

AWHILE IN THE MOUNTAINS

IKE WILLIAMS.

Old Ike Williams, dead and gone,
Died with his boots and britches on;
Turribul, turribul life he led,
And a quart of buckshot laid him dead.

Shot in the eye when very young,
Front teeth out and one leg sprung;
Said he, "One eye fer a good gun-sight
Is bettr'n two in a rifle fight."

Wasn't much in the gospel line,
Preachers worked on him to jine;
But seems when he got in the gospel mood
Thar'd come a break in the county feud.

Marksman? w'y, sir, many a time
I've seen him plug a silver dime
At fifty steps, an' so they say
He plugged the Bickers boys that way.

An' he made a dozen bite the dust
Till the copper-line of his stummick bust;
An' he tuck to bed, an' the doctor cone,e,
An' he give him booze till he rallied some.

An' they set him out by the door awhile—
Ed Bickers crawled to the big wood pile
An' he shot old Ike in the diaphragm,
An' all Ike said was, "Whoopee! dam!"

An' they ask Ed why he shot old Ike,
As he couldn't live but a day or like;
An' all Ed says, as he give a yawn,
"He died with his boots an' britches on."

LOST ARGUMENT.

The Parson stood a-talking
With old Peyton at the fence,
A-seeking to imbue him
With a Christian penitence,
And his words were full of wisdom
Such as suited simple parts.
'Twas the true and simple story
That is food for simple hearts;
And he said: "Look here, Sam Peyton,
It is time for you to make
A turn for sweet salvation
For your soul and family's sake.
Get your heart upon the Bible,
Wash your sins in Christian grace."
Peyton wriggled and said: "Dag me
'F I got time to wash my face."

"Look here, Peyton," said the Parson,
"Don't you want to own a chair
In the parlor of the mansion
Of the Blessed Over There,
Where the angels all are singing—
Don't you want to own a nook
In that realm of peace and plenty
That we read of in The Book?"
Sam Peyton slowly whimpered out:
"I'll tell you, Parson Bill,
The only thing I want to own's
A shotgun an' a still."

"But, Peyton," said the Parson,
"Did you ever stop to think
That some days of your lifetime
You are pressing on the brink?
Suppose that rock above your house
Some night would break its holt;
To think—down in perdition
You'd be shifter by the jolt!"
But Peyton whittled on the rail
And said: "You needn't fret,
I've seen that rock hang fifty years
An' 'taint fell yet."

"Ah, Peyton," said the Parson,
"I must leave you to your fate:
Some day you might come calling,
But your call may come too late.
The spirit may get in your heart
And bring you to the fold
And warm up worldly feelings
That are laying now so cold;
I fear the Lord will send his wrath
Some day to make you hear."
Old Peyton turned away and said,
"It's tuther one I fear."

SUMMER UP THE HOLLOW.

Oh, it's summer up the hollow,
An' a smile is on the skies,
An' a slumber song is stealin' on the breeze,
An' it's ev-ry bird a lendin'
Tune into the paradise
Of clingin' vine an' shady forest trees.

When it's summer up the hollow
Then it's summer in the heart,
An' it lingers in the young an' in the old;
An' the summers up the hollow
Kinder stand themselves apart
Like a paintin' in a frame of purest gold.

Ever hear the red birds singin'
On a rosy summer morn,
An' the blue jay callin' back across the hill?
An' it's sweet to hear at twilight
'Round the place where you were born
The serenadin' of the whippoorwill.

Ever get away at dawnin'
Through the diamond-tinted dew,
Hang your basket on a lim' above the stream,
Drop your line into the water
Where the bass are waitin' you?
It's the crownin' joy of summer's happy dream.

Oh, it's summer up the hollow,
An' the wild flowers are in bloom,
An' the mornin' glory's wavin' full an' fair
'Mid a rift of noddin' roses,
An' it leads me to presume
That old nature lends to these her dearest care.

Oh, le's wander up the hollow
For we'll find the warmest cheer,
An' we'll stop along the way at Daniel's spring;
There we'll find the gourd a-hangin'
O'er the water cool and clear,
An' we'll tarry there to hear the cat bird sing.

An' we'll hunt up old McGregor,
An' we'll mix him up a dram
Then he's boun' to make you know his table fare,
An' he'll give us fryin' chickens
An' some good old country ham—
Le's be goin', for I long to be up there.

THE BLUE DUCK.

Cap Jo Grimes he owned the boat,
Said she was the best afloat
Of her kind—she run between
Hockertown and Ballersgreen.

Roun' trip run was twenty mile—
Could she run it? I should smile.
She could run it in a day
If the wind blowed roun' her way.

Three, the crew that manned the boat
'Less you'd count the billygoat.
Only sober one at times
In the crew of Captain Grimes.

Sternwheel—paddles painted green—
Grimes once run a thrash machine;
Took the biler jest for luck,
Put it on the old Blue Duck.

Hockertown was prohibish,
Business mostly run to fish;
Grimes was busy most the year
Freightin' fish and bottled beer.

Comin' up the stream one day
Yankee pine stood in his way;
Two young yaps that rowed the skiff
Thought he'd pass 'em in a jiff.

But they shot that skiff up stream;
Grimes was firin' up fer steam.
"That ere skiff I've got to pass
Or this trip will be my las'."

Fellers in the Yankee pine
Hollered back: "Yer doin' fine;
Heat her up an' stoke her down—
Bet we'll beat you into town!"

Grimes was burnin' ev'ry kind
Scraps uv fuel he could find;
Burned his bench an' hick'ry cheer,
Can uv tar was settin' near.

Picked it up an' heaved it in,
Shorely het her biler then.
Smell was awful on that boat,
Smell of tar an' billygoat.

Somethin' happened—I don't know—
Seemed the rivets all let go
On the biler, then a sound
That was heard for miles around.

Grimes was swimmin' for the shore,
Ragged shirt was all he wore;
Where his pants an' boots was blowed
To this day he's never knowed.

An' he kinder rubbed his head,
Settin' on the shore, an' said:
"Taint so hard to lose the boat
As it was that billygoat."

"An'," says he, "thar haint a doubt
As to that my winnin' out;
We'd a reached the waufboat fust
'F that dam biler hadn't bust!

TRADIN' UP THE HOLLOW.

Oh, they're tradin' up the holler,
Jinkins Hite has come across
From his rome in Martin county up at Ep;
An' Jinkins is a trader—
He can jedge a swappin hoss
Jest the minnit that he sees him take a step.

Swappin' hosses is a business
Where you've got to have some brains,
An' a ready heft of lyin' for the same.
An' it takes a heap of patience
An' a lot of keerful pains
For to git a queer hoss ready for the game.

An' Jinkins come a prancin'
Up the holler on his mare;
An' she had the finest tail an' curly mane,
An' he racked her an' he paced her
An' he told us ev'rywhere:
"You will never see the likes of her agane."

Julus Fothergill was itchin'
For to hit him for a swap,
For that mare with flowin' tail had caught his eye;
Julus had a ches'nut sorrel
With a sorter runnin' hop,
An' he kicked at ev'rything as come a-nigh.

An' Jinkins, kinder laughin',
Said he wasn't hard to suit;
An' Julus says: "I'm waitin' for your say."
An' Jinkins says: "I'm thinkin'
That it's twenty-five to boot."
An' Jinkins got the cash and rode away.

'Twas Julus kinder laughin',
As he took the nobby mare,
Sayin', "Who'd a thought old Jinkins was so tame."
But Jinkins crossed the river,
An' he never had a care,
For Jinkins knowed the playin' of the game.

For that mare he'd swapped to Julius
Was about as shy a tail
As any hoss could be, the reason which
Old Jenkins went to plannin',
An' I never see him fail,
An' he just supplied the filly with a switch.

Got the hosstail from a blacksmith,
One as used for brushin' flies,
An' he bound it 'round the stump with binder twine;
An' he fluffed the hair aroun' it
Till the stump was in disguise,
An' you never saw a counterfeit so fine.

At the peep o' day next mornin'
Julus went into the stall,
An' he took his curry comb an' waded in;
But the tail slipped through his fingers,
An' 'twas then he see it fall,
An' the stump was standin' like a couplin' pin.

An' his grin was sorted sickly
As he stood an' scratched his head;
An' he muttered out as though he had a pain:
"Well, Jenkins wasn't lyin' none
Yistiddy when he said,
'The like of her you'll never see again.'"

BLOSS FELTON.

Ole Bloss Felton, perlice judge,
Corncob pipe an' full er budge;
Wad uv long green in his jaw,
Short uv funds an' short uv law.

Ole Bloss Felton tried to look
Wise on law, an' sarched the book,
All the law he ever found
Wus that jes' sorter floatin' 'round.

Never knowed how ole Bloss won—
Jes' a joke he come to run.
Politics makes many a pass
Uv luck to heist the tin-horn class.

Yanker a Mormon preached once,
Doin' prayin' an' singin' stunts
On the streets; they opened court,
Bloss wuz hittin' gin an' port.

An', says he: "Hit seems to me
As this Mormon sancti-tee
Sorter bunches as beehives—
Honey, hell an' howlin' wives."

An' that Mormon give a sigh,
Kinder shet his soulful eye;
Pulled a gun, a forty-five,
Looked at Bloss an' let her drive.

Sech a yell an' sech a crash!
Bloss went through the winder-sash.
"Hold him, Peters! Hold him, Cook!"
He's shot clean through the Statue book!"

Ole Bloss Felton's keepin' store,
Says, "Fer me the bench no more.
Strangest thing I ever saw
How that Mormon queered the law!"

THERE'S WEEPIN' UP THE HOLLER.

Oh, there's weepin' up the holler,
An' the joy has gone away,
An' a heavy sorrow hangs above 'em all;
Harvey Cobb, down at the ferry,
Killed his friend the other day—
Killed the old friend of his boyhood, Benjie Hall.

They were gamblin' at the ferry,
An' the witness as was there
Says they both had been a-drinkin' party hard,
An' Benjie says to Harvey:
"Harv, you aint a totin' fair,
For I see you when you rech an' stole that car!."

An' Harvey, hot with licker,
Drewed an ugly lookin' knife,
An' he stabbed him quick as lightnin' in the side.
But the deed it made him sober
When he sees that Benjie's life
Was a-goin', an' he wrung his hands an' cried.

An' he give up to the sheriff,
An' he never tried to run,
An' he never even ask to git him bail;
Jest a-moanin' to his mammy
'Bout the awful deed he done,
An' his mammy prayin' with him in the jail.

Ev'ry heart is full of sorrow,
For the hearse is at the door,
An' a solemn sort of stillness fills the air.
All the birds have left the branches
Of the oak and sycamore
An' the gloom of death is heavy everywhere.

An' there's Benjie's little children,
As will foller him no more,
Nor will feel him clasp each stubby little hand
As he leads them down the holler,
Headin' for the country store—
It's a sorrow that they hardly understand.

Oh, there's weepin' up the holler,
For they're lettin' Benjie down
In the grave they've been diggin' on the hill;
An' poor Harvey settin' sobbin'
In the dark jail up in town.
Oh, I tell you, takin' life's a bitter pill.

LAUGHIN' UP THE HOLLER.

Oh, there's laughin' up the holler,
An' they got a right to laugh;
But they wasn't laughin' jest a week ago.
For some fellers see a panther,
An' he carried off a calf;
Leastwise, they give their word that it was so.

Old Uncle Lem McGregor
See the thing himself and said
That he's fasten' up his chickens when it come;
An' its eyeballs was a-blazin'
As it shuck its mangy head,
An' the growl it give had turned him cold an' num.

Tim Withers told the nabers
That he drove in kinder late
After goin' to the meetin' up in town;
An' the thing slipped up behind him
As he stopped to lift the gate,
An' 'twas bigger then a colt an' yaller-brown.

An' that kettle-headed nigger
Workin' for old Levi Kropp
Wouldn't even venture out in broad daylight.
If he'd hear a noise behind him
You would see his jawbone drop,
An' he slep' behind the kitchen stove at night.

One day he kind fergot it,
An' he's settin' on the fence,
Jest a-hummin' in a lazy sort of way;
An' a rooster crowed behind him
An' they haven't seen him sence,
An' he never even come to git his pay.

An' they had the sheriff up there,
An' they had a reg'ler guard
A-watchin' for the critter day an' night,
But a little shaver caught it,
Right down in his mammy's yard,
You'd a-split yourself a-laughin' at the sight.

'Twas a yaller dog—a mastiff—
That had wandered from a show,
An' the biggest of his kind I ever saw.
But his eyes was full of kindness
As he laid a moanin' low,
While that shaver picked a thorn out of his paw.

Oh, they're laughin' up the holler,
An' that little bustin' boy
Wouldn't take a thousand dollars for his pet;
An' they roam around together
In a never-endin' joy,
But McGregor says, "I'll keep my winders shet!"

YARROW.

Yarrow treed a coon on Frozen,
Clum the ash an' got his nose in
Thro' the crack where he wuz layin',
Growlin', whinin' like he's sayin'
"Taint no fair to come a-bruizin'
'Round a feller when he's snoozin'."

Dogs down on the ground wuz yelpin',
Thinkin' as their fuss wuz helpin'
Fer to git that coon a-shakin'
As they seen old Yarrow makin'
Up a blaze o' bark to drap in
Whar the coon had been a-nappin'.

In the crack old Yarrow helt it,
An' that coon he shorely smelt it,
An' he shuck hisself an' started—
Wuz he slow or chicken-hearted?
Nary time: He jumped old Yarrow—
Froze his blood clean to the marrow.

Yarrow drapped his fire an' hollered,
Hit the ground an' there they wallered;
Dogs had tucked their tails an' hustled,
Still the coon an' Yarrow tusseled.
Never wuz a coon that clawed so.
Never wuz a man wuz awed so.

Yarrow fin'ly got his bearin',
Shuck that coon an' come a-tearin'
Through the brush, and sech a-moanin',
Hit the cabin door a-groanin',
All the dogs went bustin' under,
Yelpin' like a streak of thunder.

An' his wife she set a-nussin'
His clawed legs, an' him a-cussin';
An' he see her kinder smilin',
An' that set his blood to bilin'.
"Nothin' here I see to smile at;
'Twant no coon; it wuz a wile-cat."

HONING FOR HOECAKE.

Oh, it's yearning, alas, for the olden scenes
And the paths that lead to the leafy wood,
And the wild flowers bursting in cool ravines,
Where the redbird trilling an interlude
'Mid the locust bloom of a paradise
Under the ocean blue of skies.

Oh, it's yearning, alas, to stand once more
Where the vine clings over the window-sill;
And gazing again from the farmhouse door
To the tranquil stream, where the watermill
Is murm'ring its song as it grinds the corn
That grows in the valley where you were born.

Oh, it's yearning, alas, and I'm nearly dead
For a hoeecake, dodger or crisp corn pone;
For I can't hold out on the baker's bread
And the shredded wheat; but I sit and hone
For a good big sack of fresh cornmeal
And a hoeecake big as a wagon wheel.

And just a touch of some bacon grease
Around the griddle to tone it down;
Then flay it over—this luscious piece,
Till just the tinge of a juicy brown—
I can taste the butter so sweet and cool
They're bringing up from the springhouse pool.

I'm tired of the junk that you get in cans,
And my jawbone aches for a good hog jowl;
Oh, give me the music of frying pans
On a country stove, and, oh, bless my soul,
I would eat in the kitchen or anywhere
If they'd give me a fill of the cornbread fare.

I want to get back where the roses blow
O'er the dear old yard, and I want to stand
Enraptured again where the lilies grow,
With a slab of that cornbread in my hand;
Just to eat and to sweetly roam
In a cornbread dream—I'm going home.