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SHOWERS AND SUNSHINE

BY ✓

WILL T. HALE
"



MEMPHIS, TENN.

GAYOSO BOOKSTORE

1896

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To My Best Friends

MR. E. W. CARMACK, MEMPHIS

AND

MR. W. M. HANDY, CHICAGO

Some incoherent echoes of the songs
That I have heard at times within my soul;
Ephemeral as notes of birds that trol,
Nor loud enough to reach the passing throngs.

Yet you have heard, my friends! and if to fame
One rhyme may reach and win some listening ears,
Let it bear testimony through the years
That there is more in friendship than a name.



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Showers and Sunshine



AT EVENFALL

THE far-off woods spread out in sombre shadow
 Beyond the lane ;
An owl upon a snag beside the meadow,
 Moans as in pain.
Across the brooklet's bar, in wild derision,
 The kildees call,
And all existence seemeth half a vision
 At evenfall.

Among the weeds beside the fence, the elders
 Loom faintly white ;
The fireflies dart among the blowing guelders —
 Wee lamps a-light.
The evening's breathings scarcely seem to dally
 The poplars tall ;
And calm the night and peaceful as Death's Valley,
 At evenfall.

The years of life are passing surely star-ward
 Unto the end ;
The borders of the Now and Then move forward,
 And, glimmering, blend.

Showers and Sunshine

And when there comes an end to woes and blisses,
And Death shall call,
May Time's last moment be as calm as this is,
At evenfall !

THE JOURNEY

I HAVE followed Hope's entreating from my
mem'ry's earliest day,
Through the sunlight and the moonlight, by a rough
or flower'd way ;
Like a lute by seraph sounded, her sweet voice was
wafted back
O'er the greenly spreading areas, o'er the yet untrod-
den track ;
Birds and bees their music rendered, and the silvery
streamlets rolled
By the shores that lilies haunted, o'er the shining sands
of gold ;
And I said that in the distance all my worryings will
cease,
With the breezes blowing round me and the flowers
smiling peace !

I have followed Hope's entreatings from my mem'ry's
earliest day,
And my footsteps totter weakly as I keep upon the way.

Showers and Sunshine

Looking back I see dead faces and recall the voice of
 woe
Of the friends who fell and perished while alone I for-
 ward go ;
Manhood's sunlight now is twilight, and it seems the
 raven bird
Croaks alone where in life's morning songsters all the
 woodlands stirred ;
And the distance still is distant when my worryings
 shall cease,
With the breezes blowing round me, and the flowers
 smiling peace !

THE HOMESTEAD

ITS tott'ring ruins stand dark-brow'd and hoary,
 A beggar now for one regretful tear.
About its gall'ry climbs the morning-glory —
 Pity in flower for the days that were.

The elder blooms among nightshade and bushes,
 Like some white thought yet in a world of sin.
A lone red rose beside the old gate blushes —
 But where are those who drank its fragrance in?

Where children romped, now suns the wary lizard ;
 Where Love spake low, the owlet builds her nest ;

Showers and Sunshine

Where life throbbed buoyant, Memory the wizard
Wanders alone, white-faced with heaving breast.

In youth the catbird 'wakened us from slumbers
With that fresh outburst from his tuneful breast ;
And day — a lyric of melodious numbers —
Suggested pleasure, then an eve of rest !

At night, how void of care was every bosom,
Far from the world, with only God's eyes near !
And all so quiet we could hear the blossom
Turning the wind's sweet whisperings to hear.

And visions came and garnished all the ceiling,
Giving their rainbow tints to plain gray walls ;
While unsung songs came o'er us gently stealing
As soft as sighs of dream-wrought waterfalls. . . .

Old homestead ! crumbling into ruins hoary,
Whatever joy we 've seen or yet may see —
You tell the sweetest part of lifetime's story ;
The dearest days are those that used to be !

LIFE

THE roses blow in summer, but the dell
In winter spreads in barrenness away ;
And so, in all our lives regret must dwell
Alternately with pleasure's dubious sway.

Showers and Sunshine

LOVE AND FATE

EVER the moonlight under
Will men and maidens dream,
Ever the same sweet wonder
Of gliding down Love's stream.
And yet this lesson 's given —
We learn it again, again ;
Kiss, and the world is heaven,
Part, and the world is pain !

Who knoweth, while sailing onward,
Where swirling whirlpools wait ?
Love looketh alone to sunward,
And giveth no thought to hate.
And yet this lesson 's given —
We learn it by and by :
The wrack may darken the even,
And laughter end in a sigh !

OBSCURITY

HE failed, men said, because his worthy deeds
Were done alone, away from public gaze ;
But Christ, the one success, found human needs
And did God's will oft 'mongst the humblest ways.

Showers and Sunshine

HOLLYHOCKS

PLAIN Syrian exiles ! growing by the walk
That leads along from gate to farm-house
gray, —

What scenes you 've witnessed in the fourscore years
Whose days in various guise have passed away !
What secrets have you caught since woman's hands
Planted you here in alien soil to bloom ;
What hopes have burgeoned, and what dreams have
come —

To end in gloom !

The beaux of half a hundred years have stepped
Beside you as they sought the gallery,
Where palpitating hearts awaited them
With hopes as buoyant as are mine in me ;
And doubtless you have seen the fair white forms
Clasped close in lovers' warm embrace, and knew
Who carved in yon gnarled locust-tree the words —
“Aye True to You.”

The bride who leaned upon the groom's strong arm —
Her robe has brushed you as she glided by ;
And sons have let their gaze upon you rest
When leaving home the world's rough ways to try ;

Showers and Sunshine

Then after you have slept through winter's tide
You've awakened from your slumber in the spring,
And missed some happy faces — some hushed voice
That used to sing.

Whereat you noted that the hours were sad
To the aged parent in the rustic chair —
Sitting upon the porch among the vines,
The breezes toying with his whitened hair ;
Sad, though the pigeons cooed about the roof,
The peacock strutted in the noon-day sun,
And slaves came singing from the fields at eve
When work was done.

Ah, Syrian exiles ! Faces withered now ;
Fair forms that mingled long ago with dust ;
Glad souls that learned full soon that even Love
Is not for ever kind to hearts that trust, —
All these have had their transient staying here,
At various times within the years' wide range,
But you alone were true — in joy or woe
You knew no change !

LOVE

THE night's not desolate, if from above
One glittering star there be ;
And failure bringeth not despair, if love
Still beams on earth for me !

Showers and Sunshine

THE ROAD TO FATHER'S HOUSE

ITS beginning was a myst'ry, wondrous to our
childish thinking —

Coming from the distant somewhere in the wide,
wide world away ;

Crawling through the shady forests, from the sight a
minute shrinking,

Then appearing by the meadows with their shocks
of fragrant hay.

Broidered by the humble fennel, cheered by songs the
birds would send,

It was pleasant as the features of an old familiar
friend ;

And I think that naught has power sweeter mem'ries
to arouse,

Than the road that, broad and dusty, led along to
father's house.

It was pleasant when we, romping, drove the cattle
home at even,

As the stars came peering downward, watchful,
watchful, yet so still,

And from 'cross the fields where tree-tops spread
black fingers 'gainst the heaven,

Floated mournfully the plaining of the lonely
whippoorwill !

Showers and Sunshine

And now plodding on my journey, with the end almost
in sight,
Oft I think 't would make life sweeter if I could, before
the night,
For a while as in my childhood when a-driving home
the cows,
Wander back upon the roadway leading to my father's
house.

MISANTHROPY

DAILY the mocking-bird, singing a medley soft,
Over the graves of the dead, banishes solitude ;
Nightly the stars gleam down out of the realm aloft,
Cheering the whippoorwill brooding within the wood.
Often I envy you — you of the by-gone years,
Sleeping so tranquil there, hidden away from strife ;
Quiet the aching heart ; ended the flow of tears ;
Over the art and craft — pitiful all of life !
Under the tender sky,
Under the waving grass ;
Peacefully there to lie
Ever as eons pass.

What is it worth to live, hearts are so fickle now ?
Never a friendship buds, saving for selfish end ;
Lovers and loved alike shameless to Mammon bow ;
Loyalty does not live ; Truth hath never a friend !

Showers and Sunshine

Haply beneath the turf memories cannot come ;
Lucky in the grave dreaming will never be ;
Treachery's lies all hushed, scandal forever dumb ;
Hate and the hell of life over for aye for me !
 Under the tender sky,
 Under the waving grass ;
 Peacefully there to lie
 Ever as eons pass.

THE LILY

THE lily standeth heartless still,
 No matter who may come to woo ;
 To tearful pleadings of the dew
And stars' arch glance, she does not thrill.

In vain the morning clasps her waist,
 In vain the hot kiss of the sun ! —
 Cold, haughty beauty, loving none,
Yet willing flatt'ry's sweet to taste !

Circe, whose passion naught can move,
 I envy her her listless part :
 How bless'd is she — she has no heart !
How bless'd is she — she cannot love !

Showers and Sunshine

NOON

AS motionless as statues stand the trees,
Their tops outlined against the slumberous
blue,
And 'cross the way, a fleck of sky, one sees
The noisy jay slow-flapping into view.

Anon the peacock's scream, a signal loud,
Startles the silence and the dozing air ;
And swarms of butterflies above the road —
The ghosts of marigold? — fly here and there.

The bustle from the busy city sent
Is mellowed to a murmur soft and low ;
While far among green pastures cowbells blent,
Tell of cool nooks where lowly daisies blow.

Upon the hazy uplands herds recline ;
The farmhouse roofs loom shimmering in the sun :
The bees drone 'round the honeysuckle vine ;
And joy-fraught are the moments dancing on.

No sweeter hour has ever dawned, I ween,
Even lost Eden's earliest ways among ;
For all the earth is but a singing scene,
And all the world is but a pictured song !

Showers and Sunshine

IN THE SUMMER EVENING

WHEN we tended the fields of the happy old farm,
The hours would travel so slow !
The sun seemed to pause by some wonderful charm
That Joshua knew long ago !
But after awhile came the shades from the hills ;
Then the sunset and gloaming anon ;
And homeward we trudged to the mocking-bird's trills,
When the time to cease working came on.

The whippoorwill dreamed in the thicket sedate,
And the cricket chirped out in the wheat,
The cattle stood lowing beside the farm gate,
And a milking-song rose low and sweet.
The summer air told of the roses that grew
And glowed in the twilight, so wan ;
And mother would meet us in welcome, we knew,
When the time to cease working came on.

We are toiling on still, yet in different ways
From the ones where we labored when young,
And not with the pleasure we knew in the days
When hope all her melodies sung.
The hours are longer, it seemeth, than then,
But the toiling will some time be done ;
And peace once again will be ours as when
The time to cease working came on.

Showers and Sunshine

DON'T FORGET THE OLD FOLKS

NAY, don't forget the old folks, boys — they've
not forgotten you;
Though years have passed since you were home, the
old hearts still are true !
And not a night e'er passes by they have n't the
desire
To see your faces once again, and hear your footsteps
nigher.
So write them now and then — 't will bring fresh light
unto their eyes,
And make the world glow bright awhile, and bluer
gleam the skies !

You're young and buoyant, and for you Hope holds
her outstretch'd hands,
And life spreads out a waveless sea, that laps but tropic
strands ;
The world is all before your face, but let your thoughts
oft turn
To where fond hearts still cherish you, and loving
bosoms yearn !
And write the old folks now and then — 't will gladden
fading eyes,
And make the world glow bright again, and bluer
gleam the skies.

Showers and Sunshine

No matter what your duties are nor what your place
in life,
There 's never been a time they 'd not assume your
load of strife ;
And shrunken shoulders, trembling hands, and forms
racked by disease,
Would go down to the grave to bring to you the pearl
of peace !
So write them now and then — 't will bring the light
unto their eyes,
And make the world glow bright awhile, and bluer
gleam the skies.

THE CLOCK THAT FATHER USED TO WIND

THE clock that father used to wind — what pictures
it recalls,
Of childhood's romps and boyhood's plays within the
homestead's walls !
And as we look upon the scenes our young years used
to know,
His dear old face comes back to us as in the long ago ;
It sometimes seems he 's living yet, and in the quietude
Of evening when the fire burns low, and bat-like
shadows brood,

Showers and Sunshine

We half expect to see him stand and with his gentle
touch,
Still turn the key as he was wont in years we loved
o'ermuch.
O, we will love this memory wherever we may roam —
The clock that father used to wind when we were boys
at home !

If winter with its snows were there, or summer with
its flowers,
The same sweet happiness would reign, the same con-
tent was ours ;
For we ne'er dreamed the circling hands upon the dial
white,
Were slowly measuring the time when he would leave
our sight ;
We had no thought that change or death would sober
all our joys,
Or chill the heart that beat in love forever for his boys.
But time and change must flow and ebb, and he we
loved is gone,
To where the opalescent lights engild a deathless
dawn ;
And yet there 's left a memory we 'll love whate'er may
come —
The clock that father used to wind when we were boys
at home.

Showers and Sunshine

IF SHE HAD LIVED

IF she had lived,
(My little girl the angels bore away),
I often wonder how she'd look if she were here
to-day —

Attired in womanhood's becoming grace,
Health in her veins and rapture in her face.
Would joy, in dimples ambushed, flush her cheeks,
Or would she feel the pain that care bespeaks,
If she had lived?

If she had lived,
Would not the ways have bloomed in sweeter wise,
And life been one perpetual spring beneath perpetual
skies? —

When, noiseless as a ghost-step in the night,
Despair has crept within my heart to blight
The struggling plant of hope that fain would grow, —
She would have kept the alien out, I know,
If she had lived.

If she had lived —
But cease thy sighs, Regret ! and trust that God
Still loves the world as He has loved, despite His
chastening-rod ;
Let's hope the tears I've shed have been the rain
To moisten faith that we will meet again,

Showers and Sunshine

And make it flower on till Heaven's won,
When I'll not care to cry as I have done.—

“ If she had lived !
If she had lived ! ”

LAND OF BY-AND-BY

CHARMFUL Land of By-and-By,
How we for your shadows sigh !
After parting, after pain,
We'll be cheerful there again ;
Mother eyes we used to see
As we lay upon her knee —
How we miss their light to-day ! —
Will be shining on us aye ;
Sweethearts that we used to kiss
In some fragrant twilight lane —
Dreaming in our boyish bliss
That our love would never wane ;
They are there as fresh and fair
As the rose in morning air,
Blooming where no daylights die
In the Land of By-and-By !

Perfect Land of By-and-By,
Spreading to the tired eye
As a haven for the soul
Plodding onward to its goal, —

Showers and Sunshine

When we 'd faint we look ahead,
See you, and are comforted ;
Life is sweeter for your hills,
Azure skies and singing rills !
When the last day mother-wise
Lays its palm upon our brow,
And while noting dimming eyes,
Wipes the beaded drops that show
That the spray from River Death
Is anear and signaleth, —
May our faith still dove-like fly
To the olived By-and-By !

AT THE OLD FARM

WHAT are they doing at the old farm to-day?
Does ev'rything glide in the old quiet way?
Are the autumns as pleasant as when, a glad boy,
I deemed home my Eden, its solar light joy?
Are the orchards still red with their sweets manifold,
Or the forests still gorgeous in red, brown, and gold?
Do the fallows and fields spread as hazy and broad?
Do the same friendly neighbors pass the same country
road?

Showers and Sunshine

What are they doing at the old farm to-day?
While I who once gambolled there wander away?
I see the deep woods where the nuts lay in heaps,
And the sumacs that blushed on the frost-bitten steep;
I hear the owl's cry 'mong the fringe of dark hills,
A weird voice of doom and a harbinger of ills;
I see falt'ring steps where the twilight falls gray,
And — yes, I'm in tears for the old farm to-day.

MONOCHROME

WE start upon the journey strong,
Believing life a wordless song:
Drunken on youth, each, happy, saith —
“ Pass by, pass by, O heartless Death ! ”

Sobered by age, and serfs of care,
Still at the end no crown to wear:
Thankful for rest, in joy we weep —
“ He giveth His beloved sleep ! ”

THE AUTUMN RAIN

THE raindrops falling on the falling leaves —
This scene accordeth with my mood and years:
For in my heart, that daily sorely grieves,
My hopes are falling, with regretful tears.

Showers and Sunshine

BABY GRAVES

IN storm or calm, how silent !
In sun or shade, how still !
Even the birds above you
Their softest threnodes trill.
In your embrace are resting
Wee forms we knew of yore —
The seal of death on eyelids
To open here no more.

O graves in endless quiet, there where the tall grass
waves !
All else may be forgotten — save you, O baby
graves !

How well do we remember
Your inmates' artless ways —
The prattle and the laughter
That glorified the days ;
And how blind Faith for comfort
Turned sightless orbs to Him,
When little hands fell listless,
And little eyes grew dim.

O graves ! the sun shone dreary, and turbid rolled the
waves,
When you our wee ones covered, O lonely baby
graves !

Showers and Sunshine

Our mem'ries hold the pictures
Of little features yet,
And oft we feel our heart-strings
Vibrating to regret.
But while we long for faces
We here no more may see,
And list in vain for voices
Of childish melody —
O graves! this hope we cherish — away beyond the waves
Existence will be sweeter for your being, baby graves.

AS IN THE SOLEMN HUSH

AS in the solemn hush of star-lit downs
The sweet innumerable tongues of leaves
In whispers tell the mystery that crowns
The night, from star-world to the grig that grieves, —
So, gently, promptings through my being creep ;
Gently, yet strong to stir as voice of deep that calls to
deep.

Immortal love ! who as the sages sing,
Cometh in gust or in the still small voice —
Make mighty all this subtile whispering
Till wake the deep strong faith that was the boy's !
Spare not the spirit's striving, for, behold,
I fain would know what wilt thou have me do, as Saul
of old.

Showers and Sunshine

AFTER SUNSET

THE drowsy eyelids of the Day
Close slowly o'er his tired eyes ;
The wind sings as a mother sings
Her soft and slumberous lullabies.
The Night, in robe of darkness dressed,
Stands patient on the far-off marge,
And through the darkling ether sea
The coming Silence steers her barge.
A dreaming wren chirps to its young
Among the honeysuckle bowers ;
Ghost of the lilies that are dust,
A fluttering moth flies 'mongst the flowers.
Vague, indistinct, the laborers
Come homeward from the twilight fields,
While sweet and far the melody
Of cowbells tinkles on the wealds.

Like moving figures in a dream,
The cattle near the shadowy gap ;
Dark as a wand'ring, evil thought,
An owl sails by with noiseless flap.
And 'gainst the far horizon looms
A branchless tree — a ship-like mast —
The gray clouds hanging 'round its length,
Like limpen sails which storms have pass'd.

Showers and Sunshine

But, earth's fair amazon, the moon,
Strides up the east and soon has hurl'd
Ten thousand silver javelins down
To drive the shadows from the world !
And in the quiet of the peace
Which like a benediction falls,
One almost hears within his soul
Faint angel strains o'er Aiden's walls !

THE MOCKING-BIRD

I WONDER of what he is thinking,
As he perches with nervous feet —
His chanson a tuneful nectar,
Intangible, passingly sweet?

But he turns his glad eye downward,
His thoughts in its darkness shine :
"How happier should be you mortals,
Whose destiny's more than mine !"

DESPONDENCY

GRAY sky, gray sea, and vapor-dimmed ;
In sombre aspect all things show :
The world 's a monochrome that 's limn'd
By saints, rememb'ring earthly woe.

Showers and Sunshine

A SUMMER DREAM

WE wandered happy, you and I, among the
country ways,
Unmindful of the end to come to summer's balmy days,
And happy in the period when our love and hope and
youth
Thought all the world was violet purled, and every
vow was truth.
Do you remember, sweetheart old, the season and the
year,
When you to me were darling, and I to you was dear?
Though we are parted now, we heard not then the
stealthy tread
Of that pale doom which came at last and struck our
pleasure dead ;
But vowing faith forevermore, we trod in pathways
sweet,
With blue above and round us love, and flowers for
our feet.
How could we know that coming change could blight
that vision e'er,
When you to me were darling, and I to you was dear !
I trust that you are happy still, wherever you may be,
And would not, should it wake regret, have you re-
member me !

Showers and Sunshine

Yet I at times may wish that life had been as I had
dreamed
In those old days when country ways with fairy splen-
dor gleamed,
And will forever, sweetheart dear, remember with a
tear
When you to me were darling, and I to you was dear !

LIFE'S MYSTERY

ONE'S path was pranked by roses,
And one through thornlands wound ;
One heard but rhymeful closes,
One heard no cheering sound.

One wept for life's outgoing,
And one was glad to go ;
And which was blessed, the knowing —
Eternity must show.

AMBITION AND CONTENT

AMBITION and content ! this is my creed —
Who strives is worthier than the one who rests ;
The running streamlet gladdeneth the mead,
Miasma's bane the sloggy pool infests.

Showers and Sunshine

THE FIRST SNOW

THE robins 'round the granary eaves,
Whisper and watch like little thieves,
And, as beside the hedge you stir,
A partridge starts with sudden whir ;
While crows — as dark as dreams that come
To worry when one fain would sleep —
Above the far-off hilltops sweep,
Flecking the heavens' dull gray dome.

About the barn the milch-cows low,
And seem one's whistled air to know ;
The horses, whinnying, seem to say,
"Why do you loiter on the way?"
The pigs from out the sage-grass bed,
Come nois'ly begging at your feet ;
And never alms-folk gladder greet
The one to whom they look for bread.

The outwork done, you then return
To where the blazing faggots burn ;
There, waiting for the morning meal,
A kind of calm content you feel.
The sparks fly upward at their will ;
The fire sends out a pleasant glow ;
And all reminds you, though there 's snow,
There 's much in life to cheer us still !

Showers and Sunshine

THE COURTESAN

SHE'S beautiful — that's true,
With perfect face and form :
And yet I see — do you? —
But little there to charm.

Her glances are the gleams
From phosphor coldly shed ;
Her joyless smile but seems
A rose above the dead !

THE FIDDLIN' DOWN AT MELTON'S BEND

I 'VE heard some music in my day, but I 'm prepared
to bet
I 've lately heard at Melton's Bend the sweetest music
yet !
With Cato Holland's fiddle there, an' Antney Stanley
his,
'T would make most fellers draw their coats an' git
right down to biz !
"The Eighth of Janiuary" rose, "The Dusty Miller"
rung,
An' "Billy in the Lowground" beat the flute er harp
er tongue !

Showers and Sunshine

It's been some years since I have danced, but still I
don't pretend
That fiddlin' didn't make me break my rule at Mel-
ton's Bend !

There's some that say when men git old, with locks
a-turnin' gray,
There's foolishness in boyish moods, er feelin' sorter
gay ;
But then my creed's a differnt one— ef God had
thought it wise
To have us, when we're young no more, to pleasant
things despise,
I'm certin He'd a-made us blind, an' covered up our
ears
Say, after we had passed our youth an' reached some
forty years !
But ef I'd thought as they, the thought that night had
found an end —
Fer I was 'bliged to shake a leg down there at Melton's
Bend !

I'm ortherdox in Scriptur' things, an' ef when life is
done,
They have but harps in Edenland, I guess I'll grumble
none.

Showers and Sunshine

It mout be they 're more tony there among the saints
an' sich —
Mout suit all classes more er less — the poor as well
as rich ;
But ef I had my ruthers-like, I 'd ask — when Jurdon's
cross'd
An' Zion's ship is anchor'd safe — no more is tempest-
toss'd —
That some good fiddlin' now an' then mout with the
harpin' blend
To make me feel the glory felt down there at Melton's
Bend !

OCTOBER DAYS

THE mullein stands upon the upland brown,
A lonely sentinel; the thistle-down
Floats ghost-like thro' the haze; a spider's net —
A silvery disc — swings 'twixt the corn-rows yet;
The mountain peaks seem farther off; the breeze
Delays a moment 'mongst the solemn trees,
And then, with rondeau soft as cloister bells,
Hurries away to cheer the flowerless dells;
While banks of clouds, like cities walled and white,
Stand etched upon the canvas lazulite.

Half sad, half joyful, the October days,
With sleepy brooks and quiet pastoral ways.

Showers and Sunshine

The sumacs, drabbled in the summer's blood,
Flaunt boldly, making gorgeous all the wood;
Green, gold, and purple shades entrance the eye —
The stately Autumn's gorgeous blazonry;
A partridge whistles in the glebe; the dove
In plaintive calls bewails its absent love;
A cricket chirrups in the blighted grass;
And, lightning winged, the dragons, droning, pass.
No jarring sounds the charms of Nature mar,
But mellowly they swell, subdued and far.
 So sadly, sweetly, the October days
 Reign in their realm of quiet pastoral ways.

REMORSE

I FEAR me the silence far more than the din
From the tempest's strong lungs or the earth-
quake's rude chill:
Then a wraith seeks my soul's cell and peers coldly in,
And sorrow and horror my breast straightway fill!

It jeers and it leers at the coward crouched there,
 (Who 'd smile once again if but death would come
 soon!)

For I dread the sharp stab of her eyes' open stare,
And the white face of innocence under the moon!

Showers and Sunshine

WHEN THE AUTUMN RAIN IS FALLING

SITTING by the door at twilight, when there's not
a soul anear,
Looking out upon the raindrops and the fields and
meadows sere, —
Then our thoughts go wand'ring backward, while there
stealthily arise
Sadness in our longing bosoms and the tears within
our eyes ;
Ghosts of half-forgotten pleasures crowd around us,
and we go
Hand in hand with those we knew once, in the days
we used to know ;
Happy days and ways and faces, and the present
visions weaves,
When the autumn rain is falling on the roof and on
the leaves.

All the world is glad and sunny, and we laugh amid
the strife,
When the forms we love are with us in exuberance of
life ;
And we hardly pause to kiss them, or to speak to
yearning ears
Words of love that thrill the bosom and that dry the
flowing tears.

Showers and Sunshine

But a time comes o'er us often when we wish our lives
had been
Not so careless of their pleasure, not so worldly-selfish
then ;
And we long to live life over and efface regret that
grieves,
When the autumn rain is falling on the roof and on
the leaves.

WITH MAGGIE AT THE BARS

THIS is truth — as we grow older, and go farther
from the times
When the days were formed in measure, and the nights
were writ in rhymes,
We grow fonder of the old things, — for, in that roman-
tic age,
All our living was a poem printed on a tinted page ;
And the sweetest lyric written was at eve beneath the
stars,
Long ago, there at the farmstead, with sweet Maggie
at the bars.

I have had somewhat of pleasure, from a worldly point
of view,
And I've met with kindly bosoms, with their hearts
pulsating true ;

Showers and Sunshine

But somehow the woods and meadows have no flowers
quite as fair
As they bloomed when I was younger in the love-
surrounded air ;
While the moons are not as tender, and not quite so
bright the stars,
As they shone when we were trysting — I and Maggie
at the bars !

GUINEVERE

JUST a glove of mauve, —
Old, but smelling of
Days among the country ways,
Sweet with marjoram and love.

Close the casket ! Joys
We experienced there
Come again with song and hum, —
I a youth, and she so fair.

Little hand in dust,
You were white and dear ; . . .
O, the hopes of long ago, —
Guinevere, dead Guinevere ! . . .

Showers and Sunshine

Just a glove of mauve, —
But the scent that clings
Holds the dream of two young souls
In the far and faded springs !

WHEN AUTUMN COMES

WHEN autumn comes,
Instinctively the mind turns to the woods,
And there, apart from body, quietly broods,
As plain as if the wandering footsteps strayed
Across the glimmering field, or in the glade ;
We hear the fall of nuts upon the stream,
And see the anarchists, the redbuds, gleam ; —
The butterflies, as wind-blown goldenrod,
Flutter where yet the autumn flowers nod ;
And, 'cross the distance, slumberous and clear,
The fodder-gath'ers' chansons reach the ear,
When autumn comes.

When autumn comes,
There hovers in the still and hazy air
A chilly hint, as though dead fingers there,
In gathering the shroud of summer time,
Had touched you with an actual touch of rime ;
Out of the grass, a thrush yet upward springs,
And, sweet as hope 'mong dead ambitions, sings ;

Showers and Sunshine

And still, despite the peace and calm that reign,
One feels the presence of a timid pain,
For dim and half-conjectured thoughts are rife, —
Some joy with summer 's gone from out our life,
When autumn comes.

CHRISTMAS TIMES GONE BY

PERHAPS it all sounds silly, but I 'm prone, when
Christmas nears,
For awhile to journey backward, o'er the highway of
the years,
To the Christmases that cheered me up among the
dear old hills,
Where my parents' care protected from the great
world's threat'ning ills.
I admit a hint of teardrops falls as early joys I knew
Dawn upon my mem'ry's vision fair as moonbeams on
the dew, —
Happy years of boyish yearnings, free from manhood's
sob and sigh ; —
How I 'd like to live them over as in Christmas times
gone by.
I can see the humble cottage, with its honeysuckle
vine,
Gleaming green through winter's freezes, as through
age my mem'ries shine ;

Showers and Sunshine

Far behind, the silent hilltops, and the vultures sailing
high,
And the holly on the uplands, and the redbuds glowing
nigh ;
While the gate, on rusting hinges, creaks as in the
other days,
As protesting 'gainst my leaving for the world's care-
haunting ways ; . . .
And I feel, if death should beckon, it would not be
hard to die
Standing face to face with loved ones of the Christmas
times gone by !

MY LITTLE GIRL AND I

MY little girl and I, —
She pointing me to fairer ways unconsciously ;
If starlight fails, I have the glory of her eyes ;
If flowers droop, there glow the little smiles I prize ;
And never sweeter music comes to human ear
Than that which thrills me as her baby voice I hear.
So we plod onward, happy, to the By-and-By,
My little girl and I.

My little girl and I, —
Pure childhood filled with faith, and age with dimming
eye !

Showers and Sunshine

What though the waves on Sometime's harbor bar,
As in my early youth, still sound and shimmer far?
I hear her laugh in innocence, and so I say,
No matter what I miss, thank God that on the way
I feel the clasp of baby hands ; and, strong, we hie, —
My little girl and I.

My little girl and I !
God grant that whatsoever comes as days go by,
No thorns may pierce her tender feet, no bitter tears
Of long duration flood those little eyes of hers ;
And when at last I totter and am hid from view,
Moveless to kisses, in the darkness and the dew, —
God ! lead her as I try while we go happily, —
My little girl and I !

A VOID

THE field — a picture — has its frame
Of elders and of goldenrod,
And, blood-drops from a wounded god,
The poison flowers glow and flame.

The vampire skims the ether deep,
Belated bees come droning in ;
The brown cicada's raspy din
Keeps still the drowsing world from sleep.

Showers and Sunshine

The swallows, clust'ring 'neath the eaves,
Tell all their little strife and scold ;
And on the slowly-dark'ning wold
The spider now its netting weaves.

And sweetly broods the twilight gray —
The world's content when day is done ;
But I — my heart goes out to one
Lone little grave always, always.

AUGUST

AUGUST, the queenliest daughter of the year,
Walks in her majesty through summer's ways.
She sees so much to greet her pensive gaze
Among the paths now grown familiar, and can hear
In shaded coverts yet the tender cheer
Of orioles ; wild roses, full of grace,
Caress the zigzag fence ; while there 's a trace
Of music from she knows not where, but clear.

And yet, methinks, o'er all the splendrous scene
There broods Presentiment ; for I whose life
Has long an heritage of illness been,
Feel some strange footfall ; that of going strife,
Or coming peace in death for you and me,
Staid August — death, and death's tranquillity !

Showers and Sunshine

PINKS

YES, pinks will ever be my choice
Of all the myriad flowers,
For they recall the best of all
Our young lives' wedded hours.
Though we were poor in earthly things,
Their constancy yet lasted,
And faithful grew the long years through,
If hopes were bright or blasted.
Do you remember, little wife,
When came our greatest sorrow,
And baby lay so still that day,
And darkly shone the morrow?
His little clasp held on his breast
The pink bouquet we made him —
The one thing bright that met our sight
Ere in his grave we laid him.
And then when other cares came on,
Remaining hopes to blighten,
Still by our door they'd smile the more,
As if our grief to lighten.
We learned from them ere long the truth,
Sent by the gracious giver,
That though there's shade by dark clouds made,
There's brightness somewhere ever.

Showers and Sunshine

SUNRISE

IN the vast shadow of the universe,
The lonely world broods silent, and its breath —
As soft as one's who calmly slumbereth,
Then quick at times as that of him who stirs
To torturing dreams that pending doom precurse —
Passes o'er wooded hill and flower'd heath ;
A fog arises like a fleshless wraith,
And noiseless as the pallor that occurs
When Death to human hearts hath brought his rest ;
Far-off a cock crows shrilly, and the stream
Sings with a joy renewed — a tenfold zest ;
The gates of morn, by viewless fingers pressed,
Part slowly — stand ajar — and lo, a gleam ;
While day within his golden car swings West !

OUR PICTURES ON THE WALLS

THE frames are not expensive and the pictures
they are plain,
A-brooding there where sunlight or the firelight
softly falls :
The stranger would not note them, yet no hope of
greed or gain
Would make us think of parting with our pictures
on the walls !

Showers and Sunshine

Nay, we would have no changes in the portraits if we
could,
For gazing on the faces, we can see them as they
were ;
The father strong, and sisters in their lovely woman-
hood,
The mother sweet and tender, and the baby in his
chair.

Their voices come at even or on quiet afternoons,
And while we look upon them we recall the dearer
days ;
And still they seem to love us as when Hope its sweet-
est tunes
Went chanting low and tender here among the
homestead ways.

The years have been so many, and the days have gone
so slow,
Since we were undivided in the years the mind
recalls ;
And yet we feel less lonely as we on our journey
go,
With the faces ever with us — with the pictures on
the walls !

Showers and Sunshine

IN THE FAMILY GRAVEYARD

THEY are sleeping in the silence, where the
winter winds are sighing,
And the whippoorwill's weird calling ringeth through
the twilight hills ;
And their friends' sweet meed of praises or the foes
their failings crying,
Fall unheeding on their slumbers, waking neither
shocks or thrills.

They are sleeping in the silence, and above them twine
the brambles ;
Not a voice that used to cheer them can be heard
above them now ;
And the alien's footstep presses, in the alien's careless
rambles,
Over many a virgin bosom, over many a manly brow.

They are sleeping in the silence, but not hopeless, I
am thinking ;
Often blue eyes seem a-peering through the cloud-
lids from on high ;
And I sometimes dream the breezes, that are ever ris-
ing, sinking,
Bear the tidings still from Heaven that they 'll waken
by and by !

Showers and Sunshine

JINNY

A CROSS the meader, yonder on the hill,
Jinny, my first wife, lays at rest in death —
Where through the lonesome days wild-roses fill
The broodin' stillness with their sweetest breath.
The family graveyard is neglected some ;
The fence I know 's been tumblin' more each year ;
But birds an' grigs, they offen wake the gloom,
An' sheep-bells drows'ly tinkle always near.

I am not old an' yit the world somehow
Hain't seemed jest like it was before she died ;
I feel myself a-wishin' she 's here now,
Like when we used to toil on side by side.
I prize her more 'n I did before she went —
Strange 'at I couldn't see her worth in life ;
But then, I seldom told her how she lent
A charm to home an' driv' off much of strife.

So thoughts like these have tetched me evermore,
When ploughin' in the field below her grave,
Or when at noon I set out by the door
Beneath the vines 'at on the trellis wave ;
Her mound is jest in sight, an' I can view
The little slab 'at tells one where she lays,
An' hear across the shimmerin' fields the coo
Of doves that linger through the summer days.

Showers and Sunshine

An' evenin's, settin' on the gallery,
The twilight's arm a-closin' round the world,
It seems 'at Mem'ry 'll come in spite of me,
An' all the past is like a scrip unfurl'd.
I think of her when raindrops patter through
The shadders lurkin' 'mongst the maple boughs,
I hear her voice when comes the s-o-o, s-o-o, s-o-o,
Down by the gap where Jinny milked the cows.

An' when the moon is shinin' ca'm an' bright —
So clear 'at one can see on upland knolls
The flocks of sheep a-browsin' — ghostly white,
As we consider sainted wimen's souls —
My eyes git full, a-thinkin' of her there,
Not hearin' love, but peacefully an' still ;
An' then I wish I too was done with care,
Restin' with Jinny yonder on the hill.

GOD'S MASTERPIECE

WHEN the Divine had made the world — the
sky, the rill,
Flower and bird, and gave to man "the breath of
life,"
He was not yet content, so, summoning His skill,
God's masterpiece was the result — the wife !

Showers and Sunshine

STANZAS TO HOPE

THOU sweetest comforter of sorrow, Hope,
Yet lingering on Styx's hither side !
I praise thy smile that, falling where men grope
In gloomy depths where miseries abide,
Serenely gleams ! Whatever may betide —
Though gods should hate, and furies interlope
To keep from us until life's eventide
The triumphs we've desired — thy bowers ope
Beyond the dizzy desert's hot and sandy scope !

At times when I have quivered from the slight
Of thoughtless souls who see the calf of gold,
And worship it nor dream that from His height
God deems the faithful struggler of a mould
As perfect as the tinselled Mammon cold ;
And when the songs I fain would sing fall quite
As heedless as the bird's notes — yet, behold !
Clear splendors of an incandescent light,
As smiles from angels' lips, or starbursts through the
night !

These, Hope — thou lingering love of God for men !—
Are but the outward markings that declare
That thy strong form lies couchant, so that when
The world may all forsake, and strides Despair
Like old Apollyon from secret lair —

Showers and Sunshine

Thy loving aid is still most ready then,
Thy staunch support is most apparent there ;
And should all angels die from human ken,
Thou still couldst cheer each living earthly denizen !

AFTER THE FLIRTATION

HEY, jaunty cap ! I will stow you away —
The dainty memento of love and a day,
When the earth was not solemn and skies were not gray,
But azure were they.

And sometimes I'll kiss you for what she has said,
When you covered the curls of her beautiful head,
And heart unto heart for a season were wed,
And hope had not fled.

I will kiss you and fondle between smothered sighs,
As I stand in my dreamings beneath the old skies,
Listening the music within your soft eyes —
That looked melodies !

THE NORTHERN LIGHT

THE Northern light in beauty glows,
Flushing the sky where'er it falls ;
The petals of some crimson rose
That trembles over Heaven's walls.

Showers and Sunshine

THE BRIDGE

THE bridge stands as mossy and grim as of old,
And the lizard still suns on the sill ;
The cricket complains underneath the worn floor,
And the sunbeams in golden drops spill.

Yet over the shallows below,
The wavelets they 're singing a strain ;
For there 's laughter on earth as there 's woe,
And there 's pleasure to pay for each pain !

From the hickory standing beside the far edge,
The nuts drop and splash in the tide,
And the swallows skim low like the leaves skurrying,
And over all cloud-shadows glide.

But over the shallows below,
The wavelets they sing a sweet strain,
For there 's laughter on earth as there 's woe,
And there 's pleasure to pay for each pain !

MOON FLOWERS

THE moon flow'rs bloom alone at night,
Then veil their faces to the day :
A harem cheering with their light
But swarthy Silence on his way.

Showers and Sunshine

A BURDEN

A MARSHALLED host against the sky,
The hills are drawn in silhouette ;
And like a ghost of some regret,
A noiseless crane goes flapping by.

A bellied sail, the autumn moon —
In quarter — glideth slowly west ;
And insects, by some thought depress'd,
Faint, mournful madrigals yet croon.

The world of shadows ! and to me
The sounds of Nature sweet and dim,
Are but the burden of a hymn
That fills God's church, immensity !

MY FIRST SWEETHEART

ONLY a picture and letter
Of the earliest sweetheart I knew,
To tell of the days when a fether
To my soul was the smile that was true.
Faded the letter and yellow,
And the portrait is yielding to must —
The beauty of eyes that were mellow,
The beauty of features now dust !

Showers and Sunshine

But under the dust of the roses,
She is resting in silence for aye ;
And under the dust of the roses, where the dust of my
first love reposes,
My heart goes a-longing to-day.

Children who knew not the meaning
Of the love that is true and will last?—
Nay, why then is memory gleaning
Some sweetness from out of the past?
A meeting of eyes, and our bosoms
Were throbbing with hopes that were sweet ;
A touching of hands, and love-blossoms
They burgeon'd about our young feet !

But under the dust of the roses,
She is resting in silence for aye ;
And under the dust of the roses, where the dust of my
first love reposes,
My heart goes a-longing to-day.

THE GREATEST HERO

I HOLD this thing to be a truth, whate'er
The loud acclaimings of the world have been ;
Greatest of heroes he who, year by year,
Can say, "Down, Self !" and "Get behind me, Sin !"

Showers and Sunshine

LIFE IN THE VILLAGE

WE always met of afternoons, beneath the locust
shades,
That cooled the old postoffice front, down there at
Hampton Glades ;
An' though scarce one of all the crowd of half a dozen
men
Would git a letter, you may say — well, ever' now an'
then, —
Still regular we gethered round — went an' returned
ag'in —
Down there to wait until the stage would come a-roll-
in' in !

Life seemed a dream ! Ours was the world, extendin'
in them days
To where the skies reached down to lift the hilltops'
veil of haze ;
An' we would pity other folks because 't was not their
fate
To sit an' gossip life away, an' wait, an' wait, an'
wait ;
An' smell the roses in the yards, an' hear the wild
birds' din,
Down where we waited till the stage would come
a-rollin' in !

Showers and Sunshine

Good feelin' an' good fellowship — that led the day,
you know,
An' surnames was forgotten 'most — 't was John an'
Bill an' Joe ;
An' ef a trouble come to one, or ef a taste of joy,
Each felt the nature warm an' true, that moved him
when a boy ;
An' we would always talk it o'er, our feelings half a-kin,
Down there when waitin' for the stage to come a-rollin' in.

It seems to me there could n't be a place where after
life,
There 'd be more peace an' quietude, an' less of earthly
strife.
The population might be “rough,” an' all of that, you
know,
But kindness an' good cheer would be, and happiness
would flow !
An' I 'd be glad ef I at least could wander back ag'in
Down where “the boys” still sit an' wait the stage's
rollin' in !

SUCCESS SUCCEEDS

SHOULD men at last twine bays about my brow,
I 'd lack no more for friends and gen'rous will ;
He who succeeds is aided most, I trow ;
While he who struggles, struggles friendless still.

Showers and Sunshine

WHEN LITTLE LIVES GO OUT

WHEN little lives go out,
And vain the wish to feel the balmy breath
That fann'd our cheeks ere came the nurse called
Death,
The world is lonely as an arid shore,
Where silent gulls fly 'bove the breakers' roar,
And things that we have loved seem strangely cold,
Naught smiling with the radiance of old,
When little lives go out.

When little lives go out,
No more on earth we'll hear the pattering feet,
Or voice that seems some note from saints' retreat;
But teach us, God, that still some hopes remain
To guide us as a beacon o'er the main —
That baby hands, however frail they are,
Can hold for us the Heaven's gates ajar —
When little lives go out.

NOT VAIN

SHE lived to womanhood, then passed away;
A season "sweetly did she speak and move";
A May rose blooming but a single May —
She yet one heart taught what is meant by love.

Showers and Sunshine

WITH THE DEAR OLD FOLKS AT HOME

SILVER'D locks and eyes grown dimmer, and am-
bition not so strong ;
Yet the nearing of the Yule-tide thrills us like a joyous
song !
And as boys with boyish feelings, yet as men who 've
lived and felt
All the pleasures life has granted, all the blows that it
has dealt, —
We return by graves and ruins down the lane which
mem'ry takes,
Where the roses and the posies sleep till summer time
awakes ;
Safe once more beside the hearthstone where few
cares are wont to come,
With the hearts that love us, love us — with the dear
“old folks at home.”

Silver'd locks and steps grown slower, and the journey
growing short ;
But in age remembrance freshens, rooted deeply in the
heart !
There's a yearning to live over in a fleeting dream
again,
Days when mother-eyes could cheer us and her kisses
drive off pain.

Showers and Sunshine

And the hours at home remind us of the Paradisian life,
Where the laughter coming after will repay for earthly
strife :

Safe within the flowered haven where no cares will
ever come,

With the hearts that love us, love us — with the dear
“ old folks at home ” !

IN OCTOBER

HERE where the clematis lingers
Through chilly October days
And woodbine with weakening fingers
Still clings where the sumachs blaze,
The sparrows they twitter and twitter,
As singing to souls in pain —
But the autumn is bitter, bitter,
To my heart whose love lies slain !
By the one heart prized, forgotten,
Though I can never forget ;
Faith ruthlessly ruined and rotten,
And buried beneath regret !

Here where the dew is falling
In the weeping October nights,
And the wild geese, passing, are calling
Hoarsely to each in their flights,

Showers and Sunshine

The cricket is peacefully droning,
As soothing the souls in pain —
But the autumn is ever moaning
To my heart whose love lies slain !
By the one heart prized, forgotten,
Though I can never forget ;
Faith ruthlessly ruined and rotten,
And buried beneath regret.

SNOW

THE snow, as down from angels' wings,
Drops lightly over wood and fen ;
The winter's songs ring out, and then
A distant sheep-bell faintly rings.

The stock now seek a kindly bield,
The evening ploddeth nightward slow ;
Gaunt sentries stand the trees, and, lo !
The cornshocks loom a tented field.

AFTER THE FROST

THE grass is withered on the field and lea,
Save one green tuft that grows beside a stone ;
As Hope that lingers ever faithfully,
Though friends forsake and happiness be flown.

Showers and Sunshine

SUICIDE

I.

WE had quarrelled, my love and I, and harsh
were the words I said —
Sword-thrusts, I afterward knew, that struck all her
high hopes dead ;
And leaving her there in the room, I sauntered to
where the vines
Swung shadowy about the door, the roses and
eglantines.

II.

Over the hills and away went baying the trailing
hounds ;
Mellowed and slow and low came the twilight's
soothing sounds ;
And a single bird piped sweet, and the thoughtless
moon peer'd down
Over the saddened home-nest and over the landscape
brown.

III.

The evening star came up, bright as a shield to me ;
Its jagged teeth, like a saw 's cutting the sky and the
sea ;

Showers and Sunshine

And out on the upland knolls the flocks shone white
as a ghost
That stands for a moment a-dream, a-dream on a
phantom coast !

IV.

A cry from her mother's heart, and I hastened within
again : . . .
Over for her my hate, and over for her the pain !
Death bearing his burden along, paused but a minute
to mock,
And then his great gates closed between us for aye
with a shock.

UNCLE ZEKE'S WAY

OLD Uncle Zeke's no pattern for a man to
imitate, —
An easy-goin' kind o' sprout, with scurce a worthy
trait ;
But like some tree that's not fer fire er arkitecture
made,
An' yit is purty middlin' fair to make a frustrate shade, —
He had one merit that was good — you never saw him
grum,
But he would always look with hope on ever'thing that
come !

Showers and Sunshine

When things that troubled others ris', he 'd never once
feel bilked,
But swore if rain poured down all day, 't would hold up
till he milked !
He ust to be right wealthy-like, but riches flew away —
“ 'T will keep my children out o' law,” he 'd sorter
laugh an' say !
While ef the drought cut short his crops, but little care
he 'd feel,
But 'lowed his corn-cribs would n't 'tempt so many now
to steal !

An' so he plodded on till death, a-holdin' the belief
That joy is much more easier to tote than any grief,
An' ef we look fer flowers sweet an' try to hear but
song,
We 'll feel a vast deal happier as we progress along ;
An' though we hold his life somewhat a failure, I
expect
That Uncle Zeke's philosophy was mighty nigh correct !

MUSIC

MUSIC ? Why, that 's the perfume from the lips
Of lilies as they bloom where twilight rests :
Divinest when they 're bruised by humbird-sips,
As song is, when it comes from aching breasts.

Showers and Sunshine

PAIN AND LOVE

THE world, I said, is callous ; hearts of men
Are dead to kindness since the olden years :
Murky their faith as that dark stream that wears
Its course between the shores of Now and Then :
Affection 's but a tarrying denizen
That fain would flee a vale where helpless tears
Are deemed intruders, and where Hope but hears
Despair call 'cross the future's stagnant fen.

But, then God gave me sympathy, and so
I sang a simple chanson, that bespoke
Pain for the death of one I loved — and lo,
What depths of melted tenderness I 'woke !
However cold the world, I saw 't would move,
When list'ning to the plaint of Pain and Love.

THE LIGHT AT MOTHER'S WINDOW

I SAW it coming home at eve, from work or from
the town,
No matter how the wind would storm, or how the
night would frown.
What cared I if the world was cold and turned away
from me,
Or if her favors fame held back, or smiled in mockery?

Showers and Sunshine

My burdens ever seemed to fall, when flared before
the eye
The light from mother's window there in days gone
by, gone by !

She sits no longer now where blooms the honeysuckle
vines,
And never more to guide my steps the faithful lamp-
light shines ;
Above her grow the roses sweet that by the window-
sill
Spake words of comfort to her heart, though all so
mute and still ;
But dearest picture of the past, it gilds my memory —
The light from mother's window there, in days gone
by, gone by !

MARGARET — A ROMAUNT

S LIP of parchment, dim and old —
Yet a tale it doth unfold :
“ Farewell, Lover ; you 'll regret ; ”
This was all, and — “ Margaret.”

Yellow bit of gossip ! for
Ninety years the escritoire
Hath its secret kept — and yet
I would know it, Margaret !

Showers and Sunshine

I can see the lovers now —
He with curls about his brow —
Powdered ; rings with rubies set ;
All his thoughts for Margaret.

She with garments of the flow
Of a century ago ;
Sweet of disposition — yet,
How your heart ached, Margaret !

How your heart ached as you saw
Him some other beauty draw
In the reel or minuet —
While you flirted, Margaret !

For a lover's quarrel came,
And you thought your passions' flame
Out ; but then your eyes were wet,
Says this parchment, Margaret !

Fellow-feelings bind us ; so
I am curious to know
If he ever felt regret ?
Well, I hope so, Margaret !

Showers and Sunshine

LONGING FOR YOU

LONGING for you ! How strange it is the days
With naught of old-time brightness seem to blaze ;
And strange the night will chant no soothing psalm
To bring the aching heart a moment's balm !
Joy's hands are folded on her still, cold breast,
The sweet bouquet of past dreams in them pressed ;
While vain Regret my chamber wanders through —
 Longing for you,
 Longing for you.

Longing for you ! Consoling Time may bid
Oblivion slide o'er like a coffin lid
To hide your mem'ry as one hides your face —
Yet would I not forget your young life's grace.
Love's eyes will know, through all the years to come,
Naught like your soul or like your wifely bloom.
So rest, dear dead ! Till Time die I 'll be true —
 Longing for you,
 Longing for you.

FRIENDSHIP

THE taper's all untreasured during day —
It sheds but in the darkness generous light ;
And friendship's scarcely honored till our way
Be darkened by some trouble's lowering night.

Showers and Sunshine

SWEET MAGGIE WITH THE TENDER EYES

HER portrait, is it — made long since that rather
fateful day,
A score of years ago, when we each went our sep'rate
way?
I would not know her, I suppose? Yes, same blue
eyes I knew
When earth but seemed a bower gay, with sun smiles
breaking through,
And all the flowers longed for her, and all the moon-
light's glow —
Sweet Maggie with the tender eyes, who loved me
long ago !

Her cheeks seem thinner, and her hair, that shows a
grayish touch,
And in her eyes a chastened light, as though she 'd
sorrowed much ;
Though when we journeyed hand in hand beneath the
old blue skies,
We dreamed not then that time could mark, or sad-
ness dim her eyes.
Was death a welcome or farewell — I 'd like so much
to know —
To Maggie with the tender eyes, who loved me long
ago?

Showers and Sunshine

You say her married life was hard, and changed her
 much at last ;
But now she 's slumb'ring well back there where all
 her life was passed ;
Forgotten are all wrongs to her in that long-lasting
 sleep —
The look unkind, the cold neglect, the words that
 made her weep ;
But still, at least, I wish she knew my heart no change
 will know —
Sweet Maggie with the tender eyes, who loved me
 long ago !

THE ROSELANDS OF THE FUTURE

I N the roselands of the Future
 Love's domains gleam and shine.
And in its skies are starry eyes
 Whose light resembles thine ;
And trill of birds, my darling,
 And sweeter sounds are there,
As though of songs of sirens
 Upon the fragrant air !

In the roselands of the Future,
 Faith hath no cause for sighs,
And hope and love together rove,
 As once in Paradise !

Showers and Sunshine

And as the nights march downward,
And days to evenings file,
All yearnings will be music,
And living but a smile !

“ MALISSA ”

AND this is where grandmother's mother sleeps,
With epitaph defaced by seasons' strife :
Malissa . . . Born in . . . Died in Eighteen Two ;
A loving Mother an(d) devot(ed) Wife.

The snail has left its trail upon her tomb,
The dead red leaves lie rotting 'round her grave ;
The winters there their dreary ballads croon,
There constant grasses through the summers wave.

What was her daily life, her care, her joys ?
Saw she some child's dear life go out in death ?
Fought she alone the tempting voice of Doubt
That sought to hush the still soft song of Faith ?

I see her now as rolled the stirring drum,
Bidding God-speed to husband or to son,
Who heard from far within Virginian fields
The echoes of the shots at Lexington.

Showers and Sunshine

How oft she's stood beside the vine-clad door,
Awaiting tidings from the scene of war!
How oft she's turned again with heavy heart,
With only God to comfort from afar!

And then another scene appears to me,
When reunited Love once more was glad;
Home came her warriors, bringing with them peace,
And life took up and sang its sweet roulade.

But o'er at last the achings and the thrills,
And grief and joy are shut in by the sod;
While silence, with its brooding pinions, sits
Anear her with the memory of God.

IF I BUT KNEW

IF I but knew that somehow, somewhere, I
Had dried one tear that dimmed a brother's eye,
Or slaked the thirst of parching fever's lips,
And led some soul through sorrow's dark eclipse,
Then I should feel life's mission had been true —
If I but knew.

Showers and Sunshine

If I but knew some heart this side the dead
Had felt its burdens fall by what I said,
Or that one life had bloomed in noble deeds
Because I'd sowed somewhere some worthy seeds,
The thought would drive the clouds from o'er life's
blue —
If I but knew.

WILD FLOWERS

THEY bloom as sweet as though a woman's hand
Gave them a special care as on she trips,
And bright the smile that wreathes their scarlet lips,
As if they felt their lone, obscure leaves fann'd
And fondled by a breath from Ceylon's strand ;
Out of the chalices the wild bee sips,
And flies off gladder ; while the swallow dips
And wheels (refreshed for them) above the land.

Not all unlike them is the simple lot
Of many of earth's humble lives to-day ;
Unknown to fame, they go their quiet way
Cheering the valleys by the great forgot —
And yet their usefulness let none gainsay :
The widow's mite weighed much with God, we wot.

Showers and Sunshine

LOOKING BACKWARD

JEST let a feller stop awhile, an' rest, an' sorter
laze ;
The Lord He took the time to blow when workin' six
long days !
Jest let me sprawl here in the shade of these invitin'
trees,
While Mem'ry skips like Nancy Hanks to old-time
pleasantries.
In this blamed, everlastin' rush to win our meat an'
bread,
We have n't time to once glance back, but still must
cut ahead ;
But this here day 's a day, I swear, I 'm goin' back
once more
An' set an' whittle with " the boys " at Thomas Vick-
er's store. . . .

I see the country 's not much changed, 'cept things
look sorter lone,
An' there is faces I don't know, an' some I knowed is
gone ;
The same old trees is standin' here 'at stood out here
when I
Was jest a boy an' played at " knucks " to help the
moments fly ;

Showers and Sunshine

The same brown catbird sings the song — the early
mornin' tune,
It used to sing to cheer our hearts in many a vanished
June ;
An' that rude checker-board — is that the one our
knees up-bore
When we come round an' took a game at Thomas
Vicker's store ?

The fields down yonder 'cross the creek that glides in
sunny sheen —
They seem as green with wavin' wheat as they have
ever been ;
Upon the outskirts of the town, yet plain unto our eyes,
The church's long forefinger p'int's forever to the
skies ;
The daytime goes to sleep as soft — as quiet as of old,
Wrapped in a mantle — twilight gray — all fringed in
sunset's gold ; —
But here at dusk I see but few old friends lounge
'round the door,
A-talkin' as they used to do at Thomas Vicker's store.

* * * * *

Of course it's no use tellin' you I'm glad to see you all ;
But then I did not think the town could change so,
bein' small.

Showers and Sunshine

Although the sun shines still as bright, an' still the
skies are clear,
There 's yet a world of somethin' gone 'at seems-like
should be here !—
What 's that — a tear? Don't mind my eyes, they 're
sorter ailin', men ;
I guess it 's age 'at makes 'em dim an' wat'ry now an'
then.
They ain't as strong — I s'pose that 's it — since in the
days of yore
There wus no absent faces here at Thomas Vicker's
store.

SYMPATHY

A FALLING of dew in the night,
Which nature can never once miss ;
And a flower that 's yielding to blight
Gloweth brighter because of its kiss.

A tear shed for some breast in pain,
Which cannot impoverish one ;
And a heart may take courage again,
And hope on till victory 's won.

Showers and Sunshine

THE STORM

THE face of evening turned a leaden gray
With half-defined and apprehensive dread,
For sweet, calm peace had with the sunshine spread
Over the earth through all the summer day ;
But now a cruel face appeared away —
Frowning above the West ; a sounding tread,
As though of giant squadrons followéd,
And seemed to hint some desolating fray ;
'Twixt dark, oped cloudlets ever and anon
The red tongue of the lightning gleamed and glowed ;
A breath of wild, resistless might rolled on
As if the sea in one mad eagre flowed ;
And then an hour 'neath the storm-god's might,
Covered the trembling world in dire affright !

SONG OF THE PAST

YOU'D smile, my friend, if you could see how I
my glasses don,
To read the journal sent which tells how you are get-
ting on !
Now, does it seem so many years have come and gone
their way
Since we were only boys that thought of little else but
play,

Showers and Sunshine

And never stopped to think for once 't would not be
long until
Impartial Time would leave his scars on even Jim and
Bill?

I've done but little yet — but may, in some of these
good times ;
A fellow somehow always hopes, however slow he
climbs !
It sounds so queer — does n't make you feel a man
among the men
To have them call you " Colonel " now, and " leading
citizen " ?
For I can think of you alone, strive strongly as I will,
But as the boyish friend I knew when we were Jim and
Bill.

When summer comes and blesses earth, and all the
world is green,
Do bud and bloom remind you then of summers that
have been ?
Do bird-songs warbled near you bring the haw hills
back again —
The homes, though humble, which appeared the holiest
places then ?

Showers and Sunshine

And do you long to look once more upon each vale
and rill,
Near which our happy boyhood romped when we were
Jim and Bill?

And while you sit by winter's hearth, does memory
e'er recall
The boyish loves we used to know — the maids who
held us thrall?
Ah, some of them are dead long since, forgotten and
entombed —
Soon-perished flowers that once made bright the
spheres in which they bloomed ;
The glory of their guileless lives the past will ever fill,
And gild the dreams we dreamed, old friend, when we
were Jim and Bill.

But, seriously, I'd like to meet and talk an hour or
two
About the time that had few clouds — when roses
thornless grew ;
When thought scarce winged beyond where sky met
earth in fondest kiss,
And fields and woods and streams held all the world
could hold of bliss ;

Showers and Sunshine

For though the future have in store some things to
please us — still
No days can rival those old days when we were Jim
and Bill !

PARTED

I

TOUCH hands, nor sigh at parting,
But hope we 'll ne'er regret ;
Though different ways we 're starting,
There 's balm as well as smarting,
And we shall soon forget,
And we shall soon forget !

II

O ways across life's heather,
When she was with me yet !
O walks we had together,
In splendrous summer weather !
Nay, I shall ne'er forget,
Nay, I shall ne'er forget !

Showers and Sunshine

OLD CYNTH, OF SHADY AVENUE

OLD Cynth, of Shady Avenue — the toughest dove
in town,
Whose viciousness, the police said, could “turn the
vilest down !”
Not old except in crime, you know — just twenty-five,
't was said ;
But sin bears heavier than the snow upon the aged
head.
She 'd loved — the story is not new ; she loved and
was betrayed,
And there 's no mercy for the girl whose virgin steps
have strayed.
So, spurned and loathed by all her kind, her baby on
her breast,
She sought a city's gilded den, and courted crime
with zest ;
And lower yet she sank in guilt, and viler still she
grew,
Till she was termed by all — “ Old Cynth, of Shady
Avenue.”

The section of the city's slums where she was forced
at last —
In scarce a lower den on earth could any one be
cast,

Showers and Sunshine

Albeit tattered girls and boys whose souls were pure
as yet,
Played there, and fought, or yelled and sang, as fate
would please or fret.
The sun appeared to lose his smile when lighting up
its ways,
And 'mong the ruins and the filth stole through in
timid rays ;
The windows of the squalid huts took on the aspect
there
Of those around, and bleared like eyes of women in
despair ;
And save the tots that romped about, and overhead
some blue,
The place had been a hell to Cynth, of Shady
Avenue.

One evening penniless she sat within her humble door,
While came from distant thoroughfares the city's
mellowed roar ;
Athwart the street the dim sun fell ; a hawker raised
his cry ;
And, like a hint of goldenrod, a butterfly sailed by ;
Just up the narrow street beneath the railroad trestles
played
A tangle-haired but bright-eyed child—a little
“ beggar maid,”

Showers and Sunshine

And as she played, she lisped an air that she had
somehow heard,
Which, floating down the misty way the fallen woman
stirred :
“ Was it for t'imes zat I had done ” — adown the
breeze it blew,
The first sweet utterance for years on Shady Avenue !

Within the pariah's eyes came tears while listening to
the song,
And those she loved of old began before her eyes to
throng ;
The home and all its blessings rose — the orchard
and the lane ;
The mother-heart that would have broke to shield her
girl from pain ;
The days that once so brightly dawned — the eyes
when twilight came,
And she could turn her girlhood face to God nor
blush for shame.
Then through the spreading veil of dust and heat and
brooding smoke,
God's voice of love perhaps came down and through
the child-voice spoke,
And good, as precious ore long hid in grime is brought
to view,
Entered once more the heart of Cynth, of Shady Avenue.

Showers and Sunshine

She dashed away the tears that rose and through some
 unguessed whim —
To kiss the child, or wishing yet to catch more clear
 the hymn —
She walked to where the song arose — when, heavens !
 far above
She saw a loosened cross-tie slip, then downward swiftly
 move !
'T was death unto the child if she could not be pulled
 away ;
Death stared the woman in the face, and dared her
 heart that day.
But what to her was life since love and virtue both
 were gone, —
The sun had set and never more would flush a vernal
 dawn ?
So counting not the cost, she rushed — the threatened
 form withdrew,
While fell the beam across Old Cynth, of Shady
 Avenue !

* * * * *

“ Say, was the young one saved ? ” she said, once open-
 ing her eyes ;
“ She 's like my child 'at died when pure, an' now all
 dreamless lies.

Showers and Sunshine

Thank — God ; — now — sing — for — me — the —
song — the — baby — sung — out — there — ”

Then brokenly her own voice rose upon the summer
air :

“ Alas ! an' did my Saviour bleed, an' did my sovereign
die ?

Would he devote that sacred head for such a worm
as I ?

Was it for crimes that I had done, he groaned upon
the tree ?

Amazing pity — grace unknown ! and love beyond
degree ! ” —

But while the crowd was gathering, ere half the hymn
was through,

The silent ship drew nigh for Cynth, of Shady Avenue.

God's ways are just — He cannot err, and on the
Judgment Day,

His will will be by justice moved, and love His acts
will sway.

In passing sentence on each soul, the spirit that of yore
Caused Christ to say to one to go her way and sin no
more,

Will feel for tempted innocence that loved and yet was
wronged,

While in her heart Hope stood outraged, and Faith's
fair hands were thonged ;

Showers and Sunshine

And sympathizing with the soul that knew but endless
night —
That wandered all the dreary way without one beam
of light,
He 'll kindly deal with her who made an effort to be true,
The scarlet wreck — and heroine — of Shady Avenue.

THE OLD HOME'S SPREADING YARD

THE old home's spreading yard, when I was
young —

It was my boyhood's only little world ;
What peace and quiet 'bout its boundaries hung,
All sky-enshadowed, dandelion purred.
There in the vernal mornings, in the sun,
The turkeys strutted on the grassy sward,
The peacock prinked, and drowsy bees would drone
Among the pompons in the old home's spreading
yard.

All day about the honeysuckle stocks,
The garrulous birds would flit in happy cheer ;
The humbirds hummed around the hollyhocks,
And in the locusts lilted jays would jeer ;
And I, sprawled out beneath the shifting shade
That here and there made cool the velvet sward,
Dreamed some sweet, boyish dreams that made
An elf-land of our old home's spreading yard.

Showers and Sunshine

A thousand summers' odorous perfumes
 Could never make more dear to me those hours —
Undying memory's red and purple blooms
 That, fadeless still, grow in the suns or showers !
And when I wish to picture Paradise —
 Its sky, its sun, its shade and peaceful sward —
It somehow shows before my fancy's eyes
 So strangely like the old home's spreading yard.

CASTLES IN SPAIN

STATELIER by far than any work of human hand,
They loom far back within the blue of Memory-
 land ;
Erected in our youth, ere scenes of Paradise
Were quite forgotten by our earthward-exiled eyes,
How oft would we re-visit them, and once more rove
Where Life was ever joyful, listening to the voice of
 Love !

Near them, soft-toned as baby-angels' first songs, roll
Cool streamlets over golden pebbles to their goal ;
The swooning air with such sweet fragrances is filled
One wonders if all Heaven's incense there is spilled ;
And dreaming bulbuls warble from some flowering grove
The strains that ne'er grow tiresome — sounding ever
 more of love.

Showers and Sunshine

Castles in Spain ! erected by Hope's buoyant hand,
And looming out the glimmering haze of Memoryland !
If we could only leave behind regret and pain,
And shelter us within your happy walls again !
Could we gray hairs and other marks of time remove,
And love as when we built you, in the days when love
meant love !

JUNE

MORNING

THE rising sun, with tender might,
Lifts up the mist from Morning's face,
That like a filmy veil of lace
Has lain there through the quiet night.

The spider's disks among the corn
Are stolen strands of moonlight — wrought
Into a sweet, material thought,
The poem of Nature to adorn.

The sky is clear, and in the blue
A martin moves, a noisy blot ;
And flowers, 'wakened from their cot,
Smile gladly in their jew'ls of dew.

Showers and Sunshine

EVENING

The cows are coming up the road
With sleek, contented look, and near
Falls softly on the drowsy ear
The trilling quaver of the toad ;

While in the darkling thicket's ways,
Close by the springlet, cool and mossed,
A redbird like a sunbeam lost,
Flashes a moment on the gaze. . . .

Ah ! Fairest month is June, I deem,
For then throughout the Southern climes
The world is filled with pretty rhymes,
The days are but one pleasing dream !

O SAILOR

O SAILOR ! long have been the years since on
your ship my boy
Took passage for the far-off land of silence and of
mist ;
And now returning, can you not to my distressed ahoy
Give me some token how he fares — the little one
I've missed ?

Showers and Sunshine

O sailor ! waft the tidings on —
The one thing I implore ;
Or take me while I stand alone
In waiting on the shore.

The sun went down in drowning clouds the time he
sailed away ;
The laughter of the waves was turned to hoarse and
bitter cries ;
I stand now on the sands distraught, and mourn him
all the day,
As lonely as the gull that flies between the sea and
skies.

O sailor ! waft the tidings on —
The one thing I implore ;
Or take me while I stand alone
In waiting on the shore.

OUR LITTLE BOY 'AT 'S GONE

A SIGHT of help he was — our little boy 'at went,
Pudgin' around with little trousers on !
But what was more than all his working meant,
He seemed to be our sunshine, now he 's gone.
He 'd go to take the cows to pasture morns,
An' seems I hear his tiny whistle now,
As I go out an' walk about the barns,
Or take the team afield and try to plough.

Showers and Sunshine

About the house he kept a sight of noise,
Singin' or trampin' at his boyish will !
It did not seem with health jest like my boy's
His voice could hush so quick an' be so still.
But he weren 't sick much more 'n a week, I b'l' eve,
An' kept his little senses durin' all ;
An' did n't grumble cause he had to leave,
But lay there still like list'nin' for a call.

That evenin' that I never will forget,
He lay beside the winder an' looked out.
I 'd sorter hoped 'at God would spare him yet,
An' give us back his noisy step an' shout.
But sudden-like he gazed intent ahead,
While crooned the katydids jest out the door,
An' — " Angels, mammy ! See 'em, pap ? " he said,
An' then was still an' never said no more.

Now, sometimes standin' by the medder bars
Waitin' the cows, all lonesome an' forlorn,
The heavens twinklin' with the cur'ous stars,
The breezes whisp'rin' 'mongst the rustlin' corn —
I wush the rustle was of angels' wings,
The stars the guiden' lamps of seraphs, come,
To waft us after all our sorrowin's
Where we 'n our boy will be again at home.

Showers and Sunshine

MIDNIGHT

THE earth's asleep. About her Silence greets
Mystery, with her scroll of secrets furled.
The stars, electric jets upon the streets
Of some far city of the upper world,
Twinkle incessant. Over hill and vale
The ghostly winds bay ever on a ghostly trail.

Across the sky a meteor shoots, a spark
Born of the friction of colliding spheres.
While lackeys draw the drapery of the dark,
An Eastern princess in her pomp appears ;
And lo ! a light comes from her chariot's gleams,
Not all unlike the peace of one with pleasant dreams.

THE CHANT OF TIME

BEFORE creation I was old — e'en then my hair
was gray,
And still my latest living year is eons yet away ;

The God and I alone have been from earliest morning-
gleam,
When mind as yet was of the Lord, and matter but a
dream !

Showers and Sunshine

I've heard the minstrels of the spheres their earliest
 anthems sing,
And seen blind chaos quickening, then into cosmos
 spring ;

The while the light a foetus lay — the elements in
 strife —
I heard the voice : " Let there be light ! " and saw
 light leap to life.

I looked upon the sun's surprise, when, that primeval
 day,
He peer'd down there upon the spot where earth's
 first dead man lay !

Within my ears have rung the cries of kingdoms at
 their birth ;
Before my eyes corruption's blast has swept them
 from the earth !

I've witnessed Knowledge in its prime, then seen the
 sure advance
Of Retrogression's reign that brought but crime and
 ignorance,

When, as the form of Venus shuts the sunlight of the sun,
The drear Dark Ages stretched their pall and hid
 what Wisdom won !

Showers and Sunshine

Yea, this I 've seen and heard, and more : and I shall
live to see
The purpose and the mystery of all the years to be,
And gaze upon the holocaust, when God the world
shall burn,
And with his palm its ashes scoop and place them in
their urn.

A HOPE

I WOULD that my dust could sleep — when my
friends shall say “ He is dead ” —
Where the morning of life was passed while Hope's
hand beckoned ahead.
Mayhap the fancy is vain, yet I deem that my form
would rest
Better 'mong scenes I love, 'mong people I love the
best ;
There forever to slumber, there forever to lie,
Under the fresh green grass, under the old blue sky.

Perchance, though life has failed, and I in the wreck
went down —
My face still toward the light, though Fate continued
to frown —

Showers and Sunshine

Some friend, forgetting my faults, might speak some
words of praise,
And say that my heart was true, no matter how dark
the days ;
True to my friends and love, e'en as I lonely lie
Under the fresh green grass, under the old blue sky.

And then who knows but she, whose love I have
craved in vain,
In passing me there will think — will think of the past
again ?
Some thought may come once more of the one who
long ago
Would have held his soul as a shield to save her heart
a blow ;
And thinking this way, a tear may trickle there where
I lie,
Under the fresh green grass, under the old blue sky.

But then, however this be — remembered or all forgot,
I still would like to sleep in a quiet, hallow'd spot,
Where roved my steps when a boy, and rose the brown
bees' hum
And the birds sang never a hint of failure that was to
come ;
There forever to sleep, and there forever to lie,
Under the fresh green grass, under the old blue sky.



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