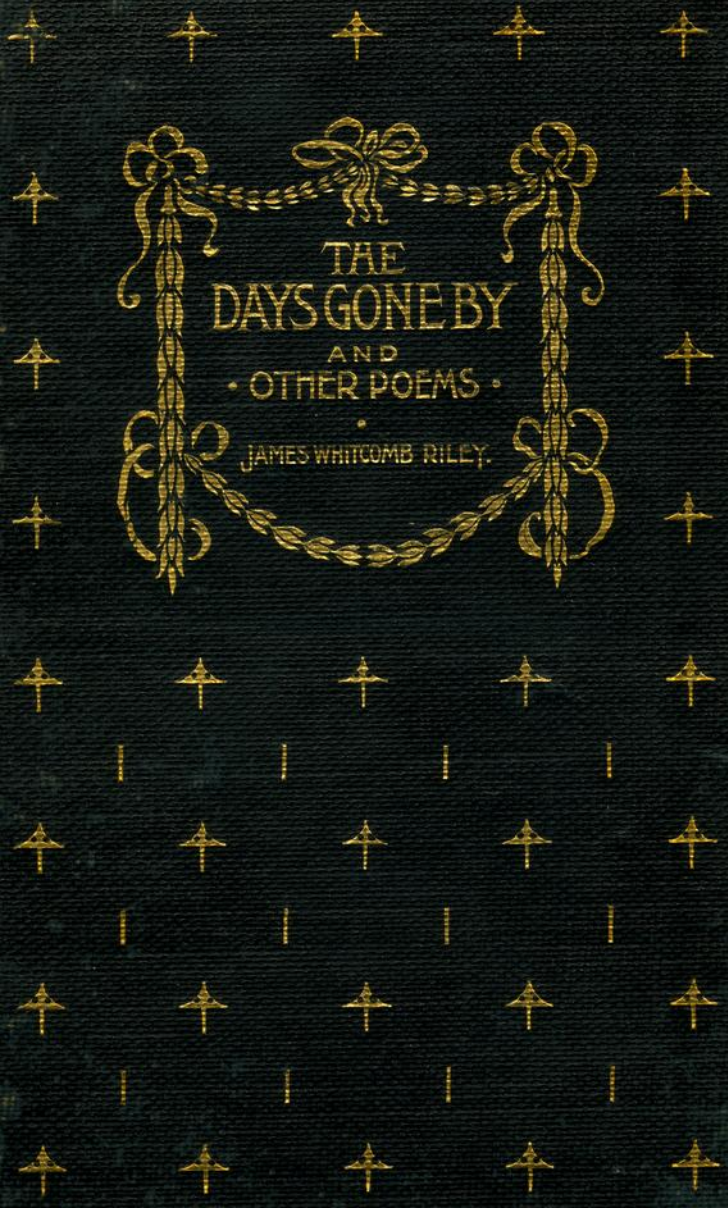
THE
DAYS GONE BY
AND
OTHER POEMS
JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

THE DAYS GONE BY.

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AND OTHER POEMS

BY

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

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POEMS

THE DAYS GONE BY.

O the days gone by! O the days gone by!
The apples in the orchard and the pathway
through the rye;
The chirrup of the robin, and the whistle of the
quail
As he piped across the meadows sweet as any night-
ingale;
When the bloom was on the clover, and the blue was
in the sky,
And my happy heart brimmed over—in the days
gone by!

In the days gone by, when my naked feet were
tripped
By the honeysuckle tangles where the water-lilies
dipped,
And the ripples of the river lipped the moss along
the brink
Where the placid-eyed and lazy-footed cattle came to
drink,
And the tilting snipe stood fearless of the truant's
wayward cry
And the splashing of the swimmer, in the days
gone by!

O the days gone by! O the days gone by!
The music of the laughing lip, the luster of the eye;
The childish faith in fairies, the Aladdin's magic ring—
The simple, soul-reposing, glad belief in everything,
For life was like a story, holding neither sob nor sigh,
In the golden olden glory of the days gone by.

WITH THE CURRENT.

RAREST mood of all the year!
  Aimless, idle, and content;
Sky and earth and atmosphere
    Wholly indolent.

Low and clear, and pure and deep
  Ripples of the river sing—
Water lilies, half asleep,
    Drowsed with listening.

Tremulous reflex of skies—
  Skies above and skies below—
Paradise and Paradise
    Blending even so!

Blossoms with their leaves unrolled
  Laughingly, as they were lips
Cleft with ruddy beaten gold,
    Tongues of petal tips.

Rush and reed, and thorn and vine
  Clumped with grasses lithe and tall—
And a web of summer shine
    Woven round it all.

Back and forth and to and fro,
  Flashing scale and wing as one,
Dragonflies that come and go,
    Shuttled by the sun.

Fairy songs and lullabies
  Fine as phantasy conceives—
Echoes wrought of cricket cries
    Sifted through the leaves.

O'er the rose, with drowsy buzz,
  Hangs the bee, and stays his kiss,
Even as my fancy does,
    Darling, over this.

Lo, let us forget all care,
  And as listless as the day
Drift adown it, half aware,
    Anywhere we may.

Drift and curve, and deviate,
  Veer and eddy, float and flow,
Waver, swerve and undulate,
    As the bubbles go.

THOUGHTS FER THE DISCURAGED FARMER.

THE summer winds is snifflin' round the bloomin' locus' trees;
And the clover in the pastur' is a big-day fer the bees,
And they ben a-swiggin' honey, above-board and on the sly,
Till they stutter in their buzzin', and stagger as they fly.
The flicker on the fence-rail 'pears to jest spit on his wings
And roll up his feathers, by the sassy way he sings;
And the hoss-fly is a-whettin'-up his fore-legs fer biz,
And the off-mare is a-switchin' all of her tail they is.

You can hear the blackbirds jawin' as they foller up the plow—
Oh! they'r bound to get theyr breakfast, and they'r not a-carin' how;
So they quarrel in the furries, and they quarrel on the wing—

But theyr peaceabler in pot-pies than any other thing.
And its when I git my shotgun drawed up in stiddy rest,
She's as full of tribbleation as a yaller-jacket's nest;
And a few shots before dinner, when the sun's a-shinin' right,
Seems to kindo-sorto sharpen-up a feller's appetite!

Theys ben a heap o' rain, but the sun's out today,
And the clouds of the wet spell is all cleared away,
And the woods is all the greener, and the grass is greener still;
It may rain agin tomorry, but I don't think it will.
Some says the crops is ruined, and the corn's drownded out,
And propha-sy the wheat will be a failure, without doubt,
But the kind Providence that has never failed us yet,
Will be on hands onct more at the 'leventh hour, I bet.

Does the medder-lark complain, as he swims high and dry
Through the waves of the wind and the blue of the sky?
Does the quail set up and whistle in a disappointed way,
Er hang his head in silence and sorrow all the day?
Is the chipmunk's health a-failin'? Does he walk, or does he run?
Don't the buzzards ooze around up thare just like they've allus done?
Is they anything the matter with the rooster's lungs er voice?
Ort a mortal be complainin' when dumb animals rejoice?

Then let us, one and all, be contented with our lot.
The June is here this morning, and the sun is shining hot.
Oh! let us fill our harts up with the glory of the day,
And banish every doubt and care and sorrow far away!
Whatever be our station, with Providence fer guide,
Such fine circumstances ort to make us satisfied,

Fer the world is full of roses, and the roses full
of dew,
And the dew is full of heavenly love that drips
for me and you.

IN THE AFTERNOON.

You in the hammock, and I, near by,
  Was trying to read, and swing you, too;
And the green of the sward was so kind to the eye,
  And the shade of the maples so cool and blue,
  That I often looked from the book to you
To say as much with a sigh.

You in the hammock. The book we'd brought
  From the parlor—to read in the open air,—
Something of love and of Launcelot
  And Guinevere, I believe, was there—
  But the afternoon it was far more fair
Than the poem was, I thought.

You in the hammock—And on and on
  I droned through, the rhythmic stuff—
But, with always a half of my vision gone
  Over the top of the page—enough
  To caressingly gaze at you, swathed in the fluff
Of your hair and your odorous "lawn."

You in the hammock—And that was a year—
  Fully a year ago, I guess—
And what do we care for their Guinevere
  And her Launcelot and their lordliness!—
  You in the hammock still, and—Yes—
Kiss me again, my dear!

THE BABY.

I.

O THIS is the way the baby came:
  Out of the night as comes the dawn;
Out of the embers as the flame;
  Out of the bud the blossom on
The apple-bough that blooms the same
  As in glad summers dead and gone—
With a grace and beauty none could name—
O this is the way the baby came!

II.

And this is the way the baby 'woke:
  As when in deepest drops of dew
The shine and shadows sink and soak,
  The sweet eyes glimmered through and
    through,
And eddyings and dimples broke
  About the lips, and no one knew
Or could divine the words they spoke—
And this is the way the baby 'woke.

III.

And this is the way the baby slept:
  A mist of tresses backward thrown
By quavering sighs where kisses crept
  With yearnings she had never known:

The little hands were closely kept
  About a lily newly blown—
And God was with her. And we wept—
And this is the way the baby slept.

BECALMED.

I.

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

II.

Warm winds won from the midland vales
To where the trees of the siren trails,
O'er the flossy tip of the mountain phlox,
And the bare limbs twined in the crested rocks,
High above as the seagull's flap
Their lopping wings at the thunder-clap.

III.

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

ART AND LOVE.

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

ONLY WANTED A CHANCE.

"'S CURIOUS like!" said the tree-toad,
"I've twittered for rain all day,
And I got up soon
And I hollered till noon,
But the sun jest blazed away
'Till I climb down into a crawfish hole,
Weary at heart and sick at soul!

"Dozed away for an hour,
And I tackled the thing again;
And I sung, and sung,
Till I knowed my lung
Was just about give in;
And then, thinks I, if it don't rain now
There's nothin' in singin' anyhow.

"Once in a while some farmer
Would come a-drivin' past,
And he'd hear my cry
And stop an' sigh,
Till I jest laid back at last,
And hollered rain till I thought my th'oat
Would bust right open at every note!

"But I fetched her! Oh, I fetched her!"
'Case a little while ago,
As I kind o' set
With one eye shet,
An' a singin' soft and low,
A voice dropped down on my fevered brain,
Sayin', "If you'll jest hush, I'll rain!"

A LOCAL POLITICIAN FROM AWAY BACK.

JEDGE is good at argyin'—
  No mistake in that!
Most folks 'at tackles him
  He'll skin 'em like a cat!
You see, the Jedge is read up,
  And ben in politics;
Hand-in-glove, you might say,
  Sence back in '56.

Elected to the shuriff, first,
  Then elected clerk;
Went into lawin' then,
  And buckled down to work;
Practiced th're er four terms,
  Then he run fer Jedge—
Speechified a little 'round,
  And went in like a wedge.

Run fer Legislatur' twic't—
  Made her every pop!
Keep's on the way he's doin',
  Don't know where he'll stop.

Some thinks he's got his eye
  On the governorship;—
Well, ef he tuck the track,
  Guess he'd make the trip!

But I started out to tell you—
  (Now, I allus liked the man—
Not for his politics,
  But social, understan',—
Fer, as regards to my views,
  Political and sich,—
When we come together there
  We're pretty ap' to hitch.)

Ketched him at Knox's
  On' t'other day—
Gittin' shaved, the Jedge was,
  Er suthin' thataway,—
Well I tetched him up some
  On the silver bill;—
Jedge says, "I won't discuss it;"
  I says, "You will!"

I-says-he, "I reckon
  You'll concede with me,
Coin's the on'y genuine
  Money," I-says-ee;
Says I, "What's a dollar bill?"

Says I, "What's a ten
Er forty-leven Hundred of 'em?—
Give us specia, then!"

I seed I was a-gittin'
The Jedge kindo' red
Around the gills. He hawked some
And cleared his th'oat and said;—
"Facts is too complicated
'Bout the bill in view,"
Squirmed and told the barber then
He wisht he'd hurry through.

Well, then I knowed I had him,—
And the crowd around the fire
Was all a-winkin' at me,
As the barber raised him higher—
Says I, "Jedge, what's a dollar?—
Er a half-'un?" I-says-ee—
"What's a quarter?—What's a dime?"
"What's CENTS?" says he.

Why, I had him fairly b'lin'!
"You needn't comb my hair,"
He says to the barber—
"I want fresh air!"
And you'd a-died a-laughin'
To a-seed him grab his hat,
As I-says-ee, says I, "Jedge,
Where you goin' at?"

Jedge is good at argyin',
  By-and-large; and yit
Beat him at his own game
  And he's goin' to git !
And yit the Jedge is read up,
  And ben in politics,
Hand-in-glove, you might say,
  Sence back in '56.

TO MY OLD FRIEND AND NEIGHBOR, WILLIAM LEACHMAN.

FER forty year and better you have ben a friend to me,
Through days of sore afflictions and dire adversity,
You allus had a kind word of counsel to impart,
Which was like a healin' 'intment to the sorrow of my hart.

When I buried my first womern, William Leachman, it was you
Had the only consolation that I could listen to—
Fer I knowed you had gone through it and had rallied from the blow,
And when you said I'd do the same, I knowed you'd orto know.

But that time I'll long remember, how I wandered here and there—
Through the settin-room and kitchen, and out in the open air—
And the snowflakes whirlin', whirlin', and the fields a frozen glare,
And the neighbors' sleds and wagons congregatin' everywhare.

I turned my eyes tords heaven, but the sun was hid away;
I turned my eyes tords earth, again, but all was cold and gray;
And the clock, like ice a-crackin', clickt the icy hours in two—
And my eyes'd never thawed out ef it hadn't been fer you.

We set there by the smoke-house—me and you out thare alone—
Me a-thinkin'—me a-thinkin' of the summers long ago,
And a-writin' "Marthy — Marthy," with my finger in the snow!

William Leachman, I can see you jest as plain as I could then;
And your hand is on my shoulder, and you rouse me up again;
And I see the tears a-drippin' from your own eyes, as you say:
"Be reconciled and bear it—we but linger fer a day!"

At the last Old Settlers' Meetin' we went jintly, you and me—
Your hosses and my wagon, as you wanted it to be;

And sence I can remember, from the time we've neighbored here,
In all sich friendly actions you have double-done your sheer.

It was better than the meetin', too, that 9-mild talk we had
Of the times that we first settled here and travel was so bad;
When we had to go on hoss-back, and sometimes on "Shankses mare,"
And "blaze" a road fer them behind that had to travel thare.

And now we was a-trottin' 'long a level gravel pike,
In a big two-hoss road-wagon, jest as easy as you like—
Two of us on the front seat, and our wimern folks behind,
A-settin' in their Winsor cheers in perfect peace of mind!

And we pointed out old landmarks, nearly faded out of sight:—
Thare they ust to rob the stage-coach; thare Gash Morgan had the fight
With the old stag-deer that pronged him—how he battled fer his life,

And lived to prove the story by the handle of his knife.

Thare the first griss-mill was put up in the settlement, and we
Had tuck our grindin' to it in the fall of Forty-three—
When we tuck our rifles with us, techin' elbows all the way,
And a-stickin' right together every minute, night and day.

Thare ust to stand the tavern that they called the "Traveler's Rest,"
And thare, beyent the covered bridge, "the Counterfitter's nest"—
Whare they claimed the house was ha'nted—that a man was murdered thare,
And burried underneath the floor, er round the place somewhare.

And the Old Plank road they laid along in Fifty-one er two—
You know we talked about the times when that old road was new:
How "Uncle Sam" put down that road and never taxed the state
Was a problem, don't you rickollect, we couldn't dimonstrate?

Ways are devious, William Leachman, that me
and you has past;
But as I found you true at first, I find you true at
last,
And, now the time's a-comin' mighty nigh our
journey's end,
I want to throw wide open all my soul to you,
my friend.

With the stren'th of all my bein', and the heat
of hart and brain,
And every livin' drop of blood in artery and vein,
I love you and respect you, and I venerate your
name,
For the name of William Leachman and True
Manhood's jest the same!

DAN O'SULLIVAN.

DAN O'Sullivan: It's your
Lips have kissed the "Blarney" sure!—
To be trailin' praise av me,
Dhrippin' shwate wid poethry!—
Not that I'd not have ye sing—
Don't lave off for anything—
Jusht be aisy whilst the fit
Av me head shwells up to it!

Dade and thrue, I'm not the man,
Whilst yer singin', loike ye can,
To cry shtop because ye've blesht
My songs more than all the resht;—
I'll not be the b'y to ax
Any sthar to wane or wax,
Or ax any clock that's woun',
To run up inshtid av down!

Whist yez! Dan O'Sullivan!
Him that made the Irishman
Mixt the burds in wid the dough,
And the dew and mistletoe
Wid the whusky in the quare
Muggs av us—and here we air,
Three parts right, and three parts wrong,
Shpiked wid beauty, wit and song!

SWEET BELLS JANGLED.

I WILL not hear the dying word
  Of any friend, or stroke the wing
Of any little wounded bird—
  Love is the deadest thing!

I wist not if I see the smile
  Of any lad, in street or lane;
I only know that after while
  He will not smile again.

The summer blossom at my feet
  Swims backward, drowning in the grass;
I will not stay to call it sweet—
  Sink out! and let me pass!

I have no mind to feel the touch
  Of gentle hands on brow or hair;
The lack of this once pained me much,
  And so I have a care.

Dead weeds, and husky rustling leaves
  That beat the dead boughs where you cling,
And old dead nests beneath the eaves—
  Love is the deadest thing!

Ah! once I fared not all alone;
  And once, no matter, rain or snow,
The summer sun forever shone—
  Because I loved her so!

With always tremblings in her hands,
  And always blushes unaware,
And always ripples down the strands
  Of her long yellow hair.

I needs must weep a little space,
  Remembering her laughing eyes,
And curving lip, and lifted face,
  And look of mock surprise.

O joy is dead in every part,
  And faith and hope; and so I sing—
In all the graveyard of my heart
  Love is the deadest thing!

WORTER-MELON TIME.

Old worter-melon time is comin' round agin,
  And they haint no man a-livin' any tickleder 'n me.
For the way I hanker after worter-melons is a sin—
  Which is the why and wherefore, as you can plainly see.

Oh, it's in the sandy soil worter-melons does the best,
  And it's there they'll lay and waller in the sunshine and the dew
Till they wear all the green streaks clean off of their breast,
  And you bet I ain't a-findin' any fault with them; air you?

They ain't no better thing in the vegetable line;
  And they don't need much tendin', as every farmer knows;
And when they're ripe and ready fer to pluck from the vine,
  I want to say to you they're the best fruit that grows.

It's some likes the yeller core, and some likes the red,
And it's some says the little "Californy" is the best;
But the sweetest slice of all that I ever wedged in my head
Is the old "Edingburg Mounting-sprout" of the West.

You don't want no punkins nigh your worter-melon vines—
Cause, someway-another, they'll spile your melons, shore;
I've seed 'em taste like punkins, from the core to the rines,
Which may be a fact you have heerd of before.

But your melons at's raised right, and tended to with care,
You can walk around amongst 'em with a parent's pride and joy,
And thump 'em on the heads with as fatherly a air,
As ef each one of them was your little girl or boy.

I joy in my hart jest to hear that rippin' sound
When you split one down the back and jolt the halves in two,

And the friends you love the best is gethered all around—
And you say unto your best friend, "Oh, here's the core for you!"

And I like to slice 'em up in big pieces fer 'em all,
Especially the children, and watch their high delight,
As one by one the rines with their pink notches falls,
And they holler fer some more with unquenched appetite.

Boys takes to it natural, and I like to see 'em eat—
A slice of worter-melon's like a french-harp in their hands.
And when they saw it through their mouths sich music can't be beat—
'Cause its music both the sperit and the stummick understands.

Oh, they's more in worter-melons than the purty-colored meat,
And the overflowin' sweetness of the worter squashed betwixt
The upard and the downard motions of a feller's teeth,
And its the taste of ripe old age and juicy childhood mixed.

Fer I never taste a melon but my thoughts flies away
To the summertime of youth, and I see agin the dawn
And the fadin' afternoon of the long summer day,
And the dusk and the dew a-fallin', and the night a-comin' on.

And there's the corn around us, and the lispin' leaves and trees,
And the stars a-peekin down on us as still as silver mice,
And us boys in the worter-melons on our hands and knees,
And the new moon hangin' o'er us like a yeller-cored slice.

Oh, its worter-melon time is a comin' 'round agin,
And they ain't no man a-livin' any tickleder than me,
For the way I hanker after worter-melons is a sin—
Which is the why and wherefore, as you can plainly see.

WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN.

WHEN the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's
in the shock,
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the
struttin' turkey-cock,
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin'
of the hens,
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the
fence;
O its then's the times a feller is a feelin' at his
best,
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of
gracious rest,
As he leaves the house bare-headed and goes out
to feed the stock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's
in the shock.

They's somepin kindo' hearty-like about the
atmosphere,
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin'
Fall is here—
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossoms
of the trees,

And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and the
buzzin' of the bees;
But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape
through the haze
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the early autumn
days
Is a picture no painter has the colorin' to mock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's
in the shock.

The husky, rusty rustle of the tossols of the corn,
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves, as golden
as the morn;
The stubble in the furries—kindo' lonesome-like,
but still
A-preachin' sermons to us of the barns they
growed to fill;
The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in
the shed;
The hosses in their stalls below—the clover over-
head !—
O it sets my heart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a
clock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's
in the shock!

IN THE SOUTH.

THERE is a princess in the South
  About whose beauty rumors hum
As honey-bees about the mouth
  Of roses dewdrops falter from;
    And O her hair is like the fine
    Clear amber of a jostled wine
    In tropic revels; and her eyes
    Are blue as rifts of paradise.

Such beauty as may none before
  Kneel daringly, to kiss the tips
Of fingers such as knights of yore
  Had died to lift against their lips:
    Such eyes as might the eyes of gold
    Of all the stars of night behold
    With glittering envy, and so glare
    In dazzling splendor of despair.

So, were I but a minstrel, deft
  At weaving, with the trembling strings
Of my glad harp, the warp and weft
  Of rondels such as rapture sings,—
    I'd loop my lyre across my breast,
    Nor stay me till my knee found rest
    In midnight banks of bud and flower
    Beneath my lady's lattice-bower.

And there, drenched with the teary dews,
  I'd woo her with such wondrous art
As well might stanch the songs that ooze
  Out of the mockbird's breaking heart;
    So light, so tender, and so sweet
    Should be the words I would repeat,
    Her casement, on my gradual sight,
    Would blossom as a lily might.

WHEN THE HEARSE COMES BACK.

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

Meet it goin' to'rds the cemet'ry, you'll want to
drap your eyes—
But ef the plumes don't fetch you, it'll ketch you
otherwise—

You'll haf to see the caskit, though you'd ort to
look away,
And 'conomize and save yer sighs fer any other
day!
Yer sympathizin' won't wake up the sleeper from
his rest—
Yer tears won't thaw them hands o' his 'at's
froze acrost his breast!
And this is why—when airth and sky's a-gittin'
blurred and black—
I like the whoop and racket
When the
Hearse
Comes
Back!

The idy! wadin' round here over shoe-mouth
deep in woe,
When they's a graded 'pike o' joy and sunshine,
don't you know!
When evenin' strikes the pastur', cows'll pull out
fer the bars,
And skittish-like from out the dark'll prance the
happy stars,
And so when my time comes to die, and I've got
ary friend
'At wants expressed my last request—I'll, mebby,
rickommend

To drive slow, ef they haf to goin' 'long the
out'ard track,
But I'll smile and say, "You speed 'em
When the
Hearse
Comes
Back!"

THE MUTE SINGER.

I.

THE morning sun seemed fair as though
It were a great red rose ablow
In lavish bloom,
With all the air for its perfume,—
Yet he who had been wont to sing,
Could trill no thing.

II.

Supine, at noon, as he looked up
Into the vast inverted cup
Of heavenly gold,
Brimmed with its marvels manifold,
And his eyes kindled, and his cheek—
Song would not speak.

III.

Night fell forebodingly; he knew
Soon must the rain be falling too,—
And, home, hartsore,
A missive met him at the door—
Then song lit on his lips, and he
Sang gloriously.

THREE DEAD FRIENDS.

ALWAYS suddenly they are gone—
The friends we trusted and held secure—
Suddenly we are gazing on,
Not a smiling face, but the marble pure
Dead mask of a face that nevermore
To a smile of ours will make reply—
The lips close-locked as the eye-lids are—
Gone—swift as a flash of the molten ore
A meteor pours through a midnight sky,
Leaving it blind of a single star.

II.

Tell us, O Death, remorseless Might!
What is the old unescapable ire
You wreak on us?—from the birth of light
Till the world be charred to a core of fire!
We do no evil thing to you—
We seek to evade you—that is all—
That is your will—you will not be known
Of men. What, then, would you have us do?
Cringe and wait till your vengeance fall,
And your graves be fed, and the trumpet
blown?

III.

You desire no friends, but we—O we
Need them so, as we falter here,
Fumbling through each new vacancy,
As each is stricken that we hold dear.
One you struck but a year ago:
And one not a month ago; and one—
(God's vast pity!)—and one lies now
Where the widow wails in her nameless woe,
And the soldiers pace, with the sword and gun,
Where the comrade sleeps, with the laureled brow.

IV.

And what did the first? that wayward soul,
Clothed of sorrow, yet nude of sin,
And with all hearts bowed in the strange control
Of the heavenly voice of his violin.
Why, it was music the way he stood,
So grand was the poise of the head, and so
Full was the figure of majesty!
One heard with the eyes, as a deaf man would,
And with all sense brimmed to the overflow
With tears of anguish and ecstasy.

V.

And what did the girl, with the great warm light
Of genius sunning her eyes of blue,

With her heart so pure, and her soul so white—
What, O Death, did she do to you?
Through field and wood as a child she strayed,
As Nature, the dear, sweet mother, led;
While from her canvas, mirrored back,
Glimmered the stream through the everglade
Where the grapevine trailed from the trees
to wed
Its likeness of emerald, blue and black.

VI.

And what did he, who, the last of these,
Faced you with never a fear, O Death?
Did you hate HIM that he loved the breeze
And the morning dews, and the rose's
breath?
Did you hate him that he answered not
Your hate again—but turned, instead,
His only hate on his country's wrongs?
Well, you possess him, dead! but what
Of the good he wrought? With laureled head
He bides with us in his deeds and songs.

VII.

Laureled, first, that he bravely fought,
And forged a way to our flag's release;
Laureled, next—for the harp he taught
To wake glad songs in the days of peace—

Songs of the woodland haunts he held
  As close in his love as they held their bloom
  In their inmost bosoms of leaf and vine—
Songs that echoed, and pulsed, and welled
  Through the town's pent streets, and the sick
    child's room,
  Pure as a shower in soft sunshine.

VIII.

Claim them, Death; yet their fame endures!
    What friend next will you rend from us
In that cold, pitiless way of yours,
    And leave us a grief more dolorous!
Speak to us! tell us, O Dreadful Power!
  Are we not to have a lone friend left?
  Since frozen, sodden, or green the sod,
Some one, Death, you have left thus bereft,
  Half inaudibly shrieks to God.

AWAY.

(In memoriam Gen. W. H. H. TERRELL.)

I CANNOT say—and I will not say
That he is dead—He is just away!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FESSLER'S BEES.

"TALKIN' 'bout your bees," says Ike,
Speakin' slow and serous-like,
"D' ever tell you 'bout old 'Bee'—
Old 'Bee' Fessler?" Ike says he:—
"Might call him a bee expert,
When it comes to Handlin' bees,—
Roll the sleeves up of his shirt
And wade in amongst the trees
Where a swarm 'ud settle, and—
Blamedest man on top o' dirt!—
Rake 'em with his naked hand
Right back in the hive agin—
Jes' as easy as you please.
Nary bee 'at split the breeze
Ever jabbed a stinger in
Old 'Bee' Fessler—jes' in fun,
Er in airnest—nary one!—
Couldn't agg one on to nuther,
Ary one way er the other!

"Old 'Bee' Fessler," Ike says he
"Made a speshyality
Jes' o' bees, and built a shed;

Len'th about a half a mild!
Had about a thousan' head
O' hives, I reckon—tame and wild!
Durndest buzzin' ever wuz!—
Wuss'n telegraph-poles does
When they're sockin' home the news
Tight as they kin let 'er loose!—
Visitors rag out and come
Clean from town to hear 'em hum,
And stop at the kivered bridge;
But wuz some ud cross the ridge
Allus, and got clos'ter—so's
They could see 'em hum, I s'ppose!
'Peared like strangers down that track
Allus met folks comin' back
Lookin' extry fat and hearty
Fer a city picnic party!

"'Fore he went to Floridy,
Old 'Bee' Fessler," Ike says he,—
Old 'Bee' Fessler wouldn't 'bide
Children on his place," says Ike;
"Yit, fer all, they'd climb inside
And tromp round there, keerless like,
In their bare feet. 'Bee' could tell
Ev'ry town-boy by his yell—
So's 'at when they bounced the fence
Didn't make no difference!—

He'd jes' git down on one knee
In the grass and pat the bee;
And, ef 'tadn't staid stuck in,
Fess 'ud 'set the sting agin—
'N potter off, and wait around.
Fer the old famillar sound.
Allus boys there, more or less,
Skootin' round the premises!
When the buckwheat wuz in bloom,
Lawzy! how them bees 'ud boom
Round the boys 'at crossed that way
Fer the crick on Saturday!
Never semed to me su'prisin'
'At the sting of bees 'uz pizin'.

"'Fore he went to Floridy,"
Ike says, "nothin' 'bout a bee
'At old Fessler didn't know,—
W'y it jes' 'peared like 'at he
Knowed their language, high and low!
Claimed he told jes' by their buzz
What their wants and wishes wuz!
Peek in them-air little holes
Round the porches of the hive—
Drat their pesky little souls!—
Could 'a skinned the man alive!
Bore right in there with his thumb,

And squat down and scrape the gum
Outen ev'ry hole, and blow
'N breash the crumbs off, don't you know?
Take the roof off, and slide back
Them-air glass concerns they pack
Full 'o honey, and jes' lean
'N grabble 'mongst 'em fer the queen!
Fetch her out and show you to her—
Jes', you might say, interview her!

"Year er two," says Ike, says he,
"'Fore he went to Floridy,
Fessler struck the theory
Honey was the same as love—
You could make it day and night,—
Said them bees o' his could be
Got jes' twic't the work out of
Ef a feller managed right.
He contended ef bees found
Blossoms all the year around,
He could git 'em down at once
To work all the winter months
Same as summer. So one fall,
When their summer's work wus done,
'Bee' turns in and robs 'em all—
Loads the hives then, one by one,
On the cyars, and 'lowed he'd see the reason
Ef his didn't work that season!

"And," says Ike, "it's jes', says he,
"Like old Fessler says to me,—
'Any man can fool a bee,
Git him down in Floridy!'
'Peared at fust, as old 'Bee' said,
Fer to kindo' turn their head
Fer a spell—but bless you! they
Didn't lose a half a day
Altogether!—Jes' lit in
Them-air tropics, and them-air
Cacktusses a-rip-nin,
'N magnoliers, and sweet peas,
'N 'simmon and pineapple trees,
'N ripe bananners, here and there,
'N dates a-danglin' in the breeze,
'N figs and reezins ev'rywhere—
All waitin' jes' for Fessler's bees!
'N Fessler's bees, with gaumy wings,
A-gittin' down and whoopin' things!
Fessler kindo' overseein'
'Em, and sorto 'hee-o-heein'!"

"'Fore he went to Floridy,
Old 'Bee' Fessler," Ike says he,
"Wuzn't counted jes' to say
Mean er ornry anyway—
On'y ev'ry tarnal dime
'At 'ud pass him on the road

He'd ketch up with ev'ry time,—
And no mortal ever knowed
Him to spend a copper-cent—
'Less on some fool-speriment
With them bees—like that un he
Played on 'em in Floridy.—
Fess, of course, he tuck his ease,
But 'twuz bilious on the bees!—
Sweat, you know, 'ud jes' stand out
On their forreds—pant and groan
And grunt round and limp about!—
And old 'Bee,' o' course, a-knowin'
'Twuzn't no fair shake to play
On them pore dumb insecks, ner
To abuse 'em thataway.
Bees has rights, I'm here to say,
And that's all they ast him fer!
Cleared big money! Well, I guess
'Bee' shipped honey, more or less,
Into ev'ry State, perhaps,
Ever put down in the maps!

"But by time he fetched 'em back
In the spring agin," says Ike,
"They was actin' s'picious like,—
Though they 'peared to 'lost the track
O' everything they saw or heard.
They'd lay round the porch and gap

At their shadders in the sun
Do-less like, ontell some bird
Suddently 'ud maybe drap
In a bloomin' cherry-tree,
Twitterin' a tune 'at run
In their minds familiously:
They'd revive up, kindo', then,
Like they argied,—Well, its been
The most longest summer we
Ever saw or want to see!—
Must be right though, er old 'Bee'
'Ud notify us!'' they says-ee;
And the'd sorto' square their chin
And git down to work agin—
Moanin' round their honey-makin'
Kindo' like their head was achin'.
Tetchin' fer to see how they
Trusted Fessler thataway—
Him a-lazin' round, and smirkin'
To hisse'f to see 'em workin'!

"But old 'Bee,'" says Ike, says he—
"Now, where is he? Where's he gone?
Where's the head he helt so free?—
Where's his pride and vanity?—
What's his hopes a-restin' on?—
Never knowed a man,'' says Ike,
"Take advantage of a bee

'At affliction didn't strike
Round in that vicinity!
Sinners allus suffer some,
And old Fessler's recknin' come!
That-air man to-day is jes'
Like the grass 'at Scriptur' says
Cometh and then turns in
And jes' gits cut down agin!
Old 'Bee' Fessler," Ike says he,
"Says last fall, says he to me,
'Ike,' says he, 'them bees has jes'
Ciphered out my ornriness:—

Nary bee in airy swarm,
On the whole indurin' farm
Won't have nothin' to do
With a man as mean as I've
B'en to them last year er two!—
Nary bee in airy hive
But 'll turn his face away,
Like they ort, whenever they
Hear my footprints drawin' nigh!'
And old 'Bee' he'd sorto' shy
Round oneasy in his cheer—
Wipe his eyes—and yit the sap,
Spite of all, 'ud have to drap,
As he wound up,—'Wouldn't keer
Quite so much ef they'd jes' light

In and settle things up right,
Like they ort—but blame the things!
'Pears like they won't even sting!—
Pepper me, the way I felt,
And I'd thank 'em everywelt!'
And as mizable and mean
As 'Bee' looked, ef you'd a seen
Them-air hongry eyes," says Ike,
"You'd forgive him more 'n like.

"Wusht you'd a knowed old 'Bee'
'Fore he went to Floridy!"

A SCRAWL.

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

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

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

O Would I Had a Lover. Page 57.

SONG.

O, I WOULD I had a lover!
  A lover! a lover!
O, I would I had a lover
  With a twinkering guitar,
  To come beneath my casement
Singing, "There is none above her,"
While I, leaning, seemed to hover
  In the scent of his cigar!

Then at morn I'd want to meet him!
  To meet him! to meet him!
O, at morn I'd want to meet him,
  When the mist was in the sky,
  And the dew along the path I went
To casually greet him,
And to cavalierly treat him,
  And regret it by and by.

And I'd want to meet his brother—
  His brother! his brother!
O, I'd want to meet his brother
  At the german or the play,
  To pin a rose on his lapel

And lightly press the other,
And love him like a mother
  While he thought the other way.

O, I'd pitilessly test him!
  And test him, and test him!
O, I'd pitilessly test him
  Far beyond his own control;
  And every tantalizing lure
With which I could arrest him,
I'd loosen to molest him,
  Till I tried his very soul.

But ah, when I relented!
  Relented, relented!
But oh, when I relented—
  When the stars were blurred and dim,
  And the moon above, with crescent grace,
Looked off as I repented,
And with rapture half demented,
  All my heart went out to him!

UNINTERPRETED.

SUPINELY we lie in the grove's shady greenery,
  Gazing, all dreamy-eyed, up through the trees,
And as to the sight is the heavenly scenery,
  So to the hearing the sighing of the breeze.

We catch but vague rifts of the blue through the wavering
  Boughs of the maples; and, like undefined,
The whispers and lisps of the leaves, faint and quavering,
  Meaningless falter and fall on the mind.

The vine, with its beauty of blossom, goes rioting
  Up by the casement, as sweet to the eye
As the trill of the robin is restful and quieting
  Heard in a drowse with the dawn in the sky.

And yet we yearn on to learn more of the mystery—
  We see and we hear, but forever remain
Mute, blinded and deaf to the ultimate history
  Born of a rose or a patter of rain.

Could I but delve out the deeper sublimity
  Hid in the lily that smiles as I write—
Ah! my good friends, how in glad unanimity
  You should read rhymes writ in fragrance and
    white!

Or, could I translate the sweet song of merriment
  Spilled from the wicker-cage hung in the hall,
How you should chuckle to hear what canary
    meant
  By his wild tangle of twitter and call!

UNLESS.

WHO has not suffered does not guess
  What pleasure is. Who has not groped
In depths of doubt and hopelessness
  Has never truly hoped—
Unless, sometimes, a shadow falls
  Upon his mirth, and veils his sight,
  And from the darkness drifts the light
    Of love at intervals.

And that most dear of everything,
  I hold, is love; and who can sit
With lightest heart, and laugh and sing,
  Knows not the worth of it.
Unless in some strange throng, perchance,
  He feels how thrilling sweet it is,
  One yearning look that answers his—
    The troth of glance and glance.

Who knows not pain, knows not, alas.
  What pleasure is. Who knows not of
The bitter cup that will not pass,
  Knows not the taste of love.

O souls that thirst, and hearts that fast,
  And nature faint with famishing,
  God fondle you, and safely bring
    You to your own at last.

WHEN KNOTTED HORSE-TAILS ARE UNITED.

WHEN country roads begin to thaw
  In mottled spots of damp and dust,
And fences by the margin draw
    Along the frosty crust
  Their graphic silhouettes, I say,
  The Spring is coming round this way.

When morning-time is bright with sun,
  And keen with wind, and both confuse
The dancing, glancing eyes of one
    With tears that ooze and ooze—
  And nose tips weep as well as they,
  The Spring is coming round this way.

When suddenly some shadow-bird
  Goes wavering beneath the gaze,
And through the hedge the moan is heard
    Of kine that cease to graze
  In grasses dead, I smile and say,
  The Spring is coming round this way.

When knotted horse-tails are united,
  And teamsters whistle here and there,
And clumsy mitts are laid aside,
      And choppers' hands are bare,
  And chips are thick where children play,
  The Spring is coming round this way.

When through the twigs the farmer tramps,
  And troughs are chunked beneath the trees,
And fragrant hints of sugar camps
      Astray in every breeze,
  And early March seems middle-May,
  The Spring is coming round this way.

When coughs are changed to laughs, and when
  Our frowns melt into smiles of glee,
And all our blood thaws out again
      In streams of ecstasy,
  And poets wreak their roundelay,
  The Spring is coming round this way.

THE BOYS.

WHERE are they—the friends of my childhood enchanted?—
The clear, laughing eyes looking back in my own,
And the warm chubby fingers my palms have so wanted,
As when we raced over
Pink pastures of clover,
And mocked the quail's whirr, and bumble-bee's drone?

Have the breezes of time blown their blossomy faces
Forever adrift down the years that are flown?
Am I never to see them romp back to their places
Where over the meadow,
In sunshine and shadow,
The meadow-larks trill, and the bumble-bees drone?

Where are they? Ah! dim in the dusk lies the clover;
The whippoorwill's call has a sorrowful tone,

And the dove's—I have wept at it over and over.
I want the glad luster
Of youth, and the cluster
Of faces asleep where the bumble-bees drone!

DOC SIFERS.

At a Physicians' Banquet held in Indianapolis, Mr. Riley responded to the Toast "Doc Sifers," as follows:

Of all the Doctors I could cite you to in this-ere town
Doc Sifers is my favorite, jes' take him up and down;
Count in the Bethel neighborhood, and Rollins, and Big Bear,
And Sifers' stan'in's jes' as good as ary doctor's there!

There's old Doc Wick, and Glenn, and Hall, and Wurgler, and McVeigh,
But I'll buck Sifers 'ginst 'em all, and down 'em any day;
Most old Wick ever knowed, I s'pose, was whiskey; Wurgler? well,
He et morphine—ef actions shows, and facts' reliable!

But Sifers—though he ain't no sot, he's got his faults; and yit
When you git Sifers onct, you've got a DOCTOR, don't fergit!

He ain't much at his office, er his house, er anywhere
You'd natchurly think certain fer to ketch the feller there;

But don't blame DOC,—he's got all sorts o' cur'ous notions, as
The feller says--his "odd come-shorts," like smart men mostly haz:—
He'll mor'n like be potter'n round the blacksmith shop er in
Some back lot spadin' up the ground, er gradin' it agin;

Er at the work-bench, planin' things; er buildin' little traps
To ketch birds; galvenizin' rings; or graftin' plums, perhaps.
Make anything good as the best;—a gunstock, er a flute;
He whittled out a set of chessmen onct o' laurel root.

Durin' the army—got his trade o' surgeon there —I own
To-day a finger-ring DOC made out of a Secesh bone.

An' glued a fiddle onct for me—jes all so busted you
'D a-throwed the thing away, but he jest fixed her good as new.

And take Doc, now, in ager, say, er biles, er rheumatiz,
And all afflictions thataway, and he's the best they is.
Er janders—milksick—I don't keer—k-yore anything he tries—
A abscess, getherin' in yer yeer, er granilated eyes.

There was the Widder Daubenspeck, they all give up fer dead;
A blame cowbuncle on her neck, and clean out of her head!
First had this doctor, what's his name, from "puddlesburg," and then
This little red-head, "Burnin' shame," they call him, Dr. Glenn;

And they "consulted" on the case, and claimed she'd hav to die;
I jes was joggin' by the place, and heerd her dorter cry
And stops and calls her to the fence, and I—says I—"Let me

Send Sifers—bet you fifteen cents he'll k-yore her!"—"well," says she,

"Light out!" she says. And, lipp-tee-cut! I loped in town, and rid
'Bout two more hours to find him, but I kussed him when I did—
He was down at the gunsmith's-shop, a stuffin' birds. Says he,
"My sulky's broke." Says I, "You hop right on and ride with me!"
I got him there, "Well, Aunty, ten days k-yores you," Sifers said—
"But what's yer idy livin' when yer jes' as good as dead?"
And there's Dave Banks—jes' back from war, without a scratch, one day
Got ketched up in a sickle-bar—a reaper runaway:

His shoulders, arms, and hands, and legs, jes' sawed in strips, and Jake
Dunn starts for Sifers—Feller begs to shoot him fer God's sake!
Doc, 'course was gone, but he had penned the notice, "At Big Bear,
Be back to-morry; gone to tend the Bee Convention there."

But Jake, he tracked him; rid and rode the
whole endurin' night,
And 'bout the time the roosters crowed they both
hove into sight.
Doc had to ampitate, but 'greed to save Dave's
arms, an' swore
He could a-saved his legs ef he'd ben there the
day before.

Like when his wife's own Mother died, 'fore
Sifers could be found,
And all the neighbors, fer and wide, a' all jes'
chasin' round;
Tell finally—I had to laugh—it's jes' like Doc,
you know—
Was learnin' fer to telegraph, down at the old
dee-po!

But all they're faultin' Sifers fer, they's none of
'em kin say
He's biggety, er keerless, er not posted anyway;
He ain't built on the common plan of doctors
nowadays;
He's jes a great, big, brainy man—that's where
the trouble lays!

He also composed for the same banquet a verse to be read after each toast proposed—the toasts and verses were as follows:

Toast 1.
"OUR GUESTS."

"Give me to claim the service meet,
That makes each seat
A place of honor, and each guest
Loved as the rest."

Toast 2.
"THE INDIANA STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY."

A learned body, Sirs, and dignified
To no top-heaviness,
It hath a pride
Trim balanced as a scale.

Toast 3.
"THE AMERICAN DOCTOR."

Just as he is the wide world through—
You're killing him while he's curing you.

Toast 4.
"MEDICAL EDUCATION IN THE WEST."

Intrepid and cool-nerved, of even brain,
Receptive of all Nature's quick imprint;
Born of the West's expansive sea and plain—
Fitting the need—by science welcomed.

Toast 5.
"THE LAW."

An' ilka quibble, quip, and a'
Ye's ever heard in legal ha'

Druned over frae the red-e'ed law,
He cracks sae grim.

Toast 6.
"THE CLERGY."

It is the Dominie, I wis,
Whose sagest saw forever is:
"Walk thou aright,
Both day and night."

Toast 7.
"THE DOCTOR, A HUMANITARIAN."

Kindly and warm and tender,
He nestled each childish palm
So close in his own that his touch was a prayer
And his voice a blessed psalm.

Toast 8.
"OUR PRECEPTORS."

They taught us every gentle use
Of instruments and medicine,
"And thus they bore, without abuse,
The grand old name of gentlemen."

Toast 9.
"THE DOCTORS' PATIENTS."

O dear doctor! come and see
What on earth is the matter with me!
He felt my pulse, and he says, says he:
"Quiet—rest—and ginger tea."

Toast 10.

"IN MEDICINE—NO NORTH, NO SOUTH."

No factionist is he, indeed,
Who ministers our pain—
Forever in such office we'd
Elect him to remain.

Toast 11.

"THE YOUNG PHYSICIAN."

Ay though he be a callow,
He's a worthy fellow—
Trust him—for he
Must needs trust thee.

Toast 12.

"THE PRESS."

While human hearts shall pulse, no less
The echoing engine of the press.

Toast 13.

"THE HOOSIER DOCTOR."

"Doc hain't to blame! He's got all sorts
O' cur'ous notions, as
The feller says, his odd-come-shorts,
Like smart men mostly has!"

ME AND MARY.

ALL my feelin's in the spring,
Gits so blame contrary
I can't think of anything
Only me and Mary!
"Me and Mary!" all the time,
"Me and Mary!" like a rhyme,
Keeps a-dingin' on till I'm
Sick of "Me and Mary!"

"Me and Mary! Ef us two
Only was together—
Playin' like we used to do
In the Aprile weather!"
All the nights and all the day
I keep wishin' thataway
Till I'm gittin' old and gray
Jest on "Me and Mary!"

Muddy yit along the pike
Sence the winter's freezin',
And the orchard is backard-like
Bloomin' out this season;
Only heerd one blue-bird yit—
Nary robin nor tomtit;

What's the how and why of it?
    S'pect it's "Me and Mary!"

Me and Mary liked the birds—
    That is, Mary sorto'
Liked 'em first, and afterwards
    W'y I thought I orto.
And them birds—ef Mary stood
Right here with me like she should—
They'd be a-singin', them birds would,
    All for me and Mary.

Birds or not, I'm hopin' some
    I can git to plowin'!
Ef the sun 'll only come,
    And the Lord allowin',
Guess to-morry I'll turn in
And git down to work agin;
This here loaferin' won't win;
    Not for me and Mary!

For a man that loves like me,
    And's afeard to name it,
Till some other feller, he
    Gits the girl—dad-shame-it!
Wet or dry, or clouds or sun—
Winter gone or jest begun—
Out-door work for me or none,
    No more "Me and Mary!"

NORTH AND SOUTH.

Of the North I wove a dream,
All bespangled with the gleam
  Of the glancing wings of swallows
Dipping ripples in a stream,
That, like a tide of wine,
Wound through lands of shade and shine
Where purple grapes hung bursting on the vine.

And where orchard-boughs were bent
Till their tawny fruitage blent
  With the golden wake that marked the
Way the happy reapers went;
Where the dawn died into noon
As the May melts in June,
And the dusk fell like a sweet face in a swoon.

Of the South I dreamed; and there
Came a vision clear and fair
  As the marvelous enchantments
Of the mirage of the air;
And I saw the bayou trees,
With their lavish draperies
Hanging heavy o'er the moon-washed cypress-
    knees.

Peering from lush fens of rice
I beheld the negro's eyes,
  Lit with the old superstition
Death itself cannot disguise;
And I saw the palm-tree nod
Like an oriental god,
And the cotton froth and bubble from the pod.

And I dreamed that North and South,
With a sigh of dew and drouth,
  Blew each unto the other the
Salute of lip and mouth;
And I wakened, awed and thrilled—
Every doubting murmur stilled
In the silence of the dream I found fulfilled.

HERR WEISER.

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

Breath of rest, what a balmy gust!—
Quit of the city's heat and dust,
Jostling down, by the winding road,
In the cool, green depths of his quaint abode—
Tether the horse, as we onward fare
Under the pear-trees trailing there,
And thumping the wooden bridge at night
With lumps of ripeness and lush delight,
Till the stream, as it maunders on till dawn,
Is still forgiven and smiled upon.

Herr Weiser, with his wholesome face,
And the gentle blue of his eyes, and grace
Of unassuming honesty,

Be there to welcome you and me!
And what though the toil of the farm be stopped,
And the tireless plans of the place be dropped,
While the prayerful master's knees are set
In beds of pansy, and mignonette,
And lily and aster and columbine,
Offered in love, as thine and mine.

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

WHAT SHALL WE PRAY FOR.

I.

WHAT shall we pray for?—
  Shall we pray
  For health to-day—
    We who so yearn
    For health's return,
  And laughing hours so far away?
    Or shall we pray
    The long delay
  Of fortune shall have end,
And wealth be ours, as when
  Each silver night and golden day
    Of youth was ours, my friend?

II.

What shall we pray for? What?—
That the sweet clusters of forget-me-nots
    And mignonette
    And violet
  Be out of childhood brought
    And in our old hearts set
      A-blooming now, as then?

Or shall we pray
That love, long flown,
Return again
Unto its own,
No more to fly away?

III.

What shall we pray for?—
Shall it be
The mother-faces we
Have missed for years
So bitterly—
Whose eyelids would
Not lift, nor could
Be wetted open with our tears?
How would we greet them now!—Nay, nay!
For what then shall we pray?

IV.

For what then shall we pray?—
Pray—pray all self to pass away—
Forgetful of all needs
Thine own—
Neglectful of all creeds,—
Alone
Stand, facing Heaven, and say:—
To Thee,
O Infinite, I pray
Bless Thou mine enemy!

THE BOY-FRIEND.

CLARENCE, my boy-friend, hale and strong!
  O, he is as jolly as he is young,
And all of the laughs of the lyric belong
  To the boy all unsung!

So I want to sing something in his behalf—
  To clang some chords for the good it is
To know he is near, and to have the laugh
  Of that wholesome voice of his:

I want to tell him, in gentler ways
  Than prose may do, that the arms of rhyme,
Warm and tender with tuneful praise,
  Are about him all the time:

I want him to know the quietest nights
  We have passed together are yet with me,
Roistering over the old delights
  That were born of his company:

I want him to know how my soul esteems
  The fairy stories of Andersen,
And the glad translations of all the themes
  Of the hearts of boyish men:

Want him to know that my fancy flows
  With the lilt of a dear old-fashioned tune
Through "Lewis Carroll's" poemly prose,
  And the tale of the bold dragoon.

O, this is the Prine that I would sing—
  Would drape and garnish in velvet line,—
Since courtlier far than any king
  Is this brave boy-friend of mine!

TO HEAR HER SING.

To hear her sing—to hear her sing—
It is to hear the birds of spring
In dewy groves on blooming sprays
Pour out their blithest roundelays.

It is to hear the robin trill
At morning, or the whippoorwill
At dusk, when the stars are blossoming—
To hear her sing—to hear her sing!

To hear her sing—it is to hear
The laugh of childhood ringing clear
In woody path or grassy lane
Our feet may never fare again.

Faint, far away as Memory dwells,
It is to hear the village bells
At twilight, as the truant hears
Them, hastening home, with smiles and tears.

Such joy it is to hear her sing,
We fall in love with everything—
The simple things of every day
Grow lovelier than words can say.

The idle brooks that purl across
The gleaming pebbles and the moss,
We love no less than classic streams—
The Rhines and Arnos of our dreams.

To hear her sing—with folded eyes,
It is, beneath Venetian skies,
To hear the gondolier's refrain;
Or troubadours of sunny Spain.

To hear the bulbul's voice that shook
The throat that trilled for Lalla Rookh;
What wonder we in homage bring
Our hearts to her—to hear her sing.

THE LITTLE FAT DOCTOR.

He seemed so strange to me every way—
In manner, and ways, and size,
From the boy I knew but yesterday—
I could hardly believe my eyes!

To hear his name called over there,
My memory thrilled with glee,
And laped to picture him young and fair,
And fresh as he used to be.

But, looking, as only glad eyes can,
For the boy I knew of yore,
I smiled on a portly little man
I had never seen before!

Grave as a judge, in courtliness,
Professor-like, and bland—
A fat little doctor, and nothing less,
With his hat in his kimboed hand.

But how we talked old times, and chaffed
Each other, with "Minnie" and "Jim!"
And how the little fat doctor laughed—
And how I laughed at him!

"And it's pleasant," I said, "though I
yearn to see
The face of the youth that was,
To know no boy could smile on me
As the little fat doctor does!"

THE IRON PUP.

VAGUE, mystical, and undefined
  As blurred reflections in a stream,
Or shadows on a window-blind,
  Or ones in a musician's dream;
Or, to a wild benightmared brain,
The slanting sleet that whips the pane
Until the dreamer's pallid cheeks
In fearful phosphorescent streaks
Seem lighting all the midnight up,—
This legend of the Iron Pup!

Frame you a fancy such as grips
  The tendrils of a madman's sight,
  And jerks his eyeballs left and right,
And lifts his hair and warps his lips
  In all contortions of affright!
Breed you a vision bare and dread
As ghouls might, digging up the dead!
Evoke, from out the farthest view
Imagination reaches to,
  The airiest, veriest conceit,—
And all will fail to furnish you
  As strange, as bitter, or as sweet

A draught from out Oblivion's cup
  As this one of—The Iron Pup!

O some may tap their heads—(would they
Might tap their brains as well!)—and say,
"Who sings of 'Iron Pups' must be
  A sorry dog himself, since he
Would fashion for a roundelay
  A theme that lacks all melody
  Of simple sense as well as rhyme!"
'Tis well I do not strive to please
The pups, not nine-days-old, like these
  That whine in blindness all the time,
Distinguishing not friends from fleas!—
Nay, bear with me. I offer up
  A tribute to the Iron Pup.

We reach not dainties to the jaws
  That snarl and snap, and drip with froth;
  We may not love an object wroth
Whose anger hath not any cause.
But, O, a pup, with iron smile
Beaming upon us all the while!—
With iron light of glad surprise
Forever in his iron eyes!
  An iron elegance of pose—
An iron stateliness of style—
  An iron brow—an iron nose,

And iron legs, toe-nails and toes—
And tail, uptilted toward the skies,
Of purest virgin iron ore,
Wagless forever—evermore!
Surely a pup like that might well
Above all pups prove lovable!

His eloquence of reticence!
His winkless eyes, his heartless ears,
His unintentional intents,
His fearlessness of any fears,
His turbulence of quietude,
His hopelessness of any howl,
Or any yowl, or growing rude,
Or any prowling ghost of prowl!
Ho! how my blood warms to recite
The unbat bitness of his bite!
And how his unwrought rabidness
Seemed sweet as any coy caress,
The while his bristles ever raised
Along his neck, I stroked and praised,
Forced by the grimness of my grim
Unmuzzled dream to muzzle him!
My full affection render up
Their fatness for that Iron Pup!

AUGUST.

O MELLOW month and merry month,
  Let me make love to you,
And follow you around the world
  As knights their ladies do.
I thought your sisters beautiful,
  Both May and April, too,
But April she had rainy eyes,
  And May had eyes of blue.

And June—I liked the singing
  Of her lips, and liked her smile—
But all her songs were promises
  Of something, after while;
And July's face—the lights and shades
  That may not long beguile
With alternations o'er the wheat,
  The dreamer at the stile.

But you!—Ah, you are tropical,
  Your beauty is so rare!
Your eyes are clearer, deeper eyes
  Than any, anywhere;
Mysterious, imperious,
  Deliriously fair,
O, listless Andalusian maid,
  With bangles in your hair!

DONN PIATT OF MAC-O-CHEE.

I.

DONN PIATT—of Mac-o-chee,—
Not the one of History,
Who with flaming tongue and pen
Scathes the vanities of men;
Not the one whose biting wit
Cuts pretense, and etches it
On the brazen brow that dares
Filch laurel that it wears:
Not the Donn Piatt whose praise
Echoes in the noisy ways
Of the faction, onward led
By the statesman:—but, instead,
Give the simple man to me,—
Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!

II.

Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!
Branches of the old oak tree,
Drape him royally in fine
Purple shade and golden shine!
Emerald plush of sloping lawn,
Be the throne he sits upon!

And, O summer sunset, thou
Be his crown, and gild a brow
Softly smoothed and soothed and calmed
By the breeze, mellow-palmed
As Erata's white hand, agleam
On the forehead of a dream,—
So forever rule o'er me,
Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!

III.

Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!
Through a lilied memory
Plays the wayward little creek
Round thy home, at hide-and-seek;
And I see and hear it, still
Romping round the wooded hill—
Till its laugh-and-babbles blends
With the silence while it sends
Glances back to kiss the sight,
In its babyish delight,
Ere it strays amid the gloom
Of the glens that burst in bloom
Of the rarest rhyme for thee,
Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!

IV.

Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!
What a darling destiny

Has been mine—to meet him there—
Lolling in an easy chair
On the terrace, while he told
Reminiscences of old—
Letting my cigar die out,
Hearing poems talked about;
And entranced to hear him say
Gentle things of Thackeray,
Dickens, Hawthorne, and the rest,
Known to him as host and guest—
Known to him as to me—
Donn Piatt of Mac-o-chee!

TO JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

THERE is rare playing when you touch the bow,
With a light foot true-beating out the time!
In many a rustic reel of rhythm and rhyme,
The homely syllables touch, with heel and toe,
Each note of the old tunes we used to know.
Silence: and hark! 'tis bells of elves that chime!
And, backward, up the hills of morn we climb
To the old fairyland of long ago!

What is this charm that, through the changing speech—
Bird-mimicked from the mouths of many men—
Thrills like a thread of rainbow glimmerings?
The golden register we may not reach—
The music of the minstrels come again—
And yours, the master-hand of many strings!

FRANK PRESTON SMART.

Belleville, W. Va.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

(Wethout ary apology.)

I GOT to thinkin' of him—as sometimes a feller will—
Of the night he give a lectur' to the folks in Shelbyville,
An' we set up ontil daylight, as them lecturers sometimes do–
A'talkin' of a hundred things that mightn't int'rest you;
I mind the things he rattled off that night, in boyish glee,
Recitations he recited to an audience of me;
How I laughed ontil the lan'lord come in an' ast us to be still—
So I got to thinkin' of him, an' that night at Shelbyville.

Then he'd kind o' quit his nonsense, an' we'd settle down a spell,
Tell Jim 'ud turn upon me an' begin agin—"Dey' tell
'Bout the time I went to Franklin fer the Baptist College folks?"

An' I'd stretch my mouth acrost my face, all ready fer the jokes:
But he'd branch off in a story 'bout "Merry Workers" band,
That 'nless you knowed the "Workers" you c'd hardly understand;
I c'd hear myself a swallerin', the room 'ud seem so still—
So I got to thinkin' of him, an' that night at Shelbyville.

I got to thinkin' of him—like 'twas jest a year ago—
Fer time, that flies so fast in dreams, in alminicks is slow;
He was workin' like a beaver, lecturn' here an' lecturn' there,
An' a-writin' on railroad cars, in taverns—ev'ry where,
Printin' poems in the papers, speakin' pieces at the fairs,
An' him and me a-travelin', now and then, around in pairs;
An' he seemed to think 'at he was no account at all—but still
I got to thinkin' of him an' that night at Shelbyville.

I got to thinkin' of him and the happy "Days gone by,"
Tell the sweet "Old fashioned roses" seemed to bloom agin—and die;
An' I hear him talk agin about "My bride that is to be,"
When he'd come to "Grigsby station" jest to have a night weth me;
I kin see him settin' down agin, to give the Prine a rock,
When "The frost was on the punkin an' the corn was in the shock,"
An' I hear a laughin' voice I loved, with music in its trill—
So I got to thinkin' of him, an' that night at Shelbyville.

So I set here an' I wonder ef I know jest what it means:
When I see 'em print his poetry in all the magazines;
An' I see him on the platform with the James and Howells set,
An' hear the people sayin', "He's the best one of 'em yet;"
An' I keep a winkin' back the tears that make my fool eyes shine,

Fer I couldn't feel no prouder ef he'd ben a boy
of mine;
Fer he's jest the same old Riley, an' he'll be the
same Jim still,
'At he was the night 'at him an' me set up at
Shelbyville.

ROBERT J. BURDETTE,
In Brooklyn Eagle.

TWO SONNETS TO THE JUNE-BUG.

I.

YOU make me jest a little nervouser
Than any dog-gone bug I ever see!
And you know night's the time to pester me—
When any tetch at all 'll rub the fur
Of all my patience back'ards! You're the myrrh
And ruburb of my life! A bumble-bee
Cain't hold a candle to you; and a he
Bald hornet, with a laminated spur
In his hip-pocket, daresent even cheep
When you're around! And dern ye! you have made
Me lose whole ricks, and stacks, and piles of sleep,—
And many a livelong night I've laid
And never shut an eye, hearin' you keep
Up that eternal buzzin' serenade!

II.

And I've got up and lit the lamp, and clum
On cheers and trunks and washstands and bureaus,
And all such dangerous articles as those,

And biffed at you with brooms, and never come
In two feet of you,—maybe skeered you some,—
But what does that amount to when it throws
A feller out o' balance, and his nose
Gits barked against the mantle, while you hum
For joy around the room, and churn your head
Aginst the ceilin', and draw back and butt
The plasterin' loose, and drop—behind the bed,
Where never human-bein' ever put
Harm's hand on you, or ever truthful said
He'd choked your dern infernal wizzen shut!

A CANARY AT THE FARM.

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

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

Sahry's sot—so I tell her
He's a purty little feller,
With his wings o' creamy yeller,
  And eyes keen as a cat;

And the twitter of the critter
Seems to absolutely glitter!
Guess I'll have to go and git her
  A better cage 'n that!

WET WEATHER TALKS.

It ain't no use to grumble and complain;
  It's jest as cheap and easy to rejoice:
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain,
  W'y, rain's my choice.

Men gener'ly, to all intents—
  Although they're ap' to grumble some—
Puts most their trust in Providence,
  And takes things as they come;—
That is, the commonality
Of men that's lived as long as me,
Has watched the world enough to learn
They're not the boss of this concern.

With some, of course, it's different—
  I've seed young men that knowed it all,
And didn't like the way things went
  On this terrestrial ball!
But, all the same, the rain some way
Rained jest as hard on picnic-day;
Or when they really wanted it,
It maybe wouldn't rain a bit!

In this existence, dry and wet
  Will overtake the best of men—

Some little skift o' clouds 'll shet
  The sun off now and then;
But maybe, as you're wonderin' who
You've fool-like lent you're umbrell' to,
And want it—out 'll pop the sun,
And you'll be glad you ain't got none.

It aggravates the farmers, too—
  They's too much wet, or too much sun,
Or work, or waitin' round to do
  Before the plowin's done;
And maybe, like as not, the wheat,
Jest as it's lookin' hard to beat,
Will ketch the storm—and jest about
The time the corn's a-jintin' out!

These here cy-clones a foolin' round—
  And back'ard crops—and wind and rain—
And yit the corn that's wallered down
  May elbow up again!
They ain't no sense, as I can see,
Fer mortals, sich as you and me,
A-faultin' Nature's wise intents
And lockin' horns with Providence!

It ain't no use to grumble and complain;
  It's jest as cheap and easy to rejoice:
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain,
  W'y, rain's my choice.

OLD MAN'S NURSERY RHYME. Page 107.

OLD MAN'S NURSERY RHYME.

I.

In the jolly winters
  Of the long-ago,
It was not as cold as now—
  O! No! No!
Then, as I remember,
  Snowballs to eat
Were as good as apples now,
  And every bit as sweet!

II.

In the jolly winters
  Of the dead-and-gone,
Bub was warm as summer,
  With his red mitts on.
Just in his little waist-
  And-pants all together,
Whoever heard him growl
  About cold weather?

III.

In the jolly winters
  Of the long-ago—

Was it half as cold as now?
  O! No! No!
Who caught his death o' cold
  Making prints of men
Flat-backed in snow that now's
  Twice as cold again!

IV.

In the jolly winters
  Of the dead-and-gone,
Starting out rabbit-hunting
  Early as the dawn,—
Who ever froze his fingers,
  Ears, heels or toes—
Or'd a cared if he had?
  Nobody knows!

V.

Nights by the kitchen-stove
  Shelling white and red
Corn in the skillet, and
  Sleepin' four abed!
Ah! the jolly winters
  Of the long-ago!
We were not so old as now—
  O! No! No!

SOMEPIN' STRANGE ABOUT OCTOBER.

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

I love old October so,
I can't bear to see her go,—
Seems to me like losin' some
Old-home relative, er chum—
'Pears like sorto' settin' by
Some old friend 'at sigh by sigh
Was a-passin' from our sight
Into everlastin' night.
Hickernuts a feller hears

Rattlin' down is more like tears
Drappin' on the leaves below—
I love old October so!

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

A POOR MAN'S WEALTH.

A POOR man! Yes, I must confess—
No wealth of gold do I possess;
No pastures fine, with grazing kine,
Nor fields of waving grain are mine:
No foot of fat or fallow land
Where rightfully my feet may stand,
The while I claim it as my own—
By deed and title mine alone.

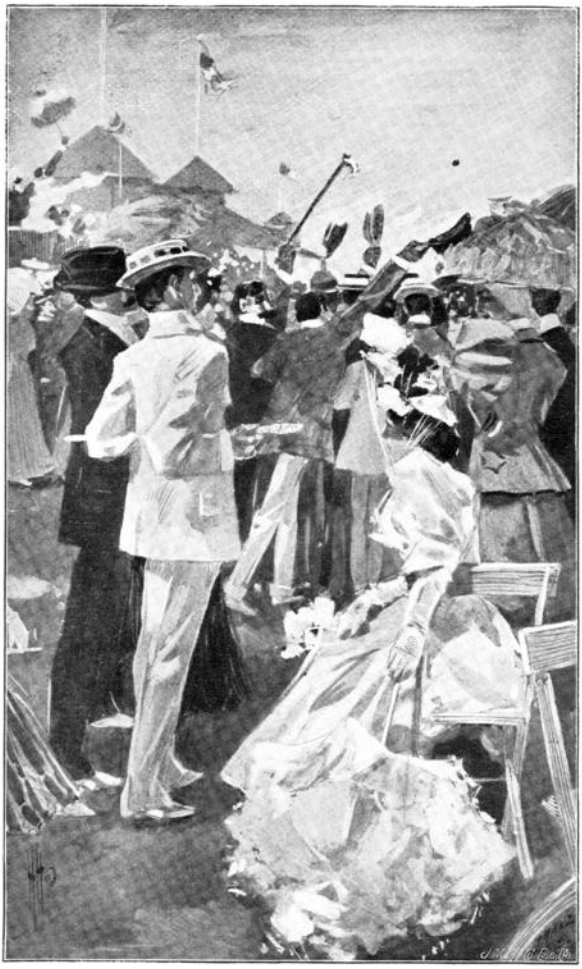
Ah, poor indeed! perhaps you say—
But spare me your compassion, pray!
When I can't ride with you, I walk
In Nature's company, and talk
With one who will not slight or slur
The child forever dear to her—
And one who answers back, be sure,
With smile for smile, though I am poor.

And while communing thus, I count
An inner wealth of large amount—
The wealth of honest purpose blent
With Penury's environment—
The wealth of owing naught to-day

But debts that I would gladly pay,
And wealth of thanks still unexpressed
With cumulative interest.

A wealth of patience and content—
For all my ways improvident;
A faith still fondly exercised—
For all my plans unrealized:
A wealth of promises that still,
Howe'er I fail, I hope to fill;
A wealth of charity for those
Who pity me my ragged clothes.

A poor man! Yes, I must confess
No wealth of gold do I possess;
No pastures fine, with grazing kine,
Nor fields of waving grain are mine—
But ah, my friend! I've wealth, no end!
And millionaires might condescend
To bend the knee and envy me
This opulence of poverty.



THE WAY THAT BILLY COULD RIDE. Page 113.

THE WAY THAT BILLY COULD RIDE.

I.

O THE way that Billy could ride!
You should hear Grandfather tell of the lad—
For Grandfather he was a horseman, too.
Though he couldn't ride now as he used to do,
It yet was his glory and boast and pride,
That he'd "back" Billy for all he had—
And that's a cool million, I'll say to you!—
And you should hear him, with all his praise
Of this boy Billy, and his wild ways;—
The way that he handled a horse, and the way
He rode in town on election day—
The way he bantered, and gaffed, and guyed,
And the ways he swopped, and the ways he lied,
And the way he'd laugh at his victims grim,
Till half of the time they would laugh with him,
Forgetting their anger, and pacified—
Seeing the way Billy could ride!

II.

Billy was born for a horse's back!—
That's what Grandfather used to say:—
He'd seen him, in dresses, a-many a day,

On a two-year-old, in the old barn lot,
Prancing around, with the bridle slack,
And his two little sunburnt legs outshot
So straight from the saddle-seat you'd swear
A spirit-level had plumbed him there;
And all the neighbors that passed the place
Would just haul up in the road, and stare
To see the little chap's father boost
The boy up there on his favorite roost,
To canter off, with a laughing face,—
Put him up there, he was satisfied—
And O the way Billy could ride!

III.

At celebration or barbecue—
And Billy, a boy of fifteen years,
Couldn't he cut his di-does there?—
What else would you expect him to,
On this little dimity chestnut mare,
With her slender neck, and her pointed ears,
And the four little, devilish hoofs of hers?
The "delegation" moved too slow
For the time that Billy wanted to go!
And to see him dashing out of the line,
At the edge of the road, and down the side
Of the long procession, his horse wild-eyed
At the fife and drums, was a sight divine
To the girls, in their white-and-spangled pride,

In the great "Big Wagon" all gilt outside
And jolt within, as they lumbered on
Into the town where Billy had gone
An hour ahead, like a knightly guide–
O, but the way that Billy could ride!

IV.

"Billy can ride! O, Billy can ride!
But what on earth can he do beside?"
That's what the farmers used to say,
As time went by a year at a stride,
And Billy was twenty if he was a day!
And many a wise old father's foot
Was put right down where it should be put,
While many a dutiful daughter sighed
In vain for one more buggy-ride
With the gallant Billy, who none the less
Smiled at the old man's selfishness,
And kissed his daughter, and rode away,—
Till one especially rich old chap—
Noted for driving a famous bay—
Gave poor Billy so sharp a rap
Regarding his daughter, that Billy replied
By noising it over the country wide,
That the old curmudgeon was simply mad
Because he (Billy) undoubtedly had
A faster horse than the famous bay,
And that was all that he had to say!—

Then he'd touch his horse in the flank, and—
zipp!—
Talk about horses and horsemanship!—
Folk stare after him just wall-eyed!
Oomh! the way that Billy could ride!

V.

Bang the cymbals! and thump the drum!
Stun the guineas! and pound the gong!
Mr. Bull, git up and come!
And beller and paw for five days long!
Whoop and howl till you drown the band
That hoots and toots in the "Judges' Stand!"
For this is the term of the county fair,
And you bet Billy will be there!—
And you watch him there, old horsemen, all!
And judges, you, in your lifted stall!
And gamblers, you, as you clap and clack,
As the order is heard to clear the track!
And watch him, you, by the "Floral Hall,"
With sweet face pink as the parasol
You wave as you stand on the buggy-seat!—
And you, young man, as you feel her hand
Tremble in yours, as there you stand!
And watch him, too, you old man gray,
With your houses, lands, and your wealth complete—
Not forgetting the famous bay

You ride with him in the race to-day!—
And lash, as you start there side by side!
Lash! for the sake of your bay defied!
Lash! for the proof of your boasted pride!
Lash! as you'd lash a cur that lied!
Lash! but watch him with both eyes wide—
For O the way that Billy can ride.

VI.

Side by side in the open track
The horses stood—such a glossy pair!—
Trim as sparrows about to fly—
Plumage of mane and song of eye!
Ho! They were beautiful!—bay and black—
The sunshine glittered along each back—
Glanced at the shoulders, and flickered and run
In dapples of light that would daze the sun!—
The veins of their limbs like tremulous vines
The breeze blows through, and the vibrant lines
Of their nostrils like to the lips of the cups
Of the gods, brimmed over with roseate sups—
From swish of tail to the toss of mane,
Pharao's favorites lived again!—
Lived, and served, and nobly, too.
As they sprung to the race, and onward flew!
Ho! but the sight of them side by side!—
Their masters' faces seemed glorified
As they flashed from view—in an instant gone,

And as you saw but their shoulders, as they rode on,
Narrowing—narrowing—less and less—
As you gazed after in breathlessness.

VII.

Shoulder to shoulder, and neck to neck—
And the hearts of the crowd spun round with them
As they dwindled away to the self-same speck—
When sudden—a flash—like the flash of a gem
That had dropped in the dust, while onward came
But one wild rider, who homeward led,
So mad with delight that he shrieked his name—
And it was not "Billy"—but all the same,
Though far behind, he was far ahead!—
As the one rode in on "his famous bay,"
His gray hair steaming beneath his hat,
And the wind-blown, upturned brim of that
Flat on his forehead—was no acclaim,—
The crowd was looking the other way!
Where, far in the distance, and through the mist
Of the dust you saw where a hand was kissed
As in hasty adieu—nor was that all,
But, fairly and clearly and sharply defined,
You saw the black horse, with Billy astride,
With a sweet little witch of a woman behind,
Gaily waving a pink parasol,

And the crowd answered roundly with cheer upon cheer,
As the horse lightly wheeled with their manifold weight,
And dashed from your gaze through the big lower gate,
While back down the track, midst a tumult of jeers,
Was seen to rack out, on a "winded" bay,
An aged parent—amazed—irate—
On a race that might not end for years—
But end it did. * * * "Who *won* the race?"
Grandfather paused, with a graver face,—
"Well, Billy won—but the reason why,
Was the bay was 'blowed'—and so was I!

"Fizzles in everything else he's tried—
But O the way Billy can ride!"

THE WILLOW.

WHO shall sing a simple ditty all about the willow,
Dainty-fine and delicate as any bending spray
That dandles high the happy bird that flutters there to trill a
Tremulously tender song of greeting to the May?

Ah, my lovely willow! Let the waters lilt your graces,
They alone with limpid kisses love your leaves above,
Flashing back your bonny beauty, and in shady places
Peering up with glimmering pebbles like the eyes of love.

ON THE BANKS OF DEER CRICK.

On the banks o' Deer Crick, there's the place for me!—
Worter slidin' past you, jes' as clear as it can be.
See yer shadder in it, and the shadder of the sky,
And the shadder of the buzzard as he goes a-lazin' by;
Shadder of the pizin-vines, and shadder of the trees,
An' I purt' nigh said the shadder of the sunshine and the breeze!—
Well, I never seed the ocean, ner I never seed the sea,
But on the banks of Deer Crick is grand enough for me!

On the banks o' Deer Crick, mile or two fum town,
'Long up where the mill-race comes a-loafin' down,—
Like to get up in there, 'mongst the sycamores,
And watch the water at the dam, a-frothin' as she pours:
Crawl out on some old log, with my hook and line,

Where the fishes is so thick you can see 'em shine
As they flicker round yer bait, coaxin' you to jerk,
Till you're tired ketchin' of 'em, mighty nigh, as work.

On the banks o' Deer Crick—allus my delight
Jes' to be around there, take it day or night!
Watch the snipes and killdeers foolin' all the day—
And these here little worter-bugs, a-skootin' ever' way!
Snake-feeders glancin' round, and dartin' out o' sight;
And dew-fall, and bull-frogs, and lightin'-bugs at night.
Take yer choice of all the places think you'd rather be
But on the banks o' Deer Crick!—Leave that fer me!

AN ANSWER TO RILEY'S "DEER CRICK."

It is coming to be pretty generally conceded that Indiana people are capable of excellent work in all kinds of literature, and particularly in poetry. It is not to be denied that there is very much poetry written by Indiana writers that is not good; indeed, some of it is very bad. But that is true of the literary people of all parts of the world. Out of the mass that is constantly tumbling into the hopper of the daily and weekly press there is much that is worthy of preservation. Writing verse seems to come as natural to many Indianians as to write anything, and to do it well. It is so easy, some think. It is too easy for some. But, altogether, the people of the Hoosier State have no reason to be ashamed of the productions of their favorites. An incident happened, recently, illustrative of the facility with which the average native of Indiana turns to poetry. Mr. James Whitcomb Riley had been to lecture at some town in the Kankakee region, probably at Kentland, and after his departure his auditors got to discussing the merits of his productions, excerpts from which he had read to make up his entertainment. There were those who regarded him as a genius, while others were as firmly persuaded that his work was "just as easy," and any one could make the same kind of verse ad lib. His dialect, while it stirred up a good deal of admiration, was regarded as something that any properly-constituted man could duplicate on order. To put it to the test, one of his auditors set himself about doing a little, "just for a joke," going home and finishing up the poem before he retired for the night. That he did not make a failure of it altogether may be seen from the following, which is the poem he produced:

Talk about yer Deer Crick, that will do to tell;
That there Hoosier poet likes it purty well;
See's his shadder in it; thinks he's purty, too—
That there kind o' lookin'-glass can't be very true;
Tells us 'bout his fishin', a mile or two from town,
Where half the little town chaps are alus loafin' roun';
Had to go on Sunday, way off the creek,
Jes' to taste o' pleasures we have all the week.
But talkin' 'bout yer Deer creek, an' where yer rather be—
Think if I was choosin' I'd say the Kankakee.

Long about September, when the leaves are colorin' fine,
Some a-turnin' yaller and some as red as wine;
Bayous full o' lilies, ferns a-growin' rank,
Goldenrods a-bloomin' all along the bank;
River full o' salmon, black haws gittin good;
Crows a holdin' meetin' over in the wood;
Squirrels a-playin' hide and seek 'mong the jack-oak trees;
Black birds an' blue jays a-holdin' matinees;
Water, clear as crystal, movin' kind o' slow,
As though it had ter leave ye but didn't want ter go.

Jes' take yer boat and paddle to some secluded place,
Where the shadder of the birches, with the sun, is weavin' lace:
Then, if yer bent on fishin', jes' bait yer hook an' fish,
An', if yer not too graspin', ye'll soon get all ye wish:
But, if yer only recreatin', jes' a-runnin' 'way from care;
If yer mind is full o' trouble, it'll surely suit you there;
For ye kind o' git to musin', kind o' lose yerself, it seems,
An' yer mind it goes a-wand'rin' sort o' like it does in dreams,
Till the sunlight fades to twilight, an' ye paddle back to camp,
With the moonlight on the water in the evenin' cool and damp.

Then take it after supper, when ev'rything is still,
'Ceptin' little tree toads an' the lonesome whipperwill;
An' ye lounge, an' smoke, an' ponder till way long in the night
Within the magic circle o' the camp-fire blazing bright,

While a feelin' o' contentment steals on ye unawares,
Lifts from yer tired shoulders the knapsack of yer cares;
Soothes from yer brow the wrinkles, the crowfeet from yer eyes,
An' ye sleep the sleep o' childhood beneath the autumn skies.
Talk about yer Deer Creek, it kind o' seems to me
That the Hoosier poet never seen the land o' Kankakee.

There are crudities in it, as might have been expected; but on the whole it is a production of which the author has no reason to be ashamed. He is evidently laboring under a delusion, if he thinks any one can write such articles "off-hand." If he does, let him try it himself again, or, better, get some of his neighbors to try it. He will discover that the machine won't work in that easy and graceful manner every time. He may learn that he himself can't duplicate it. If he can, he should be at it, for there is a grace, and rhythm, and flow about it that reveals the true poetic instinct. The gentleman to whom credit should be given for this poem is Mr. William W. Pfrimmer, of Kentland, who is represented to be a great lover of nature, well acquainted with all her ways. "Ho, for the swales of the Kankakee!"

THE ROSSVILLE LECTURE-COURSE.

ROSSVILLE, MICH., MARCH, '86.

Folks up here at Rossville got up a lectur'-course,
All the leadin' citizens they wuz out in force;
Met and talked at Williamses, and 'greed to meet agin,
And holt another corkus when the next reports wuz in;
Met agin at Samuelses; and met agin at Moore's,
And Johnts he put the shutters up and jest barred the doors—
And yit I'll jest be dagg-don'd ef et didn't take a week
'Fore we'd settled where to write to git a man to speak!

Found out where the Bureau wuz, and then and there agreed
To strike while the iron's hot, and foller up the lead.
Simp wuz secatary, so he tuck his pen in hand,
And ast what they'd tax us fer the one on "Holy Land"—

"One of Colonel J. De Koombs Abelust and Best
Lecturs"—the circ'lar stated—"Give East er
West!"
Wanted fifty dollars, and his kyar-fare to and
from,
And Simp was hence instructed fer to write him
not to come.

Then we talked and jawed around another week
er so,
And writ the Bureau 'bout the town a-bein' sort
o' slow
And fogey-like, and pore as dirt, and lackin'
enterprise,
And ignornter'n any other 'cordin' to its size:
Till finally the Bureau said they'd send a cheaper
man,
Fer forty dollars, who would give "A Talk About
Japan"—
"A regular Japanee hisse'f," the pamphlet
claimed; and so,
Nobody knowed his languige, and of course we
let him go!

Kindo' then let up a spell—but rallied onc't agin,
And writ to price a feller on what's called the
violin—

A Swede, er Pole, er somepin'—and no matter what he wuz,
Doc Sifers said he'd heerd him, and wusn't wuth a kuss!
And then we ast fer Swingses terms; and Cook, and Ingersoll—
And blamed ef forty dollars looked like anything at all!
And then Burdette, we tried fer him; and Bob he writ to say
He wuz busy writin' autographts, and couldn't git away.

At last—along in Aprile—we signed to take this here
Bill Nye of Californy, 'at wuz posted to appear
"The Humorestest Funny Man 'at Ever Jammed a Hall!"
So we made big preparations, and swep' out the church and all!
And night he wuz to lectur', and the neighbors all wuz there,
And strangers packed along the aisles 'at come from ever'where,
Committee got a telegrapht the preacher read 'at run—
"Got off at Rossville, Indiany, 'stead of Michigun."

THE CHRIST.

" Father!" (so the Word) He cried,—
" Son of thine, and yet denied;
By my brothers dragged and tried,
Scoffed and scourged, and crucified,
With a thief on either side—
Brothers mine; alike belied,—
Arms of mercy open wide,
Father! Father!" So he died.

THE LAND OF THUS-AND-SO.

"How would Willie like to go
To the land of Thus-and-So?
Everything is proper there—
All the children comb their hair
Smoother than the fur of cats,
Or the nap of high silk hats;
Every face is clean and white
As a lily washed in light;
Never vaguest soil or speck
Found on forehead, throat or neck;
Every little crimple dear,
In and out, as pure and clear,
As the cherry-blossoms blow
In the land of Thus-and-So.

"Little boys that never fall
Down the stairs; or cry at all—
Doing nothing to repent,
Watchful and obedient;
Never hungry, nor in haste—
Tidy shoestrings always laced;
Never button rudely torn
From its fellows all unworn;

Knickerbockers always new—
Ribbon-tie, and collar, too;
Little watches, worn like men,
Only always half past ten—
Just precisely right, you know,
For the land of Thus-and-So!

"And the little babies there
Give no one the slightest care,—
Nurse has not a thing to do
But be happy and say 'Boo!'
While mama just nods, and knows
Nothing but to doze and doze;
Never litter round the grate;
Never lunch or dinner late;
Never any household din,
Peals without or rings within—
Baby-coos nor laughing calls,
On the stairs or through the halls—
Just great Hushes to and fro
Pace the land of Thus-and-So.

"O, the land of Thus-and-So!
Isn't it delightful, though?"
"Yes," lisped Willie, answering me
Somewhat slow and doubtfully,—
"Must be awful nice—but I
Ruther wait till by and by

'Fore I go there—maybe when
I be dead I'll go there then.
But—" the troubled little face
Closer pressed in my embrace,—
" Le's don't never go
To the land of Thus-and-So!"

FROM THE HEADBOARD OF A GRAVE IN PARAGUAY.

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

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

WHEN WE THREE MEET.

R. C. M.

WHEN we three meet, as meet we may,
And meet we must, some after-day,
  What keener sense of joy can be
  Accorded unto men than we
Shall feel along our pulses play?

If time hath turned our temples gray,
What then, shall we not still be gay,
  Be still as fresh, and flush, and free,
    When we three meet?

We bear apart—drift wide astray,
Each in his own appointed way,
  Like ships that sever out at sea,—
  We bear apart, but all agree
That care shall have a holiday,
    When we three meet.

J. N. MATTHEWS.

M. C. R.

When we three meet? Ah! friend of mine
Whose verses well and flow as wine,—

My thirsting fancy thou dost fill
With draughts delicious, sweeter still
Since tasted by those lips of thine.

I pledge thee, through the chill sunshine
Of autumn, with a warmth divine,
Thrilled through as only I shall thrill
When we three meet.

I pledge thee, if we fast or dine,
We yet shall loosen, line by line,
Old ballads, and the blither trill
Of our-time singers—for there will
Be with us all the Muses nine
When we three meet.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

DAVE FIELD.

LET me write you a rune of a rhyme, Dave Field,
  For the sake of the past we know,
When we were vagrants along the road,
  Yet glad as the skies were blue;
When we struck hands, as in alien lands
  Old friend to old friend is revealed,
And each hears a tongue that he understands,
  And a laugh that he loves, Dave Field.

Ho! Let me chant you a stave, Dave Field,
  Of those indolent days of ours,
With our chairs a-tilt at the wayside inn,
  On our backs in the woodland flowers;
With your pipe a-lit, and the breath of it
  Like a nimbus above your head,
While I sipped, like a monk, of your winey wit,
  With my matins all unsaid.

Let me drone you a dream of the world, Dave Field,
  And the glory it held for us—
You with your pencil and canvas dreams,
  And I with my pencil thus;

Yet with never a thought of the prize we sought
  Being at best but a pain
As we looked from the heights and our blurred
    eyes caught
  The scenes of our youth again.

O, let me sing you a song, Dave Field,
  Jolly and hale, but yet
With a quaver of pathos along the lines,
  And the throb of a vain regret;—
A sigh for the dawn long dead and gone,
  But a laugh for the dawn concealed,
As bravely awhile we still toil on
  Toward the topmost height, Dave Field.

MY MARY.

My Mary! O, my Mary!
  The simmer skies are blue;
The dawnin' brings the dazzle,
  And the gloamin' brings the dew,—
The murk o' nicht the glory
  O' the moon, and kindles, too,
The stars that shift about the lift,—
  But naething brings me you!

Where is it, O, my Mary,
  Ye are bidin' a' the while?
I ha' wended by your window—
  I ha' waited at the stile,
And up and down the river
  I ha' rowed for mony a mile,
Yet never found, adrift or drown'd,
  Your lang-belated smile.

Is it forgot, my Mary,
  How glad we used to be?—
The simmertime when bonny
  Bloomed the auld trysting-tree—
How there I carved a name for you,
  And you a name for me;

And the twilight kenned it only
  When we kissed sae tenderly.

Speak aince to me, my Mary!—
  But whisper in my ear
As light as any sleeper's breath
  And a' my soul will hear;
My heart shall stap its beating,
  And the soughing atmosphere
Be hushed the while I leaning smile
  And listen to you, dear!

My Mary! O, my Mary!
  The blossoms bring the bees,
The sunshine brings the blossoms
  And the leaves upon the trees;
The simmer brings the sunshine,
  And the fragrance of the breeze,—
But O, without you, Mary,
  I care naething for these!

We were sae happy, Mary!
  O think how aince we said,—
Wad ane o' us gang fickle,
  Or ane o' us were dead,—
To feel another's kisses
  We wad feign the auld instead,
And ken the ither's footsteps
  In the grass aboon the head.

My Mary! O, my Mary!
  Are ye sister o' the air,
That ye vanish aye before me
  As I follow everywhere?—
Or is it that ye're only
  But a mortal, wan wi' care,
Sin' I search the kirkyard over
  And dinna find you there.

LAUGHTER HOLDING BOTH HIS SIDES.

Aye, thou varlet! Laugh away!
All the world's a holiday!
Laugh away and roar and shout
Till thy hoarse tongue lolleth out!
Bloat thy cheeks and bulge thine eyes
Unto bursting; pelt thy thighs
With thy swollen palms, and roar
As thou never hast before!
Lustier! wilt thou! peal on peal!
Stiflest? Squat and grind thy heel—
Wrestle with thy loins, and then
Wheeze thee whiles, and whoop again!
Tiptoe up and pour thy mirth
Sloshingly around the earth
For a wallow-slough for thee
To swash round in—Hi! whoop-ee!—
Throughout all eternity!

THE CHANT OF THE CROSS-BEARING CHILD.

I BEAR dis cross dis many a mile.
O de cross-bearin' chile—
De cross-bearin' chile!

I bear dis cross 'long many a road
Wha' de pink aint bloomed an' de grass aint
growed.
O de cross-bearin' chile—
De cross-bearin' chile!

Hit's on my conscience all dese days
Fo' ter bear de cross ut de good Lord lays
On my po' soul, and ter lif' my praise.
O de cross-bearin' chile—
De cross-bearin' chile!

I's nigh-'bout weak ez I mos' kin be,
Yit de Mastah call, an' he say,—"You's free
Fo' ter 'cept dis cross' an' ter cringe yo' knee
To no n'er man in de worl' but me!"
O de cross-bearin' chile—
De cross-bearin' chile!

Says you guess wrong ef I let you guess—
Says you 'spect more an'-a you git less;—
Says you go eas', says you go wes',
An' whense you fine de road ut you like bes'
You bettah take ch'ice er any er de res'!
O de cross-bearin' chile—
De cross-bearin' chile!

He build my feet, an' he fix de signs
Dat de shoe hit pinch an' de shoe hit bines
Ef I wear eights an'-a wanter wear nines;
An' I hone fo' de rain, an' de sun hit shines,
An' whilse I hunt de sun hit's de rain I fines—
O-a trim my lamp, an'-a gyrd my lines!
O de cross-bearin' chile—
De cross-bearin' chile!

I wade de wet, an' I walk de dry;
I done tromp long, an' I done clim high;
An' I pilgrim on ter de golding sky,
An' I taken de resk fo' ter cas' my eye
Wha' de gate swing wide, an' de Lord draw nigh,
An' de trump hit blow, an' I hear de cry,—
"You lay dat cross down by an' by!"
O de cross-bearin' chile—
De cross-bearin' chile!

THE OLD SWIMMIN'-HOLE.

OH! the old swimmin'-hole! where the crick so still and deep
Looked like a baby-river that was laying half asleep,
And the gurgle of the worter round the drift jest below
Sounded like the laugh of something we onc'st ust to know
Before we could remember anything but the eyes
Of the angels lookin' out as we left paradize;
But the merry days of youth is beyond our controll,
And it's hard to part forever with the old swimmin'-hole.

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! In the happy days of yore,
When I ust to lean above it on the old sickamore,
Oh! it showed me a face in its warm sunny tide
That gazed back at me so gay and glorified,
It made me lose myself, as I leaped to caress,
My shadder smilin' up at me with such tenderness.

But them days is past and gone, and old Time's tuck his toll
From the old man come back to the old swimmin'-hole.

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! In the long, lazy days,
When the hum-drum of school made so many run-a-ways,
How pleasant was the jurney down the old dusty lane,
Where the tracks of our bare feet was all printed so plain
You could tell by the dent of the heel and the sole
They was lots o' fun on hands at the old swimmin'-hole.
But the lost joys is past! Let your tears in sorrow roll
Like the rain that ust to dapple up the old swimmin'-hole.

There the bullrushes growed, and the cat-tails so tall,
And the sunshine and shadder fell over it all,
And it mottled the worter with amber and gold
Till the glad lillies rocked in the ripples that rolled,

And the snake-feeder's four gauzy wings fluttered by
Like the ghost of a daisy dropped out of the sky,
Or a wownded apple-blossom in the breeze's controll
As it cut acrost some orchard to'rds the old swimmin'-hole.

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! When I last saw the place
The scenes was all changed, like the change in my face;
The bridge of the railroad now crosses the spot
Where the old divin'-log lays sunk and forgot.
And I stray down the banks where the trees ust to be—
But never again will their shade shelter me!
And I wish in my sorrow I could strip to the soul
And dive off in my grave like the old swimmin'-hole!

WRITTEN IN JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY'S "IN BOHEMIA."

SINGERS there are of courtly themes—
  Drapers in verse—who would dress their rhymes
In robes of ermine; and singers of dreams,
  Of gods high-throned, in the classic times;
Singers of nymphs, in their dim retreats,
  Satyrs, with sceptre and diadem;
But the singer who sings as a man's heart beats,
  May well blush for the rest of them.

I like the thrill of such poems as these,—
  All spirit and fervor of splendid fact—
Pulse, and muscle, and arteries
  Of living, heroic thought and act!—
Where every line is a vein of red
  And rapturous blood all unconfined
As it leaps from a heart that has joyed and bled
  With the rights and the wrongs of all mankind.

GRANT.

AT REST—AUGUST 8, 1885.

Read at the Memorial Meeting at Delphi, Ind.

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

WHAT shall we say of the soldier, Grant,
His sword put by and his great soul free?
How shall we cheer him now or chant
His requiem befittingly?
The fields of his conquest are now seen
Ranged no more with his armed men—
But the rank and file of the gold and green
Of the waving grain is there again.

Though his valiant life is a nation's pride,
And his death heroic and half divine,
And our grief as great as the world is wide,
There breaks in speech but a single line:—
We loved him living, revere him dead!—
A silence then on our lips is laid:

We can say no thing that has not been said,
  Nor pray one prayer that has not been prayed.

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

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

And ho! as he rides what dreams are his?
  And what have the breezes to suggest?—
Do they whisper to him of shells that whizz

O'er fields made ruddy with wrongs redressed?
Does the hawk above him an eagle float?
Does he thrill and his boyish heart beat high,
Hearing the ribbon about his throat
Flap as a flag as the winds go by?

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

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

Thus ready mounted, and booted, and spurred,
He loosed his bridle and dashed away!—

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

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

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

Soldiers! look on his face the last,
  With never a tremble of lip or lid;

Look on the hero, as you file past,
  And front his foe as your leader did—
For still you may see, in the deepest dole
  And the darkest night of your discontent,
The great white light of his loyal soul
  Ablaze in the midmost firmament.

THE BAT.

I.

THOU dread, uncanny thing,
With fuzzy breast and leathern wing,
  In mad, zigzagging flight,
Notching the dusk, and buffeting
  The black cheeks of the night,
    With grim delight—

II.

What witch's hand unhasps
  Thy keen claw-cornered wings
  From under the barn roof, and flings
Thee forth, with chattering gasps,
    To rend the air,
  And nip the lady-bug, and tear
  Her children's hearts out unaware?

III.

The glow-worm's glimmer, and the bright,
Sad pulsings of the fire-fly's light,
  Are banquet lights to thee.
O less than bird, and worse than beast,
Thou Devil's self, or brat, at least,
    Grit not thy teeth at me!

THE SOUTH WIND AND THE SUN.

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

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

And the Sun had on a crown
Wrought of gilded thistle-down,
And a scarf of velvet vapor,
And a raveled rain-bow gown;
And his tinsel-tangled hair,
Tossed and lost upon the air,

Was glossier and flossier
  Than any anywhere.

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

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

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

Over meadow-lands they tripped
Where the dandelions dipped
In crimson foam of clover-bloom,
And dripped and dripped and dripped,
And they clinched the bumble-stings,
Gauming honey on their wings
And bundling them in lily-bells,
With maudlin murmurings.

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

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

By the brook with mossy brink,
Where the cattle came to drink,

They trilled and piped and whistled
  With the thrush and bobolink,
  Till the kine, in listless pause,
  Switched their tails in mute applause,
With lifted heads, and dreamy eyes,
  And bubble-dripping jaws.

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

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

  And they stroked the downy cheek
  Of the peach, and smoothed it sleek,
And flushed it into splendor;

And with many an elfish freak,
Gave the russet's rust a wipe—
Prankt the rambo with a stripe,
And the winesap blushed its reddest
As they spanked the pippins ripe.

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

And the golden-banded bees,
Droning o'er the flowery leas,
They bridled, reined, and rode away
Across the fragrant breeze,
Till in hollow oak and elm
They had groomed and stabled them
In waxen stalls that oozed with dews
Of rose and lily-stem.

Where the dusty highway leads,
High above the wayside weeds,
They sowed the air with butterflies
Like blooming flower-seeds,

Till the dull grasshopper sprung
Full a man's height up, and hung
Tranced in the heat, with whirring wings,
And sung and sung and sung!

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

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

And the fairy vessel veered
From its moorings—tacked and steered
For the center of the current—
Sailed away and disappeared:
And the burthen that it bore

From the long-enchanted shore—
"Alas! The South Wind and the Sun!"
I murmur evermore.

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

AN IMPROMPTU ON ROLLER SKATES.

RUMBLE, tumble, growl and grate!
Skip, and trip, and gravitate!
Lunge and plunge, and thrash the planks
With your blameless, shameless shanks!
  In excruciating pain,
Stand upon your head again,
And uncoiling kink by kink,
Kick the roof out of the rink!

In derisive bursts of mirth,
Drop kawhoop and jar the earth!
Jolt your lungs down in your socks,
O, tempestuous equinox
Of dismembered legs and arms!
Strew your ways with wild alarms;
Fameward skoot and ricochet
On your glittering vertebræ.

THE LAW OF THE PERVERSE.

Where did the custom come from, anyway!
  Sending the boys to "play" at dinner-time,
When we have company? What is there, pray,
  About the starched, unmalleable guest
  That, in the host's most genial interest,
Finds him first favor on Thanksgiving Day,
  Beside the steaming turkey, with its wings
  Akimbo over all the savory things
  It has been stuffed with, yet may never thus
  Make one poor boy's face glad and glorious!

Fancy the exiled boy in the back-yard,
  An-hungered so that any kind of grub
Were welcome, yet with set face, stern and hard,
  Hearing the feasters' laugh and mild hub-
    bub,
  And wanting to kill something with a club!
  Intuitively arguing the unjust
  Distinction, as he naturally must,
  The guest with all the opportunity,
  And he with all the appetite. Ah, me!

So is it that when I, a luckless guest,
  Am thus arraigned at banquet, I sit grim

And sullen, eating nothing with a zest,
With smirking feature, yet a soul distressed,
    Missing the banished boy and envying him—
Aye, longing for a spatter on my vest
    From his deflecting spoon, and yearning for
    The wild whoop of his lips insatiate, or
    The burning corruscations of his eyes
    Bulged like dead-ripe stars in paradise.

GOD BLESS US EVERY ONE.

"God bless us every one!" prayed Tiny Tim—
Crippled and dwarfed of body, yet so tall
Of soul we tiptoe earth to look at him,
High towering over all.

He loved the loveless world, nor dreamed, indeed,
That it, at best, could give to him the while
But pitying glances, when his only need
Was but a cheery smile.

And thus he prayed "God bless us every one!"
Enfolding all the creeds within the span
Of his child-heart, and so, despising none,
Was nearer saint than man.

I like to fancy God in Paradise,
Lifting a finger o'er the rhythmic swing
Of chiming harp and song, with eager eyes
Turned earthward listening.

The anthem stilled—the angels leaning there
Above the golden walls—the morning sun
Of Christmas bursting flower-like with the prayer,—
"God Bless us every one!"

O, PINCHING-BUG!

Circumstances alters cases.—J. W. RILEY.

O, PINCHING-BUG! When life was young,
Ere love into my heart had sung,
  I fled whene'er I heard your tune—
  And loathed you for your dismal croon
As buzzing round the lamp you hung!

Then, if into my hair you clung,
Or down my neck, in gambols swung,
  Forthwith I fell into a swoon,
  O, pinching-bug!

But now—ah, me! with altered tongue
I bless the source from which you sprung;
  For out beneath the summer moon
  My dear and I must stray and spoon,
While you are from the window flung,
  O, pinching-bug!

POET OF THE WASTE-BASKET.

HER BEAUTIFUL EYES.

O HER beautiful eyes! they are blue as the dew
On the violet's bloom when the morning is new,
And the light of their love is the gleam of the sun
O'er the meadows of spring where the quick shadows run,
As the morn shifts the mists and the clouds from the skies,—
So I stand in the dawn of her beautiful eyes.

And her beautiful eyes are as midday to me,
When the lily-bell bends with the weight of the bee,
And the throat of the thrush is a-pulse in the heat,
And the senses are drugged with the subtle, and sweet,
And delirious breaths of the air's lullabies,—
So I swoon in the noon of her beautiful eyes.

O her beautiful eyes! they have smitten mine own
As a glory glanced down from the glare of the Throne;

And I reel, and I falter and fall, as afar
Fell the shepherds that looked on the mystical
Star,
And yet dazed in the tidings that bade them
arise,—
So I grope through the night of her beautiful
eyes.

WANT TO BE WHUR MOTHER IS!

"WANT to be whur mother is! Want to be whur
mother is!"
Jeemses Rivers! won't someone ever shet that
howl o' his?
That-air yellin' drives me wild!
Cain't none of ye stop the child?
Want yer daddy? Naw! Gee whizz!
"Want to be whur mother is!"

"Want to be whur mother is! Want to be whur
mother is!"
Coax him, Sairy! Mary, sing somepin' fer him!
Lift him, Liz—
Bang the clock-bell with the key—
Er the meat-ax! Gee-mun-nee!
Listen to them lungs o' his!
"Want to be whur mother is!"

"Want to be whur mother is! Want to be whur
mother is!"
Preacher guess'll pound all night on that ole
pulpit o' his!
'Pears to me some wimmin jest
Shows religeous interest

Mostly 'fore their fambly's riz!
"Want to be whur mother is!"

* * * * * * *

"Want to be whur mother is! Want to be whur mother is!"
Nights like these and whipperwills allus brings that voice of his!
Sairy; Mary; 'Lizabeth;
Don't sit there and ketch your death
In the dew—er rheumatiz—
"Want to be whur mother is!"

A PRAYER FOR CONTENT WITH SIMPLE STORE.

DEAR LORD, to Thee my knee is bent:
Give me content—
Full-pleasured with what comes to me,
Whate'er it be:
An humble roof—a frugal board,
And simple hoard;
The wintry fagot piled beside
The chimney wide
While the enwreathing flames upsprout
And twine about
The brazen dogs that guard my hearth
And household worth:
Tinge with the embers' ruddy glow
The rafters low;
And let the sparks snap with delight,
As fingers might
That mark deft measures of some tune
The children croon:
Then—with good friends, the rarest few,
Thou holdest true,
Ranged round about the blaze, to share
My comfort there,—

Give me to claim the service meet
That makes each seat
A place of honor, and each guest
Loved as the rest.

SONG.

I.

LINGER, my Lady! Lady lily-fair,
Stay yet thy step upon the casement-stair—
Poised be thy slipper-tip as is the tine
Of some still star.—Ah, Lady!—lady mine,
Yet linger—linger there!

II.

Thy face, O Lady, lily-pure and fair,
Gleams i' the dusk as in thy dusky hair
The snowy blossom glimmers, or the shine
Of thy swift smile.—Ah Lady!—lady mine!
Yet linger—linger there!

III.

With lifted wrist where round the laughing air
Hath blown a mist of lawn and claspt it there,
Waft finger-tipt adieus that spray the wine
Of thy waste kisses towr'd me, lady mine!
Yet linger—linger there!

IV.

What unloosed splendor is there may compare
With thy hand's unfurled glory anywhere!

What glint of sun, or dew, or jewel fine
May mate thine eyes?—Ah, Lady—lady mine,
Yet linger—linger there!

V.

My soul confronts thee; on thy brow and hair
It lays its gentleness like palms of prayer;
It touches sacredly those lips of thine
And swoons across thy spirit, lady mine,
The while thou lingerest there.

THE BEST IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.

I QUARREL not with Destiny,
I make the best of everything—
The best is good enough for me.

Leave Discontent alone, and she
Will shut her mouth and let you sing,
I quarrel not with Destiny.

I take some things, or let 'em be—
Good gold has always got the ring;
The best is good enough for me.

When Fate insists on secrecy,
I have no arguments to bring—
I quarrel not with Destiny.

The fellow that goes "haw" for "gee"
Will find he hasn't got full swing.
The best is good enough for me.

One only knows our needs, and He
Does all of the distributing.
I quarrel not with Destiny;
The best is good enough for me.

MY FRIEND.

"He is my friend," I said—
"Be patient!" Overhead
The skies were drear and dim;
And lo! the thought of him
Smiled on my heart—and then
The sun shone out again!

"He is my friend!" the words
Brought summer and the birds;
And all my winter-time
Thawed into running rhyme
And rippled into song,
Warm, tender, brave and strong.

And so it sings to-day.
So may it sing alway!
Though waving grasses grow
Between, and lilies blow
Their trills of perfume, clear
As laughter to the ear,
Let each mute measure end
With "Still he is thy friend!"

THE HARPER.

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

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

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

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

FACTS AND FANTASTICS

ONE AFTERNOON.

BELOW, cool grasses. Over us
The maples waver tremulous.

A slender overture above,
Low breathing as a sigh of love

At first, then gradually stronger
And stronger. 'Tis a locust's song,

Swol'n midway to a pæan of glee,
And lost in silence dwindingly—

Not utter silence; nay, for hid
In ghosts of it, the Katydid

Chirrs a diluted echo of
The loveless song he makes us love.

The low boughs are drugged heavily
With shade. The poem you read to me

Is not more gracious than the trill
Of birds that twitter as they will.

Half consciously, with upturned eyes,
I hear your voice—I see the skies.

Where, o'er bright rifts, the swallows glance
Like glad thoughts o'er a countenance;

And voices near and far are blent
Like sweet chords of some instrument

Awakened by the trembling touch
Of hands that love it over much.

Dear heart, let be the book awhile!
I want your face—I want your smile!

Tell me how gladder now are they
Who look on us from heaven to-day.

A TRANCIENT DENTAL MONODY.

I HAIL thee, thou regal profession—
  O Dentistry! Queen as thou art!
How can I extract the expression
  That aches in my innermost heart?
My mirror-like mind's necromancy
  Reflects it—but ah! when I fain
Would nip it, the forceps of fancy
  Slip off and my efforts are vain!

I loll back and breathe of thy presence
  As patients of laughing-gas—nay,
This last is an impotent essence
  Compared with thy worth anyway!
Like bibulous paper my spirit
  Drinks of thee until I become
As weak as the moisture, or near it,
  That slowly exudes from the gum.

There's a cavity in my affection
  Impatiently waiting thy skill—
Thy coffer-dam's tender protection,
  And the rasp of each requisite drill.

Like a patient I come to thee, trusting
  My feelings most sensitive shoots,
With a tartar deposit encrusting
  My being's indefinite roots.

THE ASSASSIN.

FLING him amongst the cobbles of the street,
Midmost along a mob's most turbid tide;
Stun him with tumult upon every side—
Wrangling of hoarsened voices that repeat
His awful guilt and howl for vengeance meet;
Let white-faced women stare, all torrid-eyed,
With hair blown forward, and with jaws dropped wide,
And some face like his mother's glimmer sweet
An instant in the hot core of his eyes.
Then snatch him with claw hands, and thong his head
That he may look no way but toward the skies
That glower lividly and crackle red—
There let some knuckled fist of lightning rise—
Draw backward flickeringly and knock him dead.

PROSE

THE GILDED ROLL.

NOSING around in an old box—packed away and lost to memory for years—an hour ago, I found a musty package of gilt paper, or, rather, a roll it was, with the tarnished gold of the old sheet for the outer wrapper. I picked it up mechanically to toss it into some obscure corner, when, carelessly lifting it by one end, a child's tin whistle fell tinkling on the cellar floor. It lies before me on my writing table now—and so, too, does the roll entire, though now a roll no longer, for my eager fingers have rent the gilded covering, and all its precious contents are spread out beneath my hungry eyes.

Here is a scroll of ink-written music. I don't read music, but I know the dash and swing of the pen that raised it on the page. Here is a letter, with the self-same impulse and abandon in every syllable, and its melody—however sweet the other—is far more sweet to me. And here are other letters like it—three—five—and seven, at least. Bob wrote them from the front, and Billy kept them for me when I went to join him. Dear boy! Dear boy!

Here are some cards of bristol-board. Ah! when Bob came to these there were no blotches then. What faces—what expressions! The droll, ridiculous, good-for-nothing genius, with his "sad mouth," as he called it, "upside down," laughing always—at everything, at big rallies, and mass meetings and conventions, county fairs and floral balls, booths, watermelon wagons, dancing tents, the swing, daguerreian car, the "lung barometer," and the air-gun man. Oh! what a gifted, good-for-nothing boy Bob was in those old days. And here's a picture of a girlish face—a very faded photograph—even fresh from "the gallery," four-and-twenty years ago, it was a faded thing. But the face—how bright and clear that was; for "Doc," Bob's awful name for her, was a pretty girl, and brilliant, clever, lovable every way. No wonder Bob fancied her! And you could see some hint of her jaunty loveliness in every fairy face he drew, and you could find her happy ways and dainty tastes unconsciously assumed in all he did—the books he read—the poems he admired, and those he wrote; and, ringing clear and pure and jubilant, the vibrant beauty of her voice could clearly be defined and traced through all his music. Now, there's the happy pair of them—Bob and "Doc." Make of them just whatever your good fancy may

dictate, but keep in mind the stern, relentless ways of destiny.

You are not at the beginning of a novel, only at the threshold of one of a hundred experiences that lie buried in the past, and this particular one most happily resurrected by these odds and ends found in the gilded roll.

You see, the contents of this package, mainly, were hastily gathered together after a week's visit out to the old Mills farm. The gilt paper, and the whistle, and the pictures, they were Billy's; the music pages, Bob's, or "Doc's;" the letters and some other MSS. were mine.

The Mills girls were great friends of "Doc's," and often came to visit her in town; and so "Doc" often visited the Mills's. This is the way that Bob first got out there, and won them all, and "shaped the thing" for me, as he would put it; and lastly, we had lugged in Billy,—such a handy boy, you know, to hold the horses on picnic excursions, and to watch the carriage and the luncheon, and all that. "Yes, and," Bob would say, "such a serviceable boy in getting all the fishing tackle in proper order, and digging bait, and promenading in our wake up and down the creek all day, with the minnow-bucket hanging on his arm, don't you know?"

But jolly as the days were, I think jollier were

the long evenings at the farm. After the supper in the grove, where, when the weather permitted, always stood the table, ankle-deep in the cool, green plush of the sward; and after the lounge upon the grass, and the cigars, and the new fish stories, and the general invoice of the old ones, it was delectable to get back to the girls again, and in the old "best room" hear once more the lilt of the old songs and the stacattoed laughter of the piano mingling with the alto and falsetto voices of the Mills girls, and the gallant soprano of the dear girl "Doc."

This is the scene I want you to look in upon, as, in fancy, I do now—and here are the materials for it all, husked from the gilded roll.

Bob, the master, leans at the piano now, and "Doc" is at the keys, her glad face often thrown up sidewise toward his own. His face is boyish—for there is yet but the ghost of a mustache upon his lip. His eyes are dark and clear, of over-size when looking at you; but now their lids are drooped over his violin whose melody has, for the time, almost smoothed away the upward kinkings of the corners of his mouth. And wonderfully quiet now is every one, and the chords of the piano, too, are low and faltering; and so, at last, the tune itself swoons into the universal hush, and—Bob is rasping in its stead the ridiculous

but marvelously perfect imitation of the "priming" of a pump, while Billy's hands forget the "chiggers" on the bare backs of his feet, as, with clapping palms, he dances round the room in ungovernable spasms of delight. And then we all laugh; and Billy, taking advantage of the general tumult, pulls Bob's head down and whispers, "Git 'em to stay up 'way late to-night!" And Bob, perhaps remembering that we go back home to-morrow, winks at the little fellow and whispers, "You let me manage 'em! Stay up till broad daylight if we take a notion—eh?" And Billy dances off again in newer glee, while the inspired musician is plunking a banjo imitiation on his enchanted instrument, which is unceremoniously drowned out by a circus tune from "Doc" that is absolutely inspiring to every one but the barefoot brother, who drops back listlessly to his old position on the floor and sullenly renews operations on his "chigger" claims.

"Thought you was goin' to have pop-corn to-night all so fast!" he says doggedly, in the midst of a momentary lull that has fallen on a game of whist. And then the oldest Mills girl, who thinks cards stupid anyhow, says, "That's so, Billy, and we're going to have it, too; and right away, for this game's just ending, and I shan't

submit to being bored with another. I say 'pop-corn' with Billy! And after that," she continues, rising and addressing the party in general, "we must have another literary and artistic tournament, and that's been in contemplation and preparation long enough; so you gentlemen can be pulling your wits together for the exercises, while us girls see to the refreshments."

"Have you done anything toward it?" queries Bob, when the girls are gone, with the alert Billy in their wake.

"Just an outline," I reply. "How with you?"

"Clean forgot it—that is, the preparation; but I've got a little old second-handed idea, if you'll all help me out with it, that'll amuse us some, and tickle Billy, I'm certain."

So that's agreed upon; and while Bob produces his portfolio, drawing paper, pencils and so on, I turn to my note-book in a dazed way and begin counting my fingers in a depth of profound abstraction from which I am barely aroused by the reappearance of the girls and Billy.

Goody, goody, goody! Bob's goin' to make pictures!" cries Billy, in additional transport to that the pop-corn has produced.

"Now, you girls," says Bob, gently detaching the affectionate Billy from one leg and mov-

ing a chair to the table, with a backward glance of intelligence toward the boy, "you girls are to help us all you can, and we can all work, but, as I'll have all the illustrations to do, I want you to do as many of the verses as you can—that'll be easy, you know,—because the work entire is just to consist of a series of fool-epigrams, such as, for instance,—

> Here lies a young man
> Who in childhood began
> To swear, and to smoke, and to drink,—
> In his twentieth year
> He quit swearing and beer,
> And yet is still smoking, I think.

And the rest of his instructions are delivered in lower tones, that the boy may not hear; and then, all matters seemingly arranged, he turns to the boy with,—"And now, Billy, no lookin' over shoulders, you know, or swinging on my chair-back while I'm at work. When the pictures are all finished, then you can take a squint at 'em, and not before. Is that all hunky, now?"

"Oh! who's a-goin' to look over your shoulder—only 'Doc?'" And as the radiant "Doc" hastily quits that very post, and dives for the offending brother, he scrambles under the piano and laughs derisively.

And then a silence falls upon the group—a

gracious quiet, only intruded upon by the very juicy and exuberant munching of an apple from a remote fastness of the room, and the occasional thumping of a bare heel against the floor.

At last I close my note book with a half slam.

"That means," says Bob, laying down his pencil, and addressing the girls,—"That means he's concluded his poem, and that he's not pleased with it in any manner, and that he intends declining to read it, for that self-acknowledged reason, and that he expects us to believe every affected word of his entire speech—"

"Oh, don't!" I exclaim.

"Then give us the wretched production, in all its hideous deformity!"

And the girls all laugh so sympathetically, and Bob joins them so gently, and yet with a tone, I know, that can be changed so quickly to my future discomfiture, that I arise at once and read, without apology or excuse, this old scrap that I pick here to-day from The Gilded Roll:

A BACKWARD LOOK.

As I SAT smoking, alone, yesterday,
  And lazily leaning back in my chair,
Enjoying myself in a general way—
Allowing my thoughts a holiday
  From weariness, toil and care,—

My fancies—I guess, for ventilation—
  Left ajar the gates of my mind,
And Memory, seeing the situation,
  Slipped out in street of "Auld Lang Syne."

Wandering ever with tireless feet
  Through scenes of silence, and jubilee
Of long-hushed voices; and faces sweet
Were thronging the shadowy sides of the street
  As far as the eye could see;
Dreaming again, in anticipation,
  The same old dreams of our boyhood's days
That never come true, from the vague sensation
  Of walking asleep in the world's strange ways.

Away to the house where I was born!
  And there was the self-same clock that ticked
From the close of dusk to the burst of morn,
When life-warm hands plucked the golden corn,
  And helped when the apples were picked.
And the "china dog" on the mantel-shelf,
  With the gilded collar and yellow eyes,
Looked just as at first, when I hugged myself
  Sound asleep with the dear surprise.

And down to the swing in the locust tree,
  Where the grass was worn from the trampled ground;
And where "Eck" Skinner, "Old" Carr, and three
  Or four such other boys used to be,
  Doin' "sky-scrapers," or "whirlin' round:"

And again Bob climbed for the bluebird's nest,
  And again "had shows" in the buggy-shed
Of Guymon's barn, where still, unguessed,
  Old ghosts romp of the best days dead!

And again I gazed from the old school-room
  With a wistful look, of a long June day,
When on my cheek was the hectic bloom
Caught of Mischief, as I presume—
  He has such a "partial" way,
It seemed, toward me,—And again I thought
  Of a probable likelihood to be
Kept in after school,—for a girl was caught
  Catching a note from me.

And down through the woods to the swimming-hole—
  Where the big, white, hollow, old sycamore grows,—
And we never cared when the water was cold,
And always "ducked" the boy that told
  On the fellow that tied the clothes,—
When life went so like a dreamy rhyme,
  That it seems to me now that then
The world was having a jollier time
  Than it ever will have again.

The crude production is received, I am glad to note, with some expressions of favor from the girls; but Bob, of course, must heartlessly dissipate my weak delight by saying, "Well, it's certainly bad enough; though," he goes on with an

air of deepest critical sagacity and fairness, "considered, as it should be justly, as the production of a jour poet, why, it might be worse—that is, a little worse." But, by this time, the girls, in a body, are suppressing him, to which he laughingly submits and calls for quarter, declaring that he would have been inclined to have ventured no comment whatever, but for the very personal allusion of the poem to his boyish derelictions and youthful eccentricities. "And now," he says, when order is restored, "our other production needs attention, and, with our new reinforcement, we can, with diligence, soon have it ready for both printer and engraver, and then we'll wake up the boy (who I notice has been fortunately slumbering for the last quarter of an hour), and present to him, as designed and intended, this matchless creation of our united intellects." At the conclusion of this speech we all go good-humoredly to work, and at the close of half an hour the tedious, but most ridiculous, task is announced completed.

As I arrange and place in proper form here on the table the separate cards—twenty-seven in number—I sigh to think that I am unable to transcribe for you the best part of the nonsensical work—the illustrations. All I can give you is the written copy of—

BILLY'S ALPHABETICAL ANIMAL SHOW.

A was an elegant Ape
Who tied up his bangs with red tape,
And wore a long veil,
Half revealing his tail,
Which was trimmed with jet bugles and crape.

B was a boastful old Bear
Who used to say,—"Hoomh! I declare
I can eat—if you'll get me
The children, and let me—
Ten babies, teeth, toenails and hair!"

C was a Codfish who sighed
When snatched from the home of his pride,
But could he, embrined,
Guess this fragrance behind,
How glad he would be that he died!

D was a dandified dog
Who said,—"Though it's raining like fog
I wear no umbrellah,
Me boy, for a fellah
Might just as well travel incog!"

E was an elderly Eel
Who would say,—"Well, I really feel—
As my grandchildren wriggle
And shout 'I should giggle'—
A trifle run down at the heel!"

F was a Fowl who conceded
Some hens might hatch more eggs than she did,—

But she'd children as plenty
At eighteen or twenty,
And that was quite all that she needed.

G was a gluttonous Goat
Who, dining one day, table-d'hote,
Ordered soup-bone, au fait,
And fish, papier mache,
And a fillet of spring overcoat.

H was a high-cultured Hound
Who could clear forty feet at a bound;
And a coon once averred
That his howl could be heard
For five miles and three-quarters around.

I was an Ibex ambitious
To dive over chasms auspicious;
He would leap down a peak
And not 'light for a week
And swear that the jump was delicious.

J was a Jackass who said
He has such a bad cold in his head,
If it wasn't for leaving
The rest of us grieving,
He'd really rather be dead.

K was a profligate Kite
Who would haunt the saloons every night;
And often he ust
To reel back to his roost
Too full to set up on it right.

L was a wary old Lynx
Who would say,—"Do you know what I thinks?—
I thinks ef you happen
To ketch me a-nappin'
I'm ready to set up the drinks!"

M was a merry old Mole
Who would snooze all day in his hole,
Then—all night, a-rootin'
Around and galootin'—
He'd sing, "Johnny, fill up the Bowl!"

N was a caustical Nautilus
Who sneered, "I suppose, when they've caught all us,
Like oysters they'll serve us,
And can us—preserve us—
And barrel, and pickle, and bottle us."

O was an autocrat Owl—
Such a wise—such a wonderful fowl!
Why, for all the night through
He would hoot and hoo-hoo,
And hoot and hoo-hooter and howl!

P was a Pelican pet
Who gobbled up all he could get;
He could eat on until
He was full to the bill,
And there he had lodgings to let!

Q was a querulous Quail,
Who said, "It will little avail

The efforts of those
Of my foes who propose
To attempt to throw salt on my tail."

R was a ring-tailed Raccoon,
With eyes of the tinge of the moon,
And his nose a blue-black,
And the fur on his back
A sad sort of sallow maroon.

S is a Sculpin—you'll wish
Very much to have one on your dish,
Since all his bones grow
On the outside, and so
He's a very desirable fish.

T was a Turtle of wealth,
Who went round with particular stealth,—
"W'y," said he, "I'm afraid
Of being waylaid
When I even walk out for my health!"

U was a Unicorn curious,
With one horn, of a growth so luxurious,
He could level and stab it—
If you didn't grab it—
Clean through you, he was so blamed furious!

V was a vagabond Vulture
Who said, "I don't want to insult yer,
But when you intrude
Where in lone solitude
I'm a-preyin', you're no man of culture!"

W was a wild Woodchuck,
And you can just bet that he could "chuck"—
He'd eat raw potatoes,
Green corn and tomatoes,
And tree roots, and call it "good chuck!"

X was a kind of X-cuse
Of some-sort-o'-thing that got loose
Before we could name it,
And cage it, and tame it,
And bring it in general use.

Y is the Yellowbird,—bright
As a petrified lump of starlight,
Or a handful of lightning
Bugs, squeezed in the tight'ning
Pink fist of a boy, at night.

Z is the Zebra, of course!—
A kind of a-clown-of-a-horse,—
Each other despising,
Yet neither devising
A way to obtain a divorce!

& here is the famous What-is-it;
Walk up, Master Billy, and kiss it:
You've seen the rest of 'em—
Ain't this the best of 'em,
Right at the end of our visit?

* * * * * * * *

And is it possible, I sorrowfully muse, that all this glory can have fled away?—that more than

twenty long, long years are spread between me and that happy night? And is it possible that all the dear old faces—O, quit it! quit it! Gather the old scraps up and wad 'em back into oblivion, where they belong!

Yes, but be calm—be calm! Think of cheerful things. You are not all alone. Billy's living yet.

I know—and six feet high, and sag-shouldered—and owns a tin and stove store, and can't hear thunder! Billy!

And the youngest Mills girl—she's alive, too.

S'pose I don't know that? I married her!

And "Doc."—

Bob married her. Been in California for more than fifteen years—on some blasted cattle-ranch, or something, and he's worth a half a million!

MRS. ROBERT J. BURDETTE.

WE who read that Mrs. Burdette is dead are very thoughtless. We listen to the birds this morning; and the gilding of the sunshine on the blossoms and the leaves is simply just the alchemy our selfishness demands, and we are pleased to say "this is a very pleasant world to us!" Some of us say this because we want to forget the mother that went away a year ago, and tried to speak but could not; for that the lips were dry and framed no thing, although they writhed and writhed with the great yearning of their love. Some say it is because the sister, when she went, was very poor, and had no legacy at all to leave, only her virtue and old maidenhood, and the strangely-vague daguerreotype of the one whose lie made all her life an empty album in which no line was writ by any friend. Some say it is because they blindly think this agony will never come to them—but, all the same, some day the hammer on the anvil will ring drear—the twitter of the blithest bird will hurt the hearing, and the lightest laughter of the sweetest child will be an awful discord that will jar and clang and ache on every sense.

The woman that is dead is past all this. That is her rapture and her joy. God is blessing her just as He has been blessing her for years and years. As it happens, I knew her here; also her husband, He is not a "funny-man" to-day, nor was he very funny when, but a few weeks ago, at his own home, he asked the writer, one Sunday morning, if he would join the family in morning service. The scene is here and it is all very plain: The invalid bolstered in her chair, her sister at her side, and the boy he has laughingly called "the Prince" for her sake, leaning on her knee. Words grow very tired trying to say how sweet and perfect it all was. But the very funny man, I remember, held the Bible on his knees and read from it in a way that sometimes he was not a funny man at all, but thought serious things and even was capable of having tears in his eyes and blessings on his head, showered, both, from the palms of God. Come from this with me, and read from the pen of the woman, who will never, with her poor, crippled hands, write one other line:

"Out of the cloud-folds of her garments shaken, nature trails the soft, soft blossoms of the snow, from grey sky to brown earth. Softly, softly, the snow comes down, and in my heart the sun still shines. Sweet peace is there. The

strong right hand of His righteousness is about me; underneath me are the Everlasting arms. Always I hear in my heart His words, 'Abide with me.' I am waiting for the post to come across the river with the message''—

This is the woman who is dead to-day, the wife of the funny-man.

A WHOLESALE POET.

The Astonishing experience of JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY at Kalamazoo.

While the Nye-Riley combination was on the road last winter, a little incident happened at Kalamazoo, Mich., which has never been given to the public. Their entertainment was over for the night, and a large and pleased audience had dispersed. Nye had been taken in hand by the town lecture committee and towed off up to Uncle Asa Butterfield's house to hear Uncle Asa tell his famous story about his red cow and Dunk Brown's hired man, the occurrence having actually taken place in 1839. Uncle Asa was a local humorist of great renown; he had been unable to attend the lecture on account of rheumatism, but had promised to sit up till the committee brought Nye around. The Red Cow story was his master-piece, and he was very anxious that Nye should hear it, as he thought that very likely he might want to introduce it into his lecture. Riley had escaped by feigning sickness as soon as the visit was proposed, and before Nye could employ the same excuse, and

was sitting in the hotel office at about 11 o'clock, congratulating himself and chuckling quietly. He was thinking of various facetious remarks which he would make to Nye should he survive the operation he was undergoing, about Uncle Asa, the red cow, the hired man, and so forth, when a man hurriedly entered who attracted his attention at once. The man was tall and angular, with long, grey hair, hollow eyes; and he had a trick of thrusting his head forward and pointing with a long, bony finger. He glanced around at the group of hotel guests sitting about and walked directly to Riley.

"You are Riley, James Whitcomb Riley," he said as he pointed a long finger at him.

The poet blushed slightly, and modestly admitted the fact. "Yes, yes," went on the man, "I knew you though I never saw you before. We never met, but we've had a good deal of business with each other."

"Well, perhaps," replied Riley, "but I don't exactly understand what you refer to."

"Hah? I'll tell you. My name is Thomas H. Stockwell," and he looked at Riley triumphantly.

"Er—well, I can't just place you, I'm afraid," answered Riley.

"You can't? Why, I'm the man that has written all your poetry for you!"

The poet looked at the hollow-eyed visitor speechless.

"Yes, sir, gentlemen," went on the intruder, swinging his long bony hands so as to include the little group, "I am the man who has written all of James Whitcomb Riley's poems for him. When he has wanted a new one he has always written to me and I have sent it to him and got my pay for it, and that has been all there is about it. You know it, Mr. Riley, as well as I do. But I'm sick and tired of it. Hereafter, sir, the world shall know Thomas H. Stockwell as he is; the fame of James Whitcomb Riley will hereafter rest on the brow of Thomas Hostetter Stockwell. The time is come for me to declare myself and claim my own!"

The unknown poet who had blushed unseen all these years drew himself up proudly and laid his hand on his heart. Riley had been gradually getting over his astonishment, and now found his voice.

"Perhaps, Mr. Stockwell," he said, "you may have some of your poems with you such as you have been furnishing me and can favor us with a short reading."

"Certainly," replied the long-haired individual, as he pulled a handful of crumpled manuscript out of his breast pocket; "certainly—nothing would give me more pleasure. I have here among others, one entitled 'The Old Barnyard' with which I intended filling out your next order. I will read one verse:

"When you go out in our barnyard, a-kind o' wandrin' round
Amongst the hens and sheep, and the hogs a-rootin' in the ground,
And git figger'rin on the colts and how much they'll prob'bly bring
When they're broke to drive in harness later in the spring,
Aige off frum the sheep with horns—'less you want to see some stars,
'Cause he's predijerdiced and li'ble to bunt you through the bars;
But what you want to railly 'void ain't ary pig, er sheep, er hoss,
But the cow 'at's got the spotted calf,
When
She
Looks
Cross!"

"You will excuse me, gentlemen, for giving you but one verse, as I want you to attend the reading I shall give in the hall to-morrow night.

Admission, only fifty cents. I have one other here, entitled, 'When Bill Turns Jack,' part of which I will recite:

"When the stock is in the stable, and ever'thing's been fed,
And all them kind o' chores done up and the wood thrown in the shed,
I'm mighty apt to slip acrost to Bill's, to have some fun,
And most gen'ly we play euchre till the clock strikes one
'I've allus handled pasteboards in a easy sort o' way,
But when it comes to Bill, I'se got jes' this 'ere much to say:
You may pile up p'ints agin him 'n' hold the best keerds in the pack,
But you've got to play 'em awful close
When
Bill
Turns
Jack!"

"That is all I will give you to-night, gentlemen, but it is enough to show you who has been writing Mr. Riley's poems. My reading to-morrow evening will be most entertaining, and as I wrote all of Mr. Longfellow's poems, and am constantly shipping poems to Mr. Lowell, you can see that it will be varied as well. Lately I have been encroaching on the English market, sending a number of consignments to Mr. Browning, and yesterday filling a trial order for Baron Tennyson.

This is all done away with, however, and Thomas H. Stockwell reveals his true self to the world. Do not forget my entertainment to-morrow—"

"Tom," said a man, as he entered and touched the poet on the shoulder, "come on—it is long past time that you were in, and I have been looking everywhere for you. I hope he hasn't disturbed you, gentlemen," he continued, as he started toward the door, followed by the other; "he is perfectly harmless, so we allow him about the asylum grounds, but we didn't think he'd wander away. It is the same man who used to think the world would cease to revolve around the sun if he didn't wear a green ribbon on his hat, but he has given up that and taken to poetry." Nye came in, a moment later, very much exhaused by Uncle Asa's cow-and-hired-man story, but he had to help Riley up to bed.