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Title: Poems

Author: Henry Reed Conant

Release date: May 1, 2016 [EBook #51904]

Language: English

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

POEMS

—BY—

HENRY REED CONANT.

“’Tis pleasure, sure, to see one’s name in print:
A book’s a book, although there’s nothing in’t.”

—BYRON.

1893.
THE SUN PUBLISHING CO.,
Kaukauna, Wis.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1893

By HENRY REED CONANT,

In the Office of the Librarian of Congress,
at Washington.

TO MY BROTHER,
CARLOS EVERETT CONANT, A. B.,
NOW PROFESSOR OF LANGUAGES
IN THE
CHADDOCK COLLEGE, ILL.,
AND FORMERLY
PROFESSOR IN THE STATE UNIVERSITY,
OF MINNESOTA,
THIS BOOK OF POEMS
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

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INTRODUCTION.

Henry Reed Conant was born in Janesville, Wis., on the seventeenth day of February, 1872. When four years of age he removed to Vermont, the native state of his parents Henry Clay and Dora Evaline (Reed) Conant. Henry was educated in the public schools and at the Morrisville "People's Academy," Vermont, and in his fifteenth year returned to the west.

He inherited from his New England ancestors a deep love of nature, and pronounced religious and moral strength, which tinge the whole body of his rhymes and poems. Like many poets in their juvenile days Mr. Conant's first lines were simple and artless, and the world of critics can hardly assail him for penning his first rhymes in honor of his "first love," thus:

"Of all the lassies in the land
That e'er I chanced to view,
Methinks the fairest one I saw
Had sparkling eyes of blue."

His first published poem appeared in a little story paper, February, 1890, at Belvidere, Ills. Nearly all of Mr. Conant's poems were written in Wisconsin, his native state. The selected poems forming this volume reflect the young poet's individuality to a sensible degree. The trend of his thoughts and genius is toward the more solemn and religious aspects of nature, and of human experience. He dwells in the forest's shade, on the banks of rivers flowing through lea and woodland, by the grave of a little child, and wanders back to his old New England home—to the scenes of his childhood.

Henry Reed Conant, like many other beginners in the literary arena, commits his poems to a critical public with the full consciousness of their poetical deficiencies. Criticism he must await, and gladly accept as the basis of that future development through which every poet must pass ere he attain that popular following that is the reward not only of genius, but of bitter disappointments.

A. K. G.

Appleton, Wis., Nov. 22, 1893.

We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.

—*Bailey.*

POEMS.

LIFE.

Life is a race in which all compete,
Hastening onward with restless feet,
Eagerly striving for some great prize
That out in the hidden future lies:
The sturdy youth with visions bright,
The stalwart form of manhood's might,
And tottering age, are borne along
In the mighty rush of the endless throng.
Like the waves of the sea that forever roll
'Tis a livelong race to an unseen goal;
But the prize is gained at the end of the strife,
For it lies just beyond this earthly life,
Where fears, tribulations and trials cease,
In the golden realms of eternal peace.

DREAM OF A FAIRY.

When all the air was filled with song
At morning's early beam,
In musing mood I strolled along
Beside a placid stream.

And as I roved the meadow sweet,
What bade my heart rejoice?
Was it the daisies at my feet?
Nay, nor the songster's voice.

For glancing toward the crystal stream
I spied a little child,
Upon whose brow the morning beam,
With all its beauty smiled:

And on her cheek, so wondrous fair,
I saw the ruddy glow,—
Beheld her locks of flaxen hair
Wave gently to and fro.

Then with delight I nearer drew,
But lo! here ends my theme;
I waked—the fairy fled my view—
'Twas but a happy dream.



TOGETHER.

'Neath an aged elm sat a loving pair,
A long, long time ago—
A youthful man and a maiden fair,
With faces all aglow:
The birds' sweet notes in the boughs above
And the balm of the sweet June weather
Seemed to say, "'Tis the time for love,"
As they chatted and laughed together.

The years flew by—an aged pair,
Sat by an old hearth-stone,
With furrowed brows and hoary hair,
Talking in feeble tone
Of the happy days they used to know,
When, in the gladsome weather,
They wandered merrily to and fro,
Talking of love together.

And now the grass grows green on a pair
Of graves, made side by side;
Two hearts are lying in silence there,
That once beat with joy and pride.
They shared life's triumphs, life's defeats,
Thro' fair and stormy weather,
And now they walk the golden streets
Of Paradise—together.

BE NOT DISCOURAGED.

When the clouds hang darkly o'er thee,
Be thou not discouraged:
When the world looks drear before thee,
Be thou not discouraged:
Let thy heart be light and gay;
Soon the clouds will pass away:
'Tis darkest just before the day;
Be thou not discouraged.

FOREST DELIGHTS.

I love to stroll amid the silent wood
Where naught is found to break the quietude,
Except the woodland tenants, or the breeze
Among the tender ferns and tow'ring trees.

Here sports the timid hare in wanton glee,
While may be heard from yonder chestnut tree
The squirrel chirping to its mate near by,
Which gaily answers with a prompt reply.

Here many a brooklet ripples on its way,
Here countless birds employ their sweetest lay,
And here and there the startled otter springs,
While oft a partridge hies on whirring wings.

What are the palaces of kings and lords
Compared with all that nature here affords?
These forest charms are dearer to my heart
Than all the pomp of royalty and art.

PARTING.

The deepest sorrow fills the heart
To see our loved ones perish;
But soon or late we all must part
With those we fondly cherish.

The tie must break with friend and friend:
The true and noble-hearted
Must one day reach their journey's end,
To join the dear departed.

Why mourn we, then, for those who cross
The intervening river?
Although to us a heavy loss,
To them is joy forever.

SONG.

Not always the prettiest flowers
Fill the air with the sweetest perfume;
And not always the sweetest singer
Is the bird with the fairest plume.

But the sweetness surpassing all other,
And the richest and tenderest strain,
Rise out of the bosom that knoweth
The feelings of love and pain.

GOD'S LOVE.

I know where'er my feet may be,
Tho' prone to stray,
His watchful eye is over me
Both night and day.

And tho' ofttimes this heart has erred
'Mid worldly cares,
I know His pard'ning ear has heard
My humble prayers.

At all times, e'en when I have failed
To do His will,
His love has in my heart prevailed—
And guides me still.

DREAMS.

What cloudless scenes of wonder and delight
Come to us in the silent realms of night;
Loved ones we meet, that long have been at rest,
We grasp their hands and clasp them to our breast,
Talk with them of the happy days gone by,
With not a pang of sorrow nor a sigh:
And everything around looks wondrous fair,
Sweet flowers of richest hue bloom here and there;
On either hand we see unnumbered throngs
Of white-robed angels, wafting joyful songs:
And seeing thus, continued glories rise.—
Our souls are 'rapt in endless Paradise.
But mingled voices touch the sleeper's ear.
And lo! how swift the bright scenes disappear!
The morning light beams through the window pane—
The dream has fled and day returned again.

LINES ON LIFE.

With all the cares and toils that here abound,
And e'en deep seas of grief which men must ford—
To him whose guardian is th' Omnipotent,
Life is a source of everlasting joy!

This world at most is but an anteroom,
Where souls prepare to take their joyous flight
To Heaven's eternal mansions. Thus the while
We here remain, is it not meet that we
Should wear the garb of truth and righteousness?

WHERE ARE THE HEARTS WE CHERISHED SO?

Where are the hearts we cherished so,
Who've left this earthly main,
And gone from kindred circles dear,
Ne'er to return again?
Where gone those aged silvery locks?
That sturdy youthful brow?
Alas! no sound comes from the grave,
Where they're reposing now!

When troubles here our paths beset.
When cares and woes assail,
We often think of those at rest
Within that happy Vale;
And tho' we cannot wish them back
In this sad world of pain—
O! how we long to catch a glimpse
Of their dear forms again!

But just beyond the stream which glides
Between that Land and ours—
Where fairer fields are all adorned
With never-fading flow'rs,
And brighter suns forever shine
Throughout the golden spheres,
We'll dwell with those who've left us here,
Through never-ending years.



CONTENTMENT.

The isle of contentment we view from afar,
And it dazzles our eyes like a beautiful star;
A region which thousands gaze wistfully at,
And would dwell there, if 'twasn't for this or for that.

The lord in his palace, the cotter obscure,
The high and the lowly, the rich and the poor,
Are all discontented whate'er be the case,
Because they are not in some other man's place.

In youth, how we long for mature years of men;
In age, how we sigh for our childhood again;
Wherever our station, whate'er be our lot,
We miss countless blessings for joys we have not.

Thus, ever thro' life, from our earliest prime,
We look and we long for some happier clime,
Until the bright portals of Paradise ope,
And we soar away home on the pinions of hope.

THE TELULAH SPRING.

A living spring of cool, clear water, on the banks of the Fox River, Appleton, Wis.: said to have been first discovered by, and named after, a beautiful Indian girl by the name of "TELULAH" who, many years ago, lived near the spot.

I've heard it told, that many years ago,
When here deep groves stood in their majesty,
Ere they had felt the white man's fatal stroke,
And peace and happiness breathed over all,—
That near this spring an Indian maiden dwelt.
Most beautiful was she, so runs the tale,
With tresses like the darkest raven's coat,
And eyes to match their hue. Her lips, 'tis said,
Surpassed the reddest berries on the hill;
And the bright glow which rested on her cheek
Was like the morning beam, or like the rays
Of eve, that ling'ring, paint the western sky.
Such was the one, 'tis said, who first beheld
This living stream of water, cool and clear,
Uprising from the bosom of the earth.
Here many a traveler on his weary way
'Mid summer's heat, retires to cool his brow,
And freely drink the ever crystal tide.
And men oppressed with city care and strife,
Stroll hither when the toils of day are o'er;
Or when the weary week draws to a close,
Upon that day when all men cease their toils,
Approach this calm retreat to meditate
On nature's wonders and the Mighty One
By Whom all things were formed and still exist.
And happy lovers strolling hand in hand
Amid these pleasant bowers, pause to behold
This sparkling fount forever gushing forth,
And linger 'round this scene of beauty, which
Still bears the name of that sweet Indian girl.

DAYBREAK.

We behold the bright joys of another day's dawn,
As time swiftly flies "like a bird on the wing;"
Let's improve every moment, now, ere it has gone,
For no one can tell what the next one may bring.

Our hopes of the future we never may see;
Our days that are past we can never redeem;
But to-day every heart, love and joy may impart,
Which surpasses the sun's most radiant beam.

TO A BROWN THRUSH,

On finding its nest and young.

O little thrush, what gives thee such alarm?
Pray fear thee not, nor think that I am come
To injure or disturb thy happy home;
Thy little ones so sweet I ne'er would harm.
Thy love, like all true parents' love, is strong—
At all times anxious for thy young so dear;
But put away now ev'ry needless fear,
And once again resume thy happy song.
Sweet bird, I wish thee never-ceasing cheer!
Who, with devoted love and tender care,
Look'st on thy nestlings now so young and fair.
May never cruel enemy come near,
Led by blood-thirsty instincts, to destroy
Thy little home—now filled with peace and joy.

HOPE.

Ne'er lose thy courage, tho' dark seems the strife;
The blackest night dies with the golden dawn:
Let not thy hope cease while there still is life,
For Hope is what the world is living on!

THE ANGEL OF HOME.

What visions of happiness often steal o'er me,
As back to my childhood in fancy I roam;
And the picture that mem'ry paints brightest before me,
Is mother, dear mother,—the angel of home.

No love's like a mother's, so true and so tender,
No love's so enduring 'neath heaven's broad dome;
And not all earth's wealth with its pomp and its splendor,
Could steal my affection from mother and home.

TO MY SISTER.

May still thy deeds of innocence,
Like stars of heaven, shine;
And thou retain thy purity,
Till Heaven itself is thine!

WOMAN.

The fairest flower that all our path adorns,
The loveliest rose amidst the cruel thorns,
The brightest star that shines in man's abode,
The sweetest gift that Heaven e'er bestowed!

THE FOX RIVER.

O beautiful river,
How gently among
The fields and the forests
Thou glidest along!

'Mid thy pleasant valleys
And cool shady bow'rs,
Grow tall fragrant grasses
And bright blooming flow'rs.

By day o'er thy waters
The sun beameth bright,
And stars ever twinkle
Above thee by night.

And never complaining
Thou flowest along
'Mid nature's wide province
With laughter and song:

Content with thy mission
In nature's great plan;
And such is thy lesson
Thou teachest to man.

A LITTLE GRAVE.

Sweetly sing, ye little songsters;
Smile, ye happy skies;
Softly blow, ye wanton breezes—
Here an infant lies!

Brightly bloom, ye tinted flowers,
Wafting sweet perfume;
Gently fall, ye summer showers,
On this little tomb.

AUTUMN DAYS.

The summer joys are fleeting fast
From forest, field and glen,
And soon shall winter's piercing blast
Sweep o'er the earth again.

How lovely were the bright spring flow'rs,
That decked the landscape o'er;
But now we see, on fields and bow'rs,
Their dainty forms no more.

The leaves are falling in the wind,
From many a lofty height,
And birds are calling to their kind,
Upon their farewell flight.

But still, how cheering is the thought,
When other joys have flown;
That the little snow-bird leaves us not,
But chirps till winter's gone.

IN HEAVEN.

One pleasant day in June a little thrush
Lit on a bough close by my window pane,
And as the streams from living fountains gush,
Poured forth its sweetest strain.

My heart then felt released from every care,
And seemed to rise toward Heaven's enchanted zone,
When soon the music ceased, and looking there,
I saw the bird had flown.

And then the thought came to me of the one
Who left me when so youthful and so fair,
Who in the light of Heaven's unsetting sun
Lives with the angels there.

I little thought, ere those sweet smiles were gone,
That she so soon must heed the angel's call;
But all the way He led her safely on
Who marks the sparrow's fall.

And some day, when life's billows cease to roar,
And here no more my weary feet shall roam,
Our souls shall be conjoined forevermore
In Heaven's eternal home.

IDLENESS.

Make some good use of ev'ry space of time,
In idleness are sown the seeds of crime;
Man's erring mind, allured by passions strong,
Begins pursuing here the path of wrong;
And heedless of the peril just ahead,
Step after step proceeds with fearless tread,
Till ruin comes with overwhelming power—
The bitter fate of many an idle hour!

THE RIVER.

Out from the shady woodland,
With song and laughter free;
Down from the sunny hillside,
And over the flow'ry lea,
Floweth the restless river,
On its journey to the sea.

Over the silvery pebbles,
Sparkling like morning dew,
Whether in light or darkness,
Doth ever its course pursue,
Till it gains the mighty ocean
With waters vast and blue.

And thus are we traveling onward,—
'Tis Hope by which we're borne,
And our hearts beat with triumphant gladness,
As we dream of some brighter dawn
With sights that are nobler and grander,
And we journey on and on.

And up from the earth's dark bosom,
Like the homeward flight of a dove,
On Hope's majestic pinions
We soar to the realms above,
To lave forever and ever,
In the sea of Eternal Love.



THE CROWN OF FAME.

What toils and hardships oft confront man's sight,
When first ascending fame's immortal height:
What cares, vexations, worriments prevail,
What deep-laid plans, repeated efforts, fail;
Yet who would dwell in hermit den, obscure,
To shun the toils that hero-gods endure!

Bestir thyself, O man, for soon—too soon,
As youth recedes, shall fade life's golden noon!
If thou wouldst make thyself undying name,
Direct thy efforts to one worthy aim;
Let each exertion then be wrought with zeal,
Nor faint if woe come where thou look'st for weal;
But toil thou on, nor fear the world's dark frown,
Till firm upon the summit of renown.

Whatever good, perchance, thy toils, may greet,
Lose not thyself in folly's vain conceit:
False pride to lowest degradation tends—
It leads to vice and vice to crime descends;
As tiny rills, that from the mountain flow,
Pursue their course to larger streams below,
Till seas are joined where mighty billows roll,
So pride goes onward till it wrecks the soul;
Thus by degrees the downward course begins,
And greatest evils rise from little sins.

Nor seek thy fame 'mid pompous scenes of art,
Where vice and folly oft inure the heart:
'Tis Right eternal kindles honor's flame,
And crowns Man's efforts with immortal Fame.



ELEGY,

On the death of Hon. C. B. Clark, member of Congress from 1887 to 1891,
for Wisconsin district No. 6, (now No. 8.) Died Sept. 10th, 1891.

Well may the throngs in countless numbers weep,
Bereft of such a great and noble man,
For brilliant was the course of life he ran,
But now he lies in everlasting sleep.

He lived a life exempt from selfish pride;
He never turned a stranger from his door;
He ne'er refused to aid the needful poor;
He proved to youth a never-failing guide.

Alas! we mourn, with aching in our breast
And eyelids moistened with the burning tear,
The loss of one, so generous and sincere,
Now silent in his sweet and peaceful rest.

A REVERIE.

O glad shall I be when the winter is ended,
When the wild sweeping blasts of the season are gone,
When the last flakes of snow to the ground have descended,
And the drifts have all vanished from meadow and lawn.

O glad shall I be when these cold days are over,
And the bright joys of summer are with us again;
When the meadows are blooming with sweet-scented clover,
And the warm sun is smiling on new fields of grain.

O glad shall I be, when as free as the air
The birds are all singing their merriest lay,
To remind me of days when I knew naught of care,
And the seasons all seemed like a long summer day.

O spring! merry spring! with thy fragrance of flowers,
To thee from my sorrows I longingly turn;—
I'll forget the drear scenes of these long winter hours,
And dream of thy blessings and happy return.



OPPORTUNITY.

Time is ever swiftly fleeting,
Unimproved by scores of men;
Opportunities are passing
That we'll never have again;
Many things we may accomplish,
As the hours go speeding on,
If we but improve each moment,
Ere the precious time is gone.

There are many hearts about us,
That a loving word might cheer;
There are many dear ones with us,
That ere long may not be here:
Let us then be wise and thoughtful,
As our course we journey on,
Striving for the good of others
Ere the precious time is gone.

LINES

Written on hearing a gentleman remark: "God bless dear woman."

"God bless dear woman!" did I hear you say?
Full many a man might wisely thus remark!
How oft her smiles have cheered man's troubled way,
And comfort brought when fortune's sky was dark—
The vine that clings unto the oak, whose bark
Is coarse and rough and void of pleasing grace;
And like a dove within the cheerless Ark,
Mid life's drear scenes we see her sweetly face,
And in God's best design, there love and beauty trace!

MY LADY FAIR.

When aged winter, fierce and grim,
Had ceased his surly reign,
And virgin spring again adorned
The forest, field and plain;
One morning when the sun was bright
And music filled the air,
I wandered o'er the meadow sweet
Beside my lady fair!

We strolled along 'mid blooming flow'rs,
Till 'neath a spreading tree,
We sat where swift the raptured hours
Flew o'er my love and me;
And when at last time bade us part,
I kissed those lips so sweet,
And little dreamed but we should still
Oft thus together meet.

But us the stars of heav'n depart,
When dawn her glory brings,
One morn the angels bore her off
Upon their snowy wings!
Yet, in the golden realms above,
I trust some day to see,
With endless joy, the one who made
This earth a Heaven to me!

TO A FIRE-FLY.

Blithesome insect, gently flying
Thro' the shades of night,
As we see thy rays of brightness,
May our hopes be bright;
And tho' with life's cares encompass'd,
May our hearts be light.

MY OLD NEW ENGLAND HOME.

When the stars above, in gladness,
Twinkle thro' the evening gloam,
With a mingled joy and sadness,
Often do my fancies roam
Backward to the vanished pleasures
Of my old New England home.

In that home I see my mother—
Of all earthly friends the best—
At her side my younger brother,
With his youthful pleasures blest;
And my little brown-eyed sister,
Sleeping on her mother's breast.

And within that sacred dwelling
Father's cheerful face I see,
And I hear him kindly telling
Us to ever loyal be;—
On the battle-field he perished,
When they made our country free.

When he went away, our mother
Safely led our little band,
And she taught us of another
Loving Father, whose strong hand,
Never would forsake his children,
If they heeded His command:

Taught us, in our youth and beauty,
Ne'er to turn our feet aside
From the paths of truth and duty,
Whatsoever might betide;
But to keep the path of wisdom,
And obey our Heavenly guide.

Back to home and all its pleasures
Often do my fancies roam,
And to me, the richest treasures
Under heaven's starry dome,
Were the blessings of my childhood,
In that old New England home.

A LOVER'S LAMENT.

As lillies, arrayed in their loveliness, fade,
So faded my fairest—my love:
My joys have all fled, for my darling is dead—
O Stella! My dearest, my dove!

The loveliest flowers, in this sad world of ours,
Are soonest from us to depart—
Are first to decay; and thus faded away
The tenderest joy of my heart.

My hopes, once so bright, have all taken their flight,
For gone is my beautiful dove:
I'm weary with grief, and shall ne'er find relief,
Till I rest with my darling above.

FACES THAT ARE GONE.

How we long to see the faces
That have crossed the silent tide—
Faces marked with care and sorrow,
Faces full of joy and pride;
Some with furrowed brow and hoary,
Some in youth's lamented bloom;—
One by one from us departed,
For the cold and silent tomb.

Birds employ their notes of gladness
As they flutter to and fro,
Flow'rs display their wealth of beauty,
As they used to long ago;
But the birds may sing forever,
And the flow'rs forever bloom;
They can ne'er bring back the faces
That are hidden in the tomb!

Silently death steals upon us,
Silently time speedeth on—
Soon we, too, shall all be numbered,
With the faces that are gone;
Each and all must shortly follow
Thro' the shadows and the gloom,
To the loved ones who are waiting
In the light beyond the tomb.

THE TRUE WAY.

We know that we're stubborn and willful,
And tho' we have kindly been shown
The true way, which God has appointed,
We often go on in our own.

And thus we go on in the darkness,
Groping our way thro' the night;
Unmindful ofttimes of His goodness,
And missing His glorious light.

But still He looks down with compassion,
And e'en thro' life's greatest alarms
We're sheltered and safely protected,
As weak little lambs in His arms.

Could we but have more of His goodness
Implanted each day in our heart,
Perhaps there are others about us
Who'd feel the rich joy we'd impart.

Could our love, every day, be to others
As the love from our Maker above,
O what a grand army of brothers
Would be banded together in love!

PITCHER OR JUG.

Which brings poverty and woe,
Which makes useless tears to flow,
Which brings scorn where'er we go,
Pitcher or jug?

Which fades beauty, health and bloom,
Which turns happiness to gloom,
Which leads to the drunkard's tomb,
Pitcher or jug?

TWO LIVES.

They started out together
Amid the worldly din;
One yielded to temptation,
And lived a life of sin:
They found his lifeless body
One pleasant summer dawn,
All mangled in the gutter—
A wretched life was gone.

The other trod the pathway
Of righteousness and truth,
And kept his soul as spotless
As in his early youth;
And when his voyage was ended,
On Heaven's blissful shore
He joined the great reunion,
Where parting is no more.

MEDITATION.

'Mid scenes of mystery life's tide rolls onward;
And tho' some, delving deep in caves of knowledge,
Have revealed wondrous facts, this life, concerning,
Still blind they are to most of life's great features;
How powerless to perceive the future's movements,
Or e'en explain the present things about them!
We little more than know that we're existing,
'Mid scenes that time and tide are changing ever.
Hope is a star that lures men ever onward,
Oft seeming near and yet forever distant;
Contentment is an isle where man, if ever,
Has seldom dwelt amid the scenes enchanting;
Love is a dew-drop on the rose-bush glowing,
Soon to depart as e'en the bush must perish:
All things of earth are like the fleeting shadows
Except the love of Him whose power and wisdom
Exceeds, by far, man's deepest understanding,
And He, who clothes the lillies in their beauty,
Who feeds his flocks and marks the falling sparrow,
Will shield His children from life's raging tempests,
And lead them safe through waters of affliction
Until, at last, beyond the vales and shadows,
Their eyes behold that Land of endless beauty.

TEMPUS FUGIT.

Men sleep, but time speeds on;
The sun comes out at dawn
 O'er hill and town,
 At eve goes down,
But ever time speeds on.

Men die—the world moves on,
And when our forms are gone,
 New hearts arise,
 To seek earth's prize;
And thus the world moves on.

GLADNESS.

Let thy heart, attuned to gladness,
Every fear and doubt dispel—
Banish idle thoughts of sadness,
Then shall joy thy bosom swell.

THE RAINBOW.

Howe'er dark the clouds may hover
O'er thy pathway, ne'er repine;
Mark thou, when the storm is over,
In the heaven that beautiful line!



**MISCELLANEOUS
VERSES.**



NOTE.

My first intention was to omit the following pieces from this publication, but on recommendation of several readers I have finally decided to place them in a separate department; expecting in either case—whether included in this book or omitted—that the youthful aspirant, in this attempt to flutter out into the literary sphere, will fall headlong and be left only to dream of those glorious heights where others triumphantly soar amid the silvery clouds of fancy.

H. R. C.

THE DAWN O' SPRING.

Yes, boys, I'm waitin' patiently to see the dawn o' spring—
To see the flowers in blossom an' to hear the robins sing;
An' to see the trees an' meadows clad in garbs o' livin' green;
An' to hear the merry music o' the brook thet flows between.

It makes me fairly home-sick sech cold wintry days ez these,
The snow a driftin' everywhere an' layin' in the trees;
An' when Jack Frost steals 'round et night an' frescoes everything,
It makes me hanker more an' more to see the dawn o' spring.

Fer I know when spring comes 'round ag'in with all her sweet perfume;
Her reses all in blossom an' her orchards all a-bloom,
An' robins singin' gaily—I'll be happy ez a king;
Thet's why I'm waitin' patiently to see the dawn o' spring.

ZEEKE BULLARD'S FARM.

Zeeke Bullard wuz a farmer of no great amount of worth,
Tho' his farm wuz well supplied with miles of rich, productive earth;
Fer he owned three hundred acres, so his frien's an' neighbors sed,
But he uster say thet money wuz a thing he never hed.

He'd groan about his losses, an' his scarcity of tin,
An' he of'en sed he wondered w'y his crops were all so thin;
He'd set aroun' frum morn till night till days an' weeks 'ud pass,
An' talk about the way he'd lose his grain an' garden sass.

The 'tater bugs in multitudes 'ud come frum all aroun',
Till nothin' in his Murphy patch wuz left abuv the groun';
Insects of all descriptions thronged aroun' his garden beds,
While worms with powerful appetites devoured his cabbage heads.

The crows 'ud come day after day to steal his yaller corn,
An' dine on oats an' barley till his fiel's were nearly shorn,
An' acre after acre where his clover oughter grow,
There wa'n't but giant thistles pintin' daggers high an' low.

An' when his crops were harvested by bugs an' worms an' crows,
An' wintry blasts were comin' on, his sons were void of clo'es;
In spite of all the mendin' thet his little wife could do,
The toes an' knees an' elbows of his boys were peekin' thro'.

* * * * *

A while ago I left thet place of farmin' enterprise,
An' now my folks are livin' 'neath the broad, blue western skies,
An' tho' I ain't a farmer I'm convinced there's nothin' made,
Unless you work et farmin', same ez any other trade.

Weeds don't need cultervatin', but they grow up tall an' stout,
An' you mus' work to save the grain an' keep the thistles out:
You can't loaf 'round frum morn till night an' talk the hull day thro',
For yer crops'll go to ruin jest ez surely ez you do.

* * * * *

I've jest received a letter frum an ol'-time friend of mine,
Who sed poor Zeeke wuz dwellin' where bright crowns of glory shine;
He'd quit the farmin' business an' wuz free frum worl'ly harm,
While his seven sons were lef' to raise the mortgage on his farm.

UNCLE NICK, ON EDDICATION.

While 'tendin' skool I uster be fust class et playin' ball,
Et playin' tag er leap-frog I wuz formost of 'em all;
Sech sportin' allus hed fer me a wondrous fascination,
An' so I spent more time et this than on my eddication.

I of'en git to thinkin' what fine chances I hed then
To git an' eddication, but of course it's useless when
The opportunity is passed to mourn yer situation—
It's pooty hard when you are ol' to git an eddication.

Now boys I'm 'fraid thet some o' you are growin' up this way,
I'm 'fraid fer learnin' some o' you are substertootin' play,
I'm 'fraid there's boys a-livin' in this present gineration,
Who'll wish some day they'd seen less play an' more o' eddication.

You can't keep waitin', thinkin' thet you've got a lot o' time,—
The time to git yer schoolin', boys, is while you're in yer prime;
When you are ol' you'll see enough o' care an' tribulation,
Without the thought thet carelessly you missed an eddication.

UNCLE NICK, ON GOSSIPERS.

When people git to gossipin' sometimes they'll set an' talk
Fer hours an' hours together, jest ez reg'ler ez a clock;
I s'pose they think folks love to hear their never-endin' yop,—
But when Samantha's talked a while she knows enough to stop.

When Mrs. Jones wuz tellin' et our place the other day,
Thet Mrs. Williams told her thet her neighbor, Mrs. Gray,
Sed she never saw so big a story-teller's Widder Heath—
Samantha set there quiet, with her tongue between her teeth.

She ain't ferever slingin' out sech everlastin' gab:—
She of'en sez "it's bad enough to hear the neighbors blab;"
But she jest stays et home instid an' 'tends to fam'ly cares,
An' never tells the neighborhood about her home affairs.

We don't take any papers, but with news we're well supplied;
Fer the neighbors tell us every birth an' death an' suicide:
When Mrs. Jones comes up our walk a-squeakin' them new shoes,
Sometimes Samantha'll say to me, "here comes the daily news."

THE ART O' KNOWIN' HOW.

It's hard to write a decent song, tho' maybe you deny it,
Most any job looks easy you'll allow;
But if you're inexperienced perhaps you'd better try it,
An' you'll find the nickromancy's in the art o' knowin' how.

There's lots o' things you've never done that looks all killin' easy—
Did you ever try to milk a kickin' cow?
If not, just try yer hand fer fun, to satisfy and please ye,
An' you'll find the nickromancy's in the art o' knowin' how.

Whatever yer profession, you'll discover soon or late,
As you stop to wipe the sweat from off yer brow,
That to preach a decent sermon er to draw a furrow straight,
The nickromancy lies within the art o' knowin' how.

So be sure that you're adapted to the work that you profess,
Teachin' gospel truths er hangin' on the plow,
Then buckle down to business, an' yer can't escape success,
Fer you'll find the nickromancy's in the art o' knowin' how.

MOTHER'S PHOTOGRAPH.

D'you wish to know what came to me from good ol' Santa Claus?
'Twuz not a lot o' nigger-toes to crack between yer jaws,
Nor candy nor a jumpin'-jack fer makin' youngsters laugh—
But the present thet he give to me wuz mother's photograph.

Some how a cur'ous feelin' seems to steal acrost my mind,
Ez I look back to boyish days an' think how good an' kind
Thet mother's been in teachin' me to shun the evil ways,
An' how attentive she hez been, e'en from my infant days.

An' when I think how many years she's toiled thro' shine and rain,
An' how she's allus been on hand to soothe my every pain,
It seems ez ef to do my best thet I could never be
Half good an' kind enough to pay fer all she's done fer me.

Perhaps you think it's silly, but it's jest ez I hev sed,
Thet all the other presents ol' St. Nicholas ever hed,
Compared with that he give to me w'ud be but worthless chaff,
Nor comfort me one half ez much ez mother's photograph.

FIFTY YEARS.

Two score and ten summers have glided away,
As time speeds relentlessly on;
And our thoughts wander back, as we sit here to-day,
O'er the past that has faded and gone.

Many dear ones have gone to their rest in the grave,
Young hearts have departed from play;
Still others have gone, their dear country to save,
And fall'n 'mid the wild battle's fray.

Many dear to our hearts are now far in the west,
While few near the old home remain;
And though often lonely, we've been greatly blest,—
Our labors have not been in vain.

'Tis fifty long years since the day which we set,
Our sorrows and pleasures to share;
That bright, happy day we ne'er shall forget,
When life looked so joyous and fair!

A MAIDEN WONDROUS FAIR.

Within a certain town there dwelt
A maiden wondrous fair,
Whose cheeks were like the rose's hue
And golden was her hair.

Her eyes were like the twinkling stars,
Her teeth were like the pearl;
And sons of both the rich and poor,
Admired this charming girl.

Two constant beaux this maiden had,
And each one swore that she,
Ere many months had passed away,
His own dear wife would be.

But soon an incident occurred
Which all their plans upset,
When at the maiden's gate one eve
Her two admirers met.

Hard words arose between the two,
As oft there had before;
And that the maid should be his wife
Still each persistent swore.

The longer thus they did contend,
The more their wrath did rise;
Until at last they came to blows
O'er who should have the prize.

While thus engaged, a prim young man
With unpretentious mien
Approached, just as the maid herself
Appeared upon the scene.

Then soon the angry blows were ceased
And quietude restored;
And each apologized to her
Whom he so much adored.

Then bowing low, each went his way;
Quite black and swollen-eyed;
While she whom they had fought to win
Became the third man's bride.

WEALTH AND WANT.

How often the poor are despised and neglected,
For no other reason except they are poor;
How often the rich are beloved and respected,
Because they have uncounted wealth at their door.

There's many an honest and virtuous heart,
To-day within poverty's prison enchained;
While thousands reside amid pleasures of art,
Whose wealth was thro' vice and dishonesty gained.

Despise not the needy because they are poor,
Nor envy the wealthy because of their gold;
Good or ill fortune may stand at our door,
But true hearts are not to be purchased or sold.

CHILDHOOD.

We long for those days, once so joyous,
For that unbounded freedom, again,
When there were no cares to annoy us,
And life knew no sorrow nor pain;
But those sweet days of childhood have vanished,
And we long for them only in vain.

Tho' time has wrought changes unnumbered
Since those happy seasons were pass'd,
And now with life's cares we're encumbered,
Still backward fond visions we'll cast;
And we'll think of our childhood with pleasure
As long as our memories last.

THE LASSIE O'ER THE WAY.

A sweet little lassie
Lives over the way:
She's pretty and modest,
Yet blithesome and gay.

So perfect her manners,
So graceful her mien;
O who would not worship
This fair little queen!

Is there a young laddie
Whose heart would not beat
For those smiles so angelic
And dimples so sweet:

Those blue eyes a-sparkling,
That bright golden hair!
O where's the young lassie
More charming and fair!

She's modest and gentle,
Yet cheerful and gay;
This sweet little lassie,
Just over the way.

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Punctuation, hyphenation, and spelling were made consistent when a predominant preference was found in this book; otherwise they were not changed.

Simple typographical errors were corrected; occasional unbalanced quotation marks retained.

All of the illustrations are the same simple decoration.

"Telulah Spring", listed as the Frontispiece in the Contents, was missing from the original book.

"[Note](#)" at beginning of "[Miscellaneous Verses](#)": "seperate" was printed that way.

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