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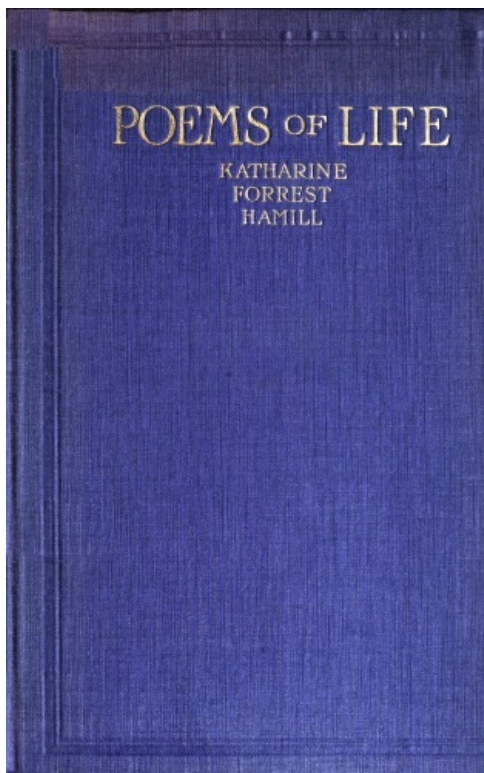
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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK POEMS OF LIFE \*\*\*



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**POEMS OF LIFE**

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**POEMS  
OF LIFE**

By  
**KATHARINE FORREST HAMILL**

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1915

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FIRST IMPRESSION

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TO  
GRACE BARTLETT STRYKER

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Words fail me when I strive to say  
What you've meant to me—for so long a day  
Hope—Inspiration—Sympathy.  
Steadfast and true, whate'er might be.  
O priv'lege rarest to the end  
As in the past, to call you—*friend*.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

The poems contained within the following pages are *children of the brain* which at intervals obtruded their company, and which, such as they are, at the solicitation of my friends, I have ventured to set down.

K. F. H.

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## POEMS OF LIFE

### TO-DAY

THE Yesterdays we might have called our own  
 But which, in our blindness, we let slip by,  
 Alas! they know not to return again,  
 Deep-buried doth each, within its grave, lie.

But O belov'ed, now that we have made  
 The golden secret ours—to hold alway  
 We will not sorrow o'er departed hours—  
 Just live in God's great glorious—To-day!

### JEWELS

OH, not the gracious deeds your kindness knew, dear,  
 When shone my sun and skies were ever fair;  
 But the more precious sympathies you tendered  
 In sorrow's hour. *Those* my jewels rare  
 Which dearer, than off'ring wealth knows to proffer,  
 I'll keep beside me whate'er may attend,  
 Nor render up so long as Life's day lasteth,—  
 Aye, and take with me, when shall plead its end.

### SOMETHING GONE

YOU come to me—you take my hand,  
 You try to make me see  
 Things should become as they once were,  
 'Twixt you and me.

I listen to each word, you say,  
 I mark well ev'ry tone,  
 Only to find—you plead in vain,—  
 There's something gone.

Something gone—that cannot come back again,  
 Tho' most entreatingly you pray.  
 Yet, not mine the fault,—but yours alone,  
 It went away.

### A-MAYING

WE will go a-Maying dear,  
 Just you and I together,  
 Oh, the glory of God's blossoming  
 Sunshiny weather!  
 Ev'ry ill we will forget,  
 Nor remember a regret,  
 For 'twill never do to fret  
 Whilst we are a-straying.  
 Only laughter ringing clear,  
 Waking echo far and near;  
 You and I so happy dear;  
 A-Maying! A-Maying!

## TRIBUTE

TO prove myself—aye, that's my aim,  
To prove myself for those  
Who took me by the hand and held,  
Nor cared if others chose  
To notice or pass coldly by.  
Thro' stormiest of weather  
Stood ever at my side, and said  
We'll face the world together!

## GOOD-BYE

### *She*

GOOD-bye, yes, I've decided  
It's best—it should not go *on*,  
The quite delightful companionship  
You and I, for some time, have known.  
  
No, do not try to dissuade me,  
I've thought it most carefully o'er,  
To arrive at but one conviction—  
We must see each other no more.

### *He*

And you think to sever our friendship  
By a mere putting away,  
Letting the same, as it were, slip from us  
Nor permitting me to say,  
  
A word in defence of its going  
As if I'd no *right* to share  
In the matter of decision  
I ask you,—Is it fair?

### *She*

Man-like you refuse to *reason*  
To see it's the only way,  
That the step really should have been taken  
Even *before* to-day.  
  
With you 'tis quite diff'rent,—the matter,—  
You've priv'lege entire of your life;  
But my freedom bows to restriction,—  
I am another man's wife.

### *He*

Yes, another man's wife, but the honor  
The Fates have conferred, it would seem  
He doesn't the quite appreciate,—  
At least, 'tis the knowledge I gleam.  
  
From observing his attitude towards you,  
Which I'm sure,—and you can but agree,  
Is not in the least in keeping with what  
A husband's towards a wife *should* be.

### *She*

And his failing you think permits me  
Favor to accept at *your* hands,  
That the vow I took at the altar  
Ceases to impose its demands.

In sickness or health I promised,  
"For better or worse",—till the day,  
He who gave should in his judgment  
See fit to take away.

### ***He***

And you'll let it bind you, that promise,  
To a man who does not care;  
Whose int'rest is the thoroughly selfish,  
In whose secrets—you do not share,

Listen, dear, the priv'lege of Mortals,—  
To get what we can out of life.  
Free yourself from the bond that is irksome  
And find happiness, as my wife.

### ***She***

Nay, not so, the rule of living  
Holds faithful but to the one test;  
Nor counts it—another's transgression,  
We must give of *ourselves*—our best.

Of no use to appeal the exception,  
The truth remains fix'ed alway,  
So, good-bye, it *must* be,—and, God bless you,—  
*There is nothing more to say.*

## **THE WONDROUS SONG**

I LONGED to sing a wondrous song,  
So wondrous, 'twould compel  
The admiration unreserved  
Of one and all as well.

My pen I took in hand and strove  
The magic words to write,  
Alas! I could not of my Muse  
Inspiration invite.

She would not humor, tho' I begged  
Persistently and long  
For the right metre—the right thought,  
To best set down my song.

'Twas stately phrase I coveted,  
The Laurel I would court—  
That of the world's acknowledgment  
Of unsurpass'ed thought.

At length disheartened, my appeal  
Knew, but to be denied,  
I rose and to the window moved,  
And marked the scene outside.

All quiet stretched the land before,  
Enwrapt in the soft haze  
Which with such rare enchantment clothes  
Autumn's initial days.

Idly my glance the expanse swept  
Till it came to where lay  
Outside the gate, the winding road  
Leading to far-away.

Then with the moment light was mine—  
Yet not complex its thought,  
The inspiration which appealed  
Was diff'rent, from that sought.

The winding road—the simple theme—  
They who followed after—  
The toll it wrested of sad tears,  
For short dole of laughter.

The tranquil ways bidden farewell,  
To seek of its unrest,  
The truth alas! too oft brought home,  
The paths forsook, were best.

Could I but so compose a lay,  
That one who heard might pause,  
Nor continue to sacrifice  
In an unrighteous cause.

And keep his soul tho' it should be  
By cruelest conflict wrung,  
I need not further supplicate—  
My wondrous song were sung.

## MILADI

MILADI is so wonderful in furbelows and laces;  
Miladi is so wonderful of such beguiling graces;  
My poor faint heart goes pit-a-pat when she her Slave addresses  
I wonder if how *much* I love, Miladi guesses!

Miladi is so wonderful, her dimples and her curls;  
Miladi is so wonderful, my mind bewildered whirls;  
Oh would some pow'r benign might make it plain for me to see  
How much it is, in very truth, Miladi thinks of *me*.

## THE SOMETHING MY LIFE HAS MISSED

I T whispers in the murmur  
Of the breezes passing by,  
Pulsates in the azure  
Of ev'ry flawless sky.  
And oh! when twilight gathers  
And its curtain gently falls,  
The-something-my-life-has-missed  
Calls and calls.

Part of the Throng have found it,  
The light within their eyes  
Pleads of too great a radiance  
The truth to disguise.  
Their world is all they wish for,  
Nor know they to implore  
From off Destiny's altar  
Happiness more.

It whispers in the murmur  
Of the breezes passing by,  
Pulsates in the azure  
Of ev'ry flawless sky.  
Some day I, too, shall know it  
In all its ecstasy,  
The-something-my-life-has-missed  
Will come to me.

## CONTENTMENT

T O have you with me day by day  
Watch you flitting to and fro,  
In and out this room and that,  
Up and down the stairs and lo!  
With each turn mark you at  
Some task benign—love bids you know.

To have you with me day by day,  
A tender, trusting, gracious self  
Let the world treasure as it may,  
To me, far dearer than its wealth  
Your comradeship. Nor pleads the hour  
In all God's calendar so true,  
With blessing richer for its dow'r  
Than the rare one which gave me,—*you*.

## GONE

I TURN to find you,  
But do not see—  
Who at my side I knew  
Continually.

Again, I hearken!  
But do not hear,  
Your voice answer mine  
In tones so clear.

Gone!—nevermore on earth  
To see, to know,  
And I still live on  
God!—is it so?

## TO MY MUSE

LET others bow before Wealth's shrine,  
And tribute render up  
For the pleasures manifold it brings  
To overflow Life's cup.  
But at your altar, Muse, I kneel  
And reverential pray,  
When darkness would have claimed my soul—  
You held its blight at bay.

My sky of Life was overcast—  
Nor showed one patch of blue—  
Love had betrayed, and deep,—ah, deep!  
My heart drank of its rue.  
Where lo! a hand my shoulder pressed,  
E'en as I would give up;—  
I turned,—your eyes looked into mine—  
There passed the cup.

A music wonderful entranced  
Which led to heights afar;  
Ever it beckoned on, and on,  
My guiding star.  
The chains that hitherto had held,—  
How worthless proved their pow'r!  
Instead of wishing Life to pass  
I thanked God for each hour.

*Let others bow before Wealth's shrine,  
And tribute render up  
For the pleasures manifold it brings  
To overflow Life's cup.  
But at your altar, Muse, I kneel  
And reverential pray,  
When darkness would have claimed my soul,—  
You held its blight at bay.*

## CONCEPTION

TO the many you give of your lighter vein  
Laughter and gay repartee.  
But the deeper side,—that which thinks things out,  
You give to me.

With the many you play Life's make-believe game;  
'Tis a bantering light they see  
When they look in your eyes, their earnest gaze  
You save for me.

The many accept you for what you would seem;  
From such blundering am I free:  
I know you for your own true self,—the self  
You are to me.

## AWAKENING

OH, truth was mine before. I knew  
The sun was gold; the skies of day were blue;  
But the wonder of things, dear—*this* never grew  
Until into my life, God's grace sent *you*.

## THE HOUSE BUILT ON SANDS



WE will go, he said, far, far away,  
And a world make of our own.  
A kingdom, such as never before  
On land or sea, has been known.

She smiled into his eyes,—and oh! the look  
Of perfect trust she gave  
As he gathered her close, vowing the while  
Allegiance unto the grave.

Well, they went away and made their world  
As others had done before,  
For the time being love blinding them  
To the confine of its shore.

They were all-in-all to each other, alone,  
And it mattered not a whit,  
That, in the scheme of things outside the pale,  
They were not permitted to fit.

Defiance they flung in the face of dissent!  
Life,—was it not their right  
To live it as they wanted to?  
And they would, all warning despite.

Why burden the pages by writing down  
Their history in detail?  
Was ever yet such a compact made  
That was known *not* to fail.

'Twas a question of time,—“*The house built on sands*”  
From its moorings slipped away;  
They who court Fate's disfavor—or soon—or late,  
“Pass under the rod” of her sway.

## TO A BUTTERFLY

BUTTERFLY, Butterfly,  
Roaming thro' the air—  
Flying here, flying there,  
Flying—ev'rywhere.  
Bending o'er the roses' petals,  
Drinking of their dew,  
Then away—with quick dart—  
Cleaving towards the blue!

Butterfly, Butterfly,  
Roaming thro' the air—  
If I, like you, had privilege,  
To wander ev'rywhere.  
I'd spread my wings and soar up! up!  
Straight to Heav'n's door—  
And when I got there Butterfly,  
I'd roam no more!

## A FRAGMENT

FLOWERS exquisite frequent thrive,  
Hidden in the shade  
Of some o'er-arching foliage  
In a secluded glade.

They need the shadow, not the sun,  
To best perfect their bloom.  
E'en so, life's rarest thought expands  
Oft, in its darkened room.

## QUERY

YOU love me, you say, and want me  
To become your own.  
I believe you are in earnest now,  
But,—as the years go on—

What do you think will happen!  
Shall we travel side by side,  
Lovers, and faithful companions,  
Whatever may betide?

So many have taken the venture,  
But to find it turn out for the bad,  
Who, at the beginning, just as much faith  
In a different outcome had.

That I'm fearful our fate might be like theirs,—  
Have we proof, think you, it will not?  
A guarantee,—we shall never grow tired  
And want to unfasten the knot?

Tho' my love is yours, 'twere far better,  
Our paths separately should trend;  
Than start together, and *then* diverge,  
Nor accomplish the journey's end.

## I CLOSE MINE EYES

I CLOSE mine eyes, and see you dear  
As in the dear, dead days;  
The tender grace, and strength of poise,  
Marking you from the rest apart.  
And oh! it seems as if I must  
Enfold you to my heart.

I close mine eyes, and see you dear  
As in the dear, dead days;  
The hair's soft fall over the brow,  
Within your eyes love's ardent light,  
It cannot be! it cannot be!  
My day has turned to night.

I close mine eyes, and see you dear  
As in the dear, dead days;  
Before love's bitter aftermath  
Whose penalty 'tis mine to know.  
Oh! come to me from out its void!  
*I need you so! I need you so.*

## UNDERSTANDING

YOU have not spoken the word, dear,  
But I know! I know!  
It came to me of a-sudden  
How you loved me so!  
A glance which escaped unguarded,  
The truth made plain.  
I've hugged its memory to me  
Over, and over again!

You have not spoken the word, dear,  
But I know! I know!  
It came to me of a-sudden  
How you loved me so!  
A breath, with a catch in the taking,—  
And my world, you see,  
Became changed,—for I love you, dear!  
As you love me!

## WE MET IN MAY

WE met in May, I know you have forgotten,  
Have long since put all thought of me away;  
Yet in my heart the mem'ry ever lingers,—  
We met in May.

Fragrant the air with redolence of blossom!  
Matchless the sky of perfect, cloudless blue!  
And oh! the music that the world was ringing—  
When I met you.

Another has your fancy from me captured;  
Her lot,—Fate's tenderer impulse to know.  
Whilst I, adown the years waiting the facing,  
Alone, must go.

No thought is mine save that bequeaths a blessing;—  
God grant your life be a long, happy day.  
You have forgotten, but I must remember,—  
We met in May.

## I TURN ME DOWN A LIGHTED WAY

I TURN me down a lighted way  
Where laughter rings and song floats out;  
And, as I gain the happy throng,  
All eagerly they flock about.

I smile on this side, and on that,  
Join the gay flow of repartee:  
Yet, deep, deep down, within my heart  
Echoes the endless moan for thee.

I hark to him who compliments,  
Within my eyes a sparkling light.  
I play the game,—nor does he guess  
Its fire has burned to ashes white.

They count me merriest of all.  
Not one who notes the deep-down sigh,  
Who lists—Life's tragic undertone,—  
*We've said good-bye—we've said good-bye.*

## COUNSEL

HAVE you balked at the test you've been put to,  
Are you weary of straining a point?  
Is the fight too hard, the way too long?  
Is there too much of sighing, too little of song?  
Does ev'ry thing seem to be going wrong?  
The scheme entire, as it were, out of joint?

Then lend me an ear whilst I counsel awhile,  
You must take a *fresh* grip, my friend,  
The game is yours if you'll make it your own,  
Defeat is a word that need never be known.  
He who *sticks* in his mount, *cannot* be thrown,  
Let his steed strive its best to that end.

The sun goes down with the gloom of each night,  
But it rises again with each morn,  
And there's so much of brightness to be gathered in,  
Such wonderful happiness ours to win,  
Throw despair to the winds, and anew begin,  
Standing forth—the Mortal re-born!

## DECISION

AT times, I think, were we to talk it over  
The something wanting in your life and mine,  
We might arrive at clearer understanding  
The cause of our unhappiness define.

Yet, ever with the impulse strong upon me  
Such course to follow out as for the best,  
Comes swift the contradictory impression,—  
'Twould useless be to put it to the test.

That sympathy which pleads when souls are mated  
Is the so woefully lacking,—'tis clear,  
It could not prove aught else than effort wasted,—  
You are so far,—to try and draw you near.

## YOU NEVER GUESSED THE SECRET

YOU never guessed the secret,  
Nor have unto to-day.  
The truth of it never reached you,  
I hid it so well away.  
The truth of how I loved you,  
Yet spake not, for your sake;  
Nor is it easy to put aside  
What One so longs to take.

The voice of you, in my musings,  
The glance of you, in my dreams;  
The feeling, you ever were near me,  
Even now, how compelling it seems!  
As if but to turn—were to see you;  
To know the clasp of your hand;  
Yet, I guarded the knowledge carefully,  
And you did not understand.

Still the thought of you hurt, and I hungered—  
Hungered, day and night,  
It will count when the story is ended,  
I was able to see aright.  
You never guessed the secret,  
Nor have unto to-day.  
The truth of it never reached you,  
I hid it so well away.

## THE LIGHT

THE light! the light!  
For all is dark,  
The light I pray,  
My feet stumble,  
I cannot find the way.

The light! the light!  
For all is dark,  
Soon the night  
Complete, will overtake  
The light! the light! Oh! God—the light!

## EDUCATION

YOU say you are shocked, my lady,—and so you ought to be.  
A comedy, quite upon my soul,  
To make me love you,—then fence about  
When I demand only righteous toll.

An innocent flirtation, you intended no harm,—  
Well, a lesson the trifler learns,  
To keep a safe distance away from fire,—  
For the truth, not the lie, it burns.

## RE-ADJUSTMENT

YOU beg of me to forgive you  
The Other in your life.  
She, who has for some time, I've discovered,  
Been defrauding the wife.

You avow you never loved her  
That 'twas she led you along—  
And why hold one responsible  
Who's not guilty of a wrong?

Won't I forgive, as you urge me,  
Forgive and try to forget?  
Let the rest of your life be a token,  
Of how sincere your regret.

I must have time for my answer,  
Some things take the breath—  
It seems to die, we need not  
Always wait for death.

I loved you so absolutely,  
Thought you so completely my own;  
I never questioned but that we meant  
All in all to each other—alone.

And you the while were betraying  
The faith I held so dear,  
Selling the same to another—  
No, do not come near.

When its foundation becomes weakened,  
A structure is undermined,  
Nor can it at all times, be strengthened anew,  
They who venture the effort, find.

I will do my best to replace it—  
The foundation my trust hath known;  
Should I fail—tho' sincere my intention—tion—  
You must go on your way—alone.

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### FROM "RHYMES FOR WEE SWEETHEARTS"

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Acknowledgment is made to Messrs. George W. Jacobs & Company for their courtesy in granting permission to reprint in this volume verses from "Rhymes for Wee Sweethearts."

### WHEN GRANDMAMA WAS LITTLE

WHEN grandmama was little—  
It was years and years ago,  
In what folks call, at this time,  
The old-fashioned days, you know—  
Why, she had such a perfect time,  
The best you ever saw:  
We wish that we'd been little  
Same time as grandmama.

She tells us all about it,  
And then, if we are good,  
And just sit still and listen,  
The way all children should,  
And never interrupt a bit,  
Or question 'bout the rest  
Till she's all through, she shows us  
The things up in her chest.

I can't begin to tell you  
The half of what is there:  
The rag-dolls soiled and faded  
That haven't any hair,  
And toys, and—oh, yes!—lady-dolls,  
And, folded with the rest,  
A little rose-bud muslin frock,  
Her one-time very best.

And there's her picture taken  
In this self-same gown,  
With ruffles reaching to the waist  
And panties showing down;  
Hair parted in the middle;  
Over each ear a curl:  
Oh! but our grandmama was pretty!  
When a little girl!

## HAROLD'S LAMENT

BLAMED if I see any fun  
In being a boy,  
With ev'rybody trying  
Their hardest to annoy!  
It's "Harold" here, and "Harold" there  
Until they have me sick  
Of "Run along!"—"Don't be slow!"—  
Or "Hurry up; be quick!"

First some one sends me down-stairs,  
I run with might and main;  
Before I'm half-way there it's turn  
And run right up again!  
And sure as I go out to play,  
Or have a little fun,  
I'm called straight in: there's something else  
A-waiting to be done!

I just believe I'll run away;  
Pack all my things and go!  
Can't see the use of staying 'round  
And being treated so!  
For I just bet when they were small,  
Not *one* of them would do  
Half of the errands and the things  
That I'm expected to!

## MRS. SPIDER

**B**ROTHER Dick and I one day  
Watched Mrs. Spider spin away:  
My, how she spun, and spun, and spun,  
Until she had her web all done!  
Then, brother Dick, he said to me:  
“Now, where can Mr. Spider be?”  
We watched, but didn’t see him come,  
So I guess he couldn’t have lived at home.

## **THE NAUGHTY LITTLE GIRL**

**W**HEN I’m so awf’ly naughty,  
And  
    just  
    won’t  
    do  
The very littlest tiny thing  
That  
    I’m  
    told  
    to,  
But kick and scream when any one  
    Attempts to come my way,  
And press my fingers to my ears  
    To miss what they may say,  
Why, then my mother says that I’m  
    As bad as bad can be;  
She says she thinks it’s some one else  
    Instead  
    of  
    me.  
She says she’s sure the little girl  
She  
    used  
    to  
    know  
Would never do the horrid things  
That  
    hurt  
    her  
    so;  
And though she doesn’t try to whip,  
    She looks so very sad  
That somehow I just get ashamed  
    And can’t keep being bad:  
I chase the naughty girl away  
    As far as far can be;  
Then I run and kiss my mother, so  
She’ll  
    know  
    I’m  
    me!

## **ON THE STAIR**

**A** WEE form nestles on the stair,  
    Two eyes betraying  
The Sand-man has o’ertaken there  
    Wee steps delaying.  
Too tired to mount the flight to bed,  
Dear little tumbled golden head,  
Just resting there a while instead,  
    Through dreamland straying.

## **THE LAND O’ DREAMS**

ALL aboard for the Land o' Dreams!  
(One for the money and two for the show!)  
All aboard for the Land o' Dreams!  
(Three to make ready and four to go!)  
    The passenger's late,  
    But the cars all wait—  
Just hark to the brakeman's cries:  
    "All aboard for the Land o' Dreams!"—  
And the tickets are drowsy eyes.

## II

All aboard for the Land o' Dreams!  
(One for the money and two for the show!)  
All aboard for the Land o' Dreams!  
(Three to make ready and four to go!)  
    The whistles sound,  
    And the wheels go 'round,  
And the bright green fields slip past;  
    The passenger's here and the track is clear  
To the Land o' Dreams at last!

## THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

SOMETIMES at night I get awake  
    And all's so dark and still—  
Why I'm 'bout scared even to take  
    A deep-down breath, until  
I peer 'round first and try to see  
    If ev'rything's all right!  
For the terriblest things can be,—  
    The Middle of the Night.

I want so much to cry right out—  
    But I am awful 'fraid!  
'Cause, if those black things *were* about,  
    They'd hear the noise I made.  
And mother sleeps so very sound,  
    She mightn't hear, you see,  
And then they'd make a great big bound  
    And run away with me.

So I lie just still as I can—  
    My heart a-thumping so!  
Wishing I were a great big man,  
    So I'd not scare, you know.  
When oh!—the covers pull away  
    And just as I begin  
To scream—why, I hear mother say  
    It's her tucking them in!

## WHEN OUR FATHERS WERE LITTLE BOYS



WHEN our fathers were little boys,  
Before they grew to men,  
I wonder did they make a noise  
Or have a good time then?  
I wonder did they ever fight  
And punch each other's nose?  
Or if they always did just right  
And never spoiled their clothes.

I wonder did their mothers scold  
Sometimes and make them cry?  
I wonder if they ever told  
A teeny-weeny lie?  
I wonder if they ever had  
Such dirty hands and face?  
I wonder were they ever mad  
And banged things 'round the place?

I wonder did they ever run  
To fires hard as they could?  
Or if they called it better fun  
To sit still and be good?  
I wonder *were* they ever small  
And kept back in the shade?  
Or didn't they have to grow at all,  
But just come ready made?

## SLUMBER LAND

TO all: "Good-night!"  
Two eyes shut tight  
And baby's bound for Slumber,  
The land where all tired children go,  
The land where white dream-flowers grow  
Beyond my art to number:  
Winks  
And blinks  
And nods all past—  
Mother's arms are sure and fast,  
Off to Slumber Land at last,  
The moonlit Land of Slumber!

## THE NEW BROTHER

WE've got a new kid in our house;  
And it 'bout gives me a fit,  
The fuss that ev'rybody is  
A-making over it.  
All 'long I've been the pet, you see,  
'Twas *me* they tried to please  
But now, this other fellow has  
Them all upon their knees!

He's just about the ugliest!  
And really doesn't seem  
Able to do another thing  
But double up and scream.  
He's got no teeth, he's got no hair,—  
Worst curiosity!  
I'd like some one to tell me *why*  
He counts for more than me!

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