



JOHN MARTIN NEWKIRK

Wild Clover

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

A TEXT-TECH PAPERS PROJECT

Extremes and Moderations

Early Southern California Poetry

Extremes and Moderations is a Text-Tech Papers project devoted to recovering poetry written, published, and circulated in Los Angeles and Southern California. Each volume brings neglected books and poems back into view through carefully prepared texts, archival images, biographical context, and a clear record of the surviving sources.

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

The Text-Tech Papers | Los Angeles, 2026

Wild Clover

John Martin Newkirk

A Critical Reading Edition

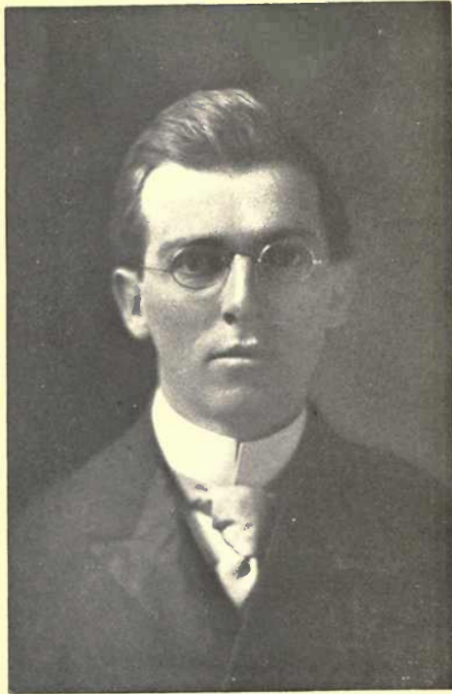
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The Text-Tech Papers

Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry

Archival Images

A short selection from the source record



JOHN MARTIN NEWKIRK

John Martin Newkirk, frontispiece to Wild Clover (1911).

WILD CLOVER

Poems and Stories



WILD CLOVER

As I walked down the country lane,
I who have tramped the wide world over,
I picked the wayside flowers, and thought
“There’s nothing sweeter than wild clover.”
Dear boyhood mem’ries throng-ed back
Of home before I went a rover,
“No place like home,” its love, its peace:
—There’s nothing sweeter than wild clover.



JOHN MARTIN NEWKIRK

Title page of Wild Clover: Poems and Stories (1911).

Editorial Note

This is a reset reading edition, not a facsimile. Every poem, prose paragraph, internal heading, epigraph, signature, and testimonial was reread against the original 1911 page images. Source-page wraps were rejoined only where the scan showed typographic continuation; stanza breaks, meaningful verse indentation, prose paragraphing, italics, and the source's punctuation and historical usage were retained. Obvious scanning debris and library matter were excluded without silently modernizing the text. Publication notes identify the source pages for every poem and prose section.

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Introduction

John Martin Newkirk's writing was gathered after his death by parents who wanted the book to carry forward the cheer, faith, and usefulness they remembered in him. *Wild Clover* opens with poems about vocation, blindness, weather, homecoming, love, children, and the ordinary treasures found close at hand. Newkirk grew up in Chicago, studied at Occidental and Berkeley, trained for the ministry at Princeton, and returned to the Altadena foothills after tuberculosis ended the career he had prepared for. He kept reading, writing, preaching when able, and receiving visitors through the years of illness. This edition resets the full recoverable text of the 1911 memorial volume: the complete poetry, both stories, the family's biographical notice, and every printed testimonial.

Biography

John Martin Newkirk was born in Wenona, Illinois, to physician Garrett Newkirk and Martha Martin Newkirk. The family moved to Chicago before he was four. He attended Forestville, Kenwood, and Hyde Park High School, graduating in 1899, the same year the family moved to Pasadena.

Newkirk began college at Occidental and transferred to the University of California at Berkeley, receiving an A.B. in 1903. He specialized in English and won recognition for original writing. "The Ballad of Valma Bay" and the story "A Temptation in the Wilderness" received Irving M. Scott prizes. He also worked with the YMCA and San Francisco missions.

Having chosen the Presbyterian ministry, Newkirk entered Princeton Theological Seminary in 1903 and graduated in 1906. Concurrent postgraduate study at Princeton University brought him an M.A. He preached in communities within traveling distance of the seminary and worked actively for foreign missions.

Tuberculosis was diagnosed around the time of graduation. Newkirk returned to his parents' home in Upper Altadena, where the dry foothill climate was hoped to aid recovery. The disease continued, but family accounts stress the disciplined life he made around current literature, Bible study, conversation, humor, and religious work.

Newkirk died on April 1, 1910. His parents assembled *Wild Clover* the following year from poems, stories, sketches, biographical notes, and tributes. Their account is affectionate and devotional, yet it supplies an unusually detailed educational chronology. A tribute by Robert J. Burdette remembers Newkirk's gentleness and courage during illness.

The poetry reflects both literary training and the circumstances of disability. Poems on Milton, threatened blindness, starlight, rain, memory, courtship, and childhood share the volume with the title poem's insistence that value may be found at one's doorstep.

Wild Clover

Poems | 1911

The complete recoverable poetry text of the 1911 collection, reset from the source page images.

The Poet's Mission

I take words and give them wings,
 They leave the ground and fly
Into men's hearts and memories,
 And there they cannot die.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 9.

The Poet

Right at our feet the treasures lie,
The world hath ever passed them by
Unseen, until the poet's eye
 Espied them
And seizing them with joyous cry,
 Bade all to share.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 10.

Wild Clover

When first ambition haunted me
When life was young and full of wonder,
Each rainbow end held pots of gold,
The great things seemed way over yonder.
Then forth in search of happiness
Across the world I went to wander;
But still illusion walked with me:
The great things still seemed *over yonder*.

At last I saw with seeing eyes,
And weary, turned me homeward, knowing
That happiness and peace and love
Were there at my own doorstep growing.
The plain old-fashioned joys of life,
Like humble flowers unnoticed blowing,
The humble virtues tried and true,
Were there at my own doorstep growing.

As I walked down the country lane,
I who have tramped the wide world over,
I picked the wayside flowers, and thought
“There’s nothing sweeter than wild clover.”
Dear boyhood mem’ries throng-ed back
Of home before I went a rover.
“No place like home,” its love, its peace:
—There’s nothing sweeter than wild clover.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 11.

Treadmill

As I sit here and write, the world goes on,
 The street cars carry loads of living souls
 Past miles and miles of houses to their goals:
From east to west the hurrying trains are drawn;
 The concerts, balls and plays each hold their sway,
And life and death contest the world outside;
E'en now some one is born, some one has died,
 Firemen are fighting a fire not far away.

As I sit here, although no sounds intrude,
 Fate never falters where eternally
With blade in hand our destinies she keeps.
 The chain of life, unceasing, endless, rude,
Drives blindly on: the heaving, surging sea
 Of restless being slumbers not nor sleeps.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 12.

Songs to Sell

If I had songs to sell
What would you buy?
I pray thee quickly tell,
Ballad or gay rondel,
Sonnet or lullaby—
If I had songs to sell
What would you buy?

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 13.

Rest

Golden summer sunlight in a pleasant garden,
 Filtered through the greenleafed trees
That stand like mossy columns, branches long
 And swaying in the lazy breeze;
Such strange mosaics in the walk and grasses:
 Above, a splash of azure sky,
A cloud or two—sweet smells from flowers—
 A passing bird or butterfly;
And *one* to keep me silent company,
 This is Rest.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 13.

The Ballad of Valma Bay

“Wait till the wind dies down, my son,
Before you venture forth,
The waves are high and black the sky;
The wind is from the North.”

The warning came from a sailor old;
It was his son that said:
“Ere I would bide for wind or tide,
I rather would be dead.”

The old man’s hair is white as snow,
He leans upon a staff.
Like a viking old with hair of gold
The son at fear doth laugh.

“And thou wilt not bide, my son, my boy,
I will brave the sea with thee:
Should the boat go down and let thee drown,
Life has nothing left for me.”

He hoists the sail in the teeth of the gale,
Oh, the waves rage wild in glee!
“On the road to Hell, I would like it well
That thou shouldst fare with me.”

The town folk gather along the shore:
“Oh, do not sail,” they cry,
“Ye will meet the storm when ye leave the bay
And no ship can live in that sea,” cried they.
“Why go ye forth to die?”

“Ye be cowards all,” the young man cried.
“Are ye feared at a splash of spray?
Go home to your fires, ye old grandsires,
And leave me go my way.”

His sweetheart stands on the wave-washed sands
And weeps as her heart would break.
She beats her breast whom he loved best,
“Oh, stay thee, for my sake!”

Her skin is white as the lashed sea foam,

Her hair is chestnut-brown:
And her lips are red as the bright blood shed
On the snow when the stag is down.

She beats her breast whom he loved best
Yet never a word spake he,
And with sullen brow he steered the prow
Straight out for the open sea.

The hand of the sire hath waved goodbye,
Afar it waved again,
And nevermore on sea or shore
Were they seen by the eyes of men.

For a man will sail in the face of death
The more they say him nay.
Christ give His Peace to their souls tonight
And hear us when we pray.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 14–15.

Sun-Dial

The days seem much alike
Silent, like Time itself, no clock to strike.
On this green lawn
I mark the hours from dawn to set of sun.

From west to north, then east, my shadow strays
Each day across my dial,
Then comes the night when I may rest awhile.
So much alike my days,
Yet, one by one
Like beads or beaded tears,
I link them into years.

And it may be,
When you who read my hours today
Have long passed away,
My shadowed years shall make a century.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 16.

Spring Rain

Autumn is past and the rains are here
But what though the day is dark and drear,
There's a touch of green on the hills, my dear,
 There's a touch of green on the hills.

It rains; but the clouds will soon blow by.
Yes, in the West where the swallows fly
Afar, there's a touch of blue in the sky,
 There's a touch of blue in the sky.

All the hills will be green clad soon,
And the sky clear blue as a day in June,
Then laugh, for this old world's in tune,
 This good old world's in tune.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 17.

Nature's Tears

You feel depressed, you say,
That your home-coming day
Is drear with April rain,
As if all Nature wept to see you home again.

Nay, not so. Have you not caught the spirit of the Spring?
Spring rains are *Nature's tears of joy*—just hear that robin sing!

For Nature in pure joy,
Like some glad mother with her lusty boy,
Goes laughing, laughing, as she sees
The green of Spring sweep o'er the earth,
The full buds bursting on the trees,
The first returning birds, the violet's birth.
 She laughs until she cries.
 Those sweet tears from her eyes
 Are April showers
 That bring again May flowers.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 18.

The Grand Canyon of the Colorado

We crossed the broad plateau through stunted pine,
Then sudden on our startled vision burst,
As if the world's red mouth gaped wide, athirst,
A giant chasm blazing in sunshine.

Sheer dropped the precipice: then slopes, far-thrown
To the long shadowed depths where ran the stream;
Then up and up, each crag and cliff a gleam—
A shattered monster rainbow turned to stone.

With wordless wonder long we watched the view,
Our little standards smothered by its size:
As those who dream, at each turn saw anew
E'en more gigantic peaks arise,
Until with vision ever widening,
A *mountain* seemed a very little thing.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 19.

Milton

His blindness was no hindrance, for he saw
Through all the open windows of his soul,
Through mists of time the centuries unroll
To ages where no earth, formed by God's law
Existed. He beheld the fallen ones
Forever banished from their high estate;
He saw the first creation; knew man's fate
And told the destiny of all earth's sons.

All this and blind! He needs no mortal eyes.
They might have drawn him from his lofty theme,
With visions of ambition and of power;
His blindness was a blessing in disguise—
So blind and blest, he could but sit and dream
His poem line by line and hour by hour.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 20.

On the Vision of Sir Launfal

The sweetest poem in the English tongue

Tender as a mother's lullaby.

It has the beauty of the changing sea,

The storm and stress, the pulsing harmony,

The purity of faith and love.

Some songs arouse as does the trumpet call,

They fill the heart with fire,

Inspire the thoughts of men to better things.

This has the love of man, of nature and of God;

The melody of a great organ, master played.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 21.

The Fear of Blindness

The fear of blindness like a shadow haunts
My steps, hangs like a cloud on every sky.
When cross my sight swift blurs of color fly,
And eyeballs burn, then dread of darkness daunts.
 Whene'er I go alone in blackest night
 When no stars shine on high, where no lamps glow,
 Seeing not even men "as trees," I know
 Thus life will be, if I should lose my sight.
To walk in darkness, nevermore to see
The sunlit land—
Never to read my books nor lovingly to gaze
On these faces that I hold most dear—
 I am afraid. Oh, God, it in thee lies—
 Save thou my eyes!

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 22.

Her Song

Long years ago she sang it,
 That plaintive, wistful song.
And strangely it hath haunted me
 Through many years and long.

For oft in the busy noons,
 In throng-ed streets and loud;
Or when the night is rich with stars
 Above the laughing crowd;

That wistful, haunting melody
 Comes floating down the years,
To throng my heart with memories
 And blind my eyes with tears.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 23.

Starlight

Light, that left your starry source a thousand years ago,
Reaching our earth in winter time and gleaming upon the snow,
What can you tell of your hurrying flight
Through the airless void and the trackless night?

And the light gave answer:
“Far over the sun and above the stars,
Beyond the gates of dawn,
Farther than eye of watcher,
Or thought of man hath gone,

There was I born of heat and flame,
And, shot like an arrow, I came, I came.
My flight was swift as the lightnings’ flash
Or the wild-tailed comet’s dash.

All alone in the pathless dark, blinded I went my way,
Held by a Power far greater than I—
Who holdeth the breadth of the boundless sky
In the hollow of His hand.”

To this, our little world, the stars
Eternal send their light;
Springtime and Summer, Autumn and Winter,
Day and Night,
*Somewhere ’tis sunset now, somewhere sunrise,
Somewhere the watchers gaze on starry skies.*

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 24.

Night's Two Children

Night has two children, Sleep and Death:

 Sleep standeth oft aloof;

We beckon her to come

 And give us quietness and rest,

Relief from all our troubled cares,

 Respite of grief.

Yet strange, Night's other child we fear and hate

 When but his shadow near we see.

Many, we say, he doth enfold within his cold embrace.

 Could we but know the truth, I deem

That we should find our own misjudgement plain,

 And death the fairer of the twain.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 25.

Rain

(A Fancy)

Steadily it rains.
From yonder chimney upward straight
The smoke arises,
And to me it seems
Like some Greek altar,
From which the burning incense rises toward Heaven,
Bearing a message to the gods.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 26.

Bocherini's Minuet

Adown the hall the music floated
Of violin soft, silver-noted.

 The merry minstrelsy
Far away and dim, enchanting
Like distant Elf-land music,
 Vague with mystery.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 26.

The Locked Door

Though our hearts were closely united
And we strove for a common goal,
Neither entered the *secret* room
Where dwelt the other's *soul*.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 27.

Transcending

To few, but few, is it given
To know in the course of years
The humor too great for laughter,
And a sorrow too deep for tears.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 27.

The Optimist

He made a perpetual motion machine
And showed me the model all polished and clean.
When I asked: “Will it go?”
He answered: “Well—no,
But it will when I’ve painted it green.”

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 27.

Love Poems

Cherry Bloom

“O lass o’ mine, sweet singing underneath the cherry bough,
Tell me truly which is fairer, cherry bloom or thou?
Pink and white of cherry blossom soft as snow,
Or thy cheeks with dainty color half aglow?”

But she blushes nor replies,
Mocking me with laughing eyes.

“Let *me* answer, lass o’ mine:
Both are soft and wondrous fine,
White and pink of cherry blossoms, color of thy cheek,
Are the same appearing now, may be equal for a week;
Yet blossoms fair soon pass away;
You will be as fair in autumn
As you are in merry May.
You are fairest, lass o’ mine.”

Still she blushes nor replies,
Mocking me with laughing eyes.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 28.

Her Beauty

“Beauty is only skin-deep,”
Says the cynic with a sneer.
He does not know,—
Yet, if ’twere so,
You’re quite thick skinned, my dear.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 29.

Two Weeks Without a Letter

I have no right to hope that my fate were better,
 Yet if she knew how I await her letter,—
If she knew every postman's coming
 Sets me a tingle, starts my heart's wild drumming;
And if she knew how when he passes by me
 My heart sinks down and drearily I hie me
Back to my work—if she but knew
 I think she'd write a chap, don't you?

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 29.

Her Eyes

I knew that I should meet her
 In the course of time—my fate;
And trusting in the future
 Was quite content to wait;
And I had little thought
 Of how my love would look,
 What she would wear,
 The color of her hair.

But oft I told myself,
 As in my thoughts I saw
A dream-like form
 Of nameless beauty—
 “*Her eyes are blue.*”

The wheel of fate turned round, we met,
 And Cupid’s bow rang twice.
She blushed and smiled,
 Her eyes cast down;
 Then met my gaze—
 Her eyes were brown.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 30.

Two Extremes

(The Co-Ed. and Last Year's "Grad.")

Quoth a lazy, loitering loafer to a serious, sober student:

"Now don't you think you're studying far harder than is prudent?"

"I am ambitious, sir," said she,

 "That's why I came to college,

To cram and jam my weary brain

 With quick forgotten knowledge."

Said the serious, sober student

 To the lazy, loitering loafer:

"Oh, isn't there some kind of work

 That you could rouse and go for?"

"She ought to learn relaxing and repose some way or other."

"I'd make him rise and hustle some,"

 says she, "were he my brother."

"You're one extreme. I'm one extreme;

 As such we're hard to beat,

Yet wouldn't it be jolly

 If we extremes could meet?"

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 31.

The Lingerer

It takes so long to say good-bye;
 I start to leave quite early, yet
I do not leave, I know not why—
 It takes so long to say good-bye.
I fear it is no use to try
 To tell you, unless Cupid's net—
It takes so long to say good-bye—
 I start to leave quite early—yet—!

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 32.

A Wise Horse

'Tis a long, long drive and the horse goes slow;
When but one hand is driving doth not the horse know?
So it takes a long time, and the horse needs no “whoa,”
To halt where the holly and mistletoe grow.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 32.

Unfolding

My love is like a flower, each day
 A petal new unfolds;
And no one knows or dares to say
 What in her heart she holds.

Not yet doth she know what it holds
 Within those petals fair;
But when her heart of hearts unfolds
 She'll find *my heart* dwells there.

Content I watch the petals part,
 Each day she grows more fair.
I wait till she shall know her heart
 And *my heart dwelling* there.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 33.

Their Honeymoon

His business called him far away,
And he wrote back to her: "Sweetheart,
Before my train had turned the curve,
I saw you walk away, your head bowed down.
This should not be, sweetheart.
He who has kept us, keeps us still:
I'll soon return, keep bright with smiles."
—They have been married thirty years,
One long, continued honeymoon.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 34.

“Cupid’s Merry-Go-Round”

I love Louise who loves but George,
George loves Annette, and she,
Although I’ve never loved her,
Still persists in loving me.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 35.

Parting

(With Interpolations)

Good Night,
Sweet Dreams,
 (How Trite it Seems.)

My Light,
Good Night,
 (How Light it Seems.)

Good Night,
Sweet Dreams.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 35.

The Weary Valentine

Distance lends enchantment, but it borrows many things.
It deadens many friendships; it clips poor Cupid's wings.

There's a cancelled, blackened stamp on the letter you receive,
It was clean and fresh and fine
When I sent it.

There's a faded violet in the letter—do not grieve,
It was fair and fresh and fine
When I sent it.

Here's a weary envelope that has traveled night and day,
Can't you give it in your kindness a nice restful place to stay,
Since I sent it?

Here's a humble little rhyme, sent you as a valentine,
Wishing you the day's sweet greetings—fresh they came from heart of mine,
When I sent it.

But Distance steals the freshness from my little valentine,
Please, Miss Amy, smile upon it and make it fresh and fine,
Since I sent it.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 36.

Fragments

(On Reading an Old Poem)

It was the *soul song* of a singer long since dead.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 37.

Two Doors

Since I have been close to the “Valley of the Shadow” I have thought often about death.

Life is a room with two doors: One we call “birth”, the other “death.”

Everyone who enters by “birth” must leave by “death.”

I am sure that the soul simply moves into a new dwelling place. Death is the door into the new home, and it is a larger, grander house lit by the presence of God.

“I go to prepare a place for you.”

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 37.

A Solitary Instance

One lived as he taught;
One preached forgiveness, and forgave;
One taught love, and loved;
One perfect example;
One perfect life;
One sacrificial death;
One Lord and Master.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 38.

A Silence

When one sweet song has died away
 It is not well to start anew
Until a time has passed;
 But let there be a silent space
Until the *echoes of the echoes* cease.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 38.

Princeton “Sem”

I’m getting ready to fight the moral battles of my country.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 39.

[Untitled: “A drop of ink”]

A drop of ink
Makes millions think—
The line it makes at evil hurled
May move the world.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 39.

After the Rain

The clouds upon the mountains
play at shadow pantomime.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 39.

(Two Songs)

From his soul he sent a message,
Hoping light and joy to yield,
As a bird at evening singing
In the forest's depths concealed.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 39.

(An Orange Grove)

A ten acre orchard seems a good deal bigger after you've worked around every tree than when you drove around it in a carriage.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 39.

Children's Poems

The Day-Time Stars

When I was very little, that's several years ago,
My papa said that every day, although they didn't show,
The big blue sky was full of stars—just like the sky at night,
But they can never shine to us because the sun's so bright.
I thought I'd make the sun give them a chance, if it were mine,
For I used to be so sorry for the stars that couldn't shine.
And now I've learned that as our earth each year goes round the sun,
The stars rise earlier each day, so that the very one
That's hidden all the day in June, six months from then will be
The star that shines through all the night where everyone can see.
So every star shines half the year; oh, isn't that just fine!
And now I'm not so sorry for the stars that cannot shine.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 40.

Lights and Shadows

I know the shadows fear the sun,
 They hide behind each stone and tree;
Yes, when out-doors I play and run
 A shadow hides and runs by me.

But when the sun has gone away
 They lose their fear and fill the air;
Then it is Night instead of Day—
 And shadows are most everywhere.

I think they're awful mean and bad,
 They stare so wild and black at night,
I'm not afraid, but still I'm glad
 When mother comes and brings the light.

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 41.

Going and Coming

“O, sober lads and lassies, why do you walk so slow?
The sky is clear, the air is cool,
Yet wearily you go.”
They make reply as they pass by:
“We’re just a-going to school,
—We’ve got to go to school.”

“O merry lads and lassies, why do you run so fast?
Such active work this warm June day,
Should be against the rule.”
With much surprise a lad replies:
“We’re *going home from school*,
—*We’ve just got out of school*.”

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 42.

“I Spy”

Clearly and sweetly comes the cry:
“All sorts in free! All sorts in free!”
Shrilled in the children’s game, “I spy,”
And makes it’s wandering way to me.

While darkness falls when night is nigh,
The children play and shout with glee:
Clearly and sweetly comes the cry:
“All sorts in free! All sorts in free!”

And sweet as a mother’s lullaby,
As clear as bells rung merrily,
With singsong melody they try
To bring those back who hide and flee.
Clearly and sweetly comes the cry:
“All sorts in free! All sorts in free!”

At dusk when Life’s last game is o’er,
Across the waves that beat the shore,
Oh, may this message come to me,
“All sorts in free. All sorts in free!”

Publication. First published in *Wild Clover*. Los Angeles: privately printed, 1911, p. 43.

His Master

Story

When the two kennels were installed in the back yard, the neighbors, who foresaw their slumbers broken by nocturnal duets, were mightily displeased. But after the two dogs had been there a month, and Leo, the old mastiff, had been petted and slapped by every child on the block, and Jack, the collie, had captured all hearts by his winning ways, Mrs. Hornby, who “ran the boarding house” across the street, was heard to declare enthusiastically: “Them two dogs is perfect gintlemin. I would me b’yes would take lessons iv them. Sure, Jack is a young gintleman, and Leo is an old gintleman, if they are dogs, be-gorrah.”

The two dogs were allowed the free run of the yard. Leo was a veritable Nestor among dogs. A giver of sage counsel, old and stiff, he loved to lie for hours in the warm sun, dreaming of former days. You would think he was sound asleep, if a half-uttered bark or a rumbling growl did not make you aware that he was acting over in his mind some scene of early life. Jack, with ceaseless activity, scoured the yard and investigated everything he could get his nose into. He would try to induce Leo to play with him, dancing up to him in fierce fun and growling as if in anger. Sometimes the mastiff, having weight and skill in his favor, would spring at him and tumble him head over heels, before he knew what had happened. Jack would return to the conflict with unabated vigor, but Leo would keep him off with thrusts of his big paw. He never learned how to break that guard. Or the two dogs would lie facing each other and gnaw bones, conversing as dumb children do, by signs which are unintelligible to our undiscerning eyes.

But most of all Jack enjoyed the long walks to the hills with his Master. When he saw his Master coming home in the afternoon ready for a walk, he would spring wildly into the air and bark with a delirium of joy. Leo would never accompany them. He would hobble as far as the corner and in spite of Jack’s persuasions halt there and wistfully watch them depart, and finally turn and limp back to his kennel to lie in the sun. He was too old for such jaunts.

Then Jack and his Master would hurry away to the hills and the “breadth of the open air.” Those were the times Jack loved the best. In perfect fellowship, the two would wander over the hills and far away on exploring trips. Sometimes Jack would run in great circles and come racing back, his eyes sparkling with the

wild joy of living, and unfettered freedom. Or he would walk by his Master's side, trying to express his love by touching his nose to his Master's hand and by looking up into his face.

Often it would be pitch dark when they returned. Jack would be bubbling over with the incidents of the excursion, for everything was new and wonderful to him, and he was interested in all that he saw. And Leo would listen and appreciate.

"I used to go out walking with his elder brother," he would say. "Those were days worth living."

Then he would rouse up and tell Jack of the night he fought with the burglar until help came, or how he swam out in the lake and saved his master's little sister. He told these stories simply and quietly, for heroes never brag. Or he might tell Jack the traditions of the old days when men and dogs first began to work together, driving the wild beasts in the hunt or watching over the herds by night, and queer unbelievable tales of dogs in other lands that ran wild and fought for themselves and had nothing to do with men: legends and tales handed down from generation to generation through centuries of captivity, full of keen wisdom and deep insight.

II. "My Master Is My God"

Many things puzzled Jack. He could not understand why he was not allowed in the house, or why every one did not like him. Every day he was mystified by something, although he tried to explain. All days were alike to him, and yet his Master made a difference. For days at a time his Master would go off with many books, and there would be a light in his room late at night. Then his Master would walk with him all afternoon in the hills, and the very next day would start out all dressed up and very solemn, and would not let Jack go with him. Once Jack disobeyed, and followed unobserved, keeping far behind. And his Master entered a big building, where many others were entering. But when Jack tried to follow, a man came and drove him away. Whereat he went home much subdued.

Leo explained as best he could: "He goes to worship his God."

"But I do not understand," said Jack. "What is his God?"

It was a hard problem even for Leo, who was wise.

"I don't know much about it," he confessed. "But his God made everything for him and looks after him to see that everything is all right. So he loves him because he is good to him and he will do anything for him."

"My Master is my God," said Jack. "He does everything for me. I love him with all my love."

"Yes," said Leo, "he is our God."

III. "Two's Company; Three's a Crowd"

But Jack liked especially those trips that ran so that he could stop and play with the deaf and dumb children. He would romp with them or let them pet him as long as his Master would wait.

"I do so love to be with them," he often told Leo at night. "They can't talk any more than we can. And they have to make signs and speak with their eyes and hands. I know how they must wish to speak. Oh, if I only could talk!"

One day Jack came home disconsolate.

"What's the matter?" asked Leo.

"Why," answered Jack, "we were at the place where the children-who-talk-as-we-do are, and I was romping with them when a young lady came out of one of the buildings.

"My Master said: 'Have you been teaching them something useful today? You must be very weary. Come and take a walk and get rested.' So she went. And they just walked so slow and talked. They never looked at me or called, and he didn't throw sticks for me to chase or anything. She didn't seem to like what he said, for she'd look away and her face would get red, and she'd hardly say anything to him for the longest time.

"Then she must have slipped crossing one of those gullies, for he caught hold of her to keep her from falling down, and then they walked slower than ever. Never looked at me at all. I was so lonesome.

"By and by they sat down on an old seat up there. Master called me.

"Jack, come and meet Miss Marguerite'—and there I'd been with them half an hour before he'd thought of it. I came, but I didn't want to be friends with her. But before I knew it she was holding my head in both her hands and

looking at me so nice—why, I just couldn’t help liking her. So I wagged my tail and licked her hands.

“Master said: ‘Smart dog; he knows on which side his bread’s buttered.’

“Then she kind of slapped him. And I growled—just a little—gently, you know. Master said to her, ‘Well, after all, I guess he’ll protect me, so I won’t be henpecked.’

“After that they talked a lot. I didn’t understand a bit of it. They never paid any attention to me. Then she said: ‘Jack, you can be our chaperon.’ What’s a chaperon for? Don’t think I was ever called that before. So I went off up the hill and left them by themselves. Was that the right thing for a chaperon to do?

“Got up on a ledge of rock. Right below me there were three ground squirrels feeding, and they didn’t see me or smell me, because I was alone. I jumped down. Whoop, you ought to’ve seen ’em run! Laughed till I couldn’t wag my tail.

“Came back and found them still sitting there. And they walked home slower than a fat poodle. That’s what made me so late. She’s real nice, but I wish she could walk without stumbling, so Master wouldn’t have to hold her all the time to keep her from falling. And they never paid any attention to me.”

“Yes,” said Leo, “I know the symptoms. He’s in love. When I used to go out with his brother they did the same way. But he went with three before he found the right one. You can be thankful you’re allowed to go at all.”

Thus it was for a long time. Jack hardly took pleasure in his walks any more. He was out of place in the new order of things. He knew his Master would have enjoyed the walks just as well without his presence. They were very good to him when they paid any attention at all. But he had ceased to be the center of attraction and was lonesome, horribly lonesome. He wandered off and investigated tracks and scents and burrows without being missed.

IV. "Greater Love Hath No Man"

Then one day—Jack never knew how or why—the old order of things was resumed. She walked with them no more, and dog and Master went off again for long, rapid walks. Jack would have been perfectly happy, but that his Master was so irritable and morose. Sometimes he became his former self and played with the dog, throwing sticks for him to chase, and indulging in mad runs with him. The dog could not comprehend why—but he would run his cold nose in his Master's hand and look up, as if to say: "You still have me, Master."

So month after month went by, until it became too hot for even the irrepressible Jack to care for long and tiresome tramps. They went out less often now and followed the beaten roads.

"Oh," said Jack. "I wish I could talk! I met her on the street and went home with her, and she kissed me and cried and said: 'Jack, tell him it was all a mistake. I love him just the same.' And I can't tell him. I wish I could talk."

So the Master never knew the message the dog had received.

Jack was in his prime now, a handsome collie. The long tramps kept him in good condition. One day he and his Master were returning from a walk in the hills, and were going home along the road they had traveled so often with Miss Marguerite. Of a sudden, rounding a curve they came upon her. Jack ran toward her, but she gave him no heed. Dejectedly he turned back. "Probably it's because my hair is shedding," he thought, "and she doesn't want to get all mussed up." His Master had straightened up and was walking rapidly, not looking her way. She had tilted back her head and was apparently unconscious of their presence. They were passing in silence.

At that instant there came a cry up the road: "Mad dog! Mad dog!" and a great brute, with froth dripping from his mouth, came charging down upon them. Jack knew and trembled. His mother and Leo had told him of this terrible poisonous lunacy. Once before he had seen such a sight.

He was starting to run—anything to escape—when he heard her scream and halted. From the corner of his eye he saw his Master snatch her in his arms and start for the fence; saw that they were directly in the brute's path, knew in a flash that they would be too late, and charged like a hero against the oncomer.

It was over in an instant. The brute ran on in silence and Jack lay there on the road badly bitten.

V. The Madness

Everything that could be done was done for him. His Master jerked out a knife and cut out the flesh around the bites, and later, at home, they burnt the wounds with a red-hot iron.

The white-haired physician came and brought a specialist with him.

"It's little use," he said. "He was bitten too deep. You had better kill him now and end his misery."

"Is there no hope?" asked Jack's Master.

"There is a possibility."

"Then I won't kill him till it's sure. I can't believe he'll have it. I just can't believe it."

Then Jack was chained up in the yard and Leo's kennel moved beyond reach of his chain. His wounds itched as they healed. He was possessed with a constant restlessness. He paced back and forth the full length of his chain, as a chained tiger in the night. Why could he not go for a walk? Uneasy and irritable, he fretted constantly. Even his Master could not calm him.

Jack knew his Master cared, but there were many things these days he did not understand. Why did his Master wear heavy gloves when he fed him? Why were there no more long walks? Leo would tell him nothing. Once Miss Marguerite came and petted him, but his Master had muzzled him first, so that he could not even lick her hand.

At night Jack could see his Master's shadow cross and recross the curtain, for the Master loved his dog and was worried. Frequently he would come into my room and run over the whole subject. Either because they had treated the bites so quickly, or some other reason, the malady was slow in developing. And his Master would take courage.

"He would have had it by this time if he were going to have it," he would argue, hoping against hope.

But Jack was growing more irritable every day. He was afraid of—he knew not what, and angry—he knew not why. He dragged his clanking chain over the ground with increasing restlessness. Then one afternoon everything became dry and parching. The ground was hot as fire. His throat seemed to be burning. He suffered from thirst and desired eagerly to drink, but he choked and could not swallow. He could scarcely breathe. His head throbbed till his eyes started from their sockets. Everything was burning. Everyone was against him. All around were red people trying to kill him. He tried to run, for he was afraid, but his chain held him. He turned and snapped and snarled at them, rolling over and over in his agony. Even Leo was against him. He ran toward him, biting in wild fury, but the chain threw him back—

He lay on the ground, weak and sick. The world was natural again. He seemed as one coming from a dream.

“What was it, Leo? Was it the Madness?”

“Yes, it was the Madness.”

“And I snapped at you. You know I didn’t mean it, Leo. All the world was red and burning.”

The next day Jack snapped at his Master. He was himself again in an instant, cowering along the ground, with his great eyes looking up in mute appeal and apology. But the mischief was done: his Master knew now beyond a doubt that he had the Madness.

“Yes, Jack, old man,” he said, “I know you didn’t mean it,” and hastily putting down the plate of food, he ran into the house.

He was face to face with the inevitable. It was best that Jack’s suffering should not be prolonged. He came into my room.

“I want to borrow your gun. And—come with me. I may need you.”

When Jack saw the gun he understood and quivered. He looked up at his Master with piteous entreaty. Life is sweet even to the last. There was no trace of madness in his eyes, and he looked as intelligent and loving as he ever had in his life.

His Master broke down.

“Here,” he said to me, “you take it and—be quick. I was a fool to try. Oh Jack, my dog! My dog!”

My eyes were so wet I could scarcely see along the sights.

...

In the home of a Berkeley graduate you may see the picture of a fine collie. Below it is written simply: “Jack. May 13, 1896.” But you must not ask your host to tell you about it. Should you approach the subject, his wife will say:

“He once saved my life,” and deftly change the subject. Their son answers to the name of “Jack.” Some people think it is almost a crime that they should name a boy after a dog. But they think Jack is one of the sweetest names in the world.

Leo died two years later, peacefully and painlessly, with his Master holding his head. At the last he gave a little happy bark, as he used to when he saw Jack coming home. *I trust there is a heaven for dogs.*

...

Only once in the years that have passed did my friend break the silence that shrined his devoted collie. In one of those rare moments of confidence between men, he said:

“My deepest sorrow has always been that Jack did not understand, didn’t know that his noble sacrifice saved the dearest one in all the world to me. And he could not know that the end was the greatest kindness to him.”

“Man, man!” I answered, “the noblest effort in life is doing duty as it comes, without thought of reward. And Jack reached the very apex of unselfishness through *love*.”

Tears sprang to his eyes; he wrung my hand, and turning to the picture exclaimed: “Greater love hath no man.”

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A Temptation in The Wilderness

Story

*The Devil hath spoken him fair and free—
“By me men’s lives are bought and sold
For Power and Fame and the Love of gold.
Now what will you take for your soul?” quoth he,
“What will you take for your soul?”*

The Overland was late again. The colored waiters lounged in the shadow of the station and lazily teased a young terrier. Out in the blazing sun, two little Mexicans played a noisy game of teeter-totter on the baggage truck, meanwhile eating red peppers and often sniffing hungrily at the dense smell of onions and coffee that floated through the restaurant windows. East of the station, the scattered adobe houses stood lifeless and forbidding as white sepulchers.

An old cat crawled from under the platform. The terrier ran at her, but remembering previous experiences, kept at a safe distance and with excited awkwardness, danced up and down, yelping in high pitched puppy tones. The negroes laughed.

The owner of the dog seized the opportunity.

“Yo’ come hear, Benjamin Rastus. She ain’t gwine to hurt yo’, yo’ insignifercant conglomeration ob audacity. Don’ yo’ know it’s too hot fo’ a fool pup like yo’ to be exercisin’ that obstreperous? Shet yo’ noise.”

A little girl with a dusty package came down the road toward the station. The waiters eyed her curiously.

“Der’s little Miss Lucy comin’ down to sell her pa’s books.”

“She ain’t sol’ a one las’ time. I wonder would she get spunky if I was to give her a biscuit or a sandwich?”

“She don’ get as much to eat as that’er cinder cat, but she won’ take nuthin’. Her folks was quality.”

The child climbed up the steps and dropped her package on the bench. The cat came purring and rubbed against her. She stooped and petted it.

“Goo’ day, Miss Lucy. Powerful hot, jus’ wiltin’, ain’t it? You all well?”

“Father isn’t so well as he was. It is so hot and he misses his books.”

“Might sorry to hear it, Miss Lucy. Ther’ was a gen’leman lef’ a book here yesterda’ an’ I saved it fo’ yo’ to take to yo’ pa.”

“Oh, thank you, Charlie. Father will be so pleased.”

Here the station agent came to the window and with a great show of fierceness drove the Mexican boys from their play. But when he saw the child he smiled and called cheerily:

“You’re just in time, Lucy. Here comes the Overland. Good luck to you today. Don’t be bashful.”

The station came to life at the sound of the train. The waiters hurried indoors to their places. The cat sprang under the platform. With a rush and roar and clang of bell, the great locomotive came panting along the hot rails and stopped at the end of the platform. A man in uniform began to beat a gong in front of the restaurant. The porters swung off the train, and after them, like cattle stampeding through a corral, the passengers swarmed into the eating room. Then the waiters hurried around shouting orders and the impatient crowd buzzed and chattered.

The little girl stood by the door and offered copies of a book to the passersby. Few of them even noticed her. They were dusty and heated, provoked by the lateness of the train and in a hurry to get served. Those who paused did nothing but glance at her and the book she offered them, and pass on into the restaurant with a surly, “No, I don’t want it,” or a half sympathetic smile of negation.

Then almost at once the tide of people turned back. Men and women began to leave the place. far more irritable than when they entered. As they came out, they complained at the stuffiness of the station, the poorness of the food, and the heat and desolation of the place. The child went around from group to group and in an almost inarticulate voice tried to sell the book.

“Buy a souvenir of California,” she said, “only a quarter. My father wrote the poems. The book costs only two bits.”

The child’s voice sounded pitiful, but the passengers were in no mood to buy. The professional beggars have calloused our hearts to the voice of misery. She went unheeded and no one bought.

A girl of her own age, dressed in the latest style and evidently uncomfortable, gazed at her with critical eyes. Complacently she noted her thinness, the cheap, worn dress and her ragged and dusty shoes. The child had endured the attitude of the others, but to be thus held in contempt by another girl was too much, and without a sound she fled out of range around the side of the station and dropped in a heap on a bench.

“Why, what’s this?” exclaimed a large woman who sat there, vigorously fanning herself with a huge palm-leaf. “Are you ill? Oh, you’re the child that’s been standing around selling that book, aren’t you? Let’s see one. Hum—nothing but verses.”

The child scanned her uncertainly. Although the voice was not unkind, instinctively she felt a dislike for this overdressed, talkative woman. But here was a possible sale. It was her duty to stay. She remembered her father’s parting words: “Be a brave girl, Lucy. Do the best you can. I don’t know where our supper’s coming from unless you sell a book today.”

“Yes, ma’am, it’s a book of poems my father wrote. They are considered very fine by critics and students.”

“Oh, I never read such stuff,” said the woman carelessly. “Who is your father and what are you doing here?”

“It’s all there on the title page and the things he used to be. We had to come here because father had catarrh and hay fever. But he’s got well now.”

At the mention of hay fever the woman showed an active interest. She ceased to fan herself and opened the book.

“Why, that’s interesting, child. Your father’s name is—oh, here it is, James Raymond Anderson, ex-school—hum—hum, some time professor in the California State—hum—hum—hum. Well I guess most everybody in California or the West has heard of your father. And he’s had hay-fever and got over it? How much are your books?”

“Only a quarter, ma’am.”

“Well, I’ll buy one. I’ve got the change. Is this the only one you’ve sold today?”

“Yes,” said the child.

"I should like very much to meet your father. Where do you live?"

"The last house down the road. But you haven't time. Your train will go."

"Just wait a minute and I'll see." She came back, puffing. "There's a freight late this afternoon with a caboose. I'm only going to the next town tonight, anyway. Are you ready to come now?"

The child was mystified. She wondered as she started down the road, "Why does this woman want to see my father?" But she could find no answer. The two walked side by side in silence, the child stretching awkwardly in the attempt to keep up with her companion. The woman fanned herself as she walked. They were both almost gasping for breath when the child halted. "This is where we live," she said. "Father, here is some one who wishes to see you."

"All right, Lucy," and with the words an old man appeared at the doorway. He was bent and feeble; his hair and beard were white; his face was kindly; his white canvas clothes were worn and frayed. All this the woman noted at a glance.

"You are welcome. Come in and sit down while I get you a drink. It is a parching day," and his manner was almost patriarchal as he slowly brought a tin cup full of water from the Olla and handed it to her.

"My name," said the woman, "is Mrs. Robert Lowden. I met your daughter at the station, and as I had heard of you so often and enjoyed your poems so much"—the child cast a startled glance at her—"I gladly embraced the opportunity of meeting you, even through this heat and dust."

"Mrs. Lowden, you honor me greatly. It does an old man's heart good to hear a word of flattery. We have few visitors here and I keep little track of the outside world."

"You are in a desolate and lonely place. Why do you live in this forsaken wilderness?"

He looked astonished at being questioned, but answered simply as a child.

"I came here on account of my health. I was afflicted with catarrh and hay-fever. But since I came here, the dry air and heat have cured me entirely. I have much to be thankful for."

“Yes, that is what your daughter told me, and why I came. I am deeply interested in a company which has just put on the market a remedy for catarrh and all such diseases.”

“But I need no such thing now. I am perfectly well.”

“I can see that. You are certainly looking well. But we are going to get out a circular next month to advertise our medicine. It will be a simple statement of what the medicine can do, and we want some testimonials of what it has done. The public won’t touch a new thing now-a-days unless it is well advertised by testimonials, and we haven’t time to introduce it slowly and locally before we commence our campaign. So I am getting credentials from old residents and prominent people. It was for that purpose I came to see you today.”

“You wish a testimonial from me? How can I recommend that which I have not tried?”

“You do not need to do that. I can leave a bottle with you and you may take a few doses. It is absolutely harmless, I assure you. Then you can write an entirely truthful statement like: ‘I was afflicted with catarrh and hay-fever for years, but since I used your medicine have had no trouble at any season of the year.’ That’s true, every word of it. It isn’t what you say, but your name we want. Mr. R. B. Tomplinson gave me a fine testimonial yesterday without even testing my medicine.”

“That ‘Bob’ Tomplinson did such a thing, is no reason why I should.”

She hurried on with her set speech. “Certainly not. I did not expect it of you. But when you have tried it, you can give us a carefully worded letter with a clear conscience. This discovery will save many a man’s life, if he can only be persuaded to use it. The sooner we get this before the public, the sooner we shall reach these sufferers. I but ask you to aid in this work of mercy.”

“Madame, under the circumstances it is impossible.”

“I can make it well worth your while. As a recompense for your trouble, I will gladly make you out a check for, say, twenty-five dollars.”

The old man sat bolt upright in his chair, and though his voice was low, it had in it the ring of steel, “Madame, it is useless to attempt to bribe me.”

“You misinterpret me, Mr. Anderson. You put down nothing but the truth and I pay you for your trouble, as I would pay you for doing clerical work in

our office. It is simply pay for value received. I know you need it," she said brutally. "Your daughter unconsciously gave me a clear understanding of your situation. Another thing! We need a man of your literary abilities to assist in editing our advertising work. The pay is not large, but you could live on it comfortably and send your daughter to school, instead of having her peddle books in a railway station."

"I will gladly do any honest work I am able to perform," he began eagerly. "I would gladly accept such an offer."

"I will use all my influence to get it for you, provided of course, you favor me by using some of the medicine and give me a letter of approval."

"Madame, you tempt me almost beyond my strength. But I have told you and I reaffirm it, I cannot do such a thing. I cannot. Do not tempt me farther. Lucy, will you go and point out the hotel to the lady?"

"First, Lucy, please get me a cup of water. It is so hot."

"Now, sir," she continued in the interval gained by the child's absence, "I give you one last chance. Do you deliberately choose to remain here and keep that child in this hopeless drudgery, or do you choose to give her the education and comforts she needs?"

She paused, but there was no answer, simply a silent gesture toward the door. The old man's face was white and drawn.

"Sir, if you lose this chance, you have no hope nor prospects. Do you accept my offer?"

Still no answer save the silent gesture.

"I offer you money and you spurn it. I offer you a livelihood and you refuse. If you should die here, now or soon, the child Lucy will be kept here, penniless, friendless and alone in this desolation."

"I know it, I know it." The words came involuntarily, drawn from him in his agony.

"For her sake cannot you forget your scruple and accept my offer?"

"Here, madame, is the water," said the child.

"Your answer?"

The old man rose to his feet.

“Madame, I cannot. For *her* sake, by whose name you seek to tempt me—for *her* sake I must leave the name of James Anderson pure and stainless.” And it was the James Anderson of former years who stood there, speaking with the voice and power that once held great audiences spellbound. Then a look of gentleness, even of compassion illumined his face. He repeated softly: “I must keep my name spotless to the end.” He raised his hands as in benediction. “And now,” he said, “that I must go so soon to my eternal home, I pray the Father to forgive thee for so sorely tempting an old and feeble man. Go in peace.”

In her vexation and anger the woman turned and threw the water into the face of the unoffending child, and hurled the cup to the floor. Then her face aflame with fury she hurried from the house.

The old man sank back in his chair. Without a thought for herself the child ran and brought him water. Then, climbing up beside him, she began to stroke his hair.

“Father,” she said in a hushed voice, “that woman told you she had enjoyed your poems, and at the station she said she never read them.”

“Yes, yes, my child.”

“Did I do wrong to bring her here, father? I didn’t know she would be this way.”

“It was all right, dear. You are father’s comfort, Lucy, so brave and helpful.”

“What shall I get for supper, father?”

“My child, I have no money.”

“But she bought a book. See, here is the quarter.”

“And all the time she was here I could not help thinking, ‘you must send your child hungry to bed tonight.’ Don’t cry, Lucy; surely, the Lord doth provide.”

But with the strain removed, his self-control gave way and the flood-gates broke, the sound was heard in the little white adobe house of the mingled sobbing of a little child and an old, old man.

Without, the afternoon sun beat down savagely on the lifeless plain and lit with a lurid glow the form of a woman tramping sullenly through the dust toward the station.

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Biographical

Memorial notice by G. N. and M. M. N.

John Martin Newkirk, author of the poems, stories and sketches contained in this book, was the son of Dr. Garrett Newkirk and Martha Martin Newkirk. He was born at Wenona, Illinois, October 2, 1879. When he was nearly four years old the family moved to Chicago, where he grew to manhood, attending the schools of Forestville, Kenwood, and Hyde Park High School, from which he graduated in 1899. The family having removed to Pasadena, California, the same year he entered Occidental College, Los Angeles, for his freshman course. The following year he went to Berkeley, and entered the State University of California, from which he graduated three years later, 1903, with the degree of A. B.

During his High School course and also at Berkeley he specialized in English literature and won distinction for original work. The poem, "Ballad of Valma Bay" and the story, "A Temptation in the Wilderness," won the Irving M. Scott first and second prizes. While attending the University he was an active member of the Y. M. C. A., and helpful in the work of missions in San Francisco.

Having chosen the ministry for his life work, in the autumn of 1903 he entered the Theological Seminary at Princeton, N. J., from which he was graduated in May, 1906. During his second and third years at the Seminary he also took a post-graduate course in Princeton University, and in June, 1906, received the degree of M. A.

At about this time he was taken ill, and it was soon determined that his disease was tuberculosis.

He returned to the home of his parents, at Upper Altadena, California, on the foothills of the Sierra Madre range of mountains. Here no favorable condition seemed to be lacking for his recovery, but nothing availed to stay the march of the insidious enemy. And yet upon the cloud that hovered near there seemed to be the ever present bow of hope, and the home life was always bright.

With a large fund of pleasant reminiscences, bright wit and a cheerful spirit, with an outlook on the world each week through the best of current literature, with much of Bible study and a heart of faith and trust, his companionship gave help and comfort to other lives; even to the last day, April 1, 1910, when he was

promoted to the higher sphere.

From first to last we may say of our son that his life was a blessing to all around him. From a child he “went about doing good.” In every school he attended, in Church and Sunday School, Christian Endeavor or Young Men’s Christian Association, his sweet and kindly influence was felt and appreciated.

During his seminary years he preached in various places within the range of a few hundred miles. He was greatly interested in foreign missions and did much to stimulate activities in that direction among the students, and he was ever ready to speak effectively for the cause where opportunity offered. And he was ever enthusiastic, always hopeful.

His cheerful spirit pervades his literary work, a part of which is published in this little book in accordance with his wish.

G. N.
M. M. N.

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A Few Extracts from Tributes Received

Memorial tributes

“John Newkirk—he is among the pleasant memories of my life, for he came into it at that delightful period of a boy’s journey, between High School and College—a land of visions and a time of hopes, for the days of dreams were not yet. The visions were high and the hopes were fair, and all his life grew into harmony with his early soul-revelations. A manly man—he was strong in the might of gentleness. In the glory of the morning time, it was told him that his sun should go down while it was yet day, yet he lived his life as one whose years should count the full tale of three score and ten. Not with the defiant recklessness of the fatalist, but with the calm courage and lofty purpose of one who is set to fight in the vanguard—God’s pioneer who is sent ahead to clear a way for fainting hearts and weary feet. To the end of his appointed ministry he was of good cheer—happy to do his Lord’s work in a day, or a year, or in a long-drawn pilgrimage of years, and gladly content to loose his hand from the plough and go home when his Father called. A brave, true, noble life that beautifully fulfilled its destiny. Oft as I saw him in the days of his pathetic, unequal, yet triumphant battle with conquering death, there came into my mind a tribute written about another hero of the faith, nearly two thousand years ago: ‘And all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes upon him saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.’”

Rev. Robt. J. Burdette
Pasadena.

“I remember him very well in the Seminar Class, where he did his work with fidelity and intelligence and a fine spirit. I count it a great privilege to come into contact with the lives of young men like your son, and to have personal relations with them; for whether their lives are spent here or in some world that we cannot see, I firmly believe that they are going on in good and brave and helpful service.”

Henry van Dyke,
Princeton, N. J.

“John Newkirk was a rare young man. He was one in a thousand. The last service I conducted in Pasadena was John’s funeral service, and of all my ten years’ duties there I think it was the hardest, for I loved him as a brother and

on that occasion I simply lost control of myself.

“John had a brilliant mind. He certainly would have made a deep mark on his age if his life had been spared. He had a strong literary sense; he had the poet’s insight and the artist’s touch. Some of his lines are worthy of a master. But it was his sweet simplicity, his noble spirit, his patience his optimism, his cheery good nature, his pure and Christ-like love that appealed most to me. He was genuine through and through. His earnestness was contagious, his spirit winsome.

“He made a heroic fight. Through pain and disappointment and set-back he never flinched. Not to defeat did he fall—to victory rather, to fullness, to growth, to glory.

“He was a graduate from the school of Christ.”

Rev. Malcolm J. McLeod,
New York.

“My memory of John Newkirk is of a beautiful and genuinely religious soul, who loved all good things—most his friends, and next to them the wayward ones he knew of. He seemed too gentle to shed blood in religious crusade, and the mystic in religion and life was too real to him for the measuring rod and crucible. But he taught us who knew him the worth of purity, of sacred things, and of gentle living—and he still teaches us!”

Dr. Norman Bridge,
Los Angeles.

From a letter written by Mrs. Katherine Girling, of Chicago, one of the author’s teachers in High School:

“I have distinct pictures in memory of John Newkirk as a boy, reciting in class. When you consider that I knew in all more than two thousand young people, it is not trivial that I should recall as a happy possession the vision of a young fellow making a recitation, a scrap of conversation, an aphorism, a conclusion quite his own after class.

“When in 1900 I was in Paris, at the Exposition in the American section in the educational exhibit, I saw framed as an example of English teaching—the only one then from America—a poem John had written, ‘All Sorts in Free’ (‘I Spy’). Was it not indicative of his mental attitude, of his largeness of feeling, that he should have taken that as a theme?”

“Few boys are born with the qualities of mind and heart that John displayed from the first. He was a fine interpreter, a deep thinker, and he will leave a void, not only in your hearts, but in the hearts of his hosts of friends. I shall always be thankful that I was one of them.”

Dr. C. N. Johnson,
Chicago, Ill.

“If the value of a life is to be measured by the good it does, rather than by its term of years, then the life of your son John must be ranked high in the scale of worth. The influence of his sweet spirit, brave in adversity, has been far-reaching. This must be the testimony of each of his wide circle of acquaintances. Such an influence extends and multiplies till the angels themselves cannot compute the total good resulting to the world.”

Mrs. F. M.
Altadena, Cal.

“My little intercourse with your son was sufficient to show me the profound earnestness of his religious life.”

James A. B. Scherer,
President Throop Institute,
Pasadena, Cal.

“Everyone who knew him will keep him in mind for his cheerfulness, his helpfulness, his friendly attitude toward everyone, his deep Christian faith and willingness to give himself for the uplifting of his fellow men. Surely in such an age of doubt and pessimism, it is something to have such an example for even a few years.”

Mrs. J. S. D.,
Princeton, N. J.

“A life so consecrated must have been useful to the Master. Life is not counted by length of days. That ‘life is long that answers life’s great end.’”

Mrs. C. E. F.
Chicago.

“John Martin Newkirk would have had a brilliant career as an Ambassador of Christ, perhaps in foreign lands. His career was cut short, but not until he had performed a noble ministry, inspiring many by his patience, his courage, and his helpfulness. Like the Master to whose service he had

dedicated his life ‘he went about doing good,’—how much cannot be measured this side of eternity. But “To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die.”

(In Pasadena Star).

“Such a sweet life he lived—it was all written upon his face, in the depth of his lovely eyes and in his tender smile.”

Mrs. S. R. O.
Pasadena.

“I never saw a more beautiful evidence of perfect understanding and comradeship than a look or a smile that passed between John and his mother.”

Dr. C. B.,
New York.

“You may be familiar with a story told me through a former Princeton student. A young man of great promise who had just left the University to die, as I recall the story, was speaking with his father at his bed one day when the father broke completely down. The son laid his hand on the father’s head and said: ‘Father, that isn’t the Princeton spirit: “Cheer when you’re losing” is our motto.’ This is the Christian spirit too, isn’t it? And we know we can never lose.”

Rev. F. C. R.
Phoenix, Ariz.

“When he told me he had decided to be a Christian minister, I believed that he would take a place among the best and most successful winners of souls. We remember the happy hours we spent together in your Chicago home when John was a mere boy. His shining eyes and happy face always seemed to say to me: ‘Mr. Morton, I’m right glad you are here and I hope you will soon come again.’”

Rev. C. M. M.
Oak Park, Ill.

“I am glad I knew your son. I find myself remembering his face with a smile on it. He struggled and yet he smiled; what a lesson to remember—for all of us.”

Mrs. G. B.
Pasadena.

“It is something fine we may say, that in spite of suffering we may still fulfill God’s purposes of usefulness, for John’s sermons were preached, though not as he had planned to deliver them—sermons of courage, of patience, of trust, the greatest themes a minister ever handles; and they were masterfully handled by him, not in words, as by other preachers, but in his life. Even in the short time that I knew him they struck home and have given me courage.”

Miss S. B.
Salem, Ore.

“So the long fight for life is over! It was a brave one, and if it could only have been one of victory! For the soul it is!”

Mrs. E. R. G.,
Chicago.

“John was a great boy. I have been thinking of those happy days when he and I played together on Forty-fourth Street. His room there with the scrap book, stamp album and the writing table became very dear to me through the years that we chummed together. What an enjoyable chap he was! Thoroughly sincere and earnest, yet he saw the happy side of things and made others see as he saw.”

Thomas J. Hair,
Chicago, Ill.

“And what a beautiful home life he had! Father, mother and son—those three had the same love of literature, art and music, the same lofty ideals in common, of faith, hope and love. Perhaps God gave to them so much of happiness because of the time soon coming when one should be translated to that infinitely higher home of the spirit. John was finer grained than most men. We admired his intellect, and commended his devotion to works of goodness and mercy. His faith and trust in his Master through years of illness were an inspiration to us all.”

Dan S. Hammack,
Los Angeles.
(A Princeton chum)

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Bibliography

Selected primary and secondary sources

Book and periodical titles are italicized throughout.

Works by the Author

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Works About the Author

Garrett Newkirk and Martha Martin Newkirk. "Biographical." In *Wild Clover*, 1911.

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Colophon

Publication and production notes

This critical reading edition was edited by Brian Kim Stefans for The Text-Tech Papers, Los Angeles, in 2026, as part of *Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry*. The poems were reset from the source pages identified in the publication notes and datasheet. The book was composed in EB Garamond on a cream field at 6 × 9 inches. The cover uses original abstract artwork prepared for this edition.