

MAUDE MILLER ESTES,
LOUISVILLE, KY.



AUTHORESS
"The Boyhood of Kentucky's Poet."



LOVE POEMS

AND

The Boyhood of
Kentucky's Poet

BEING

The Life-Story

OF

WILLIAM LEE POPHAM



BY

MAUDE MILLER ESTES

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

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DEDICATION

TO EVERY OPTIMIST WHO BELIEVES
IN GIVING FLOWERS OF PRAISE TO
THE LIVING INSTEAD OF PLACING A
WREATH UPON THE GRAVE OF THE
DEAD

THIS VOLUME IS
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY
THE AUTHORESS

Comfort.

There is never a cry in all the world
 But Jesus hears the weeping;
There is never a child of woman's birth
 But the care of God is keeping;
There is never a word in secret prayer
 But brings our blessings nearer;
There is never a sorrow of human life
 But makes high heaven dearer.

There is never a song of the nightingale
 But the joys of life it's voicing;
There is never a spoken word of love
 But sets the heart rejoicing;
There is never a cloud across the sky
 But somewhere the sun is shining;
And let us think the clouds of life
 Will leave a silver lining.

—Popham.

PREFACE.

In this volume it is the writer's desire to present in a "nut-shell" a few of hundreds of Love Poems from the pen of William Lee Popham, together with their author's biography.

I do not attempt to write a full biography of my hero—but give that which I think the world should know of his sweet boyhood and inspired manhood.

His simple, loving, consecrated thoughts in verse and prose have inspired me to this attempt.

It is with the poet's full consent that I write his biographical sketch, together with his poems used exclusively herein.

No man ever gave to the world sweeter thoughts of higher endeavor than William Lee Popham, of whom I write. The poet is yet unborn who can excel him in painting mind-pictures in natural simplicity, beauty and clearness of thought.

Herein is presented the poet's first poem, entitled: "The Babbling Brook," in which it is plain that love inspired his pen. In this poem the reader can see the boy-poet as he sat on that "moss-covered rock" and wrote verse to his little sweetheart. One can see the love-light in his eyes when he "mailed" the poem, together with a rose or bunch of sweet violets in the "hollow stump" by the brook. Let your fancy

picture the "golden-haired" lassie when she went to the "hollow stump post office" and received the flowers and verse placed there by her poet-lover. The reader will also, find herein, a poem written in the poet's manhood—written of the memories of this same little girl. In this poem, entitled, "My First Sweetheart," is enough of sweetness to lure the bees from every blooming flower. May all who read this brief biographical sketch of the boyhood of Kentucky's poet and his love poems herewith, feel the same inspiration of which this volume is born.

Very truly yours,

MAUDE MILLER ESTES.

EVANGELIST, AUTHOR, LECTURER AND POET.



WILLIAM LEE POPHAM.

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THE VALLEY OF LOVE
SHE DARED TO WIN
LOVE'S RAINBOW DREAM
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The Boyhood of Kentucky's Poet

William Lee Popham, Kentucky's "world poet," was born April 14, 1885, in Hardin Co., Kentucky. After a common school education at the "log schoolhouse" amid the fields near his birthplace, he entered East Lynn College in his early "teens." After an unfinished college career, he returned to his country home full of ambition to see the world, and persuaded his parents to move to Louisville, Ky.

In his early teens, the poet, with his parents, one brother and two sisters, moved to Kentucky's metropolis, where the poet continued to study under private teachers and self-help.

At age seventeen he began his American lecture tour and at once won titles as "The boy orator," and "The youngest lecturer in the world."

He attracted large crowds in cities and hamlets; and wrote his first book at age eighteen.

His first book voiced his noble sentiments and high endeavor for humanity's good; but in boyhood style and simple manner.

He is now the author of eight more books and is still writing new ones.

Below the hill upon which nestled the poet's childhood home, flowed a cool, babbling spring which in its winding revel, sang its way thru the vale of wild flowers and green pasture.

It was by the shady banks of this brook where the poet often wandered when but a child; and those who knew not his heart's impulse and his golden future thought him an idle wanderer; but be it far from idleness.

It was amid such environments where his poems of to-day were born in his soul of nature—and therein had been sleeping along the trail of the kindly years. By this clear brook there was a large moss-covered rock upon which the "boy poet" sat and wrote love-poems to his "girl-sweetheart;" and nearby was a hollow stump which was his post office, where he "mailed" many a bunch of violets with poetic presentation inscribed upon the paper that wrapped their tender stems. In this valley were wild roses, forget-me-nots, daisies, violets, ferns and cool green vines that hugged the bosom of the trees and giant rocks. Toward the West was a steep hillside bedecked with white oaks, maples, and sugar trees—with a growth of green amid the queerly shaped rocks. Toward the East spread a gentle, sloping hill of less steepness, where white oaks were numerous; and beneath their stately shade, was a green carpet of bluegrass spotted with wild roses and dogwood saplings. Northward, far across the valley, stood an orchard of apple, peach, pear, and plum trees which covered about one hundred acres of lawn and clover.

In the cornfield, while the tired horse rested in the shade, the "plowboy poet" would sit and write verse; and each summer added largely to his boyhood writing.

It was often the young poet's duty to "shepherd the sheep" in the shady pasture—and this quiet environment gave opportunity for expression of thought. He delighted to see the lambs play—and it was the inspiration from their glee that caused their shepherd to write "The Frolicing Innocent Lambs." It is said by some that the boy-poet's association with the sheep and his care for the helpless lambs was largely influential in establishing his boyhood gentleness; for a shepherd's life is gentle and his flocks are the most harmless of stock. Many were the poems by the shepherd boy; but few were the persons who heard or read them—for it was the young author's quiet pleasure to write—secluding his manuscripts from the public.

No record is had of the number of poems written during the poet's boyhood; but few are left of his early poems, many having been destroyed by their author as he would write better ones from time to time.

And real poets seldom are able to rewrite lost verse; for poetic thought is a flash of inspiration—the same thoughts, perhaps, never to be written by the same author again.

Lost poems like each yesterday lost in the past, can not be recalled.

A lost poem is like a fresh flower thrown upon the cold bosom of the stream; it is seldom rescued—and if at all, the fragrance is lost—for 'tis only a withered flower.

The world is yet to see the full fruit of our hero's manhood; for already the bud of boyhood and the blossom of young manhood have given to the world a small library within itself; and after a healthy bud and a full blossom comes mature fruit.

In springtime after his "work hours," the boy-poet would stroll in his father's massive orchard where the tree tops were full of white and colored blossoms—where the air was fragrant amid Nature's paradise. He delighted to find the nests of birds and watch the mated lives; but never would he disturb their peace. Their song filled his young heart and his pen flowed as freely as their song.

In winter when the earth lay beneath a coverlid of snow, he would throw out crumbs of bread to the hungry birds—and they soon learned that he meant not to harm but help them. The horses and dogs and cows on the farm were "pets" when near the young poet; for each knew his gentleness.

The cottage in which our hero was born was a plain four-room wood structure, and in the front yard amid other trees, were two tall cedars. Each year the jays and other birds made their nests near the cottage door, over which clung green vines that blossomed in season.

While our hero was much alone in his childhood, he never failed to receive "a mother's good-night kiss" while she knelt

by an old-fashioned trundle-bed where the boy dreamed and slept away the still nights.

It seem to have been the providence of a kind God that his boyhood was spent away from the wicked city and the noisy streets.

In the woodland dells, the open fields and amid the God-built hills, were his youthful highways; and nature and heaven alone taught him how to use his pen. God is always in the training of every benefactor of the human race. It is not strange that God raised a "world-poet" from "blackberry fields," for to get His twelve diciples He went along the sea-shore and gathered humble fishermen—the lowly of earth.

Sometimes from the "smallest" God chooses the "greatest," but never does the all-wise Creator go among the "haughty proud" for useful men to establish His kingdom upon earth.

On the farm the young poet "fought in war with bees and flies" and was fond of romps amid the sweet clover blossoms.

He loved children, but seldom stayed where they were except to care for his younger brother or sister while his mother busied herself in domestic duty.

The only "chum" of the boy-poet was his brother who is now one of the leading lawyers at the Louisville bar.

It befell the "brothers" to feed the stock, carry the water, cut the "stove wood" and other things with which only "country boys" are familiar. The only "fights" the boy-poet had were "in defense" of his younger brother, and the boy who

chose to "over-ride" him had the poet to "whip" then and there.

Like other children, many were the times when the youthful brothers sought the orchard and spent the summer hours in picking wild strawberries and chasing young rabbits. Then "the green apple dinner" was a "favorite banquet" spread upon God's table-cloth of green grass beneath an apple tree.

The poet's father was a fruit grower, farmer, nurseryman and country merchant, and had no poetic talent or unusual intellectual gift.

The poet's father was a school-teacher ere his business career.

The poet's mother while uneducated, was a gentle, kind and dutiful wife and mother. The poet has blue eyes, full of expression, love, and gentleness. He is a medium-size man, possesses a voice of melody—which at will becomes eloquent and commanding. He inherited his ability as an orator from his mother's people, but as far back as can be traced, heredity does not claim his poetic gift. This gift is born of heaven in his own soul. His expression of poetic sentiment is natural as a mother's love for her child—a rare gift from the holy God. He finds congenial company in solitude, for the bird's song, the wind's whisper and the brooklet's babble are music in response to his soul's longing. His sentiments of love, expressed in almost every page he writes, are sacred, tender and impressive. His writings have a distant similarity to the works of some of our ancient poets, yet possess an originality

wholly his own. His word-painting is hard to excel, and his thoughts on love are ever inspiring.

His unmarried manhood is happy as was his blissful boyhood, and his road is a path of sunbeams. Yet the poet has said, "Not for all of the world's silver and gold would I go thru life without a sweet woman to share my love and happiness."

He seems to never worry ; but lives to disperse his sunshine into sunless lives. His poems have not appeared in miscellaneous publications like some poems of old—a strict copyright being the reason. Tho' possessing an unselfish spirit, it has been his desire to only permit a limited circulation of many poems—always promising himself verses near perfection in the future issues. However, his works are accepted by one of the greatest publishing houses in New York City on liberal royalty.

Places and names of persons are unnamed in his poems.

He is the people's poet. To read his poems is to know his heart and feel his thrills.

Yet he says of himself: "No one knows me but God." Doubtless, in his heart there are unborn ideas and unspoken love ; yet his readers feel that they know him—even the thousands who have seen his face only in the print of his picture.

He cultivates the acquaintance of but few personal friends ; but his praises are sung by admiring friends wherever he is known. His personality and kindly feeling for humanity wins new friends wherever he goes ; for he is welcome as the May-time flowers. He delights to praise friends upon their merit ;

but is honest with all, and never flatters. He is so sympathetic with every human need that his verse finds a home in warm hearts; and those who know him best are unwilling to see him go. To know that his daily and hourly life is a practice of his sermons in verse, prose, and pulpit is to appreciate, admire and love him.

The tenderness in his verse often brings tears—but the very tears are sweet. His poems touch every phase of life, and to read them is to feel the heart throb and hear the bird sing, the brook babble, and lovers coo. The sloping hills and quiet valleys bordering the humble cottage of his birthplace, were the scenes of his ramble in boyhood. He sought the solitude of the woodland and spent a quiet boyhood close to nature. Unlike other boys of his age, he was tender, kind and affectionate to all. He would not rob a bird's nest, kill a frog or harm a garden rose.

It is said that once when he found some boys stoning birds, that he persuaded them to "harm not the defenseless birds that sing their lives away to make us happy," and speaking thusly, the poet tenderly lifted the wounded sparrow to his lips and with a tearful kiss, placed it upon a leafy bower and looking heavenward said: "Thou who notes the fallen sparrow, heal and protect this innocent bird." This was such a rebuke to the rough boys that they were never known to harm another innocent life. The poet is tender and loving as a good woman; and gentle like the Savior whom he often confesses, and whose saving grace he preaches to lost humanity. A

bleeding heart brings his flow of tears—and a sweet poem to console the sufferer. His lowest endeavor is to be pure and do good; and his life, words, verse, and literature are simple and sweet as childhood.

He knows human nature as he knows the alphabet; and every word from his pen is human.

He knows how to console, cheer, and inspire; and this he does with natural ease. No congenial person can be with him much without being better and sweeter spirited.

Tho' he is only about twenty-five years old he has written more and spoken more than some of our ancient poets had accomplished in a long lifetime.

His name will go down in fadeless ink upon history's pages as the "world-poet."

And such title shall be his, because sympathy makes the whole world kin, because human nature is the same the world over; and hence his poems shall be read internationally—in as much as our poet's verse is replete with these charms—so dear to the human heart.

His past achievement, be it ever so humble, is a promise of this prediction.

It is not expected that the stars of international fame shall presently adorn his crown, for how many of our now famous poets, who acquired such fame at age twenty-five?

The poems of some of the greatest poets in history were rejected and unrecognized at their first public appearance.

The writer of the now famous hymn entitled: "In the Sweet Bye and Bye," was refused a penny for his masterpiece—and after several failures, a friend gave him twenty dollars for the composition "just to help him along." Since, this hymn has brought its owner a royalty of thousands of dollars.

Millions yet unborn will sing the praises of Kentucky's

poet and catch the inspiration of his pen. He is truly humanity's friend and an expounder of God's holy love. The green blades of grass to him, are flowers; and the meanest bud that promises a blossom amid the thorns, does not to him, "blush unseen" or unappreciated. He is a staunch defender of the home; and "home happiness" is his earnest plea. The poet's grace and peace are born of the "Prince of Peace;" and his love for flowers is a living spark from the Man of Galilee who said in Matthew 6: 28: "Consider the lilies."

Above all he is an optimist; a living ray of sunshine, a kindling spark of inspiration to those who know him best. He is an advocate of innocent laughter, and says, "Laughter, careful diet, peace, health-thought and fresh air will cure nearly every human ill."

Whether preaching gospel sermons, lecturing, writing prose or poetry, he is happy, lighthearted and cheerful. This sketch is far less than a complete biography of this immortal poet-soul; for this space is too limited to tell his life-story.

And be it understood by the reader, that the writer's aim is to say only the "good things"—leaving unsaid, or for others to say—the "bad things" (and doubtless they be) in the life of our poet. Flowers and kind words of praise should be for the living—not the dead. History will honor his name after he is dead; let us do him honor while he lives.

My loftiest praises of our poet, do not "kiss the sky," nor do I aim to soar so high in the "blue fields above" as to pluck the stars to get diadems for his crown. Be my mission far from such. But the flowers I mean to display at his grave, will have blossomed along his pathway.

It is American custom to "forget" a man's "badness" at his death, and the "funeral-preacher" and newspapers say "loving words" of the deceased—and often the praise is the second cousin to a "white lie."

That our poet has many admirers of his verse, we cannot doubt; that there are sarcastic critics of his verse, there is no doubt. Yet be it said in truthfulness, that the former class outnumbers the latter.

Critics are numbered from the man who "does something," not from the man with "folded hands."

Jesus Christ, the only perfect man, met with opposition, even unto death. By many His works were scorned, rejected and branded as false. Even today in this Christian age, there are many who do not acknowledge Him as the world's Redeemer and the door to heaven.

Then if the Savior, the Son of God, failed to please "everybody," it would be worse than folly for the humble writer to expect all readers of our poet's praise, to agree with her opinion—or to say that his poems are "perfect."

But William Lee Popham's "imperfect poems" do possess a sweetness which many true hearts enjoy, and his boyhood years, close to Nature's heart, were not without their charms.

I do not desire to be understood as saying that either the boyhood or manhood of our poet is "ideal." Angels do not populate this earth, and indeed human vision is often dim. "Now we see through a glass darkly."

"To err is human; to forgive is divine" is an adage worth remembering.

Our poet is "guilty" of having "slipped" away from the school room with other boys, to the "swimming pool," and he "confesses" to having received "the peachtree tea" applied to his back for the "offense."

That these "baths" occurred too often there is no doubt; and that his "love for the water" and "hate for school" accounts for what he "does not know," we will not question.

By his boyhood playmates, I am told that "once upon a time" our poet's favorite passtime was in "sliding down the

bank" of a steep gully in his father's meadow. But from the story of the holes then in the seat of his cottonade trousers, I do not know whether to attribute the "holes" to his coming in contact with the "gully bank" or a "pine plank" in his father's hand.

In talking with one of our poet's school teachers who held the "log school-house sessions of knowledge," I find that "Willie" was not the best boy in the world. Many were the days when "Willie's conduct" necessitated the use of a "dog-wood limb;" and one day in vain did he put a "pie pan" in the seat of his trousers and a jeans coat beneath his shirt. As a penalty for folly such as "shooting chewed paper wads" and "placing bent pins with point upward, upon the seat," the country school teacher would make the guilty but "bashful" lad, sit in the lap of a "grown-up" girl.

But this "punishment" proved too pleasant to "Willie"—for wooing was the young poet's "besetting sin." So the "penalty" was changed. The poet still remembers the times (almost countless) when he had to "stand on one foot and face the black board" for writing "love verse" to a certain girl in "time of books."

Almost daily the boy-poet would bring a large ripe apple for his "girl schoolmate," and about as numerous were his verse presentations.

The teacher tried to keep an eye upon "note passing"—but one might as well try to keep the sunshine from an open field.

With no little effort, I have secured a copy of a verse written in the school room by the boy-poet to a little girl who is now a happy mother and a glad reader of our poet's pen.

The morning on which this poem was written, the poet had placed an apple (the coat of which being a color of red

and gold) behind his sweetheart's basket by the schoolhouse door.

She was a girl possessing red lips and golden hair—and the reader will note in the verse, the comparison of same to the apple colors. The sarcastic “nickname” of the teacher was “Boss” which some “offenders” gladly used.

The verse follows:

When at this note you look
Pretend to read your book;
For “Boss” can hear a kitten tread—
And see from the back of his head.
This note, be careful where you put,
For I tire of standing on a foot.
I love you more than I can spell
And better than my tongue can tell.
Behind your basket on the floor
You'll find an apple by the door;
And its coat of gold and red
Is like your lips and golden head.

The only “perfection” of the foregoing verse is the rhyme; and doubtless if our poet could rewrite the verse of “the long yesterday,” with his pen of today, he would say “golden hair” instead of “golden head”—besides other changes.

But if nothing more, the foregoing “boyhood verse” is amusing, and denotes natural poetic talent.

The verse of the foregoing comment, was written near as I can learn, in the eleventh year of its author.

The writer of these lines does not pose as a critic, but she ventures to state that the rhyme of Kentucky's poet is absolutely perfect, and nowhere in all his works can be found a near rhyme. This is not so in the works of some of our celebrated poets, for

from their pen we find near rhymes such as "home and come," "love and move," "heaven and given," and others.

Neither is a poet licensed to mispronounce a word to make a rhyme, such as "eternity with thee."

This is also found in the works of some of our celebrated ancient poets.

In this biographical sketch it is but fitting that I should quote the opinion of others in their praise of Kentucky's poet. Hundreds of newspapers from ocean to ocean have reviewed his poems, and it is a rare "exception to the rule" when comments have been given other than of praise to both his verse and platform lectures. Among hundreds of press compliments, space only permits the following:

KENTUCKY.

The Rev. William Lee Popham, author, poet and lecturer, of Louisville, is the author of "Poems of Truth, Love and Power." The volume is replete with the lover's wooing, life's sunshine and shadows and the whispers of the wind.

This is the young author's eighth book.

The Rev. Mr. Popham was born in 1885 on a Kentucky farm, and in his poems the birds sing and the brooklets babble in the land of a poet's dream.—Louisville Times.

He sees the bright side of life.—Central Methodist, Lexington.

He is a finished orator. His address was regarded as a gem of the first water. His work has been much praised, especially by the religious press.

They listened to him as if they were spell-bound. . . . His address was sparkling with genuine oratory.—Louisville Herald.

He has achieved considerable success on the lecture platform.—Baptist Argus. (Now the Baptist World.)

His lecture here was a prose poem of sublimest eloquence.—Hopkinsville Kentuckian.

He is a lecturer of considerable fame.—Farmer's Home Journal.

Greeted by thousands.—Daily Gleaner, Henderson.

Many of his poems contain touching and beautiful sentiments.—Christian Observer, Louisville.

NEW YORK.

His poetry is of matchless simplicity and appeals to the better nature of man. It is affectionate, romantic and dreamy. His sentiment kisses the beauty-land of flowers, love, womanhood, music and art.—Broadway Publishing Co., New York City.

FLORIDA.

The Kentucky poet and lecturer is regarded as one of the South's most eloquent orators.—The Evening Metropolis, Jacksonville.

For more than an hour the orator and poet swayed his audience from tears to smiles.—The True Democrat, Tallahassee.

GEORGIA.

The silver-tongue orator lectured here to the delight of a brilliant audience. While he is a minister of the gospel, his lectures and writings are non-sectarian. He is a great drawing card. His language is flowery, his voice is strong and eloquent, and his thought is of the greatest degree of simplicity.—Daily Times, Valdosta.

ALABAMA.

As a lecturer, he commands an easy flow of eloquence. As a poet, he is a child of nature. A self-made man.—Daily Siftings, Dothan.

IOWA.

He is popular, and has made a splendid record.—Highland Nobles Herald, Des Moines. (Now the American Noble, Waterloo.)

OHIO.

His poems are original and complete.—The Springfield Daily Republican.

MICHIGAN.

He is an orator who sways his audience at will.—Daily Star, Niles.

He is not only an orator, lecturer and poet, but is author of many books. A man of ability and many distinctions.—Daily Tribune, South Haven.

INDIANA.

Noted orator greeted by large crowds. Lectures are popular.—Daily Herald, Madison.

Beautiful sentiments — flowery eloquence. — Daily Review, Greensburg.

NEW JERSEY.

At his lofty strain, we bare our heads in silent admiration.—Newark Evening News.

MASSACHUSETTS.

He has come up from a choreboy and plowboy on a Kentucky farm to a writer of tuneful verse. People who are stirred by the baby's smile, the mother's croon, the wind in the trees and the melody of the birds will read with pleasure, the chimes in "Poems of Truth, Love and Power."—The Boston Globe.

The writer has secured and quotes hereafter one of the first poems ever published from William Lee Popham's pen—said to have been published in the early teens of the boy-poet. Critics have pronounced it almost perfect—and remarkable for only a boy. Conflicting stories are told of the poet's first wooing; but safe to say, he was a lover in the bud of childhood. Throughout the wording and between the lines of this poem, you will stroll with its author along the "meadow-brook" near his childhood home, and feel the beats of a lover's heart locked within a boy's bosom. May its noble thrills inspire our modern youth to purer sentiments of love—and bless millions yet unborn.

THE BABBLING BROOK.

When the school is out
I like to come and play—
In the "meadow-brook"
Near the close of day.
The floating clouds above
Are lined with heaven's blue—
With the ruby light
And sunbeams peeping thru.

I like to see the minnows
Playing in the brook—
Fleeing from my hand
That even dodge my look.
But if they only knew
That I'd do no harm—
They would surely be
Freer from alarm.

If I were a minnow
In this tiny stream,
I'd seek the ocean—
There to swim and dream:
For the world is big;
And the massive sea
Would be a pretty home,
And to it I would flee.

I like to see the flowers
By the brooklet's bank;
And he who loves them not
Is a sour crank.
And when I put the violets
In the "hollow stump"
For my pretty sweetheart
My throat contains a lump.

But when I see her fingers
Clasp the violet bower
My heart is full of praise
For every tender flower.
And when she reads the poems
I write here by the moss
This vale is full of beauty
And life's without a cross.

I like to see the cattle
As they creep and graze;
For I could linger here
By the brook for days.
And the little lambs
That frolic on the lawn
Would like for me to stay
From dewy eve till dawn.

The roses seem to say,
 Take me to your breast;
And all they have to do
 Is to bloom and rest.
If I were a rose,
 I'd seek a place more fair;
For I'd make my home
 In my sweetheart's hair.

If I were a bird,
 I would never fly
From a noble boy
 And make him want to cry.
For I wouldn't hurt
 The pretty little things;
I'd only hug them
 On their folded wings.

If I were a bird
 I would sing and sing
To any boy or girl
 Who their crumbs would bring.
But there're cruel boys
 Who delight to throw
At the little things
 No matter where they go.

I like to see the buds
 By the running branch;
And every one would blossom
 If they had a chance.
But the other boys
 Take the tender bud
And tear it to pieces
 Or fling to the mud.

I like to see the trees
 Yonder on the hill,
For they seem to be
 So very cool and still.
If I were a tree,
 I'd spread my shade
O'er the panting sheep
 And the withered blade.

I like to drive the cows
 From the grassy lea,
For every time I come
 My heart is light and free.
For when I pass the stump
 I put a poem there
For my little girl
 With locks of golden hair.

The golden sun is sinking
In the distant West—
And hides its shining face
Beyond the wooded crest.
But memory of the scenes
Here on which I look
Will as lasting be
As the babbling brook.

The foregoing poem was among the first William Lee Popham ever wrote and the memory that inspired it is truly "as lasting as the babbling brook," for the poet's latest verse connects the golden chain of inspiration.

As a clear proof that his first inspiration still lives to blossom in his soul, the writer hereby offers the reader another poem written in the poet's manhood and which is only the past tense of the first poem. During these several years the poet's first wooing has lived in his heart, and one of the world's sweetest poems is born in William Lee Popham's following verse entitled: "My First Sweetheart."

MY FIRST SWEETHEART.

They say 'tis "puppy love"
With one you first admire,
But methinks that mine
Was a burning fire;
For my child-heart
I often thought would melt
With the love therein
Which day and night I felt.

Her eyes were blue as violets;
Her face was like a flower—
With roses in her cheeks
That blossomed every hour.
Her hands were like a lilly
Resting then in mine;
And sparkling were her eyes
Like the new-made wine.

Like wing-beats of angels
Were her starchly skirt;
The ground she trod was honey
Instead of common dirt.
And I gave her apples
Instead of a diamond ring;
And to think of her
Made me want to sing.

Me thought her gingham apron
 And her calico
Were finest silk and satin;
 And love made them so.
And the pretty bonnet
 That almost hid her eyes
Was fairer than the moon
 Set in jeweled skies.

We used to wade the puddles
 After summer rains;
And would go to town
 To see the passing trains.
And the sandy mud
 That showed her tracks was sweet—
For 'twas "holy ground"
 Where she put her feet.

My poems were the ribbons
 In her curly hair;
And a thousand rainbows
 In colors, lingered there.
We would wade the brooklet,
 And her rosy toes
Were prettier to me
 Than the blooming rose.

And I'd lie at night
 In the land of dream—
When again we'd wade
 In the "meadow stream."
And gold can not buy
 The memory of the scene,
For visions of the past
 Will keep the memory green.

Perhaps 'twas "puppy love"
 Soon to fade away,
For childhood is a blossom
 That thriveth but a day.
But the matchless fragrance
 That my childhood gave
Will sweeten every hour
 From the cradle to the grave.

In a poet's dream
• I like to recall
The early dewy walks
 By the garden wall.
And the morning glories
 Which we gathered then
Fill a poet's heart
- And freely move the pen.

Childhood is a blossom
Only soon to wither;
And the waves of life
Take the blossoms thither.
And my manhood now
Possesses more joy
Because I was a lover
When a little boy.

The poet whose soul is aflame with love, says: "I love the world because, 'God so loved the world to send us a Redeemer,'" and throughout the poet's whole works, love is the text. His following poem is sympathy's sweet fragrance from the holy flower of love—and its dew-kisses are heavenly tears.

LIFE'S MEASURE.

Life is measured by deeds,
Not by fleeting years;
Is measured by heart-throbs
And sympathizing tears.

Is measured by love
And sweetest thought;
Life is sweet by loving,
And not with money bought.

Again life is measured by duty well done; no matter how brief the life. And no one more beautifully expresses the writer's sentiments than the poet's following verse:

MISSION FULFILLED.

The bud that blossoms
And lives but a day
Has filled its mission,
Tho' brief its stay.
And he who lives
To honor God
Has nobly lived,
Tho' the road he trod
Be rough and rugged
And but a mile,
His life hath won
God's approving smile.

Doubtless the greatest poems our hero ever wrote were written in solitude; when not a human voice was near to break the silent stillness, where no harsher notes were heard than a bird's free song or the kind wind's whisper.

Heaven must have paused when the young poet wrote the following masterpiece.

IN DELLS OF SOLITUDE.

In dells of solitude
Where God his valleys laid
Is where thoughts are born
Of which verse is made.
For there is noteless music
And the wordless song;
And he who understands
Will his stay prolong.

Fenced by the horizon
Of every colored cloud,
There is plenty of company
Excluded from the crowd.
And the blue-domed heaven
An inspiration yields
To the poet-lover
Who dreams amid the fields.

When life seems dry and dull
 With the crowd 'tis duller,
For then we can not pause
 To view the clouds of color.
If you'd be master
 Of all that you survey,
Seek sweet solitude
 Where one may think and pray.

There is enough of heaven
 In the bird that sings
To inspire the soul
 And give it soaring wings;
And he who hears the song
 And truly understands
May sail the seas of thought
 And visit many lands.

The stars are heaven's eyes
 And from the skies protrude
To greet the one who waits
 In dells of solitude.
And the gentle breeze
 Has a thousand fingers
To lie upon my brow
 While listening to the singers.

The brooklet speaks a language
Of familiar words—
Like unto the language
Of the warbling birds.
And he who sits alone
Doubtless will conclude
That sightless wings of Love
Doth beat in solitude.

The dells of solitude
The poets long have sought—
Have given to the world
Sweet poetic thought.
For matchless thoughts are born
When quiet thoughts exclude
The agonizing noise
In dells of solitude.

I like to dwell in valleys
Of the winding river,
For I find kind Nature
An inspiration giver.
May her loving borders
My happy dreams seclude
Close to God and heaven
In dells of solitude.

The writer knows of no poet whose verse-subjects cover so much of human life and interest.

Heaven will be populated with lovers of home, and the following verse seems to express what I fain would say :

HEART AND HOME UNITED.

Love is born of heaven,
And is the only light
That beautifies the home
When all without is night.

Our feet may leave the home,
But never will our heart;
For the heart and home
Will not, can not part.

The writer has never found a truer friend of woman than our poet hero; for his grace is so kin to womanhood. In not a few poems the poet pays high tribute to wife, mother and daughter. The reader will be glad to read the following poem from one who is ever ready to pluck a thorn and drop a flower in woman's uneven path.

JUST A WOMAN.

Was ever there a woman
Whose heart was never tired?
Was ever there a woman
Who has never cried?
Was ever a flower given
That she didn't bless the bringer?
Was ever a mockingbird
A sweeter-hearted singer?

Oh, I answer, "No!"
This life would be a dross
Without a woman's love
And a woman's cross.
For each a cross must have
Who is holding fast
A love within her heart
From memories of the past.

It's just a woman's love
Of a woman's heart,
For holy love and woman
Can not stay apart.
God did honor woman
With the Savior's birth,
For He knew that she
Was queen of all the earth.

If you strive to please
And often feel at loss,
There is help from Him
Who bled upon the cross.
For he is woman's friend
Who was sent to earth
To heal the broken heart
And come of woman's birth.

Unlike some poets who make a comedy of love, our hero knows that love is sacred; love is in his sermons, in his eyes, in his voice; for his soul is love. Is it not proper to define one's soul as being love? Proof: "God is love." "God made man in his own image." That is, in His spiritual image or soul image. All that is good in the world is directly or indirectly from love.

The noble soul whose love goes out to meet its kinship in other souls, somewhere will find a sympathetic friend; and

like the balmy breeze that associates with the flowers, each noble soul will carry delicious fragrance for the enjoyment of others all along its glad way. Let us not look upon love as a stranger in our midst, but a living reality, ever present—itsself our soul's life.

Again our hero expresses in verse some more sweet thoughts of love.

Love is not a stranger—
That dear, sweet thing—
But like summer flowers
Whose fragrance fling
Their sweet, warm breath
Against my heart;
And in mine eyes
The tear drops start.

Not tears of sorrow
Too often shed—
But of devotion
And joy instead.
Stay! holy love,
My heart to stir,
And light the future
Like days that were.

Happiness is not always born on a bed of sunbeams amid silver clouds. Even when the day is shadowed by some dark sorrow, the optimistic eye can either look to the future in

cheerful hope; or backward in sweet memory of happy days that were. In memory's gallery are many sacred pictures of unfading brightness. To sit in meditation of happy "by-gones" is to engage in gratitude's prayer; and such a prayer never ascended but that heaven sent its blessings down upon the soul that prayed. This moment you can shut your eyes and see more in memory's gallery than to open your eyes to behold the limited scenes around you. The horizon is where the clouds and earth seem to meet; but go to where the horizon now seems—and it will still be the same distance away. So we can not see very far ahead in life's uncertain journey; but no power save death, can prevent us from looking backward—as far as fancy may carry our thoughts on white wings of ease.

The pessimist alone looks backward upon unpleasant scenes and forward on predicted unpleasantness. The optimist not only sees the silver lining of the dark cloud and lives in a beautiful castle of hope, but looks backward upon happy "by-gones" and lives his childhood again; sees the dear, sacred pictures in memory's gallery and keeps his spirit sweet.

Again our poetic hero gives us a poem which illustrates what I desire to say. In reading his lines may you, with the poet, draw "mind pictures" and sit in the bliss of memory's gallery, where a thousand sweet things are recorded and are at your command.

IN MEMORY'S GALLERY.

If you would see, O friend,
Gently close your eyes
And every rainbow color
Will illumine the skies;
For the fairest pictures
That forever last
Are in memory's gallery—
The unforgotten past.

Now I close mine eyes
While I sit alone
To recall the past
With thoughts of every zone.
And while I'm sitting here
I sail a thousand seas;
I hold a slender hand
And sink upon my knees.

For I have to pray
To thank the God of Love
That the gentle breeze
Did my vessel shove
O'er the sea of thought
To the laughing shore—
Where flowers wither not,
But blossom evermore.

In dear memory's gallery
Are my golden treasures,
Gathered from the past
Of a thousand pleasures.
And should my present wants
Never be supplied,
The scenes in memory's gallery
Would make me satisfied.

I only reach my hand
And close mine eyes to look—
To gather buds of childhood
By the babbling brook.
And I see again
The darling that I kissed
And the pleasant strolls
The other fellow missed.

To-day I sit in dream—
A dream almost divine—
Thinking of a love
That's forever mine.
And it lights the future
Like the golden past,
For 'tis only love
That makes heaven last.

The meanest flower that blooms has a blessing for man, bee or butterfly. It takes a noble, large soul to enjoy and appreciate flowers.

Remember the gay butterfly that flits from flower to flower and makes its heaven in the garden, had to grow into a nobler being ere its ability for enjoyment. When the butterfly was yet a worm, beautiful flowers lost their fragrance in the sweet air where it creepeth and the poor dull thing never knew the sweetness thereof. Not only did God desire us to appreciate flowers when He said, "Consider the lillies," but His delight is that we also learn from His singing birds, a foretaste of heavenly music, for our God says that "He notes the sparrow's fall."

Then, that which is not too small to attract the attention of the Creator of the world and everything therein, is certainly worthy of our thought and appreciation.

No poet ever lived whose love for birds and flowers surpassed the love of our poet hero; and in the verse which follows is a whole sermon in rhyme; and students of the Bible will find in it a message well told.

HE NOTES THE FALLEN SPARROW.

The One who said, "Consider
The lillies of the field"
Is the author of a love
That never was repealed.

And never can it be;
For He who cured the lame
And heals the broken heart
Remaineth just "the same."

The One who paints the lillies
And made the babbling rills
Also "owns the cattle
On a thousand hills."
And His loving eyes
See the fallen sparrow
When cruel hands have loosened
The piercing, deadly arrow.

Every foot that trods
"The straight and narrow way"
Makes a track toward heaven
At labor or at play.
"The way" is broad enough—
Tho,' indeed, is "narrow";
And He will guide us home
Who notes the fallen sparrow.

"He who notes the sparrow's fall"
Has made "the way" so plain
That not one honest heart
Will have to seek in vain.

And we're told "a fool
Needn't err therein,
For Jesus calleth all
And seeks alike to win.

Mothers will find in our poet's heart deep sentiments of appreciation, and in his verse sweet consolation, sympathy and inspiration. A mother's prayer is the silver key that opens heaven's golden gate; and thru her earnest pleas from the depth of a mother's heart, many wanderers have been lured from sin's benighted path to "the straight and narrow way" of righteousness. I would that every praying mother in this world of woe could read our poet's following words:

A MOTHER'S HEART.

I stood beside the door
While the cradle rocked
And saw the mother's pride
That in her heart was locked.
And down in her breast
Was a love so deep—
That death alone could sever
From her babe asleep.

I heard the mother's voice
In an undertone
Which was a prayer
Known by God alone.
For He whose Son was born
Of a virgin dear
Knows a mother's heart
And her prayers doth hear.

Now, we will follow our poet to a white-washed cabin in Kentucky. In order to enjoy the poet's verses immediately following this comment, let us take fairy wings of ease and fly before the cabin door by the lane where the scene is painted. Around the cabin grows a patch of sugar cane; the rustic farmer is sitting by the door playing the violin, while the poet is taking in the scene while he eats some ripe apples, throwing the cores to the hungry chickens.

The birds are singing in the trees as if they were also inspired by the violin's music, and two kittens are playing beneath the tree. Presently lovers are seen eating sugar cane, and in the poet's fancy the winding road in front of the cabin changes to "Lover's Lane." In the yard are red roses and snowy white lilies, and across in one corner a frisky pup is capering over a lazy hound. In the floor lies the baby upon its back playing with its toe.

The farmer pauses, the bow is still a moment, while the good wife (woman-like), who has listened till tears fill her eyes, leans upon her husband's breast anxious to be wooed.

Amid this enchanting scene, tho' only be its existence in the fertile field of its author's imagination, do you wonder at our poet writing the following inspired lines?

BECAUSE THE VIOLIN HAD A BOW.

Down in old Kentucky
Amid the sugar cane
I sat beside a cabin
That nestled by the lane.
The farmer played the violin
By the open door;
And while I ate some apples
The chickens ate the core.

By the white-washed cabin
The birds began to sing—
Catching inspiration
From the violin string.
And methought that heaven
Occupied that place;
And I saw the kittens
In their fond embrace.

Then I saw two lovers
Eating sugar-cane;
And the winding road
Changed to lover's lane.
And I wondered why
They walked so very slow;
But sweethearts are in fashion,
'Cause the violin had a bow.

And passing by the gate
The lovers came and went;
For the violin talked
And they knew what it meant.
For it spoke of love
As they would come and go;
But lovers are in fashion,
'Cause the violin had a bow.

It took me back to childhood
When I was on the farm—
Where a little lassie
Clung upon my arm.
Those were happy days
That only lovers know;
But sweethearts were in fashion
'Cause the violin had a bow.

And by the little cabin
The bow began to quiver—
And methinks my tears
Nearly made a river;
For in its voice I heard
A sound soft and low,
And I thought of sweetheart,
'Cause the violin had a bow.

Then I shut mine eyes
And saw her dimpled chin—
Where smiles were chasing blushes
And hiding there within.
For I saw the darling
“Dressed up” in calico;
For wooing was in style,
'Cause the violin had a bow.

And methought the music
Was better than a band,
For in the vale of memory
I held a slender hand.
And I thought my heart
Would fill and overflow;
For childhood came again,
'Cause the violin had a bow.

The roses in the yard
Blushed a pretty red,
While the farmer played
And swung his silver head.
And the garden lillies
With faces white as snow
Bended to caress,
'Cause the violin had a bow.

And the frisky pup
Was playing with the hound—
Active as a monkey,
Rolling on the ground.
And the cooing baby
Was playing with its toe;
And sweethearts were wooing,
'Cause the violin had a bow.

And the farmer's wife
Leaned upon his breast;
And 'ere the music ceased
The woman was caressed.
And love made that home
A heaven here below—
With wife and husband lovers,
'Cause the violin had a bow.

Love is a sunbeam
That lights the night of life,
Making home a heaven
For a man and wife.
The heart will never age
When thru its center flow
The blood drops of love,
'Cause the violin had a bow.

I like to see the aged
Going down life's hill—
In the path of love
In peace and wooing still.
For the aged hearts
A sweetness can bestow;
For youth and age are lovers,
'Cause the violin had a bow.

And tho' it be a cabin
White-washed with lime,
Love makes it a heaven—
An eden most sublime.
And the sugar-cane
Bended from its row
To greet another stalk,
'Cause the violin had a bow.

And while the violin's music
 Did its beauties blend,
I only wished its voice
 Would never, never end.
For the joyful thrills
 The playing did bestow
Brought me happy memories
 'Cause the violin had a bow.

Then let all the lovers
 The happy harvest sow
And reap the grains of love
 Instead of tares of woe.
For to them my pen
 Shall never be a foe;
For I'm a friend of lovers,
 'Cause the violin had a bow.

Kentucky's poet seldom writes pessimistic poems, for an optimist generally writes the sentiments of his own heart.

Yet, with his fertile imagination, he sees both sides of life—and for a few moments he can step into the shoes of Mr. Pessimist and relate his woes to the world.

It is said that the poet wrote the following poem just after an interview with a bachelor who had wooed a young girl in vain.

The poet surely read the lines of woe in the unsuccessful
wooer's face when he wrote:

THE LOVE-SICK BACHELOR.

Oh, the heart is troubled!
And its pain is doubled
When a fellow misses
The blisses and the kisses
In the honeymoon carriage
Of a happy marriage.

Life is but a "phony"
In anti-matrimony,
For the joys that mingle
When you're gay and single
Become unwelcome hisses
Without a woman's kisses.

Life is dull and dreary,
Days are long and weary
When man is straying
In his sore dismaying
From the path that's flower-bedded
Where the true are wedded.

The love-sick bachelor described in the above poem was woeful because he chose to wear the "robe of cares."

Or again, he may have been reaping the harvest of his own sowing in early life; for perhaps he, like many others, has "trifled with affection" by winning the love of some true woman, pretending to love her in return, when his pretention was a lie. If this be true, the bachelor of our comment was a God-made pessimist, for the Divine law is, "Whatsoever ye sow, that shall ye also reap." However, let us learn this lesson: A "God-made pessimist" does not have to remain a pessimist after he has reaped the harvest of his sowing, for then he has paid the price of his folly.

Our merciful God will forgive, and every "reaper of woe" may change the seed he plants and become an optimist again.

All of us have made mistakes; many have made the same mistake. But let us pray the forgiveness of the One who is ever ready to forgive, and throw off our robe of cares. In one sentence our poet expresses much in connection herewith:

THE ROBE OF CARES.

The man who knows
Life's many woes
Is he who wears
The robe of cares.

Whether in the open fields, woodland or secluded in his sitting room, our poet is never lonely, for his thoughts surely entertain him. I would that all of us could, like our hero, be at home with our thoughts no matter where we go, for I truly believe that contentment is from contented thoughts. "As a man thinketh, so he is."—Bible.

AT HOME WITH THOUGHTS.

My joy is deep as the ocean;
My trouble is light as its foam;
And where my hat is off
I am at "home, sweet home."
And I am contented
As the cow that "chews her cud";
My thoughts are jolly company
In city, valley or wood.

My thoughts are my companions—
And I am their guest,
For we abide together
At work, playtime or rest.
And if the day is sunny
Or filled with cloud and rain,
My thoughts never fail
Their guest to entertain.

Companionship is the one word which makes matrimony worth while. But, alas! many married persons are not companions. To be companions, the two must be one in sacrifice, loyalty and love. To be happy, each must strive to please the other; and be no cause for mistrust. Doubtless there are times when our poet's heart yearns for companionship, for in his following lines he sees God's mated species of birds, fishes, rivers, flowers, and even the blades of grass:

COMPANIONSHIP.

The mated birds are happy
And linger close together;
Love walks with love
And will walk forever!
And the countless fishes
Are mated in the sea;
Then why not my darling
Livest thou with me?

The blades of grass together
Grow to healthy green;
And flowers bloom together
Living there between.
And as brook meets river
And journeys to the sea,
Will you, oh! my darling,
Journey now with me?

The sunbeams and the flowers
 Hold each other's hand;
The shells by the seashore
 Sleep in golden sand.
The honey in the blossom
 Lures the busy bee;
So natural is companionship,
 Then why not you and me?

At the first thought you will think our poet is giving queer advice when he says "Kiss the cook." But ere long you will agree that many cooks are hungry for kisses—for frowns are given instead.

I like to see men who possess enough gratitude to distinguish them from hogs. The man who eats good biscuits made by the dear hands of wife, sister, daughter or mother, and never "praises the cook," is acting but half a man. The hog also eats his fill beneath the apple tree with nothing but a "grunt."

Don't frown and growl if the meal is accidentally "below the standard" but say: "Well, dear, the good meals of the past more than make up for accidents."

Do this, meaning it deep down in your heart, and "the cook" will not make many "accidents."

Woman craves appreciation; she longs for sympathy; but
alas, too many get it not.

KISS THE COOK.

If I gave enough advice
 To fill a massive book,
On every page I'd write:
 "Be sure to kiss the cook."
For cooks are fond of kisses—
 And the finest bread
Awaits the man who praises
 The simple, dainty spread.

When no one is near
 To interfere or look,
My advice to you
 Is to kiss the cook.
Of course, I mean to say—
 To avoid all strife—
That this advice applies
 When the cook's your wife.

In reading the complete works of our poet, doubtless some will ask if he has "ever been disappointed in love," for there is a tearful flow in many poems. This question came to my mind and I was not satisfied to write this biographical sketch without knowing. At last, I decided that the best way to determine this question satisfactorily was to ask our hero whether he had ever been disappointed in love.

I was frank in asking the question and obtained an honest reply none the less frank. The answer was, "No."

But our hero is human.

He has wooed ladies who have since passed out of his life; but to use his own words, the courtship was ended "by mutual agreement."

I accused our poet of being "a disappointed lover." His reply was: "You might as well accuse me of being a mother, because I write with a mother's sentiment."

I am glad to give so definite an answer to my reader, for "love" comprises so large a portion of his works.

However, in reading the whole, I find that our hero's writings on love are largely optimistic; and the saddest phase of love is expressed in his following verse:

LOVE'S GRIEF.

Love's way is steep;
 And depth and height
Is often reached
 Thru blackest night.
And the one who sorrows
 With a cause to grieve
Gives to one their love
 And love doth not receive.

The reader will be pleased to know some of the existing conditions under which the following poem was written.

Its author was conducting a revival meeting in a Kentucky town when several young ladies invited the "poet-preacher" to take a stroll with them in the "daisy field." Our poet accepted the invitation; and while the girls gathered daisies in the beautiful valley, their guest sat beneath a tree and wrote the following:

WITH THE DAISIES.

In the field of daisies
Where lovers long have trod
Methinks I hear the whispers
Of kind Nature's God.
For "He who notes the sparrow"
Surely hears their song—
And gives them inspiration
And their lives prolong.

In the field of daisies
Our wandering feet may tread—
Where the pretty blossoms
Lift their yellow head.
And here in solitude
Amid their fragrant smell,
The daisies nod and bow
At strollers in the dell.

The song birds are singing
While the others hop
O'er the field and meadow
From hill to mountain top.
And methinks their music
Among the daisies here
Is full of youth and joy,
Mingled with a tear.

The sky is blue and crimson
 Beneath heaven's dome—
And earth and heaven meet
 Where daisies have their home;
For here, indeed, is beauty!
 Not from an artist's hand—
But only equaled yonder
 In heaven's happy land.

The pretty, sloping hillsides
 Dressed in robes of green
Are beautified with daisies
 Blooming here between.
And here is Lover's eden—
 Where the air is sweet
Amid the nodding daisies
 At kind Nature's feet.

Oh! sweet, blooming daisies—
 My queenly summer flower—
I love thee as a friend
 Every day and hour.
And when I stroll among you
 My pen is light and free—
For of all the flowers
 The daisy is for me.

In thy yellow hair
 Is a speck of black—
And when we leave you here
 You seem to call us back.
For here we find a welcome
 Amid your stately bloom—
Away from town and city
 Where there is plenty room.

And here may lovers ramble
 And tell the olden story—
Till it newer seems
 In its sacred glory.
For in this blooming valley
 Is love and sweetest bliss—
Where even nodding daisies
 Seem to woo and kiss.

When we tire of roaming
 O'er the meadow lawn—
The daisies seem to smile
 And lure us on and on.
And the skies are golden
 When we sit at rest—
With a bunch of daisies
 Pinned upon our breast.

And there the living daisy
Hears our throbbing heart—
And lies its pretty head
And withers ere we part.
And if the daisies told
The lover's thought and word—
They would be the sweetest
The angels ever heard.

Good-bye, pretty daisies—
The falling rain and dew
Will visit you from heaven,
For Jesus cares for you.
And now we journey homeward,
But with sweeter thought
Of the noble lessons
Which you, sweet daisies, taught.

WHERE LOVE IS.

A mansion is a cottage;
Yea, 'tis but a hut!
Where the door of pride
Is closed with love outshut.
And let me tell you this—
Listen! gentle reader:

I'd rather have a cottage
By a lonely cedar—
If love is there
With its golden hope—
Than a shaded mansion
Where love and peace elope.

LOVE LED ME BY THE HAND.

There is an olden proverb
Which says, "Love is blind";
But Love's eyes are perfect
And Love is very kind.
Love took me thru the dell—
Led me by the hand;
Led me where I knew not
O'er river, sea and land.

'Twas I who was blind;
The fault was all in me.
But since I go with Love
I stumble not, but see.
I see the blossoms of the skies
Set in the vault of night;
And since I'm led by Love
The world is full of light.

Love led me by the hand,
Leading just before—
Thru unknown paths of beauty
Will lead me evermore.
The south wind's balmy kiss
Swung flowers to and fro;
And I have promised love
With her to ever go.

God's strongest command is love; and love makes a happy home a foretaste of heaven. Love makes angels of human mortals, and without love no soul can abide with the redeemed in the eternal "city not made with hands."

Love is the tie that binds two hearts into the oneness of holy endeavor, and is the inspiration of earth's noblest good.

Love is life's evening star that sheds its constant light to illumine sorrow's blackest night. Without love, life would be a burden void of the beautiful.

Our hero gives to the world a heavenly blossom of undying
fragrance in the following poem:

LOVE BUILDS HEAVEN.

“God so loved the world
That he gave His Son;”
And His love was proven
By the crucified One.
Jesus said, “I go
To prepare a place for you.”
Then if love gave us Jesus,
It gives us heaven, too.

Love builds an earthly heaven
In which to go to heaven in;
For earth is an eden
To the heart that hateth sin.
And he who is the richest
Gives his love away;
For truly love is needed
To pave the “Narrow way.”

SHE IS SO SWEET.

I have a girl so charming
And so very sweet
That the clover blossoms
Kiss her cunning feet.
And if I were a bee
Seeking honey tips,
I'd suck the honey
From her rosy lips.

And the fragrant breezes
Kiss each floating curl
Which adorns her head,
Making them unfurl.
And the dew-kissed flowers
I pinned upon her dress
Seem to lure her eyes,
Begging her caress.

The sun with arms of gold
Her slender form embrace,
While a thousand sunbeams
Are born upon her face.
And if I were a sunbeam,
The love-light in her eye
Would be my pretty bride
Or else I'd want to die.

THE SCHOOL OF LOVE.

The dew-kissed flowers of the morning
Bring thoughts of love without a warning.
And in my walk I stop to pray,
For love doth crown each new-born day.
The bird that sings as he flies
Charms my ears and longing eyes;
And when he flees beyond the cloud
My pen is busy, my head is bowed.

And only a lover can understand
The easy flow of a poet's hand;
For when with love the heart is stirred
The soul dictates each written word.
The heart that feels the true and good
Can not be misunderstood.
And love can never turn to hate,
For love's the key to heaven's gate.

In pretty Eden love began;
And since has been the goal of man.
And the God who gave it birth
Made love the holiest thing of earth.
My life is sweet; love makes it so;
And a lover can only know
The deep, sweet joy that love has brought
Since at Love's school I have been taught.

LOVE IS HERE.

Let my heart be singing,
For love is here;
Ope' the golden gate,
For heaven is near.
Sing, sweet nightingale;
Grow, roses, grow;
Babble, dear, old brook;
Flow, cool waters, flow.

Let music and melody
And praises and rhyme
Mingle in beauty
For immortal time.
For love is here—
'Tis here at last!
And all the darkness
And shadows have passed.

WITH THEE.

The wind gently whispers
The sound of joy entralling,
And the mockingbird
Thy dear name is calling.
And I sit alone
With every moment blessed;
For I think of thee
When at prayer and rest.

I'm living in your sunshine;
I'm living in the shade;
I'm living in the heaven
Which your love hath made.
My heart leaves its bosom
To with thee abide,
For I'm truly happy
When I'm by your side.

No matter where I wander
Or what roof I'm beneath—
I'm in a flower garden
Where I make a wreath.
For my thoughts are flowers
Since the day we met;
For I loved you then
And I love you yet.

When I look into your face
Those dreamy, violet eyes
Make me quite forget
The beauty of the skies.
For when I'm with thee
All others I forget,
For thy love-light glows
When the sun is set.

LOVE IN DREAM'S PARADISE.

Time has made us fonder,
And love doth linger near
To lighten every shadow
And kiss away the tear.
Love is like a fairy
To light the darken places,
And drives away the frowns
To make the smiling faces.

I hear the birds a-singing
Amid my sweetest rest;
And they linger near,
Obeying my request.
Love is in my dreaming,
And my thoughts entice
The happy warbling birds
To sing in Paradise.

The paradise of dreams
Is the lover's land
Where flowers bloom forever
Above the golden sand.
In the blessed future
When dreams come true
I'll then relate
My happy dreams to you.

A DREAM OF THE ONE I CAN'T FORGET.

Last night while all was sleeping
The dew had fallen wet,
I fell asleep and dreamed
Of the one I can't forget.
Somewhere within the border
Of the shadowed night
Her eyes were like the stars
That make the heavens bright.

The deep, blue shade of evening
Stretched across the land;
And the sky was painted
By an artist's hand.
The silver moon was shining
Amid the clouded peaks;
The splendor of the flowers
Were copied from her cheeks.

The night's enchanting songs
In a whispering tone,
Bade me lie and listen
In my room alone.
And thru the open window
When the moon had set
Came in garments white
The one I can't forget.

And standing in the beauty
Of a lover's smile
She waited there in silence
To let me dream awhile.
With open arms of welcome
Where earth and heaven met
A poet's dream was ended
Of the one he can't forget.

LOVE AND I.

Love and I were camping
Beneath the starry tent;
The moonlight was our blanket
As it came and went.
By the valley pathway
The flowers bloomed anew,
While the heavens showered
Down the sparkling dew.

The mockingbird was singing
Its thrills of sweet delight,
And its voice was blended
With music of the night.
And a brook was gushing
From the mountain side;
And in the arms of Nature
We were satisfied.

We heard a hundred voices
Ere we went to sleep,
And the brook was singing
Down the mountain steep.
And in the arms of Night
By the singing stream
We closed our eyes in slumber
In a poet's dream.

Love and I are partners
And with each other dwell—
In the mountain shadows
Or in the blooming dell.
We are true companions
And where one is sent
The other goes along
To make each content.

Love enjoys my company
And can not stay apart
From a poet's thoughts
And a lover's heart.
For my heart's its home,
And it will ever guide
My steps o'er leas of joy
Where love and I abide.

Tho' our poet is in the blossom of young manhood, his verse appeals to old and young alike. Safe to say he will never grow old in heart, for "souls of love" do not age. Let us catch his spirit of youth (tho' some of us be already nearing the grave) and be young again. Be young with the same sweet love which made childhood a foretaste of heaven. May our hero live to enjoy the "youthfulness of age" when a useful life will have been spent and millions yet unborn will have read his poems of inspiration.

If you would that the "childish-aged" be sweeter-spirited, begin now in yourself, and you, for one, will realize the attainment of our poet's following lines:

MY HEART GROWS YOUNGER.

When my face shall wrinkle
And my locks are gray
My heart will be a blossom—
The fairest one in May.
As I pass the milestones
Of the fleeting years
My heart is growing younger
In the pool of tears.

While passing thru
 Life's bitter phases
I'll stop and rest
 Amid the daisies.
And thoughts of love
 Will make me young
When youthful songs
 Will have have been sung.

IN THE CITY.

God has set a billion diamonds
 In the bosom of the night;
Man has dressed a darkened city
 With a flood of mellow light.
I am sitting by my window
 Looking o'er the crowded street,
Listening to the mingling voices
 And the sound of horses feet.

Far above the dear, old city
 The moon is shining yellow gold,
Softly falling on the house tops,
 Shining as it shone of old.
And beneath the sloping house tops
 Is a world of joy within;
For love can make a home
 Be the roof of slate or tin.

Flowing by the dear, old city
Winds the river with its song,
Singing with the same old music
Ever floating on and on.
And life is like unto the river
When in heaven—God, with Thee—
We'll reach our distant home
As the river finds the sea.

God, protect the dear, old city!
Every home and standing wall;
For in mercy thou has promised
To even note "the sparrow's fall."
Bless the hands that toil and labor,
For to them the city owes
The progress of the desert
Which has "blossomed as the rose."

Looking out upon the city
We behold the passing crowd.
Some are rich, some are toilers,
Some are humble, some are proud.
Some are renters, some are brokers,
Yet the richest of them all
And the poorest was the Savior
Who was born within a stall.

And the honest man who labors
 Gets the praises of my pen,
For a carpenter was Jesus
 When he taught the sons of men.
And methinks that every mother
 Is a gem of priceless worth,
For 'twas a holy woman
 Who gave our Savior birth.

Aud our meek and loving Master,
 Whose heart is full of pity,
Was born in the manger
 In a crowded city.
For the inn was crowded
 As they in many cities are;
But the stall was lighted
 By heaven's evening star.

Looking out upon the city
 With a prayer for every home
I behold the sons of men
 Who in sin and sadness roam.
But the love of Christ
 Who bled upon the tree
Offers peace and pardon—
 A priceless gift, but free.

God not only made the earth and "called it good," but He dressed it in a beautiful gown of green grass which adorns its exterior like the stars adorn the evening sky.

There is beauty in the grass unnoticed by thousands, who, "having eyes to see, but see not." The grass which provides alike a bed for the "weary tramp" and the prowling beasts, also adorns the barren earth with new life, beautifying the home, giving food to hungry grazers, cheerfulness to environment, and wealth to the commercial world.

Try to imagine the dire result were grass extinct from the earth.

Surely any poet could write of flowers, but not every one can hold a blade of grass before the world and show therein the value and beauty of its possession. The Creator, "who doeth all things well," clothed His creation with green and inspired our hero to thusly declare its beauty:

GRASS.

I am not a flower,
 Yet I am the queen
Of every growing blossom
 And every sprig of green.
Were it not for me
 To carpet field and vale,
The earth would be a desert—
 A plain of no avail.

Boasting not the fragrance
 Of the summer rose,
My path is everywhere
 The wind-god blows.
Boasting not the color
 Of a single flower,
I comprise the wealth
 Of earth's greatest dower.

From yonder grassy mountain
 To a distant hill
My seed is safely planted
 From the sparrow's bill.
And where I touch the earth
 The barren peaks are rife
With a rug of beauty
 And a touch of life.

I climb the giant cliffs
Where man has never been,
And there I feel at home
As well as in the glen.
Should I refuse to grow
For a single year—
Failure, woe and famine
Would be approaching near.

I beautify the mansion
Or the humble cot;
I make a pretty lawn
Of a cheerless spot.
I kiss the feet of paupers;
I kiss the feet of kings;
I'm the "stamping ground" of herds
And a thousand things.

Beneath the winter snow
When you'd think me dead
I'm waiting for the spring
To lift my sleepy head.
For when the golden sun
Wakes me with a kiss,
My bed a-rife with green,
Forgets its loneliness.

I cover all the meadows
 For the grazing flocks;
I penetrate the earth
 Above the giant rocks.
I border winding streams
 And beautify the shore;
The sky is my roof
 And I am heaven's floor.

And every one I welcome
 Of myself to share;
And when you come to my house
 You'll always find me there.
Come and sit upon me,
 For I am cool and clean;
And of Nature's carpets
 I am surely queen.

Fairer than the flowers
 Of every name and class
Is a pretty lawn
 Composed of common grass.
For of all the beauties
 I have ever seen
A simple blade of grass
 Is the stately queen.

He who is guided by love will reach the silver heights of happiness in the end. No matter how steep the mountain before you, or how "mirery" the valley around you, love will pave the way with gold and "burn the bridges behind you." Foes and conflict retreat and fade from love's way like the darkness fades before the morning light. But great things are not done in a day. The patient God took His own good time in perfecting creation.

"Time," the "error-mender" and the "love-defender," will in its own glad season, remove the obstacles from your feet and place them anew as stepping stones to reach the goal. Large souls are born not "on flowery beds of ease," but often "in the rough."

But "the greatness" of a large soul is measured by the "struggles in the rough."

The man who grows to manhood without "trials" to temper his character is but half a man; his vision is narrow; his capacity is small.

If you want to enlarge a balloon, fill it within. So with man. Man's largeness is measured not by exterior adornment. Too many "black hearts" are living beneath "white linen." Man paves his own way by his aspirations, and the world largely accepts him at his self-value.

The buzzard is not an ugly bird; but is little respected because of its low aspiration.

The eagle is king of the bird world because of his high aspiration to soar above the "storm cloud." Man, to be much and do much, must soar his aspiration on gilded wings far above the cloud and storm of life.

And if he resumes his flight above the "storm of woe," it is his holy aspiration which will keep him above the gulf of failure. Small ships cannot buffet the waves of life's sea. Love enlarges the soul; and large souls can rise above the storm-ridden tide.

In every rosebud is the heart of the rose; but it takes sunlight, rain and shadow to perfect its blossom. In the heart of every man is a spark of love; and this spark is capable, by cultivation, of becoming a mighty flame.

Great fires are started from small sparks; and it takes the wind to fan them into greatness. So in man, the wind of adversity only enlarges the blaze.

Love your way thru the world. Love your enemies into friends. Love melts cold, selfish hearts into friendship. Love opened up the way thru "the red sea" and closed the way behind to destroy the enemies. That's "burning the bridges behind you."

Love never has and never will fail. "God is love;" and love will ever guide you. Let the world "read as it runs" the following words of our poet:

LOVE WILL GUIDE YOU.

Tho' the road be rugged
O'er grief's benighted way,
The star of love will guide you
To a purer, fairer day.
For the soul of man enlarges
And the heart forgets its pain—
When life to love surrenders
Letting only peace remain.

Free thy soul from every idle!
And the love which fear defied
Will put to flight all evil
And conquer selfish pride.
Love will "burn the bridges"
Across the stream of woe—
Leaving far behind you
Each evil-minded foe.

If your way is rugged
And the stones have tried you,
Crowns of peace are waiting
Where love will ever guide you.
If the road is rugged
Be thou not resigned,
For future's way is brighter
Than the fairest way behind.

IN THE VILLAGE OF YOUTH.

When I lived in the village of youth
Lakes were as large as the oceans.
I dreamed of the life of "grown-ups"
Devising a thousand-odd notions.
Apples adorning the orchard,
Bumble-bees flying about,
Children eating green apples
Amid the laughter and shout.

The world was full of sunshine;
Life was springtime and summer.
The singing birds were welcome
And every joyous comer.
Dreams in the eyes of maidens,
Wooing in man's attention—
And walks 'mid clover blossoms
Where joy was not a pretention.

The town seemed larger than city;
Manhood seemed a century away.
Our goal was a romp in the meadow;
Our pasttime was laughter and play.
The harmless shadows of evening
Were full of tigers and bears;
And the sweet joys of childhood
Outnumbered our ills and cares.

I loved in the village of youth
 And my heart came out of its prison;
I wooed in the morning of life
 Till the sun was higher risen.
I dreamed in the village of youth
 Till evening caressed the morning;
But dreams, like the apple blossoms,
 Were only a brief adorning.

TO MAKE THE WORLD BETTER.

Don't say that the world is evil
 And every one's out for the money;
Don't mimic the goal of the buzzard—
 But the bee that seeks the honey:
For life is a withering blossom
 Containing the bitter and sweet;
And its fruit will ripen in heaven
 If we stay at the Savior's feet.

As in the tender heart of the rosebud
 Is sleeping a beautiful rose—
So in the heart of each man
 Doth the flower of goodness repose.
And to awaken the flower,
 You must be patient and kind—
Seeing not the evil prevailing,
 For 'tis often wise to be blind.

The world will never grow better
 With a pessimistic redeemer;
But life's beautiful dreams
 Are born of a joyful dreamer.
The Savior "came not to condemn";
 Not merely to reform,
But stood upon the sea
 And calmed the raging storm.

Not to condemn, but redeem
 Was the Savior's glad mission—
Calming the storm in the heart
 In its troubled condition.
And if the storm of trouble
 In your heart is abiding,
Remember, in the shadows of night
 A beautiful star is hiding.

To some comes large opportunity, to others small, to others none.

To the latter I fain would cheer—and indeed there is for him a chance. Self-made opportunity asks favor from no one—and often is the wing which flies highest above the gulf of failure. And he whose opportunity is small, truly has a right to be encouraged; for ere the butterfly—a worm; ere the flower—a tiny seed; ere the mountain trail—the valley journey; and often ere the greatest victory is temporary defeat. All sunshine or all

shade can not develop one sprig of the vegetable kingdom.

So with man. The shadows of sorrow if we meditate upon their lessons, make us stronger, truer and better equipped to meet every phase of life.

To every man who possesses a true spirit—the shadows, the small beginning and the struggles of life only mean that he is going to succeed.

Expect a new morning to succeed each black night—for 'tis Nature's law. So with human life.

THE VALLEY PATHWAY.

In the smallest 'bud that ever grew
A perfect flower reposes;
Sun and cloud and rain and dew
Bring forth the perfect roses.

And be it so in the life of man—
At first the step is small;
Ere he is able to say "I can"
Into his life some cloud must fall.

And he who climbs the mountain height
Must go the valley way—
Expecting shadows of the night
Before the dawn of day.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

Secluded in the woodland
In summer's leafy June
I'm sitting in the splendor
Of the yellow moon.
And mingling in the air
The voices that prevail
In sweetness can't compare
To thine, dear nightingale.

To-night I hear a voice
From yonder leafy limb
That charms my very heart
Like a sacred hymn.
And the moonlit dell
Beneath the sky is pale
While I pause to hear
Thy song, dear nightingale.

While the earth is sleeping
The shadows of the night
Seclude the happy songster
Beyond the human sight.
The dogs are in the woodland
Running down a trail.
The dell is full of song
From thee, sweet nightingale.

There is enough of heaven
 In thy charming voice
To fill the soul with joy
 And make the heart rejoice.
Tho' tiny be thy throat
 And be thy body frail,
Thou art large enough
 To sing, dear nightingale.

And thy cheerful song
 Upon the evening air
Seems to fill my heart
 And drive away my care.
Be other songs forgotten,
 Memory can not fail
To remember thine,
 My cheerful nightingale.

Often in the night
 Many hearts that pine
Fain would rejoice
 To hear that song of thine.
I, too, would sing for others
 And shadowed lives avail
If I had a voice
 Like thine, dear nightingale.

BY THE SURGING SEA.

I like to stand on the golden sand
And see the waves retreat;
For on their tide the vessels ride
And the rolling waves are fleet.
Like unique things with mammoth wings
The ships are coming in;
And here I sit and thoughts commit
Of where the ships have been.

Before our doors from distant shores
O'er a trackless road
Comes the freight in value great
And at our docks unload.
The ships go back o'er a watery track,
Leaving the waves for me;
And let my pen proclaim to men
My thoughts by the surging sea.

Beneath the wave in an ocean grave
Many are the dead that sleep;
Buried from home beneath the foam
With no mourners there to weep.
The wavelets tell as they roll and swell
A message strange, to me;
And a thousand tales of giant whales
Belong to the surging sea.

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"And well they may. Often one verse of a poem will express a speaker's text.

"Some chord of life's harp of a thousand strings will utter sweet music in response to a tender touch. Tho' this chord be invisible to the pessimist, unseen by the false, and unheeded by the vain—yet the music is slumbering there on some golden key.

"Second in beauty to the angel's message, 'Peace on earth, good will toward men,' are the sentiments of a poet—true to humanity and God.

"Tho' he plays upon life's golden keys and alone hears the music; tho' he flies amidst the fairyland to gather flowers of Praise, his fiction, his rhyme, his truth—must be weighed in the silver scale of a poet's meaning.

“The truest heart can always find
Some truth amidst the fiction;
For you cannot bind a poet's thought
With chains of restriction.
A poet's thought may kiss the sky
Where his heart is leaning—
And tho' it be a fairy tale
The true may catch its meaning.’—Popham.

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