



SAMUEL HAWKINS MARSHALL BYERS

Collected Poems

BOOK POEMS, PERIODICAL VERSE, AND ARCHIVAL RECORD

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

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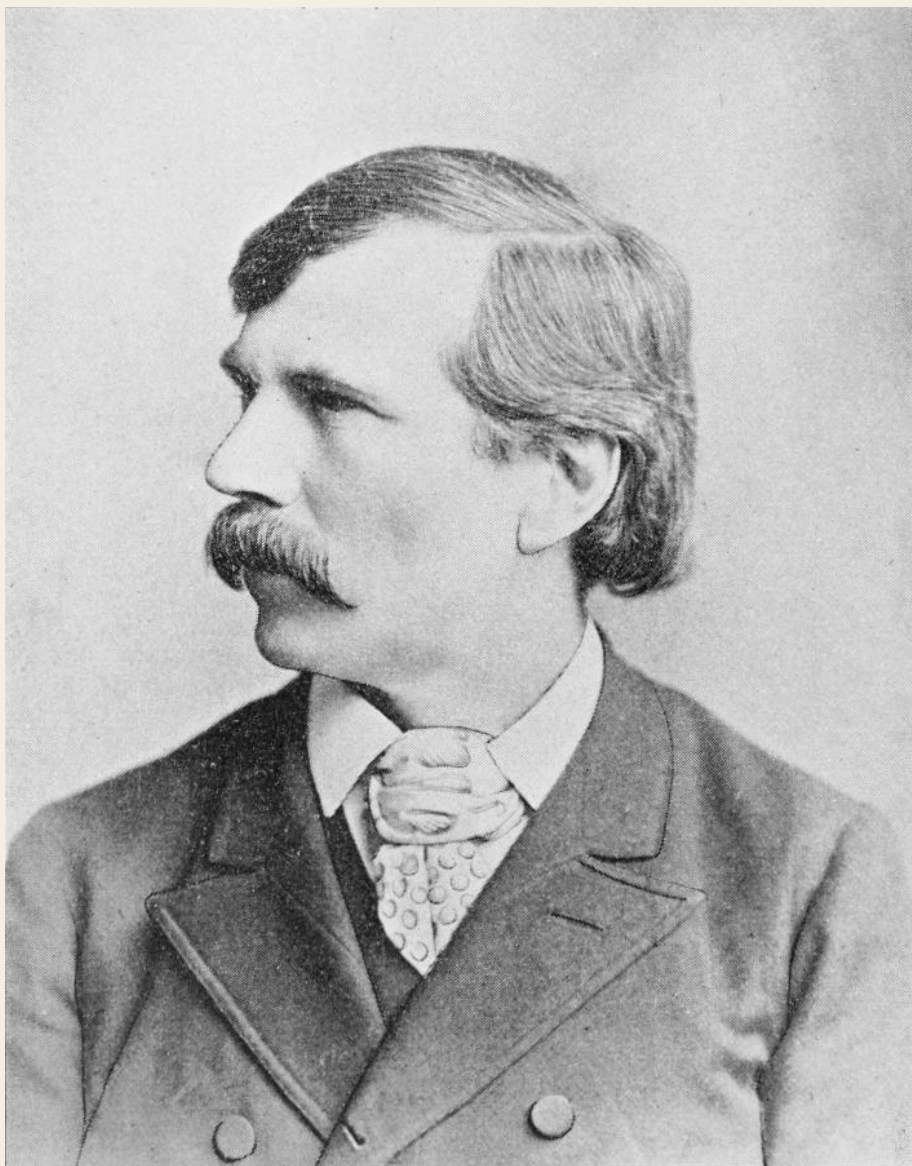
Sources and unresolved leads

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ARCHIVAL IMAGES

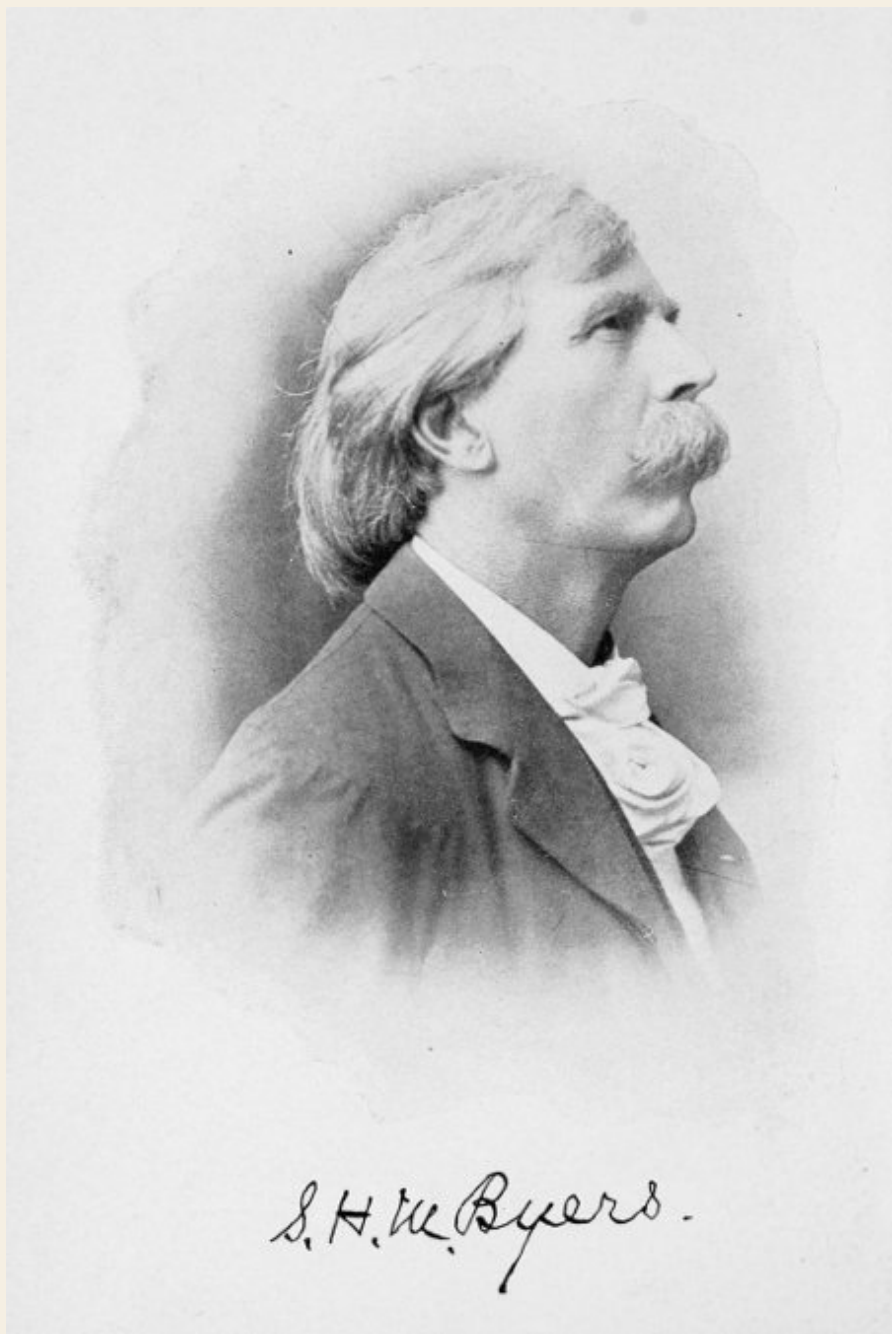
Portraits and biographical witnesses

Three distinct portraits spanning more than a quarter century.

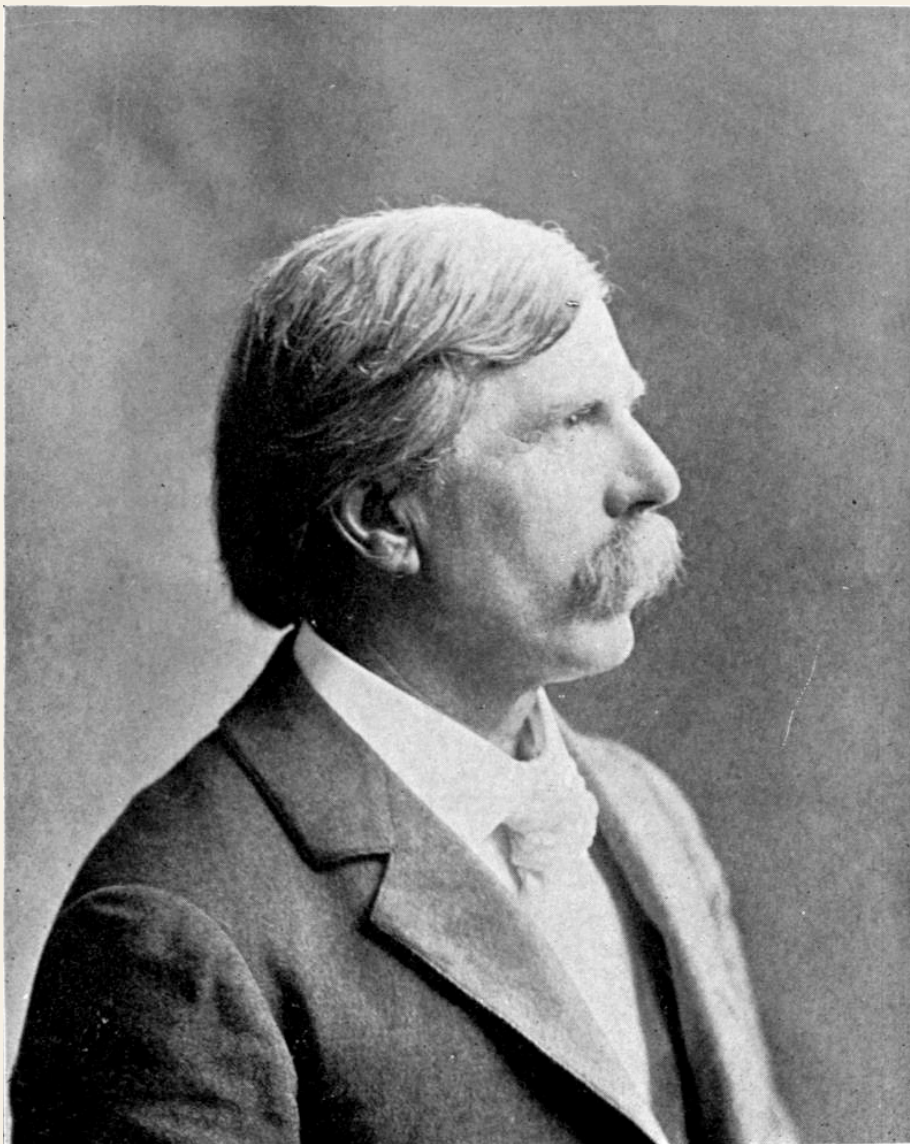


S. H. M. Byers, by 1888

From Iowa in War Times (1888). Unknown photographer.



S. H. M. Byers, 1911
Frontispiece to With Fire and Sword (1911).



S. H. M. Byers, by 1914

Frontispiece to Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected (1914). Unknown photographer.

SAMUEL HAWKINS MARSHALL BYERS

Life and career

1838–1933: lawyer, Union officer, prisoner of war, diplomat, historian, and California poet.

I. Pennsylvania and Iowa, 1838–1861

Samuel Hawkins Marshall Byers was born at Pulaski, Pennsylvania, on 23 July 1838. In 1853 his family moved west to Oskaloosa, Iowa, where he studied law and entered the bar in 1861. His prewar newspaper verse is still incompletely recovered: later accounts mention an “Impromptu” in the *Oskaloosa Herald*, but no dependable scan has yet been located.

II. Soldier and prisoner, 1861–1865

Byers enlisted in Company B of the Fifth Iowa Infantry. Captured after the fighting around Missionary Ridge, he passed through Libby Prison and Confederate prisons at Macon, Charleston, Camp Sorghum, and Camp Asylum. On 25 December 1864, while imprisoned at Columbia, South Carolina, he wrote the words of “Sherman’s March to the Sea”; fellow prisoner J. O. Rockwell composed the music. The song was smuggled through the lines in the artificial leg of Lieutenant Daniel Tower and quickly circulated in the North. Byers later escaped, reached Sherman’s army, served on the general’s staff, and received the brevet rank of major.

III. Europe and the first poetry books, 1869–1895

After the war Byers combined law, historical writing, diplomacy, and poetry. From 1869 through the early 1890s he held American consular posts in Switzerland and Italy, with interruptions as administrations changed. His travel and diplomatic prose grew from these years, while poems appeared in American and British periodicals. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* first appeared from Cupples, Upham in 1884; an expanded 1891 edition and the substantially enlarged Rand, McNally edition of 1901 followed.

IV. Civil War memory and public verse, 1895–1914

The short wartime song and the long narrative poem are different works. In *The March to the Sea* (1896), Byers enlarged the campaign into a book-length sequence of narrative stanzas, songs, ballads, and dramatic interludes. He also wrote civic and ceremonial poems, including “The Roll Call,” performed at the 1895 reunion of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee, and “The Rose of Iowa,” associated with the legislature’s 1897 adoption of the wild rose as state flower. “The Song of Iowa,” later designated the state song in 1911, secured his most durable civic reputation.

V. California, 1914–1929

Byers eventually made Los Angeles his home and contributed verse to the *Los Angeles Times*. The 1914 *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* gathered much of his earlier work and reprinted the long *March to the Sea*. Thereafter the California missions, Spanish-era legends, desert landscapes, and coastal cities came to the foreground in *The Bells of Capistrano* (1915–16), *Glorietta* (1916), *The Pony Express and Other Poems* (1925), and *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (1929). He died in Los Angeles on 24 May 1933, aged ninety-four.

VI. A long career in several publics

Byers wrote for several audiences at once: veterans who understood the culture of reunion; Iowans seeking state emblems and songs; readers of conventional magazine verse; and Californians looking backward toward the missions and Spanish settlement. The recurring poems in his later books are not accidental padding. Their repetition shows Byers repeatedly re-framing a lifetime’s work for new regional and historical settings.

Chronology

- 1838 Born in Pulaski, Pennsylvania.
- 1853 Family moves to Oskaloosa, Iowa.
- 1861 Admitted to the Iowa bar; enlists in the Fifth Iowa Infantry.
- 1863–65 Captured, imprisoned, escapes, and joins Sherman’s staff.
- 1864 Writes “Sherman’s March to the Sea” in prison on Christmas Day.
- 1869–92 Serves in American consular and diplomatic posts in Switzerland and Italy.
- 1884 First edition of *The Happy Isles and Other Poems*.
- 1896 Publishes the long narrative *The March to the Sea*.
- 1907 Publishes *The Honeymoon and Other Poems*.
- 1911 “The Song of Iowa” receives official state-song status.
- 1914 Publishes *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected*.
- 1916 Expanded *The Bells of Capistrano* and separate *Glorietta*.
- 1925 Publishes *The Pony Express and Other Poems*.
- 1929 Publishes *In Arcadia and Other Poems*.
- 1933 Dies in Los Angeles.

ORIGINAL PREFACES AND FOREWORDS

Authorial framing preserved from the source books

Byers's verse preface, historical notes on the missions, and introduction to the Pony Express poem.

Verse Preface

From *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (1925); revised note in *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (1929)

Said a song-bird once to me,
'Listen to my roundelay;
Man nor maid shall hinder me—
I shall sing my song today.'

Said a song-bird once to me,
'I have sung my song today;
Hadst thou listened, it may be
I have said what thou wouldst say.'

I have only said and sung
Things that in thy heart have dwelt;
Though thy harp was never strung,
Thou hast felt what I have felt.

All are poets in their time—
God's whole world is harmony;
Lo! in one majestic rhyme
Sweep the rivers to the sea.

All are poets when they feel
Nature's rhythms rise and fall;
Nature's heart-beats are the seal
Making poets of us all.

If, perchance, these songs of mine
Waken some responsive strain,
Silent though the countersign,
I shall not have sung in vain.

Author's note (1925): A few of these verses have appeared in other books of mine; the greater number are in type for the first time.

The 1929 printing revises the note to name 'The Bells of Capistrano, etc.' among the poems that had appeared in earlier books.

S. H. M. B. · Sunset Place, Los Angeles · April 1925 / December 1929

Foreword to *The Bells of Capistrano*

The California missions were established by Spanish Friars in the middle and towards the end of the eighteenth century. Capistrano itself was dedicated November 1, 1776. It is near the sea, at the village of San Juan Capistrano, between Los Angeles and San Diego. There were twenty-one missions, all told, along the California coast. They were connected by a road called 'El Camino Real,' or The King's Highway. California then belonged to Spain. It was the most romantic period of its existence. Most of the missions are in ruins; but they are the most picturesque ruins on this continent.

Capistrano mission was destroyed by an earthquake December 8, 1812. Forty persons were killed.

The descriptions of life at the missions, as told in the poem, are from authentic sources.

Introduction to 'The Pony Express'

From *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (1925)

In 1860–61 the American government and people were absolutely without any rapid communication with California and the Pacific Coast. Secession was threatening everywhere, and California was about to be dragged out of the Union. A quick line, known as 'The Pony Express,' was organized, reaching from St. Joe, on the Missouri River, to California. The riders, sixty in number, rode as high as one hundred, even two hundred miles a day, stopping only two minutes at relay stations to change horses. They went on the dead run for two thousand miles, relaying every fifteen or twenty miles. No animal, save the half-tamed broncho, and no men, save the hardy sons of the desert, were capable of the unbelievable exertion. They carried a small mail pouch, with only government or valuable letters and drafts, all written on tissue paper to save weight. Postage was about five dollars an ounce. At the moment of

California's greatest peril, these fast riders fairly flew across the desert and mountains with a message of President Lincoln ordering California to 'raise regiments at once and save the State.' Many are of the opinion that without these quick-carried orders California might have been lost to the Union. W. F. Cody ('Buffalo Bill') was one of the riders. The route at times led through regions infested by hostile Indians. One or two riders, and numbers of men at the little isolated stations on the desert, were killed. The story of the heroism of these men is related in the annexed poem.

EDITORIAL NOTE AND SOURCES

Editorial method and source limits

This edition follows original book and periodical scans. It preserves clearly intentional line indentation but removes hanging wraps imposed by narrow source pages. Book and journal titles are italicized; poem titles are treated consistently; em dashes are closed without surrounding spaces. Publication information follows every poem.

When Byers republished a poem, the earliest dependable complete witness normally supplies the copy-text. Later lifetime witnesses are collated in a variorum note after that poem rather than printed again. Changes confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, or a few local words are summarized there. A later version is printed separately only when Byers fundamentally reconceived the work. Thus the short prison song “Sherman’s March to the Sea” and the book-length narrative *The March to the Sea* are both retained, while ordinary reprints occur only once.

The surviving full-view sources do not yet include a complete scan of *The Honeymoon and Other Poems* (1907). The volume is therefore represented by a documented chronological section rather than by silently reconstructed or invented contents. A verified scan should be collated into a future revision.

The supplied 2026 biographical report was used as research evidence, not as editorial instruction. Its claims were checked against Byers’s books, the Biographical Dictionary of Iowa, archival catalogs, contemporary periodicals, and public-domain image records.

EARLY AND PERIODICAL VERSE

Stage I | War song and transatlantic periodicals, 1864–1884

The prison song, transatlantic magazine appearances, and poems later gathered into books.

Sherman's March to the Sea

Our camp-fires shone bright on the mountains
That frowned on the river below,
While we stood by our guns in the morning
And eagerly watched for the foe,
When a rider came out from the darkness
That hung over mountain and tree,
And shouted, "Boys, up and be ready,
For Sherman will march to the sea."

Then cheer upon cheer for bold Sherman
Went up from each valley and glen,
And the bugles re-echoed the music
That came from the lips of the men;
For we knew that the stars in our banner
More bright in their splendor would be,
And that blessings from Northland would greet us
When Sherman marched down to the sea.

Then forward, boys, forward to battle,
We marched on our wearisome way,
And we stormed the wild hills of Resaca—
God bless those who fell on that day!
Then Kenesaw, dark in its glory,
Frowned down on the flag of the free;
But the East and the West bore our standards,
And Sherman marched on to the sea.

Still onward we pressed, till our banners
 Swept out from Atlanta's grim walls,
And the blood of the patriot dampened
 The soil where the traitor flag falls;
But we paused not to weep for the fallen,
 Who slept by each river and tree;
Yet we twined them a wreath of the laurel
 As Sherman marched down to the sea.

Oh, proud was our army that morning,
 That stood by the cypress and pine,
When Sherman said, "Boys, you are weary;
 This day fair Savannah is thine."
Then sang we a song for our chieftain,
 That echoed o'er river and lea,
And the stars on our banners shone brighter
 When Sherman marched down to the sea.

Publication. Words written 25 December 1864; sheet music with J. O. Rockwell's setting published by H. M. Higgins, Chicago, 1865. The short song is distinct from the 1896 narrative poem.

Variorum. The later book witnesses preserve the short prison song; the book-length narrative of 1896 is a fundamentally reconceived work and is printed separately. Later witnesses: *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 24–26; *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 24–26; *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 63–64; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 101–102.

SHERMAN'S MARCH TO THE SEA.

3

Words by

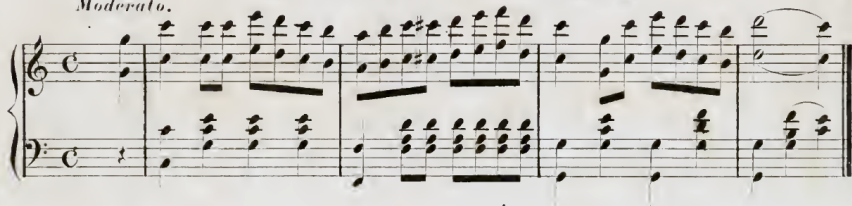
Lieut. S. H. M. BYERS, 5th Iowa Inf'y.

Music by

Lieut. J. O. ROCKWELL, 97th N.Y. Inf'y.

Dec. 25th 1864, WHILE PRISONERS OF WAR AT COLUMBIA, S. C.

Moderato.



1. VER: Our camp-fire shone bright on the mountains

That frowned on the ri-ver be-

2. VER: Then cheer up - on cheer for bold Sherman

Went up from each val-ley and

3. VER: *Then for-ward, boys, for-ward to bat-tle,*

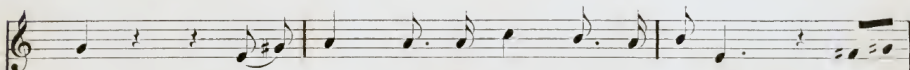
We marched on our wea-ri-some

4. VER: Still on-ward we pressed, till our ban-ners

Swept out from At-lan-ta's grim

5. VER: Oh, proud was our ar-my that morning

That stood by the ey-press and



low,

While we stood by our guns in the morning

And

glen,

And the hu-gles re-ech-oed the mu-sic

That

way,

And we stormed the wild hills of Re-sa-ra,

God

walls

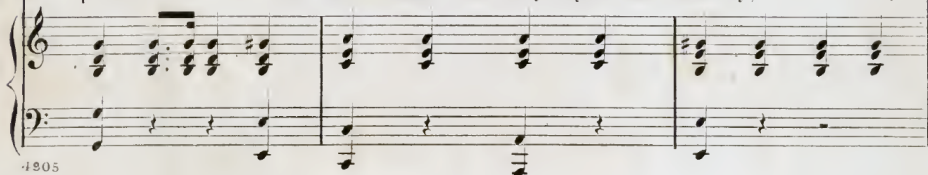
And the blood of the pa-tri-ot dampened

The

pine,

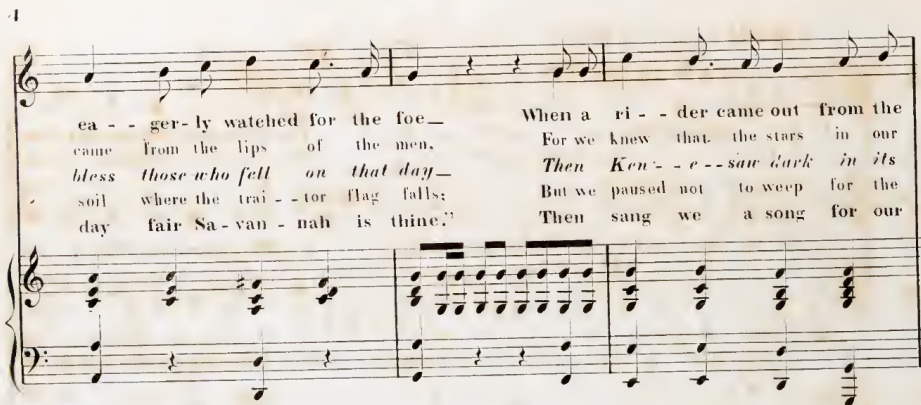
When Sher-man said: "Boys, you are wea-ry,

This



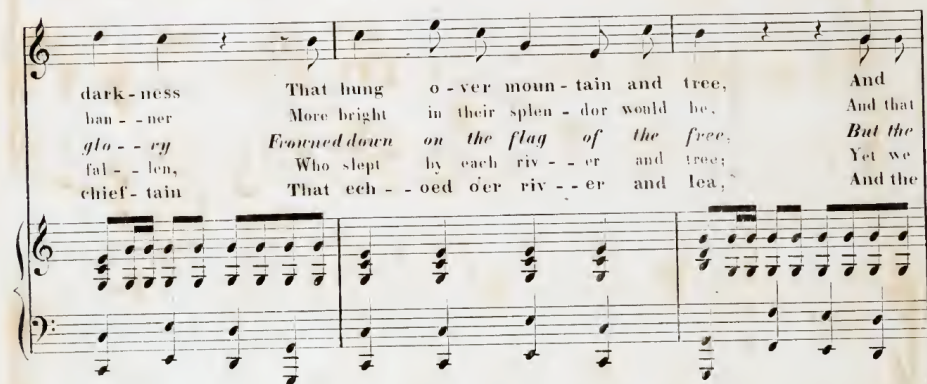
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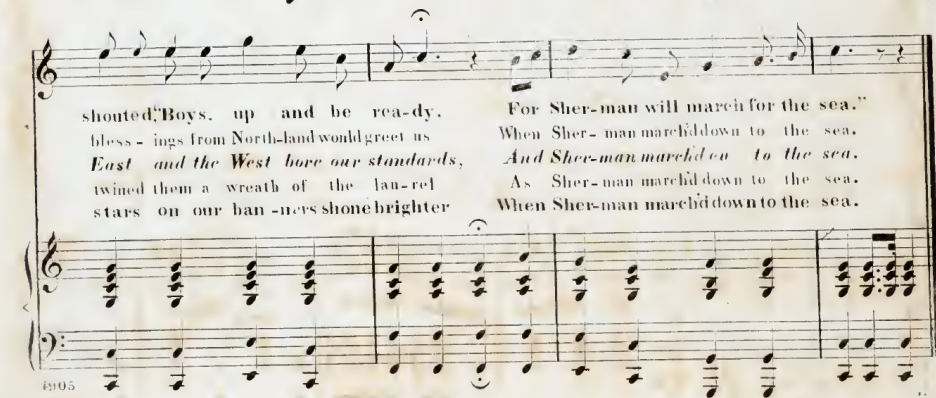


ea - - ger-ly watched for the foe—
 came from the lips of the men.
 bless those who fell on that day—
 soil where the trai - - tor flag falls;
 day fair Sa - van - nah is thine.”

When a ri - - der came out from the
 For we knew that the stars in our
 Then Ken - - saw dark in its
 But we paused not to weep for the
 Then sang we a song for our



dark-ness That hung o - ver moun - tain and tree, And
 ban - - ner More bright in their splen - dor would be, And that
 glo - - ry Frowned down on the flag of the free, But the
 fal - - len, Who slept by each riv - - er and tree; Yet we
 chief - tain That ech - - oed o'er riv - - er and lea, And the



shouted, Boys, up and be rea-dy, For Sher-man will march for the sea.”
 bless - ings from North-land would greet us When Sher- man march'd down to the sea.
 East and the West bore our standards, And Shee-man march'd on to the sea.
 twined them a wreath of the lau-rel As Sher- man march'd down to the sea.
 stars on our ban - ners shone brighter When Sher- man march'd down to the sea.

1905

CHORUS

5

AIR.

1. And shouted Boys, up and be rea-dy, For Sher-man will march for the
 2. And that bles - sings from North-land would greet us When Sher-man march'd down to the

ALTO.

3. But the East and the West bore our standards And Sher-man march'd on to the

TENOR.

4. Yet we twined them a wreath of the lau-rel As Sher-man march'd down to the
 5. And the stars in our ban-ners shone brighter When Sher-man march'd down to the

BASS.

sea.

sea.

sea.

sea.

sea.

1905

At Sea in 1876

1.

Ten days and nights our gallant ship
Sped o'er a lone and trackless way,
And we had watched the seagulls skip
Like arrows o'er the wave, and dip
Their wings into its foam, for they
Were children of the sea, at play.

2.

We were a hundred there, and more,
From many lands, yet loved but one;
And we had longed to see the shore,
The far-off mists from Labrador,
To hear some distant evening gun
Proclaim the day, the voyage, done.

3.

It was so quiet there—at last
One, bolder than the others, led,
Why is this silence? let the past
Be of things that cannot last;
We are the living, not the dead.
“Give us a song,” the captain said.

4.

“Is there among us, none, not one,
With the divine Promethean fire,
Can sing of deeds most nobly done—
Of sieges lost, of battles won,
Of knightly sons of knightlier sire,

And wake to life the sleeping lyre?

5.

I do bethink me now, there stood
Amid the forward decks to-day,
A harpist, old, of silent mood;
I did not think there ever could,
Be human form so weird, so gray.”
“Bring him,” the others said, “to play.”

6.

And soon an old man tottered in
To where the lamps were all aglow:
The boatswain bore his harp for him—
For he had thought it well a sin
That one so old should helpless go.
’Tis good we treat our aged so.

7.

“Good friends,” the boatswain said, “I bring
The poet of the ship to you.
Well he can play, and sweetly sing
To this his harp, whose every string,
Though tuned oft, yet, tuned’ anew,
May cheer you for an hour or two.”

The Harpist.

I.

“Give me the harp,” the singer said,
And touched his weird hand to the lyre;
And, lo! the eye that seemed so dead,
The form, whence life had almost fled,
Brightened anew with living fire.

Forgot was age, forgot was pain;
The old man lived the boy again.

2.

He swept the cords through many a strain,
And sung of youth and love, till we,
Like followers in his knightly train,
Wept o'er his touching minstrelsy.
Is it not true that man may be
Made angels by some melody?

3.

Have we not lived at times above
The sorrowing earth, and its complaints,
On hearing some sweet tale of love,
Some seraph song of dying saints?
Has not some poet said that we
Are chords in God's great harmony?

.....

I.

"Enough—enough"—the harpist said.
I sing no more of love's young dream,
Of knightly deeds, of lovers wed,
Of hours, of days, too quickly sped,
Mine is another, nobler theme,—
My Country, born midst blood and tears,
Grown sacred by its hundred years.
'Tis not so long ago that men—
Brave men, who feared not storm nor sea,
Crossed to the new-born land of Penn,
Without one thought but to be free:
Brave men, good men, as well, were they

Who fearless sought the dang'rous way
To Plymouth Rock, to Florida;
Men who could fight, as well as pray
Nor asked what else their fate might be
In that fair land beyond the sea,
So that it brought them liberty.

2.

They came—and soon their axes rung
By many a lake and tangled wood;
And midst their labors, lo! they sung,
For God was in their solitude.
Their struggles none but he may tell,
Who watched them on their dang'rous way;
How by the lurking foe they fell,
Yet trusted him, and said, "'Tis well,
He leads us to the coming day."

3.

The panther slunk into his lair,
The she-wolf hid within her den,
And there was peace and plenty there,
For God had blessed the hands of men.
Lo! towns, and states and cities rose,
And flocks were fed in every glen;
It was the bloss'ring of the rose,
For God had blessed the hands of men.

.....

.....

Oh! would that Peace might ever rest
Her heav'nly wings on every shore;
Then were mankind divinely blest,

And men should learn of war no more.
Pray, pray for that good hour in store,
When men shall learn of war no more.

I.

Oh! England, England, tell us where,
Where had we wronged thee—how, and when?
Hadst thou forgot thy children there,
Although thy children, yet were men?
Hadst thou forgot that clime, and sea,
And growing years bring wider range,
A larger hope, a destiny
That laws nor wars can ever change?

2.

Thy armies came, thy navies flung
Their flags o'er many an inland sea;
And soon the hills of England rung
With shouts and thanks for victory.
With shouts and thanks, but echoing there,
The answer came from swamp and glen,
You've driven the tiger to his lair—
God help you when he comes again.

3.

Towns, cities blazed, barefooted men
Tramped where our Western rivers flow;
They left their marks behind them, then,
In bloody lines on frozen snow.
'Twas death—aye, more to them, but know
Men oft'nest earn their freedom so.

4.

Orphans and widows wept in vain,
And armies sank for want of bread;
Death stalked through every wood and plain,
And fields were left unharvested.
Still would they yield not—no, beware!
God's will is worked through man's despair.

5.

Days, months, and years, they wavered not,
Nor asked the number of their foe;
By wounds, by death, they cheaply bought
The rights their grateful children know;
The fairest right that heaven can give,—
Unfettered in their faith to live.

6.

They conquered, and a nation sprung
To life, to greatness in the West;
And the wide world her praises sung,
She was the freest and the best.
She was the freest and the one
Whose soil no tyrant dared to tread—
For lo! above, about her shone
The mystery of her sacred dead.
Fate chose but one, but one—'twas she,
To lead mankind to liberty.

.....

It is a century since then—
A hundred years to-day, and men
Tell all the old tales o'er again;
How she was born, our land, how bred,

And how the life her children led
By faith and peace was hallowed;
How well she kept her promised vow
To lead the way—to help the oppressed
Of every land and clime, and how
Men worshipped her, and she was blest.
How commerce came, and all that fate
Ordains to glorify a State
Waited on her, and she was great.
Each wind that blew, each sail that bent,
Seemed like some gift divinely sent
To help enrich a continent.
The world was envious, too—but no,
Kings could not stop what fate had told;
Hills, rocks unbound themselves, and lo!
Their breasts were filled with oil and gold.

.....

What more? The land was blessed, and grew
Like Eden fair, but never knew,
Like it, she nursed a tempter, too.
A tempter—black, fit child of hell;
He came, and half the nation fell.
They fell, and where the daisies grew,
Lo! cannon belched their poisonous breath—
And war her red-mouthed trumpet blew,
And wedding morns saw nights of death.
The hand of fate lay heavy then,
For God had cursed the ways of men.
Dark months and years, the storm-cloud swept
Her course across a widowed land
But, lo! the God of battles kept

The nation in his pitying hand.
At last, at last, the burning smoke
Faded before her silent guns,
But louder than her cannon spoke
The shroudless bodies of her sons.
Weep, fading clouds, speak, silent guns,
And honor these, her fallen ones.
Dead was the tempter, dead the past,
And men forgot their burning hate,
For hates and angers cannot last
With men whose foes were good, or great.
Sleep on, ye braves, ye shroudless ones!
Men shall not ask which side ye stood:
Enough, ye were the nation's sons,
And ye are dead, and God is good.
It little reck where men have stood,
When Heav'n forgives, and God is good.

I.

Again the peaceful lilies bloom,
And kiss the graves of friend and foe;
Again, again, the busy loom
Sends its dear music to and fro;
Again the hills are gold and red
With shocks and sheaves on every hand,
For all the fields are harvested,
And there is plenty in the land.
Plenty and peace, for God again
Has smiled and blessed the hands of men.

2.

And now, where once the wigwam stood,

Upon the Schuylkill's banks of green,
Where reddening vines and tangled wood
Hemmed in the fair but dang'rous scene,
Behold! a palace, fit for kings,
Lifts its fair head unto the skies,
And all the land her tribute brings,
And shouts aloud, 'Friends, all, arise,
This day, this hour, this place must be,
Made sacred to men's liberty.'

3.

And here, where all have met to see
The earth's united rivalry,
In all that is, or yet may be,
They reached their hands to each, and said,
This is the tribute to our dead,
This is the ring with which we wed
The twice-born bride, Columbia,
And this the oath, new-sworn to thee,
Land of our hopes and destiny.

4.

Again the old time-honored scroll,
Whereon the new world's faith was writ,
Was shown to men, and every soul
Thanked God, and wept, at sight of it.
Thanked God, and wept—it was a sight
Such as men see but once in life.
I saw it then, I saw its birth—
What more can one then want of earth?"

I.

He ceased his music, and the lyre,
Full-toned, fell at the singer's feet:
Gone was the light, the hope, the fire,
Finished the song he sang so sweet.
We bore him to the deck above,
Where soft winds kissed his brow and lip;
In vain, sweet winds, no breath of love
Could wake the poet of the ship.
In freedom's faith his life had passed,
His noblest, sweetest song, his last.

2.

All night our ship sped on its way,
Along a moonlit, starlit sea,
And, when the red sun brought the day,
The sailors shouted "Land," and we
Looked to the west, and, smiling there,
Lay the low hills of Delaware.
Loud boomed the guns, the ship-bells rung,
It Was the land the poet sung.

3.

Land of the West, our Fatherland,
We bow and greet thee, here at sea,
We bare our heads, and meekly stand,
And pray that God in his right hand,
May ever keep thee great, and free.
May ever keep thee great, and when
Th' oppressed shall cry for liberty
Thy stars and stripes shall answer then,
Lo! here all men, all men, are free.

Publication. First printed in the *Philadelphia Press*; reprinted in *Littell's Living Age*, vol. 132, no. 1701 (6 January 1877), pp. 52–54. Text checked against the page-scan transcription.

The Mowing

The clock has struck six,
And the morning is fair,
While the east in red splendor is glowing;
There is dew on the grass, and a song in the air,
Let us up and be off to the mowing.

Wouldst know why I wait,
Ere the sunlight has crept
O'er the fields where the daisies are growing?
Why all night I've kept my own vigils, nor slept?
'Tis to-day is the day of the mowing.

This day and this hour
Maud has promised to tell
What the blush on her cheek was half showing,—
If she wait at the lane, I'm to know all is well,
And there'll be a good time at the mowing.

Maud's mother has said,
And I'll never deny,
That a girl's heart there can be no knowing—
Oh! I care not to live, and I rather would die,
If Maud does not come to the mowing.

What is it I see?
'Tis a sheen of brown hair,
In the lane where the poppies are blowing.
Thank God! it is Maud—she is waiting me there,
And there'll be a good time at the mowing.

Six years have passed by,
And I freely declare
That I scarcely have noticed their going;
Sweet Maud is my wife, with her sheen of brown hair—
And we had a good time at the mowing.

Publication. First located in periodical publication in 1879; text here collated with *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (1901), p. 117.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; changes are limited to punctuation, capitalization, and other local accidentals. Later witnesses: *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 117–118; *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 117–118; *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 15; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 54.

Baby Helene

She was only a child of the May-day,
That came when the sweet blossoms fell,
But rarer than any fair lady
Of whom the old poets may tell.
Then the days brought us everything sweeter
Of sunshine and love in their train,
But better than all and completer,
Was Baby Hel  ne.

With a kiss and a smile she came to us,
—The sunshine of God in her hair,
Ah! never a sweet wind that blew us
A blossom so tender and rare.
We sang a new May-song together,
New-found and of jubilant strain,
Ah! our hearts they were light as a feather,
With Baby Hel  ne.

Would she stay with us, love us? We bid her
Unloosen the notes of her song—
And tell where the sweet angels hid her,
And why had we waited so long.
Would they sorrow in Heaven to miss her?
Would they wait for her, weary to pain?
Would they anger to see us but kiss her,
Our Baby Hel  ne?

And all the day long, like new lovers,
Like words that are ever in tune,
Like songs the fresh May-wind discovers,
Like birds that are mating in June,—
Together we loved and we wandered,
Forgetting of sorrow or pain,
Forgetting the sweets that we squandered,
With Baby Hel  ne.

Oh! lips running over to kisses,
Red cheeks kissed to brown by the sun,
Shall we ever again know what bliss is,
When the song and the kisses are done?
Oh! baby, brown-haired, on thy tresses
The hands of the angels had lain,
And joy laughed new-born in caresses
Of Baby Hel  ne.

Years went—seven years with their story
More bright than Aladdin's of old,
To love and be loved was our glory,
Our hearts were our castles of gold.
But broken our castles, and falling,
Hope crushed—true hearts bleeding and slain,
God's angels in Heaven were calling
Our Baby *Heléne*.

Dim-eyed, and heart-broken, we waited
The sounds of invisible things,
While the soul of our soul was remated,
Borne off on invisible wings.
In the far-away, purple and golden,
Went up an ineffable strain,
And the far-away gates were unfolden
To Baby *Heléne*.

One moment, God's earth and its brightness
Seemed darkened and turned into dross,
And the manifold stars and their lightness
Were dimmed and as nothing to us.
For the bowl that was golden was broken,
The hearts that were one heart, were twain.
And the last words of love had been spoken
By Baby *Heléne*.

Ah! seven years gone as the dream goes,
Oh! baby-love, lost to our ken,—
—Will the brooklet still flow where the stream flows?
Will the lilies still blossom as then?
Will the sweet tongues of birds be unloosed to
The songs of our love and its pain?
Will the violets bloom as they used to
For Baby *Heléne*?

Oh! baby-love, heart-sweet, the sunlight
That fell on the way that you went,
Shall be to our feet as the one light,
The lamp the sweet angels have lent.
And the nights and the days shall be lighter,
And the ways that were dark ways be plain,
And the stars where thou art shall be brighter
For Baby *Heléne*.

Publication. First published as “Baby Helène” in *The Argosy*, February 1884; text here collated with *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (1901), p. 86.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; the periodical title’s accent, *Baby Helène*, is not retained in every book printing. Later witnesses: *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 86–87; *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 86–89.

THE HAPPY ISLES AND OTHER POEMS

Stage II | The diplomatic and Iowa years, 1884–1895

1884; expanded through 1901. Poems first collected here are printed in full; later reprints of earlier poems are recorded in the variorum notes attached to their copy-texts.

The Happy Isles

Once on a time, in beauteous Paradise,
Two angels wandered at the even-tide,
Beneath a splendor of celestial skies,
With banks of violets on every side.
And to their ears, came ever far and wide,
Soft notes of flutes, voluptuous melodies,
That mortals, hearing, had in rapture died.
So soft they came, the murmuring of the seas
Was stilled, to listen to their ecstasies.

And while they wandered, all their senses filled
With the sweet thought to be forever young,
All things a joy, and every longing stilled,
With not a heart by any sorrow wrung,
And life a song to be forever sung,—
A thought came o'er them like a sacred spell,
Of loved and left, far other scenes among,

Where no dear heart might ever go, to tell
How sweet is death, and how all things are well.

Then one did ask what loveliest thing there was,
That was most fair of anything on earth,
Of lovely flower, or eglantine, or rose,
Or tree, or thing of most surpassing worth,
And beauteous even from its very birth,—
Be it of groves, or seas, of human kind, or skies,
Or songs of winds, of sadness, or of mirth,—
What loveliest thing of all that ever dies,
Were fittest first to be in Paradise.

One said a nightingale, and one the gleam
Of summer sunset by some constant sea,—
And one, sweet apple-blooms that fall and seem
Wind-kissed, and lulled into an ecstasy
Of odorous death, if such a thing there be.
And others said, for many hastened near,
The loveliest thing in all the world to see,

Surpassing all, to heaven and earth most dear,
By angels welcomed, is a sorrowing tear.

One said the fragrance of a summer rose,
And one the melody of flutes at eve,
Or else the music of a brook that flows,
Murmuring farewell, and yet doth never leave,—
And some said moonlight nights that weave
In every soul sweet phantasies so deep
That mortals may of immortality conceive,
Nor longer wish their little lives to keep
From that sweet death which some of them call sleep.

But one there came, of others all the first,
And laid his hand upon a little child,
And quick there seemed a radiance to burst
About his face, ineffable and mild.
“This is the loveliest,” he said, and smiled.
“Surpassing this, or lovelier, there is none,—
Rose-leaf of beauty, mortal undefiled.
The pearly gates no soul hath ever won,
That was not like unto this little one.”

Then children came, and laid sweet baskets down,
Rose-leaf and violet, and every flower of worth,
And odorous herbs, and many a wreath and crown,
While in their midst stood one of mortal birth,
Herself more fair than any flower of earth.
Oh! beauteous one,—oh! face more perfect grown, “
Though all unchanged, more beautiful thou art,—
E’en in thy angelhood, we still had known
Our heart-sweet lost—our loved, our very own.

Was it a vision that I saw her there,
Her face all gleaming in the light of His,
The sunlight shining on her sweet, brown hair,
That ever had been my delight to kiss,
In the old days, when seeing her was bliss?
It must have been—and if such things there be.

In fleeting visions of an hour like this,
What an Elysium the soul must see
In the sweet joys of an eternity!

’Tis but a year—but little more, since she
And I were laughing by this beauteous lake;
There is the path, and there the little tree
I used to bend close to the ground, and make
A springing seat—’t was easy for her sake.
There, too, the grove, of Nidelbad the pearl,
The beechen trees no winds could ever break,
The cedars, bending like some pluméd earl
To her I loved, the little, laughing girl.

There are the Alps—there they will ever be,—
A thousand years will make no change in them,
Though rivers fail, and all the mighty sea,
Still they will wear their gracious diadem,
Storm and the clouds their snowy mantles hem,
And they will shine as they have shone of old—

Their tops aflame, as on some evening, when
We watched the sun their palaces unfold,—
The sapphire roofs—the colonnades of gold.

And Zürich lake! thy waters ever will
Be dearer far than other scenes to me,
For I have wandered by thy shores until
My very being seemed akin to thee.
Each bank I knew, and every brook and tree,
Each vine-clad hill, and every hamlet fair,
And more I loved thee every day, that she
Was born to us amid a scene so rare,—
My heart will be forever turning there.

Forever turning to that beauteous scene,
Where she and I, the happy years ago,
Looked on the hills and the blue lake between,
The blushing mountains in the dim beyond,
The ice-built palaces, and rocks whereon
A thousand years the frost-king travelleth,
Where the red sun, at evening and at dawn,
Spreads all in gold, as with a fairy's breath.
We looked and dreamed, but never dreamed of death.

And it is done! One morn, the little bird
That waited ever at her window-pane
For some dear crumb, or for some dearer word,
Plumed its sweet breast, and waited there in vain.
Sweet heart! dear soul! she without any stain,
Too pure for earth, born of far fairer skies,
Thoughtless of death, of darkness, or of pain,
Looking on us as if with other eyes,
Let go our hands and passed to Paradise.

With gentle hands, and gentle prayers, we laid
Her body where the violets do blow;
And if sometimes they should be thought to fade,
With our warm tears we'll water them, and so
For love of her, they will forever grow.

And many days, with broken hearts, we said,
"Could one return, or could we only know
She liveth yet, whom we have thus called dead,
Our souls in this might still be comforted."

And days and nights, we waited for a sign,
Praying and hoping she might linger there,
That word or look might lessen death's repine,
One single word might lighten our despair—
Might make the yoke more possible to bear.
We sought of silence—there was answer none,
We sought of moonlight, and of earth and air,—
There was no answer. Would she never come
One moment back, and strike all doubting dumb?

And longing thus, as once I wept alone,
With heart bowed down, and face all wet with tears,
I felt her presence—felt my very own,—

And in that moment was the bliss of years.
Gone were my doubts, and gone were all my fears.
No dream was it—no phantasy could be
So like to her—the very thought endears.
It was no dream, that vision sweet—I see
Her dear form yet, and feel her kissing me.

One moment only, and one sweet embrace—
I felt her warm arms resting on my breast—
Her soft, warm cheek I felt against my face.
A thousand times I'd put that head to rest,
Those little hands a thousand times caressed.
Dear eyes, sweet eyes! I know their tender gleam,
How oft their look some sorrowing heart hath blessed—;
Dearer this night, than they did ever seem,
Dear one I love, I know it was no dream.

'Twas but a moment, but that moment was
Rich in significance of things that are:
As some faint light behind the hill-top shows
The coming moon and her attendant star,
So with new eyes I saw, and from afar
Heard sweetest tones, and in the rosy West
Where they had left the golden gates ajar,
That she might come to give my spirit rest,
I looked and saw the Islands of the Blest.

Or dream, or waking, I may never know,
Alike the joy, no words may ever tell,—
I saw the isles where roses ever blow,
I saw the shores where bright seas ever swell—
It was the land where the blest spirits dwell.
I saw fair barks, by angels piloted

O'er roseate seas that only rose and fell
To notes of flutes, that thus were hallowéd,
While silver moons shed soft light overhead.
I saw the gardens of the happy Blest,—
The lotus-blooms, and golden asphodel,
And flowering shrubs angelic hands had dressed,
Red-berried ash, and the sweet mountain bell.
And thornless rose that doth forever smell,
And lilies fair, and waters all in tune

With odorous winds that came like fairy spell
Out of the night, to cool the parchéd noon,
And make the year a never-ending June.

I saw the fields that are forever green,
And purple hills that melt into the sea,
The thousand brooks that sing their way between,
One and a part of His great minstrelsy.
Not far away that happy sea may be,
'Not far those sails by rapturous breezes bent,
With mortal eyes, at times, we almost see,
So near they are to our own firmament—
The Blessed Isles, where all men are content.

Gone is the vision of that blessed hour,
Like to some dream that with the morn is flown.
I saw the Isles, and every tree and flower
Melt and grow dim, as when a cloud is blown
Across a moon that had that moment shone.
But as that moon and all her star-lit train,
Will still shine on, when the dark cloud is gone,

So will the clouds that hide my vision wane,
And I shall see the Blessed Isles again.

Shall ever think how very thin the veil
That floats at times betwixt myself and her,
Like mist of morn, or like some dewy sail,—
Ethereal cloud—so vapor-like, as't were
A touch of wind, a gentle breath, might stir
Its shining folds—and I again should see,
Spread out like gold, as in my vision fair,
The Happy Isles, the far-off shining sea,
And her I loved, waiting to welcome me.

So I shall walk as now the earth along,
Dearer to me for one that has been here,
Nor shall the way seem very dark or long
To those Blest Isles whose confines do appear.
And if, sometimes, in fancy I should hear
A dear, soft voice, or some light footstep's tread,
I shall be sure that she is very near,
And, thinking so, be gently comforted,
And live and love, as by her spirit led.

And many times my hand in hers will be,
And we will walk by pleasant ways alone,
And I shall look into her face, and see
The dearest eyes that ever yet have shone—
And cheeks more sweet than any roses blown.
And when, sometimes, light song and pleasantry
Fill every heart but mine, to silence grown,
They will not know that, at that moment, she
Sits by my side and keeps me company.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 11–23.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 11–23.

The Ballad of Columbus

It was fourteen hundred and ninety-two,
The close of the New Year's day,
When the armies of Catholic Ferdinand,
The flower of all the Spanish land,
At the siege of Granada lay.

Ten thousand foot and ten thousand horse
And ten thousand men with bows
Were on the left, and as many more
Had stormed close up to the city's door,
Where the Darro River flows.

And the king held levee, for on that day
Great news had come to court—
How on the morrow the town would yield,
And the flag of Spain, with the yellow field,
Would float from the Moorish fort.

There were princely nobles and high grandees
That night in the royal tent;
And the beautiful queen with the golden hair
And shining armor and sword was there—
On the king's right arm she leant.

It was nine, and the old Alhambra bells
Tolled out on the moonlit air;
And over the battlements far there came
The murmuring sound of Allah's name,
And the Moorish troops at prayer.

"Hark!" said the king, as he heard the sound,
"Hark, hark! to yon bell's refrain—
Five hundred years it has called the Moor;
This night, and 'twill call him nevermore—
To-morrow 'twill ring for Spain!"

Then spake a guest at the king's right hand:
"To-morrow the end will be;
Hast thou not said, when the war is done
And the Christ flag floats o'er the Moslem one,
Thou wouldst keep thy promise to me?"

“Thou wouldst give me ships, and wouldst give me men
Who would dare to follow me?
Help thou this night with thy royal hand,
And I’ll make thee king of a new-found land
And king of a new-found sea.

“For the world is round, and a ship may sail
Straight on with the setting sun,
Beyond Atlantis a thousand miles,
Beyond the peaks of the golden isles,
To the Ophir of Solomon.

“So I’ll find new roads to the golden isles,
To the gardens that bloom alway,
To the treasure-quarries of Ispahan,
The sunlit hills of the mighty Khan,
And the wonders of far Cathay.

“And gold I’ll bring from the islands fair,
And riches of palm and fir
Thou shalt have, my king; and the lords of Spain
Shall march with the Christ flag once again,
And rescue the Sepulchre.”

But the nobles smiled and the prelates sneered,
With many a scornful fling;
“Had not the wisest already said
It was but the scheme of an empty head,
And no fit thing for a king?

“And were it true that the world is round,
And not like an endless plain,
Were our good king’s vessels the seas to ride
Adown the slope of the world’s great side,
How would they get up again?

“And the land of the fabled antipodes
Was a wonderful land to see,
Where people stand with their heads on the ground,
And their feet in the air, while the world spins round”—
And they all laughed merrily.

But the king laughed not, though he scarce believed
The things that his ears had heard;
And he thought full long of the promise fair,
And he knew that the day and the hour were there,
If a king were to keep his word.

So he said, "For a while, for a little while,
Let it bide, for the cost is great;"
But the guest replied: "Nay, seven years
I have waited on with my hopes and fears;
And soon it will be too late."—

Then spake the queen, "Be it done for me.
Here are jewels for woe or weal;"
And she took the gems from her shining hair,
And the priceless pearls she was wont to wear,
And she said, "For my own Castile."

* * * * *

There were three ships sailing from Palos town,
Ere the noon of a summer's day,
And the people looked at the ships and said,
"God pity their souls, for they all are dead;"
But the ships went down the bay.

And an east wind blew, and the convent bells
Rang out in sweet accord,
And the master stood on the deck and cried,
"We sail in the name of the Crucified,
With the flag of Christ our Lord!"

They were ten days out when a storm wind blew—
Ten days from the coast of Spain—
And the sailors shrived each other and said,
"God help us now, or we all are dead!
We shall never see land again."

They were twelve days out when an ocean rock
Burst forth in a sea of fire,
As if each peak and each lava cliff
Of the red-hot sides of Teneriffe,
Were a sea-king's funeral pyre.

And the sailors crossed themselves and said,
"Alas, for the day we swore
Though it be at last to the Sepulchre—
In search of an unknown shore."
And they spoke of the terror that lay between,

Of the hurricanes born of hell,
Of the sunless seas that forever roar,
Where the moon had perished long years before,
When an evil spirit fell.
And ever the winds blew west, blew west,

And the ships blew over the main.
“They are cursed winds,” the mariners said,
“That blow us forever ahead—ahead;
They will never blow back to Spain.”
But the master cited the Holy Writ;

And he told of a vision fair,
How a shining angel would show the way
To the Indus isles and the sweet Cathay,
And he “knew they were almost there.”
But a sea-calm came, and the ships stood still,

And the sails drooped idle and low,
And a seaweed covered the vasty deep
As darkness covers a world in sleep,
And they feared for the rocks below.
It was twelve that night when a breeze sprang fresh,

As if from a land close by,
And the sailors whispered each other and said,
“God only knows what next is ahead—
Or if to-morrow we die.”
It was two by the clock on the ship next morn,

And breathless the sailors stand,
With eyes strained into the starless night,
When, lo! there’s a cry of “A light, a light!”
And a shout of “The land, the land!”
There were weeping eyes, there were pressing hands,

Till the dawn of that blessed day;
When the admiral, followed by all his train,
With the flag of Christ and the flag of Spain,
Rode proudly up the bay.
In robes of scarlet and princely gold,

On the New World’s land they kneel;
In the name of Christ, whom all adore,
They christened the island San Salvador,
For the crown of their own Castile.
And the simple islanders gazed in awe

On the “gods from another sphere;”
And they brought them gifts of the Yuca bread,
And golden trinkets, and parrots red,
And showed them the islands near.
They told of the lords of a golden house,

Of the mountains of Cibao,
The cavern where once the moon was born,
The hills that waken the sun at morn,
And the isles where the spices grow.
From isle to island the ships flew on,
Like white birds on the main,
Till the master said, "With my flags unfurled,
I have opened the gates of another world—
I will carry the news to Spain."
It was seven months since at Palos town,
Ere the noon of that summer's day,
The good ships sailed, with their flags unfurled,
In search of another and far-off world—
And again they are in the bay.
Twelve months have passed, and the king again
Holds levee with all his train,
And Columbus sits at the king's right hand,
And, whether on sea or upon the land,
Is the greatest man in Spain.
And the queen has honored him most of all—
She has taken him by the hand:
"Don Christopher thou shalt be called alway;"
And a golden cross on his heart there lay,
And over his breast a band.
And ships she gave, and a thousand men,
With nobles and knights in train;
And again the convent bells they rung,
And the praise of his name was on every tongue,
As he sailed for the West again—
To the hundred islands and far away
In the heats of the torrid zone,
To gardens as fair as Hesperides,
To spice-grown forests, and scented seas
Where no sails had ever blown;
And up and down by the New World's coast,
And over the western main,
With but the arms of his own true word,
He lifted the flag of the blessed Lord
And the flag of the land of Spain.
And he gave them all to the king and queen,

And riches of things untold;
And never a ship that crossed the sea
But brought them tokens from fruit and tree,
And gems from the land of gold.
Three times he had sailed to his new-found world,

Five times he had crossed the main,
When, walking once by the sea, he heard,
By secret letter or secret word,
Of a murderous plot in Spain—
How that envious persons about the court

Had poisoned the mind of the king
By many a letter of false report,
By base suspicion of evil sort,
And words with a traitorous sting.
And the king, half eager to hear the worst,

For he never had been a friend,
Believed it all, and he rued the hour
He gave to the master rank and power,
And resolved it should have an end.
So with cold pretence of the truth to hear,

And with heart that was false as base,
A ship was hurried across the main,
With Bobadilla, false knight of Spain,
To take the admiral's place.
O that kings should ever unkingly be!

O that men should ever forget!
For that fatal hour the false knight came,
To the king's disgrace and the great world's shame,
The star of Columbus set.
They took the queen's cross from off his breast,

And chains they gave him instead;
And iron gyves on his wrists they put,
Vile fetters framed for each hand and foot—
"Twere better they left him dead."
For he who was first of the new-found world,

And bravest upon the main,
Who had found the isles of the fabled gold,
And the far-off lands that his faith foretold,
Was dragged like a felon to Spain.
But the whole world heard the clank of his chains,

When he landed in Cadiz bay;
And fearing the taunt and the curse and scoff,
The false king hurried to take them off,
At the pier where the old ship lay.
But little it helped, or the king's false smile,

As he sat in his robes of state;
For wrong is wrong, if in hut or hall,
And the right were as well not done at all,
If done, alas! too late.
And little it helped if, here and there,

The mantle of favor stole
Across his shoulders, to hide the stain
Of a broken heart or a broken chain—
They had burned too deep in his soul.
So the years crept by, and the cold neglect

Of kings, that will come the while;
Forever and ever 'tis still the same—
Short-lived's the glory of him whose fame
Depends on a prince's smile.
And long he thought, could he see the queen,

Could he speak with her face to face,
She would know the truth and would be again
What once she was, ere his hopes were slain;
And he sighed in his lonely place.
And on a day when he seemed forgot,

And darker the fates, and grim,
A letter came, 'twas the queen's command,
"Come straight to court," in her own fair hand,
And she would be true to him.
But alas for man, and alas for queen,

And alas for hopes so sped!
He had only come to the castle gate,
When the warder said, "It is late—too late,
For the queen, she is lying dead."
And the king forgot what the fair, good queen

With her dying lips had said;
And he who had given a world to Spain
Had never a roof for himself again,
And he wished that he, too, were dead.
Slow tolled the bells of old Seville town,

At noon of a summer's day;
For up in a chamber of yonder inn,
Close by the street, with its noise and din,
The heart of the New World lay.
Perhaps the king, on his throne close by,
No thought to the tolling gave;
But over a world, far up and down,
They heard the bells of Seville town,
And they stood by an open grave.
And the Seville bells, they are ringing still,
Through the centuries far and dim;
And though it is but the common lot
Of men to die, and to be forgot,
They will ring forever of him.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 27–41.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 27–41.

The First Kiss

Can you tell me what a kiss is,
Lady mine?
Stands there writ among the pages
Of the poets and the sages
Any sign?

What a kiss is, sweet, then listen
Once to me:
When the fairies first made lovers,
Such as you and I and others—
In their glee,

They forgot to make a sign-word
And a seal—
Something that should be a token
Of a something still unspoken,
That we feel.

Till one day a man and maiden,
Sweet as morn,
Touched their lips just so, together,
And out there, among the heather,
It was born.

Oh! the fairies laughed and cried so,
In the morn,
Just to think, in two lips meeting,
And in two eyes fondly greeting,
It was born.

And they laughed, and said together,
We will make
Out of human lips a treasure,
Loved and deep beyond all measure,
For their sake.

And with fairy wands they touched them,
And the thrill
Of the two first lips together,
On that sweet morn in the heather,
Liveth still.

And from that morn unto this morn
Of our bliss,
There hath never been a lover
But the sign-word could discover
In a kiss.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 42–43.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 42–43.

Philip

Ah! many and many a year ago it was—
And yet, but yesterday it might have been,
So little changed are fields and olive rows,
And Prato's hills, and orchards gold and green,
And hearts of men and women too, I ween.
Some things there are that never do grow old,
Or, growing old, age is not felt nor seen;
As faces of the ones we love—they hold
A truce with time,—and lovers' tales, though oft retold.

Ah! many a year within a cloister's walls,
A friar-painter brooded all the day;
For even prayer sometimes a little palls
On honest hearts who count their beads alway,
And most with those who work, as well as pray.
And so with Philip, young and fair, and one
Whom cities honored; and men loved to say

That Friar Philip painted Christ as none
In all his far-famed Italy had ever done.

Still was he not content, for he would trace
The Holy Virgin, with a face so fair,
Men should not say, "How sweet it is, what grace,
What depth of color and what beauty rare,
And still, no face of any woman there."
He would have flesh, and human blood and bone;
Christ was a woman's son, the priests declare:
It was a maid, on whom the starlight shone
That night, that sweetest night, God's world has ever known.

"If I could find in all fair Italy,
One face to help me to my face divine,
It should be riches, joy enough, for me,
Alas! there is not any face so fine
As this I see, this virgin face of mine.
If Heaven were gracious—no—it cannot be,
That which my soul for ever doth enshrine,

Which even in sleep comes tenderly to me,
I cannot paint because no form or body can I see.

One day, blessed day, within St. Margaret,
A sisters' cloister of old Prato town,
The pious abbess thought to pay some debt
To some dead saint or other, of renown,
And prayed that Philip might himself come down:
And paint a virgin, with a mother's face,
And Christ, the child, her glory and her crown,
A picture fitted for such holy place,—
Thus would the sisters find some special lasting grace.

Long up and down the archéd room he went,
With folded hands, and eyes bent down alway;
His unused easel on the altar leant,
The unstained pallet on the marble lay,
His thoughts, with her, had: wandered far away.
“Cursed fate”—he cried—“but, no, I do forget—

I will not curse, and yet I cannot pray.”
Thus murmured ever till his dark eyes met
The nearing, list'ning abbess of St. Margaret.
“What is it, Philip? list—I heard you here;
He is more gracious than your words allow—
The sweetest face of Italy is near,
I hear her singing in the vespers now—
A month ago, she took our novice vow.
It is not seeming, and perhaps not meant,
And holy fathers they would frown, I trow,
To see a novice to a brother lent,
E'en were't to paint a picture of the sacrament.

“But you I know and your good heart ah, well,
Take her till prayers, and paint her as you can,
Above that altar, that we long may tell
We have a picture by the famous man;
It is not every convent here in Prato can.
Bar well the door, and let the censer swing,
It adds a glamour to this room—a spell,
Perhaps't will aid in your imagining,
It is like her, so fair, so beautiful a thing.”

Herself she crossed, and left him at the noon—
The great drops stand in Philip's dark, deep eyes;
It is too much to be so blest so soon,
But he who falters at this moment, dies.
He laughs anon, and then anon he sighs.
The curtains part—along the altar stair
A rustling gown, to where his pallet lies—
His prayed-for virgin—see, she waits him there.
Even in his dreams she was not half so fair.

Abashed, and blushing like a rose she stood,
Her dark eyes resting on the marble floor;
“Was this not Philip, whom the sisterhood
Had praised a thousand, thousand times, before,
Till she herself was ready to adore?”
He took her hand and gently led to where
The sunbeams bent, embracing, from a stained door,
Casting their shadows on an oaken chair,
High-backed and carved, that was standing there.

High-backed and carved and of form antique,
And half way covered with a cloth of gold,
So bright, the very sunbeams even seemed to seek
Some new warmth lurking in its secret fold—
As if when she were there, even marble could be cold—
She was herself so warm, and beautiful, and rare,—
Not half her beauty had the abbess told.
Heaven! ‘tis no wonder Philip can but stare,
How could mere mortal paint a face so fair?

Her novice kerchief she has laid aside,
And loosed the girdle from her simple gown,
And her sweet bodice she has half untied,
And half the abandon of her hair is down,
Her hair, so soft, and beautiful, and brown.
He looked and sighed as in a soothéd bliss,
Saw his ideal—of all maids, the crown,
The throat, the bosom, fit for cherub's kiss,
Alas! he was not living who could paint like this.

He was not living who could paint a sigh,
Or the soft heaving of a loving breast,
Nor the warm lustre of a woman's eye
When he she loves is ling'ring to be prest—
Could one so paint, he were divinely blest.
He tried and tried, then laid the pallet down,—
The chapel bells were calling her to prayer,
Her beads she took, and, folding her sweet gown,
She left him longing like a spirit there,
In sad, yet sweet and beautiful despair.

But on that night, when olive-covered hills
Lay sweet and silvered with a summer moon,
When all was silence, save the whippoorwills
Who tired not chanting in the sad old roon
To the grim watchdog that had waked too soon,
Soft whisp'ring lips half touched a maiden's ear:
"Arise, arise, it is the long night's noon,
And here are kisses for thee, sweet, and here.'
And softly rose she without shame or fear.

And softly stepped she on the oaken stair,
And softly stepped she in that chapel old,
The silver censer still was swinging there,
As if a moonbeam did its weight uphold,
It was so light, and beautiful of mould.
It was not mockery that she did kneel,
Though round her waist she felt an arm enfold,
Beneath that censer it was good to feel
The old time blessing guilt could not conceal.

And out through fields, and olive groves they went,
Through cypress alleys, and by forests green,
And purpled vines, with luscious fruits all bent,
And high stone walls, with narrow lanes between,—
And over all the moonlight's mellow sheen.
Still on they wandered till the coming day
Changed into purple the enchanted scene;
And when the sisters met that morn, to pray,
They did not dream how far she was away.

Oh woe! oh woe! the sisters cried that morn,
 And woe! swift neighbors, as they mounted steed;
 And all the hills re-echo to the horn,
 And horses' hoofs, as quickly on they speed
 By brook, and bridge, and olive grove and mead.
 In vain, in vain, not one of them may tell
 Where he hath hid her in this hour of need,
 If in some cave of mountain, or some secret dell—
 Little, but little, recks he, that they ride so well.

'Vain was demand, and vain was bishop's frown,
 Vain as swift mounting, and the swifter chase—
 But once, when Philip came to Prato town,
 Men saw him painting, in the market-place,
 The immortal picture of his lady's face—
 A face so fair—a sorrow without pain,
 An angel's look, and yet a woman's grace—
 As if a rose upon a frost had lain,
 And blushed to see itself a rose again.

Long dead is he who painted there that day,
 And she whose face did so his soul inspire,
 And all those sisters, aye, long dead are they;
 And other hands now light that altar-fire,
 And that sweet censer's like a broken lyre.
 But through the ages, still men love to trace
 An art new born to Philip, king and sire,
 And lives like song the beauty of that face
 That Philip Lippi painted in the market-place.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 44–53.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 44–53.

Margery Brown

Margery Brown is ever so fair,
There is none like her, not one in the town.
Brownare her soft eyes, and browner her hair,
Queenly her footstep, and queenly her air—
No, there's no other like Margery Brown.
Margery Brown is not young as she seems,
Fair as she is from her foot to her crown,
Lips archly bent, cheeks with dimples and gleams,
Eyes full of summer and beautiful dreams—
She is just sixty—sweet Margery Brown.

Years ago, many, sweet Margery Brown
Loved as a woman can only know how;
That was the year of the plague in the town,
And people all wondered that Margery Brown
Kept her sweet dimples and beautiful brow.
“I am still beautiful,” Margery said,
Bowing her face to the form they laid down.
“He will come back when the poppies are red.
See! how he smiles, tho’ he’s lying there dead;”
And the neighbors all pitied mad Margery Brown.

Years did not reckon with Margery more;
Time brought no dimness to eyes that were brown—
Fountains of youth kept her beauty in store.
“I am yet young,” she still said, “as before,”
And fair as an angel was Margery Brown.
Margery lives in a world of her own.
What to her if the sun goes down?
Night hath stars that never have shone,
And she has hopes none other has known.
And they keep her young, sweet Margery Brown.

She forgets that the years pass by,
Margery fair, with the quaint-cut gown,
Lips of roses and sunlit eye,
Cheeks where blushes and dimples vie;
But all hearts love her—sweet Margery Brown.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 54–55.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M.*

Byers, Selected (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 54–55.

News at the White House

All the night the President sat,
Waiting the telegraph's click, click, click;
Waiting the news that should tell him that
Grant had crossed at the little creek;
Waiting to hear that before the light
Sherman's troops were beyond the bridge;
That over the river, from left to right,
All was ready to charge the Ridge.

Chickamauga was lost; our dead
Lay in heaps on the sodden plain;
What if the rebel, with lifted head,
Strike, as he struck, to our hearts again?
Over the North, as a pall of night,
Sorrow hung, and the summons came:
"Win a victory—win us a fight;
Wipe away from our flag the shame."

All the night, in his room alone—
All the night till the dawn was by,

And over the broad Potomac shone
Red the sun in the eastern sky—
Watched the President, grave and sad—
Came no tick on the mystic line;
What if the daring rebel had
Tapped the wire and read the sign—

Sign of battle, or sign of gloom?
Hark! the lightning's messenger!
No! Silence only is in the room—
Silence only, and breath of prayer.
Listen! Yes, 'tis the tick, tick, tick—
"Clear the lines" are the first words sent,
"Up to Washington, men, be quick!
Grant will talk with the President."

Click, click, click, went the instrument—
“‘Sherman’s army has crossed the stream;”
Nearer the table the grave face leant,
Lips half parted and eyes agleam.
“Hooker’s soldiers but yesterday
Stormed up Lookout in mist and rain;
They are holding the dangerous way,
They will fight at our right again.

“On the left is our storming line,
Sherman’s legions are bending on;”
Click, click, click: “On the Ridge there shine
Rows of cannon since early dawn—
Rows of cannon and men in gray,
Shining columns of burnished steel;
They are holding our men at bay,
They are waiting the cannon’s peal.

“Look! our soldiers have climbed the Ridge;
Sherman’s gallants have stormed the line
Forty cannon are at the bridge—
Brave these soldiers of his and mine!”
Click, click, click: “The centre moves,
Thomas, Sheridan, all abreast,
Bayonets fixed—in troops and droves
Charging clear to the mountain’s crest.

“Battle’s thunder from left to right,
Belching cannon and musket’s crash.”
Click, click, click: “Lo! on every height
Flames of sulphur and lightnings flash.”
Closer still to the breathing wire
Bends the face of the President—

Does he hear it, the battle’s fire,
Half-way over a continent?

Does he hear it, the bugle’s call,
Sounding “Forward,” the whole long line?
Sees he blue-coat and gray-coat fall?
Hears he cannon and splintering pine?
Click, click, click: “And a thousand men
Climb the works on the highest hill—
Wait! they are driving us back again!
No! our banner is waving still!
“See! we’re storming the whole long line,
Waiting never a leader’s cry;

Over the rocks and splintering pine—
We will capture the Ridge or die!
Hand to hand on the very crest ’—
Click, click, click—* with the naked steel;
Only a moment, and, east to west,
Flags are falling and columns reel.
“Shouts and cheers on the Ridge are heard—
Shouts and cheers till the skies are rent;
Back to the river, they’ve got the word—
Won is the battle, our President!”

Quick as thought, and the answer flies—
“Bless our soldiers! God bless each one!”
And up to the loyal Northern skies
Hymns ascend for the battle won.
Kind, good President—brave, strong men,
Sounds of battle you’ll hear no more—
Calls of bugle to charge again,
Crash of muskets or cannon’s roar.
But, while Mountain and Ridge shall stand,
They are one with your deathless fame;
Men shall tell to a rescued land
How the news to the White House came.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 56–60.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 56–60.

The Reveille

For the one last reveille
 They are waiting as they fell—
 Arm to arm, and knee to knee;
 They are sleeping—it is well—
 Till the one last reveille.

They are sleeping—let them rest—
 In the sod they died to save;
 Fame shall write above their breast,
 “They are mine, though in the grave,”
 And their spirits shall have rest.

Feet of loved ones shall come near
 When the May is in her bloom,
 And with garlands every year
 Deck their unforgotten tomb,
 For, though dead, they are so dear.

When, with fife and muffled drum,
 And with steady step, and slow,
 They shall hear their comrades come,
 They will hear the step and know—
 They will hear them when they come.

They will smell the fragrance sweet
 Of the blossoms that you bring;
 They will hear the treading feet;
 They will hear the songs you sing;
 They will hear the drummers beat.

They will hear the jubilee,
 And the bells that ring release—
 They will fold their arms and be
 All at rest in hope and peace,
 While they wait the reveille.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 61–62.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 61–62; *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 19; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 58.

Said a Song-Bird

Said a song-bird once to me,
“Listen to my roundelay;
Man nor maid shall hinder me—
I shall sing my song to-day.”

Said a song-bird once to me,
“I have sung my song to-day;
Hadst thou listened, it may be
I have said what thou wouldst say.”

I have only said and sung
Things that in thy heart have dwelt;
Though thy harp was never strung,
Thou hast felt what I have felt.

All are poets in their time—
God’s whole world is harmony:
Lo! in one majestic rhyme
Sweep the rivers to the sea.

All are poets when they feel
Nature’s rhythms rise and fall;
Nature’s heart-beats are the seal
Maketh poets of us all.

If, perchance, these songs of mine
Waken some responsive strain,
Silent though the countersign,
I shall not have sung in vain.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 63–64.

The Guard on the Volga

“What is it you’re watching, good soldier,
In the forest so dark and lone?
I have heard of no Turkish cannon,
And our Czar is at peace at home.
Why stand on the Volga River,
When the night is so cold and drear?
My Christ! must a soldier shiver,
When never a foeman is near?

Hark! peasant, across there, an army
Lies hid in the brushwood and moss,
And the sergeant said: “Watch by the ferry,
And see that no picket shall cross.”
I charged the red ditches at Plevna,
And knew the foes’ sabres by sight.
It was fierce! it was death! but I never
Knew fear in my life till to-night.

By Heavens! I tremble. What is it?
What is it, this army so near?
Why don’t the drums beat to the rescue?
Why is not our Skobeleff here?
Are hordes of the desert upon us,
Are China’s fierce legions at war,
And we but one guard on the Volga?
God save our good land and the Czar!

A fiercer foe, far, than the Tartar,—
And armies of China are small
When counted beside the battalions
That muster to conquer them all.
’Tis the Pestilence marching in silence,
That hides in the brushwood and moss;
But the sergeant said: “Stick to the ferry,
And see that no picket shall cross.”

Great God! Do they think that a picket
Can stop what the Heavens command?
—That bullets may wrestle with angels,
To keep the Plague out of the land?
Oh! soldier, I’m but a poor peasant,
Yet know that God has but one way.
Trust sabre, nor rifle, nor picket,
But kneel by the Volga and pray.

And peasant and soldier together
Knelt down in the forest alone,
And prayed that that night on the Volga
The hand of the Lord should be shown.
And though the Plague lurks on the border,
And hides 'mid the brushwood and moss,
God's angels keep watch o'er the ferry,
And see that no picket shall cross.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 65–67.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 65–67; *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 25–26; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 70–71.

The Sea

A charm there is about the dang'rous sea
 That draws man to its rugged arms, as draws
 The polar star the compass to the North.
 Let him but taste the briny ocean once,—
 Friends, home, nor gold, can stay his wild desire
 To breast again its waves, to breathe its air,
 To brave its tempests, and to share its calm.
 To him, the deep, with all its heartless wreck
 And ruin, is a thing to love. Its storms
 Are playthings to his daring heart. He sleeps
 Amid its foaming rage, as sleeps a child
 Upon some mossy bank, nor dreams of harm
 To happen, ere his day has come. To be
 Upon its billowy breast, sweetheart and wife,
 Mother and child, are left to weep and wait
 Through weary days, weeks, months, and years; and when
 At last the longed-for sailor comes, 'tis but
 To snatch one kiss of love, a wife's embrace,
 A mother's tear—then yield himself again
 To that strange spell which binds him to the sea.
 Again he tramps the vessel's deck; climbs high
 Among its shrouds and sails, and feels again
 The white sea-foam leap up to greet him with
 Its rude embrace. His heart is strangely full,
 And all he has he gives to his best love,
 The sea—his youth, his manhood, and at last
 Himself; then sweetly sleeps the long strange sleep
 Of Death in the old Ocean's arms.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 68–69.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 68–69.

Auf Wiedersehen!

There are no words in our cold English tongue
Where hope and joy are kin alike to pain;
“Farewell,” we say, and the sad heart is wrung:
Only farewell—there is no “wiedersehen;”

No wish expressed, no joyous hope, that when,—
The voyage ended o’er the dang’rous main,
The desert crossed, the trial done,—that then
We, who have parted thus, may meet again.

Not so farewell the German sailor cries,
Not so good-by, sad sweetheart unto swain.
I go to come—he is not dead who dies;
Good-by, sweet love,—but, till we meet again.

“Auf wiedersehen”—a hundred thoughts in one—
The double joy that recompenses pain:
There is a rising as a setting sun;
Good-by, sweet love, good-by—“auf wiedersehen.”

“Auf wiedersehen”—good-by, but not for aye;
Thou still shalt be my one sweet song’s refrain.
Though thou dost go, thus ever shalt thou stay,—
Good-by, sweet love, good-by—“auf wiedersehen.”

“Auf wiedersehen”—good-by, good-by, and when
Hope hath, in trust, the wicked absence slain,
I will be with you every hour; till then
Good-by, sweet love, good-by—“auf wiedersehen.”

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 70–71.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 70–71.

The Tramp of Sherman's Army

List, comrades, I hear the old bugle;
It's sounding the same reveille
That wakened the armies of Sherman
One morn by the swift Tennessee.
A thousand old memories crowd on me;
My tired feet are marching along,
Keeping steps with the notes of yon bugle,
Or the words of some old army song.

I see Hooker's lines climbing Lookout,
The storming of Sherman's brave men,
The "Ridge," and the Centre, and Thomas,
The flag floating up there again;
And Grant standing there like a statue,
Unmoved till the battle is done;
And the words of great Lincoln, I hear them—
"God bless you, brave men, every one."

And the fields fiercely fought for Atlanta,
Once more to my vision they rise—
A hundred long days, each a battle,
And nights full of dread and surprise.
Each mountain and hill grows historic;
Each stream from some battle is red;
Each field is swift mown with war's sickle;
Each hillock's some grave of our dead.

I see the flag float o'er Atlanta—
The tattered old flag that we bore
At Shiloh and Vicksburg and Corinth,
And a score of red battles before.
With a cheer on the ramparts we raise it,
A cheer, and a sigh for our men
Who sleep in the woods over yonder,
Who'll never see battle again.

* * * * *

Again the old bugle is sounding;
There's a tramping of thousands of men;
The mountains repeat the wild music;
The forests re-echo again.
And around every camp-fire's the story
Of fame and of glory to be,
And a shout of blue-coated battalions,
For Sherman will march to the sea.

And look! the great columns are moving
To music of bugle and drum;
Their blood-colored flags pointing southward,
Like tempests the blue columns come,
While millions stand breathlessly waiting
The boom of a far signal-gun,
For the blaze of that cannon shall tell them
How bravely Savannah was won.

Oh! where are the men who took Lookout,
Or stormed up the "Ridge" on that day?
Who held the hot lines at the "Tunnel,"
Or drove the fierce foeman to bay?
Oh! where are the legions of Sherman?
God bless them, wherever they be,
Who fought with him all that war-summer,
Or marched with him down to the sea.

Where, where are the heroes who wakened
That morn by the swift Tennessee,
When the bugles of Sherman said "Forward,"
Or sounded their loud reveille?
Where, where are the men of Resaca,
Of Dallas, of Kenesaw—where?
Fame writ their names up in her temple,
And Freedom stands guarding them there.

Oh patriots! oh comrades! we know you;
Your hands are still touching our own;
The flag that we saved there together—
No star from its glory has flown.
Again we touch elbows; your spirits
Are with us to-night in this room;
There's Logan, I know by his bearing,
McPherson I see by his plume.

There's Sheridan riding his charger,
And Thomas, so brave and serene,
And Hooker, and Grant, the great captain,
His eye resting still on the scene;
And spirits of blue-coated soldiers
Are wheeling from column to line;
They see the great chief and salute him,
And give him the new countersign.

Fill up again, comrades, your glasses;
Let's drink to these spirits, and be
Once more the old army of Sherman,
That stood by the blue Tennessee.
Let's keep the old camp-fires a-burning,
The songs and the memories bright,
Till the bugle shall sound by yon river—
All hail! and forever—good-night!

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 72–76.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 72–76.

The Ballad of Quintin Massy

Who goes to the city of Antwerp, that famous old Flemish town,
Will see, in the square of the Münster, a fountain of great renown.
It stands by the grand Cathedral, the church with the wondrous chimes,
And the maidens go there for water, as they went in the olden times;

And they meet and talk of their lovers, till their pitchers are running o'er,
And wonder if Flemish lovers will be what they were, once more,—
Will be what they were when Quintin, as famous in art as in love,
Wrought out from the heated iron the

Roland that stands above.

As gallant a youth was Quintin as any in
Antwerp town,

And never a better blacksmith made bellows go up and down;

And never a Flanders lover had maiden more richly fair,
Than the daughter of proud Franz Floris, renowned of the painters there.
But the haughty, the proud Franz Floris looked up from his easel, and said:
“The world it has got but one Floris, with only one child to wed.

And he who will woo and win her, must first be a painter, and paint
This fairest of faces in Flanders,—knighterrant, or king, or saint.
I note that you are a blacksmith, and a clever one, too, they say—
There are many fair girls in Antwerp would marry you any day.

But the daughter of old Franz Floris can never give heart nor hand
To one who is not the equal of any in all the land.”

“Now, good Franz Floris, listen—I’ll tell you what I will do—
There is not in the whole of Flanders a painter so great as you;

But if, within five short summers, I paint on a canvas clear,
A picture better than any of all you have painted here,—
Do you promise upon your honor, do you promise your own good name,
That she shall be mine forever? be one in my love—my fame?”

Loud laughed the great Franz Floris: “Too modest, young man, by far.
Art is not won like a maiden, nor maidens as some things are.
I grant that to be a blacksmith, to hammer a nail or a ring,
Is an easy task for a young man, but art is another thing.
And whether my daughter is willing to wait five summers for you?

There are enough of Antwerp’s gallants who wait but my leave to woo.”
“I’ll wait!” cried Floris’ daughter; “I’ll wait, good Quintin, nor wed;
Five summers will find me faithful, or else they will find me dead.”

So he buckled his sword about him, and with pilgrim's staff in hand,
He wandered along fair rivers, he journeyed through many a land;
And an image was ever before him: "Could
I paint what my soul doth see,
There is not a painter in Flanders, who would not be envying me."
So out from the fields of Holland, and over cold fields of snow,
By many an Alpine torrent, by many a gorge below,
The feet of the pilgrim wandered, far into that favored clime,
Where art is a child of nature, and nature a thing sublime.

Then he tarried and sought a master, in color, and form, and line,
And watched the summer sunsets go out in a sea of wine.
And the days went by, and the summers in splendor their cycles ran,
And the smith became a scholar, and the scholar the fullgrown man.

Five years to a day had vanished, five years and a month had flown,
And the autumn had brought no message to her who was left alone.

"He is dead," she cried, "my lover, for faithless he could not be;"
"He is dead," the false winds whispered,
"he is dead, but not for thee."

One day, when the great Franz Floris stood leaning on Quintin's well,
A peddler unloosed his bundle, with curious things to sell:
"For the love of God, buy something! I have nothing to eat or wear!
I am told you are fond of pictures, and here
I have one that's rare:

It has neither frame nor stretcher—but the colors remain as clear"—
"What is that? good heaven!" cried Floris,
"tis my child that is painted here.

Who—where is the master painter? how much is the price you seek?
There is not a man in Flanders can paint such a brow and cheek."
"Thank God!" the stranger answered,
"thank God that you think it true,
For that picture is Quintin Massy's, who claims your daughter of you."

"If you are Quintin Massy, and if this is the work of your hand,
There is not such another painter in all of this Flemish land.

There's not such another painter, but I've
And if you are Quintin Massy, you'll know what I say is true:

Five summers my child' had waited, five summers their autumns wed,
And the winter brought no message, and the poor child thought thee dead.

‘He is dead,’ she cried, ‘my lover, for faithless he could not be;’
‘He is dead,’ the false winds whispered, ‘he is dead, but not for thee.’
This morning, this very morning, when the cloister bells strike nine,
There will be another sister at the cloister of Isolone;

When the bell strikes nine and a quarter, she will kneel for the one last vow,—
’Tis a mile from here, good Quintin, and the bells are ringing now.”

“Horse—horse!” cries Quintin Massy, and his cloak is cast afar,
And he rides with sword and buckler, as a soldier would ride to war.

The bell strikes five already—the bell strikes six—and eight,

But Quintin’s sword has rattled the bars of the cloister gate.

“Who comes?” cries the angered abbess,

“who storms at the cloister door?

I tell you that Floris’ daughter is a child of the world no more.

For the solemn mass is chanting, and she kneels at the altar rail,
And pious nuns attend her, and bring her the sisters’ veil.”

“Stop, stop your prayers,” cries Quintin,

“for I swear by Antwerp town,

You’ll bring me Floris’ daughter, or I’ll burn your cloister down.”

And the pale, poor nuns grew whiter, as white as the bands they wore,

And they led a maiden fainting, and veiled, to the cloister door.

“It is done!” cried Quintin Massy, “the picture I saw, is done!

And as you are Floris’ daughter, so I am to be his son.”

And the chimes of the famous Münster rang out in a joyous tune,
As the bride and her blacksmith painter rode by on that afternoon.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 77–85.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 77–85; *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 45–50; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 86–91.

The Dwarf of Mytilene

There dwelt in Mytilene once,
By the AEgean sea,
A little wrinkled, dwarfish man,
No uglier could there be;
But a very prince of ferrymen,
And stout of limb was he.

No man had ever vainly dared,
No woman feared to go,
To any island in that sea,
Whatever winds might blow,
If only Phaon's boat were there,
And Phaon's self, to row.

For men have seen him when the waves
Grew loud and thick apace,
When wild winds blew from Asia's sides,
And storms came down from Thrace,
Sail out as if to dare their rage,
And fight them face to face.

And yet a life of woe was his,
On land or stormy main;
No bright eyes ever on him smiled,
No sweet voice called his name;
In sun, or shade, or storm, or calm,
His days were all the same.

Proud maidens of the Lesbian Isle,
Proud men of high degree,
Curled their cold lips, and passed him by,
As one unfit to be;
And children shouted, "See, he comes,
The old man of the sea."

One day in the sweet summer-time,
There came across the hills
The kindly lowing of the herds,
The songs of many rills,
And the old man leaned him on his oar,
And thought upon his ills.

He thought of those proud Lesbian dames,
And those proud-hearted men—
He cursed his bitterness of fate,
He cursed the gods, and then

Wished that the sun that saw him born
Had never shone again.

He dropped his oar, he crossed his arms,
When o'er the sands apace
A step drew near. He turned and saw
A fair young woman's face—
No maiden was there like to her
In all the Lesbian race.

"O, who art thou, thou queenly maid?
From whence now may'st thou be?"
"I am the Queen of Love," she said:
"Wilt bear me o'er the sea?
For yonder, on that island fair,
Adonis waits for me."

O, never yet had ferryman
A passenger so fair,—
O, never had the sun shone on
So strangely matched a pair,
As wrinkled Phaon at the oars,
And Venus smiling there.

The boat went up, the boat went down,
Forward and forward still,
While Phaon stood behind the oars,
And worked with mighty will.
And Mytilene's lights grew dim,
On every tower and hill.

The land was reached, the harbor passed,
The goddess sprang on shore.
"What shall I pay, good ferryman,
Since thou hast brought me o'er?*"
And Phaon, bowing, answered her,
"Thy smiles, and nothing more."

"A woman's smiles," the goddess said,
May come or go at will,
They slay as often as they bless,
Nor pity when they kill.
But thou shalt have a richer fate,
A dowry better still."

She touched the girdle at her side,—
Transformed, the old man stood,
The fairest mortal ever seen
On the Agean flood—
“A dwarf, in one sweet moment made
The equal of a god.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 88–93.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 90–93.

Echo

There was a young nymph Echo, once,
Employed by thundering Jove,
To entertain his queen at home,
Whene'er he wished to rove;
To talk, and talk, and talk with her,
And keep her mind away,
Whilst he with nymphs and goddesses
Went sporting many a day.

Thus hours and days, the legends tell,
Good Juno's king was gone,
And little did the queen suspect
What errands he was on;
For by her side, incessantly,
In court or pleasant walk,
Fair Echo laughed and gave no time
For anything but talk.

She talked poor Juno mad almost,
Until by her't was seen
It was a ruse of Jupiter
To blind an injured queen:
When turning on the nymph, she cried,
"Far shall my vengeance reach,—
Behold! false maid, from this time forth
Thou shalt be robbed of speech."

She touched her with her wand, and lo!
The sweet nymph's tongue was fast—
Of others' words she still had voice
To echo back the last;
But from her own sad, swelling heart,
No word might ever come,—
In burning pain, or thrilling joy,
Still were her own lips dumb.

Through field, and grove, and silent wood,
She wandered here and there,
And meeting with Narcissus once,
She loved the stripling fair.
But what is love unspoken worth,
Or lips to silence wed?—
Though she was young, and fair as young,
Narcissus saw and fled.

Grieving, she wept, and turned her face,—
She heard the ring-dove moan,
Oh! pity, pity, pity love
Forsaken by its own.
And up and down, and far and wide,
She walked, and sadly wept,
And she was like some lily fair
Whereon the frost had slept.

Oh! never, never such a maid
In the wide world was seen,
As Echo, sorrowing up and down,
By wood and meadow green;
And her fair body pined, and grew
Like to the air, so thin—
The sunshine found no cheek to kiss
No heart to enter in.

Like to the mem'ry of a dream
She grew, and faded, till
Nought but her echoing voice was left,
To gladden wood and hill;
And half ashamed, and half afraid,
Like to some naiad queen
She hid herself among the rocks,
And nevermore was seen.

The wild birds sought her on the hill,
The huntsman on the plain—
She laughed, and mocked, and cried, but still
Was never seen again,—
But summer evenings, schoolboys hear,
In woods and valleys fair,
The nymph, whom Juno's vengeance turned
Into an echo there.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 94–97.

The Kiss of Jupiter

In ages past, when Jupiter
Was wandering here and there,
He peeping in a temple saw
Sweet Io bent in prayer,
And quite forgetful of his wife,
He kissed the maiden fair.

A rousing kiss it must have been,
Resounding far and near,
For Juno on Olympus heard,
And hurrying through the air,
Threw wide the temple doors and stood
Before the guilty pair.

One look on Jupiter she cast,
One on the maid,—and lo!
She turned her with her wand into
A heifer white as snow—
With Argus, hundred-eyed, to watch
Wherever she might go.

And up and down, and far and wide,
Go where the poor cow will,
That curséd herdsman follows her
By field, and wood, and hill:
By day, by night, his hundred eyes
Are burning on her still.

One day, in pity, Jupiter
Bade Mercury repair
And find the herdsman in the woods,
Who kept the heifer fair,
And, though he had a thousand eyes,
To slay him then and there.

With flute and lyre flies the god
Through woods and tangled ways—
The herdsman sees him by the brook
And listens while he plays;
For every song the sweet boy sings
Is in the herdman's praise.

Enchanted music fills his ear:
By flattery's strains misled,
He sleeps upon the dewy grass,
Nor cunning foe doth dread,—

The god beholds the drooping eyes,
And strikes the herdsman dead.

Rejoiced. the heifer sprang away,
Released from Argus' eve,
And hoped in wider fields to range,
And greener grass to try—
But lo! beside her, day and night,
There buzzed a mighty fly.

Enraged. the wite of Jupiter
Had seen her herdsman slain,
And sent the gad-fly to the cow,
To sting her into pain,
And bade it ever follow her,
Through weed. and field. and plain.

Through many fields the poor cow ran,
Through weary forests wide,
Over many straggling brooks she leaped,
And plunged through many a tide;
Yet was that cursed dragon-fly
Still buzzing at her side.
It followed her through Macedon,
It followed her through Thrace;

It buzzed in many distant lands;
It stung in many a place;
And north or south, or east or west,
That fly was on the chase.

She swam the bounding Bosphorus,
It stung and buzzed the while,
On right and left, behind and front,
For many a weary mile,
Till, wretched with the horrid race,
She plunged into the Nile.

While struggling with the flood, behold!
Eternal Jove was there,
And with his wand transformed his love,
Into a maiden fair;
The same whom he had kissed one morn.
In temple nave at prayer.

And lo! a king was waiting her.
By Jupiter's command,
He sprang into the flood and took
The sweet maid by the hand,
And made her mistress of his heart
And queen of all the land.

And ever, when the new moon rose,
It was a fancy there,
The snow-white cow's two horns were seen,
And Io, young and fair;
And maidens loved to hear how Jove
Once kissed her, when at prayer.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 98–102.

On a Fair Dead Girl

How beautiful to die as does the rose,
Sweet fragrance casting on the am'rous air!
What if too lovely seemed life's way to close,
When death still leaves us with a scene so fair.

Like to the rose thy life was one sweet bloom,
Till Fate undid thee from the fair young stem;
It is not fit, this silent pall and plume,
These weeping maidens, and these sorrowing men.

Thou hadst fair youth, and life's sweet things the best,
Knew naught of Sorrow, or its lonely consort Pain;
Thou hadst the joys of life—leave us the rest,
Who well have known how much of life is vain.

Thy cup, half finished, flushed with joyous wine,
The sad dregs at its bottom thou didst never reach;
Thy night of revels had no morn's repine,
No aching heart, no long-regretted speech.

Thou didst not live the ignomy to own
Of beauty faded, or of roses fled;
Thy cheeks, they paled not, ere the buds were blown,
Thou wert not fairer when thou lived, than dead.

Death is no victor thus—we will not weep!
Thou walk'st in other paths of beauty now, more strange;
It is not Death we call this thing, but Sleep;
No parting this, but Beauty's secret change.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 103–104.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 103–104; *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 38; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 80.

My White Rose and Red

So you've come from the South, have you, darlings?
And slept snug as mice all the way?
And was n't it cold on the mountains,
For rosebud, and myrtle, and bay?
And she packed you up so together,
And blessed you, and kissed you, and said,
"Keep sweet as my memory for him is,
My darlings, my white rose and red."
And what did she tell you at parting?
Some message for me, I know well;
Some praise of our boy, there, God bless him!
Some words of our sweet little Nell.
And the dear tiny hands of the children,
Have they touched your petals so fair?
O, rosebuds, you're happy if Helen
But kissed you one moment, when there!
This white rose shall bloom in the study,
This red one I'll wear on my breast,
O, I wonder if she will be thinking
How often your petals are pressed?
Did she tell you how long we've been married?
Ten years—'t is another year, soon,—
And though we've had snow in December,
We've always had roses in June.
How far it is here from San Remo,
The gem of the beautiful sea!
But you've come with your petals all fragrant
With incense, from her unto me.
How strange it all is; and her letter—
This much and this only it said:
"The children are well here, and happy,
And my love's like the white rose and red."
I'll write her no letter to-morrow,
But something I'll send her instead—
Two rose leaves,—she'll guess at their meaning,
One each from the white rose and red.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 105–106.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M.*

Byers, Selected (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 105–106.

The Marriage of the Flowers

“It is six,” the swallows twittered, “and you’re very late in rising,
If you really think of rising on this lovely morn at all;
For the great red sun is peeping over wood and hill and meadow,
And the unmilked cows are lowing in the dimly lighted stall.”

O, ye robins and ye swallows, thought I, throwing back the lattice,
Ye are noisy, joyous fellows, and you waken when you will;
Then I saw a dainty letter, bound in ribbon-grass and clover,
That the swallows had left swinging by the narrow window-sill.

O, the dainty, dainty letter, on an orange leaf, or lemon,
Signed, “Your friend, the Queen of Roses,” writ in characters of dew,
“You’re invited to the garden, there’s a good time there at seven,
And a place beside the apple-tree has been reserved for you.

“There’ll be matings there, and marriages, of every flower and blossom:
Cross the brook behind the arbor, and come early, if you can.”
O, my thoughts, they all went bounding, and my heart leaped in my bosom,
“And how sweetly she composes,” I reflected as I ran.

There she sat, the Queen of Roses, with her virgins all about her,
While the lilacs and the apple-blooms seemed waiting her command.
O how lovely, O how gracious, she did smile on each new-comer!
‘O how sweet she kissed the lilies as she took them by the hand!

Never had I seen her fairer than she was this happy morning,
Never knew her breath delicious, half so boundless, half so rare;
Oh! she seemed a thing of heaven, with the dew upon her bosom,
And I wished I were some daffodil, that I might kiss it there.

All at once the grass rows parted, and the sweetest notes were sounded,—
There was music, there was odor, there was loving, in the air;
—And a hundred joyous gallants, robed in holiday apparel,
Danced beneath the lilac-bushes with a hundred maidens fair.

There were tulips, proud and yellow, with their great green spears beside them;
There were lilies grandly bowing to the Rose Queen as they came;
There were daffodils so stately, scenting all the air of heaven,
Joyous buds, and sleepy poppies, with their banners all aflame.

There were pansies robed in purple, marching o’er the apple-blossoms,
And the foxgloves with their pages tripped coquettishly along;
And the violets and the daisies, in their bonnets blue and yellow,
Joined the marching and parading of th’ innumerable throng.

All at once the dandelion blew three notes upon his trumpet:
 “Choose ye partners for the dancing, gallant knights and ladies fair!”
 And the honeysuckle curtsied to the young sweet-breathed clematis,
 And remarked upon the sweetness of the blossoms in her hair.

“We’re the tallest,” said the tuberose to the iris standing nearest,
 “And suppose that now, for instance, I should offer you my heart?”
 “O, how sudden!” cried the sly thing; “I’m really quite embarrassed,—
 Unexpected, but pray do it, just to give the rest a start.”

Then a daisy kissed a pansy, with its jacket brown and yellow,
 And a crocus led a thistle to a seat beside the rose;
 And the Maybells grouped together, close beside the lady-slipper,
 And commented on her beauty, and the splendor of her clothes.

“O, a market this for beauty!” said a jasmine, gently clinging
 To the strong arm of an orange, as a glance on him she threw;
 “Why, you scarcely would believe it, but I’ve had this very morning
 Twenty offers, and declined them just to promenade with you.”

So, in groupings, or in couples, led each knight some gentle lady,
 Led some fair companion blushing, past the windows fresh and green,
 And the Sweet Rose gave her blessing, and a kiss at times, it may be,
 To the fairest brides and sweetest mortals eye hath ever seen.

Then again the grass it parted, and the sunshine it grew brighter,
 Till it seemed as if the curtains of high heaven were withdrawn,
 And each flower and bud and blossom pressed some fair one to its bosom,
 As the bannered train danced gayly ’twixt the windows on the lawn.

O, the muskrose was so stately! and so stately was the Queen Rose!
 And how sweetly smiled she on me, as she whispered in my ear:
 “Come again! you know you’re welcome! come again, dear, for, it may be
 That our baby buds and blossoms will be christened here next year.”

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 107–112.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 107–112.

Room for the Angels

Far away by the Indus River,
Where the mornings are gold and red,
The mourners walk together,
And bury their silent dead,
In couples and in silence,—
But ever a place ahead
Is left unfilled and honored,
As that where the angels tread.

'Tis a fancy, old as their river,
That, whenever they bury their dead,
The noise of wings is near them,
And light forms marching ahead,—
So ever before the mourners,
And close to the pall and plume,
'Tis a beautiful heathen custom
To make for the angels room.

I've thought if some, not heathen,
Would make, in their worldly care,
Just room in their hearts for angels,
They would sometimes find them there.
If but in some nook or corner,
Filled up with the smallest things,
'Twere a joy to be sometimes hearing
The rustle of angels' wings.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 113–114.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 113–114; *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 57; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 97.

If You Want a Kiss, Why, Take It

There's a jolly Saxon proverb,
That is pretty much like this—
A man is half in heaven,
When he has a woman's kiss.
But there's danger in delaying,
And the sweetness may forsake it;
So I tell you, bashful lover,
If you want a kiss, why, take it.

Never let another fellow
Steal a march on you in this,
Never let a laughing maiden
See you spoiling for a kiss:
There's a royal way to kissing,
And the jolly ones who make it,
Have a motto that is winning—
If you want a kiss, why, take it.

Any fool may face a cannon,
Any booby wear a crown;
But a man must win a woman,
If he'd have her for his own.—
Would you have the golden apple,
You must find the tree and shake it;
If the thing is worth the having,
And you want a kiss, why, take it.

Who would burn upon a desert,
With a forest smiling by?
Who would give his sunny summer
For a bleak and wintry sky?
O, I tell you there's a magic,
And you cannot, cannot break it,
For the sweetest part of loving
Is to want a kiss and take it.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 115–116.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 115–116; *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 61; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 99.

Jamie's Coming O'er the Moor

Jamie's coming o'er the moor,
Heaven smile, and good betide him!
I am rich and Jamie's poor,
But I love no one beside him.

Jamie, Jamie, all the day,—
I am thinking only of him;
June would not be June alway,
If I did not see and love him.

Twelve sweet months ago we met.
Twelve sweet moons have been the token,
Break, my heart, or else forget
Jamie yet no word hath spoken.

List! 'tis Jamie's voice I hear,
One sweet voice of all the many.
I shall have no longer fear,—
Jamie cries, "I love you, Jeannie!"

Jamie comes across the moor,
Heaven smile, and love betide him;
Neither I nor Jamie's poor,
When I love no one beside him.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 119–120.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 119–120; *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 69; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 108.

Maid and Butterfly

From the German.

A maiden idly wandered
Through wood and cool retreat,
And as she stopped to gather
A nosegay from the heather,
A butterfly passed by her,
And kissed her lips so sweet.

“O! pardon,” said the rover,
“O! pardon, maiden fair,
I sought amid the flowers
The honey that is ours,
And took your red lips blooming
For roses growing there.”

“For this time,” said the maiden,
Forgiveness—it is by;
But I must beg to mention,
And press to your attention,
These roses are not blooming,
For every butterfly.”

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), p. 121.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), p. 121; *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 21; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 60–61.

O, How Shall I Sing to My Fair One?

O, how tune my harp to the best?
Sweet south-winds, ye breathed on the rarest;
Ye knew not your treasure, O West,
Wake, wake, ye red roses, half sleeping—
Know ye that a fairer is there?
O primroses, primroses weeping!
Hast seen her—my own one, so fair?
O morning, rejoice in my gladness!

And breathe on my song but a tone:
She will hear—she will hear it—and answer,
And think the sweet music my own.
O sunlight, that gladdens the hillside,
O rainbows, that die in the sea—
Thou lendest the robes of thy beauty,
But think not thou 'rt fairer than she.
O seas! be ye glad in my gladness!

And hills, let me never in vain
Call out to thy heart for an echo,
Some sound that resembles her name.
Stars brightly shine, bright on my treasure,
And tell what ye dare not conceal—
O winds, help my harp to some measure,
To words that shall speak what I feel.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 122–123.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 122–123.

Under the Rose

She is not dead we love,
She still is here;
Cross her white hands above
Heart true and dear.
With her new senses born,
All things are fair;
Brighter the stars at morn,
Sweeter the air.

Bloom, rose, yellow rose,
White rose, for her;
Scent every air that blows,
Sweet balm and fir.
Song-birds, singing still,
Sing the old song;
Thrush, lark, and whippoorwill,
Sweet notes prolong.

Shine, mornings, sweet and fair—
Shine as ye shone;
She breathes your scented air,—
Though she be gone.
She sees the roses born
With her new eyes;
She sees the light of morn
Burst in the skies.

Speak, friends, in love of her—
Speak, she is near;
What though no cloud may stir?
Still she will hear;
Speak as ye spake before,
Kindly and true;
There's but an open door
'Twixt her and you.

What though her body rest
Under the sod?
He knows what is best—
Trust her to God.
Under the roses there,
White rose and red,
She breathes the sweeter air;
She is not dead.

She is not dead we love,
She still is here;
Cross her white hands above
Heart true and dear.
Pray, friends, that when for you
Life, too, shall close,
You seem as kind and true,
Under the rose.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 124–126.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 124–126.

O Maiden, So Slender and Fair

O maiden, so slender and fair,
And straight as the reeds by the sea:
The rose in thy beautiful hair
Is more than a rose unto me.

Last night, when the stars were aglow,
We walked on the terrace, and then
You whispered this night I should know
If I were most blessed of men.

How queenly you look, and how rare!
My heart is ill-trained, and I can
But look at that rose in your hair,
And curse every daughter of man.

Walk down the bright aisles of the hall,
So tall and so stately,—perchance
Your eyes may not meet mine at all,
But I shall see you in the dance.

And if, when he touches your hand,
My dagger shall leap from my side,
Ah! better the rage of the damned
Than the wrath of a lover denied.

Oh! never you dreamed I was near,
To-day, when you met at the train—
'Twas little, I grant, I could hear,
But that little's undoing my brain.

I saw him reach over and break
This very same rose that you wear,—
"To-night, at the ball, for my sake,"
Were the words that he uttered, I swear.

What? waited to see would he kiss
The lips I had dreamed would be mine,—
Enough! there is murder in this!
And the rose in your hair is the sign.

Yes, maiden, walk down the bright aisle,
'Tis gay here and light as the moon,
His eyes will keep time with your smile,
And his feet with the flute and bassoon.

By Heaven! they're coming this way;
And dares she to smile on me still?
Your brother!—what is it you say?
Your brother—just back from Brazil!

Your pardon! this room has no air—
Come, walk on the terrace and then—
Ah! sweet is that rose in your hair,
And I'm the most blessed of men.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 127–129.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 127–129.

In Libby

I hear the music of the bells
Float out upon the summer air—
Now, like the sea their chorus swells,
Now, faintly, as the breath of prayer;
Yet lingering still as if to bless
My heart within its loneliness.

The tide comes up from out the bay,
The sails ride to and fro;
I stand and watch them all the day,
Out on the stream below;
But bending sail, nor flowing sea,
Brings one sweet word of joy to me.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), p. 130.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), p. 130; *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 66; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 104–105.

My Violet

She is not here, my violet,
My Maybell sweet, my mignonette,
And so my eyes are often wet,—
She is not here, my violet.

But over there, where ever swells
Each bud and bloom in heavenly dells,
Like nightingale she sings and tells
Our love to the sweet asphodels.

And where the sweet stars ever shine
On jasper seas and hills divine,
I'll know her by love's constant sign,
And see her still and call her mine.

I hear her to the blossoms hum:
"In the bright days, he, too, will come;"
And so with eager lips, half dumb,
I only wait that I may come.

It little matters where I be
For a few years, on lake or lea,
For through the gates ajar I see
My brown-haired maid still waiting me.

And sometime when the stars are set,
And sweet Maybells with dew are wet,
I'll close my eyes and go and get
My brown-haired love, my violet.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 131–132.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 131–132.

There Is a Maiden Whom I Know

Know.

There is a maiden whom I know,
Some sweet six summers old or so;
And to my chair she climbs to throw
Her soft arms round me lovingly.

There is no maiden in the town
With lips so red, or hair so brown,
Or cheeks so like the thistle's down,
Nor one who is so loving me.

Her eyes—bright eyes—I know I dare
To say they are more sweetly rare
Than any others ever were—
And shine on me so lovingly.

Bright eyes, brown hair, and red lips say
A thousand sweet things every day,
But most, in her dear childish way,
How very much she's loving me.

Perhaps you know some little miss,
So very sweet and like to this,
Whom every day you fondly kiss
And press to you so lovingly?

It little matters what her name—
If Helen, Kate, or Maud, or Mame,
Sweet child—dear one—'t is all the same,
Press her and kiss her lovingly.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 133–134.

Variation. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 133–134.

In a Vineyard

When lads shall clamber 'mid the vines,
And press the purple vintage down,
And maids more rare than Rhenish wines
Shall braid each rustic youth a crown,—
O happy youth! O happy maid!
Who dance to Labor's music chime,—
Well has your poet sweetly said:
“God bless us in the vintage time.”

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), p. 135.

Song

The sea hath its pearls so rare,
The sky hath its stars so bright,
The river is ever so fair,
But I have my lover, my light.

Oh! truer than pearls and sea,
And fairer than stars of night,—
Oh! better than all is he,
My lover, my dream, my light.

He's coming! I hear, I hear
The voice of my brave, my knight!
There's joy when his step is near,
My lover, my dream, my light.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), p. 136.

Ione

Old Surrey's hills are dear to me,
And Richmond's fields are fair,
And many a bud unfolds its flower
And leaves a sweetness there,—
But fairest flowers that ever grew,
Or sweetest bud that's blown
On Surrey hills will not compare
With our sweet rose Ione.

The sun was bright the morn she came,
At least we thought it shone,
And all the birds they seemed to sing
A welcome to Ione.
The dewes that kissed the rose's breast
The whole sweet night before,
Still lingered for one look at her—
What could they wish for more?

Tone, Ione, our sweet Ione!
Our youth renews in thee,
While Surrey's hills and Richmond's fields
Are very fair to see;
And Heaven's own doors are opened wide,
The road has shorter grown;
Thou bring'st us one step nearer Him,
Ione, our sweet Ione.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 137–138.

A Centennial Idyl

Six days and nights our gallant ship
Sped o'er a lone and trackless sea;
And we had watched the sea-gulls skip
Like arrows o'er the wave, and dip
Their wings into its foam, while we
Found in their freaks some company.

We were a hundred there, and more
From many lands, yet loved but one;
And we had longed to see the shore,
The first faint mists of Labrador—
To hear some far-off evening gun
Proclaim the day,—the voyage done.

It was so quiet there—at last,
One bolder than the others led:
“Why is this silence? Let the past
Be of the things that cannot last,—
We are the living—not the dead.”
“Give us a song,” the captain said.

“’Tis there none here, not one, not one,
With the divine Promethean fire,
Can sing of deeds most nobly done:
Of sieges lost, of battles won,
Of knightly sons of knightlier sire,
And wake to life the sleeping lyre?

“I do bethink me now, a man
Sat amid the forward decks to-day—
I do not think there ever can
Be one again so old and wan,
As he whose harp beside him lay.”
“Bring him,” the others said, “to play.”

And soon an old man tottered in
To where the lamps were all aglow;
The boatswain bore his harp for him—
For he had thought it well a sin
That one so old should helpless go;
’Tis good we treat our aged so.

“Good friends,” the boatswain said, “I bring
The poet of the ship to you,
Well he can play, and sweetly sing
To this, his harp, whose every string
Though tunéd oft, yet, tuned anew,
May cheer you for an hour or two.”

“Give me the harp,” the singer said,
And touched his weird hand to the lyre—
And, lo! the eye that seemed so dead,
The form, whence life had almost fled,
Brightened anew with living fire;
Forgot was age—forgot was pain—
The old man lived the boy again.

He swept the chords through many a strain,
And sung of youth and love, till we,
Like followers in his knightly train,
Wept o’er his touching minstrelsy.
Is it not true that men may be
Made angels by some melody?

Have we not lived, at times, above
The grov’ling earth and its complaints,
On hearing some sweet tale of love,
Some seraph-song of dying saints?
Has not some poet said that we
Are chords in God’s great harmony?

“Enough—enough!” the harpist said:
“I sing no more of love’s young dream,
Of knightly deeds, of lovers wed,
Of hours, of days, too quickly sped,—
Mine is another, nobler theme—
My Country—born midst blood and tears,

Grown sacred by its hundred years.
’Tis not so long ago, that men—
Brave men, who feared not storm or sea—
Crossed to the new-born land of Penn,
Without one thought but to be free:
Brave men, good men as well, were they

Who fearless sought the dang'rous way
To Plymouth Rock, to Florida—
Men who could fight, as well as pray,
Nor asked what else their fate might be
In that fair land beyond the sea,
So that it brought them liberty.

“They came—and soon their axes rung
By many a lake and tangled wood;
And midst their labors, lo! they sung,
For God was in their solitude.
Their struggles none but He may tell,

Who watched them on their dang'rous way;
How by the lurking foe they fell,
Yet trusted him, and said: ‘Tis well,
He leads us to the coming day.’

“The panther slunk into his lair,
The she-wolf hid within her den,
And there was peace and plenty there,
For God had blessed the hands of men.

Lo! Towns, and States, and Cities rose,
And flocks were fed in every glen,—
It was the bloss'ming of the rose,
For God had blessed the hands of men.
“O, would that Peace might ever rest

Her blessed wings on every shore!
Then were mankind divinely blest,

And men should learn of war no more.
Pray, pray, for that good hour in store,

When men shall learn of war no more.
“O england! England! tell us where,

Where had we wronged thee? how? or when?
Hadst thou forgot thy children there,
Although thy children, yet were men?
Hadst thou forgot that clime and sea,
And growing years, bring wider range,—
A larger hope, a destiny

That laws or wars can never change?

“Thy armies came—thy navies flung
Their flag o'er many an inland sea—
And soon the hills of England rung
With shouts and thanks for victory:

With shouts and thanks, but echoing there,
The answer came from swamp and glen,
'You've driven the tiger to his lair—
God help you when he comes again!'
"Towns, cities blazed; barefooted men
Tramped where our Western rivers flow;
They left their marks behind them, then,
In bloody lines on frozen snow.
'Twas death—aye, more to them, but know
Men oft'nest earn their freedom so.
"Orphans and widows wept in vain,
And armies sank for want of bread;
Death stalked through every wood and plain,
And fields were left unharvested.
Still would they yield not—No, beware!
God's will is worked through man's despair.
"Days, months, and years, they wavered not,
Nor asked the number of their foe;
By wounds, by death, they cheaply bought
The rights that tyrants would not know,—
The fairest right—to die to be
The fathers of men's liberty.
"They conquered, and a nation sprung
To life, to greatness, in the West;
And the wide world her praises sung,
She was the freest and the best;
She was the freest, and the one
Whose soil no tyrant dared to tread—
For, lo! above, about her, shone
The mystery of her sacred dead.
Fate chose but one—that one was she—
To lead mankind to liberty.
"It is a century since then—
A hundred years to-day, and men
Tell all the old tales o'er again;
How she was born, our land, how bred,
And how the life her children led,
By faith and peace was hallowéd;
How well she kept her promised vow
To lead the way—to help the oppressed
Of every land and clime, and how
Men worshiped her, and she was blest;
How commerce came, and all that Fate
Ordains to glorify a State
Waited on her, and she was great;

Each wind that blew, each sail that bent,
Seemed like some gift divinely sent
To help enrich a continent.
The world was envious, too—but, no!
Kings could not stop what Fate had told;
Hills, rocks, unbound themselves, and lo!
Their breasts are filled with oil and gold.
““What more? The land was blest and grew
Like Eden, fair——but never knew
Like it, she nursed a tempter, too.
A tempter—black, fit child of hell—
He came—and half the nation fell.
They fell, and where the daisies grew,
Lo! cannon belched their poisonous breath—
And war her red-mouthed trumpet blew,
And wedding morns saw nights of death.
The hand of Fate lay heavy then,
For God had cursed the ways of men.
“Dark months and years the storm-cloud swept
Her course across a widowed land—
But lo! the God of battles kept
The nation in his pitying hand.
At last, at last, the burning smoke
Faded before her silent guns,
But louder than her cannon spoke
The shroudless bodies of her sons.
Weep, fading clouds—speak, silent guns,
And honor these her fallen ones!
Dead was the tempter—dead the past,
And men forgot their burning hate,
For hates and angers cannot last
With men whose foes were good, or great.
Sleep on, ye braves, ye shroudless ones!
Men may not ask which side ye stood;
Enough, ye were the nation’s sons,
And ye are dead, and God is good.
It little reeks where men have stood,
When Heav’n forgives, and God is good.
“Again the peaceful lilies bloom,
And kiss the graves of friend and foe;
Again, again, the busy loom
Sends its dear music to and fro;
Again the hills are gold and red,
With shocks and sheaves on every hand,
For all the fields are harvested,

And there is plenty in the land,—
Plenty and peace, for God again
Has smiled and blessed the hands of men.
“And now, where once the wigwam stood
Upon the Schuylkill’s banks of green,
Where redd’ning vines and tangled wood
Hemmed in the fair but dang’rous scene—
Behold! a palace fit for kings
Lifts its fair head unto the skies,
And all the land her tribute brings,
And shouts aloud: ‘Friends all, arise!
This day, this hour, this place must be
Made sacred to men’s liberty.’
“And here, where all have met to see
The earth’s united rivalry
In all that is, or yet may be,
They reached their hands to each, and said:
‘This is the tribute to our dead—
This is the ring with which we wed
The twice-born bride, Columbia—
And this the oath, new-sworn, to thee,
Land of our hopes and destiny.’
Again the old, time-honored scroll,
Whereon the New World’s faith was writ,
Was shown to men, and every soul
Thanked God, and wept at sight of it,—
Thanked God, and wept—it was a sight
Such as men see but once in life.
I saw it then—I saw its birth—
What more can one then want on earth?”
All night our ship sped on its way,
Along a moonlit, starlit sea,
And when the red sun brought the day,
The sailors shouted “Land!”—and we
Looked to the West, and smiling there
Lay the low hills of Delaware;
Loud fired the guns—the ship-bells rung—
It was the land the poet sung.
Land of the West—our Fatherland!
We bow and greet thee here at sea;
We bare our heads, and meekly stand,
And pray that God in his right hand
May ever keep thee great and free,—
May ever keep thee great, and when,
Th’ oppressed shall cry for liberty,

Thy Stars and Stripes shall answer them:
Lo! here, all men, all men are free.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 139–150.

Gypsy Girl's Song

They're waiting for me in the forest,
To lead the first reel on the grass:
The hare-bells will spring at my coming,
The lilies will bow as I pass.

I care not for palace or city,
My home is the home of the free—
The birds are my playmates in summer,
My music's the song of the sea.

All day with my arrows and quiver,
I wander by meadow and spring;
And the birds are repeating forever,
The words of the song that I sing.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), p. 151.

The Nation's Dead

Hail to the dead—the nation's dead—
Who sleep by wood and field and shore!
To them we come with loyal tread
And kneel beside their graves once more.
With notes of bugle-song and drum,
With flying flags and sweet Mayflowers,
And grateful hearts, again we come
To deck these soldier graves of ours.

With hopes undimmed by flying years,
And faith renewed by the great past,
We see amidst our funeral tears
The glory that was born to last.
Once more beside each verdant grave
We gather, and with pride recall
How heroes' blood alone could save,
How heroes' sons alone could fall.

And lifting up the veil of years,
We hear again the nation's cry—
Its dark distress, its anguished fears,
Its wail for help—for men to die.
We see the tramping thousands come,
Their tents shine white on every field;
The nation's heart, it is not dumb,
It cannot fail, it will not yield.

No longer spears and battle-blades
To pruning-hooks and staves are bent;
From farms and hills and far-off glades
The dreadful news is quickly sent;
And sounds of drums and clanging steel
And braying horns are in the air,
And quick the pulse of men who feel
Their own heart's blood is flowing there.

And there are partings none may tell,
And faces paled and lips all dumb,
And broken hearts in one farewell
To those who go, but never come.
Like to the torrent bounding down
From some tall mountain to the sea,

From shop and village, farm and town,
Comes the young nation's chivalry.

And once again is heard the cry
Of squadrons charging to the death,
And bombs and shells go shrieking by,
Borne on the red-hot cannon's breath:
And fierce and far o'er Southern fields,
Like the dread sea to terror blown,
Comes the fierce foe that never yields,
Or yields to death, and death alone.

On! on! we hear the battle's din,
"On! on!" we hear our leader's cry;
"There is no way but Death's to win" —
"On! on!" the bugles make reply, —
With Farragut among the shrouds,
Wherever Danger's signals be,
With Hooker fighting in the clouds,
With Sherman marching to the sea.
"On! on!" — we hear them once again
Shout back the fierce old rebel yell;
And though from ships and ramparts rain
The sulphurous smoke, the fire of hell, wet

Still on, until the withering blast —
Is silenced like the trampled dead,
And fair as morning shines at last
The Stars and Stripes above their head.

They sleep to-day in silent lines, —
Heroic men, whom Fame hath lent
The glory that forever shines,
To be their lasting monument.
And years and men may pass, but they,
Shrined in their country's bosom, live
In fairer forms than flesh or clay:
The fitter forms that Fame can give.

Sleep on, sleep on, heroic dead,
It little recks what we may say,
For there, beyond your narrow bed,
Shines the new light, your better day;
And midst the music of the spheres
That sounds the soldier's reveille,
Where march and countermarch the years,
Ye wait the Peace that is to be.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 152–155.

Ariadne

I walked by the yellow Tiber,
Last night, when the sun was low,
While all in the silent distance
Grew soft with a purple glow;
And an odor of new-crushed poppies,
And the smell of the lilies, crept
Deep into my veins, till, weary,
I lay by the stream and slept.

And stronger the odors pressed me,
And a dream in my dream there came—
The joy of a love's new greeting,
Of lips that pronounced my name—
Of a love that was more than mortal,
Of cheeks that were godly fair;
And I knew that my Dionysius
Was standing beside me there—

Was standing, his eyes upon me,
As once, on that other day,
He touched with his wand, and loved me,
And bore me with him away.
My leopard sprang up to greet him,
As I waked from the drowsy dream,
With the arms of my new love round me,
By the side of the Tiber stream.

Oh! come to me, Dionysius—
I dreamed of the evils by,
When Theseus, false and curséd,
Had left me alone to die.
'Twas the poppies that made me dream so,
And the lilies you love the best—
Oh! kiss me, Dionysius,
And hold me upon your breast.

And deeper, still deeper, kiss me,
Nor lessen your warm embrace,
Till our love and our lips commingle,
Like the blushes upon my face.
Oh! dream of my dream, I have you;
Look out from your coal-black eyes,
For the light and the love they give me
Were born of a Paradise.

Push back the curls from your forehead,
And your cheek, be it close to mine,
Till our hearts beat warm together,
As our arms each other entwine.
There, breathe in my soul one moment,
For the touch of thy lips is worth
A thousand of mortal's kisses—
An age of the loves of earth.

Oh! life of my life, come near me,
Look into my eyes again,
And closer, oh! closer press me,
For the love that is born of pain;
I swoon, but my eyes are open—
I faint, but I see thy face—
Oh! happiness, born to woman,
To be in a god's embrace.

Come on to the sweet flute's playing,
The feet that are drunk with dance,
The loves, and the bacchant women,
Who die, if without thy glance;
Lead on by the gardens blowing,
By the meadows of sweet perfume,
For where thy light breath toucheth,
The beautiful roses bloom.

Look! look at the dancers coming,
The train and the festal wine,
The pans and the satyrs leading,
The buds and the blossomed vine.
Thus, thus, I will be immortal,
My name in the bright stars set,
With the marriage-crown you gave me
The day that our kisses met.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 156–159.

A Sonnet of Love

Who am I? Master of the human soul,
Whom never any mortal yet defied,—
Youth nor old age, bridegroom nor bride.
Born of the gods, all beauty is my dole;
Lips smile, eyes meet; that instant I control
Soul, heart and being. There, beside
Him I have conquered, I abide,—
His hell or paradise, I am the whole.
He doth not will it whom my arrow stings
To sudden joy, or still more sudden pain;
Spite of himself, Love's sweet or bitter things
Evade he cannot,—and, one smile to gain,
Beyond the grave he'd follow on swift wings,
For I am that which death hath never slain.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), p. 160.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), p. 135; *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 18; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 57.

Helen

Helen, sweetest name I know,
I have never seen thee yet.
Have thy eyes a mellow glow?
Are they brown or violet?

Is thy hair a sheen of gold?
Is it black or is it fair?
Do thy cheeks sweet dimples hold
When the blushes hurry there?

Little matter—light or brown,
Each alike would be divine;
Looking sweet, and looking down,
I would love thee, lady mine.
Helen, sweet, 'twere all the same;
I would love thee for the name.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), p. 161.

Will It Be So?

When I shall die, perhaps it will be so,
That I shall see with other eyes than these,
Deep in the skies find other lands and seas
And beauteous isles where soft winds come and go,
And know of things that now I cannot know;
That I shall see new colors to the rose,
New odors find in every breeze that blows,
And thousand hues in yonder arched bow;
That I shall hear new strains of minstrelsy,
Strains that, to us, are but the storm and wind,
Find every sense enlarged, and new to me,
And wonder much that I had been so blind.
If it be so that death such senses give,
'Then death come quick, that I may die and live.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), p. 162.

To a Sweet Singer

The voices sounded down the aisle,
The organ's tones seemed ne'er so sweet
Then joy was mine a little while
That day you sang, sweet Marguerite.

Is it not true that many a time
The souls of men forget their clay
On hearing some sweet bells in chime,
Some singer sing his deathless lay?

I only know I heard your voice
And then forgot all earthly things,
Too soul-exalted to rejoice,
I only soared on music's wings.

To heaven itself I might have gone,
Against its bars my breast to beat,
Had I not heard you singing on—
And heaven was here, sweet Marguerite.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), p. 163.

The Beauty Rose

I saw a rose beside the garden lawn,
A beauty Rose on its enchanted throne;
With odorous breath it welcomed in the dawn,
While on its breast the night's sweet jewels shone.

Last night the moon held it in soft embrace,
And, loverlike, now hides beyond yon hill.
O beauty Rose, the blushes on thy face
Were born of love, and make thee lovelier still.

Oh! that such blush should perish soon, I said,
And then the Beauty Rose made me reply:
"Think thou on this: the moon that seems to fade
Shines on as bright within some other sky.
We change and live; make thou no heart-repine.
No rose were sweet were it forever thine."

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), p. 164.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), p. 136.

I Hear the Sea

When night has let her curtain down
And darkness shuts the world from me,
In yonder little fisher town
I lie and listen to the sea.

My windows open to the strand,
I hear the sounding waters roll;
They beat the rocks, they wash the sand,
Their breakers cross the lighthouse mole.

And all the night, against the shore,
I hear their beat, but have no fear,
'Tis not alone the ocean's roar,
It is the voice of God I hear.

Forever thus, O sounding sea!
The years perpetual come and go;
Across life's bar they call to me,
As constant as the ocean's flow.

And so it is in yonder town,
When darkness falls across the lea,
Where fisher folk go up and down,
I lie and listen to the sea.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 165–166.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), p. 137; *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 58; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 98.

An Alpine Rose

Sweet rose that blooms in higher air,
On Alpine cliffs, by fields of snow,
Go thou to her I love and bear
A breath from lands where roses blow.

Tell her my joyous feet have climbed
To heights where only eagles were,
To cliffs and rocks that I might find
One little flower most worthy her.

Tell her, that by a little brook
I found thee growing one sweet day,
And when I, stooping, fondly took
Thee from the stem, thou heardst me say:

“Sweet rose, dear rose, come, go to her—
She’ll press thee on her snowy breast,
And thou wilt feel her warm heart stir—
Oh, happy rose, to be so blest!”

‘And, if she gives a kiss to thee
And questions with her eyes of blue,
Say yes, dear rose, say yes, for me,
He kissed me when he found me, too.”

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 167–168.

Bismarck Dead

Must it be so—the proud rock that could bear
The stormiest billows ocean ever gave,
When angry breakers found an angrier grave,
Is nothing there?

Must it then be? The mighty oak that gave
So long the German people strength and pride,
That every foe and every storm defied,
Lies by its grave!

Must it then be? Thy hour, has it, too, come,
Thou later Eckhart of a nobler band,
Misjudged, yet dying for thy fatherland,
Thy voice now dumb?

Now still thy voice, and cold thy hand for aye,
And that clear glance, that kept us in thy sight,
Gone out, as goes a candle in the night—
Gone is the day.

*From the German.

Gone is the day—ah, surely gone!—and yet,
Thanks for the splendor of so many years,
And now, indeed, comes the dark night, and tears—
The sun is set.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 169–170.

Dawn in Eden

It is dawn, and the splendor of morning
Rewakens the slumbering world,
The hills and the mountains adorning,
The banners of day are unfurled.
Illumined and glorious the sky is,
Wide open the gates of the morn,
And the breath of the wind that goes by is
Like odors of roses new born.

New lights shine on palms where the gate is
That enters our gardens of bliss;
Calm faced and serene, the Euphrates
Awaiteth the morning's first kiss.
From caves in the mountains proceeding,
Star-tinted, sun-lighted her rod,
Aurora her winged steeds is leading,
Her garments the light of a god.

Gold sandaled, along the horizon,
She toucheth the sky and the earth;

The mountains, the white snow that lies on,
Turn crimson, the morning has birth.
Majestic, the great sun advances,
In mantle of gold he is clad;
All earth and the sea feel his glances,
All things that have voices are glad.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 171–172.

War Violets

Two days and nights the battle swept
Through all the forest round;
Two days and nights the wounded slept
Upon the sodden ground.

Then came the roll-call; every name
Accounted for but one.
Some dead upon the field of fame;
Some wounded; missing, none.

“Yes, Barton Jones,” the sergeant cried,
The youngest lad was he;
“He rode close to the captain’s side
In that brave company.

“Has no one seen him? Men, go out
And search among the dead.
Look in yon wild woods all about
Where last the foemen fled.”

They found him in the shady glen,
Hemmed in by many a tree,

Among the bodies of dead men
That kept him company.
Wounded, alone, in pain he’d crept
The shady glen around,
To pick the violets that slept
In the sweet-scented ground.

Kindly they bore him to the rear,
The violets on his breast;
And no strong man but shed a tear
When he was put to rest.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 173–174.

John S. Woolson

What—dead? and the courtliest man of all,
The knight with his armor on;
The gentlest soul, if in hut or hall,
The prince of all kindness gone?

What—brought they him on his shield, at last,
The battle but half begun,
The light gone out that had burned so fast,
And the day of his work not done?

Yes—into the room where the lilies stand,
And there where the mourner goes,
Aye, him they brought of the iron hand,
And him of the heart of rose.

“Dead—dead,” they said, and they gazed the while
With eyes that were growing dim;
Yet, standing there, they could almost smile,
For they knew it was well with him.

O! thanks for a life that had not a stain,
For the chivalrous soul now gone;
O! hark! O hear, like a sweet refrain
Is the voice not sounding on?

O! never a sun like his went out,
Or faded behind some hill,
But the lingering sky shone all about
With the joy of its radiance still.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 175–176.

To Laura

The rose you brought me yesterday
Still stands upon my mantel shelf,
And in a soft, luxurious way
Reminds me, Laura, of yourself.

A burst of beauty, there it glows,
A thing too tender to caress;
But I, who kissed that beauty-rose,
Felt all there is of loveliness.

A dream-like odor fills the room
From yonder rose-leaf's gorgeous hue—
I sit and weave on Fancy's loom
A little song, sweet friend, for you.

I see your face, the tender smile,
And seem to hear the voice so low,
I clasp a hand, and, all the while,
The rose-leaf's odors come and go.

The tall green stem bends there elate
Beneath its perfumed load of bliss,
Yet whispers softly to me, "Wait,
She, too, is fair who sends thee this."

Tomorrow, and that rose will fade—
Not so my friendship fades for you;
Though fairest flower God ever made,
The rose of friendship is more true.

Tomorrow, and that rose will die,
Its odors cast to land or sea,
But I will lay its memory by
For one who sent the rose to me.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 177–178.

In June

Sweet days of June,
Your steps again I hear,
Welcome, sweet days—best of the year,
Sweet days of June.
Once more, dear days,
Bring in the cherry time,
Strawberries ripe, and full, dear rhyme
Of song-birds' sweetest lays.
Come with the blooms
Of tree, and bladed corn,
Odors, and sweets, on thy fair bosom borne,
Delights, and dear perfumes.
Bright morns with dew
On many a grassy bed,
Roses full white, or else, so kissing red,—
Bring them with you.
Bring them with you,
And give them all to her,
For sweet and quickly they will stir
Her heart so true.
And she will say,
“He loves me yet”—and soon
Kisses will come, as in that other June—
Our wedding day.
They are not flown,
The dear June days of mine,
For in her eyes can I not still divine
She is my own!
Give me this boon,
Giver of all good things—
The joy her smile, the good her true love brings,
This happy June.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 179–180.

The Song of Iowa

Air: "My Maryland."

You ask what land I love the best,
Iowa, 'tis Iowa,
The fairest State of all the West,
Iowa, O! Iowa.
From yonder Mississippi's stream
To where Missouri's waters gleam,
O! fair it is as poet's dream,
Iowa, in Iowa.

See yonder fields of tasseled corn,
Iowa, in Iowa,
Where plenty fills her golden horn,
Iowa, in Iowa.
See how her wondrous prairies shine
'To yonder sunset's purpling line,
O! happy land, O! land of mine,
Iowa, O! Iowa.

And she has maids whose laughing eyes,
Iowa, O! Iowa,

To him who loves were Paradise,
Iowa, O! Iowa.
O! happiest fate that e'er was known,
Such eyes to shine for one alone,
To call such beauty all his own,
Iowa, O! Iowa.

Go read the story of thy past,
Iowa, O! Iowa,
What glorious deeds, what fame thou hast!
Iowa, O! Iowa.
So long as time's great cycle runs,
Or nations weep their fallen ones,
Thou'lt not forget thy patriot sons,
Iowa, O! Iowa.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 181–182.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 138–141.

Ponce de Leon

Through the woods and the smoke intense
Charged the lines of the regiment,
Over the field and the low stone fence,
And the old dog went where the Captain went.

Once we halted. lord! how hot!
Grape and canister filled the air;
The Captain fell, and I saw the spot,
And we all went back; but the dog stayed there.

Through the fight of the afternoon,
Kept he watch by his master dead,
Through the fight till the sun went down
And the new moon rose on the field instead.

“Sound a truce,” said the General; then,
“Gather our wounded from off the plain.”
With biers and spades went the burying men
Out in the moonlight amongst the slain,

Till they came to one with a Captain’s bars.
Far at the front, by the fence, he died;
And they saw by the light of the moon and stars
The old dog dead by the Captain’s side.

In the field, in the starlight there,
Under the flag they had died to save,
Under the moonlight, fresh and fair,
They buried them both in a soldier’s grave.

Softly and gently, within the ground;
War’s fierce terror has still amends.
Some words they wrote by the little mound:
“Sacred, forever, to two good friends.”
Ponce de Leon, the St. Bernard,
True in life, and in death more true;
In the time of the great reward
He will stand at the right hand, too.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 183–184.

Regret

Welcome, robin, you have come!
Look, the violets bloom anew,
And I hear the pheasants drum—
Bird and blossom welcome you.
Happy robin, many a day
We had missed you on the lawn,
When the skies were cold and gray,
When the forest leaves were gone.
Robin, robin, since you left
Many a change has crossed us here—
Wood and field of flowers bereft,
Sad the winter seemed and drear.
I, too, happy bird, have known
Change and sorrow, pain and grief;
Not for me the flowers have blown—
Not for me the coming leaf.
Seek'st thou, robin, still a hand,
Or a voice thou once didst hear?
One that sweetly used to stand
Calling, loving thee, last year?
Robin, robin, she is dead!
She that was so kind and true;
Violets at her feet end head—
She will hear no song from you.
'Neath yon little mound so near,
In her still and narrow bed,
She who loved you so last year,
She is lying cold and dead.
Still, sweet robin, every spring,
When the violets deck the land,
Sing the song you used to sing—
You and I will understand.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 185–186.

Sunrise on Terrace Hill

“Tis the dawning of the day
And the night will soon be dead,
Though the pale moon rides away
In the deep sky overhead.
There’s a freshness in the breeze,
And a song of bird that thrills
Till it wakens all the trees;—
It is morning on the hills.

Over there are Clifton Heights,
By the river’s endless flow,
Where the moon in summer nights
Casts its image far below;
And the far-off dome of gold,
Floating dim above the mist
That the wings of morning hold,
And the stars all night have kissed.

And I see the happy town,
With the river at its feet,

And the bridge, so old and brown,
Where the flowing waters meet;
And a hundred hills in green
Guard the old town where it stands,
And the rivers in between
They are holding in their hands.

All at once there is a light,
Red and rosy in the sky;
’Tis Aurora in her flight,
With Apollo passing by.
She is letting down the bars
In the pathway of the sun;
She is putting out the stars,
She is bringing in the dawn.

Slow the red and molten sun
Slips above the great earth's rim,
And the dewy night is done,
She has hid her face from him;
For a splendor of the morn
All the earth with glory fills,
For another day is born,
And it's sunrise on the hills.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 187–188.

Love and September

O tell me, have you seen her,
This brown-haired love of mine?
They call her sweet September,
And she is all divine.
A painter is my lady.
And, O, such heavenly skill!
One little touch of her white hand
Can color all the hill.

I saw her yester-morning
Pass down along the lane;
The woodbine turned its leaves to red
To see her face again.
The wild crab apple on the trees
Felt warmer pulses stir;
The orchard and the forest leaves
Went blushing all for her.

She crossed the new-mown meadows,
Her pallet in her hand,
And colors of the rainbow fell
Upon the happy land.
She touched the sumac with her breath,
To scarlet red it turned;
And all the hedge-rows by the lane
With gold and scarlet burned.

The purpling grapes in clusters
Upon the am'rous vine
She pressed and gave new promise
Of a more luscious wine.
And by the lazy stream she walked,
And past the dusty mills;
She left a mist upon the fields,
A purple on the hills.

I would that you had seen her
As through the woods she went,
A touch—a trifle mortal,
But more of heaven lent.
The happy breezes kissed her
Where smiles and dimples lay,
The winds and sunshine kissed her—
O! would that I were they.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 189–190.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 101–102; *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 29–30; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 72–73.

Almost Up

'Twas Chattanooga's battlefield,
The night was filled with stars;
Two strong men bore a soldier back,
He wore a sergeant's bars

A color-sergeant of the line,
On the high ridge he fell,
Where the old colonel gave the sign
To charge them with a yell.

None braver climbed the battle hill
Or stormed the dangerous pass,
Than he, now lying pale and still,
Upon the blood-stained grass.

Beneath the torchlight's flick'ring glare,
Under the starlight dim,
The busy surgeons labored there
Until they came to him.

"Where are you wounded, sergeant?" said
The kind-faced surgeon. "Where?"

"Right at the top, sir," said the lad;
"The bullet struck me there."

"Ah! boy, I know. But where? I mean,"
Again, in kind surprise.
"Just as I said, sir, at the top";
Steady his deep blue eyes.

"Yes, yes, I see!" The surgeon tore
The sleeve from off his arm—
A bleeding gash. "Yes, doctor—there
Is what did all the harm.

"I was 'most up—right at the top,
When the ball struck me here—
Yes, almost up." Out in the woods
He heard his comrades cheer.

And faint he heard the pearly gates
Swing outward on the air,
And still he whispered, "Almost up—
The flag was almost there."

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 191–192.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

So the guest of honor's left us, and the bard of humor's dead!
Ah, the good things that he left us! and the kind things that he said!
Is it true his chair is empty, is it true the voice is still
That could fill our hearts with rapture or bring tear-drops at its will?

Left us when the lights were burning, and the toasts were just begun,
When all eyes were turned upon him, as the sunflower to the sun!
What though eighty years he'd waited—or the rest had gone ahead!
His "last leaf" had never faded, all his roses still were red!

And the odor of his lilies, filled they not the blessed room?

And the garden of his fancy, was it not this day abloom?
He whose words were like to music that had thrilled us oft and long,
Who had warmed us with the wine of thought, the red grape of his song;

Will he never, never smile again whose smile made strangers kin;
He whose verse was like the foaming wine that newly is poured in?
Will he never touch the harp again that made us all so glad?
One single touch upon its chords had made us light or sad!

Is it true he has departed? Let us fill the cup to him—
To the poet over yonder—where the stars are never dim;
To the bard who saw God's sunshine from the heights to which he grew,
And who held the rifting clouds apart that we might see it too.

No, we will not stand lamenting; keep the lights up as they were!
He who loved us still is with us; take the crape from off his chair;
He is only resting yonder till his harp is newly strung:
In the new dawn that is lighting, to the new song that is sung.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 193–195.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 142–143; *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 33–34; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 77–78.

Beautiful Death

Beautiful death—that is what it is;
And that very day I had told you so
When you stooped to give me a one last kiss
And your eyes filled up. Oh! you did not know
How sweet and sudden a dream was mine,—
Without a pain, or a pang, at the last,
One single sip of the nectared wine,
And out of the there to the here I passed.

Still for a little the clouds were cleft,
And there behind me, I still could see
The flowers, the room, and the friends I left,
And the beautiful body God gave to me.
And just a moment I waved my hand
From the rosy heights of the newer dawn,
To tell you, dear—did you understand—
That I was not dead, but was living on.

Now there is nothing of pain or pride;
Rapturous beings are everywhere,

And the dear, dear dead who have never died,
They are just the same as they were back there.
The very mountains and lakes you see,
O! all that gladdens your mortal eyes
Are brighter a thousand fold to me,
For I see them, dearest, in Paradise.

In the scented grove, when the night is near,
And the pine trees murmur a low, sweet song,
It is I that speak—do you sometimes hear?
That you stand so still, and you stand so long?
What do I tell you? O, this, no more;
Beautiful Death, it is sweet, so sweet,
Not the death that we thought before,
But the miracle death, that is life complete.
Out on the lawn when the rose is red,
And its breath an odorous ecstasy,
It is not the rose—it is I instead—

When you kiss the rose you are kissing me.
O, I often speak in the voice of things
That move your soul, and you know not why,

In the evening flute, and the sound of strings,
And the radiant isles of a summer sky.

When the nightingale on the hedgerow sings
Till the very trees in the woods rejoice,
And a nameless rapture around you clings,
It is I who speak in the sweet bird's voice.
Oh, could you hear me, oh, could you know,
Oh, could you breathe of this joyous land,
'You would long for the Beautiful Death, and go
So glad, so glad—could you understand.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 196–198.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 144–145; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 68–69.

Doris

'Tis morn and the horsemen ride
Far on at the army's van,
And Doris is at my side,
We are galloping man for man.

"Doris, brother, slow—
Halt, is the cry ahead—
Look where the colonels go!"
Never a word he said.

My Doris's horse is brown,
And my good steed is gray,
We've ridden them up and down
On many a battle day.

"Look, Doris, see!
Something is wrong, I know."
Smiling he looked at me,
Looked where the colonels go.

The bridge is burned, and the ford
Is filled with the men in gray,
And Look! by the trees a horde
Of rebels that block our way.

"Charge, cavalry, charge!"
See how the sabres gleam,
Slowly out of the wood,
Quickly down to the stream.

And full in our faces flash,
As into the creek we ride,
The glare of the musket's crash,
A gun from the other side.

"Charge, cavalry, there!
Charge on that blazing gun!"
There's a shout on the morning air,
The ford and the creek are won!

A shout on the morning air,
Till the forests resound again;
We have taken the crossing fair,
And lost but a dozen men.

Doris? comrades?—God!—

Doris? It cannot be—

Yonder upon the sod,

And never a word to me!

I buried him in the sand,

And tarried behind a day,

Till the army should come to hand

To the place where my Doris lay.

“Cheer, soldiers, cheer,”

That’s what the General said;

How little they seemed to care

That Doris was lying dead!

My Doris’s horse is brown,

And my good steed is gray,

But I shall take his instead of my own,

And now I am on my way.

“Charge, cavalry, charge!”

Little it is to me,

Whether I live or whether I die,

Or whether I reach the sea.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 199–201.

Daybreak at Appomattox

In the woods of Appomattox
Lay the grand Union army,
With the gray coats not a dozen miles away—
All night we'd been fighting, with guns and sabres smiting,
And the cannon still were booming at the day.

There was Sheridan, the rider,
With his black-mouthed cannon,
And his twenty thousand troopers so bold,
The blue-coated riders, with carbines and with Snyders,
And Custer, with his locks of shining gold.

From their cities we had chased them,
Till their hosts all were flying.
Would they turn on us? We heard the warning drum—
At dawn of the morning we heard the drummer's warning,
And we knew that the fatal hour had come.

Would they yield, then, to our forces,
All the fifty thousand rebels?
"No! they answered to our challenge with a yell,
And quick came the battle, the muskets' deadly rattle,
O! it sounded like the very fiends of hell!

Then uprose our blue battalions
From the ground that they lay on,
And we thundered in their faces storms of lead;
The batteries assembled, and the whole earth trembled,
Till rebellion lay there gasping with the dead.

All at once they stopped their firing,
All at once there was silence,
Then we saw a white flag flutter to the pine,
And we knew by the token their armies all were broken,
For the little flag that fluttered was the sign.

Then from out the forest slowly
Rode their white-haired leader,
Past our blue lines, and batteries dark and grim;
—We all stood solemn as he rode down the column,
'For the lost cause was passing there in him.

With his sword of gold bejeweled,
And his coat gold embroidered,
Down the column riding, haughty and alone,
Like a proud prince he bore him, though he saw our flag before him,
Saw the stars and stripes that 'spite of treason shone.

"Here's my sword; lo! all is finished,"
And he stood before our captain,
In his simple blouse of plain old army blue;
"It is dead, all we sought for, the cause is lost we fought for,
Fort and gun and man and horse belong to you."

Then our great commander answered,
In his plain and simple language,
"Keep the sword that you have carried, Robert Lee,
And the good steeds that bore you; behold, I will restore you:
Horse and rider all are from this moment free."

Then across the hills the sunlight
Swept afresh upon the army,
And the war-clouds quickly melted all away,
And we heard the bells ringing, and the people all singing
For the peace that dawned on Appomattox day.

And the world looked on in wonder
At the reconciliation,
At the day-dawn that closed the cannon's mouth,
When Grant and Lee together buried hate there forever,
And there was no longer any North or South.

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), pp. 202–205.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 146–148.

Alster Water

Fare thee well, sweet Alster water,
Alster water, fare thee well;
Dream of beauty, Hamburg's daughter,
Alster water, fare thee well!

Plash of oar and laughing maiden,
Bending sail and evening bell,
Rosy banks with perfumes laden;
Alster water, fare thee well!

Once a poet lingered near thee,
Gladdened by thy wondrous spell,
Absent, may his song endear thee;
Alster water, fare thee well!

Fare thee well, whose soft eyes gleaming
Touched him more than words may tell;
Joys of waking or of dreaming,
Alster water, fare thee well!

Fare thee well, thou Hamburg's daughter,
Bending sail and evening bell,
Love keeps faith by Alster water;
Alster water, fare thee well!

Publication. *The Happy Isles and Other Poems* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., third edition, 1901), p. 206.

THE MARCH TO THE SEA

Stage III | Civil War memory and retrospective gathering, 1896–1914

1896. A book-length narrative assembled from numbered passages, dramatic interludes, songs, and ballads.

The March to the Sea

Part I.

Prelude.

Reader, listen, if it is thy will
To know of things that half forgotten are—
Heroic deeds that may thy bosom thrill,
And hear a tale of heroes in the war.

Think that you hear a bugle sounding yet,
And see a camp within a forest fair,
White rows of tents amidst the green aisles set,
And silent sentries slowly walking there.

See once again the bivouacs in the wood,
And soldiers sleeping where the shadows fall,
The oaks and pines, that centuries have stood,
And glorious moonlight shining over all.

And smouldering fires whose ashes have grown cold,
And stacks of muskets standing there in line,
And banners drooping, with their stars of gold,
Beneath the moonlight and the silent pine.

For things like these a thousand times were seen,
Blue coat, or gray, their camps were still the same,
And oft a river only rolled between,
That saw them foemen when the morning came.

Then gleamed their blades, and shone their fronts of steel,
The fearful sounds the leaders' voices drown;
The guns flash out, the black-mouthed cannons peal,
As if the forests all were crashing down.

And brave they fought, whichever side they stood,
And met death there, not trembling nor with fear,
For blue or gray, now struggling in that wood,
Each struck for something that his heart held dear.

And when again the night around them fell,
And in their camps all peacefully they lay,
The glorious moon, with its enchanting spell,
Still shone alike on blue coat and on gray.

The Silent City.

Atlanta.

'Twas a time not very far away,
For men still live who knew that city well,
And though their beards be turning gray,
Their eyes rekindle when again they tell
How on a time they saw a city, fair,
Where no one lived, yet armies marshalled there.

I.

Grass grew at will in every empty street,
And roses bloomed on every garden wall,
And sweetbriar climbed with dear and noiseless feet;
One almost thought to hear the blossoms fall,

Or the bright moonlight, as it shone apace,
It was so silent in that wondrous place.

III.

Closed every door and every latticed shade,
Where once fair maids on lovers had looked down,

In the dear days ere hope began to fade,—
In the dear days ere all had silent grown;
Ere cruel war upon the city burst,
To leave its children wanderers and accurst!

IV.

The old town clock there in its steeple high,
Still tolled the hours upon the starlit air,
And faint one heard the hungry watchdog's cry
Chained to his post,—he was forgotten there;
And days had gone, and nights in silence passed,
Since all the people from the town were cast.*

V.

Calm sat the city in its solitude,
No sound of wheels or footsteps now was heard,
In the white moonlight tower and steeple stood,
The summer wind the rose-leaves scarcely stirred;
Only the notes of some far bugle's call
Disturbed the silence that was over all.

VI.

Long summer days the hostile armies strove
For mast'ry of this city, now so bare,
And many a field and many a far-off grove
Told of the death that soldiers met with there;
A hundred days of conflict and of blood,
A hundred days, so long the city stood;

VII.

Till, on a time when thousands had been slain,
And graves were thick in every wood and dell,
And death reaped men as harvesters their grain,
The day was lost, and then the city fell:
The city fell—and through its every gate
The people went, and left it desolate.

VIII.

And they who conquered camped about.
its walls,

And left it standing empty and alone—
Its silent streets and its deserted halls,
Its roses blooming, but its people gone.
One had not known, it was so still and fair.
That war and death had ever entered there.

IX.

Then came a calm, and while the victors lay
In their white tents, amidst the forest green,
They told the tales of their long, dangerous way,
Of many a march, the battles they had seen,
Before they reached this city of delight,
For so it seemed in the soft summer night.

X.

One told how once on Lookout's height they fought,
Wrapped in the clouds, and hid from all below;
How every step with danger had been fraught,
Each cliff a fort, and every tree a foe;
How on they climbed, along the mountain dread,
And no soul asked what still might be ahead.

XI.

Till at high noon an awful darkness fell
Of mist, and fog, and smoke—a battle shroud—
And who his nearest comrade none could tell,
Nor see the flames of cannon in the cloud,—
When, suddenly, a rift broke in the west;
They saw, and cheered, and charged the mountain's crest.

XII.

Another told of Missionary Ridge,
And Sherman's army by the Tennessee,
That starless night, and never any bridge,
The army floating there so noiselessly;
The muffled oar, the silence, and the tide,
And death, grim, waiting on the other side.

XIII.

The awful charge, the storming at the Left,
The hundred guns that flamed across their path,
The battle roaring in the mountain's cleft,
The smoking rocks, the red-hot cannon's wrath,
Till down the hill there came the exulting cry,
"The Ridge is ours; they fly, the foemen fly!"

XIV.

And round the camp-fires there was talk of him
Who led our Left to victory on that day,
Who, spite of foes, and wounds, and valor grim,
Still kept his heart like some sweet child's at play;
Not war his choice, nor conflict's dreadful din—
His love for others took the whole world in.

XV.

At every camp-fire he was called the Good,
By every soldier he was called the Brave,
The kind, true knight, whom every comrade would
Have followed, faithful even to the grave;
The glorious hero, warrior of the West,—
Mighty his sword, but peace he loved the best.

XVI.

Of him they told how, with prophetic eye,
From Lookout's heights he saw Atlanta rise,
And knew that there his battle-path must lie,
Or else in vain were all his victories.
And farther, deeper still, his vision went,
Of armies marching o'er a continent.

XVII.

The drums now beat; "Lights out!" the sergeants call;
Sounds the tattoo in all the forest round;
And soon 'tis silent in the bivouacs all,
The camp-fires, dying, smoulder to the ground.
Above the camp the stars their silence keep,
And in the moonlight all the soldiers sleep.

XVIII.

The soldiers sleep, and in their visions feel
Once more the thrill of that first battle day,
When down the lines they saw the flashing steel,
And heard the guns, and saw the men in gray;
The smoke, the heat, the furious battle-cry,
The squadrons charging where the wounded lie.

XIX.

Again in sleep Resaca's hills they see,
And Kenesaw, with all its heaps of slain,
The batteries, hid by many a rock and tree,
In their fierce dreams they see them all again;
And Dallas Woods, where quick a thousand fell,
And that dread field men called "The Hole of Hell."

XX.

Still in their dreams Atlanta's cannon roar,
Round that fierce scene where brave McPherson fell,
And Peach-tree creek, and Ezra church; once more
The siege, the charge; they hear the awful yell,
Till, waking, lo! it is the dawn they see—
Their dream of war the morning's reveille.

XXI.

Then through the camps a rider hurries by,
"Great news—great news!" to all the list'ning host,
Of some great thing they are about to try,
Some wondrous march,—Atlanta to the coast;
And round about the very forest ring,
The bugles echo, and the soldiers sing.

* * * * *

Soldiers' Song.

“Tall in, fall in, good news has come,”
The joyous soldiers sing;
And down the lines and up the lines
The glorious tidings ring.
“Sherman, hurrah! we’ll go with him
Wherever it may be,
Through Carolina’s cotton fields,
Or Georgia to the Sea.
“Let every blue-coat soldier-boy
Put on his knapsack well,
There’ll be no knowing where we’ll go,
Nor coming back to tell.
Up boys, hurrah! the order reads,
‘The troops shall forage free,
And flanking parties will go out
When marching to the Sea.’
“What if some soldier boys should fall?
Well, there’s no use to sigh,
The grave at last will cover all,
We have but once to die.
Sherman, hurrah! we’ll go with him
Wherever it may be,
Through Carolina’s cotton fields,
Or Georgia to the Sea.
“A thousand miles we’ve marched before,
And battled half the way,
What matters then how many more
Be added on to-day?
Look boys, hurrah! ’tis Sherman comes
Along the lines, and we
Will cheer the General as we go
Through Georgia to the Sea.”

* * * * *

XXII.

Finished the song, and every heart beats high,
And horse and foot are gath'ring far and near;
Polished each blade, and every gun they try,
The army trains in long white lines appear.

"March in light order," is the one command,
"The soldiers all will forage from the land."

XXIII.

Burned every bridge between them and the North,
Destroyed all roads, and fordless every stream;
Now many a one sends his last greetings forth,
To some far home, now fading like a dream.
Not in their arms alone they trust, but cast
Themselves on God, who leadeth all at last.

XXIV.

Like sailors turning to an unknown sea
Where no ship's keel has ever gone before,
Not knowing where, if any land there be,
Or what may greet them on that distant shore;
So seems it now, and only this they know—
Their hearts are strong, and their great leader true.

XXV.

"Now cut the wires," the leader said,
"but note
One message first to him we leave behind."*

* *General Thomas,*

And kneeling down upon the ground, he wrote,
"We march at dawn,—the Sea we hope to find."
He turned his face, and through war's vistas came
A light of glory shining round his name.

XXVI.

Far, far away, Atlanta's children weep,
Yet see, nor dream, what fearful fate has done;
The weary wanderers of the city sleep,
Nor hear their foes nor any signal gun,
Nor any sound upon the midnight wind
To tell of all that they have left behind.

XXVII.

Little they dream of how war's dreadful needs
Have doomed their city to some sudden fall,
Or how themselves have sown the awful seeds
They soon shall reap in war's red carnival.
They sleep, they dream, they see their homes so fair,
The quiet moonlight and the roses there.

XXVIII.

They dream of days when all was sweet and still,
And blessed peace her dear wings cast around,
When blossoms bloomed by every tarn and hill,
And violets kissed the sweetly scented ground;
Of their own homes, ere the invader came,
In sleep they smile, and call Atlanta's name.

XXIX.

But lo! already smoking columns rise
In conflagration o'er that fated town,
Illumed the woods, and reddened half the skies;
In every street the storm comes sweeping down,
And bursting bombs hurl their destruction dire,—
Atlanta's doom; the city is on fire.

XXX.

Atlanta's doom! A hundred years shall tell
The tale anew of that terrific morn,
How tower and dome and walls together fell,
Or in fierce flames were to destruction borne;
How in one night all that had been so fair

Perished and left but ruins standing there.

XXXI.

And round that place where that fair town had stood,
Ten thousand graves told what the cost had been;

No fallow field, no hill, no pleasant wood,

But there some mangled soldier's grave was seen.

There blue and gray—their fearful conflicts done—

Together slept, nor asked which side had won.

XXXII.

Once more the sun illumes the horizon,

Once more the bugles sound the call, "Fall in!"

On yonder heights they hear the signal gun,

The hour has come; the great march will begin.

And from their camps the steady columns wind,

In long blue lines,—Atlanta's left behind.*

XXXIII.

Their faces South along the unknown way,

With measured tread the bronzed veterans go.

No gorgeous pomp, no glorious array,

But plain, strong men, and feared by every foe.

Sublime they sing, and glorious anon,

Of old John Brown, whose soul was marching on.

XXXIV.

For many miles the serried column spread,

On many roads their daring horsemen flew,

A sight it was, most beautiful, yet dread,

War's wasting besom sweeping Georgia through,

Destroying all that in its pathway lay,

And threatening towns a hundred miles away.

XXXV.

A thousand men the railroads overturn,

The red-hot rails round neighboring trees are bent,

All that a foeman e'er may use they burn;

Flames marked each road where'er the army went.

Thus through the land the tramping soldiers wind,

Rich fields in front, a howling waste behind.

XXXVI.

Thus too each morrow with the risen sun
They march again to bugle note and song,
Or listen, thrilling, to some foeman's gun,
Far forward where the vanguard troopers throng;
There at some ford hard held by men in gray,
The daring troopers give their lives away.

* * * * *

Doris.

'Tis morn and the horsemen ride
Far on at the army's van,
And Doris is at my side,
We are galloping man for man.
"Doris, brother, slow—
Halt," is the cry ahead—
"Look where the colonels go
Never a word he said.
My Doris's horse is brown,
And my good steed is gray,
We've ridden them up and down
On many a battle day.
'Look, Doris, see!
Something is wrong, I know."
Smiling he looked at me,
Looked where the colonels go.
The bridge is burned, and the ford
Is filled with the men in gray,
And under the trees a horde
Of rebels that block our way.

*

"Charge, cavalry, charge!"
See how the sabres gleam,
Slowly out of the wood,
Quickly down to the stream.
And full in our faces flash,
As into the creek we ride,
The glare of the musket's crash,
A gun from the other side.
"Charge, cavalry, there!
Charge on that blazing gun!"
There's a shout on the morning air,
The ford and the creek are won!

A shout on the morning air,
 Till the forests resound again;
 We have taken the crossing fair,
 And lost but a dozen men.
 Doris? comrades?—God!—
 Doris? It cannot be—
 Yonder upon the sod,
 And never a word to me!
 I buried him in the sand,
 And tarried behind a day,
 Till the army should come to hand
 To the place where my Doris lay.
 “Cheer, soldiers, cheer,”
 That’s what the General said;
 How little they seemed to care
 That Doris was lying dead!
 My Doris’s horse is brown,
 And my good steed is gray,
 But I shall take his instead of my own,
 And now I am on my way.
 “Charge, cavalry, charge!”
 Little it is to me,
 Whether I live or whether I die,
 Or whether I reach the sea.

* * * * *

XXXVI.

Long in the North the people sit and wait,
 In doubt and fear what yet the end may be,
 If time or tide, heroic deeds, or fate,
 Shall bring that army safely to the sea.
 “They all are lost,” so rumor darkly said,
 “In the deep forest, and their leaders dead.”

XXXVIII.

And here and there some soldiers had gone down,
 Captured or killed if straggling from the line,
 For fiercer now the hearts of men had grown,
 And war had scarcely any pitying sign;
 Life is not much, that men to it should cling,
 And death to some seemed but a little thing.

* * * * *

XXXIX.

Rich was that land in everything that grew
On tree or vine, or nurtured in the ground;
Its kindly sun, its sky's ethereal blue,
Its softening rains blessed all the fields around.
From field and vine the frightened owners fled,
From groaning barns with golden ears and red.

X.

But distant far the rich fields often were,
And, that the army might not want for bread,
Each twentieth man was made a forager,
And so it was the marching host were fed.
On left and right, wherever farms might be,
They roved the lands as privateers the sea.

XLI.

Grotesque their garb as ever one could find,
To camp they rode fantastically grand,
In hats and coats the planters left behind,
Mounted on steeds such as might come to hand;
Or else in some rich farmer's new coupé,
Its silken cushions piled with hams and hay.

XLII.

And so they went, these foragers, and far,
And each a law unto himself became,
Audacious men as ever went to war,
Or found in fight an easy road to fame.
And many a time in their own reckless way;
They met with death in some far-off foray.*

* * * * *

Forager's Song.

The bugles I hear and the camp is astir,
The sun rises clear on the pine and the fir;
Away let us ride, past the vanguard and camp,
Ere the farmer shall hide all his corn in the swamp.
Already the hills are in purple and gold,
The dawn, how it thrills all the wood and the wold!
No flag and no drum—ah! little they know
How sudden we come, or the roads that we go.

Let soldiers who will plod along on their way,
 But give us the spice of a far-off foray:
 A brush in some lane with their five to our one,
 And a barn full of grain when the scrimmage is done.
 Then forward, hurrah! there'll be fun on the farm,
 When the cocks and the dogs shall have raised the alarm;
 When the darkies shall cry to each gay cavalier,
 "We'sglad, Mr. Sherman, to see you is here."
 Then here's to the bumner who longest can ride,
 A sheep on his shoulder, his gun at his side;
 And to every brave fellow who goes on before
 To forage good food for the grand army corps.
 Then up, while the hills are in purple and gold,
 While the dew's on the grass, and the sheep are in fold;
 Let others who will watch along on their way,
 But give us the morn, and a far-off foray.

XLII.

O day by day the army moved along,
 Flanked left and right by these bold foragers;
 'Tis now a cheer, or now an army song,
 Or bugle's note the soldier's bosom stirs,
 And catching step to that wild music's strain,
 They bend their faces to the distant main.

XLIV.

Through field and wood the blue-coat soldiers stride,
 The battery wagons fill the road between,
 Far in advance the troopers gaily ride,
 The long white trains fill up the varied scene;
 Like grown-up boys on some wild pleasure bent,
 With swinging step the fearless soldiers went.

XLV.

A sight it was! that sea of army blue,
 The sloping guns of the swift tramping host,
 Winding its way the fields and forests through,
 As winds some river slowly to the coast.
 The snow-white trains, the batteries grim, and then,*
 The steady tramp of sixty thousand men.

XLVI.

Yet they were far within a stranger's land,
 A foeman brave was round them everywhere,
 And ambuscades and swamps on every hand,

And bridgeless streams, and foemen waiting there;
Still feared they not the dangers of the way,
But trusted him who led them day by day.

XLVII.

And if, perchance, they saw him down the lines,
To the blue skies there went the wild huzza,—
Amazed the rocks and the tall, silent pines,
That never heard such music till that day;

And far away still other columns hear,
And wave their flags and join the mighty cheer.

XLVIII.

By many a road the swinging lines went on,
By many a farm, through many a hamlet rude,
Where every soul save some poor slave was gone,
The village green turned to a solitude:
Or if some, fearless, kept the lonesome place,
Scorn marked each brow, contempt looked from each face.

XLIX.

But once unto a city fair they neared,
With shaded streets like to some wooded glen,
And in its midst a great white house appeared,
Within whose walls sat solemn whiskered men,
Who great laws made, and proclamations gave,
And ever cried, “Be brave, be brave, be brave.”

L.

Fearless they seemed as solemnly they sate,
Like men who dared at duty’s post to die,
But lo! one shot outside the city’s gate,
They took their hats and were the first to fly;
On horse, on foot, chief magistrate and all,
Disgraceful fled, and left an empty hall.

LI.

And in their stead some blue-coats sat them down,
And merry made of all things grave or gay,
And laws they passed declaring that that town
Should, nolens volens, with the Union stay.
And many days within that town, ‘twas said,
Men laughed at how their Legislature fled.

LII.

And round the camp-fires many an evening,
 The soldiers too talked of those solemn men,
 Or else told tales, or one a song would sing,
 When all would join him in the glad refrain.
 And so it was that every camp-fire had
 Its tale to tell, its song to make them glad.

LIII.

And once, as closer round a fire they drew,
 A poet comrade gave his fancy flight;
 Stories he told of lovers, false and true,
 And tales of war—then would have said “Good-night.”
 “Not yet,” they cry; “enough of love and sport;
 *Still tell of Corse, and how he held the fort.”

* * * * *

*With Corse at Allatoona.**

’Twas less than two thousand we numbered,
 In the fort sitting up on the hill;
 That night not a soldier that slumbered;
 We watched by the starlight until
 Daybreak showed us all of their forces;
 About us their gray columns ran,
 To left and to right they were round us,
 Five thousand if there was a man.
 “Surrender your fort,” bawled the rebel;
 “Five minutes I give, or you’re dead.”
 “Not a man,” answered Corse, in his treble,
 “Perhaps you can take us instead!”
 Then pealed forth their cannon infernal;
 We fought them outside of the pass,
 Two hours, the time seemed eternal;
 The dead lay in lines on the grass.

But who cared for dead or for dying?
 The fort we were there to defend,
 And across from yon far mountain flying,
 Came a message, “Hold on to the end;
 Hold on to the fort.” It was Sherman,
 Who signalled from Kenesaw’s height,
 Far over the heads of our foemen,
 “Hold on—I am coming to-night.”
 Quick fluttered our flag to the signal,

We answered him back with a will,
And fired on the gray-coated rebels
That charged up the slope of the hill.
“Load double,” cried Corse, “every cannon;
Who cares for their ten to our one?”
We looked at the swift-coming rebels,
And answered their yell with a gun.
With the grape from our fort in their faces,
They rush to the ramparts, but stop;
Ah! few of the gray-columned army
That day left alive at the top.
On the parapets, too, lie our wounded,
Each porthole a grave for the dead;
No room for our cannon, the corpses
Fill up the embrasures instead.
Again through the cannon’s red weather
They charge up the hill and the pass,
Their dead and our dead lie together
Out there on the slope in the grass.
A crash from our rifles—they falter;
A gleam from our steel—it is by.
“Recall, and retreat,” sound their bugles;
We cheer from the fort as they fly.
Once more and the signal is flying—
“How many the wounded and dead?”
“Six hundred,” says Corse, “with the dying,”
The blood streaming down from his head.
“But what of that? Look! the old banner
Shines out there as peaceful and still
As if there had not been a battle
This morning up here on the hill.”

* * * * *

LIV.

aw ELL on, tell on,’ the eager listeners cried,
As each new tale of love or war was done,
And half they cheered at Sheridan’s great ride,
And laughed or wept as each new yarn was spun;
Then all at once they wrangled, near and far,
As to what thing had brought about the War.

LV.

One said the politicians; others said
’Twas cotton, else the niggers did it all;

Or abolitionists; had they been dead
 There never had been any war at all.
 Then one spake up, who by the fire had lain,
 "This is God's war, to me 'tis very plain.

LVI.

"You all have heard, but listen, hear once more,
 Of that old Shepherd of New England's sod,
 Whose hero-blood lies at the Nation's door
 Because he feared the everlasting God.
 Curst was the land for that black deed, abhorred,
 For they had slain an angel of the Lord."

* * * * *

The Ballad of John Brown.

By old North Elba's hill-girt town
 A shepherd, dressed in homely brown,
 Beside his flocks one morning stood
 Amidst the rough field's solitude,
 And wanting aught of else to do,
 His Bible from his pocket drew,
 And read some pages, till he saw
 How straight and simple is the law.
 "Do unto others as you would
 That they should do to you." He stood
 A little while when he had read,
 Then closed the book, and prayed, and said,
 "I have not done this thing at all."
 He glanced beyond the pasture wall,
 And saw two bondsmen hurrying by,
 Who had escaped from slavery.
 Far from the South they fled one day,
 And good men helped them on their way.
 And now the shepherd thought of this,
 How far and long he'd been amiss,
 How in the land he called his own
 A monstrous evil had upgrown
 Till millions of his kinsmen stood,
 Bound hand and soul in servitude,
 And he had lifted heart nor hand
 To cleanse the foul blot from the land.
 He knelt and made to God a vow,
 That if some day, or if somehow,
 The shepherd of North Elba could

Become God's instrument for good,
To drive the curse from out the land,
He would give all his years, and stand
First in the ranks of those who make
Their bed with death for Freedom's sake.
That moment round about him shone
A light unearthly and unknown,
But fair, supernal, as some star,
—That shines where only angels are.
And then a low voice seemed to say,
"Thou art my servant from this day."
Years passed, and he who heard the Lord
Became an angel of the sword.
Wherever wrong, oppression, dwelt,
There his right hand was quickly felt.
Stern, as became his pride and name,
That hither with the Mayflower came,
Yet little children loved to stand
Beside his knee or press his hand;
But hated, wronged, despised was he,
As was that One of Galilee,
And no man dared to give him bread,
Lest vengeance fall upon his head.
Only a prophet here and there
With soul to soar, and hand to dare,
Saw in the old man's shining sword,
The secret purpose of the Lord.
Like some strong knight of olden time
Whom bards have sung in many a rhyme,
Alone he fought against the wrong,
Nor asked which side was the more strong,
For well he knew one in the right
Could chase a thousand in the fight.
Years passed, but never once forgot
The bondsman's tears, the bondsman's lot
Nor that fair morning in the field
Where his great vow to God was sealed.
And many a sad slave's eyes grew dim,
At thought of freedom and of him.
And many a bondsman's feet were led
To lands where slavery never spread.
Yet, wronged himself, despised and poor,
He trod the wine-press o'er and o'er:
Though full of bitterness the cup,
To the last dregs he drank it up.

Burned were his barns, his corn, his wheat,
His murdered sons lay at his feet;
To misery his life seemed wed,
A price was placed upon his head;
Yet yielded not his heart of steel,
Nor questioned he of woe or weal.
“Who perils naught in God’s great strife
He is not worthy of his life.
To live with wrong were mortal crime;
Who fears is born out of his time.
So one more blow the curse I’ll give;
What if I die or if I live?
Years are not of our life the sum,
Nor dies one till his time is come.
Nor matters it, so if at last
The curse of bondage shall be passed.”
He struck. ’Twas proud Virginia felt
The blow the shepherd’s strong arm dealt.
Where the Potomac winds its way
From the blue mountains to the bay,
A little village smiling waits
The stranger at its outer gates;
Immortal grown since that first blow
That laid at last the monster low.
One autumn Sabbath in the night
He set the whole town in a fright;
With but a handful of brave men
He scared the lion to his den;
But ere the noontide of that day,
Dead half his comrades round him lay,
And ere night’s shadows had grown dim,
A thousand soldiers marched on him.
But spite of numbers, wounds, and blood,
Like some chased tiger there he stood,
And fired his rifle till, the last
Poor chance of hope or rescue past,
He fell amidst his children dead,
Hurling his curse on slavery’s head.
And no fierce foeman where he fought,
And no cold court where he was brought,
No frowning judge, nor lawyer’s scorn,
Nor pain of body, bleeding, torn,
Could make him one small moment yield.
Whose life to freedom had been sealed.
Writhing upon his cot of hay,

Unconquered the old hero lay,
Though pitiless around him stood
His captors thirsting for his blood.
Unmoved he heard the judge's cry,
"Away with him, and let him die."
Unmoved and tearless saw them come
To lead him to his fearful doom;
The scaffold saw, but not afraid,
He walked as if an angel stayed
Close by his side and bade him hear,
Above the rabble's shout and jeer,
Beyond the scaffold, dark and grim,
The far-off bells that tolled for him;
Adown the drifting years to look,
And see all chains, all shackles broke;
And farther, through the drifting cloud,
Beyond the coffin and the shroud,
With his glad eyes the gates behold,
The Master's face, the crown of gold,
And in the pearls encircling it
These words, for his own glory writ:
"As unto them ye did, so ye
Have likewise done it unto Me."

* * * * *

LVI.

"That is my story," said the soldier, "and
That's why I think the conflict is of God.
They did not see the everlasting Hand,
They heeded not, so passed beneath the rod.
They mocked His face, nor saw the holy light,
And that is why we all are here to-night."

LVIII.

A white-haired slave who to the camp had come,
Sat near the fire and heard the story through;
Silent he sat like one who might be dumb,
But while they talked his eyes still larger grew,
For now, confirmed, as if by holy Word,
The things of which he had but dimly heard.

LIX.

And when the moon her glory had put on,
And silvered o'er the bivouac and the pines,

With step as light as some poor frightened fawn
He crept away beyond the Union lines.
From farm to farm his hurrying footsteps flew
To tell the slaves the mighty things he knew.

LX.

How down the roads a glorious army went,
“A million men, each with a shining sword,
Their camp-fires lighting all the firmament
As might have shone the camp-fires of the Lord.”
How in the woods he heard their trumpets blow,
“Like to the horns that threw down Jericho.”

LXI.

Down sank the moon and still he hurried by,
Forever shouting, “Lo! the Jubilee.”
The foeman heard the weird and far-off cry,
And wondered much what this strange voice could be.
The bondsmen too, they hear and understand,
As if it were an angel in the land.

LX.

No sleep that night for twenty miles around,
From cabin homes to cabin homes they flee,
And far away the glorious tidings sound
As spread the waves of some disturbéd sea,
And chanting songs fill all the midnight air,
And sobs and sighs and thankfulness and prayer.

LXII.

And old men heard who had not hoped to live
To hail in tears the coming of this day,
Though here and there some flying slave would give
A tale of that great army on its way;
Or tell of him whose death, the bondsmen’s loss,
“Had made the scaffold glorious like the cross.”

LXIV.

Up to the house, the white house on the lawn,
From their rude cabins all the bondsmen hie;
Gone is the mistress, and the master, gone;
And tasks and whips, and gone is slavery;
And ere the dawn illumines field and dell,
The slaves will sing their long and last ‘farewell.

* * * * *

Last Night I Heard the Whippoorwill.

Last night I heard the whippoorwill, Good-bye;
I think I hear his sweet voice still,
Good-bye, plantation.
An angel brought some good news round, Good-bye;
Oh, don't you hear the joyful sound?
Good-bye, plantation.
Oh! if you never prayed before,
Good-bye;
Just now you's bound to pray the more,
Good-bye, plantation.
I think I hear the angels sing,
Good-bye;
Oh, don't you hear the angel's wing,
Good-bye, plantation.
Oh, make your garments clean and white, Good-bye;
Great news has come to you this night,
Good-bye, plantation.
Oh, Massa Linkum, make us free,
Good-bye;
Oh, let us hail the jubilee,
Good-bye, plantation.

* * * * *

LXV.

Till in that forest round their bivouac fires,
The soldiers gossip far into the night;
Some of adventure; some, their heart's desires;
To far-off homes some send their fancy's flight;
Some, of their leaders talk; but most they bend
Their thoughts om Lincoln—him, the people's friend.

LXVI.

They see him toiling in the wilderness,
In simple garb, with hardened hands, but sure.
Hard school of toil, but blessed none the less,
Where he may learn the lessons of the poor!
Well Nature knew the soul she had to teach,
And gave it wings immortal heights to reach.

LXVII.

They see him stand in joy or toil the same,

And fearing not life's battles or its scars;
 The ladder see by which he climbed to fame,—
 To them it seemed to lean against the stars,—
 And on its rounds, writ in his deathless hand,
 "There shall no more be bondage in this land."

Part II.

'Tis morn; the bugles in the camp
 Sound loud the reveille,
 And far their notes through wood and swamp
 Re-echo merrily.
 And from their leafy beds the men
 Rise up like wakened deer,
 And round the bivouac fires again
 Make good their morning cheer.
 Once more the clarion note is heard:
 "Fall in!" goes down the line,
 The camp is left to wind and bird,
 And to the murmuring pine.

* * * * *

LXVIII.

Asa the fir trees that an hour ago,
 Stood like lone ghosts above the bivouac fires,
 Illumined now with the sun's rising glow,
 Lift up their heads like tall cathedral spires;
 And far along, in many a blue-coat line,
 The columns tramp, the sloping rifles shine.

LXIX.

At times through some grand forest they would pass,
 Whose lofty aisles were marvels to behold,
 Whose floors of moss and of bright yellow grass,
 Like fairyland, new wonders did unfold;
 And there abreast the marching columns come
 With flying flags, and bugle-notes, and drum.

LXX.

And then one sings, "My Country, 'tis of thee;"
 A thousand voices join the glad refrain;
 Fit forest song, fit hymn to liberty!
 The woods resound, they are the soldier's fane;
 Forgot is war, 'tis Freedom's song they sing;
 The bugles sound and all the dim aisles ring.

LXXI.

So marched they on, and here and there there came
Great groups of slaves, of young folks and of old,
Children and wives, the poor, the halt, the lame,
To see the sights of which they had been told.
Still spread the tale with wondering accord
Of old John Brown, "The servant of the Lord."

LXXII.

And dusky bondsmen at the roadside knelt
And gave God thanks that they had seen this day.
No heart not flint but at that scene had felt
Pity and shame for all that sad array:
Pity, that help had come so late to hand,
And shame, that slavery e'er had cursed the land.

LXXIII.

And now again their hallelujahs rise,
Like to that chant of Miriam by the sea;
The Lord has heard the lowly and his cries,
His armies come to set the bondsmen free;
And every soldier in that mighty line
Seems in their eyes a being half divine.

LXXIV.

It was a scene such as the world looks on
But here and there in the dim centuries—
The armed host, that tramped its way at dawn,
The lines of bondsmen weeping on their knees,
And praying but to touch the garment's hem
Of men who brought such glorious news to them.*

LXXV.

Nights passed, and days, and every roadside had
Its groups of slaves now bound for liberty;
Nor any faces were there wholly sad,
So glad were they at thoughts of being free;
Poor simple souls, their cup with joy was lined
At leaving all they ever knew behind.

LXXVI.

At times the scene was picturesque and fair,
The ebon faces shining in their joy,
The half-clad forms of men and women there,

The half-brown maids, with faces soft and coy,
And wistful children, naked and forlorn,
Too young to know they were in bondage born.

LXXVII.

And old, old men with faces like the night,
And locks like snow, that hemmed their dark eyes in;
With teeth like ivory, so smooth and white,
And beards like flakes fresh from the cotton gin.
None knew their age, nor counted they their years,
Nor scars, nor blows, their sorrows nor their tears.

LXXVIII.

Red-turbaned matrons ling'ring round the scene,
Their gay bandanas over breast and head;
The yellow grass, no longer fresh and green,
The autumn leaves now turning gold and red.
December days already were at hand,
The Indian-summer of the Southern land.

LXXIX.

Now many a night, around the soldiers' fires,
In the dim light was seen the bondsman's face,
Women and maids, young men and gray-haired sires,
While tales they told of their down-trodden race;
And songs they sung, for music still was his;
Wrongs had not robbed the poor slaves' power of this.

LXXX.

In his worst hours, in all his years of wrong,
Rude song had been his only hope and stay;
Nor day so dark but that some simple song
Could make it light, and drive his tears away.
Simple of heart as was his music's strain,
The gentlest race that ever wore a chain.

LXXXI.

And dance he could, in his fantastic way,
And patted Juba round the fires at night—
Hoe-downs, and jigs, and many a capering play;
The soldiers shouted in their wild delight.
The flick'ring flames danced on the bivouacs round
As if they too had pleasure in the sound.

LXXXII.

And cocks crew loud that had some battle won,
For this, too, was a soldiers' camp-fire sport,
And woe that cock, who when his fight was done,
Had no great news of victory to report!
Into the stew-pan straight his body came,
Unknown to glory and unknown to fame.

LXXXIII.

But, lo! for him, though common barnyard fowl,
Who had wrenched victory from some better blood,
To him the cheers; up rose the mighty howl
As if some Cesar down the columns rode;
Glorious his fate, he lived, the soldiers' pride,
As on some knapsack he would proudly ride.

LXXXIV.

Still round the camp the slaves like gypsies clung,
And lived on what their busy hands could find
Of plenteous waste, or what the soldiers flung
To them of bread, or food of any kind;
Content if they could only surely be
Flying away from their sad slavery.

LXXXV.

For there was no one in that dusky throng
Who did not see in their escaping thus
A resurrection from the grave of wrong,
And to their people God's new exodus;
So that no hardship seemed too great to stand,
If but at last they reached their promised land.

LXXXVI.

Nor dared they halt, for oft behind them rode
Men fierce of heart, enraged to see them fly
From their hard masters, who in cruel mode
Might capture all or slay them utterly;
And little choice was there for any one,
To die like this or live as they had done.

LXXXVII.

Nor midst the troops was every man their friend;
At sight of wrong men were not always moved;
Some had in heart no sympathy to lend,

And some the curse of slavery approved,
 And little recked if sorrow might befall,
 Or woful chance should put them back in thrall.

LXXXVIII.

Thus on a time, beside a rapid stream,
 A column slept—it was the early dawn;
 And at their rear a thousand bondsmen dream
 Of sweetest days now swiftly coming on;
 But ere the sun lit full the forest fair
 The column marched and left them sleeping there.

LXXXIX.

And then, as if by cruel war's mischance,
 The bridge is cut ere they have crossed the stream;
 They see the rapid water's cold expanse,
 And far away the blue-coats' rifles' gleam.
 "Horror!" they cry, to sudden death consigned,
 "The bridge is gone, and we are left behind!"

XC.

Broad was the stream, most pitiful the cry
 Of that black throng quick-gathered on the shore;
 They see their hopes in one dread instant fly,
 Before them toil and slavery once more;
 Dreading the foes, that close behind them ride,
 Wildly they wail, and plunge into the tide.

XCI.

Old men and young, the weaklings and the strong,
 Unthinking rushed into the rolling stream;
 Like some wild herd the panic-stricken throng
 Went to its fate as in some horrid dream,
 Preferring death in the cold river's waves
 To going back as bondsmen and as slaves.

XCII.

Still some are saved; the soldiers, kinder than
 The cruel fate that willed the fearful thing,
 Spring to the stream and do whate'er they can,
 And many a poor soul from the river bring.
 Yet all that day, adown that stream, 'twas said,
 Men saw naught else than bodies of the dead.*

Part III.

Ballad.

The good old times were bravest times,
Alas that they are by!
'Twas then the land's best citizens
Were not afraid to die.
Then Country meant to small or great
A something to defend;
And nothing was too dear to give,
No blood too good to spend.
And no one asked if any time
Or often he must fight,
Or what the cause—'twas one to him,
His country must be right.
Thus was it e'er Atlanta fell,
And foes were put to rout;
When the great land was in despair,
And clouds hung all about.
A message came to Sherman's men—
In cold and rags they stood,
And many names of battle-plains
Were written with their blood.
"Oh! by your hero past," it said,
"And by each honored brow,
Vain is the blood already spilt
If you should leave us now."
Then spake a colonel of the line:
"Now, men, do as you may;
Three bloody years you've battled through,
Your time is up to-day.
"Three bloody years of heat or cold,
Of toil and marching far;
A hundred battles you have fought,
And each man has his scar.
"If 'tis your will, this moment ends
Your dangers in the strife;
Say but the word and you go home
To sweetheart or to wife.

10.

"But if that one or all should still
His land's behest obey,
Let him step forward as the sign
He stands by it to-day."

II.

Calm stood each soldier in the line
And thought the matter o'er;
Thought of his sweetheart, or of wife,
But thought of country more.
Ten paces out the colonel placed
The torn and tattered rag.
"Who wills it, when the drum shall beat,
Steps to the dear old flag."

13.

"Eyes right;" they looked. "Eyes front;" they turned;
Each other's face they scan:
One tap of drum—with steady step
Came forward every man.*

* * * * *

XCVIII.

Heavens! such it was that made our armies great,
And such it was that made our Country strong—
A love of land, surpassing home; the state
Was men's first sweetheart four years long.
And faithful they, who standing in that line,
Stepped to the flag at the grim drummer's sign.

XCIV.

And these were they now marching to the sea,
With their dead comrades in their graves behind;
Little they recked what at the front might be,
So that their banners floated to the wind;
For well they knew, so long as Sherman led,
All would be well, whatever lay ahead.

XCV.

One time they camped beside a rolling stream,
Their kinsmen foes upon the other side,
In the green woods they saw their white tents gleam
And heard the war-songs o'er the glistening tide.
And in the night they heard their sentinel
Cry, "Twelve o'clock, midnight, and all is well."

* * * * *

At the River.

Beside the stream our bivouac lay,
And by the other side
The rebels camped, so close that they
Could see us o'er the tide.
And twice a day across the way
They heard our bands of music play.
Green grew the grass along the shore,
Kissed by the morning dew;
Like a sweet dream the silent stream,
Coursed its deep channel through;
While overhead the pine-trees said
Low words as if they worshippéd.
The soft winds lifted the sweet mist,
In happiness elate,
And knew not if the flags they kissed
Were flags of love or hate.
With sweetest thrall God's dear winds fall
In benediction over all.
And suddenly the band began
Some sweet and loyal strain;
From the green woods the soldiers ran
To hear the glad refrain.
From shore to shore, the waters o'er,
The gladsome winds the music bore.
A truce to war that moment fell
On blue coat and on gray;
Enrancing music's heavenly spell
On the broad river lay.
Nor sabre's gleam, nor bullet's scream,
Disturbed the silent-flowing stream.
Now sweeter still the music plays
"My country, 'tis of thee."
The blue-coat boys their voices raise,
And sing it fervently.
Sad hearts and sore, on yonder shore,
The rebels love that song no more.
Then Yankee Doodle fills the air,
And slogans fierce of war;
And "Old John Brown," the soldiers there
Take up the chorus far;
And far and near the blue-coats cheer
The loyal music that they hear.

A pause—and then the band resumes,
 'Tis “Dixie” is the strain;
 And, hark! across the stream there comes
 The rebels’ loud refrain.
 Bronze-faced they stand, the gray-coat band,
 And cheer and cheer for Dixie Land.
 “Then rally round the flag,” once more
 And loud the blue-coats cry,
 And mock them on the other shore
 With songs of loyalty.
 Till loud and clear, and far and near,
 Each side its own war slogans cheer.
 Then all at once the sweeter strain
 Of “Home, Sweet Home,” is heard;
 Both camps join in the dear refrain,
 And every heart is stirred.
 And, blue or gray, each soul that day
 Thought on his loved ones far away.
 For one sweet moment, and there seemed
 No North or South land there,
 Across the river’s breast there gleamed
 The holiness of prayer.
 Forgot were hatred, wrong, and strife;
 Each thought of sweetheart or of wife.
 Oh! had some power that moment come,
 To keep that music’s strain,
 Then war and hate had all been dumb,
 There had been no more slain,
 But sweet surcease of war, the lease
 Of years that bringeth all men peace.
 Still, long as kindlier things shall last
 War’s rude heart to adorn,
 No touching scene will have surpassed
 The pathos of that morn,
 When blue and gray, in one sweet lay,
 Together sang war’s hates away.

* * * * *

XCVI.

Till, northward came no news of all that host,
 Since that great day that saw Atlanta fall,
 Nor any knew if they should reach the coast,
 Or if in battle they were captured all.
 “Lost is that army,” still grim rumor said,

“Its legions captured, and its leader dead.”

XCVII.

Yet every day saw its great General ride
Down the blue lines amidst the columns' cheers.
Through forests dark, across savannahs wide,
They tramped, nor thought of all the Nation's fears;
Content, if only their great leader's hand
Should guide them safely through the unknown land.

XCVIII.

Night saw him silent in his camp alone,
Or walking slowly by his bivouac fire,
When all the army to its rest had gone—
Unwearying soul that never seemed to tire;
What thoughts were his beneath that camp-fire's spell,
When lonely midnight round his bivouac fell?

XCIX.

Heard he at times the far-off foeman's horn,
And planned, in thought, some battle's great array?
Saw he the charge, led he the hope forlorn,
Through the red coals that in his camp-fire lay?
Saw he afar the mighty conflict done,
And his own name, of all, the glorious one?

CC.

Saw he through years the arch of triumph rise,
The bronzed steeds, the trumpeters elate,
The marble shafts that pierce the very skies
To him whose name the people have called great?
Hears he afar the grateful bells they ring,
The shouts of joy, the pans that they sing?

CL.

Night wraps him round in her mysterious gloom,
Above his head the fir trees waiting stand,
Silent and dark, as is some funeral plume;
The glimmering camp-fire waves its magic wand;
Lone shadows creep about the silent place,
And flickering lights fall on the leader's face.

CII.

A form erect as is some sturdy oak,
Alert, and tall, and quick in every move,

A face deep carved, whose very wrinkles spoke,
 And lips that told of battle and of love.
 Brown, sparkling eyes, that ever seemed to shine,
 A lofty brow where genius sat divine.

CIII.

Men said he was like Cesar; only this—
 The imperial form and face, indeed, he had,
 But his ambition never went amiss,
 And love of glory ne'er did make him mad.
 Great though his deeds, and great though his renown,
 No Antony had dared to offer him a crown.

CIV.

At times he heard some music's far-off strain,
 Or snatch of song beside some bivouac fire,
 And list'ning caught the gladsome notes again,
 Soft in the night as some Æolian lyre;
 And joyed to think his soldiers free from care,
 Though he himself had many a load to bear.

* * * * *

Midnight in Camp.

'Tis midnight in the camp,
 And starlight in the sky;
 In a forest cold and damp
 Two mighty armies lie.
 A river rolled between,
 Where the lone pickets stood;
 The camp-fire's faintest gleam
 Shone on the silent flood.
 Out of the darkness rides
 A cavalry brass band;
 Down to the stream it glides,
 Down where the sentries stand.
 Their clanging swords we heard,
 As past the lines they went;
 We questioned them no word,
 But wondered what it meant.
 Low spake their leader: "Men,
 To-morrow is the fight;
 The rebels in that glen
 Must hear us play to-night.
 "Let's play some loyal air

They may not hear again,
They'll know the strain out there—
Some song of Sherman's men."
And through the starlight fell,
And midst the forest dim,
Like some grand organ's swell,
The Nation's battle-hymn.
Strange thoughts were in the breast
Of many a rebel there,
Who, wakened from his rest,
Heard that last loyal air.
Oh! many heard that night
The last song of their life—
There was no time to write
To sweetheart or to wife.
For morning saw them slain,
Whose souls mayhap were stirred
By that one loyal strain—
The last song that they heard.

CV.

Ne night it was the chaplain's turn to tell
Some story of great danger he had seen;
For though he preached, still he could fight as well;
In many a fray and skirmish he had been,
And on his breast, when back his coat was rolled,
They saw a badge of silver and pure gold.

CVI.

And now beside a little picket post,
Far in advance of all the army's camp,
Where but a handful of that mighty host
Sat round a hidden fire within a swamp,
He stirred the embers, slumbering low, and then
Told them the tale of Andrews and his men.

* * * * *

The Raid of the Andrews Men

'Tis April eighteen sixty-two,
Great Shiloh's bloody day,
Brave Mitchell, with his men in blue.
By Chattanooga lay.
Far and alone he had come there,
With but a thousand men,

To chase the rebels to their lair,
The lion to his den.
“If I could take the town,” he said,
“With its high ridges, then
I would not fear them though they led
A hundred thousand men;
For to the lofty mountain pass
It is the only key;
Who holds its gates, that moment has
The whole of Tennessee.
“There is a railroad leading quite
Into Atlanta town;
It brings the soldiers up who fight,
And takes the wounded down.
Had I some soldier bold enough
To cross yon river’s bar
And burn the bridges on that road,
’Twere worth a year of war.
“But who would think to venture there
With life so in his hand?
It were a deed no soul would dare
For all the Southern land.”
Low spoke a captain of the guard—
James Andrews was his name:
“Well, General, ’twere not so hard
As many a road to fame.
“Give me a score of trusted men,
Brown coats, instead of blue,
And ere yon sun sinks twice again
The deed is done for you.
This very night in deep disguise
Each on some path his own,
Will wander where the river lies
Behind yon mountain lone.
“To-morrow night the train will go
From Chattanooga town,
And we will ride to Kenesaw
Before the sun is down.
And there we’ll hide and wait the train,
That’s coming North next day,
And overpower the guards, and gain
The engine on its way.
“Be ready, you, to take the place
By noon if all goes well;
How far we’ve run the fearful race

Each burning bridge will tell.
But if no flame nor smoke you see,
Beyond yon mountain's head,
Fly quickly out of Tennessee
And know that we are dead."
That night, through storm and forests damp,
By many a darkening stream,
A band of men set out from camp
Under the lightning's gleam.
Before, around, the foemen lay,
The night grew stormier still,
But still they kept their dangerous way
Past Chattanooga's hill.
"Who are the men who ride with us
From Chattanooga town?
They are not foemen, coming thus,
Their garb our homely brown?
Only their faces all are pale;
Why are they all so still?
Some came on board at Ringgold vale,
And some at Tunnel Hill."
So spake the people in the train,
But night came on ere long;
Some talked of harvests, and the rain,
Some passed the hours in song.
But no one guessed that when the light
Should tinge the mountain's crown,
A hundred men would be in fight
With twenty men in brown.
No sleep that night for any one
Of that heroic band,
And all were glad of morning's sun,
To bring the game to hand.
God! 'twas a sight for one who knew
What errand they were on,
To see how firm their faces grew,
Their eyes, how strange they shone.
Low spake the leader: "Men, I know
To count on every one;
We know what thing we've got to do,
'Twere good that it were done.
Five minutes, and the train is here;
Keep cool, as you are now."
Each thought of some one far and dear,
And wiped his moistening brow.

Right by them stood the foemen's camp,
With many a sentinel;
The sun rose like some mighty lamp
And tinged the mountain swell.
No word is said; no soul holds back;
One moment still for prayer,
And roaring down the railroad track
The train is coming there.
"Ten minutes here for breakfast, men,"
They hear the trainmen cry.
"We'll make it more," said Andrews then,
A strange look in his eye.
He watched the passengers get out,
The trainmen hurry through;
Loud rang the gong, the hungry rout
Quick to the table flew.
"Now is our time, if ever, men,"
The leader softly said;
And every eye was turned, and then
He signalled with his head.
One glance along the line he flung,
One glance his comrades gave,
And to the train the twenty sprung,
As if 'twere from the grave.
Three men upon the engine leap,
Upon the tender, ten,
And seven among the baggage keep;
They are strong-hearted men.
A pin is drawn, the train's in two,
One half is left behind,
And quick the engine leaped and flew,
As if 'twere on the wind.
The rebel soldiers fire and shout,
The wheels fly on amain,
Alarmed, the trainmen hurry out,
And curse the stolen train.
"To horse," cry some, and well they need;
And some stand by and swear
That never yet was such a deed
Of daring anywhere.
"Tis thirty miles to Kingston town,"
Cries Fuller; brave is he.
"We'll catch them there, a train comes down,
The mail from Tennessee.
Steam up yon locomotive, quick,

The 'Yonah,' flying bird;
We'll teach the Yankees such a trick
As they have never heard.
"Their engine is the 'General,'
And she is strong and fleet;
But 'Yonah' is the little girl
That never yet was beat.
Fill her with soldiers, quick, for when
We meet, full sure it is,
There will be fighting fierce with men
Who'd dare a thing like this."
On, on, they fly, the Andrews men,
Quick as the bounding deer,
When through the woods and down the glen
The horn and hounds they hear.
But practiced hands hold at the bar,
The throttles open wide,
The engine bounds and leaps, and far
For life or death they ride.
They only stop to break the track,
Or cut the wires down,
Or do some thing to make a wrack,
This side of Kingston town.
"What's all of this?" the Kingston folk
Cry, when they see the ten;
"Here's Fuller's engine roaring hot,
But where are Fuller's men?"
And freight and mail trains crowd them thick;
There is no room, alas!
"Move out, you thieves," cried Andrews, quick,
"And let the Special pass.
For I am bound for Beauregard,
With powder and with lead;
Who stops the Special Shiloh-ward
Will pay it with his head."
That moment and there is a wrack
And roaring far behind;
For Fuller's men have cleared the track—
He, too, comes like the wind.
Amazed, the people hear the din,
And wonder what's about,
For just as Fuller's train comes in
The Andrews train goes out.
And on, and on, and on, they fly,
On six wheels or on four;

The smoke pours out, the clouds go by,
The mighty engines roar.
“Stop, quick, and tear the tracks again,”
Cries Andrews, “and load on
A hundred railroad ties, my men;
We’ll throw them as we run.
“More steam, more oil, pile in the wood,
Brakes off, and let her go.”
Two strong men hold the lever good;
Two strong men fuel throw.
White are the hot flames roaring there,
And white the roaring steam,
And white the faces of the men
That hear the “Yonah” scream.
On, on, and on; the people stare,
As past the towns they fly;
A lightning’s flash is on Adair,
A storm is in the sky.
“Now, let her run for all she’s worth
Before our fuel’s wet;
There is no longer time to halt,
Nor any wood to get.”
The engine rocks to left and right,
The tender springs in air;
By heaven! it was a stirring sight,
To see them flying there!
The hundred ties they quickly fling
Along the railroad track;
But ties, nor logs, nor anything
Can keep the “Yonah” back.
She, too, bounds roaring up and down;
At railroad ties they scoff,
And fast as Andrews flings them down,
So fast they fling them off.
Nearer and nearer still they come,
Their musket’s crash is red;
“Pour on the oil, and give her room,”
Was all that Andrews said.
“Pour on the oil and burn the car,
Perhaps as we pass through,
Its flames may catch yon bridge’s bar
And burn the bridges too.”
Lord, Lord! it was a sight to see,
As any sight of war,
The storm, now raging fearfully,

The burning, flying car,
The flaming at the engine's wheels,
The red-hot musket's flash,
The "Yonah" flying on their heels,
The mighty thunder's crash.
Lord, help them! Look, the wheels stop still
Upon the slippery track;
Too steep the grade of yonder hill,
The engine will go back!
A scream, a shout, a mighty yell!
The "Yonah's" within hail.
"Too late, ye rebels, with your curse,
Our engine takes the rail."
And faster, louder than before,
Down the steep grade she runs;
They hear the "Yonah's" angry roar,
The crashing of her guns.
Oh! for one little hour of time,
Some moments of delay,
So near is glory unto crime,
Failure to victory!
In their brave hands a nation's hope
Hangs trembling in the scale—
Lord! but five minutes on yon slope
And they were out of hail!
But who can fight with storm and fate?
The engine has stopped still;
The "Yonah," past the Summit gate,
Is roaring down the hill!
Quick, spring, my men, to yonder wood!"
It is the leader's cry,
And right and left by copse and flood
The twenty soldiers fly.
What steam and storm could never do
Ts done with horse and hound,
And here and there by swamp and slough,
The little band is found.
God help them now, an angrier foe
Was never theirs to meet,
The prison gate, the dungeon low,
The scaffold in the street!
By Chattanooga's hill-girt town,
Within a shady glen,
The wild-flowers and the lilacs crown
The graves of Andrews' men.

Earth holds their earth; their honored names
To children shall go down
So long as heroes' names have worth,
Or brave deeds have renown.*

CVII.

fe story closed, and for a little spell
They who had listened spoke not any word,
Nor thought if any other there might tell
A tale so sad as this one they had heard.
But soon they talked of other things till dawn
Put out the stars, and brought the morning on.

CVIII.

A few recalled the weariness of war,
And longed for homes that they might never see;
Little to them was shoulder-strap or star,
Their trusted guns their only blazonry.
What theirs to hope? A grave in some lone spot,
Their valorous deeds, their very names, forgot.

CIX.

Nor was that march one long great holyday,
With naught to do but tramp along and sing,
New sights to cheer them on their wondrous way,
And blazing camp-fires, endless frolicking;
Full many a night on cold and sodden ground
Their only rest, their only sleep, they found.

CX.

Glad if some tree its kindly branches lent,
Some fallen trunk kept off a little rain,
Till the cold storm, its blast and fury spent,
Died with the night, and morning dawned again.
When round new fires the veterans essayed
Their garb to dry, their cups of coffee made.

CXII.

And some recalled how, when the roads were worst,
And trains mired down, deep in the mud and sand,
When teams gave out, and drivers howled and curst,
The soldiers pulled the wagons out by hand;
How days they tramped through muddy fields to free
The roads for trains and the artillery.

CXXII.

How false alarms had led them many a mile;
The ignis fatuus that was never found;
The scanty food, the fireless camp the while,
The dang'rous foe that still was lurking round—
Of such their speech; of such it still had been,
Had not one said, "Let us have tales again."

* * * * *

War Violets.

apo days and nights the battle swept
Through all the forest round;
Two days and nights the wounded slept
Upon the sodden ground.
Then came the roll-call; every name
Accounted for but one.
Some dead upon the field of fame;
Some wounded; missing, none.
"Yes, Barton Jones," the sergeant cried.
The youngest lad was he;
He rode close to the Captain's side
In that brave company.
'Has no one seen him? Men, go out
And search among the dead.
Look in yon wild woods all about
Where last the foemen fled."
They found him in the shady glen,
Hemmed in by many a tree,
Among the bodies of dead men
That kept him company.
Wounded, alone, in pain he'd crept
The shady glen around,
To pick the violets that slept
In the sweet-scented ground.
Kindly they bore him to the rear,
The violets on his breast;
And no strong man but shed a tear
When he was put to rest.

CXIII.

Touched by the words, no comrade round that fire
But saw in thought some far-off village green,
A mother weeping, and a gray-haired sire,

A youthful soldier parting from the scene;
 A sister, smiling 'twixt the tears that flow;
 A sweetheart proud to see her lover go.

CXIV.

And farther still than village green or street,
 They see a glen where bluest violets lie,
 And that fair youth, like to the flowers so sweet,
 "Trampled and torn with death's artillery.
 Ah! North or South, bitter for you the
 When your dear hearts among' the violets lay!

CXV.

Again the soldier told a tale of one,
 He, too, a boy, on Chattanooga's field,
 Who, when the roar of the great fight was done,
 Lay on the grass that his life-blood had sealed;
 Dying, he thought of his heart's pain no more,
 But that dear flag that he to triumph bore.

* * * * *

*Almost Up.**

'Twas Chattanooga's battlefield;
 The night was filled with stars;
 Two strong men bore a soldier back;
 He wore a sergeant's bars.
 A color-sergeant of the line,
 On the high ridge he fell,
 Where the old colonel gave the sign
 To charge them with a yell.
 None braver climbed the battle hill
 Or stormed the dangerous pass,
 Than he, now lying pale and still,
 Upon the blood-stained grass.
 Beneath the torchlight's flick'ring glare,
 Under the starlight dim,
 The busy surgeons labored there
 Until they came to him.

"Where are you wounded, sergeant?" said
 The kind-faced surgeon. "Where?
 Right at the top, sir," said the lad;
 "The bullet struck me there."
 "Ah! boy, I know. But where? I mean,"

Again, in kind surprise.
“Just as I said, sir, at the top;”
Steady his deep-blue eyes.
“Yes, yes, I see!”? The surgeon tore
The sleeve from off his arm—
A bleeding gash. “Yes, doctor—there
Is what did all the harm.
“I was ’most up—right at the top,
When the ball struck me here—
Yes, almost up.’ Out in the woods
He heard his comrades cheer.
And faint he heard the pearly gates
Swing outward on the air,
And still he whispered. “Almost up—
The flag was almost there.”

Ponce De Leon.

Through the woods and the smoke intense,
Charged the lines of the regiment,
Over the field and the low stone fence;
And the old dog went where the Captain went.
Once we halted. Lord! how hot!
Grape and canister filled the air;
The Captain fell, and I saw the spot,
And we all went back; but the dog stayed there.
Through the fight of the afternoon,
Kept he watch by his master dead,
Through the fight till the sun went down,
And the new moon rose on the field instead.
“Sound a truce,” said the General; then,
“Gather our wounded from off the plain.”
With biers and spades went the burying men
Out in the moonlight amongst the slain,
Till they came to one with a Captain’s bars.
Far at the front, by the fence, he died;
And they saw by the light of the moon and stars,
The old dog dead by the Captain’s side.
In the field, in the starlight there,
Under the flag they had died to save,
Under the moonlight, fresh and fair,
They buried them both in a soldier’s grave.
Softly and gently, within the ground;
War’s fierce terror has still amends.
Some words they wrote by the little mound:
“Sacred, forever, to two good friends.”

Ponce de Leon, the St. Bernard,
True in life, and in death more true,
In the time of the great reward,
He will stand at the right hand, too.

* * * * *

CXVI.

Till marched the soldiers, journeying on and on;
A bold, brave foe hung round them left and right;
The little towns, with half their people gone,
Looked in amazement at the wondrous sight;
Some saw with scorn, a few with secret tears,
The stars and stripes they had not seen for years.

CXVII.

For years that flag had been a hidden thing;
Men had not dared unfurl that banner there;
No little children now were taught to sing
“God bless our land!” The loyal, in despair,
Whispered their griefs; no soul aloud dare pray
For his own country in that awful day.

CXVIII.

And now they see this mighty army come,
Like some vast cloud, with vengeance in its train;
With woful faces, trembling lips and dumb,
Once more they hear the loyal bugle’s strain;
For one short day, above the village gate,
Waves the old flag they have been taught to hate.

CXIX.

Waves the old flag—and then the bitter end:
The torch, the flame; their homes, before the night,
With the soft winds their ashes quickly blend;
War’s whirlwind stoops to tear them in its flight,
And morning comes to see a naked land,
And trampled fields, where smoking ruins stand.*

CXX.

Maddened to rage the Rebel horsemen fly
And fling themselves upon their foemen there;
Useless, they only find a place to die;
Their own brown fields become their sepulchre.
For them no household fires again may burn,
No village bells ring out their glad return.

* * * * *

In some lone swamp, or by some roadside drear,
In years to come some epitaph will tell
How, "In this mound alone is sleeping here
A soldier boy they buried where he fell."
Enough the words, whichever side he stood:
"He thought it right,—lies here, and God is good."

CXXII.

Oft, too, by night the columns hurried on,
Hearing dull cannon on some far-off flank,
And though their feet had journeyed since the dawn,
And here and there one at the roadside sank,
Still on they marched, till some dark river's breast,
Its bridges burned, gave them a moment's rest.

CXXIII.

Then came a scene, most weird and wondrous grand:
A thousand torches in the forest stood;
A thousand men with axe or saw in hand
Hew down the trees, and bridge the rolling flood;
And planks and ropes from the high banks are strung,
And light pontoons across the water flung.

CXXIV.

Throughout the darkness flares the pineknot's light,
And shadowy forms are hurrying to and fro,
The dark stream gurgles off into the night,
The bonfires glimmer on the sands below;
Gigantic seem the horsemen as they ride
Out of the woods, down to the river side.

CXXV.

The bridge is finished, forward moves the line,
With steady step to the low-beating drum,
With glare and smoke from out the darkling pine,

'Neath flick'ring lights the silent columns come.
The stream is crossed, the dying torches fall
On the wet sand, and darkness covers all.

CXXVI.

Sometimes again the march was lightly done;
Steady the tramp, commencing with the morn,
Wer yet the light of the fair rising sun
Tinged half in gold the dry leaves of the corn.
Then noontide saw them by some shaded stream,
In bivouac resting, and their fires a gleam.

CXXVII.

On grassy knolls some sleep the long hours through;
With dice and cards some chase the time away,
Or fighting cocks, or football; not a few
In dance, or tale, or music find their play;
For long as war is of the world a part,
So long will music move the soldier's heart.

CXXVIII.

Their muskets stacked in long, clear rows of steel,
The sun's slant rays on polished bayonets shine;
One bugle call or one loud cannon peal,
And every soldier had been up in line.
The drum's long roll, one cry, "Fall in!" and then
That darkling wood had turned to arméd men.

CXXIX.

Quick fly the hours; the sunset crimsons by;
Night comes, the woods with camp-fires are ablaze,
In smoke the glimmering branches sway on high,
Illumed yet ghostly in the bivouac's rays.
The tattoo sounds, the guards their vigils keep;
"Tattoo," "Lights out," and all the soldiers sleep.

CXXX.

The soldiers sleep; and yet, perchance, ere morn,
Some fierce surprise falls on th' unconscious men;
Some cannon's boom on the night air is borne,
Or flashing rifles rattle in the glen;
Then beat the drums, and all the camp's a-din,
The bugles sound, the sergeants cry,
"Fall in!"

* * * * *

Kilpatrick's Cavalry Charge

Quiet that night in our camp we lay,
The pine trees softly above us stirred;
The brook sang low on its winding way;
Only these were the sounds we heard.
Suddenly, and there came a flash,
Blazing red in the wooded glen;
And that quick moment a cannon's crash,
Into the midnight among our men.
Little we needed the bugle's blare,
Little the noise of the scaring drum,
For quick in line we were standing there,
Waiting the foe if he dare to come.
Long we stood in the forest gloom,
Silence only along the line,
Save when a foeman's gun would boom
And tear the limbs from a trembling pine.
Fair was the dawn when at last it came,
Glowing and red o'er the field it lay;
And beyond the wood, by its tinted flame,
We saw a line of the men in gray.
How they looked when we saw them there,
Loading their guns for our men in blue!
And they burst their shells on the Sabbath air;
Over our heads in the woods they flew.
Over our heads, and we laughed at first,
Till their lines broke out in a spluttering flash,
And a hurry of musketry from them burst,
And we thought no more of the cannon's crash.
"Cavalry, mount," came the clear command,
As down before us Kilpatrick rode;
His saber glistened in his right hand,
Over his shoulders his fair hair flowed.
"We will drive them out of that field and lane.
Steady!" he said, to the waiting line;
And he looked straight into our eyes again,
As we waited only to see his sign.
Oh! the dawn, it was fair to see;
Rosy and fresh on the fields it fell;
And clear, that moment, as clear could be—
Oh! we heard the voice of Kilpatrick well!
"Front rank, sabers, and pistols, rear:
Forward, gallop, and charge!" he cried.

Over the ditch and the fences near,
 Straight at the guns of the foes we ride.
 Down the hill and across the brook,
 Up the slope like a hurricane;
 The very ground with our squadrons shook,
 And charging troopers fell thick as rain.
 Over the fence and the barricades,
 Dashing, cheering, we cut our way,
 And we hear the thud of our slashing blades,
 On the stubborn heads of the men in gray.
 Smite and pound on the rebel head,
 Strike and thrust at the blue dragoon,
 Till the desperate gunners all are dead—
 They are lying still as a day in June.
 “Now, right about!” for the day is ours;
 Back to the woods, for the lane is won;
 But oh! the grass and the withered flowers
 Are red with blood when the charge is done!
 Once again in the line we stand,
 And down before us Kilpatrick rides;
 His saber glistens in his right hand,
 And his face glows fair like a new-made bride’s.
 Cheer after cheer as he rides along!
 But the soldiers lying dead
 Will never know of the cheers and song,
 Or the words Kilpatrick said.*

* * * * *

CXXXI.

Ae now it seemed as if they could go on
 Forever marching in this wondrous way;
 The morning’s foe at evening would be gone;
 Nothing there was that could that army stay.
 With lightsome step they marched, and cheered and sang;
 The hills re-echoed, and the forests rang.

CXXXII.

And all were happy, for right well they knew,
 That march once done,—the South cut clean in twain,—
 Sweet peace would come, the war would then be through,
 And they would see their far-off homes again.
 And so with hopes like happy children they
 “Marched laughing on, and war was almost play.
 Till on a day they fell upon a land,

Low, flat, and sterile; void of everything
For man or beast. The cold unpitying sand
To their tired ankles went; nor budding spring
Nor summer made that region wholly fair,
Nor pierced the sun the dull, dark forests there.

CXXXIV.

Now more the foe pressed hard at every stream,
Held every bridge, in every swamp lay hid;
In the swamp's twilight and its murky gleam,
No soul could see of nation they did,
Nor hear alarm, till, suddenly, a flash,
A cry of pain, and a fierce musket's crash.

CXXXV.

Hungry and tired, they who had hoped before,
Now feared a little what might happen yet;
For little now the wagons had in store,
In these last days that seemed so desperate.
And all men knew that hurrying armies could
Still cut them off in some great swamp or wood.

CXXXVI.

But on a day, while tired and sore they went,
Across some hills wherefrom the view was free,
A sudden shouting down the limes was sent;
They looked and cried, "It is the sea! the sea!"
And all at once a thousand cheers were heard,
And all the army shout the glorious word.

CXXXVII.

Not since that day when the great Genoese
Placed his proud feet upon a new-found world,
Had such glad shouts gone up to heaven as these,
When to the breeze the old flag was unfurled,
And all the army in one mighty song
Passed the glad news, "Jé is the sea," along.

CXXXVIII.

Bronzed soldiers stood and shook each other's hands;
Some wept for joy, as for a brother found;
And down the slopes, and from the faroff sands,
They thought they heard already the glad sound
Of the old ocean welcoming them on
To that great goal they had so fairly won.

CXXXIX.

High waved the flags, and every bugle played;
And silver bands whose notes had not been heard
For days, in the dull forests where we'd strayed,
Where joyous songs our hearts had never stirred,
Poured forth their notes; yet little heeded we,
Our souls too busy with that glistening sea.

CXL.

Now all at once things sad turned into gay,
The very swamps seemed changed to fairy green,
No longer dull the fields about us lay,
Turned to enchantment the inglorious scene;
Forgot the weariness, the toil, the pain;
Forgot were e'en our hapless buried slain.

CXLI.

To see this ocean! that was joy supreme;
Not in our lives had ever we before
Seen such a sight; and like some fairest dream
Sped the quick moments, for that shining shore
To our glad hearts, and to our wondering eyes,
Gleamed like the storied gates of Paradise.

CXLII.

Some swore they tasted sea-salt in the air,
Some strained their eyes at little specks far off,
And called them ships, and looked for sailors there;
And some saw fleets in the deep ocean trough,
Laden with bread and all good cheer that we
Could crave, who brought such glorious victory.

CXLIII.

At times we thought we heard the very waves,
Though distant miles the white sea still from us,
Or the low murmuring by the shore, where laves
The water, restless as mankind; and thus
Our hearts went faster than our feet, and none
But said, "At last the weary war is done!"

CXLIV.

But lo! behold! just as the end was near,
A cannon boomed across the army's way;
And by the sea we plainly saw appear

A frowning fort, strong held by men in gray,
And round about it palisades so high,
Who charged that fort might surely fear to die.

CXLV.

Black, belching guns frowned on its parapet;
And though we wept to see the sweet sea's face,
The longed-for goal was not accomplished yet,
And that fair shore might be our burial place.
Then, suddenly, our leader's form appeared,
The proud flags waved, and all the army cheered.

CXLVI.

Long looked he there out on the whitening sea,
Scanning in vain some little trace to find
Of friendly fleet, if any there might be,
Or signal flag, upon the evening wind.
But fleet, nor flag, nor ship was anywhere,
No sign to tell they knew that we were there.

CXLVII.

That hour held fate, and well our leader knew,
One short delay and all could still be lost—
All that we hoped, and all we had come through,
And his own fame, and all that marching host.
Anxious he: gazed into the speechless space;
And, breathless, looked we in our leader's face.

CXLVIII.

"Men," then said he, "yon fort that's in our course,
This very night must come into our hands."
Then cheered we all, and many clamored hoarse,
To have that honor, in the woods and sands
To storm the fort, and ere the sun be set
Wave the old flag above its parapet.

CXLIV.

Then quiet marched five thousand veterans
The dark woods through, by dauntless Hazen led,—
Through half-cleared fields, by swamps and boggy fens,—
While from the fort the shells shrieked overhead;
Till all at once the bugles sounded clear,
"On to the works!" We answered with a cheer.

CL.

The dear flags waved, and all the lines went on,
Toward belching guns, past those high palisades,
In the dark smoke; one moment they were gone,
And then one cry, one mighty charge, they made;
Into the fort a thousand blue-coats sprung;
The stars and stripes above its walls are flung! *

CLI.

Bright shone the moon upon the fort that night,
And bright it shone upon the glistening sea;
And far below we saw by its pale light,
Our ships of war that lay there silently;
And on the faces of our dead it shone—
Blue coat or gray, to them it was all one.

CLII.

And all that night beneath the Southern moon,
With dead around us, all so patiently,
We sat and talked of that fierce battle noon,
Until we saw the sun rise from the sea;
And when it rose in all its glory, then
We sang the song of Sherman and his men.

* * * * *

Song of Sherman's March To

Our camp-fires shone bright on the mountains,
That frowned on the river below,
While we stood by our guns in the morning
And eagerly watched for the foe,
When a rider came out from the darkness
That hung over mountain and tree,
And shouted, "Boys, up and be ready,
For Sherman will march to the sea."
Then cheer upon cheer for. bold Sherman,
Went up from each valley and glen,
And the bugles re-echoed the music
That came from the lips of the men.
For we knew that the stars in our banner
More bright in their splendor would be,
And that blessings from Northland would greet us
When Sherman marched down to the sea.
Then forward, boys, forward to battle,

We marched on our wearisome way,
And we stormed the wild hills of Resaca;
God bless those who fell on that day!
Then Kenesaw, dark in its glory,
Frowned down on the flag of the free,
But the East and the West bore our standards,
And Sherman marched on to the sea.
Still onward we pressed, till our banners
Swept out from Atlanta's grim walls,
And the blood of the patriot dampened
The soil where the traitor flag falls;
Yet we paused not to weep for the fallen,
Who slept by each river and tree;
We twined them a wreath of the laurel
As Sherman marched down to the sea.
Oh! proud was our army that morning,
That stood where the pine darkly towers,
When Sherman said, "Boys, you are weary;
This day fair Savannah is ours!"
Then sang we a song for our chieftain,
That echoed o'er river and lea,
And the stars in our banner shone brighter
When Sherman marched down to the sea.*

CLIII.

'Twas the end, and yet one march the more;
The Carolinas heard our columns' tread;
Th' unhappy town that first began the war
In ashes lay, with half its soldiers dead.
On land and sea the glorious tidings swell,
And Sumter rose the day that Charleston fell.

CLIV.

And proud Columbia, too, in ruins lay,
And shrieking shells passed through its halls of state,
Then all bethought them of that other day
When in these halls Secession sat elate.
Now, too, on far-off Appomattox field
Grant hurls the storm, and soon the foemen yield.

CLV.

Then came that deed, ah! wofullest of all,
That dreadful deed, that treason's self o'erleapt;
Black night of nights that saw great Lincoln fall,
The one great soul for whom the whole world wept.
First, peace he saw, then laid his troubles by,
Crowned by mankind with immortality.

CLVI.

It was the end; in yonder Capital
The trumpets sounded for one last parade;
Far in the South the veterans heard the call;
For one last tramp the army is arrayed.
Five hundred miles, the march is quickly o'er,
Their white camps gleam by the Potomac's shore.

CLVII.

And on a morn, a wondrous morn in May
It was proclaimed that through the Avenue
The mighty host should take its glorious way,
And all the land as one be there to view;
Not in all time had such a sight, I ween,
Of Freedom's hosts in the wide world been seen.

CLVIII.

From many a field the veteran armies came,
And East and West went glorious side by side;
Together felt the thrilling joys of fame,
The people's heroes and the nation's pride;
Together now their long blue columns wheel
Up the long street, one sea of sloping steel.

CLIX.

Two days they marched on that great Avenue;
Two days they cheered, that mighty multitude,
And flowers and wreaths upon their heads they threw;
And all men called the land's defenders good;
And all gave thanks, now the great war was done,
To see these men who had such victories won.

CLX.

But most of all that moved beholders then,
Were the freed bondsmen marching two by two,
Not captive wives and chained and scowling men,
Such as of old the Roman triumphs knew,
But men made free, their days of bondage o'er,
And all rejoiced that slavery was no more.

CLXI.

And some shed tears, glad, joyous tears, to know
What things unhop'd had come about at last;
He was raised high who yesterday was low;
Round the poor slave the Nation's arm was cast;
Long years the land had passed beneath the rod;
Now through it all men saw the hand of God.

CLXII.

And marching thus the glorious armies went,
Never again to muster in review;
Past the great leaders, past the President,
Swayed crests of steel upon great waves of blue.
And Sherman! Once his face his soldiers saw,
And lingering looked, and gave one last hurrah!

CLXIII.

One last hurrah! To him that parting cheer
Was more than fame and glory ever were.
What if he wept? It was a soldier's tear;
They were his comrades who were marching there.
Long, long he looked, moved with a mighty spell,
Then, silent, waved a long, a last farewell.

CLXIV.

But in her shrines where glory loves to keep
Record of souls she dedicates to fame,
There in her marble, pure, clean-cut, and deep,
Behold! men see the letters of his name;
And underneath, in characters as free,
"To them who marched with Sherman to the sea."

* * * * *

Adieu.

I.

'Tis said that once in times of old
A wizard touched a land,
And turned its hillsides into gold,
To silver all its sand.

2.

A kindlier wizard cast a spell
Upon the South, and lo!
Where once war's dreadful harvests fell
Now corn and cotton grow.

3.

Sweet meadows mark the shaded glen
That war with bullets sowed,
And roses line the lanes again
Where Sherman's troopers rode.

4.

In yonder wood, where once was heard
The cannon's deadly hail,
With softer notes the heart is stirred,
By some sweet nightingale.

5.

War's wasted fields have grown to green,
The streams in Sherman's path
Turn busy wheels, no more the scene
Of battle's deadly wrath.

6.

And they whose swords were sharp to slay,
Have felt war's anger cease,
And busy commerce leads the way
In paths of love and peace.

7.

What matters now if they were wrong?
They were our kith and kin,
And they were brave, and tale and song
Shall tell what they have been.

8.

Once more in fair Atlanta town
The moonlight shines, as when
War's bugles sounded up and down;
The sweet-briar climbs as then.

9.

And North or South, 'tis all the same,
By pine tree or by bay,
One starry banner guards the fame
Of blue coat and of gray.

Publication. First published as *The March to the Sea: A Poem* (Boston: Arena Publishing Company, 1896), pp. 9–146; copy-text from the complete reprint in *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), separately paginated pp. 9–144. This is the long narrative poem, not the 1864–65 song lyric.

Author's note. On “reveille,” Byers notes: “In the armies, North and South, this word was pronounced as if written *rev'-a-lée'*.”

Variorum. The 1896 and 1914 witnesses preserve the same book-length work. The 1914 reprint is used as copy-text because its scan is substantially clearer; the 1896 witness confirms the structure and contains only local resetting, punctuation, and spelling variants.

THE HONEYMOON AND OTHER POEMS

Stage III | Bibliographical interlude, 1907

A documented book whose complete text has not yet been recovered in a dependable full-view scan.

Rand, McNally published *The Honeymoon and Other Poems* in Chicago in 1907. Contemporary catalogs, later bibliographies, and surviving copies confirm the volume. No complete public-domain scan was found in the local archive, Internet Archive, Google Books full view, HathiTrust full view, or the other repositories searched for this edition. Its contents are therefore not guessed from later selections. This placeholder preserves the book's chronological position and the limit of the present archive.

POEMS OF S. H. M. BYERS, SELECTED

Stage III | The retrospective selected volume, 1914

1914. Poems first collected here are printed in full; later reprints of earlier poems are recorded in the variorum notes attached to their copy-texts.

Look Up

Did you ever think for a moment
That black as the cloud may be
The sun shines bright above it,
If only your eyes could see?

That over the mist and the rain-cloud
There's bending a sky of blue,
If only your soul could feel it,
If only your spirit knew?

II.

Did ever you think in your trouble
When all of the world went wrong,
That close, if you only knew it,
There's beauty, and love, and song?

That out of the cloud misfortune,
And out of the cloud dismay,
There's a path that leads right upward,
If only you'd walk that way?

Just try it—go out to Nature,
And walk in the shining sun,
And walk where flowers are blooming,
And walk where the rivers run.

And there, with your soul uplifted,
Forgetting of care and grief,
You'll find the cure of the ages,
The healer that brings relief.

For a spirit has touched the sunshine,
And an angel has walked abroad,
And the balm of the air you're breathing
Is the balm of the breath of God!

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 63–64.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 31; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 74–75.

The Pioneers

Touch memory's veil; who lived then can forget
The hardier lives of yonder pioneers?
The old log house—I see it standing yet,
Back from the road where the new home appears.
Ah! that log house, with its plain puncheon floor,
Its clapboard roof, and papered window screen,
Could it but speak and tell the tales once more
Of the old days that it and they have seen!
The simple fire-place, built of sticks and clay,
The unbolted door, on wooden hinges swung;
“Come in,” was writ on every heart that day,
The welcoming latch string to the stranger hung.
Then all were neighbors, whether far or near,
And all were friends, no matter rich or poor;
Misfortune claimed the rudest settler's tear,
Distress and loss were yet of pity sure.
And joys were shared by everyone the same;
To fair or feast each soul was bid to come;
No child but heard the welcomed stranger's name,
No hearth so small but by it there was room.
Then things were great that pass unheeded now—
The weekly mail, the school house in the wood,
The threshing days, the new-bought prairie plow,
The old-time clock that by the window stood.
The spelling school, where old as well as young,
Stood round the wall to spell each other down;
The singing master, the old songs he sung,
And singing, taught the names of state and town.
The circuit preacher on his monthly ride,
With simple ways, such as the Master taught:
Nor scrip he bore, nor gold, nor aught beside;
They welcomed him for the glad news he brought,
The meeting-house—the first green grave behind—
Ah! that first grave in yonder settlement;
The sweet-briar bush bends o'er it in the wind;
The plain board tells the year, the day she went.
Brown-haired and sweet and like a flower she grew
Till her soft eyes with love's dear lamps were lit;
Breathe not her name, enough, they loved who knew,

One heart string broke-her epitaph is writ.

* * * * *

‘Those far-off times—who saw will not recall
The old-time weddings of that merrier day,—
The feast, the dance, the wedding-in fair,—all
So strangely different from our modern way.
No perfumed notes announced the happy time;
From home to home the joyous news was sent;
The singing birds made merrier wedding chime
As friend and neighbor to the cabin went.
And many a youth across the prairies rode,
Whole heart, and free, into the odorous air,
Nor dreamed that Cupid watched yon rude abode,
That fate and love were waiting for him there.
Like a wild rose that over night had bloomed,
With eyes like skies where swallows love to swim,
She came, he saw, and all things were illumed,—
A simple rose, that waited there for him.

* * * * *

The guests have come; the marriage will begin,
The preacher’s word in kindly mood is said;
The bride is kissed by all her kith and kin,
The table waits, the wedding feast is spread—
Quick flies the meal, the cabin floor is cleared;
The violin, in yonder corner, hear,
Old Jerry Church has stroked his bow and beard—
Old Jerry Church to all the county dear.

And ali the night be tells the dances through;
“Choose partners, all!” he lifts his bow and calls—
Out on the grass, close by the chimney walls,
The table stands, the big decanter, too.

And all the night the merry dance goes on—
Eyes melt, hearts break, just as in marble hall;
O love, O love, whatever times are gone,
Thou still hast been the master of them all.

Let none deride these simple marriage ways,
Love sat with them by every wedding vow,
And courts were not, in those old-fashioned days,
For marriage scandal, as we see them now.

But not their weddings gave them joy alone—
The quilting bees, with rude and simple cheer—
The husking corn, where many a bright eye shone—
The kiss to him who found the lucky ear;
For them the grouse boomed at the early dawn,
The antlered elk roamed o'er the enflowered plain; ‘

In the tall grass the red deer hid its fawn;
They knew the spot where the gray wolf had lain.
At times they heard the bison's mighty roar,
As in vast herds they battled long and far,
Or watched them thundering the broad prairies oer
When terror-struck, like flying hosts of war.

Nature for them endowed with magic hand
A scene as fair as Araby, the blest—
Tired of the old, she touched with magic wand,
There sprang to life the prairies of the West.

Not desert sands, and leagues of burning plains,
Far and encircling to some ocean's brim—
But billowy waves of blossom-covered mains
Swept in great seas to the horizon's rim.

And farther, farther, past the setting sun,
Rolled grassy waves, now purple and now green;
Touched by the wind they bend, and bow, and run—
It is the land that only God has seen.

A thousand years it blossomed just as now;
A thousand years the harvest moons had set,
And suns arose, nor scythe, nor any plow,
Nor human hands, had ever touched it yet.

And other scenes, and fierce, the pioneer
Sees from his cabin, standing there alone,
When autumn's frost turns the green prairies sear,
And these same billows into flames are blown.

Night comes: he sees with anxious heart the sky—
Far, far away, a strange and reddening hue;
Long bars of light on the horizon lie,
Red streaks of flame the black clouds bursting through.

Some roaming hunter, doubtless, made his bed
In the tall grass, or by some cooling stream,
Lit his lone fire, nor, careless, saw it spread
Until too late, the whole night is a gleam!

In bounds and darts the lighted grasses go;
Leaps to its start the dreaded prairie fire,
In long, long lines the burning billows glow,
Roars the night wind, the flames are leaping higher.

Like battle steeds th' extending lines rush on,
Black grows the night, save where their banners are.
One sweep, one roar, and flowers and grass are gone;
The moon goes out; there is not any star.

Wild, fierce, devouring, o'er the waste they come,
The very ground burns 'neath them as they pass,
As if the world were hurrying to its doom,
And earth and sky had turned to molten brass.

Nor battle scene, nor wild Niagara's roar,
Nor seething Ætna with its lava hiss,
Nor ocean, thrashing on its rocky shore,
So threatening seemed, yet beautiful, as this.

Alarmed, alone, by yonder little farm,
The settler guards like midnight sentinel;
Fights flame with flame, keeps house and stacks from harm,
And gives God thanks when all has ended well.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 94–100.

The Larks of Waveland

Sweet lark whose liquid notes I heard
Across the lanes and meadows ring,
Thad not thought that flute or bird
Such joy to any heart could bring.

Spell bound I listened to the strain,
Forgetting all the earth but thee
And that dear song whose one refrain
That hour was heaven itself for me.

The fragrant meadow grasses lay
In windrows scattered all along,
And wild rose blossoms seemed to say
They too were gladdened by the song.

There from the topmost willow bough
Adown the lane there came a tide
Of song so sweet it seemed, somehow,
The gates of heaven had opened wide.

And I had listened but to thee,
When, from the hedge-row, sudden came
Still other bursts of melody;
It was thy mate that called thy name.

From tree to hedge-row music fell,
Love answering Love with rapturous sign;
Oh, it must be a joy to tell
One's love in language such as thine.

Beyond the evening's scented air,
Through sunset islands of the skies,
The happy cloudlets seemed to bear
The music back to Paradise.

What though I wander far and wide,
To lands of birds with lovelier wing,
Still in my dreams at eventide
I'll hear the larks of Waveland sing.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 149–150.

Vicksburg

Part I

(Recited by the author at the dedication of the
Iowa monuments on the Vicksburg battlefield.)

Running the Batteries.

Would you like to know how the thing was done,
How the Vicksburg batteries all were run,
Four miles of sulphur, and roar of gun—
That Grant's great army far below
Might cross the river, and fight the foe?

Not a single boat had he anywhere,
Nor barge, nor raft, that could dare to try
The mighty stream that was rolling by.
And between his troops and our fleet up there
Were the Vicksburg batteries everywhere—
Four miles of cannon and breastworks strong
Stretching the whole dread way along.

There was not a hill, nor a hollow then
But had its guns and its hundred men
To guard the river, and once, they say.

A federal gunboat tried to go
From the fleet above to the troops below—
But it hailed and rained and thundered so
Of cannon, and grapeshot all the way,
That the captain said to his dying day—
Whenever the talk on Vicksburg fell—
“He traveled that night four miles of hell.”

Now this is the thing we had to try,
We who were soldiers, not sailors, mark,
To run three Federal steamboats by
The river batteries in the dark.
'Twas in Sixty-three, and an April night,
Soft and cloudy, and half in sight
Was the edge of the moon, just going down.
Into the canebrakes dark and brown,
As if it did not care to know
What thing might happen that night below.
Out on the river three steamers ride,
Moored on the breast of the sweeping tide.

Lashed to the side of each steamer lay
River barges with bales of hay,
And bales of cotton that soldiers knew
Never a cannon had yet shot through.
In the half-lit hold of each waiting ship
Not a sound is heard from human lip,
Yet a dozen soldiers there grimly stand—
And they know the work they have in hand
Theirs, when bellows the cannonade,
And holes in the sides of the ship are made,

With boards, and cotton, and gunny sack
To keep the rush of the waters back;
Theirs, no matter if all should drown,
To keep the vessels from going down—
For all Grant's army will hold its breath
Till the forts are passed or they meet their death.
'Tis ten o'clock by the watch and more—
Sudden, a lantern swings on shore—
Tis the signal—"Start—lift anchor, men."
And a hundred hearts beat quicker then,
And six great gunboats pass ahead—
They will give the batteries lead for lead.
Ten and a half—the moment nears,
No sound of sail, or spars—
The listening pilot almost hears
The music of the stars.
"Lift anchor, men—the silent few
Down the dark river glide—
God help them now, as swift into
The lane of death—they ride.
They round the bend, some river guard
Has heard the waters splash,
And through the darkness heavenward
There is a lightning's flash.
A sudden boom across our path,
A sullen sound is flung—
And we have waked the lion's wrath,
And stirred the lion's young.

It was only a gun on the hills we heard,
One shot only, and then was dumb,
To send to the lower batteries word,
The foe, the terrible foe had come.
And just as the echo had died away,
There was such a flash of lightning came,

The midnight seemed to be turned to day,
And the river shone as if all on flame.
And indeed it was, for on either side,
Barns and houses and bonfires burned,
And soon in the conflagration wide,
They saw our ships, and a mighty roar—
Bellowed after us in our flight—
There wasn't a nook on the whole east shore
But had a battery there that night.
Thunder and lightning, and boom on boom;
Oh! it was terrible in the chase;
Never again till the crack of doom
Will the Mississippi see such a race.
For our gunboats answered them all along—
Spite of the wounds on their sloping mail,
And spite of the current swift and strong
They let them feel of their iron hail.
Two hours the terrible storm goes on
With one of our boats in flames,
And one of our barges burned and gone.
Another, the river claims.

And the hull of one of our boats they broke,
But we, in the hold below,
We heard the thunder and felt the stroke,
And checked the water's flow.

And once we climbed to the deck o'erhead
From out the infernal place,
Where we hardly heard what each other said
Or looked in each other's face.

Only a moment! Lord, what a sight!
The bravest would hold his breath—
For it seemed as if the river that night
Were in the throes of death.
Crash follows crash, worst follows worst,
Thunder on thunder dire,
As if some meteor had burst
And set the world on fire.

* * * * *

Two hours—the dangerous deed is done;
Just as the dawn is by
The heroic vessels, every one,
Below the batteries lie.
A shout, a cheer, a wild huzzah,
Quick to the heavens flew
When Grant and Sherman's soldiers saw
The boats come rounding to.

Part II.

Where Are They All Today?

Who calls it forty years ago?
To me 'twas yesterday
We ran the batteries of the foe
And anchored in the bay.
A thousand cheers our bosoms stirred,
My comrades wept, they say,
When Grant but spoke a kindly word;
Where are they all today?
Red shone the dawn, and there in line
The glorious army stood,
And ere the midnight stars shall shine
Is ferried o'er the flood.
Where yesternight the foemen kept
Their bivouacs by the way,
Now thirty thousand bluecoats slept;
Where are they all today?
By different roads our columns led,
Where e'er we tracked a foe,
And, listening to our midnight tread,
They waited for the blow.
By day, by night, we marched and fought
In many a bloody fray,
And many a grave was left forgot—
Where are they all today?
Port Gibson, Raymond, Jackson fell,
Great was the southern ire—
At Champion Hills a taste of hell
They gave us with their fire.

Two hours, I saw my comrades fall—
Begrimed in death they lay,
The sulphurous smoke their funeral pall—
Where are they all today?
Two hours of fire and tempest, then
The foemen yield the place—
McPherson and McClelland's men
Are dangerous foes to face.
They yield, for Logan's on their flank
Who never lost the fray,
Whose sword to foeman never sank—
Where's Logan's sword today?
And Hovey's pounding on their left,
And Crocker's hurrying by,
Fierce the assault, their line is cleft,
What can they do but fly?
Beneath the soft magnolia trees
There the five thousand lay,
Hands touching hands, knees touching knees,
Where are they all today?
Yet wait, we struggle for the bridge
Behind the flying foe,
There from the low and wooded ridge
The flags of Lawler go.
A shout, a cheer, men may not dream
Of such a charge again;
But where are they who held the stream,
And where are Lawler's men?
That very day with flags unfurled
We circled Vicksburg town,
And forty days and nights we hurled
Death's missiles up and down.
By heaven! it was a sight, at last,
The host of Blue and Gray,
The cannon's roar, the muskets' blast,
Where are they all today?
Filled with the pride of victories by
To storm the works we willed,
Two times the awful thing we try,
Our dead their ditches filled.
Two times they hurled us back, our men
Writhing and wounded lay;
Brave souls who charged on Vicksburg then,
Where are they all today?
Where are the Hawkeye boys who fell

In that dread holocaust,
When cannon burst like blasts of hell
And all the day was lost?
One flag, a little moment shone
Above the men in gray.
'Twas theirs, 'twas theirs—though all alone.
Where is that flag today?
That very hour our circling lines
The wondrous siege began,
And burrowed pits and saps and mines
Around the city ran.
Like tigers fighting for their young
The maddened men at bay
Across our road their bravest flung—
Where are they all today?
To caves and hollows of the hills
Their wives and children flew,
Enduring all war's hideous ills,
They were heroic too.
Courageous souls, war's thunder tone
And lightnings 'round them play,
And bursting shells like meteors shone—
Where are they all today?
The roses on the garden walls
A thousand odors fling,
The blackbird to the thristle calls
And still our bullets sing.
The little children, scared at first,
Along the commons play,
While Porter's shells around them burst—
Where are they all today?
The laurel and magnolias bloom
In colors white and gay,
Yet Grant and Sherman's cannon boom,
'Tis Grant and Sherman's way.
By saps and mines we near the town,
Defend it as they may,
Their flags will soon be falling down—
Where are their flags today?
One morning thirty thousand men
Laid down their arms and wept,
Because they ne'er would see again
The hills their valor kept.
Our scanty bread with them we shared,
As bravest soldiers may,

They cheered us, who but now had dared,
Where are they all today?
The forts are ours, the mighty stream
Unvexed flows to the main,
A thousand miles our banners gleam,
We've cut the South in twain.
Where are the victors, where the foe—
Where are the Blue and Gray,
'The hero souls of years ago—
Where are they all today?
Build to our own the marble bust
Where the great river laves
Yon hill! that holds their honored dust—
Their twenty thousand graves.
The years go on, the living still,
If Blue coat, or if Gray,
May ask the mounds on yonder hill,
Where are they all today?

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 151–161.

The Rose and the Ashes

These were the roses, red and white,
I sent to her in the long ago;
Like them, Love changed, in a little night,
And she sent them back, and their ribboned bow.
These are the roses, white and red,
I sent to her in the long ago;
Dead, and ashes; she, too, is dead,
Ashes all, and as white as snow.
Letters, promises—false or fair—
Likewise ashes, and all forgot;
No one living will know or care
If she loved me, or loved me not.
Sweet the kisses she gave to me,
Every sigh that her bosom stirred;
Blind was I, and I could not see,
Deaf was I, and I never heard.
Loved or no; it is all one now,
Meetings, kisses, are all forgot—
Cheeks of roses and smooth, young brow,
Loved she little, or loved she not.
Rose, and ashes, and all, is dead,
Rose, and promise, and loves that were,
Yet I know that her name is wed
To the songs that I wrote for her.
Other lovers my songs will see,
Whether I will it, or will it no—
She will live, but alas! for me,
Rose and ashes of long ago.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 162–163.

The Bells of San Diego

I hear the bells, the mission bells
Of San Diego town;
Across the bay the echo swells,
And over the hills so brown,
And into the valley and canyons deep,
When the sun is going down.

I think I hear the friars still,
The saintly priests of Spain,
Come down the valley and round the hill,
From the mission walls again;
And I hear them chant as they used to chant,
To the mission bells' refrain.

I see the palm tree's stately head
Beside the mission wall,
The bending stream by mountains fed,
The canyon deep, the waterfall,
And hill, and palm, and valley fair,
And God's own mountains watching all.

And San Miguel lifts high his dome
Far over rock and tree,
The wild deer and the eagle's home,
The mountains at his knee,
While Loma bathes his rocky breast
Deep in the western sea.

I see the ships, the Spanish ships,
Ride in the western bay,
Where safe at last from wind and gale,
The pride of sea kings lay.
And the friars see them, and think of home,
As they cross themselves and pray.

And far along the valley's sweep
I hear the vesper chime,
And out of canyons dark and deep
Comes back the mystic rhyme;
And not a soul but prayeth there
For it is a holy time.

Gone are the halls where long ago
There dwelt that brotherhood,
And bare brown walls and arches low
Mark where the mission stood,
And the moping owl makes there his home,
Where he feedeth his hungry brood.

Miguel still lifts his lofty head
Above the mountains gray,
And Loma Point still makes his bed
Far in the western bay;
But the times are changed, and the days are dead,
And the friars—where are they?

ten THE BELLS OF SAN DIEGO
Changed, changed is all save yonder sea,
And yonder mountains brown,
The breakers' deep-toned symphony
When the tide is going down,
And the voices of the mission bells
Of San Diego town.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 164–166.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 59–60.

The Sea Anemone

Would you put a rose to shame?
Would you see a color more rare,
A beauty too great to name,
A blush that is still more fair?

Then go where the sea tide goes,
Where the sea anemone is,
A rose that is more than a rose,
A kiss that is more than a kiss.
A flower that has a soul,
A tremulous, living thing,
Of beauty and light the whole,
A crimson imagining.

Touch not, it will shrink and fade;
But look all rapturously,
For the fairest flower yet made
Is the sea anemone.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), p. 167.

Beethoven's Symphony

"Pile on the turf," the farmer said,
"And let the embers glow,
The poor man's house is quickly warmed,
Whatever winds may blow.
And thou, O stranger, by our hearth
Accept our humble cheer,
For down the lanes the north wind blows,
The night is cold and drear.
"And down the Baden hills there comes
The sound of breaking storm.
The Danube holds no cheer to-night,
Within its icy form.
'Tis twenty miles to yonder town
And thou art old and gray,
And thy tired limbs have done their own
With many leagues to-day.
"So sup with us and let the storm
Blow fierce, blow high or low,
There shall be good times by our hearth
Whatever winds may blow."
So gathering round the frugal board—
"Let us give thanks," he said,
"To God who ruleth on the storm,
Who gives the hungry bread."
The good wife sat with folded hands,
The sons with heads bowed low,
"Give us this day our daily bread,
Whatever winds may blow,
And here's to thee, thou stranger guest,
Fill us one cup the more,
There must be joy when strangers sit
Within our humble door."
Then bending to his harpsichord,
"My children, join with me,
And let us play this stormy night,
Beethoven's Symphony."
And quickly from its treasured place
Came flute and mandolin—
The daughter tuned her loved guitar,
The sons, the violin.

And soon the strains of melody
Filled all the humble room,
And sweet-toned voices answered back,
From out the gathering gloom;
And tones, deep souled with joy or pain,
Grew visible with form,
Deepening at times to other tones
Heard in the sounding storm.
And sweeter, sweeter grew the strain,
Like angels of delight,
Till heaven itself grew very near
To those who played that night;
While strange and still, the guest looked on
And wondered much to see,
A father sob and strong men weep
At their own minstrelsy.
“And are there tones on earth,” he cried,
“To move men’s hearts like this?
Or was it heavenly music lent
To fill their souls with bliss?
I, too, love music, but alas!
I hear no minstrel strain.
My ears hear not; nor laugh, nor song,
May glad my heart again.
“Give me the notes, that I may read
The tones of pathos deep;
He is immortal who can write
The strains that make you weep.”
He looked but once, his eyes grew dim
And quick his pulses beat,
As with a sob he tremblingly
Let fall the written sheet.
“And weep’st thou too, thou stranger guest,”
The wondering peasant said—
“And hast not heard the master’s tones,
The notes that we have played?”
There was a pause—the stranger’s face
Grew sweet in every line,
“I am Beethoven,” said the guest,
“The symphony is mine.”

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 168–171.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 52–54; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 92–94.

Serenade

Now is the happy Christmas morn
When all the world is glad and free;
Since kindliness this day was born,
Sweet love, dear heart, be kind to me.

Were I the prince of fairies, dear,
I'd know the way your heart to win,
I'd sing a song so sweet you'd hear,
And ope the gates and let me in.

Hark, hark, the bells! The Christmas tide
Comes dancing in with love and song,
On viewless wings it seems to ride,
To music's strains it sweeps along.

Were I those bells, to yonder sky
Such rapturous music I would fling,
That only dreaming it was I,
You'd love, and bid me sing and sing.

Now is the time when roses red
Bloom under skies of lovelier hue;
On balmiest winds their leaves are fed—
Sweet girl, they'd bloom in snow for you.

Were I, dear maid, the beauty rose
Upon your breast this Christmas day,
I'd lie so close, so very close
I'd hear the words your heart would say.

To-night will be the Christmas dance,
Mazurka, polka, waltz, and all,
And you, dear one, will be perchance,
The veriest queen of all the ball.

But let them dance, they will not know
In that same room I'm dancing too;
To flute and viol, swift or slow,
'Tis I, who dance all night with you.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 172–173.

Alfred Tennyson

On his fair island of the sea

He tuned his lyre, and by the shore,
There rose such bursts of harmony
As England never heard before.

Men had not known our English tongue
Could sweep so soft through song and tale,
In notes such as an Orpheus sung,
With voice like England's nightingale.

Beside the sounding sea he walked,
It swelled to music when he came—
The glist'ning waves together talked,
The very sand-hills knew his name.

Poet of beauty. Maidens knew
How sweetly deep his words could thrill,
Though tenderer than a rose they grew,
His verse but made them tenderer still.

He touched sweet ghosts of long ago,
Through far-off vistas, joys and tears;
He kissed their hands, he loved them so,
They smiled across a thousand years.

King Arthur, Launcelot, Elaine,
He brought them back, he gave them breath;
And Guinevere, and all her train—
For them there is no longer death.

Wrapt in the glory of his song,
His leaves of laurel on their brow,
On Fame's glad wings they sweep along,
They are the whole world's children now.

Himself a ghost, not dead, for lo!
He walks with Shakespeare, side by side!
Like some bright star that still may glow,
When night into the day has died.

The sweet enchantment of his verse,
Like burning Sappho's wondrous rhyme,
Like songs that birds at dawn rehearse,
He gave us till the end of time.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 174–175.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 23–24; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 63–64.

A Footstep in the Snow

The snow had fallen half the night,
And covered all the street,
And all the roads, and all the lanes
Were like a winding sheet.

The sun came out, I walked alone,
Nor anything did see,
Save one light foot-print in the snow,
That lay ahead of me.

The daintiest foot it must have been,
For where it lightly fell
It warmed the white snow where it went,
It warmed my heart as well.

Across the snow I followed it,
Evasive as the wind,
Along the lane, or down the street,
I followed on behind.

She never knew a lover came
Who had not seen her face,
Who only guessed her young and fair
By that sweet footstep's trace.

Once, and another rudely crossed
The snow where she had been—
I halted, heart distressed, then caught
Her own footstep again.

Fairer in fancy grew the face,
The phantom I pursued,
And in my heart was only thought
Of her I fondly wooed.

But all at once a cruel wind
Swept where the foot-prints were,
And foot-prints in my heart at last
Is all there is of her.

O maiden! whereso'er thou art,
One lover still is true,
We did not meet, we did not part,
And yet I love but you.

And when the lanes are freshly white,
I through them idly go,
And hope by some sweet fate to find
Your footstep in the snow.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 176–177.

In Burns' Land

Beside the banks of Bonny Doon

Alone I walked at early morn;
I heard the river's rambling tune,
The blackbird whistling on the thorn;
I heard the cadenced song of one
Who walked these banks as I do now—
His ploughman's harp behind him flung,
And Scotland's heather on his brow.

"Thou spirit of the Bard," I cried,
"Who made these scenes forever dear,
Walk thou this morning by my side,
Let me but know thy presence near;
Let me but touch thy mantle's hem;
Inspired, I too, with harp in hand,
Like yon sweet bird on flowering stem,
Would be with Burns, in Burns' land.

"Come back one happy hour again;
The hare-bells stir to hear thy name;
The linnet sings the old-time strain;
The hawthorn blooms are still the same.
Still flows the bonny Doon along,
And still the loved and winding Ayr,
Made ever sacred by thy song;
And Nith and Annan still are fair,

"The lark, inspired with newer song,
Soars upward from his dewy bed;
The thrush and all his woodland throng,
The purple morn have worshipped:
And Scotland's daisy, for thy sake,
Forever blooms by bank and brae;
And Scotland's heather, broom and brake,
Have grown immortal with thy lay.

“Across the moors and down the glen
Come Highland laddies as of old;
And snooded lassies walk as then—
The same old tale is being told.
In yon same field the ploughman turns
The daisy down, yet wet with dew;
By hedge and stone, and weed and ferns,
He sings and ploughs and thinks of you.

“And bonny ‘Jean,’ thy bonnie Jean,
In every Scottish heart has room—
While song shall last, and love remain;
While brooks shall flow, and flowers bloom.
And Highland Mary is not dead.
Immortal grown in that new birth,
In yon bright skies her soul is wed
To one she dearly loved on earth.

180 He crowing of the cook

“Then come one happy hour again,
Thou poet of the human heart;
Thy Scotland guards thy poet fame,
Where’er in yon fair realm thou art;
Not Scotland only—near or far,
By cottage hearth or purpled throne,
Where true hearts beat or lovers are,
Mankind will claim thee as its own!”

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 178–179.

The Crowing of the Cock

The cock crows loud from yonder barn

His midnight bugle call;
Though darkness hangs o'er field and tarn,
And silence over all.

He watches for the setting star,
The daybreak coming on,
And trumpet-throated, near and far,
He welcomes in the dawn.

O bird of joy, no saddened note
From thee has ever sprung;
No ringdove's moan is in thy throat,
Thy heart is ever young.
Brave to the death, and if, perchance,
The battle, long and grim,
Fall to thy own victorious lance,
Thou singst a battle hymn.

III.

Proud of thy splendor, warrior bird,
And of thy clarion tone;
No Orient breezes ever stirred
A radiance like thine own.
No other voice but sometimes sings
A note at sorrow's call;
Thou singst the song the morning brings,
Or singest not at all.
Like thee, I, too, would joyous be,
Like daylight's coming on,
And call to heaven and earth and sea
The gladness of the dawn.
Though but a single note were mine,
If it with music rang,
I'd fill my cup with pleasure's wine—
The happiest bard that sang.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 180–181.

Castles in Spain

I have built me some castles in Spain,
On the shores of an emerald sea,
Where the waves beat a mystical strain.
Will you come to my castles with me?

There are turrets all fretted in gold,
And fountains that glint in the sun,
And gardens with perfumes untold,
And nightingales sing in each one.

There are roses of wonderful hue,
And odorous lilies unfurl,
There are skies of ethereal blue,
And grottoes of marble and pearl.

There are odors of orange and vine,
There are notes of a ravishing tune,
And the sound of the lute is divine
In the light of a rapturous moon.

It is not far away to the clime
Where the dreams of my castles appear!
And dearer than land of the lime
Is the voice of the one that is near!

There are eyes that are dear to behold,
There are lips where my kisses have lain,
There is one that my arms shall enfold,
And these are my castles in Spain.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 182–183.

Ode to Emerson

It was so long since Goethe wrote,
And longer since the Greek days were,
That Nature sought a fresher note,
And found a new interpreter.

Not where the yellow Tiber stirred
To old-time tales the gods had writ,
But by the western seas he heard
The one great voice, and echoed it.

And we who listened to his words
And gazed upon the face serene,
Thought only of the songs of birds,
And wondered what it all could mean.

So deep a chord we could not reach,
His Alpine heights we could not climb;
From far-off stars it seemed, the speech
A hundred years ahead of time.

He led us to his high plateau,
To cliffs where eagles fear their death,
And dizzier heights; we looked below—
We only looked, and held our breath.

But time has lifted us above
The falseness that we used to preach;
All creeds are dead—all creeds but love:
This is the height he helped us reach.

This is the height, though in the clouds
His face by breezes far was fanned,
His heart still lingered in the crowds,
His feet were on: the level land.

He peopled woods and shores again,
Not with the gods that Homer saw—
A higher beauty crossed his ken,
The beauty born of love and law.

He heard angelic voices speak
In aisles of pines, in forests dim,
And not one little flower so weak
But had a tale to tell to him.

Seer, poet, friend, still shines the light
You planted on its mountain place,
Torch of the nations, day or night,
Uplifter of the human race.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 184–185.

Pharaoh in Egypt

A pilgrim to the mighty Nile

By deeds of great Sesostris led—
I stood and looked a little while
Upon the face of Egypt's dead.

Dragged from their tombs in desert sands,
Kings of the old, the mighty day,
Robbed of their cerements and bands,
In Cairo's vast museum lay.

And thou, Sesostris, all the years
Thou hast not heard how nations fall—
Nor wept at seas of human tears,
In thy own Egypt most of ail.

Above her hundred Theban gates,
Her eyes expectant to the skies,
As patient as the Sphinx she waits
The truth that sleeps but never dies.

A thousand years her glory shone—
May not that glory shine again?
Time that has kept her sculptured stone
Bears in her womb the fates of men.

Serene thy face, oh king, as t'were
An age were but a little while:
Thou wast a God, yet listen, there
Thy sons are slaves beside the Nile.

Wake, waken once, Sesostris, wake—
Shades of the dead might overawe
A foe that makes thy children break
The stones for kings they never saw.

Or, must we perish, let it be
One blow we strike ere all be past,
To make us worthy to be free,
Though that one blow should be our last.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 186–187.

On the Beach

We sat beside the sounding sea—

'Twas twenty years ago—

I doubt not you've forgotten me,

In life's great ebb and flow.

Yet look, the beach is just the same—

The waves come in as blue,

And you—you have forgot my name—

The ocean is more true.

Do you recall one summer night?

A bright star shone above—

That star you said would change its light

Ere you would change your love.

But look—last night it shone again,

And cast a wondrous spell—

Ah me, to think what might have been

Had you kept faith as well.

There was a song you used to sing,

I half forget the air,

A little, sad, heart-breaking thing,

Of one as false as fair.

Sometimes I hear it in my sleep,

A dreaming discontent,

Then sudden waking, start and weep

To think 'twas you it meant.

Again I walk along the strand

Just as I walked with you;

The waves still wash the yellow sand,

Because the waves are true.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 188–189.

To the Author of 'America'

Who moulds in bronze some hero's face,

Or carves a marble bust,
May see his idol lose its grace,
His marble turn to dust.

For time corrodes the bronze he casts;
The Parian marble turns
To darker hues, or but outlasts
The ashes in its urns.

The image on the canvas made
No lease with time has got;
A hundred years—the colors fade,
And all that was, is not.

The arch, the spire, the lofty dome,
All crumble to decay,
And all that's left of mighty Rome
Is stone, and mire, and clay.

No work e'er done by mortal hands
Outlasts Time's wasting flood;
The lion walks on golden sands
Where Homer's cities stood.

Roofless the walls of Pestum stand—
They only speak to tell
How by far seas and desert land,
The works of ages fell.

But Homer, breathing on his lyre,
Three thousand years ago,
Lit with his torch the immortal fire
Whose flames forever glow.

And Ajax' name, and Helen's face,
For ages will live on,
When only ruins mark the place
Where stood the Parthenon.

The Lesbian Temples all are gone,
But songs that Sappho sung
Live like the seas that beat upon
The rock from which she sprung.

So time will keep the glorious Hymn—
The patriot's burning lay,
What though the singer's eyes be dim,
Or cold the poet's clay!

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 190–191.

From Madeira

I send you, dear one, roses red,
From this fair island of the sea,
And though their petals may be dead,
They still will waken thoughts of me.

To-morrow, and the ship will sail,
I know not where 'twill bear me to,
But this I know, if calm or gale,
My thoughts, dear one, will be of you.

An hour ago I walked alone
Where break the billows on the sand,
A feeling came—you must have known—
As in a dream I touched your hand.

From emerald isles these roses came,
From emerald seas of far away,
I kiss them and they breathe your name,
A thousand things to you they'll say.

Good-bye, the ship to-morrow sails,
Good-bye, for islands just as fair,
Where roses born in other vales
Will sweetly whisper “she is there.”

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), p. 192.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 32; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 76.

Her Presence

“Whence come thy blushes,” to the rose I said,
“Thou sweet enchantress of the garden, speak!”
The rose a moment grew more sweetly red—
“Last night I stole them from thy lady’s cheek.”

“And that dear perfume that my senses thrills,
That dewy odor, faint yet ever nigh,
Rose of the rose, that only heaven distills?”
“That, too, is hers; she kissed me, passing by.”

The peeping violet in yonder dell
I questioned, wondering what it would say,
“This heavenly blue, whence comes it? Will’st thou tell?”
“From her blue eyes I borrowed it one day.”

I kissed the lily, as a lover might,
And bade it tell, what love already guessed,
“What made thy petals all so snowy white?”
“Last night I slept upon thy sweetheart’s breast.”

A song-bird sang in yonder cedar tree—
“Whence that dear music to my soul?” I cried,
“’Tis hers, ‘tis hers,” it sweetly answered me,
“I heard her sing it at the eventide.”

What matters then though she be far away,
Yon blushing rose her beauty will retrace,
And bird and flower shall show me every day
Her blessed presence in this very place.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 193–194.

On Passing San Remo

Go slow, go slow, ship of the sea,
Along San Remo's shore,
A little moment I would be
By Helen's side once more.
There are the orange groves, the hill—
Where she was wont to play—
The roses all are blooming still,
She was as sweet as they.

The little dell where violets grew,
Oh, I could ne'er forget,
And though the violets were so blue
Her eyes were bluer yet.
I look again, the glass is dim—
Oh, heart, oh, blinding tears,
Beyond the little harbor's rim
Lie dead the happy years.

Speak but one word, give me a sign,
A touch, a kiss, a hand,
There could not be a heart like mine
On any sea or land.
Through all the years since thou art gone
Have I not called to thee?
And I will still call on, and on,
By land and shore and sea.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), p. 195.

The Turtle Dove

And I have crossed the wandering main

One moment to be near
The violet beds and hills again,
And think that thou art here.

Now swift across the emerald green,
Sweet ship, go on thy way,
For one dear moment I have seen
My little girl to-day.

The Turtle Dove

Once I could sing a happy roundelay,
With her apart.
A hunter shot my mate one day—
It broke my heart.

And now, alone, in some sweet blossomed lane,
Where once we were,
I moan a little song of pain—
And all for her.

Sometimes I think that in the air around
She hears me, sad.
My voice to her was such a happy sound—
Then, I am glad.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), p. 196.

Larry and I

Larry and I are the first ones awake,
*Ere a chirp of the robin is heard on the lawn;
For myself, I am up for the very dear sake
Of seeing the glory that comes with the dawn.

Larry, he carries the papers around,
In the gray of the morning, to rich and to poor;
But little they dream in their slumbers profound,
The weight of the message he leaves at their door.

He and I only, abroad on the streets
When the lingering moon is just hiding from view,
And the little brown owl in the hollow repeats—
“The morning was made just for Larry and you.”

Sudden there’s streaking of rose in the sky—
There is gold on the windows of hovel and hall;
The steeds of the Sun-god are hurrying by,
And Larry and I are alone with it all.

Sudden there’s waking in meadows and grove,
Throstles and thrushes in musical glee;
The world has its songs and its singers to love,
But the song of the throstle’s for Larry and me.

Waken, O waken! The light’s on the hills,
Would’st taste of the cup of celestial wine—
The breath of the morning—would’st know how it thrills?
Come, drink from this sup, then, of Larry’s and mine!

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 197–198.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 22; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 62.

The Call of the Woods

Once more the Autumn in her robes of gold

Comes o'er the hills in festival attire;
Dead is the rose—but look; the forests hold
A newer beauty for the heart's desire.

Now are the days of gorgeous colorings;
The Master Painter touched the world last night,
And every hour some added glory brings,
Till all the scene's a ravishing delight.

The scarlet vines along the hedge-rows creep;
The sumac bushes turn to fiery red;
The far-off hills their misty silence keep,
And like a dream's the blue sky overhead.

There are the fields so lately harvested,
And lanes hemmed in with plumed golden rod;
And look! The woods, to every color wed,
Seem all emblazoned by the hand of God.

A thousand flags from every tree shall swing—
A thousand hues on every banner show,
Enthroned beauty stamped on everything;
The Master Painter knew to make it so.

And music, too, melodious and low,
Like to the notes of some far elfin's horn,
Or soft sea-music when the tide's aflow—
It is the wind among the rustling corn.

When scenes like these in soft September wait,
Lay down they work a little and rejoice;
Take thou a glimpse through Heaven's half-open gate—
And, hast thou ears, thou'lt hear the Master's voice.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 199–200.

When Leonora Plays

'Tis said when violins are played
That other strings, alike in tune,
By some soft mystery are made
To also wake, and tremble soon.

I do not know the secret, quite,
For Nature has such curious ways,
I only know I have delight
Whenever Leonora plays.

Perhaps my heart strings all are set
Accordant with yon violin.
Oh! stroke of fortune, thus I let
The mystery of the music in.

I listen, while I close my eyes,
And troops of fairies come and go.
I wonder if in Paradise
They speak the language of the bow?

Ours is a little day, at best,
Some wearing myrtle, some the bays,
But, oh! what heart would not have rest,
Whenever Leonora plays.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), p. 201.

In Purple Seas

We are like hulls of ships that ride
In purple seas and know not why,
Nor see the pilot hands that guide,
Nor masts, nor sails, nor any sky.

There in the twilight of the deep,
Where far and dim the shadows fall,
Their little round of life they keep,
And vaguely ask if this be all.

So we in seas of purple ride,
In web-like mists around us spun,
Nor know what dream-like curtains hide
The splendor of some setting sun.

Close to us sweep mysterious things,
The secrets of the earth and sky;
They touch us with their radiant wings,
We almost hear them passing by.

But through the amber-lighted air,
Our little senses cannot reach;
Tho' soft, low voices whisper there,
We hear, but do not know their speech.

Sometime with other eyes than these,
Lo, we shall see the veil withdrawn,
And drifting from the purple seas
Our night shall melt into the dawn.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 202–203.

La Marguerite

He made an air ship, fair and trim,
Just like a bird, and when complete,
It seemed so beautiful to him
He called it “La belle Marguerite.”

* * * * *

“Now for a midnight ride,” he said,
And cheering thousands wished him fair,
And as the sun went to its bed,
His shallop leaped into the air.

He sailed among the stars of night
Like some strange meteor of the sky,
Beyond the eagle’s utmost flight,
Beyond the ken of human eye.

Still up, and on, and on he climbs,
And then the crescent moon appears,
All is so still he hears betimes
The fabled music of the spheres

No cloud obscures the perfect glow
Of moon and starlight over him,
While in the shadows, down below,
He sees the world’s inverted rim.

He sees a city’s lights and towers,
All silent as the moon o’er head,
Save one great bell that tolls the hours
As’t were some city of the dead.

All night his star-born shallop flies,
Amazed the very stars look on,
Till once, a darkness fills the skies,
And light and moon and stars are gone.

A little while—the cloud is by;
A soft’ning twilight’s in the air,
A glowing gladness fills the sky,
The world’s in daylight everywhere.

For he has left the night’s abode,
And towards the morning hurries on,
And swifter than Apollo rode
The golden horses of the sun.

Into the happy dawn he goes,
On all the world a splendor lies,
A mantle, as of gold and rose,
A dream as if from Paradise.

What thrill of joyance must be his!
Alone on ether seas to ride!
Who would not days of pleasure miss
For just one moment by his side?

A thousand miles; the flight is done,
Through starry night and rosy skies;
Last night he left the setting sun,
Now he beholds it slowly rise.

A moment and he leaves behind
The stars with all their banners furled.
And on the stair-way of the wind
Comes back into the waiting world.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 204–206.

The Dawning of the Day

The morning belongs to God,
And the bird's first carols, too,
When the breath of the rose is abroad
And the lily is wet with dew.

When the stars of the night go out,
And the gates of the East unfold,
Till the glad hills seem to shout
In purple and rose and gold.

When a something is in the air
Exalting—we know not why—
And beauty is everywhere
In the dawn that is drawing nigh

Oh, then is the blessed hour,
Oh, sleeper arise—arise,
When blossom and tree and flower
Are likest to Paradise.

Wouldst know of a joy supreme,
Then come when the day is born,
And the night like a dying dream
Melts into the crimson morn.

Oh, haste to the glowing dawn,
To rose and lily ablown,
For the glory is coming on,
And the Master is with His own.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 207–208.

The Invisible Nun

Three nuns there were on a ship at sea,
And each was very fair;
But one was fairer than all the rest,
And she had golden hair.

Sweet nuns they were, and their rosaries
They counted every day;
They held their beads in their lily hands,
I would that I were they.

They were “but three,” the ship-folks said,
Yet four there were, I swear;
For the fairest one I counted twice,
Because she was so fair.

I counted twice—for two she was,
Plain as the stars above;
For half of her was a sweet nun’s face,
And half was a face for Love.

And ever when on the deck they came,
And low their voices fell,
The ship-folks bowed to the sisters three,
I bowed to a fourth as well.

And they are gone, with their rosaries,
Gone are the sisters three—
But half of her with the golden hair
Will stay forever with me.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 209–210.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 62; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 100.

At Seventy-five

Well, well, and you say it's tomorrow,
A riddle, as I am alive
I'd guessed you along about sixty,
And here you are seventy-five.

No riddle, no magic about it,
The road was so easy and plain,
'Twas living just closer to nature,
I loved her in sunshine or rain.

Out doors was the world of my fancy,
The breath of the morning was mine—
Her cup running over with beauty
I drank of celestial wine.

For I had the woods and the river,
And I had the blue of the sky—
The soul, you know, too, must be nourished,
The rose without water will die.

Oh! yes, and I had the changing
That comes with the night and the morn,
To all who are born here of woman,
For I had the rose and the thorn.

But never a day was so darkened
Yet, somewhere, there still was a light,
No cloud is so black but above it
The sun is still shining and bright.

I took the world just as I found it,
God made it, and said it was good,
Perhaps I had made it some better
But I was not asked if I could.

For lucre, I cared not a whistle,
The wealth of a sweet summer's day
Has more of the good of God's riches
Than all of the mines of Cathay.

The best that God has cometh gratis,
The splendor of morning is free,
He asketh no price for the beauty
Of moonlight and starlight and sea.

The linnet up yonder is singing,
And yonder the sky is aglow,
And yonder the trees of St. Helen's
Still look on the river below.

No, no, there's no magic about it,
Or easy the riddle is sung,
Who keepeth a kinship with Nature
Today and forever is young.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp.
211–212.

The Fight off Flamboro Head

Boom, boom, boom! 'Twas a hundred years ago

Two ships sailed in the North Sea
When the sun was lying low.
One carried the flag of England,
The Serapis—forty-four—
And one was the Bonhomme Richard,
Paul Jones' man-of-war.

Steady the wind blew northward,
And steady the two ships sailed,
Beyond the Flamboro lighthouse,
When the British Captain hailed:
"What ship is that? Give answer!"
For a moment it was so still
You might have heard a lamb's bleat
Far off on Flamboro hill.

Then, sudden the Bonhomme Richard
A cannon's answer sent,
Across the sea to Flamboro Head
The echoing answer went.
And into the night the cannon roared,
And the sun went down all red,
Still into the night the cannon roared,
And the moon rose overhead.

Then out of the smoke and thunder
The arrogant Briton yelled,
"Do you give up your ship—surrender?
A moment his fire is held.
"No!" came from the Bonhomme Richard,
"No!" answered the bold sea-knight,
"May God have mercy on you,
I have only commenced to fight!"
A half an hour—'tis finished,

The British flag goes down,
Three hundred are dead and dying
In sight of Flamboro town.
The Bonhomme Richard, sinking,
Goes down with her dead below,
But the flag of the Bonhomme Richard
Floats over the fallen foe.

Boom, boom, boom! 'Twas a hundred years ago
Two ships sailed in the North Sea
When the sun was lying low.
One carried the flag of England,
The Serapis—forty-four—
And one was the Bonhomme Richard,
Paul Jones' man-of-war.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), pp. 213–214.

Beyond the Gates

We often wondered, she and I,
What thing might lie behind the wall,
Whose gate stands open when we die,
Then sudden, shuts beyond recall.

We longed and looked, and dear ones past
As if on wings in viewless air,
No path they left, nor shadow cast,
They sailed and sailed, we knew not where.

Sometimes when twilight gathered round,
Each spake to each when lamps were low,
And never yet God's answer found;
We only said, We do not know.

Then came a promise each to each,
Our thoughts still on the gate divine,
Beyond the wall, if one has speech,
Who enters first shall give a sign.

One summer day she left my side,
A struggle and the angels won;
And that sad gate that stood so wide,
I heard it close and all was done.

And then I waited for the sign;
If love could pierce the mighty wall,
Then she would speak, this lost of mine;
I listened, but no word at all;

Till once, with Nature all in tune,
I walked beneath the myriad stars;
The breath of night was on the June,
And God seemed letting down the bars.

And all at once I seemed to hear
Celestial music in the sky,
And her sweet voice, so soft and clear;
And then I knew, we do not die.

Publication. *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1914), p. 215.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 65; *In Arcadia and*

Other Poems (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 103.

THE BELLS OF CAPISTRANO AND OTHER POEMS

Stage IV | California mission romances, 1915–1916

1916 expanded collection. Poems first collected here are printed in full; later reprints of earlier poems are recorded in the variorum notes attached to their copy-texts.

The Bells of Capistrano

Wouldst see a ruin of enchanting beauty,
And hear a story of its old-time splendor,
When all the land along the coast was Spanish,
Save the wild natives bivouacked in the forests?
Then turn thy steps to San Juan Capistrano,
Go there by moonlight, almost any season,
There is no winter in that golden climate,
Where blooms the rose in April or December.
There by the waters of the great Pacific,
Its back upon the mountain and the desert,
Stands the old ruin, silent in the moonlight.
Climb to some eminence and look about you,
Look when the moon is highest in the heavens,
And falls full on the mission's great quadrangle,
Illuminating all the dream-like, slender arches;
Each column lights, and all the corridors;
Or fills with glory yonder falling transept,
And thou wilt see a very lovely vision.
The nearby hills lie sleeping in the moonlight;
Below you is a fair and fertile valley,
All rich in lemon trees, and groves of walnut;
A little farther, the Pacific Ocean;
All waveless now, but glinting in the moonlight
As if a glory had been cast upon it.
No sound is heard except a gentle river—
Or else a mocking-bird there sweetly singing.
On such a night one summer evening, sitting

Beneath that pepper tree before the mission
I and the old Alcalde talked together.
There was a village wedding on that evening
Within the chapel of that broken ruin,
And when it all was done the bells were ringing;
Two merry boys down on the grass were pulling
The long bell ropes that reached up to the tower.
A pretty sight it was there in the moonlight
These barefoot boys who rang the wedding marches,
While hills and valleys echoed back the music.
The bride, a dark-eyed Spanish girl, and pretty,
Walked out on roses strewn by little maidens,
And as the bells died off far up the valley
Guitars were heard, and castanets, and viols
Down at the inn where they would dance till morning.
“It all reminds me,” said the old Alcalde,
“Of that old tale I promised once to tell you.
That pretty bride you saw—that village maiden,
Could trace her line far back to greater people—
Such as Francisco, he the sweet musician,
And fair Dolores, loveliest of the valley,
When all the coast was famous for its beauties.”
Well, here’s the story told at Capistrano,
You must have read in parchments old and faded,
How on a time a Spanish ruler, hearing
Of this bright land by the Pacific Ocean,
Then all in heathendom, and half discovered,
Sent ships and priests to claim the blessed country.
Besides, they were to build great mission houses
Here by the mountains and along the ocean—
And when they could, convert the native heathen.
It was no race of wild and fierce born warriors
Lived in these mountains at the first beginning,
But simple people, weak, and little knowing.
Well, so they came, these pious priests and soldiers,
Built these great missions northward by the ocean;
And built a road, “The King’s Highway” they called it,
Four hundred leagues, thus linking all together.
This was the seventh; and, you know the story—
How friars came, brought with them bells, and vestments—
As was their habit in the first beginning—
And started thus a mission in the desert.
First hung the bells on trees to call the heathen,
Then built rude huts of reeds and spreading bushes;
Had started, only, when a cry of danger

From other missions made them hurry to them.
Then leaving all, they went to San Diego.
The bells they left behind them in the forest,
Hid from the Indians and unholy people;
For they were sacred most as gifts from heaven—
Blessed by the Pope, and by the friars worshipped.
A great white cross they planted in the valley,
Then left the place their pious tears had watered.

* * * * *

A year went by, and stranger friars followed.
The cross still stood there, beckoning to the heathen,
Its great white arms forever skyward stretching;
For very fear the red man left it standing—
Told awful tales of strange things happening near it,
Of groaning hills, and smoke up in the mountains,
And fires that blazed upon them at the midnight.
The bells were gone, and no soul answered whither;
If in the sand, or in some gloomy canyon.
Or if, perhaps, deep in the ocean's bosom,
For he was dead who only knew the secret.
So other bells were borrowed for the mission;
And once again the cry went to the heathen.
Who, seeing now the good life of the friars,
Themselves became a kinder race of people;
Came to the cross by thousands at the mission;
Joined in the friars' labor, and the building;
Learned many crafts, and helped in many places;
A simple folk, that did the friars' bidding.
Day in, day out, the people carried burdens;
With simple tools they worked, and delved, and quarried;
Made tiles of clay, and cut trees in the forest;
So, laboring on, the mission was completed.
Then other friars came and their assistants,
And teachers came, across the farthest ocean;
And every craft was taught to men and women;
The busy loom, and shuttle, sounded ever;
And schools began, and every craft and calling—
None dared be idle, neither man nor woman;
For next to serving God, was honest labor.
So taught the priests, and gave themselves example;
And next to these the art of being joyous;
Indoors, or out, the busy hands kept moving;
The loom, and spindles, occupied the women,

And tilling ground gave men their daily labor;
This, and the vineyards, and the herds of cattle;
Toil brought them sleep, and sleep new-born endeavor.
The rising sun saw all within the chapel;
An early mass—a little song, and music,
Some simple breakfast, made of beans, and barley,
And then the fields rejoiced to see them coming;
A noon-day rest, an evening rendered joyous
By song, and dance, and games for men and women.
Sometimes a flute was heard out in the garden;
It was Francisco—he, the sweet musician,
The mission chorister for all the singers.
Straight from Castile he came, his music with him.
One thought he had—some day to be a friar—
A priest, perhaps, who knows, perhaps a cardinal;
Such things had been—and might it not still happen?
That was his room, there by the right hand corner—
The second door beyond the mission portal.
It was inborn in him, I think, this music—
But much from nature, too, he must have captured;
Birds, and the waterfalls, and every gladness
To him had melodies of untold sweetness;
But most his flute afforded joyous rapture.
Dark-eyed, dark-haired, and very young, and Spanish,
And handsome, too, almost beyond expressing;
Fra Angelo a face like his had painted—
But, giving wings, had made an angel of him.
Music his joy, nor even love nor passion
Had touched his heart, or changed his true devotion.
Not love he knew, nor any of love's pleasures—
Not love he knew, nor any of love's sorrows.
There still was time. Who knows to read his future?
He loved his music, day and night and morning;
And so, at last, not one of all the missions
Could boast a choir like that of Capistrano.
Nor anywhere was the *Te Deum* chanted,
The high mass sung in such a glorious fashion,
As when Francisco and his choir of singers
Filled all the mission with enchanting music.
The very hills seemed listening and in gladness,
As if they heard the violins and viols,
The flutes and drums, the castanets and voices,
But most of all the voice of fair Dolores.
She, from far Carmelo, the blessed valley,
Had come to learn of him the sweet musician.

At far rancherias they knew her beauty,
At rich estates where lived the exiled Spanish;
For such there were on all the sea-line border.
So on a time came gay Antonio riding
His great white stallion to the mission service;
His silver spurs, and jeweled bridle shining,
His great sombrero, decked with gold and ribbon,
His silken vest, and trousers made of velvet;
Down low he bowed, and crossed himself, and entered.
Dolores saw him, thought him very splendid—
But turned a little seeing he was looking
Straight at her face, where she was standing singing,
Ashamed to be so gazed at there in public,
Yet in her heart a little proud at knowing
It was her beauty kept him looking at her.
For where was woman yet that needed telling
If anyone were looking at her beauty?
And she was beautiful, and good as beautiful,
For goodness, too, is but a kind of beauty;
Without it beauty is not even beautiful.
Fair face she had, and hair all richly golden,
And eyes like violets in the early May time.
And this was he, Antonio, the handsome,
With raven hair, and eyes black as the midnight.
A hundred times had she not heard his praises!
The finest rider, too, in all the valley;
Possessed of lands that reached clear to the ocean;
Exiled from Spain when Bonaparte was ruler,
When despots' heels were on his country's border.
Once on a time, in some great broil or other,
He took a fort, and won the young king's favor.
Great grants received, of lands in California.
Then came the French, and drove the king to exile;
Antonio, too, was chased across the ocean—
Where now he lived, among his mountain acres,
Lord of great fields beyond all computation,
Square miles of valley, reaching north and southward,
Square miles of mesa, chaparral and mountain,
Where roamed his droves of horses and of cattle.
Dolores saw him when he was not looking,
Saw all the richness of his velvet costume,
The gold and silver of his spurs and bridle,
Saw the white stallion prancing there and pawing,
Best blood of Monterey's world-famous horses;
Saw him, Antonio, the handsome rider—

The princely bow he made in passing by her;
Saw all and wondered what fair maid would win him;
And as he rode far off, and up the valley,
Still, longing, looked, and wondered who would win him.
Now he rode off and onward in the valley,
Forever thinking of the mission music,
And why it was his soul was so ecstatic?
Or why the world seemed better now and brighter?
Men had been smitten in a single moment,
Such sudden ways love often has of doing;
And so Antonio, though he did not know it,
Had got a wound almost beyond explaining.
A change there was, but words cannot express it,
Some subtle thing awakened other feelings;
The wild rose, somehow, had another meaning,
And if a bird sang from some bush or olive,
His mind went back to yonder chapel's music.
Alone he was, yet one sweet face was with him,
As 't were a spirit in the air beside him;
So he went on, and upward in the valley;
Went to his home and waited, all impatient,
A certain festival down at the mission,
When all the people came to games and races;
Came from the mission down at San Diego,
From San Obispo, and a dozen others;
She, too, would come, somehow he knew and waited.
The spring had come with all its birds and flowers,
Such spring as comes to that fair climate only,
With almond blooms and gold acacia blossoms,
Bright orange groves, and walnut trees and lemon,
And ocean breezes sweeping up the valley,
And sunshine lying on the hills forever,
And misty mountains leaning up to heaven—
Such was the scene that made life there delicious.
Still at the mission, like a beehive's humming,
Each soul was busy with its love and labor;
Some in the shops a hundred things were doing—
Some saying prayers, and some reciting lessons,
For every neophyte must work or study,
Converted souls must know that labor's holy.
The idle Indian soon became a helper—
Learned trades, and crafts, as well as prayers and masses,
Still watched the herds upon a hundred hillsides.
In an enclosure, like an eastern harem,
Or old-time nunnery, well-kept and guarded,

The women toiled at many a lighter calling—
With busy shuttle and the needle going,
Clothed all the people living at the mission—
Made stuffs to sell, bright Indian robes, and blankets,
Strange baskets wove, of bulrush and wild grasses.
The girls their music had, as well as labor,
For pleasure there was hand-maid still of toiling,
And all knew music, flute, or voice, or viol,
The sweet guitar at every night was thrumming;
And often times Dolores taught them Spanish,
Or thought out plans for this thing, or for that thing,
Helped find new shapes for baskets and for blankets,
New bead work taught them for their belts and sandals,
And pretty ways for them the Indian maidens;
Or stories told them of the old-time Spanish,
And other tales of that famed city northwards, n
Of Monterey—and how the people lived there—
Soft luxury-loving, as the lotus eaters;
How pearls were found there in its glorious waters,
Enriching thousands living but for pleasure;
Of haciendas, in the hills, and valleys,
And richer lords than any Spanish nobles,
Dressed all in velvet, and with rich sombreros—
And one she thought of, while she yet was speaking.
Told of the jewels worn by dark-eyed women,
Great strings of pearls, each worth a prince's ransom;
Of sudden fortunes made in mines forgotten,
Or by vast herds of horses and of cattle.
How some from Spain had brought their fortunes with them,
Brought, too, their manners, and their Spanish customs,
Till all the coast was but a Spanish province.
Then tales she told of Carmelo the holy,
Her own fair home there in the blessed valley.
Told of Junipero the Christian leader,
Who built the missions for the heathen people;
And thus she won the hearts of all the maidens.
Francisco now was busier than ever,
Preparing all things for the great fiesta;
A hundred neophytes in chorus training,
Young clever souls with castanets and viols.
And dancing, too, that was almost religion;
Were they not Spanish, they, and all the people,
Save yonder natives on the hills and desert,
Was this not Spain, and all its customs Spanish?
Would they not come, the dark-eyed Spanish ladies,

From haciendas by the sea or mountains,
From Monterey, too, and the farther border!
So day by day went on the getting ready.
Dolores helped in all the gladsome labor,
A favored one, as niece of him the Padre,
Child of his brother in Carmelo valley.
Her duty was, beside her music lessons,
To be the guardian of the churches' treasures—
The silken stoles, the chasubles all golden,
The altar cloths, with silver all embroidered,
The silver candlesticks from Spain brought over;
To gather roses for the mission altar—
"The lady sacristan," the friars called her.
A pleasant labor, too, was now Francisco's,
With fair Dolores in the work assisting.
Quick thought was hers, so many things devising,
Flags and festoons from arch and column swinging,
And yellow poppies banked on cooling waters.
Strange feelings now Francisco's soul were moving,
Strange but delightful, and beyond expressing.
No thoughts had he of love for any woman,
For he was pledged, some happy day or other,
To be a priest with no thought but of serving.
Yet somehow still grew pleasanter the labor,
Somehow he lingered in Dolores' presence,
Not knowing why, save that it was so pleasant,
Did things twice over that he might be near her,
Still stayed and stayed, nor knew why he was staying.
Perhaps Dolores could herself have guessed it,
Girls are so quick at knowing things so subtle;
Besides, she, too, had feelings, more than tender,
Although Francisco never once had seen it,
So hid were they in other thoughts and fancies—
Of one she saw, his great sombrero waving,
And wondered who if any one would win him,
Not knowing then that she herself had won him.

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The day was done, the Angelus was ringing,
Francisco heard, and led the chapel music,
Then all the night lay thinking of Dolores.
And when the dawn another day was bringing
Across the hills, and downward to the valley,
Lighting anew the olive groves, and orchards,

And casting gold upon the waking ocean,
He wandered fieldwards past the Indians' cabins—
Adobe huts with roofs of reeds and grasses,
Looked at the river from the canyons leaping;
Still went and wandered by the cliffs of ocean;
Looked at the ships with mission-cargoes loading,
Saw pelts of oxen by the thousand loaded,
Thrown from the cliffs down to the waiting sailors,
Great tons of wheat and barley brought for shipment,
And casks of oil, and wine, from their own vineyards;
Then turned his steps and went a little hillwards—
Each moment thinking of the fair Dolores,
Of things three days now burning in his bosom—
Of that old hope some day to be a friar;
How now the vow was somehow slipping from him,
As slip the dews in sunshine from the grasses;
And in its place a beauteous face, and figure,
Yet never knew that it was love possessed him.
Still roamed in happiness across the meadows—
Saw nothing fair that did not mind him of her,
Thought out sweet names by which sometimes to call her,
"The poppy girl," or "Golden-haired Dolores."
Wild roses grew beside him on the heather—
They were so fair, he wondered would they please her?
Then plucking many, "this will deck her bosom,
This double one will suit her hair so golden,"
Then poppies plucked, the great wild yellow poppies,
And peach tree blossoms clustered with the others,
And many more, not knowing why he did it.
All these he took and found the sweet Dolores,
And almost bashful gave to her the poppies,
The roses, too; she took them, smiling sweetly.
"You knew my fancy for the yellow poppies?"
Demurely said she, glancing softly at him.
"But this one's yours, Francisco—let me fix it,"
And reaching towards him with the pretty blossom,
Her eyes now shining, looking clearly at him,
Her lily hand just touched his cheek a moment;
A sudden thrill went through Francisco's being—
And in that thrill love had its way, as ever;
There was no need of any further telling.
That day the festival had its beginning,
And, when Dolores in the choir was singing,
The golden poppies lay upon her bosom.
The mass once sung, the happy people gathered

Around the mission for the games, and dances.
From every valley and the far rancherias
They came by hundreds bringing gifts, and prizes,
So, too, the Indians from the inland country,
And scattering seed, the sign-word of their friendship.
Now rang the bells, the signal all was ready.
First came the races of the Indian maidens,
Half-naked women, from the neighboring desert,
Against the girls now at the mission living.
Then games of ball the desert girls excelling
By very strength, a hundred plaudits winning.
A little pause, the great event was coming—
Out on the plaza, seawards from the mission,
The bear and bull fight was about commencing.
Gifts had been offered by the mission friars
For some wild beast, the fiercer one, the better.
And many days the mission youths had hunted
In wood and canyon till at last they found him,
A wild grey monster, savage and ferocious.
All unawares they sprang on him with lassoes,
And brought him growling to the safe enclosure.
Around the square the excited people waited,
Priests in their robes, and dark-eyed Spanish women
From far pueblos and old Spanish ranchos.
A hundred youths in festal day apparel,
With jingling spurs, and jewel-mounted saddles
Sat on their steeds, encircling all the plaza,
Receiving smiles and their own smiles returning.
There, too, Antonio most of all was noticed,
On his white stallion, gold and lace apparelled,
His broad sombrero with its jeweled ribbon,
His dark eyes glancing when he saw Dolores
There on a bench, Francisco sitting near her,
And golden poppies fastened on her bosom,
Ten times as handsome as she ever had been.
He spurred his stallion, galloped nearer to her,
Waved his sombrero, as he once had waved it
That other morning when she saw him passing,
And wondering thought who is the maid to win him—
Not knowing still, that she herself would win him.
A moment more the signal bells were ringing;
The mission portals to the plaza opened,
There was a cheer, and waving fans and banners;
The great black bull was slowly coming forward—
Back in the patio, decked in flowers and ribbons,

He had been waiting for the sign of battle.
Amazed he looked a moment at the people,
Then sudden saw the monster thing before him,
A grizzly pile of hair, and claws, and clutches.
The bear arose and on his hind feet standing,
Reached out his arms as if to do him honor,
Blinked his small eyes, and calmly stood and waited.
His very calmness scared the bull a moment,
Not knowing quite if he should run or battle;
Then shut his eyes, and bent his great neck downward,
And with his horns lunged at the thing before him—
A little missed—the bear was quickly on him,
His mighty arms around his neck were pressing,
His awful teeth deep in his throat imbedded—
With roar of pain around the ring he started,
Grim as grim death, the bear held on the harder,
Till, by sheer dragging once his hold was broken,
And bruin rolled a little distance from him.
Again the bull with a terrific bellow
Plunged at the beast with his red eyes distended;
Again the bear as in a vise has caught him,
And bear and bull roll in the dust together.
It was not long, for bruin all exhausted,
By loss of blood lay still a little moment,
When, with a roar the bull in pain and maddened,
Rushed on his prey, and goring, left him dying.
There was a cheer, a thousand people rising,
And cheers once more, and all the bells were ringing.
Now changed the scene, the horse-race is beginning,
A league of road straight northward from the mission—
There all the crowds again are come together.
One thought alone moves every man or woman,
One idol only worshipped in the province;
Next to religion, were the people's horses.
“Who loves his horse alone can love a woman—“
It was a saying in the Spanish province.
No Arab flying on the wasted desert
Had better steeds, or better knew to ride them—
Men's lives were spent so wholly in the saddle;
Their greatest treasure often was expended
On jewelled trappings for the horse and rider;
And he was rich who rode his jeweled saddle,
Though he were homeless else, and wholly friendless.
And fleet they were, these California horses,
Fleet as the wind on mountain or in desert;

And all one's riches oft were staked upon them.
And so today, one saw great bags of silver
On carts piled up, and at the roadside waiting,
There to be gambled on a favorite racer.
An hour or so, and fortunes most had vanished—
Lost on this horse, or that one, in the racing.
Then came the last the piece de resistance—
The horses running without any rider.
Ten splendid steeds stood stripped there for the starting,
White stallions, known as swiftest of the valley;
Antonio's horse was there among the many;
No bridles theirs, nor saddles, nor yet riders—
Just bells, and spurs, to madden them to running.
The signal fires, and wildly they are started,
Not knowing where, save that they must be flying;
Like a tornado they have passed the people,
Who hold their breath too moved for any cheering;
One league, two leagues—and faster fly the horses,
Great clouds of dust the races most obscuring—
One runner now is leading all the others—
Just by one neck, Antonio's horse is winning—
And with a bound the final goal he crosses.
A shot announces that the race is over;
A thousand throats the victor's horse are cheering,
And he is led among the crowds of people.
He walks on roses scattered now before him,
As comes a hero from the battle's thunder.
Dolores, too, has cast a flower before him;
Antonio sees it with a smile of gladness,
Picks up the rose, and kissing throws it to her,
Then leading now, the splendid steed before her,
With a great bow, and all so courteous looking,
Presents the stallion to the fair Dolores.
“Oh, signorita, look, your gladsome beauty
This day eclipses every beauty present,
The horse is yours. You know it is a custom
Who wins a race must make some gift or other
To her he deems most fair of any women.
Adieu! Adieu!” he waved his great sombrero,
And left Dolores standing there and blushing.
Still on her arm the silver bridle rested,
A little while she stroked the horse's shoulder,
Then saw Antonio passing to the plaza—
And wondered still if any maid would win him.
The day is done, the Angelus is ringing,

An evening prayer, and then the feast and dances.
Francisco's choir, with castanets and viols,
His many singers have already gathered
Where hang the lanterns from the palms and peppers.
The wilder Indians, from the hills and canyons,
Have started homeward, going up the valley,
Save two or three now hiding in the bushes.
Bright is the scene and brighter yet the dances;
Gay cavaliers, and wondrous dark-eyed women,
And brown-robed priests, and olive-colored maidens,
Young neophytes, the children of the mission,
And soldiers, guardsmen of the mission people,
And sailors coming from the ships at anchor.
Some danced the waltz, and some the gay bolero,
Still others in the wild fandango reveled.
And there were smiles and pressing hands and whispers,
And praise of eyes that shone in soft replying.
Dolores, radiant as the scene before her,
Danced till the midnight with her two adorers,
And on her breast the golden poppies carried—
Yet, in her mind, she saw a gay sombrero,
And heard the words "most beauteous of women."
Francisco, often as his music let him—
Beheld her, fairest there of all the dancers;
Beheld the poppies, too, and rested happy.
But 'twas Antonio who danced so often.
And kissed her hand as every dance was finished,
Looked at the poppies resting on her bosom,
Nor guessed, one moment, what could be their meaning.
Once, when the music ceased a little moment,
Dolores went out in the moonlight walking,
A little neophyte her sole companion.
Scarce fifty paces from the dancers going,
They heard low talking, then a footstep nearing—
Three painted Indians from the roses springing,
Quick as an eagle unexpected pounces
Upon his prey, so pounced they on Dolores.
There was a cry, the neophyte came screaming—
"Dolores killed, the Indians have got her."
Loud rang the bells, "The Indians were uprising"
So went the cry alarming all the valley.
A little while the child, her senses gaining,
Told how she knew the faces of the villains.
Of her own tribe they were, up in the mountains,
There were but three, and lived alone by plunder.

Before the dawn, a hundred were pursuing,
On foot, on horseback, priests and friends and soldiers.
All day they hunted in the woods and canyon,
And not a trace of either man or woman
With hope most gone the people half distracted
Gave up the hunt, "Dolores has been murdered."
Francisco only kept up hope and sought her.
Footsore and weary through the forest went he,
By paths scarce known to any but the Indians,
Nor found a sign of where she might be hidden.
Antonio, too, on his white stallion sought her,
Dashed to the canyon with its dark recesses,
Flew to the edges of the far-off desert.
Once saw some trace of bandits in the mountains,
Rode faster yet, determined to o'ertake them,
And kill them ere they reached their secret cavern.
It was a plan if anyone should find her,
Dead or alive, the mission bells should tell it.
With heavy heart Francisco still was searching,
Sad and alone deep in the hills and forest,
When all at once the bells rang in the valley.
"Found! Found!" he cried, and hastened toward the mission.
An Indian boy had signaled from the canyon,
That she was found and all went out to meet her.
Francisco, too, and saw Antonio coming
On his white horse, Dolores on before him.
A mad'ning thought a moment overwhelmed him,
Yet thanked he God to know she had been rescued.
Two days, and then the festival renewing,
All sang and danced in fair Dolores' honor;
A little pale she was, yet fairer most than ever.
Antonio told them how he saved Dolores—
With that swift horse, he caught the bandits flying,
And fighting slew them there within the canyon,
Just as they reached their far and secret cavern.
It was most morning now, and yet they reveled,
Or wandered singing down beside the river.
There by its bank Antonio and Dolores
Sat down and talked of this her great adventure.
With thankful gratitude, beyond expressing,
Dolores prayed all blessings should come to him.
Antonio heard and took her hand and kissed it,
Told of his love, born that first day he saw her.
Would she be his, heaven's blessings would be on him.
"You have been kind," was all Dolores answered,

“While life shall last this day will be remembered.”
Then there was silence, and a quick heart-beating—
A burning struggle in Dolores’ bosom,
She dared not speak the thing she should have spoken;
And when again, with burning words he urged her,
“Pray, wait a little,” was her only answer—
“I will go home to Carmelo tomorrow.”
There I will weigh it all, so thought she silent,
And farther gave not any word of answer,
But slowly walked with “him back toward the plaza.
The stars were down, the dawn was almost breaking;
The music ceased, and yet Antonio pressed her,
Told of the dangers he had passed to save her;
Told how the king would some day yet restore him
His Spanish rights, his titles and his castle;
Told how some day they two would walk together
Beside a lake within his Spanish garden.
Dolores heard, but gave no certain answer,
Her thoughts confused with all the past day’s doings.
Her thoughts of that bright day when first she saw him.
How she had wondered who would some time win him,
Then suddenly, as seeking some delaying—
“Wait just a little,” smiling, when she said it,
“Once on a time, beside this very river,
A little party of us young folks gathered,
And I had suitors pressing for an answer.
And I held daisies, counting them all over,
Each petal gave some pretty little answer,
Yet leaving doubt if either of them loved me.
‘He loves me, loves me not,’ you’ve seen them do it.
Well, that was when the fine new church was founded,
The dear old bells, long lost, were now so wanted,
The Padre said no other bells would answer,
These ones were sacred, for the Pope had blessed them.
So all the valley here was put at searching,
For many days, and no soul ever found them,
And there was sorrow here in all the valley.
Then, lovers pressing me, I made a promise;
The daisies first I threw into the river,
Their little play had settled nothing for me.
‘Whoever finds the missing bells, and brings them
To yonder tower the day that it is finished,’
I said it laughingly, ‘him, I will marry.’
And so you see that I have made a promise;
I am fast bounden till the church is finished,

But if the bells are not then there and ringing,
 I am released, and am no longer bounden.
 Wait but till then, and you shall have an answer.”
 Antonio laughed, “If that be all, Dolores,
 Then never day will come that you are married.
 The bells, men say, were cast into the ocean.
 But, true, or no, let us a compact enter;
 Give me one word, and, if, by chance, tomorrow,
 Or any time before the church is finished,
 Some happy soul should find the missing treasure,
 That moment I release you from the promise.”
 So they walked on, still talking, toward the mission.
 “Good night,” Dolores said, “or rather morning,”
 And did not know, or scarcely, she had promised.
 They stayed good friends, Francisco and Dolores.
 “Fate was unfriendly to me then as ever,”
 So said he wandering on the flowering meadows.
 “I should have known how far she was above me,
 I, a musician only, he, a lordly noble.
 I should have kept the vow to some day enter
 The holy service of the Lord and Master.
 But, somehow, love all resolution conquers.
 I was but human—loved her without knowing—
 And I am glad I never told her of it.
 She never knew for certain that I loved her;
 Nor had I any right to think of loving;
 Save one dear glance she gave me on that morning
 She placed the yellow poppies on my shoulder,
 What right had I to think she ever loved me?”
 So, many days, Francisco tried to think it—
 He “had no right,” and so would overcome it—
 Yet went on loving spite of pain and promise.
 That very day Dolores had departed.
 By chance, a ship bound northward, stopped a little;
 To Monterey ’twas bound; Carmelo near it,
 And so she went scarce knowing she was promised.
 Antonio now came to the mission often,
 Perhaps the memory of that morning drew him,
 When first he saw Dolores in the chapel!
 Its patron now, and many gifts he brought it,
 And often helping, showed the mission Indians
 New ways of doing, sent skilled people to them.
 So hurried, too, the great church they were building.
 It had been years, so slow the work proceeded—
 The only church of stone in all the province;

And stone by stone the whole was slowly carried
From yonder canyon by the men and women.
A little while the temple would be finished,
A house of God there standing by the mountains,
A house of God that looked forever seawards,
The bells alone they were not yet discovered.
Once more they hunted for them northward, southward,
So zealous all, Antonio most was fearing
They might yet find them, somewhere, always thinking
Of that strange promise made by fair Dolores;
And also thinking what himself had promised,
And so he hurried every day the building.
They were good friends, Antonio and Francisco,
And oftentimes Francisco heard him praising
Dolores' beauty, and her thousand virtues,
Nor let him know how his own heart was beating;
Nor guessed Antonio once a thought of danger.
The time was near, the church was most completed;
Antonio's perfect rapture was approaching.
She would be there—be at the dedication,
Her voice would add to all the festive pleasure;
And then the day, the one day of all others,
Was it not coming with delight and music!
Then came the word no ship would soon be sailing
From Monterey toward Capistrano mission,
Not for a month would any ship sail southwards.
Dismayed, the friars talked with one another,
She must be here, our fairest, greatest singer,
The Padre, too, the head priest of the mission,
Would see his niece at this the great occasion,
And said, "Francisco, you I trust to bring her,
And some companion she may choose beside her."
Then came Antonio, too, and urged Francisco,
"Are we not friends—go you and bring Dolores."
But did not dream they ever had been lovers.
"Ride to Carmelo, on" the king's great highway,
Tomorrow take the fleetest of my horses."
Astounded was he, yet he could not show it—
A thousand thoughts went through Francisco's bosom—
He made excuse—"he was at home much needed;
There were rehearsals of the music waiting."
Said this, said that, Antonio but insisted.
And so he went along the king's great highway,
Along the seaside and beside the mountains,
The sea no more perturbed than were his feelings.

One afternoon, among the roses walking,
Up at Carmelo, where the sea was shining,
Dolores saw him coming in the garden;
And, so surprised, she wondered at his coming,
A little while they wandered through the garden,
Glad of this chance to look upon each other,
Yet neither speaking of the thing the nearest.
For both were bounden, she who'd made her promise—
And he whom trust had sent upon this errand.
Once they climbed up a hillside from the valley,
There saw the ocean glistening bright before them.
Saw aisles of pine and heard their low-toned music,
Saw gentle hills with every blossom glowing,
A babbling river dancing to the ocean.
There lay Carmelo, heaven's own hand had touched it,
And made it beautiful above all others.
Its sun-kissed gardens and its snow-white lilies,
Its clustering roses and its field of poppies,
Made all the air a something so delicious
That every lover loved Carmelo valley.
Great memories, too, around the place were clinging,
There Junipero lived—the good, the holy—
The master hand, the soul of all the missions,
He who had brought salvation to the heathen.
Beneath a slab there in San Carlos mission,
Hid all in roses, he is softly sleeping,
Whose name in tender hearts will burn forever.
Three days in joy the happy lovers lingered,
For they were lovers, spite of bounden duty.
Each loved in silence though he dare not tell it,
Nor break a vow, for both of them were bounden.
“Tomorrow we shall ride,” Francisco said it—
“Down El Camino, there the beauteous highway.
Down the long way past sea and hill and mission,
To Capistrano. He will there be waiting.”
Dolores smiled a little—then a shadow
Fell on her face and hid what she was feeling.
And so they rode onwards on the highway,
Along the seashore, listening to its music,
She on the great white horse Antonio gave her,
Francisco riding on a coal black stallion,
With gorgeous saddles both, and jeweled bridles;
Had she been queen she had not then been greater.
Antonio's name was known at every mission.
Dolores, too, fair golden-haired Dolores;

Not less Francisco, he the famed musician.
Two hundred leagues, not less, the happy journey.
So they rode on, at every mission waiting,
(For all men knew Antonio's bride was coming),
A troop of girls, young neophytes, would meet them,
Pelt them with roses, scatter palms before them,
Sing joyous songs and lead them to the mission;
There feast and toast and castanet and viol,
Brought to a close each day of sweetest travel.
Sometimes they met a barefoot pilgrim friar
Making his way to Carmelo, or farther,
Who made the cross, and blessed them, ever saying,
"May God be with you as you fare together."
Four happy days like bees on roses sipping,
The lovers traveled by the sweet sea's border,
Yet not of love had either one yet spoken,
For each one knew he to a vow was bounden.
But once at noon they passed a field of poppies
All golden glinting, by the seaside growing;
Francisco saw them, leaped from off his stallion
And brought a nosegay to the happy maiden.
"My fancy yet, and you have not forgotten,"
She smiling said, and placed them on her bosom.
Yet was it true, a thought was ever with her
That heavier grew as now the journey ended;
Spite of the joy the golden days had brought her,
The very poppies made it all the harder;
And all the time there riding by Francisco,
She thought in silence of a half-made promise;
Thought of that night there by the little river,
Antonio's pleading—and her half-made promise;
How he had saved her from an unknown terror;
Then saw Francisco riding there beside her,
Felt something tearing every heartstring from her,
Love, and that promise, struggling with each other.
So they rode on—and still no word was spoken.
Francisco, too, now as the day was closing,
Felt as awakened from a pleasant vision—
A moment's joy, and then the dream departing
Left only shadow as the journey ended.
He had lacked courage; up there at Carmelo
He should have spoken—ventured all to have her;
The trust he held, was it not forced upon him?
It was too late; he saw, as in a vision,
A marriage feast, Antonio and Dolores

Walk down an aisle with orange blossoms fragrant.
So they rode on and yet no word was spoken.
A little while, and now the sun was setting,
Drowning itself in the Pacific Ocean,
With such a trail of glory left behind it
As only comes to sunsets in that region.
It was clear moonlight now at Capistrano
When these two lovers stopped before the mission.
Antonio welcomed them, he had been waiting,
And helped Dolores from her silken saddle,
And helping saw the golden yellow poppies.
Few words were said, Antonio, without telling,
Knew from that moment that he had a rival.
Francisco took the horses toward the river,
To give them water where the stream was clearest,
For now it was receded almost wholly
From a great drouth that fell upon the valley.
And while the horses stood there in the water,
Or in the sand where he himself was standing,
Their hoofs struck on some iron thing or other.
With both his hands Francisco delved a little
Down in the sand, when lo! there, deep imbedded,
He found the bells of Capistrano mission!
'Twas like a dream or some sweet thing from heaven.
A thousand joys, all in one joy together;
Now he could speak—was it not her own promise
Who found the bells—her hand should have forever?
And in her eyes had he not sometimes read it—
The hope that he might find the hidden treasure?
That she had loved and never dared to tell it?
Then in the moonlight friars came and labored
With all the mission glad almost to crying—
So thankful were they for the thing that happened.
That very night, through all the little valley,
The news was spread like prairie fires in autumn,
And eager hands in long procession forming,
Now bore the bells in gladness to the mission.
High mass was sung at daybreak of the morning,
“Regina Salve,” ’twas Dolores singing.
Antonio heard her, as he did that morning
When first he saw her at the mission chapel—
The day he waved his great sombrero to her.
The service out, the two went to the river;
To that same spot where in the moonlight walking
She once had promised without scarcely knowing.

Antonio spoke, "Bright honor's left, Dolores,
Here is the spot, our trysting place last summer.
The promise, half enforced, you scarcely granted.
I saw tonight was thankfulness, not passion;
I was love-blind, too strong my great devotion.
We both have vowed, nor shall my vow be broken:
The bells are found, you are no longer bounden.
Take one you love, there, I release you wholly;
Nor you nor I are any longer bounden."
He strode his horse and rode far up the valley,
And no one knew Antonio's heart was broken.
Dolores lingered, saw him disappearing,
With moistened eyes turned slowly toward the mission.
And that great weight was slowly lifted from her.
That day, almost, Francisco and Dolores
Walked o'er the hills and pretty vales together.
Then said Francisco, "Long, so long, I've waited.
May I not speak now, that you are not bounden?
There at Carmelo once I almost ventured,
And then I thought, the trust I had was holy,
Antonio trusted me, I dared not say it;
And when I gave the poppies to you, also,
I was most minded then to tell you frankly.
Again I thought, some other one might love you,
Might find the bells, and you would keep your promise.
Now I speak out; I love you, dear Dolores.
The bells are here and I would hear them ringing
On that dear day when we two shall be wedded."
And so the bells were kept a little, silent;
Although the church was finished now, and waiting,
Till on a day these lovers twain were married.
Then all at once the bells rang out their music,
And all the valley joined in song and dancing.
Without a change weeks passed there at the mission,
The old routine of labor and religion;
Save that the mission now was growing richer;
Great herds of cattle grazed upon the mountains,
And flocks of sheep that never could be numbered,
And crowds of Indians came and were converted.
Then came that day that made this place a ruin—
When all the coast of the Pacific Ocean
For one short, awful moment, rocked and trembled,
And all the missions shook to their foundation.
But this one most, felt yonder earthquake's coming,
The twilight mass of a December morning

Was being sung there in the finished temple,
When all at once, the church dome reeled a little,
The roof spread open, showed the sky above it,
Then with a crash the whole fell down together.
For many days the buried ones were sought for;
Some said, Antonio, too, was buried with them,
But none were certain, in the dread confusion.
The hunt for lost ones was at last abandoned;
The little graveyard there, behind the mission,
Already full; but on a day when the great mass was singing
For souls of all who had so sadly perished,
A ship came by, its captain had a letter—
Dolores' name was quickly seen upon it;
'Twas from Antonio written ere the earthquake
Had cast the mission in a sea of sorrow,
"Once sudden news," so ran it, took him northwards,
Nor gave him time for any farewell message.
And now he wrote to say he was not angry;
She had done well to marry where her heart was,
And now he knew 'twas gratitude, not passion
That made her promise to be bounden to him.
So went the letter, telling news from Spainwards,
He had been given back his castles, titles,
So had no use for lands so very distant;
His valley rancho, reaching west, and seaward,
She must accept it as her wedding present;
And so they would be friends forever after.

Publication. *The Bells of Capistrano and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1916), pp. 11–54.

Variorum. The 1929 witness preserves the same mission romance with local corrections and resetting variants. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 139–172.

Glorietta

Or, The City of Fair Dreams

Oh, many, many years ago this tale
Had drifted oft from its beloved Spain,
So beautiful it seemed; the bending sail,
And the blue sky, like that of Italy.
There grew the palm and there the lemon tree,
And every flower that's beautiful to see.

Outside the bay the mighty ocean rolled
In liquid mountains, or in glist'ning sea,
And moonlight nights some wondrous story told
To listening forests and to meadowed lea;
And lovers, walking in the moonlight, heard
Their sweethearts' voices when the sea was stirred.

Such was the scene, where the fair city stood,
By poets called "The City of Fair Dreams,"
Between the forest and the shining flood;
And even now, to strangers' eyes there seems
Some lingering glory of that happy day
When all was merry in old Monterey.

'Twas at a time when Spanish friars bore
For many years their long and kindly sway
In grand old Missions stretched along the shore
From San Diego to Francisco Bay.
Then all was Spanish—manners, speech and dress—
Save the wild Indians in the wilderness.

'Twas just as if some island in the past
Had its beginning by a charmed sea,
And by some wondrous miracle been cast
Along the shores of the Pacific main:
Or was it Arcadia that had been lost,
And by some chance had hitherward been tossed?

Be it as it may, it was a lovely land,
And joyous people lived along its coast;
There dance and music wandered hand in hand.
And, next to these, their horses were their boast,
No Arab tenting in the desert airs
Had steeds so swift, so beautiful as theirs.

He was not poor who had his desert steed,
With silver spangles hung on neck and breast,
Bejeweled saddle, beautiful, indeed,
And wondrous spurs outshining all the rest.
It was a sight sometimes to look upon,
These new-world knights and their caparison.

Famed was the land for other things as well,
Famed for fair women, beauteous to behold,
With great black eyes, and olive skins to tell
Castilian blood; and forms of fairest mold.
Of one of these, had I a harp to sing,
I'd tell a tale not all imagining.

For there was one, a child almost in years,
Some sixteen summers only had been hers,
But in that clime of rose-leaf and of tears,
Love wakens early and its passion stirs.
So, Glorietta, soft as any dove.
Just laughed and loved, yet never thought of love.

Till on a day when Ivan came to woo,
A fisher's lad, he was, down by the bay,
Who dived for pearls of many a heavenly hue
That in the bottom of the ocean lay;
And here and there a pretty shell he took
To Glorietta with a lover's look.

Though well she prized these pretty courtesies,
There was a gulf that stretched betwixt the two,
A stream unbridged, and bridgeless, most, as seas,
Without a road that any lover knew.
For what was he? A common fisher's son,
And she, the heiress of a Spanish don.

O! she was young, and beautiful of face,
With melting eyes, a joy to look upon,
Big, black and deep, like her Castilian race;
Who looked too long was sure to be undone.
That Ivan learned, although he was so young,
Yet loved the sting with which he had been stung.

Her hair—such hair—in two great braids fell down
Like twisted ropes, black as the ebon night.
Upon her beautiful but girlish gown
Of simple rose, bedecked with lilies white.
Hearts had been cold, or ice, or something worse,
Not to be moved by eyes and hair like hers.

She was akin to the Don Carlos line;
Though orphaned young she might have riches still,
For the Alcalde, now Count Valentine,
Had many lands and herds on every hill.
He was her guardian, and could well endow
Such rose of beauty as he saw her now.

Upon the hill where his gray palace stood
Fair flowers grew of every hue and kind;
The bougainvillea, with its purpling flood,
In drifted banks the walls and porches lined.
But Glorietta, far beyond compare,
Was fairest yet of any flower there.

And when the harvest of the vine was on
In the sweet autumns of that blessed clime,
When summer's heats and summer's suns were gone
And frosts just touched the orange and the lime,
Then manly youths were to the labor pressed,
And Ivan, too, was there among the rest.

So it fell out, as in that long ago,
When Ruth and Boaz in the harvest met,
Love had its way, or Ivan wished it so,
And cast himself in Glorietta's net,
Just at the moment when she brought the wine
Sent to the gard'ners by Count Valentine.

'Twas like a dream, the sudden joy, to him!
Not many grapes he gathered on that day,
Nor on the next, for other things now drew
His one attention in another way,
And oftener now did Glorietta bear
Her jugs of wine out to the gard'ners there.

And once, unconsciously, the jug she held
To Ivan's lips, that he might drink his fill,
As if by accident his face she touched,
And quick he felt it, the immortal thrill,—
Such thrill as comes but once to any soul,
Or rich or poor, it is love's sweetest toll.

So days went on, the vintage was not done,
And every day young Ivan there would be
To gather grapes in the sweet autumn sun,
Or pick the lemons from the lemon tree;
But most to see his sweetheart, and adore,
And every day she welcomed him the more.

There was an arbor on the palace ground,
Hid all in roses of sweet loveliness,
Where all was silence save the gentle sound
Of little brooklets and the wind's caress.
There Glorietta at the noontide came:
Who wonders now that Ivan did the same!

So in sweet converse flew the blessed noon,
While they sat looking in each other's eyes,
Amazed an hour could fly away so soon.
But time to lovers very quickly flies;
Not much their feast on either bread or wine,
On other things, 'tis said, do lovers dine.

Yes, talk they had, and maybe, kisses, some.
For they were glad of life, and everything:
Youth must be so—delicious it can come,
And this was now the flower of their spring.
Give love a bower, in vines and roses drest,
And melting eyes, and love will do the rest.

There, in their moments of felicity,
Young Ivan told her of a thousand things;
Of the pearl-divers and the sapphire sea,
And the great fishes that had shining wings;
Of caverns told, and rocks that overhung
The ocean caves where the pearl-fishes clung.

How he himself the dangers underwent
Of diving down, his trusty knife in hand,
To cut them loose from walls and caverns rent,
Then sudden rise and cast them on the sand:
No rainbow hues more glorious could be
Than these, the children of the azure sea.

How he had seen a grotto wonderful
Down in the ocean with the waves above,
Not e'en the shrieking of the sad sea-gull
Was ever heard in this enchanted cove.
Like Desdemona, Glorietta heard,
And breathed a sigh at every other word.

How, fearing not, again and yet again,
He dared the dangers that around him were,
Not in some hope of some poor little gain,
But for a pearl that was most worthy her;
And then he reached to give it, with a kiss—
But hark! a step, and ended all their bliss!

It was the Count, his face in purple rage.
Some evil soul had whispered in his ear,
How ever day these lovers did engage
In guilty amours, and he'd find them here.
Few words were said, there was not much to say;
The place, the kiss, were they not plain as day?

He railed a little, Glorietta heard:
"I had no one to guide, and I was young,"
Her eyes were weeping, but no other word;
The Count, he better too had held his tongue!
He was himself not over good, they say,
Among th' elite of lovely Monterey.

Be as it may, he had his Spanish pride;
No kin of his might ever think to wed
With lowly fisher-folk, or be the bride
Of one who labored for his daily bread.
That very day he made his plans to send
Young Glorietta to a distant friend.

He had a cousin, rich and proud and lone,
Who with a sister by the desert dwelt;
What took him there had never quite been known,
If fate or love with him had coldly dealt.
Don Eldorado was the cousin's name,
A bit romantic and once known to fame.

There Glorietta will be safe awhile,
Thought the Alcalde, when she reached the place,
And thinking so, a long and happy smile
At times illumined the Alcalde's face.
"Time conquers love, at least so I have read,
And Ivan well may think her lost or dead."

For it was planned that never any word
Should pass between them now forever more.
Just how 'twas done no mortal ever heard,
But things like these were often done before—
Some false arrest, some prison far away,
Or, at the worst, there still would be the bay.

A little while, though broke of heart at first,
And Glorietta almost loved the scene—
When on her eyes the great wild desert burst
Like two vast seas, with mountains in between.
The porphyry hills, the red sea-walls that rise,
Seemed fit for gates to some sweet paradise.

Note—The Mojave and the Colorado deserts are really the same thing. A chain of the Sierra Madre mountains cuts the vast plain in two parts.

'Twas in the morning, and God's great blue tent
Spread over mountains and the desert land;
A sapphire glory every moment lent
Some lovelier color to the desert sand;

A little while, and then the mountains seem
A mystic phantom, a forgotten dream.
Once, on a height, alone, she stood and gazed
On violet mountains and the desert sea.
A sudden sun above the desert blazed,—
"O world!" she cried, "thou wert all joy to me

Were this to last, with never any tear,
And Ivan standing close beside me here."
Now, Eldorado, though not very young,
Kept in his breast some fires not yet gone out,
Saw Glorietta, and that moment flung
Himself before her, dead in love, no doubt.

Love at first sight, I've sometimes heard it said.
Affects the heart, but oftener the head.
Be as it may, he surely was most kind
To Glorietta, never dreaming how
Her heart with Ivan there was left behind,
Nor saw the shade that often crossed her brow.

One thought was his, and that he could not hide,
The hope that quickly she would be his bride.
Each hour he thought some pleasant thing to do
To please her fancy or to kill the time;
Rode on the hills, looked on the desert view,
Or climbed the canyons glorious and sublime,

Where thundering down some torrent came to bless
The flowering wastes, the desert's loveliness.
And lovelier things he thought of, and less grand,
The purple sage-brush that was everywhere,
The yellow poppy of the sun and sand,
Enchanting contrast to her raven hair;

And Manzanita berries, crimson red,
And purple heather from the desert's bed.
And desert holly of the sanded wild,
Frost-white and fair as ever fair could be,
Sun-born but lone, the desert's loveliest child,
Its curling leaves God's own embroidery.

All these were hers, and others yet the while,
All cheaply purchased by a single smile.
Day in, day out, the old new lover came;
Was it not time to answer yes, or nay?
Like fair Penelope, who did the same,
She prayed delaying, just another day,

And still in hopes she yet might surely know
If Ivan really were alive, or no.
Just then a letter from her guardian came;
A perfect thunderbolt it must have been,
Full of complaining, and of every blame,
What under heaven was it she could mean?

Could it be so, such cold ingratitude,
Towards one who always was so kind and good?
Oft he had heard of how his cousin sought
Her hand in marriage, and of her delay:
He was amazed, for was this cousin not
What any girl could like most any day?

Rich, and genteel, and good to look upon,
And then, still more, he was a Spanish don.
Then, as to Ivan, heaven only knew
What had become of him: perhaps a shark
Had simply swallowed him; such things they do!
There were great dangers down in caverns dark.

And anyway, her passion for him must
Long since have turned to ashes and to dust.
There seemed no choice; that, Glorietta saw,
This unloved marriage was a thing foregone.
Her guardian's wishes, were they not a law?
She was as helpless as a mountain fawn,

And yet she waited still another day,
And never answered either yes or nay.
At last she spoke. It was a ruse to find
If Ivan really were alive or dead.
"It seems to me that I could speak my mind
If I were only in my home," she said.

"There in our garden by the crystal bay,
There I could answer either yes or nay.
"Let it be so! Tomorrow," he replied,
Not guessing all her reasons nor the why;
"On my fleet steeds across the hills we'll ride."
He did not notice Glorietta sigh.

He had forgotten, too, about the slip
That sometimes happens 'twixt the cup and lip.
Next day it was a pretty cavalcade
That crossed the mountains, westward to the sea.
The Don, his sister, and the beauteous maid,
And some retainers, only two or three.

A hundred miles was nothing then to ride,
At least to win so beautiful a bride!
A little while, and now in Monterey,
The dear old city by the sounding sea,
There was great talk among the young and gay
Of an event that very soon would be.

"The Don was rich," that much the gossips said,
"And Glorietta had come home to wed."
Not in whole years had there been such a stir.
The Alcalde's ward was now a beauty, grown,
All eyes were turned for but a glimpse of her
Or the great Don who claimed her for his own.

A little while, and wedding bells would ring,
And guests be bid up to the revelling.
Now there was searching of old wardrobes through
For gowns unique, and rich, of long ago;
Gold satin skirts, and rare mantillas, too,
And high heeled boots with gold or silver bow;

Queer combs from Spain, and jewels rare and bright,
To wear on Glorietta's wedding night.
It was proclaimed among the ladies all,
To be au fait one must be gaily dressed,
And there would be a Spanish carnival,
To make this wedding seem the very best.

The men also, in picturesque array,
Expectant waited for the wedding day.
Young Ivan, meantime, had been lost to view;
No trace of him could Glorietta find,
And now there seemed no other thing to do
Than wed the Don, though much against her mind

So, though in tears, she gave a half consent,
And all was fixed, just as her guardian meant.
The day has come, the sun will soon be down,
A hundred guests on horseback gaily ride
Up to the palace, quite outside the town,
To greet the bridegroom and to kiss the bride,

As was the custom in the days of yore,
Each rider held his fair one on before.
Down by the sea the glad old mission bells
Ring out a sweet, a half voluptuous chime.
The saintly friar there a moment tells
His beads to heaven in this dear, happy time:

Then turns his steps, he must be there to say
The nuptial vows on this their wedding day.
At her high window Glorietta stood,
And saw the riders in their glad array,
Yet felt that moment that she almost could
Have thrown herself into the shining bay:

All seemed a mockery to her, the scene,
Not less her wedding dress of gold and green.
Out on the lawn a bright pavilion showed,
Hung round with flags, and open at the side,
Already circled by the common crowd,
For all would see the bridegroom and the bride.

Half in the dark one silent figure leant
Against the curtains of th' illumined tent.
A little while, and look! The priest has come,
And bride and groom walk slowly down the line.
In a few words she is bid welcome home,
By the Alcalde, old Count Valentine.

In smiles and tears, she waits the solemn word:
Yet listen, now, a singer's voice is heard.
A pretty custom in the land they had,
That girlhood friends about the bride should be,
To sing some song, some pretty words, nor sad,
To wish her joy and all felicity,

Before the one and final word is said,
Before the priest pronounced her duly wed.
And so to-night the singers come and sing,
And to a lute some verses improvise;
Some happy thought, perhaps some little thing,
Each for herself some pretty couplet tries,

Then hands the lute to her who next her is,
Who smiling sings of future ecstasies.
Meanwhile the bride, who is all listening
To honied phrases she is glad to hear,
Herself prepares some pretty song to sing,
For see, the lute to her is coming near!

That moment look, her eyes are quickly bent
On that lone figure by the curtained tent.
Half in the shadow, halfway in the light,
Two sad dark eyes are looking straight at hers.
Heavens! it is Ivan, come this very night!
A sudden joy her inmost bosom stirs;

She dare not speak, a hundred wait around,
And he were dead if near the palace found.
Quick beat her heart, it was her turn to sing,
A prayer she breathed for guidance. What to do?
Her voice she feared had sudden taken wing,
And Ivan's eyes were piercing through and through.

Oh! would some saint in all Love's calendar
That moment come and pitying smile on her.
She waits a little—then an Indian air
Came to her mind that he had often sung.
Not one would know it of the many there,
For it was only of the Indian tongue.

She took the lute and sang a melody
Of love beside the Manzanita tree:
The moon's above the ocean now,
Then hasten, love, to me,
And keep the vow you made beside
The Manzanita tree.

The stars across the heavens sweep,
As faithful as can be.
Let us be faithful, too, beside
The Manzanita tree.
The mist is on the mountain top,
The mist is on the lea,

Tonight, tonight, we meet beside
The Manzanita tree.
The Manzanita berry's ripe,
And red as red can be,
O who would not go loving by
The Manzanita tree.

What if another claim my hand,
My heart, my heart's with thee,
So we will meet tonight beside
The Manzanita tree.
Each sigh, each thought, the list'ning lover heard,
And knows the meaning of the song she sings,

And ere the priest has said the solemn word
A steed all saddled to the gate he brings:
A sign, a gesture, from her lover there,
And they are gone, and no one knows where.
And they have mounted on the swiftest horse,
The fleetest steed the Alcalde ever owned

They ford the Carmel in its swiftest course,
The old sea-bay behind them moaned and moaned,
And many a cypress gnarled by storm and wind
There in the moonlight they have left behind.
Into the mountains, all the night they rode,
On narrow ways, along the canyon's side,

Where moon and stars no more the pathway showed,
Till the bright dawn the flying lovers ride,
Then change their course, for path there now is none,
And leave the horse and climb the rocks alone.
And still a day, now downward toward the sea,
Some ignis fatuus beckons them along;

Though tired of limb and hungry they may be,
They think they hear some soft, sweet siren's song—
It is the sea-wave's voice alone they hear,
Forever sweet to any lover's ear.
And they have reached the hemmed-in ocean's shore,
Cliffs right and left, behind them but despair.

Are they pursued, there is not any more
The smallest hope of further flight than there:
But see! a ship is yonder passing by,
Or is it a phantom of the mist and sky?
Full-sailed it rides, yet scarcely passes on—
" 'Tis not a league," cried Ivan, "from the shore,

Trust to my arms: a thousand times I've gone
Down in the deeps and braved the ocean's roar.
Here it is calm, and yonder ship may prove
A rest from flight, a refuge place for love."
And they are gone into the mist and wave,
Far out of sight of each pursuing one.

If in the sea they find a lovers' grave,
Now who may know, since mist and ship are gone!
Time and the sea, no matter, kind or rude,
Can cover all, pursuers, and pursued.
Still, from you cliff, where fisher-folk repair
On moonlight nights the ocean to behold,

'Tis said they see, if but the mist be there,
A ship all shining like the ship of old,
And on the deck a lady walks serene,
Still in her wedding dress, of gold and green.

Publication. *The Bells of Capistrano and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1916), pp. 55–80.

La Favorita

A Tale of the Spanish Days in California

'Twas in the golden summer-time,
When mocking-birds their carols sung,
And friars heard the soothing rhyme,
Soft as their own Castilian tongue.

The mission bells of San Jose
In yonder valley sounded near,
And echoing hills all seemed to say,
"Ave Maria, welcome here!"

'Twas in the golden summer-time,
There where the summers longest stay,
A friar pilgrim sought to climb
The mountain road to Monterey.

The purple wings of morning fanned
The golden poppies everywhere,
And by the sea and on the land
The roses scented all the air.

'Twas in that sweet, delicious clime,
Where June goes ling'ring on and on,
Where cold nor storm nor winter-time
May bid the roses to be gone.

So on the king's highway he went
Toward yonder fair horizon's rim;
Above him shone God's azure tent,
And all the world seemed made for him.

It was Vincenzo, knight of God,
Defender of the missions, when
His lifted cross had overawed
The swords of twice a hundred men;

A saintly man, and pure of heart.
Along the shores there was a tale
That once, when pilgriming apart,
His eyes had seen the Holy Grail.

Not this alone; his voice, his eye,
Such mystic power possessed, a zeal
For that Christ cross he held on high;
No soul withstood his heart's appeal.

Brown-robed and sandaled, staff in hand,
At times he rested by the sea,
Looked at the sea-waves come to land,
Looked at the sea's infinity.

And thought of that most holy shrine
Whereto his pilgrimage was bent;
"Dear Serra's grave, O Dios mine,
There I would kneel and be content."

A little while his feet have pressed
That heaven-born valley of delight;
Sweet Carmel vale, not east nor west
Are hills so green or scenes so bright.

There in San Carlos' shrine he knelt,
He crossed him twice and meekly prayed;
When sudden on his cowl he felt
A woman's hand—and sprang dismayed.

No ghost—too fair the being seemed,
With heavenly eyes and golden hair;
He knew not if he slept and dreamed,
Or if it were an angel there.

"Thou know'st not who I am," she said,
"But here in dear Carmelo's shrine
I too would humbly bow my head
And bid thee hear this tale of mine.

"Outside these doors three cavaliers
Impatient wait to claim my hand;
And they are armed with sword or spears,
And each is lord on sea or land.

"Not much I love, nor heart have I;
I have a hundred loves withstood;
And he I choose will surely die;
That much is writ in Spanish blood.

"For, spite of loves my fairness won,
Still I was never yet content;
Like chaff they seemed when all was done;
Like chaff they came, like chaff they went.

"And all the time my thoughts have run
On a strange promise that I made,
And how tomorrow's setting sun
Will set upon a heart dismayed."

"I know thee well," the friar spoke;
"Thou art that far-famed Isabel,
La Favorita; she who broke
More hearts than all my beads could tell.

In truth she was that Isabel;
No one so beauteous far or near;
Where'er she went she cast a spell
On humble folk or cavalier.

The sky's blue light was in her eyes;
Such loveliness of cheeks she had
As in the rose's petals lies;
A face men seeing once were glad.

If Spanish ships sailed down the shore,
The Spanish sailors all would say,
"Oh, let us have one look the more
At Isabel of Monterey."

The brown-robed friars passing by
Would count a bead or two for her,
Say "Ave Maria" with a sigh,
Almost forgetting who they were.

At festival and rout and ball
Her satin slippers skimmed the floor;
One felt he had no heart at all,
Or else he felt it throb the more.

What though it was a land where reigned
A hundred beauties everywhere?
He had been blind, or else had feigned,
Who saw another like to her.

What though it was a land where men
Were rich in pearls from yonder bay,
Where gold lay hid in every glen,
And ladies shone in fine array?

She would be finer than them all
In pearls and gems and rich attire,
That when she entered rout or ball
The dancers stopped but to admire.

She would have jewels such as shone
In fair Loretto's sacred shrine;
"Why should some wooden image own
A hundred pearls outshining mine?"

And so it was one afternoon
Down on the plaza by the sea,
She walked and heard the sea-waves' tune;
The sea-waves kept her company.

When suddenly three lovers came;
They had been suitors many days;
They told her of her beauty's fame,
Her ears heard nothing but their praise.

But they were weary of delay,
And would she not be less unkind
And, whether yes or whether nay,
Now tell them what was in her mind?

She smiled and jestingly replied,
"Tomorrow night's th' Alcalde's ball;
There in the dancing I'll decide
Which is the knightliest knight of all.

"I have great love for jeweled rings
And pearls most precious in the land;
Who best of these tomorrow brings,
Tomorrow night shall have my hand."

And this is she, fair Isabel,
Now kneeling at the altar rail;
Each act, each word, she fain would tell;
The friar listened to her tale.

Again she spoke: "Dear Father, look!
My suitors wait outside the door;
No more delaying will they brook,
This day I have, and one day more.'

A light illumed the friar's face,
A light as if from heaven sent;
Not once before in all her days
Had look so strange on her been bent.

Sweet were his eyes so soft and brown,
Such eyes as angels might possess,
Or such as Raphael's pictures crown
When looked at in their loveliness.

She heard his voice; and never yet
Had kinder, sweeter tones been heard;
What wonder if her eyes were wet,
Or that her soul was deeply stirred?

A moment, and she seemed to think
Life's curtain parted, as it were,
And she herself upon some brink,
And those deep eyes were pitying her.

The friar, list'ning, seemed to know
The thing that was her heart's desire:
On the great morrow should she go
To sell her soul for gold and hire?

"Thou seek'st for guidance? Maiden! go!
Keep thou the promise lightly given;
What words to answer thou shalt know;
There shall be light that hour from heaven."

As in a dream she left the place;
A something spoke within her breast;
She felt the bright eyes on her face,
They told of peace and calm and rest.

The sun was set; the candles shone
In the Alcalde's hall of state,
And torchlights back and forth were blown
Among the roses by the gate.

Within was festival and dance
And sound of flute and castanet;
And dark eyes glowed as if by chance
On darker eyes more glowing yet.

A little while the feast was on,
The tables groaned with fruits and wine,
And through the windows from the lawn
Came breath of rose and eglantine;

And look! Among the guests was one—
A brown-robed priest of quiet mien;
He had come late, this silent one,
And softly joined the happy scene.

And now 'twas whispered round the board:
"This very night we all shall hear
Which of the knights with star and sword
La Favorita holds most dear."

Soon, too, amid the toasts and wine,
The lovers entered in the hall;
The first one's gifts were lands and kine,
'Twere wearisome to name them all.

The second spoke: "Great pearls have I
Like those Loretto's self doth wear;
Sweet counterfeits—T'd have them lie
Upon my sweet heart's golden hair."

Proud rose the third: "No copies mine,
No counterfeits by fairy elves;
Last night I came from yonder shrine,
I bring Loretto's pearls themselves."

A thrill of horror ran around;
When to the door a guardsman came,
With burning words and voice profound
He called the guilty lover's name.

"Five nights ago the sacristan
At far Loretto's church was slain;
Hast thou the pearls? Thou art the man;
Upon thy soul the guilt is lain!"

Dumb and in rage the lover stood,
The shackles clanked upon his feet;
The guests all crossed themselves, for blood
Seemed on the bread, the wine, the meat.

And look! Now rises at the board
Yon silent friar, cross in hand;
His tender eyes, his tenderer word,
At once the assembled guests command.

Kindly he speaks: "Fair Isabel,
Thou seest now how vain is pride;
There's but one pearl that doth excel,
There is no other pearl beside.

"Well didst thou pledge thy life to give
For the one pearl the highest priced;
More high than all—behold and live!
I bring thee here the tears of Christ!"

As comes sometimes without a thought
Some mem'ry of forgotten things,
As if the mind a moment caught
A glimpse of the old happenings.

So, suddenly, to Isabel
Came thoughts again of yonder shrine,
Again she felt the holy spell,
The eyes, the voice, almost divine.

And they are calling her again,
The shrine, the cross, of yesterday;
With tears, as falls the summer rain,
“Here are my pearls,” they heard her say.

“I will do penance for my pride;
There is a convent by the shore,
There many days will I abide
In doing service for the poor.”

And yonder where the sea-waves moan
By yonder convent, on the hill,
Fair Isabel is fondly known;
She is La Favorita still.

And often on the king’s highway
A friar pilgrim waves his hand;
He waves it twice, as if to say:
“Your pearl is noblest in the land.”

Publication. *The Bells of Capistrano and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1916), pp. 81–94.

Variorum. The 1929 witness preserves the same romance with local corrections and resetting variants. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 192–203.

At San Diego

I hear the bells, the mission bells
Of San Diego town;
Across the bay the echo swells,
And over the hills so brown,
And into the valley and canyons deep,
When the sun is going down.

I think I hear the friars still,
The saintly priests of Spain,
Come down the valley and round the hill,
From the mission walls again;
And I hear them chant as they used to chant,
To the mission bell's refrain.

I see the palm tree's stately head
Beside the mission wall,
The bending stream by mountains fed,
The canyon deep, the waterfall,
And hill, and palm, and valley fair,
And God's own mountains watching all.

And San Miguel lifts high his dome
Far over rock and tree,
The wild deer and the eagle's home,
The mountains at his knee,
While Loma bathes his rocky breast
Deep in the western sea.

I see the ships, the Spanish ships,
Ride in the western bay,
Where safe at last from wind and gale,
The pride of sea kings lay.
And the friars see them, and think of home,
As they cross themselves and pray.

And far along the valley's sweep
I hear the vesper chime,
And out of canyons dark and deep
Comes back the mystic rhyme;
And not a soul but prayeth there
For it is a holy time.

Gone are the halls where long ago
There dwelt that brotherhood,
And bare brown walls and arches low
Mark where the mission stood,
And the moping owl makes there his home,
Where he feedeth his hungry brood.

Miguel still lifts his lofty head
Above the mountains gray,
And Loma Point still makes his bed
Far in the western bay;
But the times are changed, and the days are dead,
And the friars—where are they?

Changed, changed is all save yonder sea,
And yonder mountains brown,
The breakers' deep-toned symphony
When the tide is going down,
And the voices of the mission bells
Of San Diego town.

Publication. *The Bells of Capistrano and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1916), p. 95.

Variorum. The 1929 witness preserves the same poem with local corrections and resetting variants. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 236–239.

ANTHOLOGY AND MAGAZINE AFTERLIFE

Periodical and anthology verse, 1917–1922

An Iowa anthology appearance followed by two poems recovered from the local journal archive.

A Ballad of the Corn

Oh, the undulating prairies,
And the fields of yellow corn,
Like a million soldiers waiting for the fray.
Oh, the rustling of the corn leaves
Like a distant fairy's horn,
And the notes the fairy bugles seem to play.

“We have risen from the bosom
Of the beauteous mother earth,
Where the farmer plowed his furrow straight and long.
There was gladness and rejoicing
When the summer gave us birth,
And the winds awakened music with their song.

“We are children of the sunshine,
We are children of the rain,
We are children of the dew and summer air;
We are children of the prairie,
And the fields of yellow grain,
And the farmer's benediction is our prayer.”

Oh, the sunshine and the beauty
On the fields of ripened corn,
And the wigwams and the corn-rows where they stand.
In the lanes I hear the music
Of the faintly blowing horn,
And the blessed Indian summer's on the land.

Publication. *Prairie Gold*, ed. Johnson Brigham, Lewis Worthington Smith, and Helen Cowles LeCron (Chicago: Reilly & Britton, 1917), p. 234.

Variorum. The later book witnesses preserve the same poem with only local wording and punctuation changes. Later witnesses: *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 37; *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 79.

The Lost Heart

I've lost my heart, a silly little thing;
Yet all I had, and valued very high;
Oh, you would know it in its wandering,
Should some one find it, may be, passing by.

No, 'tis not lost, I know most where it is—
Safe in yon harbor of my lady's breast,
Beneath yon rose I saw her fondly kiss;
O happy rose, to be so doubly blest.

No, 'tis not lost; bring it not back to me—
For see, that rose is but a secret sign—
While on her breast that happy rose I see
I know who has it—that lost heart of mine.

Publication. *The Lyric West*, vol. 1, no. 6 (October 1921), p. 26. Text checked against the original journal scan in the local archive.

California Song

A song, a song for the dear old state
By the beautiful western sea—
From the Sunny South to the Golden Gate,
Oh, there is the land for me.
There where the mystical mountains seem
Touching the skies above,
And the desert lies in a misty dream,
There, there is the land to love.

A song, a song for the times of old,
When the padres tilled the sod,
And led the sheep to the Master's fold
In the beautiful fields of God.
Oh, gone and broken, the arch and wall
Built by the padre's hand—
But the sounds of the mission bells recall
The tale of a vanished land.

And still forever the sea is heard,
And the tide comes into the shore,
And the rapt'rous songs of the mocking bird
Are sweet as they were of yore.
'Tis there forever I long to be,
In that land by the blue sea-tide;
Oh, rather one smile of that land for me
Than all of the world beside.

Publication. *The Lyric West*, vol. 1, no. 10 (February 1922), p. 27. This appearance is absent from the journal's compiled author index; text checked against the original scan.

THE PONY EXPRESS AND OTHER POEMS, NEW AND OLD

Stage V | Late gathering and California retrospect, 1925

1925. Poems first collected here are printed in full; later reprints of earlier poems are recorded in the variorum notes attached to their copy-texts.

The Pony Express

In 1860-61 the American government and people were absolutely without any rapid communication with California and the Pacific Coast. Secession was threatening everywhere, and California was about to be dragged out of the Union. A quick line, known as "The Pony Express," was organized, reaching from St. Joe, on the Missouri river, to California. The riders, sixty in number, rode as high as one hundred, even two hundred miles a day, stopping only two minutes, at relay stations, to change horses. They went on the dead run for two thousand miles, relaying every fifteen or twenty miles. No animal, save the half-tamed broncho, and no men, save the hardy sons of the desert, were capable of the unbelievable exertion. They carried a small mail pouch, with only government, or valuable letters and drafts, all written on tissue paper to save weight. Postage was about \$5.00 an ounce. At the moment of California's greatest peril, these fast riders fairly flew across the desert and mountains, with a message of President Lincoln, ordering California to "raise regiments at once and save the State." Many are of the opinion that without these quick-carried orders California might have been lost to the Union. W. F. Cody ("Buffalo Bill") was one of the riders. The route at times led through regions infested by hostile Indians. One or two riders, and numbers of men at the little isolated stations on the desert, were killed. The story of the heroism of these men is related in the annexed poem.

Did ever you hear of the pony express?
(Carried the mail on the plains, you know)
Never such riding as theirs, I guess,
On burning desert or field of snow.

Two thousand miles as the crow might go,
That was the journey the riders went
On the Utah trail from old St. Joe
To the sunset side of the continent.

Sixty riders are on their way,
Riding fast as a horse can run;
Thirty ride to the break of day,
And thirty ride toward the setting sun.

“Swift as the wind” is the first command;
“Ride as if it were life or death;
Fear not desert, nor burning sand,
Ride so long as your horse has breath.”

“A hundred miles is your run today;
Ride as never you rode before;
’Tis twenty miles to the first relay,
A fresh horse waits at the station door.”

A fresh horse bridled and saddled stands,
Swift as any of Ukraine breed;
Arab, Cossack, nor eastern lands,
Boasted ever so fleet a steed.

“Your broncho is wild as the winds that blow
Over the desert, where he was bred;
Like that tempest unchained he’ll go,
Swift and swifter, till he is dead.”

“Quick, you’re nearing the station now;
Only a minute is yours to spare;
Quick, the mail at your saddle bow—
Spring to the horse that is waiting there.”

“Ride for your life in the Red Skin’s land;
They are waiting yonder to have their prey;
Murderous chiefs of the Pawnee band
Fired on Cody but yesterday.”

So he went on his lonesome way,
Hurrying under the pale moonlight,
Where the whitened bones of the bison lay;
They seemed like tombstones in the night.

On and onward along the trail,
Fearing nothing that may betide;
He, and a horse, and a pouch of mail,
Only these, and the night, beside.

Only these, and the mesquite bush,
And the gray coyote's lonesome cry—
These alone in the desert's hush,
And the silences of the starry sky.

On till the dawn on the desert breaks;
Rest, the ride of the night is past;
Another rider the mail pouch takes,
He'll ride as far and he'll ride as fast.

Another yet, and another still—
Many riders the trail will keep.
By sandy desert and lonesome hill,
By snowcapped mountains and canyons deep.

So they galloped from east to west—
Foaming horses and brave-born men;
Swimming now on some river's breast,
Yonder now on the trail again.

Only once does a rider fail—
A redskin's arrow has pierced him sore—
And a riderless horse from the lonesome trail
Comes foaming back to the cabin door.

"Now, who'll venture the road to ride,
Who dare carry the great news on?"
And they think of the rider who bravely died
On the lonesome road at the break of dawn.

Suddenly, and a shout is heard—
And Cody, the rider, has dashed in sight;
Eighty miles like a frightened bird,
He has galloped fast in the starless night.

Worn and weary, his ride is done—
But no—he thinks of the comrade dead,
And none to carry the great news on,
"I will try myself," was all he said.

Just a moment for breath—and then
A change of horse—like the wind he's gone,
Wolves may howl on the road again,
He hears them not as he gallops on.

On he thunders, and on—and on—
Fifty miles on the road he's sped—
He and his horse, and the streaking dawn,
And another fifty miles ahead.

See, he's reaching the canyon now,
The rattling hoofs of his horse are heard,
And the grizzly slinks to the mountain brow,
And the panther's feast of the night's disturbed.

Long the people have stood in doubt,
Waiting, watching and praying some—
When over the hill is a mighty shout,
“The mail—the mail”—they have seen him come.

Clear to the sea is the shouting sent,
Roll of drums for the news is great—
And they hear the voice of the president:
“Arm your people and save the State.”

Lost is the trail in the desert sand—
And the wolf still howls as he did of yore,
But never again in the lonesome land
Will the riders ride as they rode before.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 11–14.

A Christmas Letter

When the Christmastide comes on again,
 And the room is a blaze of light,
 And the Christmas wreaths on the windows say,
 “There’s joy in the house tonight”—
 When the stockings hang by the chimney side,
 And the candles are on the tree,
 And you turn to lighting them, one by one,
 Won’t you light just one for me?

When the carpet’s rolled from the parlor floor,
 And the polka and waltz begin,
 And there’s nothing but joy outside the door,
 And nothing but joy within—
 Won’t it seem just then that you hear me say,
 Though like to a dream it be—
 Betwixt the dance and the players play,
 “Won’t you dance just once with me?”

When the moment comes that is best of all,
 And your heart with a rapture swells,
 And the Christmas presents are handed round
 By the man with the sleigh and bells—
 And the happy voices of children come
 To your heart with a new delight,
 And the whole world seems just a happy dream,
 On the blessed Christmas night—

And all at once in your mind there’s one
 Who was not at the Christmas tree,
 And you puzzle your mind for an hour to think
 Of a gift you shall send to me—
 Well, here is the gift that is best of all,
 On earth, or in heaven above—
 There is no gift that is like to this—
 The gift of your simple love.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 16.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 55.

Moonlight on the Desert

To-night the moon lights all the desert sand;
There is no sleep—just waking dreams for me;
And far I see the dim cold mountains stand
Robed sentries, watching by this desert sea.

Yet nearer now, close on the desert's rim,
Red walls of rock stretch onward with the plain;
There in the moonlight, and the shadows dim,
Weird forms are theirs, of castle, tower and fane.

Last night I saw them by the setting sun—
Celestial most they seemed, close to the sky;
The twilight came, and walls and towers were gone,
Mist and the moonlight veiled them suddenly.

Above the rumbling of the flying train
The lonesome coyote's voice I seem to hear;
There is not on the land nor any main
A cry so desolate, a sound so drear.

The clustering sage-brush in the moonlight seem
Gray-coated fairies bidding us to stand
And share with them the desert's lure and dream,
Or dance with them upon the desert sand.

Three things I love beyond all things on earth:
The purple mountains, and the grey old sea,
And the lone desert; since creation's birth,
Somehow, they speak of God's infinity.

So, in the stillness of the desert night,
With yonder moon upon the desert sea,
I watch the stars slide downward out of sight,
And though alone, I have great company.

Yet wert thou with me in these silences,
Where night and desert seem as things divine,
"Twere like a dream of some sweet blessedness,
And doubled joys this summer night were mine.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 17.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 56.

Where Are the Kings of Yesterday?

Yesterday?

Where are the kings of yesterday?
 Is it a dream they're passing on?
 I heard a voice that seemed to say,
 They'll soon be gone—they'll soon be gone.
 The crimson robes they used to wear,
 The crowns, the jewels—where are they?
 Gone like to bubbles in the air—
 Where are the kings of yesterday?
 Imagination is as naught
 Compared with things of sterner clay;
 Cold truth, a wilder tale has brought,
 Where are the kings of yesterday?
 In exile some, in stranger lands,
 Like ghosts they walk their weary way,
 In far-off isles, on Holland sands,
 Behold the kings of yesterday.
 The world has wakened from its dream,
 There's something more than to obey,
 And things are greater than they seem—
 Where are the kings of yesterday?
 On pitying roads they walk alone,
 For them the skies are dark and gray,
 Misfortune seems their very own,
 Where are the kings of yesterday?

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 20.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 59.

When I Was Twenty

“Time walks on crutches oftentimes,
But it has wings as well,
And never was it known to stop,
Nor rest, one little spell.

When I was twenty, then it seemed
Time went so very slow;
At thirty, it had changed its gait,
I then could see it go.

At forty, I was married then,
And children had, a set;
But then their prattle only made
‘The horse go faster yet.

At fifty—that they say’s the time
When life is at its best;
But in a trice and it is gone,
And one has never rest.

At sixty, then a slower gait
You’d look for anyway;
But not a bit; what was a week,
Has now become a day.

At seventy, you sure would look
To see a slowing up;
But bless me, it is only then
You’ve scarcely time to sup.

At eighty, well, I know of that,
Yes, more; of eighty-one—
And somehow time has dropped his crutch
And now is on the run.

Well—he it so, I’ll keep my steed
I once had thought so slow,
And bravely ride, and hold the rein,
However fast it go.

And if at last I reach the gates,
The place I hope to win—
May good old Peter simply smile,
And bid me to come in.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 27–28.

My Birthday

Who knocks? come in! My birthday—ha!
You startled me—But then
Who would have thought a twelve-month back
You'd come so soon again?
There was a time, in younger days,
I thought you came too slow;
I longed to see a quicker step—
But that was long ago.
Well, well—I'm glad to see you come
At this your annual call—
'Tis better have a day like this
Than have no day at all!
What am I doing? Much the same
As when you saw me last;
An idle looker-on at games
That others play so fast.
Oh, thank you, yes, I'm middling fair
To tolerable, that is—
I've got no broken ribs nor back,
Nor gout, nor rheumatiz.
I still can wander in the fields,
And laugh, and play, and run,
And, for old boys like you and me,
The world has lots of fun.
I love my wife, a book, a friend;
I like a real good time—
And comes a maid with melting eyes,
I put her into rhyme.
And then I let the merry world
Go merry as it can,
Nor ask to see the riddle read
Of the eternal plan.
I've heard them guess of other worlds,
And oftenest guess amiss;
Enough for me if I but know
The one straight road in this.
I'll leave to Him, the master hand,
The thing that is to be;
And know that He who builds the stars

Knows what is best for me.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 35–36.

Good-bye, Maggie

Good-bye, dear one, a word before you go—
Although you scarce may hear the things I say;
You seem so quiet there, one cannot know
If you'll be with us at the break of day.

Oh, things I've said a thousand times to you
I would repeat, if only you could hear,
Things of the past, and the bright days we knew
When heaven was mine because that you were near.

How like a dream, those two and fifty years!
For heaven did smile so often on us then
That even now amid my blinding tears,
I think I was the blessedest of men.

For every day you were my helping friend,
My joys or pains, you made them yours as well,
For we were lovers to the very end,
And will be still—wherever you may dwell.

A little while and those alluring eyes,
Now tired with pain, that shone so wondrously,
Will waken yonder in some paradise,
And gladden angels as they gladdened me.

And those dear ones who left us long ago
For that fair land that you are going to—
Hark to their welcome—yes, for them I know
Heaven will be dearer just because of you.

But oh, for me! how different will appear
The scenes we two have long and fondly known;
The flowers will bloom—but you will not be here,
The birds will sing—but I will be alone.

Yet not alone, for many a flower there'll be
And soft sweet music at the close of day,
And heavenly notes of song-birds minstrelsy,
To tell me dear—you are not far away.

And so I'll try to think it is God's will,
That you and I should part a little while—
And be content to have it thus until
I see again the beauty of your smile.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 39–40.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 81–82.

The Sweetest Girl in Town

Would you know the charm of it?
I'll tell you what it is—
It is not paint, nor powder, lad,
Nor anything like this.

'Tis not the ribboned furbelows,
Nor any silken gown—
That makes you glad to see her face—
The sweetest girl in town.

It's just the lightness of her step,
The lovelight in her eye,
The smile that rests upon her lip,
That makes a lover sigh.

She's just a bit of Nature's self,
A wild rose of the land,
And blushes on her happy cheek
Were never made by hand.

Oh, that is all the charm of it,
There is no more than this—
Oh, that is all the charm of it,
She is just what she is.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 41.

Daffodils and Daisies

'The april's all your own, dear,
When grass begins to green,
And daffodils and daisies
Are in the garden seen.

The May belongs to you, dear,
When apple blossoms fall,
And all the birds are singing
Beside the garden wall.

The June it is your own, too,
When lilies are in bloom,
Likewise the dear, red roses,
With all their sweet perfume.

Oh, all that's sweet and lovely,
On any land, or sea,
They all belong to you, dear,
But you belong to me.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 42.

That Beau of Mine

Here's a Laddie I love, but you never
Could guess in the world who it is,
But the moment I hear that he's coming,
My heart's in a rapture of bliss.

He never has asked me to marry,
He doesn't know how to propose,
Though surely he knows of my feeling,
This loveliest one of my beaus.

If sleeping or waking I see him,
His hand tangled all in my hair,
Should he long for a kiss, and should take it,
I'm sure that I never would care.

Of course 'tis a secret, but listen,
If really you're dying to know—
'Tis Bobby, my two-year-old baby,
And that is my loveliest beau.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 43.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 83.

Brownie

Hope sometime when I have crossed the border
My Brownie dog will come and meet me there,
It seems to me it might be Heaven's order
That we should still the old affection share.

We were such friends, we two, whate'er the weather,
And well he knew he could not be forgot;
There was no day we did not go together,
No scene of beauty that we had not sought.

I know another just beyond the border
Who sore would miss him if he never came,
And she will ask some angel or immortal
In yonder book to write down Brownie's name.

Delight were mine, I'm sure, in added measure,
If fondly wishing it I only knew,
That in that land of love and light and pleasure,
Our little Brownie would be with us, too.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 44.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 84–85.

The Happy Man

I saw a river rolling by,
In wondrous haste, it seemed to be,
And oftentimes I heard it sigh,
“There is no peace but in the sea.”

Life, too, 's a river rushing on,
And discontent sits on the shore,
Till, like a bubble, all is gone,
And fate steps in and shuts the door.

The happiness that once we knew,
The golden days still give us zest,
But spite of all we think or do,
The memory of it is the best.

Ours is the rosebud and the rose,
A little while they scent the air,
Then it is lost; who knows, who knows,
Perhaps we'll find it over there.

The winds were fair but yesterday,
And I was on the shining sea,
But land, the land, was far away,
And there I still had wished to be.

A fortune fell into my hands,
And friends enough I quickly met,
And I could roam in many lands,
But there was something, something yet.

Happy the man who often finds
His little cup filled to the brim,
Who drinks it down, and never minds
Whatever fate has sent to him.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 51.

'Just Down and Out'

He was down and out, as the saying goes,
Of hope he hadn't a single ray,
And his wretched look and his ragged clothes,
It seemed he might have been born that way.

Discouraged? No! It was more than that,
He had asked for a job that very day,
But the boss just looked at his shoes and hat,
No tramp for him and he turned away.

He rang the bell at a rich man's door,
But the girl in the cap just stared and said:
"If you'd work a little, you wouldn't be poor,
And you wouldn't come begging around for bread."

Yes! I knew him once, it was long ago,
As dapper a youth as there was in town,
But the fates somehow, oh, I hardly know,
Just caught him and held him and dragged him down.

And so he drifted the lonesome road,
It is so easy to drift, they say,
When you haven't a roof for a night's abode,
Or half a loaf for a winter's day.

None ever asked, for they did not care,
How rags and wretchedness came about,
They only said, with an icy stare,
"That fellow yonder is down and out."

But on a sudden a new hope came,
A woman's voice in a tone of love,
"Look up, have courage in Christ's sweet name,
The stars are shining somewhere above."

Surprised, he listened, it seemed the blue
That moment shone in a clouded sky,
And the light of the sun came peeping through,
And the Christ in the woman was passing by.

I met him there on another day,
A happier soul there was not about,
And she who did in the Christ-like way,
Had saved a man who was down and out.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 55–56.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 95–96.

The Knights of the Pencil and Pen

*And Pen**

When the knights of the pen and the pencil,
Enchanters of women and men,
Like swallows shall visit their roof-tree,
What welcome we'll give to them then!

When the writers of love and romances,
And the poets of beauty and song,
Shall gather like sweet birds of passage,
With hearts that have loved them so long.

May the scenes they revisit remind them
Of days when their fancy was young,
Ere the tales and romances were written,
Or the songs of the poets were sung.

May the brook and the hill and the wildwood
Still call as they called them before,
Ere the laurel was bound on their foreheads
Or their ships had sailed off from the shore.

May they drink in these days of October,
These forests of scarlet and gold;
And, touched by the goldenrod's beauty,
New visions of wonder behold.

May they draw from the wells of their fancy
New glories of things that are fair;
Things deep as the deep of the ocean,
Things light as the light of the air.

May the pictures of beauty still linger,
Soul-dreamings of things that are true—
The things that are felt by the many
But only are said by the few.

May the gods and the muses be with them—
Melpomene, Clio, to bring
The fire from Olympian heaven,
The torch that shall burn while they sing.

And we'll see them and look in their faces,
These wonderful women and men,
Who captured our hearts and our graces,
These knights of the pencil and pen.

Note: Recited at a reunion of writers and artists at Des Moines.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 67–68.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 106–107.

To a Reverend Friend

With a Barrel of Apples on Christmas Day

By eating apples Adam fell,
As we are surely told;
But then, they had no Jonathans
In Eden's happy fold.
From eating apples, such as these,
No harm can ever come;
And Eve would never have been blamed
For giving Adam some.
Besides, she should have gathered them
(That, anyone can see),
Not from a long-forbidden fruit,
But from a Christmas tree.
Now, eat as many as you can,
Nor ask from whence they came,
Nor what they cost, nor where they grew,
Nor anybody's name.
For seeking knowledge was the thing
That caused those people's fall,
And brought the legendary curse
Upon us, one and all.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 70.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 109.

To 'Jim'

November 23, 1923

Old friend—today you're eighty-five,
And I was that in last July;
Astounding quick these dates arrive
And quicker still they pass us by.

Some threescore years at least are gone
Since first as boys we met,
And other years go slipping on—
Still we are boys as yet.

There was no parting of our ways,
Naught could our friendship dim,
You called me "Marsh" through all the days,
And I still call you "Jim."

The desert stretches far today
Betwixt myself and you,
And years have almost swept away
The places that we knew.

The million blossomed prairies where
We wandered many a day,
Are plowed-up fields and going there
I'm sure you'd lose the way.

By Alpine lakes I dwelt and dreamed,
You roamed in many far-off lands;
Far, far apart—and yet it seemed
We still were touching hands.

A little while, the sun goes down,
It is the journey's end,
Not much they'll miss us in the town,
But each will miss a friend.

And when our ships have crossed the line,
With sails all set and trim,
Who knows but in some land divine,
I still will call you "Jim."

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 71–72.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 110–111.

The Yosemite

Stood within a valley deep and green,
Where walls of rock commingle with the sky—
There in cold ether, lofty and serene,
They watch the centuries go marching by.
From dizzy heights adown their granite sides
Leap snow-fed brooks and lovely waterfalls,
While through the vale the Merced River glides
And murm'ring answers to the brooklet's calls.
Below, the fir trees lift their lofty heads,
As if they, too, would touch yon dappled sky,
While noisy waters leap o'er stony beds
And soft green meadows twixt the forests lie.
A thousand years their voice has been the same;
Ere man was thought of in the wondrous scheme—
These rocks, this vale, these mountains without name,
These "Happy Isles" so like a summer's dream.
Now night comes on and yonder silver moon
And shining stars will ride across in state;
There is no noise, save yonder crooning tune
Of waters falling where the mountains wait.
These and the murmuring of the forest trees
That moan forever their undying song;
There is no note on any land or seas
So sad as these, when gentle winds prolong.
Soon yon far peaks that in the moonlight stand—
And others yet, the dimly shadowed ones,
Will seem as watchers of the happy land,
Or gray-robed priests reciting orisons.
Let him, that's touched by high and loftier things
Than this dull round of noise and city strife,
Fly to yon valley and its cooling springs
And taste anew the joyousness of life.
A day, an hour in that enchanted land
And thoughts will rise that often may appal,
Of Him, the Maker, and His mighty hand,
And our own littleness the most of all.
One hour alone in that high vale to be,
Amidst the vastness that is ever there,
And only look on yon Yosemite—
Though speechless, yet that look would seem a prayer.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 73–74.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 112–113.

The Flag

war FLAG is that on yonder breeze?
Among a hundred none so fair;
I've seen it float on far-off seas,
It thrilled my soul to see it there.

I've seen it wave in many lands
Where I have wandered, sad and lone;
There on my heart I'd press my hands,
And weep because it was my own.

I've seen it through black prison-bars,
When death seemed lurking at my side;
"Oh, let me touch yon Stripes and Stars,
I will die happy then," I cried.

Flag of the new world's hope and light,
Be ever this the patriot's prayer:
That kindly hands by day, by night,
May keep our standard ever there.

There by the heavenly breezes fanned,
Hope of new nations yet to be,
A voice far-heard in many a land,
Immortal symbol of the free.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 75.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 114.

Margaret

Dear margaret, you bid me say
 What most in women I adore,
 Well—Beauty in a general way—
 Of course there must be something more.

A woman's voice, when soft and low,
 Is something, too, that touches me;
 It moves us oftener than we know,
 As does some soft-toned melody.

And eyes—brown eyes I do prefer,
 Tho coal-black eyes have more of fire—
 And blue can make my bosom stir,
 But brown, I'm sure, I most admire.

And then there is that subtle charm
 In woman's power to possess—
 A thing that makes the coldest warm,
 Made up of smiles and loveliness.

But, summing up, I will confess,
 A hundred times beyond recall,
 The kindliness that you possess,
 Dear Margaret, is worth them all.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 76.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 115–116.

A California Summer

Oh, fair is California in the winter time, they say,
And the grass will soon be tall enough to mow,
And the odor of the lemon's like a gentle breath from heaven
When the blossoms all are falling like the snow.
The lanes are decked with roses when the merry spring is on,
And the Yucca tree is snowy white and tall—
'Tis now the bees are humming, when the happy spring is coming,
But a California summer beats them all.
Oh, yes, the Alps are joyous and wonderful to see,
In a grandeur that no other land may give;
But my own land is fairer and its blue skies rarer,
And its beauty makes you always glad to live.
Yes, Italy is lovely, with its placid lakes of blue,
Where the nightingale to love and lovers call,
With its dolce far niente, and song and dance a-plenty,
But a California summer beats them all.
What though other lands be sunny and other skies be blue,
Here the purple mountains seem as if divine,
Here the breeze of oceans blowing and the old tide is—flowing,
And the carols of the mocking-bird are mine.
All day I have been dreaming on the sand beside the sea—
And a hundred scenes of beauty I recall
Of lands where seas were flowing and gentle winds were blowing,
But a California summer beats them all.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 77.

The Ballad of Mona Lisa

Again gioconda's wife had gone
To the accustomed place
Where the great master should retouch
The picture of her face.

Three years had Mona Lisa sat
To the great Florentine;
And yet the picture was not done;
Again the fields are green.

They are alone; the greatest soul
In Italy—and she,
No rose and lily all in one
So beautiful could be.

She smiled: "This is my day you know,
It suits my face; and here,
The little clouds that come and go,
Are your loved atmosphere.

"For Leonardo, look, the mists
Across the Arno rest;
And days like these, you always said,
You painted me the best."

Day in, day out, had he not sought
Some mystery to trace?
Something no artist yet had caught,
The soul behind the face?

Her face with each emotion changed,
Some new enchantment wore;
And once, a longing look was hers
That was not hers before.

Day in, day out, he painted on,
And all so tenderly,
Knew all her thoughts, save that great one
He was too blind to see.

Each held a secret neither told—
To realms of love the key;
Yet neither dared the door unfold
To love's great ecstasy.

Entrancing music was her voice—
Soft as the murm'ring firs;
She did not know that listening there
His soul passed into hers.

Again she smiled, and gave her hand,
He kissed it in farewell,
And saw in her entreating eyes
The thing she dared not tell.

He, too, nor dared, nor spoke, nor knew,
That moment was his doom;
As in a dream his tongue was fast,
She slowly left the room.

Transfixed, he waited there, and long
Gazed on his canvas fair,
And gazing saw the broken heart
He had not known was there.

Days passed, and absence only lent
Some new grief to the old;
The sorrowing, mad'ning discontent
Of love that is not told.

Far, far, he wandered by the sea,
As by a phantom led,
But ever in his soul there burned
The words he should have said.

"I will go back," he thought, at last,
"I shall have courage yet,"
And turned his face to that dear spot
Where first their souls had met.

Too late! Where winds the Arno down
To meet the blue sea wave,
They told him where to find the stone
That marked her lowly grave.

But in a palace by the Seine,
In gilded halls of state,
There Mona Lisa's picture hangs
Among the fair and great.

And strangers, ling'ring long, will look,
Chained by the master's spell,
On one whom Leonardo loved,
Yet never dared to tell.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 78–80.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 117–119.

Listening In

'Twas night and I was listening in
To some soft music on the air,
When all at once I heard begin
A song that seemed beyond compare.

Home, Home, Sweet Home, the notes I heard
In strains that were as half divine;
O, singer of that night you stirred
A thousand hearts as well as mine.

With half-closed eyes I seemed to see
A lonesome cabin on the plain,
Its dweller, too, alone, had he
Not listened to your winsome strain.

Outside, the winds were moaning low,
The desert winds are ever sad;
He heard the music and was glad.

His little crystal set alone
His treasure, in that cabin dim;
O girl, who sang, I wish you'd known
The joy your music brought to him.

There was another gladdened well,
A sailor on the boundless blue,
He listened, lady, dare I tell,
He heard and dreamed that night of you.

And one who by her pillow kept
Long vigils all the weary night—
And heard your voice while others slept
She blessed you in her glad delight.

And so in some far solitude,
Where never yet a church-bell rang,
To simple dwellers of the wood,
It seemed as if an angel sang.

O, it must be a joy to sing
A song upon the rapturous air,
And know the gladness that you bring
To tens of thousands listening there.

Tomorrow night will soon be here,
And I, again, be listening in—
And though I may not see you, dear,
I'll hear the happy songs you sing.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 81–82.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 120–121.

At Laguna Beach

When I am tired of all the town,
And long for scenes more dear to me,
I take my staff and wander down
To old Laguna by the Sea.

'Tis but a hamlet, there, I know,
Where one may see the ships go by,
With cliffs above, a beach below,
And O! so wonderful a sky.

Along the shore for miles and miles
The sea-gods build such wondrous things;
One sees but caves, and rocks, and isles,
And crested waves with snowy wings.

And in the purpling distance there
Fair Catalina seems to be
Some phantom island hung in air
Betwixt the blue sky and the sea.

Here painters paint and make their home,
Inspired by rock and breakers' crest,
Nor thinking now of Greece nor Rome,
They copy nature at its best.

They hear the sea; I, too, would hear
The voice of yon great chorister—
Its organ tones when storms are near,
And waves beat round yon rocky spur.

From far-off depths their voices come,
Vast ocean's music wand'ring by;
They speak, and yet they are as dumb,
They ebb, and flow, and pass, and die.

Oh, oft I've thought if one could find,
Words for the music of the sea,
There were no songs of any kind
Like yonder ocean's minstrelsy.

What wonder then if from the town
A little while I would be free,
I take my staff and wander down
To old Laguna by the Sea.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 83–84.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 122–123.

The Lady of the Keys

“There’s a lovely little lady,
A musician, that I know,
She’s been married twenty summers,
So I cannot be her beau.

But all the world may know it,
And this is what I say,
I’d walk the whole town over
Just to hear the lady play.

Were I a noted singer,
And they cheered to hear me sing,
I would have her play the music
Till I made the rafters ring.

Were I a grand piano—
Yes—a Knabe, if you please,
I would tremble just in pleasure
When her fingers touched the keys.

Every little touch, I’d hear it
With a rapturous delight,
For the notes were born in heaven,
That are here in black and white.

Oh, the world is always better,
And the heart is more at ease,
When you listen to the lady
With her fingers on the keys.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 85.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 124.

The Song of Youth

'Tis nine by the old town clock,
And nine by the college bell,
And over the fields in the cold, crisp air,
I hear the echoes swell.
And I hear the words that they say,
“Whatever the world may seem,
Youth’s day is the golden day,
And life’s but a passing dream.”
Oh, the tramping of youthful feet,
I hear on the college stair,
And the songs that are dear and sweet,
As only the youth-songs are.
And the chimes in the belfry still,
Tell ever the same old song,
“The days of youth are the best days,
And life’s but a dream, nor long.”
Then I said to the bell, “Be still,
Nor clatter in endless rhyme,
Of youth and a childish will,
Of only a sweet springtime.
“There is warmth in a summer sky,
And growth in the bladed corn,
There is health when the sun is high,
And joy in a summer’s morn.
“There is brain for the man full grown,
An aim for the bow that bends,
And a scent in the rose full blown,
That only the summer lends.”
But the clanging bell rang on,
“There’s hope in the young man’s breast,
Ere the bud to the rose be blown,
And the first days are the best.”
But I said, “When the autumn comes,
And the woods are a scarlet red,
And the golden sheaves on the threshing-floor
Are ripe for the thresher’s tread,
“When the heart and the brain are tried,
And life to its goal has pressed,
And the trump of fame sounds wide,
The autumn days are the best.”

But again the old bell said,
“‘There’s ever more straw than wheat,
And the thresher tires ere the day is fled,
And fame’s but a passing cheat.”
“Yet the winter,” I said, “though cold,
Has ever a song that’s clear,
With the cattle housed, and the sheep in fold,
And friends and a fireside cheer.
“And the thought of a life well spent,
A dream of a new life near,
With a joy and a sweet content,
That maketh the winter dear.”
But forever the bell said, “No,
The summers may have their zest,
But the spring has the promise-bow,
And the days of our youth are best.”
Then I heard on the college stair,
A clatter of many feet,
And a song in the open air,
A shout of a joy complete.
And I cried to the clanging bell,
“Ring out to the east and west,
To the world ring out, and tell
The days of our youth are best.”

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 86–88.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 125–127.

Land o' Mine

Sing me, throstle, a happy song,
Sing of the sky-blue sea,
There where the breakers are dashing on,
That is the land for me.

There, where wonderful mountains seem
Touching the clouds above,
And the desert sleeps in a happy dream,
There is the land for love.

Mocking-birds in the garden sing,
Calling to one I know,
Fly to her, fly to her, happy thing,
Tell her who loves her so.

Tell her wherever her feet may go,
Under the palm or pine—
There where the golden poppies grow,
That is the Land O' Mine.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 89.

Mrs. L—— and Her Turkey

And Her Turkey

Your turkey, Madame, came to town
Without a fuss or feather,
And ten brave people all sat down
And ate it up together.
And when the matter all was through,
(The bird no longer living),
Each said he felt he never knew
Such jolly good Thanksgiving.
For every one had done his best
To finish up the matter;
Six persons took the legs and breast,
The other four the platter.
And angel cake, quite fit for kings,
And fruits, and cooling ices,
Cranberry sauce, and other things,
Filled up the interstices.
And not a single person thought
To raise the foolish question
If eating such a turkey ought
To give us indigestion.
But every one in kindly word,
Rose up to show he meant it,
And toasted loud the turkey bird,
And likewise her who sent it.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 90.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 128.

The Bay of Avalon

I crossed the sea to Avalon,
 And glad was I the while,
 For like a dream is Avalon
 On Catalina's isle.
 Oh, never bluer sea than this,
 Nor bluer skies above,
 Where many a flower blooms to kiss
 This paradise of love.

Just like a dream the mountains stood,
 Just like a dream the bay,
 And many a nook and inglewood
 In deep recesses lay.
 And sunken gardens of the sea
 In plumes of yellow gold,
 Where homes of mermaid well could be,
 As in the days of old.

Oh, happy ship to sail upon
 A sea forever blue,
 And happy winds to chase and run
 Along the sea with you.
 Farewell, farewell to Avalon,
 And Avalon's blue sea,
 Still may the kindly breezes blow
 To bear me back to thee.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 91.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 129.

The Telephone Girl

I send a message on the wire
To one whose face I've never seen;
But may she have her heart's desire
When all the Christmas trees are green.

And, if a lover comes her way,
I pray he may not come too late,
Or disappointed, hear her say,
“The line is busy, you must wait.”

But, rather, when he stops and woos,
Or claims a kiss beneath the trees,
She, half consenting—half refuse,
Shall ask, “What number, if you please?”

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 92.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 130.

At Eighty-five

He, my friend—you're back again;
My birthday, sure as fate.
Come in—that was a noiseless step,
But what a rapid gait.
Of course it seems a little soon,
At least I found it so;
As I remember you were here
About a year ago.

But still, I'm proud to have you come;
Your visits seem to say,
"He finds the world just mighty good,
And rather likes to stay."
You ask me how I'm getting on!
Well, this, at least, is sure—
I thank the Lord at night and dawn
I'm neither rich nor poor.

I haven't much of worldly things;
What matters—old or new—
I couldn't take the stuff along,
Where I am going to.
I have no mansion of my own,
Nor land—but what of that?
He is the lucky one who finds,
Contentment in a flat.

I have the fields—the open air,
The happy birds that sing,
And he who loveth these, my friend,
Why, he has everything.
There's health in every step you take
In God's delicious open air,
There's music when the birds awake,
For God's own troubadours are there.

And so the years go slipping on,
I scarcely count them any more,
For stars and sea and rosy dawn,
Are mine just as they were before.
Life's but a show for king or clown,
Let's watch the stage a little, then,
Before they ring the curtain down,
Come back and let's shake hands again.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), pp. 93–94.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 131–132.

Inscription on the Shiloh Monument

Brave of the brave—
The twice five thousand men—
Who all that day stood in the battle shock;
Fame holds them dear,
And with immortal pen—
Inscribes their names on the enduring rock.

Publication. *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Press, 1925), p. 95.

Variorum. The later witnesses preserve the same poem; their differences are confined to punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and minor local wording. Later witnesses: *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 135–138.

IN ARCADIA AND OTHER POEMS

Stage V | Late gathering and California retrospect, 1929

1929. Poems first collected here are printed in full; later reprints of earlier poems are recorded in the variorum notes attached to their copy-texts.

In Arcadia

A Legend of San Luis Rey

Note:—San Luis Rey—Name of one of the loveliest and most prosperous missions of the Spanish days of California. It was named for Louis the 9th, the French Crusader. It is situated among the beautiful hills five miles back from Oceanside, 45 miles north of San Diego. It is one of the few missions that is now something more than ruins.

Life at San Luis Rey—as at all the missions in the days of the friars—was pious, self-sacrificing, and strenuous; devoted wholly to converting and training the Indians.

Away from the missions, everybody seems to have lived only for a good time—ease, idleness, enjoyment, excitement and amusement in a semi-barbaric way. That was life to them. In a sense it was half Arcadian, and will never be seen again.

Edwin Markham, the poet, in his California history asks: ‘Had there ever before been such an epoch as that since the light of the golden age faded from the hills and the valleys of the earth?’

There is a land—who has not heard of it?—
Where shines the sun all the sweet seasons through;
There is no winter there; the mountains sit
Forever gazing on the ocean’s blue,
In silence gazing in their purple hue,
As if they’d hear the sea-tides come and go
Across the sands a thousand feet below.

Far in the West that lovely country is,
Where the Sierras stretch their tops along,
Where mocking-birds in ecstasy of bliss,

By night or day, in many a happy throng,
Delight the soul with melody and song—
The lark itself might stop its flight to hear
Its song re-echoed in a voice so dear.
The golden years pass swiftly in that clime,
As once they passed in days now far away,
And singers sing about that olden time
When like a dream the land in quiet lay,
And love and beauty had their happy day,
And no one thought of how things came or went,
In the old days, for all men were content.

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As in Arcadia their lives were cast
In wondrous idleness they spent the day;
Or, if a sorrow for a moment passed,
Or any cloud upon their spirit lay,
With song or dance they cast it all away.
Small were their needs, so much was heaven-lent
In the old days when all men were content.
Of days like these the story I would tell,
Yon Spanish days, by the Pacific shore,
When on the land and on the people fell
A love for joyance, as in time of yore,
A love for joyance never known before;
Whatever came, they took what heaven sent
In the old days when all men were content.

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Imagine then a hundred years have gone,
And Spanish Dons are rulers on the coast,
Whose vast domains for leagues stretch on and on
Where wander herds and flocks a mighty host;
Towns there were none, or very few at most.
But here and there a grand old mission stood
Whose very ruins yet should be our pride;
Half church, half castle, in their solitude,

They were as landmarks all the country wide,
Where friars told of Him the crucified.
An old-time highway stretched along the coast,
The Royal Road, they often call it yet;
A mountain pass it often was at most,
Where the lone seashore and the mountain met;
And there it was the mission homes were set.
A long day's journey lay from each to each
Of these God's houses in the solitude,
And travelers glad the kindly homes to reach,
Found rest and friends where'er a mission stood—
And no one paid for lodgment or for food.
Just their companionship, that was enough;
And many a time, as't were some country inn,
With night all dark, and winds a little rough,
By a bright fire they shortly would begin
Some tales to tell of strange things they had seen.
Thus on a night at old San Luis Rey,
Back from the sea it stands, a league or so,
Some travelers weary with the burning day
Passed round the cup to make the hours go,
Though 'twas the time when cocks begin to crow.
When most had given their stories, or a song,
Had wakened hearts as by some magic spell,
One who was silent all the evening long,
Spoke up and said: "I have a tale to tell
That near this house once on a time befell."
Strange as it seems of that night's company,
And its strange tales, I but remember his;
And hard the task likely enough for me
To give it here, nor give one thing amiss,
For of all arts the hardest one is this.
A clapping hands, a filling up the bowl—
Each listener's eyes the strange narrator scan,
A little cough to emphasize the whole,
A sup or two, and then the tale began;

And memory says, that thus the story ran.

The Story

It happened once, yet not so long ago,
 A spanish noble lived within this land—
 And rich he was with woolly flocks, and lo,
 His acres stretched from mountains to the strand;
 And herds he had, and serfs on every hand.
 For half the Indians in the mountains then
 Were tamed to servitude, and gladly thought
 It some great honor just to serve such men;
 So all the labor of his fields they wrought,
 And watched the herds that mountain lions sought.
 His house was such as rich hidalgos knew—
 Built of adobe, round an open square,
 With long arched corridors, that opened to
 Low rooms as dark as prisons often were;
 Its gates and walls had an old Moorish air.
 Inside the square, a cooling fountain played
 Where pigeons washed their plumage at the noon,
 And lilies, white as wings of angels, made
 Obeisance to the splashing water's tune
 That rose and fell in the sweet winds of June.
 "Not very grand his house," one might have said;
 Yet grand enough there in the vale alone—
 The low-built walls, the red-tiled roof had made
 A kind of splendor all its very own,
 And such as fit this half-way tropic zone.
 In easy idleness their days were spent
 Who lived in that fair valley by the sea;
 As in a dream the seasons came and went.
 Not much they knew of toil or industry,
 Their herds brought wealth—if wealth there need to be.
 The dance, the race, the bull-fight's bloody rings
 Made fierce enjoyment for them every one;
 They loved a horse above all other things,
 And fleeter ones were not beneath the sun—
 And great was he who rode the swiftest one.
 They were like birds that spring from bough to bough,
 Scarce knowing where tomorrow's bread should be—
 Asking of earth enough just for the now,
 So they had dance, and joyous revelry,
 And their bright skies and music's melody.
 Nor use had they for very much of gold,
 Though their attire was splendid every way;

The passing ships brought riches most untold,
Silks from Japan and jewels from Cathay,
And pearls they had from their own shining bay.
And so it was from many a rude abode
Stepped stately girls, dressed as for carnival—
Red-vested gallants to their sweethearts rode
In velvet gear, all golden laced, as well,
While gay serapes round their shoulders fell.
No coming ship from Spain, or anywhere,
But gladly traded for the rancher's stuff;
Shiploads of hides, and tallow, sold them there,
Were thrown by Indians down the deep sea bluff—
The slaughtered herds gave for such trade enough.
Nature, to them, a wondrous bounty gave;
She fed their flocks as from a boundless store;
No fruit or flower the heart might ever crave
But shed abundance on their lovely shore;
They had content, and no one asked for more.
They had the mountains and the shining sea,
And the lone desert, calling to them there,
Strange as is death in its great mystery;
These, and the skies they had, forever fair;
To gaze on them itself was most a prayer.
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In scenes like these Antonio passed his days,
From his own acres scarce he need to ride;
Mountains and lake, and valleys most were his—
Ten leagues in length, and half as many wide
Roamed his great herds from sea to mountain side.
Well, there he lived, this Spanish nobleman,
One son he had, a handsome cavalier—
At rout or dance he was the noticed one,
There was no one quite like him anywhere
At all the ranches, were they far or near.
It was Luigi, all so debonair
Towards every one of all fair womankind;
Yet no one face to him had been so fair
But half disdain was oftenest in his mind;
And one to love he had not cared to find.
Love's roses oft were scattered at his feet;
Too oft he'd seen them bud and bloom and fade,
Ever to think of love that was complete—
Such as sometimes a holy incense made
When it and life were on the altar laid.
Sometimes he wondered much if love could bring

Delights for which he never yet had yearned,
Or was it but some very painful thing,
Some fitful fire that but a moment burned
And then went out or into ashes turned!
Then woman's love; was it not but a whim
To be admired? that was her only cue—
And failing this she is quick done with him
Who fondly, blindly has a heart to woo,
And kneels before her as mad lovers do.
'Though to all love he was indifferent,
Yet loved be Beauty for its sake alone;
For well he knew the gods to Beauty lent
A something greater than of king or throne,
A gift as great as was their very own.
Much had he read of lovers, and their pain;
Were not the books writ full of things so drear,
Of lovers scorned, who in the sea would fain
Forget the faces they had held so dear,
And every hope they ever yet had here?
Had he not heard the wisest sometimes say:
"In all your giving, be it less or more,
Give anything, but not your heart away,
Nor keep for love too much an open door—
Lest grief come in where joy had been before."
Perhaps too much of the sweet world he'd had—
Too many smiles from women much to care
If anything could make him very glad,
Or even sorrowful, such men there are,
Made so by fate, or some unlucky star.
But once, while riding by the ocean side,
His thoughts on races that his horse had won,
A beauteous thing upon the sand he spied,
And caught it quickly as he galloped on;
They could do that, in the bright days ago.
It was a belt of silk and filigree,
And six white pearls shone on it side by side;
And close to these, two black pearls did he see;
Amazed he was, and saw them wonder-eyed:
'Some fair one's pearls," he thought, 'some woman's pride."
And she whose form such a fair thing had worn,
She must herself be beauteous to behold—
And long he looked at it, almost forlorn,
Thinking what loveliness it did enfold,
And could it speak, what romance had it told.
He held it long and all caressingly

Gazed on its pearls, so beautifully set;
Had he not read, in some book over sea:
‘Who finds a pearl makes Cupid in his debt!’
And these black pearls were ten times rarer yet.
Once too he’d read: ‘Who finds a precious thing
And places it that very self-same night
Beneath his head, the moon all shimmering,
And the Great Bear shining full and bright—
Will see a face of very great delight.’
So on that evening he could scarcely wait
Until the stars began their watch to keep,
Or yonder moon shone on his father’s gate
Where soft the night-winds had begun to sweep,
Till deep he fell in a delicious sleep.
He had but slept a little hour or so,
When, in his dreams, a gentle noise he heard
Like rustling leaves when gentle breezes blow,
Or moving wings of some most lovely bird
Or silken skirts now coming hitherward.
That instant there a lovely vision stood
Close by his bed, bidding him rise and go
On a great quest, by town, or field, or wood,
And find that maid whose belt it was, for lo!
Her like in loveliness one could not know.
“Give her the belt as the most beauteous one
Of womankind, or here or anywhere—
For not beneath the moon, or any sun,
Wherever loved and beauteous women are,
Is one so radiant, so divinely fair.”
He took his dream as ’twere a great command
That he should go and seek her everywhere,
And know at last if in that happy land,
Where beauty languished in the amorous air,
There really was a face so wondrous fair.
So deep impressed with that thing of his dream
His life all suddenly a change took on,
Some moving hand mysteriously would seem.
To beckon him that moment to be gone,
Nor scarcely wait the coming of the dawn.
If so indeed she the most lovely is
Of all the fair in this land east or west,
I would pursue it were it but for this—
For beauty’s sake—nor weary in the quest
To see a face that’s so divinely blest.
It was the May, the month of hearts’ desire,

And sapphire skies were bending overhead,
The far-off fields with color seemed on fire,
The dear wild rose a wondrous odor shed,
And rosewood blooms the ground had carpeted.
Arrayed in costume of those days ago,
On such a morn Luigi mounted steed,
And the glad journey bravely started on—
Not caring much to where it yet might lead—
If at the last it only should succeed.
Strange things he saw now in his journeying
Of those old times and of the people's ways;
Still here with us oft remnants of them cling—
Telling strange things of yonder Spanish days,
Though age has dimmed them in a misty haze.
Each day he traveled on his wondrous quest,
The more he saw the land's simplicity—
A pastoral folk, with just sweet plenty blest—
In flocks and herds their riches seemed to be,
And lands that stretched from mountain to the sea.
Now other days he wandered near and far—
Oft to great ranches in some mountain place,
Where girls so often very beauteous are—
Forever hoping there to find a trace
Of what must be so heavenly a face.
Now oftentimes at some great house, whose door
Stood ever open for the stranger guest,
He stopped for days, it might be even more,
And was the custom, and the house's best
And all there was, was on the stranger pressed.
'Twas like an inn, made free to every one—
No door was locked by either night or day;
A ranchman's heart was very easy won,
No thought of recompense or any pay—
"Welcome, come in," were the first words he'd say.
"Take of our best; yours is the house tonight,
Tomorrow, too;" and when the guest arose,
Some silver pieces sure would lay in sight
To use if needed when the stranger goes;
Such hospitality the rancher shows.
His hundred horses fed upon the plain,
Who needed one but left his own, and so
Took one more fresh, and galloped on again,
Nor question asked if it were his or no—
Such things were customs in that long ago.
Now other days have swiftly come and gone,

And other scenes Luigi visited—
Go where he would, he could not find that one
Who here and there like a sweet phantom led—
Whose dreamed of face he blindly worshiped.
Yet, oftentimes when riding on the way,
A shadowy presence seemed with him to ride;
'Twas love a-borning all the happy day,
Then all he saw by him was beautified—
Yet knew he not that love was at his side.
Sometimes a smile, a pretty woman's face
Would touch his heart a little, not for long—
She of his dreams would quickly take her place—
Then he would hum this pretty little song,
Made up that morning as he rode along:
How sweet is love—how very dear love i is.
Words were not made to tell of it at all;
Eyes only tell of love's enraptured bliss,
Eyes only answer to love's dearest call,
'Tis eyes alone that keepeth love in thrall.
How sweet love is, O very sweet love is,
Though like the rose, it fadeth at the dawn—
So be it, yet I dearly would have this,
The first red rose upon the garden lawn,
And love's first kiss, however quickly gone.”
And now and then it seemed a phantom chase—
Hoping such beauty in this world to find;
He had gone far, and not the simplest trace
Of one so fair as this one in his mind
For whom he now so many days had pined.
Most, now, it seemed, he should not further chase
The strange illusion of a fleeting dream,
Beyond the desert there could be no face,
Fair though it were, and beautiful did seem,
Like this he sought whose beauty was supreme.
“I will go back to my old home again,”
He said at last, “and wander by the sea,
There where the pearls on the bright sand had lain,
Perhaps in sleep my dream comes back to me,
And plainer then the vision now will be.”

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Still, when the dawn comes slowly peeping in,
Again he rides along the sandy shore,
Hoping at last some little sight to win,

Some word, some look, a glance, if nothing more,
Ere hope itself forever close the door.
Now here and there a brown-robed traveler
Walks by his 'side, and keeps him company—
And gallant youths, as in those days there were—
Sometimes o'ertook him by the shining sea—
Nor any guessed what his great quest might be.
Once as the shades of evening gathered 'round,
They heard the bells of old San Luis Rey—
Rejoiced they hear the ever-welcoming sound;
They looked and saw the hills back from the bay,
And in their midst the white walled mission lay.
Not in the land was there a lovelier scene
Than yonder valley and its wand'ring stream,
The purpling hills, the mission in between,
The pastoral silence and the ocean's gleam;
To them it seemed a beauteous summer dream.
And now the great gate for them open swings,
And they are welcomed by the friars there;
A troop of neophytes in chorus sings;
They hear the brotherhood in song and prayer;
Again the Angelus sounds on the air.
The busy labors of the day are done,
'Twas like a bee-hive but an hour ago;
The looms, the forge, are resting, every one.
A thousand neophytes with voices low
Give praise for life and everything below.
Now night is on, and darkness has come in;
About the fireside travelers gather 'round,
And soon the tales and merriment begin;
Nor at some inn were happier people found;
Who has a tale—to tell it, will be bound.
Now is there none or any in that hall
Of travelers down the El Camino way,
Like to Luigi, young, and fair and tall,
A likelier youth there was not in his day,
Go where one might from mountains to the bay.
'Take thou this seat," the friar smiling said,
"At my right hand," for well the friar guessed
Something uncommon this one here had led—
He was so handsome, and so nobly dressed—
And then, withal, he seemed to like him best.
Round went the cup in joy and merriment,
And tales were told till half the night was gone,
And no one cared how many hours were spent,

Or if the daylight might be coming on,
And hills be streaked with glory of the dawn.
Right busy they who served the bread and wine,
The men and maids in plain and homespun dress,
And one there serves, it is a face divine—
Few seeing her had called her any less—
So fair she was in perfect loveliness.
Once passing near to young Luigi's seat,
Filling the cups with nectar of the land,
One little moment and their eyes did meet
When as by accident she touched his hand—
Then came a thrill that love could understand.
For there beside him in low-serving gown,
Stood one, the loveliest his eyes had seen:
In one black braid her lovely hair hung down,
So soft her eyes, so loving her mein—
Hebe herself had not more lovely been.
That instant and his dream flashed through his mind,
The fairies' words, how a fair face he'd see
If ever she who'd lost the belt he'd find;
But here was one as fair, perhaps, as she—
Lovelier than this, he knew there could not be.
And anyway, the face he had pursued
Had it not simply led him on and on,
As 'twere a phantom he had madly wooed,
And never once had any nearer won—
Till now all thought of seeing her was gone!
In that quick instant of their meeting there,
Luigi knew and this one knew as well—
A shaft was sped as from the viewless air—
If good or ill, the gods alone could tell;
Yet two lives changed in that sweet moment's spell.
There is a sign that telleth of deep love,
It's only speech, a look, a breath, a sigh,
No stars need drop from out the heavens above,
To tell if love is somewhere passing by—
Luigi knew, nor asked he how nor why.
A little while the dawn came passing on,
Streaking the hills with crimson and with gold,
"The Angelus" had rung an hour ago
And travelers left the kindly mission fold
With thrilling memories of the stories told.
Then in a while another morning came,
And these two walked together hand in hand,
Again the hills in crimson were aflame,

A gentle seabreeze swept the happy land,
And burning love by burning love was fanned.
Yet was there something half uncertain seen
In her dear eyes, an almost doubtful glow,
Half hidden thoughts, whatever they might mean,
She did not tell—Luigi did not know.
Hearts may have depths that stay unsounded so.
Then by a cliff that looked down on the sea,
He told the story of his quest for one—
A maid most beautiful of all, and she
With her sweet beauty, the glad prize had won
There at the mission now three nights gone.
With that he drew from out its hidden place
The shining belt, and pearls all radiant;
A sudden gladness swept across her face—
“Oh! it is mine, the gods my pearls have sent,
Lost on that night that to the dance I went.”
Then half in woe her own sad tale she told
Of a ship wrecked upon this very shore—
How, as a child, a year or two years old,
Brave men had saved her from the ocean’s roar
And left her dying at yon mission door.
From old Cadiz she and her mother sailed
On a fair ship bound for this sunny land;
Once on the way they were by pirates hailed,
And once were wrecked with never help at hand,
And almost lost upon this very strand.
“Left so a waif, my mother lost and gone,
None knew my birth, my name, nor anything—
Laurita, so they called me, so I’m known,
They say I’m twenty just this very spring—
So swift a pace the years go traveling.
That sad strange morning that they took me there
The friars found a necklace that I wore;
A mother’s gift, no doubt, for me to wear,
Whatever thing might hap on sea or shore—
A gift of pearls a princess might adore.
Well, when to womanhood I was most grown,
I took the pearls and made the belt you hold,
In precious filigree it all was sown,
In wire of silver or with threads of gold,
And patterned bravely from fair things of old.
And so one night to a great dance I went,
And wore my belt, ’twas such a dear delight—
And many eyes on it, or me, were bent,

In truth, I think it was a pretty sight—
But going home, I lost it in the night.”
Now they walked on, and looked down at the sea,
And much she told him of the days ago,
And how she grew a pretty girl to be,
In the old mission standing there so lone,
And all the strangeness that her life had known.
“I had a voice, and was made chorister,
To sing in yonder dear San Luis Rey,
With other girls who at the mission were:
And I was best, I heard the friars say,
And mine the prize on many a festal day.”
She told him how when travelers came along,
And all good things the friars made them share
The mission’s cheer—the wine, the tale, the song;
It was her task to help to serve them there
In the plain garb that he had seen her wear.
And now to him she seemed more beautiful
The more she told of other days than this,
And yet too oft a little cloudlet stole
Across a brow he had not dared to kiss—
Across a face that looking at was bliss.
That she loved much her eyes cared not to hide—
On red’ning cheeks one read the story well!
Yet, like a phantom trav’ling at her side,
There seemed a secret that she feared to tell—
Some threat’ning cloud that on her spirits fell.
Now many days, and months, almost, were by,
“Would she not speak?” Luigi longing cried,
‘What stood between them? were it mountain high,
There is no height that love can quite divide,
No land, no sea, but love has oft defied.”
“Should she not break the built-up bars of earth,
Tear down whatever things might stand between
Her love and his; was not love greater worth
Than any jewel that God’s world had seen,
Than anything that ever yet had been?”
Nor yes nor nay had she once clearly said,—
“Would she not speak and end the bitter woe,
Again the roses had grown white and red,
Again the poppies had begun to blow,
Would she not answer, whether yes or no?”
Thus he who once had only scorned at love,
Now shook in passion’s wild and burning way,
Called on the gods in the sweet heavens above

To give him that for which his soul did pray
Or leave him lifeless ere another day.
Then on a day when bees were murmuring,
And yellow poppies like a sea of gold
The dear glad earth seemed almost covering
They stood again by the blue sea that rolled,
Listening as ever to the tale he told.
She listened also, pleading more delay;
'A little while, perhaps tomorrow's dawn
Would give her heart for that which she might say;"
To him it seemed as if all hope were gone,
Some sad'ning fate to him were coming on.
That night the moon shone glad and gloriously
On palm and rose and many an olive grove,
And to the chamber where Luigi lay,
With open windows and the stars above,
Sleep'ess and dying with the pangs of love.
Scarce had the moon in the horizon set,
Scarce had the stars slipped downward toward the day,
Before through fields that still were dewy wet,
Luigi hastened on the well known way,
To where his heart forever bounden lay.
Close by the sea there was their trysting place,
Not distant far was dear San Luis Rey,
Should they meet now, the last time, face to face,
Or would it be the birthtime of a day
When bells should ring for happiness alway?
Already now he heard her footsteps near,
And hands were clasped as yesterday they were,
Yet seeing her he almost seemed to fear,
And scarcely knew if his own heart did stir,
So pale she was when he but looked at her.
At last she spoke: "Luigi, all is gone—
My great sad fear like a black storm did fall,
Last night when vespers had but just begun
I prayed the friar he should tell me all—
My life, my birth, whatever might befall.
Well, of that ship, and many things he spoke;
As to my mother; doubt there could not be—
How like a waif from the wild waves that broke
On yonder strand some brave men rescued me,
An Indian's child," he said, "saved from the sea."
Oft at the mission gossipings I'd heard
Among the girls who on such gossip fed—
"She's no Castillian"—much my soul was stirred,

Knowing that thus I should not ever wed;
And now, at last, I know the truth," she said.
An olive tint that moment seemed to trace
The Indian's blood across her cheek and brow—
Had death itself looked in Luigi's face
He had not had a face so calm as now;
To worse than death the heart must often bow.
"Let it be so,"—he answered, holding fast
The hand that trembled as he spoke the word,
"Whatever blood, or race, or speech, thou hast,
Thou art still mine—the words are yet unheard
To measure love or hearts so deeply stirred."
She spoke again: "Oh, it must be farewell,
This very day the friar bade prepare;
A passing ship whose name I cannot tell,
Goes to the South. I must go with it there,
Nor see thee more nor here, nor anywhere.
"Dear art thou, yes, Oh, doubly dear, and yet,
All I could give thou wouldst not hold it fast,
Better to live not knowing love's great debt,
Just dreaming things that once were dear and past,
Than live regretting the great thing at last.
"That which I am thou wouldst not want alway,
Disdain of friends would be too much for thee;
Too strong my love that ever I should say
Thy days should go in weariness for me—
Better to live not knowing love's great debt.
'Some have done things to save another's life,
I will do more, refusing thee, nor wed—
The scorn thou'st have, were I to be thy wife—
The hard disgrace, were curses on thy head;
Go and forget, ere thou art worse than dead."
"Not so, dear one, on some lone island far,
If need be, just we two would live alone—
Where slanderer tongues of gossips never are,
And only love on the sweet winds is blown,
And words of love the only language known."
"Luigi, think—there is not in the world
A spot so far where scandal could not go—
Embittered words would still at thee be hurled,
And thou be friendless still; lost dear one, no;
What fate has willed, let us but leave it so."
Even as she spoke, on the high hills was seen
A warning flag, that answered back to one
There on the mission in the valley green—

A ship was sighted through the glistening sun,
And quick the news to every hillside run.
She looked and saw the nearing whitening sails,
“No pirate, that, it is the ship that nears
For my sad fate—and now the signal hails,
And to the land the sailors’ long boat steers,
And all is lost—save time and grief and tears.”
That moment, too, from yon Presidio,
Soldiers have come to hasten her away;
At whose command they little care to know,
No farewell words, her duty to obey,
Each looked at each as in cold death’s dismay.
Speechless the two a dreadful moment stood,
Each thinking how below that mighty wall,
In the deep sea, so easily they could
Find death and peace: they heard the sea waves call
In pitying moans—“the sea can end it all.”

* * * * *

That night alone in her poor lonesome room,
Gathering the little that was hers to take,
Sleepless in woe she waited there her doom—
Waited the morn that should in sadness break;
The morn that once was gladness for her sake.
But on that day around the mission went
A story, strange as any ever known—
“That ship,” they said, “to a near isle was sent
And found a woman stranded there alone,
In a sea-wreck she had been thither blown.
“Eighteen long years no human face she’d seen;
Her sole companions, birds and the wild things
That came to think her as some forest queen;
They brought her food, just as the mother brings
To its young wildlings while it coos and sings.
She learned their voices, spoke with every one
As if they had been people of her own—
Companioned them until they each had grown
To her like children that she long had known;
So passed the seasons with her there alone.
It was but yesterday the ship came here
That rescued her, and brought her to our shore:
And scarce her feet on the sweet land was near
Till one she saw who on her slim waist wore
The two black pearls that had been hers before.

Leaping on land she caught in wild embrace
The form of one whose name she did not know—
But one near look at her sweet eyes and face—
And hearing tones that were so dear and low,
She knew her child of that strange long ago.
And stranger yet and almost marvelous,
The child she lost in that great wreck of old,
Was our Laurita, living here with us;”
So said the gossips, as new tales they told,
Of that lost belt of filigree and gold.
For so it happened when her feet were set
Close to the ship, where she should sail in scorn,
Right at its side mysteriously, she met
Her who could say she was Castillian born,
And not an Indian, of a race forlorn.
A little time and birds are caroling
On El Camino downwards to the bay,
And cavaliers touch their guitars and sing,
And flowers are strewn along the happy way,
For see, it is Luigi’s wedding day.
And at the mission of San Luis Rey
There was rejoicing, and the bells were rung,
And all went happy, and the legends say,
For many years, in the Castillian tongue,
One heard the story of Luigi sung.
And true it is, the happy couple went
In loving journeyings up and down the land,
And every sight some newer joyance lent,
Nor was forgot, as they went hand in hand,
The day he found the bright belt on the sand.

Publication. In *Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 9–35.

The Organ Grinder

I saw him playing down the street,
His organ somewhat old and yellow,
A monkey danced about his feet,
A little red-capped funny fellow.

A dozen children up and down
From step and doorway hurried to him
And joyed to see the little clown
Take off his cap for what they threw him.

I, too, a “grown-up” as they say,
Was listening there as glad as any—
When all at once I heard him play
Sweet “Annie Rooney” for my penny:

Oh, music masters of the town
You smile, I know what you are saying,
But listen, nowhere up or down,
Was I so touched as by his playing.

A little while and he was gone
To give some other children pleasure,
I wondered were he playing on
Yon little songs delightful measure.

That night he slept on board or straw,
Nor fame nor gold came ever nigh him;
What matter, if in dreams he saw
The little ones made happy by him?

Publication. In *Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 36.

Locarno

Locarno by the little lake,
Land of the sunshine and the snow;
Once more a singer for thy sake
Would touch the strings of long ago.

Not long ago, for yesterday
Not much we knew of thee or thine,
Save that enchantment 'round thee lay
On all thy hills of oil and wine.

Save that thy waters then were blue,
And bluer still thy summer 'skies—
And that a kindly nature knew
To make of thee a paradise.

Thou wast so quiet then and lone,
Thou scarce didst hear yon awful quake—
The crash of war and fall of throne
That buried nations in their wake.

Tired out at last with blood and crime
Whole nations sought thy beauteous shore,
And in one moment all sublime
Declared that war should be no more.

Oh, little town amidst the vines—
A wreath of glory's on thy brow
And thou shalt dwell in pleasant lines.
For thou belong'st to history now.

Publication. *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 37.

The Ballad of the Trees

Once on a time, 'twas long ago,
Where the blue Danube River flows,
The land was blessed, as it is now,
With every fruit and flower that grows.

The shores were lined with forest's green,
Green forests dotted all the plain,
But no one knew, or none had seen,
'Twas these that brought the blessed rain.

A hundred years they tilled the soil,
And plenty smiled on every hand,
For nature paid them for their toil,
And all men loved the happy land.

Till on a time ambition grew—
They would be rich, like folks in town—
Their trees would sell for gold, they knew,
And so they cut their forests down.

Their sylvan groves that once had been
The altars of a vanished race,
No more on yonder shores were seen,
Just sand and desert took their place.

"What's this? alas!" the good king said;
"Has nature then forgot her plan?
My land is waste, my fields are dead,
There is no food for beast or man.

"It must be so, some wrong is done;
I see it now; it all is plain,
We should have left them, every one,
It was the trees that brought the rain."

That very day an edict went,
To all who lived within the land,
'Plant trees," it said, "nor be content
Till all have trees instead of sand."

'Twas done, and soon green forests stood
Where once was only sandy plain,
And all agreed it was the wood
That brought them back the blessed rain.

“God’s happiness,” exclaimed the king,
“Now all is fair this land of mine,
To every peasant’s home ’twill bring
Some happy share of oil and wine.”

All praised the king, whose simple word
There where the Danube River flows,
The very desert list’ning heard,
And turned to blossom like the rose.

And sure it is as holy writ,
Who plants one little tree, or so,
Some day will be as glad of it
As was that king of long ago.

Publication. *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 38–39.

A Bit of Land for Me

I couldn't live the town life, wherever it may be—
There's lots of folks that like it, but a bit of land for me.
I'd rather have the green hills, the meadows and the sky
Than all the town-made pageants that ever glad the eye.

Among the new-made furrows, I go with lightsome tread,
I reap the old-time harvest that gives the world its bread.
What care I for the bright lights along the stony street,
The hard, the noisy pavements that crucify the feet?

I walk on grassy meadows when work and day is done,
At night I have the moonlight, at noon I have the sun.
Of course I have no mansion, nor anything so grand,
But only just contentment, and a little bit of land.

Give me but room to breathe in, the room for work or play,
To watch the wild things growing and hear the things they say—
That is enough, no town life, wherever it may be—
There's lots of folks that like it, but a bit of land for me.

Publication. *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 40.

A Single Strain

Dear girl, I know it is the thing,

To sing your praises every day;
But, listen, birds that oftenest sing
Are not the birds of sweetest lay.

The nightingale but here and there
Will let you hear its sweetest song;
There is no music anywhere
That can enchant if heard too long.

One song the mocking bird will sing,
Then hastens to some other tree,
As if it feared your heart to wring,
Hearing too long its ecstasy.

Could I but sing a single strain
To touch your heart on land or sea,
Though I should never sing again
That song were still enough for me.

Publication. *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 41.

At Ninety

And so I am Ninety—Good Gracious!
Why really I'd not tho't of that—
So jolly the game I've been playing;
And listen—I'm still at the bat.

A wonderful game it all is too—
A riddle for woman or man—
You're tossing the ball or you catch it
You're playing the game as you can.

And whether you win or you lose it,
And whether you pipe or you dance—
But half of the game is your planning,
And half of it's only a chance.

You ask, Is it worth all the candle,
The pleasure, the joy and the pain?
Why, yes, I would live it all over,
The sunshine, the cloud, and the rain.

For tho' it was not of my choosing,
This life and I've weathered the gale;
Though often a stout wind was blowing
We've managed to keep up the sail.

The gods gave me all that I wanted,
Good friends and the great out-of-doors,
The mountains to me seemed enchanted,
The sea and its beautiful shores.

And if a rose grew in my garden
And by it a thistle would start,
That moment I plucked it and burned it;
The rosebud I kept in my heart.

Contentment I had, 't was a jewel
I'm sure that no riches could buy—
I scarcely can tell how I got it,
It must have dropped down from the sky.

For youth and the pleasures long vanished,
Why need I lament or repine?
The blue sky is here, just as ever,
The stars in the heaven are mine.

And so when the Captain is calling
The end of the game I am at,
I'll stand and salute, and He'll see me
Still playing down here at the bat.

Publication. In *Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 42–43.

Christmas Bells

There's joy all over the world tonight,
In song and the Christmas glee,
But never a joy like the dear delight
Of the Christmas Bells to me.

There is gladness, yes, in the happy lay
Of a bird in the greenwood tree,
And the nightingale, be it night or day—
But the Christmas Bells for me.

There's not in the pipe of the great god Pan,
Nor a flute on a moonlit sea,
Nor ever a song from the lips of man
Like the Christmas Bells to me.

The night is crisp and the stars are cold,
But I stand in the street below,
And I hear the tale that is never old,
Of a thousand years ago.

Of Shepherds keeping their flocks by night
On the plains of Bethlehem—
And the choristers in their robes of white—
Till I'm almost seeing them.

And this is why when the sweet bells ring
There's a rapturous delight;
And I think I am hearing the angels sing,
As they did on that Christmas night.

Publication. *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p.
44.

Is It Not So?

I'm sure, almost, I heard you say
"Your heart is light beyond belief;
You write a verse, you sing a lay—
I think you never had a grief."

O, yes, my dear, I've seen it all,
'Tis not enough to call it sad.
I've seen my friends around me fall,
I lost the dearest that I had.

And yet tis better that I smile,
I cannot sure bring back the past;
God lent it for a little while,
It was too great a thing to last.

Tis better that I laugh and sing
And be as happy as the rest.
One need not know about the sting
The arrow hidden in my breast.

And so it is I laugh and smile.
They'd have it so who went away,
Tis at the best a little while,
Let's have it merry while we may.

Publication. *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 45.

A Game of Chess

Well, Margaret, you've won the game,
And handsome, too, I must allow,
For yesterday you did the same,
So we are fifty-fifty now.

That was a pretty battle line,
Our men all standing vis a vis,
You moved a pawn as I did mine,
Just where the struggle was to be.

Around the board—at right or left,
I chased your Knights and Bishops, too,
It little helped—you were so deft
You had my Queen before I knew.

A castle stood on my right hand,
Help, quick, I heard the Warden call,
My Bishop flew to give a hand,
It was too late, I saw it fall.

My King now too was “bottled up,”
How could I thus anticipate,
But worse, the last drop in the cup,
I looked, and lo, it was a mate.

But listen, Margaret, this is sure,
Of many pleasures, old or new,
There is not one that could allure
Like playing chess, my dear, with you.

Let come the future as it may,
This on my memory still will press,
How quickly flew the time away,
When you and I were playing chess.

Publication. *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 46.

The Little Folks

So you're smiling at the children
On the green where they are playing,
All as happy as the birdies
Or the Queen upon her throne,
And you'd know the reason maybe
Why they're glad as in the maying—
It's a secret—but the children
Have a kingdom of their own.

It is bound about with roses
And with buttercups and daisies,
And the castles they are building are so real,
The wooden blocks are marble,
And the sawdust-dolls are ladies,
And in spite of broken noses
They can walk about and feel.

Little care they for the market,
Or the speculative chances—
What your bonds and stocks
Are selling at today—
More to them the gentle music
Of the little brook that dances
Or the violets in the meadow
And the smell of new mown hay.

More to them the romp and running
And the pretty games they're playing
Than all the undertakings
Of the grown-ups here below.
There never yet was gold enough
Or anything outweighing
The rapture of just living
That the happy children know.

We have dreams of far off places,
Where the clouds have silver lining,
We have pictures all so lovely to recall.
There are happy lands we read of
Where the sun is always shining,
But the little children's kingdom
Is the loveliest of all.

Publication. *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 47–48.

At Camp on the Rapidan

Last night beside the Rapidan
The burning camp-fire rose and fell—
And where the raging river ran—
In field and wood there seemed a spell.

The crescent moon above the pines
Looked down upon the scene as when
In these same woods in serried lines—
No thing was seen but armed men.

Wars' havoc swept throughout the land
Amidst the groaning of the brave—
Uncoffined dead on every hand—
On every hill a soldier's grave.

How changed the scene; by yonder fire
Two men are sitting side by side—
One thought alone—one heart desire,
One prayer that peace may yet abide.

Each was a spokesman for his land—
And greater lands were not on earth—
That night each speaker showed his hand,
And world resolve was given birth.

"A world resolve," 'twas England spoke—
Spoke too—our own loved nation's head—

That night the spell of war was broke,
Before the camp-fire coals were dead.

And everywhere the news was spread,
And round the world the tidings ran,
And all men hoped that war was dead
From that night—on the Rapidan.

Publication. *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 49.

He and She

She sits beside the busy loom
Or feeds her pretty pigeons crumbs—
She does not know it is her doom
To wait for one who never comes.

He rides along the rosy lane,
His heart with happiness astir—
He, too, is doomed to lovers' pain—
He has not found the road to her.

Oh, Fate, why hast thou made it so
These two unknowing never met?
Thou wast Love's riddle long ago
And look, thou art its riddle yet.

It is a tale old as the sea
Of two who might have loved and wed,
Had chance that weaves our destiny
Not left them strangers here instead.

Publication. *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 50.

Los Angeles the Beautiful

Los Angeles, the Beautiful

Last night I heard the mocking-birds,
They sang the whole night through;
And beautiful Los Angeles
They sang alone of you.
They sang of palms and olive trees,
Beneath a summer moon,
'Till all the roses seemed to sigh
That day should come so soon.

Los Angeles, the Beautiful,
Behold her smiling there,
A bride that's just from fairyland,
With roses in her hair.
Above are skies of summer land,
As blue as blue can be,
And yonder are the mountain tops,
And yonder is the sea.

Tis said whom fairies love the most
To them a home they give
Somewhere in fair Los Angeles
Where they would like to live.
And so they come from everywhere
Into the Golden West,
To find the city of their dreams,
Los Angeles, the blest.

Publication. *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 51.

Yes or No

Yes, or No

I do not know but may be he was right,
That Omar Khayam of the long ago
Who bade his friends drink every joy in sight
Nor wait a future that they did not know.

'Twere strange indeed, a master hand should build
Some wondrous Eden with a wall about,
With all delights, and every pleasure filled,
And on its gates inscribe the words: "Keep Out."

Today the rose is red upon the tree,
Shall I not have it while it is so fair?
Or wait, tomorrow it may redder be;
Who knows? tomorrow it may not be there.

One thing we know—the sun is shining now,
And pleasure waits—and joy, and love and dance.
Shall I not taste? I cannot wait somehow—
I am not certain of another chance.

Perhaps the pagan went too far afield
In singing only of the life he knew,
Ah, to be sure, the future is concealed,
There was a veil he never could see through.

Yet after all, were it not good to drink
The cup that's offered for a little spell,
Taste measured joys, and if as sure I think,
A better's offered, why, drink that as well.

One thing is sure, life's but a little thing,
A candle burning, oh so very low,
And that red rose will soon be withering,
Shall I not pluck it—tell me—yes or no?

Publication. *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), pp. 52–53.

Which One of Them All Is Worst?

Which One of Them All Is Worst

Three strange men walked on the street one day
And all with the same intent—
Though going each in a different way,
Each knew what the other meant.

The first was the fool who fixed the laws,
And a fool was he off hand,
For the thing he made was so full of flaws
No soul could understand.

The second one was a fiendish soul—
Who murdered night or day,
For in every law he could find a hole
And he knew he could get away.

The third was a fellow disliked by all,
A criminal lawyer he—
For what was crime—he it great or small
If only he got his fee.

“Give me the half that you stole,” he said,
“Did’st bury the man you slew?
I see your hands with his blood is red—
But I think I can pull you through.”

Blood money—yes—for ’twas his trade
By a trick or a crook or a flaw,
To find the hole that the fool had made
To strangle the court and law.

And still they walk in the open way,
With the same intent as at first,
And people ask in a casual way—
Which one of them all is worst?

Publication. In *Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 65.

The Hollywood Bowl

And would I please my lady fair,
Here is the thing that I would do—
I would not praise her face, her hair,
Her eyes, however brown or blue.

I'd say—come with me just tonight
To yonder “Bowl” by Hollywood;
There where the stars are shining bright
Above the mountain's solitude.

Mozart, Beethoven, Verdi—all
The world's immortals will be there,
And yonder players will recall
The glory of the days that were.

There with the pine trees list'ning round
And stars and moonlight overhead,
Who that has felt it has not found
His soul to newer raptures-led.

To sit beneath the stars a time
And listen to some madrigal
In such a Jand—in such a clime
It seems to me were best of all.

Thus would I please my lady fair
With music by yon choristers
For in an hour of list'ning there
A taste of heaven were surely hers.

Publication. *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 66.

The Curtains Rise

From whence I came, I cannot tell,
Nor whither I may go—
I'm only sure that all is well,
The Master made it so.

For He who made all things that are,
The mountains and the sea,
And lighted yonder far-off star,
Must have a plan for me.

And so, as best I can, I'll wait
The bugles, sounding clear—
For well I know that soon or late,
God's daylight will be here.

And I will watch the curtains rise
To music soft and low,
And see at last with mine own eyes
The things I've longed to know.

Publication. *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 67.

Good Morning

Good Morning—Good morning—
How cheery your voice is,
It touches my heart
In the words that you say;
O lighter the toil
—And the task of the day is
For the cheery Good morning
You just said to me.

So often the day has
A shadow in starting,
Just one little cloud
And you scarcely know why,
One word and a smile
And a cheery Good morning,
And shadow and cloud
Are all gone from the sky.
Good morning—Good morning—
How gladly we hear it,
That moment the sky
Has a tenderer blue;
There's something we know not
Uplifting the Spirit,
And nature seems saying
Good morning to you.
The birds and the flowers
They bid us Good morning—
Let us be as kindly
And gracious as they—
For are we not brothers
Abroad on a journey,
And all are God's children
We meet on the way.

Publication. In *Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p. 133.

In Arcady

I dreamed I was in Arcady,
The land of love and song,
There was no winter there at all,
And summer days were long.
As happy as the birds—they lived
In yonder valley fair,
Of what might happen soon or late
They did not need to care.
Not much they talked of good or bad
On some hereafter shore,
Such joy of living here they had
They asked for nothing more.
The rose—the blossoms on the trees,
The blue sky overhead,
The singing birds and brooks and seas,
“It is enough,” they said.
“And where and where is Arcady?”
I’m sure I heard you say,
It’s not an island of the sea,
Nor far-away Cathay.
No map will show you where it is,
But listen, friend, and find
That Arcady’s no land at all,
But just a state of mind.
Give up the noisy discontent,
The awful chase for pelf—
For this is what the poet meant,
And Arcady’s yourself.
Just be in love with what you’ve got,
Whatever winds have blown—
Heaven sends to earth no happier lot,
And Arcady’s your own.

Publication. *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1929), p.

134.

The City of Fair Dreams

Note:

There was a time when beautiful Monterey by the Sea was the capital of California. The people there, as all along the Pacific Coast, were mostly Spanish—with Spanish customs, dress, and manners. The old Mission houses were still in their glory, and Monterey, then the gem of the Pacific, was a very gay and luxurious little capital. It was not surpassed for beauty anywhere on the Pacific.
The City of Fair Dreams

Oh, many, many years ago this tale
Had its beginning by a charmed sea,
So beautiful it seemed; the bending sail,
And the blue sky, like that of Italy.
There grew the palm and there the lemon tree,
And every flower that's beautiful to see.

Outside the bay the mighty ocean rolled
In liquid mountains, or in glist'ning sea,
And moonlight nights some wondrous story told
To listening forests and to meadowed lea;
And lovers, walking in the moonlight, heard
Their sweethearts' voices when the sea was stirred.

Such was the scene, where the fair city stood,
By poets called "The City of Fair Dreams,"
Between the forest and the shining flood;
And even now, to strangers' eyes there seems
Some lingering glory of that happy day
When all was merry in old Monterey.

"'Twas at a time when Spanish friars bore
For many years their long and kindly sway
In grand old Missions stretched along the shore
From San Diego to Francisco Bay.
Then all was Spanish—manners, speech and dress—
Save the wild Indians in the wilderness.

'Twas just as if some island in the past
Had drifted off from its beloved Spain,
And by some wondrous miracle been cast
Along the shores of the Pacific main:
Or was't Arcadia that had been lost,
And by some chance had hitherward been tossed?

Be it as it may, it was a lovely land,
And joyous people lived along the coast;
There dance and music wandered hand in hand.
And, next to these, their horses were their boast,
No Arab tenting in the desert airs
Had steeds so swift, so beautiful as theirs.

He was not poor who had his desert steed,
With silver spangles hung on neck and breast,
Bejeweled saddle, beautiful, indeed
And wondrous spurs outshining all the rest.
It was a sight sometimes to look upon,
These New-world knights and their caparison.

Famed was the land for other things as well,
Famed for fair women, beauteous to behold,
With great black eyes, and olive skins to tell
Castilian blood; and forms of fairest mold.
Of one of these, had I a harp to sing,
I'd tell a tale not all imagining.

For there was one, a child almost in years,
Some sixteen summers only had been hers,
But in that clime of rose-leaf and of tears,
Love wakens early and its passion stirs.
So, Glorietta, soft as any dove,
Just laughed and loved, yet never thought of love.

Till on a day when Ivan came to woo,
A fisher's lad, he was, down by the bay,
Who dived for pearls of many a heavenly hue
That in the bottom of the ocean lay;
And here and there a pretty shell he took
To Glorietta with a lover's look.

Though well she prized these pretty courtesies,
There was a gulf that stretched betwixt the two,
A stream unbridged, and bridgeless, most, as seas,
Without a road that any lover knew,
For what was he? A common fisher's son,
And she, the heiress of a Spanish don.

O! she was young, and beautiful of face,
With melting eyes, a joy to look upon,
Big, black and deep, like her Castilian race;
Who looked too long was sure to be undone.
That Ivan learned, although he was so young,
Yet loved the sting with which he had been stung.

Her hair—such hair—in two great braids fell down
Like twisted ropes, black as the ebon night.
Upon her beautiful but girlish gown
Of simple rose, bedecked with lilies white.
Hearts had been cold, or ice, or something worse,
Not to be moved by eyes and hair like hers.

She was akin to the Don Carlos line;
Though orphaned young she might have riches still,
For the Alcalde, now Count Valentine,
Had many lands and herds on every hill.
He was her guardian, and could well endow
Such rose of beauty as he saw her now.

Upon the hill where his gray palace stood
Fair flowers grew of every hue and kind;
The bougainvillea, with its purpling flood,
In drifted banks the walls and porches lined.
But Glorietta, far beyond compare,
Was fairest yet of any flower there.

And when the harvest of the vine was on
In the sweet autumns of that blessed clime,
When summer's heats and summer's suns were gone
And frosts just touched the orange and the lime,
Then manly youths were to the labor pressed,
And Ivan, too, was there among the rest.

So it fell out, as in that long ago,
When Ruth and Boaz in the harvest met,
Love had its way, or Ivan wished it so,
And cast himself in Glorietta's net,
Just at the moment when she brought the wine
Sent to the gard'ners by Count Valentine.

'Twas like a dream, the sudden joy, to him!
Not many grapes he gathered on that day,
Nor on the next, for other things now drew
His one attention in another way,
And oftener now did Glorietta bear
Her jugs of wine out to the gard'ners there.

And once, unconsciously, the jug she held
To Ivan's lips, that he might drink his fill,
As if by accident his face she touched,
And quick he felt it, the immortal thrill,—
Such thrill as comes but once to any soul,
Or rich or poor, it is love's sweetest toll.

So days went on, the vintage was not done,
And every day young Ivan there would be
To gather grapes in the sweet autumn sun,
Or pick the lemons from the lemon tree;
But most to see his sweetheart, and adore,
And every day she welcomed him the more.

There was an arbor on the palace ground,
Hid all in roses of sweet loveliness,
Where all was silence save the gentle sound
Of little brooklets and the wind's caress.
There Glorietta at the noontide came:
Who wonders now that Ivan did the same!

So in sweet converse flew the blessed noon,
While they sat looking in each other's eyes,
Amazed an hour could pass away so soon,
But time to lovers very quickly flies;
Not much their feast on either bread or wine,
On other things, 'tis said, do lovers dine.

Yes, talk they had, and maybe kisses, some.
For they were glad of life and everything:
Youth must be so—delicious it can come,
And this was now the flower of their spring.
Give love a bower, in vines and roses drest,
And melting eyes, and love will do the rest.

There, in their moments of felicity,
Young Ivan told her of a thousand things;
Of the pearl-divers and the sapphire sea,
And the great fishes that had shining wings;
Of caverns told, and rocks that overhung
The ocean caves where the pearl-fishes clung.

How he himself the dangers underwent
Of diving down, his trusty knife in hand,
To cut them loose from walls and caverns rent,
Then sudden rise and cast them on the sand:
No rainbow hues more glorious could be
Then these, the children of the azure sea.

How he had seen a grotto wonderful
Down in the ocean with the waves above,
Not e'en the shrieking of the sad sea-gull
Was ever heard in this enchanted cove.
Like Desdemona, Glorietta heard,
And breathed a sigh at every other word.

How, fearing not, again and yet again,
He dared the dangers that around him were,
Not in some hope of some poor little gain,
But for a pearl that was most worthy her:
And then he reached to give it, with a kiss—
But hark! a step, and ended all their bliss!

It was the Count, his face in purple rage.
Some evil soul had whispered in his ear,
How every day those lovers did engage
In guilty amours, and he'd find them here.
Few words were said, there was not much to say;
The place, the kiss, were they not plain as day?

He railed a little, Glorietta heard:
"I had no one to guide, and I was young,"
Her eyes were weeping, but no other word;
The Count, he better too had held his tongue!
He was himself not over good, they say,
Among th' elite of lovely Monterey.

Be as it may, he had his Spanish pride;
No kin of his might ever think to wed
With lowly fisher-folk, or be the bride
Of one who labored for his daily bread.
That very day he made his plans to send
Young Glorietta to a distant friend.

He had a cousin, rich and proud and lone,
Who with a sister by the desert dwelt;
What took him there had never quite been known,
If fate or love with him had coldly dealt.
Don Eldorado was the cousin's name,
A bit romantic and once known to fame.

"There Glorietta will be safe awhile,"
Thought the Alcalde, when she reached the place,
And thinking so, a long and happy smile
At times illumined the Alcalde's face.
"Time conquers love, at least so I have read,
And Ivan well may think her lost or dead."

For it was planned that never any word
Should pass between them now forever more.
Just how 'twas done no mortal ever heard,
But things like these were often done before—
Some false arrest, some prison far away,
Or, at the worst, there still would be the bay.

A little while, though broke of heart at first,
And Glorietta almost loved the scene—
When on her eyes the great wild desert burst
Like two vast seas, with mountains in between.
The porphyry hills, the red sea-walls that rise,
Seemed fit for gates to some sweet paradise.

'Twas in the morning, and God's great blue tent
Spread over mountains and the desert land;
A sapphire glory every moment lent
Some lovelier color to the desert sand;
A little while, and then the mountains seem
A mystic phantom, a forgotten dream.

Note—The Mojave and the Colorado deserts are really the same thing.
A chain of the Sierra Madre mountains cuts the vast plain in two parts.

Once, on a height, alone, she stood and gazed
On violet mountains and the desert sea.
A sudden sun above the desert blazed,—
“O world!” she cried, “thou wert all joy to me
Were this to last, with never any tear,
And Ivan standing close beside me here.”

Now, Eldorado, though not very young,
Kept in his breast some fires not yet gone out,
Saw Glorietta, and that moment flung—
Himself before her, dead in love, no doubt.
Love at first sight, I've sometimes heard it said,
Affects the heart, but oftener the head.

Be it as it may, he surely was most kind
To Glorietta, never dreaming how
Her heart with Ivan there was left behind,
Nor saw the shade that often crossed her brow.
One thought was his, and that he could not hide.
The hope that quickly she would be his bride.

Each hour he thought some pleasant thing to do
To please her fancy or to kill the time;
Rode on the hills, looked on the desert view,
Or climbed the canyons glorious and sublime,
Where thundering down some torrent came to bless
The flowering wastes, the desert loveliness.

And lovelier things he thought of, and less grand,
The purple sage-brush that was everywhere,
The yellow poppy of the sun and sand,
Enchanting contrast to her raven hair;
And Manzanita berries, crimson red,
And purple heather from the desert's bed.

And desert holly of the sanded wild,
Frost-white and fair as ever fair could be,
Sun-born but lone, the desert's loveliest child,
Its curling leaves God's own embroidery.
All these were hers, and others yet the while,
All cheaply purchased by a single smile.

Day in, day out, the old new lover came;
Was it not time to answer yes, or nay?
Like fair Penelope, who did the same,
She prayed, delaying just another day,
And still in hopes she yet might surely know
If Ivan really were alive, or no.

Just then a letter from her guardian came;
A perfect thunderbolt it must have been,
Full of complaining, and of every blame,
What under heaven was it she could mean?
"Could it be so, such cold ingratitude,
Towards one who always was so kind and good?

"Oft he had heard of how his cousin sought
Her hand in marriage, and of her delay:
He was amazed, for was this cousin not
What any girl could like most any day?
Rich, and genteel, and good to look upon,
And then, still more, he was a Spanish don.

"Then, as to Ivan, heaven only knew
What had become of him; perhaps a shark
Had simply swallowed him; such things they do!
There were great dangers down in caverns dark,
And anyway, her passion for him must
Long since have turned to ashes and to dust."

There seemed no choice; that, Glorietta saw,
This unloved marriage was a thing foregone.
Her guardian's wishes, were they not a law?
She was as helpless as a mountain fawn,
And yet she waited still another day,
And never answered either yes or nay.

At last she spoke. It was a ruse to find
If Ivan really were alive or dead.
“It seems to me that I could speak my mind
If I were only in my home,” she said.
“There in our garden by the crystal bay,
There I could answer either yea or nay.”

“Let it be so! Tomorrow,” he replied,
Not guessing all her reasons nor the why;
“On my fleet steeds across the hills we’ll ride.”
He did not notice Glorietta sigh.
He had forgotten, too, about the slip
That sometimes happens ’twixt the cup and lip.

Next day it was a pretty cavalcade
That crossed the mountains westward to the sea.
The Don, his sister, and the beauteous maid,
And some retainers, only two or three.
A hundred miles was nothing then to ride,
At least to win so beautiful a bride!

A little while, and now in Monterey,
The dear old city by the sounding sea,
There was great talk among the young and gay
Of an event that very soon would be.
“The Don was rich,” that much the gossips said,
“And Glorietta had come home to wed.”

Not in whole years had there been such a stir.
The Alcalde’s ward was now a beauty grown,
All eyes were turned for but a glimpse of her
Or the great Don who claimed her for his own.
A little while, and wedding bells would ring,
And guests be bidden to the revelling.

Now there was searching of old wardrobes through
For gowns unique, and rich, of long ago;
Gold satin skirts, and rare mantillas, too,
And high-heeled boots with gold or silver bow;
Queer combs from Spain, and jewels rare and bright,
To wear on Glorietta’s wedding night.

It was proclaimed among the ladies all,
To be *au fait* one must be gaily dressed,
And there would be a Spanish carnival,
To make this wedding seem the very best.
The men also, in picturesque array,
Expectant waited for the wedding day.

Young Ivan, meantime, had been lost to view;
No trace of him could Glorietta find,
And now there seemed no other thing to do
Than wed the Don, though much against her mind;
So, though in tears, she gave a half consent,
And all was fixed, just as her guardian meant.

The day has come, the sun will soon be down,
A hundred guests on horseback gaily ride
Up to the palace, quite outside the town,
To greet the bridegroom and to kiss the bride:
As was the custom in the days of yore,
Each rider held his fair one on before.

Down by the sea the glad old mission bells
Ring out a sweet, a half voluptuous chime.
The saintly friar there a moment tells
His beads to heaven in his dear, happy time:
Then turns his steps, he must be there to say
The nuptial vows on this their wedding day.

At her high window Glorietta stood,
And saw the riders in their glad array,
Yet felt that moment that she almost could
Have thrown herself into the shining bay:
All seemed a mockery to her, the scene,
Not less her wedding dress of gold and green.

Out on the lawn a bright pavilion showed,
Hung round with flags, and open at the side,
Already circled by the common crowd,
For all would see the bridegroom and the bride.
Half in the dark one silent figure leant
Against the curtains of th' illumined tent.

A little while, and look! The priest has come,
And bride and groom walk slowly down the line.
In a few words she is bid welcome home,
By the Alcalde, old Count Valentine.
In smiles and tears, she waits the solemn word:
Yet listen, now, a singer's voice is heard.

A pretty custom in the land they had,
That girlhood friends about the bride should be,
To sing some song, some pretty words, nor sad,
To wish her joy and all felicity,
Before the one and final word is said,
Before the priest pronounced her duly wed.

And so to-night the singers come and sing,
And to a lute some verses improvise;
Some happy thought, perhaps some little thing,
Each for herself some pretty couplet tries,
Then hands the lute to her who next her is,
Who smiling sings of future ecstasies.

Meanwhile the bride, who is all listening
To honied phrases she is glad to hear,
Herself prepares some pretty song to sing,
For see, the lute to her is coming near!
That moment look, her eyes are quickly bent
On that lone figure by the curtained tent.

Half in the shadow, halfway in the light,
Two sad dark eyes are looking straight at hers.
Heavens! it is Ivan, come this very night!
A sudden joy her inmost bosom stirs;
She dare not speak, a hundred wait around,
And he were dead if near the palace found.

Quick beat her heart, it was her turn to sing,
A prayer she breathed for guidance. What to do?
Her voice she feared had sudden taken wing,
And Ivan's eyes were piercing through and through.
Oh! would some saint in all Love's calendar
That moment come and pitying smile on her.

She waits a little—then an Indian air
Came to her mind that he had often sung.
Not one would know it of the many there,
For it was only of the Indian tongue.
She took the lute and sang a melody
Of love beside the Manzanita tree:

The moon's above the ocean now,
Then hasten love, to me,
And keep the vow you made beside
The Manzanita tree.

The stars across the heavens sweep,
As faithful as can be.
Let us be faithful, too, beside
The Manzanita tree.
The mist is on the mountain top,
The mist is on the lea,
'Tonight, tonight, we meet beside
The Manzanita tree.

The Manzanita berry's ripe,
And red as red can be,
O who would not go loving by
The Manzanita tree.
What if another claim my hand,
My heart, my heart's with thee,
So we will meet tonight beside
The Manzanita tree.
Each sigh, each thought, the listening lover heard,
And knows the meaning of the song she sings,
And ere the priest has said the solemn word
A steed all saddled to the gate he brings:
A sign, a gesture, from her lover there,
And they are gone, and no one knows where.
And they have mounted on the swiftest horse,
The fleetest steed the Alcade ever owned,
They ford the Carmel in its swiftest course,
The old sea-bay behind them moaned and moaned,
And many a cypress gnarled by storm and wind
There in the moonlight they have left behind.
Into the mountains, all the night they rode,
On narrow ways, along the canyon's side,
Where moon and stars no more the pathway showed,
Till the bright dawn the flying lovers ride
Then change their course, for path there now is none,
And leave the horse and climb the rocks alone.
And still a day, now downward toward the sea,
Some ignis fatuus beckons them along;
Though tired of limb and hungry they may be,
They think they hear some soft, sweet siren's song—
It is the sea-wave's voice alone they hear,
Forever sweet to any lover's ear.
And they have reached the hemmed-in ocean's shore,
Cliffs right and left, behind them but despair.
Are they pursued, there is not any more
The smallest hope of further flight than there:
But see! a ship is yonder passing by,
Or is't a phantom of the mist and sky?
Full-sailed it rides, yet scarcely passes on—
'Tis not a league," cried Ivan, "from the shore,
Trust to my arms: a thousand times I've gone
Down in the deeps and braved the ocean's roar.
Here it is calm, and yonder ship may prove
A rest from flight, a refuge place for love."
And they are gone into the mist and wave,

Far out of sight of each pursuing one.
If in the sea they find a lover's grave,
Now who may know, since mist and ship are gone!
Time and the sea, no matter, kind or rude,
Can cover all, pursuers, and pursued.
Still, from yon cliff, where fisher-folk repair,
On moonlight nights the ocean to behold,
"Tis said they see, if but the mist be there,
A ship all shining like the ship of old,
And on the deck a lady walks serene,
Still in her wedding dress, of gold and green.

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A Madonna of the Ranch

Never yet had Grecian statue half so beautiful a face,
 Never Phidias had chiseled such a form of strength and grace
 As the outlines, half-discovered, in the thin old robe he wore,
 Painting pictures of the padres standing in the mission door.
 Little wonder that the missions by the coast-line up and down
 Saw and praised the new Adonis, in the old Franciscan gown.
 Not so much as priest they praised him; 'twas the gift he had to paint,
 And they thought him somewhat worldly, and not born to be a saint.
 In the old ranchero mansions he was welcomed everywhere,
 And the black-eyed senioritas saw no padre to compare.
 At the old Presidio dances he was there among the gay—
 When the guardsmen rode at races, he could ride as fast as they.
 There was something in his manner that was very hard to guess;
 Like a secret one discloses, yet keeps hidden none the less.
 Very mortal one had called him—not to praise nor yet condemn—
 Not too holy to be human, good as many priests were then.
 Love it seemed he never thought of, save for beauty as it lay
 In the color on the canvas that he painted day by day.
 All the life about the missions, brown-robed padres kneeling there—
 And the neophyte processions as they went to early prayer.
 These, and brown-faced Indian maidens in the sunshine on the sand,
 Weaving blankets, making baskets, pounding out their corn by hand.
 All he painted, and the missions, not in ruins falling low
 But in noble mission grandeur of the days of long ago
 A madonna of the Ranch

Where Sierra Madre's mountains look in gladness on the sea,
 And the scented air floats upward from the lime and orange tree,
 Where the whole land seems a garden, all abloom with fruit and flowers,
 And the sky that bends above it is a lovelier sky than ours,

Stretching there along the ocean for a hundred leagues or so,
 Are the grand old mission ruins of the strange and long ago.
 Here and there a pilgrim passing, thinking of the days ago,
 When these half-forgotten ruins were as splendid as the dawn—

Breathes a sigh half exclamation that a people should forget
 Such a heritage of glory, ere its sun be wholly set!
 Never make a seeming struggle, ere the struggle be too late,
 For the saving of the temples that have glorified the state.

In the name of Junipero, him who laid the stepping-stone
For a grandeur and a glory that you proudly call your own—
Let a cry go to the mountains, and from mountains back to sea,
That these ruins be re-built for a future yet to be.

Be re-built in the beauty of each arch and belfry low
Pedro Benedetto painted in the strange and long ago.
In my mind again I see him, in the long sweet summer days,
Cowled and hooded at the mission, now in painting, now in praise.

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Weaving blankets, making baskets, pounding out their corn by hand.
All he painted, and the missions, not in ruins falling low,
But in noble mission grandeur of the days of long ago;

Sketched great herds of grazing cattle, vast in numbers everywhere,
With the young vaqueros guarding from the mountain lion's snare.
Painted saints, and boy-like angels, on the mission walls within,
And the brown-robed padres walking ere the vespers would begin.

Painted threshers with the oxen tramping out the harvest grain,
As they did in days of Boaz, they were doing now again.
As they did in gray old Egypt, in a time most out of mind,
So they tossed the new grain upwards to be winnowed by the wind.

Painted sunsets full of glory, such as only there are seen,
Like the crimson gates of heaven when the ocean is serene.
Sketched the guardsmen of the mission, at the old Presidio,
And the Indians of the desert where the holly-bushes grow.

Painted black-eyed señoritas from the ranches far and near,
And the fleet and wondrous horses of the new-world cavalier;
Silver-spurred and gay rancheros hast'ing to the coming race.
To the bull-fight, and the bear-fight, at the old-time fighting place.

All, he painted, when the labors of the mission would allow,
Yesterday some Indian maiden, some young caballero now.
Yet he found not in the faces on the canvas that he drew,
Any soul behind the picture, any eyes that looked him through.

"I would paint the virgin mother on this canvas white of mine,
Just a pure sweet country maiden like the girls in Palestine."

Long he sought for it, the one face that in very truth could be
All his waking mind could fancy, all his dreaming eyes could see.

Long he waited, dreamed and waited, till the sunset of a day
When the vesper bells were ringing in a sweet half-saddened way—
Came a footstep, almost noiseless, to the open mission door,
Came a fair and girlish figure bearing gifts for yonder poor.

In her hands were golden poppies, in her face a beauty lay
Like the roses and the lilies that she gathered by the way.
Thrice she came, the lovely Inez, when the vesper bells would ring,
Came the same soft footstep answering to the old bells caroling.

Thrice she came, and quick departed, leaving little gifts of love,
While the vesper bells kept ringing in the old bell tower above.
Just a glimpse, and Benedetto in that fleeting moment felt
She was here, the one he dreamed of, here were eyes that seemed to melt.

Here were eyes of gladsome splendor, here were cheeks of such a hue—
Not a blush-rose in the garden ever lovelier color knew.
Just a tint of brave brown olive in a face beyond compare—
Just a harmony of color with the midnight of her hair.

"He must go,"—the padres said it, "he must find from whence she came,
He, the youngest, he must thank her, in the oldest padre's name.

Not for long he sought to find her; not for long does beauty hide—
Being conscious it is beauty, knowing how 'tis glorified.

Where the great ranch of her father's stretched for twenty miles and more,
Where the old adobe mansion looked straight downward to the shore,
Where in half-way Spanish splendor lived the rich old ranchero,
Like an old Castilian noble of the long, longtime ago,—

There where swept the purple blossoms from the bougainvillea vine,
Where the lemon on the terrace cast an odor half divine,
There he found her, with her pigeons, by the gray old terrace wall,
Talking with them as companions, with a name for each and all.

Once that greetings kind were over, through the garden aisles they go,
Talking of the grand old missions, looking on the sea below.
Talking of the olive orchards, of the herds of sheep and kine,
Of the golden yellow poppies, and the purple-laden vine,

Of "El Camino Real," stretching yonder by the sea,
Where the brown-robed padres pilgrimed with their thoughts for company,
Where the cavaliers rode gaily to some evening serenade,
While some senorita waited at the half-closed window shade.

Heard their silver-mounted bridles as they jingled light and gay,
Saw the all-beribboned gallants as they galloped on the way.

Yonder, too, beheld the ranchos of her father's kith and kin,
Owners of the boundless acres where the Indians once had been.

Once they gazed to where the purple of the far-off islands were,
Though they talked of isles and ocean, yet his thoughts were all of her.
'Might he paint her? 'Twere a treasure for the missions beyond bound,
He would paint her on the terrace, with her pigeons all around.

He would paint her with the poppies, gold and yellow, on her breast,
And her hair all loose and tangled by the soft winds of the west."
Deep she blushed, all seeming happy, as she answered, soft and low,
"If my simple face be worthy, then I answer, be it so."

So he painted on the terrace, where the orange blossoms fell,
Never yet in all his painting had he painted half so well.
Every grace of face and figure, every charm her being knew,
In a soft idyllic beauty on the happy canvas grew.

Day by day he came and painted at the dear accustomed place,
Finding ever some new beauty in the gladness of her face.
Feeling ever some new feeling, something stranger to his heart,
Something not of paint and brushes, something not akin to art.

In her face the rapturous colors, like enchantment rose and fell,

In her eyes there seemed a secret that her lips might never tell.
Once he touched the golden yellow of the poppies that she wore,
And a thrill went through his being that he never felt before.

Was it love? He dared not think it—he a priest of solemn vow,
He would thrust it from his bosom, he would put it from him now.
Yet he painted on, forgetting all the danger that could lie
In the crimson of her blushes, in the starlight of her eye.

To herself it seemed as dreaming, as she watched the painter's hand,
Saw herself as if transfigured by some wondrous magic wand.
Once she heard the far-off music of the low wind in the firs.
Never dreaming while she listened that his soul passed into hers

Till a day, when all was finished, and the painter was alone
Gazing on the perfect picture, that was sweet love's very own—
She beheld him kneel and kiss it, from her vine-clad hiding place,
As Pygmalion kissed the marble of his Galatea's face—

So he kissed the perfect likeness, on the eyes, and lips, and hair,
Never knowing, she, he painted, stood behind him smiling there.
Till the soft leaves, all a-rustle, like the footsteps of an elf,
Made him half forget the picture when he saw her very self.

Deep confused, she spake and said it: "Now I know you love me well,
Long I, too, have kept a secret; you have broken here the spell,
Am I she for whom you're longing? Dare you, then, to love me so?
Dare you break the cords that bind you? Would you rather let me go?"

"Hear me, lovely Inez, listen: I was born in old Seville,
I a priest at one and twenty, I a priest against my will.
Orphaned as a child, a guardian taught me all the church's rules,
I should be a priest or nothing, and consented, fool of fools.

"'T whose gifts had made me famous in the salons of the great,
Never then had been a football, in the fickle hands of Fate.
I was fettered down to routine, all was narrow that I knew;
In your face was heaven's gladness; I was born again in you.

"Is it sin, then, if, recanting, I undo the cord that held—
Kept me where my life belonged not, where for long I had rebelled?
I am loved; what is there greater? Gift that heaven to mortals gave,
Strong are vows, but love is stronger; love can reach beyond the grave.

'Who shall care what comes tomorrow, if but love itself remain,
Binding into one forever souls that yesterday were twain!
Would I rather that you leave me? Heaven itself can answer No;
While your eyes are shining on me, every joy is here below.

"Stood the gates of heaven open, bidding me to enter there,
Where all things are as enchanted, perfumes gladdening all the air—
Leaving thee behind, I would not, though the lights forever shone,
Though the angels were about me, yet I still would be alone.

“Let us go; the world’s advancing, thought has broadened everywhere;
Heaven is reached by good deeds only, not alone by psalms and prayer.
In the new world that we’ll live in, love itself shall master be,
And I still will be a painter, finding fame for thee and me.”
In the records of the missions, Pedro’s name no more appears—
It is gone; the padres lost it in the going of the years.
But in Seville there are pictures of the missions known to fame,
On the lower right-hand corner still is Benedetto’s name.

And among them one is fairer, greater far than all the rest;
It is Inez of the missions, with the poppies on her breast.

And the stranger passing sees it, and he stops to gaze awhile,
Looking at the perfect beauty that upon him seems to smile,
And a something seems to tell him from the days that long are flown,
“He who painted this sweet picture, painted it for love alone.”

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The Feast of the Pinon Tree

(Note:—The Pinon tree (pronounced “Peenyon”) is of the nut pine variety in the Sierra Mountains. John Muir, the naturalist, describes it as about forty feet high, with wide extending branches. The tree produces a prodigious quantity of nuts, and the total crop has been at times estimated to equal half the wheat crop of California. These nuts are often the principal food of the Mono, Carson, and other tribes of mountain Indians. The cones are opened by roasting in the fire. Festivals and dances are held around the tree at the gathering-time every autumn.

It is a wonderfully unique spectacle. The tree is held almost sacred by the Indians, and many a white man has been killed for cutting it down.)

We were all in the ship’s forecastle,
With never a thing to do,
For the decks were washed and the sails all set,
And the ship like a sea-bird flew.

We were close to the world’s equator,
With strange thoughts in our mind
Of the strange new stars above us,
And the dear stars left behind.

It was now farewell to Venus,
To the Great Bear, and the rest,
To Orion’s belt, and the North Star,
And the Dog Star in the west.

And away in the dim horizon,
Strange stars in the heavens blazed,
’Twas the Southern Cross there shining,
And we stood on the deck and gazed.

And a new star-world was around us,
From the midnight till the dawn—
And the red sun rose at morning,
And the wind with the night was gone.

When like to an infant’s cradle,
The blue sea rose and fell,
And we heard the black whale’s breathing
Like the sob of a sea’s low swell.

And we saw on the quiet waters
The smooth low billows toss,
A great white bird there sleeping;
’Twas the white-winged Albatross.

And never on land or ocean
Was there seen a lovelier thing
Than the beautiful bird there sleeping
With its head beneath its wing.

And we sailors looked and wondered,
And thought of the isles of spice,
And the bird with its white wings folded,
Like the angels of Paradise.

And we wondered if it were dreaming
Out there on the sea alone
Of another bird, still fairer,
Somewhere in a Southern zone.

For spite of our wild sea-roving,
And spite of our sailors' air,
There was that that touched us somehow
In the lone bird sleeping there.

Then we talked of the lands out yonder
By the far Pacific's shore—
Of the homes we had left behind us,
And the stars we might see no more.

And so in the ship's forecabin,
With never a thing to do,
Each shipmate told some story
Of the land we were going to.

Of the strange old Spanish missions,
Of the friars robed in brown,
And the old bells with their music
When the sun was going down.

And the youngest shipmate told us
A tale that he once had heard,
For it all came back to his memory
On seeing the great white bird.

So we gave him the seat of honor,
And waited a little spell,
As we sat on our chests and listened
For the story he had to tell.

* * * * *

"It was twenty years, in the April—
And I was a lad in Spain,
When I shipped on a Spanish clipper
For the far Pacific main.

Perhaps it was gain we sought for,
Wherever the trade might be,
And we steered straight west and southwards,
For a new Spain by the sea.

For the land of the rose and palm tree—
The orange blooms and the lime—
Where the mocking-birds were singing
The whole sweet summer time.

So we voyaged west and southwards,
And ever on deck was one,
A dark-eyed youth of twenty,
And browned by a Spanish sun.

'Twas little he talked with the ship's crew,
But often he seemed to be
Alone with the skipper talking—
And we guessed at some mystery.

He was dressed like a village huntsman,
In garb of the plainest green,
Nor a simpler garb, nor a plainer,
No sailor had ever seen.

And a wonderful silver bugle,
As polished and bright as day,
Swung gaily down from the ribbon
That over his shoulder lay.

And on the bugle a picture,
A bird, with its wings across,
Like the bird we had seen on the ocean,
The beautiful albatross.

'Twas a gypsy's gift, the bugle,
With the albatross design,
"And it bears a charm," she told him,
"For a wonderful love of thine."

Philippo, the skipper called him,
And that was all we knew—
But we sailors loved to listen
Whenever his bugle blew.

So around Cape Horn we wrestled
With many a wind unkind;
'Twas a sad, tempestuous ocean,
But at last it was left behind.

Then a calm set in on the ocean,
Yet a dear wind tried to blow
From the nearby California
Where the lime and the orange grow.

And we almost saw the palm trees,
So near we were to the land,
While an odorous air came to us
Like the odors of Samercand.

And ever at times Philippo,
When the ship was going free,
Blew soft notes on his bugle
To the glad and listening sea.

Till back from the sunset islands
The echoing answers came,
While the wind went down on the ocean,
And the sun went down in a flame.

And again the breezes quickened,
And quicker the dear ship flew,
While we thought of the strange one with us,
And the land we were going to.

There was still a bit of the twilight,
And we heard the stranger say—
“It is there I would be landed,
By the cove, and the little bay.”

So the ship lay to for a little,
And the gig-boat went ashore,
And we left him there on the sea-sand,
Nor asked would we see him more.

Nor not so strange we thought it
A thing like that to do—
For many a man thus wandered
From the old Spain to the new.

There alone on the sand we left him,
With never a comrade nigh,
With only the darkness around him,
And a great red moon in the sky.

But not till the ship sailed homewards
Did ever we sailors find
The strange things that had happened
To him we had left behind.

Through a little valley upwards,
Away from the sea he went,
But the high hills hid the red moon
And the little light that it lent.

It was midnight in the mountains
And a fog was over the sea,
And the coyote's bark in the darkness
Was his only company.

And at last, worn out and weary,
To the side of a tree he crept,
And in spite of the wild things 'round him
Till the dawn of the day he slept.

Till the dawn of the day; but listen!
The leaves at his side were stirred,
And his heart almost went from him
When the voice of a man was heard.

For just a moment he listened,
Then opened his eyes apace,
And behold! a brown-robed friar
Stood looking him in the face!

"What—lost?" 'twas the friar speaking,
And reaching a tender hand—
"May the heavens greet you, brother,
Whatever may be your land.

"Let me share with you the little
That's left of this bread of mine,
And drink of the cooling water,
And taste of this grateful wine.

"It is sure that no bed of roses
Was yours in the night that's by,
With the fog down there on the ocean,
And the stars gone out of the sky.

“And the noise of the preparation!
You surely have heard it all,
For half of the night they were gathering
To a wonderful festival.”

“To a festival! holy father,—
And what is the thing you say?
Is some strange magic around me?
Do I walk in my sleep by day?”

“What, you never heard it, brother?”
Amazed, the friar said—
“How the wild folk come here autumns,
To gather their winter bread.

‘And that there by the sloping hillside,
In the sight of the shining sea—
They dance, they laugh and they call it
The feast of the Pinon tree.

“At noon by the bells of the mission,
A league, not more, from here,
And the strange wild feast commences,
You can almost hear them cheer.

‘Tis a wild yet timid people,
And fond of the song and dance;
We may cross the pine grove yonder
And see them all by chance.”

So they went from the darkening forest
A little towards the sea,
To a gentle slope where they saw a smoke
By a great gray pinon tree.

And around the tree in the dances
The unclad people swung
To a music weird and wondrous,
To the songs that the maiden sung.

And the nimblest youths among them,
Most like young bears they were,
Climbed far on the old tree’s branches
To gather the brown cones there.

’Twas the rarest cone for the fairest,
Far sweeter than all the rest,
Each tore from its branch and tossed it
To the maid that he loved the best.

With a spring and a bound she caught it,
And smiled on her heart's desire,
And the big brown cone was roasted
Till it burst its fruit in the fire.

Till it burst in a luscious plenty—
The food that is prized of all—
And the maid with the richest pine-cone
Is the queen of the festival.

So with games and the dance and the music,
In sight of the shining sea,
There was love of the wild-man's loving
At the feast of the pinon tree.

And the ranchers came on horseback,
To look at the strange wild show,
From the brown hills by the mountains,
And the green vales down below.

On their swift, wild horses riding
For a twenty miles and more,
With silver bells on their bridles,
And their sweethearts on before.

'Twas the days of the old ranchero,
Spanish, and rich, and grand,
With his herds on a hundred hillsides,
On his thousands of acres of land.

So they came and sat in a circle,
On horseback looking on;
There were youths and black-eyed maidens,
There were eyes as brown as the fawn.

On a little knoll that was nearest,
Philippo wondering stayed,
As he gazed on the whirling dances,
And the games that the wild ones played.

Till a girl on a snow-white charger
Rode by in her loveliness—
With hair as black as the midnight,
All down on her snow-white dress.

And he saw her, and loved that instant,
Who never had loved till then,—
Felt that first fire in his bosom
That never can flame again.

If she only would look now towards him,
Would turn and but look his way—
She would read in his eyes the passion,
And the things that his lips would say.

And the soul of his soul said to him—
There is never a spot so green
That is worth that I ever tread on,
Save the spot where her feet have been.

Nor a bliss, nor a joy, nor a gladness,
Nor a thing that a heart could stir,
Unless the joy, and the gladness,
Are all to be shared by her.

So he longed for a look that was nearer,
But never she turned her face,
Though she looked at the dancers dancing
In the beautiful greenwood place.

And he thought, I will blow my bugle—
She'll hear it and look around;
So he blew just a little love-tune,
And she startled to hear the sound.

'Twas a Spanish air of the old time,
To pay for a little glance,
And she turned her face for a moment
And smiled, as it were, by chance.

"We will go," said the friar, kindly,
"The feast and the dance are done,
And the mission bells are ringing
For a good night to the sun."

And again they walked in the forest—
The friar, and he, alone,
But his thoughts went ever backwards
To the eyes he would call his own.

Nor the strange things all about him
Had interest for him then,
Not the Indian maids at their weaving,
Nor the half-tamed Indian men.

Nor the mission there in the distance,
With its walls white as the snow,
And the long, low-arched cloisters
Where the friars loved to go.

Nor the vast flocks on the hill-sides,
With the shepherds watching there,
Nor the neophyte processions
On their way to the chapel prayer.

Nor the soft sweet tones of music
Of the chapel choristers,
Nor the Indians at the altar rail,
For his thoughts they all were hers.

For a while in the cloistered mission
He was a stranger guest,
But the thought of the passing vision
Forever was in his breast.

And he looked at his silver bugle,
“No more will I ask my bread—
At the kind old friar’s table—
I’ll earn it with this instead.

“At the guardhouse of the mission,
My bugle I there shall blow,
And I’ll sound the call for the soldiers
At the old Presidio.”

In a little while, and the friars
Such notes from a bugle heard,
It seemed like voices chanting,
Or the songs of the mocking-bird.

For the liquid notes of the bugle
Such wonderful music made,
It seemed the soul of the music
Was the soul of the one that played.

Yet a something would often sadden
The smile that the bugler wore,
When he thought of the day in the forest,
And the face he might see no more.

And he does not know while waiting
That far on the green hillsides
On a wild and snow-white charger
A beautiful maiden rides.

On the great ranch of her father,
That stretched like a king’s domain,
Past the vast herds on the hillsides,
Past the great flocks on the plain.

And she sometimes thinks of a lover,
That some day is to be,
Who will come like a prince and take her
To a beautiful home by the sea

But she oftener thinks of another
Whose eyes once on her turned
Till a thrill went through her bosom,
And the blush on her cheek had burned.

* * * * *

“Corinne”—(“twas her father speaking),
“In a month, and the day is near,
When the good ship will be sailing,
And the prince will soon be here.

“I have thought all day of the promise
To the best friend that I had—
(His only child was a boy then—
But the prettiest little lad),

“That whenever the time had ripened,—
And it is this very spring,—
You two should be sworn sweethearts,
And be married by book and ring.” ok * *

Still again she rides on the hillsides,
Where the grass with dew is wet,
And she thinks again of the dark eyes,
And she hears that bugle yet.

At the old Presidio yonder,
The days go slow and long,
But the bugler sounds his bugle,
And the hills give back the song.

And he yearns for eyes that he sees not,
One look at a radiant face,
And he sometimes goes to the forest
As it were to a trysting place.

But the cold gray ashes only
Remain of the fires that were,
Though the hot fire in his bosom
Will burn forever for her.

Still, still in the summer evenings,
His bugle notes are heard;
They hear them out on the ranches,
And the rancher's heart is stirred.

And they ride from the shining foothills
To the old Presidio,
Just to look at the Spanish soldiers
And to hear the bugle blow.

For 'twas nothing then to gallop
A twenty miles and more,
Just to dance in the wild bolero
On some distant ranchman's floor.

Or to see the brown-robed friars
When the vesper bells would ring,
Or to hear the low sweet voices
When the choristers would sing.

For the lives they led were joyous,
A horse that almost flew,—
And the open glade, and one fair maid,
Were the greatest joys they knew.

So it happened once, when blowing
The evening's bugle call,
While the passers-by all listened
To the echoes rise and fall,

That Philippo saw below him
—A girl all loveliness—
With her hair like the midnight, flowing
And loose on her snow-white dress.

It was she, it was she the longed-for,—
For a moment he was dumb
In the sight of the lovely vision
That again to his eyes had come.

Again, with his lips on the bugle
In a wonderful melody—
He plays the strain that he played there
On that day at the pinon tree.

And she hears, and a white hand waving
Has answered the bugle tone—
For the soul of the player playing—
That day passed into her own.

So now, and these two are lovers,
And never a day is done
But they think how a bugle's music
Has melted their hearts in one.

And away to the fields they've wandered,
These two, where the blue bells grow,
And she loves to hear the bugle
At the old Presidio.

But the prince, and his ship—where are they?
The morrow they're in the bay,
And the friars, dressed in friars' robes,
Will watch for them, and pray.

While away on the hills the ranchmen
Will saddle their steeds and come,
And the neophytes at the mission
Will march to the beating drum.

But look! it's the ship already!
With colors all aglow
And Philippo's there with his bugle
From the old Presidio.

In a moment more and the ship's boat
Has come close to the land—
And the skipper he sees Philippo,
Has kissed him on the hand.

And he calls him "prince," and smiling
He gladly would have him tell
Of that dark night at the seashore,
Of his love—had it prospered well?

And the people hear in gladness
The things that the skipper has said,
While the prince with the silver bugle
To the mission door is led.

'Twas a merry time that midnight,
In the mission festal place,
When the bugler boy sat gazing
In joy at his lady's face.

When he told her between the wine cups
How he'd left his dear Cadiz,
To see for himself a fair one,
That was destined to be his.

How, disguised as a bugler only,
He had wandered into the land,
How a kind priest found him sleeping
With his bugle in his hand.

How the day, almost, that he landed,
To the pinon tree he came,
And the sight of a lovely vision
Had set his soul aflame.

How the errand that brought him hither,
And the face he had come to see,
Were all forgot that morning
At the feast of the pinon tree.

How a wonderful fate was with him,
And a new joy to him came,
For lo! the face he had sought for
And her own face was the same.

And he touched his glass to the fair one,
And he saw in her eyes the glance,
The same soft look and tender,
That he saw that day at the dance.

* * * * *

In a castle at lovely Cadiz,
O'erhung with roses and moss,
There's a beautiful silver bugle
With the wings of an albatross.

And a lady in dreams there hears it,
As plain as plain can be—
In the same love-tune that won her,
That day by the pinon tree.

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The Rose of Monterey

It was in a golden summer,
Such as nowhere else is seen,
And the sea was all in sapphire,
And the hills ashore were green,
When our little ship came sailing
Round Point Pinos on the bay,
And we saw the low white houses
And the streets of Monterey.

In a little while the vessel,
Like a swan had gone to rest,
Seemed asleep inside the harbor,
With the blue sea at its breast.
And the sailors all went shorewards,
For they each had longed to know
Of a rose tree they had read of
In the legends long ago.

Of a golden rose they'd heard of,
And a love that was supreme,
Of a dark-eyed senorita,
Fair as any poet's dream.
Oh, in all the coast land nowhere
Was there one so fair to see
As sweet Ellenore the beauteous
Of the rose of Ophir tree.

(Editor's Note:—Among the sights shown visitors at Monterey is a wonderful rose of Ophir tree said to have been planted as a love pledge by General Sherman, then a lieutenant at the Presidio, and a beautiful

Spanish girl in 1849.)
'Twas a story all pathetic
As was any tale of old,
And the legend here is written
As the sailors heard it told;
As they tell it still to strangers—
When sojourning in the town,—
As the old-time gossips tell it,

So it here is written down.
They were joyous days they tell of
By yon wondrous sunlit strand,
In the Spanish days they tell of,
In the half enchanted land.
Music, dancing; dancing, music,
Tambourine, and castanet,
Rout and ball, and racing horses;

Every soul on joyance set.
It was all enchanting beauty
Where the little city lay,
With its arms in half a circle
Round the heavenly little bay;
And the low adobe houses,
Wreathed in roses white and red,
Seemed as ships out in the desert,

With the blue skies overhead.
All their valleys thrilled with color,
And the mountain paths were red
With the manzanita berries,
And the strange vines overhead.
It was color, color, color,
Only color everywhere,
From the far-off purple mountains

To the sapphire-colored air.
Once it was the town lay sleeping
In its rose-embowered bed,
Till one morn they heard strange bugles
And a stranger's marching tread—
Heard the music of strange bugles
Up and down the pretty street—
Heard the wild notes all re-echoed

That the stranger drummers beat.
From the old Presidio yonder,
Looking westward from the hill,
Fly the Spanish flags no longer,
And the Spanish drums are still;
For one day like white birds sailing
Came strange ships across the bay,
And they raised a stranger's banner

On the forts of Monterey.
There they kept them, ever flying
From the high hill looking down,
But the soldiers all commingled
With the people of the town.
Went to balls, and routs, and parties,
Not as friends, nor yet as foes,
Shared the wild day's joy of hunting,
Shared the dances at its close.
Once amid the soldiers guarding
In the old Presidio,
Stood a youth, all tall and slender,
And with eyes like fire aglow;
It was Adrian, Gun-Lieutenant
At the old Presidio,
And there was no other like him,
From the highest to the low.
Soft of speech as any woman,
He the youngest of them all,
Yet no trooper there could throw him
Wrestling at the carnival.
Naught he loves save hounds and horses,
Lonesome woods and chasing deer,
Yet not Robin Hood with ladies
Ever was so cavalier.
On a time as May drew nearer,
May, the month of heart's desire,
Rode the youth to hills and forest,
Past the chaparral and briar,
Past the red woods tall and lonely,
Past the liveoaks darkling green,
Till he saw an old-time ruin
That for years had roofless been.
It was Carmel, lovely Carmel,
Serra's home in days gone by—
Now the gray owl made its nest there,
On its walls the lizards lie.
Roofless now and fall'n asunder,
Yonder tower alone can tell
How the old-time friars listened

To the calls of yonder bell.
Still, at times they say it rings there,
Moonlight nights the most of all;
When a child has died they say it
Rings from yonder ruined wall.
And the land folks think that angels
Passing ring the mission bell,
And they cross themselves and whisper

When they feel the midnight spell.
There below the Carmel river,
Hurrying downward to the bay,
Through its woods the soldier wanders,
Knowing scarce the lonesome way,
Till at once he hears strange voices
Just beyond him in the glen—
Laughing tones of happy women,

Laughing shouts of merry men.
Drawing nearer, lo! a valley,
Long and level, stretches on,
Hemmed with ivied oak and holly;
There upon its grassy lawn
Sees he men and maids and horses,
For the morning sport will be
Seeing what horse runs the swiftest

To yon distant live-oak tree.
Not for gain the sport, this morning—
Just this flower wreath for him
Who shall hang his hat first yonder
On the liveoak's nearest limb;
Then a fair hand holds the wreath up
In a gay and laughing mood,
And a pair of black eyes pierced him

Like an arrow, where he stood.
It is Ellenore, the fair one,
That his eyes have quickly seen;
In one moment she has snared him
Like a wild bird on the green;
Never any arrow swifter,
Never any Cupid's dart
Found its way straight to a bosom

Than her eyes to Adrian's heart.
Scarcely now he could look from her,
Seems so fair she is, and all,
Seems himself enchained that moment,
Seems his very soul in thrall.
Once she touched his hand with her hand,
All so white and fair and slim,
And the thrill that comes but one time

In that moment came to him.
Scarce he saw the flying horses,
Scarcely heard the signal—"start,"
For still faster than the hoof-beats
Were the quick beats of his heart.
Now all soon the sport is ended,
Soon the wreath of flowers is won,
And in merry groups or single

They are parting every one.
Soon in merry mood they're riding
On the road to Monterey,
And 'tis Adrian who rides by her,
And they're laughing all the way:
But another rides behind them,
With a cloud-like look and frown—
'Tis the son of the Alcade,

Now the ruler of the town.
Once a suitor, and rejected,
Like a cloud he follows now—
Seeing that she loves another
He has vowed a solemn vow.
Some day, somewhere, she shall know it,
He will pay her cold disdain—
Some time, though it be far distant,

She shall think of all again.
So they rode on through the forest,
To the jingling of their bells,
To the bells upon their bridles
Making music in the dells,
Till it seemed a new Diana,
She the goddess of the chase,
With her merry ones around her

Were enchanting all the place.
Never once was love-word spoken;
But in Adrian's burning eyes
There was that that told when near her
He was close to Paradise.
Yet she gave no sign nor token—
Lest a secret should be known—
Save her dark eyes' tender glances

Told his feelings were her own.
So they rode on to the city,
So they rode on to the bay,
And they often walked together
At the closing of the day.
But the strange flag floating yonder
Was forever on her mind;
Though her eyes were ever tender,

And her words were ever kind.
Many days passed, and the longing
For a promise ever grew,
For the joy of love's returning
Was a joy he never knew.
Though they walked alone together
In the moonlight by the bay,
Yet in vain he waited, listened,

For the words she did not say.
'You must speak, dear Ellenore,
Waiting's long and hard to bear."
But she pointed to the strange flag
That was floating over there.
"That alone is love's undoing.
Could you leave it all for me?
Put our old flag where it once was,

Proudly looking on the sea?"
'Love is strong," he answered, "stronger
Most than anything; but know
'Twere not so if with dishonor
Love should ever think to go."
For a little while she waited,
And again their eyes have met,
And she loved him for that saying

More than she had loved him yet.
For she knew who loved bright honor
To her also would be true;
And they pledged there in the moonlight
To each other to be true.
Many days were theirs together,
Wand'ring up and down the wold,
And she learned to love the new flag

As she once had loved the old.
Wand'ring in the sunny weather,
Wand'ring in the forest green,
With the blue bells and the heather,
Every morning they were seen.
Every joy seemed theirs in sharing—
As they laughed along the way,
Till a cloud came on their spirits

That had always been so gay.
Till a cloud on their horizon
Bid the lovers they must part;
There were "orders" now, up yonder,
And tomorrow he must start.
There were oceans to divide them,
There were years to come and go.
Ere again they'd walk together

With the blue sea down below.
They must part, but firm the promise
Made that afternoon with tears;
Love should bind their hearts together
Through the coming of the years:
And beside the shining waters
Of the little sun-lit bay,
They would plant a rose as promise

Of a happy wedding day.
'Plant a rose of gold of Ophir;
When it blossomed it should be
Pledge that he was thinking of her,
Though he were beyond the sea.
Every year that it should blossom
It should be a sign to say
He was thinking only of her

There beside the happy bay.
Then the ship sailed down the harbor.
As they waved a long farewell;
Long she gazed upon the waters
As the white waves rose and fell,
Till the long low distance buried
Ship and sail from out her sight,
Till the sun sank in the ocean

And the stars shone in the night.
And the rose tree grew and blossomed,
Blossomed fair for many a day;
There was not another like it
In the town beside the bay.
Yet it brought no sign or message
From the one beyond the sea—
“You are fooled,” the people told her,

“Sitting by your Ophir tree.”
Little harked she to their saying,
Listened but to that within.
‘He will come—has he not promised?
See the roses now begin.”
And in sooth the rose tree flourished,
Spread as never rose before,
Cast its fragrance ever dearer,

Covered gate and cottage door.
Still no message—years were passing,
Still her faith was as before;
Ever, ever, letters sending,
Still no answer at her door.
Now at last she waited, only;
Still the rose its fragrance sent;
Oh, the days they moved so slowly,

And the ships they came and went.
He, too, there beyond the ocean,
Never tidings has of her,
Never word of his is answered,
And he thought of days that were;
Thought of that time in the forest,
Of the ride down to the bay,
Saw that churl again that followed

Cloud-like, frowning all the way.
“She is false, like other women;
Had it not been so from old?”
And he thought of that dark shadow
That pursued them in the wold.
“He it is, her old-time lover,
Welcomed back in place of me.”
Yet he could not cease to love her
Yonder by the rosebush tree.
Hopeless now he sought adventure,
Flung him to the battle’s strife;
She was lost, what was there left him,
What to him were death or life?
Bravest of the brave, behold him—
Leading where his comrades fall,
Look, his sword unsheathed, is foremost,
He is leader of them all.

* * * * *

Years have passed and all is changing;
He’s a nation’s idol now,
See, he passes there in triumph,
Wreaths of glory on his brow.
Once he rides through town and city,
Crosses mountains, hills and plain,
And almost before he knows it
Rides in Monterey again.
They will show him all the city,
The Presidio by the bay,
Where as but a young lieutenant
He had been for many a day;
Show him Carmel, still a ruin,
Where the friars used to be,
And they tell him of a rosebush
That is wonderful to see.
Half-forgetting, still he’d see it,
And he wandered there alone—
Saw a rose tree in the blooming, heard a once familiar tone;
It was Ellenore, the fair one,
Holding roses in her hand,
With a tender smile she gives them
To the greatest in the land.

Tells him they were from the rose tree
That they planted long ago,
Tells the sad tale of her waiting
Since the morning long ago;
Of the strange, mysterious secret—
Why their letters came nor went;
How from that false churl she knows it—
He had watched when they were sent.

It was he, that one rejected;
Dark revenge had led him on;
Came or went a ship with letters,
Quick he stole them every one
In the old Alcade's office,
There the evil thing was done!
Thus at death he had confessed it,
Feeling his revenge was won.

All was clear, the strange long silence;
Now again the vow is said,
For the mystery is broken,
And their love was never dead,
So again the fates untangle
All the threads of years ago,
And again they walk together
When the moonlight's coming on.

Still the ships go to the harbor,
And the sailors go on shore,
And they see the wondrous rose-tree
Blooming as it bloomed before.
And they hear again the legend,
Strolling yonder by the bay,
Of the handsome young lieutenant
And the Rose of Monterey.

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SOURCES AND UNRESOLVED LEADS

Editorial apparatus

What is included, what remains to be found, and how the volume was checked.

Primary book scans

The Happy Isles and Other Poems (1901); *The March to the Sea* (1896); *Poems of S. H. M. Byers, Selected* (1914); *The Bells of Capistrano and Other Poems* (1916); *The Pony Express and Other Poems, New and Old* (1925); and *In Arcadia and Other Poems* (1929).

Periodicals and anthology

The 1865 Rockwell–Byers sheet music; *The Argosy* record for “Baby Helène”; *Prairie Gold* (1917); and *The Lyric West*, October 1921 and February 1922.

Biographical authorities

Samuel H. M. Byers entry, *Biographical Dictionary of Iowa*; Ruth A. Gallaher, “S. H. M. Byers,” *The Palimpsest* (November 1932); Byers’s own memoirs and historical books; ArchiveGrid and University of Iowa collection descriptions; contemporary reviews and obituaries; and the supplied *Samuel H. M. Byers: A Biographical, Bibliographical, and Reception Dossier* (2026).

Unresolved texts

The prewar “Impromptu,” the Macon-prison mockingbird poem, “The Roll Call” (1895) reunion broadside, and the complete contents of *The Honeymoon and Other Poems* (1907) remain targets for archival recovery. They are recorded here but not reconstructed without a source image.

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