

## **The Project Gutenberg eBook of Afterwhiles, by James Whitcomb Riley**

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### TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE:

Most of this etext was made with a "Top Scan" text scanner, with a bit of correcting here and there. Mr. Riley does spell pretty=purty and such things and have been left as printed, including the first poem in this book listed as "Proem" on both the contents page and the page headers, even though in later editions this poem is simply called "Afterwhiles." In "The South Wind and the Sun" the line is 'Laughed out in every look.' while in later versions it has the word 'nook', replacing 'look.' The poem "Old Aunt Mary's" is later retitled "Out To Old Aunt Mary's" and later enlarged by 13 verses. The "In Dialect" section has the ' to replace a letter that he left out, to make the word sound a certain way, including words like sure-enuff he writes as sho'-nuff, or He'pless as helpless and ect. This etext is based on the 1898 edition Published by The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis Publishers. "Teary Eyes" Anderson\*\*\*

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AFTERWHILES \*\*\*

# **AFTERWHILES**

**By James Whitcomb Riley**

**DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER ELIZABETH**

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## **PROEM (AKA "Afterwhiles")**

Where are they— the Afterwhiles—  
Luring us the lengthening miles

Of our lives? Where is the dawn  
With the dew across the lawn  
Stroked with eager feet the far  
Way the hills and valleys are?  
Were the sun that smites the frown  
Of the eastward-gazer down?  
Where the rifted wreaths of mist  
O'er us, tinged with amethyst,  
Round the mountain's steep defiles?  
Where are the afterwhiles?

Afterwhile— and we will go  
Thither, yon, and too and fro—  
From the stifling city streets  
To the country's cool retreats—  
From the riot to the rest  
Were hearts beat the placidest:  
Afterwhile, and we will fall  
Under breezy trees, and loll  
In the shade, with thirsty sight  
Drinking deep the blue delight  
Of the skies that will beguile  
Us as children— afterwhile.

Afterwhile— and one intends  
To be gentler to his friends—,  
To walk with them, in the hush  
Of still evenings, o'er the plush  
Of home-leading fields, and stand  
Long at parting, hand in hand:  
One, in time, will joy to take  
New resolves for some one's sake,  
And wear then the look that lies  
Clear and pure in other eyes—  
We will soothe and reconcile  
His own conscience— afterwhile.

Afterwhile— we have in view  
A far scene to journey to—,  
Where the old home is, and where  
The old mother waits us there,  
Peering, as the time grows late,  
Down the old path to the gate—.  
How we'll click the latch that locks  
In the pinks and hollyhocks,  
And leap up the path once more  
Where she waits us at the door—!  
How we'll greet the dear old smile,  
And the warm tears— afterwhile!

Ah, the endless afterwhiles—!  
Leagues on leagues, and miles on miles,  
In distance far withdrawn,  
Stretching on, and on, and on,  
Till the fancy is footsore  
And faints in the dust before  
The last milestone's granite face,  
Hacked with: Here Beginneth Space.  
O far glimmering worlds and wings,  
Mystic smiles and beckonings,  
Lead us through the shadowy aisles  
Out into the afterwhiles.

---

***Herr Weiser***

Herr Weiser—! Three-score-years-and-ten—,

A hale white rose of his country-men,  
Transplanted here in the Hoosier loam,  
And blossomy as his German home—  
As blossomy and as pure and sweet  
As the cool green glen of his calm retreat,  
Far withdrawn from the noisy town  
Where trade goes clamoring up and down,  
Whose fret and fever, and stress and strife,  
May not trouble his tranquil life!

Breath of rest, what a balmy gust—!  
Quite of the city's heat and dust,  
Jostling down by the winding road,  
Through the orchard ways of his quaint abode—. .  
Tether the horse, as we onward fare  
Under the pear-trees trailing there,  
And thumping the wood bridge at night  
With lumps of ripeness and lush delight,  
Till the stream, as it maunders on till dawn,  
Is powdered and pelted and smiled upon.

Herr Weiser, with his wholesome face,  
And the gentle blue of his eyes, and grace  
Of unassuming honesty,  
Be there to welcome you and me!  
And what though the toil of the farm be stopped  
And the tireless plans of the place be dropped,  
While the prayerful master's knees are set  
In beds of pansy and mignonette  
And lily and aster and columbine,  
Offered in love, as yours and mine—?

What, but a blessing of kindly thought,  
Sweet as the breath of forget-me-not—!  
What, but a spirit of lustrous love  
White as the aster he bends above—!  
What, but an odorous memory  
Of the dear old man, made known to me  
In days demanding a help like his—,  
As sweet as the life of the lily is—  
As sweet as the soul of a babe, bloom-wise  
Born of a lily in paradise.

---

## ***The Beautiful City***

The Beautiful City! Forever  
Its rapturous praises resound;  
We fain would behold it— but never  
A glimpse of its dory is found:  
We slacken our lips at the tender  
White breasts of our mothers to hear  
Of its marvellous beauty and splendor—;  
We see— but the gleam of a tear!

Yet never the story may tire us—  
First graven in symbols of stone—  
Rewritten on scrolls of papyrus  
And parchment, and scattered and blown  
By the winds of the tongues of all nations,  
Like a litter of leaves wildly whirled  
Down the rack of a hundred translations,  
From the earliest lisp of the world.

We compass the earth and the ocean,  
From the Orient's uttermost light,  
To where the last ripple in motion

Lips hem of the skirt of the night—,  
But the Beautiful City evades us—  
No spire of it glints in the sun—  
No glad-bannered battlement shades us  
When all our Journey is done.

Where lies it? We question and listen;  
We lean from the mountain, or mast,  
And see but dull earth, or the glisten  
Of seas inconceivably vast:  
The dust of the one blurs our vision,  
The glare of the other our brain,  
Nor city nor island Elysian  
In all of the land or the main!

We kneel in dim fanes where the thunders  
Of organs tumultuous roll,  
And the longing heart listens and wonders,  
And the eyes look aloft from the soul:  
But the chanson grows fainter and fainter,  
Swoons wholly away and is dead;  
AND our eyes only reach where the painter  
Has dabbled a saint overhead.

The Beautiful City! O mortal,  
Fare hopefully on in thy quest,  
Pass down through the green grassy portal  
That leads to the Valley of Rest;  
There first passed the One who, in pity  
Of all thy great yearning, awaits  
To point out The Beautiful City,  
And loosen the trump at the gates.

---

## ***Lockerbie Street***

Such a dear little street it is, nestled away  
From the noise of the city and heat of the day,  
In cool shady coverts of whispering trees,  
With their leaves lifted up to shake hands with the breeze  
Which in all its wide wanderings never may meet  
With a resting-place fairer than Lockerbie street!

There is such a relief, from the clangor and din  
Of the heart of the town, to go loitering in  
Through the dim, narrow walks, with the sheltering shade  
Of the trees waving over the long promenade,  
And littering lightly the ways of our feet  
With the gold of the sunshine of Lockerbie street.

And the nights that come down the dark pathways of dusk,  
With the stars in their tresses, and odors of musk  
In their moon-woven raiments, bespangled with dews,  
And looped up with lilies for lovers to use  
In the songs that they sing to the tinkle and beat  
Of their sweet serenadings through Lockerbie street.

O my Lockerbie street! You are fair to be seen—  
Be it noon of the day, or the rare and serene  
Afternoon of the night— you are one to my heart,  
And I love you above all the phrases of art,  
For no language could frame and no lips could repeat  
My rhyme-haunted raptures of Lockerbie street.

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## *Das Krist Kindel*

I had fed the fire and stirred it, till the sparkles in delight  
Snapped their saucy little fingers at the chill December night;  
And in dressing-gown and slippers, I had tilted back "my throne—"  
The old split-bottomed rocker— and was musing all alone.

I could hear the hungry Winter prowling round the outer door,  
And the tread of muffled footsteps on the white piazza floor;  
But the sounds came to me only as the murmur of a stream  
That mingled with the current of a lazy-flowing dream.

Like a fragrant incense rising, curled the smoke of my cigar,  
With the lamplight gleaming through it like a mist-enfolded star—;  
And as I gazed, the vapor like a curtain rolled away,  
With a sound of bells that tinkled, and the clatter of a sleigh.

And in a vision, painted like a picture in the air,  
I saw the elfish figure, of a man with frosty hair—  
A quaint old man that chuckled with a laugh as he appeared,  
And with ruddy cheeks like embers in the ashes of his beard.

He poised himself grotesquely, in an attitude of mirth,  
On a damask-covered hassock that was sitting on the hearth;  
And at a magic signal of his stubbly little thumb,  
I saw the fireplace changing to a bright proscenium.

And looking there, I marvelled as I saw a mimic stage  
Alive with little actors of a very tender age;  
And some so very tiny that they tottered as they walked,  
And lisped and purred and gurgled like the brooklets, when they talked.

And their faces were like lilies, and their eyes like purest dew,  
And their tresses like the shadows that the shine is woven through;  
And they each had little burdens, and a little tale to tell  
Of fairy lore, and giants, and delights delectable.

And they mixed and intermingled, weaving melody with joy,  
Till the magic circle clustered round a blooming baby-boy;  
And they threw aside their treasures in an ecstasy of glee,  
And bent, with dazzled faces and with parted lips, to see.

'Twas a wondrous little fellow, with a dainty double-chin  
And chubby-cheeks, and dimples for the smiles to blossom in;  
And he looked as ripe and rosy, on his bed of straw and reeds,  
As a mellow little pippin that had tumbled in the weeds.

And I saw the happy mother, and a group surrounding her  
That knelt with costly presents of frankincense and myrrh;  
And I thrilled with awe and wonder, as a murmur on the air  
Came drifting o'er the hearing in a melody of prayer—:

By the splendor in the heavens, and the hush upon the sea,  
And the majesty of silence reigning over Galilee,  
We feel Thy kingly presence, and we humbly bow the knee  
And lift our hearts and voices in gratefulness to Thee.

Thy messenger has spoken, and our doubts have fled and gone  
As the dark and spectral shadows of the night before the dawn;  
And in kindly shelter of the light around us drawn,  
We would nestle down forever in the breast we lean upon.

You have given us a shepherd— You have given us a guide,  
And the light of Heaven grew dimmer when You sent him from Your side—,  
But he comes to lead Thy children where the gates will open wide  
To welcome his returning when his works are glorified.

By the splendor in the heavens, and the hush upon the sea,  
And the majesty of silence reigning over Galilee—,  
We feel Thy kingly presence, and we humbly bow the knee

And lift our hearts and voices in gratefulness to Thee.

Then the vision, slowly fading, with the words of the refrain,  
Fell swooning in the moonlight through the frosty window-pane;  
And I heard the clock proclaiming, like an eager sentinel  
Who brings the world good tidings—, "It is Christmas— all is well!"

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### ***Anselmo***

Years did I vainly seek the good Lord's grace—,  
Prayed, fasted, and did penance dire and dread;  
Did kneel, with bleeding knees and rainy face,  
And mouth the dust, with ashes on my head;  
Yea, still with knotted scourge the flesh I flayed,  
Rent fresh the wounds, and moaned and shrieked insanely;  
And froth oozed with the pleadings that I made,  
And yet I prayed on vainly, vainly, vainly!

A time, from out of swoon I lifted eye,  
To find a wretched outcast, gray and grim,  
Bathing my brow, with many a pitying sigh,  
And I did pray God's grace might rest on him—.  
Then, lo! A gentle voice fell on mine ears—  
"Thou shalt not sob in suppliance hereafter;  
Take up thy prayers and wring them dry of tears,  
And lift them, white and pure with love and laughter!"

So is it now for all men else I pray;  
So is it I am blest and glad always.

---

### ***A Home-Made Fairy Tale***

Bud, come here to your uncle a spell,  
And I'll tell you something you mustn't tell—  
For it's a secret and shore-'nuf true,  
And maybe I oughtn't to tell it to you—!  
But out in the garden, under the shade  
Of the apple-trees, where we romped and played  
Till the moon was up, and you thought I'd gone  
Fast asleep—, That was all put on!  
For I was a-watchin' something queer  
Goin' on there in the grass, my dear—!  
'Way down deep in it, there I see  
A little dude-Fairy who winked at me,  
And snapped his fingers, and laughed as low  
And fine as the whine of a mus-kee-to!  
I kept still— watchin' him closer— and  
I noticed a little guitar in his hand,  
Which he leant 'ginst a little dead bee— and laid  
His cigarette down on a clean grass-blade,  
And then climbed up on the shell of a snail—  
Carefully dusting his swallowtail—  
And pulling up, by a waxed web-thread,  
This little guitar, you remember. I said!  
And there he trinkled and trilled a tune—,  
"My Love, so Fair, Tans in the Moon!"  
Till presently, out of the clover-top  
He seemed to be singing to, came k'pop!



The purtiest, daintiest Fairy face  
In all this world, or any place!  
Then the little ser'nader waved his hand,  
As much as to say, "We'll excuse you!" and  
I heard, as I squinted my eyelids to,  
A kiss like the drip of a drop of dew!

---

## ***The South Wind and the Sun***

O The South Wind and the Sun!  
How each loved the other one  
Full of fancy— full folly—  
Full of jollity and fun!  
How they romped and ran about,  
Like two boys when school is out,  
With glowing face, and lispng lip,  
Low laugh, and lifted shout!

And the South Wind— he was dressed  
With a ribbon round his breast  
That floated, flapped and fluttered  
In a riotous unrest,  
And a drapery of mist  
From the shoulder and the wrist  
Flowing backward with the motion  
Of the waving hand he kissed.

And the Sun had on a crown  
Wrought of gilded thistle-down,  
And a scarf of velvet vapor,  
And a ravelled-rainbow gown;  
And his tinsel-tangled hair,  
Tossed and lost upon the air,  
Was glossier and flossier  
Than any anywhere.

And the South Wind's eyes were two  
Little dancing drops of dew,  
As he puffed his cheeks, and pursed his lips,  
And blew and blew and blew!  
And the Sun's— like diamond-stone,  
Brighter yet than ever known,  
As he knit his brows and held his breath,  
And shone and shone and shone!

And this pair of merry fays  
Wandered through the summer days;  
Arm-in-arm they went together  
Over heights of morning haze—  
Over slanting slopes of lawn  
They went on and on and on,  
Where the daisies looked like star-tracks  
Trailing up and down the dawn.

And where'er they found the top  
Of a wheat-stalk droop and lop  
They chucked it underneath the chin  
And praised the lavish crop,  
Till it lifted with the pride  
Of the heads it grew beside,  
And then the South Wind and the Sun  
Went onward satisfied.

Over meadow-lands they tripped,  
Where the dandelions dipped  
In crimson foam of clover-bloom,

And dripped and dripped and dripped;  
And they clinched the bumble-stings,  
Gauming honey on their wings,  
And bundling them in lily-bells,  
With maudlin murmurings.

And the humming-bird that hung  
Like a jewel up among  
The tilted honeysuckle-horns,  
They mesmerized, and swung  
In the palpitating air,  
Drowsed with odors strange and rare,  
And with whispered laughter, slipped away,  
And left him hanging there.

And they braided blades of grass  
Where the truant had to pass;  
And they wriggled through the rushes  
And the reeds of the morass,  
Where they danced, in rapture sweet,  
O'er the leaves that laid a street  
Of undulant mosaic for  
The touches of their feet.

By the brook with mossy brink  
Where the cattle came to drink.  
They trilled and piped and whistled  
With the thrush and bobolink,  
Till the kine in listless pause,  
Switched their tails in mute applause,  
With lifted heads and dreamy eyes,  
And bubble-dripping jaws.

And where the melons grew,  
Streaked with yellow, green and blue  
These jolly sprites went wandering  
Through spangled paths of dew;  
And the melons, here and there,  
They made love to, everywhere  
Turning their pink souls to crimson  
With caresses fond and fair.

Over orchard walls they went,  
Where the fruited boughs were bent  
Till they brushed the sward beneath them  
Where the shine and shadow blent;  
And the great green pear they shook  
Till the fallow hue forsook  
Its features, and the gleam of gold  
Laughed out in every look.

And they stroked the downy cheek  
Of the peach, and smoothed it sleek,  
And flushed it into splendor;  
And with many an elfish freak,  
Gave the russet's rust a wipe—  
Prankt the rambo with a stripe,  
And the wine-sap blushed its reddest  
As they spanked the pippins ripe.

Through the woven ambuscade  
That the twining vines had made,  
They found the grapes, in clusters,  
Drinking up the shine and shade—  
Plumpt like tiny skins of wine,  
With a vintage so divine  
That the tongue of fancy tingled  
With the tang of muscadine.

And the golden-banded bees,  
Droning o'er the flowery leas,  
They bridled, reigned, and rode away  
Across the fragrant breeze,  
Till in hollow oak and elm  
They had groomed and stabled them

In waxen stalls oozed with dews  
Of rose and lily-stem.

Where the dusty highway leads,  
High above the wayside weeds  
They sowed the air with butterflies  
Like blooming flower-seeds,  
Till the dull grasshopper sprung  
Half a man's height up, and hung  
Tranced in the heat, with whirring wings,  
And sung and sung and sung!

And they loitered, hand in hand,  
Where the snipe along the sand  
Of the river ran to meet them  
As the ripple meets the land,  
Till the dragon-fly, in light  
Gauzy armor, burnished bright,  
Came tilting down the waters  
In a wild, bewildered flight.

And they heard the killdee's call,  
And afar, the waterfall,  
But the rustle of a falling leaf  
They heard above it all;  
And the trailing willow crept  
Deeper in the tide that swept  
The leafy shallop to the shore,  
And wept and wept and wept!

And the fairy vessel veered  
From its moorings— tacked and steered  
For the centre of the current  
Sailed away and disappeared:  
And the burthen that it bore  
From the long-enchanted shore—  
"Alas! The South Wind and the Sun!"  
I murmur evermore.

For the South Wind and the Sun,  
Each so loves the other one,  
For all his jolly folly  
And frivolity and fun,  
That our love for them they weigh  
As their fickle fancies may,  
And when at last we love them most,  
They laugh and sail away.

---

## ***The Lost Kiss***

I put by the half-written poem,  
While the pen, idly trailed in my hand,  
Writes on—, "Had I words to complete it,  
Who'd read it, or who'd understand?"  
But the little bare feet on the stairway,  
And the faint, smothered laugh in the hall,  
And the eerie-low lisp on the silence,  
Cry up to me over it all.

So I gather it up— where was broken  
The tear-faded thread of my theme,  
Telling how, as one night I sat writing,  
A fairy broke in on my dream,  
A little inquisitive fairy—  
My own little girl, with the gold  
Of the sun in her hair, and the dewy

Blue eyes of the fairies of old.

'Twas the dear little girl that I scolded—  
"For was it a moment like this,"  
I said, "when she knew I was busy,  
To come romping in for a kiss—?  
Come rowdying up from her mother,  
And clamoring there at my knee  
For 'One 'ittle kiss for my dolly,  
And one 'ittle uzzer for me!"

God pity, the heart that repelled her,  
And the cold hand that turned her away,  
And take, from the lips that denied her,  
This answerless prayer of to-day!  
Take Lord, from my mem'ry forever  
That pitiful sob of despair,  
And the patter and trip of the little bare feet,  
And the one piercing cry on the stair!

I put by the half-written poem,  
While the pen, idly trailed in my hand  
Writes on—, "Had I words to complete it  
Who'd read it, or who'd understand?"  
But the little bare feet on the stairway,  
And the faint, smothered laugh in the hall,  
And the eerie-low lisp on the silence,  
Cry up to me over it all.

---

## ***The Sphinx***

I know all about the Sphinx—  
I know even what she thinks,  
Staring with her stony eyes  
Up forever at the skies.

For last night I dreamed that she  
Told me all the mystery—  
Why for aeons mute she sat—:  
She was just cut out for that!

---

## ***If I knew What Poets Know***

If I knew what poets know,  
Would I write a rhyme  
Of the buds that never blow  
In the summer-time ?  
Would I sing of golden seeds  
Springing up in ironweeds?  
And of raindrops turned to snow,  
If I knew what poets know?

Did I know what poets do,  
Would I sing a song  
Sadder than the pigeon's coo  
When the days are long?  
Where I found a heart in pain,  
I would make it glad again;

And the false should be the true,  
Did I know what poets do.

If I knew what poets know,  
I would find a theme  
Sweeter than the placid flow  
Of the fairest dream:  
I would sing of love that lives  
On the errors it forgives;  
And the world would better grow  
If I knew what poets know.

---

### *Ike Walton's Prayer*

I crave, dear Lord,  
No boundless hoard  
Of gold and gear,  
Nor jewels fine,  
Nor lands, nor kine,  
Nor treasure-heaps of anything—.  
Let but a little hut be mine  
Where at the hearthstone I may hear  
The cricket sing,  
And have the shine  
Of one glad woman's eyes to make,  
For my poor sake,  
Our simple home a place divine—;  
Just the wee cot— the cricket's chirr—  
Love and the smiling face of her.

I pray not for  
Great riches, nor  
For vast estates and castle-halls—,  
Give me to hear the bare footfalls  
Of children o'er  
An oaken floor  
New-rinsed with sunshine, or bespread  
With but the tiny coverlet  
And pillow for the baby's head;  
And pray Thou, may  
The door stand open and the day  
Send ever in a gentle breeze,  
With fragrance from the locust-trees,  
And drowsy moan of doves, and blur  
Of robin-chirps, and drone of bees,  
With after-hushes of the stir  
Of intermingling sounds, and then  
The good-wife and the smile of her  
Filling the silences again—  
The cricket's call  
And the wee cot,  
Dear Lord of all,  
Deny me not!

I pray not that  
Men tremble at  
My power of place  
And lordly sway—,  
I only pray for simple grace  
To look my neighbor in the face  
Full honestly from day to day—  
Yield me his horny palm to hold.  
And I'll not pray  
For gold—;  
The tanned face, garlanded with mirth,  
It hath the kingliest smile on earth;

The swart brow, diamonded with sweat,  
Hath never need of coronet.  
And so I reach,  
Dear Lord, to Thee,  
And do beseech  
Thou givest me  
The wee cot, and the cricket's chirr,  
Love and the glad sweet face of her!

---

### ***A Rough Sketch***

I caught, for a second, across the crowd—  
Just for a second, and barely that—  
A face, pox-pitted and evil-browed,  
Hid in the shade of a slouch-rim'd hat—  
With small gray eyes, of a look as keen  
As the long, sharp nose that grew between.

And I said: 'Tis a sketch of Nature's own,  
Drawn i' the dark o' the moon, I swear,  
On a tatter of Fate that the winds have blown  
Hither and thither and everywhere—  
With its keen little sinister eyes of gray,  
And nose like the beak of a bird of prey!

---

### ***Our Kind of a Man***

1

The kind of a man for you and me!  
He faces the world unflinchingly,  
And smites, as long as the wrong resists,  
With a knuckled faith and force like fists:  
He lives the life he is preaching of,  
And loves where most is the need of love;  
His voice is clear to the deaf man's ears,  
And his face sublime through the blind man's tears;  
The light shines out where the clouds were dim,  
And the widow's prayer goes up for him;  
The latch is clicked at the hovel door  
And the sick man sees the sun once more,  
And out o'er the barren fields he sees  
Springing blossoms and waving trees,  
Feeling as only the dying may,  
That God's own servant has come that way,  
Smoothing the path as it still winds on  
Through the golden gate where his loved have gone.

2

The kind of a man for me and you!  
However little of worth we do  
He credits full, and abides in trust  
That time will teach us how more is just.  
He walks abroad, and he meets all kinds  
Of querulous and uneasy minds,  
And sympathizing, he shares the pain  
Of the doubts that rack us, heart and brain;  
And knowing this, as we grasp his hand  
We are surely coming to understand!

He looks on sin with pitying eyes—  
E'en as the Lord, since Paradise—,  
Else, should we read, Though our sins should glow  
As scarlet, they shall be white as snow—?  
And feeling still, with a grief half glad,  
That the bad are as good as the good are bad,  
He strikes straight out for the Right— and he  
Is the kind of a man for you and me!

---

### ***The Harper***

Like a drift of faded blossoms  
Caught in a slanting rain,  
His fingers glimpsed down the strings of his harp  
In a tremulous refrain:

Patter and tinkle, and drip and drip!  
Ah! But the chords were rainy sweet!  
And I closed my eyes and I bit my lip,  
As he played there in the street.

Patter, and drip, and tinkle!  
And there was the little bed  
In the corner of the garret,  
And the rafters overhead!

And there was the little window—  
Tinkle, and drip, and drip—!  
The rain above, and a mother's love,  
And God's companionship!

---

### ***Old Aunt Mary's***

Wasn't it pleasant, O brother mine,  
In those old days of the lost sunshine  
Of youth— when the Saturday's chores were through,  
And the "Sunday's wood" in the kitchen too,  
And we went visiting, "me and you,"  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's?

It all comes back so clear to-day!  
Though I am as bald as you are gray—  
Out by the barn-lot, and down the lane,  
We patter along in the dust again,  
As light as the tips of the drops of the rain,  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's!

We cross the pasture, and through the wood  
Where the old gray snag of the poplar stood,  
Where the hammering "red-heads" hopped awry,  
And the buzzard "raised" in the "clearing" sky  
And lolled and circled, as we went by  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's.

And then in the dust of the road again;  
And the teams we met, and the countrymen;  
And the long highway, with sunshine spread  
As thick as butter on country bread,

Our cares behind, and our hearts ahead  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's.

Why, I see her now in the open door,  
Where the little gourds grew up the sides and o'er  
The clapboard roof—! And her face— ah, me!  
Wasn't it good for a boy to see—  
And wasn't it good for a boy to be  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's?

The jelly— the Jam and the marmalade,  
And the cherry and quince "preserves" she made!  
And the sweet-sour pickles of peach and pear,  
With cinnamon in 'em, and all things rare—!  
And the more we ate was the more to spare,  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's!

And the old spring-house in the cool green gloom  
Of the willow-trees—, and the cooler room  
Where the swinging-shelves and the crocks were kept—  
Where the cream in a golden languor slept  
While the waters gurgled and laughed and wept—  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's.

And O my brother, so far away,  
This is to tell you she waits to-day  
To welcome us—: Aunt Mary fell  
Asleep this morning, whispering— "Tell  
The boys to come!" And all is well  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's.

---

## *Illileo*

Illileo, the moonlight seemed lost across the vales—  
The stars but strewed the azure as an armor's scattered scales;  
The airs of night were quiet as the breath of silken sails,  
And all your words were sweeter than the notes of nightingales.

Illileo Legardi, in the garden there alone,  
With your figure carved of fervor, as the Psyche carved of stone,  
There came to me no murmur of the fountain's undertone  
So mystically, musically mellow as your own.

You whispered low, Illileo— so low the leaves were mute,  
And the echoes faltered breathless in your voice's vain pursuit;  
And there died the distant dalliance of the serenader's lute:  
And I held you in my bosom as the husk may hold the fruit.

Illileo, I listened. I believed you. In my bliss,  
What were all the worlds above me since I found you thus in this—?  
Let them reeling reach to win me— even Heaven I would miss,  
Grasping earthward—! I would cling here, though I clung by just a kiss.

And blossoms should grow odorless— and lilies all aghast—  
And I said the stars should slacken in their paces through the vast,  
Ere yet my loyalty should fail enduring to the last—.  
So vowed I. It is written. It is changeless as the past.

Illileo Legardi, in the shade your palace throws  
Like a cowl about the singer at your gilded porticos,  
A moan goes with the music that may vex the high repose  
Of a heart that fades and crumbles as the crimson of a rose.

---



## *The King*

They rode right out of the morning sun—  
A glimmering, glittering cavalcade  
Of knights and ladies and every one  
In princely sheen arrayed;  
And the king of them all, O he rode ahead,  
With a helmet of gold, and a plume of red  
That spurted about in the breeze and bled  
In the bloom of the everglade.

And they rode high over the dewy lawn,  
With brave, glad banners of every hue  
That rolled in ripples, as they rode on  
In splendor, two and two;  
And the tinkling links of the golden reins  
Of the steeds they rode rang such refrains  
As the castanets in a dream of Spain's  
Intensest gold and blue.

And they rode and rode; and the steeds they neighed  
And pranced, and the sun on their glossy hides  
Flickered and lightened and glanced and played  
Like the moon on rippling tides;

And their manes were silken, and thick and strong,  
And their tails were flossy, and fetlock-long,  
And jostled in time to the teeming throng,  
And their knightly song besides.

Clank of scabbard and jingle of spur,  
And the fluttering sash of the queen went wild  
In the wind, and the proud king glanced at her  
As one at a wilful child—,  
And as knight and lady away they flew,  
And the banners flapped, and the falcon too,  
And the lances flashed and the bugle blew,  
He kissed his hand and smiled.

And then, like a slanting sunlit shower,  
The pageant glittered across the plain,  
And the turf spun back, and the wildweed flower  
Was only a crimson stain.  
And a dreamer's eyes they are downward cast,  
As he blends these words with the wailing blast:  
"It is the King of the Year rides past!"  
And Autumn is here again.

---

## *A Bride*

"O I am weary!" she sighed, as her billowy  
Hair she unloosed in a torrent of gold  
That rippled and fell o'er a figure as willowy,  
Graceful and fair as a goddess of old:  
Over her jewels she flung herself drearily,  
Crumpled the laces that snowed on her breast,  
Crushed with her fingers the lily that wearily  
Clung in her hair like a dove in its nest—.  
And naught but her shadowy form in the mirror  
To kneel in dumb agony down and weep near her!

"Weary—?" Of what? Could we fathom the mystery—?  
Lift up the lashes weighed down by her tears  
And wash with their dew one white face from her history,  
Set like a gem in the red rust of years?  
Nothing will rest her— unless he who died of her  
Strayed from his grave, and in place of the groom,  
Tipping her face, kneeling there by the side of her,  
Drained the old kiss to the dregs of his doom—.  
And naught but that shadowy form in the mirror  
To heel in dumb agony down and weep near her!

---

### ***The Dead Lover***

Time is so long when a man is dead!  
Some one sews; and the room is made  
Very clean; and the light is shed  
Soft through the window-shade.

Yesterday I thought: "I know  
Just how the bells will sound, and how  
The friends will talk, and the sermon go,  
And the hearse-horse bow and bow!"

This is to-day; and I have no thing  
To think of— nothing whatever to do  
But to hear the throb of the pulse of a wing  
That wants to fly back to you.

---

### ***A Song***

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear;  
There is ever a something sings always:  
There's the song of the lark when the skies are clear,  
And the song of the thrush when the skies are gray.  
The sunshine showers across the grain,  
And the bluebird trills in the orchard tree;  
And in and out, when the eaves dip rain,  
The swallows are twittering ceaselessly.

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,  
Be the skies above or dark or fair,  
There is ever a song that our hearts may hear—  
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear  
There is ever a song somewhere!

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,  
In the midnight black, or the mid-day blue:  
The robin pipes when the sun is here,  
And the cricket chirrup the whole night through.  
The buds may blow, and the fruit may grow,  
And the autumn leaves drop crisp and sear;  
But whether the sun, or the rain, or the snow,  
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear.

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,  
Be the skies above or dark or fair,  
There is ever a song that our hearts may hear—  
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear—

There is ever a song somewhere!

---

### ***When Bessie Died***

If from your own the dimpled hands had slipped,  
And ne'er would nestle in your palm again;  
If the white feet into the grave had tripped—"

When Bessie died—  
We braided the brown hair, and tied  
It just as her own little hands  
Had fastened back the silken strands  
A thousand times— the crimson bit  
Of ribbon woven into it  
That she had worn with childish pride—  
Smoothed down the dainty bow— and cried  
When Bessie died.

When Bessie died—  
We drew the nursery blinds aside,  
And as the morning in the room  
Burst like a primrose into bloom,  
Her pet canary's cage we hung  
Where she might hear him when he sung—  
And yet not any note he tried,  
Though she lay listening folded-eyed.

When Bessie died—  
We writhed in prayer unsatisfied:  
We begged of God, and He did smile  
In silence on us all the while;  
And we did see Him, through our tears,  
Enfolding that fair form of hers,  
She laughing back against His love  
The kisses had nothing of—  
And death to us He still denied,  
When Bessie died—  
When Bessie died.

---

### ***The Shower***

The landscape, like the awed face of a child,  
Grew curiously blurred; a hush of death  
Fell on the fields, and in the darkened wild  
The zephyr held its breath.

No wavering glamour-work of light and shade  
Dappled the shivering surface of the brook;  
The frightened ripples in their ambushade  
Of willows thrilled and shook.

The sullen day grew darker, and anon  
Dim flashes of pent anger lit the sky;  
With rumbling wheels of wrath came rolling on  
The storm's artillery.

The cloud above put on its blackest frown,  
And then, as with a vengeful cry of pain,

The lightning snatched it, ripped and flung it down  
In ravelled shreds of rain:

While I, transfigured by some wondrous art,  
Bowed with the thirsty lilies to the sod,  
My empty soul brimmed over, and my heart  
Drenched with the love of God.

---

### ***A Life Lesson***

There! Little girl; don't cry!  
They have broken your doll, I know;  
And your tea-set blue,  
And your play-house too,  
Are things of the long ago;  
But childish troubles will soon pass by—.  
There! Little girl; don't cry!

There! Little girl; don't cry!  
They have broken your slate, I know;  
And the glad, wild ways  
Of your school-girl days  
Are things of the long ago;  
But life and love will soon come by—.  
There! Little girl; don't cry!

There! Little girl; don't cry!  
They have broken your heart, I know;  
And the rainbow gleams  
Of your youthful dreams  
Are things of the long ago;  
But heaven holds all for which you sigh—.  
There! Little girl; don't cry!

---

### ***A Scrawl***

I want to sing something— but this is all—  
I try and I try, but the rhymes are dull  
As though they were damp, and the echoes fall  
Limp and unlovable.

Words will not say what I yearn to say—  
They will not walk as I want them to,  
But they stumble and fall in the path of the way  
Of my telling my love for you.

Simply take what the scrawl is worth—  
Knowing I love you as sun the sod  
On the ripening side of the great round earth  
That swings in the smile of God.

---

## *Away*

I cannot say, and I will not say  
That he is dead—. He is just away!

With a cheery smile, and a wave of the hand  
He has wandered into an unknown land,

And left us dreaming how very fair  
It needs must be, since he lingers there.

And you— O you, who the wildest yearn  
For the old-time step and the glad return—,

Think of him faring on, as dear  
In the love of There as the love of Here;

And loyal still, as he gave the blows  
Of his warrior-strength to his country's foes—.

Mild and gentle, as he was brave—,  
When the sweetest love of his life he gave

To simple things—: Where the violets grew  
Blue as the eyes they were likened to,

The touches of his hands have strayed  
As reverently as his lips have prayed:

When the little brown thrush that harshly chirred  
Was dear to him as the mocking-bird;

And he pitied as much as a man in pain  
A writhing honey-bee wet with rain—.

Think of him still as the same, I say:  
He is not dead— he is just away!

---

## *Who Bides His Time*

Who bides his time, and day by day  
Faces defeat full patiently,  
And lifts a mirthful roundelay,  
However poor his fortunes be—,  
He will not fail in any qualm  
Of poverty— the paltry dime  
It will grow golden in his palm,  
Who bides his time.

Who bides his time— he tastes the sweet  
Of honey in the saltiest tear;  
And though he fares with slowest feet,  
Joy runs to meet him, drawing near;  
The birds are heralds of his cause;  
And like a never-ending rhyme,  
The roadsides bloom in his applause,  
Who bides his time.

Who bides his time, and fevers not  
In the hot race that none achieves,  
Shall wear cool-wreathen laurel, wrought  
With crimson berries in the leaves;  
And he shall reign a goodly king,  
And sway his hand o'er every clime,  
With peace writ on his signet-ring,  
Who bides his time.

---

***From the Headboard of a Grave in  
Paraguay***

A troth, and a grief, and a blessing,  
Disguised them and came this way—,  
And one was a promise, and one was a doubt,  
And one was a rainy day.

And they met betimes with this maiden,  
And the promise it spake and lied,  
And the doubt it gibbered and hugged itself,  
And the rainy day— she died.

---

***Laughter Holding Both His Sides***

Ay, thou varlet! Laugh away!  
All the world's a holiday!  
Laugh away, and roar and shout  
Till thy hoarse tongue lolleth out!  
Bloat thy cheeks, and bulge thine eyes  
Unto bursting; pelt thy thighs  
With thy swollen palms, and roar  
As thou never hast before!  
Lustier! Wilt thou! Peal on peal!  
Stiflest? Squat and grind thy heel—  
Wrestle with thy loins, and then  
Wheeze thee whiles, and whoop again!

---

***Fame***

1  
Once, in a dream, I saw a man,  
With haggard face and tangled hair,  
And eyes that nursed as wild a care  
As gaunt Starvation ever can;  
And in his hand he held a wand  
Whose magic touch gave life and thought  
Unto a form his fancy wrought  
And robed with coloring so grand,  
It seemed the reflex of some child  
Of Heaven, fair and undefiled—  
A face of purity and love—  
To woo him into worlds above:  
And as I gazed with dazzled eyes,  
A gleaming smile lit up his lips  
As his bright soul from its eclipse  
Went flashing into Paradise.  
Then tardy Fame came through the door  
And found a picture— nothing more.

## 2

And once I saw a man alone,  
 In abject poverty, with hand  
 Uplifted o'er a block of stone  
 That took a shape at his command  
 And smiled upon him, fair and good—  
 A perfect work of womanhood,  
 Save that the eyes might never weep,  
 Nor weary hands be crossed in sleep,  
 Nor hair that fell from crown to wrist,  
 Be brushed away, caressed and kissed.  
 And as in awe I gazed on her,  
 I saw the sculptor's chisel fall—  
 I saw him sink, without a moan,  
 Sink life less at the feet of stone,  
 And lie there like a worshipper.  
 Fame crossed the threshold of the hall,  
 And found a statue— that was all.

## 3

And once I saw a man who drew  
 A gloom about him like cloak,  
 And wandered aimlessly. The few  
 Who spoke of him at all, but spoke  
 Disparagingly of a mind  
 The Fates had faultily designed:  
 Too indolent for modern times—  
 Too fanciful, and full of whims—  
 For talking to himself in rhymes,  
 And scrawling never-heard-of hymns,  
 The idle life to which he clung  
 Was worthless as the songs he sung!  
 I saw him, in my vision, filled  
 With rapture o'er a spray of bloom  
 The wind threw in his lonely room;  
 And of the sweet perfume it spilled  
 He drank to drunkenness, and flung  
 His long hair back, and laughed and sung  
 And clapped his hands as children do  
 At fairy tales they listen to,  
 While from his flying quill there dripped  
 Such music on his manuscript  
 That he who listens to the words  
 May close his eyes and dream the birds  
 Are twittering on every hand  
 A language he can understand.  
 He journeyed on through life unknown,  
 Without one friend to call his own;  
 He tired. No kindly hand to press  
 The cooling touch of tenderness  
 Upon his burning brow, nor lift  
 To his parched lips God's freest gift—  
 No sympathetic sob or sigh  
 Of trembling lips— no sorrowing eye  
 Looked out through tears to see him die.  
 And Fame her greenest laurels brought  
 To crown a head that heeded not.

And this is Fame! A thing indeed,  
 That only comes when least the need:  
 The wisest minds of every age  
 The book of life from page to page  
 Have searched in vain; each lesson conned  
 Will promise it the page beyond—  
 Until the last, when dusk of night  
 Falls over it, and reason's light  
 Is smothered by that unknown friend  
 Who signs his nom de plume, The End.

---

## *The Ripest Peach*

The ripest peach is highest on the tree—  
And so her love, beyond the reach of me,  
Is dearest in my sight. Sweet breezes bow  
Her heart down to me where I worship now!

She looms aloft where every eye may see  
The ripest peach is highest on the tree.  
Such fruitage as her love I know, alas!  
I may not reach here from the orchard grass.

I drink the sunshine showered past her lips  
As roses drain the dewdrop as it drips.  
The ripest peach is highest on the tree,  
And so mine eyes gaze upward eagerly.

Why— why do I not turn away in wrath  
And pluck some heart here hanging in my path—?  
Lover's lower boughs bend with them— but, ah me!  
The ripest peach is highest on the tree!

---

## *A Fruit Piece*

The afternoon of summer folds  
Its warm arms round the marigolds,

And with its gleaming fingers, pets  
The watered pinks and violets

That from the casement vases spill,  
Over the cottage window-sill,

Their fragrance down the garden walks  
Where droop the dry-mouthed hollyhocks.

How vividly the sunshine scrawls  
The grape-vine shadows on the walls!

How like a truant swings the breeze  
In high boughs of the apple-trees!

The slender "free-stone" lifts aloof,  
Full languidly above the roof,

A hoard of fruitage, stamped with gold  
And precious mintings manifold.

High up, through curled green leaves, a pear  
Hangs hot with ripeness here and there.

Beneath the sagging trellisings,  
In lush, lack-lustre clusterings,

Great torpid grapes, all fattened through  
With moon and sunshine, shade and dew,

Until their swollen girths express  
But forms of limp deliciousness—

Drugged to an indolence divine  
With heaven's own sacramental wine.



---

## ***Their Sweet Sorrow***

They meet to say farewell: Their way  
Of saying this is hard to say—  
He holds her hand an Instant, wholly  
Distressed— and she unclasps it slowly,

He lends his gaze evasively  
Over the printed page that she  
Recur to, with a new-moon shoulder  
Glimpsed from the lace-mists that infold her.

The clock, beneath its crystal cup,  
Discreetly clicks— "Quick! Act! Speak up!"  
A tension circles both her slender  
Wrists— and her raised eyes flash in splendor,

Even as he feels his dazzled own—  
Then blindingly, round either thrown,  
They feel a stress of arms that ever  
Strain tremblingly— and "Never! Never!"

Is whispered brokenly, with half  
A sob, like a belated laugh—,  
While cloyingly their blurred kiss closes—,  
Sweet as the dew's lip to the rose's.

---

## ***John McKeen***

John McKeen, in his rusty dress,  
His loosened collar, and swarthy throat,  
His face unshaven, and none the less,  
His hearty laugh and his wholesomeness,  
And the wealth of a workman's vote!

Bring him, O Memory, here once more,  
And tilt him back in his Windsor chair  
By the kitchen stove, when the day is o'er  
And the light of the hearth is across the floor,  
And the crickets everywhere!

And let their voices be gladly blent  
With a watery jingle of pans and spoons,  
And a motherly chirrup of sweet content,  
And neighborly gossip and merriment,  
And old-time fiddle-tunes!

Tick the clock with a wooden sound,  
And fill the hearing with childish glee  
Of rhyming riddle, or story found  
In the Robinson Crusoe, leather-bound  
Old book of the Used-to-be!

John McKeen of the Past! Ah John,  
To have grown ambitious in worldly ways—!  
To have rolled your shirt-sleeves down, to don  
A broadcloth suit, and forgetful, gone  
Out on election days!

John ah, John! Did it prove your worth  
To yield you the office you still maintain—?  
To fill your pockets, but leave the dearth  
Of all the happier things on earth  
To the hunger of heart and brain?

Under the dusk of your villa trees,  
Edging the drives where your blooded span  
Paw the pebbles and wait your ease—,  
Where are the children about your knees,  
And the mirth, and the happy man?

The blinds of your mansion are battened to;  
Your faded wife is a close recluse;  
And your "finished" daughters will doubtless do  
Dutifully all that is willed of you,  
And marry as you shall choose—!

But O for the old-home voices, blent  
With the watery jingle of pans and spoons,  
And the motherly chirrup of glad content,  
And neighborly gossip and merriment,  
And the old-time fiddle-tunes!

---

## ***Out of Nazareth***

"He shall sleep unscathed of thieves  
Who loves Allah and believes."  
Thus heard one who shared the tent,  
In the far-off Orient,  
Of the Bedouin ben Ahrzz—  
Nobler never loved the stars  
Through the palm-leaves nigh the dim  
Dawn his courser neighed to him!

He said: "Let the sands be swarmed  
With such thieves as I, and thou  
Shalt at morning rise unharmed,  
Light as eyelash to the brow  
Of thy camel amber-eyed,  
Ever munching either side,  
Striding still, with nestled knees,  
Through the midnight's oases."

"Who can rob thee an thou hast  
More than this that thou hast cast  
At my feet— this dust of gold?  
Simply this and that, all told!  
Hast thou not a treasure of  
Such a thing as men call love?"

"Can the dusky band I lead  
Rob thee of thy daily need  
Of a whiter soul, or steal  
What thy lordly prayers reveal?  
Who could be enriched of thee  
By such hoard of poverty  
As thy niggard hand pretends  
To dole me— thy worst of friends?  
Therefore shouldst thou pause to bless  
One indeed who blesses thee:  
Robbing thee, I dispossess  
But myself—. Pray thou for me!"

He shall sleep unscathed of thieves

## ***September Dark***

1

The air falls chill;  
The whippoorwill  
Pipes lonesomely behind the Hill:  
The dusk grows dense,  
The silence tense;  
And lo, the katydids commence.

2

Through shadowy rifts  
Of woodland lifts  
The low, slow moon, and upward drifts,  
While left and right  
The fireflies' light  
Swirls eddying in the skirts of Night.

3

O Cloudland gray  
And level lay  
Thy mists across the face of Day!  
At foot and head,  
Above the dead  
O Dews, weep on un comforted!

---

## ***We To Sigh Instead of Sing***

"Rain and rain! And rain and rain!"  
Yesterday we muttered  
Grimly as the grim refrain  
That the thunders uttered:  
All the heavens under cloud—  
All the sunshine sleeping;  
All the grasses limply bowed  
With their weight of weeping.

Sigh and sigh! And sigh and sigh!  
Never end of sighing;  
Rain and rain for our reply—  
Hopes half drowned and dying;  
Peering through the window-pane,  
Naught but endless raining—  
Endless sighing, and as vain,  
Endlessly complaining,

Shine and shine! And shine and shine!  
Ah! To-day the splendor—!  
All this glory yours and mine—  
God! But God is tender!  
We to sigh instead of sing,  
Yesterday, in sorrow,  
While the Lord was fashioning  
This for our To-morrow!

---

## ***The Blossoms on the Trees***

Blossoms crimson, white, or blue,  
Purple, pink, and every hue,  
From sunny skies, to tintings drowned  
In dusky drops of dew,  
I praise you all, wherever found,  
And love you through and through—;  
But, Blossoms On The Trees,  
With your breath upon the breeze  
There's nothing all the world around  
As half as sweet as you!

Could the rhymer only wring  
All the sweetness to the lees  
Of all the kisses clustering  
In juicy Used-to-bes,  
To dip his rhymes therein and sing  
The blossoms on the trees—,  
"O Blossoms on the Trees,"  
He would twitter, trill, and coo,  
"However sweet, such songs as these  
Are not as sweet as you—:  
For you are blooming melodies  
The eyes may listen to!"

---

## ***Last Night— And This***

Last night— how deep the darkness was!  
And well I knew its depths, because  
I waded it from shore to shore,  
Thinking to reach the light no more.

She would not even touch my hand—.  
The winds rose and the cedars fanned  
The moon out, and the stars fled back  
In heaven and hid— and all was black!

But ah! To-night a summons came,  
Signed with a tear-drop for a name,  
For as I wondering kissed it, lo  
A line beneath it told me so.

And now— the moon hangs over me  
A disk of dazzling brilliancy,  
And every star-tip stabs my sights  
With splintered glitterings of light!

---

## ***A Discouraging Model***

Just the airiest, fairest slip of a thing,

With a Gainsborough hat, like a butterfly's wing,  
Tilted up at one side with the jauntiest air,  
And a knot of red roses sown in under there  
Where the shadows are lost in her hair.

Then a cameo face, carven in on a ground  
Of that shadowy hair where the roses are wound;  
And the gleam of a smile, O as fair and as faint  
And as sweet as the master of old used to paint  
Round the lips of their favorite saint!

And that lace at her throat— and fluttering hands  
Snowing there, with a grace that no art understands,  
The flakes of their touches— first fluttering at  
The bow— then the roses— the hair and then that  
Little tilt of the Gainsborough hat.

Ah, what artist on earth with a model like this,  
Holding not on his palette the tint of a kiss,  
Nor a pigment to hint of the hue of her hair  
Nor the gold of her smile— O what artist could dare  
To expect a result half so fair?

---

### ***Back From a Two-years' Sentence***

Back from a two-years' sentence!  
And though it had been ten,  
You think, I were scarred no deeper  
In the eyes of my fellow-men.  
"My fellow-men—?" Sounds like a satire,  
You think— and I so allow,  
Here in my home since childhood,  
Yet more than a stranger now!

Pardon—! Not wholly a stranger—,  
For I have a wife and child:  
That woman has wept for two long years,  
And yet last night she smiled—!  
Smiled, as I leapt from the platform  
Of the midnight train, and then—  
All that I knew was that smile of hers,  
And our babe in my arms again!

Back from a two-years' sentence—  
But I've thought the whole thing through—,  
A hint of it came when the bars swung back  
And I looked straight up in the blue  
Of the blessed skies with my hat off!  
O-ho! I've a wife and child:  
That woman has wept for two long years,  
And yet last night she smiled!

---

### ***The Wandering Jew***

The stars are falling, and the sky  
Is like a field of faded flowers;  
The winds on weary wings go by;  
The moon hides, and the tempest lowers;

And still through every clime and age  
I wander on a pilgrimage  
That all men know an idle quest,  
For that the goal I seek is— Rest!

I hear the voice of summer streams,  
And following, I find the brink  
Of cooling springs, with childish dreams  
Returning as I bend to drink—  
But suddenly, with startled eyes,  
My face looks on its grim disguise  
Of long gray beard; and so, distressed,  
I hasten on, nor taste of rest.

I come upon a merry group  
Of children in the dusky wood,  
Who answer back the owlet's whoop,  
That laughs as it had understood;  
And I would pause a little space,  
But that each happy blossom-face  
Is like to one His hands have blessed  
Who sent me forth in search of rest.

Sometimes I fain would stay my feet  
In shady lanes, where huddled kine  
Couch in the grasses cool and sweet,  
And lift their patient eyes to mine;  
But I, for thoughts that ever then  
Go back to Bethlehem again,  
Must needs fare on my weary quest,  
And weep for very need of rest.

Is there no end? I plead in vain:  
Lost worlds nor living answer me.  
Since Pontius Pilate's awful reign  
Have I not passed eternity?  
Have I not drunk the fetid breath  
Of every fevered phase of death,  
And come unscathed through every pest  
And scourge and plague that promised rest?

Have I not seen the stars go out  
That shed their light o'er Galilee,  
And mighty kingdoms tossed about  
And crumbled clod-like in the sea?  
Dead ashes of dead ages blow  
And cover me like drifting snow,  
And time laughs on as 'twere a jest  
That I have any need of rest.

---

## ***Becalmed***

1

Would that the winds might only blow  
As they blew in the golden long ago—!  
Laden with odors of Orient isles  
Where ever and ever the sunshine smiles,  
And the bright sands blend with the shady trees,  
And the lotus blooms in the midst of these.

2

Warm winds won from the midland vales  
To where the tress of the Siren trails  
O'er the flossy tip of the mountain phlox  
And the bare limbs twined in the crested rocks,  
High above as the seagulls flap

Their lopping wings at the thunder-clap.

3

Ah! That the winds might rise and blow  
The great surge up from the port below,  
Bloating the sad, lank, silken sails  
Of the Argo out with the swift, sweet gales  
That blew from Colchis when Jason had  
His love's full will and his heart was glad—  
When Medea's voice was soft and low.  
Ah! That the winds might rise and blow!

---

### ***To Santa Claus***

Most tangible of all the gods that be,  
O Santa Claus— our own since Infancy!  
As first we scampered to thee— now, as then,  
Take us as children to thy heart again.

Be wholly good to us, just as of old:  
As a pleased father, let thine arms infold  
Us, homed within the haven of thy love,  
And all the cheer and wholesomeness thereof.

Thou lone reality, when O so long  
Life's unrealities have wrought us wrong:  
Ambition hath allured us—, fame likewise,  
And all that promised honor in men's eyes.

Throughout the world's evasions, wiles, and shifts,  
Thou only bidest stable as thy gifts—:  
A grateful king re-ruleth from thy lap,  
Crowned with a little tinselled soldier-cap:

A mighty general— a nation's pride—  
Thou givest again a rocking-horse to ride,  
And wildly glad he groweth as the grim  
Old jurist with the drum thou givest him:

The sculptor's chisel, at thy mirth's command,  
Is as a whistle in his boyish hand;  
The painters model fadeth utterly,  
And there thou standest—, and he painteth thee—:

Most like a winter pippin, sound and fine  
And tingling-red that ripe old face of thine,  
Set in thy frosty beard of cheek and chin  
As midst the snows the thaws of spring set in.

Ho! Santa Claus— our own since Infancy—  
Most tangible of all the gods that be—!  
As first we scampered to thee— now, as then,  
Take us as children to thy heart again.

---

### ***Where the Children used to Play***

The old farm-home is Mother's yet and mine,  
And filled it is with plenty and to spare—,

But we are lonely here in life's decline,  
Though fortune smiles around us everywhere:  
We look across the gold  
Of the harvests, as of old—  
The corn, the fragrant clover, and the hay;  
But most we turn our gaze,  
As with eyes of other days,  
To the orchard where the children used to play.

O from our life's full measure  
And rich hoard of worldly treasure  
We often turn our weary eyes away,  
And hand in hand we wander  
Down the old path winding yonder  
To the orchard where the children used to play.

Our sloping pasture-lands are filled with herds;  
The barn and granary-bins are bulging o'ver;  
The grove's a paradise of singing birds—  
The woodland brook leaps laughing by the door;  
Yet lonely, lonely still,  
Let us prosper as we will,  
Our old hearts seem so empty everyway—  
We can only through a mist  
See the faces we have kissed  
In the orchard where the children used to play.

O from our life's full measure  
And rich hoard of worldly treasure  
We often turn our weary eyes away,  
And hand in hand we wander  
Down the old path winding yonder  
To the orchard where the children used to play.

---

## ***A Glimpse of Pan***

I caught but a glimpse of him. Summer was here.  
And I strayed from the town and its dust and heat.  
And walked in a wood, while the noon was near,  
Where the shadows were cool, and the atmosphere  
Was misty with fragrances stirred by my feet  
From surges of blossoms that billowed sheer  
Of the grasses, green and sweet.

And I peered through a vista of leaning tree,  
Tressed with long tangles of vines that swept  
To the face of a river, that answered these  
With vines in the wave like the vines in the breeze,  
Till the yearning lips of the ripples crept  
And kissed them, with quavering ecstasies,  
And wistfully laughed and wept

And there, like a dream in swoon, I swear  
I saw Pan lying—, his limbs in the dew  
And the shade, and his face in the dazzle and glare  
Of the glad sunshine; while everywhere,  
Over across, and around him blew  
Filmy dragon-flies hither and there,  
And little white butterflies, two and two,  
In eddies of odorous air.

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## SONNETS

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### *Pan*

This Pan is but an idle god, I guess,  
Since all the fair midsummer of my dreams  
He loiters listlessly by woody streams,  
Soaking the lush glooms up with laziness;  
Or drowsing while the maiden-winds caress  
Him prankishly, and powder him with gleams  
Of sifted sunshine. And he ever seems  
Drugged with a joy unutterable— unless  
His low pipes whistle hints of it far out  
Across the ripples to the dragon-fly  
That like a wind-born blossom blown about,  
Drops quiveringly down, as though to die—  
Then lifts and wavers on, as if in doubt  
Whether to fan his wings or fly without.

---

### *Dusk*

The frightened herds of clouds across the sky  
Trample the sunshine down, and chase the day  
Into the dusky forest-lands of gray  
And sombre twilight. Far and faint, and high,  
The wild goose trails his harrow, with a cry  
Sad as the wail of some poor castaway  
Who sees a vessel drifting far astray  
Of his last hope, and lays him down to die.  
The children, riotous from school, grow bold  
And quarrel with the wind whose angry gust  
Plucks off the summer-hat, and flaps the fold  
Of many a crimson cloak, and twirls the dust  
In spiral shapes grotesque, and dims the gold  
Of gleaming tresses with the blur of rust.

---

### *June*

O queenly month of indolent repose!  
I drink thy breath in sips of rare perfume,  
As in thy downy lap of clover-bloom  
I nestle like a drowsy child and doze  
The lazy hours away. The zephyr throws  
The shifting shuttle of the Summer's loom  
And weaves a damask-work of gleam and gloom  
Before thy listless feet. The lily blows  
A bugle-call of fragrance o'er the glade;

And wheeling into ranks, with plume and spear,  
Thy harvest-armies gather on parade;  
While faint and far away, yet pure and clear,  
A voice calls out of alien lands of shade—:  
All hail the Peerless Goddess of the Year!

---

### ***Silence***

Thousands of thousands of hushed years ago,  
Out on the edge of Chaos, all alone  
I stood on peaks of vapor, high upthrown  
Above a sea that knew nor ebb nor flow,  
Nor any motion won of winds that blow,  
Nor any sound of watery wail or moan,  
Nor lisp of wave, nor wandering undertone  
Of any tide lost in the night below.  
So still it was, I mind me, as I laid  
My thirsty ear against mine own faint sigh  
To drink of that, I sipped it, half afraid  
'Twas but the ghost of a dead voice spilled by  
The one starved star that tottered through the shade  
And came tiptoeing toward me down the sky.

---

### ***Sleep***

Thou drowsy god, whose blurred eyes, half awink  
Muse on me—, drifting out upon thy dreams,  
I lave my soul as in enchanted streams  
Where revelling satyrs pipe along the brink,  
And tipsy with the melody they drink,  
Uplift their dangling hooves, and down the beams  
Of sunshine dance like motes. Thy languor seems  
An ocean-depth of love wherein I sink  
Like some fond Argonaut, right willingly—,  
Because of wooing eyes upturned to mine,  
And siren-arms that coil their sorcery  
About my neck, with kisses so divine,  
The heavens reel above me, and the sea  
Swallows and licks its wet lips over me.

---

### ***Her Hair***

The beauty of her hair bewilders me—  
Pouring adown the brow, its cloven tide  
Swirling about the ears on either side  
And storming round the neck tumultuously:  
Or like the lights of old antiquity  
Through mullioned windows, in cathedrals wide  
Spilled moltenly o'er figures deified  
In chastest marble, nude of drapery.

And so I love it—. Either unconfined;  
Or plaited in close braidings manifold;  
Or smoothly drawn; or indolently twined  
In careless knots whose coilings come unrolled  
At any lightest kiss; or by the wind  
Whipped out in flossy ravellings of gold.

---

### ***Dearth***

I hold your trembling hand to-night— and yet  
I may not know what wealth of bliss is mine,  
My heart is such a curious design  
Of trust and jealousy! Your eyes are wet—  
So must I think they jewel some regret—,  
And lo, the loving arms that round me twine  
Cling only as the tendrils of a vine  
Whose fruit has long been gathered: I forget,  
While crimson clusters of your kisses press  
Their wine out on my lips, my royal fair  
Of rapture, since blind fancy needs must guess  
They once poured out their sweetness elsewhere,  
With fuller flavoring of happiness  
Than e'en your broken sobs may now declare.

---

### ***A Voice From the Farm***

It is my dream to have you here with me,  
Out of the heated city's dust and din—  
Here where the colts have room to gambol in,  
And kine to graze, in clover to the knee.  
I want to see your wan face happily  
Lit with the wholesome smiles that have not been  
In use since the old games you used to win  
When we pitched horseshoes: And I want to be  
At utter loaf with you in this dim land  
Of grove and meadow, while the crickets make  
Our own talk tedious, and the bat wields  
His bulky flight, as we cease converse and  
In a dusk like velvet smoothly take  
Our way toward home across the dewy fields.

---

### ***The Serenade***

The midnight is not more bewildering  
To her drowsed eyes, than to her ears, the sound  
Of dim, sweet singing voices, interwound  
With purl of flute and subtle twang of string,  
Strained through the lattice, where the roses cling  
And, with their fragrance, waft the notes around  
Her haunted senses. Thirsting beyond bound

Of her slow-yielding dreams, the lilt and swing  
Of the mysterious delirious tune,  
She drains like some strange opiate, with awed eyes  
Upraised against her casement, where aswoon,  
The stars fail from her sight, and up the skies  
Of alien azure rolls the full round moon  
Like some vast bubble blown of summer noon.

---

### ***Art and Love***

He faced his canvas (as a seer whose ken  
Pierces the crust of this existence through)  
And smiled beyond on that his genius knew  
Ere mated with his being. Conscious then  
Of his high theme alone, he smiled again  
Straight back upon himself in many a hue  
And tint, and light and shade, which slowly grew  
Enfeatured of a fair girl's face, as when  
First time she smiles for love's sake with no fear.  
So wrought he, witless that behind him leant  
A woman, with old features, dim and sear,  
And glamour'd eyes that felt the brimming tear,  
And with a voice, like some sad instrument,  
That sighing said, "I'm dead there; love me here!"

---

### ***Longfellow***

The winds have talked with him confidingly;  
The trees have whispered to him; and the night  
Hath held him gently as a mother might,  
And taught him all sad tones of melody:  
The mountains have bowed to him; and the sea,  
In clamorous waves, and murmurs exquisite,  
Hath told him all her sorrow and delight—  
Her legends fair— her darkest mystery.  
His verse blooms like a flower, night and day;  
Bees cluster round his rhymes; and twitterings  
Of lark and swallow, in an endless May,  
Are mingling with the tender songs he sings—  
Nor shall he cease to sing— in every lay  
Of Nature's voice he sings— and will alway.

---

### ***Indiana***

Our Land— our Home— the common home indeed  
Of soil-born children and adopted ones—  
The stately daughters and the stalwart sons  
Of Industry—: All greeting and godspeed!  
O home to proudly live for, and if need  
Be proudly die for, with the roar of guns

Blent with our latest prayer—. So died men once...  
Lo Peace...! As we look on the land They freed—  
Its harvests all in ocean-over flow  
Poured round autumnal coasts in billowy gold—  
Its corn and wine and balmed fruits and flow'rs—,  
We know the exaltation that they know  
Who now, steadfast inheritors, behold  
The Land Elysian, marvelling "This is ours?"

---

## *Time*

1

The ticking— ticking— ticking of the clock—!  
That vexed me so last night—! "For though Time keeps  
Such drowsy watch," I moaned, "he never sleeps,  
But only nods above the world to mock  
Its restless occupant, then rudely rock  
It as the cradle of a babe that weeps!"  
I seemed to see the seconds piled in heaps  
Like sand about me; and at every shock  
O' the bell, the piled sands were swirled away  
As by a desert-storm that swept the earth  
Stark as a granary floor, whereon the gray  
And mist-bedrizzled moon amidst the dearth  
Came crawling, like a sickly child, to lay  
Its pale face next mine own and weep for day.

2

Wait for the morning! Ah! We wait indeed  
For daylight, we who toss about through stress  
Of vacant-armed desires and emptiness  
Of all the warm, warm touches that we need,  
And the warm kisses upon which we feed  
Our famished lips in fancy! May God bless  
The starved lips of us with but one caress  
Warm as the yearning blood our poor hearts bleed...!  
A wild prayer—! Bite thy pillow, praying so—  
Toss this side, and whirl that, and moan for dawn;  
Let the clock's seconds dribble out their woe,  
And Time be drained of sorrow! Long ago  
We heard the crowing cock, with answer drawn  
As hoarsely sad at throat as sobs... Pray on!

Grant

At Rest— August 8, 1885

Sir Launcelot rode overthwart and endlong in a wide forest, and held no path but as wild adventure led him... And he returned and came again to his horse, and took off his saddle and his bridle, and let him pasture; and unlaced his helm, and ungirdled his sword, and laid him down to sleep upon his shield before the cross. —Age of Chivalry

---

## *Grant*

What shall we say of the soldier. Grant,  
His sword put by and his great soul free?  
How shall we cheer him now or chant  
His requiem befittingly?

The fields of his conquest now are seen  
Ranged no more with his armed men—  
But the rank and file of the gold and green  
Of the waving grain is there again.

Though his valiant life is a nation's pride,  
And his death heroic and half divine,  
And our grief as great as the world is wide,  
There breaks in speech but a single line—:  
We loved him living, revere him dead—!  
A silence then on our lips is laid:  
We can say no thing that has not been said,  
Nor pray one prayer that has not been prayed.

But a spirit within us speaks: and lo,  
We lean and listen to wondrous words  
That have a sound as of winds that blow,  
And the voice of waters and low of herds;  
And we hear, as the song flows on serene,  
The neigh of horses, and then the beat  
Of hooves that skurry o'er pastures green,  
And the patter and pad of a boy's bare feet.

A brave lad, wearing a manly brow,  
Knit as with problems of grave dispute,  
And a face, like the bloom of the orchard bough,  
Pink and pallid, but resolute;  
And flushed it grows as the clover-bloom,  
And fresh it gleams as the morning dew,  
As he reins his steed where the quick quails boom  
Up from the grasses he races through.

And ho! As he rides what dreams are his?  
And what have the breezes to suggest—?  
Do they whisper to him of shells that whiz  
O'er fields made ruddy with wrongs redressed?  
Does the hawk above him an Eagle float?  
Does he thrill and his boyish heart beat high,  
Hearing the ribbon about his throat  
Flap as a Flag as the winds go by?

And does he dream of the Warrior's fame—  
This Western boy in his rustic dress?  
For in miniature, this is the man that came  
Riding out of the Wilderness—!  
The selfsame figure— the knitted brow—  
The eyes full steady— the lips full mute—  
And the face, like the bloom of the orchard bough,  
Pink and pallid, but resolute.

Ay, this is the man, with features grim  
And stoical as the Sphinx's own,  
That heard the harsh guns calling him,  
As musical as the bugle blown,  
When the sweet spring heavens were clouded o'er  
With a tempest, glowering and wild,  
And our country's flag bowed down before  
Its bursting wrath as a stricken child.

Thus, ready mounted and booted and spurred,  
He loosed his bridle and dashed away—!  
Like a roll of drums were his hoof-beats heard,  
Like the shriek of the fife his charger's neigh!  
And over his shoulder and backward blown,  
We heard his voice, and we saw the sod  
Reel, as our wild steeds chased his own  
As though hurled on by the hand of God!

And still, in fancy, we see him ride  
In the blood-red front of a hundred frays,  
His face set stolid, but glorified  
As a knight's of the old Arthurian days:  
And victor ever as courtly too,  
Gently lifting the vanquished foe,  
And staying him with a hand as true

As dealt the deadly avenging blow.

So brighter than all of the cluster of stars  
Of the flag enshrouding his form to-day,  
His face shines forth from the grime of wars  
With a glory that shall not pass away:  
He rests at last: he has borne his part  
Of salutes and salvos and cheers on cheers—  
But O the sobs of his country's heart,  
And the driving rain of a nations tears!

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## IN DIALECT

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### *Old Fashioned Roses*

They ain't no style about 'em,  
And they're sorto' pale and faded,  
Yit the doorway here, without 'em,  
Would be lonesomer, and shaded  
With a good 'eal blacker shudder  
Than the morning-glories makes,  
And the sunshine would look sadder  
Fer their good old-fashion' sakes.

I like 'em 'cause they kindo'—  
Sorto' make a feller like 'em!  
And I tell you, when I find a  
Bunch out whur the sun kin strike 'em,  
It allus sets me thinkin'  
O' the ones 'at used to grow  
And peek in thro' the chinkin'  
O' the cabin, don't you know!

And then I think o' mother,  
And how she ust to love 'em—  
When they wuzn't any other,  
'Less she found 'em up above 'em!  
And her eyes, afore she shut 'em,  
Whispered with a smile and said  
We must pick a bunch and putt 'em  
In her hand when she wuz dead.

But as I wuz a-sayin',  
They ain't no style about 'em  
Very gaudy er displayin',  
But I wouldn't be without 'em—,  
'Cause I'm happier in these posies,  
And the hollyhawks and sich,  
Than the hummin'-bird 'at noses  
In the roses of the rich.

---

## *Griggsby's Station*

Pap's got his patent-right, and rich is all creation;  
But where's the peace and comfort that we all had before?  
Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—  
Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

The likes of us a-livin' here! It's jest a mortal pity  
To see us in this great big house, with cyarpets on the stairs,  
And the pump right in the kitchen! And the city! City! City  
And nothin' but the city all around us ever'wheres!

Climb clean above the roof and look from the steeple,  
And never see a robin, nor a beech or ellow tree!  
And right here in ear-shot of at least a thousan' people,  
And none that neighbors with us or we want to go and see!

Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—  
Back where the latch-strings a-hangin' from the door,  
And ever' neighbor round the place is dear as a relation—  
Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

I want to see the Wiggenses, the whole kit-and-bilin',  
A-drivin' up from Shallor Ford to stay the Sunday through;  
And I want to see 'em hitchin' at their son-in-law's and pilin'  
Out there at 'Lizy Ellen's like they ust to do!

I want to see the piece-quilts the Jones girls is makin';  
And I want to pester Laury 'bout their freckled hired hand,  
And joke her 'bout the widower she come purt' nigh a-takin',  
Till her Pap got his pension 'lowed in time to save his land.

Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—  
Back where they's nothin' aggervatin' any more,  
Shet away safe in the woods around the old location—  
Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

I want to see Marindy and he'p her with her sewin',  
And hear her talk so lovin' of her man that's dead and gone,  
And stand up with Emanuel to show me how he's growin',  
And smile as I have saw her 'fore she putt her mournin' on.

And I want to see the Samples, on the old lower eighty,  
Where John, our oldest boy, he was tuk and burried— for  
His own sake and Katy's—, and I want to cry with Katy  
As she reads all his letters over, writ from The War.

What's in all this grand life and high situation,  
And nary pink nor hollyhawk a-bloomin' at the door—?  
Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—  
Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

---

## *Knee Deep in June*

1

Tell you what I like the best—  
'Long about knee-deep in June,  
'Bout the time strawberries melts  
On the vine—, some afternoon  
Like to jes' git out and rest,  
And not work at nothin' else!

2

Orchard's where I'd ruther be—  
Needn't fence it in fer me—!  
Jes' the whole sky overhead,



And the whole airth underneath—  
Sorto' so's a man kin breathe  
Like he ort, and kindo' has  
Elbow-room to keerlessly  
Sprawl out len'thways on the grass  
Where the shadders thick and soft  
As the kivvers on the bed  
Mother fixes in the loft  
Allus, when they's company!

3

Jes' a-sorto' lazin' there—  
S'lazy, 'at you peeks and peer  
Through the wavin' leaves above,  
Like a feller 'ats in love  
And don't know it, ner don't keer!  
Ever'thing you hear and see  
Got some sort o' interest—  
Maybe find a bluebird's nest  
Tucked up there conveenently  
Fer the boy 'at's ap' to be  
Up some other apple-tree!  
Watch the swallers skootin' past  
'Bout as peert as you could ast;  
Er the Bob-white raise and whiz  
Where some other's whistle is.

4

Ketch a shadder down below,  
And look up to find the crow—  
Er a hawk—, away up there  
'Pearantly froze in the air—!  
Hear the old hen squawk, and squat  
Over ever' chick she's got,  
Suddent-like—! And she knows where  
That-air hawk is, well as you—!  
You jes' bet yer life she do—!  
Eyes a-glittern' like glass,  
Waitin' till he makes a pass!

5

Pee-wees' singin', to express  
My opinion, 's second class,  
Yit you'll hear 'em more er less;  
Sapsucks gittin' down to biz,  
Weedin' out the lonesomeness;  
Mr. Bluejay, full o' sass,  
In them base-ball clothes o' his,  
Sportin' round the orchard jes'  
Life he owned the premises!  
Sun out in the fields kin sizz,  
But flat on yer back, I guess,  
In the shade's where glory is!  
That's jes' what I'd like to do  
Stiddy fer a year er two!

6

Plague! Ef they ain't somepin' in  
Work 'at kindo' goes ag'in'  
My convictions—! 'Long about  
Here in June especially—!  
Under some old apple-tree,  
Jes' a-restin' through and through,  
I could git along without  
Nothin' else at all to do  
Only jes' a-wishin' you  
Wuz a-gittin' there like me,  
And June was eternity!

7

Lay out there and try to see  
Jes' how lazy you kin be—!  
Tumble round and souse yer head  
In the clover-bloom, er pull  
Yer straw hat acrost yer eyes

And peek through it at the skies,  
Thinkin' of old chums 'at's dead,  
Maybe, smilin' back at you  
In betwixt the 'beautiful  
Clouds o' gold and white and blue—!  
Month a man kin raily love  
June, you know, I'm talkin' of!

8

March ain't never nothin' new—!  
Aprile's altogether too  
Brash fer me! And May— I jes'  
'Bominate its promises—,  
Little hints o' sunshine and  
Green around the timber-land—  
A few blossoms, and a few  
Chip-birds, and a sprout er two—,  
Drap asleep, and it turns in  
'Fore daylight and snows ag'in—!  
But when June comes— Clear my th'oot  
With wild honey—! Rench my hair  
In the dew! And hold my coat!  
Whoop out loud! And th'ow my hat—!  
June wants me, and I'm to spare!  
Spread them shadders anywhere,  
I'll git down and waller there,  
And obleeged to you at that!

---

### ***When The Hearse Comes Back***

A thing 'at's 'bout as tryin' as a healthy man kin meet  
Is some poor feller's funeral a-joggin' 'long the street:  
The slow hearse and the hosses— slow enough, to say at least,  
Fer to even tax the patience of gentleman deceased!  
The low scrunch of the gravel— and the slow grind of the wheels—,  
The slow, slow go of ev'ry woe 'at ev'rybody feels!  
So I ruther like the contrast when I hear the whip-lash crack  
A quickstep fer the hosses,  
    When the  
    Hearse  
    Comes  
    Back!

Meet it goin' to'rds the cimet'ry, you'll want to drap yer eyes—  
But ef the plumes don't fetch you, it'll ketch you otherwise—  
You'll haf to see the caskit, though you'd ort to look away  
And 'conomize and save yer sighs fer any other day!  
Yer sympathizin' won't wake up the sleeper from his rest—  
Yer tears won't thaw them hands o' his 'at's froze acrost his breast!  
And this is why— when airth and sky's a gittin blurred and black—  
I like the flash and hurry  
    When the  
    Hearse  
    Comes  
    Back!

It's not 'cause I don't 'preciate it ain't no time fer jokes,  
Ner 'cause I' got no common human feelin' fer the folks—;  
I've went to funerals myse'f, and tuk on some, perhaps—  
Fer my hearth's 'bout as mal'able as any other chap's—,  
I've buried father, mother— But I'll haf to jes' git you  
To "excuse me," as the feller says—. The p'int I'm drivin' to  
Is simply when we're plum broke down and all knocked out o' whack,  
It he'ps to shape us up like,  
    When the  
    Hearse

Comes  
Back!

The idy! Wadin round here over shoe-mouth deep in woe,  
When they's a graded 'pike o' joy and sunshine don't you know!  
When evening strikes the pastur', cows'll pull out fer the bars,  
And skittish-like from out the night'll prance the happy stars.  
And so when my time comes to die, and I've got ary friend  
'At wants expressed my last request— I'll mebbly, rickommand  
To drive slow, ef they haf to, goin' 'long the out'ard track,  
But I'll smile and say, "You speed 'em

When the  
Hearse  
Comes  
Back!"

---

### ***A Canary At the Farm***

Folks has be'n to town, and Sahry  
Fetched 'er home a pet canary—,  
And of all the blame', contrary,  
Aggervatin' things alive!  
I love music— that I love it  
When it's free— and plenty of it—;  
But I kindo' git above it,  
At a dollar-eighty-five!

Reason's plain as I'm a-sayin'—,  
Jes' the idy, now, o' layin'  
Out yer money, and a-payin'  
Fer a willer-cage and bird,  
When the medder-larks is wingin'  
Round you, and the woods is ringin'  
With the beautifullest singin'  
That a mortal ever heard!

Sahry's sot, tho'—. So I tell her  
He's a purty little feller,  
With his wings o' creamy-yeller,  
And his eyes keen as a cat;  
And the twitter o' the critter  
'Pears to absolutely glitter!  
Guess I'll haf to go and git her  
A high-preceter cage 'n that!

---

### ***A Liz Town Humorist***

Settin' round the stove, last night,  
Down at Wess's store, was me  
And Mart Strimples, Tunk, and White,  
And Doc Bills, and two er three  
Fellers o' the Mudsock tribe  
No use tryin' to describe!  
And says Doc, he says, says he—,  
"Talkin' 'bout good things to eat,  
Ripe mushmillon's hard to beat!"

I chawed on. And Mart he 'lowed

Wortermillon beat the mush—.  
"Red," he says, "and juicy— Hush—!  
I'll jes' leave it to the crowd!"  
Then a Mudsock chap, says he—,  
"Punkin's good enough fer me—  
Punkin pies, I mean," he says—,  
Them beats millions—! What say, Wess?

I chawed on. And Wess says—, "Well,  
You jes' fetch that wife of mine  
All yer wortermillon-rine—,  
And she'll bile it down a spell—  
In with sorghum, I suppose,  
And what else, Lord only knows—!  
But I'm here to tell all hands  
Them p'serves meets my demands!"

I chawed on. And White he says—,  
"Well, I'll jes' stand, in with Wess—  
I'm no hog!" And Tunk says—, "I  
Guess I'll pastur' out on pie  
With the Mudsock boys!" says he;  
"Now what's yourn?" he says to me:  
I chawed on— fer— quite a spell  
Then I speaks up, slow and dry—,  
Jes' tobacker!" I-says-I—.  
And you'd ort o' heerd 'em yell!

---

## ***Kingry's Mill***

On old Brandywine— about  
Where White's Lots is now laid out,  
And the old crick narries down  
To the ditch that splits the town—,  
Kingry's Mill stood. Hardly see  
Where the old dam ust to be;  
Shallor, long, dry trought o' grass  
Where the old race ust to pass!

That's be'n forty years ago—  
Forty years o' frost and snow—  
Forty years o' shade and shine  
Sence them boyhood-days o' mine—!  
All the old landmarks o' town.  
Changed about, er rotted down!  
Where's the Tanyard? Where's the Still?  
Tell me where's old Kingry's Mill?

Don't seem funder back, to me,  
I'll be dogg'd! Than yisterd'y,  
Since us fellers, in bare feet  
And straw hats, went through the wheat,  
Cuttin' 'crost the shortest shoot  
Fer that-air old ellum root  
Jest above the mill-dam— where  
The blame' cars now crosses there!

Through the willers down the crick  
We could see the old mill stick  
Its red gable up, as if  
It jest knowed we'd stol'd the skiff!  
See the winders in the sun  
Blink like they wuz wonderun'  
What the miller ort to do  
With sich boys as me and you!

But old Kingry—! Who could fear  
That old chap, with all his cheer—?  
Leanin' at the window-sill,  
Er the half-door o' the mill,  
Swoppin' lies, and pokin' fun,  
'N jigglin' like his hoppers done—  
Laughin' grists o' gold and red  
Right out o' the wagon-bed!

What did he keer where we went—?  
"Jest keep out o' devilment,  
And don't fool around the belts,  
Bolts, ner burrs, ner nothin' else  
'Bout the blame machinery,  
And that's all I ast!" says-ee.  
Then we'd climb the stairs, and play  
In the bran-bins half the day!

Rickollect the dusty wall,  
And the spider-webs, and all!  
Rickollect the trimblin' spout  
Where the meal come josslln' out—  
Stand and comb yer fingers through  
The fool-truck an hour er two—  
Felt so sorto' warm-like and  
Soothin' to a feller's hand!

Climb, high up above the stream,  
And "coon" out the wobbly beam  
And peek down from out the lof'  
Where the weather-boards was off—  
Gee-mun-nee! w'y, it takes grit  
Even jest to think of it—!  
Lookin' 'way down there below  
On the worter roarin' so!

Rickollect the flume, and wheel,  
And the worter slosh and reel  
And jest ravel out in froth  
Flossier'n satin cloth!  
Rickollect them paddles jest  
Knock the bubbles galley-west,  
And plunge under, and come up  
Drippin' like a worter-pup!

And to see them old things gone  
That I onc't was bettin' on,  
In rale p'int o' fact, I feel  
kindo' like that worter-wheel—,  
Sorto' drippy-like and wet  
Round the eyes— but paddlin' yet,  
And in mem'ry, loafin' still  
Down around old Kingry's Mill!

---

## *Joney*

Had a hare-lip— Joney had:  
Spiled his looks, and Joney knowed it:  
Fellers tried to bore him, bad—  
But ef ever he got mad,  
He kep' still and never showed it.  
'Druther have his mouth all pouted  
And split up, and like it wuz,  
Than the ones 'at laughed about it.  
Purty is as purty does!

Had to listen ruther clos't  
'Fore you knowed "what he wuz givin'  
You; and yet, without no boast,  
Joney he wuz jest the most  
Entertainin' talker livin'!  
Take the Scriptur's and run through 'em,  
Might say, like a' auctioneer,  
And 'ud argy and review 'em  
'At wuz beautiful to hear!

Hare-lip and inpediment,  
Both wuz bad, and both ag'in' him—  
But the old folks where he went,  
'Preared like, knowin' his intent,  
'Scused his mouth fer what wuz in him.  
And the childern all loved Joney—  
And he loved 'em back, you bet—!  
Putt their arms around him— on'y  
None had ever kissed him yet!

In young company, someway,  
Boys 'ud grin at one another  
On the sly; and girls 'ud lay  
Low, with nothin' much to say,  
Er leave Joney with their mother.  
Many and many a time he's fetched 'em  
Candy by the paper sack,  
And turned right around and ketched 'em  
Makin mouths behind his back!

S'prised sometimes, the slurs he took—.  
Chap said onc't his mouth looked sorter  
Like a fish's mouth 'ud look  
When he'd be'n jerked off the hook  
And plunked back into the worter—.  
Same durn feller— it's su'prisin',  
But it's facts— 'at stood and cherred  
From the bank that big babtizin'  
'Pike-bridge accident occurred—!

Cherred for Joney while he give  
Life to little childern drownin'!  
Which wuz fittenest to live—  
Him 'at cherred, er him 'at div'  
And saved thirteen lives...? They found one  
Body, three days later, floated  
Down the by-o, eight mile' south,  
All so colored-up and bloated—  
On'y knowed him by his mouth!

Had a hare-lip— Joney had—  
Folks 'at filed apast all knowed it—.  
Them 'at ust to smile looked sad,  
But ef he thought good er bad,  
He kep' still and never showed it.  
'Druther have that mouth, all pouted  
And split up, and like it wuz,  
Than the ones 'at laughed about it—.  
Purty is as purty does!

---

### ***Like His Mother Used To Make***

"Uncle Jake's Place," St. Jo, Mo., 1874

"I was born in Indiany," says a stranger, lank and slim,  
As us fellers in the restarunt was kindo' guyin' him,

And Uncle Jake was slidin' him another punkin pie  
And a' extry cup o' coffee, with a twinkle in his eye.  
"I was born in Indiany— more'n forty year' ago—  
I hain't be'n back in twenty— and I'm workin' back'ards slow;  
But I've et in ever' restarunt 'twixt here and Santy Fee,  
And I want to state this coffee tastes like gittin' home, to me!"

"Pour us out another, Daddy," says the feller, warmin' up,  
A-speakin' 'cost a saucerful, as Uncle tuk his cup—,  
"When I seed yer sign out yander," he went on, to Uncle Jake- -,  
"Come in and git some coffee like yer mother used to make'—  
I thought of my old mother, and the Posey County farm,  
And me a little kid ag'in, a-hangin' in her arm,  
As she set the pot: a-bilin', broke the eggs and poured 'em in—"  
And the feller kindo' halted, with a trimble in his chin:

And Uncle Jake he fetched the feller's coffee back, and stood  
As solemn, fer a minute, as a' undertaker would;  
Then he sorto' turned and tiptoed to'rds the kitchen door— and nex',  
Here comes his old wife out with him, a-rubbin' of her specs—  
And she rushes fer the stranger, and she hollers out, "It's him—!  
Thank God we've met him comin'—! Don't you know, yer mother, Jim?"  
And the feller, as he grabbed her, says—, "You bet I hain't forgot—  
But," wipin' of his eyes, says he, "yer coffee's mighty hot!"

---

## ***The Train Misser***

At Union Station

'Ll where in the world my eyes has bin—  
Ef I hain't missed that train ag'in!  
Chuff! And whistle! And toot! And ring!  
But blast and blister the dasted train—!  
How it does it I can't explain!  
Git here thirty-five minutes before  
The durn things due—! And, drat the thing  
It'll manage to git past-shore!

The more I travel around, the more  
I got no sense—! To stand right here  
And let it beat me! 'Ll ding my melts!  
I got no gumption, ner nothin' else!  
Ticket Agent's a dad-burned bore—!  
Sell you a tickets all they keer—!  
Ticket Agents ort to all be

Prosecuted— and that's jes what—!  
How'd I know which train's fer me?  
And how'd I know which train was not—?  
Goern and comin' and gone astray,  
And backin' and switchin' ever'-which-way!

Ef I could jes sneak round behind  
Myse'f, where I could git full swing,  
I'd lift my coat, and kick, by jing!  
Till I jes got jerked up and fined—!  
Fer here I stood, as a durn fool's apt  
To, and let that train jes chuff and choo  
Right apast me— and mouth jes gapped  
Like a blamed old sandwich warped in two!

---

## *Granny*

Granny's come to our house,  
And ho! My lawzy-daisy!  
All the childern round the place  
Is ist a-runnin' crazy!  
Fetched a cake fer little Jake,  
And fetched a pie fer Nanny,  
And fetched a pear fer all the pack  
That runs to kiss their Granny!

Lucy Ellen's in her lap,  
And Wade and Silas Walker  
Both's a ridin' on her foot,  
And 'Pollos on the rocker;  
And Marthy's twins, from Aunt Marinn's  
And little Orphant Annie,  
All's a-eatin' gingerbread  
And giggle-un at Granny!

Tells us all the fairy tales  
Ever thought er wundered—  
And 'bundance o' other stories—  
Bet she knows a hunderd—!

Bob's the one fer "Whittington,"  
And "Golden Locks" fer Fanny!  
Hear 'em laugh and clap their hands,  
Listenin' at Granny!

"Jack the Giant-Killer" 's good;  
And "Bean-Stalk" 's another—!  
So's the one of "Cinderell"  
And her old godmother—;  
That-un's best of all the rest—  
Bestest one of any—,  
Where the mices scampers home  
Like we runs to Granny!

Granny's come to our house,  
Ho! My lawzy-daisy!  
All the childern round the place  
Is ist a runnin' crazy!  
Fetched a cake fer little Jake,  
And fetched a pie fer Nanny,  
And fetched a pear fer all the pack  
That runs to kiss their Granny!

---

## *Old October*

Old October's purt' nigh gone,  
And the frosts is comin' on  
Little heavier every day—  
Like our hearts is thataway!  
Leaves is changin' overhead  
Back from green to gray and red,  
Brown and yeller, with their stems  
Loosenin' on the oaks and e'ms;  
And the balance of the trees  
Gittin' balder every breeze—  
Like the heads we're scratchin' on!  
Old October's purt' nigh gone.

I love Old October so,



I can't bear to see her go—  
Seems to me like losin' some  
Old-home relative er chum—  
'Pears like sorto' settin' by  
Some old friend 'at sigh by sigh  
Was a-passin' out o' sight  
Into everlastin' night!  
Hickernuts a feller hears  
Rattlin' down is more like tears  
Drappin' on the leaves below—  
I love Old October so!

Can't tell what it is about  
Old October knock me out—!  
I sleep well enough at night—  
And the blamedest appetite  
Ever mortal man possessed—,  
Last thing et, it tastes the best—!  
Warnuts, butternuts, pawpaws,  
'Iles and limbers up my jaws  
Fer raal service, sich as new  
Pork, spareribs, and sausage, too—.  
Yit fer all, they's somepin' 'bout  
Old October knocks me out!

---

## *Jim*

He was jes a plain ever'-day, all-round kind of a jour.,  
Consumpted-lookin'— but la!  
The jokeiest, wittiest, story-tellin', song-singin', laughin'est, jolliest  
Feller you ever saw!  
Worked at jes coarse work, but you kin bet he was fine enough in his talk,  
And his feelin's too!  
Lordy! Ef he was on'y back on his bench ag'in to-day, a- carryin' on  
Like he ust to do!

Any shopmate'll tell you there never was, on top o' dirt,  
A better feller'n Jim!  
You want a favor, and couldn't git it anywheres else—  
You could git it o' him!  
Most free-heartedest man thataway in the world, I guess!  
Give up ever' nickel he's worth—  
And ef you'd a-wanted it, and named it to him, and it was his,  
He'd a-give you the earth!

Allus a reachin' out, Jim was, and a-he'ppin' some  
Pore feller onto his feet—  
He'd a-never a-keered how hungry he was hisse'f,  
So's the feller got somepin' to eat!  
Didn't make no differ'nce at all to him how he was dressed,  
He ust to say to me—,  
"You togg out a tramp purty comfortable in winter-time, a huntin' a job,  
And he'll git along!" says he.

Jim didn't have, ner never could git ahead, so overly much  
O' this world's goods at a time—.  
'Fore now I've saw him, more'n onc't, lend a dollar, and haf to, more'n  
likely,  
Turn round and borry a dime!  
Mebby laugh and joke about it hisse'f fer awhile— then jerk his coat,  
And kindo' square his chin,  
Tie on his apern, and squat hisse'f on his old shoe-bench,  
And go to peggin' ag'in!

Patientest feller too, I reckon, 'at ever jes natchurly  
Coughed hisse'f to death!

Long enough after his voice was lost he'd laugh in a whisper and say  
He could git ever'thing but his breath—  
"You fellers," he'd sorto' twinkle his eyes and say,  
"Is a-pilin' onto me  
A mighty big debt fer that-air little weak-chested ghost o' mine to pack  
Through all Eternity!"

Now there was a man 'at jes 'peared-like, to me,  
'At ortn't a-never a-died!  
"But death hain't a-showin' no favors," the old boss said—  
"On'y to Jim!" and cried:  
And Wigger, who puts up the best sewed-work in the shop—  
Er the whole blame neighborhood—,  
He says, "When God made Jim, I bet you He didn't do anything else that day  
But jes set around and feel good!"

---

## *To Robert Burns*

Sweet Singer that I loe the maist  
O' ony, sin' wi' eager haste  
I smacket bairn-lips ower the taste  
O' hinnied sang,  
I hail thee, though a blessed ghaist  
In Heaven lang!

For weel I ken, nae cantie phrase,  
Nor courtly airs, nor lairdly ways,  
Could gar me freer blame, or praise,  
Or proffer hand,  
Where "Rantin' Robbie" and his lays  
Thegither stand.

And sae these hamely lines I send,  
Wi' jinglin' words at ilka end,  
In echo o' the sangs that wend  
Frae thee to me  
Like simmer-brooks, wi' mony a bend  
O' wimplin' glee.

In fancy, as wi' dewy een,  
I part the clouds aboon the scene  
Where thou wast born, and peer atween,  
I see nae spot  
In a' the Hielands half sae green  
And unforgot?

I see nae storied castle-hall,  
Wi' banners flauntin' ower the wall  
And serf and page in ready call,  
Sae grand to me  
As ane puir cotter's hut, wi' all  
Its poverty.

There where the simple daisy grew  
Sae bonnie sweet, and modest too,  
Thy liltin' filled its wee head fu'  
O' sic a grace,  
It aye is weepin' tears o' dew  
Wi' droopit face.

Frae where the heather bluebells fling  
Their sangs o' fragrance to the Spring,  
To where the lavrock soars to sing,  
Still lives thy strain,  
For' a' the birds are twittering  
Sangs like thine ain.

And aye, by light o' sun or moon,  
By banks o' Ayr, or Bonnie Doon,  
The waters lilt nae tender tune  
But sweeter seems  
Because they poured their limpid rune  
Through a' thy dreams.

Wi' brimmin' lip, and laughin' ee,  
Thou shookest even Grief wi' glee,  
Yet had nae niggart sympathy  
Where Sorrow bowed,  
But gavest a' thy tears as free  
As a' thy gowd.

And sae it is we be thy name  
To see bleeze up wi' sic a flame,  
That a' pretentious stars o' fame  
Maun blink asklent,  
To see how simple worth may shame  
Their brightest glent.

---

## *A New Year's Time at Willards's*

1

The Hired Man Talks

There's old man Willards; an' his wife;  
An' Marg'et— S'repty's sister—; an'  
There's me— an' I'm the hired man;  
An' Toms McClure, you better yer life!

Well now, old Willards hain't so bad,  
Considerin' the chance he's had.  
Of course, he's rich, an' sleeps an' eats  
Whenever he's a mind to: Takes  
An' leans back in the Amen-seats  
An' thanks the Lord fer all he makes—.  
That's purty much all folks has got  
Ag'inst the old man, like as not!  
But there's his woman— jes the turn  
Of them-air two wild girls o' hern—  
Marg'et an' S'repty— allus in  
Fer any cuttin'-up concern—  
Church festibals, and foolishin'  
Round Christmas-trees, an' New Year's sprees—  
Set up to watch the Old Year go  
An' New Year come— sich things as these;  
An' turkey-dinners, don't you know!  
S'repty's younger, an' more gay,  
An' purtier, an' finer dressed  
Than Marg'et is— but, lawzy-day!  
She hain't the independentest!  
"Take care!" old Willards used to say,  
"Take care—! Let Marg'et have her way,  
An' S'repty, you go off an' play  
On your melodeum—!" But, best  
Of all, comes Toms! An' I'll be bound,  
Ef he hain't jes the beatin'est  
Young chap in all the country round!  
Ef you knowed Toms you'd like him, shore!  
They hain't no man on top o' ground  
Walks into my affections more—!  
An' all the Settlement'll say  
That Toms was liked jes thataway  
By ever'body, till he tuk

A shine to S'repty Willards—. Then  
 You'd ort'o see the old man buck  
 An' h'ist hisse'f, an' paw the dirt,  
 An' hint that "common workin'-men  
 That didn't want their feelin's hurt  
 'Ud better hunt fer 'comp'ny' where  
 The folks was pore an' didn't care—!"  
 The pine-blank facts is—, the old man,  
 Last Christmas was a year ago,  
 Found out some presents Tomps had got  
 Fer S'repty, an' hit made him hot—  
 Set down an' tuk his pen in hand  
 An' writ to Tomps an' told him so  
 On legal cap, in white an' black,  
 An' give him jes to understand  
 "No Christmas-gifts o' 'lily-white'  
 An' bear's-ile could fix matters right,"  
 An' wropped 'em up an' sent 'em back!  
 Well, S'repty cried an' snuffled round  
 Consid'able. But Marg'et she  
 Toed out another sock, an' wound  
 Her knittin' up, an' drawed the tea,  
 An' then set on the supper-things,  
 An' went up in the loft an' dressed—  
 An' through it all you'd never guessed  
 What she was up to! An' she brings  
 Her best hat with her an' her shawl,  
 An' gloves, an' redicule, an' all,  
 An' injirubbers, an' comes down  
 An' tells 'em she's a-goin' to town  
 To he'p the Christmas goin's-on  
 Her Church got up. An' go she does—  
 The best hosswoman ever was!  
 "An" what'll We do while you're gone?"  
 The old man says, a-tryin' to be  
 Agreeable. "Oh! You?" says she—,  
 "You kin jaw S'repty, like you did,  
 An' slander Tomps!" An' off she rid!

Now, this is all I'm goin' to tell  
 Of this-here story— that is, I  
 Have done my very level best  
 As fur as this, an' here I "dwell,"  
 As auctioneers says, winkin' sly:  
 Hit's old man Willards tells the rest.

## 2

### The Old Man Talks

Adzackly jes one year ago,  
 This New Year's day, Tomps comes to me—  
 In my own house, an' whilse the folks  
 Was gittin' dinner—, an' he pokes  
 His nose right in, an' says, says he:  
 "I got yer note— an' read it slow!  
 You don't like me, ner I don't you,"  
 He says—, "we're even there, you know!  
 But you've said, funder that no gal  
 Of yourn kin marry me, er shall,  
 An' I'd best shet off comin', too!"  
 An' then he says—, "Well, them's Your views—;  
 But havin' talked with S'repty, we  
 Have both agreed to disagree  
 With your peculiar notions— some;  
 An', that s the reason, I refuse  
 To quit a-comin' here, but come—  
 Not fer to threat, ner raise no skeer  
 An' spile yer turkey-dinner here—,  
 But jes fer S'repty's sake, to sheer  
 Yer New Year's. Shall I take a cheer?"

Well, blame-don! Ef I ever see  
 Sich impidence! I couldn't say  
 Not nary word! But Mother she  
 Sot out a cheer fer Tomps, an' they

Shuk hands an' turnt their back on me.  
 Then I riz— mad as mad could be—!  
 But Marg'et says—, "Now, Pap! You set  
 Right where you're settin'—! Don't you fret!  
 An' Toms— you warm yer feet!" says she,  
 "An throw yer mitts an' comfert on  
 The bed there! Where is S'repty gone!  
 The cabbage is a-scortchin'! Ma,  
 Stop cryin' there an' stir the slaw!"  
 Well—! What was Mother cryin' fer—?  
 I half riz up— but Marg'et's chin  
 Hit squared— an' I set down ag'in—  
 I allus was afeard o' her,  
 I was, by jucks! So there I set,  
 Betwixt a sinkin'-chill an' sweat,  
 An' scuffled with my wrath, an' shet  
 My teeth to mighty tight, you bet!  
 An' yit, fer all that I could do,  
 I eeched to jes git up an' whet  
 The carvin'-knife a rasp er two  
 On Toms's ribs— an' so would you—!  
 Fer he had riz an' faced around,  
 An' stood there, smilin', as they brung  
 The turkey in, all stuffed an' browned—  
 Too sweet fer nose, er tooth, er tongue!  
 With sniffs o' sage, an' p'r'aps a dash  
 Of old burnt brandy, steamin'-hot  
 Mixed kindo' in with apple-mash  
 An' mince-meat, an' the Lord knows what!  
 Nobody was a-talkin' then,  
 To 'filiate any awk'ardness—  
 No noise o' any kind but jes  
 The rattle o' the dishes when  
 They'd fetch 'em in an' set 'em down,  
 An' fix an' change 'em round an' round,  
 Like women does— till Mother says—,  
 "Vittels is ready; Abner, call  
 Down S'repty— she's up-stairs, I guess—."  
 And Marg'et she says, "Ef you bawl  
 Like that, she'll not come down at all!  
 Besides, we needn't wait till she  
 Gits down! Here Temps, set down by me,  
 An' Pap: say grace...!" Well, there I was—!  
 What could I do! I drapped my head  
 Behind my fists an' groaned; an' said—:  
 "Indulgent Parent! In Thy cause  
 We bow the head an' bend the knee  
 An' break the bread, an' pour the wine,  
 Feelin'—" (The stair-door suddently  
 Went bang! An' S'repty flounced by me—)  
 "Feelin'," I says, "this feast is Thine—  
 This New Year's feast—" an' rap-rap-rap!  
 Went Marg'ets case-knife on her plate—  
 An' next, I heerd a sasser drap—,  
 Then I looked up, an' strange to state,  
 There S'repty set in Toms lap—  
 An' huggin' him, as shore as fate!  
 An' Mother kissin' him k-slap!  
 An' Marg'et— she chips in to drap  
 The ruther peert remark to me—:  
 "That 'grace' o' yourn," she says, "won't 'gee'—  
 This hain't no 'New Year's feast,'" says she—,  
 "This is a' Infair-Dinner, Pap!"

An' so it was—! Be'n married fer  
 Purt' nigh a week—! 'Twas Marg'et planned  
 The whole thing fer 'em, through an' through.  
 I'm rickonciled; an' understand,  
 I take things jes as they occur—,  
 Ef Marg'et liked Toms, Toms 'ud do—!  
 But I-says-I, a-holt his hand—,  
 "I'm glad you didn't marry Her—  
 'Cause Marg'et's my gardeeen— yes-sir—!  
 An' S'repty's good enough fer you!"

---

## ***The Town Karnteel***

The Town Karnteel—! It's who'll reveal  
Its praises jushtifiable?  
For who can sing av anything  
So lovely and reliable?  
Whin Summer, Spring, or Winter lies  
From Malin's Head to Tipperary,  
There's no such town for interprise  
Bechuxt Youghal and Londonderry!

There's not its likes in Ireland—  
For twic't the week, be gorries!  
They're playing jigs upon the band,  
And joomping there in sacks— and— and—  
And racing, wid wheelborries!

Kanteel— it's there, like any fair,  
The purty gurrls is plinty, sure—!  
And man-alive! At forty-five  
The leg's av me air twinty, sure!  
I lave me cares, and hoein' too,  
Behint me, as is sinsible,  
And it's Karnteel I'm goin' to,  
To cilebrate in principle!

For there's the town av all the land!  
And twic't the week, be-gorries!  
They're playing jigs upon the band,  
And joomping there in sacks— and— and—  
And racing, wid wheelborries!

And whilst I feel for owld Karnteel  
That I've no phrases glorious,  
It stands above the need av love  
That boasts in voice uproarious—!  
Lave that for Cork, and Dublin too,  
And Armagh and Killarney thin—,  
And Karnteel won't be troublin' you  
Wid any jilous blarney, thin!

For there's the town av all the land  
Where twic't the week, be-gorries!  
They're playing jigs upon the band,  
And joomping there in sacks— and— and—  
And racing, wid wheelborries!

---

## ***Regardin' Terry Hut***

Sence I tuk holt o' Gibbses' Churn  
And be'n a-handlin' the concern,  
I've travelled round the grand old State  
Of Indiany, lots, o' late—!  
I've canvassed Crawferdsville and sweat  
Around the town o' Layfayette;  
I've saw a many a County-seat  
I ust to think was hard to beat:  
At constant dreelage and expense

I've worked Greencastle and Vincennes—  
Dropped out o' Putnam into Clay,  
Owen, and on down thataway  
Plum into Knox, on the back-track  
Fer home ag'in— and glad I'm back—!  
I've saw these towns, as I say— but  
They's none 'at beats old Terry Hut!

It's more'n likely you'll insist  
I claim this 'cause I'm prejudist,  
Bein' born'd here in ole Vygo  
In sight o' Terry Hut—; but no,  
Yer clean dead wrong—! And I maintain  
They's nary drap in ary vein  
O' mine but what's as free as air  
To jest take issue with you there—!  
'Cause, boy and man, fer forty year,  
I've argied ag'inst livin' here,  
And jawed around and traded lies  
About our lack o' enterprise,  
And tuk and turned in and agreed  
All other towns was in the lead,  
When— drat my melts—! They couldn't cut  
No shine a-tall with Terry Hut!

Take even, statesmanship, and wit,  
And ginerel git-up-and-git,  
Old Terry Hut is sound clean through—!  
Turn old Dick Thompson loose, er Dan  
Vorehees— and where's they any man  
Kin even hold a candle to  
Their eloquence—? And where's as clean  
A fi-nan-seer as Rile' McKeen—  
Er puorer, in his daily walk,  
In railroad er in racin' stock!  
And there's 'Gene Debs— a man 'at stands  
And jest holds out in his two hands  
As warm a heart as ever beat  
Betwixt here and the J judgement Seat—!  
All these is reasons why I putt  
Sich bulk o' faith in Terry Hut.

So I've come back, with eyes 'at sees  
My faults, at last—, to make my peace  
With this old place, and truthful' swear—  
Like Ginerel Tom Nelson does—,  
"They hain't no city anywhere  
On God's green earth lays over us!"  
Our city government is grand—  
"Ner is they better farmin'-land  
Sun-kissed—" as Tom goes on and says—  
"Er dower'd with sich advantages!"  
And I've come back, with welcome tread,  
From journeyin's vain, as I have said,  
To settle down in ca'm content,  
And cuss the towns where I have went,  
And brag on ourn, and boast and strut  
Around the streets o' Terry Hut!

---

### ***Leedle Dutch Baby***

Leedle Dutch baby haff come ter town!  
Jabber und jump till der day gone down—  
Jabber und splutter und split hees jaws—  
Vot a Dutch baby dees Londsmon vas!  
I dink dose mout' vas leedle too vide

Ober he laugh fon dot altso-side!  
Haff got blenty off deemple und vrown—?  
Hey! Leedle Dutchman come ter town!

Leedle Dutch baby, I dink me proud  
Ober your fader can schquall dot loud  
Ven he vas leedle Dutch baby like you  
Und yoost don't gare, like he always do—!  
Guess ven dey vean him on beer, you bet  
Dot's der because dot he aind veaned yet—!  
Vot you said off he dringk you down—?  
Hey! Leedle Dutchman come ter town!

Leedle Dutch baby, yoost schquall away—  
Schquall fon preakfast till gisterday!  
Better you all time gry und shout  
Dan shmile me vonce fon der coffin out!  
Vot I gare off you keek my nose  
Downside-up mit your heels und toes—  
Downside, oder der oopside-down—?  
Hey! Leedle Dutchman come ter town!

---

## ***Down On Wriggle Crick***

"Best time to kill a hog's when he's fat." —Old Saw.

Mostly folks is law-abidin'  
Down on Wriggle Crick—,  
Seein' they's no Squire residin'  
In our bailywick;  
No grand juries, no suppeenies,  
Ner no vested rights to pick  
Out yer man, jerk up and jail ef  
He's outragin' Wriggle Crick!

Wriggle Crick hain't got no lawin',  
Ner no suits to beat;  
Ner no court-house gee-and-hawin'  
Like a County-seat;  
Hain't no waitin' round fer verdick,  
Ner non-gittin' witness-fees;  
Ner no thieves 'at gits "new heain's,"  
By some lawyer slick as grease!

Wriggle Cricks's leadin' spirit  
Is old Johnts Culwell—,  
Keeps post-office, and right near it  
Owns what's called "The Grand Hotel—"  
(Warehouse now—) buys wheat and ships it;  
Gits out ties, and trades in stock,  
And knows all the high-toned drummers  
'Twixt South Bend and Mishawauk'

Last year comes along a feller—  
Sharper 'an a lance—  
Stovepipe-hat and silk umbreller,  
And a boughten all-wool pants—,  
Tinkerin of clocks and watches:  
Says a trial's all he wants—  
And rents out the tavern-office  
Next to Uncle Johnts.

Well—. He tacked up his k'dentials,  
And got down to biz—.  
Captured Johnts by cuttin' stenchils  
Fer them old wheat-sacks o' his—.



Fixed his clock, in the post-office—  
Painted fer him, clean and slick,  
'Crost his safe, in gold-leaf letters,  
"J. Culwells's Wriggle Crick."

Any kindo' job you keered to  
Resk him with, and bring,  
He'd fix fer you— jest appeared to  
Turn his hand to anything—!  
Rings, er earbobs, er umbrellers—  
Glue a cheer er chany doll—,  
W'y, of all the beatin' fellers,  
He Jest beat 'em all!

Made his friends, but wouldn't stop there—,  
One mistake he learnt,  
That was, sleepin' in his shop there—.  
And one Sund'y night it burnt!  
Come in one o' jest a-sweepin'  
All the whole town high and dry—  
And that feller, when they waked him,  
Suffocatin', mighty nigh!

Johnts he drug him from the buildin',  
He'pless— 'peared to be—,  
And the women and the childern  
Drenchin' him with sympathy!  
But I noticed Johnts helt on him  
With a' extry lovin' grip,  
And the men-folks gethered round him  
In most warmest pardership!

That's the whole mess, grease-and-dopin'!  
Johnt's safe was saved—,  
But the lock was found sprung open,  
And the inside caved.  
Was no trial— ner no jury—  
Ner no jedge ner court-house-click—.  
Circumstances alters cases  
Down on Wriggle Crick!

---

## ***When De Folks Is Gone***

What dat scratchin' at de kitchin do'?  
Done heah'n dat foh an hour er mo'!  
Tell you Mr. Niggah, das sho's yo' bo'n,  
Hit's mighty lonesome waitin' when de folks is gone!

Blame my trap! How de wind do blow!  
An' dis is das de night foh de witches, sho'!  
Dey's trouble gon' to waste when de old slut whine,  
An' you heah de cat a-spittin' when de moon don't shine!

Chune my fiddle, an' de bridge go "bang!"  
An' I lef' 'er right back whah she allus hang,  
An' de tribble snap short an' de apern split  
When dey no mortal man wah a-tetchin' hit!

Dah! Now, what? How de ole j'ice cracks!  
'Spec' dis house, ef hit tell plain fac's,  
'Ud talk about de ha'nts wid dey long tails on  
What das'n't on'y come when de folks is gone!

What I tuk an' done ef a sho'-nuff ghos'  
Pop right up by de ole bed-pos'?  
What dat shinin' fru de front do' crack...?

### ***The Little Town O' Tailholt***

You kin boast about yer cities, and their stiddy growth and size,  
And brag about yer County-seats, and business enterprise,  
And railroads, and factories, and all sich foolery—  
But the little Town o' Tailholt is big enough fer me!

You kin harp about yer churches, with their steeples in the clouds,  
And gas about yer graded streets, and blow about yer crowds;  
You kin talk about yer "theaters," and all you've got to see—  
But the little Town o' Tailholt is show enough fer me!

They hain't no style in our town— hit's little-like and small—  
They hain't no "churches," nuther—, jes' the meetin' house is all;  
They's no sidewalks, to speak of— but the highway's allus free,  
And the little Town o' Tailholt is wide enough fer me!

Some find it discommodin'-like, I'm willin' to admit,  
To hev but one post-office, and a womern keepin' hit,  
And the drug-store, and shoe-shop, and grocery, all three—  
But the little Town o' Tailholt is handy 'nough fer me!

You kin smile and turn yer nose up, and joke and hev yer fun,  
And laugh and holler "Tail-holts is better holts'n none!  
Ef the city suits you better w'y, hit's where you'd ort'o be—  
But the little Town o' Tailholt's good enough fer me!

---

### ***Little Orphant Annie***

Little Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay,  
An' wash the cups an' saucers up, an' brush the crumbs away,  
An' shoo the chickens off the porch, an' dust the hearth, an' sweep,  
An' make the fire, an' bake the bread, an' earn her board-an'-keep;  
An' all us other childern, when the supper things is done,  
We set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun  
A-list'nin' to the witch-tales 'at Annie tells about,  
An' the Gobble-uns 'at gits you

    Ef you  
    Don't  
    Watch  
    Out!

Onc't they was a little boy wouldn't say his prayers—,  
An' when he went to bed at night, away up stairs,  
His Mammy heerd him holler, an' his Daddy heerd him bawl,  
An' when they turn't the kivers down, he wasn't there at all!  
An' they seeked him in the rafter-room, an' cubby-hole, an' press,  
An' seeked him up the chimbly-flue, an' ever'wheres, I guess;  
But all they found was thist his pants an' roundabout—:  
An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you

    Ef you  
    Don't  
    Watch  
    Out!

An' one time a little girl 'ud allus laugh and grin,

An' make fun of ever'one, an' all her blood an' kin;  
An' onc't, when they was "company," an' ole folks was there,  
She mocked 'em an' shocked 'em, an' said she didn't care!  
An' thist as she kicked her heels, an' turn't to run an' hide,  
They was two great big Black Things a-standin' by her side,  
An' they snatched her through the ceilin' 'fore she knowed what she's about!  
An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you

Ef you  
Don't  
Watch  
Out!

An' little Orphant Annie says, when the blaze is blue,  
An' the lamp-wick sputters, an' the wind goes woo-oo!  
An' you hear the crickets quit, an' the moon is gray,  
An' the lightn'-bugs in dew is all squenched away—,  
You better mind yer parents, an' yer teachers fond an' dear,  
An' churish them 'at loves you, an' dry the orphant's tear,  
An' he'p the pore an' needy ones 'at clusters all about  
Er the Gobble-uns 'll git you

Ef you  
Don't  
Watch  
Out!

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AFTERWHILES \*\*\*

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