EUGENE FIELD'S LIFE AND WORK

In its biographical sketch of Eugene Field the Post-Intelligencer said that much of his best work would be forgotten, because it discussed the events of the day and was not worth preserving. To illustrate what was meant, Field's last column of "Sharps and Flats," printed in the Chicago Record of November 2, two days before he died, is reproduced here:

Sharps and Flats.

No matter what else it did, if the earthquake shock waked up St. Louis there should be no complaint.

A new monument to Abraham Lincoln's memory should be built. It should be paid for by the public at large and the people of Springfield should have nothing to do with the management of it after it is built and paid for. The Springfield people have too many other interests to attend to.

Now that Fitzsimmons has been disposed of, we suppose that Pete Jackson will bob up again.

It begins to look as though those Philadelphia detectives would not be able to convict Holmes. Perhaps the Indiana talent will have better luck.

The Rev. Dr. M. Woolsey Stryker, president of Hamilton college, has been in Chicago for several days. He is in excellent health and spirits, and it is evident that the duties of his present executive position are wholly congenial.

The Corbett-Fitzsimmons imbroglio has ceased to be an all-absorbing issue. All eyes are now riveted upon John L. Sullivan, who is attempting the important feat of drinking up all the whisky in the state of Arkansas.

A searching investigation and a general 'tending to—that's what Fort Sheridan needs. Under the present policy of hushing things up the condition is rapidly going from bad to worse. The Augean stables need cleaning.

The one thing we regret is the probability that John Sherman's book will bring Calico Charley Foster out of his hole.

We lose our guess if there is anybody who can read Col. John A. Joyce's poem about Cuban freedom and not want to fight somebody.

It is pleasant to know that Gen. John B. Gordon met with so cordial a reception at Indianapolis. Elsewhere in the north the attendance at his lecture has not been so large as to warrant the belief that an extended northern tour would be profitable. Gen. Gordon is addicted to those flowery periods characteristic of what is called the old school of Southern oratory, but which, so far as we have learned by observation, is still current and popular in our Southern states. This style of oratory is by no means distasteful to us; it comes in grateful contrast to the bloodlessness of too many public speakers whose efforts are as impotent to move humanity as tepid water is to excite the emotion in the sensitive bosom of a Shanghai pullet's egg.

At last Ohio is fully aroused. We are not fully convinced whether Foraker or the earthquake is responsible for this condition.

It's as clear as can be, you're done for, Duffy! But take it good-naturedly—don't get huffy.

Mr. Cleveland's telegram of sympathy to the New York Democracy has been published, but we are waiting to hear about the number of simoleons he coughed up in response to the pleading call of the committee on ways and means.

A correspondent, who evidently has been reading "The Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac," asks us what good Napoleon Bonaparte ever did for France. He bestowed upon France a glory which not only France but also all the rest of the civilized world is talking about and will talk about to the end of time.

While Mr. Cleveland was worrying about Atlanta, a thousand miles away, Washington City hops up and hurrahs for Cuba right under his august nose.

We are betting that all time records were broken by the special train which Calvin S. Brice chartered to convey him and his barrel beyond the reach of Campbell's pleading voice and Campbell's itching fingers.

You can depend upon it that if Spain saw her way out of the woods she wouldn't be suggesting compromise to the Cubans.

A current paragraph tells us that Prof. Huxley's notorious fondness for cats was a fad which he shared with Cardinal Mazarin, Cardinal Richelieu, Charles Stewart Parnell and other eminent public men. The name of Isaac Newton should not be omitted from the list of cat-lovers, nor that of Mohammed. The prophet, it will be remembered, had so great a regard for the comfort of his pet cat that once when he found her asleep on his robe he would not awaken her, but, cutting out that part of his robe upon which she lay, removed the other mutilated part carefully and left tabby undisturbed.

Robert Southey was an ardent lover of cats. Have you ever read the letter he wrote to his friend Bedford announcing the death of one of his pets? "Alas! Grosvenor," he wrote, "this day poor Rumpel was found dead, after a long and happy a life as cat could wish for, if cats form wishes on that subject. His full titles were: The Most Noble the Archduke Rumpelstiltzchen, Marquis Macbum, Earl Tomlemagne, Baron Raticide, Waowhler and Skaaatch. There should be a court-mourning in Catland, and if the Dragon (your pet cat) wear a black ribbon round his neck or a band of crepe a la militaire round one of his fore paws it will be but a becoming mark of respect." Then the poet-laureate adds: "I believe we are each and all, servants included, more sorry for his loss, or, rather more affected by it, than any of us would like to confess."

Byron was fond of cats; in his establishment at Ravenna he had five of them. Daniel Maclise's famous portrait of Harriet Martineau represents that estimable woman sitting in front of a fireplace and turning her face to receive the caress of her pet cat that is crawling to a resting place upon her mistress' shoulder.

It's an ill wind that blows nobody good. Civilization is indebted to Messrs. Corbett and Fitzsimmons for having given Arkansas and Texas an opportunity to declare and to prove their allegiance to the principles of humanity and decency.

You may have noticed that just before the contribution plate is passed around once every four years some enterprising Democrat has the presence of mind to suggest that Roswell P. Flower would make a very acceptable presidential candidate.

Humanity lives to learn. Even Patti, at the mature age of 55, discovers and concedes that Richard Wagner was a great composer.

If Adlai Stevenson meets with any superfluous harmony lying around loose in Ohio he should lay hands on it and bring it back to Illinois, where it is needed badly.

Bill Nye's lecture engagements up to the first of February have been canceled, and Nye himself is probably home again in the North Carolina hills by this time. The story of his heroic experience at Paterson, N. J., last Wednesday evening is rather a one-sided affair, and, until Nye himself has been heard from on the subject, the public should reserve judgment. It seems that Nye and his coadjutor, Bert Poole, went to Paterson and gave a performance there. That the auditors were not pleased with the proceedings was evidenced by the fact that many of them arose and left the hall before the close of the entertainment. Subsequently, while Nye was en route to the railway station, he was set upon and egged by a turbulent crowd of young men. If there was provocation for this assault, it must have been bitter; if there was not strong provocation, the assault was as brutal as could well be conceived of; in either case, we think, Paterson will have the worst of it in the long run, for demonstrations of this character are by no means approved by people possessed of any sense of peace and dignity.

We see in one of the dispatches from New York that the charge of drunkenness has been made against Mr. Nye, and that it has been specified that he was inebriated when he made his public appearance in Chickering hall. Nye denies the accusation, and we are free to say that we do not believe it at all. A somewhat intimate acquaintance with Nye for the period of fifteen years enables us to testify that if there is one temperate man on our platform today it is Bill Nye.

From one quarter it has been suggested that sickness may have been responsible for some apparent indiscretion which served to excite the indignation of the Paterson audience. Ten years ago Nye was in shocking bad health, and at one time there were fears that he would be an invalid for the rest of his life. His malady at that time was meningitis; never since his two years' affliction with that insidious and destructive disease has Nye been a robust man. Only the utmost caution and the most scrupulous observance of the rules laid down by his physician have enabled Nye to go ahead with his work. This work in itself has been arduous; if there is anything more vexatious or more wearing than traveling about the country in all kinds of weather and at the mercy of railway trains and lecture bureaus and hotel-keepers, we do

THE FIELD COAT-OF-ARMS.

not know it. We are ready to believe that overwork has induced a return of Nye's old trouble and that Nye is a sick man. But we do not believe, and we shall not believe upon the testimony so far presented, that Nye has been guilty of any irregularity warranting a diminution of public confidence in him, and least of all, justifying the unseemly outrage committed at Paterson last Wednesday.

We join with the Tribune in the prediction that Miss Tarbell's "Life of Abraham Lincoln," begun in the current number of McClure's Magazine, promises to be a highly interesting and very valuable performance.

The chances are that Buck Hinrichsen would have slept right through it all if he had thought it was Ben Cable instead of the earthquake.

As for the Inter Ocean, it is always to be found on the other side. It never forms an opinion until it finds out which way its contemporaries have turned. It would rather be wrong than to be collector.

In this column of "Sharps and Flats" appeared his poems, mixed in with jokes about the Browning Society and Buck Hinrichsen. Occasionally he would sign some one's else name to a poem, as when he attached the name of Helena Modjeska, his friend, to the verses beginning "Upon a mountain top, far from the sea." He hated sham, humbug and false pretenses, and never tired of poking fun at the Chicago "literary people," who knew nothing about literature, and at the "Markeesy di Pullman" and others who sought to imitate the nobility of Europe. He himself drew a coat-of-arms for the Field family, in which sheaves of wheat had a conspicuous place.

Eugene Field's Wife.

In a recent issue of the Ladies' Home Journal John Ballantyne wrote:

Mrs. Eugene Field is a remarkable woman. To appreciate this fact in all its dimensions it is necessary to know her husband, and to be familiar with his daily life. Mr. Field is one of those men who are said to be very "trying." He is free from what are commonly called vices, and he is affectionate and devoted to his family; but he is a genius, and when that is said all is said. A lady of wide experience and close observation once remarked that while a man of genius was one to admire and look up to, possibly to worship, he was generally "a great trouble about a house." This describes Mr. Field's case exactly. He is esteemed and loved by all who come in contact with him, and he is worthy of the sentiments he inspires; but he is nervous, dyspeptic, usually amiable, but at times extremely irritable, always eccentric, extravagant, generous to the point of prodigality, a creature of impulse and a perpetual obstacle to orderly living, systematic housekeeping and good domestic discipline. He loves books, pictures, curiosities of every description, dogs, chickens and birds. Upon the inanimate objects he lavishes a great part of his income and upon the living creatures the choicest viands that he can openly or surreptitiously extract from the larder. By a supreme exercise of her authority, Mrs. Field has contrived to keep the chickens out of the house but the books, dogs, birds and curiosities occupy every nook and corner that is not absolutely required for chairs and beds. No one realizes better than Mr. Field himself what Mrs. Field has had to endure by reason of his peculiarities, and he illustrates this by narrating a dream he claims to have had. "I thought," he says, "that I had died and gone to heaven. I had some difficulty in getting past St. Peter, who examined my record closely and regarded me with doubt and suspicion, but finally permitted me to enter the pearly gates. As I walked up the streets of the heavenly city I saw a venerable old man, with long gray hair and flowing beard. His benignant face encouraged me to address him. 'I have just arrived and am entirely unacquainted,' I said. 'May I ask your name?'

"'Oh, yes,' he replied, 'I'm Job.'

"'Indeed,' I exclaimed, 'are you that Job whom we were taught to revere as the most patient man in the world?'

"'Yes,' he said, with a show of hesitation, 'yes, I did have quite a reputation for patience once, but I hear that there is a woman now on earth who has suffered more than I ever did and has endured it with greater resignation.'

"'Why,' said I, 'that is curious. I am just from the earth, and I do not remember to have heard of her case. What is her name?'

"'Mrs. Eugene Field,' was the reply. Just then I awoke."

Mrs. Field's trials have left no mark upon her face nor wrought any change in her disposition. She is as girlish in appearance and as equal in temper as she was in her youth. She might readily be mistaken for an elder sister of her youngest boy. Mr. Field touches very gracefully on this point in a poem written upon and relating to his thirty-ninth birthday:

And you, dear girl, with velvet eyes,
I wonder what you mean
Through all your keen anxieties
By keeping sweet sixteen.

Mrs. Field—Julia Sutherland Comstock—was born December 8, 1856, at Bainbridge, Chenango county, N. Y. Her father, Alexander A. Comstock, was a prosperous merchant, whose fortune had been considerably augmented by a legacy from his elder brother, Samuel Comstock, a wealthy trader. Her mother, who still lives, was Ann Sutherland—one of the Sutherlands whose ancestors came from Scotland in the old colonial days and settled in the western part of New York. About 1867 or 1868 Mr. and Mrs. Comstock removed to St. Joseph, Mo., and it was there that Mr. Field met, wooed, won and married his wife. She was the second of five beautiful sisters, who are still spoken of in St. Joseph as "the pretty Comstock girls." Mr. Field had been studying, or at least had been at the University of Missouri, at Columbia, and had become intimately acquainted with Edgar V. Comstock, a fellow student. They arranged to go to Europe together, and prior to their departure Mr. Field was invited to spend a few days at the Comstock residence. He accepted, and there was introduced to Julia, then a girl of 15. It was a case of love at first sight. Mr. Field remained a month, and during the whole time devoted himself to the object of his affection. In a poem entitled "Lovers' Lane," not included in his published works, Mr. Field has commemorated the days of their wooing. It was written about a year ago, while they were in London. Here are two of the verses:

"Let us sit awhile, beloved,
And dream of the good old days,
Of the kindly shade the willows made
Round the staunch but creaky chaise.
With your head upon my shoulder
And my arm about you, so,
Though exiles we may seem to be
In Lovers' Lane, Saint Joe.

"In the Union bank of London
Are forty pounds or more,
Which I'm like to spend ere the month shall end
In an antiquarian store.
But I'd give it all, and gladly,
If for an hour or so
I could feel the grace of that distant place—
Of Lovers' Lane, Saint Joe."

To those who know the poet intimately, the line referring to the creaky chaise speaks eloquently of the depth of his passion. Mr. Field looked upon a horse as a savage beast, which, like the Scriptural lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. His regard for Miss Julia must have been strong, indeed, if it enabled him to overcome his prejudice and take her out driving.

At the end of a month Mr. Field had declared himself and been accepted. It was arranged that the marriage should take place on his return from Europe, where he proposed to remain a year. He said good-bye to his beloved, and with her brother as a companion went to New York to embark. Somewhere in the East Mr. Comstock lost sight of him, and after several days of careful investigation learned that he had gone back to St. Joseph for another fond farewell. At last they sailed, but six months of absence was all that Mr. Field could endure, and at the end of that period he returned to America, hurried to the home of his little sweetheart, and insisted on a speedy wedding. Of course, he carried his point; men always do in such cases. He was then 23; she was barely 16.

On attaining his majority Mr. Field had come into possession of a handsome fortune left to him by his father. At 23 he had contrived to part with a large slice of it, and as he had no occupation and lived expensively after his marriage, the housekeeping bills made serious inroads upon the balance. Before it was entirely exhausted he engaged in newspaper work, but as his salary was paid in promises instead of currency his labors did not serve to check the drain upon his bank account. However, he gained a knowledge of the newspaper business, and when his money was all gone he was enabled to take a position on a solvent journal. The income thus gained was small, but it served to support them after a fashion, though Mrs. Field could tell the straits to which they were sometimes reduced. It was the experience of their early married life that made her the financial manager she is today. It is fortunate for the entire family that she profited by the lessons of that period of poverty, for they made no impression upon her husband. He was just as improvident as ever, and although his income later was larger—sufficient to provide for the comforts and many of the luxuries of life—it would hardly have paid the expenses of the household, added to those of Mr. Field's mania for books and curios, but for her wise administraton of the funds. There was only one weak point in her financial armour; she reposed confidence in her husband. Notwithstanding repeated breaches of faith, she frequently intrusted him with sums which she had appropriated for specific and necessary purposes, hoping against hope that he might not divert them to other and unnecessary ones. A case in point occurred shortly before his death. She had with some difficulty scraped together the money with which to make a payment on his life insurance policy, and unwisely constituted him her agent for the transaction of the business. A few hours later he returned to the house accompanied by a man who bore eight large pasteboard boxes on his shoulder. Mr. Field had come upon a very fine collection of butterflies—800 specimens—and, forgetting all about the insurance, had purchased them. Although it was a seriously embarrassing matter to Mrs. Field just at that time, her only complaint was expressed in these words:

"Dear me, Gene, where on earth can we put all those things?"

Mrs. Field is always spoken of as a little woman, but, as a matter of fact, she is somewhat above the medium height and fully up to the medium weight. Her head is rather small and her hands and feet extremely so, and somehow she gives the impression of littleness. She has soft brown hair and eyes—velvet eyes, her husband calls them—and a complexion as clear and fair as a child's. She is the mother of six children, three of whom live to remind her that, in spite of her youthful appearance, time is fleeting. Her eldest is a daughter of 15, already taller than her mother. She is the Mary French Field to whom Mr. Field's "Little Book of Profitable Tales" is dedicated. The other two are boys, Eugene, aged 12, and Frederich, aged 10. The latter is the baby of the family. It was to him that Mr. Field addressed his lines "To a Usurper," written five or six years ago. In this little poem he has paid a deserved tribute to his wife's steadfast and loyal devotion. It occurs in the last verse:

And when that other comes to you,
God grant her love may shine
Through all your life, as fair and true,
As mamma's does through mine.

EUGENE FIELD'S POEMS.

The following recent verses, never before printed in Seattle, will give an idea of the range of his powers:

The Bow-Leg Boy.

Who should come up the road one day
But the doctor man in his two-wheeled shay;
And he whoaed his horse and he cried, "Ahoy,
I have brought you folks a bow-leg boy!
Such a cute little boy!
Such a funny little boy!
Such a dear little bow-leg boy!"

He took out his box and he opened it wide,
And there was the bow-leg boy inside!
And when they saw that cunning little mite,
They cried in a chorus expressive of delight:
"What a cute little boy!
What a funny little boy!
What a dear little bow-leg boy!"

Observing a strict geometrical law,
They cut out his panties with a circular saw;
Which gave such a stress to his oval stride
That the people he met invariably cried:
"What a cute little boy!
What a funny little boy!
What a dear little bow-leg boy!"

They gave him a wheel and away he went
Speeding along to his heart's content;
And he sits so straight and he pedals so strong
That the folks all say as he bowls along:
"What a cute little boy!
What a funny little boy!
What a dear little bow-leg boy!"

With his eyes aflame and his cheeks aglow,
He laughs "aha" and he laughs "oho;"
And the world is filled and thrilled with the joy
Of that jolly little human, the bow-leg boy—
The cute little boy!
The funny little boy!
The dear little bow-leg boy!

If the doctor man comes my way
With his wonderful box and his two-wheel shay,
I'll ask for the treasure I'd fain possess—
Now, honest Injun! can't you guess?
Why, a cute little boy—
A funny little boy—
A dear little bow-legboy!

Pan Liveth.

They told me once that Pan was dead,
And so, in sooth, I thought him;
For vainly where the streamlets led
Through flowery meads I sought him—
Nor in his dewy pasture bed
Nor in the grove I caught him.
"Tell me," 'twas so my clamor ran—
"Tell me, Oh, where is Pan?"

But, once, as on my pipe I played
A requiem sad and tender,
Lo, thitner came a shepherd-maid—
Full comely she and slender!
I were indeed a churlish blade
With wailings to offend 'er—
For surely wooing's sweeter than
A mourning over Pan!

So, presently, whiles I did scan
That shepherd-maiden, pretty,
And heard her accents, I began
To pipe a cheerful ditty
And so, betimes, forgot old Pan
Whose death had waked my pity;
So—so did Love undo the man
Who sought and pined for Pan!

He was not dead. I found him there—
The Pan that I was after!
Caught in that maiden's tangling hair,
Drunk with her song and laughter!
I doubt if there be otherwhere
A merrier god or dafter—
Nay, nor a mortal kindlier than
Is this same dear old Pan!

Beside me, as my pipe I play,
My shepherdess is lying,
While here and there her lambkins stray
As sunny hours go flying;
They look like me—those lambs—they say,
And that I'm not denying!
And for that sturdy, romping clan
All glory be to Pan!

Pan is not dead, O sweetheart mine!
It is to hear his voices
In every note and every line
Wherein the heart rejoices!
He liveth in that sacred shrine
That Love's first, holiest choice is!
So pipe, my pipe, while still you can,
Sweet songs in praise of Pan!

The Bench-Legged Fyce.

To Master Charlie Lemperly, of Cleveland.

Speakin' of dorgs, my bench-legged fyce
He'd most o' the virtues an' nary a vice.
Some folks called him Sooner, a name that arose
From his predisposition to chronic repose;
But, rouse his ambition, he couldn't be beat—
Yer bet yer he got thar on all his four feet!

Mos' dorgs has some forte—like huntin' an' such,
But the sports o' the field didn't bother him much;
Wuz jest a plain dorg, an' contented to be
On peaceable terms with the neighbors an' me;
Used to fiddle an' squirm, and grunt "Oh, how nice!"
When I tickled the back of that bench-legged fyce!

He wuz long in the bar'l like a fyce oughter be;
His color wuz yaller as ever you see;
His tail, curlin' upward, wuz long, loose an' slim—
When he didn't wag it why, the tail it wagged him!
His legs wuz so crooked, my bench-legged pup
Wuz as tall sittin' down as he wuz standin' up!

He'd lie by the stove of a night an' regret
The various vittles an' things he had et:
When a stranger, most likely a tramp, come along,
He'd lift up his voice in significant song—
You wondered, by gum! how there ever wuz space
In that bosom o' his'n to hold so much bass!

Of daytimes he'd sneak to the road an' lie down,
An' tackle the country dorgs comin' to town;
By common consent he was boss in St. Joe,
For what he took hold of he never let go!
An' a dude that came courtin' our girl left a slice
Of his white flannel suit with our bench-legged fyce!

He wuz good to us kids—when we pulled at his fur
Or twisted his tail he would never demur;
He seemed to enjoy all our play an' our chaff,
For his tongue ud hang out and he'd laff an' he'd laff;
An' once when the Hobart boy fell through the ice,
He wuz drug clean ashore by that bench-legged fyce!

We all hev our choice, an' you, like the rest,
Allow that the dorg which you've got is the best;
I wouldn't give much for the boy 'at grows up
With no friendship subsistin' 'tween him an' a pup!
When a feller gits old—I tell you it's nice
To think of his youth an' his bench-legged fyce!

To think of the springtime way back in St. Joe—
Of the peach trees ablooom an' the daisies ablow;
To think of the play in the medder an' grove,
When little legs wrestled an' little han's strove;
To think of the loyalty, valor an' truth
Of the friendships that hallow the season of youth!

Dedication for a Book of Tales.

Brother of mine, have you forgot
Those pleasant nooning times of old;
How in a quiet, shady spot
We sat and heard quaint stories told?

How sweet it was, when tired of play
Or vexed with discipline at school,
To while that nooning hour away
With romance in the shade and cool!

Brother of mine, our noon is high—
Come, let us rest a little space,
And let us twain revivify
Our ardor with that boyhood grace!

These little tales it is to tell—
Some folks may wonder why they're told;
Yet shall they serve their purpose well
If they recall the days of old;

If they recall our boyhood joys,
And those far distant scenes retrace;
If they bring back to us two boys
A vision of the dear old place—

The homestead, and the pickerel pond,
The maple trees, the pasture lot,
The Pelham hills away beyond—
Brother of mine, have you forgot?

My Playmates.

The wind comes whispering to me of the country green and cool—
Of redwing blackbirds chattering beside a reedy pool;
It brings me soothing fancies of the homestead on the hill,
And I hear the thrush's evening song and the robin's morning trill;
So I fall to thinking tenderly of those I used to know
Where the sassafras and snakeroot and checkerberries grow.

What has become of Ezra Marsh, who lived on Baker's hill?
And what's become of Noble Pratt, whose father kept the mill?
And what's become of Lizzie Crum and Anastasia Snell,
And of Roxie Root, who 'tended school in Boston for a spell?
They were the boys and they the girls who shared my youthful play—
They do not answer to my call—my playmates—where are they?

What has become of Levi and his little brother Joe,
Who lived next door to where we lived some forty years ago?
I'd like to see the Newton boys and Quincy Adams Brown,
And Hepsy Hall and Ella Cowles, who spelled the whole school down!
And Gracie Smith, the Cutler boys, Leander Snow, and all
Who I am sure would answer could they only hear my call!

I'd like to see Bill Warner and the Conkey boys again
And talk about the times we used to wish that we were men!
And one—I shall not name her—could I see her gentle face
And hear her girlish treble in this distant, lonely place!
The flowers and hopes of springtime—they perished long ago,
And the garden where they blossomed is white with winter snow.

Oh, cottage 'neath the maples, have you seen those girls and boys
That but a little while ago made, oh, such pleasant noise?
Oh, trees, and hills, and brooks, and lanes, and meadows, do you know
Where I shall find my little friends of forty years ago?
You see, I'm old and weary, and I've traveled long and far;
I am looking for my playmates—I wonder where they are!

Old Friends in Vellum.

Though care and strife
Elsewhere be rife,
Upon my word, I do not heed 'em;
In bed I lie
With books hard by,
And with increasing zest I read 'em.

Propped up in bed
So much I've read
Of musty tomes that I've a headful
Of tales and rhymes
Of ancient times,
Which, wife declares, are simply "dreadful!"

They give me joy
Without alloy;
And isn't that what books are made for?
And yet—and yet—
(Ah, vain regret!)
I would to God they all were paid for!

No festooned cup
Filled foaming up
Can lure me elsewhere to confound me;
Sweeter than wine
This love of mine
For these old books I see around me!

A plague, I say,
On maidens gay;
I'll weave no compliments to tell 'em!
Vain fool I were,
Did I prefer
Those dolls to these old friends of vellum!

At dead of night
My chamber's bright,
Not only with the gas that's burning,
But with the glow
Of long ago—
Of beauty back from old returning.

Fair women's looks
I see in books,
I see them, and I hear their laughter—
Proud, high-born maids,
Unlike the jades
Which menfolk now go chasing after!

Herein again
Speak valiant men
Of all nativities and ages;
I hear and smile
With rapture while
I turn these musty, magic pages.

The sword, the lance,
The morris dance,
The highland song, the green wood ditty,
Of these I read,
Or, when the need,
My Miller grinds me grist that's gritty!

When of such stuff
We've had enough,
Why, there be other friends to greet us;
We'll moralize
In solemn wise
With Plato or with Epictetus.

Sneer as you may,
I'm proud to say
That I, for one, am very grateful
To heaven, that sends
These genial friends
To banish other friendships hateful!

And when I'm done,
I'd have no son
Pounce on these treasures like a vulture;
Nay, give them half
My epitaph,
And let them share in my sepulture.

Then, when the crack
Of doom rolls back
The marble and the earth that hide me,
I'll smuggle home
Each precious tome,
Without a fear my wife shall chide me!

The Ride to Bumpville.

Play that my knee was a calico mare
Saddled and bridled for Bumpville;
Leap to the back of this steed, if you dare,
And gallop away to Bumpville!
I hope you'll be sure to sit fast in your seat,
For this calico mare is prodigiously fleet,
And many adventures your likely to meet
As you journey along to Bumpville.

This calico mare both gallops and trots,
While whisking you off to Bumpville;
She paces, she shies, and she stumbles, in spots,
In the tortuous road to Bumpville;
And sometimes this strangely mercurial steed
Will suddenly stop and refuse to proceed,
Which, all will admit, is vexatious indeed,
When one is en route to Bumpville!

She's scared of the cars when the engine goes "Toot!"
Down by the crossing at Bumpville;
You'd better look out for that treacherous brute
Bearing you off to Bumpville!
With a snort she rears up on her hindermost heels
And executes jigs and Virginia reels—
Words fail to explain how embarrassed one feels
Dancing so wildly to Bumpville!

It's bumptybump and jiggytijog,
Journeying on to Bumpville;
It's over the hilltop and down through the bog
You ride on your way to Bumpville;
It's rattletybang over bowlder and stump,
There are rivers to ford, there are fences to jump,
And the corduroy road it goes bumptybump,
Mile after mile to Bumpville!

Perhaps you'll observe it's no easy thing
Making the journey to Bumpville,
So I think, on the whole, it were prudent to bring
An end to this ride to Bumpville;
For, though she has uttered no protest or plaint,
The calico mare must be blowing and faint—
What's more to the point, I'm blowed if I ain't!
So play we have got to Bumpville!

Googly-Goo.

Of mornings bright and early,
When the lark is on the wing
And the robin in the maple
Hops from her nest to sing,
From yonder cheery chamber
Cometh a mellow coo—
'Tis the sweet, persuasive treble
Of my little Googly-Goo!

The sunbeams hear his music
And they seek his little bed,
And they dance their prettiest dances
Round his golden curly head;
Schottisches, galops minuets,
Gavottes and waltzes, too,
Dance they unto the music
Of my googling Googly-Goo.

My heart—my heart it leapeth
To hear that treble tone;
What music like thy music,
My darling and mine own!
And patiently—yes, cheerfully,
I toil the long day through—
My labor seemeth lightened
By the song of Googly-Goo!

I may not see his antics
Nor kiss his dimpled cheek;
I may not smooth the tresses
The sunbeams love to seek;
It mattereth not—the echo
Of his sweet, persuasive coo
Recurreth to remind me
Of my little Googly-Goo.

And when I come at evening,
I stand without the door
And patiently I listen
For that dear sound once more;
And oftentimes I wonder,
"Oh, God! what should I do
If any ill should happen
To my little Googly-Goo!"

Then in affright I call him—
I hear his gleeful shouts!
Begone, ye dread forebodings—
Begone, ye killing doubts!
For, with my arms about him,
My heart warms through and through
With the oogling and the googling
Of my little Googly-Goo!

The Doll's Wooing.

The little French doll was a dear little doll
Tricked out in the sweetest of dresses,
Her eyes were of hue
A most delicate blue,
And dark as the night were her tresses.
Her dear little mouth was fluted and red,
And this little French doll was so very well bred
That whenever accosted her little mouth said:
"Mamma! Mamma!"

The stockinet doll, with one arm and one leg,
Had once been a handsome young fellow;
But now he appeared
Rather frowsy and bleared
In his torn regimentals of yellow.
Yet his heart gave a curious thump as it lay
In the little toy cart near the window one day,
And heard the sweet voice of that French dolly say:
"Mamma! Mamma!"

He listened so long and he listened so hard
That anon he grew ever so tender,
For it's everywhere known
That the feminine tone
Gets away with all masculine gender.
He up and he wooed her with soldierly zest,
But all she'd reply to the love he professed
Were these plaintive words, which perhaps you have guessed:
"Mamma! Mamma!"

Her mother—a sweet little lady of five—
Vouchsafed her parental protection,
And although stockinet
Wasn't blue-blooded, yet
She really could make no objection.
So soldier and dolly were wedded one day,
And a moment ago, as I journeyed that way,
I'm sure that I heard a weak voice say:
"Mamma! Mamma!"

The Fly-Away Horse.

To Master Fritz Christopher.

Oh, a wonderful horse is the Fly-Away Horse—
Perhaps you have seen him before;
Perhaps, while you slept, his shadow has swept
Through the moonlight that floats on the floor.
For it's only at night, when the stars twinkle bright,
That the Fly-Away Horse, with a neigh
And a pull at his rein and a toss of his mane,
Is up on his heels and away!
The moon in the sky,
As he gallopeth by,
Cries: "Oh, what a marvelous sight!"
And the stars in dismay
Hide their faces away
In the lap of old Grandmother Night.

It is yonder, out yonder, the Fly-Away Horse
Speedeth ever and ever away—
Over meadows and lanes, over mountains and plains,
Over streamlets that sing at their play;
And over the sea like a ghost sweepeth he,
While the ships they go sailing below,
And he speedeth so fast that the men at the mast
Adjudge him some portend of woe.
"What ho there!" they cry,
As he flourishes by
With a whisk of his beautiful tail;
And the fish in the sea
Are as scared as can be,
From the nautilus up to the whale!

And the Fly-Away Horse seeks those faraway lands
You little folk dream of at night—
Where candy trees grow, and honey brooks flow,
And corn fields with popcorn are white;
And the beasts in the wood are ever so good
To children who visit them there—
What glory astride of a lion to ride,
Or to wrestle around with a bear!
The monkeys they say:
"Come on, let us play,"
And they frisk in the cocoanut trees;
While the parrots, that cling
To the peanut vines, sing
Or converse with comparative ease!

Off! scamper to bed—you shall ride him tonight!
For, as soon as you've fallen asleep,
With a jubilant neigh he shall bear you away
Over forest and hillside and deep!
But tell us, my dear, all you see and you hear
In those beautiful lands over there,
Where the Fly-Away Horse wings his far-away course
With the wee one consigned to his care.
Then grandma will cry
In amazement: "Oh, my!"
And she'll think it could never be so;
And only we two
Will know it is true—
You and I, little precious! will know!

Horace to Phyllis.

Come, Phyllis, I've a cask of wine
That fairly reeks with precious juices,
And in your tresses you shall twine
The loveliest flower this vale produces.

My cottage wears a gracious smile—
The altar decked in floral glory,
Yearns for the lamb which bleats the while
As though it pined for honors gory.

Hither our neighbors nimbly fare—
The boys agog, the maidens snickering;
And savory smells possess the air
As skyward kitchen flames are flickering.

You ask what means this grand display,
This festive throng, and goodly diet?
Well, since your bound to have your way,
I don't mind telling, on the quiet.

'Tis April 13, as you know—
A day and month devote to Venus
Whereon was born, some years ago,
My very worthy friend Mecenas.

Nay, pay no heed to Telephus—
Your friends agree he doesn' love you;
The way he flirts convinces us
He really is not worthy of you!

Aurora's son, unhappy lad!
You know the fate that overtook him?
And Pegasus a rider had—
I say he had before he shook him!

Hac docet (as you must agree);
'Tis meet that Phyllis should discover
A wisdom in preferring me
And mittening every other lover.

So come, O Phyllis, last and best
Of loves with which this heart's been smitten—
Come, sing my jealous fears to rest,
And let your songs be those I've written.

Martha Clow.

I cannot eat my porridge,
I weary of my play;
No longer can I sleep at night,
No longer romp by day!
Though forty pounds was once my weight,
I'm shy of thirty now;
I pine, I wither and I fade
Through love of Martha Clow.

As she rolled by this morning
I heard her nurse girl say:
"She weighs just twenty-seven pounds
And she's one year old today."
I threw a kiss that nestled
In the curls upon her brow,
But she never turned to thank me—
That bouncing Martha Clow!

She ought to know I love her,
For I've told her that I do;
And I've brought her nuts and apples,
And sometimes candy, too!
I'd drag her in my little cart
If her mother would allow
That delicate attention
To her daughter, Martha Clow.

Oh, Martha! pretty Martha!
Will you always be so cold?
Will you always be as cruel
As you are at one-year-old?
Must your two-year-old admirer
Pine as hopelessly as now
For a fond reciprocation
Of his love for Martha Clow?

You smile on Bernard Rogers
And on little Harry Knott;
You play with them at peek-a-boo
All in the Waller Lot!
Wildly I gnash my new-cut teeth
And beat my throbbing brow,
When I behold the coquetry
Of heartless Martha Clow!

I cannot eat my porridge,
Nor for my play care I;
Upon the floor and porch and lawn
My toys neglected lie;
But on the air of Halsted street
I breathe this solemn vow:
"Though she be false, I will be true
To pretty Martha Clow!"

A REJUVENATOR.

(Mem: there's a baby in the house and a bottle of milk has been placed to cool.)

First Weary Wanderer: Well, Jimmy, an' how does it taste?

Second Weary Wanderer (in ecstacy): Don't speak ter me, Tom, it takes me back thirty years! (Falls asleep crooning "I would I wuz a boy agin."—*Truth.*

The Ebb and Flow of Gold.

New York Weekly.

Business Man (in the bosom of his family)—The crops of this country are abundant, those of Europe have failed, and the stream of gold which has been flowing across the Atlantic will soon be returning. You bet I'll get my share of it.

Daughter—That's just splendid. Then next year we can all go to Europe and spend it.

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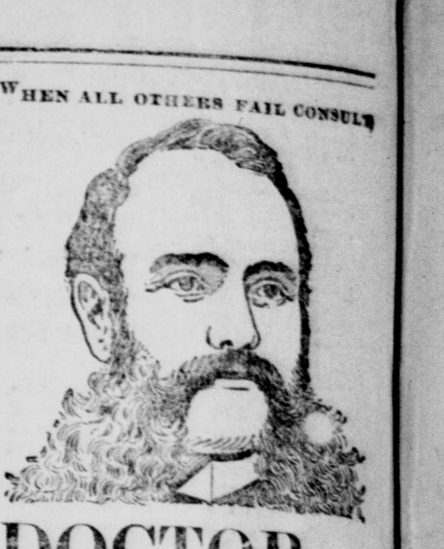

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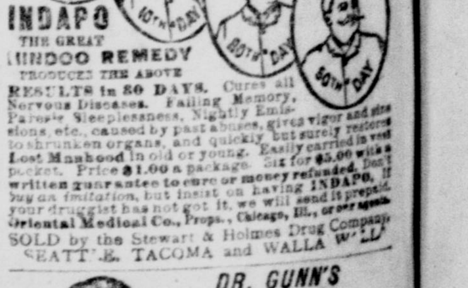

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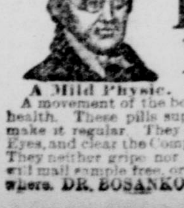

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