

Ballads

Horatio Alger, Jr.

1875

BALLADS.

GRAND'THER BALDWIN'S THANKSGIVING

UNDERNEATH protected branches, from the highway just aloof;
Stands the house of Grand'ther Baldwin, with its gently sloping roof.

Square of shape and solid-timbered, it was standing, I have heard, In
the days of Whig and Tory, under royal George the Third.

Many a time, I well remember, I have gazed with Childish awe At the
bullet-hole remaining in the sturdy oaken door,

Turning round half-apprehensive (recking not how time had fled) Of
the lurking, savage foeman from whose musket it was sped..

Not far off, the barn, plethoric with the autumn's harvest spoils, Holds
the farmer's well-earned trophies--the guerdon of his toils;

Filled the lofts with hay, sweet-scented, ravished from the meadows
green, While beneath are stalled the cattle, with their quiet, drowsy mien.

Deep and spacious are the grain-bins, brimming o'er with nature's gold;
Here are piles of yellow pumpkins on the barn-floor loosely rolled.

Just below in deep recesses, safe from wintry frost chill, There are
heaps of ruddy apples from the orchard the hill.

Many a year has Grand'ther Baldwin in the old house dwelt in peace,
As his hair each year grew whiter, he has seen his herds increase.

Sturdy sons and comely daughters, growing up from childish plays,
One by one have met life's duties, and gone forth their several ways.

Hushed the voice of childish laughter, hushed is childhood's merry
tone, the fireside Grand'ther Baldwin and his good wife sit alone.

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Hushed the voice of childish laughter, hushed is childhood's merry
tone, By the fireside Grand'ther Baldwin and his good wife sit alone.

Yet once within the twelvemonth, when the days are short and drear,
And chill winds chant the requiem of the slowly fading year,

When the autumn work is over, and the harvest gathered in, Once
again the old house echoes to a long unwonted din.

Logs of hickory blaze and crackle in the fireplace huge and high,
Curling wreaths of smoke mount upward to the gray November sky.

Ruddy lads and smiling lasses, just let loose from schooldom's cares,
Patter, patter, race and clatter, up and down the great hall stairs.

All the boys shall hold high revel; all the girls shall have their way,-
That's the law at Grand'ther Baldwin's upon each Thanksgiving Day.

From from the parlor's sacred precincts, hark! a madder uproar yet;
Roguish Charlie's playing stage-coach, and the stage-coach has upset!

Joe, black-eyed and laughter-loving, Grand'ther's specs his nose across,
Gravely winks at brother Willie, who is gayly playing horse.

Grandma's face is fairly radiant; Grand'ther knows not how to frown,
though the children, in their frolic, turn the old house upside down.

For the boys may hold high revel, and the girls must have their way;
That's the law at Grand'ther Baldwin's upon each Thanksgiving Day.

But the dinner--ah! the dinner--words are feeble to portray What a
culinary triumph is achieved Thanksgiving Day!

Fairly groans the board with dainties, but the turkey rules the roast,
Aldermanic at the outset, at the last a fleshless ghost.

Then the richness of the pudding, and the flavor of the pie, When
you've dined at Grandma Baldwin's you will know as well as I.

When, at length, the feast was ended, Grand'ther Baldwin bent his head, And, amid the solemn silence, with a reverent voice, he said:--

"Now unto God, the Gracious One, we thanks and homage pay, Who guardeth us, and guideth us, and loveth us always!

"He scatters blessings in our paths, He giveth us increase, He crowns us with His kindnesses, and granteth us His peace.

"Unto himself, our wandering feet, we pray that He may draw, And may we strive, with faithful hearts, to keep His holy law!"

His simple words in silence died: a moment's hush. And then From all the listening hearts there rose a solemn-voiced Amen !

ST. NICHOLAS.

In the far-off Polar seas, Far beyond the Hebrides, Where the icebergs, towering high, Seem to pierce the wintry sky, And the fur-clad Esquimaux Glides in sledges o'er the snow, Dwells St. Nick, the merry wight, Patron saint of Christmas night.

Solid walls of massive ice, Bearing many a quaint device, Flanked by graceful turrets twain, Clear as clearest porcelain, Bearing at a lofty height Christ's pure cross in simple white, Carven with surpassing art From an iceberg's crystal heart.

Here St. Nick, in royal state, Dwells, until December late Clips the days at either end, And the nights at each extend; Then, with his attendant sprites, Scours the earth on wintry nights, Bringing home, in well-filled hands, Children's gifts from many lands.

Here are whistles, tops and toys, Meant to gladden little boys; Skates and sleds that soon will glide O'er the ice or steep hill-side. Here are dolls with flaxen curls, Sure to charm the little girls; Christmas books, with pictures gay, For this welcome holiday.

In the court the reindeer wait; Filled the sledge with costly freight. As the first faint shadow falls, Promptly from his icy halls Steps St. Nick, and grasps the rein: And afar, in measured time, Sounds the sleigh-bells' silver chime.

Like an arrow from the bow Speed the reindeer o'er the snow. Onward!
Now the loaded sleigh Skirts the shores of Hudson's Bay. Onward, till the
stunted tree Gains a loftier majesty, And the curling smoke-wreaths rise
Under less inclement skies.

Built upon a hill-side steep Lies a city wrapt in sleep. Up and down the
lonely street Sleepy watchmen pace their beat. Little heeds them Santa
Claus; Not for him are human laws. With a leap he leaves the ground,
Scales the chimney at a bound.

Five small stockings hang below; Five small stockings in a row. From
his pocket blithe St. Nick Fills the waiting stockings quick; Some with
sweetmeats, some with toys, Gifts for girls, and gifts for boys, Mounts the
chimney like a bird, And the bells are once more heard.

Santa Claus! Good Christmas saint, In whose heart no selfish taint

Findeth place, some homes there be Where no stockings wait for thee,
Homes where sad young faces wear Painful marks of Want and Care, And
the Christmas morning brings No fair hope of better things.

Can you not some crumbs bestow On these Children steeped in woe;
Steal a single look of care Which their sad young faces wear; From your
overflowing store Give to them whose hearts are sore? No sad eyes should
greet the morn When the infant Christ was born.

BARBARA'S COURTSHIP.

'Tis just three months and eke a day, Since in the meadows, raking hay,
On looking up I chanced to see The manor's lord, young Arnold Lee, With
a loose hand on the rein, Riding slowly down the lane. As I gazed with
earnest look On his face as on a book, As if conscious of the gaze,
Suddenly he turned the rays Of his brilliant eyes on me. Then I looked
down hastily, While my heart, like caged bird, Fluttered till it might be
heard. Foolish, foolish Barbara!

We had never met before, He had been so long away, Visiting some
foreign shore, I have heard my father say. What in truth was he to me,
Rich and handsome Arnold Lee? Fate had placed us far apart; Why, then,
did my restless heart Flutter when his careless glance Fell on me by merest

chance? Foolish, foolish Barbara!

There are faces--are there not?- That can never be forgot. Looks that seen but once impress With peculiar vividness. So it was with Arnold Lee. Why it was I cannot say That, through all the livelong day He seemed ever near to me. While I raked, as in a dream, Now the same place o'er and o'er, Till my little sister chid, And with full eyes opened wide, Much in wonder, gently cried, "Why, what ails thee, Barbara?"

I am in the fields again; 'Tis a pleasant day in June, All the songsters are in tune, Pouring out their matin hymn. All at once a conscious thrill Led me, half against my will, To look up. Abashed I see His dark eyes full fixed on me. What he said I do not know, But his voice was soft and low, As he spoke in careless chat, Now of this and now of that, While the murmurous waves of sound Wafted me a bliss profound. Foolish, foolish Barbara!

Am I waking? Scarce I know If I wake or if I dream, So unreal all things seem; Yet I could not well forego This sweet dream, if dream it be, That has brought such joy to me. He has told me that he loves me,- He in rank so far above me; And when I, with cheeks aglow, Told him that it was not meet He should wed with one so low, He should wed with one so low, Then he said, in accents sweet, "Far be thoughts of rank or pelf; Dear, I love thee for thyself!" Happy, happy Barbara!

THE CONFESSION.

I am glad that you have come, Arthur, from the dusty town; You must throw aside your cares, And relax your legal frown. Coke and Littleton, avaunt! You have ruled him through the day; In this quiet, sylvan haunt, Be content to yield your sway.

It is pleasant, is it not, Sitting here beneath the trees, While the restless wind above Ripples over leafy seas?

Often, when the twilight falls, In the shadow, quite alone, I have sat till starlight came, Listening to its monotone. Yet not always quite alone,-- Brother, let me take the place Just behind you now the moon Shines no

longer in my face.

It is near two months ago Since I met him, as I think, By God's mercy,
when my horse Trembled on the river's brink. I had fallen, but his arm
Firmly seized the bridle-rein, And, with one decided grasp, Drew me back
to life again. I was grateful and essayed Fitting words my thanks to speak.
Arthur, when the heart feels most, Words, I think, are oftenest weak.

So I stammered and I fear, What I said had little grace But I knew he
understood, By the smile upon his face. There are faces--his was such--
That are sealed when in repose; Only when a smile floods out, All the soul
in beauty glows. With that smile I grew content, And my heart grew
strangely calm, As with trustful step I walked, My arm resting on his arm.

Brother, turn your face away, So, dear, I can tell you best All that
followed; but be sure You are looking to the west. Arthur, I have seen him
since, Nearly every day, until If I lose him, all my life Would grow wan,
and dark, and chill. Brother, this my love impute Not to me for maiden-
shame; He has sought me for his wife, He would crown me with his name.
Only yesterday he said That my love his life would bless: Would I grant it?
Arthur, dear, Was I wrong in saying "Yes"?

ROSE IN THE GARDEN.

THIRTY years have come and gone, Melting away like Southern
Snows, Since, in the light of a summer's night, I went to the garden to seek
my Rose.

Mine! Do you hear it, silver moon, Flooding my heart with your
mellow shine? Mine! Be witness, ye distant stars, Looking on me with
eyes divine!

Tell me, tell me, wandering winds, Whisper it, if you may not speak--
Did you ever, in all your round, Fan a lovelier brow or cheek?

Long I nursed in my heart the love, Love which felt, but dared not tell,
Till, I scarcely know how or when-- It found wild words,- and all was
well!

I can hear her sweet voice even now-- It makes my pulses leap and

thrill-- "I owe you more than I well can pay; You may take me, Robert, if you will!"

One pleasant summer night, the garden walks alone, Looking about with restless eyes, Wondering whither my Rose had flown,

Till, from a leafy arbor near, There came to my ears the sound of speech. Who can be with Rose to night? Let me hide me under the beach.

It must be one of her female friends, Talking with her in the gloaming gray; Perchance--I thought--they may speak of me; Let me listen to what they say.

This I said with a careless smile, And a joyous heart that was free from fears; Little I dreamed that the words I heard Would weigh on my heavy heart for years.

"Rose, my Rose! for your heart is mine," I heard in a low voice, passion-fraught, "In the sight of Heaven we are truly one; Why will you cast me away for naught?"

"Will you give your hand where your heart goes not To a man who is grave and stern and old; And whose love compared with my passion-heat, As the snow of the frozen North, is cold?"

And Rose--I could feel her cheek grow pale-- Her voice was tremulous, then grew strong-- "Richard," she said, "your words are wild, And you do my guardian bitter wrong.

"Did you never hear how, years gone by," -- She spoke in a tremulous undertone-- "Bereft of friends, o'er the world's highways, I wandered forth as a child alone?"

"He opened to me his home and heart-- He whom you call so stern and cold-- And my grateful heart I may well bestow On him for his kindness manifold."

"Rose," he said, in a saddened tone, "I thank him for all he has done for thee; He has acted nobly--I did him wrong-- But is there no voice in your heart for me?"

And Rose--she trembled--I felt it all; I heard her quick breath come and go; Her voice was broken; she only said, "Have pity, Richard, and let me go!"

And then--Heaven gave me strength, I think-- I stood before them

calm and still; You might have thought my tranquil breast Had never known one passion-thrill.

And they alternate flushed and paled; Rose tottered, and I feared would fall; I caught her in supporting arms, And whispered, "Rose, I heard it all.

"I had a dream, but it is passed, That we might journey, hand in hand Along the rugged steeps of life, Until we reached God's promised land.

"This was my dream; -- 'tis over now;-- Thank Heaven, it is not yet too late! I pray no selfish act of mine May keep two young hearts separate."

I placed her passive hand in his- With how much pain God only knows-- And blessing him for her sweet sake, I left him standing with my Rose!

PHOEBE'S WOOING.

"PHOEBE! Phoebe! Where is the chit? When I want her most she's out of the way. Child, you're running a long account Up, to be squared on Judgment-day.

"Where have you been? and what have you there?" "To the pasture for buttercups wet with dew." "My patience! I think you are out of your wits; I wonder what good will buttercups do?

"There's pennyroyal you might have got,- It might have been useful to you or me, But I never heard, in all my life, Of buttercup cordial or buttercup tea.

"I want you to stay and mind the bread, I've just put two loaves in the oven to bake; When they are clone take them carefully out, And put in their place this loaf of cake,

"While I run over to Widow Brown's; Her son, from the mines, has just got back. I don't believe he's a cent in his purse, Young men are so shiftless now, alack!

"It was very different when I was young; Young men were prudent, and girls were wise; You wouldn't catch them gadding about Like so many idle butterflies."

So bustled and scolded the worthy dame, Until she had passed the

outer sill, To do her justice, it seldom chanced That her hands were idle, or tongue was still.

So Phoebe gathered her knitting up, And sat her down in the chimney niche; But her mind was on other thoughts intent, And here and there she dropped a stitch.

The yellow kitten purred on the hearth, While the kitchen clock, with its frame of oak, In the corner stood, like a sentinel, And challenged time with its measured stroke.

But Phoebe's mind was on none of these: The bread in the oven, her good aunt's frown, And the scene before her faded away, And blended with thoughts of Reuben Brown:

How they walked together on summer days, Or bravely faced the winter's chill, And chatted merrily all the way To the little school-house on Sligo Hill.

How both grew older, and school-days passed, When he was a youth, and a maiden she; How often she went with Reuben Brown To the rustic dance or the social bee.

The warm flush deepened on Phoebe's cheek, And she breathed a low, half-conscious sigh; Ah, well-a-day! they were happy times, But he has forgotten, and so must I."

So Phoebe gathered her knitting up, Which, while she was thinking, had fallen down, When her quick ear caught a strange footfall, And there in the doorway stood Reuben Brown,

With the same frank, handsome face she knew, A smile as bright, and an eye as black-- "Phoebe," he said, "I have wandered far; Are you glad to see your playmate back?"

The kitten still purred on the kitchen hearth, And the ancient clock, with its frame of oak, In the corner stood, like a sentinel, And challenged time with its measured stroke.

A pleased light shone in the maiden's eyes; Ah, love, young love, it is very sweet! Reuben had gone, but she sat quite still, And the knitting lay untouched at her feet.

Just then the dame came bustling in, And went to the oven without ado. "Why, Phoebe, child, what have you done? The bread is baked as black as

my shoe!"

And Phoebe started, and blushed for shame, Took up her knitting and dropped it down; And when her aunt said, "What ails you, child?" She hastily answered, "Reuben Brown."

Ah, love! young love! it is very sweet, In field, or hamlet, or crowded mart; But it burns with the brightest, purest flame In the hidden depths of a young maid's heart.

THE LOST HEART.

One golden summer day, Along the forest-way, Young Colin passed with blithesome steps alert.

His locks with careless grace Rimmed round his handsome face And drifted outward on the airy surge.

So blithe of heart was he, He hummed a melody, And all the birds were hushed to hear him sing.

Across his shoulders flung His bow and baldric hung: So, in true huntsman's guise, he threads the wood.

The sun mounts up the sky, The air moves sluggishly, And reeks with summer heat in every pore.

His limbs begin to tire, Slumbers his youthful fire; He sinks upon a violet-bed to rest.

The soft winds go and come With low and drowsy hum, And ope for him the ivory gate of dreams.

Beneath the forest-shade There trips a woodland maid, And marks with startled eye the sleeping youth.

At first she thought to fly, Then, timid, drawing nigh, She gazed in wonder on his fair young face.

When swiftly stooping down Upon his locks so brown She lightly pressed her lips, and blushing fled. When Colin woke from sleep, From slumbers calm and deep, He felt- he knew not how- his heart had flown.

And so, with anxious care, He wandered here and there, But could not find his lost heart anywhere.

Then he, with air distraught, And brow of anxious thought, Went out

into the world beyond the wood.

Of each that passed him by, He queried anxiously, "I prithee, hast thou seen a heart astray?"

Some stared and hurried on, While others said in scorn. Your heart has gone in search of your lost wits"

The day is wearing fast, Young Colin comes at last To where a cottage stood embowered in trees.

He looks within, and there He sees a maiden fair, Who sings low songs the while she plies her wheel.

"I prithee, maiden bright,"-- She turns as quick as light, And straight a warm flush crimsons all her face.

She, much abashed, looks down, For on his locks so brown She seems to see the marks her lips have made.

Whereby she stands confest; What need to tell the rest? He said, "I think, fair maid, you have my heart.

"Nay, do not give it back, I shall not feel the lack, If thou wilt give to me thine own therefor."

JOHN MAYNARD.

'Twas on Lake Erie's broad expanse One bright midsummer day, The gallant steamer Ocean Queen Swept proudly on her way. Bright faces clustered on the deck, Or, leaning o'er the side, Watched carelessly the feathery foam That flecked the rippling tide.

Ah, who beneath that cloudless sky, That smiling bends serene, Could dream that danger awful, vast, Impended o'er the scene,- Could dream that ere an hour had sped That frame of sturdy oak Would sink beneath the lake's blue waves, Blackened with fire and smoke?

A seaman sought the captain's side, A moment whispered low; The captain's swarthy face grew pale; He hurried down below. Alas, too late! Though quick, and sharp, And clear his orders came, No human efforts could avail To quench the insidious flame.

The bad news quickly reached the deck, It sped from lip to lip, And

ghastly Faces everywhere Looked from the doomed ship. "Is there no hope--no chance of life?" A hundred lips implore, "But one," the captain made reply, "To run the ship on shore."

A sailor, whose heroic soul That hour should yet reveal, By name John Maynard, eastern-born, Stood calmly at the wheel. "Head her south-east!" the captain shouts, Above the smothered roar,-- "Head her south-east without delay! Make for the nearest shore!"

No terror pales the helmsman's cheek, Or clouds his dauntless eye, As, in a sailor's measured tone, His voice responds, "Ay! ay!" Three hundred souls, the steamer's freight, Crowd forward wild with fear, While at the stern the dreaded flames Above the deck appear.

John Maynard watched the nearing flames, But still with steady hand He grasped the wheel, and steadfastly He steered the ship to land. "John Maynard, can you still hold out?" He heard the captain cry; A voice from out the stifling smoke Faintly responds, "Ay! ay!"

But half a mile! a hundred hands Stretch eagerly to shore. But half a mile! That distance sped Peril shall all be o'er. But half a mile ! Yet stay, the flames No longer slowly creep, But gather round that helmsman bold, With fierce, impetuous sweep.

"John Maynard!" with an anxious voice The captain cries once more, "Stand by the wheel five minutes yet, And we shall reach the shore." Through flame and smoke that dauntless heart Responded firmly still, Unawed, though face to face with death,- "With God's good help I will!"

The flames approach with giant strides, They scorch his hand and brow; One arm, disabled, seeks his side, Ah! he is conquered now! But no, his teeth are firmly set, He crushes down his pain, His knee upon the stanchion pressed, He guides the ship again.

One moment yet! one moment yet! Brave heart, thy task is o'er, The pebbles grate beneath the keel. The steamer touches shore. Three hundred grateful voice rise In praise to God that he Hath saved them from the fearful fire, And from the engulfing sea.

But where is he, that helmsman bold? The captain saw him reel,- His nerveless hands released their task, He sank beside the wheel. The wave received his lifeless corpse, Blackened with smoke and fire. God rest him!

Never hero had A nobler funeral pyre!

FRIAR ANSELMO.

Friar Anselmo (God's grace may he win!) Committed one sad day a deadly sin;

Which being done he drew back, self-abhorred, From the rebuking presence of the Lord,

And, kneeling down, besought, with bitter cry, Since life was worthless grown, that he might die.

All night he knelt, and, when the morning broke, In patience still he waits death's fatal stroke.

When all at once a cry of sharp distress Aroused Anselmo from his wretchedness;

And, looking from the convent window high, He saw a wounded traveller gasping lie

Just underneath, who, bruised and stricken sore, Had crawled for aid unto the convent door.

The friar's heart with deep compassion stirred, When the poor wretch's groans for help were heard

With gentle hands, and touched with love divine, He bathed his wounds, and poured in oil and wine.

With tender foresight cared for all his needs,-- A blessed ministry of noble deeds.

In such devotion passed seven days. At length The poor wayfarer gained his wonted strength.

With grateful thanks he left the convent walls, And once again on death Anselmo calls.

When, lo! his cell was filled with sudden light, And on the wall he saw an angel write,

(An angel in whose likeness he could trace, More noble grown, the traveller's form and face),

"Courage, Anselmo, though thy sin be great, God grants thee life that

thou may'st expiate.

"Thy guilty stains shall be washed white again, By noble service done
thy fellow-men.

"His soul draws nearest unto God above, Who to his brother ministers
in love."

Meekly Anselmo rose, and, after prayer, His soul was lightened of its
past despair.

Henceforth he strove, obeying God's high will, His heaven-appointed
mission to fulfil.

And many a soul, oppressed with pain and grief, Owed to the friar
solace and relief.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE CHURCH AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

One autumn day, when hedges yet were green, And thick-branched trees diffused a leafy gloom, Hard by where Avon rolls its silvery tide, I stood in silent thought by Shakspeare's tomb.

O happy church, beneath whose marble floor His ashes lie who so enriched mankind; The many-sided Shakespeare, rare of soul, And dowered with an all-embracing mind.

Through the stained windows rays of sunshine fall In softened glory on the chancel floor; While I, a pilgrim from across the sea, stand with bare head in reverential awe.

Churches there are within whose gloomy vaults Repose the bones of those that once were kings; Their power has passed, and what remains but clay? While in his grave our Shakspeare lives and sings.

Kings were his puppets, kingdoms but his stage,-- Faint shadows they without his plastic art,-- He waves his wand, and lo! they live again, And in his world perform their mimic part.

Born in the purple, his imperial soul Sits crowned and sceptred in the realms of mind. Kingdoms may fall, and crumble to decay, Time but confirms his empire o'er mankind.

MRS. BROWNING'S GRAVE AT FLORENCE.

FLORENCE wears an added grace, All her earlier honors crowning; Dante's birthplace, Art's fair home, Holds the dust of Barrett Browning.

Guardian of the noble dead That beneath thy soil lie sleeping, England, with full heart, commends This new treasure to thy keeping.

Take her, she is half thine own; In her verses' rich outpouring, Breathes

the warm Italian heart, Yearning for the land's restoring.

From thy skies her poet-heart Caught a fresher inspiration, And her soul obtained new strength, With her bodily translation.

Freely take what thou hast given, Less her verses' rhythmic beauty, Than the stirring notes that called Trumpet-like thy sons to duty.

Rarest of exotic flowers In thy native chaplet twining, To the temple of thy great Add her--she is worth enshrining.

MY CASTLE.

I have a beautiful castle, With towers and battlements fair; And many a banner, with gay device, Floats in the outer air.

The walls are of solid silver; The towers are of massive gold; And the lights that stream from the windows A royal scene unfold.

Ah! could you but enter my castle With its pomp of regal sheen, You would say that it far surpasses The palace of Aladeen.

Could you but enter as I do, And pace through the vaulted hall, And mark the stately columns, And the pictures on the wall;

With the costly gems about them, That send their light afar, With a chaste and softened splendor Like the light of a distant star!

And where is this wonderful castle, With its rich emblazonings, Whose pomp so far surpasses The homes of the greatest kings?

Come out with me at morning And lie in the meadow-grass, And lift your eyes to the ether blue, And you will see it pass.

There! can you not see the battlements; And the turrets stately and high, Whose lofty summits are tipped with clouds, And lost in the arching sky?

Dear friend, you are only dreaming, Your castle so stately and fair Is only a fanciful structure,-- A castle in the air.

Perchance you are right. I know not If a phantom it may be; But yet, in my inmost heart, I feel That it lives, and lives for me.

For when clouds and darkness are round me, And my heart is heavy with care, I steal me away from the noisy crowd, To dwell in my castle fair.

There are servants to do my bidding; There are servants to heed my call; And I, with a master's air of pride, May pace through the vaulted hall.

And I envy not the monarchs With cities under their sway; For am I not, in my own right, A monarch as proud as they?

What matter, then, if to others My castle a phantom may be, Since I feel, in the depths of my own heart, That it is not so to me?

APPLE-BLOSSOMS.

I sit in the shadow of apple-boughs, In the fragrant orchard close, And around me floats the scented air, With its wave-like tidal flows. I close my eyes in a dreamy bliss, And call no king my peer; For is not this the rare, sweet time, The blossoming time of the year?

I lie on a couch of downy grass, With delicate blossoms strewn, And I feel the throb of Nature's heart Responsive to my own. Oh, the world is fair, and God is good, That maketh life so dear; For is not this the rare, sweet time, The blossoming time of the year?

I can see, through the rifts of the apple-boughs, The delicate blue of the sky, And the changing clouds with their marvellous tints That drift so lazily by. And strange, sweet thoughts sing through my brain, And Heaven, it seemeth near; Oh, is it not a rare, sweet time, The blossoming time of the year?

SUMMER HOURS.

It is the year's high noon, The earth sweet incense yields, And o'er the fresh, green fields Bends the clear sky of June.

I leave the crowded streets, The hum of busy life, Its clamor and its strife, To breathe thy perfumed sweets.

O rare and golden hours! The bird's melodious song, Wavelike, is borne along Upon a strand of flowers.

I wander far away, Where, through the forest trees, Sports the cool summer breeze, In wild and wanton play.

A patriarchal elm Its stately form uprears, Which twice a hundred years Has ruled this woodland realm.

I sit beneath its shade, And watch, with careless eye, The brook that babbles by, And cools the leafy glade.

In truth I wonder not, That in the ancient days The temples of God's praise Were grove and leafy grot.

The noblest ever planned, With quaint device and rare, By man, can ill compare With these from God's own hand.

Pilgrim with way-worn feet, Who, treading life's dull round, No true repose hast found, Come to this green retreat.

For bird, and flower, and tree, Green fields, and woodland wild, Shall bear, with voices mild, Sweet messages to thee.

JUNE.

Throw open wide your golden gates, O poet-landed month of June, And waft me, on your spicy breath, The melody of birds in tune.

O fairest palace of the three, Wherein Queen Summer holdeth sway, I gaze upon your leafy courts From out the vestibule of May.

I fain would tread your garden walks, Or in your shady bowers recline; Then open wide your golden gates, And make them mine, and make them mine.

LITTLE CHARLIE.

A VIOLET grew by the river-side, And gladdened all hearts with its bloom; While over the fields, on the scented air, It breathed a rich perfume. But the clouds grew dark in the angry sky, And its portals were opened wide; And the heavy rain beat down the flower That grew by the river-side.

Not far away in a pleasant home, There lived a little boy, Whose cheerful face and childish grace Filled every heart with joy. He wandered

one day to the river's verge, With no one near to save; And the heart that
we loved with a boundless love Was stilled in the restless wave.

The sky grew dark to our tearful eyes, And we bade farewell to joy;
For our hearts were bound by a sorrowful tie To the grave of the little boy.
The birds still sing in the leafy tree That shadows the open door; We heed
them not, for we think of the voice That we shall hear no more.

We think of him at eventide, And gaze on his vacant chair With a
longing heart that will scarce believe That Charlie is not there. We seem to
hear his ringing laugh, And his bounding step at the door; But, alas! there
comes the sorrowful thought, We shall never hear them more!

We shall walk sometimes to his little grave, In the pleasant summer
hours; We will speak his name in a softened voice, And cover his grave
with flowers; We will think of him in his heavenly home,-- In his heavenly
home so fair; And we will trust with a hopeful trust That we shall meet
him there.

THE WHIPPOORWILL AND I.

IN the hushed hours of night, when the air quite still, I hear the strange
cry of the lone whippoorwill, Who Chants, without ceasing, that
wonderful trill, Of which the sole burden is still, "Whip-poor-Will."

And why should I whip him? Strange visitant, Has he been playing
truant this long summer day? I listened a moment; more clear and more
shrill Rang the voice of the bird, as he cried, "Whip-poor-Will."

But what has poor Will done? I ask you once more; I'll whip him, don't
fear, if you'll tell me what for. I paused for an answer; o'er valley and hill
Rang the voice of the bird, as he cried, "Whip-poor-Will."

Has he come to your dwelling, by night or by day, And snatched the
young birds from their warm nest away? I paused for an answer; o'er
valley and hill Rang the voice of the bird, as he cried, "Whip-poor-Will."

Well, well, I can hear you, don't have any fears, I can hear what is
constantly dinned in my ears. The obstinate bird, with his wonderful trill,
Still made but one answer, and that, "Whip-poor-Will."

But what HAS poor Will done? I prithee explain; I'm out of all patience, don't mock me again. The obstinate bird, with his wonderful trill, Still made the same answer, and that, "Whip-poor-Will."

Well, have your own way, then; but if you won't tell, I'll shut down the window, and bid you farewell; But of one thing be sure, I won't whip him until You give me some reason for whipping poor Will.

I listened a moment, as if for reply, But nothing was heard but the bird's mocking cry. I caught the faint echo from valley and hill; It breathed the same burden, that strange "Whip-poor-Will."

CARVING A NAME.

I wrote my name upon the sand, And trusted it would stand for aye; But, soon, alas! the refluent sea Had washed my feeble lines away.

I carved my name upon the wood, And, after years, returned again; I missed the shadow of the tree That stretched of old upon the plain.

To solid marble next, my name I gave as a perpetual trust; An earthquake rent it to its base, And now it lies, o'erlaid with dust.

All these have failed. In wiser mood I turn and ask myself, "What then?" If I would have my name endure, I'll write it on the hearts of men,

In characters of living light, Of kindly deeds and actions wrought. And these, beyond the touch of time, Shall live immortal as my thought.

IN TIME OF WAR.

GONE TO THE WAR.

My Charlie has gone to the war, My Charlie so brave and tall; He left his plough in the furrow, And flew at his country's call. May God in safety keep him,-- My precious boy--my all!

My heart is pining to see him; I miss him every day; My heart is weary with waiting, And sick of the long delay,-- But I know his country needs

him, And I could not bid him stay.

I remember how his face flushed, And how his color came, When the flash from the guns of Sumter Lit the whole land with flame, And darkened our country's banner With the crimson hue of shame.

"Mother," he said, then faltered,-- I felt his mute appeal; I paused-- if you are a mother, You know what mothers feel, When called to yield their dear ones To the cruel bullet and steel.

My heart stood still for a moment, Struck with a mighty woe; A faint as of death came o'er me, I am a mother, you know, But I sternly checked my weakness, And firmly bade him "Go."

Wherever the fight is fiercest I know that my boy will be; Wherever the need is sorest Of the stout arms of the free. May he prove as true to his country As he has been true to me.

My home is lonely without him, My hearth bereft of joy, The thought of him who has left me My constant sad employ; But God has been good to the mother,-- She shall not blush for her boy.

WHERE IS MY BOY TO-NIGHT?

When the clouds in the Western sky Flush red with the setting sun,-- When the veil of twilight falls, And the busy day is done,-- I sit and watch the clouds, With their crimson hues alight, And ponder with anxious heart, Oh, where is my boy to-night?

It is just a year to-day Since he bade me a gay good-by, To march where banners float, And the deadly missiles fly. As I marked his martial step I felt my color rise With all a mother's pride, And my heart was in my eyes.

There's a little room close by, Where I often used to creep In the hush of the summer night To watch my boy asleep. But he who used to rest Beneath the spread so white Is far away from me now,-- Oh, where is my boy to-night?

Perchance in the gathering night, With slow and weary feet, By the light of Southern stars, He paces his lonely beat. Does he think of the mother's heart That will never cease to yearn, As only a mother's can, For

her absent boy's return?

Oh, where is my boy to-night? I cannot answer where, But I know,
wherever he is, He is under our Father's care. May He guard, and guide,
and bless My boy, wherever he be, And bring him back at length To bless
and to comfort me.

May God bless all our boys By the camp-fire's ruddy glow, Or when in
the deadly fight They front the embattled foe; And comfort each mother's
heart, As she sits in the fading light, And ponders with anxious heart-- Oh,
where is my boy to-night?

A SOLDIER'S VALENTINE.

Just from the sentry's tramp (I must take it again at ten), I have laid my
musket down, And seized instead my pen; For, pacing my lonely round In
the chilly twilight gray, The thought, dear Mary, came, That this is St.
Valentine's Day.

And with the thought there came A glimpse of the happy time When a
school-boy's first attempt I sent you, in borrowed rhyme, On a gilt-edged
sheet, embossed With many a quaint design, And signed, in school-boy
hand, "Your loving Valentine."

The years have come and gone,-- Have flown, I know not where, --
And the school-boy's merry face Is grave with manhood's care; But the
heart of the man still beats At the well-remembered name, And on this St.
Valentine's Day His choice is still the same.

There was a time-- ah, well! Think not that I repine When I dreamed
this happy day Would smile on you as mine; But I heard my country's call;
I knew her need was sore. Thank God, no selfish thought Withheld me
from the war.

But when the dear old flag Shall float in its ancient pride, When the
twain shall be made one, And feuds no more divide,-- I will lay my musket
down, My martial garb resign, And turn my joyous feet Toward home and
Valentine.

LAST WORDS.

"DEAR Charlie," breathed a soldier, "O comrade true and tried, Who in the heat of battle Pressed closely to my side; I feel that I am stricken, My life is ebbing fast; I fain would have you with me, Dear Charlie, till the last.

"It seems so sudden, Charlie, To think to-morrow's sun Will look upon me lifeless, And I not twenty-one! I little dreamed this morning, Twould bring my last campaign; God's ways are not as our ways, And I will not complain.

"There's one at home, dear Charlie, Will mourn for me when dead, Whose heart--it is a mother's-- Can scarce be comforted. You'll write and tell her, Charlie, With my dear love, that I Fought bravely as a soldier should, And died as he should die.

"And you will tell her, Charlie, She must not grieve too much, Our country claims our young lives, For she has need of such. And where is he would falter, Or turn ignobly back, When Duty's voice cries 'Forward,' And Honor lights the track ?

"And there's another, Charlie (His voice became more low), When thoughts of HER come o'er me, It makes it hard to go. This locket in my bosom, She gave me just before I left my native village For the fearful scenes of war.

"Give her this message, Charlie, Sent with my dying breath, To her and to my banner I'm 'faithful unto death.' And if, in that far country Which I am going to, Our earthly ties may enter, I'll there my love renew.

"Come nearer, closer, Charlie, My head I fain would rest, It must be for the last time, Upon your faithful breast. Dear friend, I cannot tell you How in my heart I feel The depth of your devotion, Your friendship strong as steel.

"We've watched and camped together In sunshine and in rain; We've shared the toils and perils Of more than one campaign; And when my tired feet faltered, Beneath the noontide heat, Your words sustained my courage, Gave new strength to my feet.

"And once,-- 'twas at Antietam,-- Pressed hard by thronging foes, I

almost sank exhausted Beneath their cruel blows,-- When you, dear friend,
undaunted, With headlong courage threw Your heart into the contest, And
safely brought me through.

"My words are weak, dear Charlie, My breath is growing scant; Your
hand upon my heart there, Can you not hear me pant? Your thoughts I
know will wander Sometimes to where I lie-- How dark it grows! True
comrade And faithful friend, good-by!"

A moment, and he lay there A statue, pale and calm. His youthful head
reclining Upon his comrade's arm. His limbs upon the greensward Were
stretched in careless grace, And by the fitful moon was seen A smile upon
his face.

SONG OF THE CROAKER. *

* Written by request for the Philadelphia Sanitary Fair.

An old frog lived in a dismal swamp, In a dismal kind of way; And all
that he did, whatever befell, Was to croak the livelong day. Croak, croak,
croak, When darkness filled the air, And croak, croak, croak, When the
skies were bright and fair.

"Good Master Frog, a battle is fought, And the foeman's power is
broke." But he only turned a greener hue, And answered with a croak.
Croak, croak, croak, When the clouds are dark and dun, And croak, croak,
croak, In the blaze of the noontide sun.

"Good Master Frog, the forces of right Are driving the hosts of
wrong." But he gave his head an ominous shake, And croaked out, "Nous
verrons!" Croak, croak, croak, Till the heart is full of gloom, And croak,
croak, croak, Till the world seems but a tomb.

To poison the cup of life, By always dreading the worst. Is to make of
the earth a dungeon damp, And the happiest life accursed. Croak, croak,
croak, When the noontide sun rides high, And croak, croak, croak, Lest the
night come by and by.

Farewell to the dismal frog; Let him croak as loud as he may, He
cannot blot the sun from heaven, Nor hinder the march of day, Though he
croak, croak, croak, Till the heart is full of gloom, And croak, croak, croak,
Till the world seems but a tomb.

KING COTTON.

KING COTTON looks from his window Towards the westering sun,
And he marks, with an anguished horror, That his race is almost run.

His form is thin and shrunken; His cheek is pale and wan; And the
lines of care on his furrowed brow Are dread to look upon.

But yesterday a monarch, In the flush of his pomp and pride, And, not
content with his own broad lands, He would rule the world beside.

He built him a stately palace, With gold from beyond the sea; And he
laid with care the corner-stone, And he called it Slavery:

He summoned an army with banners, To keep his foes at bay; And,
gazing with pride on his palace walls, He said, "They will stand for aye!"

But the palace walls are shrunken, And partly overthrown, And the
storms of war, in their violence, Have loosened the corner-stone.

Now Famine stalks through the palace halls, With her gaunt and pallid
train; You can hear the cries of famished men, As they cry for bread in
vain.

The king can see, from his palace walls. A land by his pride betrayed;
Thousands of mothers and wives bereft. Thousands of graves new-made.

And he seems to see, in the lowering sky, The shape of a flaming
sword; Whereon he reads, with a sinking heart, The anger of the Lord.

God speed the time when the guilty king Shall be hurled from his
blood-stained throne; And the palace of Wrong shall crumble to dust, With
its boasted corner-stone.

A temple of Freedom shall rise instead, On the desecrated site: And
within its shelter alike shall stand The black man and the white.

OUT OF EGYPT.

To Egypt's king, who ruled beside The reedy river's flow, Came God's
command, "Release, O king, And let my people go."

The king's proud heart grew hard apace; He marked the suppliant

throng, And said, "Nay, they must here abide; The weak must serve the strong."

Straightway the Lord stretched forth his hand, And every stream ran blood; The river swept towards the sea-- A full ensanguined flood.

The haughty king beheld the land, By plagues afflicted sore, But, as God's wonders multiplied, Hardened his heart the more;

Until the angel of the Lord Came on the wings of Night, And smote first-born of man and beast, In his destructive flight.

Throughout all Egypt, not a house Was spared this crowning woe. Then broke the tyrant's stubborn will; He bade the people go.

They gathered up their flocks and herds, Rejoicing to be free; And, going forth, a mighty host, Encamped beside the sea.

Then Pharaoh's heart repented him; He called a mighty force, And swiftly followed on their track, With chariot and with horse.

Then Israel's host were sore afraid; But God was on their side, And, lo! for them a way is cleft, The Red-sea waves divide.

At God's command the restless waves Obey the prophet's rod; And, through the middle of the sea, The people marched dry-shod.

But, when the spoilers, following close, Would hinder Israel's flight, The waters to their course return, The parted waves unite,

And Pharaoh's host is swept away, The chariots and the horse; And not a man is left alive Of all that mighty force.

So in these days God looks from heaven, And marks his servants' woe; Hear ye his voice: "Break every yoke, And let my people go!"

For them the Red-sea waves divide, The streams with crimson flow; Therefore we mourn for our first-born;-- Then let the people go.

They are not weak whom God befriends, He makes their cause His own; And they who fight against God's might Shall surely be o'erthrown.

THE PRICE OF VICTORY.

"A VICTORY! --a victory!" Is flashed across the wires; Speed, speed the news from State to State, Light up the signal fires! Let all the bells from all the towers A joyous peal ring out; We've gained a glorious victory,

And put the foe to rout!

A mother heard the chiming bells; Her joy was mixed with pain. "Pray God," she said, "my gallant boy Be not among the slain!" Alas for her! that very hour Outstretched in death he lay, The color from his fair, young face Had scarcely passed away.

His nerveless hand still grasped the sword. He never more might wield, His eyes were sealed in dreamless sleep Upon that bloody field. The chestnut curls his mother oft Had stroked in fondest pride, Neglected hung in clotted locks, With deepest crimson dyed.

Ah! many a mother's heart shall ache, And bleed with anguish sore, When tidings come of him who marched So blithely forth to war. Oh! sad for them, the stricken down In manhood's early dawn, And sadder yet for loving hearts. God comfort them that mourn!

Yes, victory has a fearful price Our hearts may shrink to pay, And tears will mingle with the joy That greets a glorious day. But he who dies in freedom's cause, We cannot count him lost; A battle won for truth and right Is worth the blood it cost!

O mothers! count it something gained That they, for whom you mourn, Bequeath fair Freedom's heritage To millions yet unborn;-- And better than a thousand years Of base, ignoble breath, A patriot's fragrant memory, A hero's early death!

HARVARD ODES.

(SUNG AT ANNUAL DINNERS OF THE HARVARD CLUB
OF New York. NEW YORK.)

HARVARD ODES.

I.

(Feb. 23, 1869.)

Fair Harvard, dear guide of our youth's golden days; At thy name all

our hearts own a thrill, We turn from life's highways, its business, its cares,
We are boys in thy tutelage still. And the warm blood of youth to our veins,
as of yore, Returns with impetuous flow, Reviving the scenes and the
hopes that were ours In the vanished, but sweet Long Ago.

Once more through thy walks, Alma Mater, we tread, And we dream
youth's fair dreams once again, We are heroes in fight for the Just and the
Right, We are knights without fear, without stain; Its doors in fair prospect
the world opens wide, Its prizes seem easy to win,-- We are strong in our
faith, we are bold in our might, And we long for the race to begin.

Though dimmed are our hopes, and our visions are fled, Our dreams
were but dreams, it is true; Dust-stained from the contest we gather to-
night, The sweet dreams of youth to renew. Enough for to-morrow the
cares it shall bring, We are boys, we are brothers, to-night; And our hearts,
warm with love, Alma Mater, to thee, Shall in loyal devotion unite.

II.

(Feb. 11, 1870.)

As we meet in thy name, Alma Mater, to-night, All our hearts and our
hopes are as one, And love for the mother that nurtured his youth Beats
high in the breast of each son. The sweet chords of Memory bridge o'er the
Past, The years fade away like a dream, By the banks of Cephissus,
beneath the green trees, We tread thy fair walks, Academe.

The heights of Hymettus that bound the near view Fill the air with an
odor as sweet As the beautiful clusters of sun-tinted grapes From the
vineyards that lie at our feet. O realm of enchantment, O Wonderful land,
Where the gods hold high converse with men, Come out from the dusk of
past ages once more, And live in our fancy again.

Let us drink to the Past as our glasses we lift, Let eye speak to eye,
heart to heart, Let the bonds of sweet fellowship bind each to each, In the
hours that remain ere we part. And thou, Alma Mater, grown fairer with
age, Let us echo the blessing that fell From thy motherly lips, as we stood
at thy side, And thou bad'st us God-speed and Farewell.

III.

(Feb. 21, 1872.)

Fair Harvard, the months have accomplished their round
And a year stands full-orbed and complete,
Since last at thy summons, with dutiful hearts,
Thy children sat here at thy feet. Since last in thy presence,
grown youthful once more, We drank to the past and its joys,
Shaking off every care that encumbered our years,
And dreamed that again we were boys.

To-night once again in thy presence we meet
In the freshness and flush of life's spring;
We wait but thy blessing, we ask but thy smile,
As our sails to the free air we fling. The winds breathe auspicious
that waft us along,
The sky, undisturbed, smiles serene, Hope stands at the prow,
and the waters gleam bright With sparkles of silvery sheen.

And thy voice, Alma Mater, so potent and sweet,
Still sounds in our ears as of yore, And thy motherly counsel
we hear, wisdom-fraught, As we push our frail barks from the shore.
From the foam-crested waves of the mountainous sea
As backward our glances we strain, We see the dear face
of our mother benign, And bless her again and again.

IV.

(Feb. 21, 1873.)

There's a fountain of Fable whose magical power
Time's ravages all could repair, And replace the bowed form
and the tottering step, The wrinkles and silvery hair,
By the brown flowing locks and the graces of youth,
Its footstep elastic and light, Could mantle the cheek
with its long-vanished bloom And make the dull eye keen
and bright.

'Tis only a fable--a beautiful dream, But the fable,
the dream, shall come true, As thy sons, Alma Mater,
assemble to-night The joys of past years to renew.
Our eyes shall grow bright with their old wonted light,
Our spirits untrammelled by care, And the Goddess of Hope,
with her fresh rainbow tints, Shall paint every prospect
more fair.

How sweet were the friendships we formed in thy halls!
How strong were the tendrils that bound Our hearts to the mother
whose provident care Encompassed her children around!
Now strong in our manhood we cherish

her still; And if by misfortune brought low, Our strength shall support her,
our arms bear her up, And sustain her through weal and through woe.

OCCASIONAL ODES.

BI-CENTENNIAL ODE.*

(June 13, 1860.)

* Sung at the bi-centennial celebration of the incorporation of Marlboro, Mass.

From the door of the homestead the mother looks forth, With a glance
half of hope, half of fear, For the clock in the corner now points to the
hour When the children she loves should appear. For have they not
promised, whatever betide, On this their dear mother's birthday, To gather
once more round the family board, Their dutiful service to pay?

From the East and the West, from the North and the South, In
communion and intercourse sweet, Her children have come, on this
festival day, To sit, as of old, at her feet. And our mother,-- God bless her
benevolent face!-- How her heart thrills with motherly joys, As she stands
at the portal, with arms opened wide, To welcome her girls and her boys.

And yet, when the first joyful greetings are o'er, When the words of
her welcome are said: A shadow creeps over her motherly face, As she
silently thinks of the dead, Of the children whose voices once rang
through her fields, Who shared all her hopes and alarms, Till, tired with
the burden and heat of the day, They have fallen asleep in her arms.

They have gone from our midst, but their labors abide On the fields
where they prayerfully wrought; They scattered the seed, but the harvest is
ours, By their toil and self-sacrifice bought. As we scan the fair scene that
once greeted their eyes, As we tread the same paths which they trod, Let
us tenderly think of our elders by birth, Who have gone to their rest, and
their God.

God bless the old homestead! some linger there still, In the haunts

which their childhood has known, While others have wandered to places remote, And planted new homes of their own; But Time cannot weaken the ties Love creates, Nor absence, nor distance, impede The filial devotion which thrills all our hearts, As we bid our old mother God-speed.

FOR THE CONSECRATION OF A CEMETERY.

This verdant field that smiles to Heaven In Nature's bright array, From common uses set apart, We consecrate to-day.

"God's Acre" be it fitly called, For when, beneath the sod, We lay the dead with reverent hands, We yield them back to God.

And His great love, so freely given, Shall speak in clearer tones, When, pacing through these hallowed walks, We read memorial stones.

Here let the sunshine softly fall, And gently drop the rain, And Nature's countless harmonies Blend one accordant strain;

That they who seek this sacred place, In mourning solitude, In all this gracious company May have their faith renewed.

So, lifted to serener heights, And purified from dross, Their trustful hearts shall rest on God, And profit by their loss.