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The Wild Roses of Maine

AND OTHER CAMDEN VERSES

By

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No. 1.

To those who know and love

CAMDEN

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The Wild Roses of Maine

I AM thinking to-day of the roses
By the side of the beautiful bay—
Each cliff and each pathway adorning,
Where of old you and I loved to stray.
In the dusk and the starlight we lingered,
To list to the whippoorwill's strain,
Where the soft air was sweet with the fragrance
Of the lovely wild roses of Maine.

The birches still shade the old pathway,
The moonlight still whitens the shore,
Birds and flowers fill with music and beauty
The places that know us no more.
And the trees twine their branches together,
Where we walked in the green shady lane
And you gathered for me the wild roses,
The lovely wild roses of Maine.

Though long are the years and the silence,
Something whispers you do not forget;

That thoughts of that distant, sweet summer
Have place in your heart even yet.
When I'm resting at last, and this sad heart
No more can feel pleasure or pain,
If you visit my grave, come in summer,
And bring the wild roses of Maine.

A Night in June

I
N deepest shadow quiet I stood,
The *chanson* sweet to hear
Of breeze-swept branches overhead
And water flowing near.

She glided by all silently
And clad in softest white,
So pure and fair, she almost seemed
A vision of the night.

She reached the bridge, I saw her pause,
A look was on her face
Like one who kneels before a shrine
Within a holy place.

And, standing where the locust trees
Their graceful shadows fling
Above the little mountain stream,
I heard her softly sing:

“High o’er Mount Battie hung thy moon,
O fair and far, but fadeless June!
The locust-shadowed bridge, that night,
Was flecked, as now, with shade and light.

“So gaily sang the rippling stream
Its dark and rocky walls between,
Then down the willow-shaded lea
Went softly murm’ring to the sea.

“Beneath the stars, dear love, I lean
Above our little murm’ring stream:
No more you stand beside me here,
And hold my hands, and call me dear.

“But, love, across the changeful years —
Their sun and shade, their smiles and tears —
I reach my loving hands to you,
And feel you hold them strong and true.

“Your every look is with me yet —
You see me as when last we met;
Our lives, but not our hearts, estranged,
So each to each remains unchanged;

“My deepest, sweetest happiness
The mem’ry of each fond caress —
Each smile, and look, and tone I hold
More precious far than miser’s gold!

“More sacred, and to me more dear,
They grow with every passing year,
Thus, evermore the bliss is mine,
Of that immortal summer-time!

“Sometime, somewhere, O love — my love!
On earth, or in the heaven above,
The eyes I see in dreams alone
Once more will smile into my own.

“For us, once more the birds will sing;
For us, once more will smile the spring;
Once more in fragrant beauty grow
Our flowers that died so long ago.

“And in the scented summer breeze
We’ll linger long beneath the trees;
And, nevermore in grief to part,
Tell to each other all our heart.”

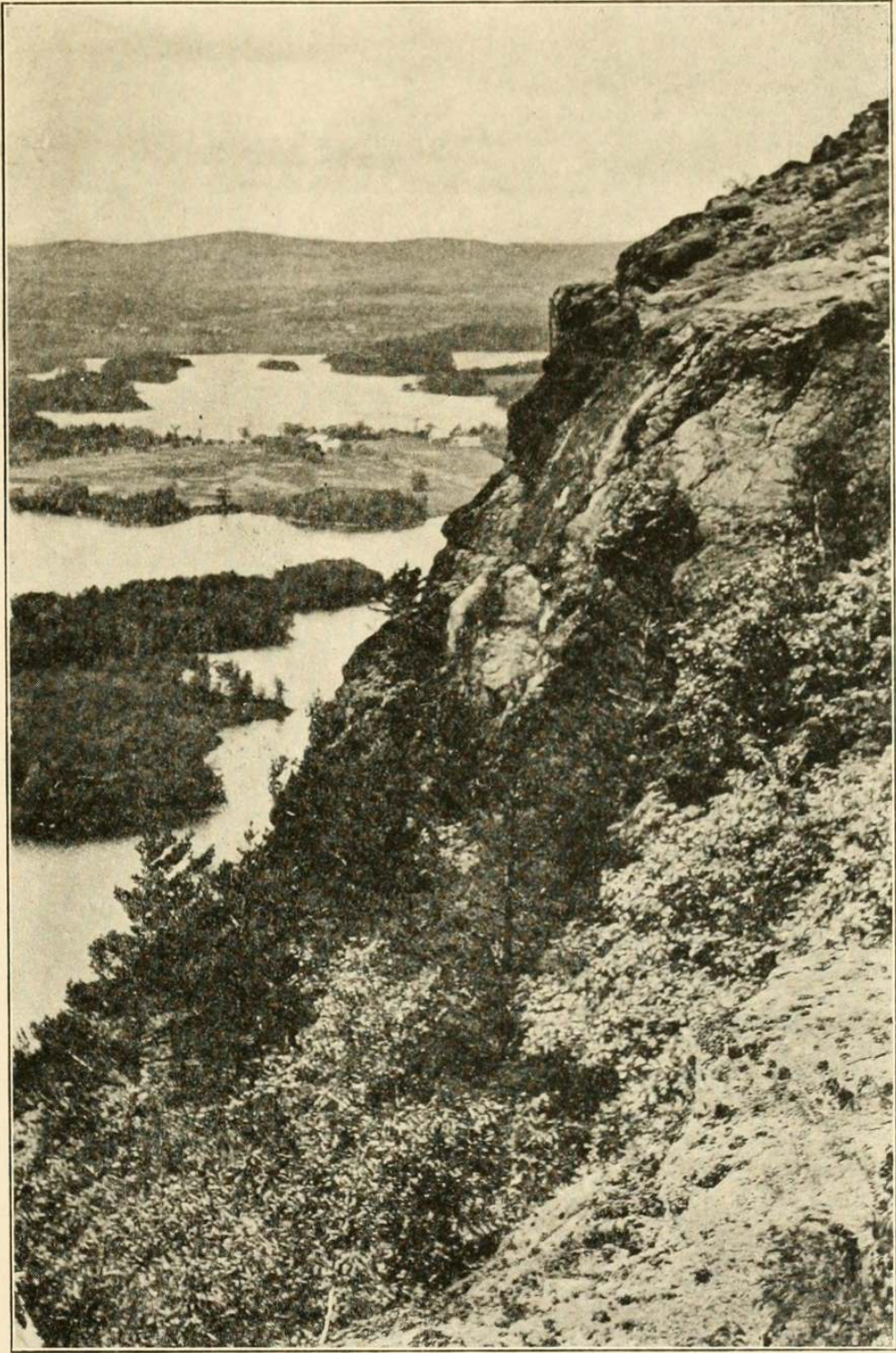
My Heritage

COME, while the day is fair and new,
My noble heritage to view!
Onward and upward let us go,
To where the breezes freshly blow.

Now rest, and take a long, long look
From lofty old Megunticook!
Upon this spot our stand we'll take —
This cliff that towers above the lake.

Proud as a monarch on his throne
I look abroad upon mine own!
Nor can you wonder at my pride,
For this is mine, on every side!

Not mine — of course you understand —
The right to give or sell this land;
It is not mine to claim or keep,
Not mine to till, to sow and reap.



*Upon this spot our stand we'll take—
This cliff, that towers above the lake—
Now rest; and take a long, long look
From lofty old Megunticook.*

No deed sets forth my "right to hold,"
As given in exchange for gold.
No field, nor wood, nor flock I own,
No legal claim to e'en a stone!

But mine to love! Who shall deny
To me the right as years go by —
The right to claim and hold as mine,
Within my heart, this scene sublime?

In all its varied aspects, I
Have viewed this scene in days gone by,
And dear to me the pictures all
That hang to-day on memory's wall.

I've seen the lake enwrapped in mist,
I've seen it flash, by sunbeams kissed,
All angry 'neath the storm-cloud's gloom,
Or sleeping 'neath the summer moon.

I've seen this vast expanse below
One glittering field of ice and snow —
The distant mountains seeming like
Huge drifts, up-blown within a night!

I've watched the first faint bud that shapes
Upon the twig, when Earth awakes —
The woods and fields their brown and gray
Exchange for springtime-garments gay.

Trees, far and near, by us now seen
In every shade of summer green,
I've oft viewed from this mountain crest
In autumn's gold and crimson drest.

Each little cot beside the lake,
Each homestead old, afar I take.
This smiling land, where'er I go,
Is with me, for I love it so!

And who, I ask you, shall deny
My right to keep, as years go by,
To hold and treasure through all time,
Within my heart, this scene sublime?

Home

IF under the sun and the summer skies,
In the lands beyond the sea,
Is a place more fair than the town I love,
With the Bay below and the Hills above,
It would have no charm for me.

I should long like a homesick child, I know,
For my Camden far away;
For dear are the very winds that blow,
And I love the dawn and the sunset glow,
And the rocks and the dashing spray.

And the poorest of all the people 'round —
The poorest — ah! that means me —
May roam where the pines and the wild flowers grow,
May linger and dream where the bright brooks flow,
Or walk by the changing sea.

Then come with me from the busy town
To the wooded mountain-side;
Let us leave for an hour the haunts of care,

For the mossy carpets deep and rare
Where the shy sweet blossoms hide —

Where the pines reach out their gentle hands
And the slim white birches bow,
And the ferns grow close to our rocky seat,
Where we rest, as we list to the music sweet
From the bird on the swaying bough.

O, the hills are kind! and the happy heart,
On the rugged mountain-slope,
Beats high with the added joy it knows,
In the sympathy that Nature shows
With the buoyant heart of Hope.

O, the hills are kind! and they patient wait
To comfort the soul oppressed.
You may take your trials and sorrows there,
For the weary heart, with its load of care,
Is lulled and beguiled to rest.

Then come with me, I am rich and glad
As abroad I freely roam,
For the sea and the sky and the hills are mine —
We may walk the shore or the mountain climb,
For each foot of the land is home!

The Road to Timbercliff

UPON the rugged mountain side
The gravelled slope lies steep;
Upward and upward winds the road
With graceful, curving sweep.

I climbed the height at early morn,
One far-off summer day —
Beauty and coolness everywhere,
And — sunrise on the bay!

A song-birds' paradise it seemed!
From tree-tops far and near
Rang out their music wild and sweet,
To charm the list'ning ear.

Along the road to Timbercliff
Grows many a flower and vine;
And trees from far-off countries thrive
Beside our oak and pine.

And 'neath these trees, a richer shade
Maine's sweet wild-rose has caught,

Where Art and Nature, hand in hand,
Their miracles have wrought.

I walked one evening there alone,
When all the world was still:
The high, full moon in softest light
Had wrapped the sleeping hill.

I passed where wreaths of white blooms hang
And gracefully entwine,
And at the sentinel Boulder paused
To give the countersign.

I whispered him the one word "love" —
Love of the charming scene,
The sleeping, dew-wet trees and flowers —
The slopes of softest green!

He let me pass: in shade and light
I went my silent way,
And cannot choose which is most fair —
The place by night or day.

But, evermore, through life with me
Remain two pictures bright —
The road awakening in the Dawn,
And dewed and hushed by Night.

Camden

OF thee a pleasing vision,
In my waking dreams I see,
Shaded by thy stately elms,
Fanned by breezes from the sea.

Have you seen my lovely village
Where the ocean breezes blow?
Towers Mount Battie high above it,
Smiles Penobscot down below.

Ah, my Camden! lovely Camden!
With her rivers and her rills,
With her glorious lakes and mountains,
With her valleys and her hills.

With her sea-shore and her forests,
With her pure, health-giving air,
With her mansions, tall and stately,
With her cottage homes so fair.

Would you hang a charming picture,
Ne'er to fade, on mem'ry's wall?

Climb Mount Battie as the shadows,
Lengthening, toward the eastward fall.

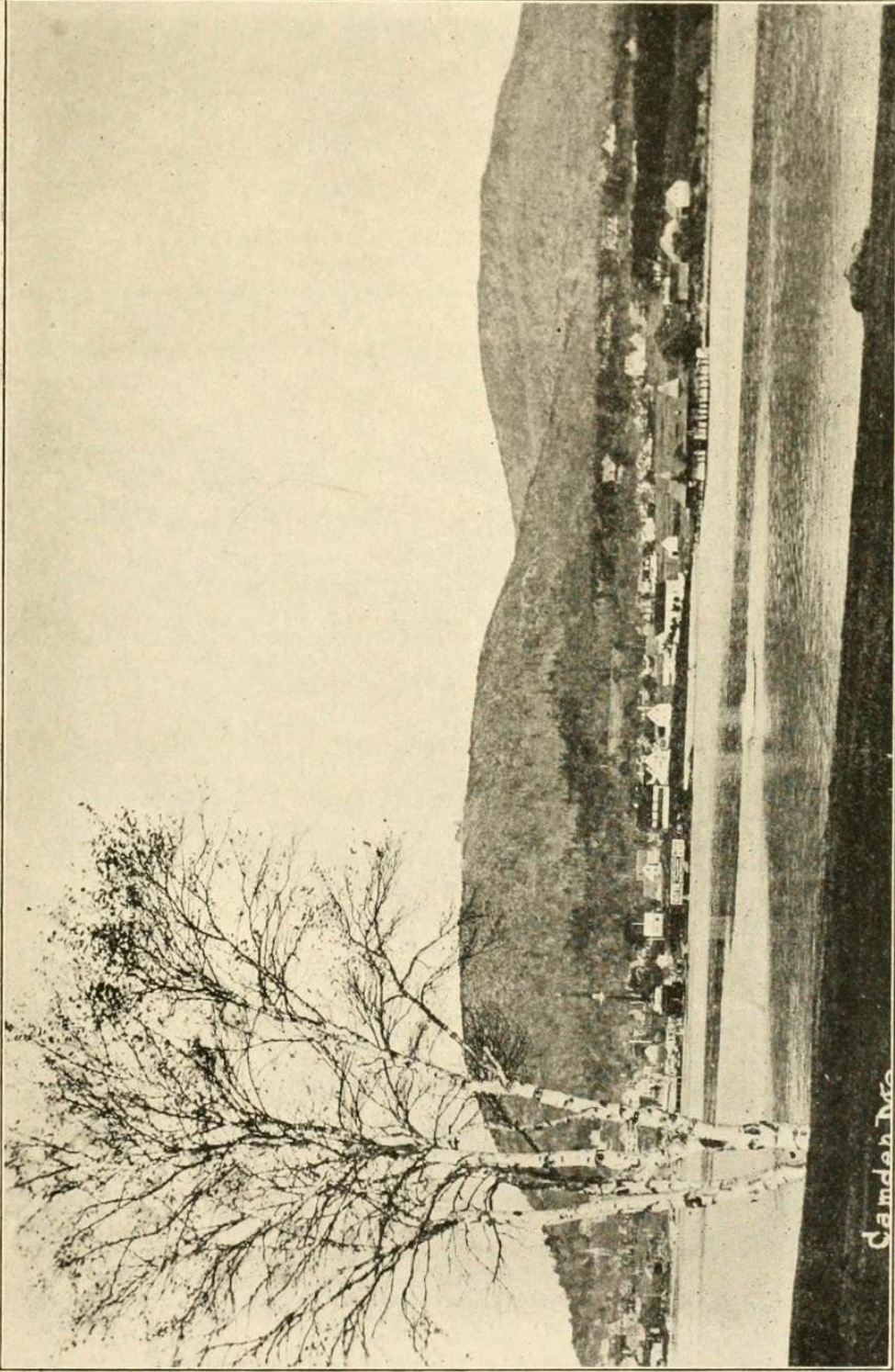
O'er the broad expanse before you,
From the stately mountain's crest,
Watch the lovely summer sunset
Crimson all the distant west.

Toward the east, the far off islands —
As you turn you from the west —
In the sunset gleam like jewels
On Penobscot's peaceful breast.

Slowly, with reluctant footsteps
As you down the mountain go,
Through the gathering shades of evening,
Watch the changing scene below.

Countless lights, as twilight deepens,
Change the town, from where you stand,
To a garden lit by fireflies,
To a scene in fairyland.

Oft to me come pleasing visions,
In my waking dreams of thee,
Shaded by thy stately elms,
Fanned by breezes from the sea.



*Have you seen my lovely village,
Where the ocean breezes blow?
Towers Mount Battie high above it,
Smiles Penobscot down below.*

The Pines of Mount Battie

DEPART from my soul every shadow of care;
What might vex or alarm in this hour has no
share,

For a garden of beauty before me is spread
And the pines of Mount Battie are over my head.

Shade of Burns, come away from your home in the skies,
O'er this scene flash the glance of your glorious eyes—
To the songs of the birds all around us, O list!
Do the wild birds of Scotland make music like this?

So sweetly and oft have its beauties been told,
That the land that you sang of I long to behold!
Are our hills and our valleys less lofty or fair
Than the hills and the vales of the Doon and the Ayr?

Are your wild mountain streams that go foaming along
More clear in their waters, more sweet in their song?
Can your heather, that decks every hillside and plain,
Compare with our beautiful wild rose of Maine?

Like the women who dwell in the land of your youth,
Our women have beauty, refinement and truth;

Our men — in no land do the skies bend above
Hearts braver in battle or truer in love.

From the distant Hope Mountains, in purple and gray,
To the green Heights of Melvin, o'erlooking the bay —
From Megunticook, towering in grandeur and pride,
To where the fair Georges sweeps down to the tide —

Like to Eden of old is the land that we view!
And life and its pleasures as sweet and as new
To the lovers who roam all the pathways and bowers:
Is your country, O tell me! more lovely than ours?

Are the white sails aflash on your waters to-day
More bright than the sails that are skimming yon bay?
O, say, while Penobscot enchants and beguiles,
If bluer your waters or greener your isles?

It is worth all life's woe to be living to-day!
Land of sunshine and singing and blossoming spray;
While below, and above, and around are the trees
Whose healing and strength is afloat on the breeze.

I would rest: then depart, every shadow of care!
What might vex or alarm in this hour has no share,
For the sky is above me, the moss is my bed,
And the pines of Mount Battie are over my head!

A Day of Foy

DO you mind you, my friend, of that dearest of days
That we passed in that bowl of the gods?
That wonderful bowl, hollowed out in the earth,
From the hills and the boulders and clods!

Do you mind how the lake was as blue as the sky?
And the sky was as blue as the lake?
And our light boat obeying the sweep of the oar,
Trailing out on that mirror its wake?

To me, we were leaving Lake City behind
For a cruise on an unexplored sea;
But to you, every spot was familiar and dear,
And you joyed to share them with me.

How rich was the green and the brown of the hills,
By the sun touched in places to gold;
And in grandeur and pride as the monarch of all,
Rose Megunticook, rugged and bold.

Do you mind how we landed and walked 'neath the
pines?

And the carpet, how soft to our feet?

Where the dear, friendly trees form a green tent above,
Reaching out till each other they meet.

There was no need of speech, as together we stood,
And harkened in silent delight

To the long, strong, clear bird-notes that came to our
ears,

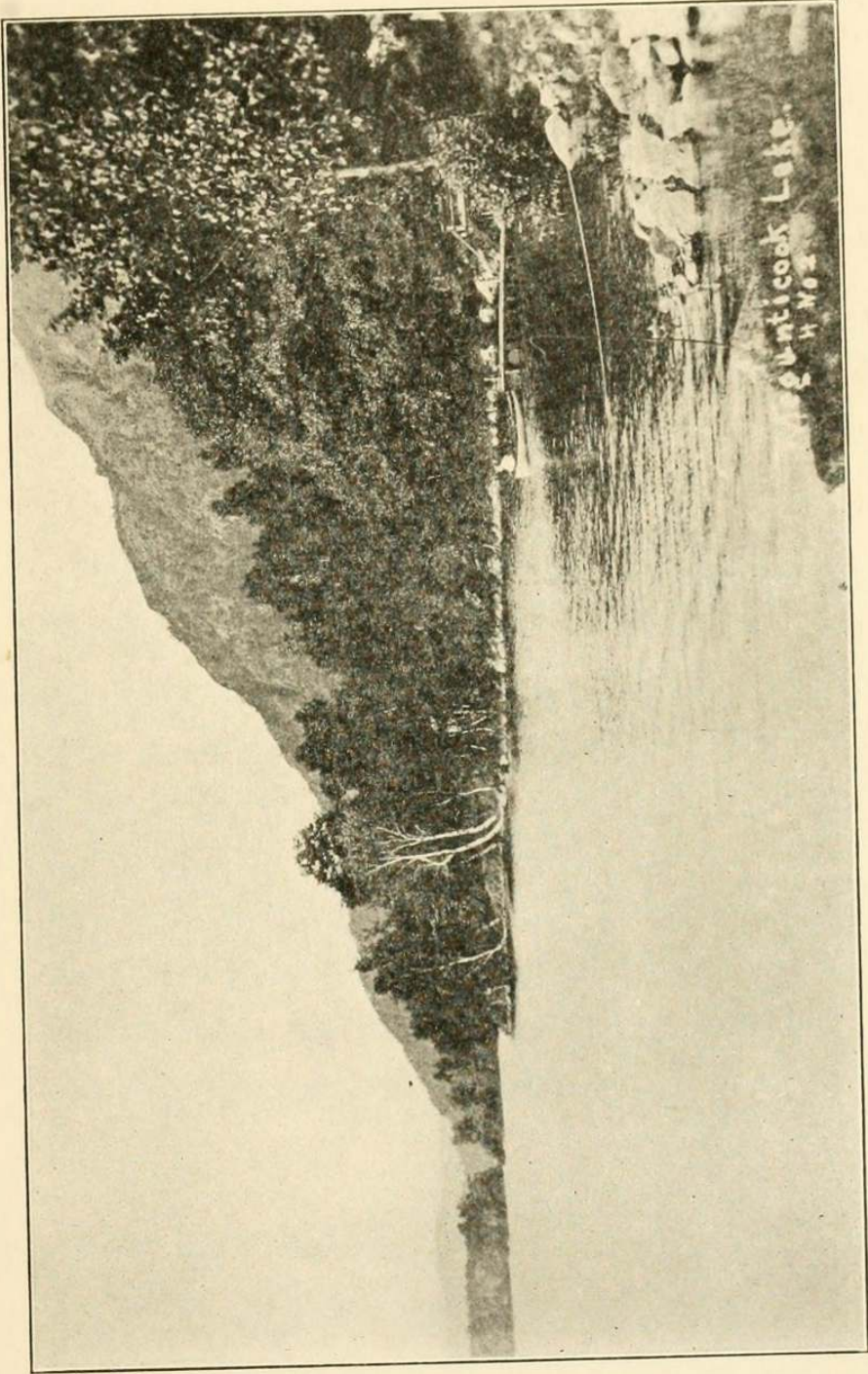
From the sweet singer hid from our sight.

When the heavenly waters and hills greet my view,

And the songbirds their melodies wake,

If there's one scene of earth that my spirit recalls,

It will be that glad day at the lake.



Megunticook Lake

Harbor Gem

O THE south wind blew, and the first pale stars
Thro' the gloaming softly shone,
And the road wound down to the sleeping bay,
Where I walked last night alone.

But the air grew chill as the darkness fell,
And a mist was on the sea;
And I no more trod that road alone,
For a warrior walked with me.

I saw his plume in the south wind wave,
And his eyes in the starlight shine,
And his folded arms on his mighty breast,
As his feet kept pace with mine.

“O, Chieftain out of the buried past,
What do you seek, I pray?
Why come from your spirit home to-night
To walk by the sleeping bay?”

In the gentle tones of the warrior's voice
The light waves seemed to sigh;
And the soft south wind in the trees grew still
As it hushed for his reply:

“Dear unto your heart is nature,
O my sister! dear to you
Are my people, Nature's children,
Therefore, I can speak to you.

“I am Abwah; and I dwelt here
Where the waters ebb and flow;
I was chief of the Penobscots,
Many, many moons ago.

“White men named and claimed my birthright,
Every point and cove and hill.
It is well — I do not censure;
Let my brothers have their will.

“Dear to me is all this region,
From the mountains to the tide:
'Twas my home — these hills and forests,
Where my people lived and died!

“Still I love, and oft I visit,
All these scenes beloved of old,
Peaceful valley, gentle river,
Lofty cliff and mountain bold.

“But more dear than any other
Is one little spot of land —
Harbor Gem! My little island —
You can see from where you stand.

“On its shore I built my wigwam!
On its shore my grave is made!
For I loved the rushing tempest —
Loved the waves that softly played.

“And I want to reach your people,
Will you tell them that I came?
Tell them Abwah’s little island
Wishes for its own sweet name.

“They will listen. Say that Abwah
Grieves upon their lips to hear
Any but the name he gave it —
Name unto him still so dear!

“On his heart there is a shadow:
They can lift it. Tell them, then,
From me, 'tis not Negro Island, —
It is Abwah's Harbor Gem!”

Then he paled away from my eager sight,
While the light waves seemed to moan;
And the road that winds to the sleeping bay
I once more walked alone.

But the stars shone bright, and the south wind blew,
And the mist wreath rose again;
And I caught the flash of his white canoe
As he crossed to his Harbor Gem.

Penobscot Pines

NEVERMORE to fondly linger, where the pine's
dark shadow lies!

Nevermore to meet the glances of those tender
loving eyes!

Nothing now can give her pleasure, and the day is
like the night,

Since her gallant soldier lover passed forever from
her sight.

With the weary marches ended, and all pain and
suffering o'er,

He is resting in a foreign land to-day;

Broken-hearted waits his loved one, for the step
that comes no more

'Neath the pines beside the blue Penobscot Bay.

Soon those eyes will cease from weeping, and that
heart no longer bleed;

And for strength to bear her sorrow those pale lips
no more will plead!

And the pines 'neath which she parted with her
soldier, true and brave,

O'er her peaceful place of resting soon their dusky
plumes will wave.

Memories

O SWEET are the notes of the wild birds to-day
In the trees that grow close by my door,
And the wings of their song bear my spirit away
To the woods cool and deep, where the laughing
 brooks play
And the pines whisper soft evermore.

With the wide-spreading branches above me, I lie
On the moss-covered bank, cool and green;
And the tree-tops are veiling the blue, shining sky,
The wild flowers are sweet, and the brook flashes by —
This is like unto heaven, I ween!

She comes — she for whom I have sorrowed so long —
In her youth and her beauty and grace;
And her glorious voice, as she lifts it in song,
Is the soul of sweet sound! and so pure and so strong
That the forest-birds draw near the place.

And the smile on her lips is as sweet as of old
As her beautiful eyes meet my own;

And the light turns the brown of her tresses to gold,
And as dainty and soft is her gown in each fold
As the clouds by the summer wind blown!

I but dream of the past: she so dear and so fair
Was called to the mansions above —
For the angels of goodness whose dwellings are there
Wished to learn of that spirit, so lovely and rare,
New lessons of pity and love.



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