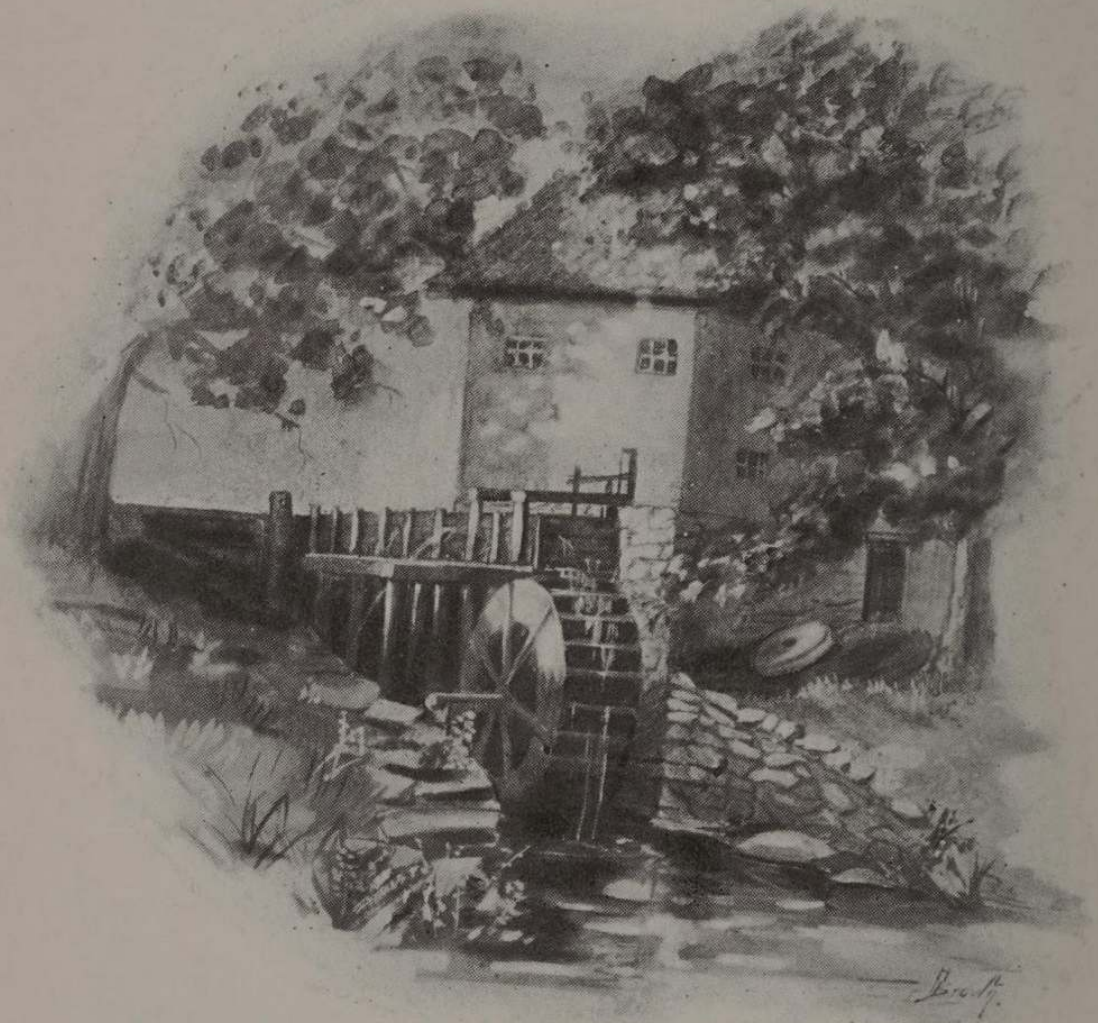




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OLD WATER-MILL RHYMES



OLD WATER-MILL RHYMES

By
MOSES M. HODSON
"MOSE THE MILLER"



AUTHORS & PUBLISHERS CORPORATION
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INTRODUCTION

When, in the Fifteenth Century, a cobbler poet, Hans Sachs, rapped out his exquisite songs to the accompaniment of the *tick-tack* of his hammer, the people, from humble to great, flocked to his lowly workshop, and because of him Nuremburg grew in fame. As in those days the inspired cobbler-poet sang, so now in this present collection of verse is heard the voice of the miller-poet, Moses M. Hodson, whom one might almost picture sitting like some present-day, flour-bespattered Pan, piping forth the music that springs from a being filled with a boundless love of the great outdoors.

There is, so far as we are aware, no poet in America quite like the author of this volume, familiarly styled "Mose the Miller." Here is one who for years and years, while operating his little mill, has sensed the Gospel of the Open Sky, the Forest, the Stream, and, too, the Gospel of Brotherhood, lifting his voice above the accompanying musical whirr of his mill-wheel to carry to the world his interpretation of the music of the spheres. And who is there who would not envy the man,—miller or monarch,—who can make of the limitless acres of space that lie between the tree-tops and the sky a realm in which his unfettered fancy may roam at will? As we read his poems, which, as he expresses it, "just come bubbling up as I work in

the mill," we can almost see the man whose mill-wheel awakes him not only to dwell in a world of toil, but to live in a sun-flecked, rose-scented kingdom, to which he is trying to give entrance to all who read. This volume, then, seems almost the key to his realm of enchantment.

Perhaps it is the very simplicity of the poetic forms in which his poems are shaped that is one of the most enviable gifts of Mose the Miller, for it makes his work breathe cheer and sincerity and spontaneity and an unutterable faith in the deathlessness of the good, the beautiful, the true. He calls his work "Old Water-Mill Rhymes," but they are more than mere rhymes; for they seem to make poetry take on a new meaning, the naïve independence of the poet's handling of his themes making for their appeal. By the simplicity of his treatment he shows that he has gone down into the secret places of his soul and has drawn out into the light the treasures hidden there, in order that others might enjoy the wealth of happiness and cheer that is his. For in those secret places of his soul (as herein revealed) where Mose the Miller keeps his store is amassed the greatest wealth of all the world,—the content that comes of a knowledge of the calm and wonder and beauty of Nature, and of the love and peace of God.

THE PUBLISHERS.

NATURE

I, who love nature, on its beauties look
And see reflected as from burnished steel
Splendors that to my senses do appeal:
Much more than I can learn from written book
I find in woodland and the babbling brook,
Where the mysterious hand tries to conceal,
And bud and flower and vine do there reveal
The wondrous secret. In some shady nook,—
Where naught can interfere,—on velvet grass
I sit, where, springing from the fertile sod,
The fragrant flowers in the breezes nod
A welcome unto all who chance to pass,
While fleecy clouds that fleck a sky like glass,—
All show the marvel of the works of God.

AN EVENING PRAYER

If, when I close my eyes to sleep,—
As stars are peeping from the sky,
And darker shadows 'round me creep
And daily cares are all laid by,—
If I've made burdens hard to bear
Or caused a foot to go astray,
Oh, hearken to my ev'ning prayer:
Forgive me now, O Lord, I pray!

If I have voiced words that are vain
To-day that brought a sigh of grief,—

If I have turned aside from pain
 When in my power to give relief,
 Then ere I close my weary eyes
 At the departing of the day,
 Look down in mercy from the skies,—
 Forgive me now, O Lord, I pray!

Forgive the secret sins I do
 That other eyes can never see,
 For naught is hidden from Thy view—
 Then draw, oh, draw me nearer Thee!
 Teach me to walk within Thy light,
 And in the straight and narrow way,
 The sins contrary to Thy sight,—
 Forgive them now, O Lord, I pray!

THE NEW YEAR

While New Year brings to many joy and mirth,
 With aspirations rampant in their breast
 And lofty hopes on gilded wings are drest,
 And great achievements of this life have birth;
 With happy homes and children 'round the hearth,
 And earthly joys for those they love the best;
 With cares of life they'll never be oppress'd,
 Enjoying richest blessings of this earth;
 To some the New Year brings a sense of care
 For with dull gloom their skies are clouded o'er,
 And cruel fate hath left his footprints there,
 With fangs of sorrow gnawing at their door,
 And in their hearts they breathe an earnest prayer
 For strength and means to heal the galling sore.

MY DESIRE

What I desire with all my heart
 Until my time on earth is past;
None of my organs will depart,—
 Be organizing to the last;
May I escape the surgeon's knife
 Which I have ever held in awe,
No broken bones,—to save my life
 He'll be compelled to use his saw.

My adenoids may I retain,
 And tonsils, too, where they should be
And my appendix to remain
 And not be "took" away from me.
I'll bear all ills as best I can,
 All of my aches I'll stand, and grin,—
I don't want "no old doctor man"
 Whetting his knife to carve my skin.

I want to be all to myself
 And know I'm altogether there,—
With no parts pickled on a shelf,
 And scattered all 'round everywhere,—
And go down to the grave complete
 When I cross to the other side;
Then I can say to good St. Pete:
 "I've all my 'innards,' bones, and hide."

WILD ROSES

While it may be jist a notion,
 Yet, somehow, it seems to me,

No flower awakes emotion
Like wild roses that we see,
That so quietly are growin'
Out along some old rail fence,
Where their beauty is o'erflowin'
With the purest innocence.

Er, where they're among the willers
By a little ripplin' stream
An' grass soft as downy pillers,
Where we love to lay an' dream
An' see where they are a-creepin'
In the branches up so high,—
All the roses at us peepin'
In a modest way so shy.

Sometimes they look sort o' faded
Where the sunshine cain't git through
But out where they are not shaded
They are of a brilliant hue;
Like upon some lovely mornin'
Where they're growin' in a clump,
An' the landscape are adornin'
Clingin' round some rotten stump.

Although I am not a gambler,
Still I think that I would bet
That there is no kind of rambler
That the high-toned people get
Equals the wild-roses clingin'
To a stump, or old rail fence,—
Their fair fragrance far a-flingin'
In their purest innocence!

INVISIBLE

I walked along a quiet strand,
The sky with stars was studded o'er,
And there, upon the glittering sand,
The tiny wavelets kissed the shore.
Alone,—but oh, yet not alone!—
For memories did old ties renew,
A warm hand-pressure in my own
Told of affections kind and true.

Again, upon a mountain high
The raging storms around me swept,
And howling winds were rushing by,—
Yet thou wert with me step by step.
Alone,—but oh, yet not alone
Emotions made my soul rejoice,
I heard the ever-tender tone
Of thy sweet, winsome, silver voice.

And when, within a forest wild,
The silence was so deep and great,
Where nature pure and undefiled
Awaited there the hand of fate.
Alone,—but oh, yet not alone!—
Contentment followed with me still,
That did for solitude atone,
And all my hungry longings fill.

Oh, kind friend of my youthful day,
The grass has years and years been green
Upon the grave, yet all the way
Thou art still with me, though unseen.

Alone,—but oh, yet not alone!—
Thou ever ling'rest close to me;
There's naught around my pathway thrown
Can blot thee from my memory.

THE OLD MAID

When'er an old maid sets her head
That it is time for her to wed,
She'll try all lotions to be found
To keep the nasty wrinkles down;
And massage, too, from day to day,
To shoo them from her face a way.
She gets more careful with her clothes,
And puts more powder on her nose,
Then tries to look so neat and trim
As wedlock chances get more slim;
And is contriving to disguise
The crow's-feet playing 'round her eyes.
And will to entertainments go
Then do her best to catch a beau.
So gracefully she'll move about,
And try to cut some young girl out
Of her sweetheart, and spread her net
To try a youthful mate to get;
Or, if that chance does not occur,
Take some old bach, or widower.
All cunning art that is displayed
Is practised by a shrewd old maid.
And some old maids that we have met
Took any old man they could get;
Then settled strictly down for life,
And made a most devoted wife.

But then, the best of old maids yet
 Are those who do not foam and fret,
 Nor splutter all around and rant
 And try to get a man,—and can't.
 For they are angels in their sphere,
 The kind that we all love so dear.
 I wish I had been born a girl,
 With rosy cheeks and flowing curl;
 Then single all my life I'd stayed,
 And been a charming, sweet old maid.

FALLING LEAVES

The maple leaves are crimson now,
 Which, falling softly from the bough,
 Are swirling in the autumn breeze,
 And drifting underneath the trees.
 The ripened nuts are pattering down,
 And meadow green is turning brown
 While fleecy clouds are floating o'er,
 And winter's knocking at the door.

A calmness on the smoky air
 Is 'round about us everywhere,
 Which makes the faded landscape seem
 Like some sweet half-forgotten dream
 Of childhood days, when life was new
 And all was pure as crystal dew—
 No pen nor tongue can e'er portray
 The beauties of an autumn day.

O autumn, with the hoards of gold,
 And matchless splendor all untold!

There is a sense of loveliness
That fills our hearts with happiness.
Although there are some sad regrets
For faded rose and violets,
We know in balmy days of spring
They'll bloom again, and birds will sing.

There comes with every passing breath
A voice that whispers: "There's no death!"
While earthly charms will fade away,
They'll come again another day.
'Though winter snowdrifts 'round us heap,
All shall awake that fall asleep,
Replenished by the fertile sod,
And show the glories of our God.

There's ever with the falling leaf
A compensation for all grief:
That when we reach our autumn, too,
And worldly cares are almost through
We then may rest with blest content
From time and labor that's well spent.
And view with joy life's setting sun
O'er victories that we have won.

FEBRUARY

February's purt' nigh gone,
Longer days now comin' on;
Soon the fierce March winds will blow,
Scatter little skifts of snow

Everywhere upon the ground,
 Make it nasty gittin' 'round.
 February, you're a peach!—
 For we laud in lofty speech
 All the ones you gave birthdays,
 We will ever sing their praise!
 Noble men and women, too,
 Who have served us staunch and true.
 February, while you're shy
 A few days, no reason why
 We should rant around and fuss
 When you are so good to us.
 You give us a prophet too,
 So we'll know just what to do:
 When ground-hog his shadder sees,
 Quick into his den he flees,
 Safety from the storms he seeks,
 To remain for six more weeks.
 And one year in ev'ry four,
 You allow us one day more,
 And you give old maids a show
 To fix up and ketch a beau
 For to share their earthly love
 And meet them in realms above.
 We'll not rip around and snort
 'Cause you are a few days short!

SOME MEN

You know, we often hear a man
 Claim he's honest as can be,
 But when he gets a chance, and can,
 He'll pinch you hard, and then you'll see

He'll treat you with cold scorn and hate,
And cuss you, too, without a doubt;
But when a man is going straight
He'll never boast, you'll find it out.

KINDNESS

There is nothing that we find
Pays like always being kind,—
Better far than shining gold,
And its worth cannot be told;
Brings the largest dividends
In true, warm, and lasting friends;
To the heart gives sweet content,
And it does not cost a cent.

When we worry, scold, and fret,
It will ever cause regret;
Harsh and hasty words will smart
Like a cruel poisoned dart;
In the end will never pay,
But will drive our friends away.
Of kind words we ne'er repent,—
And they do not cost a cent.

Kind words oft will soothe a care;
Ease a burden hard to bear;
Make a sad eye sparkle bright,
And a heavy heart beat light.
Kindness never makes a foe,
Makes our friendships stronger grow.
Makes our enemies relent,—
And it does not cost a cent!

A REQUEST

When my sun's sinking in the west,
And I go to my long, long rest,—
My body will return to clay,
And spirit rise on Judgment Day
To sail across the crystal sea,—
One pray'r I trust they'll say for me,
When death's cold shadows 'round me creep:
'Tis, "Now I lay me down to sleep."

That little pray'r was taught to me
In childhood's tender infancy,
Before my feet were wont to stray
In sinful paths so far away.
At eventide that pray'r was said
When mother tucked me up in bed,
And asked the Lord my soul to keep
As "Now I lay me down to sleep."

Oh, who has learned a better prayer
Here in this world of toil and care
With all its pomp and vain pretense,
Than that, of childish innocence?
So, when my sun is sinking low
And to the portals I must go,
Where as I've sown I there shall reap,
Say, "Now I lay me down to sleep."

HOUSE-CLEANING TIME

No doubt, that when this world was new
And merry birds sang tuneful lays,

When all was pure as crystal dew
And every heart was full of praise.
And Adam and his lovely spouse
Were in that garden bright and fair,
'Twas when Eve went to cleaning house
That Father Adam learned to swear.

Like most of men he tried to please
And satisfy each little whim,
But then, when nothing would appease,
Perhaps it somewhat worried him.
His carelessness he'd meekly own
For what he did to make a muss,
Then slip out by himself alone
And stand and grit his teeth,—and cuss.

But when at last Eve called him in
To help her move some heavy thing,
He mustered up a cheerful grin
Tried what consolement that would bring;
And when his back he'd nearly broke
(The way he'd lifted was absurd!),
She only harshly to him spoke
Then he'd invent a new cuss word.

Since then whene'er the house they clean,
The women folks get badly peeved,
And men will swear and act so mean,—
Yet when it's done they feel relieved.
Now all who read this simple rhyme
I think, like me, they will declare
It must have been house-cleaning time
When Father Adam learned to swear.

WINTER WIND

Art thou the wind that blows to-day
That brought the fragrant flowers of May;
And fanned our brows at summer's noon,
When merry birds were all a-tune;
And rippled streams that laved our feet,
And waved the fields of ripening wheat;
And whispered through the leafy trees
At twilight's happy hour of ease?

Art thou the wind that blows to-day,
When wintry skies are cold and gray;
And brings the pelting hail and rain
That patters on the window pane?
The brooklet thou hast frozen o'er,
And piled snowdrifts around the door;
The birds that merrily did sing
Have flown from thee on fleeting wing,

O winter wind, so chilling now
That buds are dormant on the bough!
But they will open out in spring,
And happy birds return and sing.
And for us now sojourning here,
Though oft we shed the briny tear,
All stormy clouds will clear away,—
There'll be for us a brighter day.

UP AND DOWN THE OLD MILL RACE

Up and down the old mill race,
On this earth's no better place

When I want to loiter 'round,—
None, at least, I've ever found.

Nature's joys I there embrace,—
Up and down the old mill race,—
With the birds in bush and tree
Just as happy as can be.

With a fishing-pole and line
Where the wild-grapes twist and twine,
Up and down the old mill race
Sweetest boyhood joys I trace.

See more beauties as I go
Saunt'ring past the old bayou,—
Loveliness and charming grace,—
Up and down the old mill race.

IF WE KNEW EACH OTHER

If you knew me, and I knew you,
Each hope and motive understood,
Our feelings would be warm and true
Each for the other, as they should;
Emotions from the soul would start
Like water flowing to the sea
In springs of crystal from the heart,
If I knew you, and you knew me.

If we could know each other's life,
And all our thoughts were brought to light,—
Easing the cares forever rife,
Striving to walk with honor bright,—

We'd only speak kind words of cheer,
And scorn to fret or disagree;
Mists from our skies would disappear
If I knew you, and you knew me.

If we but to ourselves live true,
And conscience at all times obey,
Whatever paths we may pursue,
Then, sure as night doth follow day,
Trust in each other we will place,
All doubts would from our bosoms flee;
Then, as we're meeting face to face,
I shall know you, and you know me.

APRIL

Now joy on earth doth everywhere abound,—
And buds are swelling on each bush and tree,
Their branches in the breeze wave gracefully;
And happy birds are singing all around,
On every side we hear their merry sound.
All nature seems to clap its hands in glee,
From winter's icy fetters to be free
Again. Thy depths mysterious are profound!
Why wonder that our hearts are full of praise,
And leap within our breasts as songs we sing
Of all the loveliness that thou doth bring,
Of gladness, mirth, and sweet sunshiny days,
That we, like birds, pour forth our tuneful lays?—
For, April, thou hast brought the happy spring!

MY DUTY

I'll do my work as best I can
As I go from day to day,
And meet all duties like a man
While I journey on the way.
For what is wealth, and what is fame
When we are beneath the sod?
Far better is a stainless name
When we come before our God.

What fate's designed unto my care
By no other can be done,
And if the skies be foul or fair—
I'm the one, the only one.
For none can fill the other's place
In whatever path is trod,
We're sustained by the saving grace
Of a just and all-wise God.

Then faithfully I'll do my work,
For I know it is the best,
And will my duty never shirk,—
In the end I will find rest.
Regardless of all hopes and fears
With an even pace I plod,
And through the rainbow of my tears
See the glory of my God.

SAYIN' "HOWDY"

Sayin' "Howdy" does not cost
Anyone a copper cent,

Much is gained, and nothing lost,
Oft a smile of merriment
Will steal o'er a sad worn face,
Where some sorrow's left its trace;
And a little word of cheer
Oft will check a falling tear.

Sayin' "Howdy" wren you meet
Friends or strangers as we go
On the road, or city street,
Even if we do not know
Who they are, or where they live,
Never worry, it will give
Them some comfort, just the same,
Though we do not know their name.

Sayin' "Howdy" all the day,
From that greeting never slack,
Cheer some one upon the way
Whether he be white or black.
Let the voice be warm and true,
We can't tell what it will do,—
Just a kind word here and there
Will make clouded skies more fair.

OUR MOTHER

What makes a home complete
With everything so sweet,
Where morning-glory vine
Doth 'round the window twine
And joys vie with each other,
Where charming roses red,

Bloom by the pansy bed,
 And happy children play
 Through all the summer day?
 It is a loving mother.

And when the day is done,
 The stars come one by one
 A-peeping from the sky,
 When sleepy is each eye,
 Then there is not another
 Can soothe the childish fears,
 And chase away the tears,
 And tuck them up in bed
 When ev'ning prayers are said
 Like a kind, loving mother.

Wherever we may roam,
 The memories of home,
 Linger round us still
 While climbing up life's hill,—
 The joys care cannot smother;
 Whatever is our lot
 There never is forgot
 The one our grief did share,—
 The earnest, fervent prayer
 Oft uttered by our mother.

BY THE FIRE

When the busy day is ended
 And I'm through with grinding grists,

Where sunshine with care is blended
 There's no happier man exists;
 And no place that is more fitting,
 That fills all my heart's desire,
 Then when with my wife I'm sitting
 Side by side before the fire.

All the cares I am a-dropping
 That would cast a shadow o'er,
 And our happiness be stopping
 Are left then outside the door.
 With hearts light as any feather
 Then I take my tuneful lyre,
 As we draw our chairs together,
 Musing there before the fire.

Though our eyes are growing dimmer
 Our sun's sinking in the west,
 Yet there beams without a glimmer
 Loving rays within our breast.
 Though our home is not a palace
 With a bright and gilded spire,
 In our bosoms is no malice
 As we're sitting by the fire.

While the wheels of time still rumble
 Through the mighty realms of space,
 Be it e'er so low and humble
 Oh, there is no better place,—
 When we're seeking sweetest pleasure
 Of which we will never tire
 And we'll get the fullest measure,—
 Than at home around the fire.

MY OLE CORN-COB PIPE

In the ev'nin' when I'm restin',
 An' the clouds have cleared away
 That my spirit was molestin'
 Of a weary busy day;
 An' the snowflakes are a-flittin'
 Through the cold an' frosty air,
 An' I quietly am sittin'
 In my easy rockin'-chair;
 Like an apple prime an' meller
 In its season that is ripe,
 Jist the best contented feller
 Smokin' my ole corn-cob pipe.

Oh, 'tis then I love to ponder
 O'er the scenes now past an' gone,
 As in memory's halls I wander
 When life's twilight's comin' on!
 Oft fond pleasures I am findin'
 Midst the turmoil an' the strife,
 As I've slowly been unwindin'
 This ole tangled skein of life.
 Down the lane of recollection
 I find joys of sweetest type,
 As I sit in retrospection,
 Smokin' my ole corn-cob pipe.

INSPIRATION

Much deeper still than speech is thought,
 And more profound is what we feel;

What's in the soul cannot be taught
That to the senses doth appeal.
Our spirits in thin veils are dressed,
And man to man is never known,
Some hidden secret in each breast
That to the world is never shown.

For heart to heart doth never talk,
And mind with mind will never blend,
Regardless of how close we walk
'Long, hand in hand, with dearest friend.
All our communions are in vain
To lift the veil that is between,
And we will ever fail to gain
The depths beyond this mortal screen.

For long, long ages man has tried
To fathom nature's mystery,
But what is all his boasted pride
And what his wise philosophy,
Compared with Him who reigns above
And rules the destiny of man,—
And shows the fullness of His love
In His all-wise, all-wondrous plan?

'Tis only when our souls do drink
Deep at the fountain flowing free,
And with His will securely link,
That we can solve that mystery,—
When by His gentle hand we're led
Up to the portals of the throne,
And we're by inspiration fed,
That we can know as we are known.

OUR INFLUENCE

With careless hand we scatter seeds
 And little dream what they will bring,
 The goodly fruit,—or filthy weeds,—
 That mar the earth and leave a sting;
 The words we say, the deeds we do,
 We may imagine they are past,
 But in some form they'll live anew,
 A blessing or a curse at last.

Examples that we set each day
 Are impressed on some other mind,
 They're not like birds that flit away
 And leave no ling'ring trace behind;
 It may be months, it may be years
 Before they will appear again
 With a full harvest of sad tears,
 Of aching heart and fevered brain.

I charge thee ere it be too late,
 And opportunities have flown,
 Ere thou com'st to the Golden Gate
 Where all shall reap as they have sown,
 To watch with ever-zealous care
 And always strew the goodly seeds;
 And when the grain is garnered there
 'Twill not be mixed with noxious weeds.

HOE YOUR ROW

I was taught in tender youth
 Always to uphold the truth,

Nor from duty e'er to shirk,
But engage in honest work;
And not try to scheme or plan
To defraud my fellow-man,—
As I journeyed here below
Always aim to hoe my row.

What'er fate brings, be content,
To wrong motives not consent;
All shortcomings to forgive,—
Willing to let others live;
Practice watchfulness, and try
To do as I'd be done by,
Self-sustaining as I go,
Always aim to hoe my row.

Showing kindness day by day
To all I meet with on the way;
And to let no harsh words fall
That I never can recall.
This has ever been my creed,
As on life's journey I proceed:
Just in deal with friend or foe,
Always aim to hoe my row.

MAY

Sweet, lovely May, with bud and bloom!
And wafted on the ev'ning breeze
Is the floweret's rich perfume,
And leaves are greening on the trees.

And where the swinging grape-vines twine
 The wavelets in the sunshine gleam,
 Is happy boy with hook and line
 A-fishing in the rippling stream.

Sweet, lovely May, with skies so fair,
 Bordering on the summer's brink,
 We love to go and wander where
 The water-lillies calmy drink.
 See turtles basking in the sun
 Upon a log in the old bayou,
 And where the frog when day is done
 Tunes up his choir where cat-tails grow.

Sweet, lovely May, we welcome you
 With merry birds and flowers gay!
 The crystal drops of shining dew
 Sparkle where slanting sunbeams stray.
 Nature in brightest robes is drest,
 From leafy tree to turfy sod—
 There should be joy in ev'ry breast,
 With praise and gratitude to God.

THE OLD-FASHIONED GIRL

We love to see the old-fashioned girl,
 With a blush on her cheek like a rose,
 Who is not lost in the mad social whirl
 Who's content with plain, sensible clothes;
 Who helps her mother do cooking and scrub,
 And sings like a lark at her work,
 Does not go out with a pout to the wash-tub,
 Nor read silly novels, nor shirk.

Whose dress is simple, comely, and neat,
And whose manners are graceful, yet plain,
Who gives a sweet smile to each one she'll meet
And has no conceit that is vain.
She is kind-hearted, gentle, and true,
And is eager to do what is right,
With sincere motives ever in view,—
Her presence is a source of delight.

Who tries to console those in sore distress
With some comforting words of good cheer,
Bring a ray of light to their loneliness
And to dry the bereaved orphan's tear.
She takes great pride in learning to cook,—
Who selects her will not mourn his fate:
Nine times out of ten man's sure to look
To the old-fashioned girl for a mate.

NATURAL

Girls love the sport, as well as boys,
Of rambling out-of-doors,
Where nature with its sweetest joys
Is found along the shores;
And by a little rippling stream,
Where in the willow shade
They watch the sunlight shyly gleam,
And in the water wade.

Girls love to hunt for mussel-shell
Upon the shining sand,
And secrets to each other tell
While strolling hand in hand.

And pluck the wild flower bright and gay
That's nodding in the breeze,
And while the happy hours away
Beneath the shady trees.

Girls love to go where wild-grapes twine
And hear glad birds that sing,
Where they can take the clinging vine
And make a rustic swing.
Girls love to go and ramble 'round,
So happy gay and free,
Where all the purest joys are found
In sweetest harmony.

THRILLS OF NATURE

I love to stroll where wild-roses bloom
By a stream that flows through the vale,
Where children's mirth drives away all gloom
At a vine-covered cot in the dale;
And wild-ferns grow by the path leading 'round
To a spring at the foot of the hill,
Hear the water splash with a rippling sound
O'er the wheel of the creaking old mill.

Nature is robed in dazzling array
And joy teems in each happy breast,
The brown thrush is singing a tuneful lay
To his mate in her downy nest.
There's a lovely charm in that mystic song
In solitude, lonely and still,
As smooth as the water that's gliding along
To the wheel of the creaking old mill.

There is no pleasure so dear unto me
As to wander 'neath skies that are fair,—
Away from worry, so happy and free,
With flowers in bloom everywhere,—
By a silver stream where the willow tree grows
And where nature my being doth thrill,
And to watch the water that peacefully flows
To the wheel of the creaking old mill.

THE GOLDENROD

In corners of the old rail fence
By the fields of rip'ning maize
And in the brier-patch so dense
Where the timid rabbit strays,
And in the bottom lands serene,
By the path where stock has trod,
In grandeur, an autumnal queen,
Blooms the stately goldenrod.

And in the tangled thicket where
Once the thistle bold held sway,
Its downy seeds now scattered there
From the parent stem away,
And flowers dying one by one
That in summer flecked the sod,
While in the mild September sun
Blooms the stately goldenrod.

And when the pasture fields are bare
And the meadows closely shorn,
When nature has a vacant stare
Like someone whose heart doth mourn,

Then bending o'er the old stone wall
 With a sweet and graceful nod,
 As if to cheer both great and small
 Blooms the stately goldenrod.

When leaves are fading on the trees
 And the days have shorter grown,
 And there's a chillness in the breeze
 And the birds have southward flown,—
 'Tis then to turn our thoughts above,
 When with weary steps we plod,
 To our Creator, God of love,
 Blooms the stately goldenrod.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Where our dearest loved lie sleeping
 So peacefully under the sod,
 Their spirits flown to the keeping
 Of an all-wise, merciful God.
 The spot that 'wakes tender emotions
 As with solemn footsteps we tread
 Away from life's busy commotions
 Is the last resting-place of the dead.

In our memory ever lingers
 The faces we'll never forget,
 As we, with our kind, loving fingers
 And lashes with teardrops so wet;
 Place garlands we pluck from the bowers,—
 Their fragrance on breezes is shed,—
 We strew with the beautiful flowers
 The last resting-place of the dead.

Brave ones, when our country was calling,
 With their crimson blood paid the price,
 To protect our great nation from falling
 They made the supreme sacrifice,
 And broke the harsh, strong, binding fetters
 And gave us our freedom instead,
 To them, we will ever be debtors,—
 We honor the graves of their dead.

AS I WATCH THE WORLD GO BY

Let me live in my lowly sphere
 As I watch the world go by,
 Oft I can speak a word of cheer
 That will soothe a weary sigh;
 Oft I can check a falling tear
 And bring luster to some eye,
 Oft I can calm a sense of fear,
 As I watch the world go by.

Oft I can help to make more clear
 Some dark and lowering sky,
 Oft I can lighten the atmosphere
 When storms are hovering nigh.
 Oft there comes stealing to my ear
 A sad, faint, distressing cry,
 Oft I cause gloom to disappear,
 As I watch the world go by.

Oft when some danger's lurking near,
 To the rescue then I fly,
 Oft with wrong motives interfere
 And turn someone's thoughts on high,

Oft help them live a life sincere
 Drink at fount that ne'er runs dry,—
Oft then they'll lead a bright career,—
 As I watch the world go by.

A HOOSIER LASS

Fair, lovely maid, nature hath shed
A dow'r of beauty on your head;
For she saw fit your form to bless
With all her charms of loveliness.
In happy innocence you seem
Like something fashioned in a dream,—
A jewel on this sombrous earth
To gladden sad hearts with your mirth.

And, like the azure of the skies,
The truth beams from your sparkling eyes;
And, then, from off your ruddy lip
The bee would nectar love to sip
Where sweet smiles play that seem to be
Like sunny wavelets of the sea.
And cluster'd 'round your brow so fair
Are shining locks of golden hair.

Sweet creature, may you ever be
From cares of this harsh, vain world free;
Your graceful charms forever keep
Like fabled mermaids of the deep;
And with your loving, winsome way,
Your happy laugh, so bright and gay,
Scatt'ring sunshine, joy and love,
An angel dropt from realms above.

ONCE MORE

The ice did freeze, chill winds have blown,
While winter claimed us for his own,
 The heavens clouded o'er;
But now the raging blasts are through,
And April skies are deepest blue
 Once more, once more, once more!

And merry birds return again
To cheer us with their music when
 Our hearts are faint and sore;
The red-bud soon will wave its plume,
And in the glen the dogwood bloom
 Once more, once more, once more!

In all our journey of this life
We are beset with earthly strife,
 And tempests 'round us roar;
And dark clouds gather o'er our skies,
Yet fate responds to each who tries
 Once more, once more, once more!

A LITTLE TRESS OF HAIR

A little tress of golden hair
 Treasured for years and years,
Safeguarded in a mother's care,
 And moistened with her tears.

'Twas severed from a baby's brow,
 Who with the dreamless sleeps,
Who's singing with the angels now
 While she the vigils keeps.

It to her lips is often pressed
 When weary and alone,
 There's a deep anguish in her breast
 That nothing can atone.

That little tress of golden hair
 That in her heart she wove,—
 Is all that death to her could spare,—
 Enbalm'd with her love.

BE A MAN

Whatever comes, to do our part,
 Although it may work to our ill,
 Just meet it with a cheerful heart
 Submissive to our Master's will.
 Then, if we fall, or if we rise,
 Whoever does the best he can,
 Sure in the end will win the prize
 If in all things he's been a man.

OH! YOU JUNE!

While June's month of brides and roses,
 We're told, so tradition discloses;
 But then we all know
 When a girl has the right beau
 She'll wed any time he proposes.

IT'S SO

We're governed by natural forces,
 And wedlock is one of its courses;

But in all the months
 They regret marriage stunts
 And apply in the courts for divorces.

THE BUMBLE-BEES' NEST

Ef you fool 'round a bumble-bees' nest,
 You'd better watch out, they'll git the best
 Uv you, sure an' certain;
 An' you don't have to be told a thing,—
 For you'll surely know it when they sting
 By the way it's hurtin'.

Wunst, when I wuz mowin' medder grass,
 Clost to a nest I had to pass—
 An' I run my scythe clean through it;
 The way them bees got after me,
 It wuz a holy sight to see,
 My! but I did rue it.

Fer they jist made me hop 'round an' dance—
 Wun uv 'em got up a leg uv my pants
 While my hands I was aflingin'
 'Round my head, to keep 'em frum my eye,
 An' that air wun crawled away up high,—
 Gee! but he wuz stingin'.

An' 'em ole bees made me purt' nigh swear,—
 'Cause folks, passin', goin' to the fair
 Hard as they could clatter,
 Seed me cuttin' capers that-a-way,
 An' stopped to laugh, an' yell, an' say:
 "What the world's the matter."

Bumble-bee's an awkward lookin' chap,
But then when he gits into a scrap
 He's sure a humdinger;
But then ef you fool 'round his ole nest
You'd better watch out, he'll git the best
 Uv you with his stinger.

SWEET SIXTEEN

"Now you're rather aged," the young girl cried,
 "And your locks with silver would shine,
If you did not keep them properly dyed,—
 And paint your cheeks redder than mine.
You try to be modest, shy, and serene,
 As if wedlock's chance you'd not missed,
While I am, as you see, but sweet sixteen
 And 'till yet have never been kissed."

"While in years you're old," the young girl cried,
 "But you never speak of your age,
Which you're holding well,—that can't be denied—
 An expert with face camouflage.
Your youth has flown, many winters you've seen,
 Oh, why do you now so insist
To flirt with a girl's beau who's sweet sixteen
 And 'til yet has never been kissed?"

"Twice you have told me I'm old, saucy lass,—
 'Tis a truth I very well know,
Years quickly have flown, and still swiftly pass
 But then I can capture your beau.

The girls are few and quite far between
 And pleasures of life they have missed,
 Whenever they've lived to be sweet sixteen
 And don't know what it is to be kissed."

Old girls are quite shrewd, and that is a fact,
 They've had much experience, and so
 They know just what to do and just when to act
 For to handle a green young beau.
 But any old bach who walks, stately of mien,
 Unceasingly he will persist
 To court a young girl that is sweet sixteen
 Who,—he thinks,—has never been kissed.

THE WEEPING WILLOW

O weeping willow, why now weep
 When all the world around is gay?—
 Thou are awake from thy long sleep
 When wintry skies were cold and gray.
 The dews have kissed thy tender bough,
 Thy buds have now burst in the sun,
 Oh, why, then, be so mournful now,—
 As if some wrong to thee'd been done?

The robin trills his tuneful lay
 For thee at breaking of the dawn,
 And gentle zephyrs 'round thee play
 When ev'ning twilight's coming on;
 All nature tries to make thee glad
 With flowers sweet and happy song,
 Oh, why art thou forever sad
 That nothing can appease thy wrong?

Beneath thy boughs the lovers meet,
Of whom the poets e'er have sung,
And pledge their tender vows so sweet
That keep the world forever young.
Perhaps, 'tis that which makes thee weep,
Like some lorn one with lashes wet,—
Some hidden sorrow buried deep
Within thy breast, ne'er to forget.

O lovely willow tree, weep on!—
For constancy's the sweetest grace
That this old world has ever known,
Which time nor tide can e'er deface.
Some sorrow lurks in every breast,
A longing that cannot be told,
That ne'er by words can be expressed:
In silence we are best consoled.

A QUAKER MAID

O you charming Quaker maid,
With sweet face in smiles arrayed;
Wavy locks of auburn hair,
Eyes of azure sparkling there
That are windows of the soul,
Speaking mirth you can't control;
And your heart is just as true
As the crystal drops of dew
Glist'ning in the morning sun,
When a lovely day's begun;
While your glad voice rings as gay
As the mock-birds tuneful lay

As it echoes from the hill,
Or the laughing, rippling rill
On its journey to the sea,—
And you're honest as can be!

O sweet, lovely Quaker maid,
With your mien so calm and staid;
You are fairer than a day
In the flowery month of May;
And your heart is all atune,
Like the happy month of June;
For the kind words that you say
Scatter sunshine on the way;
And you bring both joy and cheer
To each one that you come near,
You are like some rich perfume,
For you drive away the gloom;
There's no counting of your worth;
You're an angel on this earth,
And a noble lesson teach,
With plain life and simple speech.

O you happy Quaker maid,
In your simple garb arrayed;
May you never, never cry,
Nor tears dim your lustrous eye,
And roll down your dimpled cheek,
Where the smiles play hide-and-seek
From your ruddy, rosy lip,
Where the bee could honey sip,
And the nector you'd not miss,—
And we'd love to steal a kiss,
— If we thought we'd only dare
Just to even venture there.

Ah! put up that haughty frown
That your brow is pulling down;
There'll be no smile, we're afraid,
From the pretty Quaker maid.

O you modest Quaker maid,
We are sometimes half-afraid
That sly Cupid with his dart
Pierce some noble suitor's heart,
And his eyes will beam on you
As he tells of love so true.
(But the tongue you can't believe
For it often will deceive,
And flattering falsehoods make
With pretense for love's own sake.)
If the tongue be mute and meek
Eyes a deeper language speak;
Hearts will throb with no disguise;
Lovers know when eyes meet eyes.
May he play no masquerade
When he wins the Quaker maid!

O you gentle Quaker maid,
When the nuptial plans are laid,
Then may you no pleasure miss
And your life be full of bliss!
When you're mistress of a home,
Then the cares of life will come.
When you feel you're growing old
May you never fret nor scold;
Be as happy as when thou'rt young
Ever careful of thy tongue.
In thy ways forever set,

Nor be always in a pet;
And rant 'round 'bout this or that
To stir up and angry spat
Always kind and patient be—
God will surely smile on thee!

O you winsome Quaker maid,
May you never be betray'd,—
Laughing eye and flowing curl,
Happy, honest, Christian girl!
Catch the sunshine while you may,
Ere it vanishes away;
Ere lines come upon thy brow
Which is smooth and placid now.
Ere the wrinkle scars thy cheek
Where the dimples now so meek
Play their pranks, and the eye
Lose its luster by and by,
And the locks of auburn hue
Are all streaked with silver, too.
A noble lesson thou dost teach
With pure life and simple speech!

THANKSGIVING PETE

The boys call him Thanksgiving Pete.
You see, it happened this away:
Young Peter tried his best to eat
All his ma had Thanksgiving day.
Ate turkey, and the dressing too,
Cakes, gravies, and all kind of pie,

And they thought 'fore the night was through
That little Pete would surely die.

Cranberry sauce, blackberry jam,
And all such things that he liked best,
He did into his stomach cram,
And pickles, too, with all the rest;
He et perserves, all kinds of sauce,
Sweet "tater," puddings, other stuff,
Looked like 'twould surely kill a hoss
Before young Peter got enough.

But when that night when all was still
And they heard Peter give a yell,
They made him take a nasty pill,
To get his little stomach well.
So, little folks should never try
To see how much food they can eat,
For that is just the reason why
The boys call him Thanksgiving Pete.

TO PERCY FRAZER*

You know of some we often meet
And with a smile we love to greet,
For as they take us by the hand,
Somehow we seem to understand
By the expression on their face,
That in their heart is a warm place
For us, they ever will be true,—
Now, Percy, this applies to you.

*Percy Frazer was for a long time on the mail route,
and a friend to everyone.

So, Percy Frazer, we all know,—
That you'll find friends where'er you go.
For when you come on this mail route,
Serving the patrons all about,
The gloomy ones you did beguile
With cheerful words and sunny smile;
And punctual service, kind and true,
And so, we fell in love with you.

We learned to watch from day to day,
For you a-smiling on your way;
'Twas then the girls would look, you know,
To get a letter from their beau.
And old folks, too, would often sigh,
And think of other days gone by.
You'd cheer us when you came in view
In fact, we all expected you.

And now we're loath from you to part,
You've won a warm spot in our heart.
For you and yours we'll ever pray,
That God will bless you on your way!
And when your tasks on earth are o'er
Oh, may you reach that golden shore,
And there with angels ever sing
Around the throne of God our King!

IN REVERIE

Oft, when I tire of haunts of men,
And shades of night are falling,

In rev'rie, by my fireside then
I hear loved voices calling.
Those who long crost the crystal sea,
Where blissful joy is never ending,
So still come back and talk with me,—
Sunshine with shadows blending.

For there, on each familiar face,
Bright smiles for me are showing,
And with the old-time lovely grace
My faded cheeks set glowing,
How kind of them who always knew
Just what my lonely soul was needing,
To come with comfort kind and true
In answer to my sad heart's pleading!
Life is to me a tangled skein,
Which years I've been unwinding

With joy and grief and toil and pain,—
The end I'll soon be finding.
How sweet it is at eventide
When this earth's busy cares are fretting,
To have my loved ones by my side
As my low sun is slowly setting.

I ne'er can speak the highest worth
In humble songs I'm singing
Of pleasures on this sombre earth
That honest friends are bringing.
They guide and stead me on my way.
All through life's surging billows,
Help make the bed whereon I lay
As soft as downy pillows.

It is not wealth nor worldly fame
 That makes my life worth living,
 The goal that is my highest aim
 Is that I'm comfort giving
 To those who are in sore distress
 Life's rugged road pursuing,—
 What helps to make my life's success
 Is flowers I am strewing.

VILLAGE LOAFERS

When I feel sorto' lonesome like, an' spirits all run
 down,
 I go where loafers gether in a little country town;
 An' hear 'em as they argy before the grocery store,
 A-chawin' scrap terbacker an' spittin', too, galore.
 All they want is an argument an' stirrin' up a row,
 To make it interestin', an' they're not a-carin' how.
 For when they git in earnest, then I tell you it's a
 fright,
 An' cussin' of each other as if they's goin' to fight.

Some of 'em perch upon a box, an' there they'll set
 and spout
 Of politics, an' other things they don't know much
 about;
 Map out a course our government at all times should
 pursue,
 An' tell jist what our Senators an' Congressmen must
 do.
 They'll prophesy about hard times, an' what's a-goin'
 to be

In all 'em foreign countries that's away across the sea.
Jist strike up any subject, an' then some one in the
crowd
Will go to rantin' all around an' git to talkin' loud.

When they git on religion,—oh! 'tis then they make
it hot;
Some claim baptizin' is the thing, an' some claim it
is not;
That all of Jordon's waters o'er their heads a-pourin'
down.
Would never cleanse 'em of their sins, nor fit 'em for
a crown.
An' so they set an' argy from the dawn 'til close of
day,
An' chaw their scrap terbacker, an' jist fool their time
away.
But then it's interestin' when a man is feelin' blue,
Jist to go an' sorto' listen to what some men folks
do.

SCATTERING FLOWERS

When death has claimed me for his own,
My spirit to its Maker flown,
My heart is still within my breast,
No more with cares of life oppress'd;
From this vain world I've passed away,
And friends are weeping o'er my clay.
The flowers on my casket spread,
No fragrance for me then they shed.

When death has kissed my eyelids down,
And storms for me no more will frown,
The kindly words that you would give,
Oh, let me hear them while I live!—
When they are spoken by my bier
They bring to me no smile of cheer
When cold as marble is my brow—
Oh, let me, let me hear them now!

So, as we journey day by day.
Let's strew fair flowers along the way;
Make someone's pathway seem more bright,
And make some heavy heart beat light.
Kind words will soothe the heaving sigh,
Bring lustre to the tear-dimmed eye,
But when we're dead all kindness shown
Can never, never then atone.

BARE-FOOT BOYS

Bare-foot boys at play on a summer day,
By the road on a grassy hill,
Where it was steep they would run and leap
Then slide as you know boys will,
And pull each other's toes, and tear their clothes,
And just make the buttons fly,
Crack their foolish jokes and yell at folks
As they were passing by.

And one boy named Jim, they got hold of him,
And then they slid him all about,

Up and down the hill and around until
They wore his old trousers out.
The pants he wore that day had stripes of gray
with a small black strip in between,
But then I tell you where they'd all worn through
The grass had stained him rather green.

Soon a beau and lass that way did pass
To take a nice evening walk,
Where those rowdy boys with their pesky noise
Did yell, and laugh, and talk;
The girl she said as she tossed her head:
"Let us walk a little slow,"
And,—with a smile,—“tease the boys awhile,
And we'll have some fun, you know.”

Then she said to him whom they called Jim,
Rather sober, quiet, and serene,
“Your pants front part they are striped with gray
But the back part's motley green.
She blushed rosy-red and then hung her head,
As he bashfully replied:
“I beg your pardon, miss, but the truth is this,
That green part you see is my hide.”

LATE SUMMER

In gorgeous splendor Summer walks with ease,
With beauty throned upon her noble brow;
On stately hills and in the vales where plow
Has stirred the fertile soil, in balmy breeze
Corn tassels wave, and on the orchard trees
The fruit is smiling on each graceful bough;

And fragrant clover lies stored in the mow,—
 All nature striving with her charms to please
 The most fastidious; and butterflies
 Collect in groups, so closely all around
 The warm, moist spongy places, where the ground
 Has dried beneath the radiant sun in skies
 Of the most beauteous amethyst and gold,
 Late Summer, thou the sweetest charm doth hold!

THE NOBLER THINGS

When age comes gently stealing on
 And cares of life around us teem,
 Our youthful pleasures all are gone
 They've vanished like an empty dream,
 And, like the autumn birds, have flown
 To sunny skies on fleeting wings;
 Then Fate, through nature doth atone,
 And we can see the nobler things.

The loftiest course there is on earth
 Is walking in the Supreme laws,
 Above the ribald jester's mirth
 And fostering a worthy cause,
 While youthful aspirations rage
 And luster 'round our pathway flings;
 Much better 'tis in riper age,—
 When we can see the nobler things

Some are who live on earth in vain
 To hoard up wealth they'll never use,

And only dross of life they gain
 And all the richest blessings lose.
They move about in discontent
 As this sphere in its orbit swings,
Don't realize that God hath meant
 That we should see the nobler things.

The chains that closely 'round us twine,
 The ties of friendship ever link,
Like tendrils of a clinging vine
 As we walk on life's shady brink.
But those who live alone for self
 Ne'er hear the songs that nature sings,
And are like mummies on a shelf
 Who cannot see the nobler things.

Our God with lavish hand hath sown
 The beauties broadcast o'er the land
For us to claim and call our own
 If we would only understand;
The depths wherein His mercy lies,
 And the contentment that it brings,
He gives to everyone who tries
 And who can see the nobler things.

The waves in rhythmic measures roll,
 The stars in splendor stud the sky,
And on this earth from pole to pole
 His great majestic wonders lie.
How great, O God, Thy wisdom is!
 And rapture in our bosom springs,
When we behold the works of His
 And dwell upon the nobler things.

CHILDHOOD'S PLEASURES

Wunst little Isaac's ma an' pa
Tuk him to the country fair,
An' Ike wuz tickled,—oh, my law!—
Fust time that he wuz ever there.
He seed the merry-go-a-roun',
'Nen had a coniption fit,
'Cause his ma said 'at she'd be boun'
'At he should never ride on it.

A thing there played a lively tune,
An' Isaac wanted so to ride,
His pa bought him a toy ballon
Jes' so's to keep him satisfied.
Oh, gee-whiz!—but Ike wuz more'n proud
Jist a-holdin' to that string,
Still, he wanted to jine the crowd
An' ride on 'at air funny thing.

Ike's ma an' aunt, that afternoon
Went to see the fine art place,
Ike's pa tuk him an' his balloon
Out to where the hosses race;
His pa clumb up where he could see
'Em go as hard as they could tear,
When he clumb down, w'y Isaac he
Had wandered clean away frum there.

Ike's pa wuz purtee nigh scared green
'N'en, he hunted Isaac's ma.
They went where they heard 'at machine
A-playin' "Turkey in the straw."

An' Ike's ma purt' nigh had a spell,
 Jist like excited women will,
 When she heard little Isaac yell
 An' jist a-laughin' fit-to-kill.

An' Ike still helt to his balloon
 Jist a-skittin' roun' an' roun',
 But she got Isaac off an' soon
 They left that-air ole fair groun'.
 His Ma wuz mad, an' wouldn't cheap
 A-ridin' home beside his pap;
 An' Ike wuz tired, an' lay asleep
 Right there, acrost his mother's lap.

"OCTOBER"

We are here to meet "October"
 With his welcome smile for us,
 Stately mien so calm and sober
 With no big hurrah and fuss;
 Only with the winds a-sighing
 Through the tops of orchard trees,
 And the crimson leaves a-flying
 In the early autumn breeze.

Pawpaw now is ripe and mellow;
 Fleecy clouds float o'er the sky;
 Pumpkin's turned from green to yellow,
 Ready for Thanksgiving pie;
 In the wood the nuts are falling,
 On the fence at early morn,
 To his mate the quail is calling
 By the fields of rip'ning corn.

Oh, we all love old "October"
 With the crimson and the gold,
 With his stately mien so sober,
 And the beauties that unfold.
 Now our hearts are full of gladness
 And praises to our God above,
 For He drives away our sadness
 Fills our souls with joy and love.

PATIENCE

We often speak of the patience of Job,
 'Tis a trait that much is desired,
 It's far better than to wear ermine robe
 And revel in wealth till we're tired.
 If we have patience we always can win
 The battles we fight through this life,
 While they claim that Job was a man free from sin
 They speak but harsh words of his wife.

Of course all his losses were hard to bear
 With boils on the back of his neck,
 His wife must have used the most patient of care
 To save him from being a wreck.
 No doubt she'd speak up when he'd moan his fate,—
 His pleasures of life looked so slim,—
 Spoke more in pity than she did in hate
 When trying to pacify him.

Man will generally splutter around
 And from trying tasks slip away,
 While his wife at home is most always found,—
 She's tied fast, and there has to stay.

Speaking of patience, nine times out of ten
A woman will come out ahead,
If man had to bear what she does, why, then,—
It would not be long 'til he's dead!

THE PLACE WHERE WE WERE BORN

No matter where on earth we roam,
In low or lofty sphere,
The memories of our childhood home
To us are ever dear.
Tender emotions quickly start
Its beauty to adorn,
For fondly cherished in the heart
Is the place where we were born.

When stormy clouds are o'er our skies
And we're tossed to and fro;
The visions then before us rise
Of scenes so long ago.
To us it is a sacred spot
That naught can make us scorn,
For never, never is forgot
The place where we were born.

When eyes are dim, and heads are gray,
And forms with age do bend,
And time is slipping fast away,—
We near life's journey's end,—
'Tis then we oftimes love to tell
Of youth's sweet rosy morn,
And on the old-time pleasures dwell
Of the place where we were born.

SEEMS SO LONG

“Seems so long,” the little boy said,
 “Before I will be a man.”
 Put a torn straw hat on his tow head,
 Took his fish-pole and bait can,
 Called his dog, and away they went
 Where the sun-fish bite the best,
 At the old log drift where the elm tree leant,
 And the oriole swung its nest.

“The road seems long,” the young man said,
 “That leads to the halls of fame;
 And many weary miles to tread
 Ere I carve a gilded name.”
 Then he set forth with might and main
 And worked with an earnest zeal,
 At last the cherished goal did gain
 And his wordly dreams were real.

“It don’t seem long,” the old man said,
 And looked on the setting sun.
 “The wheels of time have quickly sped
 And my earthly course is run.”
 He bowed his hoary head and slept,
 Without e’en a sigh or frown;
 The angels softly ’round him crept,
 As they kissed his eyelids down.

IT’S NATURAL

Women folks are sorto’ curious,
 Ofttimes fill us with dismay

When they git to actin' furious
 'Cause they cannot have their way.
When with words they're not prevailin'
 Tears come gushin' to their eye,
For we know it is their failin'
 Then to hunker down an' cry.

We can stand their wild commotion
 An' their slander an' abuse,
But to move we take a notion
 When they start the optic juice.
Man will labor an' not murmer
 An' to please 'em he will try,
But it puts him on a hummer
 Whene'er they begin to cry.

That must have been when it started.
 If some point they fail to gain
They will act so broken-hearted
 An' tears fall like summer rain.
Man will do his best to please 'em
 To their rescue he will fly,
Almost break his neck to ease 'em,—
 For he hates to see 'em cry.

I'll bet it made Adam wonder
 'Way back in the early years,
When he had to knuckle under
 To Eve's flood o' briny tears.
She who'd always been so jolly,—
 Sweetest creature 'neath the sky!—
'Spect it made him melancholy
 When she first begin to cry.

THE ABANDONED WATER-MILL

The water-wheel is resting in the pen-stock,
And the wooden fore-bay has all tumbled down,
The old meal-buhr is lying on the bed-rock,
With the hopper gaping like a rustic clown.

The rats and mice have gnawed the belts to pieces,
And the main drive-pulley's sagging out of line,
And the flour-rolls have rusted into creases
That in other days ground golden grain so fine.

The old flour-packer's standing still and solemn,
And no farmer's grists are waiting by the door,
And no ricks of flour are standing like a column
For at last the old mill's grinding days are o'er.

The sparrows in the attic now are nesting
And they also have possession of the reels,
For ther's now no one around to be molesting,—
And the mice are playing 'mong the bevel-wheels.

Now the cobwebs are all hanging from the rafter,
And the roof lets in the rain, the sleet, and snow,
No more is heard the children's merry laughter,
As when playing in the bins so long ago.

And no more do lights within the windows glisten
As when the old mill used to run at night,—
When the miller would, with lantern, watch and listen,
Taking care that everything was running right.

The siding now is all torn loose, and sagging,
And through the windows comes the howling blast

The heavy doors are on their hinges dragging
For the days of their old usefulness is past.

The farmers with their grists no more are coming
And waiting for their turn outside the door
And hushed the old wheat-cleaners' merry humming,--
They are standing silent on the second floor.

No water now is in the tail-race flowing,
Everything is hushed, is quiet, all about,
And tall grass is within the head-race growing
For the freshets have long washed the old dam.

Barefoot boys along the race no more are straying
To fish for perch, and cat, or goggle-eye,
In the big, deep hole where they were staying
At the waste-way where the stream went gliding
by.

For gone, gone is that old mill's fame and glory,
And it now is quickly crumbling to decay,
It's leaning from the basement to top story,
For the tooth of Time is gnawing it away.

The old miller's often seen there sitting
In the old door with the silence all around,
And he thinks of all the years that have gone flitting,
And the grain that in the old mill he has ground.

His eyes have now become so dim and bleary,
And his footsteps now are faltering, short, and slow
For he has grown so feeble, sad, and weary,
And his head has frosted white as driven snow.

The mill and miller have gone down together,
 And their years of usefulness on earth are past,—
 A few more days of rough and stormy weather,—
 But they still are holding true friends till the last.

A stone will mark the miller's silent slumber;
 The wheel-pit, where the mill went to decay;
 And time flow on in years of ceaseless number,
 Till the dawning of that glorious Judgment Day.

THE RAZOR STRAP

I'm not a bit afeard of Dad,
 When I'm naughty any day,
 He'll glare aroun' like he wuz mad
 Nen furgit it right away,
 But when Ma speaks I'd better heed,
 Fur she'll take me crost her lap,
 An' jis' give me all 'at I need
 With Dad's ole long razor strap.

Now, Dad he will jis' threat an' threat
 'At he's goin' to box my ears,
 But all he'll do is scold an' fret,—
 'At don't give me any fears.
 When Ma lays down the law to me
 I know 'at she will not slap,
 But I will ketch it crost her knee
 With Dad's ole long rason strap.

My Ma's as kind as she kin be,—
 I think more of her than Dad;

She often say 'at she kain't see
 Jis' what makes me be so bad.
I promise if she'll give me a chance
 'At I'll be the goodest chap,
When she is dustin'n out my pants
 With Dad's ole long rason strap.

IN MEMORY

In memory there's a sacred place
 Where all the lovely things we store,
Naught enters that can e'er deface
 The portals of that guarded door;
Each loving word, each sunny smile,
 That made our clouded skies more fair,
And did the lonely hours beguile
 We cherish with the treasures there.

In memory there's a sacred place
 Where sad and weary, oftimes we
Look, and behold a smiling face
 That now has crossed the crystal sea,
And watches o'er us from above,—
 So quiet, peaceful, and serene,—
Still keeping bright the lamp of love
 With gleams of joys that once have been.

In memory there's a sacred place
 We enter in the solemn night
When sleep has flown, and there we trace
 Some old-time joy with pure delight

That o'er our bosom brings a thrill,
As old friends gather by our side,
We know with them we're living still,—
In mem'ry we will e'er abide.

A WOMAN'S APRON

Did you ever note the uses women put their apron
to?—
Often subject to abuses in so many things they do.
They'll tie it at the waist-line with a double bow so
neat,—
A nice apron on a woman will make her look more
sweet.
And when they see some unexpected guests a-coming
in,
They'll put on a clean apron and look tidy as a pin.
When winter wind is chill they use it to protect their
hands,
And then roll 'em so tight in it that 'tis straining on
the bands;
Or when the sun is shining wear no bonnet on their
head,
But turn their apron gently up and throw it o'er
instead;
Oftimes they "tote taters" in it that they are about
to peel,
And then use it to fetch fuel too that's to cook the
ev'ning meal;
Also have the clothes-pins in it when hanging out the
clothes,

Then turn the wrong side of it when they'd want to
 wipe their nose;
 Flop it in the air so wildly when *shoo-ing* some old
 hen,
 And try to scare her crazy, so she'll not come back
 again;
 And then use it in a hurry for dusting off the chairs;
 Maybe flog a young'un with it that she's caught quite
 unawares.
 Oh, that garment is so handy and used for so many
 things,—
 We even sometimes see man tied to his wife's apron
 strings.

AT THE WINDOW

Snug, at the window's cosy seat,
 Sits a fair young damsel, reading,
 While a timid lad across the street
 For a smile is softly pleading;
 And watching shyly for a chance
 That their eyes might be meeting;
 But then he fails to win the glance
 Called by his heart's quick beating:
 Her eyes are buried in her book
 He's denied that bit of heaven
 She does not care to even look,—
 For she is not yet quite eleven.
 O timid lad, you still are young,
 As time slips by you will be wiser;
 And when with Cupid's dart you're stung,—
 Just listen, now, to your adviser:

“The little heartaches never mind,
 And your same course go on pursuing;
 In five more years, then, you will find
 She will encourage you in wooing.
 The courtship spurned that you’ve begun,
 She’ll then for that be warmly yearning,
 For you will then be twenty-one,
 And she into sweet sixteen turning.”

THE MAN WE LOVE

We love the man who goes forth without fear,
 And fights the daily battles fair and just;
 When duty calls, he bravely says: “I must.”
 With steps unfaltering and song of cheer,
 He clings to honor, which he holds most dear:
 Has better a good name with but a crust
 Than life infamy with none to trust!
 He meets life’s problems with his conscience clear.
 With faith in God who doeth all things best,
 He does not shed a tear when fond hopes fail,
 Nor moan his fate, and in harsh language wail.
 With friendless and smiles for the opprest,
 He brings contentment to some weary breast,
 And in the end o’er all he doth prevail.

A HOOSIER’S VIEWS

When’er the Hoosiers go to heaven, an’ they most
 allers do,

Providin' their passports are clear so's St. Peter'll let
'em through;

W'y they're apt to look around awhile, before they
settle down,

Fur to sorto' git the lay o' things ere they adjust their
crown;

An' cast their eyes about 'em soon as they pass the
pearly gate,

To see if everything's fust-class an' is strictly up-to-
date.

With a droll expression on their face will stare around
so strange,

As if they's kindo' wund'rn like if they'd bettered by
the change.

Fur you know in Indyan'y here, w'y, ev'rything's the
best,—

If you long to go to Heaven, or you're hankerin' fur
rest,

Then jist come out here an' stay awhile, an' learn the
Hoosier ways,

An' soon you'll wear a sunny smile, an' your heart be
full o' praise,

Jist a-seein' how kind Providence has strewn with
lavish hand,

The great beauties all around us here that we can
understand.

Oh, you'll never want to ramble, nor from this good
place to roam,

Until death shall close your eyelids an' the angels call
you home.

If you are wantin' things romantic, an' fur nice
scenery thirst,

Before you go to foreign lands, jist see Indyan first.
Fur we've got the hills an' hollers, an' we've got the
level plain,
An' we have the lakes an' rivers, an' we've got the
fields o' grain.
When it comes to real comfort, then I tell you fair
an' square,
That there is no place in this wide world that ever
can compare
With good ole Indyan, though some claim we folks
are queer,
An' Heaven may be grander, but we're better
'cquainted here.

GETTING EVEN

Once when I was fishing where
I had thought the big fish were,
Threw my hook where it was deep,
Where the large ones try to keep
Clear away, plum out o' sight,—
Very soon I got a bite;
Then the line began to slack
And commenced a-creeping back;
But with patience I did wait
For that fish to take my bait.

And I watched my line until
It had settled down right still;
Then I drew it in to look
If the bait was off my hook.
It wasn't long till I could see
Hook was naked as could be.

Tried again, threw back once more,
It did just like it did before;
So I raised it up to see
What it was a-fooling me.

Got my hook up in the air,
With a craw-dad hanging there
With his pincers every one
Just like he was having fun;
I reached out to take him, when
He let loose, drooped back, and then
Starts off fast as he could climb,
Going backwards all the time,
And sneaked off where he could wait
Somewhere there to steal my bait.

I got peeved, and said; "By jing,
I will catch that measly thing,
That does naught but lay and wait
In the creek to steal my bait,
Like I'd nothing else to do
But fool around a-feeding you!"
So I tried again, and then
Stood and held my pole, and when
He took hold I gave a yank
Brought that craw-dad to the bank.

Up I picked him with a smile,
Stood and looked at him awhile;
Says I: "This is what I'll do
That I may get square with you."
Then I pulled off legs and shell
Put him on the hook right well,

Threw, to see if I could git
Some fish that was kind o' fit
For the fryingpan or pot,
Pay for the trouble that I'd got.

I'd get something if I'd try
Either Bass or goggle-eye.
Soon the line began to jump,
I could feel my glad heart thump;
So I rubbed my hands in glee,
I knew there's a fish for me,
Which I'd get if I would wait
Till he runs off with my bait;
Soon I land a two-pound bass
Which laid flopping in the grass.

In every age or clime,
There will always come a time
For all those who lay and wait
And will steal some fellows bait.
They will never gain a whit,
But soon get the worst of it.
For no road has yet been found
But at last 'twill wind around;
'Tis a fact without a doubt
Their past sins will find them out.

SOME MEN FOLKS

Now, some men claim that women's queer,
That may be so, but I declare
Some men I've met would very near
Just make a common feller swear.

Contrary, and so unconcerned,
 Beats anything I've ever seen!
 I'm not profane, but I'll be durned
 If I see what some men folks mean.

I've seen some onery trifling men
 Who'd loiter 'round the whole day long,
 And seem the best contented when
 They know they're doing something wrong.
 I don't see how some women live
 With grouchy guys around their home;
 They would be justified to give
 A knockout blow across their dome.

They are opposed to moral laws,
 It is a fact we must confess,
 And try to down each noble cause
 Engaging in pure cussedness.
 Then let the woman have her right,
 Of her shortcomings do not prate,
 And she'll put up a gallant fight
 To keep the pesky men folks straight.

A PETITION

Lord, I come not to Thee for light
 Nor that the veil lift from mine eyes,
 For Thou hast shown me what is right
 And it can not be otherwise.
 The light to me Thou hast revealed,
 That I a empty space might fill,
 And promised Thou would'st ever sheld—
 Lord, give to me the power of will.

And knowledge to me Thou hast lent
To aid the sphere in which I move,
That I may act with good intent,
And opportunities improve;
And taught to me what is the best
That I may know the good from ill,
And in Thy laws I will be blest—
Lord, give to me the power of will.

Not for more courage do I plead,—
Of that I have a goodly store,
For Thou'st bestowed all that I need,—
Why should I pray to Thee for more?
'Tis not for that, O Lord, I crave,
But love into my heart instil,
That 'midst temptations I'll be brave—
Lord, give to me the power of will.

I know the paths my feet should tread,
In my heart's written Thy decree,
Thy wonders are around me spread
All o'er the land and depths of sea.
I know Thy mercies never slack,
Help me Thy purpose to fulfill,
Then grant, I pray, the thing I lack,—
Lord, give to me the power of will.

I have the knowledge and the light,
All which are graciously supplied,
I know the ways of truth and right
To walk 'long with Thee, side by side;
May I abhor all selfish creed
As I plod up life's rugged hill,

And leave my footprints in the deed—
Lord, give to me the power of will!

EMPTY ARMS

All is full of sunshine,
This life is full of cheer,
When I know you are mine
Then I have naught to fear;
For I'm free from all alarms
When you fill my empty arms.

Skies are always clearer
And of a deeper blue,
Heav'n above seems nearer
Whene'er I am with you;
And this world holds the sweetest charms
When you fill my empty arms.

Fill my heart with gladness,
Bring luster to my eye,
Drive away all sadness
Be thou forever nigh.
Shield me from all earthly harms,—
Fill my hungry, empty arms!

ON THE OLD MILL RACE

When the sultry sun is shining
On a summer day so hot,

Snipes and kildeers are a-wading
On sand-bars that suit them best,
And the leafy elm tree's shading
The glad oriole's swinging nest.
Where the weeds and grass are shaking,
There a muskrat's slide we trace,
Where his winter's home he's making
In the bank of the old race.

Hear the redbird's merry whistle
In the foliage so dense,
Where the wild-rose and the thistle
Grow along the pasture fence.
And the busy chipmunks trying
Ev'ry moment to embrace,
And the loud kingfishers flying
Up and down the old mill race.

Some will boast about the city
And the pleasures they find there,
But on them we look with pity,
For they've nothing to compare
With the gentle breeze that's blowing,
Which brings color to the face,
And the beauties nature's showing
All along an old mill race.

GREETING

We all love to meet a fellow
With a smile upon his face,

And there's not a streak of yellow
 'Round about him any place.
 For to each one he is meeting
 As he passes 'long the way,
 He'll ask, as he's kindly greeting:
 "How are you, my friend, to-day?"

There is not a man or woman
 Nor a little girl or boy,
 Nor to other living human
 But 'twill bring a thrill of joy;
 For it acts with magic power
 And a smile begins to play,—
 For kind words a frown will cower—
 "How are you, my friend, to-day?"

Oft, when some sad heart is aching
 With a heavy load of care,
 Then some weight we can be taking
 From the burden that they bear.
 And can brighten eyes when tearful
 If in greeting we will say
 In a manner kind and cheerful:
 "How are you, my friend, to-day?"

That's the reason why a fellow
 With kind words and sunny smile,
 Like an apple, ripe and mellow,
 Wins a welcome all the while;
 Of his presence we're not tiring,
 For he drives the gloom away,
 As he kindly is inquiring:
 "How are you, my friend, to-day?"

WHEN YOU HAVE THE BLUES

When a feller feels so on'ry that he does not even
 care,
 An' wouldn't give a chaw terbacker fer to live er die,
 I swear
 Thet the best thing there is fer him is to take a hook
 an' line,
 An' go whur the creek is laughin' an' wild mornin'-
 glories twine;
 Whur the turtles are a-sunnin', an' the fish are bitin',
 too,
 An' the merry birds are singin' songs as sweet as
 honey-dew,—
 Oh, it puts the ginger in him, an' he feels like he would
 give
 Ev'rything he lays his hands on jist to git a chance to
 live!

SOME OLD FRIENDS

While old friends I am respecting,
 And I will be till I die,
 Yet some things they're not neglecting
 That are apt to make me sigh;
 On their mem'ry still is dwelling
 Some occurrence of the past,
 When we hear something they're telling
 That will a reflection cast.

For they are death on relating
 How I once got licked at school,

When I ran off and went skating,—
 'Twas against the teachers rule;
 And how I, my lesson missing,
 Had to stand out on the floor;
 And the time teacher caught me kissing
 Girls behind the schoolroom door.

And when cider we were stealing,—
 Went to spelling school that night,—
 I could not walk straight for reeling;
 Oh, gee-wiz, but I got tight!
 Then the boys so quickly hurried
 Me off home, and put me to bed,
 To my best girl, who seemed worried,
 I had taken quite sick, they said.

Now, the new friends are not knowing
 'Bout the capers that I've cut,
 In my youth, when wild oats sowing,
 They may have suspicions, but
 They're not at each other winking,
 And then shyly smile and cough,
 Then just act as if they're thinking
 Of some stunts that I've pulled off;

Don't know when we "frizzed" the chickens,
 And got in a melon patch;
 When our parents raised the dickens,
 Whipped the whole endurin' batch;
 Nor when we *ticktacked* the preacher;
 When we killed an old maid's cat;
 And played pranks upon our teacher,
 Nor when we got licked for that.

Now, since I became more settled,
 'Specially in certain ways,
I get somewhat riled and nettled
 When reminded of those days.
And while old friends I'm respecting,
 Yet when I'm put to the test,—
My old pranks they're not neglecting,—
 I enjoy the new friends best.

ERE WE SLEEP

When dark shadows 'round us creep,
 We should put all cares away,
Ere we close our eyes in sleep
 Lift our hearts to God and pray;
Thanking Him who reigns above,
 And His grace on us bestows,
For His wondrous, boundless love
 And the mercy that He shows.

We should pray for strength to live
 True and faithful day by day,
All shortcomings to forgive
 And strew flowers on the way.
When our hearts with love are pure,
 God has promised He would keep—
In His care we rest secure
 As we gently fall asleep.



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