

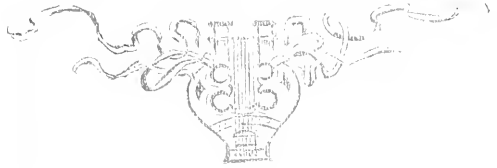
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LYRICS
AND
LEGENDS



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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



LYRICS AND LEGENDS

BY

NORA PERRY

AUTHOR OF "AFTER THE BALL AND OTHER POEMS," "NEW SONGS
AND BALLADS," "A FLOCK OF GIRLS AND THEIR FRIENDS,"
"ANOTHER FLOCK OF GIRLS," ETC.



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Songs of Spring.

| | PAGE |
|------------------------------------|------|
| WHAT THE CROCUS SAID | 9 |
| THE EASTER MESSAGE | 12 |
| THE COMING OF THE SPRING | 15 |
| MAIDEN MAY | 18 |

Songs of Summer.

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| TO THE SWEETHEART JUNE | 23 |
| QUEEN OF THEM ALL | 25 |
| FLOWER DANCE | 27 |
| DAWN | 29 |

Autumn.

| | |
|---|----|
| AFTER VACATION | 33 |
| THE SONG OF THE CHRYSANTHEMUM | 35 |

Winter.

| | PAGE |
|-------------------------------|------|
| THE OLD AND THE NEW | 39 |

Love and Friendship.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| WHERE? | 45 |
| THE ROSE AND THE WEED | 48 |
| FATE | 50 |
| TWO FRIENDS | 52 |
| HIS MESMERIC EXPERIMENT | 57 |

Loss and Gain.

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| THROUGH THE STORM | 63 |
| THE STAR OF TRUTH | 64 |
| THE LESSON OF TRUST | 66 |
| THE LOST FRIEND | 68 |
| A LOST DAY | 70 |
| DISCONTENT | 72 |
| LUCIFER | 74 |

Hope and Memory.

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| FROM DAY TO DAY | 77 |
| A CONQUEROR | 80 |
| TAKE HEART OF GRACE | 84 |
| IN THE RAIN | 86 |

Songs of New England.

| | PAGE |
|--------------------------------|------|
| THE PILGRIM VOYAGERS | 91 |
| ON PLYMOUTH BAY | 95 |
| OUR FRENCH ALLIES | 98 |

Ballads.

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| THE SIEGE OF CALAIS | 107 |
| BALBOA | 119 |
| THE HERO OF THE FORT | 125 |
| JIM | 131 |
| THE COLONEL'S STORY | 135 |
| THE LITTLE FOES | 138 |



Serbs of
SPRING



LYRICS AND LEGENDS.



WHAT THE CROCUS SAID.

MONTH after month, and day by day,
Beneath sweet mother earth I lay,
And slept and woke, and slept again,
Lulled by the whispering winds and rain.

At times, within my shrouded bed
I felt the restless, hurrying tread
Of human steps, and caught the beat
Of human hearts above the feet.

I kept so still within my place
That though I did not see a face,
I heard each breath that passed my way,
And knew what every heart did say.

I knew their hopes, I knew their fears,
I heard their laughter and their tears ;
But over all I heard a plaint,
Now lifted high, now falling faint, —

A plaint of doubt, and doubting dread ;
A questioning, hungry cry that spread
From heart to heart until I heard,
Sometimes, no other sound or word.

And all the while the rootlets grew
About my bed ; from old and new
I felt the quickening pulse and breath,
The throes of life that conquered death.

I knew that when the months came round
My leaves would break the sheltering ground,
Would leap like light from out the earth
In all the glory of new birth.

I knew that thus from life to death,
From death to life, this living breath
Of bud and bloom, of leaf and flower,
Eternal sprang from hour to hour.

Yet while thus sentient in my shroud,
Above me, moving in a cloud,
These restless hearts cried in the bright
And high noonday, "God, give us light!"

THE EASTER MESSAGE.

ONCE more the promise of the spring,
The quickening and awakening
Of sap and shoot,
And tender root ;
Once more the miracle of birth
Along the length and breadth of earth ;
Once more the breath
Of life for death.
Released again from winter's doom
Of frozen days, from Lenten gloom,
We seem to stand
In some new land,
And fresh the breeze that blows abroad
That brings the message of our Lord,

The heavenly breath

Of life for death.

Oh, spirit folded in thy sleep,

Oh, soul long buried fathoms deep

Beneath the old

Material mould,

Fling off the load that, year by year,

Has veiled thy sight and dulled thine ear ;

And as the lark

Doth, soaring, hark

To heavenly sounds, so hearken thou

To that low voice that calleth now

Across the dark.

Oh, wake and hark,

The night goes fast ! Oh, wake and pray,

For 't is the dawn of Easter day,

When heaven doth lift

Above the drift

Of self and sense ; when budding earth,

Renews the parable of birth ;

When Christ doth wake

With us to break

The bond of sense which is our pall, —

Doth wake and wait while He doth call,

“ Oh, here and now

Awaken thou ! ”

THE COMING OF THE SPRING.

THERE 's something in the air
That 's new and sweet and rare —
A scent of summer things,
A whirr as if of wings.

There 's something too that 's new
In the color of the blue
That 's in the morning sky,
Before the sun is high.

And though on plain and hill,
'T is winter, winter still,
There 's something seems to say
That winter 's had its day.

And all this changing tint,
This whispering stir and hint
Of bud and bloom and wing,
Is the coming of the spring.

And to-morrow or to-day
The brooks will break away
From their icy, frozen sleep,
And run and laugh and leap.

And the next thing, in the woods,
The catkins in their hoods
Of fur and silk will stand,
A sturdy little band.

And the tassels soft and fine
Of the hazel will untwine,
And the elder branches show
Their buds against the snow.

So, silently but swift,
Above the wintry drift,
The long days gain and gain,
Until, on hill and plain,

Once more, and yet once more
Returning as before, .
We see the bloom of birth
Make young again the earth.

MAIDEN MAY.

OH, what's the day, and where's the way
That brought you hither, sweeting?
The hills were brown as you came down,
The skies with tears were greeting.

But as you pass, the sodden grass
Takes on a sudden splendor ;
And April dries her weeping eyes,
Then smiles in sweet surrender.

Oh, whereaway did you delay ;
In what near nook, my sweeting,
Did slyly stand, so close at hand,
While April stood a-greeting?

No breath of you was in the dew,

No hint of you before us ;

The winds were wet with April yet,

And sobbing in a chorus,

When, swift and strong, you came along

As if nowise belated,

Your face alight with blushes bright,

Your arms with blossoms freighted.

You lifted up each flowery cup,

Yourself a flowery vision ;

At April fears of April's tears,

You laughed in gay derision.

For what were fears, and what were tears,

To you, my merry maiden,

As you came down the hillside brown

With rosy May-flowers laden?

But whereaway, oh, whereaway,
In what near nook, my sweeting,
Did you find room to hide your bloom,
While April stood a-greeting?



Songs
of
Summer



TO THE SWEETHEART JUNE.

HERE'S to my love, and here's to my dove,
And here's to my darling and dear;
From the dew of the rose, as it bourgeons and blows,
I will drink to my sweetheart here.

With the eyes of a lover, I watch her come over
The crest of the purple hills;
My pulses beat at the sound of her feet,
Along by the rivers and rills.

For at ever so light a touch, or so slight,
A tuneful song doth arise,
And as ever so swift the waters drift,
They catch the blue of her eyes.

And where she passes, the emerald grasses,
The flowering garden and glade,
Lift higher and higher each tender spire,
Of bud and blossom and blade.

And the soul of the rose is wooed to uncloset,
And slip from its sheath of death,
To revel anew in the sun and the dew,
At the touch of her balmy breath.

Then drink to her health, and drink to her wealth
Of summer bloom and cheer,
As through the grasses she lightly passes,
The sweetheart of the year.

QUEEN OF THEM ALL.

BREATH of the wind that blows and blows,
South and west, and west and south,
Bring us a lily, bring us a rose,
Sweet with a kiss of your balmy mouth.

April has lost her golden blows
Of cowslip, crocus, daffydowndilly,
And May-buds cry, "'Tis the time of the rose,
And her maid of honor, the garden lily."

One by one they have all made room,
April and May-flowers stepped aside,
Waiting for her, — the rose in bloom,
And her maid of honor dressed like a bride.

Veiled and shrouded they wait to go, —
 These flowers of April, flowers of May;
What do they wait for, do you know,
 Lingering, loitering thus by the way?

Just for a glimpse of the queen of them all,
 And her maid of honor dressed like a bride,
Coming along, stately and tall,
 Royal beauties side by side.

Then will the loiterers bid good-by,
 And into their stalks will shrink away,
And half with a smile, and half with a sigh,
 Nod and murmur, "We've had our day."

So, breath of the wind that blows and blows,
 South and west, and west and south,
Hasten and bring us the lily and rose,
 Sweet with the kiss of your balmy mouth.

FLOWER DANCE.

OH, hearken and listen
When honey-dews glisten
 At eve or at morn
 On the flower o' the corn,
On the lips of the lily
And the daffydowdilly,
 On the bud o' the rose
 As it turns to unclose,
On the white daisy faces
That smile in their places.
 Oh, hearken and list,
 For this is the tryst
That brings the bee hither
A-tuning his zither

To waltz and galop,
Till swiftly we go,
We lilies and roses
And all the sweet posies
That summer doth bring,
In a mad merry swing.

DAWN.

ONE moment in a sleep like death
The world of Nature holds its breath,
'Mid darkness such as might have been
In days of midnight chaos ; then,
Another moment, 'thwart the gloom
Cometh a mist of light, a bloom
Like that upon the purple store
Of vintages ; a moment more,
A slender, piping note is heard,
Then throat by throat each hidden bird
Breaks into tune, — a herald's lay,
That ushers in the dawn of day.



AFTER VACATION.

HERE they come, the happy crew,
Merry monarchs through and through, —
Laughing, chattering, all together,
In the red-leafed autumn weather.

Once again the streets are gay
As a gypsy's holiday ;
Once again has life begun
Fresh and fair beneath the sun.

Yesterday the toiling town
Dull with care was bending down ;
Now to-day it lifts its head,
For to-day dull care has fled, —

Vanished for the moment quite,
At the sudden sound and sight
Of this heedless happy crew,
Merry monarchs through and through.

What to them the cares that weigh?
'T is the breaking of their day,
When across the morning skies
Only rainbow-hopes arise.

Theirs to be the lot and part
Of bold conquerors at the start;
Every dragon fear and doubt,
Lion-hearted they will rout

THE SONG OF THE CHRYSANTHEMUM.

At last I have come to my throne.

No more, despised and unknown,

In gardens forlorn

My blossoms are born ;

No more in some corner obscure

Do I drearily, sadly endure

The withering blight

Of neglect and of slight ;

Oh, long have I waited and late,

For this fair and slow-coming fate,

Which the years have foretold

As they sighingly rolled.

Oh, long have I waited and lone ;

But at last, on my blossomy throne,

The world doth declare
I am fairest of fair,
And queen of the autumn I reign,
With a sway that none may disdain,—
I, once who did stand,
Despised in the land.



Winter ❄️

THE OLD AND THE NEW.

I.

SAID the year that was old,
 "I am cold, I am cold,
And my breath hurries fast
 On the wild winter blast
Of this thankless December.
 Ah, who will remember
As I shivering go,
 The warmth and the glow,
That arose like a flame,
 When I came, when I came?
For I brought in my hands
 From Utopian lands

Golden gifts, and the schemes
That were fairer than dreams.
Ah, never a king
Of a twelvemonth will bring
Such splendor of treasure,
Without stint or measure,
As I brought on that day,
Triumphant and gay.
But alas, and alas,
Who will think as I pass
I was once gay and bold?"
Sighed the year that was old.

II.

Said the year that was young, —
And his light laughter rung, —
"Come, bid me good cheer,
For I bring with me here

Such gifts as the earth
 Never saw till my birth.
All the largess of life,
 Right royally rife
With the plans and the schemes
 Of the world's highest dreams;
Then, Hope's chalice filled up
 To the brim of the cup,
Let us drink to the past,
 The poor pitiful past,"
Sang the year that was young,
 While his light laughter rung.



LOVE

and Friendship

WHERE?

WHERE went you on that August day,
When out of sight you took your way?
The sun was soft, the winds were low,
No breath of bitterness did blow
For dying summer as it went ;
But bitter, bitter breath was spent
In bitter tears for you that day,
As out of sight you took your way.

Where did you go, my love, my dear?
Into what country, far or near,
By mountain path or shoreless main,
Took you that wealth of heart and brain,

That voice of music, and that face
That made the world an empty place
For me, to me, when out of sight
And sound and touch they vanished quite?

Where did you go? O love, come back
One moment down that shadowed track,
And give me news, and tell me where,
What way your wandering steps did fare;
And if some tender hand did lead,
Some voice did soothe, perhaps, at need,
So that you missed not overmuch,
In that strange hour, my voice and touch.

Ah, never had I failed before
To follow where your footsteps bore,
Or by your side to hold my way—
Ah, never yet, until that day,

Just as the August day was spent,
Upon that unknown path you went,
That path that leads — oh, tell us where,
And break this burden of despair !

THE ROSE AND THE WEED.

UP these very stairs she went,
Down these rooms she daily sent
Smiles of greeting as he came ;
Can I dare to come and claim
What she held with such a grace !
Can I dare to take her place ?

When I entered at the door
Would her face not go before ?
When my foot was on the stair,
Would he not, before me there,
Hear her tread, and thrill with pain,
More than once and once again ?

What am I beside that grace
But a weed thrust out of place
In a garden where the rose
In her royal beauty grows?
She had looked at one like me
Blindly and unconsciously,

As a queen might idly glance
At the lowly weed perchance.
Yet, ah me, it is the weed
That doth sometimes heal at need.
Should the weed then vainly care
That the royal rose was fair?

Would the rose dispute the place
That the weed's low roots embrace?
And the lover of the rose,
Can I count what love bestows,
Can I price its priceless power
In the reckoning of an hour?

F A T E.

THE hour was late —

Oh, was it fate?

I stayed a moment at the gate

To see you pass

Across the grass.

The hour was late —

Oh, was it fate?

For as you sped

With hurrying tread,

You lifted up your bending head,

And caught with fear

My shadow near ;

It barred the gate —

Oh, was it fate?

I had not meant
With grave intent
To seek you out, when there I leant
To watch you pass
Across the grass;
But at the gate —
Oh, was it fate

That did discover
There a lover,
In one who 'd been so long a rover
He 'd half forgöt
The common lot,
The common fate,
Might him await?

TWO FRIENDS.

BITTER words they 'd spoken
Each to each,
Till a cloud unbroken
Seemed to reach —
Seemed to float between them,
Dull and gray,
Like a veil, to screen them
Since that day
Each from each ; till, alas, there,
Half in hate,
They did meet and pass there,
Who so late

Had been friends together,
 Friends of years,
Through all winds and weather,
 Hopes and fears.
“All these years mistaken,”
 Murmured one ;
“Now to start and waken,
 Find undone,
Ruined past retrieving
 At a blow
All my fine believing.”
 Very low
Murmured he, the other,
 “*This* the end?
More than any brother
 Seemed this friend.”
Thus apart they spoke there
 Under breath.

At that moment broke there
 News of death.
Faster yet, and faster
 Flew that wail
Of the dread disaster,
 Till the tale
Over all the city
 Cast its gloom
Of dismay and pity
 For such doom.
When the rumors rang there
 At the start,
More than one man sprang there
 Sick at heart.
One thus fearing, waited,
 Dumb with fear
For the friend "half hated,"
 Now so dear.

Should he find him lying
 Stiff and stark?
Should he find him dying?
 Hark ! oh, hark !
Whose the voice that falls there,
 On his ear?
Whose the name it calls there,
 Full and clear?
Face to face thus meeting,
 Hand to hand,
In that moment greeting,
 Dumb they stand,
With full hearts outgoing,
 Each to each,
With full eyes o'erflowing
 For their speech.
What ! they 'd once contended,
 Blindly thought

All their friendship ended,
 Come to naught?
Face to face with death there,
 Out of sight,
Like a wind-blown breath there,
 Fled their spite.

HIS MESMERIC EXPERIMENT.

Brow bent over, eyelids falling,
All the soft hair's silken splendor
 Lying prest
 Against my breast,
While her soul in dumb surrender,
Floated upward at my calling, —
Floated upward to my keeping,
As a dove might float to capture,
 While a thrill,
 Swift and chill,
As of half-remorseful rapture,
Through and through my veins went creeping.

“Just a moment more,” I faltered,
“And her soul will lie before me
Unconcealed
And full revealed.”

On that instant there swept o'er me
In a flood-tide as I paltered,
Wave on wave of bitter leaven,
And I seemed to hear God crying
Then and there,
“Oh, beware !
Hold thee from thy rash espying.
These are border lands of Heaven,
And my angels at their portals,
With veiled eyes and hidden faces,
And my hosts
At their posts,
Know that these are sacred places,

Guarded 'round by my immortals.
Whoso, then, in rash pursuing
Of his will, shall seek these portals,
 Guarded twice
 And guarded thrice
By this triune of immortals,
Shall repent with bitter rueing.
Mine alone the right to enter
At these hidden sacred places
 Where the heart
 Holds apart,
While the angels veil their faces;
Mine alone the right to enter."
"Thine alone," my soul and heart there
Swift responded; then repeating,
 Low of tone,
 "Thine alone,"
Backward moving, slow retreating,

Silently I drew apart there.
Thus I left her. When she woke there
Presently, with keen, clear vision
 Full and free,
 I could see
At a glance her gay derision,
Ere her mocking laughter broke there,
Ere she cried to those who waited, —
The gay group of friends assembled, —
 “Failed, you see !”
 Then to me, —
While I, smiling there, dissembled, —
“Mesmerism ’s over-rated !”



LOSS
& GAIN



THROUGH THE STORM.

I HEARD a voice, a tender voice soft falling
 Through the storm ;
The waves were high, the bitter winds were calling,
 Yet breathing warm
Of skies serene, of sunny uplands lying
 In peace beyond ;
This tender voice, unto my voice replying,
 Made answer fond.
Sometimes indeed like clash of armies meeting
 Arose the gale,
But over all, that sweet voice kept repeating,
 “ I shall not fail.”

THE STAR OF TRUTH.

I FOLLOW fast, I follow far,
From dusk to dusk a glimmering star ;
Ingulfed at times by thickest night,
I lose my breath, I lose my sight.

Then, for a space, bold heart and hope
Forsaketh me, yet still I grope ;
Still by some instinct led afar
To seek, and seek that glimmering star.

From time to time false lights betray,
Strange voices call along the way ;
Now here, now there, confused, misled,
I turn aside with stumbling tread,

And enter thus with reckless haste
Upon that barren land of waste,
Where nothing is, or is to be,
But barren waste eternally.

And o'er this waste — a pathless plain —
I stumble on, to find again
Old clews that gather up the new,
Old faiths baptized in morning dew.

Then, all at once, I see the white,
Still shining of that ray of light,
Where truth abides, — that steadfast star
Toward which my steps have followed far.

And forward, forward once again
I leave behind the pathless plain ;
Blown onward by resistless breath
To find the clews of life, in death.

THE LESSON OF TRUST.

THESE WAIT ALL UPON THEE.—*Psalms.*

THE wind of the morning was in the sky,
Calling and calling, now low, now high!
“Awake and awake, ye bonny wee birds!
And awake and awake, ye flocks and ye herds!”

It called and it called, long ever a note
Was answered back by a feathered throat;
And the flocks and herds were as silent and still,
Under the brow of the sheltering hill.

But suddenly, through the darkness there,
Over the hill and everywhere —
By field and wood and rock and river —
A shadowy presence seemed to quiver;

And straightway out of a million throats
Lifted a million musical notes,
And all in a moment, as if at a word,
The sleeping cattle awoke and stirred ;

And rock and river and plain and hill
With jubilant life began to thrill,
While yet no human eye could mark
The spirit of dawn within the dark !

THE LOST FRIEND.

Oh, what was the hour and the day,

The moment I lost you?

I thought you were walking my way,

I turned to accost you,

And silence and emptiness met

My word half-unspoken ;

But I thought, and I said, "I shall get

A word or a token,

"That sometime and somewhere he will wait,

Impatient, to meet me —

Round the corner, perhaps, at the gate,

Come smiling to greet me."

But never a token or word
Has he sent to me hither,
Nor wherefore he went have I heard,
Nor wherefore nor whither.

Oh, what was the hour and the day,
The moment you left me,
When you went on your separate way,
Oh, friend, and bereft me?

Sometime and somewhere shall we walk,
Clear of earth, in high places?
Sometime and somewhere shall we talk,
With our hearts in our faces?

And see all the meaning writ clear,
The depth and the sweetness,
Apart from this doubt and this fear,
This sad incompleteness?

A LOST DAY.

WHERE is the day I lost, —
The golden day,
Beyond all price and cost,
That slipped away

Out of my wandering sight,
My careless hold?
Where did it lift in flight,
Its wings of gold?

What were the treasures rare
It bore from me?
What were the pleasures fair
I shall not see?

Ah, never day was yet
 So fine, so fair,
So rich with promise set,
 So free from care,

As that we mourn and sigh
 When we do say, —
“Alas, how time doth fly,
 I 've lost a day!”

DISCONTENT.

BEFORE my steps she hovering flits
My foe, — the demon Discontent ;
Or by my side she sadly sits
With restless mien and eyes down-bent.

Most times, however, she doth lift
Her gaze beyond to something far ;
I look, and through a cloudy rift
I see the shining of a star.

Why should I strive that star to gain?
My heart is faint, my courage spent ;
Why should I leave the grassy plain,
O cruel, cruel Discontent.

But as I cry, "Oh why, oh why?"

She turns on me a wondering gaze,
And wonderingly doth make reply:

"I lead you out of slothful ways,

"I spur you on to win the race

For which you languish overspent;
No foe am I, but by God's grace,
I am — the angel Discontent."

LUCIFER.

WHEN I went out of Paradise,

I turned a backward glance to see
Two flaming swords: once, twice, and thrice,
I turned and turned, ere I could flee.

Then down the darkened path I sped,
And heard heaven's gate behind me close:
What matter then if, quick or dead,
The world of men before me rose?

What matter now indeed, to-day,

These lower honors, lower gains!
Above me shines that higher way,—
I might have walked the heavenly plains!



Hope

and

Memory

FROM DAY TO DAY.

ONLY from day to day
We hold our way,
 Uncertain ever,
Though hope and gay desire
Touch with their fire
 Each fresh endeavor.

Only from day to day
We grope our way
 Through hurrying hours ;
But still our castles fair
Lift to the air
 Their glistening towers,

. And still from day to day
Along the way
 Beckon us ever,
To follow, follow, follow,
O'er hill and hollow,
 With fresh endeavor.

Sometimes, triumphant, gay,
The bugles play
 And trumpets sound
From out those glistening towers,
And rainbow showers
 Bedew the ground ;

Then "sweet, oh, sweet the way,"
We smiling say,
 And forward press
With swift, impatient feet,
And hearts that beat
 With eagerness.

Yet still beyond, the gay

Sweet bugles play,

 The trumpets blow,

Howe'er we flying haste,

Or, lagging, waste

 The hours that go ;

Still far and far away,

Till comes the day

 We gain that peak

In Darien ; then, blind

No more, we find

 Perchance what we do seek.

A CONQUEROR.

How fast and close they cling,
These memories that sting!
Days pass, years come and go,
Above the ebb and flow
Of all this human tide.—
Still ever doth abide,
Through devious wandering.
Some memory that will sting.

Perhaps we thought one day,
Somewhere upon our way,
Sometime, somewhere to find
That we had left behind,

Or buried under flowers,
These memories of ours,
And henceforth we should be
Of all their venom free.

But never time nor place
Brings that forgetting grace ;
We gain, perhaps, some height
Kissed by the morning light, —
We walk with friends thereon,
And Paradise seems won ;
But in that moment fair,
Swift through the ambient air

Straight to our very heart
Flies that unerring dart.
Nowhere can we escape
The shafts of that dark shape ;

No height can leave below
The arrows of that foe.
Come, then, O soul, O heart,
Turn thee, and face the dart!

Fling off thy craven fears,
Thy trembling and thy tears;
And as that hero bold
Who crushed within his hold
The bristling Austrian spears,
Crush thou these craven fears.
Thus haply thou shalt gain
That saving salt of pain

Embalmed in bitterness;
Thus haply thou shalt press
Still further up and on,
Till higher heights are won,—

Till conqueror at length,
By virtue of thy strength
Thou standest, O my soul,
Before a kingly goal!

TAKE HEART OF GRACE.

TAKE heart of grace, begin anew,
To-day's to-day, not yesterday,
And on its budding bloom the dew
Of early morning still doth play.

Take heart of grace, and gather up
This dewy sweetness of the morn,
Fill up with this your emptied cup,
And pledge the fair hours newly born.

Take heart of grace, and look before,
Instead of backward on the way,
Wash out the old regretful score,
The sorrowing sins of yesterday;

And let the old mistakes and pain
 Be cleansed with this refreshing dew,
And make beginning once again,
 With hope and courage bright and new.

For what's the world and all its days,
 But ours to try and try again?
Not ours to falter on its ways,
 Not ours to fling aside for pain.

Take heart of grace, then, day by day, —
 Take heart of grace, and sing each morn :
“To-day's to-day, not yesterday,
 And all the world is newly born !”

IN THE RAIN.

O ROBIN, robin, singing in the rain,

While black clouds lower

Above your bower !

O swallow, swallow, pouring forth your strain

Of hope and cheer,

While dull and drear

The gray skies bend above your soaring flight !—

Come bring, come bring

To us your spring

Of joyous hopefulness and sure delight !

Come teach our human hearts your lack of fear,

From day to day,

Though skies be gray ;

Your happy faith and trust that somewhere near,

Just out of sight,
The sun's bright light
Doth wait to break, and make the world anew ;
Doth wait to lift
The rainy rift,
The lowering clouds, and show Heaven shining
through.



Songs of
NEW
ENGLAND



THE PILGRIM VOYAGERS.

THE winds blew down a favoring gale,
The skies were clear, as they set sail, —
Those pilgrims bold, from Holland's shore,
Two hundred years ago and more.

Day after day, week after week,
They sailed and sailed, till, cold and bleak,
From icy coasts the breezes blew.
Where had they lost the happy clew

That would have brought them as they planned
Unto that fair Virginian land, —
That southern shore that bore the name
Of England's queen and Raleigh's fame?

But vainly then they trimmed their sails ;
Caught in the wild New-England gales,
They yielded to their fate, and found
Their shelter on New England's ground.

Not this the haven they had planned, —
This rocky coast, this wintry land ;
Yet none the less in full accord,
They blessed "the leading of the Lord,"

And built upon the rugged earth
The homes that gave a nation birth,
And sowed and reaped their scanty grain,
With faith that conquered loss with gain.

What armèd force did ever wrest
From any country, east or west,
Such triumphs as these gallant men
With faith and love did conquer then?

No dreams of power, no greed of gold,
Did tempt these men to leave the old
And seek the new, — for liberty,
Fair Freedom's dower, they crossed the sea ;

That freedom that would give to man
New life, and laws of simple plan ;
Where justice, mercy, love, and peace
Should rule and reign without surcease.

With what success they builded there
Upon this plan of freedom fair,
We know to-day, who live to see
The splendor of their victory.

And whoso says that we to-day
Have lost the old heroic way,
Shall find the hero and his deed
To fit the very hour of need.

For somewhere yet, beneath the face
Of pessimistic commonplace, —
That shadow on our shining sun, —
The ardent pilgrim blood doth run.

ON PLYMOUTH BAY.

Down Plymouth Bay we sailing bore
Past rocky ledge and sandy shore,
While sunset lights streamed redly down,
And touched with fire the quaint old town
Where Bradford ruled, and Brewster prayed,
And Standish went forth undismayed
To face the lawless Indian foe,
In that old time so long ago.

Past rocky ledge and sandy shore
We sailing sung, as on we bore,
A foolish song of love, until
A voice arose with sudden thrill,

And sent across the murmuring waves
The fervent words, the stalwart staves,
The long-drawn measures of a psalm
They might have sung to lift and calm

Their fainting souls in those dark days
When unknown perils blocked the ways,
And, sore beset, the Pilgrim band
Watered with tears their new-found land.

From end to end the psalm we sung,
And as the brave old words outrung,
With echoing thrills across the bay,
With echoing thrills that distant day

Pressed close upon us as we bore
Past rocky ledge and sandy shore,
Until, as deepening night came down
And shrouded half the little town,

And hid the wharves in ghostly gray,
We seemed ourselves to be as they
Who wandered here by wild winds blown,
Strange seekers of the vast unknown, —

With something of their aim and thought,
Their high, heroic purpose brought
To bear upon our commonplace,
Just for a moment's saving grace.

But in that moment's grace what fire
Did flash along the electric wire
That knits the deathless bonds of race!
What flame did pierce our commonplace,

To show us, by its searching rays,
The contrast of those ancient days, —
Those high, heroic lives, to these
Of lower aims and selfish ease!

OUR FRENCH ALLIES.

DARK was that hour before the light
That ushered in the morn
Of that great day, when to the world
A nation's life was born.

For foes without, and foes within,
Had threatened at the start,
Till men once brave, and men once bold,
Did falter, faint of heart.

Yet stanch and firm — their faith and trust
Untouched by fear or doubt —
That little band of patriots stood
To fight the battle out ;

To fight, and win their freehold right
Unto the soil they trod,
The homes their pilgrim fathers held
As a free gift from God, —

The homes on which old England laid
The pressure of her hand,
And taxed at will, until uprose
A protest in the land;

And force met force, and might met right,
While parliament and crown
Swore out a mighty oath to bring
“Those boasting Yankees down.”

But day by day, and week by week,
And month by month went by,
And still “those boasting Yankees” dared
Old England to defy.

“What folly this!” the British cried,

“What madness, when the end

Is ours to take, and ours to make

These rebel subjects bend,

“And own the power they now defy,

And pay the rebel debt

Of treason’s score, which now they flout

With braggart thrust and threat.”

Still grimly stanch they held their place, —

The little patriot band, —

By foes without, and foes within,

Beset on every hand.

Half-clad, half-fed, they faltered not ;

When round about their way

The shadows closed, they only said,

“To morrow ’ll bring the day.”

'T was then, just at the darkest hour,
When hope was well-nigh spent,
And prophecies of ill were rife,
That France her message sent.

Oh, gallant word of cheer and help,
Forerunner of the deed
That followed fast, what life you brought
In that dark hour of need!

What life, and health, and courage, then,
Sprung up afresh to give
New power and strength, new hope and heart,
And bid the nation live.

O generous land, when other lands
Looked on in cold disdain,
Who sent your timely aid to us,
Not once, but once again,

Whose costly fleets brought out to us
Your country's pride and flower,
What hearts have we, what memories,
To overlook that hour!

To hear indifferently his name
Whose youthful ardor spurred
His country on to such response
Of gallant deed and word!

Whose noble eloquence inspired
King Louis' timid soul,
Whose fiery courage caught and held
All France in its control!

Ah, let the land that gave him birth,
Indifferently forget,
Or hear without a thrill at heart
The name of La Fayette,

But never, while the world endures

And time and seasons roll,

Let my America forget

Her debt to that great soul.

Let her remember year by year

What France with him bestowed,

How generously in time of need

Her warm heart overflowed.

Oh, my America, to-day

Strong-limbed, of giant power,

Look back with gratitude and love

To that long vanished hour.

Look backward, then, with outstretched hands,

Go forth to seek her there --

There where she sits beside her Seine,

This kingless "France the Fair."

Go forth with gifts, love-gifts to her,
Nor longer make delay ;
Let loose the flood-tide of your heart,
America, to-day !



THE SIEGE OF CALAIS.

TWENTY trumpets, blowing, blowing,
Fifers playing, drums a-going,
Bugles calling to the fray,
When King Edward took his way
To the city of Calais.

Down he rode with banners streaming,
Sabres shining, lances gleaming,
Down he rode, the kingly head
Of the glittering line he led,
Rode into the sunset red,

Westward, where in bold defying
Fifty Calais flags were flying.

Watching from the turret heights
Laughed aloud the Calais knights,
Soldiers famed in famous fights.

As they laughed, still near and nearer
Rode the King, and clear and clearer
Just beyond the guarded moat
Trumpet-call and bugle-note
On the evening air did float.

Then, with splendid pennons streaming,
Golden lions and lilies gleaming
On the royal standards there,
Forth there rode a herald fair
With a confident, bold air.

Swift he rode, with pace unfaltering,
Not a sign of doubt or paltering ;
Swift he rode, as sped by fate,
Straight unto the Calais gate,
Clothed about with royal state.

“In the king’s name, open straightway !”

Called he there before the gateway.

From their fortress strong and high,
Scornfully they made reply,

“In the king’s name, we defy

“British greed and British power.

Here in fortress and in tower,

France shall keep and hold her own,
Over Calais reign alone,

With her king upon his throne !”

But alas for Calais, lying
Month by month there, starving, dying,
In her melancholy plight
Held in siege by England's might
With her armèd force in sight, —

Month by month until, despairing,
Forth they sent a warder bearing
This frank message : they would fling
Open wide their gates, and bring
Straight unto the English king

The keys of Calais if in pity
He would pass from out the city
All the people, young and old, —
Nobles, merchants, soldiers bold,
All the populace, full told.

Hot with wrath, the king made answer, —

“Tell your lords that every man, sir,

All the people, young and old,

Nobles, merchants, soldiers bold,

All the populace, full told,

“To the English crown shall render

Unconditional surrender,

Shall be subject unto me,

Or for ransom or for fee,

Ere the siege shall lifted be !”

When returned the Calais warder

With this message, flushed with ardor,

With their French blood mounting high,

Swift the lords did make reply,

“Tell the king that we can die, —

“Bravely starve without his pity,
Shut within our guarded city ;
But to turn so late, so late,
Cowards at the very gate, —
Send unto this blindfold fate

“Comrades who have starved together,
Through a twelvemonth’s varied weather, —
Shall a Frenchman stoop so low,
Yield like this unto a foe,
Faithless, heartless? No, — ah, no !”

Stirred with something like relenting
At this courage, half repenting
Of his tyrannous decree,
Edward cried impatiently,
“Tell these Frenchmen now from me,

“If as ransom they will straightway
Send me by the city gateway
Six chief merchants of the town,
Citizens of high renown,
Swift my herald shall ride down

“Into Calais, and proclaim there
Peace and pardon in my name there ;
Peace and pardon full and fain,
Unto those who do remain
Subject to my sovereign reign.”

“Never ! never !” rose the bitter
Cry of Calais. “It were fitter
We should die together here
Than to buy our lives so dear !”
But at this a voice rose clear,

Saying, "Friends, it were a pity
Thus to doom to death a city ;
Are there not at this sore need
Men of high renown and deed
Who will follow where I lead?"

Then forth stepped, with gallant bearing,
Six brave men whose noble daring
Was to save the city there
From the doom of slow despair ;
Forth they stepped, while sob and prayer

Broke the cheers that were ascending
In a pitiful, strange blending ;
For alas ! — what cruel fate
Lurked behind that iron gate
Where King Edward held his state !

Hopeless then of English pity,
Forth they went from out the city,
 Bare of foot and bare of head,
 And by halters meanly led,
 As the king had grimly said.

When before him in this fashion
They were brought, with sudden passion
 Loud he thundered, "Let them die!"
 Then arose a tender cry:
 "O my liege, my lord, put by

"In this hour war's cruel measure!
Calais yields her life and treasure
 To your mercy, O my king!
 Give her then, unreckoning,
 Mercy that befits a king."

In a moment's breathless span there,
Joyfully from man to man there
Ran the whisper low yet keen,
" 'T is Philippa ; 't is the Queen !"
Startled from his warlike mien,

Flushed King Edward as he listened,
As he saw the eyes that glistened.
Then, with voice that vainly tried
To be fierce with wrath and pride,
" Dame, my dame !" he sharply cried.

But, before him straightway kneeling,
Spake the Queen in soft appealing :
" For my sake !" she sweetly said,
Lifting up her drooping head,
In her face both love and dread.

For her sake ! The stern lips parted ;
There he stood, this lion-hearted
 Soldier, conqueror, and king,
For her sake considering
 Mercy that befits a king !

For her sake ! Yet when, assenting,
Turned he there with swift relenting,
 Who that looked upon his face,
 Merciful with pardoning grace,
 Failed the glad relief to trace ?

So at last the grand old story
Ends in conquered Calais's glory ;
 For not Edward's might and skill,
 Nor Philippa's gracious will,
 Through the centuries doth thrill,

But that deed so great and tender,
Where in noble self-surrender
Six brave men in solemn state
Passed beyond that iron gate,
Halter-led, to meet their fate!

BALBOA.

With restless step of discontent,
Day after day he fretting went
Along the old accustomed ways
That led to easeful length of days.

But far beyond the fragrant shade
Of orange groves his glances strayed
To where the white horizon line
Caught from the sea its silvery shine.

He knew the taste of that salt spray,
He knew the wind that blew that way ;
Ah, once again to mount and ride
Upon that pulsing ocean tide, —

To find new lands of virgin gold,
To wrest them from the savage hold,
To conquer with the sword and brain
Fresh fields and fair for royal Spain!

This was the dream of wild desire
That set his gallant heart on fire,
And stirred with feverish discontent
That soul for nobler issues meant.

Sometimes his children's laughter brought
A thrill that checked his restless thought;
Sometimes a voice more tender yet
Would soothe the fever and the fret.

Thus day by day, until one day
Came news that in the harbor lay
A ship bound outward to explore
The treasures of that western shore,

Which bold adventurers as yet
Had failed to conquer or forget ;
“Yet where they failed, and failing died,
My will shall conquer !” Balboa cried.

But when on Darien's shore he stept,
And fast and far his vision swept,
He saw before him, white and still,
The Andes mocking at his will.

Then like a flint he set his face ;
Let others falter from their place,
His hand and foot, his sturly soul
Should seek and gain that distant goal !

With speech like this he fired the land,
And gathered to his bold command
A troop of twenty score or more,
To follow where he led before.

They followed him day after day
O'er burning lands where ambushed lay
The waiting savage in his lair,
And fever poisoned all the air.

But like a sweeping wind of flame
A conqueror through all he came ;
The savage fell beneath his hand,
Or led him on to seek the land

That richer yet for golden gain
Stretched out beyond the mountain chain.
Steep after steep of rough ascent
They followed, followed, worn and spent,

Until at length they came to where
The last peak lifted near and fair ;
Then Balboa turned and waved aside
His panting troops. " Rest here," he cried,

“And wait for me.” And with a tread
Of trembling haste, he quickly sped
Along the trackless height, alone
To seek, to reach, his mountain throne.

Step after step he mounted swift ;
The wind blew down a cloudy drift ;
From some strange source he seemed to hear
The music of another sphere.

Step after step ; the cloud-winds blew
Their blinding mists, then through and through
Sun-cleft, they broke, and all alone
He stood upon his mountain throne.

Before him spread no paltry lands,
To wrest with spoils from savage hands ;
But, fresh and fair, an unknown world
Of mighty sea and shore unfurled

Its wondrous scroll beneath the skies.
Ah, what to this the flimsy prize
Of gold and lands for which he came
With hot ambition's sordid aim!

Silent he stood with streaming eyes
In that first moment of surprise,
Then on the mountain-top he bent,
This conqueror of a continent,

In wordless ecstasy of prayer, —
Forgetting in that moment there,
With Nature's God brought face to face,
All vainer dreams of pomp and place.

Thus to the world a world was given.
Where lesser men had vainly striven,
And striving died, — this gallant soul,
Divinely guided, reached the goal.

THE HERO OF THE FORT.

WHAT, you never heard of Boisrosé,
The hero bold and brave and gay,
Who scaled the rock and took the fort,
Then, bolder still, did make report
Of deed and claims before the king
Without a word of faltering?

And Rosny,¹ he who afterward
Was Duke of Sully, stood and heard
With chuckling mirth the sturdy claim
This hero dared thus coolly name :
“Six hundred feet, your liege, we went,
Six hundred feet of sheer ascent

¹ Marquis Rosny.

Above the surface of the sea, —
A cable rope flung down to me
And fastened firm, by one outside
The fortress wall, our only guide.
Who was our friend within the camp?
A sailor, Sire, of such a stamp
As might a hundred heroes make —
I'd give a hundred for his sake!
And for this deed, which to the crown
Brings back again the fortress town,
I only asked your royal grace
A right to rule the little place,
As governor from this time on.

“And thus I said to Villars there,
Your admiral — how he did stare,
When my conditions I made plain! —
To yield the fort, might I remain

As governor of the little town.
He raved and stormed ; then, marching down
With all his army, made demand
That forthwith I should yield command
Without conditions, and retire
From fort and camp ; then straightway, Sire,
I sent to you my proffered claim.
When Marshal Biron strutting came
With vain pretences of his power.
If words were gifts, I'd had a shower
Of all the treasures in the land.
'Twas thus he wheedled my command
From out my grasp. I was to be —
The Lord knows what, your Majesty, —
The Governor of Feschamp, or
Some fine equivalent therefor.
And this was all, for not a word,
Ay, not a sign, since then I've heard ;

And, Sire, he promised in your name
At once to heed and grant my claim !”

The speaker paused indignant here ;
The marquis grinned from ear to ear,
And sent the king a look that said,
“Was e'er so bold a varlet bred?”

But he, the good King Henri, turned,
And smiling, cried, “’Tis fairly earned,
As you assert, brave Boisrosé,
And as my Rosny here did say
Before you came ; ay, ay, you see
You ’ve still to learn, if majesty
And courts delay, no soldier yet
Did ever any tale forget
Of gallant deeds ; so, go your way,
And with you take, Sieur Boisrosé,

A soldier's word, signed by a king,
That such a hero's deed shall bring
Fit recompense ; and Rosny here
Shall prove to you how near and dear
He also holds a hero's fame.
Now, marquis, speak, and strike with shame
This doubting hero ; tell him now
What fine award you made me vow
In place of Feschamp to bestow."

The king rose up ; the marquis low
Before him bent ; then, smiling, turned
To Boisrosé, whose brown cheek burned
With frank amazement thus to hear
That Rosny held his exploit dear.

And what was this the marquis there
Was saying, with that smiling air?

“The rank of captain from that day,
Twelve thousand livres the yearly pay,
With twice a thousand crowns in hand.”

Ah, what was Feschamp's dull command
To this, indeed, — to serve the king
In camp and field? Half faltering,
With all his braggart bluster fled,
Bold Boisrosé bent down his head,
And murmured low: “Ah, Sire, forgive
My angry doubts; henceforth I live
For you and France, and if a deed,
An act of mine, could e'er at need
My lord the marquis serve, perchance
He too may pardon me — for France.”

J I M .

Out in a fog-bank we went down, —
Four-and-twenty men full told,
Fishermen all, from Provincetown,
None of 'em more than thirty year old.

We 'd cleared the banks and were homeward bound,
With such a load as you never saw, —
Cod and mackerel fine and sound,
Twelve hundred weight without a flaw.

The wind was west and the sky was clear
When we set our sails that night for home ;
Nobody had a thought of fear
An hour before the end had come.

Jim was whistlin' — a way he had —
A theatre tune he'd heard somewhere ;
I can hear it now, and can see the lad,
With his handsome shoulders broad and square.

He stood at the helm, and he knew his place,
Nobody knew it better than he.
One minute the moon lit up his face,
The next, I swear I couldn't see
Half a foot before me there !

Just as sudden as that it fell,
That white fog-bank, — a devil's snare
It seemed to me, from the pit of hell !

Four-and-twenty men full told,
And never one of 'em saved but me.
None of 'em more than thirty year oid,
As likely lads as ever you see.

Fisherman's luck, perhaps you say.

The parson said pretty nigh the same,
When he tried to comfort the folks that day,
Though he fixed it up by another name.

Well, it's five-and-thirty years to-night

Since we parted company, Jim and me, —
Since I saw him there in that March moonlight,
His hand to the helm, his face to the sea.

Five-and-thirty years, and Jim —

He's a young man still, I s'pose, while I,
My hair is white, and my eyes are dim.

But, mate, I've a notion, when I die

He'll be at the helm and steer me through

The shoaling tide to my journey's end;
For Jim and me — well I never knew

Such a fellow as Jim to stick to a friend.

And I've had a thought I've never told
In all these years before — that Jim
Would never have lost his grip and hold,
As somehow I lost my grip on him.

We went down into the fog together;
He was hurt from the first, but I had him fast
In a clutch like death, I thought; but whether
My strength or courage failed at the last

I never could tell, but only know
That all at once I found my hand
Loose and empty — God, what a blow!
Then I drifted alone to an empty land.

But I have n't much time here now to spend;
My hearing's dull and my eyes are dim.
What's that you ask, "afraid of the end"?
Afraid! Why, the end is — Jim!

THE COLONEL'S STORY.

“COME, tell us a story, a long ago story

Of some wonderful Christmas before we were born ;
Some story that brings in the war and its glory

And that soldier coat hanging there dusty and
worn.”

The gallant old Colonel laughed as he listened

To this eager demand, from this eager young crew ;
But laugh as he might, his kindly eyes glistened.

And his pulses leaped up, at the picture they drew.

“Come, tell you a story of war and of glory?”

He lightly repeated ; “ah, what shall I tell
You boys of to-day of that long ago story,

When we rode to the tune of the shot and the
shell?

“You’ve thought when you’ve read of the start and
the sally,

The bugle’s gay call, the drum and the fife,
That whether we rode to a rout or a rally,
’T was all one to us—a gay soldier’s life.

“Ah, boys, you forget, when the bugle is calling,
And the drum and the fife set the gay flags a-flying,
That along either side brave fellows are falling,
And the shouts of the living are mixed with the
dying.

“You forget what we lose even when we are winning—
No victory yet was won without cost;
We silently fill up the ranks that are thinning;
We cover with glory the list of the lost.

“Brave fellows on either side fighting and falling,—
Ah, well I remember that terrible day.
When, wounded and faint, on the field I lay crying
For a cup of cold water, a trooper in gray

“Wheeled, stooped from his saddle, and poured down
my throat

A draught from his canteen, then galloped away ;
But fast as he galloped, I saw his gray coat
And the cavalier hat in the light of the day.

“And the day — it was Christmas, the day that we
lost

On the heights by the fort, and this trooper, you
know,
Who had stopped as he rode, without counting the
cost

In the rain of the shot and the shell, was — our
foe !

“When you read now of deeds that lead up to glory
Through the gallant bold charges of armies at bay,
Just pause for a moment, and think of my story,
And the deed of my silent brave trooper in gray.”

THE LITTLE FOES.

ALL in and out, and up and down
The crooked streets of Boston town,
King George's troops had held their way
Through many a weary night and day.

And walking forth, by day or night,
The townsfolk saw the bitter sight
Of British sentries pacing down
The streets of their beloved town ;

And heard, wherever they did fare,
The challenge cry of, "Who goes there?"
To stay their steps and bar their way,
By day and night, and night and day.

One day another sound was heard, —
The cannon's roar, that sent its word
Of battle forth, to wake and thrill
The echoing heights of Bunker Hill.

It happ'd that on the mall that day
A beardless boy did sentry play,
And challenged proudly, "Who goes there?"
Of every soul who met him there.

One came at last at headlong pace ;
He mocked the sentry to his face,
And with a schoolboy's sturdy blow
He laid the bayonet-bearer low !

Then, hand to hand, they grappled there,
And "Rebel !" "Tyrant !" rent the air
In tones of wrath, till, loud and shrill,
A voice came shouting o'er the hill.

One word they heard the shrill voice cry :
“ Defeat ! defeat ! ” then riding by
At break-neck speed, dust-stained and pale,
The messenger poured forth his tale.

And what was that ! What names were those
The shrill voice called ? The boyish foes
Leap to their feet, cry “ truce,” and chase
The break-neck rider on his race.

So, speeding on, they swiftly gain
The rider’s side, who slackens rein
To tell the crowd the news he ’s brought
Of how the battle has been fought.

He tells it all, — that gallant story, —
The dire defeat, the loss and glory ;
And who was wounded, who was dead, —
Until the tumult rose and spread,

And bitter cries and curses fell ;
But dumb, as if beneath a spell,
The little sentry turned aside,
Blind with the tears he strove to hide.

And all unseeing, white with woe,
Forgetting for the time his foe, —
Forgetting everything but this :
His father's last good-by and kiss,

The little Yankee lad leaps down
The grassy slope that fronts the town,
And turning with uncertain pace,
He meets the sentry face to face.

Through falling tears they staring stand
A moment, then with outstretched hand,
The little British sentry cries,
With breaking voice and tearful eyes,

“My father, too, is shot there — dead !”
The Yankee lad bends down his head,
And hand meets hand, and hate 's forgot
In this their common loss and lot.

THE END.



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