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"SOMETIMES."

SOMETIMES—not often—when the days are long.

And golden lie the ripening fields of grain,
Like cadences of some half-forgotten song.
There sweeps a memory across my brain,
I hear the landrail far among the grass,
The drowsy murmur in the scented times;
I watch the radiant butterflies that pass,
And I am sad and sick at heart sometimes—
Sometimes.

Sometimes, when royal Winter holds his sway,
When every cloud is swept from azure skies,
And frozen pool and lighted earth are gay
With laughing lips and yet more laughing eyes,
From far-off days an echo wanders by,
That makes a discord in the Christmas chimies.
A moment in the dance or talk I sigh,
And seem half lonely in the crowd some-
times—
Sometimes.

Not often, nor for long, O friend, my friend,
We were not lent our life that we might weep;
The flower-crowned May of earth hath soon an end;
Should our fair Spring a longer sojourn keep?
Comes all too soon the time of fading leaves,
Come on the cold short days, we must arise
And go our way, and garner home our sheaves,
Though some far faint regret may cloud our eyes
Sometimes.

Sometimes I see a light almost divine
In meeting eyes of two that now are one,
Impatient of the tears that rise to mine,
I turn away to seek some work undone.
There dawns a look upon some stranger face;
I think, "How like, and yet how far less fair!"
And look, and look again, and seek to trace
A moment more your fancied likeness there—
Sometimes.

O sad, sweet thoughts! O foolish, vain regrets!
As wise it were, what time June roses blow,
To weep because the first blue violet
We found in Spring has faded long ago.
O love, my love, if yet by song of bird,
By flower-scent, by some sad poet's rhymes,
My heart, that fain would be at peace, is stirred,
Am I to blame that still I sigh sometimes?
Sometimes?

And sometimes know a pang of jealous pain,
That, while I walk all lonely, other eyes
May happily smile to yours that smile again,
Beneath the sun and stars of Southern skies.
The past is past; but it is sin, if yet
I, who in calm content would seek to dwell,
Who will not grieve, yet cannot quite forget,
Still send a thought to you, and wish you well
Sometimes?
—Louisa F. Story, in Time.

HIERONYMUS POP AND THE BABY

"Now 'ONYMUS POP," said the mother of that gentle boy, "you jes take keer o' dis chile while I'm gone ter de hangin'. An' don't you leave dis house on no account; not if de skies fall an' de earth opens ter swallow yer."

Hieronymus grunted gloomily. He thought it a burning shame that he should not go to the hanging; but never had his mother been willing that he should have the least pleasure in life. It was either to tend the baby, or mix the cow's food, or to card wool, or cut wood, or to pick a chicken, or wash up the floor, or to draw water, or to sprinkle down the clothes—always something. When everything else failed, she had a way, that seemed to her son simply demonic, of setting him at the alphabet. To be sure, she did not know the letters herself, but her teaching was none the less vigorous.

"What's dat, 'Onymus?" she would say, pointing at random with her sauff brush to a letter.
"Q"—with a sniff.
"Is you sho'?"—in a hollow voice.
"Woe be unto young Pop if he faltered, and said it might be a Z. Mother Pop kept a rod ready, and used it as if she was born for nothing else. Naturally he soon learned to stick brazenly to his first guess. But unfortunately he could not remember from one day to another what he had said; and his mother learned, after a time, to distinguish the forms of the letters, and to know that a curly letter called S on Tuesday could not possibly be a square-shaped E on Thursday. Her faith once shattered, 'Onymus had to suffer in the usual way.
The lad had been taught at spasmodic intervals by his sister Savannah—commonly called Sissy—who went to school, put on airs, and was always clean. Therefore Hieronymus hated her.

Mother Pop herself was a little in awe of her accomplished daughter, and would ask her no questions, even when most in doubt as to which was which of the letters G and C.

"A pretty thing!" she would mutter to herself, "if I must be a-learnin' things from my own chile, dat wuz de mos' colicky baby I ever had, an' eos' me unheerd-of miseries in de time of her teethin'."

It seemed to Hieronymus that the climax of his impositions had come, when he was forced to stay at home and mind the baby, while his mother and the rest of them trotted off, gay as larks, to see a man hanged.

It was a hot afternoon, and the unwilling nurse suffered. The baby wouldn't go to sleep. He put it on the bed—a feather-bed—and why it didn't drop off to sleep, as a proper baby should, was more than the tired soul of Hieronymus could tell. He did everything to soothe Tiddlekins. (The infant had not been named as yet, and by way of affection they addressed it as Tiddlekins.) He even went so far as to wave the flies away from it with a mulberry branch for the space of five or ten minutes. But as it still fretted and tossed, he let it severely alone, and the flies settled on the little black thing as if it had been a licorice stick.

After awhile Tiddlekins grew aggressive, and began to yell. Hieronymus, who had almost found consolation in the contemplation of a bloody picture pasted on the wall, cut from the weekly paper of a wicked city, was deprived even of this solace. He picked up "de miserbul little screech-owl," as he called it in his wrath. He trotted it. He sang to it the soothing ditty of—
"Tain't never gwine to rain no mo';
Sun shines down on rich and po'."

But all was vain. Finally, in despair, he undressed Tiddlekins. He had heard his mother say, "Of'en and of'en when a chile is a-screamin' its breff away, 'tain't nothin' ails it 'cep'n pins."

But there were no pins. Plenty of strings and hard knots; but not a pin to account for the antics of the unhappy Tiddlekins.

How it *did* scream! It lay on the stiffly-braced knees of Hieronymus, and puckered up its face so tightly that it looked as if it had come fresh from a wrinkle mold. There were no tears, but sharp regular yells, and rollings of its head, and a distracting monotony in its performances.

"Dis here chile looks 's if it's got de measles," muttered Hi, gazing on the squirming atom with calm eyes of despair. Then, running his fingers over the neck and breast of the small Tiddlekins, he cried, with the air of one who makes a discovery, "It's got de heat! Dat's what ails Tiddlekins!"

There was really a little breaking out on the child's body that might account for his restlessness and squalls. And it was such a hot day! Perspiration streamed down Hi's back, while his head was dry. There was not a quiver in the tree leaves, and the silver-poplars showed only their leaden side. The sunflowers were dropping their big heads; the flies seemed to stick to the window-panes, and were too languid to crawl.

Hieronymus had in him the materials of which philosophers are made. He said to himself, "Tain't nothin' but heat dat's de matter wid dis baby; so of cose he ought ter be cooled off."

But how to cool him off—that was the great question. Hi knitted his dark brows and thought intently.
It happened that the chiefest treasure of the Pop estate was a deep old well that in the hottest days yielded water as refreshing as iced champagne. The neighbors all made a convenience of the Pop well. And half way down its long cool hollow hung, pretty much all the time, milk cans, butter pats, fresh meats—all things that needed to be kept cool in summer days.

He looked at the hot, squirming, wretched, black baby on his lap; then he looked at the well; and, simple, straightforward lad that he was, he put this and that together.

"If I was ter hang Tiddlekins down de well," he reflected, "'twouldn't be mo' dan three jumps of a flea befo' he's as cool as Christmas."

With this quick-witted youth to think was to act. Before many minutes he had stuffed poor little Tiddlekins into the well bucket, though it must be mentioned to his credit that he tied the baby securely in with his own suspenders.

Warmed up with his exertions, content in this god riddance of such bad rubbish as Tiddlekins, Hieronymus reposed himself on the feather bed, and dropped off into a sweet slumber. From this he was aroused by the voice of a small boy.

"Hello, Hi! I say, Hi Pop! whar is yer?"
"Here I is!" cried Hi, starting up. "What you want?"

Little Jim Rogers stood in the doorway.

"Towzer's dog," he said, in great excitement, "and daddy's bull pup is gwine ter have a fight dis evenin'. Come on quick, if yer wants ter see de fun."

Up jumped Hi, and the two boys were off like a flash. *Not one thought to Tiddlekins in the well bucket.*

In due time the Pop family got home, and Mother Pop, fanning herself, was indulging in the moral reflections suitable to the occasion, when she checked herself suddenly, exclaiming, "But, land o' Jerusalem! whar's 'Onymus an' de baby?"

"I witnessed Hieronymus," said the elegant Savannah, "as I wandered from school. He was with a multitude of boys, who cheered, without a sign of disapperation, two canine beasts that tore each other in deadly feud."

"Yer don't mean ter say, Sissy, dat 'Onymus Pop is gone ter a dog-fight?"
"Such are my meaning," said Sissy, with dignity.

"Den whar's de baby?"
For answer, a long low wail smote upon their ears, as Savannah would have said.

"Fan me!" cried Mother Pop. "Dat's Tiddlekins' voice."
"Never min' 'bout fannin' mammy," cried Weekly, Savannah's twin, a youth of fifteen, who could read, and was much addicted to gory tales of thunder and blood; "let's fin' de baby. P'raps he's been murdered by dat ruffian Hi, an' dat's his ghos' dat we hears a-callin'."

A search was instituted—under the bed, in the bed, in the wash-tub and the soup-kettle; behind the wood-pile, and in the pea vines; up the chimney, and in the ash-hopper; but all in vain. No Tiddlekins appeared, though still they heard him cry.
"Shade of Ole Hickory!" cried the father Pop, "whar, whar is dat chile?" Then, with a sudden lighting of the eye, "Unchain de dog," said he; "he'll smell him out."

There was a superannuated blood-hound pertaining to the Pop menage that they kept tied up all day under a delusion that he was fierce. They unchained this wild animal, and with many kicks endeavored to goad his nostrils to their duty.
It happened that a piece of fresh pork hung in the well, and Lord Percy—so was the dog called—was hungry. So he hurried with vivacity toward the fresh pork.

"De well!" shrieked Mother Pop, tumbling down all in a heap, and looking somehow like Turner's "Slave-Ship," as one stumpy leg protruded from the wreck of red flannel and ruffled petticoats.

"What shall we do?" said Sissy, with a helpless squeak.

"Why, git him out," said Mr. Pop, who was the practical one of the family. He began to draw up the well bucket, aided by Weekly, who whispered, darkly, "Dar'll be anudder hangin' in town befo' long, and Hi won't miss dat hangin'."

Soon appeared a little woolly head, then half a black body, the rest of him being securely wedged in the well bucket. He looked like a jack-in-the-box. But he was cool, Tiddlekins was, no doubt of that.

Mother Pop revived at sight of her offspring, still living, and feebly sucking his thumb.

"Ef we had a whisky bath ter put him in!" she cried.

Into the house flew Father Pop, seized the quart cup, and was over to the white house on the hill in the wink of a cat's eye.

"He stammered forth his piteous tale," said Savannah, telling the story the next day to her school-mates; "and Judge Chambers himself filled his cup with the best of Bourbon, and Miss Clara came over to see us resuscitate the infant."

Mother Pop had Tiddlekins wrapped in hot flannel when he got back; and with a never-to-be-sufficiently admired economy Mr. Pop moistened a rag with "the best of Bourbon," and said

to his wife, "Jes rub him awhile, Cynthia; an' see if dat won't bring him roun'."

As she rubbed, he absent-mindedly raised the quart cup to his lips, and with three deep and grateful gulps the whisky bath went to refresh the inner man of Tiddlekins' papa.

Then who so valorous and so affectionate as he? Dire were his threats against Hieronymus, deep his lamentations over his child.

"My po' little lammie!" he sobbed. "Work away, Cynthia. Dat chile mus' be saved, even if I should have ter go over ter de Judge's fur anudder quart o' whisky. Nuthin' shall be spared to save that precious kid o' my old age."

Miss Clara did not encourage his self-sacrificing proposal; but for all that, it was not long before Tiddlekins grew warm and lively, and winked at his father—so that good old man declared—as he lay on his back, placidly sucking a pig's tail. Savannah had roasted it in the ashes, and it had been cut from the piece of pork that had shared the well with Tiddlekins. The pork belonged to a neighbor, by-the-way; but at such a time the Pop family felt that they might dispense with the vain and useless ceremony of asking for it.

The excitement was over, the baby asleep, Miss Clara gone, and the sun well on its way to China, when a small figure was seen hovering diffidently about the gate. It had a limp air of dejection, and seemed to feel some delicacy about coming further.

"The miscreant is got back," remarked Savannah.

"Hieronymus," calls Mrs. Pop, "you may thank yo' heavenly stars dat you ain't a murderer dis summer day—"

"A-watin' ter be hung nex' wild-grape-time," finished Weekly, pleasantly.

Mr. Pop said nothing. But he reached down from the mantel-shelf a long thin something, shaped like a snake, and quivered it in the air.

Then he walked out to Hi, and taking him by the left ear, led him to the woodpile.

And here— But I draw a veil—
Harper's Magazine for June.

John Bright and American Poets.

THE purity of John Bright's English has often been a surprise to critical hearers, who knew that he had enjoyed in early life but limited advantages of education. Even Mr. Gladstone, with his University training and the literary pursuits of a long life, has not the command of such a pure and sinewy English style as that which marks the speeches of the Lancashire manufacturer, who never went to college or wrote a book. In an interview with an American friend recently, Mr. Bright referred to a habit which explains the origin of his good English style. He has always read, carefully, the best authors, and especially the poets. For many years he has read a poem every night before retiring. He added a remark complimentary to our American poets. Of late years, he said, his evening readings have been confined chiefly to American poets, among whom Longfellow, Bryant, Whittier and Lowell were foremost. English poets are too obscure and involved to be enjoyed, or to serve as models. Poetry, he thought, like all speech, should be intelligible, and leave no reader in doubt of its meaning. In this respect Americans are much superior to their English rivals.—*Youth's Companion.*

In the backwoods of Presque Isle County, Wisconsin, is a town, that has just elected its first Justice of the Peace. Like the rest of the residents, he is a rough lumberman. The first case brought before him was that of an assault committed by a notorious brawler. The Justice had no difficulty in pronouncing him guilty, but how to punish him was a harder question, for he had no money with which to pay a fine, and there was no jail in which to imprison him. After mature thought the magistrate said: "The complainant's got to pay me two dollars costs. I sentence the prisoner to be whipped, and, as a peace officer I'm going to do the punishing myself." Then he rolled up his sleeves and thrashed the culprit.

A CONTEMPORARY prints a poem called "Gather Ripe Fruits, O Death." And that would be best. It is so now that the small boy gathers the fruits before they are ripe, and Oh Death gathers the small boy."