

TOM'S

Book of Poems Inspired By Northside Trolley

Retired Motorman Publishes 100 Verses Jotted Down in 34 Years of Running Car

During 34 years of running a "dinky" streetcar on the Northside, T. J. Kennedy, 4230 Perrysville avenue, found lines of verse running through his head.

As his car looped on Brighton road, his thoughts were on "quiet streams in sylvan dells." And when he got home at night, he'd jot down the poetry and tuck it away.

Last year he retired, but nearly 300 poems kept needling him for attention. So he's had them published.

His first book, with 100 of the verses, is called "The Hope of Tomorrow and Other Poems." It is published by Bruce Humphries, Inc., in Boston.

Say the publishers: "These poems reveal the ripened philosophy of a mature mind and radiate the warmth of hope and good cheer. A grace of serenity threads its way through the verse and provides a calming note in a confusing world."

Mr. Kennedy, born in Ireland in 1883, keeps on being a philosopher about his book.



T. J. KENNEDY

"I don't expect many to be sold," he said, "but I'm happy to have it published."

THE HOPE OF TOMORROW

and Other Poems

By

T. J. KENNEDY



BRUCE HUMPHRIES, INC.

Publishers, Boston

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Printed in the United States of America

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THE HOPE OF TOMORROW
AND OTHER POEMS

THE HOPE OF TOMORROW

The hope of tomorrow is always before us
Despite what misfortune today may bring forth.
It banishes all the dark clouds hanging o'er us
As summer winds melt those ice floes of the North,

And brightens Life's road, which looks often so dreary,
While trudging along with heart sunken and sad.
We also look to it when burdened and weary
As a sheltered refuge where rest can be had.

And to the scientist in a laboratory,
While probing in mist for improvement of man,
It beams over doubt like a halo of glory
Which makes him more zealous to perfect his plan.

To stranger benighted, despondent, and lonely,
With sneers of the many and pity from none,
Which adds to the torment of his tiresome journey,
Hope is the glad beacon that urges him on.

That hope of tomorrow reflects from the distance
A grace of serenity, calming the soul,
And buoys jaded heart to renewal of persistence,
The stimulus needed to reaching its goal.

A PHANTOM SEARCH

A phantom search we fools have staged
Since the creation of mankind,
In which all people are engaged—
Though futile—to true pleasure find.

There never lived a single man
But with him from his childhood grew
Some cherished, though elusive plan
By which dreams would some day come true.

Aye! from the first day of our birth
We try this ghostly shadow trace
And keep persisting while on earth
Till death, in mercy, ends the chase.

Unnumbered millions who've passed on
Have singly tried, to no avail,
And we receiving the baton
Will ignominiously fail.

To ever think that erring man
Can find true pleasure in this sphere
Is counter to the Divine plan—
Let's give an illustration here:

Like him who on long journey goes
And getting his instructions crossed
Stops off enroute to talk with those
Who give directions to one lost.

Though he delays in sunny clime,
Has health and all wealth can attain,
Yet does not have a pleasant time
Because of leaving soon again.

Each one of us has voyaged along
And disembarked from that same boat;
That's why there never was a song
Composed without discordant note.

On earth man is not reconciled—
Although he may at times pretend—
Till record of his life is filed
In Master's vault at Journey's End.

A NOBLE THOUGHT

Our period on earth, seemingly,
Is, compared with eternity,
Just like the snowflakes on Spring day
That fall, then quickly melt away;
Momentarily hold the view,
Then disappear like morning dew.

'Tis so with us, we too appear
And touch upon this global sphere,
Are hurried on through life's side isle,
Like snowflakes hold the light a while;
Into that picture we are urged
Then into darkness submerged.

There are a few exceptions when
Grand and outstanding noble men
Are focused on life's moving screen.
Then death, on entering the scene,
Encircles them in light sublime
Of haloes until end of time.

Whose genius is reflected there
By previous deeds in brilliant glare
Which were enacted long ago,
But ages make them brighter glow.
A noble thought, though of one line,
With author's name for ever shine.

ANOTHER SEASON PASSING ON INTO ETERNITY

While sitting in a Park, I see
A caterpillar crawl
Across the pathway, then begin
To wriggle up a wall;
An ant is racing to and fro,
Not for one moment still,
A cycle of tensed energy
To unknown mission fill;
While leaves shower down upon my head
From lofty elm tree—
Another season passing on into eternity!

Gone are our Summer visitors,
I don't see even one,
But drowsing, huddled sparrows are
Enjoying the mid-day sun;
A squirrel gay with urge to play
Makes frolic on the grass,
And chipmunk sits at edge of hole
To watch its cousin pass,
While leaves shower down upon my head
From lofty elm tree—
Another season passing on into eternity!

Then that immortal question
Comes back again to me
While I grope on and lose myself
In maze of reverie,
And in this futile way of mine
I thrash it o'er and o'er,
What great minds of the ages
Have vainly tried explore,
While leaves shower down upon my head
From lofty elm tree—
Another season passing on into eternity!

It matters not what pace is set,
This ant a dashing round,
Or caterpillar crawling on
That same oft-circled ground.
Eventually stalking death
Shall overtake them all—
Those leaves from lofty elm tree
Upon my head still fall!

The squirrel may through those trees climb
And chipmunk hide away,
But find them that grim spectre will,
Sure as night follows day;
Song bird to sunny clime may go,
But as cloud darkens light,
In offing it's approaching
For last migratory flight.
Those leaves still shower upon my head
From lofty elm tree—
Another season passing on into eternity!

And brooding here I wonder, too,
How many more, ah, me!
Of coming Autumns shall I sit
Beneath this elm tree.

ANSWERING A FRIEND

Well, friend: Those lines you classed as "crude"
I think were really very good,
And gave me quite a little food
To brain digest,
So when their trend was understood
I felt possessed

To answer you in the same kind
Because we are of the same mind
The same environment us bind.
Devoid of cheer,
We are consigned to the same grind
From year to year.

Fate may decree we are small fry
And keep us so until we die,
With not a chance our rods to ply
Or lines to test,
But we're not men to moan or sigh;
His way is best.

And yet Hope's star alluring, fond,
Will always brilliantly respond
To beam above despair's black pond
On darkest night,
Persuading it with magic wand
To emit light.

Within each life there's joy and pain,
A little sunshine, then much rain,
But sometimes one will find a grain
Of solid gold.
Those lines of yours, I still maintain,
Are of that mould.

A GRAVE WHEREON THE GRASS AND WEEDS GROW TALL

A grave whereon the grass and weeds grow tall
As sentinels to watch those bones that lie
Beneath that sod until the bugle call
Of Gabriel shall wake them from the sky.

If such high reeds and nodding blossomed tares
Spring up in rank abundance on a mound,
That's testimony mute no person cares
For those remains below the knoll of ground.

No little touch, to show that there is one
Who still reveres loved memory of the dead,
Nor can remember hand once pressed upon,
Caressingly, a touseled little head.

Remembrance is very short for some,
Forgetfulness possess them in an hour,
Which is the reason why they never come
And plant upon that lonesome spot a flower.

Meanwhile, within that cemetery site
It lies, unkempt, forgotten, and alone;
No visitants, except the stars of night,
Or when shrill winds as in protest bemoan.

"ABE" LINCOLN

The name of "Abe" Lincoln
Will onward go ringing
Down life's storied halls
Through the channels of Time,
For men who love freedom
Insist upon singing
His praises with voices
Of rapture sublime.

The Maker of All had
A glorious conception
When He conceived Lincoln
In infinite mind,
Then chiseled him out
As the peak of perfection,
In ideal mold
For the good of mankind.

"Abe" Lincoln stood out
As a figure immobile,
Rigidly opposed to
The vices of greed,
Then with will of iron
And high purpose noble,
Demanded the Negro
From bondage be freed;

The sequence of which
Was the Civil War battle,
Of serfdom and thrall
Against Justice and Right,
To lift human beings
From the level of cattle,
Off auctioneer's block
On to Freedom's loved height.

So Lincoln victorious,
A heinous wrong righted,
And Progress which had
Been by slavery delayed
Marched under one banner
Of nation united
In triumphant glory—
Erect, unafraid.

A SINGING SPARROW

One morning in a chilly rain
I heard a little sparrow
Singing as though its throat would burst—
With not a trace of sorrow.

The gladsome song of that small bird
To me proved so beguiling
It changed these lines on face of mine
From frowns to those of smiling.

My thought was: if this bird can sing
In cold and rainy weather,
Its joyful heart in weight must be
Less than a tiny feather.

Then my heart felt like feather, too,
Thanks to brave song of sparrow,
Which buoyed it in strong faith to know
The sun will shine tomorrow.

AT TIMES

At times when valued gem is found
Within the dark, dank, smelling ground
Of creviced, rocky nook
One's loath to take it in the hand—
Excrescences of clay and sand
Give it a grimy look.

But when a master gets his tools,
Observant of the standard rules,
The silt is soon demolished
And then emits a brilliant light
That dazzles like the stars at night
So highly is it polished.

We've drawn distinction, as outlined,
Between gems "raw" and those refined—
An ocean of contrast!
The latter being through craftsman's hands
And dictated by art's commands
Remodeled and recast

Until they shone before the gaze
Of people gaping in amaze,
Like sun on clear day's birth
And curious crowds around them grew—
(Among them were appraisers, too)
To estimate their worth.

While other jewels were kicked around
And tramped into the sodden ground
Lying hidden, undetected,
Although if it were really known,
That debris "wise" men classed as stone
Unnoticed and neglected,
Had all the sparkle and the lure
And lustre of a Kohinoor.

This contrast in the diamonds can
Be readily applied to man,
Beginning at the source—
All children by the will of God
Are like as peas within a pod
(In aggregate, of course).

But some are born into the hue
Of purple deep and skies of blue
And fed from golden spoon.
All happiness that money buys
Is given them in full supplies.
Their young lives are of June.

Then, following accustomed rule,
Are sent to cultured boarding school
As a first step to knowledge,
Acquiring that in their teen years,
And as the age of manhood nears
Are ushered into college.

And under care of well trained hands
From native and from foreign lands
Get finished education.
And like the diamonds in this script
Are finally quite well equipped
To fascinate a nation.

While others start life in a "rut"
Within the confines of a hut
They first begin to crawl
In dusty and obnoxious air
And harried mother's hurried care.
They toddle and they fall,
And learn to play on squalid streets,
Not in parental safe retreats.
Then school and last gay laughter
While casually greeting the "R's"—
Being fated to receive deep scars
In life's grim struggle after.

They, like those gems that are ignored
And never by skilled craftsmen bored
Because "of common stone,"
If lifted from the silt and sands,
And touched by trained, artistic hands,
Would dignify a throne.

'Tis so with men in shop and mill—
Work which requires no special skill—
With faces blackened smudges,
To the dire needs of life assuage
Are forced to work for menial wage
As automatic drudges.

Those, human diamonds in the rough,
Were they raised from the darksome slough
On day denoting birth,
Some would reflect refulgent light
Like meteors in sky at night
And illumine the earth,

Though in life's by-ways thrown as "stone"
To lie unpolished and unknown.

AT TIMES BIRD SONG

At times bird song
Makes my heart long
To be as light as zephyr breeze,
And carry me
In ecstasy
Above the gleaming, surging seas.

A bird's sweet trill
Gives it the thrill
Of bursting forth in sudden flight,
Aloft to fly
On through the sky
To heaven's farthest, crowning height.

A ROBIN'S SONG

This morning, at the break of day,
I heard a glorious roundelay
That thrilled me through and through—
Yes, pierced the very heart of me
And filled my soul with ecstasy
Which nothing else could do.

A robin's song was what I heard,
The throatings of a gladdened bird
In welcoming the things
That go to make this life worth while;
The budding flowers, the sun's bright smile,
It is of those he sings.

Had I a robin's cheery voice
I would of the same things rejoice
But being alas! quite mute,
I listened with such joy inflamed
It could not be by mortal named,
To trills of magic lute!

BRIGHT SPRING

Bright Spring has come again with misty showers
The old but joyful story to repeat,
To fill this earth with gay, bejeweled flowers
And celebrate the winter's slow retreat.
The birds emerge and voice their happy lays—
Their method of holding a gay commune
In anticipation of Summer days,
Which instinct teaches them are coming soon.

The trees send out unnumbered leafy shoots,
Inviting all to partake of their shade,
Cool, serviceable Spring and Summer suits
And guaranteed till autumn not to fade.
'Tis so the years flit on unconsciously,
Yet each leaves its imprint on you and me.

CONTENTMENT

Contentment! Yes, you are one thing which gold,
That monarch of this earth, can never buy.
You cannot be by him no more controlled
Than the bright sun that shines in the blue sky.

There are times when man holds you in strong grasp
While firmly convinced that he has shown
'Twere folly trying escape that eager clasp.
"Henceforth," he vows, "you are my very own."

But when he thinks that you are most secure,
By manifested power, self-styled supreme,
At that befitting moment you are sure
To show that he has entertained a dream.

'Tis certain that you love not luxury,
We have of that obtained convincing proof,
Because from halls of Kings you quickly flee
Though known to dwell long under lowly roof.

CHRISTMAS

It is indeed most fortunate
That Christmas comes each year
To fill our hearts with thoughts of love
And amiable cheer.

Cruel barbarism would engulf
And hold this world again
If Charity and Kindliness
Were not impressed on men.

It is important parents should
The virtue then instill
Into their children's plastic minds
To harbor not ill will,

By teaching them the golden rule
That they should always do
Unto all others as they'd wish
Themselves be done unto.

DEATH

Death! dark-winged angel of sorrow and tears,
Nemesis of all, respecter of none,
In mystery surrounded, closed are its ears
To wail of daughter or pleading of son
Inexorable, like Juggernaut go
And unerringly the dire summons bring
To the beggar poor in a hovel low
And palace high of the haughtiest king.

Nature's grim messenger sent amongst men
To beckon us on with its mystic wand
Into the shade of that mysterious glen
We mortals know as the "Vale of Beyond."
Which vale is to some of an all ebon ground
But darker or brighter, that's where we are bound.

EXPECTATION

What happiness there is in life
Is built on expectation,
We harbor through the tiresome strife
Some fond anticipation.

Tomorrow's hopes are always fair
When visioned from afar,
They dazzle with a brighter flare
Than the joyous morning star.

But when some hopes of ours mature
And day of days is here,
Lost suddenly is its allure,
That glad, expectant cheer,

The peace, which distance only lent,
Deprived of glittering rays
Now lacks the charm of content
To a bewildered gaze.

But yet, though all our wishes fade
And darken one by one,
We'll face the future unafraid
By ever hoping on.

EARTH'S JOURNEY

A little boy riding for days on a train
By kindly observer was asked to explain
Why he was so active and never seemed tired,
And if thought of meeting someone most desired
Had kept him so happily all during the ride.
Thus questioned, that bright little youngster replied:

"No sir, I'm not weary, for, Mister, you see
At end of this road is where Mother meets me,
Her arms extended to embrace with a kiss;
That's why I enjoy a long ride such as this."
As he was speaking, his face all the while
In anticipation was lit with a smile.

The moral of this simple story is plain.
We, too, are enroute upon life's dreary train,
But when this earth's journey of trouble is o'er,
Fond friends then shall meet us on Hope's starry shore
And welcome us into the land of our dream
Where peace is immortal and love is supreme.

FOND MEMORIES

I prize in my mind a loved spot by a quarry
(A small plot of ground, running into a "V")
Where I roamed as a tot, and free from all worry
As lark singing blithly above the green lea.

In memory I still see the primroses peeping
From moss-covered banks looking coy and demure,
And in a recess of my fancy I'm keeping
This picture which riches could never secure.

I, too, can envision the frail woodbine climbing
Up through the green brambles of haw and of sloe,
And hear the glad voices of song birds all chiming,
A harmonious setting in the twilight's glow.

Fond memories! Ah, this is indeed a great treasure
That lives with one always regardless of age,
Which is beyond power of all mankind to measure
A gift as from Heaven, our griefs to assuage.

FREEDOM'S CRAVER

Freedom's Craver upon reading
Wilson's message gets desire
That sets red blood through him speeding
As if it were set on fire,
With his heart in transport beating
When he sees those words outlined
Standing forth, as if in greeting
For which he since boyhood pined.

Brings to him with keen precision
Fulfillment of an ideal
In a happy, joyous vision
Freedom from oppressor's heel,
In his breast a hope is started
That he has not lived in vain
And will yet see the link parted
In suppression's galling chain.

In Wilson's message, all confess,
Is involved the grandest plan
Ever voiced in any address
By the mortal tongue of man,
Keeping hearts enthralled in wonder,
So ineffably sublime
That 'twill rumble on like thunder
Down the tidal waves of Time.

FROM BLACK DESPAIR'S DEEP PIT

From black despair's deep pit does Progress spring
As comes from night the glorious dawn of day,
Because men's hearts like birds like to take wing,
Respond to Nature's urge and soar away.

The darkest hour of all, observers claim,
Is that before the sun breaks smiling through
To give the gloomy sky a brilliant flame
And paint this somber earth a rosy hue.

So it may be in this depressive year
Which keeps that being known as the common man
Beset between twin demons, doubt and fear,
That he may too the sunny heavens scan.

You cannot keep the toiler bound in chains
And dominated like a yellow dog.
With his great strength he'll some day combine brains
And wake forever from his mental fog.

And learn to know of happiness at last,
When lifted from the cave where he has been
Submerged, while countless ages slowly passed,
Then only will his life really begin.

FOR A GLORIOUS TIME BY THE FOAMY BRINE

For a glorious time by the foamy brine!
It is supremely grand
To take a long stroll where the big waves roll
Along the ocean sand,

And to view that sight of the gulls in flight
In a sky of rainbow hue,
While they skip and dip over ocean's lip
When the night bids the day adieu.

Or to take a ride on the rising tide
In the teeth of a lashing gale
As you lunge your oars from the breakers' roars
While you're crouched in a flimsy sail.

Then your cheeks are kissed by the salty mist
And you're unrestrained and free;
Well, you'll get that thrill when you pit your skill
'Gainst the whip of a ripping sea.

FLOWERS

Of all the kindly gifts Nature bestow
On us to lighten thrall of daily toil
And keep our hearts uplifted as we go
Along the murky path of life's turmoil,
That isolates our minds from things mundane
And buoys us as bright stars on darksome night
Encourages wayfarer to attain
His cherished hope by their enchanting sight.

Those priceless gems! Think, if flowers were destroyed
From earth's broad fields, wherein they bud and bloom,
Would not their need leave in our hearts a void,
An abyss steep, surcharged with Stygian gloom?

Earth's surface rid of flowers—A gloomy thought!
Then would the joy of life be vainly sought.

FAITH

Faith is the rock upon which Hope exists,
That citadel from which she sends her bright
And ceaseless rays of promise through the mists
Of sorrow and despair's impending night.

Faith is the rock where Hope stands unafraid,
In heroic, characteristic pose,
Her calm, unbending spirit undismayed
By failure's most exasperating blows.

Hope's temple there is built, its golden dome
Is pointed to those lofty regions high,
Where mankind dreams there is a future home
In space unending of empyrean sky.

HOW I LOVE TO STROLL IN THE EVENING WHEN SUNSET

How I love to stroll in the evening when sunset
Is robing grey clouds in bright mantles of gold,
And zephyrs are whispering through each leafy inlet
Grand secrets we mortals can never be told.

While birds, like famed choir at some great celebration,
Voice music enchanting, expressive of bliss,
Keep heart strings attuned in a thrill of elation;
If on earth is heaven its hours such as this.

HONOR

Honor is the grandest virtue
That a soul can ever love,
Like an eagle soaring over
Mountain crest in sky above.

Honor reigns in lofty splendor
On its heaven-ward, sunkissed throne,
In sublime display of grandeur
God bestowed on it alone.

Honor, being the parent virtue,
It should therefore be our aim
To acquire it before hoping
Any other virtues claim.

As the rosebush conceives roses
To distribute fragrance sweet,
Honor must be heart's conceivance
E'er those others shall us greet,

For it is the regal virtue,
Testifying to worth of man,
Always are its blessed possessors
Leading every noble plan.

Those who vigilantly guard it
Are exalted of this earth;
Honor's seal has deified them
Irrespective of their birth.

IN APPRECIATION

This day to France, our proud sister nation,
And gifted son, Bartholdi, we bestow
America's awed appreciation
For priceless gift of fifty years ago.

Brave France, where bides the spirit that inspired
Creation of our idol Liberty,
Which all true men have ever since admired
Be they of menial birth or high degree.

Live Freedom smoulders in the hearts of men
And needs but gentle fanning to inflame
Such as ink dripping from a fiery pen
Or mention of this Goddess' sacred name.

Idolators from far flung distant lands
Came anxious to this Queen of Freedom great,
Then with uplifted eyes and outstretched hands
Threw themselves prone and worshipped at her feet.

O France, we of today are the same brood;
Those were our sires who gave that love divine;
The very same red, virile, pulsing blood
Flows in our veins; we too revere this shrine.

They've passed the torch to us; may we not fail
To keep it gleaming brightly, for their sake
This statue's inspiration must prevail,
Our heritage and honor are at stake.

IF ONE WOULD REFRAIN FROM WORRY

If one would refrain from worry
This advice is well worth while:
You will worry if you hurry—
Take an hour to walk a mile.

True contentment is a treasure
Few there are who do not crave,
Yet it can be gained by leisure
If one would all hurry save.

We are ever rushing blindly,
Wearing hurried hearts away.
Why not treat that organ kindly,
Not distract it to decay?

Till at last we fools shall learn
That our hurrying was vain;
All it did for us was earn
Future years of active pain.

Life is short, why should we wrong it,
Rushing ourselves out of breath?
Hurrying will not prolong it,
But is shortest way to death,

Which in silence waits our greeting
At the end of this life's road.
Why jump headlong to that meeting?
Be a snail and not a toad.

I HAVE TODAY A ROBIN SPIED

I have today a robin spied
Upon a grassy lawn
But no companion hopped beside—
He was the only one.

And as I watched, my wonder grew,
What did retard its flight?
Then whimsically, if he knew
That frost is due tonight?

Of course, a person cannot tell
What's in a robin's mind;
It may be that not feeling well
Is dallying behind.

Or could it be he's just a crank
And feels a trifle sore
Because demoted from some rank
Held during year before?

But why digress with thoughts like these?
That robin on the lawn
Awoke in me fond memories
Of summer days, nigh gone.

INJUSTICE

Of all the foul, ignoble sins of man
Injustice stands alone as being most base,
It is the King of Evil's heinous plan
To stigmatize the entire human race.

The stab of an injustice sears the soul
And leaves a burning ember in the heart,
And although years may into decades roll,
It smolders on, refusing to depart.

The weakest ones are always victimized
By this most devastating human blight,
Which must have been in hell first symbolized
To undermine the basic law of Right.

Its victims lose what faith they had in men,
For disillusioned minds have narrow scope.
They cannot well believe or love again,
And Justice holds not one faint ray of hope.

Injustice springs from deadly poisoned roots
The merciless hearts have nurtured through the years.
Those hearts inferior to the savage brutes
Have made this world an ocean filled with tears.

IF YOU COULD ONLY LOVE ME A LITTLE BIT

Give me but a little love
If only tiny mite,
Just enough for you to prove
To me your heart is right.

If you could only love me a little bit,
How glad I would be!
With heart as light
As bird in flight
Above the sunny sea.
Then life would really be a paradise,
So that's why I want you
To try and love me just a little bit
And let my dreams come true,
Let my dreams come true.

If that favor you'd bestow
I never would complain.
Oh, the joy 'twould be to know
Hopes were not dreamed in vain!

I WALKED IN THE SPRINGTIME

I walked in the Springtime one morning, alone,
And found, without searching, a story.
As rainbow-crowned Sun was ascending his throne
While birds sang loud praise to his glory.

The wild flowers being bathed in the crystal night dew,
To dazzling gems of perfection,
Smiled thanks to their lord, who had watched while they grew
Into a most gorgeous selection.

This thought then occurred to me, on that spring day!
What pleasure there is, just in living,
And to marvel at such stupendous display,
When, with lavish hand, Nature is giving.

JACK FROST

Jack Frost, Winter's steady,
Is with us already
To intimidate folks with his icy breath,
Came as in a hurry
Upon a snow flurry
To worry good people nigh almost to death.

The sidewalks are slippery,
And air is sure nippy.
Ears protest on being exposed to the breeze;
No gas in the meter
To fire up the heater,
So all there is left is to grimace and freeze.

O Jack, you're a pippin—
You send us all skippin'
To cover, a-trippin' the heel and the toe,
When you start enforcing
The mercury down coursing
Till reaching that cipher we know as zero.

If we would outdo you
The way to subdue you
We've found from experience is a paradox.
We can laugh at your best
If we're heavily dressed
And defy your worst buffets while being under wraps.

LOVE'S LINKS

Of Love there are five distinct links
To help complete its chain,
While in this life those various clinks
One hears should he remain.

First comes the noblest and the best,
Confiding, loving years,
When Mother on her knee caressed
And kissed away your tears.

The second is the pleasant link
Of adolescent days,
As you are gazing o'er the brink
At Love's first golden rays.

The third is the betrothal vow,
The promise, then the ring,
And you stand at the altar now
While loving arms cling.

Then fourth, which strengthens family ties,
When longed for baby creeps
Into your life with smiling eyes
And rosy, dimpled cheeks.

Then comes the fifth, and chain is done,
As ageing man and wife
See Hope's bright, gleaming, autumn sun,
In evening of life.

LUCY LOU

Though 'twas no strange sight, yet the moon one night
Had to smile through the clouds when
A youth and maid together strayed
Down a tree-fringed mossy glen,
And trying his skill, as lovers will
When coaxing a kiss,
He haltingly made known his plea
In a voice something like this:

"Lucy Lou, Lucy Lou,
What would you say if I make love to you?
One little kiss, dear, you'll never miss,
And it will make my heart bubble with bliss,
And I promise you
I'll not ask for two,
So, let me have just one, please, Lucy Lou."

'Tis the same old tale that can never pale
Until love has ceased to be
Of man and maid 'neath leafy shade,
So the moon can't even see.
While lovers walk they're sure to talk
Much in this same refrain,
On city street or rustic seat
Of a country village lane.

MY LITTLE BIRD ENCASED IN STEEL

My little bird encased in steel,
 Confined a prisoner there,
Withal your song has glad appeal
 Entirely void of care.

At times our wonder is why you
 Sing with a voice so sweet?
While prisoned in that cage of blue
 You should be more discreet.

Some folks may think you sing with joy
 And so would rather to be
A whim of man, a mere playtoy,
 Than to again be free
In that glad land where you belong
 And sunshine ever smiles,
Named because of your lilting song
 The fair Canary Isles.

As for myself I hold the view
 Within that tiny breast
A heart's imploring freedom true,
 But you know that the best
Advice is found in adage brief—
 Which seemingly you're trying—
The best prescription known for grief:
 "Sing it instead of crying."

MISS OPPORTUNITY

'Tis said, Miss Opportunity
Knocks at each person's door
But once, and if she can't come in
One hears of her no more.
Well, I think that's a shabby trick
On common people play,
To knock and, though we do not hear,
Then hie yourself away.

My dear Miss Opportunity,
I don't think that is right,
For you doubtless came to my house
In middle of the night
When I was deep in slumber
Upon dreamland's farthest shore;
That is just when you must have come
And rapped outside my door.

Did you really expect that I
Could hear a gentle knock
Upon the door at midnight,
Or at one or two o'clock?
If you had wished a fair game play,
Miss Opportunity,
You would have waited till I was
Awake to visit me.

MOST BEAUTIFUL UPON THIS EARTH TO ME

Most beautiful upon this earth to me
Are flowers, all kinds; I love them every one.
Yes, each a sermon speaks more fluently
Than any preacher beneath heaven's sun.

Each blossom is reality, a prayer
To an all-wise but to us secret power.
One can perceive such demonstration there,
In every petal of a single flower.

A lover of all flowers, when one I see
I'd pluck and clasp it tightly did not I
Know too that if not fondled tenderly
It would within the moment wilt and die.

All flowers are too refined for mortal hand
To ever touch but with a precious care.
As symbols from fond hope's expectant land,
They're meant to chasten mankind everywhere.

MOTHER

Of all loving words man has ever learned,
Coined in the depths of his soul's brightest flame,
From that whitest heat where molten fires burned
Originated a glorified name.

That name is Mother, inspired by emotion,
Surgings of heart from its innermost core,
Not unlike waves of billowing ocean,
Whispered as prayer when receding from shore.

"Mother" when spoken awakens a feeling,
One which all men have acceded as blest,
Remembrance of childhood bring thoughts, revealing
Mother caressing you close to her breast.

Mother! that word is a magnetic key
Opening the portals of dear memory.

MONARCH OF THE WOOD

It has, no doubt, for centuries
With fortitude sublime
Absorbed the mighty blows of that
Famed gladiator, Time.

Serene and in a poise erect
Majestic head unbowed,
Displaying through onslaught of the years
A courage still uncowed.

As legend giants of long ago
Dwarfed men who near them stood,
This stately tree stands out supreme,
Sole monarch of the wood.

A king in truth it really is,
Possessing regal mien,
Adorned in royal splendor with
A vernal crown of green.

MANKIND HAS WANDERED ALL OVER THIS EARTH

Mankind has wandered all over this earth
For ages uncounted, untold,
And sages have differed regarding our birth
But a theory each only unfold.

The wisest of men are compelled to confess
No definite knowledge is found,
Being based on conjecture, at best but a guess
On fantasy instead of ground.

Like sailors on ocean uncharted, astray,
And no equipment for rowing,
Knowing not the port from which they sailed away
Or haven to which they are going.

We, too, are drifting on, ceaselessly on,
With seeming no rudder or oar,
Upon troubled waters and soon shall be gone
Where? No answer responds from the shore.

There must be a purpose, some preconceived plan,
Why this olden drama is played
Upon stage of life by an actor named man;
The first act may here but be laid.

The second could be some ethereal sphere
Where all discontent is unknown,
When heart throbs of worry at once disappear
And peace with joy smiles from their throne.

Thus is Hope all people's salvation,
Without which man is but a mere clod.
Through it since the dawn of Creation
He's been communicating with God.

ON FISHING

When you're dyed in deep blue
And don't know what to do,
With life's motor running in low,
Fix yourself a quick date
With Dame Nature; don't wait,
And off to some wooded brook go.

Just get hold of a rod
And haste to the green sod
On wild flowery bank of quiet stream,
Where birds sing from trees high,
Ageless songs towards the sky,
Chanting praises to heaven, 'twould seem.

What a sense of delight
In that expectant bite
From the fish as it darts to and fro
Around end of your line;
Yes, it gets one like wine;
It's a feeling but fishermen know!

There's a thrill in that bout
With a big, lusty trout
When on impulse he nibbles the lure,
And decides to match will
Against your test of skill—
Then the odds should be even, that's sure.

When you're holding a rod
You are closest to God,
Which is where you truly belong.
While the heart with joy soars
In the glorious outdoors
Such happiness cannot be wrong.

But make fishing true sport,
Do not prolong the hurt
Of the fish you are lucky to take.
When one you chance to catch
At that moment dispatch;
Do so for a calm conscience sake.

O SUN!

O Sun! celestial body of that vast
And wondrous realms of the great unknown,
Wherefrom you gaze as centuries drift past,
Beneath the turrets of your fiery throne.

Those eons, from which you have been watching there
And could no doubt if feeling so inclined,
Relate the truth about this earth and bare
The mystery that now surrounds mankind.

What of this orb, this fast revolving sphere
Millions of anxious minds would be relieved
Should you divulge when earth did first appear
Or what great plan is back of it conceived.

Of origin of man you hold the key,
What was his stature upon his debut?
When your first rays were cast on him, did he
Shape up as now, we wish to know of you?

And that exact location, where was it?
In Eden fair did you perchance perceive,
And if the name was Adam, as 'tis writ,
Was his companion then our mother Eve?

We wish . . . but what's the use—if wishes were
All satisfied we would be still, I ween,
Disgruntled beings, for with nought to infer
This life would be a very dull routine.

O JUSTICE FAIR

O Justice fair! Why did you go away
And leave within the human breast a void?
Now treachery and avarice hold sway,
No more by your proximity annoyed.

O Justice fair! You fought a gallant fight,
But having gone, what shall we people do?
Being the grand Champion recognized by Right,
She placed her fullest confidence in you.

O Justice fair! the world's priceless gem
Which tainted gold could never hope to buy,
Of virtues, you were the great parent stem
Upon which all the others did rely.

O Justice fair! Why did you go away
And leave the human heart to vice a prey?

PITTSBURGH HILLS

Dark, brooding hills! morosely you stand
Austere, and yet alluring to the eye,
Though scowling, our attention yet command,
That great destroyer of all—Time—you defy.

O sphinx-like silent hills, could it be told
All you have seen since first He wove earth's loom,
Ah! what a tragic story would unfold
Through countless ages from this world's womb.

Eons ere man your stolid structures viewed
There reigned a stillness, then within your ken
Came life—then rapine, in continuous feud,
For might was right in Nature even then.

When? Sages are divided and just guess,
The Builders came, from where there is no trace,
Half civilized into the wilderness
And founded mounds upon your rugged face.

The Indians were next, of purple tan,
From whom, it is surmised, the Builders fled;
Time's pendulum moved on, came the white man
With guns and bribes to dispossess the Red.

Does that complete the circle? Who can tell?
You can, old hills, ten thousand years or more.
If our sojourn here is but a spell,
Shall we pass on as races have before?

WHERE A RIVER RUNS AROUND

Where a river runs around
A green hill of woody ground
On its everlasting journey to the sea,
And the fishes jump in play
On its surface all the day,
A fond memory brings me back, unconsciously.

Shady trees on crest above
Hide a cottage that I love,
Where were spent my happy days, a guileless boy.
I prefer its whitewashed walls
To these mirrored, polished halls;
There my joy was never tainted with alloy.

Yet the pity of it all
Before heeding siren call,
Could I only then have known this simple truth:
One can never hope to find
Gift of a contented mind
But in treasured and endearing scenes of youth.

Though adventure's open door
Tempted me on to explore,
And great wonders of the world to behold,
Still a lazy river bend
Is where thoughts of memory wend
And this longing heart through life shall be enrolled.

A CEMETERY SITE

A cemetery site beside a wood
I saw today while in a pensive mood,
Which one could see was falling to neglect
And had on me a strange, abstruse effect;
So thoughts came trooping through this mind of mine
Which I shall make an effort to define:

Above forgotten graves wild flowers had grown,
A gracious gesture to in part atone
For pledges broken by unfaithful friends.
'Twas thus a cordial nature made amends.

With little seeking also could be found
Some frames of wreaths the wind had blown around
While to them still adhered stems of those flowers
Picked in their pristine blush from Summer bowers,

As there are youths, alas! one may assume,
Plucked, too, in the bright dawn of early bloom
And sleeping under cover of this sod
At summons of an all commanding God.

Their dreams, upon which castles high were raised,
And at which blissful Fancy often gazed,
Sleep with them—bubbles in Hope's sky of blue,
Craved by the many, yet attained by few.

Those monuments which once conferred the grace
Of somber splendor to this hallowed place
Are poised at grotesque angles, nearly all,
As cowering from oblivation's fall.

Yet some are so impressively erect
That eye of critic could no fault detect,
Too newly chiseled with deft hand of skill
For Time—the Wrecker—to impose his will.

And mortals who had chosen them with care
Beneath selected slabs are resting there.
Stones—to endure a while above their heads,
Then lie in rubble piles on nameless beds.

How pitiful is such a futile plan
To try perpetuate the name of man!
Names are like clouds in dominating wind—
Loom up, pass on, and leave no trace behind.

The anguished tears that in this acre fell
Would brim and overflow a copious well.
Heart rending thoughts from memory's freshet green
Make 'edge of sorrow's dagger point more keen:

Fond recollection of a mother's smile.
That lasting friendship which made life worthwhile
A child's glad kiss as tiny arms embrace.
Those—years may dim but never can efface.

Such mental pictures which I've tried to paint,
As years go drifting on, become more faint;
A wise Arranger has ordained it so
That balm of time should ease heart pangs of woe.

Had not kind Nature with divine foresight
Permitted man such memories requite,
No haven left to harrowed thoughts repair,
Then mind bereft would kill heart in despair.

We know to core of tree does each year bring
A safer shelter with protective ring,
And that each year, too, has shield of film brought
To brain enwrap, besieged by grief's onslaught.

I LOVE TO LET MY FANCY ONWARD DRIFT

I love to let my fancy onward drift
Along the road of bygone yesterday,
The only place where I can see a rift
Between those clouds that now darken my way.

This road connects the bridge which intervenes,
Dividing those endearing days when I
Wandered with carefree feet by loving scenes
Beneath youth's fair and shadowless, blue sky.

So when I wish to visit those fond haunts
Of boyhood days, I just allow my mind
To cross this span upon its happy jaunts
Where heart can balm of solace always find.

THE U. S. A.

Would I had a voice of thunder
So the welkin I could ring
In praise of a land of wonder
And its beauty to you sing,
Chant with pride the grandest story
Ever claimed by tongue or pen
Of a nation raised to glory
By the deeds of gallant men.

'Tis the land of the great George Washington;
'Tis the land of Lincoln, too;
'Tis the land where Freedom's glorious sun
Sheds brightest rays on you.
'Tis the land where the Starry Banner
Waves proudly to display
Its streaming bars and gleaming stars;
'Tis the land of the U. S. A.

As a bird keeps onward winging
With untiring energy,
I would never weary singing
Of this land of liberty,
But echo this fervid feeling
Harbored inside my heart's core,
Sending it as joy bells pealing
To vibrate from shore to shore.

"DAD"

So many grand songs about Mother are told,
While Father's completely left out in the cold.
With all noted singers such songs are a fad.
I wonder why they never sing of poor Dad.

To that dear name of Mother
Heart always will respond,
But yet there is another name
Of which I'm just as fond,
For Father's brow gets furrowed, too,
And that is why I'm sad.
With Mother's name it is a shame
They don't link that of Dad.

When I hear them singing of Mother's white hair,
I feel that somehow they're not acting quite fair.
That Mother is ageing there is little doubt,
But Father is also; then why leave him out?

GO THROUGH LIFE WEARING A SMILE

Go through life wearing a smile
On a happy, carefree face.
Make this living job worth while
As along life's path you chase.

Strew that path with gorgeous flowers,
Radiant as rainbow hue.
Pass through years like pleasant hours.
Begin now. It's up to you.

Plant on each side evergreens,
Shady laurels overhead,
Whispering pines and forest queens
Underneath which you may tread.

Wander down that flowery isle,
Beautiful as fairy dream,
Cultivated with your smile,
Things are really as they seem.

HOW FASCINATING WORDS CAN BE

An orator with golden tongue
Can paint a picture fair
Of mansions built on rainbow rims
Suspended upon air,

Envisioning the rising sun
Shown over green hills flaming—
How fascinating words can be
Glossed in artistic framing!

PENNSYLVANIA

Would that my voice were chiming bells so I could sing in glee
Of winding streams and pictured dells in pleasant harmony,
To chant the praise of that great State of Pennsylvania
And have its music to vibrate around the U. S. A.

To the sylvan vales of Penn,
The home of virile men
And women fair to see,
Wherein rang forth that call
From Independence Hall,
"Freedom From Tyranny."
O Pennsylvania! My Pennsylvania!
You're the grandest state of the forty-eight—
My Pennsylvania!

Had I but the great power to make this country resound
From mountain high to lowland lake, one detonating ground,
From old New York to Frisco Bay, from Texas up to Maine,
I'd echo on in roundelay this vigorous refrain.

A SONG OF LOVE

From a sylvan valley grove
I once heard a song of love
Echoed through the wooded dells.
As intoned by magic bells
A small bird's gay song of cheer
Passaged through enraptured ear
In exalted tone of glee,
An enchanting melody.

That little bird was warbling from a tree top
To his lady in the cozy nest below,
Reminding her of happiness and sunshine,
This glorious song to the vale overflow:

Chirr, chirr, dear, be of good cheer
And have no fear; your love is near.
It's to you alone I sing
Though the woodlands gaily ring.

Singing a sweet song of love
To his spouse from branch above,
From a fond heart joyous and free,
Rippling notes of harmony,
Emphasizing as it were
His fidelity to her,
A brave pledge of loyalty
From that topmost bough of tree.

Then was I with thought impressed
Of a bird in homey nest,
Peeping through green, leafy bowers
At bright carpets of Spring flowers,
Wafted on the perfumed breeze,
Floating through the wavy trees,
While a gallant serenade
Is by lover daily played.

WHEN THE SUN SALUTES THE MORNING

When the sun salutes the morning
In the beauty of re-birth,
With a golden tinge adorning
Furrowed landscape of the earth,
Birds in every dale and highway
Inspired by the glorious sight
Lift glad voices to blue sky-way,
Up and on to heaven's height.

EILEEN

Eileen, I'm to you appealing;
Tell me that you love me, dear,
For around my heart is stealing
Something close akin to fear
Which will make me ever lonely
Till I hear your gentle voice,
Sweetheart, say you love me only,
Make this heart of mine rejoice.

My dear Eileen! My little queen,
The idol of my life's fair dream,
If you should now my love deny,
My darling, I would surely die
Because, Eileen, this life would be
Too dark and dreary then for me.

Eileen, do not let me languish,
Speak those words that will relieve.
Do not have me suffer anguish;
Tell me really you believe
That each syllable I've spoken
To you, darling, is sincere.
Then, my Eileen, as a token
Kiss me and dispel my fear.

ONE EVENTIDE

One eventide, I song-bird spied
While strolling through a woody land,
So close beside that, had I tried,
I could have touched it with my hand.

I felt as must one who had burst
In on recluse at hour of prayer
Though not to blame, engulfed in shame
Of his having intruded there.

Or, too, as must a sinner thrust
Without permission to explain—
Into a shrine, hallowed, divine,
While knowing his presence does profane.

I was as awed before my God,
And halted, without power of will
In rigid stance, as in a trance
This heart of mine was almost still.

Ignoring me, it sang with glee
The sweetest song I've ever known.
"This bird," mused I, "is of the sky,
And has to earth from Heaven flown."

Perhaps of fright that bird took flight
Into the fast, retreating day;
And I began to walk again,
Continuing my homeward way.

The ebb and flow in twilight glow
Of those notes so enchanted to me,
Through fleecy rings on wispy wings
This bird still sings in phantasy.

And in my mind I'll always find
A picture that time cannot dim
Of eventide when Thrush I spied
While chanting its own vesper hymn.

MOST PEOPLE APPRAISE BY EXTERIOR

One evening in my bedroom, reading,
To shorten the wearisome hours,
As dark shades of night came on speeding,
And birds lapsed to quiet in their bowers
At summons which made them subservient,
All helping the mind to impress,
If it were a trifle observant,
That day was taking a recess.

As night's curtain thus was descending,
Enveloping all in its fold,
Objects in their own shadows blending
And darkness well nigh uncontrolled,
To me came upon the air ringing
A voice which an angel might own.
I listened astounded; 'twas singing
In thrilling, ecstatic tone.

Looking through the window, enraptured,
To see if I could find the spot
Whence came those notes which had me captured,
And beheld a ramshackle cot.
On making inquiries I learned
That hovel, back off the main road
Was talked of with contempt and spurned
Because of being a Negro abode.

Most people appraise by exterior,
A habit to which we are prone,
Instead of insisting interior
Should in common justice be shown.
We cannot judge a book through its cover,
Or value a leaf by its page,
Nor is there a way to discover
Worth of bird imprisoned in cage.

PUSSIES ON THE WILLOW TREE

I saw an omen of good cheer
Today while crossing yonder lea.
A symbol of fond Spring is here,
There're pussies on the willow tree!

This heart from melancholy blues
With joy leaped to the throat of me
The moment my eyes flashed the news—
"There're pussies on the willow tree."

As if confined a captive long
Within a cage unwillingly,
Released, it soared like lark in song—
There're pussies on the willow tree!

Soon birds shall fill each wood and glen
With matchless notes of ecstasy
To thrill again the souls of men;
There're pussies on the willow tree!

Bright, diamond-studded, dewy flowers
Shall strew the land for all to see
While garden seats are changed to bowers—
There're pussies on the willow tree!

This resurrection every Spring
Of Nature's regal pageantry
Awakes in one an urge to sing,
There're pussies on the willow tree!

Tomorrow's early morning sun
Again shall see me cross the lea
To feast enraptured eyes upon
The pussies on the willow tree.

A WILTED ROSE

Ah! would that I could have the power
To take again this wilted flower
And place it back upon its bush,
Have leaves renew their peerless blush,
Of which is every artist's creed
To truly paint, but none succeed.
Of lovely flowers fair Nature grows,
Few are as perfect as the Rose.

Once gorgeous Rose, your head is bowed.
No more 'twill pose with hauteur proud
In jewels bedecked when sun and dew
Came graciously to honor you,
And paid you court till it did seem
You rivalled beauty's fairest dream.
With regal poise you graced that bower,
And now you're but a faded flower.

These petals from which perfume rare
Was wafted on the Summer air,
A scented air which made one feel
That joy of living was so real,
The happiness from which glad heart
Was so reluctant to depart,
Inspiring wish to ever live
In the sweet fragrance roses give.

And to think that I am the means
To tear you from endearing scenes!
Where you were meant to gaily bloom
And fill the breeze with sweet perfume.
My hands! Most fault must rest on them.
They burst in twain thy tender stem.
I scarcely can endure the shame.
Impulsiveness is all to blame.

CIVILIZATION

I wonder how it came, this name we call Civilization,
For though we're told he is as old as Adam and creation
Yet no person ever saw him, or if he has, can state
On what occasion it occurred or specify the date.

If Civilization does exist, that's in reality,
Please resurrect a "Sherlock Holmes" to solve the mystery,
For when you go to find him home the people always shout,
"You are a little tardy, Friend, that man has just gone out."

Then should you ask the whereabouts of this elusive fellow,
Their answer is a voice as one; this is what they'll bellow,
"Why, that was only told to us what we are telling you
By people who were also told that same tall story, too."

So it goes from year to year without clear realization
Of the very evasive being known as "Civilization,"
Until we finally are forced to this abrupt conclusion:
Folks who still believe in him are victims of delusion.

If I should this suggestion make, what would you people say,
To spell this gent's cognomen in our twentieth century way,
Civilization takes twelve letters to have it so comply,
Why not simplify and write it thus: M-O-N-E-Y?

Dear Sir: We of the common herd to you make fervid plea,
Come mingle with us and dispel our incredulity
Upon this motley stage of life, and act a noble part
To demonstrate possession of an honest, human heart.

It's up to you to prove to us, we're all agog to see
You save (as should a legend knight) betrayed humanity.
So in this game of Hide and Seek, don't blame us when we chide,
For we're forever seeking, while you forever hide.

CUPID

There's a little boy named Cupid
Who some people class as stupid
And say his bow and arrow are a fake,
But yet we know when Danny
Gets a bead on "Bob" and "Annie,"
He fills their hearts with darts until they ache.

As a marksman he's a dandy,
Is the goods we call the candy.
They tell that he has medals in galore,
And never yet, 'tis claimed,
Missed the mark at which 'twas aimed.
His record is an almost perfect score.

As he's pictured still a baby,
It is possible that maybe
This smiling, chubby, mischievous, winged scamp
Has upon some unknown mountain
Found youth's everlasting fountain,
While searching for some lover's trail to camp.

Nor does he to beauty cater,
For if heart of second rater
Proves it is a good target for this bow,
If the symptoms shown are tender,
Danny Cupid, the love vendor,
Will carefully take aim and let it go.

Judging then by these facts, Cupid
Can't be reckoned as being stupid;
His feathered shafts are poised in every clime.
He is never idly sitting,
But has arrows from bow flitting—
Love's sentinel on duty all the time.

CHEERYVILLE

There is a place called Cheeryville,
Called Cheeryville, called Cheeryville,
There is a place called Cheeryville.
Have you ever been there, sir?
Where people wear a constant smile,
A constant smile, a constant smile,
Where people wear a constant smile,
And all are free from care, sir.

They smile and joke the whole day long,
The whole day long, the whole day long,
They smile and joke the whole day long,
Regardless of their ages.
If you were there, sir, you'd laugh, too,
Sir, you'd laugh, too. Sir, you'd laugh, too.
If you were there, sir, you'd laugh, too,
Because it is contagious.

The man who has a grouch is barred,
A grouch is barred, a grouch is barred.
The man who has a grouch is barred
From living in this town, sir,
Because, you see, he always wears,
He always wears, he always wears,
Because, you see, he always wears
Upon his face a frown, sir.

If you would care to there reside,
To there reside, to there reside,
If you would care to there reside,
Promote a cheerful smile, sir.
Then build a home in Cheeryville,
In Cheeryville, in Cheeryville,
Then build a home in Cheeryville
And live there all the while, sir.

THIS ROAD OF LIFE

Now sixty miles have I traversed along
This Road of Life, which makes my years three score.
The first of these passed as a gladsome song,
With close succeeding ones a gay encore.

The landscape that surrounded those first miles
Was ravishingly picturesque to view
And I, susceptible to beauty's wiles,
Beheld but a bright sky of cloudless blue,

The birds sang an incessant roundelay
And Nature wore her matchless robe of spring.
Each year sped by, condensed in one month—May,
My heart was light as fancy on the wing.

Being optimistic then, as all youths are,
I loitered on enraptured by the flowers,
Unmindful that those golden years, too, were
Fleeting away as carefree, happy hours.

It was about the fortieth mile in years
That I began to trudge instead of walk.
Too, a slight grade upon this road appears
Which surface changed to brick from layer of chalk.

The grassy edging did not seem so green;
With singing birds I was not so intrigued;
All foliage assumed a darker sheen;
Since then each mile has made me more fatigued.

In a few years this little grade which I
But noticed in the evening of my prime
Has now become so rugged and so high
It takes all of my energy to climb.

Just as a watch that one neglects to wind,
Its strength exhausted, stops on the next day,
This milestone I am now leaving behind
May be my last to reach on Life's Highway.

But we are ever striving toward the sun
To gain those heights beyond the gloomy mists.
Some grand, instinctive spirit guides us on,
Which is, no doubt, why race of man exists.

Oh, for the strength to reach that glorious goal
Which those unending skies the secret hold,
Calm haven of safe refuge for a soul
Now buffeted within a crumbling mold!

AMERICA, LAND OF THE FREE

America, Land of the Free,
United States of Liberty,
Where Washington first raised the torch
Of Freedom to the sky,
Where Jefferson and Lincoln, too,
Gave their aid to that flame renew,
Are we to stand now and allow
Those Fathers' work to die?

CHORUS

America, fair land of mine,
May Freedom's torch forever shine
To spread its hallowed rays divine,
 A mighty blaze
To brighten up the shadowed seams
Of earth with its transcendent gleams
And realize all people's dreams
 By its glad rays.

We owe it to those honored three,
Whom we revere in memory,
To keep this light still burning
Of Justice and of Right,
To keep its radiance undimmed,
Inset in halo golden-rimmed,
A star of Freedom's destiny
Above the mountain height.

WHERE THOSE BLUE-EYED VIOLETS GREW

You mind that valley, sweetheart,
Where the blue-eyed violets grew
By the little country village
We often rambled through?
When we loitered by those willows
To pluck the sweet bouquets—
Then all was love and sunshine
In those bygone, golden days?

Let's nestle closer, Mary, dear, and take heart-longing trip
Back to the land of yesteryear on whimsy's mystic ship,
Across the sea of reverie, wafted by memory's breeze,
Where skies were blue and violets grew by shady willow trees.

This precious gift of memory
Is an enchanted ship
Whereon we are transported back
Upon heart-loving trip
Into the scenes of yesterday
Where violets are strewn
To beautify our pathway
In this life's dull afternoon.

So through life's final season
We can see the summer sun
In retrospective mirror
Till our earthly course is run.
Can fondly clasp each other's hand
And wistfully review
That "Valley of the Willows"
Where those blue-eyed violets grew.

THAT HILL POINTING STRAIGHT TO THE WEST

That hill pointing straight to the west
Momentarily was caressed
By ebbing orb of golden hue
As horizon hid it from view.

Another milestone has been passed,
A day into the abyss cast.
Time is a master, strict and stern;
A day once flown cannot return.

I gazed on that twilight caress,
Choked on thoughts words could not express.
When green-clad hill met bowing sun
Another precious day had gone.

Then promptly came the question: Why
We let each one meander by?
Length of life's act which mankind plays
Is averaged twenty thousand days.

And as I watched, aware of this,
The regal sun that high hill kiss,
While birds trilled in the evening light,
A day was vanishing in night.

Each day, yes, every single hour,
We should apply our utmost power
To make earth a joyous stopping place
Where all could happiness embrace.

THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO NOWHERE

The road that leads to Nowhere
Has an easy, sloping grade,
And a surface smooth as velvet
To all who promenade
So aimlessly upon it
And whose thoughts that weight the mind
Are feathers light in careless flight
Before each changing wind.

This road that leads to Nowhere
Is filled with a motley throng
Who listlessly parade on it
Throughout their whole lives long,
But though they watch appraising bees
Encircling the flowers
Let minutes fly as seconds by,
And days as fleeting hours.

This road is filled with beautiful
And fascinating views.
Most everything that greets the eye
Reflects the brightest hues,
While from the towering evergreens
Glad song-birds loudly sing,
Which make the year one season here,
And that is genial Spring.

Until, too late, we find our fun
On this road to Nowhere
Can only last, as millions know,
While we are getting there.
The end is a bleak, desert land
Where sunny joy soon sets;
Then we are left of all bereft
But undying regrets.

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THE SADDEST HISTORY OF THE AGES

The saddest history of the ages
Was not written with a pen,
But is smeared through Time's red pages
With blood wrung from hearts of men.

'Tis a sordid, gruesome story
Wherein Mammon dominate
Held in ruthless hand his gory,
Merciless sword of greed and hate.

With the aid of hireling minions
He dictates in every clime,
Over all this earth's dominions
Long before men reckoned time.

Cunning Satan, Man's swordmaster,
Has taught his dupe, Mammon, well,
How to drive us to disaster
With heart pitiless as hell.

We, supposed to be reborn
By the Savior's glorious birth,
Are more ravaged and war torn
Than before He came on earth.

Questioned, wise men answer sadly,
"Barbarism is the cause
Why some men kill brothers madly,
While the mob gives wild applause."

Civilization, mocked and flouted
Like to Him of Galilee,
Ridiculed, blasphemed and knouted,
This is your Gethsemane.

Man, untutored, selfish creature
Of conflicting hopes and fears,
Has because of perverse nature
Truth denied two thousand years.

But our knowledge is expanding
To the wisdom of His plan;
Light shall flame to understanding
And true brotherhood of man.

THE SCENES OF MY BOYHOOD

The scenes of my boyhood—
First love of my heart!
Have been by the spoilers reclaimed,
The streamlets and wildwood
Of which I was part,
Where Nature, supreme, ruled untamed.

They tell me tall buildings
Now obstruct the eye
Where great forest trees used to grow,
“All of which is progress,”
But my one reply
Is always an emphatic “No.”

Those guests of the Summer
In that home of mine
Were forced to a farther retreat,
Whose gay plumaged wings
Revealed in the sunshine
A rainbow, my rapt eyes to greet,

And then the rhythm of their wonderful song,
Ah, me! I can yet feel the thrill
It gave, as that echo resounded along
Over valley and tree-studded hill.

How well I remember the big antlered deer
Erect above his fawn and doe,
So regal in bearing, yet born with a fear
That nearby was lurking a foe.
I treasure that picture still clearly in mind,
Envisioned through the bushy thorn,
In statuesque posture while sniffing the wind
With proud head thrown back as in scorn.

A wolf howling forth
In the eerie moonlight
His weird chant upon the still air,
Awaking in other
Wild things of the night
An instinctive dread of the slayer.

Such scenes though long vanquished
Have never grown pale
Whenever I travel road back
To those youthful days
Upon memory's fond trail,
And by me it's a well-beaten track!

But although keen ax
Of the prosaic pioneers
Did that primal beauty destroy,
In mind it is fresh
As spring flowers round
Those meres where often I played when a boy.

TWO ROADS

There are two roads within this life of ours,
One of which every person has to choose.
The first is terraced off with flaming flowers
Reflecting the most fascinating hues.

Along its sides are planted lofty trees,
From where glad birds, a hundred million strong,
Send forth in notes along the perfumed breeze
A captivating melody of song.

The surface of this road is level, too,
So people who walk on it seldom tire,
But instead are filled with the flame anew
Of passionate and self-loving desire.

It is indeed such an alluring road
It has been classified "The Easy Way"
Where lightly sits duty's unpleasant load
Upon the backs of those who on it stray.

Yet there are some prefer the other one
And over rugged hills throughout life tread;
No flowers or trees or birds to urge them on
But rocky boulders, threatening, instead.

What is it keeps them plodding patiently
Along this road with steady, tireless feet,
Eyes fixed into the distance eagerly,
Unmindful of all obstacles they meet?

Their gaze outvisions those of earthly scope.
Far beyond this globe's border they can see
"The Twins"—resplendent stars of Faith and Hope—
Meet recompense for life's rough journey.

WERE I EMPOWERED TO UNDERSTAND

Were I empowered to understand
Your murmuring, O ancient tree!
The wealth of all this spacious land
Would not be worth such gift to me.

I'd learn then of your joys and fears
Which were experienced through the span
Of possibly three hundred years,
Before appearance of white man.

Those tortured moments—here supposed—
While buffaloes when grazing by
With threatening gestures around nosed,
And you, at most three inches high.

And when a tiny sapling grown,
Removed a few years from the seed,
What agony you must have known
When they decided to stampede.

Did ever deer, to satiate
His hunger, browsing close to view,
Eat up your little seedling mate,
Then cast attentive look at you?

That age must have been living fears
Till Time in changing, steady flight
Brought finally some joyous years
As sunshine follows darkest night.

Thus, growing into stately plume
With manners graceful as a Queen,
Invited birds to come and room
Within your friendly boughs of green.

Then followed periods of glad song
While welcome and attractive guests
Sang as they worked throughout the long,
Gay, mating days, building love nests

Till helpless, little, fluffy things
In your long arms made their debut,
Then in short while developed wings
And from those social arms flew.

It would be foolish to suppose
Those pleasant years were never marred.
The frosty winds and heavy snow
With lightning flashes often scarred.

Those dreary winters you've survived—
A sentinel chained to his post—
And when of all leaves were deprived
You sighed then with strong winds the most.

That long array of tragic sights,
Which doubtless were through centuries viewed,
Such as wild things in savage fights
Till one or other was subdued.

And, too, no doubt, could also tell
Why round you were built Indian fires,
And how each tribe's ear-splitting yell
Betrayed the trend of its desires.

Their sorrow felt for "Big Chief" dead,
When from this life he got release,
And burying the hatchet red
By smoking deep the pipe of peace.

Or, maybe some fair Indian maid
And dauntless brave decided to
Pledge troth for life beneath this shade,
Then for that memory cherished you.

I cannot, patriarchal tree,
Interpret mystic whispers, so
Those answers you are giving me,
Though craving them, I'll never know.

THE CARDINAL

Of feathered songsters to me known
I like the red bird best;
Distinctively, it ranks alone
As our most genial guest;

Throughout the spring and summer long
(One of the few that does)
Keeps whistling a vibrant song
To cheer the hearts of us.

And when the snow blends every scene
Into a glaring white,
My favored one then loves to preen
And seems to find delight

In perching high on some gaunt tree
To crimson feathers plume,
Which makes a setting fair to see
Against the winter gloom.

My friend may have such act arranged
To give man's mind grand scope
And think from bird it has been changed
Into bright gleam of hope,

To realize this icy blast
Of Winter, chill and drear,
Shall soon be of forgotten past
Since Spring is speeding here.

THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO SOMEWHERE

The road that leads to somewhere
Must be narrow, bleak, and straight;
No flowers to brighten up the way
Or lights to indicate
That should one hold its craggy course
With heart that will not quail
There is a grand Elysian land
At the end of that trail.

But though persistency's required
At every step you take,
And fixed resolve to die before
That lonesome road forsake,
The fair reward that's glimmering
Through fogs of lowering haze
Will give to you a strength anew
To clearer see its rays.

And yet the greatest obstacles
Along this road men find
Were specters gaunt of fear and doubt,
Creations of the mind.
So when Somewhere at last is reached,
All readily agree,
The need was will to try until
Was gained ascendancy.

TRUE PLEASURE

Of all the fleeting and elusive things
Man has of happiness the least control
It's an apparition on gaudy wings
Which mocks his life and robs him of his soul.

He gives his all to catch this wraithy sprite
With hands outstretched to firmly enclasp,
But it keeps on upon its ghostly flight
And deftly eludes his eager grasp.

Sometimes he may momentarily find
A flimsy hold with anxious finger tips,
But gliding through the net which wile designed
Leaves his fond hopes in a complete eclipse.

O foolish mortals! Why do we pursue
This phantom from the first years of our birth?
Despite the teaching of the wise but few,
True pleasure is a myth to men on earth.

TRUE HAPPINESS

True happiness a grand illusion
With which people always toy,
Though aware it's an illusion
Which no mortal can enjoy.

Like the beams of Borealis
Ever beyond human reach,
Still it fills the heart with solace
And a glorious sermon preach.

Although man cannot attain it
Yet he does not that fact heed
But hopes wistfully to gain it,
And that wish will not concede.

True happiness—bright star of grandeur—
To where yearning thoughts all fly
Gleams with fascinating splendor
In tomorrow's rosy sky.

TIME

Time—not unlike a surging wave—
Bears helpless man upon its crest,
Relentlessly on toward the grave,
Immovable against protest.

Powerless as is a tiny reed
In devastating hurricane,
He's swept with undiminished speed
Across its billowed, rolling main.

Closer to that pre-destined shore
Its seconds slowly bring him
Until at last, his journey o'er,
Upon that beach will fling him.

Time carries man upon its surge,
To unknown lands it buoys him,
Then at command of Nature's urge
From earth's brief home destroys him.

TO A VIOLET

Sweet little violet, modest flower,
Why do you keep your head
So stooped and in the grasses cower
As if you were in dread
To have the sun upon you shine
Thinking it meet to grow
In obscure places and decline
The brightness 'twould bestow?

You love environs of the vale
The deep, receding dell,
On mossy banks by wooded dale
In solitude you dwell.
Those are the haunts where you abide,
Though it's a mystery
That you should wish to ever hide
In such obscurity.

A thought has now come to my mind.
It is, coy violet blue,
That you in those recesses find
Lingering crystal dew,
Which may account why you forsook
The direct sunbeam's ray
To choose instead the shady nook
And in the shadows stay.

TO A WOOD THRUSH

O charming minstrel of the lonely wood,
Your captivating music is divine.
It creates strange sensations in the blood
And thrills, beyond all words, this heart of mine.

A languid and bewitching feeling reigns,
Mysterious and elusive as the wind,
Yet it is here, within these throbbing veins,
A fitting balm for a distracted mind.

Entrancing notes! To my enchanted ear
They do not to this earthly orb belong,
But is a lute played on some other sphere
And echoed by this glorious bird of song.

A medium from unknown planet sent
To change men's vista and true peace extol,
By voicing this grand message of content:
"Have care depart and rest possess the soul."

TO A DOG

An inspired writer will some day impress
On us the fact of the great debt we owe
To the best friends one can hope to possess
Through the vicissitudes of weal or woe.

A dog's desire is very small reward,
Such as a hand to softly stroke his head
And with a pleasant, kindly spoken word
Address him by a name, as Jack, or Fred.

Then notice his reaction to caress,
See in those beaming eyes unfathomed joy,
Too deep for tongue of man attempt express,
Or plumbed by all the skill science can employ.

Let neighbors meet you with a stony stare,
Or greet a cordial smile with shocked surprise.
They may act so but your dog does not care;
That same devotion glows within his eyes.

This noble trait most people love, but then
Remorse and shame keep us from being enthused,
Aware that unappreciative men
Have dogs, through ages brutally abused.

UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE—UNIFORM RELIGION

To insure civilization a solid foundation,
Erect, without scheming pretense,
A world wide building void of pompous gilding
Upon concrete base of good sense.

Philosophers, sages in volumes of pages
Write of the millenium age,
Are very persistent, its coming's not distant,
Yet will not exact date presage.

Well, we are not prophets, have never made profits
From fountain of a facile pen,
But venture prediction on honest conviction,
We fear they're in error, those men.

Put to capital use the two capital U's
Displayed at the top of this rhyme,
And in two noble strides would be crossed those divides
Which have kept us apart through all time.

WERE I EMPOWERED TO DO A NOBLE DEED

Were I empowered to do a noble deed,
I would at once adopt a wondrous plan
By sowing a tiny, priceless, fertile seed
Of love within the heart of every man.

And nurture each then with the greatest care
A seedling ever got from human hands
Until their teeming blossoms filled the air
With frankincense to sanctify all lands.

Ah, me! to think, a billion blooms aglow
In perfect rhythm of consistent love
Not only for our fellow men; oh, no!
But every living thing which God above

Created for a reason only He
Could by His own infinite wisdom tell,
Some purpose which we mortals cannot see—
In mundane minds such knowledge does not dwell.

A billion rarest blooms, whose tendrils cling
Around a billion hearts—amazing sight!
Then every year would be perpetual Spring
And this whole world a garden of delight.

STEPHEN G. FOSTER

On a receding steep of grassy ground,
Well isolated from unthinking throngs,
Stephen G. Foster's hallowed shrine I found,
The famed composer of true Darkie songs.

On entering the poet's sanctuary
I was enthralled by ancient relics there;
A reverential awe had mastered me
And all I did was idly stand and stare.

Those olden strings and hollow shells of keys,
Manipulated with unrivaled skill,
Were first to breathe the matchless melodies
That gave the world a sentimental thrill.

The master touch of genius—a rare gift—
Possessed but by the great immortal few,
That Foster had, to mind of mankind lift
From drabby thoughts to ones of brighter hue.

SOLILOQUY OF A HORSE

I've served man through those primal years
While clambering to peak of fame,
When he was rent with savage fears,
But now he's cast me off in shame.

Have lifted him from dungeon pit
Of darkness and black despair,
Which was his till he learned to sit
Upon my back and laugh at care.

And have with supreme patience borne
With him while in vindictive mood,
He lashed me till my flesh was torn
And his base anger had subdued.

Was willing slave in arduous climb
From darksome cave to fame's high road
But on attaining crest sublime
Forgets the debt that I am owed.

But why should I expect a change?
Man always was a selfish brute,
And it would be surpassing strange
Did he that selfishness refute.

SANTA CLAUS

Santa Claus will come this year
With the usual good cheer
On his smiling, ruddy face.
From where reindeer skip and race
He will come, the dear "Old Soul,"
All the way from the North Pole,
And will carry on his back
Most everything in a big sack.
He's a good old Santa Claus!
How do I know? Why, because
I have talked with him today.
He told me of being away
Where the weather is so cold
By Alaska's fields of gold,
Polar bears and icebergs, too,
To get pretty toys for you.
When tonight you go to sleep,
Do not from the bed clothes peep.
Santa's coming; he told me
To dress up the Christmas tree.
But on stepping in his sled
Of jingle, jingle bells, he said:
"Now before I dash away
This is what I've got to say:
If they're not good girls and boys
I won't bring them any toys."
Then, calling to his team, "Get on,"
In less than second he was gone.

DEAR LITTLE SONGSTER

Dear little songster, you look so forlorn.
Please now, do tell me the whole candid truth.
Why did you not with companions sojourn
When they moved on to the mild, sunny south?

Would it be possible that you were ailing
And lacking in strength—could not match the flock's speed
Which in accordance with custom prevailing
Continued its flight without tending your need?

Or, might it be through some avian studies
With which you had struggled the whole Summer long,
And yet not completed, informed your buddies
You would remain over to find what was wrong?

With further questions I shall not task you.
You may be thinking of me as a scold,
But you look famished; pray, may I ask you
Would you mind coming inside from the cold?

Say yes, and this promise allow me fulfill:
When Winter decides to relinquish his reign
And on Spring's arrival I'll with a glad thrill
Loose you to freedom of green woods again.

MEET ME AT TWILIGHT, DARLING

The gentle hush of twilight
As birds are lulled to sleep,
When silent shadows of the night
Around all slowly creep,
Will always help remind me
Of a letter from one gone,
That first and only love of mine.
Here's how it was begun:

"Meet me at twilight, darling, when the golden sun has set;
In the evening twilight, and, sweetheart, don't forget
Just as the night is stealing, I hope to see you, Love,
When Angelus is pealing, at the pine-scented grove."

I still retain that missive,
This revered billet-doux
And cannot think of better way
To prove that I've been true,
Than read it in the evening light
To once again recall
Those memories of yesteryear
While shades of Autumn fall.

AN ART DIVINE

An art divine is plainly traced
On every single flower,
From violet's shade in cloistered glade
To orchid's lofty bower.

The diamond opal splendor
Of the dewdrops on the lawn
Are diadems to the pansy
When sunbeams pierce the dawn.

From the plumes of Spring's own lilacs
With their chastening perfume
To the arch of festooned roses
In their June of budding bloom.

From the cherry-wild, fair flowerets,
Sentinels above the brook,
To the gold-flecked, modest primrose
In its own sequestered nook.

From the vigil eye of sunflower,
Watching till its idol hides,
To the flower of night, awaiting,
Till that sun the nadir rides.

From the hardy mountain laurel,
Reaching over craggy steep,
While the daisies in the meadow
Coyly through the grasses peep.

From the morning-glory climbing
On and up into the light,
To the pond of water lilies
Robed in cloaks of virgin white.

From the pear and apple blossoms
Beautifying the hills of home
To those blooms on sea-swept islands,
Decked with beads of snowy foam.

Each flower is a divine desire
To mind with wonder fill,
A super art of His alone
Beyond all mortal skill.

A MAN MAY OWN A SHABBY COAT

A man may own a shabby coat
And wear old shoes crooked at the heel,
No collar to conceal his throat,
Which would have him look more genteel.
Have all the earmarks of a grouch,
A temper quick and uncontrolled,
Walk with a slinking kind of slouch,
Yet his heart may be pure as gold.

Upon the other hand, he may
Have manners suave, sweet and refined,
And on his face, a smile all day,
Be most agreeable and kind
By mastering the subtle art
To hide from one of casual eye
The cunning of a blackened heart
Where sometimes thoughts of murder lie.

There is a moral in this, friend,
Which may be worth a thought to you,
And in some future day may tend
To save long hours of worry, too.
One cannot on the surface trace
The heart or mind of anyone,
Being not exposed upon his face,
But in the deeds that he has done.

BROKEN BLOSSOM

Broken blossom drooped and faded,
Thrown upon the busy street,
Left to die alone, unaided,
Crushed to death by passing feet.

You, who had been proudly sported
On a vain, false loving breast,
Kissed and fondled, nursed and courted
While at peak of beauty's crest.

Ah! What a pathetic story,
To think person whom you pleased
When in bloom of pristine glory
Cast you off when charm ceased.

Those hands, which were first caressing,
Then threw you into that mud,
May be at this moment pressing
Tenderly another bud:

And that other will be meeting
The same sad fate that is yours,
Because human love is fleeting,
A fresh blossom ever lures.

A VALLEY IN SUMMER

A valley in Summer is pleasant,
Refreshing and fair to the eye
Amidst haunts of grouse and of pheasant,
Concealed within thickets nearby.
A red-bird is chanting his ditty
From bough of a sycamore tree,
Beyond the confines of a city
A green Summer valley for me!

A valley in Summer is heaven
To loiter between winding hills
Which Nature has gracefully riven
By placid and serpentine rills,
That seemingly murmur in whispers
To one passing by, a low prayer,
As though he were listening to vespers
In celestial church of the air.

THE BEAUTY OF A FLOWER

Once chosen as the fairest flower,
Though wilted now and dying,
No more the little honey bees
Will encircle you, flying
E'er drawing that nectar from within
Which you were wont to give
To tide them o'er the winter
By which they are meant to live.

Perhaps some lover true had plucked
And gave you to the best
And sweetest girl in the world
While his fond plea he pressed
In whispers that had glad appeal
Of future wedding chimes,
Building grand castles in the air,
As lovers do at times.

In fancy's eye I see this head
Now faded, then a gleam,
Poised upon this slender stem,
Reflecting the sunbeam,
Distributing a sweet perfume
Toward azure, sunny sky,
And changing earth to Paradise
For mortals passing by.

'Tis sad to think how fleeting,
Almost as Summer shower,
Is life of Love's creation—
The beauty of a flower.

STAR OF DESTINY

Try to persuade a narrow mind
The light of Truth to see.
Impossible! That mind is blind
And will forever be.

It is a stark reality
And tragically strange
That what most minds are set against
No power on earth can change.

Which proves that if man harbors hope
To reach the heights sublime,
He must develop intellect
And from the dungeon climb.

Where Hate, that hellish foe of his,
Through countless centuries reigns
And holds man as an abject serf
By robbing him of brains.

In every age man excavates
More from his living tomb;
Enslaved by Hate, the helpless wretch
Is sealing his own doom.

A million years may yet elapse
Before decreed that we
Get Tolerance and gain access
To Star of Destiny.

OUR SUMMER GUESTS HAVE TAKEN WING

Our summer guests have taken wing,
The robin red-breasts are away.
I know because I saw them swing
On towards the south this August day.

They were, at least it seemed to me,
Imbued with restive eagerness,
For flitting on from tree to tree
Could be perceived a nervous stress.

And noticing their mode of flying,
Spasmodic, every muscle tensed,
'Twas evident that death-defying
Adventure they had truly sensed.

An unknown reason urged them on,
Some folks opine it is a gland;
Well, I'll not argue pro or con,
A wise Creator has it planned.

But as they flew into the blue
Of this clear morning's sunny sky,
Too soon they were obscured from view
And silenced that distinctive cry.

A stillness then engulfed the land,
While I stood rigid as a post.
A feeling I can't understand
Enveloped me till I felt "lost";

And though the sun kept shining on,
To me it brought no cheering glow
Well knowing that for months had gone
The dearest friends I'll ever know.

THE JUST MAN

The just man does not care a straw
About your Mayflower pedigree,
Nor effort make to find a flaw
In branches of your family tree.

And neither does he knowledge need,
Dismisses it as "petty, wrong"
In reference as to your creed
Or of the nation you belong.

Such narrow, small-brained thoughts as those
His fully matured, balanced mind
But class as vile and treacherous foes
Which breed distrust among mankind.

The only thing he wants to know
Is of the stuff oneself is made,
Which can be found the way you show
Up in life's busy passing parade.

So granting that your power is strong
And unburdened by heavy load
Don't bully through the milling throng
And force the weak ones off the road.

For he, aware they have the same
Right on this Life's Highway as you,
Holds aid is due the sick and lame
To light their hearts with hope anew.

THE GREAT DESIGNER

Jack Frost, that grand designer
And modeler of art,
Which man can never copy
Even the smallest part,
Those drawings so unexcelled, supreme,
Make mundane efforts vain,
Such as his painting landscape scenes
Upon a window pane.

The ferny plants are drawn with care,
A marvel to behold,
And leads one think fair Venus had
With her hands cast the mold
As we watch with admiring gaze
Them in profusion grow
And wonder if her beautiful gift
She did on him bestow.

But such loveliness is fleeting
With icy breath of frost.
'Twas born and is, when breathings cease,
Irrevocably lost.
Dissolving into atmosphere
Of which it becomes part,
Until no slightest trace remains
Of Nature's frigid art.

Is it not strange the hoar frost should
Leave such rare imprints there,
So beautiful to look upon,
Ideal beyond compare!
As if it were an angel's wing
Flecked that glass to remind
That even in the Winter's gale
We can much beauty find.

THE SARCASTIC WORD

Friend, did you ever realize
One little word with biting sting
Can cause more trouble for its size
Than any other vicious thing?

It is as when a stone you throw
Into a lake that's still and deep
At once you start a wave to flow
And wake the water from its sleep.

That word releases waves of hate
By opening up the sluiceway wide,
And swiftly through that open gate
Flows prejudice to swell the tide

With bias, anger in its wake,
All by this little demon stirred,
Come surging in a hell to make
Because of this ill-spoken word.

It's not unlike a two-edged sword
That cuts a way by pricks and jabs,
This keen, sarcastic, pointed word,
As through some tender heart it stabs.

My friend, if to your lips the nonce
This tempter comes, for your own sake
Restrain your tongue, suppress at once.
Leave in its den that poison snake.

WINDOWS FLASHING IN THE GILDED EAST

Those windows flashing in the gilded East
Are sending signals through the ether back
Across the great unknown, unmeasured track,
Unto the sun at that sun's own request
Before it sinks behind the mountain crest,
As in retreat before the night's attack.
In dusky clouds of inky, somber black
The eastern sky in sable robe is dressed.

The glitter in those windows fainter grow.
Their mentor is astride the mountain rim,
Then drops behind a vivid, crimson ball.
The windows fail to reflect further glow
And get obscured. The houses become dim.
That sable shroud at last envelops all.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

You have grown old and feeble
But still look the same to me,
Although your hair once golden brown
Is changed to silvery.
These laughing eyes are just as gay,
And yet retain that glow
As they did on our wedding day,
Now fifty years ago.

You've been an angel through those years,
Guardian of my life,
Stayed by my side 'midst hopes and fears,
A sweetheart and a wife.
Marched down with me Life's rugged path
To rhythm of Love's tune,
Which made those fifty years to seem
A pleasant honeymoon.

Life's lamp is slowly burning now.
Its brightest beams have passed,
Yet, true love's Sun shall cast its gleams
Upon us to the last.
It pierces through the darkest clouds.
Its rays will never die,
Which is our cue to seek it in
The blue of Heaven's sky.

