

A LITTLE BOOK OF
FAMILY VERSE





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A LITTLE BOOK OF
FAMILY VERSE

BY

William Adams
W. A. B.



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1906

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Copyright, 1906, by
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THE DE VINNE PRESS

TO BRIGHTHURST

WHERE MANY OF THESE LITTLE SONGS WERE BORN;
TO BRIGHTHURST'S INMATES, PAST AND PRESENT,
WHO WERE AT THEIR CHRISTENING,
AND TO
BRIGHTHURST'S MISTRESS,
TO WHOM THEY OWE THEIR PERMANENT HOME,
THIS LITTLE VOLUME
IS DEDICATED
IN LOVING MEMORY

*O BRIGHTHURST! guardian of our early ways!
Under whose fostering care these verses grew,
Receive this nosegay, gathered 'neath thy blue,
Bright with thy dewdrops, shining with thy rays.
Read here the story of forgotten days,
In love retold that maketh all things new.
Grudge not old jests the laughter once they drew.
Hear yet again with tears grief's sadder lays.
Thine are the gifts I bring. Thy children rare
Have sown the seed from which these songs have come,
Upon the soil thy mistress did prepare,
Rich with the fertile moisture of a home.
Sun from thy skies has wooed them to the air,
To claim at last thy welcome, Brighthurst dear.*

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I

FAMILY VERSES

TO THE MEMORY OF WILLIAM ADAMS

AFTER RE-READING THE INTRODUCTION TO AN OLD COMMONPLACE BOOK,
GIVEN THE WRITER WHEN A BOY

SPIRIT benign, that o'er the faded page
Unseen dost bend, with look intent to prove
What the child comrade of thine early love
Has gleaned of harvest on life's pilgrimage !
Some store I fain would bring of wisdom sage
To fill the empty space,— some treasure trove
Of insight,—wealth of passion strong to move
Youth's generous heart, or fan the hopes of age.

But the lips falter, and the pen is still.
What of mine own, to thee, O soul apart !
Love's confidant, and honor's chosen knight !
Can I return, of worth to match thy will ?
Do thou to me the hidden gift impart
Thy life made eloquent, and I will write.

FAMILY ANNIVERSARIES

I

CHRISTMAS, 1885.

TWAS CHRISTMAS EVE, and in the silent room
No flaring light disturbed the grateful gloom,
Save where, upon the hearth, the embers' bed,
A ruddy radiance about them shed;
Nor any sound the solemn silence broke
Save when some half-burnt log its death-word spoke.
Yet still I lingered in my easy-chair
And watched the dying fire's fitful glare,—
At first, attentive to the forms of flame
That rose, gleamed bright, then sank to rest again;
But soon their pictures faded from my sight,
And in their place came visions of the night.
For, in my reverie, before me clear
Passed in review the whole completed year.
Much that was bright I saw and good and glad;
Much that was dark, and somewhat that was sad;

FAMILY VERSES

Partings, and joyful meetings, work and play,
Sunshine and shadow, each succeeding day.
Would that the poet's art were mine, to write
In fitting form the lessons of the night;
Would it were mine before you clear to show
The forms that flickered in the fire's glow,
And the dear vanished faces of the past,
Caught for one moment, hold forever fast.
One face there was that smiled upon me fair
From out the halo of her silvered hair,—
One pleasant voice I seemed again to hear
That never more shall sound on mortal ear.
O severed tie! O parting's bitter pain!
O loss of her to whom that loss was gain!
'Twas but a transfer from our earthly love
To the more perfect sympathy above.
While thus I pondered, lo! methought I saw
A shadow resting by an open door—
No unfamiliar portal, or unknown,
For, as I looked, behold! it was our own.
Beloved spot! However far we roam,
Still to our hearts the dearest place—our home!
Yet there this dreary shadow fell. Within
I saw the band of children gathered in;
While with the rest one honored form did blend,
Husband and father, counsellor and friend;

FAMILY VERSES

Wise in reproof, oft to shortcoming blind,
Patient and tender, loving, true and kind.
Yet most on him the shadow rested there
Of disappointed hope, and anxious care;
Burdens by others laid, for others borne,—
A load too heavy for a strength outworn.
E'en as I pondered on this vision drear
A sudden voice fell gently on my ear;
With helpful words my dark foreboding broke,
And this the cheering message that it spoke:
"Have faith and patience. Though so sorely tried,
Remember that the Lord is still your guide.
His hand protecteth wheresoe'er you go,
And bringeth blessing from the deepest woe.
Perchance from out this shadow dark may come
More perfect sympathy and love at home,
More perfect understanding, and a tie
Ever more sacred through the bye and bye."
Thus spake the voice, and all was still again;
The dying fire strove to leap in vain.
One last short shower of feeble sparks it shed;
Then flickered out, and left the ashes dead.
I started from my chair. The sombre gloom
Now reigned unchallenged through the silent room,
Save where, in through the window high was borne
The first faint glimmer of the Christmas morn.

FAMILY VERSES

II

NOVEMBER 9, 1887.

ON this bright day, so full of solemn meaning
That strangely links the future and the past,
We turn aside awhile from wonted duties,
Forget the throbbing world of cares at last.

To-day's a holy day—a day twice holy,
For blessing past, and for its promise rare.
Its wondrous memories, in rich succession,
Rise like sweet incense on the peaceful air.

Like quiet voices in the evening chanting,
Whose gentle music falls on listening ears,
Its notes of promise sound above the hurry
And hot confusion of the busy years.

When, in his dusty journeying, the traveler
Meets by the way a cool and sparkling spring,
He stops awhile to cool his burning temples,
Slake his parched throat, and hear the wild-
birds sing.

FAMILY VERSES

So we to-day forsake familiar duties,
Turn from the paths of care, so often trod.
To-day we consecrate to sweet communing
With home, with one another, and with God.

Who's this that stands, so fresh and sweet and holy,
'Neath the soft shelter of the nestling lace?
Mother or daughter this, that shyly greets us,
While happy blushes wreath her smiling face?

From the dark closet's safe protecting cedar
Soft hands have brought the ancient dress
to-day,
Where it has lain unseen, but not forgotten,
Waiting this happy resurrection day.

From the dear shoulders, pressed by many a
burden,
Tenderly falls the girlish wedding dress,
While the white veil, the maiden once that
sheltered,
Rests with soft grace on each familiar tress.

Years that have come have brought their weight
of sorrow,
Laid their sad loads of grief, of pain, of care.

FAMILY VERSES

Mother's no name for ease and self-enjoyment ;
Mother means sleepless nights and earnest
prayer.

But in the eyes so bright with thankful meaning ;
In the white brow, to-day so fair we see,
Still we behold the girl within the woman,
Young in her hope, her faith, her purity.

Watch how the children gather round the mother,
Proud with a pride the father loves to see;
See the glad sunshine in his eyes who loved her
Ere that tall son had yet begun to be.

Grandma has come to join the happy meeting;
Forgets to-day her fourscore years and four;
Sees in the woman standing 'mid her children
The girl her boy brought home in days of yore ;

Whispers in willing ears wise words of counsel,
Breathes a soft benediction on the air,
Rich with a lifetime's weight of holy meaning,
Dear to the listeners as an angel's prayer.

What sacred memories the scene awakens
Of all the three and twenty years now flown;
What varied visions of the past it raises
But to two hearts alone can e'er be known.

FAMILY VERSES

Each wondrous joy, each holy revelation,
Each doubt, each fear, each sorrow, and each
care
Return as guests uncalled, but not unwelcome,
To those who've studied in the school of prayer.

What eager questioning within us rises
When we consider life's mysterious flame!
Girl, woman, wife—a single life we cherish,
More deep, more rich, more full, but still the
same.

How strange the progress from the girl's first
answer,
Given with downcast head in days gone by,
To the rich fullness of the finished woman,
Husband and children standing gladly by!

God leads us slowly through life's darkened
pathway,
Gives strength with weakness, comfort with
each loss,
Feeds but with daily bread His hungry children,
Sends faith with trial, patience with each cross.

So it has proved in all this happy journey.
God's guiding hand has led us safely on,

FAMILY VERSES

Till, in the goodness of His wise providing,
We come again unto a marriage morn.

Where stood the mother once, now stands the
daughter

On this first morning of her new, rich life;
Hoping, yet fearing, doubting still, but trusting,
Torn in her spirit by a strange, sweet strife.

In the new country, dear, that now you enter,
What wisest counsel shall we bid you prize?
What richest blessing shall we ask the Father?
What deepest prayer from loving spirits rise?

May the new union that to-day we witness
Be rich and full and sacred as the old,
Perfect in love and faith and understanding,
In counsel sweet and sympathy untold.

Wealth, honor, fame, content we leave to others.
A higher pleasure you have learned to know.
In the sweet service of the Heavenly Father
Alone is peace, alike for high and low.

We do not ask for you an easy pathway,
A careless life, from doubt and sorrow free.
God leads His dearest children through the shadow;
Oft comes His message, "Suffer this for me."

FAMILY VERSES

So 'tis our heartfelt prayer on this glad morning
That in the Father's work you too may share,
Content, if need, to suffer in His service,
Making your daily walk a living prayer.

Carry the Master's message to His children,
Breathe in the weary ear His words of love,
And in the blessed ministry of Jesus
Find for your soul the peace that's from above.

So shall each care prove but a greater blessing,
Each sorrow a diviner patience teach,
Darkness without shed brighter light within you,
Bind you in closer union, each to each.

May the great Father's Providence enfold you,
His Holy Spirit be your friend and guide,
And Christ, the tender Saviour, walk before you
In all your way, nor ever leave your side.

May God's protecting power guard and keep you
Till earthly life give place to life above,
Rich faith be swallowed up in richer knowledge
Within the blessed heaven of perfect love.

FAMILY VERSES

III

THE SILVER WEDDING

November 9, 1889.

THEY tell us thought and language each are part
Of other. Each needs each. Yet oft there start
Within the inmost chambers of the heart
Thoughts that we cannot utter.

Some times there are when speech a sin I deem,
When even softest words intruders seem,
When things of earth and time are but a dream,
And things unseen most real.

No word spake Moses when on Pisgah's height
The long, long past stood clear before his sight,
And faith's strong eye, piercing the future bright,
Beheld the two join hands.

So on this day so full of life and love
I do not hope the deepest chords to move ;
Let but my broken lines an echo prove
Of softer, sweeter music.

FAMILY VERSES

Let each to-day with his own soul commune,
To inner harmonies his ear attune,
While the past years, like softest breath of June,
Whisper their silent message.

Let us remember in our thankful thought
Each blessing which the kindly years have brought ;
So shall the gratitude within us wrought
Become our perfect poem.

Though marks there be of sorrow and decay,
Waste no regrets. So has it been always ;
God's messengers come oft in suits of gray,
His choicest blessings bearing.

No good but has by sacrifice been won ;
No joy but has in deepest grief begun ;
No love but in some self-denial done
Has gained its fullest meaning.

Then let the years speak comfort to each soul ;
To-day we reach a rest-place, not the goal ;
Part have we learned—a part, but not the whole,
Of the great Master's lesson.

FAMILY VERSES

May each with faith new strengthened by the past
Toward the great future fearless glances cast ;
The lingering darkness shall be light at last
 In the one perfect morning.

So shall this day an inspiration prove,
Lifting each one nearer the thing above,
A silver link binding the past of love
 Unto a golden future.

FAMILY VERSES

IV

THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

November 9, 1904.

ALL hail, dear day, that links our fond remembrance
 To years long past !
To thee, the long desired, the long expected,
 We come at last.

Not as we hoped, thou com'st, in gala raiment,
 With smiling face ;
Grief shades thy brow, and in the eyes that greet us
 Tears leave their trace.

For one we miss who in our festal meeting
 Held place most dear ;
So lately sped, so softly stolen from us,
 We deem her here.

Not lightly then, or with gay jests we meet thee
 In jollity,
But silent, with the awe and hush upon us
 Of mystery.

FAMILY VERSES

Yet, though we speak not, in the thoughts thou stirrest
 Is joy most deep ;
Where fullest flows the seaward hurrying river
 The eddies sleep.

Not for the gifts the crowding years have brought us
 Which change may take,
But for the bonds nor time nor space can sever,
 Our praise we make :

For love, which sees beneath the altering features—
 Life's vesture fair—
The deathless soul whose beauty fadeth never
 In God's bright air.

For faith, which, in the night of blinding sorrow—
 When sight doth cease—
Feels in the dark the Father's hand sustaining,
 And is at peace ;

For hope, which, when love fails and faith doth waver—
 Since flesh is weak—
Hears from the heights the Master's voice triumphant
 New courage speak.

FAMILY VERSES

Not then alone for what thy past has brought us,
Rich though it be,
But for the promise that the past enfoldeth
We welcome thee.

Teach us to live, that on the life that changeth
From day to day
There may abide for aye the changeless glory
Of God's alway.

So when the partings come, the future holdeth,
God's will be done ;
We all, or here in strife, or there victorious,
Shall still be one.

FAMILY VERSES

IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAM AND MARTHA M. ADAMS.

A PERFECT understanding, each of each,
A perfect sympathy of heart and soul,
A common purpose and a common Lord,—
Such were the treasures of their married life.
And as two streams, whose waters, joined in one,
Flow on, a single river, toward the sea,
Bringing new health and beauty where they go,
Their lives passed on in earthly unity,
Blessing and blessed,—while life's eventide
Shed o'er their quiet course a sunset glow.
Thus throughout all the closing scenes of life—
Sorrow and joy alike—they lived and loved,
Till he was summoned home—the trusted friend,
The honored counsellor—he whom the world
Had known as father, and whose life had been
A constant toiling for his fellow men.

FAMILY VERSES

But she was left behind on earth—alone ;
And yet not all alone—for hers was still
That precious heritage, an honored name
And faith in God. And so the years rolled by,
Not spent in morbid brooding or regret,
But filled with deeds of kindness and of love,
And rendered bright by never-failing thought
For those about her. Yet in spite of all
There was at heart a void that never filled,
A longing that was never satisfied,
Till the good Lord in pity looking down
Upon this sorrowing yet trusting soul
Sent His swift messenger to dry her tears
And bid her, too, unto the Father's house.

O blessed greeting in that heavenly home !
O happy pair who nevermore shall part,
But join at last in perfect unity
Within the boundless ocean of God's love !

ZERMATT, August, 1885.

FAMILY VERSES

POSSESSION

S. M. D.

WHAT have we left? The picture of a face
That, dying, seemed to sleep; asleep, to dream
Of some sweet word that hovered on the lips
Fresh poised for flight; cut short ere it was sped.

What have we left? The knowledge of a soul
That matched the face; wherein all sanctities
Dwelt gently and at ease,—a gracious host,
Winsome as pure, like springtime's violets.

What have we left? The witness of a love
That lives in lives renewed, and, living, speaks
In tones, so many, tender, clear and strong,
We marvel at its reach and mastery.

What have we left? The comfort of a hope
That looks beyond this span of months and years,
To that bright day—not distant—when her voice,
With His she loved, shall bid us welcome home.

O rich! who, when the well-loved form is hid,
And voice is hushed for which we list in vain,
Still in the spirit rich communion find,
And lessons learn we had not mastered else.

BRIGHTHURST, September 25, 1904.

FAMILY VERSES

PROVIDENCE

E. C. B.

SOFT summer skies, with scarce a fleck of cloud,
Still summer air, in quivering silence mute,
A quiet cottage, honeysuckle-clad,
Whose subtle fragrance made the still air sweet:
In such a frame I saw a picture fair.
Before the door, an arm-chair, quaint and high,
Wherein there sat an ancient dame,—her dress
Of sober black, save where about her neck
A soft white kerchief nestled; o'er her head
Full eighty envious winters must have passed
Yet left no snow behind; upon her lap,
A wealth of summer roses, rich and rare.

“Grandma,” I said, “for whom these flowers sweet?”
A soft voice answered, “For the poor and sick
In yonder toiling city’s dust and grime,
Who never see green fields, and whispering trees,
But lie on beds of sickness and of pain;

FAMILY VERSES

For whom this hot and glorious August sun
Means fevered brows, parched lips, and sleepless eyes ;
To them these roses come as messengers
From God's fair country." Even as she spoke
My eye, down glancing, noticed crimson spots
On one small finger-tip—so thin, it seemed
Scarce fit to spare a single ruddy drop.

"Grandma," I asked, "what mean these drops of blood?"
Then Grandma raised the wounded hand and said,
"Because the poor to whom these flowers go
Have thorns enough in their sad, lonely lives
Without the added pricks of country rose,
Therefore I strip the thorns from off the stems
And leave them soft and smooth as babies' cheeks,—
Safe plaything for the weakest tired hands.
To-day, you see, one, sharper than the rest,
Has left its mark." She smiled, and said no more,
But brushed away the tell-tale drops, and took
Another sharp-spurred warrior from the pile.

"Grandma," I said, "Thorns have their uses too.
Who seeks to strip these roses of their spurs
Makes war with God. In His great Providence
Each biting pain has its appointed place,

FAMILY VERSES

And roses' thorns teach heedless mortals care."
A troubled look stole o'er the wrinkled face;
The thin lips trembled as at length she said,
"It may be you are right. Too deep God's plan
For my weak mind to probe. I try to do
Each day what seems the kindest. More than this
Is not my care. I cannot think it wrong
To spare one sad one such a prick as this."

And I, with heart astir, went on my way,—
The quiet figure sat so simply there —
Musing of rose and thorn: "God uses thorns.
Ay, sharp and bitter oft His messengers.
But is this all? Have patient fingers then
No work to do? And loving, loyal hearts?
Shall He who bendeth sorrow to His use
No service find for sweet self-sacrifice?
Who knows in what mysterious way wise Love
That counts the ruddy drops, each gracious deed
Into His all-enfolding Providence
Doth gather up, and make a perfect part?"

SARATOGA, May, 1890.

FAMILY VERSES

THE CITY CHURCH

“He Being Dead, Yet Speaketh.”

ONCE, o'er the verdure of the quiet square,
The tapering spire, in stately solitude,
Rose in the azure clear. In reverent mood
Men heard its summons, and from toil and care
Turned thankful steps towards the house of prayer.

Now, where it soared, the piles of commerce
rude

Beat back the city traffic's swelling flood;—
Hushed is the voice that once made music there.

Hushed, did I say, when still, in hearts of men
His magic touched of old, new temples rise;

A thousand living pulpits own his sway;
A thousand voices speak his words again
To list'ning thousands, who, 'neath changing
skies

The deathless message speed upon its way?

THE COUNTRY CHURCH

PAST the near faces, silent turned to mine,
 Into the dim sweet past I seem to gaze.
 A boy again, as in the olden days,
I take my place upon the rough-hewn pine
That serves as bench within the new built shrine.
 Once more I join the first glad hymn of praise.
 My eager look—too brief, alas!—I raise
To the loved form so soon I must resign.

Could I to these that wait upon my word
 Make vocal once again the voices old
 That speak to me from out these hallowed
 walls,
How would their spirits thrill at what they heard,
 And blossom into graces manifold,
 As blooms yon ivy sere when springtime calls!

CHILDHOOD'S FRIENDS

I

MICHAEL

NOT thine the task that Wordsworth's Michael
knew,

To watch thy flock where splash of brook foretold
The virgin grass, or lead them to the fold.

Fleet horses were thy care, a wilder crew,
And restless children, often wilder too.

Oft in the golden days the past doth hold,
Stormed we thy stable, like the knights of old,
In the vain hope thy courage to subdue.

Yet when, upon the box that is thy throne,

I see thee gently guide up Brighthurst's hill
These latest from the never-ceasing stream
Of tired mothers from the city flown,
And fretful babies now at last grown still,
A shepherd true our Michael do I deem.

FAMILY VERSES

II

DONKEY JACK

FRIEND of our childhood, by the silent grave
Thy cedars hide, I stand with downcast head,
To pay my tear of tribute to the dead.
What thrilling hours of boyish triumph brave,
Perched crosslegged 'twixt thy paniers did I have,
While sisters twain, less bold, in lowlier bed,
Were by thy trusty guidance safely led,
Where Brighthurst's paths her swards of green do
pave.

O best of nurses! still with ears erect
I see thee wait our eager call of Jack,
Constant thy wayward charges to protect.
Shall I again, upon thy patient back,
Ride through green fields and watch the
daisies blow
In the bright heavens where good donkeys go?

FAMILY VERSES

III

PONY FLY

SHAGGY and brown, with swiftly twinkling feet,
Still dost thou canter through my land of
dreams,
As in the days of yore. Again, meseems,
I sway unsteady on thy back—a seat
Oft tried, oft lost. Once more, O comrade fleet!
Rising whence thou didst cast me, rent in seams,
My cheeks still traversed by unbidden streams,
Thy look of sorrowful surprise I meet.

Not these the thoughts I cherish; but the hours,
When, safely harnessed to thy pony cart,
I drove thee up the mountain on the trot.
Could those lost hours live; and I, through bowers
Of dogwood's summer snow, with swelling heart,
Drive yet again, how blissful were my lot!

FAMILY VERSES

IV

NURSEY

OUR second mother! through the silver haze
The distance lends, again I see thy face,
Serene and placid, with a sober grace
Born of an elder time. Not thine the ways
Of our insistent, restless, hurrying days,
But gentler; as some ancient patterned lace,
By loving hands brought from its hiding place,
To meet our look of wondering amaze.

Yet, as the lace that once the bride did wear
Finds a new home upon the daughter's dress,
That tender love thy mother heart did bear
Was not content to dwell in loneliness.
And so it came to pass, thy children grown,
That thou didst make a second flock thine
own.

FAMILY VERSES

TO J. C. B.

FROM out his patriarchal face
Two twinkling eyes like stars shine out,
That beam upon our hurrying rout
With a serene transcendent grace.

On sorrow's upturned glance they fall
Soft as the snow and cool and bright,
And hope rekindles at their light
And sheds its radiance over all.

But when some lurking wrong they see
Their flame remorseless smites. From eyes
That burn so piercingly, all lies
Ashamed, all wickedness must flee.

Now nestling each beneath its lid
Like tired children wooing sleep,
They seem like pin points, buried deep
Save for two gleams of love half hid.

FAMILY VERSES

THE ORIGIN OF MUSIC

LINES WRITTEN AS AN INTRODUCTION TO "MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND
THEIR HOMES."

STRANGER or friend, whose careless eye
 Across this sheet may chance to fall,
 A moment linger at my call
Here on the threshold, ere you fly.

A word of greeting, if you will,—
 A word of explanation, too,
 From one who's trod the pathway through,
To one for whom it opens still.

A catalogue of music here
 Awaits your interested view,
 And if you wonder whence it grew,
A single word will make it clear.

Full many a man of learned worth
 Has scanned the records of the past,
 And sadly oft the question asked,
When music came upon the earth.

FAMILY VERSES

Full many a ponderous ancient tome
 Forgotten on its dusty perch
 Bears witness to the weary search
Whence first the "heavenly maid" did come.

In vain the toil. Come, pedant, come!
 No longer thus your heart deceive;
 No antiquarian cobweb weave,
But seek your answer in the home.

When the long, weary night is past,
 The hours gone that seemed as years,
 And to the watcher's weary ears
A tiny voice is borne at last,

In the first baby's helpless cry
 The household music has its birth;
 Faint quavering treble, better worth
Than any seraph melody.

Deep in the father's inmost heart
 Strange, tender chords—before unknown—
 The wee enchanter's presence own,
And into sweet vibration start.

FAMILY VERSES

Time flies ; the tiny limbs expand,
 And wax to somewhat stouter mould,
 And nature's wondrous truths unfold
Their hundred claims on head and hand.

Then on the mother's welcome knee,
 Safe resting-place from woe or wild,
 A greater lesson waits the child,—
The truth, "O God, thou seest me."

When first the lisping voice doth sigh
 Its low "Our Father" on the air,
 And mother's whisper joins the prayer,
Begins the household harmony.

And so it goes. Nor does it need
 The steady growth that I should trace ;
 The added years bring added grace,
And to more perfect beauty lead.

True, there are times when discord parts
 The listening ear in sudden pain,
 And selfish passions render vain
The melody of loving hearts.

FAMILY VERSES

So when the path of mischief trod
 Has tried too long the parent's love,
 The anguished scream is heard above
The obligato of the rod.

Yes, there are discords. So 't is best.
 Our music is of earth, not heaven ;
 'T is for our good they have been given,
To teach the sweetness of the rest.

Be it your study—it is ours—
 To make these jarring discords few;
 Let all you say and all you do
Make musical the passing hours.

Then whether Afric's burning sun,
 Or Asia's jungles, wild and lone,
 First heard the weird, melodious tone,
To you and yours will all be one.

A sweeter study far it is
 To seek in no uncertain parts,
 In figures writ in living hearts,
The household music's genesis.

BRIGHTHURST, 1886.

FAMILY VERSES

DEDICATION OF A FAMILY CHRONICLE

TAKE, dear, this book. Though naught of grace
Or outer beauty charm the eye,
Within it is a holy place,
Where only love may pry.

Write there the record of our home.
These spotless pages, virgin white,
Well fitting such a modest tome,
To confidence invite.

There that old story thou may'st tell,
How two were one, and one was three,
Life's oft recurring miracle,
Which yet could not but be.

Far off 'neath softest evening haze,
Through mists of mem'ry softer seen,
Old Rome I view,—her noonday blaze
Subdued to sunset sheen.

FAMILY VERSES

What thou hast seen of varied life,
Old city of the countless years,
Wise books have told,—wild tale of strife,
Ambitions, loves and tears.

One tale I know these books have not,
Full of strange story though they be,
One quiet unrecorded spot,
Most dear to thee and me.

This book that story shall unfold,
To patient list'ners whisp'ring low;
That spot by artist's skill untold,
This quiet page shall show.

What though to great ones of the earth
Our little story trivial seem !
To us it is of priceless worth,
All else of Rome a dream.

For love, dear love, thou knowest well
In trivial things finds richest food,
Each commonplace a parable
To his prophetic mood.

FAMILY VERSES

Take, book, our story— make it thine.

Simple without, most rich within,

Be thou thyself the fittest sign

Of what our life hath been.

FAMILY VERSES

THE COUNTRY HOME

I KNOW a cottage set on high,
The sheltering treetops hold in their embrace ;
Seaward it turns its morning eye,
While nestling roses deck it with their grace.

Through the long laughing days of June
The wavelets, dancing by the rugged shore,
Sing to the winds ; and these in tune
Make answer, whispering their joy once more.

All growing things in this dear place
Do lift their grateful glances to the sun,
Who smiles his love into each face
Upturned, and drops his kisses one by one.

Yet oft, from these sweet intimates
I lift mine eyes, and let them seaward stray
To where the great ships sail, by fates
Unseen determined on their unknown way;

FAMILY VERSES

And often, when the wind at eve
Blows cold and shrill, and loud the breakers roar,
My genial fireside I leave,
And fly in thought upon the tempest far,

Where lonely toilers on the wave
Do battle with life's billows in the dark,
To find in alien seas a grave,
Or lose on treacherous rocks their trusted bark.

For he who by the catholic sea
Doth build his home, may fix what bolts he will
To bar him in ; humanity
In rags of need shall find an entrance still,

And stand as suppliant beside his hearth,
And crave his shelter for its storm-tossed crew,
Bring a diviner love to birth,
And prove him larger, nobler, than he knew.

FAMILY VERSES

THE CITY HOME

I KNOW a street, where two tides meet,
Now dark, now white with foam,—
Two restless streams, of hopes and dreams—
'T is there you 'll find our home.

From the great sea, Humanity,
They draw the surging tide
That beats with shock, upon the rock
Where we do now abide.

A narrow span for which to plan,
Yet with foundation strong ;
A little place for love to grace
And joy to fill with song.

Yet with good cheer, shall laughter here
Make gay the morning hours,
And for the night, we 'll trim our light
And deck the place with flowers.

FAMILY VERSES

Here may the sad find welcome glad
And tears be made to cease ;
Here darkened eyes find sunny skies,
And restless spirits peace.

So when without the tempest's rout
Puts nerve and faith to strain,
I'll think of rest within this nest
And so be strong again.

FAMILY VERSES

AFTER LOOKING AT A CHILD'S PICTURE

DEAR little eyes! bright earnest eyes!
Tell me, I pray, what question lies
Within that look of child surprise
 So grave I see?
Come, whisper, dear! soft in my ear!
I'll not betray you. Never fear.
The secret kept this many a year
 Is safe with me.

Has some strange thought come all unsought,
To your small world by knowledge brought
Of things not always as they ought
 At three years old?
Did dolly cry, or hurt her eye?
Or was she bad and told a lie?
And are you vainly asking "Why?"
 Ah, query bold!

FAMILY VERSES

Child questionings are solemn things,
Faint inarticulate whisperings
Of spirit—trial of nestling wings
Still all unused:

Was it a tone—before unknown—
By some wild passing wind breath blown?
From life's weird symphony some moan
Of chord confused?

Some inkling wee—too soon, ah me!
Of this our world's sad mystery,
Sorrow and sin's dark tragedy?

What, no replies
Perchance I dream, and only seem
By wayward fancy swept a-stream
'Neath the child's brows to catch the gleam
Of older eyes.

Bright earnest eyes! true woman's eyes!
To me, of all beneath the skies,
Most precious gift, most priceless prize!

How well I love
That look full grave, that look so brave!
Be sure that He who made can save;
That He the power to ask who gave
Answers above.

FAMILY VERSES

THE SCHOOL BOY

His talk is all of bat and ball,
But in his eyes of blue
At times I seem to catch a gleam
Of manhood shining through.

For in the swirl where boys do whirl
When first to school they go,
Beneath the splash of sprays that dash,
Life's deeper currents flow.

Talk as he will of Jack or Bill
As "peachy" or as "bum,"
By love of right and honor bright
Each measureth his chum.

No honied word persuasive heard,
No blow of battering ram
Can pierce the ward where school boys guard
Their hatred of a sham.

FAMILY VERSES

And though 't is true that not a few
Life's finer graces lack,
If I must fight wrong's serried might,
Give me a boy at back.

So let the tear hang trembling near
When comes the last good-bye,
I'll send my boy with heartfelt joy
His luck at school to try.

And if at night when burns the light
Within the empty home,
To parents twain, alone again,
Some sober thoughts do come,

Full well I know, however slow
The halting hours may move,
The time will come that brings him home
To claim our waiting love.

And when at last, his schooldays past,
'T is time the house to trim,
As comrade free he'll bring to me
What I ne'er gave to him.

THE IMP

MOTION incarnate! imp of restlessness!

Of all things mobile and alert compact!

Who taught thee from the clouds so late that
wrecked

Thy plans to woo the sun of happiness ?

What hadst thou, since a tiny baby boy

Thou cam'st to plague thy parents and to make

Chaos our daily guest, thou didst not break?

Yet in thy heart dwelt ever dancing joy.

Still do I see thy mother's grave surprise

To find the task undone, the hour misspent,

Thy prodigal time to stranger fancies lent ;

But who is proof against those roguish eyes?

Once more I take the father's rod in hand,

Once more the father's sacred task fulfil,

To hear 'mid sobs and tears and kisses still

Thy notes of triumph at new conquests planned.

Spirit of hope! unconquerable heart!

Thy many faults how freely we forgive.

Drear were the world in which thou didst not live,

To dry the tears which thou hast caused to start.

BROWNIE LODGE

I

THE BROWNIES

AT night they nest beneath the eaves,
With tiny coverlets of leaves
 To guard their slumbers airy,—
The friendly folk whose homely name
We mortal Brownies love to claim
 As cousins to the fairy.

But when the first faint gleam of day
Peeps from the East, to merry play
 Like thistle-down they scatter,
And when you hear soft laughter sly
Peal on the ear when none is by,
 'Tis they whose footsteps patter.

FAMILY VERSES

Then stupid folks who never laugh,
And get provoked at honest chaff
 Fly out into a passion,
And say, the law they must invoke
'Gainst fairies who have dared to joke
 In such outrageous fashion.

But kindly souls whose hearts are pure,
And children, young and old, be sure,
 You 'll never find abusing
The little men in suits of brown
Who love to turn things upside down
 Because it is amusing.

Dear roguish elves, whose merry jest
Has oft brought solace to the breast
 Which secret grief was shaking,
Hold you the pen, and I will write
The story old for your delight
 Of Brownie Lodge's making.

II

THE BUILDING OF THE HOUSE

MORE years ago than I shall tell—
The older people know too well—
While still on Brighthurst's mountain height
Dame Nature ruled by sovereign right,
And in the good old-fashioned way
The oaks and cedars spent their day,
Dropping small acorns by the root,
And teaching youthful cones to shoot,
In the staid town of William Penn,
A small log cabin—twelve by ten—
To wondering eyes the story told,
How people lived in days of old.

Amid the throngs whose footsteps slow
Passed in their going to and fro,
Hither one summer day there came
Two gentlefolk—a squire and dame,—

FAMILY VERSES

He, on the lady's pleasure bent,
She, that his will should find a vent.
Quick as a flash her eagle eye
That naught escaped the hut did spy.
"O John," she cried, "how nice 't would be
If this small cabin we could see
Transported to our mountain height
For all the little Browns' delight,"
And John replied, as husbands should,
"My dear, your plan is very good."

Full soon, where once the wild-birds sang,
The sound of lusty axes rang,
And mighty oaks whose giant arms
Had long defied the storm's alarms,
Quivered,—then tottered to their fall,
As sinks the sun at evening's call.
Yet not as older warriors fell,—
Their only dirge the nightwind's knell,
Their chorister some bird that grieves,
Their shroud the dying autumn's leaves—
These doughty champions passed away
Without a resurrection day.
For them a brighter morning dawned
Beyond the darksome grave that yawned.

FAMILY VERSES

For, fashioned into beams, behold
Them fitted to a building's mould,
By the strong arm of faithful Jake
Who thus our Brownie Lodge did make.

And now at length the house is done,—
Or rather it is just begun.
Full grave the task we still must face.
It is not hard to make a place
With walls and ceiling, floor and roof
Tight to the air and waterproof.
But furnishing's a different matter,
And makes interminable chatter.
Each for the new home's christening
Some useful article must bring.
Old chairs and tables once did grace
Some ancient worthy's dwelling place
Now find a modest lodging here,
And serve the children's humbler cheer.
A spinning wheel, a trundle bed,
An ancient crane, a patchwork spread,
A sampler worked by Grandma's hand
A musket grim, a writing stand,
A fan for winnowing the chaff,
A picture—no, you must n't laugh —

FAMILY VERSES

Showing the wayward prodigal
Merrily striding toward his fall,
Clad in the strangest pantaloons
E'er graced Jerusalem's saloons:—
Such are the gifts in ceaseless shower,
Poured in for Brownie Lodge's dower,
Until at last the task is done
And all is ready for the fun.

III

LEARNING TO COOK

MAYSIE, put the kettle on, and set the cups for tea!
The eggs are frying in the pan: the steak is brown,
 you see;
And all is ready for the guests who dine with you and
 me.

The tablecloth is spotless white, as freshly-fallen snow;
The butter yellow as the gold the buttercups do show;
And mouths will water like the brooks that down the
 hillsides flow.

But if you think the cook too small, to serve so large
 a meal,
Pluck up your courage like a knight who meets a foe-
 man's steel,
And eat in faith whatever comes, and then—see how
 you feel.

FAMILY VERSES

IV

THE GARDENERS

WHEN first the spring—
That clever thing—
Starts all the flowers growing,
Each girl and boy
Begins with joy
A digging and a hoeing.

And first we dig
A hole full big
To hold the seed we 're sowing;
And then with glee
We dig to see
Whether it 's really growing.

FAMILY VERSES

And when the rain
With might and main
Is sending down its showers,
It tells us too
What we should do
In watering our flowers.

But when the sun
Invites to fun
In cloudless August weather,
Each flower bed
Unwashed, unfed,
Is left alone to wither.

Yet here and there
Kind Nature's care—
It surely is no other—
Some flowers sweet
Preserves to greet
The longed-for smile of Mother.

FAMILY VERSES

V

FRIENDS' DAY

SILENT the house. The inmates all are flown,
Who once made Brownie Lodge their own.
No longer now the gently rising smoke,
Lazily circling through the leaves of oak,
Warns sober folk of more substantial age
That Bessie's in the culinary stage;
And sister Maysie's tiny feet no more
Go twinkling by on their eternal chore.
The garden's free from weeds at last; yet fate
Seems to have left it sadly desolate.
Disconsolate the well-bred pansies mourn,
Like lonely children when their playmate's gone.
The place is strangely empty. All about
A leaden stillness hangs. But hark! What shout
Is this that sudden breaks the quiet mild?
A laugh like that comes only from a child.
What sound of little feet is this I hear
Waking old echoes in my listening ear?

FAMILY VERSES

What merry troop whose coming through the trees
Sets all a-quiver like the morning breeze?
No strangers these whose all devouring swarm
Takes unresisting Brownie Lodge by storm.
Has Father Brown, whom all men so respect
Become a convert to the Mormon sect,
And are these dames in sober garments dressed
New wives he 's taken at his faith's behest?
Who else would dare another child to lay
In the old cradle where he used to play,
Or with the dainty china make so free
In which dear Grandma poured her maiden tea?
No need for fear. Nor children these nor wife,
Who wake the forest to unwonted life.
These are the friends who from the city come
To find in Brownie Lodge a second home,
And in the kindly school of love and ruth
Teach us the secret of undying youth.

FAMILY VERSES

VI

THE CAMPFIRE

WATCH how the eager flame leaps high!
 The flying cinders mark!
Hear how the rending cedar's cry
 Goes crackling through the dark!
Drink in the odors sweet that fly
 From underneath the bark!

Quick, Hans ! another armful here,
 To feed the hungry flame!
For Tante May would warn you, dear,
 'T was work for which you came.
You laugh, as merry in your cheer
 As if it were a game.

Now let us nestle side by side
 And watch the fire's glow,
And we will think of Christmastide
 So many years ago,
And Him who came on earth to bide
 Because He loved us so.

FAMILY VERSES

Of Him who came on earth to live,
 A little child like you;
Of Him who learned so soon to grieve,
 As you, my child, must do;
Of Him who yearned so much to give,—
 Would we might learn it too!

Of Him who came on earth to die,
 As dies yon flickering flame,
And rose from death, as you and I
 Shall see it live again,
And now is bending from the sky,
 As at the first He came,
To share His gracious charity
 With all who love His name.

VII

AND AFTER

So, tiny friends, the tale is done
That was so merrily begun.

'T is time that we were parting.
How much of laughter and of jest
Remains untold, you know the best,
Who set the smiles a-starting.

Yet, ere the last good-bye is said,
One silent prayer be upward sped,
That in the bosom's hiding,
That the good Father in his grace
May in each Brownie's heart and face
Keep faith and fun abiding.

II

FAMILY NONSENSE

THE FRESHMAN'S ALPHABET

A 's Athenaeum, of Freshmen the bore ;
B are its Benches, with names covered o'er.
C stands for College and Campus and all,
D for Durfee and Divinity Hall.
E's the tall Elm, with its broad-spreading trunk ;
F stands for Freshman and also his Flunk.
G is the Gym, where he takes exercise,
H is his Horror, when Sophomores surprise,
I, Indignation, when forced to stand treat,
J are the Jeers his remonstrances meet.
K is the Kick in the game of Foot-ball.
L's our Landlady, sharp-visaged and tall.
M are her Meals, which are hardly divine.
N stands for Navy, and also for Nine.
O, our Objections to paying our due.
P stands for Pony, and President too.
Q is our Quaking when first we behold him.
R is the Rush, we were not over-bold in.

FAMILY NONSENSE

S is a Shirt, and the Sophomore who wears it ;
T, the Triumphant young Freshman who tears it.
U is the Union, Uniting us here.
V is Vacation, soon may it appear.
W's the Warning, how Woeful its call.
X is old Xenophon, hated of all !
Y stands for Yale, ever hearty and hale,
and Z is the Zeal we all have for old Yale.

NEW HAVEN, 1883.

HOW WE WENT TO FARMINGTON

I AM asked to tell the story
Of our trip to Farmington,
Of our trials and adventures,
Of our fear and of our fun.

But, methinks, not even Homer,
Were he wakened from his rest,
Could do justice to the subject,
Though he tried his level best.

Soft the afternoon and balmy,
Blue the sky, the breezes sweet ;
Nature smiled, and all was charming
Save the mud beneath our feet.

Six young men along the pathway
Strive the driest spots to find,
Till they reach the school house portal,—
Six—for one was left behind.

FAMILY NONSENSE

We had seen him in New Haven,
 Searching left and searching right
For some baggage that was missing ;
 There he vanished from our sight.

But our friend was soon forgotten
 In the sight which met our eyes,
As we entered through the doorway,
 For we stood in Paradise.

All about a rich profusion,
 Blossoms fair from wood and dale,
But the graces of the maidens
 Made the flowers with envy pale.

In the midst of all Miss Porter
 Like a guardian spirit stood,
And we trembled when we saw her,
 Staid and strict and strong and good.

But she bade us kindly welcome,
 Bade our quaking hearts sit still,
Then beside our sisters left us
 Free to wonder and to thrill.

FAMILY NONSENSE

If you ask me of the concert,
What and when and how they played,
I am sure I cannot tell you,
I was careless, I'm afraid.

For that sea of lovely faces
(I suppose it was n't right,)
Kept enchained my whole attention,
And I lost the music quite.

Eyes of blue and eyes of hazel,
Chestnut eyes and eyes of grey,
Rosy lips and glossy tresses
O'er my giddy brain held sway.

From the vision's bright enchantment
Downward glancing like a fool,
Suddenly this heading met me—
Mrs. Dow's Young Ladies' School.

At the stiffly printed letters
Then my anger quickly rose.
Surely it was unromantic
Thus to mix with poetry prose.

FAMILY NONSENSE

School! The word was profanation
For a company so rare ;
If its lovely members study
Sure, 't is only to be fair !

When the show was almost over
Came a knocking at the door,
And the seventh brother entered,
Whom we 'd lost so long before.

Two long hours he 'd spent in prinking
At the village inn hard by,
And the maidens gazed with wonder
At his bearing sweet and high.

But his triumph was a brief one,
We were sorry to perceive,
For the quickly thinning parlors
Warned us it was time to leave.

I should like to tell you further
Of the parting words we said,
Of the pleasant dreams that hovered
Gently round each sleeping head.

FAMILY NONSENSE

But 't is time to end my story,
For already 't is too long,
And I 'm morally persuaded
You are tired of my song.

As I took my sad departure
In the village stage next day,
Thus to me a country bumpkin
Slowly spake his solemn say :

“Thet wuz quite a lively blow-out
Thet they seem t' 'uv hed last night.”
“Yes, my friend,” I answered simply,
“Yes, my honest friend, you 're right !”

NEW HAVEN, March, 1885.

FAMILY NONSENSE

SERENADE

COMPOSED BY A YOUNG ITALIAN, UNFORTUNATELY IGNORANT OF THE NATIONALITY OF THE OBJECT OF HIS AFFECTIONS, BUT DETERMINED TO STICK AT NO SUCH TRIFLE AS THAT.

CARISSIMA mia, Signora !

Dich lieb ich with all of my soul !

Et je t'aimerai toujours et toujours.

Nun also, natürlich ; ja wohl !

O ! luna bianca in cielo !

Mais tiens ! See das Fenster above !

Was sagst du, carissima mia ?

Mein Thierchen, ma cherie, my dove !

Elle parle ! Oh, by George, wie du schön bist !

Behold me the prey of love's dart.

Nicht Donner und Blitzen, Regen, Hagel,

Schnee und Eis mich behalten kann,

Bis ich clasp your sweet form to my heart.

Das Fenster sich schliesst ; elle est partie.

Es only remains for zu gehen.

Also, cara mia ! Good evening.

Ich empfehle mich. Auf wiedersehn.

N. B. As it happened, the young lady was a Russian,
so all his efforts were of no avail.

1882.

THE KISS

I SEE an ill-assorted pair,
A maiden delicate and fair
With rosebud lips and meaning eyes
And look of innocent surprise.
But who is this before her there—
The little chap with tangled hair,
Who frowns—unworthy of the bliss
Of getting such a charming kiss ?
A wayward little rascal he,
Who little cares how blest he be,
But pouts and cries—this foolish Bill—
At being kissed against his will.

Old time rolls on, and now the maid
Has somewhat older grown and staid.
Her early charms have yielded place
To other and maturer grace.
No longer now with laughing eye
She seeks her little friend to spy,

FAMILY NONSENSE

But walks apart in silent state,
Serene, imposing, and sedate.
Big Bill, whene'er—as often is—
He thinks of that long vanished kiss,
Stills feels his mournful bosom pant,
But now he weeps, to think he can't.

NEW YORK, January, 1886.

FAMILY NONSENSE

TO SUSY

I

I 'M asked to write a rhyme for Sue.
It were a charming thing to do,
Had one the wit. Take eyes of blue
And golden hair—a dimple too;
Ears quick to hear, chin firm and true—
That is the outward part of Sue.
But of the soul within—Pray who
Can paint this picture? Give their due
To heart and mind. Alas! not you
Nor I may pluck the fruit that grew
For one alone—that poet new
Whom love shall teach to find the clue
To that sweet mystery, our Sue.

II

What time I said your eyes were blue,
I really thought that it was true
There was no other rhyme would do.

FAMILY NONSENSE

But now I see "eyes dark in hue"
Is just as good. So, wayward Sue,
Take these instead. You'll never rue
The change. And I, your grace to sue,
"Brown wavy hair" will give to you.
Your dimple with a "smile or two"
Replace, and hope this version new
Will satisfy my critic Sue.

FAMILY NONSENSE

EXERCISE VERSUS PHYSIC

TO H. G. B.

WITH THE PRESENT OF A PAIR OF WOODEN DUMBBELLS.

THE frogs—so runs the story through the town—
Once chose as King the patient monarch Log,—
Too patient as it proved ; for each small frog
Did as he pleased, nor feared the royal frown.

Whereat, despising this inglorious chief
They chose King Stork,—a royal King was he.
Each night he ate a subject for his tea
Till all were gone. 'T is really past belief.

Five years, dear Wife,—as once upon the frog—
Has long-billed Doctor Stork upon you fed.
Take warning from my tale. Ere you be dead,
Show Stork the door, and send for Doctor Log.

NEW YORK, March 30, 1897.

FAMILY NONSENSE

THE TEA PARTY

My lady bade her friends to tea
Upon the smiling ocean.
The number six she first did fix
To share the gentle motion.

But one, forewarned by perils past,
Omitted to arrive.
Upon the brink she back did shrink,
And then there were but five.

And one no sooner came on board
Than back she turned to shore.
“The launch! Enough!” she cried,
“Puff, puff!”
And then there were but four.

The hostess next appeareth vexed,—
A wondrous sight is she.
A soft pea green she now is seen,
And soon there ’ll be but three.

FAMILY NONSENSE

Her husband leaps into a boat,—
He knoweth what to do.
See ! at the oar he pulls for shore,
And now there are but two.

Now ask me not what next occurred,
And how the party ended.
I fear lest one should soon be none.
Least said is soonest mended.

FAMILY NONSENSE

THE SPINET

To M. E. B.

WITH THE GIFT OF A TOY SPINET.

O LADY fair, whose wisdom rare
Most learned men amazes !
To whom on aboriginal drums
Wild Indians chant their praises !

In Florence far, where treasures are,
There blossomed once a spinet,—
So wondrous fair, I do declare,
The others were not in it.

Our lady heard,—some little bird
Brings news of all that's doing—
So to the spinet in her way
She coyly went a-wooing.

“O spinet, hear ! I love you, dear !
Be mine, you 'll ne'er regret me.”
The spinet sighed, and soon replied,
“A hundred francs will get me.”

FAMILY NONSENSE

The price was high, the lady shy,
 Conflicting feelings pricked her.
So art pulled here, and purse strings there,
 Till art came out a victor.

Away! away! without delay,
 The message went a speeding.
Alas! alas! it came to pass,
 It fell on ears unheeding.

Some bolder love, of sterner mood,
 Had whisked away our hero,
And left behind—how sad to find—
 His compliments and zero.

O lady lorn, your grief we mourn
 And long to do you pleasure,
The world we've sought and hither brought
 This unexpected treasure.

Take then this spinet which we bring,
 And wipe your eyes, poor weeper,
For, though it is not half as fair,
 It's ninety-nine times cheaper.

FAMILY NONSENSE

THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICE

HAVE you a longing yet unstilled,
A need unmet, a wish unfilled ?
Why idly weep ? Without delay
Communicate with our Miss May.

With her you 'll information find
Of all who long to serve mankind ;
No office for a holder waits
But she has fifty candidates.

Are you by chance in need of cooks ?
She 's forty-seven on her books,
With every grace of mind and heart—
Except the culinary art.

A secretary if you seek,
She has them, muscular or weak.
Whate'er you wish they can do well—
Unless they should be asked to spell.

FAMILY NONSENSE

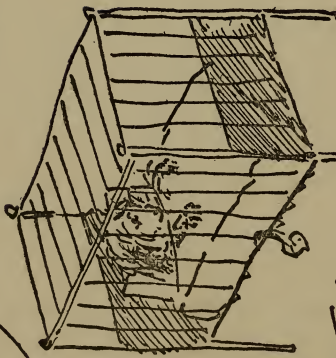
A nurse considerate and kind
She 'll quick supply, and you will find
Her deft to sooth your every ache—
Whene'er she chance to be awake.

A furnace man perhaps you 'd like,
Some paragon of Pat or Mike.
Six lame men are among her cares,
Who balk at nothing—but the stairs.

But if you really want your work
Done quick and neat and without shirk,
For cook, scribe, nurse or furnace man
To take Miss May herself 's your plan.

The Caged Lion

Ok! please Mamma,
let me finish this
one more chapter!!



What! change my suit
for the seventeenth
time!!



This is the Lion — hear its roars
And see it wave its massive paws
If it were not for Doctor's haws
I'll bet those boys would feel its claws.

FAMILY NONSENSE

CONTEMPORARIES

LINES WRITTEN ON RECEIVING AN INVITATION TO A "DINOSAUR TEA"
FROM A MAN WHO HAD OMITTED TO INVITE US TO THE
WEDDING OF HIS DAUGHTER.

THOUGH to the jovial marriage feast
We ancient folk be asked no more,
Take comfort, love. We're bid at least
To supper with the Dinosaur.

AN INTIMATE QUESTION

OFT have I asked my dearest rose,
My fount of wisdom and advice,
Why I should spend my shekels nice
To pay a maid to hide my clothes.

FAMILY NONSENSE

THE POET

THIS melancholy chap 's a poet.
He tries to please, but does n't show it.
 He seems to think
 That printer's ink
Is just as good as pearls or Möet.

TO J. M. BARRIE

IF 'Liza made sweet Peter Pan,
 Too highly none can prize her ;
But higher still I rate the man,
 Who first did make Eliza.

FAMILY NONSENSE

POWER THROUGH REPOSE

A MEDITATION BORN OF EXPERIENCE.

SAID the mason to the plumber: "Now, don't you
really think

The time has come when we should take a friendly
little drink ?

The boss is nearly frantic ; the need for hurry grows.

'T is clearly now our duty to seek power through
repose."

"Agreed," the plumber cries, "agreed." And you shall
see them soon

Steal from their spirit-rasping toil to a nearby saloon,
Where copious draughts of frothy beer their restless
nerves do still,

The while the patient householder is footing up the
bill.

FAMILY NONSENSE

Would you could hear the golden words that from their
lips do fall.

They speak of Wagner's "Simple Life" and Annie
Payson Call.

"Strange how that fellow Roosevelt has petered out,"
one said,

"A man so strenuous as he is ethically dead."

And when at last, back to their work their languid
footsteps turn,

'T is plain to see they've gained the peace for which
our spirits yearn.

O happy land, where practice with thought is not at
strife,

And plumbers vie with masons in their zeal for higher
life!

NEW YORK, November, 1905.

FAMILY NONSENSE

THE RIVAL DENTISTS

A BALLAD OF CIVIL WAR.

ASSIST me, Muse! not thou to whom the lyric bards
make prayer,

Who write of love and violets and brooks and wavy
hair!

No sentimental theme is mine for babes and ancient
dames.

I sing of stratagems and war and blood and raging
flames;—

Of that worst war, whose thirst for gore to rival camps
doth bring

Brother and sister, friend and friend,—such strife, dread
Muse, I sing.

The battle of the dentists here to celebrate I'm fain—
Laud Slice and Hipkins striving each the laurel wreath
to gain.

FAMILY NONSENSE

For Boston Hipkins fights, Slice for New York. Yet
fate decrees

Boston's for strenuousity, New York for dreamy ease.
The massive strain of Hipkins' brain his advocates
extol;

But Slice excels in sentiment,—he's strongest in the
soul.

See now the heroes stripped for fight. Unlike the war
they wage;

One soft and slow, and one aglow with elemental rage.
With ceaseless click, through thick and thin, harsh
Hipkins heedless hacks;

But the thin wedge of smiling Slice slips in as smooth
as wax.

How count the instruments they use, their cruel knives
and saws,

The file to rile, the axe that cracks and hammers on
your jaws

The latest murderous device keeps Hipkins up to date.
But Slice takes pride in weapons tried his foe to pene-
trate.

No artificial counterscarp shields Hipkins' ruthless ram;
But Slice—he fighteth at his ease behind his rubber
dam.

FAMILY NONSENSE

In silence Hipkins strikes—no breath hath he for idle
taunts,

But with soft words the languorous Slice his prowess
ceaseless vaunts.

From morning bright to dusky night upon his victim's
head

Rains Hipkins tireless his blows till you or he be dead.

But Slice the sage prefers to wage an intermittent
war;

He smiteth short but oft, draws off, to have at you once
more.

On such a field who first shall yield, who first restrain
his choler?

I'll back them both while there's a tooth still left, or
eke a dollar.

FAMILY NONSENSE

THE BALLAD OF PATRICK FORD MAGEE

LINES SUGGESTED BY AN INCIDENT SEEN AT THE SAILING OF THE
STEAMSHIP "WERRA."

A DOUGHTY son of Ireland was Patrick Ford Magee.
He was as tough a citizen as you would care to see,
And one fine steaming August day he started off to sea.

To procure a steerage passage his last cent he had
employed

Upon the good ship "Werra," of the line of "Deutscher
Lloyd."

The vacuum resulting this worthy man annoyed.

But Patrick had a faithful friend, O'Flanagan by name.
He vowed he'd see his "darlint" off, by thunder and
by flame.

That Pat should go to sea alone he thought a burning
shame.

FAMILY NONSENSE

And as a parting gift he brought a drop of "Mountain
Dew,"

To warm his heart and clear his brain, and set its rosy
hue

Upon the place that gets its grace from alcoholic
brew.

Alas! The day was broiling hot, the sun beat on his
pate.

O'Flanagan went on so slow he reached the steamer
late ;

Upon the plank a boatswain stood, as sinister as fate.

Upon the deck he saw his friend, hard by the weather
pump.

He waved the bottle in the air, then on the plank did
jump.

A cop stretched out his burly hand and pulled him
back—kerflump !

The boatswain piped his whistle—the gangplank swung
in air.

Ah ! then there fell on Pat Magee a look of dark
despair,

As when a man has seen his suit rejected by his fair.

FAMILY NONSENSE

Upon the wharf a youngster stood—a sailor chap was
he.

Said he, "If that there whisky flask of yours belonged
to me,

I'd tie a bowline 'round her neck and 'hist' her up to
he."

No sooner said than done. The rope is found, the knot
is tied.

Four times the cord is thrown and missed ; the fifth it
strikes the side,

And Patrick has it by the end, his face aglow with
pride.

And now, behold, the Mountain Dew is swinging in the
air.

No mother holds her infant babe with more protecting
care

Than that with which our friend Magee doth guide his
treasure rare.

At last the treacherous gulf is passed—the prize is well
nigh won.

Alas ! That such an end should meet a scheme so
well begun.

FAMILY NONSENSE

Well said the wise man, "Vanity is all beneath the sun."

Hans Donnerwetter Blitzenschwanz, the second mate was he.

Long time he stood with folded arms and watched our friend Magee ;

Then snatched the bottle from his hands, and cast it in the sea,

And that is everything I know of Patrick Ford Magee.

III

MY ROSE AND OTHER VERSES

OTHER VERSES

APOLOGIA PRO FURTO SUO

*My choicest blossoms plucked I for my dear,
Her heart to please.
Within her inmost chamber found they cheer,
To their heart's ease.*

*When for my friends I would my table grace
With flowers fair,
And turned again unto the roses' place,
I found it bare.*

*While thus I gazéd at the empty bush,
Heavy with care,
Heard I quick footsteps in the evening's hush,
Light as the air.*

*Then sudden on my arm was laid a hand,
Soft as the breeze.
Turning I saw my love with roses stand,
Who said: Take these.*

OTHER VERSES

MY ROSE

I CALLED thee rose, O love; and rose thou art,
 Since thou art sweet and pure and fair.
Deep-rooted in the garden of my heart,
 In fragrance dost thou blossom there.

Thy velvet cheek, when bruised with cruel blows,
 I press to mine, and find relief.
Since thou art smooth and soft and safe, my rose,
 My solace canst thou be from grief.

Yet hath the rose her thorns. Hast thou not thine?
 When listless at mine ease I move,
Counting my little done enough, since mine,
 Who pricks me on, but thou, my love?

When from the day's long toil I bring to thee
 My best, to win thy praise, my crown,
Who bids me seek my better still to be,
 Spurs to new tasks, but thou, my own?

What need I, but in thee complete I have?
 What grace but in thy spirit blows?
Balsam or goad, true love or comrade brave,
 What lack I, having thee, my rose?

OTHER VERSES

TO MY LOVE'S PICTURE

SONG

FROM out thy rim
Of gold so trim,
Dear love, I see thee smile.
Thou canst not hear—
Though thou art near—
The plaint I make the while.

When thou art by
The hours fly,
Alas! too fast, too fast!
When thou art sped,
My joy is fled,
My sky is overcast.

While at my side
Thou dost abide,
All riches I possess.
When thou art gone,
No beggar lorn
Can be so penniless.

OTHER VERSES

When from thine eyes
My summer skies,
Thy sun of love doth shine,
Come storm, come rain,
Come grief or pain,
Warm shelter still is mine.

Where shalt thou find,
O most unkind!
More love than shall be thine,
When thou shalt come
To claim thine own,
Here in these arms of mine?

Then haste thee, sweet,
Thy love to meet!
Too long thou tarriest far.
Why longer roam
When here is home,
Where all thy treasures are?

OTHER VERSES

A FACE IN THE STREET.

ONLY a fleeting vision caught
Of a face in the city street;
But a fragrance lingers in my thought,
And quicker my pulses beat,

And the dingy walls—as I pass—are bright,
And the dusty pavements fair,
And the crowds that jostle to left and right
Tread lightly as the air.

For in two brown eyes (Oh, how fair to see!)
I have read love's message true,
And the smile that has passed from my love to me
Has made the whole world new.

It may chance, on the dusty street of life
I shall pass with weary tread;
'Mid the crowding thoughts that are all at strife,
And the shadows of hopes long dead.

Oh, then may I see thy face once more
With its smile so brave and true,
That at light of the eyes I have loved of yore
I may kindle my faith anew.

OTHER VERSES

TO MY LOVE

WITH THE DEAD BODY OF A LITTLE POEM.

LOVE not the words I speak
 (Lips falter oft).
Low flies my thought, too weak
 To soar aloft.

Love what I fain would say
 (Thou, love, canst hear),—
Dreams that would wing their way
 High in the clear.

Yet o'er my verses dead,
 Fallen in flight,
Still let thy pity spread
 Love's mantle light.

So shall my songs to be,
 Daring to roam,
Mount up at last to thee,
 And find their home.

OTHER VERSES

LOVE'S CALENDAR

TO MY LOVE

*'Twas yesternight,
When I would write
Some wise sermonic lore,
A little wight—
Most impolite—
Came crowding in before.*

*I caught him, dear.
Behold him here
Your clemency to sue!
His guilt is clear,
Yet much I fear
The cause of it was—you!*

SONG

Friendly sprites, who guard Love's ways,
Ever new,
When he comes, and where he stays,
Tell me true ;
What the hours, which the days,
When a lover, all ablaze,
Knows his sweetheart's sweetest phase
To be due.

OTHER VERSES

Is it morning, when the light
 In her eyes
Greets the dawn, in rosy flight,
 All surprise?

Is it noon, when earth is bright
With the day's full-orbed delight,
And her spirit, in its might
 Soars the skies?

Is it evening, when the shade,
 As we stand,
Bids day's bolder colors fade
 O'er the land,
Till beneath night's shelt'ring plaid,
Bolder now and unafraid
Silent lip to lip is laid,
 Hand in hand?

Is it spring, when laughing May
 Decks her bowers?
Or when summer makes display
 Of her flowers?
When ripe autumn's mintage gay,
Golden red and silver gray,
The lorn forest's dying day
 Richly dowers?

OTHER VERSES

Is it youth, when hope and joy
Reign supreme,
And the world a maiden's toy
Still doth seem?

Or, when girlhood's sweetness cloy,
Shall the woman's bloom employ,
With a zest without alloy
All my dream?

When the knell of autumn rings,
And I see
Marks of care and sufferings,
Borne for me,
Shall the calm life's evening brings
To our restless questionings,
When we know the truth of things,
Sweetest be?

Foolish lover, do not so
Tempt your fate.
Let your idle questions go
As to date.
From the realm of Love, you know,
Time was banished long ago,
Dares no more his face to show,
Soon or late.

OTHER VERSES

Love is constant ; has no night
And no day ;
Knows no spring, no autumn blight,
No decay.
In the ever-burning light
Of his Mistress' eyes so bright
Finds unchanging his delight
Now and aye.

OTHER VERSES

“A LITTLE KNOT OF BLUE.”

SWEET knot, that wind your wavy blue
About my love, pray, tell me true
Whence did you steal your dainty hue ?

Not from the eyes that draw me down
To depths of bliss wherein I drown—
Clear wells of light !—for they are brown.

Not from the lips that hold unsaid
The wingéd words I would were sped—
Strong gates of love !—for they are red.

Not from the brow where I would write
With burning lips my heart's delight—
Fair scroll of life!—for it is white.

I think that of the sky above
Your fairy noose some spirit wove
In hope that he might snare my love.

OTHER VERSES

A QUESTION

I

THROUGH the bars day by day—
Singing for me—
Poured forth a bird its lay
In minor key.

Grateful the food I gave
Took from my hand;
Oft in the flood did lave
My care had planned.

Yet ever in my ear
Appealingly
Seemed I this prayer to hear,
Wind-borne to me:—

OTHER VERSES

“Give but the liberty
For which I long,
Ceaseless I'll sing to thee
My grateful song.”

Heard the unspoken vow;
Wide flew the door.
Silent my heavens now;
Songs are no more.

II

Narrow thy lot, O love !
Living for me;
Bars that I cannot move
Encompass thee.

Grateful the love I bring
Thou dost receive;
Oft to my arm dost cling,
And wilt not leave.

Yet through thy smiles I see
Shining a tear,
Winging the thought to me
Ears never hear.

OTHER VERSES

“Were but from cramping care
Our life set free,
How beyond all compare
My love for thee !”

Could I the door wide fling,
Bid care take flight,
Would love too spread his wing,
O my delight ?

OTHER VERSES

COMMUNION

WHEN on thy watching eyes the climbing moon
Drops his soft kiss beside the silver sea,
And in the trembling joy that dies too soon
I feel the thrill of Nature's mystery,
Then am I brothered with each artist true
Who bows in reverence at Beauty's shrine;
I feel the charm enchanted Turner knew,
And share with Inness rapt his trance divine.

But rarer still the gift thou dost impart,
When by the genial lamplight's evening glow,
I see thy lips in sudden wonder part
At some sweet thought stol'n from the page below.
For then the poets' joys I make my own;
Know Wordsworth's rapture o'er the daffodil,
And hear great Shakespeare sing in magic tone
Of life and death and love and good and ill.

OTHER VERSES

AMOR INVICTUS

If these bright eyes, now closed in gentle sleep,
 No more should wake ;
If this soft breath, so calm, so full, so deep,
 Its flight should take,
Still would thy love my heart in safety keep,
 Lest it should break ?

From the far country of the dim unknown
 (Far, love, or near?),
Still would thy spirit steal to claim its own,
 As thou dost here?
And all I do or plan or hope alone
 Through thee be dear ?

When kindly night—after day's fevered strife—
 Shall bring its rest,
Still may I hold thee fast, O spirit wife !
 Within my breast,
And, knowing thee mine own in death as life,
 Be wholly blest !

OTHER VERSES

SYMPATHY

I STOOD in Santa Croce, 'neath the wall
Made fair by Giotto's frescoes; thither drawn
Because a friend had whispered in my ear
That in that chapel dim were treasures rare.
A soft half-twilight filled the darkened room:
Above, a curtain drawn by envious hands
To hide from hungry souls God's own free light
(Save as they bought it of some sacristan),
Caught the full brightness of the noon-day sun
And held it prisoner. Only softened rays
Stole gently o'er the wall. Long time I stood
And strove to pierce the gloom. At length my eyes,
Grown wonted to the dusk, were conscious, first
Of colors, then of single forms, which soon
Took each his place in one harmonious whole,
Until the finished picture stood revealed.
I saw the Saviour sweeping through the sky
With saints and angels in bright garments clad.
From the fair mansions earthward Christ had come
To call an old saint from his narrow house

OTHER VERSES

To the glad home above. At the still call
The sepulcher is rent; the sleeper starts
From his long sleep, and through the open door
Rises to meet his Master in the air.
About the tomb, in variant attitudes,
Stand groups of startled men. A part
Gaze at the grave, to mark if it be bare;
Others at one another, asking each
His neighbor of the prodigy; a few,
With upturned faces, see the rising saint
And catch the golden glory in the air.
But he—the gray old man—his waiting past—
Sees not the crowd who throng the grave about,
Sees not the band of bright ones in the air
With hands outstretched to greet him, sees alone
His Saviour's face—that loving, tender face—
Feels but the look of welcome in his eyes,
And, in the light that streams from that bright sun
Himself is all transfigured; till the marks
Of strife and pain slip from him like a dress,
Outworn and cast aside. As thus I gazed,
Two weary travelers to the chapel strayed,
Led by a guide who, pointing to the wall,
Exclaimed in accents loud: "This picture, sirs,
Is Giotto's glory of the old St. John."

OTHER VERSES

Then, glancing jealously to where I stood,
As though begrudging what he now must do,
Drew back the curtain and the full rich rays
Flooded the frescoed wall. The strangers gazed
With leaden eyes, as men who do hard tasks
For duty's sake. Now, as they looked, and I
Looked also, this strange thing befell. The sun,
Instead of brightening, made the picture dim.
The glow, so slowly won from out the gloom,
Was lost in empty light. The golden gleam,
From the Christ's face that streamed, was soon
dissolved

In yellow lines, stiff, straight and cold and dead.
The halo all was gone; the marks alone
Of time and change were clearer than before.
Short time they tarried, then passed on. The guide
With quick relief drew the high curtain close,
And, with a look at me which seemed to say,
Now linger if you will, he too was gone.
And so they left me. Silently I stood,
And in the softened light, now all my own,
Won back my vision fair. No earthly form
Strove with the pictured crowd to gain their place:
No conscious thought of any but myself
Was present to my mind. Yet as I looked,

OTHER VERSES

Within some secret chamber of the heart,
Deeper than thought itself, I seemed to feel
The presence of my friend invisible
In silent sympathy; and the quick sense
Played on my spirit as upon a harp.
Eye, heart and mind alike were opened wide
To take the painter's message. As the strings
In some rare inwrought Indian instruments,
Untouched by human hands, are subtly stirred
To sweet vibration by the softest sound
Of distant music, if but tuned aright,
So the still sweetness in another's heart
Made mine responsive, and it seemed to sound
In harmonies not mine, yet all my own.
Oh, sympathy! best gift of God to men!
Wisest of all our teachers! mystic bond,
By which two souls without or word or look
Read each the other's heart! With what blest light
Dost thou the world illumine! What common joys
Dost thou not glorify! What bitter griefs
But at thy touch are rendered sacred things!
What darkest realm of mystery divine
But brightens at thy presence into day!

FLORENCE, 1891.

OTHER VERSES

WITH THE GIFT OF A FLORENTINE PICTURE

LONG years ago in Florence lived a monk—
A gentle soul, well loved of God and man.
Many sweet strains he heard and visions fair
Broke on him from the world across the veil.
To him the angels came and freely talked,
And showed their happy faces, and the monk
Put all upon the canvas, as a man
Paints dear loved faces of familiar friends.
Full well he loved the Christ, and the scarred face
Smiled oft upon him in his narrow cell.
To-day we see that visage on the wall,
Fair with unearthly beauty, touching men
They know not how or why. A simple soul,
Men said; yet when he died, all Florence wept.
Often he painted Christ, the angels oft;
Yet most he loved to paint one strange, sweet scene—
That blessed time when the rare whisperings
Of heavenly voices shall be rare no more;
When our communion with the saints above
Shall be no longer like a summer cloud,
Which, when we fain would fix it, vanisheth
In thinnest air; but through the pastures green

OTHER VERSES

Of Paradise, angels and men shall walk,
Hand clasped in hand, and Christ, no longer sad,
Smile as the tender shepherd in the midst.
From such a scene, by such a painter made,
I stole two figures ('T was a harmless theft,—
His heart had been the gladder, had he known,
Who, all his life, loved most of all to give,
Knowing who first had given)—two figures, dear,
Caught on firm canvas by a skilful hand,
And brought them safely over sea to you.
Full hearts have ever room, and newest loves,
If they be true, make but the old more dear.
Take, then, my gift and grant it, if you will,
Hearth room and heart room. These two silent guests
Ask but to dwell in the same room with you.
They will not speak to you, or, if they do,
In such low voices you will scarcely hear,
Like the soft rustling of some summer wind
Stirring the tree tops in the woods hard by.
Yet, as the wind which cometh, none knows whence,
May sooth the hotness of a fevered brow,
Perchance these strangers, quiet though they be,
May calm some restless hour, whispering low
Of things unseen, of heaven not far away.

OTHER VERSES

WITH THE GIFT OF A PORTRAIT

I SOUGHT of gifts the gift most rare,
 To give my dear,—
Pearls of the sea beyond compare,
 Or diamonds clear.

I found a beating human heart,—
 How large! how free!
Two tender eyes that loving art
 Had caught for me.

When that great heart I sought to probe,
 I found it thine;
The love that lit each shining globe
 For thee did shine.

That which already owns thy sway
 How can I give?
Or dare for art a home to pray
 Where love doth live?

OTHER VERSES

Yet since, of all the world doth hold,
 Love dearest be,
These eyes so true, this heart of gold,
 Take thou from me.

Think not—my picture to thee flown—
 I shall have less.
That which thy love doth make its own
 I too possess.

OTHER VERSES

TO H. A. N.

WITH A GIFT OF ROSES.

DEAR presence, welcome as the summer breeze,
Constant, familiar as the sky above,
Solace in sorrow, minister of ease,
Be these our messengers to voice our love.

In the soft fragrance of these blossoms, caught
For a brief moment, ere their petals fall,
May'st thou discern what blessings thou hast
brought
To us, who taste thy kindness prodigal.

The roses' petals fall—'t is so decreed,—
And falling, leave no breath of June behind.
Thy fallen kindnesses in time of need
Leave a perennial fragrance in the mind.

OTHER VERSES

CONSTANCY

O WAYWARD love ! whose swiftly changing mood
My duller spirit oft to vain alarm
Hath stirred, lest I should lose some older charm
For joys as yet unproved. As one who stood
Beside a stream at even, and did brood
Over its silent deeps, might count as harm
The breeze that rippled o'er its golden calm
And broke the stillness of his solitude :—
Till he was ware that for one sunset lost
A thousand shining stars instead he had,
Lamping the self-same current with their
flame.

So thou, O love ! most dear when changeful most,
Art still with me; and I, grown wise, am glad
In other dress to own thee still the same.

OTHER VERSES

IN ABSENCE

BEHIND yon bank of clouds, the sun is hid ;
 Yet through the mist he reaches down his arm
 To clasp the yearning earth; and she is warm.
Ere yet the waking day its drooping lid
Has opened wide, from stalls encanopied
 With leaves a choir unseen with vocal charm
 Makes all the wood alive. Secure from harm
While on this moss-clad bank full stretched amid
The trees I lie at ease, that seem to be
 My sentinels, what odours sweet of flowers
 From glades invisible, my senses thrall!
So thou, in absence, love, art still with me,
 And I responsive to thy mystic powers.
 Thou art my sun, my song, my rose, my all !

OTHER VERSES

RESERVE

PLACID she seems, as is some mountain lake,
Whose privacy the sheltering hills do screen
From the rude wind's affront—a glass serene,
Wherein the sky doth habitation make;
Yet hath she deeps by me unfathoméd.
Beside this crystal tide of purity
How might one stoop and wash and cleanséd be
From the world's stain. To this clear water led,
How drink of love one's fill and be renewed!
On the safe bosom of this faith's calm sea,
How rest in peace through the long night's
eclipse,
Or, when the day dawns bright, in thankful mood
Drift idly by these shores of joy, and see
New beauties smiling on these eyes and lips.

OTHER VERSES

THE WOUNDS OF LOVE

IN playful mood my cleverness to prove
I mocked at Love, and in his friendly dart
Sought matter for a jest: yet found her heart,
Whom thus I thought to merriment to move,
Untuned to mirth, more ready to reprove
Than praise, so recent was her smart.
What can I do to cure the wounded part
But string again the bow of slighted Love?

For wounds of Love have balm medicinal
That robs them of their pain. Strange surgery
Is theirs. Like leeches' knives, their probe is
kind ;
And they who once have felt Love's arrow gall
Crave naught save thus to bleed eternally.
I'll wing my shaft; then shalt thou healing
find.

OTHER VERSES

ATTAINMENT

O YE who sit serene upon the heights !
Your brows aflame with glories of the sun
The foothills hide,—tell me, I pray, might one
Whom common tasks, through the long morning
bright,
Kept toiling on the plain, still—ere the night—
Attempt the venture high, as ye have done,
Conquer the mountain's perils one by one,
And share at last your vision's calm delight?

Yet if this may not be, be this my prize,
To see some younger climber, whom my word,
Thrilling with joy of triumphs not for me,
Won with the dawn to dare the bold emprise,
And make his own the sights of which he heard,
Stand victor on the mount of poesy.

OTHER VERSES

LIBERTY

To sit at life's rich feast, a welcome guest,
 With kindly eye, yet pass without offense —
 Since inly fed—the brimming cup of sense;
To count all men as friends, yet feel at rest
But with the pure and true; ever to hear
 Neath joy's glad melody and moan of pain
 The undertone of a celestial strain,
Low whispering peace within the spirit's ear;—
To give without reserve; be ever shared
 With all who need; yet ever to withhold
 Within the soul a place of privacy
To man denied—a sanctuary bared
 To Him alone, who seeth from of old
 The contrite heart:—is not this liberty?

OTHER VERSES

RESIGNATION

STRAYING one day through the dark wood of care
In quest of water for my fainting love,
I spied a pool beneath a hemlock grove
Still moist with droppings of the tearful air.
Joyful I garnered up the relics rare,
And hastened breathless with my treasure trove
To my dear love. But even as she strove
To take the cup my trembling fingers bare,
Tripping I fell, and 'neath the grievéd trees
Empty we saw the broken vessel lie.
Hand clasped in hand we laid us down to die,
When sudden to our ears soft murmuring
Betrayed the presence of a hidden spring.
Searching, we found, and drank deep draughts of
peace.

OTHER VERSES

EXTENUATION

IF 'neath youth's burning sky too rankly blow
 The passion flower of pride, too reckless blaze
 The morning-glory joy with tangled maze
Of bloom its truant path where thou must go,
Shall it not stay thy censure's rising flow
 To think how soon keen winter's nipping days,
 Blasting with icy wind these upstart ways,
Shall lay in death their fragile pageant low?

If the swift sap that courses through the veins
 Too wildly throb its short sweet pulse of life,
 Too boldly flaunt its passionate desire
To reach its utmost height ere night restrains,
Shall not the nearness of the pruning knife
 So soon must fall, withhold thee from thine ire?

OTHER VERSES

INCOMPATIBILITY

WAITING they stood beneath life's doméd fane

For the great word should seal them man and wife—

Calm Science grave, and Art, with passion rife,
Daughter of Hope and sister twin of Pain.

But when the ancient question rang again,

“Wilt have this maid for lady of thy life?”

“Ay, verily,” quoth he, “An she her strife
Forswear, and wifely own my rightful reign.”

“Nay, first,” said she, “show me thy visage bright

With dancing joy, or stained with sympathy.

Make thou my wish thy will, and take delight

In my desire; then will I follow thee.”

He shook his head, and she her pleading ceased.

To marry Art and Science, who is priest?

OTHER VERSES

THE DESTROYER

O RUTHLESS TIME! that oft with nimble hand
Hast robbed me of the deed I fain would do,
How at thy touch, like bubbles children blew,
Vanish in air the castles I have planned!
Beneath thy hurrying tread, in parching sand
Dies young desire, ere it has seen the blue,
And tender hope, uprooted where it grew,
Withers away the life which thou hast banned.

Misshapen births are thine, blind, helpless, dumb;
Wild protest against wrongs untimely made,
Enforced decisions, lacking reason's ray
To guide them to the goal where they would come;
High sacrifice misspent, for lack of aid
Thou might'st have lent, hadst thou but learned
delay.

OTHER VERSES

THE HEALER

AND is it thou, dear Time ! most gentle friend !
'Gainst whom, in some mad hour of wild unrest
I uttered such complaint? Most welcome guest!
That o'er my lonely bedside oft dost bend
With kindly face, and of thy bounty lend
Patience and hope! How oft, O surgeon best!
Hast thou to wounds by other aid unblest
Brought the skilled touch that made of pain an end!

Sweet ministry is thine, the sick to heal,
From darkened eyes the blinding scales to part,
To make the lame man leap as doth the hart,
And the dumb lips in grateful song unseal;
While in the frozen heart thy summoning
Unlocks the chamber where has slept the spring.

OTHER VERSES

THE SCHOLAR

WITH brow still shadowed from the caves of night,
And hands begrimed by delving in the dark,
He comes, this miner of the soul—a mark
Of pitying gaze to dwellers in the light.
No radiant gems he bringeth, to delight
The wondering eye,—the diamond’s crystal pride,
Or the white pearls that in the ocean hide—
But dusty coals of fact, for jewels bright,
Whose fires, long quenched, leave but this frozen
death.
“A slave,” men say, “who toils for such a meed.”
Yet lay these coals upon the hearth of need,
And touch them with the prophet’s torch of faith,
And they shall flame, a beacon in the night,
To guide the ages onward in their flight.

OTHER VERSES

THE TEACHER

UPON the dry brown earth, to him upturned
In mute expectance of the life to be,
He casts his seed of truth, this sower free,
Lavish of treasure, he hath hardly earned;
Yet deemeth oft his bounty hath been spurned,
So silent sleeps the field, a waveless sea,
Waiting the sun of joy, or mystery
Of sorrow's tears, as gentle rain returned
To kiss the parchéd ground, that barren lies,
Lacking the fruitful moisture of the sky.
O watch of faith! Till from its patient grave
The buried life shall break, in glad surprise
At what it bears, and from its rich supply
Give strength to nations, and the dying save.

OTHER VERSES

GREATHEART

RUGGED he rises as some massive tower
That guards the ancient Oxford of his love,
Its base the solid rock. No winds do move,
No buffets daunt him. Lesser men may cower
Before the gathering storm clouds when they lower.
He stands erect until the mists remove,
And from his vantage seems afar to prove
The coming day—the type of conscious power.

Yet, as upon the battlemented pile
Nestles the ivy planted long ago,
That lies upon its breast, and dares to take
Love's license with its strength; so there do smile
Within his spirit graces that did grow
In that dim past which he a friend doth make.

OTHER VERSES

AFTER HEARING A SYMPHONY OF
BEETHOVEN

MISTRESS of joy and grief, immortal maid!

To whose sweet service, lo! these many years
My stolen hours were lent—not without tears
That hands untrained gave but unskilful aid—
High tasks are thine, with rare reward repaid!
Rich largess dost thou lavish on thy peers,
And beyond blessing blest the knight who wears
Thy cherished favor, awed and unafraid!

Not mine the guerdon of this hero strong,
Thrilling thy touch to feel, or see thy face!
Yet in thy courtyard let me linger still,
Content in menial tasks to do thy will,
And ever and anon, by thy good grace,
Catch the faint echoes of thy distant song.

OTHER VERSES

A SUMMER AFTERNOON ON SARGENT

How still thou liest, tiny upland lake
Where Jordan lays his arm on Sargent's breast,
To make a shelter for thy slumber blest!
No errant winds thy bosom restless make,
Or with ungentle hands thy lilies shake.
Peaceful thou sleepest, as a bird in nest,
Until some zephyr, bolder than the rest,
Drop his soft kiss, and thou at last awake.

So a dear face, in meditation caught,
Where friends have wandered from the world
apart,
Holds rapt communion with itself awhile,
Till, in its passing flight, some loving thought,
Blown gently down, its surface sudden start,
And lo! it ripples over with a smile.

OTHER VERSES

THE FOUNDERS

NOT for to-day they planned,
But for the better future that should be !
Not the near scene they scanned,
But the far distance faith alone can see !
Kingly the reach they spanned,
Wide as the world, broad as humanity!

On Hudson's Eastern hill,
Lordlier site than monarchs fit have deemed,
Shall rise a citadel,
Giving firm shape to hopes once vain that seemed,
Whose silent stones shall tell
What visions they have seen, what dreams have
dreamed.

Here truth her power shall prove,
Winning new ministers to fan her flame;
Here the great heart of love
Reach out in healing touch to sin and shame;
Till sun and stars remove,
Free sons here bless the mother whence they came.

OTHER VERSES

This let their guerdon be,—
Not praise of men, or the world's plaudits rare,
But that their sons shall see
In the new home that greets the morning fair,
Truth, love, and liberty
In union sweet, their blesséd fruitage bear!

OTHER VERSES

RESURRECTION

I

WHERE are you, vanished flowers:
That once upon a day
Peeped laughing through the bowers
Of winsome Mistress May,
Those unforgotten hours
I chanced to pass your way?

My hand was stretched to make you
My own, my heart inclined;
And yet I did forsake you,
Some fleeting joy to find.
Did truer lover take you?
Pluck what I left behind?

Or did your beauty, lading
With fragrance once the air,
Droop softly to its fading
Unwatched by mortal care,
To meet without evading
Death's darkness and despair?

OTHER VERSES

And live you now in posies
From seed you dropped in death,
Borne to some garden's closes
By zephyr's kindly breath,
To bloom with stately roses
That never knew your heath?

II

My mind, it was a garden
Where flowers blossomed fair,
Yet I my heart did harden;
Unplucked I left them there.
How can I ever pardon
The sin beyond compare!

Where are you, vanished faces,
For which I now repine?
Show me the hidden places
Where now your beauties shine!
Have others plucked the graces
That were, but are not mine?

OTHER VERSES

Or did you, sadly shrinking,
 When I, your lover fled,
Turned from my pleasant thinking
 To join life's battle dread,
Fall silent, silent sinking
 In dust of thoughts unsaid?

And live you now in beauties
 That know not whence they sprang?
In sympathies and duties
 No poet ever sang,
And love that now the fruit is
 Of dead thought's deathless pang?

OTHER VERSES

INDIVIDUALITY

IN pride of youth my soul I did address:

“Hear, soul,” I said, “the thing I ask of thee.
Give me to drink my fill of happiness.”

But my soul answered, “It is not in me.”

I wandered forth into the haunts of men,

To join their revel through the fleeting hours.

“Ye who are glad! give joy!” I cried again.

“He asks for joy”; they said, “it is not ours.”

Through sunlit glades of forest did I roam

To where Dame Nature sat upon her throne.

“To thee, dear Mother! suppliant I come

For joy.” “Nay, joy!” she said, “I do not own.”

Last in my quest I came to heaven’s door,

Through which aflame I saw God’s glory shine.

“Of thy great joy, O God! grant me some store.”

Said God: “The gift thou askest is not mine.”

OTHER VERSES

“Nay, Lord,” I cried, “since thou, of all who give
The sovereign, my pittance dost deny,
Why should I seek in heaviness to live?
Grant to thy joyless child, I pray, to die.”

And the Lord answered, “Child, it may not be.
Joy may depart; the lonely heart may bleed,—
Still my sad world cries out for ministry.
Walk thou abroad and hear their plaint who need.”

Submissive to the word, I turned me back
Unto the scenes from which so late I fled,
To hear the cry of all that suffered lack,
And feel the anguished throb of hearts that bled.

The errant breeze sighed plaintive in my ear;
The drooping flowers hung their heads in pain.
“Thy downcast face hath robbed us of our cheer.
Smile thou on us, that we be fair again.”

“Ah foolish ones!” I cried, “and will ye dare
To ask that gift of me which God denies?
Ask my Lord Sun.” Yet still they made their prayer,
“Nay, if thou be not glad, our beauty dies.”

OTHER VERSES

Upon a bed one lay and tossed in pain.

“A song! a song!” he cried, “that I forget.”

“Thou asketh that which I have sought in vain.

Seek music where bright joy may still be met.”

“Nay, if thou sing not, all my world is dumb,”

He said in grief, and turned him to the wall.

“Joy through the joyful heart alone doth come ;

The tunêd ear finds melody in all.”

I bowed my knee within the house of prayer,

In deep contrition basing all my pride,

When lo! I heard God speak within my ear,

“Grant me thy love, that I be satisfied.”

“And is thy need so great, O Lord!” I cried,

“That with the world thine own, thou still dost
pine?

Thou who hast sun and stars, dost ask beside

The homage of this broken heart of mine?

Nay, then, if need so far doth reach his hand

That the great God hath hunger in his heart,

Why should I seek in lonely joy to stand?

Let me at least in sorrow have a part.”

OTHER VERSES

All day I labored in the world of God,
Attentive to its cries of want and pain,
Content to minister to child or clod,
And when night fell, turned to my soul again.

Timid I stood without the darkened home,
From whose bare chambers once I turned in pride,
Fearful to knock: when lo! a voice cried, "Come!
The feast is spread my bounty doth provide."

"Who art thou, friend," I said, "I pray thee, tell,
Who thus dost come my lonely heart to bless?
Hast thou no brighter house wherein to dwell?"
And the voice answered, "I am happiness."

OTHER VERSES

A PARENT'S PRAYER

OUT of the darkness of the night they came,
 These lives that seem eternally our own,
 Bringing what wealth from treasuries unknown
To homage of our thankful love to claim.

Into the darkness when they shall return,
 The silent night that yields no answer clear,
 Be it with treasures they have gathered here
The gratitude of hearts unseen to earn.

OTHER VERSES

A THANKSGIVING HYMN

FOR all Thy gifts, O Lord of love!
Our praise to Thee this day we bring.
Do Thou within our spirits move,
And teach us from our hearts to sing
Our hymn of gratitude.
For the dear Christ, we bless Thee, Lord,
Our Brother, Master, Saviour, Guide,
In whom Thy searching, healing word
Finds human voice to bend our pride
And calm our restless mood;

For all the saints, who in the school
Of love have learned the healing art,
And passed to us Thy golden rule
In the wise language of the heart,
Whose words are ministry:
But most we bless Thee that Thy grace
Permits us, too, Thy task to share,—
That we, who cannot see Christ's face,
Yet by His side the cross may bear
In great humility.

OTHER VERSES

O Thou! who from the darkened skies
Dost cause Thy sun to break again!
Grant us to see in saddened eyes,
With sin o'ercast or dimmed with pain,
Thy light of peace and love.
Then as the grateful earth to heaven
Her wealth of moisture doth restore,
So shall the joy Thyself hast given
As messenger return once more
To bear our praise above.

OTHER VERSES

A PRAYER FOR GOD'S PRESENCE

AFAR I sought Thee in the radiant sky ;
 But thou art near.
In every breeze that sings its lullaby
 Thy voice I hear.

Afar I sought Thee in heroic deed
 Still to be done ;
But Thou dost speak in every brother's need
 Beneath the sun.

So let me feel Thy presence day by day
 In wind and sod,
That every bush I meet upon my way
 Shall glow with God.

So let Thy spirit kindle my desire
 Self to deny,
That every common deed shall flame with fire,
 As doth Thy sky.

OTHER VERSES

A PRAYER FOR PEACE

KEEP me quiet, Master,
Patient day by day.
When I would go faster
Teach me thy delay.

Restless, oft I borrow
From the future care.
Teach me that to-morrow
Shall its burden bear.

From thy full provision
Daily richly fed,
By thy clearer vision
Ever safely led,

Let me to my brothers
Turn a face serene,
Sharing thus with others
What thy gift hath been.

OTHER VERSES

EVENSONG

PATIENCE, my soul!
A truce to all thy hasting.
 'Tis time for rest.
Pleasant the bowl
Invites thee to its tasting;
 But sleep is best.

If thou but cease,
The morn of high endeavor
 Full soon shall break.
Sleep now in peace!
For joy shall greet thee ever,—
 When thou awake.

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