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Title: Poems, Vol. IV

Author: Hattie Howard

Release date: August 23, 2006 [EBook #19109]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Joseph R. Hauser and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK POEMS, VOL. IV ***



**In Celestial realms where knowledge hath no end.
HARRY HOWARD,
STUDENT.
"Blessed are the pure in heart."**

POEMS

BY

HATTIE HOWARD.

**AUTHOR OF "POVERTY VS. PAUPERISM," "OUR GIRLS," "VIVE LA
REPUBLIQUE," "KEEPING A SECRET," "LITTLE JO,"
AND OTHER STORIES.**

Happy whoever writes a book
On which the world shall kindly look,
And who, when many a year has flown—
The volume worn, the author gone—
Revere, admire, and still read on.

HARTFORD PRESS:
THE CASE, LOCKWOOD & BRAINARD COMPANY.
1904.

**EXTRACTS FROM PRESS NOTICES OF A FORMER
VOLUME.**

[Pg 2]

"We find these poems of sentiment by Hattie Howard entirely natural, spontaneous, direct, rhythmical, and free from ambitious pretense. Many of the fanciful verses have a laugh at the end; and the collection has altogether a sunny, hopeful spirit and will be welcome in this time of generally morbid expression."

"This author's verse shows a hearty, wholesome, *human* spirit, sometimes overflowing into downright fun, and a straightforward directness always. It is a pleasant book, sure to be welcomed by all."

"These garnered gems reveal a genuine poetic faculty, and are worthy their attractive setting. We give the book a hearty welcome."

"Many of the poems abound in playful humor or tender touches of sympathy which appeal to a refined feeling, and love for the good, the true, and the beautiful."

"This poet's ear is so attuned to metric harmony that she must have been born within sound of some osier-fringed brook leaping and hurrying over its pebbly bed. There is a variety of subject and treatment, sufficient for all tastes, and these are poems which should be cherished."

"Lovers of good poetry will herald with pleasure this new and attractive volume by the well-known authoress of Hartford. A wooing sentiment and genial spirit seem to guide her in every train of thought. Her book has received, and deserves, warm commendations of the press."

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Poems.

[Pg 7]

"The Salt of the Earth."

The salt of the earth—what a meaningful phrase
 From the lips of the Saviour, and one that conveys
 A sense of the need of a substance saline
 This pestilent sphere to refresh and refine,
 And a healthful and happy condition secure
 By making it pure as the ocean is pure.

In all the nomenclature known to the race,
 In all appellations of people or place,
 Was ever a name so befitting, so true
 Of those who are seeking the wrong to undo,
 With naught of the Pharisee's arrogant air
 Their badge of discipleship humbly who wear?

Do beings, forsooth, fashioned out of the mold,
 So secretly, strangely, those elements hold
 That may be developed in goodness and grace
 To shine in demeanor, in form and in face
 Till they, by renewal of heavenly birth,
 Shall merit their title—the salt of the earth?

To the landsman at home or the sailor at sea,
 With nausea, scurvy, or canker maybe,
 'Tis never in language to overexalt
 The potent preservative virtue of salt—
 A crystal commodity wholesome and good,
 A cure for disease, and a savor for food.

[Pg 8]

Ah, the beasts of the wood and the fowls of the air
 Know all of the need of this condiment rare,
 Know well where the springs and the "salt-licks" abound,
 Where streams salinaceous flow out of the ground;
 And their cravings appease by sipping the brine
 With more than the relish of toppers at wine.

Our wants may be legion, our needs are but few,
And every known ill hath its remedy true;
'Tis ours to discover and give to mankind
Of hidden essentials the best that we find;
'Tis ours to eradicate error and sin,
And help to make better the place we are in.

If ever this world from corruption is free,
And righteousness reign in the kingdom to be,
Like salt in its simple and soluble way
Infusing malodor, preventing decay.
So human endeavor in action sublime
Must never relax till the finale of time.

To thousands discouraged this comforting truth
Appeals like the promise of infinite youth:
To know, as they labor like bees in the hive,
Yet do little more than keep goodness alive—
To know that the Master accredits their worth
As blessed disciples—"the salt of the earth."

[Pg 9]

Not Gone.

They are not gone whose lives in beauty so unfolding
Have left their own sweet impress everywhere;
Like flowers, while we linger in beholding,
Diffusing fragrance on the summer air.

They are not gone, for grace and goodness can not perish,
But must develop in immortal bloom;
The viewless soul, the real self we love and cherish,
Shall live and flourish still beyond the tomb.

They are not gone though lost to observation,
And dispossessed of those dear forms of clay,
Though dust and ashes speak of desolation;
The spirit-presence—this is ours always.

Let Us Give Thanks.

[Pg 10]

If we have lived another year
And, counting friends by regiments
Who share our love and confidence,
Find no more broken ranks,
For this let us give thanks.

If, since the last Thanksgiving-time,
Have we been blessed with strength and health,
And added to our honest wealth,
Nor lost by broken banks,
For this would we give thanks.

If through adversity we trod,
Yet with serene and smiling face,
And trusted more to saving grace
Than charlatans and cranks,
For this let us give thanks.

If we have somehow worried through
The ups and downs along life's track,
And still undaunted can look back
And smile at Fortune's pranks,
For this would we give thanks.

If every page in our account
With God and man is fairly writ,
We care not who examines it,
With no suspicious blanks,
For this let us give thanks.

[Pg 11]

Sonnet.

Upon my smile let none pass compliment
If it but gleam like an enchanting ray
Of sunshine caught from some sweet summer day,
In atmosphere of rose and jasmine scent
And breath of honeysuckles redolent,
When, with the birds that sing their lives away
In harmony, the treetops bend and sway,
And all the world with joy is eloquent.

But in that day of gloom when skies severe
Portend the tempest gathering overhead,
If by my face some token shall appear
Inspiring hope, dispelling darksome dread,
Oh, be the rapture mine that it be said,
"Her smile is like the rainbow, full of cheer."

A Rainy Day.

[Pg 12]

Oh, what a blessed interval
A rainy day may be!
No lightning flash nor tempest roar,
But one incessant, steady pour
Of dripping melody;
When from their sheltering retreat
Go not with voluntary feet
The storm-beleaguered family,
Nor bird nor animal.

When business takes a little lull,
And gives the merchantman
A chance to seek domestic scenes,
To interview the magazines,
Convoke his growing clan,
The boys and girls almost unknown,
And get acquainted with his own;
As well the household budget scan,
Or write a canticle.

When farmer John ransacks the barn,
Hunts up the harness old—
Nigh twenty years since it was new—
Puts in an extra thong or two,
And hopes the thing will hold
Without that missing martingale
That bothered Dobbin, head and tail,
He, gentle equine, safe controlled
But by a twist of yarn.

[Pg 13]

When busy fingers may provide
A savory repast
To whet the languid appetite,
And give to eating a delight
Unknown since seasons past;
Avaunt, ill-cookery! whose ranks
Develop dull dyspeptic cranks
Who, forced to diet or to fast,
Ergo, have dined and died.

It is a day of rummaging,
The closets to explore;
To take down from the dusty shelves
The books—that never read themselves—
And turning pages o'er
Discover therein safely laid
The bills forgot and never paid—
Somehow that of the corner store
Such dunning memories bring.

It gives a chance to liquidate
Epistolary debts;
To write in humble penitence
Acknowledging the negligence,
The sin that so besets,
And cheer the hearts that hold us dear,
Who've known and loved us many a year—
Back to the days of pantalets
And swinging on the gate.

[Pg 14]

It gives occasion to repair
Unlucky circumstance;
To intercept the ragged ends,
And for arrears to make amends
By mending hose and pants;
The romping young ones to re-dress
Without those signs of hole-y-ness
That so bespeak the mendicants
By every rip and tear.

It is a time to gather round
The old piano grand,
Its dulcet harmonies unstirred
Since Lucy sang so like a bird,
And played with graceful hand;
Like Lucy's voice in pathos sweet
Repeating softly "Shall we meet?"
Is only in the heavenly land
Such clear soprano sound.

It is a time for happy chat
En cercle tête-à-tête;
Discuss the doings of the day,
The club, the sermon, or the play,
Affairs of church and state;
Fond reminiscence to explore
The pleasant episodes of yore,
And so till raindrops all abate
As erst on Ararat.

[Pg 15]

Ah, yes, a rainy day may be
A blessed interval!
A little halt for introspect,
A little moment to reflect
On life's discrepancy—
Our puny stint so poorly done,
The larger duties scarce begun—
And so may conscience culpable
Suggest a remedy.

The Subway.

[Pg 16]

Oh, who in creation would fail to descend
That wonderful hole in the ground?—
That, feeling its way like a hypocrite-friend
In sinuous fashion, seems never to end;
While thunder and lightning abound.

Oh, who in creation would dare to go down
That great subterranean hole—
The tunnel, the terror, the talk of the town,
That gives to the city a mighty renown
And a shaking as never before?

A serpent, a spider, its mouth at the top
Where the flies are all buzzing about;
Down into its maw where the populace drop,
Who never know where they are going to stop,
Or whether they'll ever get out.

Why is it, with millions of acres untrod
Where never the ploughshare hath been,
That man must needs burrow miles under the sod,

As if to get farther and farther from God,
And deeper and deeper in sin?

O Dagos and diggers, who can't understand
That the planet you'll never get through—
Why, there is three times as much water as land,
And but for the least little seam in the sand
Your life is worth less than a *sou*.

Come up out of Erebus into the day,
There's plenty of room overhead;
No boring or blasting of rocks in the way,
No stratum of sticky, impervious clay—
All vacuous vapor instead.

Oh, give us a transit, a tube or an "el—",
Not leagues from the surface below;
As if we were never in Heaven to dwell,
As if we were all being fired to—well,
The place where we don't want to go!

[Pg 17]

The Apple Tree.

[Pg 18]

Has ever a tree from the earth upsprung
Around whose body have children clung,
Whose bounteous branches the birds among
Have pecked the fruit, and chirped and sung—
Was ever a tree, or shall there be,
So hardy, so sturdy, so good to see,
So welcome a boon to the family,
Like the pride of the farmer, the apple tree?

How he loves to be digging about its root,
Or grafting the bud in the tender shoot,
The daintiest palate that he may suit
With the fairest and finest selected fruit.
How he boasts of his Sweetings, so big for size;
His delicate Greenings—made for pies;
His Golden Pippins that take the prize,
The Astrachans tempting, that tell no lies.

How he learns of the squirrel a thing or two
That the wise little rodents always knew,
And never forget or fail to do,
Of laying up store for the winter through;
So he hollows a space in the mellow ground
Where leaves for lining and straw abound,
And well remembers his apple mound
When a day of scarcity comes around.

By many a token may we suppose
That the knowledge apple no longer grows,
That broke up Adam and Eve's repose
And set the fashion of fig-leaf clothes;
The story's simple and terse and crude,
But still with a morsel of truth imbued:
For of trees and trees by the multitude
Are some that are evil, and some that are good.

[Pg 19]

The more I muse on those stories old
The more philosophy they unfold
Of husbands docile and women bold,
And Satan's purposes manifold;
Ah, many a couple halve their fare
With that mistaken and misfit air
That the world and all are ready to swear
To a mighty unapple-y mated pair.

The apple's an old-fashioned tree I know,
All gnarled and bored by the curculio,
And loves to stand in a zigzag row;
And doesn't make half so much of a show
As the lovely almond that blooms like a ball,

And spreads out wide like a pink parasol
Set on its stem by the garden-wall;
But I love the apple tree, after all.

"A little more cider"—sings the bard;
And who this juiciness would discard,
Though holding the apple in high regard,
Must be like the cider itself—very hard;
For the spirit within it, as all must know,
Is utterly harmless—unless we go
Like the fool in his folly, and overflow
By drinking a couple of barrels or so.

What of that apple beyond the seas,
Fruit of the famed Hesperides?
But dust and ashes compared to these
That grow on Columbia's apple trees;
And I sigh for the apples of years ago:
For Rambos streaked like the morning dawn,
For Russets brown with their jackets on,
And aromatic as cinnamon.

Oh, the peach and cherry may have their place,
And the pear is fine in its stately grace;
The plum belongs to a puckery race
And maketh awry the mouth and face;
But I long to roam in the orchard free,
The dear old orchard that used to be,
And gather the beauties that dropped for me
From the bending boughs of the apple tree.

Two Roses.

I've a friend beyond the ocean
So regardful, so sincere,
And he sends me in a letter
Such a pretty souvenir.

It is crushed to death and withered,
Out of shape and very flat,
But its pure, delicious odor
Is the richer for all that.

'Tis a rose from Honolulu,
And it bears the tropic brand,
Sandwiched in this friendly missive
From that far-off flower-land.

It shall mingle *pot-à-pourri*
With the scents I love and keep;
Some of them so very precious
That remembrance makes me weep.

While I dream I hear the music
That of happiness foretells,
Like the flourishing of trumpets
And the sound of marriage bells.

There's a rose upon the prairie,
Chosen his by happy fate,
He shall gather when he cometh
Sailing through the Golden Gate.

Mine, a public posy, growing
Somewhere by the garden wall,
Might have gone to any stranger,
May have been admired by all.

But the rose in beauty blushing,
Tenderly and sweetly grown
In the home and its affections,
Blooms for him, and him alone.

Speed the voyager returning;
His shall be a welcome warm,
With the Rose of Minnesota
Gently resting on his arm.

Love embraces in his kingdom
Earth and sea and sky and air.
Hail, Columbia! hail, Hawaii!
It is Heaven everywhere.

The Taxidermist.

[Pg 23]

From other men he stands apart,
Wrapped in sublimity of thought
Where futile fancies enter not;
With starlike purpose pressing on
Where Agassiz and Audubon
Labored, and sped that noble art
Yet in its pristine dawn.

Something to conquer, to achieve,
Makes life well worth the struggle hard;
Its petty ills to disregard,
In high endeavor day by day
With this incentive—that he may
Somehow mankind the richer leave
When he has passed away.

Forest and field he treads alone,
Finding companionship in birds,
In reptiles, rodents, yea, in herds
Of drowsy cattle fat and sleek;
For these to him a language speak
To common multitudes unknown
As tones of classic Greek.

Unthinking creatures and untaught,
They to his nature answer back
Something his fellow mortals lack;
And oft educe from him the sigh
That they unnoticed soon must die,
Leaving of their existence naught
To be remembered by.

[Pg 24]

Man may aspire though in the slough;
May dream of glory, strive for fame,
Thirst for the prestige of a name.
And shall these friends, that so invite
The study of the erudite,
Ever as he beholds them now
Perish like sparks of light?

Nay, 'tis his purpose and design
To keep them: not like mummies old
Papyrus-mantled fold on fold,
But elephant, or dove, or swan,
Its native hue and raiment on,
In effigy of plumage fine,
Or skin its native tawn.

What God hath wrought thus time shall tell,
And thus endowment rich and vast
Be rescued from the buried past;
And rare reliques that never fade
Be in the manikin portrayed
Till taxidermy witness well
The debt to science paid.

[Pg 25]

Lo! one appeareth unforetold—
This re-creator, yea, of men;
Making him feel as born again
Who looketh up with reverent eyes,
Through wonders that his soul surprise,

Epithalamium.

I.

"Whom God hath joined"—ah, this sententious phrase
A meaning deeper than the sea conveys,
And of a sweet and solemn service tells
With the rich resonance of wedding-bells;
It speaks of vows and obligations given
As if amid the harmony of heaven,
While seraph lips approving seem to say,
"Love, honor, and obey."

II.

[Pg 26]

Is Hymen then ambassador divine,
His mission, matrimonial and benign,
The heart to counsel, ardor to incite,
Convert the nun, rebuke the eremite?
As if were this his mandate from the throne:
"It is not good for them to be alone;
Behold the land! its fruitage and its flowers,
Not mine and thine, but ours."

III.

Did not great Paul aver, in lucid spell,
That they of conjugal intent "do well"?
But hinted at a better state,—'tis one
With which two loving souls have naught to do.
For, in well-doing being quite content,
Be there another state more excellent
To which the celibate doth fain repair,
They neither know nor care.

IV.

And does the Lord of all become High Priest,
And with his presence grace the wedding-feast?
Then must the whole celestial throng draw nigh,
For nuptials there are none beyond the sky;
So is the union sanctified and blest,>
For Love is host, and Love is welcome guest;
So may the joyous bridal season be
Like that of Galilee.

[Pg 27]

V.

Sweet Mary, of the blessed name so dear
To all the loving Saviour who revere,
Madonna-like be thou in every grace
That shall adorn thee in exalted place,
And thine the happy privilege to prove
The depth, the tenderness of woman's love;
So shall the heart that honors thee today
Bow down to thee always.

VI.

O radiant June, in wealth of light and air,
With leaf and bud and blossom everywhere,
Let all bright tokens affluent combine,
And round the bridal pair in splendor shine;
Let sweethearts coy and lovers fond and true
On this glad day their tender vows renew,
And all in wedlock's bond rejoice as they
Whom God hath joined for aye.

I hope I'm not too orthodox
To give a joke away,
That took me like the chicken-pox
And left a debt to pay.

Let argument ignore the cost,
If it be dear or cheap,
And only claim that naught be lost
When it's too good to keep.

The proverb says "All flesh is grass,"
But this I do deny,
Because of that which came to pass,
But not to pass me by.

A body weighing by the pound
Inside of half a score,
In case and cordage safely bound,
Was landed at my door.

What could it be? for friends are slack,
And give, I rather trow,
When they are sure of getting back
As much as they bestow.

My hair, at thought of dark design,
Or dynamitish fate,
Stood up like quills of porcupine,
But more than twice as straight.

[Pg 29]

Anon, I mused on something rare,
Like duck or terrapin,
But dreamed not, of the parcel, there
Might be a pullet-in.

A mighty jerk,—the string that broke
The fowl affair revealed,
The victim of a cruel choke,
Its neck completely peeled.

The biped in its paper cof-
Fin, cramped and plump and neat,
Had scratched its very toenails off
In making both ends meat.

The only part I always ate,
That never made me ill,
Had gone away decapitate
And carried off the bill.

I pondered o'er the sacrifice,
The merry-thought, the wings,
On giblet gravy, salad nice,
And chicken-pie-ous things.

In heat of Fahrenheit degree
Two hundred twelve or more,
Where its grandsire, defying me,
Had crowed the year before,

[Pg 30]

I thrust it with a hope forlorn,—
I knew what toughness meant,
And sighed that ever I was born
To die of roasting scent.

But presto! what *dénouement* grand
Of cookery sublime!
'Twas done as by the second hand,
The drumsticks beating thyme.

And now the moral—he who buys
Will comprehend its worth,—

Look not so much to weight and size
As to the date of birth.

In fowls there is a difference;
"The good die young," they say,
And for the death of innocence
To make us meat, we pray.

Holiday Home.

[Pg 31]

Of all the sweet visions that come unto me
Of happy refreshment by land or by sea,
Like oases where in life's desert I roam,
Is nothing so pleasant as Holiday Home.

I climb to the top of the highest of hills
And look to the west with affectionate thrills,
And fancy I stand by the emerald side
Of charming Geneva, like Switzerland's pride.

In distant perspective unruffled it lies,
Except for the packet that paddles and plies,
And puffing its way like a pioneer makes
Its daily go-round o'er this pearl of the lakes.

Untroubled except for the urchins that come
From many a haunt that is never a home,
Instinctive as ducklings to swim and to wade,
Scarce knowing aforesaid why water was made.

All placid except for the dip of the oar
Of the skiff, or the barge striking out from the shore,
While merry excursionists shout till the gale
Reverberates laughter through rigging and sail.

How it scallops its basin and shimmers and shines
Like a salver of silver encompassed with vines,
In crystal illusion reflecting the skies
And the mountain that seems from its bosom to rise.

[Pg 32]

There stands a great house on a summit so high,
Like an eyrie of safety enroofed by the sky;
And I think of the rest and the comfort up there
To sleep, and to breathe that empyreal air.

Oh, the charm of the glen and the stream and the wood
Can never be written, nor be understood,
Except by the weary and languid who come
To bask in the quiet of Holiday Home.

From prisonlike cellars unwholesome and drear,
From attic and alley, from labor severe,
For the poor and the famished doth kindness prepare
A world of diversion and excellent fare.

To swing in the hammock, disport in the breeze,
To lie in the shade of magnificent trees—
Oh, this is like quaffing from luxury's bowl
The life-giving essence for body and soul!

Nor distance nor time shall efface from the mind
The influence gentle, the ministry kind;
While gratitude fondly enhallows the thought
Of a home and a holiday never forgot.

[Pg 33]

Ah, one is remembered of saintliest men
To lovely Geneva who comes not again;
Who left a sweet impress wherever he trod,
Humanity's helper, companion of God.

In the hearts of the many there sheltered and fed,
As unto a hospice by Providence led,
Does often a thought like a sunbeam intrude
Of the bounty so free, and the donors so good?

Who of their abundance have cheerfully given
Wherewith to develop an embryo heaven—
To brighten conditions too hard and too sad
And make the unhappy contented and glad.

Be blessedness theirs, who like knights of renown
Thus scatter such largesse o'er country and town,
Their monument building in many a dome
Like healthful and beautiful Holiday Home.

Rutha.

[Pg 34]

The days are long and lonely,
The weary eve comes on,
And the nights are filled with dreaming
Of one beloved and gone.

I reach out in the darkness
And clasp but empty air,
For Rutha dear has vanished—
I wonder, wonder where.

Yet must it be: her nature
So lovely, pure, and true;
So nearly like the angels,
Is she an angel too.

The cottage is dismantled
Of all that made it bright;
Beyond its silent portal
No love, nor life, nor light.

Where are the hopes I cherished,
The joys that once I knew,
The dreams, the aspirations?
All, all are perished too.

Yes, love's dear chain is broken;
From shore to shore I roam—
No comfort, no companion,
No happiness, no home.

[Pg 35]

Oh could I but enfold her
Unto my heart once more,
If aught could e'er restore me
My darling as before;

If God would only tell me—
Such myriads above—
Why He must needs have taken
The one I loved to love;

If God would only tell me
Why multitudes are left,
Unhappy and unlovely,
And I am thus bereft;

If—O my soul, be silent
And some day thou shalt see
Through mystery and shadow,
And know why it must be.

To every cry of anguish
From every heart distressed,
Can be no other answer
Than this—God knoweth best.

The Student Gone.

[Pg 36]

So soon he fell, the world will never know

What possibilities within him lay,
What hopes irradiated his young life,
With high ambition and with ardor rife;
But ah! the speedy summons came, and so
He passed away.

So soon he fell, there lie unfinished plans
By others misapplied, misunderstood;
And doors are barred that wait the master-key—
That wait his magic Open Sesame!—
To that assertive power that commands
The multitude.

Too soon he fell! Was he not born to prove
What manhood and integrity might be—
How one from all base elements apart
Might walk serene, in purity of heart,
His face the bright transparency of love
And sympathy?

The student ranks are closed, there is no gap;
Of other brave aspirants is no dearth;
Prowess, fidelity, and truth go on,
And few shall miss or mourn the student gone,
Reposing in the all-protecting lap
Of Mother Earth.

Too soon—O God! was it thy will that one
Of such endeavor and of noble mien,
Enrapt with living, should thus early go
From all he loved and all who loved him so,
Mid life's activities no longer known,
No longer seen?

Oh, not for aye should agonizing lips
Quiver with questionings they dare not frame;
Though in the dark penumbra of despair
Seemeth no light, nor comfort anywhere—
All things enshadowed as in dense eclipse,
No more the same.

Could we but know, in that Elysian lore
Of happy exercise still going on
Could we but know of glorious heights attained,
Of his reward, of mysteries explained,—
Ah! but to know were to lament no more
The student gone.

[Pg 37]

The Tourist.

[Pg 38]

Lo! carpet-bag and bagger occupy the land,
And prove the touring season actively begun;
His personnel and purpose can none misunderstand,
For each upon his frontlet bears his honest brand—
The fool-ish one!

By caravan and car, from country and from town,
A great grasshopper army fell foraging the land;
Like bumblebees that know not where to settle down,
Impossible it is to curb or scare or drown
The tourist band.

With guidebook, camera, with rod and gun, to shoot,
To lure the deer, the hare, the bird, the speckled trout,
The pauper or the prince unbidden they salute,
And everywhere their royal right dare none dispute—
To roam about.

From dark immuring walls and dingy ways of trade,
From high society's luxurious stately homes,
From lounging places by the park or promenade,
From rural dwellings canopied in sylvan shade,
The tourist comes.

To every mountain peak within the antipodes,
To sweet, sequestered spots no other mortal knows;
To every island fair engirt by sunny seas,
To forest-centers unexplored by birds or bees,
The tourist goes.

[Pg 39]

For Summer's fingers all the land have richly dressed,
Resplendent in regalia of scent and bloom,
And stirred in every heart the spirit of unrest,
Like that of untamed fledglings in the parent nest
For ampler room.

What is it prompts the roving mania—is it love
Of wild adventure fanciful, unique, and odd?
Is it to be in fashion, and to others prove
One's social standing, that impels the madness of
The tramp abroad?

The question hangs unanswered, like an unwise prayer,
Importunate, but powerless response to bring;
Go ask the voyagers, the rovers everywhere—
They only say it is their rest-time, outing, their
Vacationing.

So is the world's eccentric round of joy complete
When happy tourist-traveler, no more to roam,
His fascinating, thrilling story shall repeat
To impecunious, luckless multitudes who greet
The tourist home.

The Antiquarian.

[Pg 40]

Millions have been and passed from view
Benignity who never knew;
No aspiration theirs, nor aim;
Existence soulless as the clay
From whence they sprang, what right have they
To eulogy or fame?

So multitudes have been forgot—
But drones or dunces, good for naught;
Like clinging parasites or burrs
Taking from others all they dared,
Yet little they for others cared
Except as pilferers.

Not so with that majestic man
The all-round antiquarian—
No model his nor parallel;
From selfishness inviolate
Are his achievements good and great,
And thus shall ages tell.

A love for the antiquities
His honest hold, his birthright is!
And things unheard of or unread,
Defaced by moth or rust or mold,
To him are treasures more than gold,
Ay, than his daily bread.

[Pg 41]

At neither ghost nor ghoul aghast
He echoes voices of the past,
And tones like melancholy knells
Of years departed to his ear
Are sweeter than of kindred dear,
Sweeter than Florimel's.

He delves through centuries of dust
To resurrect some unknown bust,
A torso, or a goddess whole;
Maybe like Venus, minus arms—
Haply to find those missing charms;
But not the lost, lost soul.

He dotes on aborigines
Who lived in caves and hollow trees,
And barter for their trinkets rare;
Exchanging with those dusky breeds
For arrow-heads and shells and beads
A scalplock of his hair.

Had he been born—thus he laments—
Along with other great events,
Coeval say with Noah's flood,
A proud relationship to trace
With Hittites—or with any race
Of blue archaic blood!

[Pg 42]

Much he adores that Pilgrim flock,
The same that split old Plymouth rock,
Their "Bay Psalm" when they tried to sing.
Devoid of metre, sense, and tune,
Who but a Puritanic loon
Could have devised the thing?

He revels in a pedigree,
The sprouting of a noble tree
'Way back in prehistoric times;
And for the "Family Record" true
Of scions all that ever grew
Would give a billion dimes.

There is a language fossils speak:
'Tis not like Latin, much less Greek,
But quite as dead and antique
Its silent syllables, and cold;
But ah, what meanings they unfold,
What histories relate!

The earthquake is his best ally—
It shows up things he cannot buy,
And gives him raw material
For making mastodons and such,
Enough to beat that ancient "Dutch
Republic's Rise and Fall."

[Pg 43]

A piece of bone can never lie:
A rib, a femur, or a thigh
Is but a dislocated sign
Of something hybrid, half and half
Betwixt a crocodile and calf—
Maybe a porcupine.

The stately "Antiquarium"
Is his emporium, his home.
He wonders if when he is gone
Will people look with mournful pride
On him done up and classified,
And the right label on.

He dreams of an emblazoned page,
The calendar of every age
Down from Creation's primal dawn;
With archetypes of spears and bones,
And tons of undeciphered stones
Its illustrations drawn.

Labor a blessing, not a curse,
His hunting ground the Universe,
So much the more his nature craves
To sound the fathoms of the sea:
What mighty wonders there must be
Down in those hidden caves!

[Pg 44]

So toils this dauntless man, alert
Amid the ruins and the dirt,
That other men to endless day
Themselves uplifted from the clod
May see, and learn and know that God
Is greater far than they.

And thus, of mighty ken and plan,
The all-round antiquarian
Pursues his happy ministry;
And on the world's progressive track
Advances, always going back—
Back to antiquity.

Poor Housekeeping.

[Pg 45]

If there is one gift that I prize above others,
That tinges with brightness whatever I do,
And gives to the sombre a roseate hue,
'Tis a legacy mine from the nicest of mothers,
Who haply the beauty of housewifery knew,
And taught me her neatness and diligence too.

So is my discomfort a house in disorder:
The service uncleanly, the linen distained,
The children like infantry rude and untrained;
The portieres dusty and frayed at the border,
By lavish expenses the pocketbook drained,
And miseries numberless never explained.

I dream not of pleasure in visions untidy,
A wrapper all hole-y, a buttonless shoe,
A slatternly matron with nothing to do;
And all the ill-luck charged to ominous Friday
Can never compare with the ills that ensue
On wretched housekeeping and cookery too.

There's many a husband, a patient bread-winner,
Gets up from the table with look of despair,
And something akin to the growl of a bear;
Not the saint he might be, but a querulous sinner—
One driven to fasting but not unto prayer—
Till epitaphed thus—"Indigestible Fare."

[Pg 46]

There's many a child, from the roof-tree diurnal,
A scene of distraction or dullness severe,
With the longing of youth for diversion and cheer,
That comes like the spring-time refreshing and vernal,
Goes out on a ruinous, reckless career,
Returning, if ever, not many a year.

O negligent female, imperfect housekeeper,
Though faultless in figure and charming of face,
In ruffles of ribbon and trailings of lace
Usurping the part of a common street-sweeper,
You never can pose as a type of your race
In frowsy appearance mid things out of place.

O fashion-bred damsel, with folly a-flutter,
Until you have learned how to manage a broom,
If never you know how to tidy a room,
Manipulate bread or decide about butter,
The duties of matron how dare you assume,
Or ever be bride to a sensible groom?

I covet no part with that army of shirkers
All down at the heels in their slipper-y tread,
Who hunt for the rolling-pin under the bed,
Who look with disdain on intelligent workers
And take to the club or the circus instead
Of mending a stocking or laying the spread.

[Pg 47]

Oh, I dream of a system of perfect housekeeping,
Where mistress and helper together compete
In excellent management, quiet and neat;
And though in the bosom of earth I am sleeping,
Shall somebody live to whom life will be sweet
And home an ideal, idyllic retreat.

Going to Tobog.

Into my disappointment-cup
The snowflakes fell and blocked the road,
And so I thought I'd finish up
The latest style of Christmas ode;
When she, the charming little lass
With eyes as bright as isinglass,
Before a line my pen had wrought
In strange attire came bounding in,
As if she had with Bruno fought,
And robbed him of his shaggy skin.

She came to me robed *cap-à-pie*
In her bewitching "blanket-suit,"
In moccasin and toggery,
All ready for "that icy chute,"
And asked me if I thought she'd do;
I shake with love of mischief true:
"For what?—a polar bear?—why, yes!"
"No, no!" she said, with half a pout.
"Why, one would think so, by your dress—
Say, does your mother know you're out?"

"No, I'm not out," she said, and sighed;
"Because the storm so wildly raged—
But for the first delightful ride
For half a year I've been engaged."
"Engaged to what?—an Esquimau?
To ride a glacier, or a floe?"
"Why, don't you know"—her color glowed,
In expectation all agog—
"The reason why I'm glad it snowed?
Because—I'm going to tobog."

[Pg 48]

"Passer Le Temps."

So *that's* the way you pass your time!
Indeed your charming, frank confession
Betrays no sort of heinous crime,
But marks a wonderful digression
From puritanic views, less bold,
That we were early taught to hold.

"*Passer le temps*," of course, implies
A little cycle of flirtations,
Wherein the actors never rise
To sober, serious relations,
But play just for amusement's sake
A harmless game of "give and take."

While moments pass on pinions fleet,
And youth in beauty effloresces,
The joy that finds itself complete
In honeyed words and soft caresses,
Alas! an index seems to be
Of perilous inconstancy.

It may be with disdainful smile
You greet this comment from a stranger,
Your pleasure-paths pursuing while
A siren voice discounts the danger,
Until, some day, in sadder rhyme
You rue your mode of "passing time."

[Pg 49]

The Torpedo.

Valiant sons of the sea,
All the vast deep, your home,

[Pg 50]

Holds no terror so dread
As this novel and unseen foe,
 Lurking under the foam
 Of some dangerous channel—
As the torpedo, the scourge of ships.

 Through the rigging may roar
 Æolus' thousand gales,
 Yet the mariner's heart
Shrinketh not from the howling blast;
 Though with battle-rent sails,
 Flames and carnage around him,
Cowardice never shall pale his lips.

 But when powers concealed,
 Threatening with death the crew,
 Pave each eddy below,
E'en the bravest are chilled with fear,
 Lest yon wizard in blue,
 Who their progress is spying,
Touch but the key with his finger-tips.

 Lo! with thunderous boom
 Towers a column bright,
 And the vessel is gone!
In that ocean of blinding spray
 Sink her turrets from sight,
 By thy potency broken,
O irresistible scourge of ships!

—*Harry Howard.*

[Pg 51]

Margaret.

I saw her for a moment,
 Her presence haunts me yet,
In oft-recurring visions
 Of grace and gladness met
That marked the sweet demeanor
 Of dainty Margaret.

Like gossamer her robe was
 Around her lightly drawn,
A filmy summer-garment
 That fairy maidens don
To make them look like angels
 Croqueting on the lawn.

The mallet-sport became her
 In hue of exercise
That tinged her cheek with roses;
 And, dancing in her eyes,
Were pantomime suggestions
 Of having won—a prize.

No more to me a stranger
 Is she who occupies
A place in all my musings;
 And brings in tender guise
A thought of one so like her—
 Long years in Paradise.

Dear Margaret! that "pearl-name"
 Is thine—and may it be
The synonym of goodness,
 Of truth and purity,
And all ennobling graces
 Exemplified in thee.

[Pg 52]

Christmas Bells.

[Pg 53]

Ring out, O bells, in joyful chime!
Again we hail the Christmas time;
In melting, mellow atmosphere,
The crown and glory of the year.

When bitterness, distrust, and awe
Dissolve, like ice in winter's thaw,
Beneath the genial touches of
Amenity, good will, and love.

When flowers of affection grow,
Like edelweiss mid alpine snow,
In lives severe and beautiless,
Unused to warmth or tenderness.

Let goodness, grace, and gratitude
Revive in music's interlude,
And pæan notes, till time shall cease,
Proclaim the blessed reign of peace.

Ring, Christmas bells! for at the sound
Sweet memories of Him abound
Who laid aside a diadem
To be the babe of Bethlehem.

By the Sea.

[Pg 54]

I am longing to dwell by the sea,
And dip in the surf every day,
And—height of subaqueous glee—
With the sharks and the porpoises play.

To novelty ever inclined—
Instead of a calm evening sail,
'Twould suit my adventurous mind
To ride on the back of a whale.

I want to disport on the rocks
Like a mythical mermaid's belle,
And comb out my watery locks,
Then dive to my cavernous cell.

I want to discover what lends
Such terror to all timid folks—
That serpent whose mystery tends
To make one believe it a hoax.

They say he's been captured at last;
The news is too good to be true—
He's slippery, cunning, and fast,
And likes notoriety too.

Once had I such longings to be
A sailor—those wishes are o'er,
But ever in dreams of the sea
My horoscope rests on the shore.

[Pg 55]

Oh, give me a home by the sea—
A cottage, a cabin, a tent!
Existence should ecstasy be
Till summer were joyfully spent.

A Song.

Oh, sing me a merry song!
My heart is sad tonight;
The day has been so drear and long,
The world has gone awry and wrong,
Discouragements around me throng,
And gloom surpassing night.

Oh, sing again the song for me
My mother used to sing
When I, a child beside her knee,
Looked up for her sweet sympathy,
Nor ever thought how I might be
Her little hindering thing.

Oh, sing, as eventide draws near,
The old-time lullabys
Grandmother sang—forever dear,
Though in her grave this many a year
She lies who "read her title clear
To mansions in the skies."

Oh, sing till all perplexing care
Has vanished with the day!
And angels ever bright and fair
Come down the melody to share,
And on their pinions lightly bear
My happy soul away.

[Pg 56]

"Is It April?"

No, this is January, dear,
The almanac's untrue;
For roaring Boreas, 'tis clear,
In sleet and snow and atmosphere,
Will be the monarch of the year,
And terror, too.

"Is it a blessing in disguise?"
Of course, things always are;
But Arctic blasts with ardent skies
Somehow do not quite harmonize,
That try to cheat by weather-lies
The calendar.

Old Janus must be double-faced;
He promised long ago
The maple syrup not to taste,
Nor steal the roses from the waist
Of one, a damsel fair and chaste
As April snow.

O winter of our discontent!
Your reign was for a day;
Behold! a scene of wonderment,
A thousand tongues are eloquent,
For spring, in bud and bloom and scent,
Is on the way.

[Pg 57]

Christmas-Tide.

Let working-clothes be laid aside,
And Industry in festal garb arrayed;
Let busy brain and hand from toil and trade
Relax at Christmas-tide.

As moments pass by dial, so
Let gifts go round the happy circle where
In giving and receiving each may share,
And mutual kindness show.

The meaning deep, like mystery,
That lies in holly-bough or mistletoe,
May thousands never fathom—yet who know
And hail the Christmas-tree.

So strong a hold on human thought
Has this glad day that seasons all the year

[Pg 58]

With the rich flavoring of hearty cheer,
It ne'er shall be forgot.

It is the milestone on life's road
Where we may lay our burdens down, and take
A look at souvenirs, for love's dear sake
So prettily bestowed.

Upon its shining tablet we may write—
If, like the good Samaritan, in deed—
A record that the angel band shall read
With impulse of delight.

And this is why on Christmas morn
The world should smile and wear its brightest glow:
Because some nineteen hundred years ago
A little child was born.

January, 1885.

[Pg 59]

These winter days are passing fair!
As if a breath of spring
Had permeated all the air,
And touched each living thing
With thankfulness for such a boon—
Discounting with a scoff
The almanac's report that "June
Is yet a long way off!"

We quarrel with the calendar—
For May has been misplaced—
And doubt the tale oracular
Of "Janus, double-faced;"
For this "ethereal mildness" looks
Toward shadowy delights
Of roseate bowers, of cosy nooks,
Of coming thermal nights.

Let robes diaphanous succeed
Dense garments made of fur,
And overcoats maintain the lead—
Among the things that were!
The wisely-rented sealskin sacque,
By many a dame possessed,
Be quickly relegated back
To its moth-haunted chest!

While every portly alderman,
In linen suit arrayed,
Manipulates the palm-leaf fan
And seeks the cooling shade;
And he perspires who not in vain
Suggests his funny squibs,
By poking his unwelcome cane
In other people's ribs.

[Pg 60]

Who dares to fling opprobrium
On January now?
As to a potentate we come
With reverential bow,
Because it doth not yet appear
That Time hath ever seen
The ruler of th' inverted year
In more benignant mien.

O Boreas! do not lie low—
That is, if "lie" thou must—
Upon our planet; do not blow
With fierce and sudden gust,
But come so gently, tenderly—
As come thou surely wilt—
That we may have sweet dreams of thee,
Beneath "our crazy quilt!"

Sweet Peas.

[Pg 61]

By helpful fingers taught to twine
Around its trellis, grew
A delicate and dainty vine;
The bursting bud, its blossom sign,
Inlaid with honeyed-dew.

Developing by every art
To floriculture known,
From tares exempt, and kept apart,
Careful, as if in some fond heart
Its legume germs were sown.

So thriving, not for me alone
Its beauty and perfume—
Ah, no, to rich perfection grown
By flower mission loved and known
In many a darkened room.

And once in strange and solemn place,
Mid weeping uncontrolled,
Upon the crushed and snowy lace
I saw them scattered 'round a face
All pallid, still, and cold.

Oh, some may choose, as gaudy shows,
Those saucy sprigs of pride
The peony, the red, red rose;
But give to me the flower that grows
Petite and pansy-eyed.

[Pg 62]

Thus, meditation on Sweet Peas
Impels the ardent thought,
Would maidens all were more like these,
With modesty—that true heartsease—
Tying the lover's knot.

The Summer House.

Midway upon the lawn it stands,
So picturesque and pretty;
Upreared by patient artist hands,
Admired of all the city;
The very arbor of my dream,
A covert cool and airy,
So leaf-embowered as to seem
The dwelling of a fairy.

It is the place to lie supine
Within a hammock swinging,
To watch the sunset, red as wine,
To hear the crickets singing;
And while the insect world around
Is buzzing—by the million—
No wingèd thing above the ground
Intrudes in this pavilion.

[Pg 63]

It is the place, at day's decline,
To tell the old, old story
Behind the dark Madeira vine,
Behind the morning glory;
To confiscate the rustic seat
And barter stolen kisses,
For honey must be twice as sweet
In such a spot as this is.

It is the haunt where one may get
Relief from petty trouble,
May read the latest day's gazette

About the "Klondike" bubble:
How shanties rise like golden courts.
Where sheep wear glittering fleeces,
How gold is picked up—by the quartz—
And all get rich as Croesus.

Here hid away from dust and heat,
Secure from rude intrusion,
While willing lips the thought repeat,
So grows the fond illusion:
That happiness the product is
Of lazy, languid dozing,
Of soft midsummer reveries,
Half-waking, half-reposing.

And here in restful interlude,
Life's fallacies forgetting,
Its frailties—such a multitude—
The fuming and the fretting,
Amid the fragrance, dusk, and dew,
The happy soul at even
May walk abroad, and interview
Bright messengers from Heaven.

[Pg 64]

To Die in Autumn.

[Pg 65]

The melody of autumn
Is the only tune I know,
And I sing it over and over
Because it thrills me so;
It stirs anew the happy wish,
So near to perfect bliss,
To live a little longer in
A world like this.

The sound was never sweeter,
The voice so nearly mute,
As beauty, dying, loses
Her hold upon the lute;
And like the harmonies that touch
And blend with those above,
Forever must an echo wake
The heart of love.

Her robe of brown and coral
And amber glistens through
Rare jewels of the morning,
The opals of the dew,
Like royal fabrics worn beneath
The tinsel of pearls,
Or diamond dust by fashion strewn
On sunny curls.

If I could wrap such garments
In true artistic style
About myself departing,
And wear as sweet a smile
And be as guileless as the flowers
My friends would never sigh;
'Twould reconcile them to my death
To see me die.

[Pg 66]

And why should there be sorrow
When dying is no more
Than 'twixt two bright apartments
The opening of a door
Through which the freed, enraptured soul
From this, a paradise,
May pass to that supremely fair
Beyond the skies?

Oh, 'twere not hard to finish
When earth with tender grace

Prepares for her dear children
So sweet a resting place;
And though in dissolution's throe
The melody be riven,
The song abruptly ended here
Goes on in Heaven.

Apple Blossoms.

[Pg 67]

Of all the lovely blossoms
That decorate the trees,
And shower down their petals
With every breath of breeze,
There is nothing so sweet or fair to me
As the delicate blooms of the apple tree.

A thousand shrubs and flow'rets
Delicious pleasure bring,
But beautiful Pomona
Must be the queen of spring;
And out of her flagon the peach and pear
Their chalices fill with essence rare.

Oh, is it any wonder,
Devoid of blight or flaw,
The peerless blooms of Eden
Our primal mother saw
In redolent beauty before her placed
So tempted fair Eve the fruit to taste?

But woman's love of apples,
Involving fearful price,
And Adam's love for woman
That cost him Paradise,
By the labor of hands and sweat of brow,
Have softened the curse to a blessing now.

[Pg 68]

If so those pink-eyed glories,
In fields and orchards gay
Develop luscious fruitage
By Horticulture's way,
Then, sweet as the heart of rich legumes,
Shall luxury follow the apple blooms.

Without a Minister.

The congregation was devout,
The minister inspired,
Their attitude to those without
By every one admired,
And all things so harmonious seemed,
Of no calamity we dreamed.

But, just in this quiescent state
A little cloud arose
Portentous of our certain fate—
As everybody knows;
Our pastor took it in his head
His "resignation" must be read.

In every eye a tear-drop stood,
For we accepted it
Reluctantly, but nothing could
Make him recant one bit;
And soon he left for distant parts,
While we were left—with broken hearts.

[Pg 69]

And next the "patriarch" who led
For nearly three-score years
Our "Sabbath school"—its worthy head—

Rekindled all our fears
By saying, with a smile benign,
"Since it's the fashion, I'll resign!"

And so he did; but promptly came
Forth one, of good report—
"Our Superintendent" is his name—
Who tries to "hold the fort"
With wisdom, tact, and rare good sense,
In this, his first experience.

The world looks on and says, "How strange!
They hang together so,
These Baptists do, and never change,
But right straight onward go
While other flocks are scattering all,
And some have strayed beyond recall!"

Indian Summer.

[Pg 70]

Is it not our bounden duty
Harsh and bitter thoughts to quell,
Wild, ambitions schemes repel,
And to revel in the beauty
Of this Indian summer spell,
Bathing forest, field, and dell
As with radiance immortelle?

None can paint like nature dying;
Whose dissolving struggle lent
Wealth of hues so richly blent
That, through weary years of trying,
Artist skill pre-eminent
May not copy or invent
Such divine embellishment.

Knights of old from castles riding
Scattered largesse as they went
Which, like manna heaven-sent,
Cheered the poverty-abiding;
But, when 'neath "that low green tent"
Passed the hand benevolent,
Sad were they and indigent.

Monarchs, too, have thus delighted
Giving unto courtiers free,
Costly robes and tinselry;
And, as royal guests, invited
Them to sumptuous halls of glee,
Banqueting and minstrelsy,
Bacchus holding sovereignty.

[Pg 71]

Then, perchance, in mood capricious
Stripped and scorned and turned away
Those who tasted for a day
Pleasure sweet and food delicious;
Nor might any say them nay—
Lest his head the forfeit pay
Who a king dared disobey.

But our own benignant Giver,
Almoner impartial, true,
Constantly doth gifts renew;
Nor would fitfully deliver
Aught unto the chosen few,
But to all the wide world through,
Who admire his wonders, too.

Never shall the heart be poorer,
Never languish in despair,
That such affluence may share;
For than this is nothing surer—
He hath said, and will prepare

In those realms of upper air
Glories infinitely fair.

Autumn-Time.

[Pg 72]

Like music heard in mellow chime,
The charm of her transforming time
 Upon my senses steals
As softly as from sunny walls,
In day's decline, their shadow falls
 Across the sleeping fields.

A fair, illumined book
Is nature's page whereon I look
 While "autumn turns the leaves;"
And many a thought of her designs
Between those rare, resplendent lines
 My fancy interweaves.

I dream of aborigines,
Who must have copied from the trees
 The fashions of the day:
Those gorgeous topknots for the head,
Of yellow tufts and feathers red,
 With beads and sinews gay.

I wonder if the saints behold
Such pageantry of colors bold
 Beyond the radiant sky;
And if the tints of Paradise
Are heightened by the strange device
 Of making all things die.

Yea, even so; for Nature glows
Because of her expiring throes,
 As if around her tomb
Unmeet it were,—the look severe
That designates a common bier
 Enwreathed in deepest gloom.

[Pg 73]

And so I meditate if aught
Can be so fair where death is not;
 If Heaven's loveliness
Is born of struggle and decay;
And, but for funeral array,
 Would it be beautiless?

Oh solemn, sad, sweet mystery
That Earth's unrivaled brilliancy
 Is but her splendid pall!
That Heaven were not what it is
But for that crown of tragedies,
 The sacrifice for all.

So not a charm would Zion lose
Were it bereft of sparkling hues
 In gilded lanes and leas;
It would be bright though not a flower
Unclosed in its celestial bower,
 And void of jeweled trees.

Yet, lily-like, one bloom I see,
Its name is his who died for me;
 Whose matchless beauty shows
Perfection on its bleeding stem,
The blossom-bud of Bethlehem,
 The Resurrection Rose.

[Pg 74]

"The Beauty of Nature."

Oh bud and leaf and blossom,
How beautiful they are!
Than last year's vernal season
'Tis lovelier by far;
This earth was never so enchanting
Nor half so bright before—
But so I've rhapsodized, in springtime,
For forty years or more.

What luxury of color
On shrub and plant and vine,
From pansies' richest purple
To pink of eglantine;
From buttercups to "johnny-jump-ups,"
With deep cerulean eyes,
Responding to their modest surname
In violet surprise.

Sometimes I think the sunlight
That gilds the emerald hills,
And makes Aladdin dwellings
Of dingy domiciles,
Is surplus beauty overflowing
That Heaven cannot hold—
The topaz glitter, or the jacinth,
The glare of streets of gold.

In "Cedar Hill," the city
Of "low green tents" of sod,
I read the solemn record
Of those gone home to God;
While from their hallowed dust arising
The fragrant lilies grow
As if their life was all the sweeter
For those who sleep below.

And so 'tis not in sadness
I dwell upon the thought,
When I am dead and buried
That I shall be forgot.
Because the germ of reproduction
Doth this poor body hold,
Perchance to add to nature's beauty
A rose above the mold.

[Pg 75]

"All the Rage."

[Pg 76]

A common wayside flower it grew,
Unhandsome and unnoticed too,
Except in deprecation
That such an herb unrequited toiled,
Prolific cumberer of the soil,
Defied extermination.

Its gorgeous blooms were never stirred
By honey-bee nor humming-bird
In their corollas dipping;
But they from clover white and red
Delicious nectar drew instead
In dainty rounds of sipping.

No place its own euphonious name
Within the catalogue might claim
Of any flora-lover;
For, in the scores of passers-by,
As yet no true artistic eye
Its beauty could discover.

The reaper with his sickle keen
Aimed at its crest of gold and green
With spiteful stroke relentless,
And would have rooted from the ground
The "Solidago"—blossom-crowned,

But gaudy, rank, and scentless.

But everything must have its day—
And since some fickle *devotée*
Or myrmidon of Fashion
Declares that this obnoxious weed,
From wild, uncultivated seed,
Shall be the "ruling passion,"

Effusive schoolgirls dote on it;
Whose "frontispieces" infinite
That need no decoration
Are hid beneath its golden dust,
Till many a fine, symmetric bust
Is lost to admiration.

Smart dudes and ladies' men—the few
Who wish they could be ladies too—
Display a sprig of yellow
Conspicuous in their buttonhole,
To captivate a maiden soul
Or vex some other fellow.

And spinsters of uncertain age
Are clamoring now for "all the rage"
To give a dash of color
To their complexions, which appear
To be the hue they hold so dear—
Except a trifle duller.

That *négligée* "blue-stockings" friend,
Who never cared her time to spend
On mysteries of the toilet,
Now wears a sumptuous bouquet
And shakes your hand a mile away
For fear that you will spoil it.

Delightful widows, dressed in black,
Complain with modest sighs they lack
That coveted expression,
That sort of Indian Summer air
Which "relicts" always ought to wear
By general concession;

And so lugubrious folds of crape
Are crimped and twisted into shape
With graceful heads of yellow,
That give a winsome toning down
To sombre hat and sable gown—
In autumn tintings mellow.

Alas, we only hate the weed!
And think that it must be, indeed,
The ladies' last endeavor
To match the gentlemen, who flaunt
That odious dried tobacco plant
At which they puff forever.

[Pg 77]

[Pg 78]

My Mother's Hand.

[Pg 79]

My head is aching, and I wish
That I could feel tonight
One well-remembered, tender touch
That used to comfort me so much,
And put distress to flight.

There's not a soothing anodyne
Or sedative I know,
Such potency can ever hold
As that which lovingly controlled
My spirit long ago.

How oft my burning cheek as if

By Zephyrus was fanned,
And nothing interdicted pain
Or seemed to make me well again
So quick as mother's hand.

'Tis years and years since it was laid,
In her own gentle way,
On tangled curls of brown and jet
Above the downy coverlet
'Neath which the children lay.

As bright as blessed sunlight ray
The past comes back to me;
Her fingers turn the sacred page
For a little group of tender age
Who gather at her knee.

And when those hands together clasped
Devout and still were we;
To whom it seemed God then and there
Must surely answer such a prayer,
For none could pray as she.

O buried love with her that passed
Into the Silent Land!
O haunting vision of the night!
I see, encoffined, still, and white,
A mother's face and hand.

[Pg 80]

A Leap Year Episode.

Such oranges! so fresh and sweet,
So large and lovely—and so cheap!
They lay in one delicious heap,
And added to the sumptuous feast
For each and all in taste expert
The acme of all fine dessert;
So, singling out the very least
As in itself an ample treat,
While sparkling repartee and jest
Exhilarated host and guest,
Of rarity so delicate
In dreamy reverie I ate,
By magic pinions as it were
Transported from this realm of snows
To be a happy sojourner
Away down where the orange grows;
Amid the bloom, the verdure, and
The beauty of that tropic land,
While redolence seemed wafted in
From orchard-groves of Mandarin.

In dinner costume *a la mode*,
Expressing from the spongy skin
The nectar that ran down her chin
In little rills of lusciousness,
Sat Maud, the beautiful coquette;
Her dainty mouth, like "two lips" wet
With morning dew, her crimson dress,
A sad discoloration showed
Where orange-juice—it was a sin!—
A polka-dot had painted in;
Which moved the roguish girl to say
Half-ruefully (half-*décolleté*)—
"I'm glad it's Leap Year now, for I—"
Her voice was like a moistened lute
"Shall wear the flowers, by and by—
I do not like this leaky fruit!"
And looking straight and saucily
At cousin Ned, her *vis-a-vis*;
While Will, who never dared propose,
Was blushing like a red, red rose.

[Pg 81]

[Pg 82]

The company was large, and she
Touched elbows with the exquisite,
Gay Archibald, who took her wit
And pertness all as meant for him;
Who, thereby lifted some degrees
Above less-favored devotees,
With rainbow sails began to trim
His craft of sweet felicity;
So mirth in reckless afterlude
Convulsed the merry multitude,
Who laughed at Archie's self-esteem,
And pitied Will's long-cherished dream;
While all declared, for her and Ned—
His face was like a silver tray—
The wedding-banquet should be spread
Before a twelvemonth passed away.
But, ah, the sequel—blind were we
To woman and her strategy!
For he so long afraid to speak
Bore off the bride within a week.

If.

[Pg 83]

If all the sermons good men preach
And all the precepts that they teach
Were gathered into one
Unbroken line of silver speech,
The shining filament might reach
From earth unto the sun.

If all the stories ever told
By wild romancers, young or old,
Into a thread were drawn,
And from its cable coil unrolled,
'Twould span those misty hills of gold
That heaven seems resting on.

If every folly, every freak,
From day to day, from week to week,
Is written in "The Book,"
With all the idle words we speak,
Would it not crimson many a cheek
Upon the page to look?

If all the good deeds that we do
From honest motives pure and true
Shall there recorded be,
Known unto God and angels too,
Is it not sad they are so few
And wrought so charily?

Perfect Character.

[Pg 84]

He lives but half who never stood
By the grave of one held dear,
And out of the deep, dark loneliness
Of a heart bereaved and comfortless,
From sorrow's crystal plentitude,
Feeling his loss severe,
Dropped a regretful tear.

Oh, life's divinest draught doth not
In the wells of joy abound!
For the purest streams are those that flow
Out of the depths of crushing woe,
As from the springs of love and thought
Hid in some narrow mound,
Making it holy ground.

He hath been blessed who sometimes knelt
Owning that God is just,
And in the stillness of cypress shade
Rosemary's tender symbol laid
Upon a cherished shrine, and felt
Strengthened in faith and trust
Over the precious dust.

So perfect character is wrought,
Rounded and beautified,
By the alchemy of that strange alloy,
The intermingling of grief and joy;
So nearer Heaven the spirit, brought
Bleeding, so sorely tried,
Finds its diviner side.

[Pg 85]

The Miracle of Spring.

What touch is like the Spring's?
By dainty fingerings
Such rare delight to give,
'Tis luxury to live
Amid florescent things.

Through weary months of snow
When Boreas swept low,
How many an anxious hour
We watched one little flower,
And tried to make it grow;

And thrilled with ecstasy
When, half distrustfully,
A timid bud appeared,
A tender scion reared
In window greenery.

But lo! Spring's wealth of bloom
And richness of perfume
Comes as by miracle;
Then why not possible
Within a curtained room?

[Pg 86]

Ah, no! that everywhere
The earth is passing fair,
And strange new life hath caught,
Is but the marvel wrought
By sunlight, rain, and air.

Bermuda.

O charming blossom of the sea
Atlantic waters bosomed in!
Abiding-place of gayety,
Elysian bower of "Cora Linn,"
The sprightly, lively *débiteuse*
Recounting all she sees and does.

Oh, how it makes the northern heart,
With sluggish current half-congealed,
In ecstasy and vigor start
To read about this tropic field;
The garden of luxuriousness,
In winter wearing summer's dress.

With gelid sap and frozen gum
In maple trees and hackmatack,
While waiting for the spring to come
Of life's necessities we lack;
And sip the nectar that we find
In luscious fruit with golden rind.

[Pg 87]

But down the street we dread to walk,
For all the teachings of our youth
Receive an agonizing shock;
Do tempting labels lie, forsooth?
For "out of Florida," she says,
"Come our Bermuda oranges."

To speed the penitential prayer
Our rosary we finger o'er,
A yellow necklace rich and rare—
'Twas purchased at the dollar store;
But oh, it makes us sigh to see
That land of amber *bijouterie*!

Oh, ocean wave and flying sail
Shall never waft us to its shore!
But if some reckless cyclone gale
Should drop Bermuda at our door,
'Twould warm our February sky
And bring the time of roses nigh!

The Charter Oak.

[Pg 88]

I seem to see the old tree stand,
Its sturdy, giant form
A spectacle remembered, and
A pilgrim-shrine for all the land
Before it met the storm.

Unnumbered gales the tree defied;
It towered like a king
Above his courtiers, reaching wide,
And sheltering scions at its side
As with protecting wing.

Revered as one among the trees
To mark the seasons born,
To watchful aborigines
It told by leafy indices
The time of planting corn.

The landmark of the past is gone,
Its site is overgrown;
A mansion overlooks the lawn
Where history is traced upon
A parapet of stone.

Shall e'er Connecticut forget
What unto it we owe—
How Wadsworth coped with Andros' threat,
And tyranny, in council met,
Outwitted years ago?

[Pg 89]

Aye, but it rouses loyal spunk
To think of that old tree!
Its stately stem, its spacious trunk
By Nature robbed of pith and punk
To guard our liberty.

But of the oak long-perished, why
Is earth forever full?
For, like the loaf and fish supply,
Its stock of fiber, tough and dry,
Seems inexhaustible.

Rare souvenirs the stranger sees—
Who never sees a joke—
And innocently dreams that these,
From knotty, gnarly, scraggy trees,
Were once the Charter Oak!

Yes, it is drawing nigh—
 The time of blossoming;
 The waiting heart beats stronger
 With every breath of Spring,
 The days are growing longer;
 While happy hours go by
 As if on zephyr wing.

A wealth of mellow light
 Reflected from the skies
 The hill and vale is flooding;
 Still in their leafless guise
 The Jacqueminots are budding,
 Creating new delight
 By promise of surprise.

The air is redolent
 As ocean breezes are
 From spicy islands blowing,
 Or groves of Malabar
 Where sandal-wood is growing;
 Or sweet, diffusive scent,
 From fragrant attar-jar.

Just so is loveliness
 Renewed from year to year;
 And thus emotions tender,
 Born of the atmosphere,
 Of bloom, and vernal splendor
 That words cannot express,
 Make Spring forever dear.

[Pg 91]

Can mortal man behold
 So beautiful a scene,
 Without the innate feeling
 That thus, like dying sheen
 The sunset hues revealing,
 Glints pure, celestial gold
 On fields of living green?

"One of the Least of These."

[Pg 92]

'Twas on a day of cold and sleet,
 A little nomad of the street
 With tattered garments, shoeless feet,
 And face with hunger wan,
 Great wonder-eyes, though beautiful,
 Hedged in by features pinched and dull,
 Betraying lines so pitiful
 By sorrow sharply drawn;

Ere yet the service half was o'er,
 Approached the great cathedral door
 As choir and organ joined to pour
 Their sweetness on the air;
 Then, sudden, bold, impelled to glide
 With fleetness to the altar's side,
 Her trembling form she sought to hide
 Amid the shadows there,

Half fearful lest some worshiper,
 Enveloped close in robes of fur,
 Had cast a scornful glance at her
 As she had stolen by,
 But soon the swelling anthem, fraught
 With reverence, her spirit caught
 As rapt she listened, heeding not
 The darkness drawing nigh.

'Mid novelty and sweet surprise

[Pg 93]

Her soul, enraptured, seemed to rise
And tread the realms of Paradise;
Her shivering limbs grew warm,
And as the shadows longer crept
Across the chancel, angels kept
Their vigils o'er her as she slept
Secure from cold and storm.

No sound her peaceful slumber broke,
But one, whose gentle face bespoke
True goodness, took her costly cloak
In tender, thoughtful way,
And as the sleeper sweetly smiled,
Perchance by dreams of Heaven beguiled,
O'erspread the passive, slumbering child,
And softly stepped away.

So rest thee, child! since Sorrow's dart
Has touched like thine the Saviour's heart,
Thou hast a nearer, dearer part
In his great love for thee;
And when life's shadows all are gone,
May Heaven reveal a brighter dawn
To thee who, unaware, hast drawn
Our hearts in sympathy.

Lightning-bugs.

[Pg 94]

Around my vine-wreathed portico,
At evening, there's a perfect glow
Of little lights a-flashing—
As if the stellar bodies had
From super-heat grown hyper-mad,
And spend their ire in clashing.

As frisky each as shooting star,
These tiny electricians are
The Lampyrine Linnæan—
Or lightning-bugs, that sparkling gleam
Like scintillations in a dream
Of something empyrean.

They brush my face, light up my hair,
My garments touch, dart everywhere;
And if I try to catch them
They're quicker than the wicked flea—
And then I wonder how 'twould be
To have a *dress* to match them.

To be a "princess in disguise,"
And wear a robe of fireflies
All strung and wove together,
And be the cynosure of all
At Madame Haut-ton's carnival,
In fashion's gayest feather.

[Pg 95]

So, sudden, falls upon the grass
The overpow'ring light of gas,
And through the lattice streaming;
As wearily I close my eyes
Brief are the moments that suffice
To reach the land of dreaming.

Now at the ball, superbly dressed
As I suppose, to eclipse the rest,
Within an alcove shady
A brilliant flame I hope to be,
While all admire and envy me,
The "bright electric lady."

But, ah, they never shine at all!
My eyes *ignite*—I leave the hall,
For wrathful tears have filled them;

I could have crushed them on the spot—
The bugs, I mean!—and quite forgot
That *stringing* them had killed them.

Of Her who Died.

[Pg 96]

We look up to the stars tonight,
Idoltrous of them,
And dream that Heaven is in sight,
And each a ray of purest light
From some celestial gem
In her bright diadem.

Before that lonely home we wait,
Ah! nevermore to see
Her lovely form within the gate
Where heart and hearthstone desolate
And vine and shrub and tree
Seem asking: "Where is she?"

There is the cottage Love had planned—
Where hope in ashes lies—
A tower beautiful to stand,
Her monument whose gentle hand
And presence in the skies
Make home of Paradise.

In wintry bleakness nature glows
Beneath the stellar ray;
We see the mold, but not the rose,
And meditate if knowledge goes
Into yon mound of clay,
With her who passed away.

[Pg 97]

Of sighs, and tears, and joys denied
Do echoes reach up there?
Do seraphs know—God does—how wide
And deep is sorrow's bitter tide
Of dolor and despair,
And darkness everywhere?

Dear angel, snatched from our caress,
So suddenly withdrawn,
Alone are we and comfortless;
As in a dome of emptiness
The old routine goes on,
Aimless, since thou art gone.

Oh, dearer unto us than aught
In all the world beside
Of thee to cherish blessed thought;
So early thy sweet mission wrought,
As friend, as promised bride,
Who lived, and loved, and died.

Thanksgiving.

[Pg 98]

Nature, erewhile so marvelously lovely, is bereft
Of her supernal charm;
And with the few dead garlands of departed splendor left,
Like crape upon her arm,
In boreal hints, and sudden gusts
That fan the glowing ember,
By multitude of ways fulfills
The promise of November.

Upon the path where Beauty, sylvan priestess, sped away,
Lies the rich afterglow
Of Indian Summer, bringing round the happy holiday
That antedates the snow:

The glad Thanksgiving time, the cheer,
The festival commotion
That stirs fraternal feeling from
The mountains to the ocean.

O Hospitality! unclose thy bounty-laden hand
In generous dealing, where
Is gathered in reunion each long-severed household band,
And let no vacant chair
Show where the strongest, brightest link
In love's dear chain is broken—
A symbol more pathetic than
By language ever spoken.

[Pg 99]

Into the place held sacred to the memory of some
Beloved absentee,
Perchance passed to the other shore, oh, let the stranger come
And in gratuity
Partake of festal favors that
Shall sweeten hours of labor,
And strengthen amity and love
Unto his friend and neighbor.

Let gratitude's pure incense in warm orisons ascend,
A blessing to secure,
And gracious impulse bearing largesse of good gifts extend
To all deserving poor;
So may the day be hallowed by
Unstinted thanks and giving,
In sweet remembrance of the dead
And kindness to the living.

Receiving Sight.

[Pg 100]

In hours of meditation fraught
With mem'ries of departed days,
Comes oft a tender, loving thought
Of one who shared our youthful plays.

In gayest sports and pleasures rife
Whose happy nature reveled so,
That on her ardent, joyous life
A shadow lay, we did not know;

And bade her look one summer night
Up to the sky that seemed to hold,
In dying sunset splendor bright,
All hues of sapphire, red, and gold.

How strange the spell that mystified
Us all, and hushed our wonted glee,
As sadly her sweet voice replied,
"Why, don't you know I cannot see?"

Too true! those eyes bereft of sight
No blemish bare, no drop-serene,
But nothing in this world of light
And beauty they had ever seen.

A dozen years in gentle ruth
Their impress lent to brow and cheek,
When precious words of sacred truth
Led her the Saviour's face to seek.

[Pg 101]

Responsive unto earnest prayers
Commingling love and penitence,
A blessing came—not unawares—
In new and strange experience.

And all was light, as Faith's clear eye
A brighter world than ours divined;
For never clouds obscured the sky
That she could see, while we were blind.

Oh, it must be an awful thing
To be shut out from light of day!—
From summer's grace, and bloom of spring
In gladness words cannot portray.

But haply into every heart
May enter that Celestial Light
That doth to life's dark ways impart
A radiance hid from mortal sight.

Revenge.

[Pg 102]

Beside my window day and night,
Its tendrils reaching left and right,
A morning glory grew;
With blossoms covered, pink and white
And deep, delicious blue.

Its care became my daily thought,
Who to the sweet diversion brought
A bit of florist skill
To guide its progress, till it caught
The meaning of my will.

When through the trellis in and out
It bent and turned and climbed about
And so ambitious grew,
O'erleaped a chasm beyond the spout
Where raindrops trickled through,

Then, in caressing, graceful way,
Around a door knob twined one day
With modest show of pride;
All unaware that danger lay
Just on the other side.

An awkward, verdant "maid of work,"
Who dearly loved her tasks to shirk,
While rummaging among
Unused apartments, with a jerk
The door wide open flung.

[Pg 103]

And lo! there lay, uprooted quite,
The object of my heart's delight—
I did not weep or rant,
And yet a grain or two of spite
My secret thoughts would haunt.

So when at night her favorite beau
Beside his charmer sat below—
That is, *dans le cuisine*—
Occurred, as all the neighbors know,
A semi-tragic scene.

The garden hose, obscured from view,
Turned on itself and drenched the two—
A hapless circumstance
That lengthened out her "frizzes" new,
But shrunk his Sunday pants.

Remember this was years agone—
The madcap now hath sober grown
And hose is better wrought,
And neither now would run alone
The risk of being caught.

On the Common.

[Pg 104]

We met on "Boston Common"—
Of course it was by chance—

A sudden, unexpected,
But happy circumstance
That gave the dull October day
A beautiful, refulgent ray.

Like wandering refugees from
A city of renown,
Impelled to reconnoiter
This Massachusetts town,
Each by a common object urged,
Upon the park our paths converged.

Good nature, bubbling over
In healthy, hearty laughs,
And little lavish speeches
Like pleasant paragraphs,
The kind regard, unstudied joke,
His true felicity bespoke.

A bit of doleful knowledge
Confided unto me,
About the way the doctors—
Who never could agree—
His knees had tortured, softly drew
My sympathy and humor, too.

I hoped he wouldn't lose them,
And languish in the dumps
By having to quadrille on
A pair of polished stumps—
But a corky limb, though one might dread,
Isn't half as bad as a wooden head.

He censured those empirics
Who never heal an ill,
Though bound by their diplomas
To either cure or kill,
Who should, with ignominy crowned,
Their patients follow—under ground.

I left him at the foot of
"The Soldiers' Monument,"
With incoherent mutterings—
As though 'twere his intent
To turn the sod, a rod or two,
And sleep beside the "boys in blue."

In Hartford's charming circles
His bonhommie I miss,
And having never seen him
From that day unto this,
I think of him with much regret
As lying—with the soldiers—yet.

[Pg 105]

Woman's Help.

[Pg 106]

Sometimes I long to write an ode
And magnify his name,
The man of honor, on the road
To opulence and fame,
On whom was never aid bestowed
By any helpful dame.

To all the world I fain would show
That talent widely known,
Rare eloquence, of burning glow
To melt a heart of stone,
That all his gifts, a dazzling row,
Are his, and his alone.

But him, of character and mind
Superb, alert, and strong,
I never study but to find

The subject of my song,
Some paragon of womankind,
Has helped him all along.

He may not know, he may not guess,
How much to her he owes,
How every scion of success
That in his nature grows,
Developed by her watchfulness,
Becomes a blooming rose.

[Pg 107]

From buffetings in humble place,
And labors ill begun,
To proud achievement in the race
And laurels grandly won,
His trials all she dares to face
As friend and champion.

The bars that hinder his advance
And half obscure the goal,
The stubborn bond of circumstance
That irritates his soul,
The countershafts of arrogance,
All yield to her control.

He builds a tower—she below
Is handing up the bricks;
His light is brilliant just as though
Her hand had trimmed the wicks;
He prays for daily bread—the dough
A woman deigns to mix.

Tobogganing.

[Pg 108]

Oh, the rare exhilaration,
Oh, the novel delectation
Of a ride down the slide!
Packed like ice in zero weather,
Pleasure-seekers close together,
On a board as thin as wafer,
Barely wider, scarcely safer,
At the height of recreation
Find a glorious inspiration,
Ere the speedy termination
In the snowy meadow wide,
Sloping to the river's side.

Oh, such quakers we begin it,
Timorous of the icy route!
But to learn in half a minute
What felicity is in it,
As we shoot down the chute,
Smothered in toboggan suit,
Redingote or roquelaure,
Buttoned up (and down) before,
Mittens, cap, and moccasin,
Just the garb to revel in;
So, the signal given, lo!
Over solid ice and snow,
Down the narrow gauge we go
Swifter than a bird o'erhead,
Swifter than an arrow sped
From the staunchest, strongest bow.

[Pg 109]

Oh, it beats all "Copenhagen,"
Silly lovers' paradise!
Like the frozen Androscoggin,
Slippery, and smooth, and nice,
Is the track of the toboggan;
And there's nothing cheap about it,
Everything is steep about it,
The insolvent weep about it,

For the biggest thing on ice
Is its tip-top price;
But were this three times the money,
Then the game were thrice as funny.

Ye who dwell in latitudes
Where "the blizzard" ne'er intrudes,
And the water seldom freezes;
Ye of balmy Southern regions,
Alabama's languid legions,
From the "hot blast" of your breezes,
Where the verdure of the trees is
Limp, and loose, and pitiful,
Come up here where branches bare
Stand like spikes in frosty air;
Come up here where arctic rigor
Shall restore your bloom and vigor,
Making life enjoyable;
Come and take a jog on
The unparalleled toboggan!
Such the zest that he who misses
Never knows what perfect bliss is.
So the sport, the day's sensation,
Thrills and recreates creation.

[Pg 110]

The Woods.

I love the woods when the magic hand
Of Spring, as if sweeping the keys
Of a wornout instrument, touches the earth;
When beauty and song in the gladness of birth
Awaken the heart of the desolate land,
And carol its rapture to every breeze.

In summer's still solstice my steps are drawn
To the shade of the forest trees;
To revel with Pan in his secret haunts,
To pipe mazourkas while satyrs dance,
Or lull to soft slumber some favorite faun
And fascinate strange wild birds and bees.

I love the woods when autumnal fires
Are kindled on every hill;
When dead leaves rustle in grove and field,
And trees are known by the fruits they yield,
And the wild grapes, sweetened by frost, inspire
A mildly-desperate, bibulous thrill.

[Pg 111]

There's a joy for which I would fling to the air
My petty portion of wealth and fame,
In tracking the rabbit o'er fresh-fallen snow,
The ways of the 'coon and opossum to know,
To capture squirrels when branches are bare
As the cupboard shelf of that ancient dame.

Oh, I long to explore the woods again
In my own aboriginal way,
As before I knew how culture could frown
On a hoydenish gait and a homespun gown
Or dreamed that the strata of proud "upper-ten"
Would smile at rusticity's *naïveté*.

I sigh for the pleasures of long ago
In youth's sweet halcyon time;
When better beloved than the thoroughfare
By multitudes trod were the woodlands, where
Was never a path that I did not know,
Nor thrifty sapling I dared not climb.

Alas for lost freedom! Alas for me!
For oh, Society's lip would curl,
Propriety's self with scornful eye
And gilt-edged Fashion would pass me by

[Pg 112]

To know that sometimes I'm dying to be
The romp, the rover, the same old girl.

Like Summer.

November? 'tis a summer's day!
For tropic airs are blowing
As soft as whispered roundelay
From unseen lips that seem to say
To feathered songsters going
To sunnier, southern climes afar,
"Stay where you are—stay where you are!"

And other tokens glad as these
Declare that Summer lingers:
Round latent buds still hum the bees,
Slow fades the green from forest trees
Ere Autumn's artist fingers
Have touched the landscape, and instead
Brought out the amber, brown, and red.

The invalid may yet enjoy
His favorite recreation,
Gay, romping girl, unfettered boy
In outdoor sports the time employ,
And happy consummation
Of prudent plans the farmer know
Ere wintry breezes round him blow.

[Pg 113]

And they by poverty controlled—
Good fortune shall betide them
As scenes of beauty they behold,
And seem to revel in the gold
Which Plutus has denied them;
For, ah! the poor from want's despair
Oft covet wealth they never share.

Sheridan's Last Ride.

[Pg 114]

While Phœbus lent his hottest rays
To signalize midsummer days,
I stood in that far-famed enclosure
By thousands visited,
Where, in the stillness of reposeure,
Are grouped battalions dead.

Where, round each simple burial stone,
The grass for decades twain has grown,
Protecting them in dreamless slumber
Who perished long ago,
The multitudes defying number,
A part of war's tableau.

Along the winding avenue
A vast procession came in view;
The mourners' slow, advancing column
With reverent step drew near,
The "Dead March" playing, sad and solemn,
Above a soldier's bier.

There were the colonels, brigadiers,
Comrades in arms of other years,
Civilians, true and loyal-hearted
To him their bravest man,
Who seemed to say to those departed,
"Make room for Sheridan!"

[Pg 115]

Anon, beside the new-made mound,
The warworn veterans gathered round,
And spake of Lyon and of Lander,

And others ranked as high,
Recalling each his old commander,
One not afraid to die.

Thus, silent tenants one by one
Are crowding in at Arlington;
Thus Sheridan, the horseman daring,
Has joined the honored corps
Of those, their true insignia wearing,
Who battle nevermore.

Potomac's wave shall placid flow,
And sing his requiem soft and low,
His terrace grave be sweet with clover,
And daisies star his bed,
For Sheridan's last ride is over—
The General is dead!

A Bit of Gladness.

[Pg 116]

As I near my lonely cottage,
At the close of weary day,
There's a little bit of gladness
Comes to meet me on the way:
Dimpled, tanned, and petticoated,
Innocent as angels are,
Like a smiling, straying sunbeam
Is my Stella—like a star.

Soon a hand of tissue-softness
Slips confidingly in mine,
And with tender look appealing
Eyes of beauty sweetly shine;
Like a gentle shepherd guiding
Some lost lamb unto the fold,
So she leads me homeward, prattling
Till her stories are all told.

"Papa, I'm so glad to see you—
Cousin Mabel came today—
And the gas-man brought a letter
That he said you'd better pay—
Yes, and *awful* things is happened:
My poor kitty's drowned to death—
Mamma's got the 'Pigs in Clover'—"
Here she stops for want of breath.

I am like the bold knight-errant,
From his castle who would roam,
Trusting her, my faithful steward,
For a strict account of home;
And each day I toil, and hazard
All that any man may dare,
For a resting-place at even,
And the love that waits me there.

[Pg 117]

And sometimes I look with pity
On my neighbor's mansion tall:
There are chambers full of pictures,
There are marbles in the hall,
Yet with all the signs of splendor
That may gild a pile of stone,
Not a living thing about it
But the owner, grim and lone.

I believe that all his millions
He would give without repine
For a little bit of gladness
In his life, like that in mine;
This it is that makes my pathway
Beautiful, wherever trod,
Keeps my soul from wreck and ruin,
Keeps me nearer to my God.

The Charity Ball.

[Pg 118]

There was many a token of festal display,
And reveling crowds who were never so gay,
And, as it were Æolus charming the hours,
An orchestra hidden by foliage and flowers;
There were tapestries fit for the home of a queen,
And mirrors that glistened in wonderful sheen;
There was feasting and mirth in the banqueting-hall,
For this was the annual Charity Ball.

There were pompous civilians, in wealth who abide,
Displaying their purses, the source of their pride;
And plethoric dealers in margins and stocks,
And owners of acres of elegant blocks,
And tenement-landlords who cling to a cent
When from the poor widow exacting her rent—
Immovable, stern, as an adamant wall—
And yet, who "came down" to this Charity Ball.

There was Beauty whose toilet, superb and unique,
Cost underpaid industry many a week
Of arduous labor of eye, and heartache,
Its starving inadequate pittance to make;
There were mischievous maidens and cavaliers bold,
Whose blushes and glances and coquetry told
A tale of the monarch who held them in thrall—
Who met, as by chance, at the Charity Ball.

[Pg 119]

There were delicate viands the poor never taste,
And dollars were lavished in prodigal waste
To pamper the palate of epicures rich;
Who drew from the wine cellar's cavernous niche
"Excelsior" brands of the rarest champagnes
To loosen their tongues—though it pilfered their brains—
Oh, sad if a step in some woeful downfall
Should ever be traced to a Charity Ball!

Outside of the window, pressed close to the pane,
And furrowed by tears that had fallen like rain,
Was the face of a woman, so spectral in hue,
With great liquid eyes, like twin oceans of blue,
And cheeks in whose hollows were written the lines
That pitiless hunger so often defines,
Who muttered, as closer she gathered the shawl,
"Oh, never for me is this Charity Ball!"

From liveried hirelings who bade her begone,
By uniformed minions compelled to move on,
Out into the street again driven to roam—
For friends she had none, neither fortune nor home;
While carnival-goers in morning's dull gray
As homeward returning, fatigued and *blasé*,
A vision encountered their hearts to appall,
And banish all thought of the Charity Ball.

[Pg 120]

As if seeking warmth from the icy curb-stone,
A form half-reclining, half-clad, and unknown.
Dead eyes looking up with a meaningless stare,
Lay close to the crowded and broad thoroughfare;
A form so emaciate the spirit had fled—
But the pulpit and press and the public all said,
As society's doings they sought to recall,
That a "brilliant success" was the Charity Ball.

The Bell(e) of Baltimore.

[One of the notable features of Baltimore is the big bell that hangs in the city hall tower, to strike the hour and sound the fire alarm. It is called "Big Sam," and weighs 5,000 pounds]

A million feet above the ground
(For so it seemed in winding round),
A million, and two more,
The latter stiff and sore,
While perspiration formed a part
Of every reeking pore,
I viewed the city like a chart
Spread out upon the floor.

And said: "Great guide Jehoiakin,
To me is meagre pleasure in
The height of spires and domes,
Of walls like ancient Rome's;
Nor care I for the marts of trade,
Or shelves of musty tomes,
Nor yet for yonder colonnade
Before your palace homes;

"But curiosity is keen
To know the city's reigning queen,
Who suiteth well the score
Of suitors at her door;
Oh, which of your divinities
Is she whom all adore?
Embodiment of truth, *who is*
The belle of Baltimore?"

Veracity's revolving eyes
Looked up as if to read the skies:
"Why, Lor'-a-miss, see dar—
De bell is in de air!
Lan' sakes! of all de missteries
Yo' nebber learn before!
Why, don' yo' know 'Big Sam'? *He is*
De bell of Baltimore!"

[Pg 121]

Christmas at Church.

[Pg 122]

'Twas drawing near the holiday,
When piety and pity met
In whisp'ring council, and agreed
That Christmas time, in homes of need,
Should be remembered in a way
They never could forget.

Then noble generosity
Took youth and goodness by the hand,
And planned a thousand charming ways
To celebrate this best of days,
While hearts were held in sympathy
By love's encircling band.

So multitudes together came,
Like wandering magi from the East
With precious gifts unto the King,
With every good and perfect thing
To satisfy a shivering frame
Or amplify a feast.

The angels had looked long and far
The happy scene to parallel,
When through the sanctuary door
Were carried gifts from shop and store,
The treasures of the rich bazaar,
To give—but not to sell.

As once the apostolic twelve
Of goods allotment made,
So equity dealt out with care
The widow's and the orphan's share,
And of the aged forced to delve
At drudging task or trade.

[Pg 123]

Oh, could the joy which tears express
That out of gladness come
Be mirrored in its tender glow,
Before the beautiful tableau
Ingratitude and selfishness
Would shrink abashed and dumb!

If every year and everywhere
Could kindness thus expand
In bounteous gratuity,
To all her children earth would be
A flowery vale like Eden fair,
A milk-and-honey land.

Mysterious.

[Pg 124]

The morning sun rose bright and fair
Upon a lovely village where
Prosperity abounded,
And ceaseless hum of industry
In lines of friendly rivalry
From day to day resounded.

Its shaded avenues were wide,
And closely bordered either side
With cottages or mansions,
Or marked by blocks of masonry
That might defy a century
To loosen from their stanchions.

Its peaceful dwellers daily vied
To make this spot, with anxious pride,
A Paradise of beauty,
Recounted its attractions o'er,
And its adornment held no more
A pleasure than a duty.

But, ere the daylight passed away,
That hamlet fair in ruins lay,
Its hapless people scattered
Like playthings, at the cyclone's will,
And scarce remained one domicile
Its fury had not shattered.

Few moments of the tempest's wrath
Sufficed to mark one dreadful path
With scenes of devastation;
While over piles of wild débris
Rose shrieks of dying agony
Above the desolation.

[Pg 125]

Oh, mystery! who can understand
Why, sudden, from God's mighty hand
Destructive bolts of power
Without discrimination strike
The evil and the good alike—
As in that dreadful hour!

Alas for aching hearts that wait
Today in homes made desolate
By one sharp blow appalling—
For all who kneel by altars lone,
And strive to say "Thy will be done,"
That awful day recalling!

We dare not question his decrees
Who seeth not as mortal sees,
Nor doubt his goodness even;
Nor let our hearts be dispossessed
Of faith that he disposeth best
All things in earth and Heaven.

"Be careful for nothing," Phil. iv. 6. Revised version, "Be not anxious."

Of all the precepts in the Book
By word of inspiration given,
That bear the import, tone, and look
Of messages direct from heaven,
From Revelation back to Genesis
Is nothing needed half so much as this.

Ah, well the great apostle spake
In admonition wise and kind,
Who bade humanity forsake
The petty weaknesses that bind
The spirit like a bird with pinioned wings,
That to a broken bough despairing clings.

Were all undue anxiety
Eliminated from desire,
Could feverish fears and fancies be
Consumed on some funeral pyre,
Like holy hecatomb or sacrifice,
'Twould be accepted up in Paradise.

Could this machinery go on
Without the friction caused by fret,
What greater loads were lightly drawn,
More easily were trials met;
Then might existence be with blessings rife,
And lengthened out like Hezekiah's life.

Oh, be not anxious; trouble grows
When cherished like a secret grief;
It is the worm within the rose
That eats the heart out leaf by leaf;
And though the outer covering be fair,
The weevil of decay is busy there.

In deep despondency to pine,
Or vain solicitude,
Is to deny this truth divine
That God is great and good;
That he is Ruler over earth and Heaven,
And so disposes and makes all things even.

[Pg 127]

Mount Vernon.

[Pg 128]

Subdued and sad, I trod the place
Where he, the hero, lived and died;
Where, long-entombed beneath the shade
By willow bough and cypress made,
The peaceful scene with verdure rife,
He and the partner of his life,
Beloved of every land and race,
Are sleeping side by side.

The summer solstice at its height
Reflected from Potomac's tide
A glare of light, and through the trees
Intensified the Southern breeze,
That dallied, in the deep ravines,
With graceful ferns and evergreens,
While Northern cheeks so strangely white
Grew dark as Nubia's pride.

What must this homestead once have been
In boundless hospitality,
When Greene or Putnam may have met
The host who welcomed Lafayette,
Or when Pulaski, honored guest,
Accepted shelter, food and rest,

While rank and talent gathered in
Its banquet hall of luxury!

[Pg 129]

What comfort, cheer, and kind intent
The weary stranger oft hath known
When she, its mistress, fair and good,
Reigned here in peerless womanhood,
When soft, shy maiden fancy gave
Encouragement to soldiers brave,
And Washington his presence lent
To grace its bright hearthstone!

O beautiful Mount Vernon home,
The Mecca of our long desire;
Of more than passing interest
To North and South, to East and West,
To all Columbia's children free
A precious, priceless legacy,
Thine altar-shrine, as pilgrims come,
Rekindles patriot fire!

A Prisoner.

[Pg 130]

Where I can see him all day long
And hear his wild, spontaneous song,
Before my window in his cage,
A blithe canary sits and swings,
And circles round on golden wings;
And startles all the vicinage
When from his china tankard
He takes a dainty drink
To clear his throat
For as sweet a note
As ever yet was caroled
By lark or bobolink.

Sometimes he drops his pretty head
And seems to be dispirited,
And then his little mistress says:
"Poor Dickie misses his chickweed,
Or else I've fed him musty seed
As stale as last year's oranges!"
But all the time I wonder
If we half comprehend
In sweet song-words
The thought of birds,
Or why so oft their raptures
In sudden silence end.

They do not pine for forest wilds
Within the "blue Canary isles,"
As exiles from their native home,
For in a foreign domicile
They first essayed their gamut-trill
Beneath a cage's gilded dome;
But maybe some sad throbbing
Betimes their spirits stirs,
Who love as we
Dear liberty,
That they, admired and petted,
Are only—prisoners.

[Pg 131]

Cuba.

As one long struggling to be free,
O suffering isle! we look to thee
In sympathy and deep desire
That thy fair borders yet shall hold
A people happy, self-controlled,

Saved and exalted—as by fire.

Burning like thine own tropic heat
Thousands of lips afar repeat
The story of thy wrongs and woes;
While argosies to thee shall bear,
Of men and money everywhere,
Strength to withstand thy stubborn foes.

[Pg 132]

Hispaniola waves her plume
Defiant over many a tomb
Where sleep thy sons, the true and brave;
But, lo! an army coming on
The places fill of heroes gone,
For liberty their lives who gave.

The nations wait to hear thy shout
Of "Independence!" ringing out,
Chief of the Antilles, what wilt thou?
Buffets and gyves from your effete
Old monarchy dilapidate,
Or freedom's laurels for thy brow?

In man's extremity it is
That Heaven's opportunities
Shine forth like jewels from the mine;
Then, Cuba, in thy hour of need,
With vision clear the tokens read
And trust for aid that power divine.

The Sangamon River.

[Pg 133]

O sunny Sangamon! thy name to me,
Soft-syllabled like some sweet melody,
Familiar is since adolescent years
As household phrases ringing in my ears;
Its measured cadence sounding to and fro
From the dim corridors of long ago.

There was a time in happy days gone by,
That rosy interval of youth, when I
The scholar ardent early learned to trace
Great tributaries to their starting place;
And thine some prairie hollow obsolete
Whose name how few remember or repeat.

Like thee, meandering, yet wafted back
From distant hearth and lonely bivouac,
From strange vicissitudes in other lands,
From half-wrought labors and unfinished plans
I come, in thy cool depths my brow to lave,
And rest a moment by thy silver wave.

But, ah! what means thy muddy, muggy hue?
I thought thee limpid as yon ether blue;
I thought an angel's wing might dip below
Thy sparkling surface and be white as snow;
And of thy current I had dared to drink
If not as one imbibing draughts of ink.

Has some rough element of horrid clay
That spoils the earth like lava beds, they say,
Come sliding down, as avalanches do,
And thy fair bosom percolated through?
Or some apothecary's compound vile
Polluted thee so many a murky mile?

[Pg 134]

Why not, proud State, beneficence insure,
Selling thy soil or giving to the poor?
For sad it is that dust of Illinois,
With coal and compost its conjoint alloy,
A morceau washed from Mississippi's mouth,
Should build up acres for our neighbors south.

River! I grieve, but not for loss of dirt—
Once stainless, just because of what thou wert.
Thus on thy banks I linger and reflect
That, surely as all waterways connect,
Forever flowing onward to the sea,
Shall the great billow thy redemption be.

And now, dear Sangamon, farewell! I wait
On that Elysian scene to meditate
When, separated from the dregs of earth,
Life's stream shall sweeter be, of better worth;
And, like the ocean with its restless tide,
By its own action cleansed and purified.

Syringas.

[Pg 135]

The smallest flower beside my path,
In loveliness of bloom,
Some element of comfort hath
To rid my heart of gloom;
But these, of spotless purity,
And fragrant as the rose,
As sad a sight recall to me
As time shall e'er disclose.

Oh, there are pictures on the brain
Sometimes by shadows made,
Till dust is blent with dust again,
That never, never fade;
And things supremely bright and fair
As ever known in life
Suggest the darkness of despair,
And sanguinary strife.

I shut my eyes; 'tis all in vain—
The battle-field appears,
And one among the thousands slain
In manhood's brilliant years;
An elbow pillowing his head,
And on the crimson sand
Syringa-blooms, distained and dead,
Within his rigid hand.

[Pg 136]

Could she foresee, who from the stem
Had plucked that little spray
Of flowers, that he would cherish them
Unto his dying day?
"Give these to M—;—'tis almost night—
And tell her—that—I love—"
Alas! the letter he would write
Was finished up above.

And so, with each recurring spring,
On Decoration day,
When to our heroes' graves we bring
The blossom-wealth of May,
While martial strains are soft and low,
And music seems a prayer,
Unto a hallowed spot I go,
And leave syringas there.

Storm-bound.

[Pg 137]

My careful plans all storm-subdued,
In disappointing solitude
The weary hours began;
And scarce I deemed when time had sped,
Marked only by the passing tread
Of some pedestrian.

But with the morrow's tranquil dawn,
A fairy scene I looked upon
That filled me with delight;
Far-reaching from my own abode,
The world in matchless splendor glowed,
Arrayed in spotless white.

The surface of the hillside slope
Gleamed in my farthest vision's scope
Like opalescent stone;
Rich jewels hung on every tree,
Whose crystalline transparency
Golconda's gems outshone.

Beyond the line where wayside posts
Stood up, like fear-inspiring ghosts
Of awful form and mien,
A mansion tall, my neighbor's pride,
A seeming castle fortified,
Uprose in wondrous sheen.

[Pg 138]

The evergreens loomed up before
My staunch and storm-defying door,
Like snowy palaces
That one dare only penetrate
With reverence—as at Heaven's gate,
Awed by its mysteries.

The apple trees' extended arms
Upheld a thousand varied charms;
The curious tracery
Of trellised grapevine seemed to me
A rare network of filigree
In silver drapery.

And I no longer thought it hard
From favorite pursuits debarred,
Nor gazed with rueful face;
For every object seemed to be
Invested with the witchery
Of magic art and grace.

And, though a multitude of cares,
Perplexing, profitless affairs,
Absorbed the hours, it seems
That on the golden steps of thought
I mounted heavenward, and wrought
Out many hopeful schemes.

[Pg 139]

Thus every day, though it may span
The gulf wherein some cherished plan
Lies disarranged and crossed,
If, ere its close, we shall have trod
The path that leads us nearer God,
Cannot be counted lost.

The Master of the Grange.

The type of enterprise is he,
Of sense and thrift and toil;
Who reckons less on pedigree
Than rich, productive soil;
And no "blue blood"—if such there be—
His veins can ever spoil.

And yet on blood his heart is set;
He has his sacred cow,
Some Alderney or Jersey pet,
The mistress of the mow;
His favorite pig is (by brevet)
"Lord Suffolk"—of the slough.

To points of stock is he alive

[Pg 140]

As keenest cattle king;
A thoroughbred he deigns to drive,
But not a mongrel thing;
The very bees within his hive
Are crossed—without a sting.

If apple-boughs drop pumpkins and
Tomatoes grow on trees,
It is because his grafting hand
Has so diverted these
That alien shoots with native stand
Like twin-born Siamese.

No neater farm a nabob owns,
Its care his chief employ,
To find fertility in bones
And briars to destroy,
Where once he lightly skipped the stones
A whistling, happy boy.

The ancient plough and awkward flail
He banished long ago;
The zigzag fence with ponderous rail
He dares to overthrow;
And wields, with sinews strong and hale,
The latest style of hoe.

The household, founded as it were
Upon the Decalogue,
He classes with the minister,
The rural pedagogue,
And as a sort of angel-cur
Regards his spotted dog.

[Pg 141]

His wife reviews the magazines,
His children lead the school,
He tries a thousand new machines
(And keeps his temper cool),
But bristles at Kentucky jeans,
And her impressive mule.

With Science letting down the bars,
Enlightening ignorance,
Enigmas deeper than the stars
He solves as by a glance,
And raises cinnamon cigars
From poor tobacco plants!

By no decree of fashion dressed,
And busier than Fate,
The student-farmer keeps abreast
With mighty men of state,
And treasures, like his Sunday vest,
The motto "Educate!"

Beyond encircling hills of blue,
Where I may never range,
This monarch in his realm I view,
Of title new and strange,
And make profound obeisance to
"The Master of the Grange."

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A Friend Indeed.

If every friend who meditates
In soft, unspoken thought
With winning courtesy and tact
The doing of a kindly act
To cheer some lonely lot,
Were like the friend of whom I dream,
Then hardship but a myth would seem.

If sympathy were always thus

Oblivious of space,
And, like the tendrils of the vine,
Could just as lovingly incline
 To one in distant place,
'Twould draw the world together so
Might none the name of stranger know.

If every throb responsive that
 My ardent spirit thrills
Could, like the skylark's ecstasy,
Be vocal in sweet melody,
 Beyond dividing hills
In octaves of the atmosphere
Were music wafted to his ear.

If every friendship were like one,
 So helpful and so true,
To other hearts as sad as mine
'Twould bring the joy so near divine,
 And hope revive anew;
So life's dull path would it illumine,
And radiate beyond the tomb.

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The Needed One.

'Twas not rare versatility,
 Nor gift of poesy or art,
Nor piquant, sparkling *jeux d'esprit*
 Which at the call of fancy come,
That touched the universal heart,
 And won the world's encomium.

It was not beauty's potent charm;
 For admiration followed her
Unmindful of the rounded arm,
 The fair complexion's brilliancy,
If form and features shapely were
 Or lacked the grace of symmetry.

So not by marked, especial power
 She grew endeared to human thought,
But just because, in trial's hour,
 Was loving service to be done
Or sympathy and counsel sought,
 She made herself the needed one.

Oh, great the blessedness must be
 Of heart and hand and brain alert
In projects wise and manifold,
 Impending sorrow to avert
That duller natures fail to see,
 Or stand aloof severe and cold!

And who shall doubt that this is why
 In womanhood's florescent prime
She passed the portals of the sky?
 As if a life thus truly given
To purpose pure and act sublime
 Were needed also up in Heaven.

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"Thy Will Be Done."

Sometimes the silver cord of life
 Is loosed at one brief stroke;
As when the elements at strife,
With Nature's wild contentions rife,
 Uproot the sturdy oak.

Or fell disease, in patience borne,
 Attenuates the frame

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Till the meek sufferer, wan and worn,
Of energy and beauty shorn,
Death's sweet release would claim.

By instant touch or long decay
Is dissolution wrought;
When, lost to earth, the grave and gay,
The young and old who pass away,
Abide in hallowed thought.

In dear regard together drawn,
Affection's debt to pay,
Fond greetings we exchange at dawn
With one who, ere the day be gone,
Is bruised and lifeless clay.

O thou in manhood's morning-time
With health and hope elate,
For whom in youth's enchanting prime
The bells of promise seemed to chime,
We mourn thy early fate!

To us how sudden—yet to thee
Perchance God kindly gave
Some warning, ere the fatal key
Unlocked the door of mystery
That lies beyond the grave.

Then let us hope that one who found
Such favor, trust, and love,
And cordial praise from all around,
For rare fidelity renowned,
Found favor, too, above.

So "all is well," though swift or slow
God's will be done; and we
Draw near to him, for close and low
Beneath his chastening hand, the blow
Will fall less heavily.

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Snowflakes.

[Pg 147]

Of specious weight like tissue freight
The snowflakes are—in sparkle pure
As the rich *parure*
A lovely queen were proud to wear;
As volatile, as fine and rare
As thistle-down dispersed in air,
Or bits of filmy lace;
Like nature's tear-drops strewn around
That beautify and warm the ground,
But melt upon my face.

A ton or more against my door
They lie, and look, in form and tint,
Like piles of lint,
When war's alarum roused the land,
Wrought out by woman's loyal hand
From linen rag, and robe, and band—
From garments cast aside—
In hospital, on battle-field
The shattered limb that bound and healed,
Or stanch'd life's ebbing tide.

I see the gleam of lake and stream,
The silver glint in frost portrayed
Of the bright cascade;
They bear the moisture of marshes dank,
The dew of the lawn, or river bank,
The river itself by sunlight drank;
All these in frigid air,
That strange alembic, crystallize
In odd, fantastic shape and size

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Like gems of dazzling glare.

Oh, of the snow such fancies grow,
'Till thought is lost in wandering,
And wondering
If portions of their drapery
The angel beings, sad to see
So much of earth's impurity,
Have dropped from clearer skies
As snowflakes, hiding stain and blot
To make this world a fairer spot,
And more like Paradise.

Monadnock.

[Pg 149]

One summer time, with love imbued,
To climb the mount, explore the wood,
Or rove from pole to pole,
Upon Monadnock's brow I stood—
A lone, adventurous soul.

Beyond the Bay State border-line
A sweeping vista, grand and fine,
Embraced the Berkshire hills;
Embosomed hamlets, clumps of pine,
And country domiciles.

Afar, Mount Tom, in verdantique,
And Holyoke, twin companion peak,
Appeared gigantic cones;
The burning sunlight scorched my cheek,
And seemed to melt the stones.

Beneath a gnarled and twisted root
I loosed a pebble with my foot
That leaped the precipice,
And like an arrow seemed to shoot
Adown the deep abyss.

Beside the base that solstice day
A city chap who chanced to stray
Was shooting somewhat, too;
Who, when the nugget sped that way,
His firelock quickly drew.

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While right and left he sought the quail,
Or the timid hare that crossed his trail,
Rang out a wild "Ha! ha!"
That might have turned the visage pale
Of a red-skinned Chippewa.

The game was his—for it made him quail;
He flung his gun and fled the vale,
The mountain-dwellers say,
As though pursued by a comet's tail—
And disappeared for aye.

Never Had a Chance

[Pg 151]

Fresh from piano, school, and books,
A happy girl with rosy looks
Young Plowman wooed and won; despite
Her pretty, pouting prejudice,
Her deep distaste for rural bliss
Or countryfied delight.

Romance through all her nature ran—
Indeed, to wed a husband-man
Suffused her ardent maiden thought;
But lofty fancy dwelt upon

A new "Queen Anne," a terraced lawn,
A city's corner lot.

Her lily fingers that so well
Could paint a scene—in aquarelle—
Or broider plush with leaves and vines,
No more of real labor knew
Than waxen petals of the dew
On native eglantines.

Anon, with lapse of tender ways
That emphasized the courting days,
The housewife in her apron blue,
As mistress of her new abode,
By frequent lachrymations showed
Her grief and blunders too.

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The butter-making, bread and cheese,
The old folks difficult to please,
The harvest hands—voracious bears!—
The infantry, a parent's pride,
By duos proudly classified:
So multiplied her cares.

The treadmill round of duties that
Makes any life inane and flat,
Without diversion sandwiched in,
The drudgery, the overplus
Of toil and trouble arduous,
Were rugged discipline.

What time for books and music, when
The lambs were bleating in their pen,
The chickens peeping at the door;
The rodent gnawing at the churn,
The buckwheat wafers crisped to burn,
The kettle boiling o'er?

To *hers*, so far between and few,
What resting-spells the farmer knew!
What intervals for culture! and
When intellect assumed the race,
He peerless held the foremost place—
No nobler in the land.

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By virtue of exalted rank
"The brilliant senator from——"
Adorns society's expanse;
While by his side with folded hands,
Her beauty gone, the woman stands
Who "never had a chance."

Sorrow and Joy.

In sad procession borne away
To sound of funeral knell,
Affection's tribute thus we pay,
And in earth's shelt'ring bosom lay
The friend to whom but yesterday
We gave the sad farewell.

But scarce the melancholy sound
Has died upon the ear,
Before the mournful dirge is drowned
By wedding-anthems' glad rebound,
That stir the solemn air around
With merry peals and clear.

Within our home doth gladness tread
So closely upon grief
That, in the tears of sorrow shed
O'er our beloved, lamented dead,
We see reflected joy instead

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That gives a blest relief.
A father and a daughter gone
Beyond our fireside—
For one we loved and leaned upon
The skillful archer Death had drawn
His bow; and one in life's sweet dawn
Went out a happy bride.
We gave to Heaven, in manhood's prime,
Him whose brave strength and worth
Life's rugged steeps had taught to climb;
And her, for whom a tuneful rhyme
The bells of promise sweetly chime,
We consecrate to earth.
Thus each a mystic path, untried,
Has entered—God is just!
We leave with him our friend who died,
With him we leave our fair young bride
Who shall no more with us abide,
And in His goodness trust.
Oh, life and death, uncertainty,
Bright hopes and anxious fears,
Commingle so bewilderingly,
That perfect joy we may not see
Till all shall reunited be
Beyond this vale of tears!

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Watch Hill.

Fair summer home peninsula,
Enriched by every breeze
From fragrant islands, wafted far
Across the sunny seas!
A profile rare! a height of land
Outlined 'gainst heaven's blue
With bolder touch than skillful hand
Of artist ever drew.
In "mountain billows" that parade
The grandeur of the deep,
Is His supremacy displayed
Whose hands the waters keep.
No sweep of waves, in broad expanse,
With wild, weird melody,
Shall thus an unseen world enhance—
"There shall be no more sea!"
A wealth of joy-perfected days,
Where glorious sunset dyes,
Resplendent in declining rays,
Surpass Italia's skies!
Proud caravansaries that compete
In studied arts to please
The multitude, with restless feet,
From earth's antipodes!
A motley company astray:
The sojourner for health,
The grave, serene, the *devotée*
Of fashion and of wealth.
Artistic cottages upreared
In beauty, strength, and skill—
The happy, healthful homes endeared
To lovers of Watch Hill!
A golden crown adorns the spot;

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Forever blessed be
The hand beneficent that wrought
"A temple by the sea!"

A star in some bright diadem
In glory it shall be,
For truly, "I will honor them,"
Saith God, "who honor me."

When Christians meet to praise and pray,
May feet that never trod
The sanctuary learn the way
Unto the house of God.

Glad pæans down the centuries
With joy the world shall thrill:
"The Lord, revered and honored, is
The glory of Watch Hill!"

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Supplicating.

One morn I looked across the way,
And saw you fling your window wide
To welcome in the breath of May
In breezes from the mountain-side,
And greet the sunlight's earliest ray
With happy look and satisfied.

The pansies on your window-sill
In terra cotta flowerpot,
Like royal gold and purple frill
Upon the stony casement wrought,
Adorned your tasteful domicile
And claimed your time and care and thought.

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In cherry trees the robins sang
Their sweetest carol to your ear,
And shouts of merry children rang
Out on the dewy atmosphere,
But to my heart there came a pang
That my salute you did not hear.

I envied then the favored breeze
That dallied with your flowing hair,
Begrudged the songsters in the trees
And longed to be a flow'ret fair—
Some favorite blossom like heartease—
Within your miniature parterre.

O heart, that finds such ample room
Within thy confines broad and true,
For song and sunshine and perfume
And all benign impulses—go,
I pray thee, dissipate my gloom—
And take in thy petitioner too!

"Honest John."

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He was a man whose lot was cast,
As some might think, in lines severe;
In humble toil whose life was passed
From week to week, from year to year;
And yet, by wife and children blessed,
He labored on with cheerful zest.

As one revered and set apart,
A quaint, unusual name he bore
That well became the frugal heart;
While plain habiliments he wore
Without a tremor or a chill

At thought of some uncanceled bill.

A king might not disdain to wear
The title so appropriate
To one who never sought to share
Exalted station 'mong the great,
Nor cared if on the scroll of fame
Were never traced his worthy name.

As bound by honor's righteous law
In strictest rectitude he wrought—
The man who calmly, clearly saw
His duty, and who dallied not—
To garner life's necessities
For those whose comfort heightened his.

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The parent bird its brood protects
As fledglings in their downy nest,
Until a Power their flight directs
From trial trips to distant quest,
Through trackless zones of ether blue,
For bird companions strange and new.

But ere his babes from prattlers grew,
Upon his knee or by his side,
To womanhood and manhood true—
Too soon we thought—the father died;
How could we know, when Death was nigh
Those little wings were taught to fly?

Another name his boyhood knew,
So seldom heard that lapse of years
Had made it seem a thing untrue,
Unmusical to friendly ears;
And thus his appellation odd
His passport was where'er he trod.

So long, on every lip and tongue
As if by universal whim,
To him had his cognomen clung,
And like a garment fitted him,
That angels even must have heard
Of one, like them, in love preferred.

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And when he came to Heaven's door,
To Peter's self or acolyte,
The holy warder looking o'er,
"'Tis 'Honest John!'" he said aright;
And his pilgrim spirit passed within
Because his walk with God had been.

Bushnell Park.

Sweet resting place! that long hath been
A boon Elysian 'mid the din
Of city life, 'mid city smoke;
Where weary ones who toil and spin
Have turned aside as to an inn
Whose swinging sign a welcome spoke;
Where misanthropes find medicine
In peals of laughter that begin
With ancient, resurrected joke,
Or ready wit of harlequin;
Where children, free from discipline,
Take on Diversion's easy yoke.

Fair oasis! to view aright
Its charming paths, its sloping height,
Its beautiful and broad expanse,
Must one approach in witching night
When, like abodes of airy sprite
Revealed unto the wondering glance,
O'erflooded with electric light

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Than Luna's beams more dazzling bright,
Illumined nooks the scene enhance;
While zephyrs mischievous unite
The timid stroller to affright
By swaying boughs in shadow dance.

The Capitol that crowns the hill
Where Boreas sweeps with icy chill,
A masterpiece of studied art
Conceived by genius versatile
And fashioned with unerring skill,
O'erlooks the busy, crowded mart,
And, like a kingly domicile,
Its burnished dome and sculpture thrill
With admiration every heart;
And strangers pause beyond the rill
To view its grandeur, lingering still,
And with reluctant steps depart.

O Bushnell Park, memorial soil!
That marks success (though near to foil)
Of one who with prophetic ken,
With honest zeal and ceaseless toil,
Opposed the vandal wish to spoil
This lovely bit of vale and glen;
Who, 'mid discussion and turmoil
Of adverse minds, did not recoil
From vigorous stroke of tongue and pen;
And then, till passion ceased to boil,
On troubled waters poured out oil
And to his plans won other men.

So when, fatigued and overwrought,
In summer time when skies are hot
We seek its verdant, velvet sward,
Oh may we hold in reverent thought
The debt we owe, forgetting not
The spirit passed to its reward
Of one whose giant soul was fraught
With true benignity—who sought
To touch humanity's quick chord
With fire from Heaven's altar brought,
That love and zeal and being caught
As inspiration from the Lord.

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At General Grant's Tomb.

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Afar my loyal spirit stirred
At mention of his name;
Afar in ringing notes I heard
The clarion voice of fame;
So to his tomb, hope long deferred,
With reverent step I came.

The pilgrim muse revived
A half-forgotten day:
A slow procession, tearful-eyed,
In funeral array,
And from MacGregor's lonely side
A hero borne away.

Here sleeps he now, where long ago
Hath nature raised his mound:
A mighty channel far below,
Divided hills around,
Where countless thousands come and go
As to a shrine renowned.

With awe do strangers' eyes discern
A casket mid the green
Luxuriance of flower and fern;
Airy and cool and clean,

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Unchanged from spring to spring's return,
This charnel chamber scene.

His country's weal his care and thought,
Beloved in peace was he;
Magnanimous in war—shall not
The nation grateful be,
And render at his burial spot
A testimonial free?

Oh, let us, ere the days come on
When energy is spent,
To him, the silent soldier gone,
Statesman and President,
On Riverside's majestic lawn
Uprear a monument.

"Be Courteous."

[Pg 166]

Ah, yes; why not? Is one more adventitious born
Than others—shekels richer, honors fuller, and all that—
That he can pass his fellows by with lofty scorn,
Nor even show this slight regard—the lifting of the hat?

Why prate of social status, class, or rank when earth
Is common tenting-ground, the heritage of all mankind?
Except in purity is there no royal birth,
No true nobility but nobleness of heart and mind.

Life is so short—one journey long, a pilgrimage
That we cannot retrace, nor ever pass this way again;
Then why not turn for some poor soul a brighter page,
And line the way with courtesies unto our fellow-men?

To give a graceful word or smile, or lend a hand
To one downcast and trembling on the borders of despair,
May help him to look up and better understand
Why God has made the sky so bright and put the rainbow there.

Be courteous! is nothing helpful half so cheap
As kind urbanity that doth so much of gladness bring;
More precious too than all the treasures of the deep,
Making the winter of discomfort seem like joyous spring.

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Be courteous and gentle! be serene and good!
Those grand ennobling and enduring virtues all may claim;
Of each may it be said, of the great multitude:
Oh that my life were more like such an one of blessed fame!

Is it that over-crowding, care, anxiety,
Vortex of pleasure, the incessant round of toil and strife,
Beget indifference, repressing love and sympathy,
Till we forget the beautiful amenities of life?

Then cometh a sad day, when with a poignant sting
Lost opportunities shall speak to us reproachfully;
And ours shall be the disapproval of the King—
"Discourteous to these, my creatures, ye have wounded Me."

A New Suit.

[Pg 168]

The artist and the loom unseen,
In textures soft as *crepe de chine*
Spring weaves her royal robe of green,
With grasses fringed and daisies dotted,
With furzy tufts like mosses fine
And showy clumps of eglantine,
With dainty shrub and creeping vine
Upon the verdant fabric knotted.

Oh, winter takes our love away
For ashen hues of sober gray!
So when the blooming, blushing May
Comes out in bodice, cap, and kirtle,
With arbutus her corsage laced,
And roses clinging to her waist,
We crown her charming queen of taste,
Her chaplet-wreath of modest myrtle.

For eighteen centuries and more
Her fairy hands have modeled o'er
The same habiliments she wore
At her primeval coronation;
And still the pattern exquisite,
For every age a perfect fit,
In every land the favorite,
Elicits world-wide admiration.

Gay butterflies of fashion, you
Who wear a suit a year or two,
Then agitate for something new,
Look at Regina, the patrician!
Her cleverness is more than gold
Who so transforms from fabrics old
The things a marvel to behold,
And glories in the exhibition.

Why worry for an overdress,
The acme of luxuriousness,
Beyond all envy to possess,
Renewed as oft as lambkin fleeces!
Why flutter round in pretty pique
To follow style's capricious freak,
To match *pongee* or *moire antique*,
And break your peace in hopeless pieces?

O mantua-maker, costumer,
And fair-robed wearer! study *her*
And imitate the conjurer
So prettily economizing,
Without demur, regret, or pout,
Who always puts the bright side out
And never frets at all about
The world's *penchant* for criticizing.

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The Little Clock.

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Kind friend, you do not know how much
I prize this time-ly treasure,
So dainty, diligent, and such
A constant source of pleasure.

The man of brains who could invent
So true a chrono-meter
Has set a charming precedent,
And made a good repeater.

It speaks with clear, commanding clicks,
Suggestive of the donor;
And 'tends to business—never sick
A bit more than the owner.

It goes when I do; when I stop
(As by the dial showing)
It never lets a second drop,
But simply keeps on going.

It tells me when I am to eat,
Which isn't necessary;
When food with me is obsolete,
I'll be a reliquary.

It tells me early when to rise,

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And bother with *dejeuner*;
To sally forth and exercise,
And fill up my *porte-monnaie*.

I hear it talking in the night,
As if it were in clover:
You've never lost your appetite,
You've never been run over.

It makes me wish that I might live
More faithful unto duty,
And unto others something give
Like this bijou of beauty.

It holds its hands before its face,
So very modest is it;
So like the people in the place
Where I delight to visit.

Sometimes I wonder if it cries
The course I am pursuing;
Because it has so many I-s
And must know what I'm doing.

Sometimes I fear it makes me cry—
No matter, and no pity—
Afraid at last I'll have to die
In some far, foreign city.

It travels with me everywhere
And chirrups like a cricket;
As if it said with anxious air,
"Don't lose your tick-tick-ticket!"

Companion of my loneliness
Along my journey westward,
It never leaves me comfortless,
But has the last and best word.

I would not spoil its lovely face,
And so I go behind it,
And hold it like a china vase,
So careful when I wind it.

A clock is always excellent
That has its label on,
And proves a fine advertisement
For Waterbury, Conn.

Those Yankees—ah! they never shun
A chance to make a dime,
And counterfeit the very sun
In keeping "Standard Time."

Ah, well! the little clock has proved
The best of all bonanzas;
And thus my happy heart is moved
To these effusive stanzas.

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Improvement.

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Along the avenue I pass
Huge piles of wood and stone,
And glance at each amorphous mass,
Whose cumbrous weight has crushed the grass,
With half resentful groan.

Say I: "O labor, to despoil
Some lovely forest scene,
Or at the granite stratum toil,
And desecrate whole roods of soil,
Is vandal-like and mean!

"Than ever to disfigure thus

Our prairie garden-land,
Let me consort with Cerberus,
Be chained to crags precipitous,
Or seek an alien strand."

But while this pining, pouting Muse
The interval ignores,
Deft industry, no time to lose,
Contrives and carries, hoists and hews,
And symmetry restores.

Behold! of rock and pile and board
A modern miracle,
My neighbor's dwelling, roofed and floored,
That rapid grew as Jonah's gourd,
And far more beautiful.

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The artisan's receding gait
Has brushed the chips away,
Where innocence shall recreate,
Or like the flowers grow, and wait
The balminess of May.

An arid spot, where careless feet
Have long been wont to roam,
Where cattle grazed, as if to eat
Were life's delicious, richest treat,
Becomes a charming home.

O man primeval! hadst thou known,
Ere rude hands scooped thy grave,
Of Homestead Act, or Building Loan,
Thou wouldst have quite disdained to own
A rugged cliff or cave.

And now I see how skill and art
May cleave fair nature through,
Disintegrate her breathing heart,
And to the tissues torn impart
A use and beauty new.

And this improvement is, to turn
The things which God has given
To their best purpose, as we learn
To make the place where we sojourn
Homelike and more like Heaven.

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On Bancroft Height.

On Bancroft height Aurora's face
Shines brighter than a star,
As stepping forth in dewy grace,
The gates of day unbar;
And lo! the firmament, the hills,
And the vales that intervene—
Creation's self with gladness thrills
To greet the matin queen.

On Bancroft height the atmosphere
Is but an endless waft
Of life's elixir, pure and clear
As mortal ever quaffed;
And such the sweet salubrity
Of air and altitude,
Is banished many a malady
And suffering subdued.

On Bancroft height the sunset glow
When day departing dies
Outrivals all that tourists know
Of famed Italian skies;
And happy dwellers round about
Who view the scene aright

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In admiration grow devout
And laud the Lord of light.

Round Bancroft height rich memories
Commingle earth's affairs,
Among the world's celebrities,
Of him whose name it bears;
The scholar-wise compatriot
Who left to later men
The grand achievements unforgot
Of that historic pen.

Fair Bancroft height revisited
When all the land is white,
A halo crowns its noble head
Impelling fresh delight;
The daring wish in winter-time
The blizzard to defy
Those shining slippery slopes to climb
Up nearer to the sky.

Though Boreas abrade the cheek
With buffetings of snow,
He gives a vigor that the weak
And languid never know;
And with rejuvenescent thrill,
Like children everywhere,
Bestirs the rhapsody, the will
To make a snow-man there.

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On Bancroft height and Bancroft tower
Such vistas charm the eye
'Twere life's consummate, glorious hour
But to behold—and die;
Yet in the sparkle and the glow
Is earth so very fair
The spirit lingers, loath to go,
And dreams of heaven—up there.

A Reformer.

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When I was young, my heart elate
With ardent notions warm,
I thirsted to inaugurate
A spirit of reform;
The universe was all awry,
Philosophy despite,
And mundane things disjointed I
Was bound to set aright.

My mind conceived a million plans,
For Hope was brave and strong,
But dared not with unaided hands
Combat a giant wrong;
So with caress I sought to coax
Those who had humored me
In infancy—the dear old folks—
And gain their sympathy.

But quarreling with extant laws
They would have deemed a shame
Who clung to error, just because
Their fathers did the same.
I sought in Pleasure's gilded halls,
Where grace and beauty stirred
At revelry's impetuous calls,
To make my projects heard.

Then turned to stately palaces
Of luxury and ease,
Where wealth's absorbing object was
The master's whim to please;
And spoke of evils unredressed,

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Of danger yet to be—
They only answered, like the rest:
"But what is that to me?"

And even pious *devotées*
Whom sacred walls immure
Condemned me (as by feeble praise)—
What more could I endure?
Down by the stream, so pure and clear
That sunbeams paused to drink,
In loneliness and grief sincere
I pressed its grassy brink.

Thick darkness seemed to veil the day;
Beyond a realm of tears
Utopia's land of promise lay;
And not till later years
I learned this lesson—that to win
Results from labor sure,
"Reformers" always must begin
Among the lowly poor.

For they whose lot privation is
And whose delights are few,
Whose aggregate of miseries
Is want of something new,
The measure of whose happiness
Is but an empty cup,
For every novelty will press
Alert to fill it up.

[Pg 180]

Transcriber's Notes:

Page 27: Changed Galiee to Galilee (Printer's Error)

Page 47: Indented 1st stanza to match others

Page 173: Changed prarie to prairie (Printer's Error)

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK POEMS, VOL. IV ***

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