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Needles from the whispering pine: verse ; a close to nature series

Nathan Appleton Tefft

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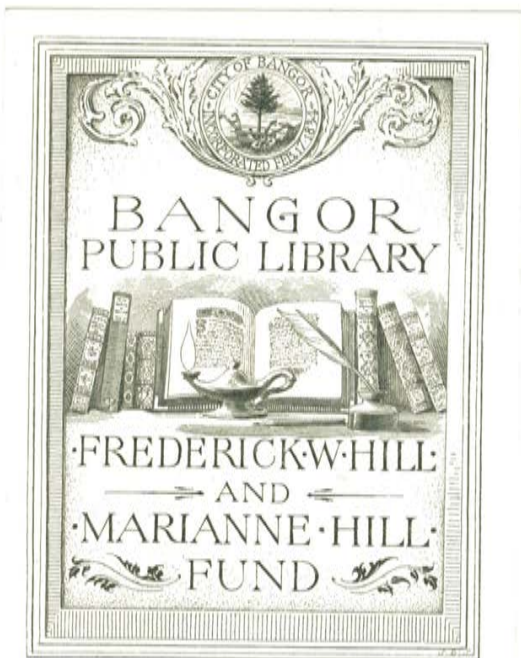
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NEEDLES FROM
THE WHISPERING PINE

NATHAN APPLETON TEFFT



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NEEDLES FROM
THE WHISPERING PINE



VERSE



A CLOSE TO NATURE SERIES

BY

NATHAN APPLETON TEFFT



MADE IN THE
JORDAN-FROST PRINT SHOP
BANGOR, MAINE
1924

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TO THE simple-living, home-loving people

I meet and enjoy to be with ; to the animals I know and pet and pat, and am rubbed and nosed by ; to the birds that sing for me and with me ; to the trees and flowers that give me of their balm and fragrance and inspire me ; and to good old Maine, with her lakes and streams, hills and valleys, fresh air, blue skies, and sunshine, I affectionately dedicate what is between these covers.

CONTENTS



✓ The Whispering Pine	13
Maine	14
✓ The Tree and the Man	16
Close to Nature	17
The Little Old Kitchen	19
One Candlemas Day	20
If Winter Goes	21
Seasonable Signs	22
A March Morning	23
On the Sunny Side	24
April	25
Woods in April	26
Little April Joys	27
The Escape	28
The Song o' the Brook	29
Fishin'	30
Treasure Brook	31
The Lure of the Lake	32
A Little Stranger	34
The Scarecrow	35
Decoration Day	36
✓ The Old Appletree	37
Sund'y Mornin'	38
The Builders	39
Honest Labor	40
A Loafer's Paradise	41
Evening	42
A Little Love Story	43
Keepin' in Line	44
Hayin' Time	45
At the Turn	47
A Summer Shower	48
Feedin' Time	49

Contentment.....	50
Home.....	51
The Old Fashioned Garden.....	52
September.....	53
Morning Glories.....	54
For Sale.....	55
Signs of Fall.....	56
Harvest Days.....	57
The Passing Light.....	58
A Bit o' the Spirit.....	59
Beddin' Down.....	60
Supper for Three.....	61
Just Hunting.....	62
Spots on the Moon.....	63
Trails and Traces.....	64
Old Folks at Home.....	65
The Snow Witches.....	66
A Symphony in Snow.....	67
A Study in Blue.....	68
Fond Recollections.....	69
A Philosophic Tale.....	71
Where October Dwells.....	72
Yesterday and Today.....	73
The Harvesters.....	74
Ike and Spike.....	75
When the Corn Spooks Prank.....	76
Indian Summer.....	77
Believing the Natural.....	78
October's Gift.....	79
In Pasturing Lands.....	80
The Way Home.....	81
The Joys of May.....	82
A Rainy Day.....	83
In Nature's Nursery.....	84
A Winter Scene.....	85
Song of the Wayside Spring.....	86

NEEDLES FROM
THE WHISPERING PINE

THE WHISPERING PINE

I KNOW a place in a pasture, where
I often go and dwell, for there
I meet an ol' time friend o' mine,—
King o' the wood, The Whisperin' Pine.
I like to lie on his bed o' spills,
And hear the sound that soothes and thrills;
And hectorin' things all up and go,
When he 'gins a-whisperin' sweet and low.

I like to watch the crows wing down,
To nestin' young in the ol' king's crown;
And when the sheep and lambkins lie
At his feet, and drowsily sigh,
It kinder makes me feel at ease,
'Cause all the things that plague and tease,
Skip away, and hearts entwine,
Under the spell o' The Whisperin' Pine.

When winter comes and drift snows fall,
I like to hear the ol' king call,—
Whisperin', whisperin', full o' cheer,
Tales of a new and better year.
He tells me how to live and do,
To swap the ol' man for the new,
As swap he does his needles fine,
For a new and better whisperin' pine.

MAINE

FIRST to greet the glad sunrise,
With outstretched mountain arms,
Her placid lakes like big blue eyes,
And a graciousness that charms;
And fairer tresses ne'er did blow,
In breeze on hill or plain,
Than silver streams that toss and flow,
Beneath the pines o' Maine.

Clothed in beauties of the land,
So modestly, serene;
Spring-rose garlands in her hand,
Against a robe of green;
Her summer gown, a floral maze,
Then Autumn tints her train;
On mantle white 'tis fair to gaze,
When Winter comes in Maine.

At her feet Atlantic, fair,
Kneels proudly, and to woo
And humbly lavish riches rare,
His wooing to pursue;
And by the sea to toil and spin,
she labors not in vain,
To harbor well her kith and kin,
Along the shores o' Maine.

Vast her stores in harvest time,
Fruits of a fertile north,
A golden share for every clime,
Nor a whit for scorn or scoff.
First to give in a sister's need,
First to a world in pain,
For love is planted with the seed,
In the garden plots o' Maine.

Model of hospitality,
Her latchstring always out.
Wide her portals by the sea,
Her way-gates swung about.
With open arms and friendly hand,
On highway, trail and lane,
She welcomes guests from every land,
To the playground o' Maine.

Mother of noble sons, and free,
Who honor the name she bears;
Daughters of love and liberty,
Their reverence voice in prayers;
Who wander far, and of her kin,
For little or for gain,
Know where to find, a place within
The heart o' dear ol' Maine.

THE TREE AND THE MAN

WHAT'S grander than a grand ol' tree?
Heap o' things to some, mebbe, but not to me:
Suthin' more'n crookedness an' knots;
Have to look beyond the wrinkles an' the warts;
Have to kinder know the truth of it,
To see the real an' not the counterfeit.

Have to feel the speerit o' the thing,
'Fore you hear the puty songs the breezes sing,
In the branches o' the tree, an' fore
You 'gin to see the beauty; an' furthermore,
Nothin', guess, 'll make you feel so glad,
When you find the good is jes' behind the bad.

What's grander than the grand ol' man,
Who, like the noble tree, the truer courses ran?
Suthin' more'n imperfections rise,
More'n falt'rin' steps an' dimmin' o' the eyes:
A light reflectin' reverence through
A stronger faith, somehow, in God's will to do.

CLOSE TO NATURE

EVER HEV that cravin' for somethin'
Yer don' know what—
Kind of a' empty longin'
To be out o' th' same old rut?
I hev it when th' moon is high,
An' when th' sun is low;
An' when I hear th' crickets chirr
An' when th' cattle lo,
I jes' can't help a-wonderin' what
A-keeps me feelin' so.

I've sut beside a runnin' brook,
An' stared my eyes mos' out—
My mind a-wanderin' here an' there,
An' all around about.
I've built them castles in the air,
An' I've built 'em on th' ground,
But darn! th' minute I look up a bit,
Or start a-movin' 'round,
That pesky feelin' ketches me,
An' knocks them castles down.

I ain' much on religious things,
An' all them kinds an' creeds,
'Cause gosh! 'twould keep a-feller guessin' some
T' know which one he needs.
I'm satisfied to know a Lord,
That leads me o'er a route,
Where Nature holds her candle up
An' points her beauties out;
'Cause then I git that cravin' fit,
I jes' been tellin' 'bout.

THE LITTLE OLD KITCHEN

PAINTED sort o' brownish yellor;
Floor worn bare by many feet;
'Hind th' stove, place where a feller
Likes a good, warm, comfy seat.
On th' mantle-piece all shiney,
Lamps a-standin' in a row,
From th' big uns to th' tiny,
Jes' th' way th' folkses go.

Iron pump coughs hard an' wheezes;
Dog comes beggin' for a drink;
Cat, too, rubs around an' teases,—
Prob'ly heerd th' dipper clink.
Under watchful care an' keepin',
Where th' sunlight al'ays comes,
Little potted vine a-creepin',
'Side o' red geraniums.

ONE CANDLEMAS DAY

DAYS are stretchin' little longer,
Ol' Sol comin' up' th' track;
Hope, too, somehow's pullin' stronger.
No drop-stitches in my back.
Broom an' turkey-wing a-workin',
Ol' clock keepin' o' th' time;
No-un but me, guess, a-shirkin',
'Cept for makin' of a rhyme.

Woodchuck in his house a-stirrin',
Roof a-startin' in to leak;
Suthin' sure mus' be occurin',
Comes out for to take a peek.
Eyes a-lookin' kinder sleepy,
Little mud spot on his nose;
Suthin' kinder weird an' creepy,
Ol' black shadow comes an' goes.

IF WINTER GOES

IF WINTER goes, what o' the Frost king's reign?
And what within his prison shall remain,
When, with his keys, the Keeper shall unlock
Each ice-bound cell? And when old Sol shall knock,
And swing each door, and bend each rigid bar,
What o' the pent-up life a-near and far?

What o' the troubled heart, if Winter goes?
And what o' the joy the freeman knows?
Brooks and streams, like children in their play,
Shall run, and laugh, and sing, and leap away!
And Spring shall come and reign in garments rare,
And let the mellow south wind wave her hair;
And from his heart the golden robin knows
How best to pour his song, if Winter goes.

SEASONABLE SIGNS

WOOD stove smokin' an' a-puffin';
Ol' maltese a-raisin' Cain,
Scamperin' around an' roughin'—
Comin' on a blow an' rain!
Tea-kettle a-breathin' wheezey;
Ol' clock skippin' uv her ticks;
I be takin' uv it easy,
Ma, she's trimmin' o' th' wicks.

Chill wind soughin' an' a-sighin';
Blinds 'gin a-rattlin', too,
Jes' like suthin' was a-tryin'
To stir old Boreas's brew.
March hare, guess, is gettin' worried;
Lion sits a-lashin' his tail!
Lamb jes' a li'l bit hurried,
Spring's campin' close on th' trail.

A MARCH MORNING

KINDER chilly 'round the edges;
East a-blushin' purty red;
Blue th' shadows 'neath th' hedges;
Sort o' pinkish overhead.
Rooster crowin' down th' holler;
T'other one atop the hill,
Stretchin' uv his speckled collar,
For to make his crowin' shrill.

Fire built an' breakfus' cookin',
Me a-kinder hangin' 'round;
At the window 'gin a-lookin',
Heerd a mighty cheery sound;
In the appletree a-bobbin',
An' a-flippin' tail an' wing,
See a cocky little robin,
Fillin' uv his heart with spring.

ON THE SUNNY SIDE

SNOW a-meltin' an' a-thawin';
Pigeons cooin' on th' roof;
Me a-splittin' an' a-sawin;
Nag a-sleepin' on th' hoof.
Sap a-drippin' from th' maple,
Chil'en lickin' uv it up;
Drive a little spout an' staple,
For to ketch it in a cup.

Little pullets up-an'-comin',
Learnin' how to talk an' lay;
Dog a-nosin' 'round an' chummin'
With th' kittens in th' hay.
Suthin' promisin' an' cheerin'!
Kinder makes me want to sing,
Cause ol' Time again is steerin'
For th' sunny port o' Spring.

APRIL

MARCH runs away in a flurry and whirl,
And leaves an obstinate slip of a girl
In pale-blue frock with snow-white frills,
A child o' the woods, and vales, and hills.
She romps the fields, and laughs at the sun,
And gathers sun-beams, one by one;
And down in the mirror lakes, afar,
She dives, and swims with the evening star.

Up with the sun, she laughs 'till she cries,
And the earth wrings wet 'till the sun it dries;
And the girl grows into a comely maid,
A child o' the sun, and unafraid.
She dances out in the noonday breeze,
And sings with the birds in budding trees;
And she scatters violets on the way,
For her next of kin, the child o' May.

WOODS IN APRIL

SNOW a-clingin' on in patches;
Mouldy leaves in soggy mats;
Mother Nature lifts her latches,
Buds come p'radin' in new hats,
Sun a-pourin' 'gin th' spruces,
Gum a-smellin' purty good.
Like t' taste th' sugar juices,
Oozin' out o' maple wood.

Chickadees a-chick-a-deein';
Ol' woodpecker borin' holes;
In a thicket out o' seein',
Ol' hen partridge clucks an' scolds.
Crows a-holdin' spring convention,
In th' pasture out beyend;
Everythin' thet calls attention,
Kinder seems t' be a friend.

In th' sun on mossy ledges,
Like to stretch out on my back;
Clouds, somehow, jes' skim the edges,
O' th' tall, slim hackmatack.
Hear a-swishin' an' a-swushin',
In th' branches o' th' pines;
Mother Nature, guess, a-brushin'
O' th' cobwebs from her signs.

LITTLE APRIL JOYS

H EERD a crow this mornin', early,
Up atop the ol' pine tree;
Patter-feet, an' fair-locks curly,
Blue eyes strainin' hard to see.
Little hands a-patee-cakin',
Me a-pointin' way up high;
Ol' black rascal circles makin'
In a puty April sky.

Have t' help about th' dressin',
Have t' bring a stick o' wood;
Ma a-mixin' an' a-messin',
Suthin' smellin' purty good.
Little hands an' mouth a-meetin'
Little nose a wrinkle makes,
Lips a-smackin' while a-eatin',
'Lasses on th' griddle-cakes.

THE ESCAPE

LOCKS a-strainin' an' a-burstin';
 Prison doors a-givin' way;
Little nature-things a-thirstin'
 For th' cheery light o' day.
Sparrer hoppin' in th' cedars,
 Puty song a-breakin' loose,
With th' swank-swank o' th' speeders,
 Far behind th' leadin' goose.

Cat-o-nine-tails 'gin a-liftin'
 O' their heads above th' swale;
Lazy trillin' sound a-driftin'
 From the swampy alder vale.
Hear a-scratchin' an' a-pickin';
 Hen a -cluckin' for to tell;
See a fluffy, li'l chicken,
 Jes' a steppin' from its shell.

THE SONG O' THE BROOK

WHEN your heart's a lump, an' your cares a load,
Jes' take a walk on a country road;
And at the bridge jes' stop and look,
And listen awhile to the song o' the brook.
It trips, and falls, and whirls, and winds,
Always a way out o' trouble finds;
Whatever the course to follow brings,
It ripples, and laughs, and merrily sings.

At the top o' the hill jes' turn around,
And see what the brook o' the song has found:
The broader course where the river winds,
Where it joyfully flows, and the ocean finds.
So when you walk on a country road,
And your heart's a lump, and your cares a load,
Jes' stop at the bridge, and stand and look,
And listen awhile to the song o' the brook.

FISHIN'

DO SEEM'S if I couldn't wait,
For fishin' time t' come
Got a bran' new-fangled bait;
Wan' t' hear the ol' reel hum.
Wan' t' see the line a-swishin';
Like t' kitch a darned good mess;
But, there's suthin' more t' fishin',
Than a-kitchin' 'em, I guess.

Some folks al'ays go a-fishin',
With nothin' but a wish;
Jes' keep up a constint wishin',
Fer more an' bigger fish.
Can't e'en hear a bird a-singin';
Never watch th' ripples play;
Jes' keep bobbin' an' a-stringin',
Blind as bats in light o' day.

Ain't much ever gits by me,
'Round about or in th' skies.
I'm atune to all, I be,
Even skeeters an' th' flies.
An' when I hear 'em wishin', wishin',
I jes' kinder likes t' bless,
'Cause, there's suthin' more t' fishin',
Than a-kitchin' 'em, I guess.

TREASURE BROOK

UP AN' down ol' Wing-um-paw;
Alder pole an' little hook;
Six-foot line fer castin', for
It's jes' a ve'y sma' brook,
Kinder puty way it winds,
Full o' holes, an' logs an' sech!
Speckle beauties, too, I finds,
Al'ays waitin' fer be ketch.

Go a-trailin' up an' down,
Same as when I was a boy;
An' fer ev'y inch o' ground,
Bet I gets a foot o' joy,
Heerd 'em tell back years ago,
'Bout ol' Wing-um an' his squaw,
Ketchin' gold fish—mebbe so,
Up an' down ol' Wing-um-paw.

THE LURE OF THE LAKE

QUIET mornin', sun a-risin',
Paddle dippin' up its wake;
Reel a-hummin' an' surprisin',
Salmon flashin' from th' lake.
Suthin' 'bout it kinder fetchin';
Suthin' in me 'gins t' rise!
Wouldn't swap fer gold th' ketchin'
O' this beau'ful silver prize!

On th' beach a little fire;
Coffee 'gins a-b'ilin' up;
P'inted saplin' fer a frier,
Piece o' birch bark fer a cup.
Somehow nuther cares an' worry,
Go a-flyin' in th' breeze!
Who 'ud swap his heat an' hurry,
Fer this close-to-natur' ease?

Driftin' camp-ard jest at sundown,
Natur' 'gins a-paintin' scenes:
Puty sky atop th' hill crown,
White birch o'er th' water leans;
Fleet o' ducklin's too, a-sailin',
Mother hidin' 'em away;
Who 'ud swap th' thing thet's ailin',
Fer this endin' uv a day?

Evenin' down th' ridges creepin';
Whip-po-wills b'gin t' call;
Pewee bird its prayer a-peepin',
By a whisperin' waterfall,
Who 'ud swap th' honk uv auto,
Fer an ol' owl's sombre hoot,
From a mountain pine or grotto,
Out 'o darkness, abserlute?

A LITTLE STRANGER

SUTHIN' jest a bit unus'al;
Quite a little stir-about;
Whisp'rin' 'round an' a refusal
To let suthin' private out.
Eyes a-blinkin' an' a-winkin';
Heads a-noddin' no an' yes;
Little muddled minds a-thinkin',
An' a-tryin' hard to guess.

Quite a trick to keep a secret,
When ol' Cu-ri-os-i-ty
Goes a-huntin' with his teeth set,
For to see what he can see.
'Round about the hay-barn seekin';
Gentle lowin' in the chaff;
Through the tie-up door a-peekin';
Puty bran' new heifer calf!

THE SCARECROW

QUITE a likely feller once,
'Fore they stuck him up out here,
'Fore they made of him a dunce,
An' afore he got so queer.
This ol' coat, an' hat, an' tie,
An' this ol' moth-eaten vest,
Use to be, I reckon, my
Sunday go-to-meetin' best.

Purty good-un for th' job!
Rain or shine he's al'ays here,
Scarin' 'em who come to rob,
For a month or two each year.
Has to stand a heap o' sassin',
An' th' boys do like to shoot;
Never swears at 'em a-passin',
When they 'gin to laugh an' hoot.

Heerd 'em say he looks like me;
Mebbe so, but what o' that!
Patches here an' there, mebbe,
Hair a-stickin' through my hat.
Suthin', guess, in dispersition;
Al'ays do th' best I can;
Clothes can win a high persition,
Never could, though, make a man.

DECORATION DAY

BAND a-playin', colors wavin',
Troopers marchin' 'long;
Young an' pert uns, well behavin',
Spick-an'-span an' strong.
Folkses 'long th' street a'plaudin',
True hearts proud an' gay:
Honors to th' brave awardin',
Deckeration Day.

Fife an' drum, an' ol' flag meetin';
Spirit o' th' Blue!
Smiles an' tears, an' hearts a-beatin'
Fer th' passin' few.
Every foot o' ground disputin',
Valiant veterans they!
Take yer hat off, keep salutin'
Deckeration Day.

THE OLD APPLETREE

NOTHIN' very puty 'bout it,
Jest a plain ol' appletree;
Folkses wonder some an' doubt it,
When I tell 'em it suits me.
Suthin' sweeter than the apples,
Is the memory it unfolds;
Suthin' kinder grips an' grapples!
Mebbe appletrees have souls.

There's a suthin' comes an' lingers,
Suthin' close to long ago—
Closer, too, than thumbs an' fingers.
Guess as how I ought t' know!
Blossom-time, an' plenty on it,
Air a smellin' puty fine;
Ruddy cheeks beneath a bonnet,
Little hand a-grippin' mine.

SUND'Y MORNIN'

SUN ASLANT th' roads an' fences;
Crows a-cawin' on th' hill;
Everythin' s'kinder o' peaceful,
Suthin' kinder near an' still.
Lookin' yonder 'cross th' valley;
Git a sniff o' balsam balm;
Church bell in th' distance ringin';
Sund'y mornin' on th' farm.

Folkes dressin' up an' primpin';
Horse a-bein' carded down;
Wagin greesed an' clean's a whistle;
Ridin' stylish in t' town.
Hear th' village choir singin';
Deacon noddin' uv his head;
Parson poundin' out his sermon,
Bout th' livin' an' th' dead.

Standin' in th' doorway thinkin';
Never go t' meetin' now;
Off th' road, 'n' kinder driftin'
'Way from people, guess, somehow.
Never think o' bein' lonely;
Never fear a bit o' harm,
'Cause there be a friendly Presence,
Sund'y mornin' on th' farm.

THE BUILDERS

HONEYSUCKLE buds a-poppin';
Bush its lacey lattice weaves;
Pair o' yellow wabblers hoppin',
In an' out among th' leaves.
Watch 'em carry straw an' feather,
Buildin' 'tween two sheltered prongs;
Hear 'em makin' plans together,
Every plan a group o' songs.

Nestlin' down among th' flowers,
Still as li'l mice all day,
Whilin' patiently the hours,
'Gin a-buildin' t'other way.
Li'l bills soon come a-pokin',
Li'l wings a-tryin' t' fly,
Li'l worm a wee throat chokin',
Then a puty lullaby.

HONEST LABOR

SWARM o' honey bees a-workin',
Like a little Trojan mob;
Never ever ketch 'em shirkin',
Never see 'em hob-an'-nob;
Hev no time fer countin' hours,
Or fer wishin' work was done,
Jes' keep dippin' at th' flowers,
From th' rise to set o' sun.

Guess as how there may be learnin'
In th' purpose o' th' bee;
Suthin' more'n wages earnin',—
Suthin' higher 'pears to me.
May be jes' respect fer duty,
Humbleness, a reverence true,
Nor a slave to storin' booty,
Jest a willin'ness to do.

A LOAFER'S PARADISE

PURTY nigh, I guess, t' heaven,—
Little garden spot o' mine!
Currant bush, an' forty-'leven
Buddin' roses on a vine.
Birds a-matin' an' a-layin';
Bees a-storin' up their fare;
Honeysuckle bush a-sprayin'
Of its fragrance everywhere.

Taters in th' ground a-growin';
Squirrel sittin' on th' fence;
Me a-ketchin' up on hoein',
But a-usin' commonsense.
Worms an' beetles all a-workin';
Ant a-tuggin' at his load;
On'y thing, I guess, a-shirkin',
Is a' ol', fat, sleepy toad.

EVENING

AFTERGLOW wanin' an' a-fadin';
Bright star shinin' in th' west;
Bird in th' bush a-hoppin' nearer,
T' keep a close watch on th' nest.
Ol' folks sittin' an' a-thinkin';
Young-uns busy doin' chores;
Little tots blinkin' an' a-noddin',
Up where th' sandman soars.

Nag in th' stable 'gins a-pawin';
Owl 'gins a-hootin' on th' hill;
Hear a little sound like th' rushin'
O' th' water by the ol' grist mill.
Damp air risin' from th' medder;
Peppermint a-snuffin' up yer nose;
Bat goes a-flippin' an' a-floppin',
Chills a-runnin' down t' yer toes.

Dog at th' door 'gins a-whinin';
Key goes a-clickin' in th' lock;
Cat 'gins a-purrin' an' a-rubbin'—
Time t' be a-windin' uv th' clock.
Weary feet a-creepin' up th' stairway;
Shadows by th' candle-light cast;
Young folks a-dreamin' o' th' future,
Ol'-uns a-thinkin' uv th' past.

A LITTLE LOVE STORY

SITTIN' by th' kitchen fire;
Lights a-flick'rin' on th' wall;
Dog a-snoozin' in th' corner,
One eye open, legs a-sprawl.
Kettle steamin', an' a-singin';
Rain a-beatin' 'gin th' door;
Hear a yawnin', an' a kickin',
Boots a-droppin' on th' floor.

Comes a scratchin', an' a whinin',
Nose a-pressin' 'gin a knee;
Hand a-reachin' out an' smoothin',
'Gins a-pattin' gently.
Hear a husky voice a-sayin',
"Kinder lovin', ain't yer Pete?"
Then a scuffin' up th' stairway,
Go a pair o' stockin' feet.

Overhead an ol' bed creakin',
An' b'low a cocked-up ear,
Waits th' rustle o' th' cornhusks;
Mus' be sure o' keepin' near.
Hear a draggin', an' a pullin',
An' a whinin', an' a root!
Flops a-sighin', goes t' sleepin',
Nose a-sniffin' of a boot.

KEEPIN' IN LINE

AUTO'BEEEL a-standin' in th' dooryard;
Wagin' in th' barn a-dryin' up;
Ol' horse a-loafin' in th' pasture,
Nosin' uv a wilted buttercup.
Gursolene a-spurtin' an' a-poppin';
Enjine a-sawin' all th' wood;
Buck-saw a-hangin' in th' woodshed;
Ol' back a-feelin' purty good.

Orgin in th' parlor out o' kilter;
Fiddle gone t' smash an' laid away.
Jes' don't care a thing about it,
Music box a-leadin' me astray.
Children go a-trottin' an' a-whirlin',
Not much as how we use t' do;
Suthin' kinder keeps 'em up an' goin',
An' I has t' keep a-goin' too.

Seems ef th' world is goin' faster;
Settin' hen a-wakin' from her dream;
Chicks 'gin a-hatchin' by th' hundreds;
Got a bigger inkerbatin' scheme.
Young folks a-workin' an' a-savin';
Little un learnin' t' creep an' climb.
Seems mighty good t' be a-livin',
An' jine in th' speerit o' th' time.

HAYIN' TIME

FIELD o' buttercups an' daisies,
Wavin' herds-grass, an' a swale;
Bob-o-link a-singin' praises;
'Lasses in th' water pail.
Me a-mowin' an' a-singin';
Bumble-bee a-buzzin' by;
Chil'ren in their cups a-bringin'
Rasb'ries, for t' make a pie.

Like to rest awhile a-thinkin';—
Take a little time to look;
Nag an' dag together drinkin',
An' a-wadin' in th' brook.
'Gin a-feelin' kinder holler,
Stumick stickin' to my back;
Suthin' kinder makes me foller
Up along th' beaten track.

Sun a-blazin', hay a-makin',
Purty good for gettin' in;
Ma a-doin' the horse-rakin',
Dog a-flying' 'roun' like sin.
Me a-pitchin' an' a-sweatin',
Chil'ren treadin' o' th' hay;
Jes' in time t' save a-wettin',
Summer shower on th' way.

Nighthawks flyin' 'round', an' swoopin';
Ma a-mixin' of her bread;
Chil'ren noddin' an' a-droopin',
Me a-crawlin' off t' bed.
Can' help feelin' mighty grateful,
When I lay me down t' sleep,
'Cause I earn a' honest plateful,
An' can pray th' Lord t' keep.

AT THE TURN

TRADED of yer, hev they Jerry?
Hates to see yer gittin' through;
Been a-ploddin' 'long fer years, we hev;
Don't know zactly what I'll do.
Partners in the harness, we been—
Fair, square an' never a shirk;
Always was a-rubbin' noses,
Jes' to help along the work.

Swapped yer for a flivver, hev they?
Progress, sure, is hurry mad!
Jes' don't see how they could do it;
Makes me, somehow, purty sad.
Give a fortune if I hed it,
To begin all over new—
Time when you was jest a yearlin',
An' I was turnin' forty-two.

Life fer me won't be worth livin',
'Thout you here to hob an' nob;
An' when it's time to do the feedin',
This ol' heart's jes' gonna throb.
Do seems if I couldn't stand it;
Seems jes' if the end hed come!
Somethin' though, I guess, in memory.
So long, Jerry; bye ol' chum!

A SUMMER SHOWER

SUTHIN' queer all of a sudden!
Cobweb wiven on th' hoe;
Woodchuck for his hole a-scuddin';
Martins 'gin a-flyin' low.
Ol' cow 'gins a' anxious mooin',
Heifer-calf a-keepin' nigh;
Kinder feel a-suthin' brewin';
Mighty s'picious lookin' sky.

Blindin' flash! an' a deep rumble,
Everythin' a-growin' black;
Mighty like a growl an' grumble,
Savage frown an' the attack.
Rain, like hot tears, 'gins a-pourin',—
Passion's way o' givin' vent;
Rainbow, like a smile, restorin'
Peace on earth, an' Heaven sent.

FEEDIN' TIME

CATTLE saunt'rin' home'ard from th' pasture;
Ol' horse whinnyin' in th' stall;
Heifer calf a-cuttin' up an' blatin',
 Ans'rin' uv th' mother's moooin' call.
Have t' go an' fetch a pail o' water;
 Git a whiff uv apple-sass an' tea;
Feel like suthin' was a-knawrin',
 Up an' down the inner side o' me.

Munchin' an' a-hookin' in th' tie-up;
 Hear th' milk a-squirtin' in the pail;
Kittens 'gin a mewin' an' a-lappin';
 Ol' cow a-switchin' uv her tail.
Broodin' hen a-cluckin' to her chickens;
 Pullets peckin' corn out uv a pan;
Little mother rockin' an' a-singin',
 Hush-a-bye t' sleep my little man.

CONTENTMENT

UP AN' doin' in th' mornin'
Long afore th' blazin' sun;
Spend a heap o' time a-yawnin',
Gettin' o' th' chore work done.
Cows a-sighin' an' a-chewin';
Ol' mare munchin' uv her oats;
'Roun' th' milk trough plenty doin',
Jes' chock-full o' hungry shoats.

Breakfus' time, an' rosy faces;
Little folks with sleepy eyes;
Buttercups in puty vases,
Jest a little-un's surprise.
Strawb'ry sass an' bread 'n' butter,
An' a ring o' happy smiles;
Sun a-peepin' through th' shutter;
Suthin' 'bout it reconciles.

HOME

SITTIN' in th' 'twilight dreamin',
Ol' he-fly a-buzzin' 'round,
Tea-kettle pipin' an' steamin',
Sure am a purty good sound.
Water 'gins a-drip-drip droppin'
Funny little notes in a pail,
Way Sir Weasel goes a-poppin',
Up an' down th' minor scale.

Eve'ythin' s' glad an' tuneful,
Heart a-kinder beatin' time,
Addin', mebbe, 'bout a spoonful,
To th' rythm an' th' rhyme.
Best uv all an' mighty cheerin',
When a feller's tired out'
Is t' be within' th' hearin'
O' th' voice uv her about.

THE OLD-FASHIONED GARDEN

SWING-GATE with a little bell,
 Beneath an arch o' roses;
Winding walk, an old stone well,
 Two maids with powdered noses.
Rustic seat where hollyhocks,
 With smiles on all their faces,
Listen to the secret talks,
 And vie with silks and laces.

Jingle bell upon the gate,
 Two hearts all in a flutter;
Bows and courtesies at eight,
 Two beaux ahem! and stutter.
Narrow paths that couples know,
 And cosy nooks for stopping;
Where the bach'lor-buttons grow,
 A hint for question-popping.

Open window, and the light
 O' candles all a-flicker;
Where the ivy shields from sight.
 A giggle and a snicker.
Spinnet tunes, and songs of old,
 And bridal wreaths a-wearing;
Sweetest stories ever told,
 And pretty notes comparing.

SEPTEMBER

LITTLE tech o' red an' yellor;
Here an' there th' green o' pine;
Gentle breeze an' kinder meller;
Sun a-feelin' purty fine.
Crickets ev'ywhere a-chirrin';
Spider takin' uv a nap,
Waitin' fer t' ketch th' whirrin'
Things around about her trap.

Fields o' clover 'round th' stubble—
Natur spreadin' uv her rug;
House in order, an' no trouble,
Fixed up cosey-like an' snug.
Ready fer th' guest uv honor,
Stores a-plenty fer th' day;
Puty colors to adorn her,—
Brown October, on th' way.

MORNING-GLORIES

OL' CAT on th' grass a-sprawlin';
Little kittens nosin' 'roun';
Dog a-waggin', an' a-crawlin',
An' a-sneezin' at th' groun'.
Suthin' good, I guess, a-comin',
Suthin' frothin' at th' top;
Hear a purrin', an' a hummin',
Milk a-flowin' sure'n pop!

Sunlight on th' mornin'-glories;
Creepin' vine a blaze o' red;
Bulgin' eyes, an' fairy stories
By a little sleepy-head;
An' another, an' another,
Like th' buds upon a stem;
An' a smilin' little mother;
Mornin'-glories, all of 'em!

FOR SALE

LITTLE white house in th' clearin';
Ol' apple trees standin' guard;
No face in a window peerin';
No-un 'round about th' yard.
Little brown barn kinder cantin';
Big door clingin' to a hinge;
No sound ever, but th' chantin'
Swallows in th' mud-nest fringe.

Birds in th' spring come a-matin';
Wild flowers grow all around;
Garden plot long been a-waitin',
Fer someone t' till th' ground.
Hay fields, an' grain, too, a-raisin';
Little trout brook runnin' nigh;
Cattle on th' hillside grazin';
Warm milk comin' by-an'-by!

Autumn reds an' yellors glowin';
All th' taters in th' bin;
Winter winds an' snow a-blowin';
All banked up an' cuddled in.
Fine ol' place t' start a-livin';
Young folks, maybe, it'll suit;
Trade, too, stiperlates a-givin',
An ol' red cradle t' boot.

SIGNS OF FALL

DAYS a-gettin' some-ut shorter,
Nights an' mornin's in a race;
Robins dreamin' 'roun', an' sorter
Wonderin' what's a-takin' place.
Yeller leaves, an' puty red uns;
Crazy flies a-dartin' 'roun';
In th' cobwebs plenty dead uns,
Out'n stubble fields o'brown.

Crickets singin' all together;
New moon facin' to th' south;
Like as not a spell o' weather,
Rain maybe, an' mebbe drouth.
Smell a-suthin' good a-cookin';
Smile a-lightin' some-uns eyes;
Tell, I bet, without a-lookin',
Ma's a-bakin' pumpkin pies.

HARVEST DAYS

RED an' yeller apples from th' pickin';
 Pun'kins like th' risin' suns o' morn;
Moon comes a-smilin' o'er th' hill-top,
 To shine on th' folkses huskin' corn.
Mill stream a-rushin' by, an' singin';
 Everyone so kinder full o' cheer;
Hear th' gals a-laughin' an' a-screamin';
 Some-un's ketched the ol' red ear.

Table spread with everything a-plenty;
 Biscuits hot, an' brown as butter-nuts;
Eyes as big as saucers, an' a-starin';
 Mother's pun'kin pie in whoppin' cuts.
Deacon shuts his eyes an' 'gins a-blessin',
 Suthin' 'bout th' hungry souls, an' sin;
Has a fit o' whoopin' an' a-coughin';
 Everybody 'gins a-wadin' in.

Sittin' 'round th' blazin' fire o' comfort,
 Talkin' 'bout th' harvest days, an' sich;
Folkses hear a sort o' plaintive meowin',
 Kind thet always gives yer heart a twitch.
Jes' as proud as ever any peacock,
 Back an' forth, a-struttin' through th' door,
Tabby-cat goes, one-by-one a-draggin',
 Seven little kittens on th' floor.

A PASSING LIGHT

OL' FARM gone to rack an' ruin;
Buildin's nigh a-fallin' down;
No more folkse up an' doin',
Never ever come aroun'.
Scythe a-hangin' 'gin a rafter,
Solid rust from drippin' rain;
Ol' grindstone o' song an' laughter,
Never, guess, 'll turn again.

Cold an' lonesome in th' kitchen,
Stairs a-little creepy, too;
Hear a-suthin' flap-a-switchin'—
Swallows up th' chimney flue.
Parlor dark an' holler-soundin';
Faded walls an' streaks o' wet;
In a corner, little roundin',
Markin's where the orgin set.

Speerit o' th' hens an' chickens,
'Roun' about th' sumac bush;
Scratchin' for their daily pickin's,
In their dust beds crowd an' push.
Lambs an' steers, too, use to huddle
'Roun' about it rainy days;
Spooky shadows in a puddle,
Overhead a crimson blaze.

A BIT O' THE SPIRIT

WILD geese a-flyin' to the south'ard;
Cold, grey clouds a-spittin' snow;
Woodbox full to overflowin';
Firelight a-spreadin' uv its glow.
Busy mother sittin' an' a-hummin',
Mendin' uv a pair o' wooley socks;
Toes, as much, I guess, need a warmin',
As geese what's a-flyin' south in flocks.

Spare-rib a-roastin' in the oven;
Mince pies a-waitin' in a row;
Cranb'ry sauce jest aw-right for tastin';
Little thumbs an' fingers in th' dough.
Plenty mouths, somehow, need a-fillin';
Thankful for th' things t' fill th' need;
Like t' hev a spare-rib big enough,
To give all th' hungry world a feed.

BEDDIN' DOWN

NIGHT her comfy quilts a-foldin'
'Roun' th' little hills an' vales;
Pullets on th' roost a-scoldin',
 An' a-peekin' heads an' tails.'
Cattle chewin' an' a-sighin';
 Nag a-whinnyin' a might;
Jes' a lovin' way o' tryin'
 For to say to me, "good night."

Have to kinder be a mother
 When it comes to beddin' down;
Animiles an' things er-other,
 Like to hear yer treadin' 'roun';
Like to know yer sort o' keepin'
 Watch uv 'em, an' lookin' out
Fer th' little uns a-sleepin'
 In th' straw aroun' about.

SUPPER FOR THREE

LIKE to sit, an' think, an' whittle,
Comin' on o' winter nights;
By the fire snooze a little,
Fore th' lightin' o' th' lights.
Ginger-bread 'n things a-cookin';
Like to smell th' b'ilin' tea;
Dog a-sniffin' 'round an' loookin';
Only him, an' ma, an' me.

Like to hear the clink o' dishes,
An' th' jingle o' th' spoons;
Dog, his tail a-waggin' wishes;
Ma a-hummin' uv her tunes.
Ain' so many chairs for sittin',
Way th' table use to be.
One-by-one they went a-flittin',
Leavin' him, an' ma, an' me.

JUST HUNTING

OUT a-strollin' in th' mornin';
Take the ol' shotgun along
Mebbe kitch a-suthin' yawnin';
Mebbe hear a puty song.
Plenty signs in Hungry Medder;
Chickadees a-hoppin' 'roun';
Partridge-berries never redder;
Rabbits still a-wearin' brown.

Little orchard in th' clearin';
Little trails 'at come an' go;
Wildwood sweetin's, so endearin'
To th' wildwood things 'at know.
Puty eyes look up a-starin';
Me a-keepin' mighty still;
Finger on th' trigger bearin';
Never could, though, shoot to kill.

SPOTS ON THE MOON

TRUDGIN' home'ard, kinder dusky,
Night a-lurkin' 'neath th' ridge;
Ice a-breakin', crisp an' husky,
Crossin' by th' winter bridge.
Heerd a-suthin' go a-whirrin'!
S'prised, I guess, a bird or two;
Mated pair, mebbe, conferrin',
Or a passin' how d' do.

Woodroad to the east a-bearin',
Me a-trudgin' right along;
Purty soon, stock-still a-starin',
See a-suthin' lookin' wrong:
Moon as big as thunder shinin',
Jest a-risin' o'er th' hill;
On a limb ag'in' it linin',
Birds a-keepin' mighty still.

TRAILS AND TRACES

PATH a-leadin' to th' medder,
Way th' things o' winter go;
Berries red, a little redder
On th' bushes 'gin th' snow.
Big an' little trails a-crossin'
One-another everywhere;
Rabbit jumps, his tail-piece tossin'
Guess I gin him quite a scare.

Snowy nooks an' cosey places,
An' a little b'ilin' spring;
By th' water wee sma' traces,
An' th' printed partridge wing.
Sound o' choppers in th' clearin',
Little echoes strange an' odd;
Eyes to see an' ears for hearin';
Traces everywhere o' God.

OLD FOLKS AT HOME

YULE LOG blazin' in the fire;
Everythin' a-glow with light;
Yeller dog a-hitchin' nigher;
Cat a-perkin' up a mite,
Soot-geese flockin' an a-flyin',
Up an' down th' chimney flue
Ol' folks sittin' an' a-sighin'—
Family's dwindled down t' two.

Ol' clock tickin' an' a-tockin';
Minds a-wanderin' far away;
Hearts a-kinder interlockin',
Over dreams o' yesterday.
Firelight its glow a-losin';
Shadows dimmer on the wall;
Cat, an' yeller dog a-snoozin';
Two white heads together fall.

THE SNOWY WITCHES

NOR'EAST wind, an' snow a-blowin';
Through drifts, wadin' middle deep;
All th' folkses Eskimoin';
Hibernatin' things asleep.
Land o' Goshen! Little witches,
Peekin' through th' frosted pane,
Brush th' window with their switches,
Then skeedaddle off again.

Blusterin', blurrin', blindin' blizzard,
Driftin', siftin' all th' night;
Ol' cock strainin' uv his gizzard,
Crowin' fer th' broad daylight.
Snug an' warm th' cows an' horses;
Cuddlin' tots in feather beds;
Roarin' wind th' fine snow tosses,
'Gin th' window 'bove their heads.

Hear th' snappin' fires burnin';
Smell th' coffee b'ilin', too;
Men folks uv their breakfast earnin';
Plenty shovelin', guess, t' do.
Down th' stairway bare feets patter;
White robed uns with cheeks aglow;
Blazin' logs fer teeth that chatter;
Witches dancin' in th' snow.

A SYMPHONY IN SNOW

WINTER mornin' 'long th' highway;
Feet a-mushin' in th' snow;
Jest a-strollin' from a byway;
No pertie'lar place t' go.
Hear th' sound o' frost a-snappin';
Sun a-thawin' out th' freeze;
'Gin t' think o' days fer sappin',
'Mid th' songs o' chickadees.

Rustic bridge adown th' holler;
Pines an' spruces hangin' low;
Rabbit tracks an' 'em 'at's smaller,
Deckeratin' uv th' snow.
Path a-leadin' to th' water
Bubblin' through a pearly chink;
Cow, an' heifer calf, her daughter,
Switchin' down along t' drink.

Flock o' sparrers on th' wires,
Sittin' 'long atween th' poles;
Like th' folkses in th' choirs,
Jes' a-pourin' out their souls.
Bluejay pipes, his notes a-swellin';
Crow a-coughin' out his part;
Nothin' lost, I guess, in tellin',
O' th' songs that reach th' heart.

A STUDY IN BLUE

THIS 'ere weather, somehow nuther,
Gits me goin' one way tother.
Some sez how it's mood, or muse;
Mebbe, though, it's jes' plain blues.
Kinder makes me wish an' wonder;
Makes me sit an' stare 'an ponder;
Starts me plannin' fishin' trips;
Jes' takes hold o' me an' grips.

When th' frogs begin a-trillin',
An' whip-poor-wills are whip-o'-willin',
Can't do much but sit an' pout,
An' guess as what it's all about.
An' when th' darkness comes a-creepin',
Then I do my bit o' weepin',
'Cause I hates t' have her see,
Th' pesky thing is gittin' me.

Never know jes' how she's feelin'
'Cause she sings an' keeps a-peelin',
Jes' th' same when she is glad,
As when her heart is achin' bad.
What's th' use t' keep a-dwellin',
When th' cure is in th' tellin'.
Jest a word sometimes'll mend,
All th' darned blue devils rend.

FOND RECOLLECTIONS

MUSIC? Don't know nothin' skursely, 'bout
th' scientific end of it;
All I know's th' diff'ence 'tween th' tones
that jibe an' a misfit.
Never knew one note from t'other; never had
a chance to learn;
Bet yer though I'd been a hummer, if I'd
a-taken such a turn.

All this highfalutin' stuff—these oprey
songs, an' trills 'n' such,
Is Greek to me, an' I can't say's I ever
fancied of it much.
Th' good old fashioned tunes suit me; they
kind-er grip me 'round th' heart,
An' take me way back home again, where
mother was th' biggest part.

They take me to th' little church, beside
th' perfumed Sally Ann,
An' by th' willows where we met, down where
th' little trout brook ran;
An' if I listen mighty hard an' close my
eyes to all about,
I hear her voice, an' see her face a-pokin'
from her bonnet out.

Sally sing? Jes' bet she could, an' she could
play the orgin too;
We've sut for hours at a time, an' run th'
whole durn hymn book through.
She never cared for people much, but somehow,
though, she took to me,
An' I too, somehow, took to her, but guess
'twas never meant to be.

A PHILOSOPHIC TALE

BEEN a-lazin' 'round all summer,
Kinder dreamin' by th' way,
Watchin' out fer some new comer,
'Spectin' suthin' day by day;
Guess as how there's nothin' to it—
Watchpot never, never boils;
Him who does, is bound t' do it;
Gettin's got by him who toils.

Say a pig's tail is th' makin's
Uv a whistle—mebbe so!
Guess th' leavin's or th' takin's
Wouldn't get a half a blow;
Wouldn't harm a single bristle
Fer th' tryin', win or fail,
'Cause t' get a darn poor whistle,
I'd be spoilin' a good tail.

WHERE OCTOBER DWELLS

LEAFY carpets, brown an' golden;
Sun weaves in 'em patterns rare;
Puty picturs, like the olden
Tapestries, hang everywhere.
Lights an' shadows ever changin';
Ceilin's all a puty blue;
Al'ays fixin' an' arrangin',
Al'ays plenty work to do.

Fires on th' hearth a-burnin';
Doors o' welcome open wide;
Lonely ones, maybe, a-yearnin'
For th' cheery light inside.
Golden fruits, an' stores a-heapin',
Everything a heart-ache needs;
In October's house a-reapin'
Golden thoughts from golden seeds.

YESTERDAY AND TODAY

BEEN wanderin' o' late, somehow—
Back to other days, I mean;
Seein' things as how they used t' be,
When times were purty slow an' lean.
Dear ol' faces keep a-bobbin' up;
Smiles an' tears—see 'em plain as day.
Cur'ous, too! When I 'gin a-seein',
Suthin', somehow, jes' won't let 'em stay.

Scenes keep a-comin' an' a-goin',
Like as how th' movin' picturs do;
No more'n git a peek at one thing,
Then suthin' else comes a-pokin' through.
Everythin' seems t' be a-whirlin';
Don't know fer sure jes' how t' stop;
Young folks a-flippin' an' a-flappin';
Time jest a-spinnin' like a top.

Ol' world, guess, has got th' wabbles;
Kinder started waggin' at both ends;
Maybe only jest a flapper notion.
Dignity, I guess, sometimes unbends.
Well t' keep an eye on tomorrow;
Yesterday has gone its lonely way.
'Member, too, while th' sun is shinin',
Don't ferget t' keep a-makin' hay.

THE HARVESTERS

FOLKSES everywhere a-workin'
Plenty harvestin' t' do;
Cool o' nights, an' frost a-lurkin'
In th' heavy medder dew.
Luggin' squash an' yeller pumpkins;
Heapin' taters in th' bin;
Huskin' corn, an' country bumpkins
All a-cuttin' up like sin

Pickin' apples; some for stewin',
Some for stringin' up t' dry;
Some for chompin' an' a-chewin'
Winter evenin's by an' by.
Pies an' pickles, an' preservin';
Sniffs o' vinegar an' spice;
Ma a-dippin' an' a-servin',
Me a-takin' helpin's twice.

Harvest moon a-risin' yeller;
Mr. Raccoon prowlin' 'roun';
Al'ays was a busy feller,
'Mong th' carrots in th' groun'.
Kitch him sometimes out a-lootin',
An' I chuckles when he runs;
Carrot in his mouth, a-scootin'
For to feed th' little-uns.

IKE AND SPIKE

THIRTY year, now, goin' on,
 Been a-sailin' side by side,—
Ike an' Spike has; sure's you're born!
 'Thout a turnin' o' th' tide.
Have their ins an' outs, o' course,
 When temp'ry squalls jes' pull an' shove;
Never could, though, tech th' source
 Of a heap o' brother love.

Purty hard, sometimes, to stand
 'G'in th' waves o' stubbinness,
But they've al'ays managed, and,
 They al'ays will, I guess.
Have t' keep a-steerin' clear
 O' th' rocks that rise an' strike.
Sailin's good in ships that veer
 With th' hearts of Ike an' Spike.

WHEN THE CORN SPOOKS PRANK

SUTHIN' mighty weird an' lonely
'Bout a cornfield in th' fall;
Guess as how, though, some folks only
See what I don't see at all.
Looks jes' like a' Injun village,—
Tee-pees, feathers, an' war-paint;
Signs o' scalpin's, too, an' pillage;
Nuff to make a scare-crow faint!

Cornstalks here an' there a-standin',
Jes' like redskins on th' watch;
Ol' chief by his wigwam handin'
Out, maybe, th' flamin' torch.
Go-ner have a big bonfire,
An', maybe, a big ghost dance!
Mebbe'll roast a whappin' liar,
To give th' li'l ones a chance.

See a lot o' grinnin' faces,
Sort-er floatin' in th' dark;
Suthin' rises up an' chases
Suthin' tall, an' stiff, an' stark!
Bell a-ringin' an' a-tollin';
Hear a caterwaulin', too;
Then th' punkins come a-rollin'
Down th' hill, at me an' you!

INDIAN SUMMER

THE STORM has curbed the fury in its rage;
The land lies brown, and damp, and cold;
The last leaf turns and falls, the final page
Of Autumn's beauteous tale of old.

'Neath the brown leaf-sog a lonely cricket sings;
The hunter stays his stealthy step. Then hist!
The startled whirl of partridge wings,
Gives him courage to persist.

And lo! The murky clouds, asunder hurled,
Let in the sun's enlightening rays,
And lend to man and his naked world,
The joy of Indian Summer days.

BELIEVING THE NATURAL

WHOS makin' all this talk about
There bein' no God an' never was?
Mus' be some durned ig'rant lout,
Who growls around a-pickin' flaws.
Jes' 'cause a dollar bill ain' ten,
An' all th' wimmen folks ain' men,
Ain' no scuse, an' durn little cause
For sayin' God ain' an' never was.

Go out a-walkin' in th' field,
An' through th' woods, an' 'long th' brook;
Jes' let go yerse'f an' yield
To eve'ythin' that is, an' look;
You won't see a green moon made o'cheese,
Nor money growin' on th' trees;
But one thing's sure, an' that ain' two,
God'll be there 'long with you.

Makes no dif'ence where you stray,
Or where you look, above, below;
You'll get th' speerit of His way—
You will, by crackey! guess I know.
There ain' no lies or shams—no fraud
About th' things that's filled with God;
Even in a flower you e'n find
Th' truth o' Him, if you've a mind.

OCTOBER'S GIFT

IN A brown woods nook,
By a singing brook,
I found a prize today;
A strange little flower,
Queen of the bower,
It may surprise to say.

Of its vestments shorn,
Nor a whit forlorn,
In chill October's gloom,
It nodded its head,
When I stooped and said:
"May I have Witch-Hazel's bloom?"

IN PASTURE LANDS

LET DOWN th' bars of other days,
An' wander down th' lane with me,
An' follow little trail an' ways,
By ledge, an' stump, an' scrubby tree.
Have a taste o' checkerberry;
Listen to the ol' cow bell:
"Onkle-onkle, dinkle-derry,"
Over yonder in th' dell.

Here an' there a clump o' birches,
Patch or two o' spruce an' pine,
Monster willow leans an' lurches,
In a favorite nook o' mine.
If you stop awhile a-drinkin'
At th' spring b'neath th' bank.
Bob-o-links'll 'gin a-spinkin':
"Sprinkle-sprackle, spinkle-spank."

Seen sun-sets, an' seen sun-rises,
Up'n top o' Clover Knoll;
Suthin' there that harmonizes
With a suthin' in my soul.
Oft'n, when twilight is fallin',
'Maginin', mebbe, a loss,
I jes' stand an' look, a-callin',
"Co-boss, co-boss, co—co—boss!"

THE WAY HOME

RIBBON road a-climbin' over
T'other side o' Weasel hill,
Runs an' capers through th' clover
In th' valley by th' mill.
Through th' woods it romps an' dances,
Seems to loiter, too, an' roam,
Swings about, an' proudly prances
Jest a step or two, an' home.

Window full o' smilin' faces;
House ain't much to brag about;
One of 'em ol' patched-up places,
Well-curb with a stubby snout.
Flower garden's kinder puty,—
Daffodils an' like o' that;
Weedy path an' kinder rooty;
Peg inside to hang yer hat.

Suthin' better'n worldly riches
For th' little folks within;
Never ugly words or switches,
Never lettin' in o' sin.
Jest a suthin' pure an' simple,
Way a mother's heart entwines,
For to make a smile an' dimple,
With th' light o' love that shines.

THE JOYS OF MAY

O VER the hill she came, and smiled
At the yawning shepherd boy, her child.
Under the oak she found her sheep
And snuggling lambs, all fast asleep;
She led them o'er the fresh, green brae,
The sheep to feed, and the lambs to play;
She bade the shepherd boy, with care,
Go watch, and drink o' the beauty there.

In at the chamber window, she
Peered and smiled; and she laughed to see
The child of her name with flaxen hair,
Bathe in the balm of her morning air.
She saw her gaze afar o'er the brae,
And feast on a songster's roundelay;
And she went with her to the wood she knew,
Where best her sweet arbutus grew.

A RAINY DAY

DO BE a-peltin' an' a-pourin';
Peas in th' groun' a-breakin' through;
Swallows a-flittin' an' a-soarin'
Roun' about the ol' chimney flue.
Can' help but do a bit o' wishin',
Rain sort o' sets a feller free;
Purty good time t' go a-fishin',
Signs in th' zodiac agree.

Yellow-hammer to her mate a-callin';
Hear a-some 'n', too, a-callin' me;
Hope, high a-sittin', 'gins a-fallin',
Winged while a-restin' in a tree.
No use a-makin' poor excuses;
Can' hide behind my lazy ways;
Can' al'ays do what I chooses,
Ma knows her business rainy days.

IN NATURE'S NURSERY

PUTY little wildwood settin',
Cherry blossoms all aglow,
Plenty open space for lettin'
O' th' sunlight freely flow.
Pale green o' th' cluster birches
'G'in' th' sky-blue overhead;
One eye squintin', t'other searches
Fer a partridge-berry bed.

Little beaten path a-leadin'
Up ag'in' an ol' pine stump;
Me a-pickin' an' a-feedin',
See a-suthin' kinder jump;
Hear a cluckin' an' a-scoldin';
Funny feelin' in my legs;
Heart a-thumpin', breath a-holdin',
Nest o' puty partridge eggs.

A WINTER SCENE

THE snow-packed low and uplands lay
As the Artist's canvas, cold and gray;
The rising sun His pallet and sheen;
Its rays His brush to paint the scene;
And I, the critic, on wind-swept knoll,
Searched to find in His work, the soul.

Nor did I in my searching err.
The leafless birch, the frosted fir,
The wooded ridge, the sky's rose rim,
All bore true reflection of Him.
Even in the meadow haze, did He
Reveal to me His artistry.

And from the scene I gleaned a thought—
A theme from a winter's morning wrought:
The cold, gray canvas of man's belief,
O'er spreading all his night of grief,
Needs but the Master brush, and His way,
To paint for him a colorful day.

SONG OF THE WAYSIDE SPRING

WEARY traveler, check thy steps,
Come hither and be strong;
Quench thy thirst in my pure depths,
And harken to my song.

Upon my banks rest thou in peace,
Thy throbbing pulse subside;
Cool thou thy fevered brow at will,
In the waters past thee glide.

Into my mirrored eyes look down,
And view thine own flushed face;
And see beyond the clear, blue sky,
And floating clouds that race.

See how my beating heart swells out,
Pouring forth earth's purest blood,
Departing thence in rivulets,
To join the mighty flood.

Drink, traveler, drink!
Satisfy thy long-felt crave;
'Twill start anew the life in thee,
And make thee young and brave.

* * *

Thou hast lingered long upon my brink,
 And rested thou must be;
Go thou then upon thy way,
 And bear kind thoughts of me.
Be thyself a sacred spring,
 Whence right and honor flow;
Teach well the world, the song I sing;
 Drink once again and go.

