the Union Bank of London
Are forty pounds or more,
Which I'm like to spend, ere the month shall end,
In an antiquarian store;
But I'd give it all, and gladly,
If for an hour or so
I could feel the grace of a distant place, —
Of Lover's Lane, Saint Jo.

Let us sit awhile, beloved,
And dream of the good old days, —
Of the kindly shade which the maples made
Round the stanch but squeaky chaise;
With your head upon my shoulder,
And my arm about you so,
Though exiles, we shall seem to be
In Lover's Lane, Saint Jo.

CRUMPETS AND TEA

THERE are happenings in life that are destined to rise
Like dear, hallowed visions before a man's eyes;
And the passage of years shall not dim in the least
The glory and joy of our Sabbath-day feast, —
The Sabbath-day luncheon that's spread for us three, —
My worthy companions, Teresa and Leigh,
And me, all so hungry for crumpets and tea.

There are cynics who say with invidious zest
That a crumpet's a thing that will never digest;
But I happen to *know* that a crumpet is prime
For digestion, if only you give it its time.
Or if, by a chance, it should *not* quite agree,
Why, who would begrudge a physician his fee
For plying his trade upon crumpets and tea?

To toast crumpets quite *à la mode*, I require
A proper long fork and a proper quick fire;
And when they are browned, without further ado,
I put on the butter, that soaks through and through.
And meantime Teresa, directed by Leigh,
Compounds and pours out a rich brew for us three;
And so we sit down to our crumpets – and tea.

A hand-organ grinds in the street a weird bit, —
Confound those Italians! I wish they would quit
Interrupting our feast with their dolorous airs,
Suggestive of climbing the heavenly stairs.
(It's thoughts of the future, as all will agree,
That we fain would dismiss from our bosoms when we
Sit down to discussion of crumpets and tea!)

The Sabbath-day luncheon whereof I now speak
Quite answers its purpose the rest of the week;
Yet with the next Sabbath I wait for the bell
Announcing the man who has crumpets to sell;
Then I scuttle downstairs in a frenzy of glee,
And purchase for sixpence enough for us three,
Who hunger and hanker for crumpets and tea.

But soon – ah! too soon – I must bid a farewell
To joys that succeed to the sound of that bell,
Must hie me away from the dank, foggy shore
That's filled me with colic and – yearnings for more!
Then the cruel, the heartless, the conscienceless sea
Shall bear me afar from Teresa and Leigh
And the other twin friendships of crumpets and tea.

Yet often, ay, ever, before my wan eyes
That Sabbath-day luncheon of old shall arise.
My stomach, perhaps, shall improve by the change,
Since crumpets it seems to prefer at long range;
But, oh, how my palate will hanker to be

In London again with Teresa and Leigh,
Enjoying the rapture of crumpets and tea!

AN IMITATION OF DR. WATTS

THROUGH all my life the poor shall find
In me a constant friend;
And on the meek of every kind
My mercy shall attend.

The dumb shall never call on me
In vain for kindly aid;
And in my hands the blind shall see
A bounteous alms displayed.

In all their walks the lame shall know
And feel my goodness near;
And on the deaf will I bestow
My gentlest words of cheer.

'Tis by such pious works as these,
Which I delight to do,
That men their fellow-creatures please,
And please their Maker too.

INTRY-MINTRY

WILLIE and Bess, Georgie and May, —
Once as these children were hard at play,
An old man, hoary and tottering, came
And watched them playing their pretty game.
He seemed to wonder, while standing there,
What the meaning thereof could be.
Aha, but the old man yearned to share
Of the little children's innocent glee,
As they circled around with laugh and shout,
And told this rhyme at counting out:
"Intry-mintry, cutrey-corn,
Apple-seed and apple-thorn,
Wire, brier, limber, lock,
Twelve geese in a flock;
Some flew east, some flew west,
Some flew over the cuckoo's nest."

Willie and Bess, Georgie and May, —
Ah, the mirth of that summer day!
'Twas Father Time who had come to share
The innocent joy of those children there.
He learned betimes the game they played,
And into their sport with them went he, —
How *could* the children have been afraid,

Since little they recked who he might be?
They laughed to hear old Father Time
Mumbling that curious nonsense rhyme
Of intry-mintry, cutrey-corn,
Apple-seed and apple-thorn,
Wire, brier, limber, lock,
Twelve geese in a flock;
Some flew east, some flew west,
Some flew over the cuckoo's nest.

Willie and Bess, Georgie and May,
And joy of summer, – where are they?
The grim old man still standeth near,
Crooning the song of a far-off year;
And into the winter I come alone,
Cheered by that mournful requiem,
Soothed by the dolorous monotone
That shall count me off as it counted them, —
The solemn voice of old Father Time,
Chanting the homely nursery rhyme
He learned of the children a summer morn,
When, with "apple-seed and apple-thorn,"
Life was full of the dulcet cheer
That bringeth the grace of heaven anear:
The sound of the little ones hard at play, —
Willie and Bess, Georgie and May.

MODJESKY AS CAMEEL

AFORE we went to Denver we had heerd the Tabor Grand,
Allowed by critics ez the finest opry in the land;
And, roundin' up at Denver in the fall of '81,
Well heeled in p'int uv looker 'nd a-pinin' for some fun,
We told Bill Bush that we wuz fixed quite comf'table for
wealth,
And hadn't struck that altitood entirely for our health.
You see we knew Bill Bush at Central City years ago;
(An' a whiter man than that same Bill you could not wish to
know!)

Bill run the Grand for Tabor, 'nd he gin us two a deal
Ez how we really otter see Modjesky ez Cameel.

Three-Fingered Hoover stated that he'd great deal ruther go
To call on Charley Sampson than frequent a opry show.
"The queen uv tradegy," sez he, "is wot I've never seen,
And I reckon there is more for *me* in some other kind uv
queen."

"Git out!" sez Bill, disgusted-like, "and can't you never find
A pleasure in the things uv life wich ellervates the mind?
You've set around in Casey's restawraw a year or more,
An' heerd ol' Vere de Blaw perform shef doovers by the score,
Only to come down here among us *tong* an' say you feel
You'd ruther take in faro than a opry like 'Cameel'!"

But it seems it wurn't no opry, but a sort uv foreign play,
With a heap uv talk an' dressin' that wuz both *dekollytay*.
A young chap sparks a gal, who's caught a dook that's old an'
wealthy, —

She has a cold 'nd faintin' fits, and is gin'rally onhealthy.
She says she has a record; but the young chap doesn't mind,
And it looks ez if the feller wuz a proper likely kind
Until his old man sneaks around 'nd makes a dirty break,
And the young one plays the sucker 'nd gives the girl the
shake.

"Armo! Armo!" she hollers; but he flings her on the floor,
And says he ainter goin' to have no truck with her no more.

At that Three-Fingered Hoover says, "I'll chip into this game,
And see if Red Hoss Mountain cannot reconstruct the same.

I won't set by an' see the feelin's uv a lady hurt, —
Gol durn a critter, anyhow, that does a woman dirt!"

He riz up like a giant in that little painted pen,
And stepped upon the platform with the women-folks 'nd
men;

Across the trough of gaslights he bounded like a deer,
An' grabbed Armo an' hove him through the landscape in the
rear;

And then we seen him shed his hat an' reverently kneel,
An' put his strong arms tenderly around the gal Cameel.

A-standin' in his stockin' feet, his height wuz six foot three,
And a huskier man than Hoover wuz you could not hope to

see.

He downed Lafe Dawson wrasslin'; and one night I seen him
lick

Three Cornish miners that come into camp from Roarin'
Crick

To clean out Casey's restawraw an' do the town, they said.

He could whip his weight in wildcats, an' paint whole
townships red,

But good to helpless folks and weak, – a brave and manly
heart

A cyclone couldn't phase, but any child could rend apart;

Jest like the mountain pine, wich dares the storm that howls
along,

But rocks the winds uv summer-time, an' sings a soothin'
song.

"Cameel," sez he, "your record is ag'in you, I'll allow,

But, bein' you're a woman, you'll git justice anyhow;

So, if you say you're sorry, and intend to travel straight, —

Why, never mind that other chap with which you meant to
mate, —

I'll marry you myself, and take you back to-morrow night

To the camp on Red Hoss Mountain, where the boys'll treat
you white,

Where Casey runs a tabble dote, and folks are brave 'nd true,

Where there ain't no ancient history to bother me or you,

Where there ain't no law but honesty, no evidence but facts,

Where between the verdick and the rope there ain't no *onter*
acts."

I wuz mighty proud of Hoover; but the folks began to shout
That the feller was intrudin', and would some one put him out.
"Well, no; I reckon not," says I, or words to that effect,
Ez I perduced a argument I thought they might respect, —
A long an' harnsome weepson I'd pre-empted when I come
Out West (its cartridges wuz big an' juicy ez a plum),
Wich, when persented properly, wuz very apt to sway
The popular opinion in a most persuasive way.
"Well, no; I reckon not," says I; but I didn't say no more,
Observin' that there wuz a ginral movement towards the door.

First Dr. Lemen he allowed that he had got to go
And see a patient he jest heerd wuz lyin' very low;
An' Charlie Toll riz up an' said he guessed he'd jine the Dock,
An' go to see a client wich wuz waitin' round the block;
John Arkins reckollected he had interviews to write,
And previous engagements hurried Cooper from our sight;
Cal Cole went out to buy a hoss, Fred Skiff and Belford too;
And Stapleton remembered he had heaps uv work to do.
Somehow or other every one wuz full of business then;
Leastwise, they all vamoosed, and didn't bother us again.

I reckon that Willard Morse an' Bush come runnin' in,
A-hollerin', "Oh, wot two idiots you durned fools have been!"
I reckon that they allowed we'd made a big mistake, —
They otter knowed us tenderfoots wuz sure to make a break!
An', while Modjesky stated we wuz somewhat off our base,
I half opined she liked it, by the look upon her face.

I reckon that Hoover regretted he done wrong
In throwin' that there actor through a vista ten miles long.
I reckon we all shuck hands, and ordered vin frappay, —
And I never shall forget the head I had on me next day!

I haven't seen Modjesky since; I'm hopin' to again.
She's goin' to show in Denver soon; I'll go to see her then.
An' may be I shall speak to her, wich if I do 'twill be
About the old friend restin' by the mighty Western sea, —
A simple man, perhaps, but good ez gold and true ez steel;
He could whip his weight in wildcats, and you never heerd
him squeal;
Good to the helpless and the weak; a brave an' manly heart
A cyclone couldn't phase, but any child could rend apart;
So like the mountain pine, that dares the storm wich sweeps
along,
But rocks the winds uv summer-time, an' sings a soothin'
song.

TELLING THE BEES

OUT of the house where the slumberer lay
Grandfather came one summer day,
And under the pleasant orchard trees
He spake this wise to the murmuring bees:
"The clover-bloom that kissed her feet
And the posie-bed where she used to play
Have honey store, but none so sweet
As ere our little one went away.
O bees, sing soft, and, bees, sing low;
For she is gone who loved you so."

A wonder fell on the listening bees
Under those pleasant orchard trees,
And in their toil that summer day
Ever their murmuring seemed to say:
"Child, O child, the grass is cool,
And the posies are waking to hear the song
Of the bird that swings by the shaded pool,
Waiting for one that tarrieth long."
'Twas so they called to the little one then,
As if to call her back again.

O gentle bees, I have come to say
That grandfather fell asleep to-day,

And we know by the smile on grandfather's face
He has found his dear one's bidding-place.
So, bees, sing soft, and, bees, sing low,
As over the honey-fields you sweep, —
To the trees abloom and the flowers ablow
Sing of grandfather fast asleep;
And ever beneath these orchard trees
Find cheer and shelter, gentle bees.

THE TEA-GOWN

MY lady has a tea-gown
That is wondrous fair to see, —
It is flounced and ruffed and plaited and puffed,
As a tea-gown ought to be;
And I thought she must be jesting
Last night at supper when
She remarked, by chance, that it came from France,
And had cost but two pounds ten.

Had she told me fifty shillings,
I might (and wouldn't you?)
Have referred to that dress in a way folks express
By an eloquent dash or two;
But the guileful little creature
Knew well her tactics when
She casually said that that dream in red
Had cost but two pounds ten.

Yet our home is all the brighter
For that dainty, sensient thing,
That floats away where it properly may,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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