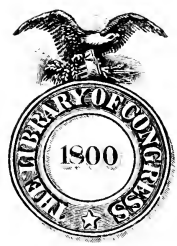
POEMS
FOR
CHILDREN

ROSSETTI

GOLDEN
HOUR
SERIES



GOLDEN HOUR SERIES

POEMS FOR CHILDREN

BY

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INTRODUCTION

The greatest task which confronts the little child is the mastering of the mother tongue in its three phases — speech, reading, and writing. In the accomplishment of this task, nothing is so helpful as the hearing and reading of large quantities of suitable poetry. This fact was well known to the people of antiquity. Before the age of writing, the laws and traditions of each tribe were handed down through the medium of verse. Verse was chosen rather than prose, because its form facilitated memorizing and furnished a guarantee of accuracy. When the law or tradition had been once thrown into the poetic form it was difficult to change its meaning without destroying its form and this would at once furnish a test of correctness.

It was in this manner that all the nations of antiquity trained the minds of their young and transmitted to posterity the memory of the deeds done by their heroes, and those laws and rules of conduct which experience had found it necessary to impart to the youthful members of the community. Thus it was that the Greeks preserved to posterity the poems of Homer and the laws of their legislators.

After the invention of writing, the necessity for poetry as a medium for the preservation of fact and tradition, passed away. For purposes of mere utility, prose took its place; yet the poetic form did not fall into disuse. It was found that poetry contained in itself a cultural value which could not be

gained from prose. For many generations the Greek school boy learned by heart the poems of Homer or of Hesiod.

In more recent times poetry has come to be comparatively neglected. Two or three generations ago there were many persons, some so-called educators, who entirely rejected or neglected poetry as a means of educating the young. This may have been owing in part to the fact that there was not in English literature any considerable body of poetry suitable for the use of very young children. Even in our day poetry of this class, printed in a form suitable for the home and the school, has not been generally available at a moderate price. It is to remedy this condition in part that this series of books is now offered to the public.

At the present day poetry, as an educational force, is recovering its ancient place in the schools. There are, probably, few or no educators of any standing or reputation whatever, who deny its importance, and were these books intended solely for the use of schools, nothing more need be said. Since, however, it is hoped that they may find a place in many homes, it seems fitting to explain more fully the importance of poetry in the education of the young.

Children should read poetry because they like it. Something within the child responds immediately to the rhythmical beat of the verse. So potent is this instinct, that children put rhythm into sounds which have it not. The tick of a clock is as evenly monotonous as mechanism can make it. Yet to the child it is not tick, tick, tick, tick, but tick, tock′; tick, tock′; with a strong ictus upon the second syllable. This feeling for rhythm seems to be a physical, as well as mental, instinct, originating, probably, in the rhythmical beating of the heart. Thus the very physical life of the child is based upon rhythm. Quite naturally therefore, he responds most readily to the

rhythmical forms of language. The length of the line of verse is also determined by the physical nature of man. A line of poetry is merely a certain number of syllables which can be pronounced comfortably between one breath and another. In most persons this number is eight or ten, and for this reason verse forms which exceed ten, or, at most, twelve syllables to the line have never been and never can become popular. To the child, of course, who breathes more rapidly than the adult, the shorter forms of verse are most suitable.

Rhyme, also,—a kind of rhythm which comes at longer intervals and marks the end of the line,—furnishes a keen pleasure to the child. The gratification furnished by rhythm and rhyme is quite independent of the sense of the words read. It is for this reason that the very baby who knows scarce half a dozen words, is soothed and amused by "Nonsense Verses" and Mother Goose Rhymes. To the potency of such, the experience of every mother will furnish ample testimony.

It is a mistake to suppose that young children should not learn poetry which they cannot fully understand. Every child, not hopelessly dull, when he begins to attain a mastery of the mother tongue, delights in using words often entirely without meaning to him. He prattles on all day, repeating the words and sounds which he has learned, in an endless variety of combinations. This apparently aimless exercise of the linguistic organs, is Mother Nature's method of training the child to the utterance of intelligible vocal sounds. For this reason, even nonsense rhymes and jingles give the child pleasure, and at the same time develop his power over the linguistic organs.

To some matter-of-fact adults the child's intense love for rhymes and jingles may seem silly and useless: something to be repressed rather than gratified and encouraged. To such persons it may be worth while to state that modern pedagogy has

furnished an explanation of this childish love of verse; an explanation based upon the doctrine of evolution, which is now, in some form or other, accepted by all.

Biologists have found that before birth the human embryo passes through various stages similar to those by which earthly life has evolved. In the beginning it resembles the lowest forms of invertebra from which it ascends to the highest, or vertebrate, forms of animal life. After birth, the child's mental and physical characteristics resemble those of the quadrumana, and later those of the lower races of humanity. The biologists further tell us that each stage is necessary to the fullest development of the individual. In short, the child does, and should, recapitulate the various stages through which the race has been evolved. This theory is known as the "Culture Epoch Theory," and is generally accepted by modern educators.

Now the child, up to the age of twelve or fourteen, passes through, or recapitulates, the savage and barbarous stages of race-evolution. In those stages the race universally preferred verse to prose, and the child while passing through the same stage exhibits the same preference.

Children should read poetry also because it trains the ear and furnishes a guide to the pronunciation of many words. This is especially true of the more musical forms of verse. Such poetry, when well read, or recited, furnishes a valuable training of the sense for the beautiful in language, which is probably latent in the mind of every normal child. The training thus afforded is closely akin to that furnished by music, and is scarcely less valuable. Rhyme requiring an identity of sound at the ends of lines sometimes furnishes a valuable key to the pronunciation of words.

Children should read and memorize poetry for the purpose

of training the memory and increasing their vocabulary. The use of poetry for these purposes has been approved of in all ages and by all schools of educators. Its value in the training of the verbal memory has been experienced by almost everyone. A poem once thoroughly learned, and afterwards almost forgotten, can be recalled far more easily and completely than could be done in case of a prose selection of equal length. Besides, it is far more easily learned in the first place. The form of poetry, the measured beat of the rhythm, the regular length of the line, and the recurring harmony of the rhyme, all aid the memory in retaining the words. Thus, in the mind of the child who hears, reads, and learns much poetry, a large and varied stock of words will be accumulated. The importance of this enrichment of the vocabulary can scarcely be overestimated. One who notices the talk of children will inevitably be astonished at the paucity of the words they are accustomed to use. The elementary school course brings the child into contact with several thousands of words; in their conversations the most of them employ but a few hundred.

Beside the mere hearing, reading, and learning poetry, there is another way in which young persons increase their stock of words and improve their command over them; that is, by writing rhymes and verses of their own. This practice is far more general than is sometimes supposed. As Hugh Miller says, "Almost every active intelligence during youth has a try at making verse." Conradi found that just fifty per cent of the cases he investigated had tried their hands at original poetry. Benjamin Franklin and many others have recorded their efforts in this direction, and their belief in the efficacy of the practice.

This practice of verse-making should always be commended and encouraged. The effort to find words to fit the rhythm

and the rhyme will greatly broaden and enrich the child's stock of words. In this connection it is an interesting fact that almost every master of English prose has, at some time or other, served an apprenticeship as a verse-maker and recorded his belief that this practice is a valuable aid toward the mastering of a good prose style.

Children should read poetry because it furnishes the mind with a store of valuable ideas. The importance of this enrichment of the child's mental content cannot be overrated. The child is bound to have something going on in his mind. Self-activity is an instinct of the mind as well as of the body, but self-activity demands something to work with. The mind cannot be active *in vacuo* any more than a baseball nine can play the game without the ball. It is the business of the parent and the teacher to put the child's mind into a condition to use good and elevating ideas rather than those which are evil and debasing. These good ideas can be furnished by the reading of good poetry. While engaged in this the child will not learn to lie, to swear, to fight, to cheat, or to steal.

The importance of implanting good ideas in the child's mind is emphasized by the theory of the human mind held by the philosopher Hume and many others. According to this theory, ideas create the mind. Hume says: "The ideas are, themselves, the actors, the stage, the theatre, the spectators, and the play." Professor James, while not accepting this theory in its entirety, says: "No truth, however abstract, is ever perceived, that will not probably, at some time or other, influence our earthly actions. . . . Every sort of consciousness, be it sensation, feeling, or idea, tends directly to discharge itself into some motor effect." In other words our actions are dependent upon our stock of ideas. How im-

portant, then, that the ideas with which a child's mind is stocked shall be good, and poetry is the most effective vehicle for the conveyance of good ideas to the mind of the young child.

Children should read poetry because it stimulates and develops the imagination. The imaginative appeal of poetry is known and acknowledged by all. Indeed, it constitutes one of the essential elements of poetry. Now, children, whether we wish it or not, will exercise their imagination. It is during childhood the dominant mental faculty. "Of all people children are the most imaginative." The childish imagination, if left to itself, is quite as apt to run to the evil as to the good. Indeed, if we accept the doctrines of a certain school of theologians, it is far more apt to take the downward than the upward path. The only way to check and prevent this downward tendency is by furnishing the child's mind with a store of good ideas, as a basis for the imagination to work upon. If we fill the mind with the good there will be no room for the evil, and in doing this, experience has shown that nothing is so effective as an abundance of good reading, especially the reading of poetry.

To emphasize the importance of this stimulation and training of the imagination let me add the following definitions:

"The imagination is the organ of the heart and opens up the way for reason." — *J. Stanley Hall.*

"The imagination is that power of the mind which combines and arranges, with more or less symmetry and proportion, that which primarily comes into the mind through the senses."
— *Dr. Francis Parker.*

Children should read poetry because it stimulates the emotions and trains the will. The power of poetry over the emotions is

due, in part, to its form. The same facts or ideas embodied in prose do not stimulate the emotions in the same manner or to an equal degree. For example, "Evangeline," in prose, would have quite another effect. Poetry in general does not perhaps excite the passions to the same degree of intensity as some works of fiction. The stimulation produced by good poetry is calmer and more even than that produced by the most vivid pieces of fiction. For this very reason poetry is better adapted to the training of the will and the character through the emotions, than the more exciting novels. For this reason, too, great care should be exercised in the choice of the prose fiction which a child is allowed to read. On the other hand, there is extant practically no English poetry suitable for children which can be, in the slightest degree, harmful; certainly none such is to be found in this series.

Now the will, that power which transmutes character into act, is governed mainly by the emotions. The heart is a far more powerful and a readier responding instrument than the head. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he."

Children should read and memorize poetry because it is the best means of developing the religious nature. On this point I cannot do better than to quote from a speech of Dr. Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard University.* He says:

"Is there any universally applicable method through which we can insure in little children the unconscious reception of the leading ideas of the (Christian) faith? I believe there is, and I believe that this method should be used in all (Christian) families and all (Christian) churches. It is the method of committing poetry to memory. I heard Dr. Crothers quoting

(*Dr. Eliot speaks from the standpoint of a particular church, but what he says is universally applicable.)

somebody last Sunday to the effect that religion is poetry; but somebody else amended that statement by saying that religion is poetry believed. The amendment is important. Can we put into the childish mind through poetry a religion it will believe? We may be perfectly certain that no child ever got any religion out of a catechism. It takes an adult with the tendency to metaphysics to get anything out of catechism. Will not a child unconsciously get religion out of poetry, if it be well selected? I have seen the experiment tried in a fair number of instances — not enough instances for a general conclusion, but in a fair number of instances — and never knew it to fail. In order to give you an impression of the actual working of the method, I must enter into a few particulars. Take such a poem as Longfellow's 'Village Blacksmith,' a very simple poem of universal sentiments, and let the child, at an appropriate age, commit the whole of it to memory, so that it can recite it whenever asked for. Some of the most fundamental conceptions of religion, some of the most fundamental conceptions of the new science of sociology, will enter the child's mind with that poem. Of course, as in all poetry, a great deal of what we may call information, or suggested knowledge, is conveyed in even a single verse. Take the verse:

> "'He hears his daughter's voice
> Singing in the village choir,
> And it makes his heart rejoice.
>
> "'It sounds to him like her mother's voice
> Singing in Paradise.'

"Now the child eight or ten years old will take that all in, and will learn from it that the blacksmith had a daughter who

could sing, and she sang sweetly in the village choir; and the blacksmith had had a wife whom he loved tenderly and she was dead, and she sang when with him, and now she was singing in a happy next world, in Paradise; and the blacksmith liked to go to church because he heard his daughter, who reminded him of her mother. All that is in that little verse; and it is a beautiful picture of some of the best parts of human experience.

"Take another poem, very well known to us all, but seldom used, it seems to me, for children: Leigh Hunt's 'Abou Ben Adhem' ('May his tribe increase')! There is a poem that any child of ten years old will take in, and it presents a series of delightful pictures; and at the end comes a very compact statement of the whole (Christian) theory about character.

"Another invaluable poem for religious education is Bryant's 'Waterfowl.' The whole (Christian) view of the Providence of God is presented to the child in that lovely poem — God is guiding the bird through the pathless air, and just as he guides the bird he will guide me. It is the simplest possible presentation to a child's mind of the loving Fatherhood of God."

The importance of what Dr. Eliot has said is emphasized by the fact that the use of the Bible is not permitted in our public schools. Teachers must therefore take advantage of every opportunity furnished by the literature read or otherwise to "point a moral." Hitherto our schools have not been sufficiently supplied with literature well fitted to form a basis for moral instruction. This deficiency, it is hoped, these little books will help diminish.

The reading of poetry by the young not only nourishes the mind and develops the moral and religious nature, but it offers the most efficient means of creating a taste for good reading. The modern civilized man is bound to read some-

thing, and the field of literature is so broad that it offers material to satisfy the needs and tastes of every intelligence. But, unfortunately, the field of bad literature is equally extensive, and is apt to be preferred by those whose early literary training has been neglected. Unfortunately, too, a taste for good reading is generally formed early in life or not at all. Early, far too early, the harsh hand of stern necessity or the flattering caress of frivolous pleasure is laid upon youth to deflect it from the laborious but profitable path which leads to true culture. Let parents and teachers, therefore, look to it that the feet of the young child are early set in the straight path which leads to the Elysian fields of good literature.

MELVIN HIX

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF
CHRISTINA GEORGIANA ROSSETTI

Christina Georgiana Rossetti, the author of the poems in this book, was born in London, England, Dec. 5, 1830, and died in that city Dec. 29, 1894. Her parents were Italian exiles. Though poor, they were persons of education and refinement. Her father supported his wife and four children — two boys and two girls — by teaching Italian. Of these children, Christina was the youngest.

As a child she was noted for her kindness and politeness to others. Indeed, so polite was she, that her brother once jokingly remarked to her that "She would soon become so polite it would become impossible to live with her." She was never sent to school, being taught at home by her mother. She learned to write a beautiful hand and her note-books were always models of neatness. Though not a particularly studious

child, she was bright and thoughtful, and learned much from the talk of others. Before she was twelve years of age she began to write poetry, and continued to do so for more than fifty years.

She was never married. Having no home of her own, she lived, during their life-time, with her parents; after their death, for the most part with her brother, William M'chael Rossetti.

She was of an affectionate disposition, being especially fond of little children. Being without family of her own, she expended her love upon her little nephews and nieces and the children of her friends, for whom most of the poems in this book were originally written.

During the greater part of her quiet and uneventful life, she suffered extremely from ill-health, but her own suffering never made her sour, ill-tempered, or unkind to others. Indeed, she was never known to do an unkind act, or say an unkind word; and, though her means were always small, she was ever ready to give freely to others whose need was greater than her own. She was naturally of a deeply religious nature, and throughout her long life an earnest and consistent member of the Church of England.

Though for fifty years a writer of poetry, and to a less extent, of prose, her income from her literary work was always small; happily toward the end of her life it became ample for her needs.

Concerning the quality of Miss Rossetti's poetry, and its adaptation to the needs of young children, I append the following estimates by two competent American critics:

"The increasing appreciation of her simple verse — not all of it flawless, by any means; too rough and broken often — is full of good augury. It is the inevitable, spontaneous quality of her verse, something like the sweet simplicity of Blake at

his best in the 'Songs of Innocence,' of Shakespeare in such drifts of thistle-down fancy as "Where the bee sucks' — it is this we want to know and feel when we see it, and fill the bird-like mouths of children with."—*Prof. Percival Chubb, in the "Teaching of English," page* 52.

"Miss Rossetti demands closer attention. She is a woman of genius, whose songs, hymns, ballads, and various lyrical pieces are studied and original. I do not greatly admire her longer poems, which are more fantastic than imaginative; but elsewhere she is a poet of profound and serious cast, whose lips part with the breathing of a fervid spirit within. She has no lack of matter to express; it is that expression wherein others are so fluent and adroit which fails to serve her purpose quickly; but when, at last, she beats her music out, it has mysterious and soul-felt meaning." —*Edmund Clarence Stedman, in "Victorian Poets," page* 280.

MELVIN HIX

POEMS FOR CHILDREN

LOVE ME — I LOVE YOU.

Love me — I love you,
Love me, my baby;
Sing it high, sing it low,
Sing it as it may be.

Mother's arms under you,
Her eyes above you;
Sing it high, sing it low,
Love me — I love you.

MY BABY.

My baby has a mottled fist,
My baby has a neck in creases;
My baby kisses and is kissed,
For he's the very thing for kisses.

ANGELS.

Angels at the foot,
And angels at the head,
And like a curly little lamb,
My pretty babe in bed.

HOLY INNOCENTS.

Sleep, little Baby, sleep;
The holy angels love thee,
And guard thy bed, and keep
A blessed watch above thee.

No spirit can come near
Nor evil beast to harm thee:
Sleep, Sweet, devoid of fear
Where nothing need alarm thee.

THE COLD DAYS OF THE YEAR.

Bread and milk for breakfast,
And woolen frocks to wear,
And a crumb for robin redbreast,
On the cold days of the year.

BABY, SLEEP.

Lie a-bed,
Sleepy head,
Shut up eyes, bo-peep;
Till day-break
Never wake: —
Baby, sleep.

MIX A PANCAKE.

Mix a pancake,
Stir a pancake,
  Pop it in the pan;
Fry the pancake,
Toss the pancake,
  Catch it if you can.

AGAINST QUARRELING.

Hop-o'-my-thumb and little Jack Horner,
  What do you mean by tearing and fighting?
Sturdy dog Trot close round the corner,
  I never caught him growling and biting.

LULLABY.

Lullaby, oh, lullaby!
Flowers are closed and lambs are sleeping;
Lullaby, oh, lullaby!
Stars are up, the moon is peeping;
Lullaby, oh, lullaby!
While the birds are silence keeping,
Lullaby, oh, lullaby!
Sleep, my baby, fall a-sleeping,
Lullaby, oh, lullaby!

A HOUSE OF CARDS.

A house of cards
Is neat and small:
Shake the table,
It must fall.

Find the face cards
One by one;
Raise it, roof it —
Now it's done: —
Shake the table!
That's the fun.

THE BEE.

What does the bee do?
  Bring home honey.
And what does Father do?
  Bring home money.
And what does Mother do?
  Lay out the money.
And what does baby do?
  Eat up the honey.

AN OAK.

A toadstool comes up in a night —
  Learn the lesson, little folk: —
An oak grows on a hundred years,
  And then it is an oak.

THE RICH AND POOR BABIES.

My baby has a father and a mother,
    Rich little baby!
Fatherless, motherless, I know another
    Forlorn as may be:
    Poor little baby!

LETTERS.

Eight o'clock;
The postman's knock!
  Five letters for papa;
One for Lou,
And none for you,
  And three for dear mamma.

THE BELLS.

"Ding a ding,"
  The sweet bells sing,
  And say,
"Come, all be gay,"
  For a holiday.

SING ME A SONG.

Sing me a song. —
  What shall I sing? —
Three merry sisters
  Dancing in a ring,
Light and fleet upon their feet
  As birds upon the wing.

A POCKET HANDKERCHIEF.

A pocket handkerchief to hem —
Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!
How many stitches it will take
Before it's done, I fear.

Yet set a stitch and then a stitch,
And stitch and stitch away,
Till stitch by stitch the hem is done,
And after work is play.

THE SWALLOW AND THE SNAIL.

Swift and sure the swallow,
Slow and sure the snail:
Slow and sure may miss his way,
Swift and sure may fail.

UMBRELLAS AND PARASOLS.

When fishes set umbrellas up,
If the raindrops run,
Lizards will want their parasols,
To shade them from the sun.

THE POOR OUT IN THE COLD.

There's snow on the fields,
And cold in the cottage,
While I sit in the chimney nook
Supping hot porridge.

My clothes are soft and warm,
Fold upon fold,
But I'm so sorry for the poor,
Out in the cold.

TWO QUEER DREAMS.

"I dreamt I caught a little owl
And the bird was blue" —

'But you may hunt for ever
And not find such an one."

"I dreamt I set a sunflower,
And red as blood it grew" —

"But such a sunflower never
Bloomed beneath the sun."

A BABY.

I know a baby, such a baby. —
Round blue eyes and cheeks of pink,
Such an elbow furrowed with dimples,
Such a wrist where creases sink.

"Cuddle and love me, cuddle and love me,"
Crows the mouth of coral pink:
Oh, the bald head, and oh, the sweet lips,
And oh, the sleepy eyes that wink!

THE RAINBOW.

If all were rain and never sun,
No bow could span the hill;
If all were sun and never rain,
There'd be no rainbow still.

DAISIES.

Where innocent, bright eyed daisies are,
With blades of grass between,
Each daisy stands up like a star,
Out of a sky of green.

POLLY AND POLL.

I have a Poll parrot,
And Poll's my doll,
And my nurse is Polly,
And my sister Poll.

"Polly!" cried Polly,
"Don't tear Polly dolly" —
While soft-hearted Poll
Trembled for the doll.

THE CHERRY TREE.

Oh fair to see
Bloom-laden cherry tree,
Arrayed in sunny white,
An April day's delight;
Oh fair to see!

Oh fair to see
Fruit-laden cherry tree,
With balls of shiny red
Decking a leafy head;
Oh fair to see!

IF.

If a mouse could fly,
  Or if a crow could swim,
Or if a sprat could walk and talk,
  I'd like to be like him.

If a mouse could fly,
  He might fly away;
Or if a crow could swim,
  It might turn him gray;
Or if a sprat could walk and talk,
  What would he find to say?

IF A PIG WORE A WIG.

If a pig wore a wig,
  What could we say?
Treat him as a gentleman,
  And say, "Good-day."

If his tail chanced to fail,
  What could we do? —
Send him to the tailoress,
  To get one new.

HOPPING FROG, PLODDING TOAD.

Hopping frog, hop here and be seen,
I'll not pelt you with stick or stone:
Your cap is laced, and your coat is green;
Good-bye, we'll let each other alone.

Plodding toad, plod here and be looked at,
You the finger of scorn is crooked at,
But though you're lumpish, you're harmless, too,
You won't hurt me, and I won't hurt you.

CLOUDS AND RAINBOWS.

Boats sail on the rivers,
And ships sail on the seas;
But clouds that sail across the sky
Are prettier far than these.

There are bridges on the rivers,
As pretty as you please;
But the bow that bridges heaven,
And overtops the trees,
And builds a road from earth to sky,
Is prettier far than these.

CHERRIES.

Mother shake the cherry tree,
  Susan catch a cherry;
Oh, how funny that will be,
  Let's be merry!

One for brother, one for sister,
  Two for mother more,
Six for father, hot and tired,
  Knocking at the door.

A WISH.

I wish I were a little bird,
  That out of sight doth soar;
I wish I were a song once heard
  But often pondered o'er,
Or shadow of a lily stirred
  By wind upon the floor,
Or echo of a loving word,
  Worth all that went before,
Or memory of a hope deferred
  That springs again no more.

IF I WERE A QUEEN.

"If I were a queen,
What would I do?
I'd make you a king,
And I'd wait on you."

"If I were a king,
What would I do?
I'd make you a queen,
For I'd marry you."

A POOR OLD DOG.

Pity the sorrows of a poor old dog
Who wags his tail a-begging in his need;
Despise not even the sorrows of a frog,
God's creature too, and that's enough to plead;
Spare puss, who trusts us, purring on our hearth;
Spare bunny, once so frisky and so free;
Spare all the harmless creatures of the earth:
Spare, and be spared — or who shall plead for thee?

THE HORSES OF THE SEA.

The horses of the sea
  Rear a foaming crest,
But the horses of the land
  Serve us the best.

The horses of the land
  Munch corn and clover,
While the foaming sea-horses
  Toss and turn over.

THE CATERPILLAR.

Brown and furry
Caterpillar in a hurry,
Take your walk
To the shady leaf, or stalk,
Or what not,
Which may be the chosen spot.
No toad spy you,
Hovering bird of prey pass by you;
Spin and die,
To live again a butterfly.

PUSSY AND DOGGIE.

Pussy has a whiskered face,
Kitty has such pretty ways,
Doggie scampers when I call,
And has a heart to love us all.

The dog lies in his kennel,
  And puss purrs on the rug,
And baby perches on my knee,
  For me to love and hug.

Pat the dog and stroke the cat,
  Each in its own degree,
And cuddle and kiss my baby,
  And baby kiss me.

TO MARY.

You were born in the Spring,
When the pretty birds sing
  In sunbeamy bowers:
Then dress like a Fairy,
Dear dumpling, my Mary,
  In green and in flowers.

CURRANTS, FIGS, AND CRERRIES.

Currants on a bush,
And figs upon a stem,
And cherries on a bending bough
And Ned to gather them.

A FRISKY LAMB.

A frisky lamb
And a frisky child
Playing their pranks
In a cowslip meadow:
The sky all blue
And the air all mild
And the fields all sun
And the lanes half shadow.

BABY CRY.

Baby cry —
Oh, fie! —
At the physic in the cup:
Gulp it twice
And gulp it thrice,
Baby gulp it up.

THE WIND.

O Wind, why do you never rest,
Wandering, whistling to and fro,
Bringing rain out of the west,
From the dim north bringing snow?

WHAT?

What is pink? a rose is pink
By the fountain's brink.
What is red? a poppy's red
In its barley bed.
What is blue? the sky is blue
Where the clouds float thro'.
What is white? a swan is white.
Sailing in the light.
What is yellow? pears are yellow,
Rich and ripe and mellow.
What is green? the grass is green,
With small flowers between.
What is violet? clouds are violet
In the summer twilight.
What is orange? why, an orange,
Just an orange!

KINDNESS.

Hurt no living thing:
  Ladybird, nor butterfly,
Nor moth with dusty wing,
  Nor cricket chirping cheerily,
Nor grasshopper so light of leap,
  Nor dancing gnat, nor beetle fat,
Nor harmless worms that creep.

BOB CHERRY.

Playing at bob cherry
  Tom and Nell and Hugh:
Cherry bob! cherry bob!
  There's a bob for you.

Tom bobs a cherry
  For gaping, snapping Hugh,
While curly-pated Nelly,
  Snaps at it too.

Look, look, look —
  Oh, what a sight to see!
The wind is playing cherry bob
  With the cherry tree.

THREE PLUM BUNS.

Three plum buns
To eat here at the stile
In the clover meadow,
For we have walked a mile.

One for you, one for me,
And one left over,
Give it to the boy who shouts
To scare sheep from the clover.

THINGS TO REMEMBER.

Seldom "can't,"
Seldom "don't";
Never "sha'n't,"
Never "won't."

LADY MOON.

O Lady Moon, your horns point toward the east;
Shine, be increased:
O Lady Moon, your horns point toward the west;
Wane, be at rest.

AN ALPHABET.

A is the Alphabet, A at its head;
B is the Baker Boy bringing the bread.

C is for Cornflower come with the corn;
D is a Dinner which dahlias adorn.

E is an elegant eloquent Earl;
F is a Falcon with feathers to furl.

G is the Gander, the Gosling, the Goose;
H is for Heartsease, harmonious of hues.

I is an Idler who idles on ice;
J is a Jacinth, a jewel of price.

K is a King, or a Kaiser still higher:
L is a Lute or a lovely-toned Lyre.

M is a Meadow where Meadowsweet blows;
N is a Nut — in a nutshell it grows.

O is an Opal, with only one spark;
P is a Pony, a pet in a park.

Q is a Quail, quick-chirping at morn;
R is a Rose, rosy-red on a thorn.

S is a Snow-storm that sweeps o'er the sea;
T is the Tea-table set out for tea.

U, the Umbrella, went up in a shower;
V is a Violet veined in the flower.

W stands for the water-bred Whale —
X, or XX, or XXX, is ale.

Y is a yellow Yacht, yellow its boat,
Z is a Zebra, zigzagged his coat.

TWO MICE.

The city mouse lives in a house; —
  The garden mouse lives in a bower,
He's friendly with the frogs and toads,
  And sees the pretty plants in flower.
The city mouse eats bread and cheese: —
  The garden mouse eats what he can;
We will not grudge him seeds and stalks,
  Poor little timid furry man.

THE MOON.

Is the moon tired? she looks so pale
Within her misty veil:
She scales the sky from east to west,
And takes no rest.

Before the coming of the night
The moon shows papery white;
Before the dawning of the day
She fades away.

ROSY MAIDEN WINIFRED.

Rosy maiden Winifred,
With a milk pail on her head,
Tripping through the corn,
While the dew lies on the wheat
In the sunny morn.
Scarlet sheperd's-weatherglass
Spreads wide open at her feet
As they pass;
Cornflowers give their almond smell
While she brushes by,
And a lark sings from the sky
"All is well."

IF THE MOON CAME FROM HEAVEN.

If the moon came from Heaven,
Talking all the way,
What could she have to tell us,
And what could she say?

"I've seen a hundred pretty things,
And seen a hundred gay;
But only think: I peep by night
And do not peep by day!"

FLINT.

Stroke a flint, and there is nothing to admire:
Strike a flint, and forthwith flash out sparks of fire.

THE LAMBKIN.

A motherless, soft lambkin,
Alone upon a hill;
No mother's fleece to shelter him
And wrap him from the cold: —
I'll run to him, and comfort him,
Until he's strong and bold.

RUSHES IN A WATERY PLACE.

Rushes in a watery place,
And reeds in a hollow;
A soaring skylark in the sky,
A darting swallow;
And where pale blossom used to hang
Ripe fruit to follow.

THE FERRY.

"Ferry me across the water,
Do, boatman, do."
"If you've a penny in your purse
I'll ferry you."

"I have a penny in my purse,
And my eyes are blue;
So ferry me across the water,
Do, boatman, do."

"Step into my ferry-boat,
Be they black or blue,
And for the penny in your purse
I'll ferry you."

A FLOWER BED.

Heartease in my garden bed,
With sweet William white and red,
Honeysuckle on my wall: —
  Heartease blooms in my heart
When sweet William comes to call;
  But it withers when we part,
And the honey-trumpets fall.

LILIES AND ROSES.

The lily has a smooth stalk,
  Will never hurt your hand;
But the rose upon her briar
  Is lady of the land.

There's sweetness in an apple tree,
  And profit in the corn;
But lady of all beauty
  Is a rose upon a thorn.

When with moss and honey
  She tips her bending briar,
And half unfolds her glowing heart,
  She sets the world on fire.

THE WIND.

The wind has such a rainy sound
  Moaning through the town,
The sea has such a windy sound —
  Will the ships go down?

The apples in the orchard
  Tumble from their tree. —
Oh will the ships go down, go down,
  In the windy sea?

GOLDEN GLORIES.

The buttercup is like a golden cup,
  The marigold is like a golden frill,
The daisy with a golden eye looks up,
  And golden spreads the flag beside the rill,
  And gay and golden nods the daffodil;
The gorsey common swells a golden sea,
  The cowslip hangs a head of golden tips,
And golden drips the honey which the bee
  Sucks from sweet hearts of flowers and
    stores and sips.

WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND?

Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you:
But when the leaves hang trembling
The wind is passing thro'.

Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I:
But when the trees bow down their heads
The wind is passing by.

ROSES.

Roses blushing red and white,
For delight;
Honeysuckle wreaths above,
For love;
Dim, sweet-scented heliotrope,
For hope;
Shining lilies tall and straight,
For royal state;
Dusky pansies, let them be
For memory;
With violets of fragrant breath,
For death.

WHAT THE STARS DO.

What do the stars do,
  Up in the sky,
Higher than the wind can blow,
  Or the clouds can fly?

Each star in its own glory
  Circles, circles still;
As it was lit to shine and set,
  And do its Maker's will.

MY ONE ROSE.

I have but one rose in the world,
  And my one rose stands a-drooping:
Oh, when my single rose is dead
  There'll be but thorns for stooping.

WRENS AND ROBINS.

Wrens and robins in the hedge,
Wrens and robins here and there;
Building, perching, pecking, fluttering,
  Everywhere!

THREE WHITE EGGS.

A white hen sitting
  On white eggs three:
Next, three speckled chickens
  As plump as plump can be.

An owl and a hawk
  And a bat come to see;
But chicks beneath their mother's wing
  Squat safe as safe can be.

COUPLET.

"Come, cheer up, my lads, 'tis to glory we steer" —
As the soldier remarked whose post lay in the rear.

SEA-SAND AND SORROW.

What are heavy? Sea-sand and sorrow:
What are brief? To-day and to-morrow:
What are frail? Spring blossoms and youth:
What are deep? The ocean and truth.

RAIN IN SEASON.

Lambs so woolly white,
  Sheep the sun-bright leas on,
They could have no grass to bite
  But for rain in season.

We should find no moss
  In the shadiest places,
Find no waving meadow grass
  Pied with broad-eyed daisies:

But miles of barren sand,
  With never a son or daughter;
Not a lily on the land,
  Or lily on the water.

LAMBKINS AT PLAY.

On the grassy banks
Lambkins at their pranks;
Woolly sisters, woolly brothers,
  Jumping off their feet,
While their woolly mothers
  Watch by them and bleat.

THE ROSE WHEN SHE BLOWS.

The lily has an air,
  And the snowdrop a grace,
And the sweet pea a way,
  And the heartsease a face —
Yet there's nothing like the rose
When she blows.

A CHILL.

What can lambkins do
All the keen night through?
Nestle by their woolly mother,
The careful ewe.

What can nestlings do
In the nightly dew?
Sleep beneath their mother's wing
Till day breaks anew.

If in field or tree
There might only be
Such a warm soft sleeping-place
Found for me!

CORAL.

O sailor, come ashore,
  What have you brought for me?
Red coral, white coral,
  Coral from the sea.

I did not dig it from the ground,
  Nor pluck it from a tree;
Feeble insects made it
  In the stormy sea.

THREE LITTLE CHILDREN.

Three little children,
  On the wide, wide earth,
Motherless children —
  Cared for from their birth
    By tender angels.

Three little children,
  On the wide, wide sea,
Motherless children,
  Safe as safe can be
    With guardian angels.

TIME TABLE RHYMES.

How many seconds in a minute?
Sixty, and no more in it.

How many minutes in an hour?
Sixty for sun and shower.

How many hours in a day?
Twenty-four for work and play.

How many days in a week?
Seven both to hear and speak.

How many weeks in a month?
Four, as the swift moon runn'th.

How many months in a year?
Twelve the almanack makes clear.

How many years in an age?
One hundred says the sage.

How many ages in time?
No one knows the rhyme.

SONG.

Two doves upon the selfsame branch,
  Two lilies on a single stem,
Two butterflies upon one flower: —
  Oh, happy they who look on them!

Who look upon them hand in hand,
  Flushed in the rosy summer light;
Who look upon them hand in hand,
  And never give a thought to night.

TO MY MOTHER.

On the Anniversary of Her Birth.

(Presented with a nosegay.)

To-day's your natal day:
  Sweet flowers I bring:
Mother, accept I pray
  My offering.

And may you happy live,
  And long us bless;
Receiving as you give
  Great happiness.

MINNIE, MATTIE, AND MAY.

Minnie and Mattie
  And fat little May,
Out in the country,
  Spending a day.

Such a brief day,
  With the sun glowing,
And the trees half in leaf,
  And the grass growing.

Pinky white pigling
  Squeals through his snout,
Woolly white lambkin
  Frisks all about.

Cluck! cluck! the mother hen
  Summons her chickens
To peck the dainty bits
  Found in her pickings.

Minnie and Mattie
  And May carry posies,
Half of sweet violets,
  Half of primroses.

Give the sun time enough,
  Glowing and glowing,
He'll rouse the roses
  And bring them blowing.

Don't wait for roses
  Losing a day,
O Minnie, Mattie,
  And wise little May.

Violets and primroses
  Blossom to-day
For Minnie and Mattie
  And fat little May.

IF THE SUN COULD TELL.

If the sun could tell us half
  That he hears and sees,
Sometimes he would make us laugh,
  Sometimes make us cry:
Think of all the birds that make
  Homes among the trees;
Think of cruel boys who take
  Birds that cannot fly.

THE DAYS ARE CLEAR.

The days are clear,
  Day after day,
When April's here,
  That leads to May,
And June
Must follow soon:
  Stay, June, stay! —
If only we could stop the moon
And June!

ONE SWALLOW DOES NOT MAKE A SUMMER.

A rose which spied one Swallow
Made haste to blush and blow:
"Others are sure to follow":
Ah no, not so!
The wandering clouds still owe
A few fresh flakes of snow,
Chill fog must fill the hollow,
Before the bird-stream flow
In flood across the main,
And Winter's woe

End in glad Summer come again.
Then thousand flowers may blossom by
the shore —
But that Rose never more.

TWO LINNETS.

A linnet in a gilded cage —
A linnet on a bough —
In frosty winter one might doubt
Which bird is luckier now.

But let the trees burst out in leaf,
And nest be on the bough —
Which linnet is the luckier bird,
Oh, who could doubt it now?

THE DEAD THRUSH.

Dead in the cold, a song-singing thrush,
Dead at the foot of a snowberry bush —
Weave him a coffin of rush,
Dig him a grave where the soft mosses grow,
Raise him a tombstone of snow.

IF STARS DROPPED OUT OF HEAVEN.

If stars dropped out of Heaven,
And if flowers took their place,
The sky would still look very fair,
And fair Earth's face.

Winged angels might fly down to us
To pluck the stars,
But we could only long for flowers
Beyond the cloudy bars.

THE MONTHS.

January, cold, desolate;
February, all dripping wet;
March wind ranges;
April changes;
Birds sing in tune
To flowers of May,
And sunny June
Brings longest day;
In scorched July
The storm clouds fly
Lightning-torn;

August bears corn,
September fruit;
In rough October
Earth must disrobe her;
Stars fall and shoot
In keen November;
And night is long
And cold is strong
In bleak December.

WITHERING.

Fade, tender lily,
  Fade, O crimson rose,
Fade every flower,
  Sweetest flower that blows.

Go, chilly autumn,
  Come, O winter cold;
Let the green stalks die away
  Into common mould.

Birth follows hard on death,
  Life on withering:
Hasten, we will come the sooner
  Back to pleasant spring.

LITTLE ONE WEARY.

Crying, my little one, footsore and weary?
Fall asleep, pretty one, warm on my shoulder:
I must tramp on through the winter night dreary,
While the snow falls on me colder and colder.

You are my one, and I have not another;
Sleep soft, my darling, my trouble and treasure,
Sleep warm and soft in the arms of your mother,
Dreaming of pretty things, dreaming of pleasure.

ALL THE BELLS WERE RINGING.

All the bells were ringing,
And all the birds were singing,
When Molly sat down crying
For her broken doll:
O you silly Moll!
Sobbing and sighing
For a broken doll,
When all the bells are ringing,
And all the birds are singing.

WINTER RAIN.

Every valley drinks,
  Every dell and hollow;
Where the kind rain sinks and sinks,
  Green of Spring will follow.

Yet a lapse of weeks —
  Buds will burst their edges,
Strip their wool-coats, glue-coats,
  In the woods and hedges;

Weave a bower of love
  For birds to meet each other,
Weave a canopy above
  Nest and egg and mother.

But for fattening rain
  We should have no flowers,
Never a bud or leaf again
  But for soaking showers;

Never a mated bird
  In the rocking tree-tops,
Never indeed a flock or herd
  To graze upon the lea-crops.

MAY.

There is but one May in the year,
And sometimes May is wet and cold;
There is but one May in the year,
Before the year grows old.

Yet though it be the chilliest May,
With least of sun and most of showers,
Its wind and dew, its night and day,
Bring up the flowers.

A GREEN CORNFIELD.

"And singing still dost soar and soaring ever singest."

The earth was green, the sky was blue:
I saw and heard one sunny morn
A skylark hang between the two,
A singing speck above the corn;

A stage below, in gay accord,
White butterflies danced on the wing,
And still the singing skylark soared,
And silent sank and soared to sing.

The cornfield stretched a tender green
To right and left beside my walks;
I knew he had a nest unseen
Somewhere among the million stalks.

And as I paused to hear his song
While swift the sunny moments slid,
Perhaps his mate sat listening long,
And listened longer than I did.

MY DOLLY WIFE.

I caught a little ladybird
That flies far away;
I caught a little lady wife
That is both staid and gay.

Come back, my scarlet ladybird,
Back from far away;
I weary of my dolly wife,
My wife that cannot play.

She's such a senseless wooden thing
She stares the livelong day;
Her wig of gold is stiff and cold
And cannot change to gray.

THE PEACH TREE.

The peach tree on the southern wall
  Has basked so long beneath the sun,
Her score of peaches, great and small,
  Bloom rosy, every one.

A peach for brothers, one for each,
  A peach for you and a peach for me;
But the biggest, rosiest, downiest peach
  For Grandmamma with her tea.

BOY JOHNNY.

"If you'll busk you as a bride
    And make ready,
  It's I will wed you with a ring,
    O fair lady."
"Shall I busk me as a bride,
    I so bonny,
  For you to wed me with a ring,
    O boy Johnny?"

"When you've busked you as a bride
    And made ready,

Who else is there to marry you,
O fair lady?"

"I will find my lover out,
I so bonny,
And you shall bear my wedding-train,
O boy Johnny."

A CROWN OF WIND-FLOWERS.

"Twist me a crown of wind-flowers;
That I may fly away
To hear the singers at their song,
And players at their play."

"Put on your crown of wind-flowers:
But whither would you go?"
"Beyond the surging of the sea
And the storms that blow."

"Alas! your crown of wind-flowers
Can never make you fly:
I twist them in a crown to-day,
And to-night they die."

MERRY LITTLE ALICE.

Dancing on the hill-tops,
  Singing in the valleys,
Laughing with the echoes,
  Merry little Alice.

Playing games with lambkins
  In the flowering valleys,
Gathering pretty posies,
  Helpful little Alice.

If her father's cottage
  Turned into a palace,
And he owned the hill-tops
  And the flowering valleys,
She'd be none the happier,
  Happy little Alice.

BITTER FOR SWEET.

Summer is gone with all its roses,
  Its sun and perfumes and sweet flowers,
  Its warm air and refreshing showers;
And even Autumn closes.

Yea, Autumn's chilly self is going,
And Winter comes which is yet colder;
Each day the hoar-frost waxes bolder,
And the last buds cease blowing.

BIRD RAPTURES.

The sunrise wakes the lark to sing,
The moonshine wakes the nightingale.
Come, darkness, moonshine, everything
That is so silent, sweet, and pale,
Come, so ye wake the nightingale.

Make haste to mount, thou wistful moon,
Make haste to wake the nightingale:
Let silence set the world in tune
To hearken to that wordless tale
Which warbles from the nightingale.

O herald skylark, stay thy flight
One moment, for a nightingale
Floods us with sorrow and delight.
To-morrow thou shalt hoist the sail;
Leave us to-night the nightingale.

SKYLARK AND NIGHTINGALE.

When a mounting skylark sings
In the sunlit summer morn,
I know that heaven is up on high,
And on earth are fields of corn.

But when a nightingale sings
In the moonlit summer even,
I know not if earth is merely earth,
Only that heaven is heaven.

CONSIDER.

Consider
The lilies of the field whose bloom is brief:
We are as they;
Like them we fade away
As doth a leaf.

Consider
The sparrows of the air of small account;
Our God doth view
Whether they fall or mount —
He guards us too.

Consider
The lilies that do neither spin nor toil,
Yet are most fair: —
What profits all this care
And all this coil?

Consider
The birds that have no barn nor harvest weeks;
God gives them food:
Much more our Father seeks
To do us good

THE SUMMER NIGHTS

The summer nights are short
Where northern days are long:
For hours and hours lark after lark
Thrills out his song.

The summer days are short
Where southern nights are long;
Yet short the night when nightingales
Trill out their song.

SUMMER.

Before green apples blush,
Before green nuts embrown,
Why one day in the country
Is worth a month in town;
Is worth a day and a year
Of the dusty, musty, lag-last fashion
That days drone elsewhere.

SUMMER.

Winter is cold-hearted,
  Spring is yea and nay,
Autumn is a weathercock
  Blown every way.
Summer days for me
When every leaf is on its tree;

When Robin's not a beggar,
  And Jenny Wren's a bride,
And larks hang singing, singing, singing
  Over the wheat-fields wide,
  And anchored lilies ride,
And the pendulum spider
  Swings from side to side;

And blue-black beetles transact business,
And gnats fly in a host,
And furry caterpillars hasten
That no time be lost,
And moths grow fat and thrive,
And ladybirds arrive.

A PIN HAS A HEAD.

A pin has a head, but has no hair;
A clock has a face but no mouth there;
Needles have eyes, but they cannot see;
A fly has a trunk without lock or key;
A timepiece may lose, but cannot win;
A cornfield dimples without a chin;
A hill has no leg, but has a foot;
A wine-glass a stem, but not a root;
A watch has hands, but no thumb or finger;
A boot has a tongue, but is no singer;
Rivers run, though they have no feet;
A saw has teeth, but it does not eat;
Ash-trees have keys, yet never a lock;
And baby crows, without being a cock.

CRUEL BOYS.

Hear what the mournful linnets say:
"We built our nest compact and warm,
But cruel boys came round our way
And took our summer house by storm.

"They crushed the eggs so neatly laid;
So now we sit with drooping wings,
And watch the ruins they have made,
Too late to build, too sad to sing."

CONSIDER THE LILIES OF THE FIELD.

Flowers preach to us if we will hear: —
The rose saith in the dewy morn:
"I am most fair;
Yet all my loveliness is born
Upon a thorn."
The poppy saith amid the corn:
"Let but my scarlet head appear
And I am held in scorn;
Yet juice of subtle virtue lies
Within my cup of curious dyes."

The lilies say: "Behold how we
Preach without words of purity."
The violets whisper from the shade
Which their own leaves have made:
"Men scent our fragrance on the air,
Yet take no heed
Of humble lessons we would read."

But not alone the fairest flowers:
The merest grass
Along the roadside where we pass,
Lichen and moss and sturdy weed,
Tell of His love who sends the dew,
The rain and sunshine too,
To nourish one small seed.

LOVE.

Love is all happiness, love is all beauty,
Love is the crown of flaxen heads and hoary;
Love is the only everlasting duty;
And love is chronicled in endless story,
And kindles endless glory.

MINNIE.

Minnie bakes the oaten cakes,
  Minnie brews ale,
All because her Johnny's coming
  Home from sea.
And she glows like a rose,
  Who was so pale,
And "Are you sure the church clock goes?'
  Says she.

TEMPUS FUGIT.

Lovely Spring,
A brief sweet thing,
Is swift on the wing;
Gracious Summer,
A slow sweet comer,
Hastens past;
Autumn while sweet
Is all incomplete
With a moaning blast.
Nothing can last,
Can be cleaved unto,
Can be dwelt upon.

It is hurried through,
It is come and gone,
Undone it cannot be done;
It is ever to do,
Ever old, ever new,
Ever waxing old
And lapsing to Winter cold.

LADY ISABELLA.

Heart warm as summer, fresh as spring,
Gracious as autumn's harvesting,
Pure as the winter's snows; as white
A hand as lilies in sunlight;
Eyes glorious as a midnight star;
Hair shining as the chestnuts are;
A step firm and majestical;
A voice singing and musical;
A soft expression, kind address;
Tears for another's heaviness;
Bright looks; an action full of grace;
A perfect form, a perfect face;
All these become a woman well,
And these had Lady Isabell.

SUN AND MOON.

Fair the sun riseth,
  Bright as bright can be,
Fair the sun shineth
  On a fair, fair sea.

Fair the moon riseth
  On her heavenly way,
Making the waters
  Fairer than by day.

UP-HILL.

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
  Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
  From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
  A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
  You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at the door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labor you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

FOR ADVENT.

Sweet, sweet sound of distant waters, falling
On a parched and thirsty plain:
Sweet, sweet song of soaring skylark, calling
On the sun to shine again:
Perfume of the rose, only the fresher
For past fertilizing rain:
Pearls amid the sea, a hidden treasure
For some daring hand to gain: —
Better, dearer than all these
Is the earth beneath the trees:
Of a much more priceless worth
Is the old brown common earth.

UNSELFISHNESS.

The dear old woman in the lane
  Is sick and sore with pains and aches,
We'll go to her this afternoon,
  And take her tea and eggs and cakes.

We'll stop to make the kettle boil,
  And brew some tea, and set the tray,
And poach an egg, and toast a cake,
  And wheel her chair round, if we may.

CHILD'S TALK IN APRIL.

I wish you were a pleasant wren,
  And I your small accepted mate;
How we'd look down on toilsome men!
  We'd rise and go to bed at eight,
  Or it may be not quite so late.

Then you should see the nest I'd build,
  The wondrous nest for you and me;
The outside rough perhaps, but filled
  With wool and down; ah, you should see
  The cosy nest that it would be.

We'd be so happy by the day,
  So safe and happy through the night,
We both should feel, and I should say,
  It's all one season of delight,
  And we'll make merry whilst we may.

Perhaps some day there'd be an egg
  When spring had blossomed from the snow:
I'd stand triumphant on one leg;
  Like chanticleer I'd almost crow
  To let our little neighbors know.

Next you should sit and I would sing
Through lengthening days of sunny spring;
  Till, if you wearied of the task,
I'd sit; and you should spread your wing
  From bough to bough; I'd sit and bask.

Fancy the breaking of the shell,
  The chirp, the chickens wet and bare,
The untried proud paternal swell;
  And you with housewife-matron air
  Enacting choicer bills of fare.

Fancy the embryo coats of down,
The gradual feathers soft and sleek;
Till clothed and strong from tail to crown,
With virgin warblings in their beak,
They too go forth to soar and seek.

So would it last an April through
And early summer fresh with dew —
Then should we part and live as twain:
Love-time would bring me back to you,
And build our happy nest again.

HOPE AND JOY.

If hope grew on a bush,
And joy grew on a tree,
What a nosegay for the plucking,
There would be!

But oh, in windy autumn,
When frail flowers wither,
What should we do for hope and joy,
Fading together?

AN ALPHABET.

A is an Antelope, agile to run;
B is a black Bear and brown Bear, both begging for bun.

C is a Cat with a comical look;
D is a Duchess who dines with a Duke.

E is an Egg whence an eaglet emerges;
F is a Fountain of full foaming surges.

G is a Garnet in girdle of gold;
H is a huge Hammer, heavy to hold.

I am I — who will say I am not I?
J is a Jay, full of joy in July.

K is a Kitten, or quaint Kangaroo;
L is a Lily all laden with dew.

M is a Mountain made dim by a mist;
N is a nest full of Nightingales singing — oh list!

O is an Olive, with oil on its skin;
P is the Point of a Pen or a Pin.

Q is a Quince quite ripe and near dropping;
R is a red-breasted Robin come hopping.

S is the Song that the swift Swallows sing;
T is a Tiger with terrible spring.

U, or Unit, is useful with ten to unite;
V is a Viper with venomous bite.

W stands for the wonderful Wax-work so gay;
X, or Policeman X, exercised day after day.

Y is the Yacca, the Yam, or the Yew;
Z is Zebu, or Zoophyte, seen at the Zoo.

FIND THE ANSWER.

There is one that has a head without an eye,
And there's one that has an eye without a head;
You may find the answer if you try;
And when all is said,
Half the answer hangs upon a thread.

WILLIE AND MARGERY.

Clever little Willie wee,
  Bright-eyed, blue-eyed little fellow;
Merry little Margery
  With her hair all yellow.

Little Willie in his heart
  Is a sailor on the sea,
And he often cons a chart
  With sister Margery.

WHAT DO THE OTHERS SAY?

What does the donkey bray about?
What does the pig grunt through his snout?
What does the goose mean by a hiss?
Oh, Nurse, if you can tell me this,
I'll give you such a kiss!

The cockatoo calls "cockatoo,"
The magpie chatters "how d'ye do?"
The jackdaw bids me "go away,"
Cuckoo cries "cuckoo" half the day:
What do the others say?

ELEANOR.

Cherry-red her mouth was,
  Morning-blue her eye,
Lady-slim her little waist
  Rounded prettily;
And her sweet smile of gladness
  Made every heart rejoice:
But sweeter even than her smile
  The tones were of her voice.

Sometimes she spoke, sometimes she
    sang;
  And evermore the sound
Floated, a dreamy melody,
  Upon the air around;
As though a wind were singing
  Far up beside the sun,
Till sound and warmth and glory
  Were blended all in one.

Her hair was long and golden,
  And clustered unconfined
Over a forehead high and white
  That spoke a noble mind.

Her little hand, her little foot,
  Were ready evermore
To hurry forth to meet a friend;
  She smiling at the door.

But if she sang or if she spoke,
  'Twas music soft and grand,
As though a distant singing sea
  Broke on a tuneful strand;
As though a blessed Angel
  Were singing a glad song,
Halfway between the earth and heaven
  Joyfully borne along.

MARGARET AND THOMAS.

Margaret has a milking-pail,
  And she rises early;
Thomas has a threshing-flail,
  And he's up betimes.
Sometimes crossing through the grass
  Where the dew lies pearly,
They say "Good-morrow" as they pass
  By the leafy limes.

A YEAR'S WINDFALLS.

On the wind of January
  Down flits the snow,
Traveling from the frozen North
  As cold as it can blow.
Poor robin redbreast,
  Look where he comes;
Let him in to feel your fire,
  And toss him of your crumbs.

On the wind of February
  Snowflakes float still,
Half inclined to turn to rain,
  Nipping, dripping, chill.
Then the thaws swell the streams,
  And swollen rivers swell the sea:
If the winter ever ends,
  How pleasant it will be!

In the wind of wintry March
  The catkins drop down,
Curly, caterpillar-like,
  Curious green and brown.

With concourse of nest-building birds
And leaf-buds by the way,
We begin to think of flowers
And life and nuts some day.

With the gusts of April
Rich fruit-tree blossoms fall,
On the hedged-in orchard-green,
From the southern wall.
Apple-trees and pear-trees
Shed petals white or pink,
Plum-trees and peach-trees;
While sharp showers sink and sink.

Little brings the May breeze
Beside pure scent of flowers,
While all things wax and nothing wanes
In lengthening daylight hours.
Across the hyacinth beds
The wind lags warm and sweet,
Across the hawthorn tops,
Across the blades of wheat.

In the month of sunny June
Thrives the red rose crop,

Every day fresh blossoms blow
  While the first leaves drop;
White rose and yellow rose
  And moss rose choice to find,
And the cottage cabbage rose
  Not one whit behind.

On the blast of scorched July
  Drives the pelting hail
From thunderous lightning-clouds that blot
  Blue heaven grown lurid-pale.
Weedy waves are tossed ashore;
  Sea-things strange to sight
Gasp upon the barren shore
  And fade away in light.

In the parching August wind
  Cornfields bow the head,
Sheltered in round valley depths,
  On low hills outspread.
Early leaves drop loitering down
  Weightless on the breeze,
First fruits of the year's decay
  From the withering trees.

In the brisk wind of September
The heavy-headed fruits
Shake upon their bending boughs
And drop from the shoots;
Some glow golden in the sun,
Some show green and streaked,
Some set forth a purple bloom,
Some blush rosy-cheeked.

In the strong blast of October
At the equinox,
Stirred up in his hollow bed
Broad ocean rocks;
Plunge the ships on his bosom,
Leaps and plunges the foam —
It's oh for mother's sons at sea,
That they were safe at home!

In the slack wind of November
The fog forms and shifts;
And all the world comes out again
When the fog lifts.
Loosened from their sapless twigs,
Leaves drop with every gust;
Drifting, rustling, out of sight
In the damp or dust.

Last of all, December,
The year's sands nearly run,
Speeds on the shortest day,
Curtails the sun;
With its bleak raw wind
Lays the last leaves low,
Brings back the nightly frosts,
Brings back the snow.

CHRISTMASTIDE.

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Stars and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love incarnate, love Divine;
Worship we our Jesus:
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.

JOHNNY.

Founded on an Anecdote of the First French Revolution.

Johnny had a gilded head
  Like a golden mop in blow,
Right and left his curls would spread
  In a glory and a glow,
And they framed his honest face
Like stray sunbeams out of place.

Long and thick, they half could hide
  How threadbare his patched jacket hung;
They used to be his mother's pride;
  She praised them with a tender tongue,
And stroked them with a loving finger
That smoothed and stroked and loved to linger.

On a doorstep Johnny sat,
  Up and down the street looked he;
Johnny did not own a hat,
  Hot or cold tho' days might be;
Johnny did not own a boot
To cover up his muddy foot.

Johnny's face was pale and thin,
  Pale with hunger and with crying;
For his mother lay within,
  Talked and tossed and seemed a-dying,
While Johnny racked his brains to think
How to get her help and drink:

Get her physic, get her tea,
  Get her bread and something nice;
Not a penny piece had he,
  And scarce a shilling might suffice;
No wonder that his soul was sad,
When not one penny piece he had.

As he sat there thinking, moping,
  Because his mother's wants were many,
Wishing much but scarcely hoping
  To earn a shilling or a penny,
A friendly neighbor passed him by,
And questioned him, why did he cry.

Alas! his trouble soon was told:
  He did not cry for cold or hunger,
Though he was both hungry and cold;

He only felt more weak and younger,
Because he wished to be old
And apt at earning pence or gold.

Kindly that neighbor was, but poor,
Scant coin had he to give or lend;
And well he guessed there needed more
Than pence or shillings to befriend
The helpless woman in her strait,
So much loved, yet so desolate.

One way he saw, and only one:
He would — he could — not give the advice,
And yet he must: the widow's son
Had curls of gold would fetch their price;
Long curls which might be clipped, and sold
For silver, or perhaps for gold.

Our Johnny, when he understood
Which shop it was that purchased hair,
Ran off as briskly as he could,
And in a trice stood chopped and bare,
Too short of hair to fill a locket,
But jingling money in his pocket.

Precious money — tea and bread,
  Physic, ease, for mother dear,
Better than a golden head:
  Yet our hero dropped one tear
When he spied himself close shorn,
Barer much than lamb new-born.

His mother throve upon the money,
  Ate and revived and kissed her son:
But oh, when she perceived her Johnny,
  And understood what he had done
All and only for her sake,
She sobbed as if her heart must break.

THE FLINT.

An emerald is as green as grass;
  A ruby red as blood;
A sapphire as blue as heaven;
  A flint lies in the mud.

A diamond is a brilliant stone,
  To catch the world's desire;
An opal is a fiery spark;
  But a flint holds fire.

SUMMER.

Soft-named Summer,
Most welcome comer,
Brings almost everything
Over which we dream or sing
Or sigh;
But then Summer wends its way,
To-morrow — to-day —
Good-bye!

AUTUMN.

Care flieth,
  Hope and Fear together:
Love dieth
  In the Autumn weather.

For a friend
  Even Care is pleasant:
When Fear doth end
  Hope is no more present:
Autumn silences the turtle-dove: —
In blank Autumn who could speak of love!

JUNE.

Come, cuckoo, come:
  Come again, swift swallow:
Come and welcome! when you come
  Summer's sure to follow;
June the month of months
  Flowers and fruitage brings too,
When green trees spread shadiest boughs,
  When each wild bird sings too.

May is scant and crude,
  Generous June is riper:
Birds fall silent in July,
  June has its woodland piper:
Rocks upon the maple-tops
  Homely-hearted linnet,
Full in hearing of his nest
  And the dear ones in it.

If the year would stand
  Still at June forever,
With no further growth on land
  Nor further flow of river,

If all nights were shortest nights
And longest days were all the seven,
This might be a merrier world
To my mind to live in.

SEPTEMBER.

I am a King,
Or an Emperor rather,
I wear a crown imperial
And prince's-feather;
Golden-rod is the sceptre
I wield and wag,
And a broad purple flag-flower
Waves for my flag.

Elder the pithy
With old-man sage,
These are my councillors
Green in old age;
Lords-and-ladies in silence
Stand by me and wait,
While gay ragged-robin
Makes bows at my gate.

LINES TO MY GRANDFATHER.

Dear Grandpapa — To be obedient,
I'll try and write a letter;
Which (as I hope you'll deem expedient)
Must serve for lack of better.

The apple-tree is showing
Its blossoms of bright red,
With a soft color glowing
Upon its leafy bed.

The pear-tree's pure white blossom
Like stainless snow is seen;
And all earth's genial bosom
Is clothed with varied green.

The fragrant may is blooming,
The yellow cowslip blows;
Among its leaves entombing
Peeps forth the pale primrose.

The king-cup flowers and daisies
Are opening hard by;
And many another raises
Its head, to please and die.

I love the gay wild flowers
  Waving in fresh Spring air: —
Give me uncultured bowers
  Before the bright parterre.

And now my letter is concluded;
  To do well I have striven;
And, though news is well-nigh excluded,
  I hope to be forgiven.

With love to all the beautiful
  And those who cannot slaughter,
I sign myself — Your dutiful
  Affectionate grand-daughter.

IN THE MEADOW.

In the meadow — what in the meadow?
Bluebells, buttercups, meadowsweet,
And fairy rings for the children's feet,
  In the meadow.

In the garden — what in the garden?
Jacob's ladder and Solomon's seal,
And Love-lies-bleeding beside the Allheal,
  In the garden.

AN EASTER CAROL.

Spring bursts to-day,
For Christ is risen and all the earth's at play.

Flash forth, thou sun,
The rain is over and gone, its work is done.

Winter is past,
Sweet Spring is come at last, is come at last.

Bud, Fig and Vine,
Bud, Olive, fat with fruit and oil and wine.

Break forth this morn
In roses, thou but yesterday a thorn.

Uplift thy head,
O pure white Lily, through the Winter dead.

Beside your dams,
Leap and rejoice, you merry-making Lambs.

All Herds and Flocks
Rejoice, all beasts of thickets and of rocks.

Sing, Creatures, sing,
Angels and Men and Birds, and everything.

All notes of Doves
Fill all our world: this is the time of loves.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

A baby is a harmless thing
And wins our hearts with one accord,
And Flower of Babies was their King,
Jesus Christ our Lord:
Lily of lilies He
Upon His Mother's knee;
White and ruddy, soon to be
Sacrificed for you and me.

Nay, lamb is not so sweet a word,
Nor lily half so pure a name;
Another name our hearts hath stirred,
Kindling them to flame:
"Jesus" certainly
Is music and melody —
Heart with heart in harmony
Carol we and worship we.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

The Shepherds had an Angel,
The Wise Men had a star,
But what have I, a little child,
To guide me home from far,
Where glad stars sing together
And singing angels are?

Those Shepherds through the lonely night
Sat watching by their sheep,
Until they saw the heavenly host
Who neither tire nor sleep,
All singing "Glory, glory,"
In festival they keep.

The Wise Men left their country
To journey morn by morn,
With gold and frankincense and myrrh,
Because the Lord was born:
God sent a star to guide them
And sent a dream to warn.

My life is like their journey,
Their star is like God's book;
I must be like those good Wise Men

With heavenward heart and look:
But shall I give no gifts to God? —
What precious gifts they took!

A VALENTINE TO MY MOTHER.

All the Robin Redbreasts
Have lived the winter through,
Jenny Wrens have pecked their fill
And found a work to do;
Families of Sparrows
Have weathered wind and storm
With Rabbit on the stony hill
And Hare upon her form.

You and I, my Mother,
Have lived the winter through,
And still we play our daily parts
And still find work to do:
And still the cornfields flourish,
The olive and the vine,
And still you reign my Queen of Hearts
And I'm your Valentine.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

Before the paling of the stars,
  Before the winter morn,
Before the earliest cock-crow,
  Jesus Christ was born:
Born in a stable,
  Cradled in a manger,
In the world His hands had made
  Born a stranger.

Priest and King lay fast asleep
  In Jerusalem,
Young and old lay fast asleep
  In crowded Bethlehem:
Saint and Angel, ox and ass,
  Kept a watch together,
Before the Christmas daybreak
  In the winter weather.

Jesus on His Mother's breast
  In the stable cold,
Spotless Lamb of God was He,
  Shepherd of the fold:

Let us kneel with Mary Maid,
With Joseph bent and hoary,
With Saint and Angel, ox and ass,
To hail the King of Glory.

WEE HUSBAND AND WEE WIFE.

Wee, wee husband,
Give me some money,
I have no comfits,
And I have no money.

Wee, wee wife,
I have no money,
Milk, nor meat, nor bread to eat,
Comfits, nor honey.

I have a little husband
And he is gone to sea;
The winds that whistle round his ship
Fly home to me.

The winds that sigh about me,
Return again to him;
So I would fly, if only I
Were light of limb.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

In the bleak mid-winter
  Frosty winds made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
  Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
  Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
  Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold him
  Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
  When he comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
  A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty,
  Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim
  Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk
  And a mangerful of hay;

Enough for Him, whom angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore.

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air;
But only His mother
In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.

What can I give Him
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a Wise Man
I would do my part —
Yet what can I give Him?
Give my heart.

A NUMBER JINGLE.

1 and 1 are 2 —
That's for me and you.

2 and 2 are 4 —
That's a couple more.

3 and 3 are 6
Sugar-candy sticks.

4 and 4 are 8
Beggars at the gate.

5 and 5 are 10
Sturdy sailor men.

6 and 6 are 12
Garden lads who delve.

7 and 7 are 14
Young men bent on sporting.

8 and 8 are 16
Pills the doctor's mixing.

9 and 9 are 18
Passengers kept waiting.

10 and 10 are 20
Roses — pleasant plenty.

11 and 11 are 22
Sums for little George to do.

12 and 12 are 24
Pretty pictures and no more.

SWEET DAFFADOWNDILLY.

Growing in the vale,
By the uplands hilly,
Growing straight and frail,
Lady Daffadowndilly.

In a golden crown,
And a scant green gown,
While the spring blows chilly
Lady Daffadown,
Sweet Daffadowndilly.

OUT IN THE FIELDS.

Out in the fields
  Summer heat gloweth,
Out in the fields
  Summer wind bloweth,
Out in the fields
  Summer wheat groweth.

WINTER.

Swift swallows have left us alone in the lurch,
But Robin sits whistling to us from his perch;

If I were a red robin, I'd pipe you a tune,
Would make you despise all the beauties of June.

But since that cannot be, let us draw round the
  fire,
Munch chestnuts, tell stories, and stir the blaze
  higher.

We'll comfort pinched robin with crumbs, little
  man,
Till he sings us the very best song that he can.

WHEN THE COWS COME HOME.

When the cows come home the milk is coming,
Honey's made while the bees are humming;
Duck and drake on the rushy lake,
And the deer live safe in the breezy brake;
And timid, funny, brisk little bunny
Winks his nose and sits all sunny.

"THERE IS A BUDDING MORROW IN MIDNIGHT."

Wintry boughs against a wintry sky;
Yet the sky is partly blue
And the clouds are partly bright: —
Who can tell but sap is mounting high
Out of sight,
Ready to burst through?

Winter is the mother-nurse of Spring,
Lovely for her daughter's sake,
Not unlovely for her own:
For a future bud in everything;
Grown, or blown,
Or about to break.

STERLING MONEY.

What will you give me for my pound?
Full twenty shillings round.
What will you give me for my shilling?
Twelve pence to give I'm willing.
What will you give me for my penny?
Four farthings, just so many.

SEASONS.

Crocuses and snowdrops wither,
Violets, primroses together,
Fading with the fading Spring
Before a fuller blossoming.

O sweet Summer, pass not soon,
Stay awhile the harvest-moon:
O sweetest Summer, do not go,
For Autumn's next and next the snow.

When Autumn comes the days are drear,
It is the downfall of the year:
We heed the wind and falling leaf
More than the golden harvest-sheaf.

Dreary Winter come at last:
Come quickly, so be quickly past:
Dusk and sluggish Winter, wane
Till Spring and sunlight dawn again.

A DIAMOND OR A COAL?

A diamond or a coal?
  A diamond, if you please:
Who cares about a clumsy coal
  Beneath the summer trees?

A diamond, or a coal?
  A coal, sir, if you please,
One comes to care about the coal
  What time the waters freeze.

BROWNIE COW.

Brownie, Brownie, let down your milk,
White as swansdown and smooth as silk,
Fresh as dew and pure as snow:
For I know where the cowslips blow,
And you and I shall have a cowslip wreath
No sweeter scented than your breath.

THE ROSE THAT BLUSHES.

The rose with such a bonny blush,
What has the rose to blush about?
If it's the sun that makes her blush,
What's in the sun to flush about?

The rose that blushes rosy red,
She must hang her head;
The lily that blows spotless white,
She may stand upright.

BOOKS IN THE RUNNING BROOKS.

"It is enough, enough," one said,
At play among the flowers:
"I spy a rose upon a thorn,
A rainbow in the showers;
I hear a merry chime of bells
Ring out the passing hours."
Soft springs the fountain
From the daisied ground,
Softly falling on the moss
Without a sound.

"It is enough," she said, and fixed
Calm eyes upon the sky:
"I watch a flitting tender cloud
Just like a dove go by;
A lark is rising from the grass,
A wren is building nigh."
Softly the fountain
Threads its silver way,
Screened by the scented bloom
Of whitest May.

FAIRIES.

I fancy the good fairies dressed in white,
Glancing like moonbeams through the shadows black,
Without much work to do for king or hack.
Training perhaps some twisted branch aright;
Or sweeping faded autumn-leaves from sight
To foster embryo life; or binding back
Stray tendrils; or in ample bean-pod sack
Bringing wild honey from the rocky height;
Or fishing for a fly lest it should drown;
Or teaching water-lily heads to swim,

Fearful that sudden rain might make them sink.
Or dyeing the pale rose a warmer pink;
Or wrapping lilies in their leafy gown,
Yet letting the white peep beyond the rim.

DAWN.

"Kookoorookoo! kookoorookoo!"
Crows the cock before the morn;
"Kikirikee! kikirikee!"
Roses in the east are born.

"Kookoorookoo! kookoorookoo!"
Early birds begin their singing;
"Kikirikee! kikirikee!"
The day, the day, the day is springing.

PRAYING ALWAYS.

After midnight, in the dark,
The clock strikes one,
New day has begun.
Look up and hark!
With singing heart forestall the carolling lark.

After mid-day, in the light
The clock strikes one,
Day-fall has begun.
Cast up, set right
The day's account against the oncoming night.

After noon and night, one day
For ever one
Ends not, once begun.
Whither away,
O brothers and O sisters? Pause and pray.

SNOW AND SAND.

I dug and dug amongst the snow,
And thought the flowers would never grow;
I dug and dug amongst the sand,
And still no green thing came to hand.

Melt, O snow! the warm winds blow
To thaw the flowers and melt the snow;
But all the winds from every land
Will rear no blossom from the sand.

ON NAMES.

The peacock has a score of eyes,
  With which he cannot see;
The cod-fish has a silent sound,
  However that may be.

No dandelions tell the time,
  Although they turn to clocks;
Cat's-cradle does not hold the cat,
  Nor foxglove fit the fox.

A city plum is not a plum;
A dumb-bell is no bell, though dumb;
A party rat is not a rat;
A sailor's cat is not a cat;
A soldier's frog is not a frog;
A captain's log is not a log.

MY LEAST LITTLE ONE.

Your brother has a falcon,
  Your sister has a flower;
But what is left for mannikin,
  Born within an hour?

I'll nurse you on my knee, my knee,
My own little son;
I'll rock you, rock you, in my arms,
My least little one.

HOPING FOR SPRING.

I wonder if the sap is stirring yet,
If wintry birds are dreaming of a mate,
If frozen snowdrops feel as yet the sun
And crocus fires are kindling one by one:
Sing, robin, sing;
I still am sore in doubt concerning Spring.

I wonder if the Springtide of this year
Will bring another Spring both lost and dear;
If heart and spirit will find out their Spring,
Or if the world alone will bud and sing:
Sing, hope, to me;
Sweet notes, my hope, soft notes for memory.

The sap will surely quicken soon or late,
The tardiest birds will twitter to a mate;

So Spring must dawn again with warmth and
bloom,
Or in this world or in the world to come:
Sing, voice of Spring,
Till I too blossom and rejoice and sing.

SEASONS.

In Springtime when the leaves are young,
Clear dewdrops gleam like jewels, hung
On boughs the fair birds roost among.

When Summer comes with sweet unrest,
Birds weary of their mother's breast,
And look abroad and leave the nest.

In Autumn ere the waters freeze,
The swallows fly across the seas: —
If we could fly away with these!

In Winter when the birds are gone,
The sun himself looks starved and wan,
And starved the snow he shines upon.

WINTER RAIN.

Lambs so woolly white,
  Sheep the sun-bright leas on,
They could have no grass to bite
  But for rain in season.

We should find no moss
  In the shadiest places,
Find no waving meadow grass
  Pied with broad-eyed daisies:

But miles of barren sand,
  With never a son or daughter;
Not a lily on the land,
  Or lily on the water.

THE HOLLY.

A Rose has thorns as well as honey,
I'll not have her for love or money;
An iris grows so straight and fine
That she shall be no friend of mine;
Snowdrops like the snow would chill me;
Nightshade would caress and kill me;
Crocus like a spear would fright me;

Dragon's-mouth might bark or bite me;
Convolvulus but blooms to die;
A wind-flower suggests a sigh;
Love-lies-bleeding makes me sad;
And poppy-juice would drive me mad: —
But give me holly, bold and jolly,
Honest, prickly, shining holly;
Pluck me holly leaf and berry
For the days when I make merry.

SUMMER.

Hark to the song of greeting! The tall trees
Murmur their welcome in the southern breeze;
Amid the thickest foliage many a bird
Sits singing, their shrill matins scarcely heard
One by one, but all together
Welcoming the sunny weather;
In every bower hums a bee
Fluttering melodiously;
Murmurs joy in every brook,
Rippling with a pleasant look:
What greet they with their guileless bliss?
What welcome with a song like this?

SPRING QUIET.

Gone were but the Winter,
  Come were but the Spring,
I would go to a covert
  Where the birds sing;

Where in the whitethorn
  Singeth a thrush,
And a robin sings
  In the holly-bush.

Full of fresh scents
  Are the budding boughs
Arching high over
  A cool green house;

Full of sweet scents,
  And whispering air
Which sayeth softly:
  "We spread no snare;

"Here dwell in safety,
  Here dwell alone,
With a clear stream
  And a mossy stone.

"Here the sun shineth
Most shadily;
Here is an echo heard
Of the far sea,
Though far off it be."

EARTH AND HEAVEN.

Water calmly flowing,
Sunlight deeply glowing,
Swans some river riding
That is gently gliding
By the fresh green rushes,
The sweet rose that blushes,
Hyacinths whose dower
Is both scent and flower,
Skylark's soaring motion,
Sunrise from the ocean,
Jewels that lie sparkling
'Neath the waters darkling,
Seaweed, coral, amber,
Flowers that climb and clamber
Or more lowly flourish
Where the earth may nourish:

All these are beautiful,
Of beauty earth is full:
Say, to our promised heaven
Can greater charms be given?

TO LALLA.

(READING MY VERSES TOPSY-TURVY.)

Darling little Cousin,
With your thoughtful look,
Reading topsy-turvy
From a printed book.

English hieroglyphics,
More mysterious
To you than Egyptian
Ones would be to us; —

Leave off for a minute
Studying, and say
What is the impression
That those marks convey.

Only solemn silence
And a wondering smile:

But your eyes are lifted
  Unto mine the while.

In their gaze so steady
  I can surely trace
That a happy spirit
  Lighteth up your face;

Tender happy spirit,
  Innocent and pure,
Teaching more than silence,
  And then learning more.

How should I give answer
  To that asking look?
Darling little Cousin,
  Go back to your book.

Read on: if you knew it,
  You have cause to boast:
You are much the wiser,
  Though I know the most.