

VARIOUS

POEMS TEACHERS ASK
FOR, BOOK TWO

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«Public Domain»

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PREFACE

In homely phrase, this is a sort of "second helping" of a dish that has pleased the taste of thousands. Our first collection of *Poems Teachers Ask For* was the response to a demand for such a book, and this present volume is the response to a demand for "more." In Book One it was impracticable to use all of the many poems entitled to inclusion on the basis of their being desired. We are constantly in receipt of requests that certain selections be printed in NORMAL INSTRUCTOR-PRIMARY PLANS on the page "Poems Our Readers Have Asked For." More than two hundred of these were chosen for Book One, and more than two hundred others, as much desired as those in the earlier volume, are included in Book Two.

Because of copyright restrictions, we often have been unable to present, in magazine form, verse of large popular appeal. By special arrangement, a number of such poems were included in Book One of *Poems Teachers Ask For*, and many more are given in the pages that follow. Acknowledgment is made below to publishers and authors for courteous permission to reprint in this volume material which they control:

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THE PUBLISHERS.

**POEMS TEACHERS ASK FOR
BOOK TWO**

Home

It takes a heap o' livin' in a house t' make it home,
A heap o' sun an' shadder, an' ye sometimes have t' roam
Afore ye really 'preciate the things ye left behind,
An' hunger fer 'em somehow, with 'em allus on yer mind.
It don't make any differunce how rich ye get t' be,
How much yer chairs an' tables cost, how great yer luxury;
It ain't home t' ye, though it be the palace of a king,
Until somehow yer soul is sort o' wrapped 'round everything.

Home ain't a place that gold can buy or get up in a minute;
Afore it's home there's got t' be a heap o' livin' in it:
Within the walls there's got t' be some babies born, and then
Right there ye've got t' bring 'em up t' women good, an' men;
And gradjerly, as time goes on ye find ye wouldn't part
With anything they ever used—they've grown into yer heart;
The old high chairs, the playthings, too, the little shoes they wore
Ye hoard; an' if ye could ye'd keep the thumbmarks on the door.

Ye've got t' weep t' make it home, ye've got t' sit and sigh
An' watch beside a loved one's bed, an' know that Death is nigh;
An' in the stillness o' the night t' see Death's angel come,
An' close the eyes o' her that smiled, an' leave her sweet voice dumb.
Fer these are scenes that grip the heart, an' when yer tears are dried,
Ye find the home is dearer than it was, an' sanctified;
An' tuggin' at ye always are the pleasant memories
O' her that was an' is no more—ye can't escape from these.

Ye've got t' sing and dance fer years, ye've got t' romp an' play,
An' learn t' love the things ye have by usin' 'em each day;
Even the roses 'round the porch must blossom year by year
Afore they 'come a part o' ye, suggestin' someone dear
Who used t' love 'em long ago, an' trained 'em jes' t' run
The way they do, so's they would get the early mornin' sun;
Ye've got t' love each brick an' stone from cellar up t' dome:
It takes a heap o' livin' in a house f' make it home.

Edgar A. Guest.

The House with Nobody In It

Whenever I walk to Suffern along the Erie track
I go by a poor old farm-house with its shingles broken and black;
I suppose I've passed it a hundred times, but I always stop for a minute
And look at the house, the tragic house, the house with nobody in it.

I've never seen a haunted house, but I hear there are such things;
That they hold the talk of spirits, their mirth and sorrowings.
I know that house isn't haunted and I wish it were, I do,
For it wouldn't be so lonely if it had a ghost or two.

This house on the road to Suffern needs a dozen panes of glass,
And somebody ought to weed the walk and take a scythe to the grass.
It needs new paint and shingles and vines should be trimmed and tied,
But what it needs most of all is some people living inside.

If I had a bit of money and all my debts were paid,
I'd put a gang of men to work with brush and saw and spade.
I'd buy that place and fix it up the way that it used to be,
And I'd find some people who wanted a home and give it to them free.

Now a new home standing empty with staring window and door
Looks idle perhaps and foolish, like a hat on its block in the store,
But there's nothing mournful about it, it cannot be sad and lone
For the lack of something within it that it has never known.

But a house that has done what a house should do, a house that has
sheltered life,
That has put its loving wooden arms around a man and his wife,
A house that has echoed a baby's laugh and helped up his stumbling
feet,
Is the saddest sight, when it's left alone, that ever your eyes could meet.

So whenever I go to Suffern along the Erie track
I never go by the empty house without stopping and looking back,
Yet it hurts me to look at the crumbling roof and the shutters fallen
apart,
For I can't help thinking the poor old house is a house with a broken
heart.

Joyce Kilmer.

Color in the Wheat

Like liquid gold the wheat field lies,
A marvel of yellow and russet and green,
That ripples and runs, that floats and flies,
With the subtle shadows, the change, the sheen,
That play in the golden hair of a girl,—
A ripple of amber—a flare
Of light sweeping after—a curl
In the hollows like swirling feet
Of fairy waltzers, the colors run
To the western sun
Through the deeps of the ripening wheat.

Broad as the fleckless, soaring sky,
Mysterious, fair as the moon-led sea,
The vast plain flames on the dazzled eye
Under the fierce sun's alchemy.
The slow hawk stoops
To his prey in the deeps;
The sunflower droops
To the lazy wave; the wind sleeps—
Then swirling in dazzling links and loops,
A riot of shadow and shine,
A glory of olive and amber and wine,
To the westering sun the colors run
Through the deeps of the ripening wheat.

O glorious land! My western land,
Outspread beneath the setting sun!
Once more amid your swells, I stand,
And cross your sod-lands dry and dun.
I hear the jocund calls of men
Who sweep amid the ripened grain
With swift, stern reapers; once again
The evening splendor floods the plain,
The crickets' chime
Makes pauseless rhyme,
And toward the sun,
The colors run
Before the wind's feet
In the wheat!

Hamlin Garland.

The Broken Pinion

I walked through the woodland meadows,
Where sweet the thrushes sing;
And I found on a bed of mosses
A bird with a broken wing.
I healed its wound, and each morning
It sang its old sweet strain,
But the bird with a broken pinion
Never soared as high again.

I found a young life broken
By sin's seductive art;
And touched with a Christlike pity,
I took him to my heart.
He lived with a noble purpose
And struggled not in vain;
But the life that sin had stricken
Never soared as high again.

But the bird with a broken pinion
Kept another from the snare;
And the life that sin had stricken
Raised another from despair.
Each loss has its compensation,
There is healing for every pain;
But the bird with a broken pinion
Never soars as high again.

Hezekiah Butterworth.

Jamie Douglas

It was in the days when Claverhouse
Was scouring moor and glen,
To change, with fire and bloody sword,
The faith of Scottish men.

They had made a covenant with the Lord
Firm in their faith to bide,
Nor break to Him their plighted word,
Whatever might betide.

The sun was well-nigh setting,
When o'er the heather wild,
And up the narrow mountain-path,
Alone there walked a child.

He was a bonny, blithesome lad,
Sturdy and strong of limb—
A father's pride, a mother's love,
Were fast bound up in him.

His bright blue eyes glanced fearless round,
His step was firm and light;
What was it underneath his plaid
His little hands grasped tight?

It was bannocks which, that very morn,
His mother made with care.
From out her scanty store of meal;
And now, with many a prayer,

Had sent by Jamie her ane boy,
A trusty lad and brave,
To good old Pastor Tammons Roy,
Now hid in yonder cave,

And for whom the bloody Claverhouse
Had hunted long in vain,
And swore they would not leave that glen
Till old Tam Roy was slain.

So Jamie Douglas went his way
With heart that knew no fear;
He turned the great curve in the rock,
Nor dreamed that death was near.

And there were bloody Claverhouse men,
Who laughed aloud with glee,
When trembling now within their power,
The frightened child they see.

He turns to flee, but all in vain,
They drag him back apace
To where their cruel leader stands,
And set them face to face.

The cakes concealed beneath his plaid
Soon tell the story plain—
"It is old Tam Roy the cakes are for,"
Exclaimed the angry man.

"Now guide me to his hiding place
And I will let you go."
But Jamie shook his yellow curls,
And stoutly answered—"No!"

"I'll drop you down the mountain-side,
And there upon the stones
The old gaunt wolf and carrion crow
Shall battle for your bones."

And in his brawny, strong right hand
He lifted up the child,
And held him where the clefted rocks
Formed a chasm deep and wild

So deep it was, the trees below
Like stunted bushes seemed.
Poor Jamie looked in frightened maze,
It seemed some horrid dream.

He looked up at the blue sky above
Then at the men near by;
Had *they* no little boys at home,
That they could let him die?

But no one spoke and no one stirred,
Or lifted hand to save
From such a fearful, frightful death,
The little lad so brave.

"It is woeful deep," he shuddering cried,
"But oh! I canna tell,
So drop me down then, if you will—
It is nae so deep as hell!"

A childish scream, a faint, dull sound,
Oh! Jamie Douglas true,
Long, long within that lonely cave
Shall Tam Roy wait for you.

Long for your welcome coming
Waits the mother on the moor,
And watches and calls, "Come, Jamie, lad,"
Through the half-open door.

No more adown the rocky path
You come with fearless tread,
Or, on moor or mountain, take
The good man's daily bread.

But up in heaven the shining ones
A wondrous story tell,
Of a child snatched up from a rocky gulf
That is nae so deep as hell.

And there before the great white throne,
Forever blessed and glad,
His mother dear and old Tam Roy
Shall meet their bonny lad.

The Ensign Bearer

Never mind me, Uncle Jared, never mind my bleeding breast!
They are charging in the valley and you're needed with the rest.
All the day long from its dawning till you saw your kinsman fall,
You have answered fresh and fearless to our brave commander's call;
And I would not rob my country of your gallant aid to-night,
Though your presence and your pity stay my spirit in its flight.

All along that quivering column see the death steed trampling down
Men whose deeds this day are worthy of a kingdom and a crown.
Prithee hasten, Uncle Jared, what's the bullet in my breast
To that murderous storm of fire raining tortures on the rest?
See! the bayonets flash and falter—look! the foe begins to win;
See! oh, see our falling comrades! God! the ranks are closing in.

Hark! there's quickening in the distance and a thundering in the air,
Like the roaring of a lion just emerging from his lair.
There's a cloud of something yonder fast unrolling like a scroll—
Quick! oh, quick! if it be succor that can save the cause a soul!
Look! a thousand thirsty bayonets are flashing down the vale,
And a thousand thirsty riders dashing onward like a gale!

Raise me higher, Uncle Jared, place the ensign in my hand!
I am strong enough to float it while you cheer that flying band;
Louder! louder! shout for Freedom with prolonged and vigorous breath
—

Shout for Liberty and Union, and the victory over death!—
See! they catch the stirring numbers and they swell them to the breeze
—

Cap and plume and starry banner waving proudly through the trees.

Mark our fainting comrades rally, see that drooping column rise!
I can almost see the fire newly kindled in their eyes.
Fresh for conflict, nerved to conquer, see them charging on the foe—
Face to face with deadly meaning—shot and shell and trusty blow.
See the thinned ranks wildly breaking—see them scatter to the sun—
I can die, Uncle Jared, for the glorious day is won!

But there's something, something pressing with a numbness on my
heart,

And my lips with mortal dumbness fail the burden to impart.
Oh I tell you, Uncle Jared, there is something back of all
That a soldier cannot part with when he heeds his country's call!
Ask the mother what, in dying, sends her yearning spirit back
Over life's rough, broken marches, where she's pointed out the track.

Ask the dear ones gathered nightly round the shining household hearth,
What to them is dearer, better, than the brightest things of earth,
Ask that dearer one whose loving, like a ceaseless vestal flame,
Sets my very soul a-glowing at the mention of her name;
Ask her why the loved in dying feels her spirit linked with his
In a union death but strengthens, she will tell you what it is.

And there's something, Uncle Jared, you may tell her if you will—
That the precious flag she gave me, I have kept unsullied still.
And—this touch of pride forgive me—where death sought our gallant
host—
Where our stricken lines were weakest, there it ever waved the most.
Bear it back and tell her fondly, brighter, purer, steadier far,
'Mid the crimson tide of battle, shone my life's fast setting star.

But forbear, dear Uncle Jared, when there's something more to tell,
When her lips with rapid blanching bid you answer how I fell;
Teach your tongue the trick of slighting, though 'tis faithful to the rest,
Lest it say her brother's bullet is the bullet in my breast;
But if it must be that she learn it despite your tenderest care,
'Twill soothe her bleeding heart to know my bayonet pricked the air.

Life is ebbing, Uncle Jared, my enlistment endeth here;
Death, the Conqueror, has drafted—I can no more volunteer,—
But I hear the roll call yonder and I go with willing feet—
Through the shadows of the valley where victorious armies meet,
Raise the ensign, Uncle Jared, let its dear folds o'er me fall—
Strength and Union for my country—and God's banner over all.

The Real Riches

Every coin of earthly treasure
We have lavished upon earth
For our simple worldly pleasure
May be reckoned something worth;
For the spending was not losing,
Tho' the purchase were but small;
It has perished with the using.
We have had it,—that is all!

All the gold we leave behind us,
When we turn to dust again,
Tho' our avarice may blind us,
We have gathered quite in vain;
Since we neither can direct it,
By the winds of fortune tost,
Nor in other worlds expect it;
What we hoarded we have lost.

But each merciful oblation—
Seed of pity wisely sown,
What we gave in self-negation,
We may safely call our own;
For the treasure freely given
Is the treasure that we hoard,
Since the angels keep in heaven,
What is lent unto the Lord.

John G. Saxe.

The Polish Boy

Whence come those shrieks so wild and shrill,
That cut, like blades of steel, the air,
Causing the creeping blood to chill
With the sharp cadence of despair?

Again they come, as if a heart
Were cleft in twain by one quick blow,
And every string had voice apart
To utter its peculiar woe.
Whence came they? From yon temple, where
An altar, raised for private prayer,
Now forms the warrior's marble bed
Who Warsaw's gallant armies led.

The dim funereal tapers throw
A holy luster o'er his brow,
And burnish with their rays of light
The mass of curls that gather bright
Above the haughty brow and eye
Of a young boy that's kneeling by.

What hand is that, whose icy press
Clings to the dead with death's own grasp,
But meets no answering caress?
No thrilling fingers seek its clasp.
It is the hand of her whose cry
Rang wildly, late, upon the air,
When the dead warrior met her eye
Outstretched upon the altar there.

With pallid lip and stony brow
She murmurs forth her anguish now.
But hark! the tramp of heavy feet
Is heard along the bloody street;
Nearer and nearer yet they come,
With clanking arms and noiseless drum.
Now whispered curses, low and deep,
Around the holy temple creep;
The gate is burst; a ruffian band
Rush in, and savagely demand,
With brutal voice and oath profane,
The startled boy for exile's chain.

The mother sprang with gesture wild,
And to her bosom clasped her child;

Then, with pale cheek and flashing eye,
Shouted with fearful energy,
"Back, ruffians, back! nor dare to tread
Too near the body of my dead;
Nor touch the living boy; I stand
Between him and your lawless band.
Take *me*, and bind these arms—these hands,—
With Russia's heaviest iron bands,
And drag me to Siberia's wild
To perish, if 'twill save my child!"

"Peace, woman, peace!" the leader cried,
Tearing the pale boy from her side,
And in his ruffian grasp he bore
His victim to the temple door.
"One moment!" shrieked the mother; "one!
Will land or gold redeem my son?
Take heritage, take name, take all,
But leave him free from Russian thrall!
Take these!" and her white arms and hands
She stripped of rings and diamond bands,
And tore from braids of long black hair
The gems that gleamed like starlight there;
Her cross of blazing rubies, last,
Down at the Russian's feet she cast.
He stooped to seize the glittering store;—
Up springing from the marble floor,
The mother, with a cry of joy,
Snatched to her leaping heart the boy.
But no! the Russian's iron grasp
Again undid the mother's clasp.
Forward she fell, with one long cry
Of more than mortal agony.

But the brave child is roused at length,
And, breaking from the Russian's hold,
He stands, a giant in the strength
Of his young spirit, fierce and bold.
Proudly he towers; his flashing eye,
So blue, and yet so bright,
Seems kindled from the eternal sky,
So brilliant is its light.

His curling lips and crimson cheeks
Foretell the thought before he speaks;
With a full voice of proud command
He turned upon the wondering band.
"Ye hold me not! no! no, nor can;
This hour has made the boy a man.

I knelt before my slaughtered sire,
Nor felt one throb of vengeful ire.
I wept upon his marble brow,
Yes, wept! I was a child; but now
My noble mother, on her knee,
Hath done the work of years for me!"

He drew aside his broidered vest,
And there, like slumbering serpent's crest,
The jeweled haft of poniard bright
Glittered a moment on the sight.
"Ha! start ye back? Fool! coward! knave!
Think ye my noble father's glaive
Would drink the life-blood of a slave?
The pearls that on the handle flame
Would blush to rubies in their shame;
The blade would quiver in thy breast
Ashamed of such ignoble rest.
No! thus I rend the tyrant's chain,
And fling him back a boy's disdain!"

A moment, and the funeral light
Flashed on the jeweled weapon bright;
Another, and his young heart's blood
Leaped to the floor, a crimson flood.
Quick to his mother's side he sprang,
And on the air his clear voice rang:
"Up, mother, up! I'm free! I'm free!
The choice was death or slavery.
Up, mother, up! Look on thy son!
His freedom is forever won;
And now he waits one holy kiss
To bear his father home in bliss;
One last embrace, one blessing,—one!
To prove thou knowest, approvest thy son.
What! silent yet? Canst thou not feel
My warm blood o'er thy heart congeal?
Speak, mother, speak! lift up thy head!
What! silent still? Then art thou dead:
—Great God, I thank thee! Mother, I
Rejoice with thee,—and thus—to die."
One long, deep breath, and his pale head
Lay on his mother's bosom,—dead.

Ann S. Stephens.

The Height of the Ridiculous

I wrote some lines once on a time
In wondrous merry mood,
And thought, as usual, men would say
They were exceeding good.

They were so queer, so very queer,
I laughed as I would die;
Albeit, in the general way,
A sober man am I.

I called my servant, and he came;
How kind it was of him
To mind a slender man like me,
He of the mighty limb!

"These to the printer," I exclaimed,
And, in my humorous way,
I added (as a trifling jest),
"There'll be the devil to pay."

He took the paper, and I watched,
And saw him peep within;
At the first line he read, his face
Was all upon the grin.

He read the next; the grin grew broad,
And shot from ear to ear;
He read the third; a chuckling noise
I now began to hear.

The fourth; he broke into a roar;
The fifth; his waistband split;
The sixth; he burst five buttons off,
And tumbled in a fit.

Ten days and nights, with sleepless eye,
I watched that wretched man,
And since, I never dare to write
As funny as I can.

Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Excelsior

The shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,
A banner with the strange device,
Excelsior!

His brow was sad his eye beneath
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath,
And like a silver clarion rung
The accents of that unknown tongue,
Excelsior!

In happy homes he saw the light
Of household fires gleam warm and bright;
Above, the spectral glaciers shone,
And from his lips escaped a groan,
Excelsior!

"Try not the Pass!" the old man said;
"Dark lowers the tempest overhead,
The roaring torrent is deep and wide!"
And loud the clarion voice replied,
Excelsior!

"O stay," the maiden said, "and rest
Thy weary head upon this breast!"
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,
But still he answered, with a sigh,
Excelsior!

"Beware the pine-tree's withered branch!
Beware the awful avalanche!"
This was the peasant's last Good-night,
A voice replied, far up the height,
Excelsior!

At break of day, as heavenward
The pious monks of Saint Bernard
Uttered the oft-repeated prayer,
A voice cried through the startled air,
Excelsior!

A traveller, by the faithful hound,
Half-buried in the snow was found,
Still grasping in his hand of ice

That banner with the strange device,
Excelsior!

There in the twilight cold and gray,
Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,
And from the sky, serene and far,
A voice fell, like a falling star,
Excelsior!

Henry W. Longfellow.

The Bivouac of the Dead

The muffled drum's sad roll has beat
The soldier's last tattoo;
No more on life's parade shall meet
That brave and fallen few.
On fame's eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And Glory guards with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead.

No rumor of the foe's advance
Now swells upon the wind;
No troubled thought at midnight haunts
Of loved ones left behind;
No vision of the morrow's strife
The warrior's dream alarms;
No braying horn or screaming fife
At dawn shall call to arms.

Their shivered swords are red with rust;
Their plumèd heads are bowed;
Their haughty banner, trailed in dust,
Is now their martial shroud;
And plenteous funeral tears have washed
The red stains from each brow;
And the proud forms, by battle gashed,
Are free from anguish now.

The neighing troop, the flashing blade,
The bugle's stirring blast,
The charge, the dreadful cannonade,
The din and shout are passed.
Nor war's wild note, nor glory's peal,
Shall thrill with fierce delight
Those breasts that nevermore shall feel
The rapture of the fight.

Like a fierce northern hurricane
That sweeps his great plateau,
Flushed with the triumph yet to gain,
Came down the serried foe,
Who heard the thunder of the fray
Break o'er the field beneath,
Knew well the watchword of that day
Was "Victory or Death!"

Full many a mother's breath hath swept
O'er Angostura's plain,
And long the pitying sky hath wept
Above its moulder'd slain.
The raven's scream, or eagle's flight,
Or shepherd's pensive lay,
Alone now wake each solemn height
That frowned o'er that dread fray.

Sons of the "dark and bloody ground,"
Ye must not slumber there,
Where stranger steps and tongues resound
Along the heedless air!
Your own proud land's heroic soil
Shall be your fitter grave;
She claims from war its richest spoil,—
The ashes of her brave.

Thus 'neath their parent turf they rest,
Far from the gory field,
Borne to a Spartan mother's breast
On many a bloody shield.
The sunshine of their native sky
Smiles sadly on them here,
And kindred eyes and hearts watch by
The heroes' sepulcher.

Rest on, embalmed and sainted dead!
Dear as the blood ye gave;
No impious footsteps here shall tread
The herbage of your grave;
Nor shall your glory be forgot
While fame her record keeps,
Or honor points the hallowed spot
Where Valor proudly sleeps.

Yon marble minstrel's voiceless stone
In deathless song shall tell,
When many a vanished year hath flown,
The story how ye fell.
Nor wreck, nor change, nor winter's blight,
Nor time's remorseless doom,
Can dim one ray of holy light
That gilds your glorious tomb.

Theodore O'Hara.

Children

Come to me, O ye children!
For I hear you at your play,
And the questions that perplexed me
Have vanished quite away.

Ye open the eastern windows,
That look towards the sun,
Where thoughts are singing swallows
And the brooks of morning run.

In your hearts are the birds and the sunshine,
In your thoughts the brooklet's flow
But in mine is the wind of Autumn
And the first fall of the snow.

Ah! what would the world be to us
If the children were no more?
We should dread the desert behind us
Worse than the dark before.

What the leaves are to the forest,
With light and air for food,
Ere their sweet and tender juices
Have been hardened into wood,—

That to the world are children;
Through them it feels the glow
Of a brighter and sunnier climate
Than reaches the trunks below.

Come to me, O ye children!
And whisper in my ear
What the birds and the winds are singing
In your sunny atmosphere.

For what are all our contrivings,
And the wisdom of our books,
When compared with your caresses,
And the gladness of your looks?

Ye are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said;
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead.

Henry W. Longfellow.

The Eve of Waterloo

(The battle of Waterloo occurred June 18, 1815)

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her beauty and her chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men.
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell.

Did ye not hear it?—No; 'twas but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street:
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when youth and pleasure meet
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet—
But, hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! arm! it is—it is the cannon's opening roar.

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness;
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated: who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise!

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder, peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering with white lips, "The foe! they come! they come!"

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,

Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal sound of strife,
The morn the marshaling in arms,—the day
Battle's magnificently stern array!
The thunder clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is covered thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
Rider and horse—friend, foe—in one red burial blent.

Lord Byron.

The Land Where Hate Should Die

This is the land where hate should die—
No feuds of faith, no spleen of race,
No darkly brooding fear should try
Beneath our flag to find a place.
Lo! every people here has sent
Its sons to answer freedom's call,
Their lifeblood is the strong cement
That builds and binds the nation's wall.

This is the land where hate should die—
Though dear to me my faith and shrine,
I serve my country when I
Respect the creeds that are not mine.
He little loves his land who'd cast
Upon his neighbor's word a doubt,
Or cite the wrongs of ages past
From present rights to bar him out.

This is the land where hate should die—
This is the land where strife should cease,
Where foul, suspicious fear should fly
Before the light of love and peace.
Then let us purge from poisoned thought
That service to the state we give,
And so be worthy as we ought
Of this great land in which we live.

Denis A. McCarthy.

Trouble In the "Amen Corner"

'Twas a stylish congregation, that of Theophrastus Brown,
And its organ was the finest and the biggest in the town,
And the chorus—all the papers favorably commented on it,
For 'twas said each female member had a forty-dollar bonnet.

Now in the "amen corner" of the church sat Brother Eyer,
Who persisted every Sabbath-day in singing with the choir;
He was poor but genteel-looking, and his heart as snow was white,
And his old face beamed with sweetness when he sang with all his
might.

His voice was cracked and broken, age had touched his vocal chords,
And nearly every Sunday he would mispronounce the words
Of the hymns, and 'twas no wonder, he was old and nearly blind,
And the choir rattling onward always left him far behind.

The chorus stormed and blustered, Brother Eyer sang too slow,
And then he used the tunes in vogue a hundred years ago;
At last the storm-cloud burst, and the church was told, in fine,
That the brother must stop singing, or the choir would resign.

Then the pastor called together in the vestry-room one day
Seven influential members who subscribe more than they pay,
And having asked God's guidance in a printed pray'r or two,
They put their heads together to determine what to do.

They debated, thought, suggested, till at last "dear Brother York,"
Who last winter made a million on a sudden rise in pork,
Rose and moved that a committee wait at once on Brother Eyer,
And proceed to rake him lively "for disturbin' of the choir."

Said he: "In that 'ere organ I've invested quite a pile,
And we'll sell it if we cannot worship in the latest style;
Our Philadelpy tenor tells me 'tis the hardest thing
Fer to make God understand him when the brother tries to sing.

"We've got the biggest organ, the best-dressed choir in town,
We pay the steepest sal'ry to our pastor, Brother Brown;
But if we must humor ignorance because it's blind and old—
If the choir's to be pestered, I will seek another fold."

Of course the motion carried, and one day a coach and four,
With the latest style of driver, rattled up to Eyer's door;
And the sleek, well-dress'd committee, Brothers Sharkey, York and
Lamb,

As they crossed the humble portal took good care to miss the jamb.

They found the choir's great trouble sitting in his old arm chair,
And the Summer's golden sunbeams lay upon his thin white hair;
He was singing "Rock of Ages" in a cracked voice and low
But the angels understood him, 'twas all he cared to know.

Said York: "We're here, dear brother, with the vestry's approbation
To discuss a little matter that affects the congregation";
"And the choir, too," said Sharkey, giving Brother York a nudge,
"And the choir, too!" he echoed with the graveness of a judge.

"It was the understanding when we bargained for the chorus
That it was to relieve us, that is, do the singing for us;
If we rupture the agreement, it is very plain, dear brother,
It will leave our congregation and be gobbled by another.

"We don't want any singing except that what we've bought!
The latest tunes are all the rage; the old ones stand for naught;
And so we have decided—are you list'ning, Brother Eyer?—
That you'll have to stop your singin' for it flurrystates the choir."

The old man slowly raised his head, a sign that he did hear,
And on his cheek the trio caught the glitter of a tear;
His feeble hands pushed back the locks white as the silky snow,
As he answered the committee in a voice both sweet and low:

"I've sung the psalms of David nearly eighty years," said he;
"They've been my staff and comfort all along life's dreary way;
I'm sorry I disturb the choir, perhaps I'm doing wrong;
But when my heart is filled with praise, I can't keep back a song.

"I wonder if beyond the tide that's breaking at my feet,
In the far-off heav'nly temple, where the Master I shall greet—
Yes, I wonder when I try to sing the songs of God up high'r,
If the angel band will church me for disturbing heaven's choir."

A silence filled the little room; the old man bowed his head;
The carriage rattled on again, but Brother Eyer was dead!
Yes, dead! his hand had raised the veil the future hangs before us,
And the Master dear had called him to the everlasting chorus.

The choir missed him for a while, but he was soon forgot,
A few church-goers watched the door; the old man entered not.
Far away, his voice no longer cracked, he sang his heart's desires,
Where there are no church committees and no fashionable choirs!

T.C. Harbaugh.

Duty

The sweetest lives are those to duty wed,
Whose deeds, both great and small,
Are close knit strands of an unbroken thread,
Whose love ennobles all.
The world may sound no trumpet, ring no bells;
The book of life, the shining record tells.
Thy love shall chant its own beatitudes,
After its own life-working. A child's kiss
Set on thy singing lips shall make thee glad;
A poor man served by thee shall make thee rich;
A sick man helped by thee shall make thee strong;
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense
Of service thou renderest.

Robert Browning.

The Last Leaf

I saw him once before,
As he passed by the door,
And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said
"They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said,—
Poor old lady, she is dead
Long ago,—
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
In the snow.

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin.
Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
At him here;

But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling.

Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Old Flag Forever

She's up there—Old Glory—where lightnings are sped;
She dazzles the nations with ripples of red;
And she'll wave for us living, or droop o'er us dead,—
The flag of our country forever!

She's up there—Old Glory—how bright the stars stream!
And the stripes like red signals of liberty gleam!
And we dare for her, living, or dream the last dream,
'Neath the flag of our country forever!

She's up there—Old Glory—no tyrant-dealt scars,
No blur on her brightness, no stain on her stars!
The brave blood of heroes hath crimsoned her bars.
She's the flag of our country forever!

Frank L. Stanton.

The Death of the Flowers

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sear.
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the withered leaves lie dead;
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread.
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrub the jay,
And from the wood-top calls the crow, through all the gloomy day.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprang and
stood
In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?
Alas! they all are in their graves; the gentle race of flowers
Are lying in their lowly beds, with the fair and good of ours.
The rain is falling where they lie; but the cold November rain
Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely ones again.

The wind-flower and the violet, they perished long ago,
And the brier-rose and the orchis died amid the summer glow;
But on the hill the golden-rod, and the aster in the wood,
And the yellow sun-flower by the brook, in autumn beauty stood,
Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as falls the plague on men,
And the brightness of their smile was gone from upland, glade and glen.

And now, when comes the calm, mild day, as still such days will come,
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their winter home,
When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all the trees are still,
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the rill,
The south wind searches for the flowers, whose fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.

And then I think of one who in her youthful beauty died,
The fair, meek blossom that grew up and faded by my side,
In the cold, moist earth we laid her when the forest cast the leaf,
And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief;
Yet not unmeet it was that one, like that young friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers.

W.C. Bryant.

The Heritage

The rich man's son inherits lands,
And piles of brick, and stone, and gold,
And he inherits soft white hands,
And tender flesh that fears the cold,
Nor dares to wear a garment old;
A heritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

The rich man's son inherits cares;
The bank may break, the factory burn,
A breath may burst his bubble shares,
And soft white hands could hardly earn
A living that would serve his turn;
A heritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

The rich man's son inherits wants,
His stomach craves for dainty fare;
With sated heart, he hears the pants
Of toiling hinds with brown arms bare,
And wearies in his easy-chair;
A heritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit?
Stout muscles and a sinewy heart,
A hardy frame, a hardier spirit;
King of two hands, he does his part
In every useful toil and art;
A heritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit?
Wishes o'erjoyed with humble things,
A rank, adjudged by toil-won merit,
Content that from employment springs,
A heart that in his labor sings;
A heritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit?
A patience learned of being poor,
Courage, if sorrow come, to bear it,
A fellow-feeling that is sure
To make the outcast bless his door;

A heritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

O rich man's son! there is a toil
That with all others level stands;
Large charity doth never soil,
But only whiten, soft white hands,—
This is the best crop from thy lands;
A heritage it seems to me,
Worth being rich to hold in fee.

O poor man's son! scorn not thy state;
There is worse weariness than thine,
In merely being rich and great;
Toil only gives the soul to shine
And makes rest fragrant and benign;
A heritage, it seems to me,
Worth being poor to hold in fee.

Both heirs to some six feet of sod,
Are equal in the earth at last;
Both, children of the same dear God,
Prove title to your heirship vast
By record of a well-filled past;
A heritage, it seems to me,
Well worth a life to hold in fee.

James Russell Lowell.

The Ballad of East and West

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends
of the earth!

Kamal is out with twenty men to raise the Border side,
And he has lifted the Colonel's mare that is the Colonel's pride:
He has lifted her out of the stable-door between the dawn and the day,
And turned the calkins upon her feet, and ridden her far away.
Then up and spoke the Colonel's son that led a troop of the Guides:
"Is there never a man of all my men can say where Kamal hides?"
Then up and spoke Mahommed Khan, the son of the Ressaldar,
"If ye know the track of the morning-mist, ye know where his pickets
are.

At dust he harries the Abazai—at dawn he is into Bonair,
But he must go by Fort Bukloh to his own place to fare,
So if ye gallop to Fort Bukloh as fast as a bird can fly,
By the favor of God ye may cut him off ere he win to the Tongue of
Jagai,

But if he be passed the Tongue of Jagai, right swiftly turn ye then,
For the length and the breadth of that grisly plain is sown with Kamal's
men.

There is rock to the left, and rock to the right, and low lean thorn
between,

And ye may hear a breech-bolt snick where never a man is seen."
The Colonel's son has taken a horse, and a raw rough dun was he,
With the mouth of a bell and the heart of Hell, and the head of the
gallows-tree.

The Colonel's son to the Fort has won, they bid him stay to eat—
Who rides at the tail of a Border thief, he sits not long at his meat.
He's up and away from Fort Bukloh as fast as he can fly,
Till he was aware of his father's mare in the gut of the Tongue of Jagai,
Till he was aware of his father's mare with Kamal upon her back,
And when he could spy the white of her eye, he made the pistol crack.
He has fired once, he has fired twice, but the whistling ball went wide.
"Ye shoot like a soldier," Kamal said. "Show now if ye can ride."

It's up and over the Tongue of Jagai, as blown dust-devils go,
The dun he fled like a stag of ten, but the mare like a barren doe.
The dun he leaned against the bit and slugged his head above,
But the red mare played with the snaffle-bars, as a maiden plays with
a glove.

There was rock to the left and rock to the right, and low lean thorn
between,

And thrice he heard a breech-bolt snick tho' never a man was seen.

They have ridden the low moon out of the sky, their hoofs drum up
the dawn,

The dun he went like a wounded bull, but the mare like a new-roused
fawn.

The dun he fell at a water-course—in a woful heap fell he,
And Kamal has turned the red mare back, and pulled the rider free.
He has knocked the pistol out of his hand—small room was there to
strive,

"'Twas only by favor of mine," quoth he, "ye rode so long alive:

There was not a rock of twenty mile, there was not a clump of tree,
But covered a man of my own men with his rifle cocked on his knee.
If I had raised my bridle-hand, as I have held it low,

The little jackals that flee so fast, were feasting all in a row:

If I had bowed my head on my breast, as I have held it high,

The kite that whistles above us now were gorged till she could not fly."

Lightly answered the Colonel's son: "Do good to bird and beast,

But count who come for the broken meats before thou makest a feast.

If there should follow a thousand swords to carry my bones away,

Belike the price of a jackal's meal were more than a thief could pay.

They will feed their horse on the standing crop, their men on the
garnered grain,

The thatch of the byres will serve their fires when all the cattle are slain.

But if thou thinkest the price be fair,—thy brethren wait to sup.

The hound is kin to the jackal-spawn, howl, dog, and call them up!

And if thou thinkest the price be high, in steer and gear and stack,

Give me my father's mare again, and I'll fight my own way back!"

Kamal has gripped him by the hand and set him upon his feet.

"No talk shall be of dogs," said he, "when wolf and gray wolf meet.

May I eat dirt if thou hast hurt of me in deed or breath;

What dam of lances brought thee forth to jest at the dawn with Death?"

Lightly answered the Colonel's son: "I hold by the blood of my clan:

Take up the mare of my father's gift—by God, she has carried a man!"

The red mare ran to the Colonel's son, and nuzzled against his breast,

"We be two strong men," said Kamal then, "but she loveth the younger
best.

So she shall go with a lifter's dower, my turquoise-studded rein,

My brodered saddle and saddle-cloth, and silver stirrups twain."

The Colonel's son a pistol drew and held it muzzle-end,

"Ye have taken the one from a foe," said he; "will ye take the mate
from a friend?"

"A gift for a gift," said Kamal straight; "a limb for the risk of a limb.

Thy father has sent his son to me, I'll send my son to him!"

With that he whistled his only son, that dropped from a mountain-crest
—

He trod the ling like a buck in spring, and he looked like a lance in rest.

"Now here is thy master," Kamal said, "who leads a troop of the
Guides,

And thou must ride at his left side as shield on shoulder rides.

Till Death or I cut loose the tie, at camp and board and bed,

Thy life is his—thy fate is to guard him with thy head.
So thou must eat the White Queen's meat, and all her foes are thine,
And thou must harry thy father's hold for the peace of the Border-line,
And thou must make a trooper tough and hack thy way to power—
Belike they will raise thee to Ressaldar when I am hanged in
Peshawur."

They have looked each other between the eyes, and there they found
no fault,

They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on leavened bread
and salt:

They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on fire and fresh-
cut sod,

On the hilt and the haft of the Khyber knife, and the wondrous Names
of God.

The Colonel's son he rides the mare and Kamal's boy the dun,
And two have come back to Fort Bukloh where there went forth but
one.

And when they drew to the Quarter-Guard, full twenty swords flew
clear—

There was not a man but carried his feud with the blood of the
mountaineer.

"Ha' done! ha' done!" said the Colonel's son. "Put up the steel at your
sides!

Last night ye had struck at a Border thief—to-night 'tis a man of the
Guides!"

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the two shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends
of the earth.

Rudyard Kipling.

Annabel Lee

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child, and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea,
But we loved with a love that was more than love,
I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me;
Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we,
Of many far wiser than we;
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee:

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee:
And so all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea,

In her tomb by the sounding sea.

Edgar Allan Poe.

April Showers

There fell an April shower, one night:
Next morning, in the garden-bed,
The crocuses stood straight and gold:
"And they have come," the children said.

There fell an April shower, one night:
Next morning, thro' the woodland spread
The Mayflowers, pink and sweet as youth:
"And they are come," the children said.

There fell an April shower, one night:
Next morning, sweetly, overhead,
The blue-birds sung, the blue-birds sung:
"And they have come," the children said.

Mary E. Wilkins.

The Voice of Spring

I come, I come! ye have called me long;
I come o'er the mountains, with light and song;
Ye may trace my step o'er the waking earth
By the winds which tell of the violet's birth,
By the primrose stars in the shadowy grass,
By the green leaves opening as I pass.

I have breathed on the South, and the chestnut flowers
By thousands have burst from the forest bowers,
And the ancient graves and the fallen fanes
Are veiled with wreaths as Italian plains;
But it is not for me, in my hour of bloom,
To speak of the ruin or the tomb!

I have looked o'er the hills of the stormy North,
And the larch has hung all his tassels forth;
The fisher is out on the sunny sea,
And the reindeer bounds o'er the pastures free,
And the pine has a fringe of softer green,
And the moss looks bright, where my step has been.

I have sent through the wood-paths a glowing sigh,
And called out each voice of the deep blue sky,
From the night-bird's lay through the starry time,
In the groves of the soft Hesperian clime,
To the swan's wild note by the Iceland lakes,
When the dark fir-branch into verdure breaks.

From the streams and founts I have loosed the chain;
They are sweeping on to the silvery main,
They are flashing down from the mountain brows,
They are flinging spray o'er the forest boughs,
They are bursting fresh from their sparry caves,
And the earth resounds with the joy of waves.

Felicia D. Hemans.

The Boys

Has there any old fellow got mixed with the boys?
If there has take him out, without making a noise.
Hang the Almanac's cheat and the Catalogue's spite!
Old Time is a liar! We're twenty tonight!

We're twenty! We're twenty! Who says we are more?
He's tipsy—young jackanapes!—show him the door!
"Gray temples at twenty?"—Yes! *white* if we please;
Where the snowflakes fall thickest there's nothing can freeze!

Was it snowing I spoke of? Excuse the mistake!
Look close—you will see not a sign of a flake!
We want some new garlands for those we have shed,
And these are white roses in place of the red.

We've a trick, we young fellows, you may have been told.
Of talking (in public) as if we were old;
That boy we call "Doctor," and this we call "Judge";
It's a neat little fiction—of course it's all fudge.

That fellow's the "Speaker"—the one on the right;
"Mr. Mayor," my young one, how are you to-night?
That's our "Member of Congress," we say when we chaff;
There's the "Reverend" What's-his-name?—don't make me laugh.

That boy with the grave mathematical look
Made believe he had written a wonderful book,
And the ROYAL SOCIETY thought it was *true*!
So they chose him right in; a good joke it was, too!

There's a boy, we pretend, with a three-decker brain,
That could harness a team with a logical chain;
When he spoke for our manhood in syllabled fire,
We called him "The Justice," but now he's "The Squire."

And there's a nice youngster of excellent pith:
Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith;
But he shouted a song for the brave and the free—
Just read on his medal, "My country," "of thee!"

You hear that boy laughing? You think he's all fun;
But the angels laugh, too, at the good he has done.
The children laugh loud as they troop to his call,
And the poor man that knows him laughs loudest of all!

Yes, we're boys—always playing with tongue or with pen;
And I sometimes have asked, Shall we ever be men?
Shall we always be youthful and laughing and gay,
Till the last dear companion drops smiling away?

Then here's to our boyhood, its gold and its gray!
The stars of its winter, the dews of its May!
And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,
Dear Father, take care of Thy children, THE BOYS!

Oliver Wendell Holmes.

The Rainy Day

The day is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
And the day is dark and dreary.

My life is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
My thoughts still cling to the mouldering past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary.

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.

H. W. Longfellow.

Let Me Walk With the Men in the Road

'Tis only a half truth the poet has sung
Of the "house by the side of the way";
Our Master had neither a house nor a home,
But He walked with the crowd day by day.
And I think, when I read of the poet's desire,
That a house by the road would be good;
But service is found in its tenderest form
When we walk with the crowd in the road.

So I say, let me walk with the men in the road,
Let me seek out the burdens that crush,
Let me speak a kind word of good cheer to the weak
Who are falling behind in the rush.
There are wounds to be healed, there are breaks we must mend,
There's a cup of cold water to give;
And the man in the road by the side of his friend
Is the man who has learned to live.

Then tell me no more of the house by the road.
There is only one place I can live—
It's there with the men who are toiling along,
Who are needing the cheer I can give.
It is pleasant to live in the house by the way
And be a friend, as the poet has said;
But the Master is bidding us, "Bear ye their load,
For your rest waiteth yonder ahead."

I could not remain in the house by the road
And watch as the toilers go on,
Their faces beclouded with pain and with sin,
So burdened, their strength nearly gone.
I'll go to their side, I'll speak in good cheer,
I'll help them to carry their load;
And I'll smile at the man in the house by the way,
As I walk with the crowd in the road.

Out there in the road that goes by the house,
Where the poet is singing his song,
I'll walk and I'll work midst the heat of the day,
And I'll help falling brothers along—
Too busy to live in the house by the way,
Too happy for such an abode.
And my heart sings its praise to the Master of all,
Who is helping me serve in the road.

Walter J. Gresham.

If We Understood

Could we but draw back the curtains
That surround each other's lives,
See the naked heart and spirit,
Know what spur the action gives,
Often we should find it better,
Purer than we judged we should,
We should love each other better,
If we only understood.

Could we judge all deeds by motives,
See the good and bad within,
Often we should love the sinner
All the while we loathe the sin;
Could we know the powers working
To o'erthrow integrity,
We should judge each other's errors
With more patient charity.

If we knew the cares and trials,
Knew the effort all in vain,
And the bitter disappointment,
Understood the loss and gain—
Would the grim, eternal roughness
Seem—I wonder—just the same?
Should we help where now we hinder,
Should we pity where we blame?

Ah! we judge each other harshly,
Knowing not life's hidden force;
Knowing not the fount of action
Is less turbid at its source;
Seeing not amid the evil
All the golden grains of good;
Oh! we'd love each other better,
If we only understood.

A Laugh in Church

She sat on the sliding cushion,
The dear, wee woman of four;
Her feet, in their shiny slippers,
Hung dangling over the floor.
She meant to be good; she had promised,
And so, with her big, brown eyes,
She stared at the meeting-house windows
And counted the crawling flies.

She looked far up at the preacher,
But she thought of the honey bees
Droning away at the blossoms
That whitened the cherry trees.
She thought of a broken basket,
Where, curled in a dusky heap,
Three sleek, round puppies, with fringy ears
Lay snuggled and fast asleep.

Such soft warm bodies to cuddle,
Such queer little hearts to beat,
Such swift, round tongues to kiss,
Such sprawling, cushiony feet;
She could feel in her clasping fingers
The touch of a satiny skin
And a cold wet nose exploring
The dimples under her chin.

Then a sudden ripple of laughter
Ran over the parted lips
So quick that she could not catch it
With her rosy finger-tips.
The people whispered, "Bless the child,"
As each one waked from a nap,
But the dear, wee woman hid her face
For shame in her mother's lap.

"One, Two, Three!"

It was an old, old, old, old lady,
And a boy that was half past three;
And the way that they played together
Was beautiful to see.

She couldn't go running and jumping,
And the boy, no more could he;
For he was a thin little fellow,
With a thin little twisted knee,

They sat in the yellow sunlight,
Out under the maple-tree;
And the game that they played I'll tell you,
Just as it was told to me.

It was Hide-and-Go-Seek they were playing,
Though you'd never have known it to be—
With an old, old, old, old lady,
And a boy with a twisted knee.

The boy would bend his face down
On his one little sound right knee,
And he'd guess where she was hiding,
In guesses One, Two, Three!

"You are in the china-closet!"
He would cry, and laugh with glee—
It wasn't the china-closet;
But he still had Two and Three.

"You are up in Papa's big bedroom,
In the chest with the queer old key!"
And she said: "You are *warm* and *warmer*;
But you're not quite right," said she.

"It can't be the little cupboard
Where Mamma's things used to be—
So it must be the clothes-press, Gran'ma!"
And he found her with his Three.

Then she covered her face with her fingers,
That were wrinkled and white and wee,
And she guessed where the boy was hiding,
With a One and a Two and a Three.

And they never had stirred from their places,
Right under the maple-tree—
This old, old, old, old lady,
And the boy with the lame little knee—
This dear, dear, dear old lady,
And the boy who was half past three.

Henry Cyler Bunner.

Unawares

They said, "The Master is coming
To honor the town to-day,
And none can tell at what house or home
The Master will choose to stay."
And I thought while my heart beat wildly,
What if He should come to mine,
How would I strive to entertain
And honor the Guest Divine!

And straight I turned to toiling
To make my house more neat;
I swept, and polished, and garnished.
And decked it with blossoms sweet.
I was troubled for fear the Master
Might come ere my work was done,
And I hasted and worked the faster,
And watched the hurrying sun.

But right in the midst of my duties
A woman came to my door;
She had come to tell me her sorrows
And my comfort and aid to implore,
And I said, "I cannot listen
Nor help you any, to-day;
I have greater things to attend to."
And the pleader turned away.

But soon there came another—
A cripple, thin, pale and gray—
And said, "Oh, let me stop and rest
A while in your house, I pray!
I have traveled far since morning,
I am hungry, and faint, and weak;
My heart is full of misery,
And comfort and help I seek."

And I cried, "I am grieved and sorry,
But I cannot help you to-day.
I look for a great and noble Guest,"
And the cripple went away;
And the day wore onward swiftly—
And my task was nearly done,
And a prayer was ever in my heart
That the Master to me might come.

And I thought I would spring to meet Him,
And serve him with utmost care,
When a little child stood by me
With a face so sweet and fair—
Sweet, but with marks of teardrops—
And his clothes were tattered and old;
A finger was bruised and bleeding,
And his little bare feet were cold.

And I said, "I'm sorry for you—
You are sorely in need of care;
But I cannot stop to give it,
You must hasten elsewhere."
And at the words, a shadow
Swept o'er his blue-veined brow,—
"Someone will feed and clothe you, dear,
But I am too busy now."

At last the day was ended,
And my toil was over and done;
My house was swept and garnished—
And I watched in the dark—alone.
Watched—but no footfall sounded,
No one paused at my gate;
No one entered my cottage door;
I could only pray—and wait.

I waited till night had deepened,
And the Master had not come.
"He has entered some other door," I said,
"And gladdened some other home!"
My labor had been for nothing,
And I bowed my head and I wept,
My heart was sore with longing—
Yet—in spite of it all—I slept.

Then the Master stood before me,
And his face was grave and fair;
"Three times to-day I came to your door,
And craved your pity and care;
Three times you sent me onward,
Unhelped and uncomforted;
And the blessing you might have had was lost,
And your chance to serve has fled."

"O Lord, dear Lord, forgive me!
How could I know it was Thee?"
My very soul was shamed and bowed
In the depths of humility.

And He said, "The sin is pardoned,
But the blessing is lost to thee;
For comforting not the least of Mine
You have failed to comfort Me."

Emma A. Lent.

The Land of Beginning Again

I wish there were some wonderful place
Called the Land of Beginning Again,
Where all our mistakes and all our heartaches,
And all our poor, selfish griefs
Could be dropped, like a shabby old coat, at the door,
And never put on again.

I wish we could come on it all unaware,
Like the hunter who finds a lost trail;
And I wish that the one whom our blindness had done
The greatest injustice of all
Could be at the gate like the old friend that waits
For the comrade he's gladdest to hail.

We would find the things we intended to do,
But forgot and remembered too late—
Little praises unspoken, little promises broken,
And all of the thousand and one
Little duties neglected that might have perfected
The days of one less fortunate.

It wouldn't be possible not to be kind.
In the Land of Beginning Again;
And the ones we misjudged and the ones whom we grudged
Their moments of victory here,
Would find the grasp of our loving handclasp
More than penitent lips could explain.

For what had been hardest we'd know had been best,
And what had seemed loss would be gain,
For there isn't a sting that will not take wing
When we've faced it and laughed it away;
And I think that the laughter is most what we're after,
In the Land of Beginning Again.

So I wish that there were some wonderful place
Called the Land of Beginning Again,
Where all our mistakes and all our heartaches,
And all our poor, selfish griefs
Could be dropped, like a ragged old coat, at the door,
And never put on again.

Louisa Fletcher Tarkington.

Poor Little Joe

Prop yer eyes wide open, Joey,
Fur I've brought you sumpin' great.
Apples? No, a derved sight better!
Don't you take no int'rest? Wait!
Flowers, Joe—I know'd you'd like 'em—
Ain't them scrumptious? Ain't them high?
Tears, my boy? Wot's them fur, Joey?
There—poor little Joe—don't cry!

I was skippin' past a winder
W'ere a bang-up lady sot,
All amongst a lot of bushes—
Each one climbin' from a pot;
Every bush had flowers on it—
Pretty? Mebbe not! Oh, no!
Wish you could 'a seen 'em growin',
It was such a stunnin' show.

Well, I thought of you, poor feller,
Lyin' here so sick and weak,
Never knowin' any comfort,
And I puts on lots o' cheek.
"Missus," says I, "if you please, mum,
Could I ax you for a rose?
For my little brother, missus—
Never seed one, I suppose."

Then I told her all about you—
How I bringed you up—poor Joe!
(Lackin' women folks to do it)
Sich a imp you was, you know—
Till you got that awful tumble,
Jist as I had broke yer in
(Hard work, too), to earn your livin'
Blackin' boots for honest tin.

How that tumble crippled of you,
So's you couldn't hyper much—
Joe, it hurted when I seen you
Fur the first time with yer crutch.
"But," I says, "he's laid up now, mum,
'Pears to weaken every day";
Joe, she up and went to cuttin'—
That's the how of this bokay.

Say! it seems to me, ole feller,
You is quite yourself to-night—
Kind o' chirk—it's been a fortnit
Sense yer eyes has been so bright.
Better? Well, I'm glad to hear it!
Yes, they're mighty pretty, Joe.
Smellin' of 'em's made you happy?
Well, I thought it would, you know.

Never see the country, did you?
Flowers growin' everywhere!
Some time when you're better, Joey,
Mebbe I kin take you there.
Flowers in heaven? 'M—I s'pose so;
Dunno much about it, though;
Ain't as fly as wot I might be
On them topics, little Joe.

But I've heerd it hinted somewheres
That in heaven's golden gates
Things is everlastin' cheerful—
B'lieve that's what the Bible states.
Likewise, there folks don't git hungry:
So good people, w'en they dies,
Finds themselves well fixed forever—
Joe my boy, wot ails yer eyes?

Thought they looked a little sing'ler.
Oh, no! Don't you have no fear;
Heaven was made fur such as you is—
Joe, wot makes you look so queer?
Here—wake up! Oh, don't look that way!
Joe! My boy! Hold up yer head!
Here's yer flowers—you dropped em, Joey.
Oh, my God, can Joe be dead?

David L. Proudfit (Peleg Arkwright).

The Ladder of St. Augustine

Saint Augustine! well hast thou said,
That of our vices we can frame
A ladder, if we will but tread
Beneath our feet each deed of shame!

All common things, each day's events,
That with the hour begin and end,
Our pleasures and our discontents,
Are rounds by which we may ascend.

The low desire, the base design,
That makes another's virtues less;
The revel of the ruddy wine,
And all occasions of excess;

The longing for ignoble things;
The strife for triumph more than truth;
The hardening of the heart, that brings
Irreverence for the dreams of youth;

All thoughts of ill; all evil deeds,
That have their root in thoughts of ill;
Whatever hinders or impedes
The action of the nobler will;—

All these must first be trampled down
Beneath our feet, if we would gain
In the bright fields of fair renown
The right of eminent domain.

We have not wings, we cannot soar;
But we have feet to scale and climb
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.

The mighty pyramids of stone
That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen, and better known,
Are but gigantic flights of stairs,

The distant mountains, that uprear
Their solid bastions to the skies,
Are crossed by pathways, that appear
As we to higher levels rise.

The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight.
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.

Standing on what too long we bore
With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,
We may discern—unseen before—
A path to higher destinies.

Nor deem the irrevocable Past
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks, at last
To something nobler we attain.

H. W. Longfellow.

Loss and Gain

When I compare
What I have lost with what I have gained,
What I have missed with what attained,
Little room do I find for pride.

I am aware
How many days have been idly spent;
How like an arrow the good intent
Has fallen short or been turned aside.

But who shall dare
To measure loss and gain in this wise?
Defeat may be victory in disguise;
The lowest ebb in the turn of the tide.

H. W. Longfellow.

John Thompson's Daughter

(A Parody on "Lord Ullin's Daughter")

A fellow near Kentucky's clime
Cries, "Boatman, do not tarry,
And I'll give thee a silver dime
To row us o'er the ferry."

"Now, who would cross the Ohio,
This dark and stormy water?"
"Oh, I am this young lady's beau,
And she John Thompson's daughter.

"We've fled before her father's spite
With great precipitation,
And should he find us here to-night,
I'd lose my reputation.

"They've missed the girl and purse beside,
His horsemen hard have pressed me.
And who will cheer my bonny bride,
If yet they shall arrest me?"

Out spoke the boatman then in time,
"You shall not fail, don't fear it;
I'll go not for your silver dime,
But—for your manly spirit.

"And by my word, the bonny bird
In danger shall not tarry;
For though a storm is coming on,
I'll row you o'er the ferry."

By this the wind more fiercely rose,
The boat was at the landing,
And with the drenching rain their clothes
Grew wet where they were standing.

But still, as wilder rose the wind,
And as the night grew drearer,
Just back a piece came the police,
Their tramping sounded nearer.

"Oh, haste thee, haste!" the lady cries,

"It's anything but funny;
I'll leave the light of loving eyes,
But not my father's money!"

And still they hurried in the race
Of wind and rain unsparing;
John Thompson reached the landing-place,
His wrath was turned to swearing.

For by the lightning's angry flash,
His child he did discover;
One lovely hand held all the cash,
And one was round her lover!

"Come back, come back," he cried in woe,
Across the stormy water;
"But leave the purse, and you may go,
My daughter, oh, my daughter!"

'Twas vain; they reached the other shore,
(Such dooms the Fates assign us),
The gold he piled went with his child,
And he was left there, minus.

Phoebe Cary.

Grandfather's Clock

My grandfather's clock was too tall for the shelf,
So it stood ninety years on the floor;
It was taller by half than the old man himself,
Though it weighed not a pennyweight more.
It was bought on the morn of the day that he was born,
And was always his treasure and pride,
But it stopped short ne'er to go again
When the old man died.

In watching its pendulum swing to and fro,
Many hours had he spent while a boy;
And in childhood and manhood the clock seemed to know
And to share both his grief and his joy,
For it struck twenty-four when he entered at the door,
With a blooming and beautiful bride,
But it stopped short never to go again
When the old man died.

My grandfather said that of those he could hire,
Not a servant so faithful he found,
For it wasted no time and had but one desire,
At the close of each week to be wound.
And it kept in its place, not a frown upon its face,
And its hands never hung by its side.
But it stopped short never to go again
When the old man died.

Henry C. Work.

A Cradle Hymn

Hush! my dear, lie still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed!
Heavenly blessings without number
Gently falling on thy head.

Sleep, my babe; thy food and raiment,
House and home, thy friends provide;
All without thy care or payment:
All thy wants are well supplied.

How much better thou'rt attended
Than the Son of God could be,
When from heaven He descended
And became a child like thee!

Soft and easy is thy cradle:
Coarse and hard thy Saviour lay,
When His birthplace was a stable
And His softest bed was hay.

Blessed babe! what glorious features—
Spotless fair, divinely bright!
Must He dwell with brutal creatures?
How could angels bear the sight?

Was there nothing but a manger
Cursed sinners could afford
To receive the heavenly stranger?
Did they thus affront their Lord?

Soft, my child: I did not chide thee,
Though my song might sound too hard;
'Tis thy mother sits beside thee,
And her arm shall be thy guard.

See the kinder shepherds round Him,
Telling wonders from the sky!
Where they sought Him, there they found Him,
With His Virgin mother by.

See the lovely babe a-dressing;
Lovely infant, how He smiled!
When He wept, His mother's blessing
Soothed and hush'd the holy Child,

Lo, He slumbers in a manger,
Where the hornèd oxen fed:—
Peace, my darling, here's no danger;
There's no ox anear thy bed.

May'st thou live to know and fear Him,
Trust and love Him all thy days;
Then go dwell forever near Him,
See His face, and sing His praise!

Isaac Watts.

If All the Skies

If all the skies were sunshine,
Our faces would be fain
To feel once more upon them
The cooling splash of rain.

If all the world were music,
Our hearts would often long
For one sweet strain of silence,
To break the endless song.

If life were always merry,
Our souls would seek relief,
And rest from weary laughter
In the quiet arms of grief.

Henry van Dyke.

The Petrified Fern

In a valley, centuries ago,
Grew a little fern leaf, green and slender,
Veining delicate and fibers tender,
Waving when the wind crept down so low;
Rushes tall, and moss, and grass grew round it;
Playful sunbeams darted in and found it;
Drops of dew stole down by night and crowned it;
But no foot of man e'er came that way;
Earth was young and keeping holiday.

Monster fishes swam the silent main;
Stately forests waved their giant branches;
Mountains hurled their snowy avalanches;
Mammoth creatures stalked across the plain,
Nature reveled in grand mysteries.
But the little fern was not like these,
Did not number with the hills and trees,
Only grew and waved its sweet, wild way;
No one came to note it day by day.

Earth, one time, put on a frolic mood,
Heaved the rocks and changed the mighty motion
Of the strong, dread currents of the ocean;
Moved the hills and shook the haughty wood;
Crushed the little fern in soft, moist clay,
Covered it, and hid it safe away.
Oh, the long, long centuries since that day;
Oh, the changes! Oh, life's bitter cost,
Since the little useless fern was lost!

Useless? Lost? There came a thoughtful man
Searching Nature's secrets far and deep;
From a fissure in a rocky steep
He withdrew a stone, o'er which there ran
Fairy pencilings, a quaint design,
Leafage, veining, fibers, clear and fine,
And the fern's life lay in every line.
So, I think, God hides some souls away,
Sweetly to surprise us the Last Day.

Mary L. Bolles Branch.

Cleon and I

Cleon hath ten thousand acres,
Ne'er a one have I;
Cleon dwelleth in a palace,
In a cottage, I;
Cleon hath a dozen fortunes,
Not a penny, I,
Yet the poorer of the twain is
Cleon, and not I.

Cleon, true, possesseth acres,
But the landscape, I;
Half the charms to me it yieldeth
Money cannot buy;
Cleon harbors sloth and dullness,
Freshening vigor, I;
He in velvet, I in fustian—
Richer man am I.

Cleon is a slave to grandeur,
Free as thought am I;
Cleon fees a score of doctors,
Need of none have I;
Wealth-surrounded, care-environed,
Cleon fears to die;
Death may come—he'll find me ready,
Happier man am I.

Cleon sees no charms in nature,
In a daisy, I;
Cleon hears no anthems ringing
'Twixt the sea and sky;
Nature sings to me forever,
Earnest listener, I;
State for state, with all attendants—
Who would change?—Not I.

Charles Mackay.

Washington

Great were the hearts and strong the minds
Of those who framed in high debate
The immortal league of love that binds
Our fair, broad empire, State with State.

And deep the gladness of the hour
When, as the auspicious task was done,
In solemn trust the sword of power
Was given to Glory's Unspoiled Son.

That noble race is gone—the suns
Of fifty years have risen and set;—
But the bright links, those chosen ones,
So strongly forged, are brighter yet.

Wide—as our own free race increase—
Wide shall extend the elastic chain,
And bind in everlasting peace
State after State, a mighty train.

W.C. Bryant.

Towser Shall Be Tied To-Night

A Parody on "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight."

Slow the Kansas sun was setting,
O'er the wheat fields far away,
Streaking all the air with cobwebs
At the close of one hot day;
And the last rays kissed the forehead
Of a man and maiden fair,
He with whiskers short and frowsy,
She with red and glistening hair,
He with shut jaws stern and silent;
She, with lips all cold and white,
Struggled to keep back the murmur,
"Towser shall be tied to-night."

"Papa," slowly spoke the daughter,
"I am almost seventeen,
And I have a real lover,
Though he's rather young and green;
But he has a horse and buggy
And a cow and thirty hens,—
Boys that start out poor, dear Papa,
Make the best of honest men,
But if Towser sees and bites him,
Fills his eyes with misty light,
He will never come again, Pa;
Towser must be tied to-night."

"Daughter," firmly spoke the farmer,
(Every word pierced her young heart
Like a carving knife through chicken
As it hunts the tender part)—
"I've a patch of early melons,
Two of them are ripe to-day;
Towser must be loose to watch them
Or they'll all be stole away.
I have hoed them late and early
In dim morn and evening light;
Now they're grown I must not lose them;
Towser'll not be tied to-night."

Then the old man ambled forward,
Opened wide the kennel-door,

Towser bounded forth to meet him
As he oft had done before.
And the farmer stooped and loosed him
From the dog-chain short and stout;
To himself he softly chuckled,
"Bessie's feller must look out."
But the maiden at the window
Saw the cruel teeth show white;
In an undertone she murmured,—
"Towser must be tied to-night."

Then the maiden's brow grew thoughtful
And her breath came short and quick,
Till she spied the family clothesline,
And she whispered, "That's the trick."
From the kitchen door she glided
With a plate of meat and bread;
Towser wagged his tail in greeting,
Knowing well he would be fed.
In his well-worn leather collar,
Tied she then the clothesline tight,
All the time her white lips saying:
"Towser shall be tied to-night,"

"There, old doggie," spoke the maiden,
"You can watch the melon patch,
But the front gate's free and open,
When John Henry lifts the latch.
For the clothesline tight is fastened
To the harvest apple tree,
You can run and watch the melons,
But the front gate you can't see."
Then her glad ears hear a buggy,
And her eyes grow big and bright,
While her young heart says in gladness,
"Towser dog is tied to-night."

Up the path the young man saunters
With his eye and cheek aglow;
For he loves the red-haired maiden
And he aims to tell her so.
Bessie's roguish little brother,
In a fit of boyish glee,
Had untied the slender clothesline,
From the harvest apple tree.
Then old Towser heard the footsteps,
Raised his bristles, fixed for fight,—
"Bark away," the maiden whispers;
"Towser, you are tied to-night."

Then old Towser bounded forward,
Passed the open kitchen door;
Bessie screamed and quickly followed,
But John Henry's gone before.
Down the path he speeds most quickly,
For old Towser sets the pace;
And the maiden close behind them
Shows them she is in the race.
Then the clothesline, can she get it?
And her eyes grow big and bright;
And she springs and grasps it firmly:
"Towser shall be tied to-night."

Oftentimes a little minute
Forms the destiny of men.
You can change the fate of nations
By the stroke of one small pen.
Towser made one last long effort,
Caught John Henry by the pants,
But John Henry kept on running
For he thought that his last chance.
But the maiden held on firmly,
And the rope was drawn up tight.
But old Towser kept the garments,
For he was not tied that night.

Then the father hears the racket;
With long strides he soon is there,
When John Henry and the maiden,
Crouching, for the worst prepare.
At his feet John tells his story,
Shows his clothing soiled and torn;
And his face so sad and pleading,
Yet so white and scared and worn,
Touched the old man's heart with pity,
Filled his eyes with misty light.
"Take her, boy, and make her happy,—
Towser shall be tied to-night."

Law and Liberty

O Liberty, thou child of Law,
God's seal is on thy brow!
O Law, her Mother first and last,
God's very self art thou!
Two flowers alike, yet not alike,
On the same stem that grow,
Two friends who cannot live apart,
Yet seem each other's foe.
One, the smooth river's mirrored flow
Which decks the world with green;
And one, the bank of sturdy rock
Which hems the river in.
O Daughter of the timeless Past,
O Hope the Prophets saw,
God give us Law in Liberty
And Liberty in Law!

E.J. Cutler.

His Mother's Song

Beneath the hot midsummer sun
The men had marched all day,
And now beside a rippling stream
Upon the grass they lay.
Tiring of games and idle jest
As swept the hours along,
They cried to one who mused apart,
"Come, friend, give us a song."

"I fear I can not please," he said;
"The only songs I know
Are those my mother used to sing
For me long years ago."
"Sing one of those," a rough voice cried.
"There's none but true men here;
To every mother's son of us
A mother's songs are dear."

Then sweetly rose the singer's voice
Amid unwonted calm:
"Am I a soldier of the Cross,
A follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own His cause?"
The very stream was stilled,
And hearts that never throbbed with fear,
With tender thoughts were filled.

Ended the song, the singer said,
As to his feet he rose,
"Thanks to you all, my friends; goodnight.
God grant us sweet repose."
"Sing us one more," the captain begged.
The soldier bent his head,
Then, glancing round, with smiling lips,
"You'll join with me?" he said.

"We'll sing that old familiar air
Sweet as the bugle call,
'All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall.'"
Ah, wondrous was the old tune's spell.
As on the soldiers sang;
Man after man fell into line,
And loud the voices rang.

The songs are done, the camp is still,
Naught but the stream is heard;
But, ah! the depths of every soul
By those old hymns are stirred,
And up from many a bearded lip,
In whispers soft and low,
Rises the prayer that mother taught
Her boy long years ago.

When Father Carves the Duck

We all look on with anxious eyes
When Father carves the duck,
And Mother almost always sighs
When Father carves the duck;
Then all of us prepare to rise
And hold our bibs before our eyes,
And be prepared for some surprise
When Father carves the duck.

He braces up and grabs the fork,
Whene'er he carves the duck,
And won't allow a soul to talk
Until he carves the duck.
The fork is jabbed into the sides,
Across the breast the knife he slides,
While every careful person hides
From flying chips of duck.

The platter's always sure to slip
When Father carves the duck,
And how it makes the dishes skip—
Potatoes fly amuck.
The squash and cabbage leap in space,
We get some gravy in our face,
And Father mutters Hindoo grace
Whene'er he carves a duck.

We then have learned to walk around
The dining room and pluck
From off the window-sills and walls
Our share of Father's duck.
While Father growls and blows and jaws,
And swears the knife was full of flaws,
And Mother laughs at him because
He couldn't carve a duck.

E. V. Wright.

Papa's Letter

I was sitting in my study,
Writing letters when I heard,
"Please, dear mamma, Mary told me
Mamma mustn't be 'isturbed.

"But I'se tired of the kitty,
Want some ozzer fing to do.
Witing letters, is 'ou, mamma?
Tan't I wite a letter too?"

"Not now, darling, mamma's busy;
Run and play with kitty, now."
"No, no, mamma, me wite letter;
Tan if 'ou will show me how."

I would paint my darling's portrait
As his sweet eyes searched my face—
Hair of gold and eyes of azure,
Form of childish, witching grace.

But the eager face was clouded,
As I slowly shook my head,
Till I said, "I'll make a letter
Of you, darling boy, instead."

So I parted back the tresses
From his forehead high and white,
And a stamp in sport I pasted
'Mid its waves of golden light.

Then I said, "Now, little letter,
Go away and bear good news."
And I smiled as down the staircase
Clattered loud the little shoes.

Leaving me, the darling hurried
Down to Mary in his glee,
"Mamma's witing lots of letters;
I'se a letter, Mary—see!"

No one heard the little prattler,
As once more he climbed the stair,
Reached his little cap and tippet,
Standing on the entry stair.

No one heard the front door open,
No one saw the golden hair,
As it floated o'er his shoulders
In the crisp October air.

Down the street the baby hastened
Till he reached the office door.
"T'se a letter, Mr. Postman;
Is there room for any more?"

"'Cause dis letter's doin' to papa,
Papa lives with God, 'ou know,
Mamma sent me for a letter,
Does 'ou fink 'at I tan go?"

But the clerk in wonder answered,
"Not to-day, my little man."
"Den I'll find anoizzer office,
'Cause I must go if I tan."

Fain the clerk would have detained him,
But the pleading face was gone,
And the little feet were hastening—
By the busy crowd swept on.

Suddenly the crowd was parted,
People fled to left and right,
As a pair of maddened horses
At the moment dashed in sight.

No one saw the baby figure—
No one saw the golden hair,
Till a voice of frightened sweetness
Rang out on the autumn air.

'Twas too late—a moment only
Stood the beauteous vision there,
Then the little face lay lifeless,
Covered o'er with golden hair.

Reverently they raised my darling,
Brushed away the curls of gold,
Saw the stamp upon the forehead,
Growing now so icy cold.

Not a mark the face disfigured,
Showing where a hoof had trod;
But the little life was ended—
"Papa's letter" was with God.

Who Stole the Bird's Nest?

"To-whit! to-whit! to-whee!
Will you listen to me?
Who stole four eggs I laid,
And the nice nest I made?"

"Not I," said the cow, "Moo-oo!
Such a thing I'd never do;
I gave you a wisp of hay,
But didn't take your nest away.
Not I," said the cow, "Moo-oo!
Such a thing I'd never do."

"To-whit! to-whit! to-whee!
Will you listen to me?
Who stole four eggs I laid,
And the nice nest I made?"

"Not I," said the dog, "Bow-wow!
I wouldn't be so mean, anyhow!
I gave the hairs the nest to make,
But the nest I did not take.
Not I," said the dog, "Bow-wow!
I'm not so mean, anyhow."

"To-whit! to-whit! to-whee!
Will you listen to me?
Who stole four eggs I laid,
And the nice nest I made?"

"Not I," said the sheep, "oh, no!
I wouldn't treat a poor bird so.
I gave the wool the nest to line,
But the nest was none of mine.
Baa! Baa!" said the sheep; "oh, no!
I wouldn't treat a poor bird so."

"Caw! Caw!" cried the crow;
"I should like to know
What thief took away
A bird's nest to-day?"

"I would not rob a bird,"
Said little Mary Green;
"I think I never heard
Of anything so mean."

"It is very cruel, too,"
Said little Alice Neal;
"I wonder if he knew
How sad the bird would feel?"

A little boy hung down his head,
And went and hid behind the bed,
For he stole that pretty nest
From poor little yellow-breast;
And he felt so full of shame,
He didn't like to tell his name.

Lydia Maria Child.

Over the Hill from the Poor-House

I, who was always counted, they say,
Rather a bad stick anyway,
Splintered all over with dodges and tricks,
Known as "the worst of the Deacon's six";
I, the truant, saucy and bold,
The one black sheep in my father's fold,
"Once on a time," as the stories say,
Went over the hill on a winter's day—
Over the hill to the poor-house.

Tom could save what twenty could earn;
But *givin'* was somethin' he ne'er would learn;
Isaac could half o' the Scriptur's speak—
Committed a hundred verses a week;
Never forgot, an' never slipped;
But "Honor thy father and mother," he skipped;
So over the hill to the poor-house!

As for Susan, her heart was kind
An' good—what there was of it, mind;
Nothin' too big, an' nothin' too nice,
Nothin' she wouldn't sacrifice
For one she loved; an' that 'ere one
Was herself, when all was said an' done;
An' Charley an' 'Becca meant well, no doubt,
But anyone could pull 'em about;
An' all o' our folks ranked well, you see,
Save one poor fellow, an' that was me;
An' when, one dark an' rainy night,
A neighbor's horse went out o' sight,
They hitched on me, as the guilty chap
That carried one end o' the halter-strap.
An' I think, myself, that view of the case
Wasn't altogether out o' place;
My mother denied it, as mothers do,
But I am inclined to believe 'twas true.
Though for me one thing might be said—
That I, as well as the horse, was led;
And the worst of whisky spurred me on,
Or else the deed would have never been done.
But the keenest grief I ever felt
Was when my mother beside me knelt,
An' cried, an' prayed, till I melted down,
As I wouldn't for half the horses in town.
I kissed her fondly, then an' there,

An' swore henceforth to be honest and square.
I served my sentence—a bitter pill
Some fellows should take who never will;
And then I decided to go "out West,"
Concludin' 'twould suit my health the best;
Where, how I prospered, I never could tell,
But Fortune seemed to like me well;
An' somehow every vein I struck
Was always bubbling over with luck.
An', better than that, I was steady an' true,
An' put my good resolutions through.
But I wrote to a trusty old neighbor, an' said,
"You tell 'em, old fellow, that I am dead,
An' died a Christian; 'twill please 'em more,
Than if I had lived the same as before."

But when this neighbor he wrote to me,
"Your mother's in the poor-house," says he,
I had a resurrection straightway,
An' started for her that very day.
And when I arrived where I was grown,
I took good care that I shouldn't be known;
But I bought the old cottage, through and through,
Of someone Charley had sold it to;
And held back neither work nor gold
To fix it up as it was of old.
The same big fire-place, wide and high,
Flung up its cinders toward the sky;
The old clock ticked on the corner-shelf—
I wound it an' set it a-goin' myself;
An' if everything wasn't just the same,
Neither I nor money was to blame;
Then—over the hill to the poor-house!

One blowin', blusterin' winter's day,
With a team an' cutter I started away;
My fiery nags was as black as coal;
(They some'at resembled the horse I stole;)
I hitched, an' entered the poor-house door—
A poor old woman was scrubbin' the floor;
She rose to her feet in great surprise,
And looked, quite startled, into my eyes;
I saw the whole of her trouble's trace
In the lines that marred her dear old face;
"Mother!" I shouted, "your sorrows is done!
You're adopted along o' your horse thief son,
Come over the hill from the poor-house!"

She didn't faint; she knelt by my side,

An' thanked the Lord, till I fairly cried.
An' maybe our ride wasn't pleasant an' gay,
An' maybe she wasn't wrapped up that day;
An' maybe our cottage wasn't warm an' bright,
An' maybe it wasn't a pleasant sight,
To see her a-gettin' the evenin's tea,
An' frequently stoppin' an' kissin' me;
An' maybe we didn't live happy for years,
In spite of my brothers' and sisters' sneers,
Who often said, as I have heard,
That they wouldn't own a prison-bird;
(Though they're gettin' over that, I guess,
For all of 'em owe me more or less;)
But I've learned one thing; an' it cheers a man
In always a-doin' the best he can;
That whether on the big book, a blot
Gets over a fellow's name or not,
Whenever he does a deed that's white,
It's credited to him fair and right.
An' when you hear the great bugle's notes,
An' the Lord divides his sheep and goats,
However they may settle my case,
Wherever they may fix my place,
My good old Christian mother, you'll see,
Will be sure to stand right up for me,
With *over the hill from the poor-house!*

Will Carleton.

""Specially Jim""

I was mighty good-lookin' when I was young,
Peart an' black-eyed an' slim,
With fellers a-courtin' me Sunday nights,
'Specially Jim.

The likeliest one of 'em all was he,
Chipper an' han'som' an' trim,
But I tossed up my head an' made fun o' the crowds
'Specially Jim!

I said I hadn't no 'pinion o' men,
An' I wouldn't take stock in him!
But they kep' up a-comin' in spite o' my talk,
'Specially Jim!

I got so tired o' havin' 'em roun'
('Specially Jim!)
I made up my mind I'd settle down
An' take up with him.

So we was married one Sunday in church,
'Twas crowded full to the brim;
'Twas the only way to get rid of 'em all,
'Specially Jim.

O'Grady's Goat

O'Grady lived in Shanty row,
The neighbors often said
They wished that Tim would move away
Or that his goat was dead.
He kept the neighborhood in fear,
And the children always vexed;
They couldn't tell jist whin or where
The goat would pop up next.

Ould Missis Casey stood wan day
The dirty clothes to rub
Upon the washboard, when she dived
Headforemosht o'er the tub;
She lit upon her back an' yelled,
As she was lying flat:
"Go git your goon an' kill the bashte."
O'Grady's goat doon that.

Pat Doolan's woife hung out the wash
Upon the line to dry.
She wint to take it in at night,
But stopped to have a cry.
The sleeves av two red flannel shirts,
That once were worn by Pat,
Were chewed off almost to the neck.
O'Grady's goat doon that.

They had a party at McCune's,
An' they wor having foon,
Whin suddinly there was a crash
An' ivrybody roon.
The iseter soup fell on the floor
An' nearly drowned the cat;
The stove was knocked to smithereens.
O'Grady's goat doon that.

Moike Dyle was coortin' Bidy Shea,
Both standin' at the gate,
An' they wor just about to kiss
Aich oother sly and shwate.
They coom togihter loike two rams.
An' mashed their noses flat.
They niver shpake whin they goes by.
O'Grady's goat doon that.

O'Hoolerhan brought home a keg
Av dannymite wan day
To blow a cistern in his yard
An' hid the stuff away.
But suddinly an airthquake coom,
O'Hoolerhan, house an' hat,
An' ivrything in sight wint up.
O'Grady's goat doon that.

An' there was Dooley's Savhin's Bank,
That held the byes' sphare cash.
One day the news came doon the sthreet
The bank had gone to smash.
An' ivrybody 'round was dum
Wid anger and wid fear,
Fer on the dhoor they red the whords,
"O'Grady's goat sthruck here."

The folks in Grady's naborhood
All live in fear and fright;
They think it's certain death to go
Around there after night.
An' in their shlape they see a ghost
Upon the air afloat,
An' wake thimselves by shoutin' out:
"Luck out for Grady's goat."

Will S. Hays.

The Burial of Moses

"And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor;

but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

By Nebo's lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab
There lies a lonely grave,
And no man knows that sepulchre,
And no man saw it e'er,
For the angels of God upturn'd the sod
And laid the dead man there.

That was the grandest funeral
That ever pass'd on earth;
But no man heard the trampling,
Or saw the train go forth—
Noiselessly as the daylight
Comes back when night is done,
And the crimson streak on ocean's cheek
Grows into the great sun.

Noiselessly as the springtime
Her crown of verdure weaves,
And all the trees on all the hills
Open their thousand leaves;
So without sound of music,
Or voice of them that wept,
Silently down from the mountain's crown
The great procession swept.

Perchance the bald old eagle
On gray Beth-peor's height,
Out of his lonely eyrie
Look'd on the wondrous sight;
Perchance the lion, stalking,
Still shuns that hallow'd spot,
For beast and bird have seen and heard
That which man knoweth not.

But when the warrior dieth,
His comrades in the war,

With arms reversed and muffled drum,
Follow his funeral car;
They show the banners taken,
They tell his battles won,
And after him lead his masterless steed,
While peals the minute gun.

Amid the noblest of the land
We lay the sage to rest,
And give the bard an honor'd place,
With costly marble drest,
In the great minster transept
Where lights like glories fall,
And the organ rings, and the sweet choir sings
Along the emblazon'd wall.

This was the truest warrior
That ever buckled sword,
This was the most gifted poet
That ever breathed a word;
And never earth's philosopher
Traced with his golden pen,
On the deathless page, truths half so sage
As he wrote down for men.

And had he not high honor,—
The hillside for a pall,
To lie in state while angels wait
With stars for tapers tall,
And the dark rock-pines like tossing plumes,
Over his bier to wave,
And God's own hand, in that lonely land,
To lay him in the grave?

In that strange grave without a name,
Whence his uncoffin'd clay
Shall break again, O wondrous thought!
Before the judgment day,
And stand with glory wrapt around
On the hills he never trod,
And speak of the strife that won our life
With the Incarnate Son of God.

O lonely grave in Moab's land
O dark Beth-peor's hill,
Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
And teach them to be still.
God hath His mysteries of grace,
Ways that we cannot tell;

He hides them deep like the hidden sleep
Of him He loved so well.

Cecil F. Alexander.

Nobody's Child

Alone in the dreary, pitiless street,
With my torn old dress, and bare, cold feet,
All day have I wandered to and fro,
Hungry and shivering, and nowhere to go;
The night's coming on in darkness and dread,
And the chill sleet beating upon my bare head.
Oh! why does the wind blow upon me so wild?
Is it because I am nobody's child?

Just over the way there's a flood of light,
And warmth, and beauty, and all things bright;
Beautiful children, in robes so fair,
Are caroling songs in their rapture there.
I wonder if they, in their blissful glee,
Would pity a poor little beggar like me,
Wandering alone in the merciless street,
Naked and shivering, and nothing to eat?

Oh! what shall I do when the night comes down
In its terrible blackness all over the town?
Shall I lay me down 'neath the angry sky,
On the cold, hard pavement, alone to die,
When the beautiful children their prayers have said,
And their mammas have tucked them up snugly in bed?
For no dear mother on me ever smiled.
Why is it, I wonder, I'm nobody's child?

No father, no mother, no sister, not one
In all the world loves me—e'en the little dogs run
When I wander too near them; 'tis wondrous to see
How everything shrinks from a beggar like me!
Perhaps 'tis a dream; but sometimes, when I lie
Gazing far up in the dark blue sky,
Watching for hours some large bright star,
I fancy the beautiful gates are ajar,

And a host of white-robed, nameless things
Come fluttering o'er me on gilded wings;
A hand that is strangely soft and fair
Caresses gently my tangled hair,
And a voice like the carol of some wild bird—
The sweetest voice that was ever heard—
Calls me many a dear, pet name,
Till my heart and spirit are all aflame.

They tell me of such unbounded love,
And bid me come to their home above;
And then with such pitiful, sad surprise
They look at me with their sweet, tender eyes,
And it seems to me, out of the dreary night
I am going up to that world of light,
And away from the hunger and storm so wild;
I am sure I shall then be somebody's child.

Phila H. Case.

A Christmas Long Ago

Like a dream, it all comes o'er me as I hear the Christmas bells;
Like a dream it floats before me, while the Christmas anthem swells;
Like a dream it bears me onward in the silent, mystic flow,
To a dear old sunny Christmas in the happy long ago.

And my thoughts go backward, backward, and the years that intervene
Are but as the mists and shadows when the sunlight comes between;
And all earthly wealth and splendor seem but as a fleeting show,
As there comes to me the picture of a Christmas long ago.

I can see the great, wide hearthstone and the holly hung about;
I can see the smiling faces, I can hear the children shout;
I can feel the joy and gladness that the old room seem to fill,
E'en the shadows on the ceiling—I can see them dancing still.

I can see the little stockings hung about the chimney yet;
I can feel my young heart thrilling lest the old man should forget.
Ah! that fancy! Were the world mine, I would give it, if I might,
To believe in old St. Nicholas, and be a child to-night.

Just to hang my little stocking where it used to hang, and feel
For one moment all the old thoughts and the old hopes o'er me steal.
But, oh! loved and loving faces, in the firelight's dancing glow,
There will never come another like that Christmas long ago!

For the old home is deserted, and the ashes long have lain
In the great, old-fashioned fireplace that will never shine again.
Friendly hands that then clasped ours now are folded 'neath the snow;
Gone the dear ones who were with us on that Christmas long ago.

Let the children have their Christmas—let them have it while they may;
Life is short and childhood's fleeting, and there'll surely come a day
When St. Nicholas will sadly pass on by the close-shut door,
Missing all the merry faces that had greeted him of yore;

When no childish step shall echo through the quiet, silent room;
When no childish smile shall brighten, and no laughter lift the gloom;
When the shadows that fall 'round us in the fire-light's fitful glow
Shall be ghosts of those who sat there in the Christmas long ago.

Nearer Home

One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er,—
I am nearer home to-day
Than I've ever been before;—

Nearer my Father's house
Where the many mansions be,
Nearer the great white throne,
Nearer the jasper sea;—

Nearer the bound of life
Where we lay our burdens down;
Nearer leaving the cross,
Nearer gaining the crown.

But lying darkly between,
Winding down through the night,
Is the dim and unknown stream
That leads at last to the light.

Closer and closer my steps
Come to the dark abysm;
Closer death to my lips
Presses the awful chism.

Father, perfect my trust;
Strengthen the might of my faith;
Let me feel as I would when I stand
On the rock of the shore of death,—

Feel as I would when my feet
Are slipping o'er the brink;
For it may be I am nearer home,
Nearer now than I think.

Phoebe Cary.

The Minuet

Grandma told me all about it,
Told me so I could not doubt it,
How she danced, my grandma danced, long ago!
How she held her pretty head,
How her dainty skirts she spread,
How she turned her little toes,
Smiling little human rose!

Grandma's hair was bright and shining,
Dimpled cheeks, too! ah! how funny!
Bless me, now she wears a cap,
My grandma does, and takes a nap every single day;
Yet she danced the minuet long ago;
Now she sits there rocking, rocking,
Always knitting grandpa's stocking—
Every girl was taught to knit long ago—
But her figure is so neat,
And her ways so staid and sweet,
I can almost see her now,
Bending to her partner's bow, long ago.

Grandma says our modern jumping,
Rushing, whirling, dashing, bumping,
Would have shocked the gentle people long ago.
No, they moved with stately grace,
Everything in proper place,
Gliding slowly forward, then
Slowly courtesying back again.

Modern ways are quite alarming, grandma says,
But boys were charming—
Girls and boys I mean, of course—long ago,
Sweetly modest, bravely shy!
What if all of us should try just to feel
Like those who met in the stately minuet, long ago.
With the minuet in fashion,
Who could fly into a passion?
All would wear the calm they wore long ago,
And if in years to come, perchance,
I tell my grandchild of our dance,
I should really like to say,
We did it in some such way, long ago.

Mary Mapes Dodge.

The Vagabonds

We are two travellers, Roger and I.
Roger's my dog—Come here, you scamp!
Jump for the gentleman—mind your eye!
Over the table—look out for the lamp!—
The rogue is growing a little old;
Five years we've tramped through wind and weather,
And slept outdoors when nights were cold,
And ate, and drank—and starved together.

We've learned what comfort is, I tell you:
A bed on the floor, a bit of rosin,
A fire to thaw our thumbs (poor fellow,
The paw he holds up there has been frozen),
Plenty of catgut for my fiddle,
(This outdoor business is bad for strings),
Then a few nice buckwheats hot from the griddle,
And Roger and I set up for kings!

No, thank you, Sir, I never drink.
Roger and I are exceedingly moral.
Aren't we, Roger? see him wink.
Well, something hot then, we won't quarrel.
He's thirsty, too—see him nod his head?
What a pity, Sir, that dogs can't talk;
He understands every word that's said,
And he knows good milk from water and chalk.

The truth is, Sir, now I reflect,
I've been so sadly given to grog,
I wonder I've not lost the respect
(Here's to you, Sir!) even of my dog.
But he sticks by through thick and thin;
And this old coat with its empty pockets
And rags that smell of tobacco and gin,
He'll follow while he has eyes in his sockets.

There isn't another creature living
Would do it, and prove, through every disaster,
So fond, so faithful, and so forgiving,
To such a miserable, thankless master.
No, Sir! see him wag his tail and grin—
By George! it makes my old eyes water—
That is, there's something in this gin
That chokes a fellow, but no matter!

We'll have some music, if you're willing.
And Roger (hem! what a plague a cough is, Sir!)
Shall march a little.—Start, you villain!
Paws up! eyes front! salute your officer!
'Bout face! attention! take your rifle!
(Some dogs have arms, you see.) Now hold
Your cap while the gentleman gives a trifle
To aid a poor old patriot soldier!

March! Halt! Now show how the Rebel shakes,
When he stands up to hear his sentence;
Now tell me how many drams it takes
To honor a jolly new acquaintance.
Five yelps—that's five; he's mighty knowing;
The night's before us, fill the glasses;—
Quick, Sir! I'm ill, my brain is going!—
Some brandy,—thank you;—there,—it passes!

Why not reform? That's easily said;
But I've gone through such wretched treatment,
Sometimes forgetting the taste of bread,
And scarce remembering what meat meant,
That my poor stomach's past reform;
And there are times when, mad with thinking,
I'd sell out heaven for something warm
To prop a horrible inward sinking.

Is there a way to forget to think?
At your age, Sir, home, fortune, friends,
A dear girl's love,—but I took to drink;—
The same old story; you know how it ends.
If you could have seen these classic features,—
You needn't laugh, Sir; I was not then
Such a burning libel on God's creatures;
I was one of your handsome men—

If you had seen her, so fair, so young,
Whose head was happy on this breast;
If you could have heard the songs I sung
When the wine went round, you wouldn't have guess'd
That ever I, Sir, should be straying
From door to door, with fiddle and dog,
Ragged and penniless, and playing
To you to-night for a glass of grog.

She's married since,—a parson's wife,
'Twas better for her that we should part;
Better the soberest, prosiest life
Than a blasted home and a broken heart.

I have seen her—once; I was weak and spent
On the dusty road; a carriage stopped,
But little she dreamed as on she went,
Who kissed the coin that her fingers dropped.

You've set me talking, Sir; I'm sorry;
It makes me wild to think of the change!
What do you care for a beggar's story?
Is it amusing? you find it strange?
I had a mother so proud of me!
'Twas well she died before—Do you know
If the happy spirits in heaven can see
The ruin and wretchedness here below?

Another glass, and strong, to deaden
This pain; then Roger and I will start.
I wonder, has he such a lumpish, leaden,
Aching thing, in place of a heart?
He is sad sometimes, and would weep, if he could,
No doubt, remembering things that were,—
A virtuous kennel, with plenty of food,
And himself a sober, respectable cur.

I'm better now; that glass was warming—
You rascal! limber your lazy feet!
We must be fiddling and performing
For supper and bed, or starve in the street.—
Not a very gay life to lead, you think.
But soon we shall go where lodgings are free,
And the sleepers need neither victuals nor drink;—
The sooner, the better for Roger and me.

J.T. Trowbridge.

The Isle of Long Ago

Oh, a wonderful stream is the river of Time,
As it runs through the realm of tears,
With a faultless rhythm and a musical rhyme,
And a boundless sweep and a surge sublime,
As it blends with the ocean of Years.

How the winters are drifting, like flakes of snow,
And the summers, like buds between;
And the year in the sheaf—so they come and they go,
On the river's breast, with its ebb and flow,
As it glides in the shadow and sheen.

There's a magical isle up the river of Time,
Where the softest of airs are playing;
There's a cloudless sky and a tropical clime,
And a song as sweet as a vesper chime,
And the Junes with the roses are staying.

And the name of that isle is the Long Ago,
And we bury our treasures there;
There are brows of beauty and bosoms of snow—
There are heaps of dust—but we love them so!—
There are trinkets and tresses of hair;

There are fragments of song that nobody sings,
And a part of an infant's prayer,
There's a lute unswept, and a harp without strings;
There are broken vows and pieces of rings,
And the garments that she used to wear.

There are hands that are waved, when the fairy shore
By the mirage is lifted in air;
And we sometimes hear, through the turbulent roar,
Sweet voices we heard in the days gone before,
When the wind down the river is fair.

Oh, remembered for aye be the blessed Isle,
All the day of our life till night—
When the evening comes with its beautiful smile.
And our eyes are closing to slumber awhile,
May that "Greenwood" of Soul be in sight!

Benjamin Franklin Taylor.

NOTE: The last line of this poem needs explanation. "Greenwood" is the name of a cemetery in Brooklyn, N.Y. "Greenwood of Soul" means the soul's resting place, or heaven.

The Dying Newsboy

In an attic bare and cheerless, Jim the newsboy dying lay
On a rough but clean straw pallet, at the fading of the day;
Scant the furniture about him but bright flowers were in the room,
Crimson phloxes, waxen lilies, roses laden with perfume.
On a table by the bedside open at a well-worn page,
Where the mother had been reading lay a Bible stained by age,
Now he could not hear the verses; he was flighty, and she wept
With her arms around her youngest, who close to her side had crept.

Blackening boots and selling papers, in all weathers day by day,
Brought upon poor Jim consumption, which was eating life away,
And this cry came with his anguish for each breath a struggle cost,
"Ere's the morning *Sun* and *'Erald*—latest news of steamship lost.
Papers, mister? Morning papers?" Then the cry fell to a moan,
Which was changed a moment later to another frenzied tone:
"Black yer boots, sir? Just a nickel! Shine 'em like an evening star.
It grows late, Jack! Night is coming. Evening papers, here they are!"

Soon a mission teacher entered, and approached the humble bed;
Then poor Jim's mind cleared an instant, with his cool hand on his head,
"Teacher," cried he, "I remember what you said the other day,
Ma's been reading of the Saviour, and through Him I see my way.
He is with me! Jack, I charge you of our mother take good care
When Jim's gone! Hark! boots or papers, which will I be over there?
Black yer boots, sir? Shine 'em right up! Papers! Read God's book
instead,
Better'n papers that to die on! Jack—" one gasp, and Jim was dead!

Floating from that attic chamber came the teacher's voice in prayer,
And it soothed the bitter sorrow of the mourners kneeling there,
He commended them to Heaven, while the tears rolled down his face,
Thanking God that Jim had listened to sweet words of peace and grace,
Ever 'mid the want and squalor of the wretched and the poor,
Kind hearts find a ready welcome, and an always open door;
For the sick are in strange places, mourning hearts are everywhere,
And such need the voice of kindness, need sweet sympathy and prayer.

Emily Thornton.

Break, Break, Break

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

Alfred Tennyson.

Don't Kill the Birds

Don't kill the birds, the pretty birds,
That sing about your door,
Soon as the joyous spring has come,
And chilling storms are o'er.
The little birds, how sweet they sing!
Oh! let them joyous live;
And never seek to take the life
That you can never give.

Don't kill the birds, the pretty birds,
That play among the trees;
'Twould make the earth a cheerless place,
Should we dispense with these.
The little birds, how fond they play!
Do not disturb their sport;
But let them warble forth their songs,
Till winter cuts them short.

Don't kill the birds, the happy birds,
That bless the fields and grove;
So innocent to look upon,
They claim our warmest love.
The happy birds, the tuneful birds,
How pleasant 'tis to see!
No spot can be a cheerless place
Where'er their presence be.

D.C. Colesworthy.

Bill's in the Legislature

I've got a letter, parson, from my son away out West,
An' my old heart is heavy as an anvil in my breast,
To think the boy whose future I had once so nicely planned
Should wander from the right and come to such a bitter end.

I told him when he left us, only three short years ago,
He'd find himself a-plowing in a mighty crooked row;
He'd miss his father's counsel and his mother's prayers, too,
But he said the farm was hateful, an' he guessed he'd have to go.

I know there's big temptations for a youngster in the West,
But I believed our Billy had the courage to resist;
An' when he left I warned him of the ever waitin' snares
That lie like hidden serpents in life's pathway everywhere.

But Bill, he promised faithful to be careful, an' allowed
That he'd build a reputation that'd make us mighty proud.
But it seems as how my counsel sort o' faded from his mind,
And now he's got in trouble of the very worstest kind!

His letters came so seldom that I somehow sort o' knowed
That Billy was a-trampin' of a mighty rocky road;
But never once imagined he would bow my head in shame,
And in the dust would woller his old daddy's honored name.

He writes from out in Denver, an' the story's mighty short—
I jess can't tell his mother!—It'll crush her poor old heart!

An' so I reckoned, parson, you might break the news to her—
Bill's in the Legislature but he doesn't say what fur!

The Bridge Builder

An old man going a lone highway,
Came, at the evening cold and gray,
To a chasm vast and deep and wide,
The old man crossed in the twilight dim,
The sullen stream had no fear for him;
But he turned when safe on the other side
And built a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near,
"You are wasting your strength with building here;
Your journey will end with the ending day,
Yon never again will pass this way;
You've crossed the chasm, deep and wide,
Why build this bridge at evening tide?"

The builder lifted his old gray head;
"Good friend, in the path I have come," he said,
"There followed after me to-day
A youth whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm that has been as naught to me
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be;
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him!"

Anonymous.

Song of Marion's Men

Our band is few, but true and tried,
Our leader frank and bold;
The British soldier trembles
When Marion's name is told.
Our fortress is the good green wood,
Our tent the cypress tree;
We know the forest round us
As seamen know the sea;
We know its walls of thorny vines,
Its glades of reedy grass,
Its safe and silent islands
Within the dark morass.

Woe to the English soldiery
That little dread us near!
On them shall light at midnight
A strange and sudden fear:
When, waking to their tents on fire,
They grasp their arms in vain,
And they who stand to face us
Are beat to earth again;
And they who fly in terror deem
A mighty host behind,
And hear the tramp of thousands
Upon the hollow wind.

Then sweet the hour that brings release
From danger and from toil;
We talk the battle over
And share the battle's spoil.
The woodland rings with laugh and shout
As if a hunt were up,
And woodland flowers are gathered
To crown the soldier's cup.
With merry songs we mock the wind
That in the pine-top grieves,
And slumber long and sweetly
On beds of oaken leaves.

Well knows the fair and friendly moon
The band that Marion leads—
The glitter of their rifles,
The scampering of their steeds.
'Tis life our fiery barbs to guide
Across the moonlight plains;

'Tis life to feel the night wind
That lifts their tossing manes.
A moment in the British camp—
A moment—and away—
Back to the pathless forest
Before the peep of day.

Grave men there are by broad Santee,
Grave men with hoary hairs;
Their hearts are all with Marion,
For Marion are their prayers.
And lovely ladies greet our band
With kindest welcoming,
With smiles like those of summer,
And tears like those of spring.
For them we wear these trusty arms,
And lay them down no more
Till we have driven the Briton
Forever from our shore.

William Cullen Bryant.

The Minstrel-Boy

The Minstrel-Boy to the war is gone,
In the ranks of death you'll find him;
His father's sword he has girded on,
And his wild harp slung behind him.—
"Land of song!" said the warrior-bard,
"Though all the world betrays thee,
One sword, at least, thy rights shall guard,
One faithful harp shall praise thee!"
The Minstrel fell!—but the foeman's chain
Could not bring his proud soul under;
The harp he loved ne'er spoke again,
For he tore its chords asunder;
And said, "No chains shall sully thee,
Thou soul of love and bravery!
Thy songs were made for the pure and free,
They shall never sound in slavery!"

Thomas Moore.

Our Homestead

Our old brown homestead reared its walls,
From the wayside dust aloof,
Where the apple-boughs could almost cast
Their fruitage on its roof:
And the cherry-tree so near it grew,
That when awake I've lain,
In the lonesome nights, I've heard the limbs,
As they creaked against the pane:
And those orchard trees, O those orchard trees!
I've seen my little brothers rocked
In their tops by the summer breeze.

The sweet-brier under the window-sill,
Which the early birds made glad,
And the damask rose by the garden fence
Were all the flowers we had.
I've looked at many a flower since then,
Exotics rich and rare,
That to other eyes were lovelier,
But not to me so fair;
O those roses bright, O those roses bright!
I have twined them with my sister's locks,
That are hid in the dust from sight!

We had a well, a deep old well,
Where the spring was never dry,
And the cool drops down from the mossy stones
Were falling constantly:
And there never was water half so sweet
As that in my little cup,
Drawn up to the curb by the rude old sweep,
Which my father's hand set up;
And that deep old well, O that deep old well!
I remember yet the splashing sound
Of the bucket as it fell.

Our homestead had an ample hearth,
Where at night we loved to meet;
There my mother's voice was always kind,
And her smile was always sweet;
And there I've sat on my father's knee,
And watched his thoughtful brow,
With my childish hand in his raven hair,—
That hair is silver now!
But that broad hearth's light, O that broad hearth's light!

And my father's look, and my mother's smile,—
They are in my heart to-night.

Phoebe Gary.

The Ballad of the Tempest

We were crowded in the cabin,
Not a soul would dare to sleep,—
It was midnight on the waters,
And a storm was on the deep.

'Tis a fearful thing in winter
To be shattered by the blast,
And to hear the rattling trumpet
Thunder, "Cut away the mast!"

So we shuddered there in silence,—
For the stoutest held his breath,
While the hungry sea was roaring
And the breakers talked with Death.

As thus we sat in darkness,
Each one busy with his prayers,
"We are lost!" the captain shouted,
As he staggered down the stairs.

But his little daughter whispered,
As she took his icy hand,
"Isn't God upon the ocean,
Just the same as on the land?"

Then we kissed the little maiden,
And we spoke in better cheer,
And we anchored safe in harbor,
When the morn was shining clear.

James T. Fields.

Santa Filomena

Whene'er a noble deed is wrought,
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
Our hearts, in glad surprise,
To higher levels rise.

The tidal wave of deeper souls
Into our inmost being rolls
And lifts us unawares
Out of all meaner cares.

Honor to those whose words or deeds
Thus help us in our daily needs,
And by their overflow,
Raise us from what is low!

Thus thought I, as by night I read
Of the great army of the dead,
The trenches cold and damp,
The starved and frozen camp,—

The wounded from the battle-plain,
In dreary hospitals of pain,
The cheerless corridors,
The cold and stony floors.

Lo! in that house of misery
A lady with a lamp I see
Pass through the glimmering gloom,
And flit from room to room.

And slow, as in a dream of bliss,
The speechless sufferer turns to kiss
Her shadow, as it falls
Upon the darkening walls.

As if a door in heaven should be
Opened and then closed suddenly,
The vision came and went,
The light shone and was spent.

On England's annals, through the long
Hereafter of her speech and song,
That light its rays shall cast
From portals of the past.

A lady with a lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land
A noble type of good,
Heroic Womanhood.

Nor even shall be wanting here
The palm, the lily, and the spear,
The symbols that of yore
Saint Filomena bore.

Henry W. Longfellow.

The Knight's Toast

The feast is o'er! Now brimming wine
In lordly cup is seen to shine
Before each eager guest;
And silence fills the crowded hall,
As deep as when the herald's call
Thrills in the loyal breast.

Then up arose the noble host,
And, smiling, cried: "A toast! a toast!
To all our ladies fair!
Here before all, I pledge the name
Of Staunton's proud and beauteous dame,
The Ladye Gundamere!"

Then to his feet each gallant sprung,
And joyous was the shout that rung,
As Stanley gave the word;
And every cup was raised on high,
Nor ceased the loud and gladsome cry
Till Stanley's voice was heard.

"Enough, enough," he, smiling, said,
And lowly bent his haughty head;
"That all may have their due,
Now each in turn must play his part,
And pledge the lady of his heart,
Like gallant knight and true!"

Then one by one each guest sprang up,
And drained in turn the brimming cup,
And named the loved one's name;
And each, as hand on high he raised,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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