

Classic Poetry Series

Edgar Albert Guest
- poems -

Publication Date:

2012

Publisher:

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Edgar Albert Guest(20 August 1881 - 5 August 1959)

Edgar Allen Guest also known as Eddie Guest was a prolific English-born American poet who was popular in the first half of the 20th century and became known as the People's Poet.

Eddie Guest was born in Birmingham, England in 1881, moving to Michigan USA as a young child, it was here he was educated.

In 1895, the year before Henry Ford took his first ride in a motor carriage, Eddie Guest signed on with the Free Press as a 13-year-old office boy. He stayed for 60 years.

In those six decades, Detroit underwent half a dozen identity changes, but Eddie Guest became a steadfast character on the changing scene.

Three years after he joined the Free Press, Guest became a cub reporter. He quickly worked his way through the labor beat -- a much less consequential beat than it is today -- the waterfront beat and the police beat, where he worked "the dog watch" -- 3 p.m. to 3 a.m.

By the end of that year -- the year he should have been completing high school -- Guest had a reputation as a scrappy reporter in a competitive town.

It did not occur to Guest to write in verse until late in 1898 when he was working as assistant exchange editor. It was his job to cull timeless items from the newspapers with which the Free Press exchanged papers for use as fillers. Many of the items were verses. Guest figured he might just as well write verse as clip it and submitted one of his own, a dialect verse, to Sunday editor Arthur Mosley. The Free Press was choosy about publishing the literary efforts of staff members and Guest, a 17-year-old dropout, might have been seen as something of an upstart. But Mosley decided to publish the verse, His verse ran on Dec. 11, 1898.

More contributions of verse and observations led to a weekly column, "Blue Monday Chat," and then a daily column, "Breakfast Table Chat."

Verse had always been part of Guest's writing, but he had more or less followed the workaday road of many newsmen for 10 years. In 1908, standing in the rain as the solitary mourner for one such journalist who had long since been forgotten and relegated to the newspaper's morgue, Guest resolved to escape that fate by becoming a specialist. From that day forward, nearly all of his writing was in

meter and rhyme.

And readers loved it.

They asked where they could find collections of his folksy verses. Guest talked it over his younger brother Harry, a typesetter, and they bought a case of type. They were in the book publishing business.

After supper, Harry climbed the stairs to the attic to set Eddie's poetry. Harry could set as many as eight pages -- provided the verses didn't have too many "e's" in them -- before he had to print what he had and break up the forms for eight more pages. They printed 800 copies of a 136-page book, "Home Rhymes."

Two years later, in 1911 and still working in eight-page morsels, they printed "Just Glad Things," but upped the press order to 1,500 copies.

They escaped the limits of their type case with the third book, published in 1914, but Guest had some misgivings about the large press run -- 3,500 copies. It sold out in two Christmases.

More books followed, and before he was done Guest had filled more than 20. Sales ran into the millions and his most popular collection, "It Takes a Heap o' Livin'," sold more than a million copies by itself.

Guest's verses, originally clipped by exchange editors at other papers, went into syndication and he was carried by more than 300 newspapers. His popularity led to one of early radio's longest-running radio shows, appearances on television, in Hollywood and in banquet halls and meeting rooms from coast to coast.

But Edgar A. Guest remained, at heart and in fact, a newspaper man. In 1939, he told "Editor & Publisher," "I've never been late with my copy and I've never missed an edition. And that's seven days a week." For more than 30 years, there was not a day that the Free Press went to press without Guest's verse on its pages. He worked for the Free Press for more than six decades. Thousands of Detroiters were born, grew up and had children of their own before a Free Press ever arrived at their homes without Guest's gentle human touch.

When Guest died in 1959, he was buried in Detroit's Woodlawn Cemetery.

'erbert's H'Opinion

H'if a yankee cutthroat `acks `is poor hold mother,
H'it tykes a year to pack `im h'off to jyle;
`E can h'always dig h'up some h'excuse or hotter
To keep your justice creepin' like a snyle.
But h'in H'England, h'if a bloke gets h'into trouble,
To the pen h'in arf a jiffy `e will roam;
H'if `e mykes a fight `is punishment will double
We do things so muc better h'over `ome.

H'if a bloomin' Yankee starts to build a dwelling
`E slaps h'it h'up without a bit h'of care,
In `arf the time h'it tykes me in the telling,
`E `as the chimney pot h'up in the h'air.
But h'in H'England `ouses h'always last forever,
We build `em right, from cellar to dome;
H'although you bloomin' Yankees think you're clever,
We do things so much better h'over `ome.

`Ere h'it's always `elter-skelter, rush and bustle,
H'and h'it's pell-mell h'into h'everthing you do;
You h'even teach your children `ow to `ustle
Your meals you never tyke the time to chew.
But h'in H'England, when h'it's tea time, we stop working,
H'an H'I wish that H'I was back h'across the foam,
H'in my `ead the notoin still h'is plynely lurking,
We do things so much better h'over `ome.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Baby's Love

A BABY is the best to love,
She always smiles when you draw near,
Though ugly you may be of face,
No handsomer may interfere
And win her heart away from you,
Despite your faults she's always true;
And though you be unknown to fame,
A baby's love remains the same.

A baby's eyes are always bright,
A baby's lips are always red,
And, O, a baby's voice is sweet,
Though not a word she's ever said.
A baby loves you for yourself,
She's not entranced by sordid self;
Though other loves may leave a smart,
A baby never breaks your heart.

It matters not though you be poor
And friendless in the outside world,
The moment that you cross the door
That baby in your arms is curled.
Though all the world may jibe and jeer,
A baby smiles when you draw near;
Through joy or sorrow, weal or woe,
With you, a babe is glad to go.

Ah, lucky man, indeed, is he
Who has a babe at home to love;
All that men now are striving for,
He owns a treasure far above.
Though fate may rob him of his gold
And bare him in the winter's cold,
And drag him down to deep despair,
His baby still will count him fair.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Battle Prayer

God of battles, be with us now:
Guard our sons from the lead of shame,
Watch our sons when the cannons flame,
Let them not to a tyrant bow.

God of battles, to Thee we pray:
Be with each loyal son who fights
In the cause of justice and human rights,
Grant him strength and lead the way.

God of battles, our youth we give
To the battle line on a foreign soil,
To conquer hatred and lust and spoil;
Grant that they and their cause shall live.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Bear Story

There was a bear — his name was Jim,
An' children weren't askeered of him,
An' he lived in a cave, where he
Was confortubbul as could be,
An' in that cave, so my Pa said,
Jim always kept a stock of bread
An' honey, so that he could treat
The boys an' girls along his street.

An' all that Jim could say was 'Woof!'
An' give a grunt that went like 'Soof!'
An' Pa says when his grunt went off
It sounded jus' like Grandpa's cough,
Or like our Jerry when he's mad
An' growls at peddler men that's bad.
While grown-ups were afraid of Jim,
Kids could do anything with him.

One day a little boy like me
That had a sister Marjorie,
Was walking through the woods, an' they
Heard something 'woofing' down that way,
An' they was scared an' stood stock still
An' wished they had a gun to kill
Whatever 'twas, but little boys
Don't have no guns that make a noise.

An' soon the 'woofing' closer grew,
An' then a bear came into view,
The biggest bear you ever saw —
Ma's muff was smaller than his paw.
He saw the children an' he said:
'I ain't a-goin' to kill you dead;
You needn't turn away an' run;
I'm only scarin' you for fun.'

An' then he stood up just like those
Big bears in circuses an' shows,
An' danced a jig, an' rolled about

An' said 'Woof! Woof!' which meant 'Look out!'
An' turned a somersault as slick
As any boy can do the trick.
Those children had been told of Jim
An' they decided it was him.

They stroked his nose when they got brave,
An' followed him into his cave,
An' Jim asked them if they liked honey,
They said they did. Said Jim: 'That's funny.
I've asked a thousand boys or so
That question, an' not one's said no.'
What happened then I cannot say
'Cause next I knew 'twas light as day.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Boost For Modern Methods

In some respects the old days were perhaps ahead of these,
Before we got to wanting wealth and costly luxuries;
Perhaps the world was happier then, I'm not the one to say,
But when it's zero weather I am glad I live to-day.
Old-fashioned winters I recall—the winters of my youth—
I have no great desire for them to-day, I say in truth;
The frost upon the window panes was beautiful to see,
But the chill upon that bedroom floor was not a joy to me.
I do not now recall that it was fun in those days when
I woke to learn the water pipes were frozen tight 'again.'
To win once more the old-time joys, I don't believe I'd care
To have to sleep, for comfort's sake, dressed in my underwear.
Old-fashioned winters had their charms, a fact I can't deny,
But after all I'm really glad that they have wandered by;
We used to tumble out of bed, like firemen, I declare,
And grab our clothes and hike down stairs and finish dressing there.
Yes, brag about those days of old, boast of them as you will,
I sing the modern methods that have robbed them of their chill;
I sing the cheery steam pipe and the upstairs snug and warm
And a spine that's free from shivers as I robe my manly form.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Boy And His Dad

A boy and his dad on a fishing trip-
There is a glorious fellowship!
Father and son and the open sky,
And the white clouds lazily drifting by,
And the laughing stream as it runs along
With the clicking reel like a martial song,
And the father teaching the youngster gay
How to land a fish in the sportsman's way.

I fancy I hear them talking there
In an open boat, and speech is fair;
And the boy is learning the ways of men
From the finest man in his youthful ken.
Kings, to youngster, cannot compare
With the gentle father who's with him there.
And the greatest mind of the human race
Not for one minute could take his place.

Which is happier, man or boy?
The soul of the father is steeped in joy,
For he's finding out, to his heart's delight,
That his son is fit for the future fight.
He is learning the glorious depths of him.
And the thoughts he thinks and his every whim,
And he shall discover, when night comes on,
How close he has grown to his little son.

Oh, I envy them, as I see them there
Under the sky in the open air,
For out of the the old, old long-ago
Come the summer days that I used to know,
When I learned life's truth from my father's lips
As I shared the joy of his fishing trips-
A boy and his dad on a fishing trip-
Builders of life's companionship!

Edgar Albert Guest

A Boy And His Dog

A boy and his dog make a glorious pair:
No better friendship is found anywhere,
For they talk and they walk and they run and they play,
And they have their deep secrets for many a day;
And that boy has a comrade who thinks and who feels,
Who walks down the road with a dog at his heels.

He may go where he will and his dog will be there,
May revel in mud and his dog will not care;
Faithful he'll stay for the slightest command
And bark with delight at the touch of his hand;
Oh, he owns a treasure which nobody steals,
Who walks down the road with a dog at his heels.

No other can lure him away from his side;
He's proof against riches and station and pride;
Fine dress does not charm him, and flattery's breath
Is lost on the dog, for he's faithful to death;
He sees the great soul which the body conceals—
Oh, it's great to be young with a dog at your heels!

Edgar Albert Guest

A Boy At Christmas

If I could have my wish to-night it would not be for wealth or fame,
It would not be for some delight that men who live in luxury claim,
But it would be that I might rise at three or four a. m. to see,
With eager, happy, boyish eyes, my presents on the Christmas tree.
Throughout this world there is no joy, I know now I am growing gray,
So rich as being just a boy, a little boy on Christmas Day.

I'd like once more to stand and gaze enraptured on a tinsel tree,
With eyes that know just how to blaze, a heart still tuned to ecstasy;
I'd like to feel the old delight, the surging thrills within me come;
To love a thing with all my might, to grasp the pleasure of a drum;
To know the meaning of a toy- a meaning lost to minds base;
To be just once again a boy, a little boy on Christmas Day.

I'd like to see a pair of skates the way they looked to me back then,
Before I'd turned from boyhood's gates and marched into the world of men;
I'd like to see a jackknife, too, with those same eager, dancing eyes
That couldn't fault or blemish view; I'd like to feel the same surprise,
The pleasure, free from all alloy, that has forever passed away,
When I was just a little boy and had my faith in Christmas Day.

Oh, little, laughing, roguish lad, the king that rules across the sea
Would give his scepter if he had such joy as now belongs to thee!
And beards of gray would give their gold, and all the honors they
possess,
Once more within their grasp to hold thy present fee of happiness.
Earth sends no greater, surer joy, as, too soon, thou, as I, shall say,
Than that of him who is a boy, a little boy on Christmas Day.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Boy's Tribute

Prettiest girl I've ever seen

Is Ma.

Lovelier than any queen

Is Ma.

Girls with curls go walking by,

Dainty, graceful, bold an' shy,

But the one that takes my eye

Is Ma.

Every girl made into one

Is Ma.

Sweetest girl to look upon

Is Ma.

Seen 'em short and seen 'em tall,

Seen 'em big and seen 'em small,

But the finest one of all

Is Ma.

Best of all the girls on earth

Is Ma.

One that all the rest is worth

Is Ma.

Some have beauty, some have grace,

Some look nice in silk and lace,

But the one that takes first place

Is Ma.

Sweetest singer in the land

is Ma.

She that has the softest hand

Is Ma.

Tenderest, gentlest nurse is she,

Full of fun as she can be,

An' the only girl for me

Is Ma.

Bet if there's an angel here

It's Ma.'

if God has a sweetheart dear,

It's Ma.
Take the girls that artists draw,
An' all the girls I ever saw,
The only one without a flaw
Is Ma.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Breach Of Friendship

'TIS friendship's test to guard the name
Of him you love from all attack,
As you are to his face, the same
To be when you're behind his back.

Now good old loyal Jimmy Green,
A traitor to you have I been;
As false as Arnold to my trust,
Your name I've trampled in the dust.
Last night I lingered out till two,
And said that I had been with you,
And then straightway my wife began
To prove to me that you're no man.
'What, out again,' said she, 'with Green!
No decent man with him is seen!
No man who valued much his home
With him would ever care to roam,
But for the children, long ago
His own wife would have quit, I know;
His only friends are loafers, who
Don't care what vicious things they do;
He'd steal, he'd lie, he's insincere.'
And all I said was: 'Yes, my dear.'

'Who else was with you, tell me pray?
Come, answer me, and right away!'
And then I muttered, 'Freddie Brown,'
And promptly turned poor Freddie down.
'What, Brown,' she screamed, 'that low-down thing
Who all his life has had his fling!
That selfish brute who doesn't care
What shabby clothes his wife must wear
So long as he can spend his pay
And turn the night hours into day!
I'd never go about the town
And tell that I had been with Brown;
I've always said his hang-dog look
Betrayed the fact that he's a crook.
And you with him! Of all men, you!

I wonder now what next you'll do?
You know Fred Brown's a man to fear.'
And all I said was: 'Yes, my dear.'

'Who else was with you all this night?'
She asked, and I said, 'Billy White.'
And Billy White was next to fall
Before her rhetoric in the hall.
I don't remember now just what
She said of Bill, but 'twas a lot.
Perhaps I should have argued back,
And spared my friends from her attack.
Perhaps I should have pointed out
That they are men beyond all doubt,
Men who have won their share of fame,
That each one bears an honored name.
Perhaps I should have argued there
And proved her charges most unfair;
But it was two, as I have said,
And I was tired and wished for bed;
So by the short route chose to steer,
And all I said was: 'Yes, my dear.'

Edgar Albert Guest

A Child Of Mine

I will lend you, for a little time,
A child of mine, He said.
For you to love the while he lives,
And mourn for when he's dead.
It may be six or seven years,
Or twenty-two or three.
But will you, till I call him back,
Take care of him for Me?
He'll bring his charms to gladden you,
And should his stay be brief.
You'll have his lovely memories,
As solace for your grief.
I cannot promise he will stay,
Since all from earth return.
But there are lessons taught down there,
I want this child to learn.
I've looked the wide world over,
In search for teachers true.
And from the throngs that crowd life's lanes,
I have selected you.
Now will you give him all your love,
Nor think the labour vain.
Nor hate me when I come
To take him home again?
I fancied that I heard them say,
'Dear Lord, Thy will be done!'
For all the joys Thy child shall bring,
The risk of grief we'll run.
We'll shelter him with tenderness,
We'll love him while we may,
And for the happiness we've known,
Forever grateful stay.
But should the angels call for him,
Much sooner than we've planned.
We'll brave the bitter grief that comes,
And try to understand.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Choice

Sure, they get stubborn at times; they worry and
fret us a lot,
But I'd rather be crossed by a glad little boy
and frequently worried than not.
There are hours when they get on my nerves
and set my poor brain all awirl,
But I'd rather be troubled that way than to be
the man who has no little girl.

There are times they're a nuisance, that's true,
with all of their racket and noise,
But I'd rather my personal pleasures be lost than
to give up my girls and my boys.
Not always they're perfectly good; there are
times when they're wilfully bad,
But I'd rather be worried by youngsters of mine
than lonely and childless and sad.

So I try to be patient and calm whenever they're
having their fling;
For the sum of their laughter and love is more
than the worry they bring.
And each night when sweet peace settles down
and I see them asleep in their cot,
I chuckle and say: 'They upset me to-day, but
I'd rather be that way than not.'

Edgar Albert Guest

A Christmas Carol

God bless you all this Christmas Day
And drive the cares and griefs away.
Oh, may the shining Bethlehem star
Which led the wise men from afar
Upon your heads, good sirs, still glow
To light the path that ye should go.

As God once blessed the stable grim
And made it radiant for Him;
As it was fit to shield His Son,
May thy roof be a holy one;
May all who come this house to share
Rest sweetly in His gracious care.

Within thy walls may peace abide,
The peace for which the Savior died.
Though humble be the rafters here,
Above them may the stars shine clear,
And in this home thou lovest well
May excellence of spirit dwell.

God bless you all this Christmas Day;
May Bethlehem's star still light thy way
And guide thee to the perfect peace
When every fear and doubt shall cease.
And may thy home such glory know
As did the stable long ago.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Christmas Greeting

Here's to you, little mother,
With your boy so far away;
May the joy of service smother
All your grief this Christmas day;
May the magic of his splendor
Thrill your spirit through and through
And may all that's fine and tender
Make a smiling day for you.

May you never know the sadness
That from day to day you dread;
May you never find but gladness
In the Flag that's overhead;
May the good God watch above him
As he stands to duty stern,
And at last to all who love him
May he have a safe return.

Little mother, take the blessing
Of a grateful nation's heart;
May the news that is distressing
Never cause your tears to start;
May there be no fears to haunt you,
And no lonely hours and sad;
May your trials never daunt you,
But may every day be glad.

Little Mother, could I do it,
This my Christmas gift would be:
That he'd safely battle through it,
This to you I'd guarantee.
And I'd pledge to you this morning
Joys to banish all your cares,
Gifts of gold and silver scorning,
I would answer all your prayers.

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Edgar Albert Guest

A Coming Reunion

Jim's made good in the world out there, an' Kate has a man that's true,
No better, of course, than she deserves; she's rich, but she's happy, too;
Fred is manager, full-fledged now—he's boss of a big concern
An' I lose my breath when I think sometimes of the money that he can earn;
Clever—the word don't mean enough to tell what they really are,
Clever, an' honest an' good an' kind—if you doubt me, ask their Ma.

Proud of 'em! Well, I should say we are, an' we have a right to be,
Some are proud to have one child, an' I am proud of three!
That's all the honor a fellow needs, why Ma an' I often say
There isn't a king or a queen on earth as proud as we are today;
Three babies off in the world out there, all honest an' kind an' true,
That's something to brag of when you are old an' your journey is almost through.

We've stretched the table out a bit, the way that it used to be,
When we were younger—an' here's Ma's chair, an' there is a place for me;
An' there's a chair for our little Kate an' one for the man she wed,
An' yonder, just to the left of Ma, is a place for our baby Fred,
An' Jim, the eldest, will sit by me—they're comin' Thanksgiving day
To sit once more where they used to sit before they went away.

They ain't ashamed of the old, old place, an' they ain't ashamed of me,
An' they're just as proud of their dear old Ma as ever they used to be;
They've got rich friends in the city now, an' there's nothing that's fine they lack,
But their hearts still stay with us here at home, and they joy in the comin' back.
So we've stretched the table out a bit to the length that it was when they
Were youngsters here in the home with us. They're comin' Thanksgiving day.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Convalescin' Woman

A convalescin' woman does the strangest sort o' things,
An' it's wonderful the courage that a little new strength brings;
O, it's never safe to leave her for an hour or two alone,
Or you'll find th' doctor's good work has been quickly overthrown.
There's that wife o' mine, I reckon she's a sample of 'em all;
She's been mighty sick, I tell you, an' to-day can scarcely crawl,
But I left her jes' this mornin' while I fought potater bugs,
An' I got back home an' caught her in the back yard shakin' rugs.

I ain't often cross with Nellie, an' I let her have her way,
But it made me mad as thunder when I got back home to-day
An' found her doin' labor that'd tax a big man's strength;
An' I guess I lost my temper, for I scolded her at length,
'Til I seen her teardrops fallin' an' she said: 'I couldn't stand
To see those rugs so dirty, so I took 'em all in hand,
An' it ain't hurt me nuther- see, I'm gettin' strong again- '
An' I said: 'Doggone it! can't ye leave sich work as that fer men?'

Once I had her in a hospittle fer weeks an' weeks an' weeks,
An' she wasted most to nothin', an' th' roses left her cheeks;
An' one night I feared I'd lose her; 'twas the turnin' point, I guess,
Coz th' next day I remember that th' doctor said: 'Success!'
Well, I brought her home an' told her that for two months she must stay
A-sittin' in her rocker an' jes' watch th' kids at play.
An' th' first week she was patient, but I mind the way I swore
On th' day when I discovered 'at she'd scrubbed th' kitchen floor.

O, you can't keep wimmin quiet, an' they ain't a bit like men;
They're hungerin' every minute jes' to get to work again;
An' you've got to watch 'em allus, when you know they're weak an' ill,
Coz th' minute that yer back is turned they'll labor fit to kill.
Th' house ain't cleaned to suit 'em an' they seem to fret an' fume
'Less they're busy doin' somethin' with a mop or else a broom;
An' it ain't no use to scold 'em an' it ain't no use to swear,
Coz th' next time they will do it jes' the minute you ain't there.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Creed

Lord let me not in service lag.
Let me be worthy of our flag.
Let me remember when I'm tired,
The sons heroic who have died.

In freedom's name and in my way,
Teach me to be as brave as they.
In all I am, in all I do,
Unto our flag I would be true.

For God and country let me stand,
Unstained of soul, clean of hand.
Teach me to serve and guard and love,
The starry flag that flies above.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Discussion

She put her arms about my neck,
And whispered low to me:
'I'm thinking daddy, dear, how nice
And lovely it would be
If only every little girl
In all this wide world through
Had daddies that were just as nice
And kind and good as you.'

And then I took her in my arms
And held her on my knee
And said: 'A nicer, brighter world
I'm sure that it would be
If only every grown-up man
Beneath the skies of blue
Were daddy to a little girl
As nice and sweet as you.'

Edgar Albert Guest

A Family Row

I freely confess there are good friends of mine,
With whom we are often invited to dine,
Who get on my nerves so that I cannot eat
Or stay with my usual ease in my seat;
For I know that if something should chance to occur
Which he may not like or which doesn't please her,
That we'll have to try to be pleasant somehow
While they stage a fine little family row.

Now a family row is a private affair,
And guests, I am certain, should never be there;
I have freely maintained that a man and his wife
Cannot always agree on their journey through life,
But they ought not to bicker and wrangle and shout
And show off their rage when their friends are about;
It takes all the joy from a party, I vow,
When some couple starts up a family row.

It's a difficult job to stay cool and polite
When your host and your hostess are staging a fight:
It's hard to talk sweet to a dame with a frown
Or smile at a man that you want to knock down.
You sit like a dummy and look far away,
But you just can't help hearing the harsh things they say.
It ruins the dinner, I'm telling you now,
When your host and your hostess get mixed in a row.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Father's Prayer

Lord, make me tolerant and wise;
Incline my ears to hear him through;
Let him not stand with downcast eyes,
Fearing to trust me and be true.
Instruct me so that I may know
The way my son and I should go.

When he shall err, as once did I,
Or boyhood folly bids him stray,
Let me not into anger fly
And drive the good in him away.
Teach me to win his trust, that he
Shall keep no secret hid from me.

Lord, strengthen me that I may be .
A fit example for my son.
Grant he may never hear or see
A shameful deed that I have done.
However sorely I am tried,
Let me not undermine his pride.

In spite of years and temples gray,
Still let my spirit beat with joy;
Teach me to share in all his play
And be a comrade with my boy.
Wherever we may chance to be,
Let him find happiness with me.

Lord, as his father, now I pray
For manhood's strength and counsel wise;
Let me deal justly, day by day,
In all that fatherhood implies.
To be his father, keep me fit;
Let me not play the hypocrite!

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Edgar Albert Guest

A Father's Thoughts

Because I am his father, they
Expect me to put grief away;
Because I am a man, and rough
And sometimes short of speech and gruff,
The women folks at home believe
His absence doesn't make me grieve;
But how I felt, they little know,
The day I smiled and let him go.

They little know the dreams I had
Long cherished for my sturdy lad;
They little guess the wrench it meant
That day when off to war he went;
They little know the tears I checked
While standing, smiling and erect;
They never heard my smothered sigh
When it was time to say good-bye.

'What does his father think and say?'
The neighbors ask from day to day.
'Oh, he's a man,' they answer then.
'And you know how it is with men.
But little do they ever say,
They do not feel the self-same way;
He seems indifferent and grim
And yet he's very proud of him.'

Indifferent and grim! Oh, heart,
Be brave enough to play the part,
Let not the grief in you be shown,
Keep all your loneliness unknown,
To you the women folks must turn
For comfort when their sorrows burn.
You must not at this time reveal
The pain and anguish that you feel.

Oh, tongue, be silent through the years,
And eyes, keep back always the tears,
And let them never see or know

My hidden weight of grief and woe.
Though every golden dream I had
Was centered in my little lad,
Alone my sorrow I must bear.
They must not know how much I care.

Though women folks may talk and weep,
A man, unseen, his grief must keep,
And hide behind his smile and pride
The loneliness that dwells inside.
And so, from day to day, I go,
Playing the part of man, although
Beneath the rough outside and grim,
I think and dream and pray for him.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Father's Tribute

I don't know what they'll put him at, or what
his post may be;
I cannot guess the task that waits for him across
the sea,
But I have known him through the years, and
when there's work to do,
I know he'll meet his duty well, I'll swear that
he'll be true.

I sometimes fear that he may die, but never that
he'll shirk;
If death shall want him death must go and take
him at his work;
This splendid sacrifice he makes is filled with
terrors grim,
And I have many thoughts of fear, but not one
fear of him.

The foe may rob my life of joy, the foe may
take my all,
And desolate my days shall be if he shall have to
fall.
But this I know, whate'er may be the grief that
I must face,
Upon his record there will be no blemish of
disgrace.

His days have all been splendid days, there lies
no broken trust
Along the pathway of his youth to molder in
the dust;
Honor and truth have marked his ways, in him
I can be glad;
He is as fine and true a son as ever a father had.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Father's Wish

What do I want my boy to be?
Oft is the question asked of me,
And oft I ask it of myself-
What corner, niche or post or shelf
In the great hall of life would I
Select for him to occupy?
Statesman or writer, poet, sage
Or toiler for a weekly wage,
Artist or artisan? Oh, what
Is to become his future lot?
For him I do not dare to plan;
I only hope he'll be a man.

I leave it free for him to choose
The tools of life which he shall use,
Brush, pen or chisel, lathe or wrench,
The desk of commerce or the bench,
And pray that when he makes his choice
In each day's task he shall rejoice.
I know somewhere there is a need
For him to labor and succeed;
Somewhere, if he be clean and true,
Loyal and honest through and through,
He shall be fit for any clan,
And so I hope he'll be a man.

I would not build my hope or ask
That he shall do some certain task,
Or bend his will to suit my own;
He shall select his post alone.
Life needs a thousand kinds of men,
Toilers and masters of the pen,
Doctors, mechanics, sturdy hands
To do the work which it commands,
And wheresoe'er he's pleased to go,
Honor and triumph he may know.
Therefore I must do all I can
To teach my boy to be a man.

A Feller's Hat

It's funny 'bout a feller's hat-
He can't remember where it's at,
Or where he took it off, or when,
The time he's wantin' it again.
He knows just where he leaves his shoes;
His sweater he won't often lose;
An' he can find his rubbers, but
He can't tell where his hat is put.

A feller's hat gets anywhere.
Sometimes he'll find it in a chair,
Or on the sideboard, or maybe
It's in the kitchen, just where he
Gave it a toss beside the sink
When he came in to get a drink,
An' then forgot- but anyhow
He never knows where it is now.

A feller's hat is never where
He thinks it is when he goes there;
It's never any use to look
For it upon a closet hook,
'Cause it is always in some place
It shouldn't be, to his disgrace,
An' he will find it, like as not,
Behind some radiator hot.

A feller's hat can get away
From him most any time of day,
So he can't ever find it when
He wants it to go out again;
It hides in corners dark an' grim
An' seems to want to bother him;
It disappears from sight somehow-
I wish I knew where mine is now.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Fine Sight

I reckon the finest sight of all

That a man can see in this world of ours
Ain't the works of art on the gallery wall,
Or the red an' white o' the fust spring flowers,
Or a hoard o' gold from the yellow mines;
But the' sight that'll make ye want t' yell
Is t' catch a glimpse o' the fust pink signs
In yer baby's cheek, that she's gittin' well.

When ye see the pink jes' a-creepin' back
T' the pale, drawn cheek, an' ye note a smile,
Then th' cords o' yer heart that were tight, grow slack
An' ye jump fer joy every little while,
An' ye tiptoe back to her little bed
As though ye doubted yer eyes, or were
Afraid it was fever come back instead,
An' ye found that th' pink still blossomed there.

Ye've watched fer that smile an' that bit o' bloom
With a heavy heart fer weeks an' weeks;
An' a castle o' joy becomes that room
When ye glimpse th' pink 'in yer baby's cheeks.
An' out o' yer breast flies a weight o' care,
An' ye're lifted up by some magic spell,
An' yer heart jes' naturally beats a prayer
O' joy to the Lord 'cause she's gittin' well.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Fourth Of July Wish

This is the day when we are great,
And sally forth to celebrate;
When night comes on, God grant that we
Have ears to hear and eyes to see.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Friend

A friend is one who stands to share
Your every touch of grief and care.
He comes by chance, but stays by choice;
Your praises he is quick to voice.

No grievous fault or passing whim
Can make an enemy of him.
And though your need be great or small,
His strength is yours throughout it all.

No matter where your path may turn
Your welfare is his chief concern.
No matter what your dream may be
He prays your triumph soon to see.

There is no wish your tongue can tell
But what it is your friend's as well.
The life of him who has a friend
Is double-guarded to the end.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Friend [2]

A friend is one who takes your hand
And talks a speech you understand
he's partly kindness, partly mirth
And Faith unfaltering in your worths
he's first to cheer you on success,
And last to leave you in distress
A friend is constant, honest, true
In short, old pal, he's just like you.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Friend's Greeting

DIAMONDS wouldn't tell yer all I really think of you,
The costliest gift the goldsmith makes I'm sure would never do.
There's nothing known that gold can buy that I could ever send
That could explain how glad I am to have yer fer a friend.

If I had all the wealth of earth and what I like could get
And I should send it on to you, I'd still be in your debt,
And still the heart o' me would cry: 'That ain't enough t' do
Fer one whose smiles an' kindly words have meant so much t' you.'

It's Christmas time, an' here I am, a-wishin' all that's good
Fer you an' yours. A patch o' blue above your neighborhood,
The bloom o' health forever on the cheeks o' those you love,
An' future years t' bring the joys that now you're dreamin' of.

'God bless yer!' That expresses it in simple words an' true,
It's what the heart o' me would say if it could speak t' you.
May every day be Christmas Day until your journey's end,
Is jus' the simple wish of one who's glad you call him friend.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Good Name

Men talk too much of gold and fame,
And not enough about a name;
And yet a good name's better far
Than all earth's glistening jewels are.
Who holds his name above all price
And chooses every sacrifice
To keep his earthly record clear,
Can face the world without a fear.

Who never cheats nor lies for gain,
A poor man may, perhaps, remain,
Yet, when at night he goes to rest,
No little voice within his breast
Disturbs his slumber. Conscience clear,
He falls asleep with naught to fear
And when he wakes the world to face
He is not tainted by disgrace.

Who keeps his name without a stain
Wears no man's brand and no man's chain;
He need not fear to speak his mind
In dread of what the world may find.
He then is master of his will;
None may command him to be still,
Nor force him, when he would stand fast,
To flinch before his hidden past.

Not all the gold that men may claim
Can cover up a deed of shame;
Not all the fame of victory sweet
Can free the man who played the cheat;
He lives a slave unto the last
Unto the shame that mars his past.
He only freedom here may own
Whose name a stain has never known.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Good Soldier

He writes to us most every day, and how his letters thrill us!

I can't describe the joys with which his quaint expressions fill us.
He says the military life is not of his selection,
He's only soldiering to-day to give the Flag protection.
But since he's in the army now and doing duties humble,
He'll do what all good soldiers must, and he will never grumble.

He's not so keen for standing guard, a lonely vigil keeping,
'But when I must,' he writes to us, 'they'll never find me sleeping!
I hear a lot of boys complain about the tasks they set us
And there's no doubt that mother's meals can beat the ones they get us,
But since I'm here to do my bit, close to the job I'm sticking;
I'll take whatever comes my way and waste no word in kicking.

'I'd like to be a captain, dad, a major or a colonel,
I'd like to get my picture in some illustrated journal;
I don't exactly fancy jobs that now and then come my way,
Like picking bits of rubbish up that desecrate the highway.
But still I'll do those menial tasks as cheerfully as could one,
For while I am a private here I'm going to be a good one.

'A soldier's life is not the way I'd choose to make my living,
But now I'm in the ranks to serve, my best to it I'm giving.
Oh, I could name a dozen jobs that I'd consider finer,
But since I've got this one to do I'll never be a whiner.
I'm just a private in the ranks, but take it from my letter,
They'll never fire your son for one who'll do his duty better.'

Edgar Albert Guest

A Good World

IT'S a good old world we're livin' in
With all its pain an' sorrow;
A world where friends are givin' in
To cheer us till tomorrow.
A world where folks come forward, when
They see our feet are slippin'
To help us till we come again
To where the honey's drippin'.

I reckon that we'd never know
How kind an' good our friends are
If trouble's face should never show
Off yonder where the bends are.
If sudden-like there never came
A rain to drench a feller
We'd miss the friend who made us claim
A share of his umbreller.

If never came to us a woe
That seemed we couldn't bear it,
We'd never positively know
Which friend would rush to share it.
We'd miss a heap of sweetness, too,
That we could never borrow,
A sweetness no one ever knew,
Save it was born of sorrow.

This thought old care has driven in,
An' grief an' trouble taught me,
It's a good old world we're livin' in
Despite the woes it's brought me.
For had I never shed a tear,
Nor known what sorrow's rends are,
I never would have learned down here
How kind an' good my friends are.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Greeting

IF every day of yours were fine
And every sky of yours were blue,
You couldn't know such joy of mine,
The joy o' being friend to you.

You've brushed away the clouds of care
And often dried the bitter tears,
And left a debt I couldn't square
If I should live a thousand years.

I'm wishing you'll as happy be
As I am all this journey through,
Who have this joy to comfort me,
The joy o' being friend to you.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Heart To Heart Talk

THEY tell me that I 'm spoiling you,
I The neighbors say that you should be
For all the awful things you do,
Laid face down over daddy's knee
And spanked and put to bed. That 'a what
The neighbors say, but what say you?
You think you should be loved a lot?
Well, somehow daddy thinks so, too.

They tell me that it isn't right
For me always to take your part,
I've heard it said you often fight,
And that you'll break your mother's heart.
The neighbors say that you are bad
And should be whipped, but what say you?
You think you are too small a lad
To whip. Well, daddy thinks so, too.

What would you do if I were you,
And you were daddy, and they came
And told, as people always do,
My little deeds, and cried: 'For shame'?
Would you put me across your knee
And spank me as you ought to do?
What's that? You think you 'd try to be
Forgiving. Well, I think so, too.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Lesson From Golf

He couldn't use his driver any better on the tee
Than the chap that he was licking, who just happened to be me;
I could hit them with a brassie just as straight and just as far,
But I piled up several sevens while he made a few in par;
And he trimmed me to a finish, and I know the reason why:
He could keep his temper better when he dubbed a shot than I.

His mashie stroke is choppy, without any follow through;
I doubt if he will ever, on a short hole, cop a two,
But his putts are straight and deadly, and he doesn't even frown
When he's tried to hole a long one and just fails to get it down.
On the fourteenth green I faded; there he put me on the shelf,
And it's not to his discredit when I say I licked myself.

He never whined or whimpered when a shot of his went wrong;
Never kicked about his troubles, but just plodded right along.
When he flubbed an easy iron, though I knew that he was vexed,
He merely shrugged his shoulders, and then coolly played the next,
While I flew into a frenzy over every dub I made
And was loud in my complaining at the dismal game I played.

Golf is like the game of living; it will show up what you are;
If you take your troubles badly you will never play to par.
You may be a fine performer when your skies are bright and blue
But disaster is the acid that shall prove the worth of you;
So just meet your disappointments with a cheery sort of grin,
For the man who keeps his temper is the man that's sure to win.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Little The Best Of It

A LITTLE the best of it,
Allus he prayed for,
All th' time lookin'
Per more than he paid for,
Had an idee, that's
What bargains are made for.

Whatever he sold,
Folks made up their minds to it,
He got th' best of it,
Everyona knew it,
There warn't any trick
Known, but what he could do it.

Sand in th' sugar,
His thumb on the scales,
Short weight in flour
An' ten-penny nails,
Made his own lard,
An' he weighed in th' pails.
Bet when he dies,

An' he makes a clean breast of it,
Tells good St. Peter
His yarn, with the rest of it,
He'll make a plea
For a little th' best of it.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Lullaby

THE dream ship is ready, the sea is like gold
And the fairy prince waits in command;
There's a cargo of wonderful dreams in the hold,
For the baby that seeks Slumberland.
There are fairies in pink and good fairies in white,
A watch o'er the baby to keep,
Now the silver sails fill with the breeze of the night,
All aboard, for the Harbor of Sleep!

I pray that no tempest shall ruffle the sea
Through the long night that he is away;
And I pray the good captain will bring him to me
With a smile at the close of the day.
Oh, soft as his breath be the breezes that blow,
And gentle the long waves that sweep
The wonderful ship that is waiting to go
With my babe to the Harbor of Sleep.

Softly, so softly, the ship slips away
With its silver sails catching the breeze,
The stars in the sky seem to twinkle and say
Our watch we will keep o'er the seas.
And never a tempest shall happen this night,
But peace shall slip down on the deep,
Safe and sound shall return, with the coming of light,
Your babe from the Harbor of Sleep.

Edgar Albert Guest

A New Baby In The House

Something to talk about, something to do,
Something to laugh at the whole day through,
Something to look at with pride and with glee,
Something for friends to come in just to see;
Something you can't sum up all the wonderful things
Of joy and delight which a new baby brings.

There's a smile that is brighter than sunbeams of May,
A wave of farewell as you're starting away,
A glad time of frolic which no one can steal,
A thrill inexpressible, lovely to feel.
There's something to boast of and something to tell
When a baby has come to the place where you dwell.

There's never an hour that is lonely and drear;
The days are filled up to the top with good cheer.
You have someone to play with and someone to sing to,
Someone to romp with and someone to cling to;
And always you're finding some pleasure that's new
When God has sent down a glad baby to you.

Edgar Albert Guest

A New Year's Plea

Lord, let me stand in the thick of the fight,
Let me bear what I must without whining;
Grant me the wisdom to do what is right,
Though a thousand false beacons are shining.

Let me be true as the steel of a blade,
Make me bigger than skillful or clever;
Teach me to cling to my best, unafraid,
And harken to false gospels, never.

Let me be brave when the burden is great,
Faithful when wounded by sorrow;
Teach me, when troubled, with patience to wait
The better and brighter to-morrow.

Spare me from hatred and envy and shame,
Open my eyes to life's beauty;
Let not the glitter of fortune or fame
Blind me to what is my duty.

Let me be true to myself to the end,
Let me stand to my task without whining;
Let me be right as a man, as a friend,
Though a thousand false beacons are shining.

Edgar Albert Guest

A New Year's Song

Love and laughter lead you
Down the pathways of the year,
And may each morning feed you
From the golden spoon of cheer;
May every eye be shining,
And every cheek aglow,
And may the silver lining
Of the clouds forever show.

May peace and plenty find you,
May pain and grief depart ;
And may you leave behind you
The little cares that smart;
May no day be distressful,
No night be filled with woe,
And may you be successful
Wherever you may go.

May June bring you her roses,
May summer poppies bloom,
And may each day that closes
Be fragrant with perfume.
May you have no regretting
When evening is begun,
No vain and idle fretting
O'er what you might have done.

May envy quit your dwelling
And hatred leave your heart ;
May you rejoice in telling
Your brother's better part.
May you be glad you're living
However dark your way,
And find your joy in giving
Your service to the day.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Pat On The Back

A PAT on the back is a wonderful thing,
It gives a man courage to whistle and sing;
When hope is departing, the outlook is grim,
A pat on the back then says volumes to him.
It whispers: 'Keep at it! You're doing all right,
Just dig in your toes and get busy and fight,
There's one man behind you, go to it, old man,
One pal who is sure that you can, that you can.'

A pat on the back from a stranger or friend
When your jaw starts to sag and your knees start to bend
Will bring you right up with new courage and grit
And you'll keep in the fight when you were going to quit,
You'll feel it, you'll hear it—yes, actually hear it—
For hours saying 'dig in, old fellow. Don't fear it,
That isn't as hard as it looks. Be a man,
There's a fellow back there who believes that you can.'

Just a pat on the back. And for days and for days,
No matter how far you may roam, it still stays
By your side, and no matter how hard be your fight
It's whispering always: 'You'll come out all right.
There's a fellow back there who's believing in you,
Expecting each minute to see you come through
With your colors still flying and leading your clan!
And the first thing you know you are saying: 'I can.'

Oh, a pat on the back is a wonderful thing,
The touch of it's magic; I've known it to bring
Back hopes that were fleeting, and strength that seemed gone
And smiles that had vanished and urge a man on
When it seemed that he couldn't one step advance more
Till he conquered. And that's what I'm singing this for;
If you see a poor brother whose nerve's out of whack,
Just step up and give him a pat on the back.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Patriot

It's funny when a feller wants to do his little bit,
And wants to wear a uniform and lug a soldier's kit,
And ain't afraid of submarines nor mines that fill the sea,
They will not let him go along to fight for liberty
They make him stay at home and be his mother's darling pet,
But you can bet there'll come a time when they will want me yet.

I want to serve the Stars and Stripes, I want to go and fight,
I want to lick the Kaiser good, and do the job up right.
I know the way to use a gun and I can dig a trench
And I would like to go and help the English and the French.
But no, they say, you cannot march away to stirring drums;
Be mother's angel boy at home; stay there and twirl your thumbs.

I've read about the daring boys that fight up in the sky;
It seems to me that that must be a splendid way to die.
I'd like to drive an aeroplane and prove my courage grim
And get above a German there and drop a bomb on him,
But they won't let me go along to help the latest drive;
They say my mother needs me here because I'm only five

Edgar Albert Guest

A Patriotic Creed

To serve my country day by day
At any humble post I may;
To honor and respect her flag,
To live the traits of which I brag;
To be American in deed
As well as in my printed creed.

To stand for truth and honest toil,
To till my little patch of soil,
And keep in mind the debt I owe
To them who died that I might know
My country, prosperous and free,
And passed this heritage to me.

I always must in trouble's hour
Be guided by the men in power;
For God and country I must live,
My best for God and country give;
No act of mine that men may scan
Must shame the name American.

To do my best and play my part,
American in mind and heart;
To serve the flag and bravely stand
To guard the glory of my land;
To be American in deed:
God grant me strength to keep this creed!

Edgar Albert Guest

A Patriotic Wish

I'd like to be the sort of man
the flag could boast about;
I'd like to be the sort of man
it cannot live without;
I'd like to be the type of man
That really is American:
The head-erect and shoulders-square,
Clean-minded fellow, just and fair,
That all men picture when they see
The glorious banner of the free.

I'd like to be the sort of man
the flag now typifies,
The kind of man we really want
the flag to symbolize;
The loyal brother to a trust,
The big, unselfish soul and just,
The friend of every man oppressed,
The strong support of all that's best,
The sturdy chap the banner's meant,
Where'er it flies, to represent.

I'd like to be the sort of man
the flag's supposed to mean,
The man that all in fancy see
wherever it is seen,
The chap that's ready for a fight
Whenever there's a wrong to right,
The friend in every time of need,
The doer of the daring deed,
The clean and generous handed man
That is a real American.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Personal View Of War

I NEVER pondered much on war,
Except to think it was inspiring
To have a cause to battle for,
To hear the guns and cannons firing;
To see brave men rush up to death
Without a sign or trace of terror,
To give their country blood and breath,
But now I know it's all an error;
War is a frightful thing I know,
What if my boy should have to go?

Last night I leaned above his crib
And spent a little while in playing,
tickled him beneath his bib,
And watched his little body swaying
With innocent delight, and then
It seemed I heard the noise of battle,
The wails and shrieks of dying men,
The cannons' boom, the muskets' rattle,
And shuddered as I stooped down low,
What if my babe some day must go?

War did not seem a splendid thing,
There was no glory in the fighting,
No thrill in hearing bullets sing,
No joy in men each other smiting.
I saw but heartache, and the grave,
And misery and desolation,
As splendid fellows, bold and brave,
Were sacrificed unto the nation;
I wept with men of long ago
Whose boys marched out to face the foe.

I used to think that war was grand
That bugle calls were splendid, thrilling;
But now I know and understand,
They sound the message to start killing.
And when I ponder now on war
'Tis but to see the terror of it,

The glory that I saw before
Has vanished in the error of it.
War may have seemed a brilliant show,
It's different when your own may go!

Edgar Albert Guest

A Place At The Top

THERE'S a place for you at the top, my boy,
Are you willing to try to get it?
It's true that trouble will try to stop
Your efforts, but will you let it?
The road is long and the path is rough,
Designed for men of the proper stuff,
And you can't get by with a common bluff,
For the way is barred to bluffers.
And ever and ever the weak drop out,
But the strong keep going with courage stout;
They may taste defeat, but never rout,
But it's worth all a fighter suffers.

Up there at the top there 's a place for you,
You may earn it or let it go;
And the world won't care which of these you do,
It's up to yourself to show
Whether you can battle with fate and wrong,
And take hard luck when it comes along
With a nervy grin or a bit of song
Or stop with the quitters tamely.
There's room at the top; you can get there, too,
If you 're ready to fight your own way through.
The odds are heavy, I know, but you
Can win, if you'll face them gamely.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Plea

GOD grant me these: the strength to do
Some needed service here;
The wisdom to be brave and true;
The gift of vision clear,
That in each task that comes to me
Some purpose I may plainly see.

God teach me to believe that I
Am stationed at a post,
Although the humblest 'neath the sky,
Where I am needed most.
And that, at last, if I do well
My humble services will tell.

God grant me faith to stand on guard,
Uncheered, unspoke, alone,
And see behind such duty hard
My service to the throne.
Whate'er my task, this be my creed:
I am on earth to fill a need.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Prayer

God grant me kindly thought
And patience through the day,
And in the things I've wrought
Let no man living say
That hate's grim mark has stained
What little joy I've gained.

God keep my nature sweet,
Teach me to bear a blow,
Disaster and defeat,
And no resentment show.
If failure must be mine
Sustain this soul of mine.

God grant me strength to face
Undaunted day or night;
To stoop to no disgrace
To win my little fight;
Let me be, when it is o'er,
As manly as before.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Prayer, 1918

Oh, make us worthy,
God, we pray,
To do thy service
Here to-day;
Endow us with
The strength we need
For every
Sacrificial deed!

Edgar Albert Guest

A Preference

I'D rather be considered dull
Than use my brain denouncing things;
I'd rather not be critical
And utter words that carry stings.
I'd rather never speak at all
Than speak as one who seems to feel
That other's faults, howe'er so small,
It proves him clever to reveal.

I have no wish to pose on earth
As born to judge my fellow men;
I'd rather praise them for their worth;
If failures, bid them try again.
If faulty effort I behold,
In silence, let me pass it by,
If I must leave it unextolled,
At least the toiler shall not sigh.

No reputation would I gain
For wisdom, if in gaining it
I cause some humble worker pain
And wound him by my flash of wit.
There is no cleverness in sneers,
A fool can scoff in manner pert;
Great wisdom by this test appears
In never saying things that hurt.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Query —

I wonder have you ever known
Or heard of such a thing
As paperhangers in the house
Who didn't try to sing?

Edgar Albert Guest

A Real Thriller

We were speakin' of excitement, an' the hair upliftin' thrills
That sorter dot life's landscape, like the bill board ads. for pills,
An' one feller spoke of bein' in a railroad wreck or two
An' another one of skatin' on some ice that let him through.
Then a meek-faced little brother in the smoker's corner said:
'I'll admit you folks have suffered temporary fear 'an' dread,
But, tell me, have you ever ridden sixteen miles at night
In a livery stable cutter, when the snow was deep an' white
An' discovered, when attracted by the lash's singin' cuts
That the driver's full of whisky an' the road is full of ruts?

'Don't talk to me of terror, 'less you've ridden in a sleigh
Through a strange an' barren country, jus' before the break o' day
When it's blacker than your derby, an' you're shiverin' with cold
An' the fear that in a minute down a chasm you'll be rolled.
I would volplane in a biplane, though I'm not a Wilbur Wright,
I would join the crazy Frenchman in his somersaulting flight.
I would even scoff at Villa or some other Greaser thug,
An' not worry that my body soon would stop a leaden slug.
But I'd pass up midnight riding, where a deep ravine abuts
When the driver's full of whisky an' the road is full of ruts.

'I never for one minute doubt that there's a Providence,
A wiser power above us, something more than mortal sense;
A wisdom that is deeper than the wisdom man has shown,
A mercy that is sweeter than we selfish mortals own.
That there is a God in Heaven is as sure as sure can be,
An' each day that I am living certain proof of it I see.
If we'd have it manifested, there's no need to go to schools,
Or to scholars or the sages—we may learn it from the fools.
One must really be watched over by an eye that never shuts
When the driver's full of whisky and the road is full of ruts.'

Edgar Albert Guest

A Scare

There are noises that freeze up the blood,
There's the sound of the burglar at night
As he's picking the lock, and the thud
Of a wind-worried door I thought tight;
But there's nothing that frightens me more
Nor causes such horrible dread
As the bumpety-bump on the floor
When the baby falls out of his bed.

The coal pile may rattle and roll
As it will in its uncanny way,
But I keep my nerves under control.
The neighbor's pet canine may bay
At the moon, and I merely turn o'er,
But I lose absolutely my head
At that bumpety-bump on the floor
When the baby falls out of his bed.

A shot may ring out in the street,
And 'murder' a woman may yell;
I may listen to scurrying feet
But I handle myself rather well.
A dark house I'll even explore,
But my heart stops as though I were dead
At that bumpety-bump on the floor
When the baby falls out of his bed.

I know that the old mothers say
That once every baby must fall,
That they seldom are hurt in that way
And really don't mind it at all;
But still terror closes each pore
And my hair stands up straight on my head
At that bumpety-bump on the floor
When the baby falls out of his bed.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Song

Rough be the road and long,
Steep be the hills ahead,
Grant that my faith be strong,
Fearlessly let me tread.
After the day's hard test
Home — with its peaceful rest.

Heavy my burdens be,
Let me not falter though,
Soon I shall come to see
Home, where the roses grow.
Home, where the swallows nest,
Home, with its peaceful rest.

This grant to me at last,
When I have ceased to roam,
When all my cares are past,
I may be welcomed home,
Home, where is none distressed,
Home, with its peaceful rest.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Successful Dad

OTHERS may laugh at my feeble endeavor
To capture life's prizes, and others may sneer;
The whole world may loudly declare I shall never
Be worthy the gunpowder to blow me from here.
It may be I 'm punk as a parlor reciter,
And when I begin grown-ups take to the woods;
But that baby of mine! I can always delight her,
She vows I 'm a wonder, she swears I 'm the goods.

It may be I can't keep a tune for a minute,
It may be my voice wanders far from the key;
It may be the nightingale, lark and the linnet
As songsters have quite a wide margin on me.
Caruso and others may take down the money
For singing their ditties to high-brows, but I
Have one little audience, cheerful and sunny,
Who 'd rather hear me than the music you buy.

She thinks I 'm a corker, a lalapaloosa,
She nightly applauds every stunt that I do;
She 'd rather hear me than your John Philip Sousa,
To her the old nonsense forever is new.
That baby of mine thinks I 'm great in whatever
I tackle, the moment we've finished our tea;
And though others may laugh at my feeble endeavor,
The praise of my little one satisfies me.

And so though the big world goes by me unheeding,
And never a grown-up takes notice of me;
Though into my work failure others are reading,
I 'm still a success to the babe on my knee.
When worn out and weary, my long day is ended,
And homeward I turn, I forget my distress;
For I know that my baby still thinks I am splendid,
To her, anyhow, I 'm a corking success!

Edgar Albert Guest

A Suggestion

IF you've grumbled through the day
Without driving care away,
If in spite of all your grouches
Troubles on you have kept piling;
If regardless of your kicking
And your cussing, they're still sticking,
Why not switch your tactics, mister,
And try smiling?

If your frowning will not chase 'em,
Why not grin a bit, and face 'em?
If your worries seem to like it
When your meanness they are riling;
If your gloomy disposition
Doesn't better your condition,
Why not switch your methods, mister,
And try smiling?

If your constant whining, swearing,
Do not better your wayfaring;
If you find your foes no kinder
After them you've been reviling;
If they keep right on assailing,
Quite regardless of your wailing,
Why not switch your style of warfare
And try smiling?

Edgar Albert Guest

A Toast To Happiness

To happiness I raise my glass,
The goal of every human,
The hope of every clan and class
And every man and woman.
The daydreams of the urchin there,
The sweet theme of the maiden's prayer,
The strong man's one ambition,
The sacred prize of mothers sweet,
The tramp of soldiers on the street
Have all the selfsame mission.
Life here is nothing more or less
Than just a quest for happiness.

Some seek it on the mountain top,
And some within a mine;
The widow in her notion shop
Expects its sun to shine.
The tramp that seeks new roads to fare,
Is one with king and millionaire
In this that each is groping
On different roads, in different ways,
To come to glad, contented days,
And shares the common hoping.
The sound of martial fife and drum
Is born of happiness to come.

Yet happiness is always here
Had we the eyes to see it;
No breast but holds a fund of cheer
Had man the will to free it.
'Tis there upon the mountain top,
Or in the widow's notion shop,
'Tis found in homes of sorrow;
'Tis woven in the memories
Of happier, brighter days than these,
The gift, not of to-morrow
But of to-day, and in our tears
Some touch of happiness appears.

'Tis not a joy that's born of wealth:
The poor man may possess it.
'Tis not alone the prize of health:
No sickness can repress it.
'Tis not the end of mortal strife,
The sunset of the day of life,
Or but the old should find it;
It is the bond twixt God and man,
The touch divine in all we plan,
And has the soul behind it.
And so this toast to happiness,
The seed of which we all possess.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Toast To The Men

Here's to the men! Since Adam's time
They've always been the same;
Whenever anything goes wrong,
The woman is to blame.
From early morn to late at night,
The men fault-finders are;
They blame us if they oversleep,
Or if they miss a car.
They blame us if, beneath the bed,
Their collar buttons roll;
They blame us if the fire is out
Or if there is no coal.
They blame us if they cut themselves
While shaving, and they swear
That we're to blame if they decide
To go upon a tear.

Here's to the men, the perfect men!
Who never are at fault;
They blame us if they chance to get
The pepper for the salt.
They blame us if their business fails,
Or back a losing horse;
And when it rains on holidays
The fault is ours, of course.
They blame us when they fall in love,
And when they married get;
Likewise they blame us when they're sick,
And when they fall in debt.
For everything that crisscross goes
They say we are to blame;
But, after all, here's to the men,
We love them just the same!

Edgar Albert Guest

A Valentine

YOUR cheeks are pinker than the rose,
Your eyes are bluer than the skies;
Than you no fairer blossom grows,
In you all earthly sweetness lies.
Without you life were drear to me,
I dream of you the night long through;
Oh, sweetheart! hear my humble plea:
Please let me hook your waists for you.

Your voice is sweet as song of birds,
Your eyes would shame the stars above;
There is no power in written words
To truly tell you how I love.
When I 'm with you I 'm trouble free,
But absent, desolate and blue,
Darling, I pray you'll hear my plea:
Please let me hook your waists for you.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Vanished Joy

When I was but a little lad of six and seven and eight,
One joy I knew that has been lost in customs up-to-date,
Then Saturday was baking day and Mother used to make,
The while I stood about and watched, the Sunday pies and cake;
And I was there to have fulfilled a small boy's fondest wish,
The glorious privilege of youth- to scrape the frosting dish!

On Saturdays I never left to wander far away-
I hovered near the kitchen door on Mother's baking day;
The fragrant smell of cooking seemed to hold me in its grip,
And naught cared I for other sports while there were sweets to sip;
I little cared that all my chums had sought the brook to fish;
I chose to wait that moment glad when I could scrape the dish.

Full many a slice of apple I have lifted from a pie
Before the upper crust went on, escaping Mother's eye;
Full many a time my fingers small in artfulness have strayed
Into some sweet temptation rare which Mother's hands had made;
But eager-eyed and watery-mouthed, I craved the greater boon,
When Mother let me clean the dish and lick the frosting spoon.

The baking days of old are gone, our children cannot know
The glorious joys that childhood owned and loved so long ago.
New customs change the lives of all and in their heartless way
They've robbed us of the glad event once known as baking day.
The stores provide our every need, yet many a time I wish
Our kids could know that bygone thrill and scrape the frosting dish.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Vow

I might not ever scale the mountain heights
Where all the great men stand in glory now;
I may not ever gain the world's delights
Or win a wreath of laurel for my brow;
I may not gain the victories that men
Are fighting for, nor do a thing to boast of;
I may not get a fortune here, but then,
The little that I have I'll make the most of.

I'll make my little home a palace fine,
My little patch of green a garden fair,
And I shall know each humble plant and vine
As rich men know their orchid blossoms rare.
My little home may not be much to see;
Its chimneys may not tower far above;
But it will be a mansion great to me,
For in its walls I'll keep a hoard of love.

I will not pass my modest pleasures by
To grasp at shadows of more splendid things,
Disdaining what of joyousness is nigh
Because I am denied the joy of kings.
But I will laugh and sing my way along,
I'll make the most of what is mine to-day,
And if I never rise above the throng,
I shall have lived a full life anyway.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Warm House And A Ruddy Fire

A warm house and a ruddy fire,
To what more can man aspire?
Eyes that shine with love aglow,
Is there more for man to know?
Whether home be rich or poor,
If contentment mark the door
He who finds it good to live
Has the best that life can give.
This the end of mortal strife!
Peace at night to sweeten life,
Rest when mind and body tire,
At contentment's ruddy fire.
Rooms where merry songs are sung,
Happy old and glorious young;
These, if perfect peace be known,
Both the rich and poor must own.
A warm house and a ruddy fire,
These the goals of all desire,
These the dream of every man
Since God spoke and life began.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Wish

I'd like to be a boy again, a care-free prince of joy again,
I'd like to tread the hills and dales the way I used to do;
I'd like the tattered shirt again, the knickers thick with dirt again,
The ugly, dusty feet again that long ago I knew.
I'd like to play first base again, and Sliver's curves to face again,
I'd like to climb, the way I did, a friendly apple tree;
For, knowing what I do to-day, could I but wander back and play,
I'd get full measure of the joy that boyhood gave to me.

I'd like to be a lad again, a youngster, wild and glad again,
I'd like to sleep and eat again the way I used to do;
I'd like to race and run again, and drain from life its fun again,
And start another round of joy the moment one was through.
But care and strife have come to me, and often days are glum to me,
And sleep is not the thing it was and food is not the same;
And I have sighed, and known that I must journey on again to sigh,
And I have stood at envy's point and heard the voice of shame.

I've learned that joys are fleeting things; that parting pain each meeting brings;
That gain and loss are partners here, and so are smiles and tears;
That only boys from day to day can drain and fill the cup of play;
That age must mourn for what is lost throughout the coming years.
But boys cannot appreciate their priceless joy until too late
And those who own the charms I had will soon be changed to men;
And then, they too will sit, as I, and backward turn to look and sigh
And share my longing, vain, to be a carefree boy again.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Woman's Love

There are times a woman's love
Fer a man stands out, I guess,
More `n usual, like as when
Sickness comes or else distress;
But I reckon that it shines
Brighter than a taller dip
When a man is goin' away
An' she comes t' pack his grip.

'Pears t' me she seems t' think
More about his comforts then;
Puts in slippers, jes' as though
They were worn by traveling men;
Fusses round an' round th' room,
Hopin', maybe, that she'll see
Somethin' that perhaps he'll need —
Jes' as thoughtful as can be.

Packs in heavy underwear,
Fearin' that it may get cold;
It is most remarkable
What a common grip will hold
When a woman fills it up —
Things fer sunshine an' fer rain,
Pills fer every kind of ills,
Liniment fer every pain.

Seen her pack that grip o' mine
Hundred times, I guess, an' more;
Heard her sigh while doin' it,
Kneelin' on th' bedroom floor;
An' I never went away
On the shortest kind o' trip
Without feelin' that her heart
Had been packed inside my grip.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Woman's Ways

IT 'S human for a woman
To enjoy a little cry;
Though a man will grin and bear 'em
And pass little troubles by,
A woman seeks a pillow
And her face she buries in it,
Starts the bitter tears to running,
And she's better in a minute.

It's human for a woman
To expect a lot of fussing,
Though a man will greet his fellow
Without once his topknot mussing;
A woman greets her sister
Disarranging gown and hair,
Kissing, hugging, squeezing, gurgling,
With enthusiasm rare.

It's human for a woman
Not to know just what she wants,
That's the reason she goes shopping
And the down-town stores she haunts;
Though a man knows just exactly
What he wants and goes and gets it,
A woman spends time looking,
And she never once regrets it.

It's human for a woman
To enjoy a lettuce sandwich,
Though a man wants steak and onions
And a cup of 'Mocha and' rich;
he must have her lady fingers,
Ices, tea and macaroons,
And she gets her fun in toying
With the solid silver spoons.

Man must grin and bear his troubles,
Lovely woman always cries,
And the man who 'd seek to stop her

Does a thing that's most unwise;
Let her weep and kiss in greeting,
Shop and feed on dainty fare —
These are human for a woman,
They 're her meat and drink and air.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Wonderful World

IT 'S a wonderful world when you sum it all up,
And we ought to be glad we are in it;
The fellow who drinks from old Misery's cup
Gets the goblet of joy the next minute.
In a wonderful way
In the course of a day
Strange changes occur as by magic,
There are solemn and sad things
And joyful and glad things,
And things that are comic and tragic.

It's a wonderful world, full of wonderful things,
No two days alike in their passing;
Some new joy or sorrow the rising sun brings,
Some new charm the former outclassing.
And yesterday's glad
Are perhaps today's sad,
And yesterday's poor may be wealthy;
Oh, the changes are quick,
Even yesterday's sick
May today or tomorrow be healthy.

It's a wonderful world, for we never can tell
What for us has the morrow in store;
Things happen as though by some magical spell
That never have happened before.
And nobody knows
Or can ever disclose
What the joy of the future may be;
But of one thing I 'm sure,
Despite all we endure
'T will be worth while to hang on and see.

Edgar Albert Guest

A Year's New Wish

MAY all your little cares depart
By which your heart is troubled;
May perfect peace supplant the smart,
And all your joys be doubled.
May every wish you have come true,
And every sky above be blue.

May every foe become your friend,
And every wrong be righted;
And may your paths that wind and bend
With sunshine all be lighted.
May love and laughter walk with you,
With ne'er a tear the whole year through.

Good health, good friends, good luck, I pray
That you will always know,
With lips to kiss at close of day,
And eyes with love aglow.
Where 'er you go, a hand clasp true,
This is my New Year's wish for you.

Edgar Albert Guest

About Boys

Show me the boy who never threw
 A stone at someone's cat;
Or never hurled a snowball swift
 At someone's high silk hat.
Who never ran away from school,
 To seek the swimming hole;
Or slyly from a neighbor's yard
 Green apples never stole.
Show me the boy who never broke
 A pane of window glass;
Who never disobeyed the sign
 That says: 'Keep off the grass.'
Who never did a thousand things,
 That grieve us sore to tell;
And I'll show you a little boy
 Who must be far from well.

Edgar Albert Guest

Accomplished Care

All things grow lovely in a little while,
The brush of memory paints a canvas fair;
The dead face through the ages wears a smile,
And glorious becomes accomplished care.
There's nothing ugly that can live for long,
There's nothing constant in the realm of pain;
Right always comes to take the place of wrong,
Who suffers much shall find the greater gain.
Life has a kindly way, despite its tears
And all the burdens which its children bear;
It crowns with beauty all the troubled years
And soothes the hurts and makes their memory fair.
Be brave when days are bitter with despair,
Be true when you are made to suffer wrong;
Life's greatest joy is an accomplished care,
There's nothing ugly that can live for long.

Edgar Albert Guest

Afraid Of His Dad

Bill Jones, who goes to school with me,
Is the saddest boy I ever see.
He's just so 'fraid he runs away
When all of us fellows want to play,
An' says he dassent stay about
Coz if his father found it out
He'd wallop him. An' he can't go
With us to see a picture show
On Saturdays, an' it's too bad,
But he's afraid to ask his dad.

When he gets his report card, he
Is just as scared as scared can be,
An' once I saw him when he cried
Becoz although he'd tried an' tried
His best, the teacher didn't care
An' only marked his spelling fair,
An' he told me there'd be a fight
When his dad saw his card that night.
It seems to me it's awful bad
To be so frightened of your dad.

My Dad ain't that way- I can go
An' tell him everything I know,
An' ask him things, an' when he comes
Back home at night he says we're chums;
An' we go out an' take a walk,
An' all the time he lets me talk.
I ain't scared to tell him what
I've done to-day that I should not;
When I get home I'm always glad
To stay around an' play with Dad.

Bill Jones, he says, he wishes he
Could have a father just like me,
But his dad hasn't time to play,
An' so he chases him away
An' scolds him when he makes a noise
An' licks him if he breaks his toys.

Sometimes Bill says he's got to lie
Or else get whipped, an' that is why
It seems to me it's awful bad
To be so frightened of your dad.

Edgar Albert Guest

After A Proposal

IS IT so sudden? Then did you believe, dear,
Those evenings I called at your flat
And lovingly, longingly gazed in your eyes,
That I merely had come for a chat?
Did it strike you the times that I lingered till twelve
And hated to leave you alone,
I was doing that merely to fill up my time,
Because I 'd no home of my own?

So sudden, you say? Yet for years I have stood
On your doorstep each evening at eight.
Did you think I had come for a chat with your ma,
Or a word with your maiden aunt, Kate?
Did you think, when I sighed as I fondled your hand,
'T was dyspepsia that troubled me then?
Or that the cigars I bestowed on your dad
Were smokes I would give to all men?

O, the tickets for shows I have purchased for you,
The automobiles I have hired!
The locket and bracelets and purses and things,
All gifts that I knew you desired,
That I tenderly laid at your feet, as a shrine,
Though each cost me a half a week's pay!
I thought that my actions betrayed my design,
And yet, 'It's so sudden,' you say.

Edgar Albert Guest

After All Is Said And Done

AFTER all is said and done,
After all the work and fun,
After all the sighing's over
And the laughter fades away,
Then the cares that now beset us
And the little wrongs that fret us
Will diminish in their value
As we sail across the bay.

There will be no friends departed,
There will be no heavy-hearted,
There will be no looking backward
To the joys of long ago;
There will be no sad words spoken
In a voice that's low and broken
Of the loved ones that are missing
And the joys we used to know.

After all is said and done,
After all the work and fun,
We shall be once more united,
With our sorrows swept away;
Each new day will bring its pleasure
In a splendid heaping measure,
And no one of us shall sigh for
Any by-gone yesterday.

Edgar Albert Guest

All For The Best

Things mostly happen for the best.
However hard it seems to-day,
When some fond plan has gone astray
Or what you've wished for most is lost
An' you sit countin' up the cost
With eyes half-blind by tears o' grief
While doubt is chokin' out belief,
You'll find when all is understood
That what seemed bad was really good.

Life can't be counted in a day.
The present rain that will not stop
Next autumn means a bumper crop.
We wonder why some things must be-
Care's purpose we can seldom see-
An' yet long afterwards we turn
To view the past, an' then we learn
That what once filled our minds with doubt
Was good for us as it worked out.

I've never known an hour of care
But that I've later come to see
That it has brought some joy to me.
Even the sorrows I have borne,
Leavin' me lonely an' forlorn
An' hurt an' bruised an' sick at heart,
In life's great plan have had a part.
An' though I could not understand
Why I should bow to Death's command,
As time went on I came to know
That it was really better so.

Things mostly happen for the best.
So narrow is our vision here
That we are blinded by a tear
An' stunned by every hurt an' blow
Which comes to-day to strike us low.
An' yet some day we turn an' find
That what seemed cruel once was kind.

Most things, I hold, are wisely planned
If we could only understand.

Edgar Albert Guest

All That Matters

When all that matters shall be written down
And the long record of our years is told,
Where sham, like flesh, must perish and grow cold;
When the tomb closes on our fair renown
And priest and layman, sage and motleyed clown
Must quit the places which they dearly hold,
What to our credit shall we find enscrolled?
And what shall be the jewels of our crown?
I fancy we shall hear to our surprise
Some little deeds of kindness, long forgot,
Telling our glory, and the brave and wise
Deeds which we boasted often, mentioned not.
God gave us life not just to buy and sell,
And all that matters is to live it well.

Edgar Albert Guest

Alone

Strange thoughts come to the man alone;
'Tis then, if ever, he talks with God,
And views himself as a single clod
In the soil of life where the souls are grown.
'Tis then he questions the why and where,
The start and end of his years and days,
And what is blame and what is praise,
And what is ugly and what is fair.

When a man has drawn from the busy throng
To the sweet retreat of the silent hours,
Low voices whisper of higher powers.
He catches the strain of some far-off song,
And the sham fades out and his eyes can see,
Not the man he is in the day's hot strife
And the greed and grind of a selfish life,
But the soul of the man he is to be.

He feels the throbbing of life divine,
And catches a glimpse of the greater plan;
He questions the purpose and work of man.
In the hours of silence his mind grows fine;
He seeks to learn what is kept unknown;
He turns from self and its garb of clay
And dwells on the soul and the higher way.
Strange thoughts come when a man's alone.

Edgar Albert Guest

Along The Paths O' Glory

Along the paths o' glory there are faces new to-day,
There are youthful hearts and sturdy that have found the westward way.
From the rugged roads o' duty they have turned without a sigh,
To mingle with their brothers who were not afraid to die.
And they're looking back and smiling at the loved ones left behind,
With the Old Flag flying o'er them, and they're calling 'Never mind.

'Never mind, oh, gentle mothers, that we shall not come again;
Never mind the years of absence, never mind the days of pain,
For we've found the paths o' glory where the flags o' freedom fly,
And we've learned the things we died for are the truths that never die.
Now there's never hurt can harm us, and the years will never fade
The memory of the soldiers of the legions unafraid.'

Along the paths o' glory there are faces new to-day,
And the heavenly flags are flying as they march along the way;
For the world is safe from hatred; men shall know it at its best
By the sacrifice and courage of the boys who go to rest.
Now they've claimed eternal splendor and they've won eternal youth,
And they've joined the gallant legions of the men who served the truth.

Edgar Albert Guest

Ambition

If you would rise above the throng
And seek the crown of fame,
You must do more than drift along
And merely play the game.
Whatever path your feet may tread,
Whatever be your quest,
The only way to get ahead
Is striving for the best.

'Tis not enough to wish to do
A day's toil fairly well;
If you would rise to glory, you
Must hunger to excel.
The boy who has the proper stuff
Goes into every test,
Not seeking to be 'good enough,'
But eager to be 'best.'

Aim high! And though you fail today
And may tomorrow fail,
Keep pounding steadily away,
Some day you'll hit the nail.
At no half-way mark ever pause
In smug content to rest,
Who would win honor and applause
Must want to be the best.

The best must be your aim in life,
The best in sport or work,
Success in any form of strife
Falls never to the shirk.
The crowns of leadership are few,
The followers move in throngs,
If you would be a leader, you
Must shun the 'drift alongs.'

Edgar Albert Guest

America

God has been good to men. He gave
His Only Son their souls to save,
And then he made a second gift,
Which from their dreary lives should lift
The tyrant's yoke and set them free
From all who'd throttle liberty.
He gave America to men—
Fashioned this land we love, and then
Deep in her forests sowed the seed
Which was to serve man's earthly need.

When wisps of smoke first upwards curled
From pilgrim fires, upon the world
Unnoticed and unseen, began
God's second work of grace for man.
Here where the savage roamed and fought,
God sowed the seed of nobler thought;
Here to the land we love to claim,
The pioneers of freedom came;
Here has been cradled all that's best
In every human mind and breast.

For full four hundred years and more
Our land has stretched her welcoming shore
To weary feet from soils afar;
Soul-shackled serfs of king and czar
Have journeyed here and toiled and sung
And talked of freedom to their young,
And God above has smiled to see
This precious work of liberty,
And watched this second gift He gave
The dreary lives of men to save.

And now, when liberty's at bay,
And blood-stained tyrants force the fray,
Worn warriors, battling for the right,
Crushed by oppression's cruel might,
Hear in the dark through which they grope
America's glad cry of hope:

Man's liberty is not to die!
America is standing by!
World-wide shall human lives be free:
America has crossed the sea!

America! the land we love!
God's second gift from Heaven above,
Builded and fashioned out of truth,
Sinewed by Him with splendid youth
For that glad day when shall be furled
All tyrant flags throughout the world.
For this our banner holds the sky:
That liberty shall never die.
For this, America began:
To make a brotherhood of man.

Edgar Albert Guest

An Apple Tree In France

An apple tree beside the way,
Drinking the sunshine day by day
According to the Master's plan,
Had been a faithful friend to man.
It had been kind to all who came,
Nor asked the traveler's race or name,
But with the peasant boy or king
Had shared its blossoms in the spring,
And from the summer's dreary heat
To all had offered sweet retreat.

When autumn brought the harvest time,
Its branches all who wished might climb,
And take from many a tender shoot
Its rosy-cheeked, delicious fruit.
Good men, by careless speech or deed,
Have caused a neighbor's heart to bleed;
Wrong has been done by high intent;
Hate has been born where love was meant,
Yet apple trees of field or farm
Have never done one mortal harm.

Then came the Germans into France
And found this apple tree by chance.
They shared its blossoms in the spring;
They heard the songs the thrushes sing;
They rested in the cooling shade
Its old and friendly branches made,
And in the fall its fruit they ate.
And then they turn on it in hate,
Like beasts, on blood and passion drunk,
They hewed great gashes in its trunk.

Beneath its roots, with hell's delight,
They placed destruction's dynamite
And blew to death, with impish glee,
An old and friendly apple tree.
Men may rebuild their homes in time;
Swiftly cathedral towers may climb,

And hearts forget their weight of woe,
As over them life's currents flow,
But this their lasting shame shall be:
They put to death an apple tree!

Edgar Albert Guest

An Easy World

It's an easy world to live in if you choose to make it so;
You never need to suffer, save the griefs that all must know;
If you'll stay upon the level and will 'do the best you can
You will never lack the friendship of a kindly fellow man.

Life's an easy road to travel if you'll only walk it straight;
There are many here to help you in your little bouts with fate;
When the clouds begin to gather and your hopes begin to fade,
If you've only toiled in honor you won't have to call for aid.

But if you've bartered friendship and the faith on which it rests
For a temporary winning; if you've cheated in the tests,
If with promises you've broken, you have chilled the hearts of men ;
It is vain to look for friendship for it will not come again.

Oh, the world is full of kindness, thronged with men who want to be
Of some service to their neighbors and they'll run to you or me
When we're needing their assistance if we've lived upon the square,
But they'll spurn us in our trouble if we've always been unfair.

It's an easy world to live in; all you really need to do
Is the decent thing and proper and then friends will flock to you;
But let dishonor trail you and some stormy day you'll find
To your heart's supremest sorrow that you've made the world unkind.

Edgar Albert Guest

An Ode To Nellie

AH Nellie, you were always fair, and you were always good and true,
I've sung about your wealth of hair, and praised your eyes, so soft and blue,
Your charms are many I confess, but now my pen in hand I take
To praise in my poor humble way the strawb'ry shortcake that you make.

It may be other maidens play a better bridge whist game than you,
That other wives for suffrage make far better speeches than you do,
And other women, it may be, know more of Browning and of Keats,
But you make shortcake, Nellie dear, that every other woman's beats.

And were you lacking in those charms that cheer the eye and warm the heart,
Were you not fair to look upon — an angel's very counterpart —
Were you not gentle, patient, kind, did you not soothe my every ache,
I still should love you, Nellie, for the strawb'ry shortcake that you make.

Edgar Albert Guest

An Old-Fashioned Welcome

There's nothing cheers a fellow up just like a hearty greeting,
A handclasp and an honest smile that flash the joy of meeting;
And when at friendly doors you ring, somehow it seems to free you
From all life's doubts to hear them say: 'Come in! We're glad to
see you!'

At first the portal slips ajar in answer to your ringing,
And then your eyes meet friendly eyes, and wide the door goes flinging;
And something seems to stir the soul, however troubled be you,
If but the cheery host exclaims: 'Come in! We're glad to see you!'

Edgar Albert Guest

An Uncle

BEIN' uncle to the kids,
Laughin' lips an' drowsy lids
Grimy hands an' tattered clothes,
Cheeks as red as any rose;
Willie Browns an' Jimmy Whites,
Sarah Smiths an' Mabel Brights;
One an' all I 'm glad t' see,
Love t' hear 'em 'uncle' me.

Want no child t' 'mister' me,
Don't want no formality,
When a youngster's playin' round,
Uncle has a sweeter sound;
Seems there's somethin' in the name,
Takes your heart an' grips the same
In a way that makes you feel
Love is somethin' that is real.

Been their uncle now for years,
I have brushed away the tears
Of the little tots when they
Hurt themselves while at their play;
Nursed stone bruises. When they fell
Kissed the lumps t' make 'em well;
Seen 'em grow t' handsome men,
Uncle to their children then.

Ruther be an uncle than
Any other famous man;
Ruther have the children come
Blowin' horn an' beatin' drum
After me, when I go by,
Laughin' like a summer sky,
Than be great, an' miss the joys
Of the little girls an' boys.

Edgar Albert Guest

Another Mouth To Feed

We've got another mouth to feed,
From out our little store;
To satisfy another's need
Is now my daily chore.
A growing family is ours,
Beyond the slightest doubt;
It takes all my financial powers
To keep them looking stout.
With us another makes his bow
To breakfast, dine and sup;
Our little circle's larger now,
For Buddy's got a pup.
If I am frayed about the heels
And both my elbows shine
And if my overcoat reveals
The poverty that's mine,
'Tis not because I squander gold
In folly's reckless way;
The cost of foodstuffs, be it told,
Takes all my weekly pay.
'Tis putting food on empty plates
That eats my wages up;
And now another mouth awaits,
For Buddy's got a pup.
And yet I gladly stand the strain,
And count the task worth while,
Nor will I dismally complain
While Buddy wears a smile.
What's one mouth more at any board
Though costly be the fare?
The poorest of us can afford
His frugal meal to share.
And so bring on the extra plate,
He will not need a cup,
And gladly will I pay the freight
Now Buddy's got a pup

Edgar Albert Guest

Answering Age

AGE is calling to me, with his finger long and grim,
It is urging me to wander down the dreary lanes with him,
It has lined my cheeks with furrows, and has tinged my hair with gray,
And is ever whispering to me that I've grown too old to play;
But the heart of me keeps saying, 'Let us dance our way along,
Let us answer age with laughter, let us drive him off with song.'

Age comes to me saying: 'You are mine forever more,
It is vain for you to hunger for the joys you knew of yore.
Now the feet of you are weary, and the eyes of you are dim,
Come with me, my worn-out brother, come and share my dwelling grim.'
But the heart of me keeps saying: 'I will cling to youth for you,
I will keep you in the sunshine where the skies are always blue.'

'Give to age your cheeks for furrows, let him silver, if he will.
The hair about your temples, but I'll keep you youthful still;
Let him dull your eyes, if need be, weight your feet with bygone years,
But I'll wake you with my singing, when the break of day appears,
I will fill your days with laughter, and with roses strew your way,
Say to age you do not fear him, while your heart is young and gay.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Answering The Grumblers

When night time comes an' I can go
Back to the folks who love me so,
An' see 'em smile an' hear 'em sing,
An' feel their kisses, then, by jing!
I vow this world is mighty fine
An' run upon a great design.

I trudge away at break o' day
An' hear the grumblers round me say,
This world ain't what it ought to be,
With so much care an' misery,
An' so much work for all to do,
An' little comfort when you're through.

But all the time I'm thinkin' of
The faces of the ones I love,
An' every minute I can see
Their bright eyes laughing right at me,
An' I can almost hear 'em say:
'Come home, come home, an' we will play.'

An' sometimes when the daily grind
Sends bitter thoughts into my mind,
An' I get thinkin' that of care
I draw far more than is my share,
I hear 'em hum their merry song,
An' then I know such thoughts are wrong.

I never doubt this world is good,
I couldn't doubt it if I would
For all the trouble that I meet
I gather compensation sweet
When night time comes an' I can go
Back to the folks who love me so.

It ain't no use for grumblers here
To tell me that this life's severe,
To say this world's a vale of woe,
For I've got proof that it ain't so,

When wearily I trudge away,
They're whisperin', whisperin': 'Soon we'll
play.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Answering The Usual Questions

My name is Johnny Vincent Brown,
I live on Leicester Court,
My Pa's not here, he's gone downtown,
An' I am three feet short,
An' I weigh sixty-three pounds, too,
An' I know my A, B, C's,
An' I say good-bye an' howdy-do,
An' yessum, yessir, please.

An' I'm a good boy all the time,
I do jes' what I'm told,
I like ter run an' jump an' climb,
I'm only four years old.
I don't like hair that hangs in curls,
An' I am fond of cake,
But I ain't got no use for girls
An' I hate stummick ache.

I like the baby that we've got,
I go ter Sunday School,
I say my prayers beside my cot,
I know the Golden Rule.
I'll be a man when I grow up,
I've got a dandy sleigh,
An' if that's all you want ter know
I'll skip along an' play.

Edgar Albert Guest

April Thoughts

Listen to the laughter of the brook that's racin' by!

Listen to the chatter of the black-birds on the fence!

Stand an' see the beauties of the blue that's in the sky-

Then ask of God why mortals haven't any better sense
Than to quarrel an' to battle

Where the guns an' cannon rattle

An' to slaughter one another an' to fill the world with hate.

God brings the buds to blossom

Where the gentle breezes toss 'em

An' the soul is blind to beauty that takes anger for its mate.

Listen to the singin' of the robins in the trees!

See the sunbeams flashin' where they're mirrored by the stream!

Hear the drowsy buzzin' of the honey-seekin' bees,

Then draw a little closer to your God the while you dream.

When the world is dressed to cheer you

Don't you feel Him standin' near you?

When your soul drinks in the beauty of the wonders in His plan,

An' you've put away your passions,

Don't you think the works He fashions

In their beauty an' their bigness mock the littleness of man?

Oh, I never walk an orchard nor a field with daisies strewn,

An' I never stand bare-headed gazin' everywhere about

At the living joys around me, be it morning, night or noon,

But I ask God to forgive me that I ever held a doubt.

Surely men must walk in blindness,

With the whole world tuned to kindness,

An' all dumb an' feathered creatures fairly bubblin' o'er with glee

To devote themselves to madness

That can only end in sadness

An' to think that they are being what God put them here to be.

Edgar Albert Guest

Arcady

Where is the road to Arcady,
Where is the path that leads to peace,
Where shall I find the bliss to be,
Where shall the weary wanderings cease?
These are the questions that come to me,
Where is the road to Arcady?

Is there a mystic time and place
To which some day shall the traveler fare,
Where there is never a frowning face
And never a burden hard to bear,
Where we as children shall romp and race?
Is there a mystic time and place?

For Arcady is an earthly sphere
Where only the gentlest breezes blow,
A port of rest for the weary here,
Where the velvet grass and the clover grow.
I question it oft, is it far or near?
For Arcady is an earthly sphere.

And the answer comes: it is very near,
It's there at the end of a little street,
Where your children's voices are ringing clear
And you catch the patter of little feet.
Where is the spot that is never drear?
And the answer comes: it is very near.

For each man buildeth his Arcady,
And each man fashions his Port of Rest;
And never shall earth spot brighter be
Than the little home that with peace is blessed.
So seek it not o'er the land and sea,
For each man buildeth his Arcady.

Edgar Albert Guest

As Fall The Leaves

As fall the leaves, so drop the days
In silence from the tree of life;
Born for a little while to blaze
In action in the heat of strife,
And then to shrivel with Time's blast
And fade forever in the past.

In beauty once the leaf was seen;
To all it offered gentle shade;
Men knew the splendor of its green
That cheered them so, would quickly fade:
And quickly, too, must pass away
All that is splendid of to-day.

To try to keep the leaves were vain:
Men understand that they must fall;
Why should they bitterly complain
When sorrows come to one and all?
Why should they mourn the passing day
That must depart along the way?

Edgar Albert Guest

As It Goes

In the corner she's left the mechanical toy,
On the chair is her Teddy Bear fine;
The things that I thought she would really enjoy
Don't seem to be quite in her line.
There's the flaxen-haired doll that is lovely to see
And really expensively dressed,
Left alone, all uncared for, and strange though it be,
She likes her rag dolly the best.

Oh, the money we spent and the plans that we laid
And the wonderful things that we bought!
There are toys that are cunningly, skillfully made,
But she seems not to give them a thought.
She was pleased when she woke and discovered them there,
But never a one of us guessed
That it isn't the splendor that makes a gift rare—
She likes her rag dolly the best.

There's the flaxen-haired doll, with the real human hair,
There's the Teddy Bear left all alone,
There's the automobile at the foot of the stair,
And there is her toy telephone;
We thought they were fine, but a little child's eyes
Look deeper than ours to find charm,
And now she's in bed, and the rag dolly lies
Snuggled close on her little white arm.

Edgar Albert Guest

As It Is

I might wish the world were better,
I might sit around and sigh
For a water that is wetter
And a bluer sort of sky.
There are times I think the weather
Could be much improved upon,
But when taken altogether
It's a good old world we're on.
I might tell how I would make it,
But when I have had my say
It is still my job to take it
As it is, from day to day.
I might wish that men were kinder,
And less eager after gold;
I might wish that they were blinder
To the faults they now behold.
And I'd try to make them gentle,
And more tolerant in strife
And a bit more sentimental
O'er the finer things of life.
But I am not here to make them,
Or to work in human clay;
It is just my work to take them
As they are from day to day.
Here's a world that suffers sorrow,
Here are bitterness and pain,
And the joy we plan to-morrow
May be ruined by the rain.
Here are hate and greed and badness,
Here are love and friendship, too,
But the most of it is gladness
When at last we've run it through.
Could we only understand it
As we shall some distant day
We should see that He who planned it
Knew our needs along the way.

Edgar Albert Guest

As It Looks To The Boy

His comrades have enlisted, but his mother bids him stay,
His soul is sick with coward shame, his head hangs low to-day,
His eyes no longer sparkle, and his breast is void of pride
And I think that she has lost him though she's kept him at her side.
Oh, I'm sorry for the mother, but I'm sorrier for the lad
Who must look on life forever as a hopeless dream and sad.

He must fancy men are sneering as they see him walk the street,
He will feel his cheeks turn crimson as his eyes another's meet;
And the boys and girls that knew him as he was but yesterday,
Will not seem to smile upon him, in the old familiar way.
He will never blame his mother, but when he's alone at night,
His thoughts will flock to tell him that he isn't doing right.

Oh, I'm sorry for the mother from whose side a boy must go,
And the strong desire to keep him that she feels, I think I know,
But the boy that she's so fond of has a life to live on earth,
And he hungers to be busy with the work that is of worth.
He will sicken and grow timid, he'll be flesh without a heart
Until death at last shall claim him, if he doesn't do his part.

Have you kept him, gentle mother? Has he lost his old-time cheer?
Is he silent, sad and sullen? Are his eyes no longer clear?
Is he growing weak and flabby who but yesterday was strong?
Then a secret grief he's nursing and I'll tell you what is wrong.
All his comrades have departed on their country's noblest work,
And he hungers to be with them- it is not his wish to shirk.

Edgar Albert Guest

As We Prayed

Often as we watched her there
From our lips there fell this prayer,
'God, give us the pain to bear!
Let us suffer in her place,
Take the anguish from her face,
Soothe her with Thy holy grace.'

Then the angels came, and they
Took her lovely soul away
From the torture house of clay.
As we'd prayed, they brought release,
Smoothed her brow with gentle peace,
But our pain shall never cease.

Ours is now the hurt to bear,
Ours the anguish and despair,
Ours the agony to share!
When our hearts with grief were stirred,
Thus we prayed and thus were heard,
Shall we fail to keep our word?

Edgar Albert Guest

At Breakfast Time

My Pa he eats his breakfast
in a funny sort of way:
We hardly ever see him
at the first meal of the day.
Ma puts his food before him
and he settles in his place
An' then he props the paper up
and we can't see his face;
We hear him blow his coffee
and we hear him chew his toast,
But it's for the morning paper
that he seems to care the most.

Ma says that little children
mighty grateful ought to be
To the folks that fixed the evening
as the proper time for tea.
She says if meals were only served
to people once a day,
An' that was in the morning
just before Pa goes away,
We'd never know how father looked
when he was in his place,
Coz he'd always have the morning paper
stuck before his face.

He drinks his coffee steamin' hot,
an' passes Ma his cup
To have it filled a second time,
an' never once looks up.
He never has a word to say,
but just sits there an' reads,
An' when she sees his hand stuck out
Ma gives him what he needs.
She guesses what it is he wants,
coz it's no use to ask:
Pa's got to read his paper
an' sometimes that's quite a task.

One morning we had breakfast
an' his features we could see,
But his face was long an' solemn
an' he didn't speak to me,
An' we couldn't get him laughin'
an' we couldn't make him smile,
An' he said the toast was soggy
an' the coffee simply vile.
Then Ma said: 'What's the matter?
Why are you so cross an' glum?'
An' Pa 'most took her head off
coz the paper didn't come.

Edgar Albert Guest

At Christmas

A man is at his finest towards the finish of the year;
He is almost what he should be when the Christmas season's here;
Then he's thinking more of others than he's thought the months before,
And the laughter of his children is a joy worth toiling for.
He is less a selfish creature than at any other time;
When the Christmas spirit rules him he comes close to the sublime.
When it's Christmas man is bigger and is better in his part;
He is keener for the service that is prompted by the heart.
All the petty thoughts and narrow seem to vanish for awhile
And the true reward he's seeking is the glory of a smile.
Then for others he is toiling and somehow it seems to me
That at Christmas he is almost what God wanted him to be.
If I had to paint a picture of a man I think I'd wait
Till he'd fought his selfish battles and had put aside his hate.
I'd not catch him at his labors when his thoughts are all of self,
On the long days and the dreary when he's striving for himself.
I'd not take him when he's sneering, when he's scornful or depressed,
But I'd look for him at Christmas when he's shining at his best.
Man is ever in a struggle and he's oft misunderstood;
There are days the worst that's in him is the master of the good,
But at Christmas kindness rules him and he puts himself aside
And his petty hates are vanquished and his heart is opened wide.
Oh, I don't know how to say it, but somehow it seems to me
That at Christmas man is almost what God sent him here to be.

Edgar Albert Guest

At Dawn

They come to my room at the break of the day,
With their faces all smiles and their minds full of play;
They come on their tip-toes and silently creep
To the edge of the bed where I'm lying asleep,
And then at a signal, on which they agree,
With a shout of delight they jump right onto me.

They lift up my eyelids and tickle my nose,
And scratch at my cheeks with their little pink toes;
And sometimes to give them a laugh and a scare
I snap and I growl like a cinnamon bear;
Then over I roll, and with three kids astride
I gallop away on their feather-bed ride.

I've thought it all over. Man's biggest mistake
Is in wanting to sleep when his babes are awake;
When they come to his room for that first bit of fun
He should make up his mind that his sleeping is done;
He should share in the laughter they bring to his side
And start off the day with that feather-bed ride.

Oh they're fun at their breakfast and fun at their lunch;
Any hour of the day they're a glorious bunch!
When they're togged up for Sundays they're certainly fine,
And I'm glad in my heart I can call them all mine,
But I think that the time that I like them the best
Is that hour in the morning before they are dressed.

Edgar Albert Guest

At Pelletier's

We've been out to Pelletier's
Brushing off the stain of years,
Quitting all the moods of men
And been boys and girls again.
We have romped through orchards blazing,
Petted ponies gently grazing,
Hidden in the hayloft's spaces,
And the queerest sort of places
That are lost (and it's a pity!)
To the youngsters in the city.
And the hired men have let us
Drive their teams, and stopped to get us
Apples from the trees, and lingered
While a cow's cool nose we fingered;
And they told us all about her
And her grandpa who was stouter.
We've been out to Pelletier's
Watching horses raise their ears,
And their joyous whinnies hearing
When the man with oats was nearing.
We've been climbing trees an' fences
Never minding consequences.
And we helped the man to curry
The fat ponies' sides so furry.
And we saw a squirrel taking
Walnuts to the nest he's making,
Storing them for winter, when he
Can't get out to hunt for any.
And we watched the turkeys, growing
Big and fat and never knowing
That the reason they were living
Is to die for our Thanksgiving.
We've been out to Pelletier's,
Brushing off the stain of years.
We were kids set free from shamming
And the city's awful cramming,
And the clamor and the bustle
And the fearful rush and hustle—
Out of doors with room to race in

And broad acres soft to chase in.
We just stretched our souls and let them
Drop the petty cares that fret them,
Left our narrow thoughts behind us,
Loosed the selfish traits that bind us
And were wholesomer and plainer
Simpler, kinder folks and saner,
And at night said: 'It's a pity
Mortals ever built a city.'

Edgar Albert Guest

At Sugar Camp

At Sugar Camp the cook is kind
And laughs the laugh we knew as boys;
And there we slip away and find
Awaiting us the old-time joys.
The catbird calls the selfsame way
She used to in the long ago,
And there's a chorus all the day
Of songsters it is good to know.

The killdeer in the distance cries;
The thrasher, in her garb of brown,
From tree to tree in gladness flies.
Forgotten is the world's renown,
Forgotten are the years we've known;
At Sugar Camp there are no men;
We've ceased to strive for things to own;
We're in the woods as boys again.

Our pride is in the strength of trees,
Our pomp the pomp of living things;
Our ears are tuned to melodies
That every feathered songster sings.
At Sugar Camp our noonday meal
Is eaten in the open air,
Where through the leaves the sunbeams steal
And simple is our bill of fare.

At Sugar Camp in peace we dwell
And none is boastful of himself;
None plots to gain with shot and shell
His neighbor's bit of land or pelf.
The roar of cannon isn't heard,
There stilled is money's tempting voice;
Someone detects a new-come bird
And at her presence all rejoice.

At Sugar Camp the cook is kind;
His steak is broiling o'er the coals
And in its sputtering we find

Sweet harmony for tired souls.
There, sheltered by the friendly trees,
As boys we sit to eat our meal,
And, brothers to the birds and bees,
We hold communion with the real.

Edgar Albert Guest

At The Cottage

SHE wanted to be asked again,
And so she wiped the dishes,
She took a knife, and with the men
She helped to clean the fishes;
She made her bed and swept the floor,
She ran for water gayly,
She tackled every menial chore,
And pared potatoes daily.

She wanted to be asked again,
She ran to do the shopping,
She toiled from early morn till ten
And never thought of stopping;
She got the meals and met the boat,
She really was a hummer,
By diligence, I 'd have you note,
She earned a pleasant summer.

Edgar Albert Guest

At The Door

He wiped his shoes before his door,
But ere he entered he did more;
'Twas not enough to cleanse his feet
Of dirt they'd gathered in the street;
He stood and dusted off his mind
And left all trace of care behind.
'In here I will not take,' said he,
'The stains the day has brought to me.

'Beyond this door shall never go
The burdens that are mine to know;
The day is done, and here I leave
The petty things that vex and grieve;
What clings to me of hate and sin
To them I will not carry in;
Only the good shall go with me
For their devoted eyes to see.

'I will not burden them with cares,
Nor track the home with grim affairs;
I will not at my table sit
With soul unclean, and mind unfit;
Beyond this door I will not take
The outward signs of inward ache;
I will not take a dreary mind
Into this house for them to find.'

He wiped his shoes before his door,
But paused to do a little more.
He dusted off the stains of strife,
The mud that's incident to life,
The blemishes of careless thought,
The traces of the fight he'd fought,
The selfish humors and the mean,
And when he entered he was clean.

Edgar Albert Guest

At The Millennium

At The Millennium

WHENEVER men and women learn
To be themselves from day to day,
To spend no more than what they earn,
Not caring what their neighbors say;
When men can see another wear
A finer raiment than they own
And neither give a sigh nor care;
When they can live their lives alone,
And when they cease to rush in debt
To keep a little swifter pace,
There will be less of vain regret
And earth will be a happier place.

Edgar Albert Guest

At The Peace Table

Who shall sit at the table, then, when the terms
of peace are made-
The wisest men of the troubled lands in their
silver and gold brocade?
Yes, they shall gather in solemn state to speak
for each living race,
But who shall speak for the unseen dead that shall
come to the council place?

Though you see them not and you hear them not,
they shall sit at the table, too;
They shall throng the room where the peace is
made and know what it is you do;
The innocent dead from the sea shall rise to stand
at the wise man's side,
And over his shoulder a boy shall look- a boy
that was crucified.

You may guard the doors of that council hall with
barriers strong and stout,
But the dead unbidden shall enter there, and never
you'll shut them out.
And the man that died in the open boat, and the
babes that suffered worse,
Shall sit at the table when peace is made by the
side of a martyred nurse.

You may see them not, but they'll all be there;
when they speak you may fail to hear;
You may think that you're making your pacts
alone, but their spirits will hover near;
And whatever the terms of the peace you make
with the tyrant whose hands are red,
You must please not only the living here, but must
satisfy your dead.

Edgar Albert Guest

At The Summer Cottage

Father's in the woodshed,
Cleaning forty fish;
Mother's in the kitchen,
Washing every dish;
Sister's upstairs making
Every bed we own;
The company is on the porch
With the graphophone.

Father does the rowing,
Brother does the chores,
Mother does the baking,
Sister sweeps the floors;
Everybody's working,
Here at Idlenook,
Except the company — and that
Sits down and reads a book.

Edgar Albert Guest

At The Wedding

There was weepin' by the women that the crowd could plainly see,
An' old William's throat was chokin' an' his eyes were watery,
An' he couldn't hardly answer when the parson made him say
Who it was on that occasion was to give the girl away.

I detest tears at a weddin', an' I didn't like 'em then,
An' I couldn't see the reason for the lips that trembled when
Reverend Goodly looked about him ere he tied the knot to stay
An' said: 'Which of you assembled here now gives this girl away?'

I shall not forget old William an' the solemn look he wore,
Though he tried his best at smilin' I could tell his heart was sore;
I could see the tear drops startin' as he looked at little May,
An' I knew the wrench it caused him when he gave his girl away.

I could hear the women sobbin', an' I didn't dare to look,
I jes' kep' my face straight forward till the parson closed his book.
For the heart of me was beatin' not in sadness, but in glee;
I had reason to be happy. He was givin' her to me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Aunty

I'm sorry for a feller if he hasn't any aunt,
To let him eat and do the things his mother says he can't.
An aunt to come a visitin' or one to go and see
Is just about the finest kind of lady there could be.
Of course she's not your mother, an' she hasn't got her ways,
But a part that's most important in a feller's life she plays.

She is kind an' she is gentle, an' sometimes she's full of fun,
An' she's very sympathetic when some dreadful thing you've done.
An' she likes to buy you candy, an' she's always gettin' toys
That you wish your Pa would get you, for she hasn't any boys.
But sometimes she's over-loving, an' your cheeks turn red with shame
When she smothers you with kisses, but you like her just the same.

One time my father took me to my aunty's, an' he said:
'You will stay here till I get you, an' be sure you go to bed
When your aunty says it's time to, an' be good an' mind her, too,
An' when you come home we'll try to have a big surprise for you.'
I did as I was told to, an' when Pa came back for me
He said there was a baby at the house for me to see.

I've been visitin' at aunty's for a week or two, an' Pa
Has written that he's comin' soon to take me home to Ma.
He says they're gettin' lonely, an' I'm kind o' lonely, too,
Coz an aunt is not exactly what your mother is to you.
I am hungry now to see her, but I'm wondering to-day
If Pa's bought another baby in the time I've been away.

Edgar Albert Guest

Autumn

The leaves are falling one by one,
The Summer days are past and gone,
The nights are cool and damp;
The little children think it strange
At tea-time, for they note the change,
We have to light the lamp;
To roost the chickens earlier go,
And everything has ceased to grow.

The pumpkins now are big and round,
And turning yellow on the ground,
The leaves are drifting down;
The farm seems bigger than before,
'T is stripped of all its wondrous store;
Only the russets brown
Still linger on the trees, and they
Will soon be picked and packed away.

The cellar's stored with rare delights
To while away the winter nights;
The squeaking cider mill
Is gushing forth its nectar rare,
A drink that all the gods call fair;
And O, the world is still;
A hush has settled over all,
The Summer's gone and it is Fall.

Edgar Albert Guest

Autumn At The Orchard

The sumac's flaming scarlet on the edges o' the lake,
An' the pear trees are invitin' everyone t' come an' shake.
Now the gorgeous tints of autumn are appearin' everywhere
Till it seems that you can almost see the Master Painter there.
There's a solemn sort o' stillness that's pervadin' every thing,
Save the farewell songs to summer that the feathered tenors sing,
An' you quite forget the city where disgruntled folks are kickin'
Off yonder with the Pelletiers, when spies are ripe fer pickin'.
The Holsteins are a-posin' in a clearin' near a wood,
Very dignified an' stately, just as though they understood
That they're lending to life's pictures just the touch the Master needs,
An' they're preachin' more refinement than a lot o' printed creeds.
The orchard's fairly groanin' with the gifts o' God to man,
Just as though they meant to shame us who have doubted once
His plan. Oh, there's somethin' most inspirin' to a soul in need o' pricken'
Off yonder with the Pelletiers when spies are ripe fer pickin'.

The frisky little Shetlands now are growin' shaggy coats
An' acquirin' silken mufflers of their own to guard their throats;
An' a Russian wolf-hound puppy left its mother yesterday,
An' a tinge o' sorrow touched us as we saw it go away.
For the sight was full o' meanin', an' we knew, when it had gone,
'Twas a symbol of the partin's that the years are bringin' on.
Oh, a feller must be better — to his faith he can't help stickin'
Off yonder with the Pelletiers when spies are ripe fer pickin'.

The year is almost over, now at dusk the valleys glow
With the misty mantle chillin', that is hangin' very low.
An' each mornin' sees the maples just a little redder turned
Than they were the night we left 'em, an' the elms are browner burned.
An' a feller can't help feelin', an' I don't care who it is,
That the mind that works such wonders has a greater power than his.
Oh, I know that I'll remember till life's last few sparks are flickin'
The lessons out at Pelletiers when spies were ripe for pickin'.

Edgar Albert Guest

Autumn Evenings

Apples on the table an' the grate-fire blazin' high,
Oh, I'm sure the whole world hasn't any happier man than I;
The Mother sittin' mendin' little stockin's, toe an' knee,
An' tellin' all that's happened through the busy day to me:
Oh, I don't know how to say it, but these cosy autumn nights
Seem to glow with true contentment an' a thousand real delights.

The dog sprawled out before me knows that huntin' days are here,
'Cause he dreams and seems to whimper that a flock o' quail are near;
An' the children playin' checkers till it's time to go to bed,
Callin' me to settle questions whether black is beatin' red;
Oh, these nights are filled with gladness, an' I puff my pipe an' smile,
An' tell myself the struggle an' the work are both worth while.

The flames are full o' pictures that keep dancin' to an' fro,
Bringin' back the scenes o' gladness o' the happy long ago,
An' the whole wide world is silent an' I tell myself just this-
That within these walls I cherish, there is all my world there is!
Can I keep the love abiding in these hearts so close to me,
An' the laughter of these evenings, I shall gain life's victory.

Edgar Albert Guest

Aw Gee Whiz!

Queerest little chap he is,
Always saying: 'Aw Gee Whiz!'
Needing something from the store
That you've got to send him for
And you call him from his play,
Then it is you hear him say:
 'Aw Gee Whiz!'

Seems that most expressive phrase
Is a part of childhood days;
Call him in at supper time,
Hands and face all smeared with grime,
Send him up to wash, and he
Answers you disgustedly:
 'Aw Gee Whiz!'

When it's time to go to bed
And he'd rather play instead,
As you call him from the street,
He comes in with dragging feet,
Knowing that he has to go,
Then it is he mutters low:
 'Aw Gee Whiz!'

Makes no difference what you ask
Of him as a little task;
He has yet to learn that life
Crosses many a joy with strife,
So when duty mars his play,
Always we can hear him say:
 'Aw Gee Whiz!'

Edgar Albert Guest

Baby Feet

Tell me, what is half so sweet
As a baby's tiny feet,
Pink and dainty as can be,
Like a coral from the sea?
Talk of jewels strung in rows,
Gaze upon those little toes,
Fairer than a diadem,
With the mother kissing them!

It is morning and she lies
Uttering her happy cries,
While her little hands reach out
For the feet that fly about.
Then I go to her and blow
Laughter out of every toe;
Hold her high and let her place
Tiny footprints on my face.

Little feet that do not know
Where the winding roadways go,
Little feet that never tire,
Feel the stones or trudge the mire,
Still too pink and still too small
To do anything but crawl,
Thinking all their wanderings fair,
Filled with wonders everywhere.

Little feet, so rich with charm,
May you never come to harm.
As I bend and proudly blow
Laughter out of every toe,
This pray, that God above
Shall protect you with His love,
And shall guide those little feet
Safely down life's broader street.

Edgar Albert Guest

Baby's Got A Tooth

The telephone rang in my office to-day,
as it often has tinkled before.
I turned in my chair in a half-grouchy way,
for a telephone call is a bore;
And I thought, 'It is somebody wanting to know
the distance from here to Pekin.'
In a tone that was gruff I shouted 'Hello,'
a sign for the talk to begin.
'What is it?' I asked in a terrible way.
I was huffy, to tell you the truth,
Then over the wire I heard my wife say:
'The baby, my dear, has a tooth!'

I have seen a man jump when the horse that he
backed finished first in a well-driven race.
I have heard the man cheer, as a matter of fact,
and I've seen the blood rush to his face;
I've been on the spot when good news has come
in and I've witnessed expressions of glee
That range from a yell to a tilt of the chin; and
some things have happened to me
That have thrilled me with joy from my toes to
my head, but never from earliest youth
Have I jumped with delight as I did when she
said, 'The baby, my dear, has a tooth.'

I have answered the telephone thousands of times
for messages both good and bad;
I've received the reports of most horrible crimes,
and news that was cheerful or sad;
I've been telephoned this and been telephoned
that, a joke, or an errand to run;
I've been called to the phone for the idlest of chat,
when there was much work to be done;
But never before have I realized quite the thrill
of a message, forsooth,
Till over the wire came these words that I write,
'The baby, my dear, has a tooth.'

Back Home

GLAD to be back home again,
Where abide the friendly men;
Glad to see the same old scenes
And the little house that means
All the joys the soul has treasured—
Glad to be where smiles aren't measured,
Where I've blended with the gladness
All the heart has known of sadness,
Where some long-familiar steeple
Marks my town of friendly people.

Though it's fun to go a-straying
Where the bands are nightly playing
And the throngs of men and women
Drain the cup of pleasure brimmin',
I am glad when it is over
That I've ceased to play the Rover.
And when once the train starts chugging
Towards the children I'll be hugging,
All my thoughts and dreams are set there;
Fast enough I cannot get there.

Guess I wasn't meant for bright lights,
For the blaze of red and white lights,
For the throngs that seem to smother
In their selfishness, each other;
For whenever I've been down there,
Tramped the noisy, blatant town there,
Always in a week I've started
Yearning, hungering, heavy-hearted,
For the home town and its spaces
Lit by fine and friendly faces.

Like to be where men about me
Do not look on me to doubt me;
Where I know the men and women,
Know why tears some eyes are dimmin',
Know the good folks an' the bad folks
An' the glad folks an' the sad folks;

Where we live with one another,
Meanin' something to each other.
An' I'm glad to see the steeple,
Where the crowds aren't merely people.

Edgar Albert Guest

Back To School

It ain' the ringing of the bell
which calls me back to skule once more;
it ain't that i must lurn to spell
that makes my hart so orful soar:
it ain't that fracktions i must lurn
nor jografy that makes me blew,
it 's just becoz today i yurn
to do the things i didn't doo.

ring out, wild bell! ime on mi way
to skule again, and summer's done —
it dussent seem more than a day
since i began to have mi fun.
i wouldn't mind this cuming back,
it ain't the skule ime kicking on,
it's just becoz i missed a stack
of fun, and now the summer's gone.

i planned to bild a coogie in
our yard, where all the kids could meat;
the roof was going to be of tin,
and we 'd have carpet for our feet;
and i was going to organize
a brave and daring pirut crew
and we 'd take rich men bi surprize —
but gee! how fast the summer's flue.

and that's the skule bell ringing now,
vacashun's slipped away from me;
what i acomplished anyhow
is something more than i can see;
i've had some fun, of course, but then,
it really seams to beet the dutch
how very little i did when
i planned to do so very much.

Ah, little boy, you do not know
The lesson that you teach us all;
You with unwilling feet now go

To school at the approach of Fall.
We grown-ups soon will hear a bell,
Announcing that our course is run,
Far more than death we fear to tell
The good deeds that we might have done.

Edgar Albert Guest

Battle Of Belleau Wood

IT was thick with Prussian troopers, it was foul with German guns;
Every tree that cast a shadow was a sheltering place for Huns.
Death was guarding every roadway, death was watching every field,
And behind each rise of terrain was a rapid-fire concealed
But Uncle Sam's Marines had orders: 'Drive the Boche from where they're hid.
For the honor of Old Glory, take the woods!' and so they did.

I fancy none will tell it as the story should be told-
None will ever do full justice to those Yankee troopers bold.
How they crawled upon their stomachs through the fields of golden wheat
With the bullets spitting at them in that awful battle heat.
It's a tale too big for writing; it's beyond the voice or pen,
But it glows among the splendor of the bravest deeds men.

It's recorded as a battle, but I fancy it will live,
As the brightest gem of courage human struggles have to give.
Inch by inch, they crawled to victory toward the flaming mounts of guns;
Inch by inch, they crawled to grapple with the barricaded Huns

On through fields that death was sweeping with a murderous fire, they went
Till the Teuton line was vanquished and the German strength was spent.

Ebbled and flowed the tides of battle as they've seldom done before;
Slowly, surely, moved the Yankees against all the odds of war.
For the honor of the fallen, for the glory of the dead,
The living line of courage kept the faith and moved ahead.
'They'd been ordered not to falter, and when night came on they stood
With Old Glory proudly flying o'er the trees of Belleau Wood.

Edgar Albert Guest

Be A Friend

Be a friend. You don't need money;
Just a disposition sunny;
Just the wish to help another
Get along some way or other;
Just a kindly hand extended
Out to one who's unbefriended;
Just the will to give or lend,
This will make you someone's friend.

Be a friend. You don't need glory.
Friendship is a simple story.
Pass by trifling errors blindly,
Gaze on honest effort kindly,
Cheer the youth who's bravely trying,
Pity him who's sadly sighing;
Just a little labor spend
On the duties of a friend.

Be a friend. The pay is bigger
(Though not written by a figure)
Than is earned by people clever
In what's merely self-endeavor.
You'll have friends instead of neighbors
For the profits of your labors;
You'll be richer in the end
Than a prince, if you're a friend.

Edgar Albert Guest

Be Cheerful

Be Cheerful

The world is bright and sunny —
If you haven't any money,

What's the difference?

Let me ask you anyhow.
Let the other fellow hurry,
Let the other fellow worry,
You won't know a thing about it

In a hundred years from now.

Edgar Albert Guest

Beautifying The Flag

To us the Flag has little meant.
Each glorious stripe of red
Was woven there to represent
The blood of heroes dead.
On some dim, distant battle line
By other men were gained
The glories that have made it fine,
And idle we've remained.
But now the Flag shall finer grow
And ages yet to be
Shall find the courage that we show
To-day for liberty.

Of other men the Flag has told;
It flies for others' deeds;
Its pride is born of heroes bold
Who served its by-gone needs.
But now our blood shall mingle there
With blood of patriots dead,
And through the years each stripe shall wear
A deeper, truer red.
The splendor of the flag shall gleam
In every radiant star,
And finer shall the banner seem
Because of what we are.

To-day new glory for the Flag
We give our best to build;
Of us shall future ages brag,
By us their blood be thrilled;
And as to us the flag has meant
The greatness of the past,
The Stars and Stripes shall represent
Our courage to the last.
The children in the years to be
Our trials shall discuss,
And cheer the emblem of the free,
In part, because of us.

Becoming A Dad

Old women say that men don't know
The pain through which all mothers go,
And maybe that is true, and yet
I vow I never shall forget
The night he came. I suffered, too,
Those bleak and dreary long hours through;
I paced the floor and mopped my brow
And waited for his glad wee-ow!
I went upstairs and then came down,
Because I saw the doctor frown
And knew beyond the slightest doubt
He wished to goodness I'd clear out.

I walked into the yard for air
And back again to hear her there,
And met the nurse, as calm as though
My world was not in deepest woe,
And when I questioned, seeking speech
Of consolation that would reach
Into my soul and strengthen me
For dreary hours that were to be:
'Progressing nicely!' that was all
She said and tip-toed down the hall;
'Progressing nicely!' nothing more,
And left me there to pace the floor.

And once the nurse came out in haste
For something that had been misplaced,
And I that had been growing bold
Then felt my blood grow icy cold;
And fear's stern chill swept over me.
I stood and watched and tried to see
Just what it was she came to get.
I haven't learned that secret yet.
I half-believe that nurse in white
Was adding fuel to my fright
And taking an unholy glee,
From time to time, in torturing me.

Then silence! To her room I crept
And was informed the doctor slept!
The doctor slept! Oh, vicious thought,
While she at death's door bravely fought
And suffered untold anguish deep,
The doctor lulled himself to sleep.
I looked and saw him stretched out flat
And could have killed the man for that.
Then morning broke, and oh, the joy;
With dawn there came to us our boy,
And in a glorious little while
I went in there and saw her smile!

I must have looked a human wreck,
My collar wilted at the neck,
My hair awry, my features drawn
With all the suffering I had borne.
She looked at me and softly said,
'If I were you, I'd go to bed.'
Hers was the bitterer part, I know;
She traveled through the vale of woe,
But now when women folks recall
The pain and anguish of it all
I answer them in manner sad:
'It's no cinch to become a dad.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Bedtime

It's bedtime, and we lock the door,
Put out the lights- the day is o'er;
All that can come of good or ill,
The record of this day to fill,
Is written down; the worries cease,
And old and young may rest in peace.

We knew not when we started out
What dangers hedged us all about,
What little pleasures we should gain,
What should be ours to bear of pain.
But now the fires are burning low,
And this day's history we know.

No harm has come. The laughter here
Has been unbroken by a tear;
We've met no hurt too great to bear,
We have not had to bow to care;
The children all are safe in bed,
There's nothing now for us to dread.

When bedtime comes and we can say
That we have safely lived the day.
How sweet the calm that settles down
And shuts away the noisy town!
There is no danger now to fear
Until to-morrow shall appear.

When the long bedtime comes, and I
In sleep eternal come to lie-
When life has nothing more in store,
And silently I close the door,
God grant my weary soul may claim
Security from hurt and shame.

Edgar Albert Guest

Being Brave At Night

The other night 'bout two o'clock, or maybe it was three,
An elephant with shining tusks came chasing after me.
His trunk was wavin' in the air an' spoutin' jets of steam
An' he was out to eat me up, but still I didn't scream
Or let him see that I was scared - a better thought I had,
I just escaped from where I was and crawled in bed with Dad.

One time there was a giant who was horrible to see,
He had three heads and twenty arms, an' he came after me
And red hot fire came from his mouths and every hand was red
And he declared he'd grind my bones and make them into bread.
But I was just too smart for him, I fooled him mighty bad,
Before his hands could collar me I crawled in bed with Dad.

I ain't scared of nothin' that comes pesterin' me at night.
Once I was chased by forty ghosts all shimmery an' white.
An' I just raced 'em round the room an' let 'em think maybe
I'd have to stop an' rest awhile, when they could capture me.
Then when they leapt onto my bed, Oh Gee! But they were mad
To find that I had slipped away an' crawled in bed with Dad.

No giants, ghosts or elephants have dared to come in there
'Coz if they did he'd beat 'em up and chase 'em to their lair.
They just hang 'round the children's rooms
an' snap an' snarl an' bite
An' laugh if they can make 'em yell
for help with all their might.
But I don't ever yell out loud. I'm not that sort of lad,
I slip from out the covers and I crawl in bed with Dad.

Edgar Albert Guest

Being Dad On Christmas Eve

They've hung their stockings up with care,
And I am in my old arm chair,
And mother's busy dragging out
The parcels hidden all about.
Within a corner, gaunt to see,
There stands a barren Christmas tree,
But soon upon its branches green
A burst of splendor will be seen.
And when the busy tongues grow still,
That now are wagging with a will
Above me as I sit and rest,
I shall be at my happiest.
The greatest joy man can receive
Is being Dad on Christmas eve.

Soon I shall toil with tinsel bright;
Place here and there a colored light,
And wheresoe'er my fingers lie
To-morrow shall a youngster spy
Some wonder gift or magic toy,
To fill his little soul with joy.
The stockings on the mantle piece
I'll bulge with sweets, till every crease
That marks them now is stretched away.
There will be horns and drums to play
And dolls to love. For it's my task
To get for them the joys they ask.
What greater charm can fortune weave
Than being Dad on Christmas eve?

With all their pomp, great monarchs miss
The happiness of scenes like this.
Rich halls to-night are still and sad,
Because no little girl or lad
Shall wake upon the morn to find
The joys that love has left behind.
Oh, I have had my share of woe-
Known what it is to bear a blow-
Shed sorrow's tears and stood to care

When life seemed desolate and bare,
Yet here to-night I smile and say
Worth while was all that came my way.
For this one joy, all else I'd leave:
To be their Dad on Christmas eve.

Edgar Albert Guest

Best Way To Read A Book

Best way to read a book I know
Is get a lad of six or so,
And curl him up upon my knee
Deep in a big arm chair, where we
Can catch the warmth of blazing coals,
And then let two contented souls
Melt into one, old age and youth,
Sharing adventure's marvelous truth.

I read a page, and then we sit
And talk it over, bit by bit;
Just how the pirates looked, and why
They flung a black flag to the sky.
We pass no paragraph without
First knowing what it's all about,
And when the author starts a fight
We join the forces that are right.

We're deep in Treasure Island, and
From Spy Glass Hill we've viewed the land;
Through thickets dense we've followed Jim
And shared the doubts that came to him.
We've heard Cap. Smollett arguing there
With Long John Silver, gaunt and spare,
And mastering our many fears
We've battled with those buccaneers.

Best way to read a book I've found
Is have a little boy around
And take him up upon your knee;
Then talk about the tale, till he
Lives it and feels it, just as you,
And shares the great adventure, too.
Books have a deep and lasting joy
For him who reads them to his boy.

Edgar Albert Guest

Bigger Than His Dad

He has heard his country calling, and has fallen into line,
And he's doing something bigger than his daddy ever did;
He has caught a greater vision than the finest one of mine,
And I know to-day I'm prouder of than sorry for the kid.

His speech is soft and vibrant with the messages of truth,
And he says some things of duty that I cannot understand;
It may be that I'm selfish, but this ending of his youth
Is not the dream I cherished and it's not the thing I planned.

I only know he's bigger in his uniform to-day
Than I, who stand and watch him as he drills, have ever been;
That he sees a greater vision of life's purpose far away,
And a finer goal to die for than my eyes have ever seen.

I wish I felt as he does, wish I had his sense of right;
With the vision he possesses I should be supremely glad;
But I sometimes start to choking when I think of him at night-
The boy that has grown bigger, yes, and better than his dad.

Edgar Albert Guest

Bob White

Out near the links where I go to play
My favorite game from day to day,
There's a friend of mine that I've never met
Walked with or broken bread with, yet
I've talked to him oft and he's talked to me
Whenever I've been where he's chanced to be;
He's a cheery old chap who keeps out of sight,
A gay little fellow whose name is Bob White.

Bob White! Bob White! I can hear him call
As I follow the trail to my little ball-
Bob White! Bob White! with a note of cheer
That was just designed for a mortal ear.
Then I drift far off from the world of men
And I send an answer right back to him then;
An' we whistle away to each other there,
Glad of the life which is ours to share.

Bob White! Bob White! May you live to be
The head of a numerous family!
May you boldly call to your friends out here,
With never an enemy's gun to fear.
I'm a better man as I pass along,
For your cheery call and your bit of song.
May your food be plenty and skies be bright
To the end of your days, good friend Bob White!

Edgar Albert Guest

Boy And His Stomach

What's the matter with you- ain't I always been your friend?
Ain't I been a pardner to you? All my pennies don't I spend
In gettin' nice things for you? Don't I give you lots of cake?
Say, stummick, what's the matter, that you had to go an' ache?

Why, I loaded you with good things yesterday, I gave you more
Potatoes, squash an' turkey than you'd ever had before.
I gave you nuts an' candy, pumpkin pie an' chocolate cake,
An' las' night when I got to bed you had to go an' ache.

Say, what's the matter with you- ain't you satisfied at all?
I gave you all you wanted, you was hard jes' like a ball,
An' you couldn't hold another bit of puddin', yet las' night
You ached mos' awful, stummick; that ain't treatin' me jes' right.

I've been a friend to you, I have, why ain't you a friend o' mine?
They gave me castor oil last night because you made me whine.
I'm awful sick this mornin' an' I'm feelin' mighty blue,
'Cause you don't appreciate the things I do for you.

Edgar Albert Guest

Boy O' Mine

'Boy o' mine, boy o' mine, this is my prayer for you,
This is my dream and my thought and my care for you:
Strong be the spirit which dwells in the breast of you,
Never may folly or shame get the best of you;
You shall be tempted in fancied security,
But make no choice that is stained with impurity.

Boy o' mine, boy o' mine, time shall command of you
Thought from the brain of you, work from the hand of you;
Voices of pleasure shall whisper and call to you;
Luring you far from the hard tasks that fall to you;
Then as you're meeting life's bitterest test of men,
God grant you strength to be true as the best of men.

Boy o' mine, boy o' mine, singing your way along,
Cling to your laughter and cheerfully play along;
Kind to your neighbor be, offer your hand to him,
You shall grow great as your heart shall expand to him;
But when for victory sweet you are fighting there,
Know that your record of life you are writing there.

Boy o' mine, boy o' mine, this is my prayer for you;
Never may shame pen one line of despair for you;
Never may conquest or glory mean all to you;
Cling to your honor whatever shall fall to you;
Rather than victory, rather than fame to you,
Choose to be true and let nothing bring shame to you.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Bravery

The brave man journeys straight ahead;
The coward goes
Along his way in constant dread
He'll meet a friend in need, ahead,
Or one he owes.

Edgar Albert Guest

Bread And Gravy

There's a heap o' satisfaction in a chunk o' pumpkin pie,
An' I'm always glad I'm livin' when the cake is passin' by;
An' I guess at every meal-time I'm as happy as can be,
For I like whatever dishes Mother gets for Bud an' me;
But there's just one bit of eatin' which I hold supremely great,
An' that's good old bread and gravy when I've finished up my plate.
I've eaten fancy dishes an' my mouth has watered, too;
I've been at banquet tables an' I've run the good things through;
I've had sea food up in Boston, I've had pompano down South,
For most everything that's edible I've put into my mouth;
But the finest treat I know of, now I publicly relate,
Is a chunk of bread and gravy when I've finished up my plate.
Now the epicures may snicker and the hotel chefs may smile,
But when it comes to eating I don't hunger much for style;[Pg 39]
For an empty man wants fillin' an' you can't do that with things
Like breast o' guinea under glass, or curried turkey wings—
You want just plain home cookin' an' the chance to sit an' wait
For a piece o' bread an' gravy when you've finished up your plate.
Oh, it may be I am common an' my tastes not much refined,
But the meals which suit my fancy are the good old-fashioned kind,
With the food right on the table an' the hungry kids about
An' the mother an' the father handing all the good things out,
An' the knowledge in their presence that I needn't fear to state,
That I'd like some bread an' gravy when I've finished up my plate.

Edgar Albert Guest

Bread And Jam

I wish I was a poet like the men that write in books
The poems that we have to learn on valleys, hills an' brooks;
I'd write of things that children like an' know an' understand,
An' when the kids recited them the folks would call them grand.
If I'd been born a Whittier, instead of what I am,
I'd write a poem now about a piece of bread an' jam.

I'd tell how hungry children get all afternoon in school,
An' sittin' at attention just because it is the rule,
An' lookin' every now an' then up to the clock to see
If that big hand an' little hand would ever get to three.
I'd tell how children hurry home an' give the door a slam
An' ask their mothers can they have a piece of bread an' jam.

Some poets write of things to eat an' sing of dinners fine,
An' praise the dishes they enjoy, an' some folks sing of wine,
But they've forgotten, I suppose, the days when they were small
An' hurried home from school to get the finest food of all;
They don't remember any more how good it was to cram
Inside their hungry little selves a piece of bread an' jam.

I wish I was a Whittier, a Stevenson or Burns,
I wouldn't write of hills an' brooks, or mossy banks or ferns,
I wouldn't write of rolling seas or mountains towering high,
But I would sing of chocolate cake an' good old apple pie,
An' best of all the food there is, beyond the slightest doubt,
Is bread an' jam we always get as soon as school is out.

Edgar Albert Guest

Bribed

I know that what I did was wrong;
I should have sent you far away.
You tempted me, and I'm not strong;
I tried but couldn't answer nay.
I should have packed you off to bed;
Instead I let you stay awhile,
And mother scolded when I said
That you had bribed me with your smile.
And yesterday I gave to you
Another piece of chocolate cake,
Some red-ripe watermelon, too,
And that gave you the stomach ache.
And that was after I'd been told
You'd had enough, you saucy miss;
You tempted me, you five-year-old,
And bribed me with a hug and kiss.
And mother said I mustn't get
You roller skates, yet here they are;
I haven't dared to tell her yet;
Some time, she says, I'll go too far.
I gave my word I wouldn't buy
These things, for accidents she fears;
Now I must tell, when questioned why,
Just how you bribed me with your tears.
I've tried so hard to do the right,
Yet I have broken every vow.
I let you do, most every night,
The things your mother won't allow.
I know that I am doing wrong,
Yet all my sense of honor flies,
The moment that you come along
And bribe me with those wondrous eyes.

Edgar Albert Guest

Brothers All

Under the toiler's grimy shirt,
Under the sweat and the grease and dirt,
Under the rough outside you view,
Is a man who thinks and feels as you.

Go talk with him,
Go walk with him,
Sit down with him by a running stream,
Away from the things that are hissing steam,
Away from his bench,
His hammer and wrench,
And the grind of need
And the sordid deed,
And this you'll find
As he bares his mind:
In the things which count when this life is through
He's as tender and big and as good as you.

Be fair with him,
And share with him
An hour of time in a restful place,
Brother to brother and face to face,
And he'll whisper low
Of the long ago,
Of a loved one dead
And the tears he shed;
And you'll come to see
That in suffering he,
With you, is hurt by the self-same rod
And turns for help to the self-same God.

You hope as he,
You dream of splendors, and so does he;
His children must be as you'd have yours be;
He shares your love
For the Flag above,
He laughs and sings
For the self-same things;
When he's understood

He is mostly good,
Thoughtful of others and kind and true,
Brave, devoted- and much like you.

Under the toiler's grimy shirt,
Under the sweat and the grease and dirt,
Under the rough outside you view,
Is a man who thinks and feels as you.

Edgar Albert Guest

Buckle In

JUST about the time the clouds are blackest
Let your thoughts go roving to the sun,
Just about the time your job is hardest
Think how glad you'll be when it is done.
Buckle to the task that you are facing,
Work away and pretty soon you'll find
All the little difficulties vanished,
All the little worries far behind.

'T isn't any use to sit and whimper,
Doesn't help a bit to sit and sigh,
Lose yourself in working out the problem,
If it's hard just buckle in and try.
Don't waste time in thinking what may happen,
Plug along and do the best you can,
That's the way to show the stuff you 're made of,
That's the way to prove yourself a man.

Edgar Albert Guest

Bud

Who is it lives to the full every minute,
Gets all the joy and the fun that is in it?
Tough as they make 'em, and ready to race,
Fit for a battle and fit for a chase,
Heedless of buttons on blouses and pants,
Laughing at danger and taking a chance,
Gladdest, it seems, when he wallows in mud,
Who is the rascal? I'll tell you, it's Bud!
Who is it wakes with a shout of delight,
And comes to our room with a smile that is bright?
Who is it springs into bed with a leap
And thinks it is queer that his dad wants to sleep?
Who answers his growling with laughter and tries
His patience by lifting the lids of his eyes?
Who jumps in the air and then lands with a thud
On his poor daddy's stomach? I'll tell you, it's Bud!
Who is it thinks life is but laughter and play
And doesn't know care is a part of the day?
Who is reckless of stockings and heedless of shoes?
Who laughs at a tumble and grins at a bruise?
Who climbs over fences and clammers up trees,
And scrapes all the skin off his shins and his knees?
Who sometimes comes home all bespattered with blood
That was drawn by a fall? It's that rascal called Bud.
Yet, who is it makes all our toiling worth while?
Who can cure every ache that we know, by his smile?
Who is prince to his mother and king to his dad
And makes us forget that we ever were sad?
Who is center of all that we dream of and plan,
Our baby to-day but to-morrow our man?
It's that tough little, rough little tyke in the mud,
That tousled-haired, fun-loving rascal called Bud!

Edgar Albert Guest

Bud Discusses Cleanliness

First thing in the morning, last I hear at night,
Get it when I come from school: 'My, you look a sight!
Go upstairs this minute, an' roll your sleeves up high
An' give your hands a scrubbing and wipe 'em till they're dry!
Now don't stand there and argue, and never mind your tears!
And this time please remember to wash your neck and ears.'

Can't see why ears grow on us, all crinkled like a shell,
With lots of fancy carvings that make a feller yell
Each time his Ma digs in them to get a speck of dirt,
When plain ones would be easy to wash and wouldn't hurt.
And I can't see the reason why every time Ma nears,
She thinks she's got to send me to wash my neck and ears.

I never wash to suit her; don't think I ever will.
If I was white as sister, she'd call me dirty still.
At night I get a scrubbing and go to bed, and then
The first thing in the morning, she makes me wash again.
That strikes me as ridiklus; I've thought of it a heap.
A feller can't get dirty when he is fast asleep.

When I grow up to be a man like Pa, and have a wife
And kids to boss around, you bet they'll have an easy life.
We won't be at them all the time, the way they keep at me,
And kick about a little dirt that no one else can see.
And every night at supper time as soon as he appears,
We will not chase our boy away to wash his neck and ears.

Edgar Albert Guest

Bulb Planting Time

Last night he said the dead were dead
And scoffed my faith to scorn;
I found him at a tulip bed
When I passed by at morn.
'O ho!' said I, 'the frost is near
And mist is on the hills,
And yet I find you planting here
Tulips and daffodils.'
'Tis time to plant them now,' he said,
'If they shall bloom in Spring';
'But every bulb,' said I, 'seems dead,
And such an ugly thing.'
'The pulse of life I cannot feel,
The skin is dried and brown.
Now look!' a bulb beneath my heel
I crushed and trampled down.
In anger then he said to me:
'You've killed a lovely thing;
A scarlet blossom that would be
Some morning in the Spring.'
'Last night a greater sin was thine,'
To him I slowly said;
'You trampled on the dead of mine
And told me they are dead.

Edgar Albert Guest

Business

'BUSINESS is business,' he said to me,
As he gave me short weight in my pound of tea.

'In business there isn't much sentiment,'
Said he, as he charged me the extra cent.

'Once I trusted a friend and he didn't pay,'
The bread that he sold wasn't made that day.

'Business is business,' he said to me,
Of a dozen eggs we could use but three.

O, it seems to me some way, somehow,
There's too much business in business now.

Edgar Albert Guest

Canning Time

There's a wondrous smell of spices
In the kitchen,
Most bewitchin';
There are fruits cut into slices
That just set the palate itchin';
There's the sound of spoon on platter
And the rattle and the clatter;
And a bunch of kids are hastin'
To the splendid joy of tastin':
It's the fragrant time of year
When fruit-cannin' days are here.

There's a good wife gayly smilin'
And perspirin'
Some, and tirin';
And while jar on jar she's pilin'
And the necks o' them she's wirin'
I'm a-sittin' here an' dreamin'
Of the kettles that are steamin',
And the cares that have been troublin'
All have vanished in the bubblin'.
I am happy that I'm here
At the cannin' time of year.

Lord, I'm sorry for the feller
That is missin'
All the hissinn'
Of the juices, red and yellerr,
And can never sit and listen
To the rattle and the clatter
Of the sound of spoon on platter.
I am sorry for the single,
For they miss the thrill and tingle
Of the splendid time of year
When the cannin' days are here.

Edgar Albert Guest

Can'T

Can't is the worst word that's written or spoken;
Doing more harm here than slander and lies;
On it is many a strong spirit broken,
And with it many a good purpose dies.
It springs from the lips of the thoughtless each morning
And robs us of courage we need through the day:
It rings in our ears like a timely-sent warning
And laughs when we falter and fall by the way.

Can't is the father of feeble endeavor,
The parent of terror and half-hearted work;
It weakens the efforts of artisans clever,
And makes of the toiler an indolent shirk.
It poisons the soul of the man with a vision,
It stifles in infancy many a plan;
It greets honest toiling with open derision
And mocks at the hopes and the dreams of a man.

Can't is a word none should speak without blushing;
To utter it should be a symbol of shame;
Ambition and courage it daily is crushing;
It blights a man's purpose and shortens his aim.
Despise it with all of your hatred of error;
Refuse it the lodgment it seeks in your brain;
Arm against it as a creature of terror,
And all that you dream of you some day shall gain.

Can't is the word that is foe to ambition,
An enemy ambushed to shatter your will;
Its prey is forever the man with a mission
And bows but to courage and patience and skill.
Hate it, with hatred that's deep and undying,
For once it is welcomed 'twill break any man;
Whatever the goal you are seeking, keep trying
And answer this demon by saying: 'I can.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Can'T Frighten Them

This is the way to take your woes,
Just grin and bear 'em,
Since everybody round here knows
A frown won't scare 'em.

Edgar Albert Guest

Capital Punishment

PROUD is the state of its millions of men,
And proud is the state of its name;
In its borders are masters of brush and of pen,
And wide as the world is its fame.
It stands for the best of the blood of the years,
Yet an eye for an eye is its way,
And there at the base of its progress appears
The chamber of murder today.

It has fashioned the visions of ages long gone,
What were dreams of the past now are real;
Its deserts and hills men have builded upon
Great structures of stone and of steel.
It is proud of its colleges, splendid and true,
Where its youth obtain learning and skill;
It has turned from the old to the glorious new,
But the death house is part of it still.

It boasts of its work in humanity's cause,
Of its churches with steeples and domes;
And proudly it tells of its numberless laws
That safeguard its millions of homes.
It has stretched out its hand to the child of the mill,
It has led him from labor to play;
Yet the chamber of death is a part of it still,
And some one must murder for pay.

Choking rabbi and priest mutter fear-stifled prayers
To the great God of mercy above
As the ominous footfalls are heard on the stairs,
And ask Him for mercy and love.
Oh, mockery! Asking the Master to show
Compassion, when ye of the state
Stand up and insist on a blow for a blow,
And murder in legalized hate!

Oh, mockery! Asking the good God to spare
This man on the brink of the grave,
That ye, as a state, by your actions declare

Ye haven't found worthy to save.
Ye have shaken the fetters of ages long gone,
Ye have risen in glory and gain;
How long must the God of us all look upon
The chamber of death ye maintain?

Edgar Albert Guest

Care-Free Youth

The skies are blue and the sun is out
and the grass is green and soft
And the old charm's back in the apple tree
and it calls a boy aloft;
And the same low voice that the old don't hear,
but the care-free youngsters do,
Is calling them to the fields and streams
and the joys that once I knew.
And if youth be wild desire for play
and care is the mark of men,
Beneath the skin that Time has tanned
I'm a madcap youngster then.

Far richer than king with his crown of gold
and his heavy weight of care
Is the sunburned boy with his stone-bruised feet
and his tousled shock of hair;
For the king can hear but the cry of hate
or the sickly sound of praise,
And lost to him are the voices sweet
that called in his boyhood days.
Far better than ruler, with pomp and power
and riches, is it to be
The urchin gay in his tattered clothes
that is climbing the apple tree.

Oh, once I heard all the calls that come
to the quick, glad ears of boys,
And a certain spot on the river bank
told me of its many joys,
And certain fields and certain trees
were loyal friends to me,
And I knew the birds, and I owned a dog,
and we both could hear and see.
Oh, never from tongues of men have dropped
such messages wholly glad
As the things that live in the great outdoors
once told to a little lad.

And I'm sorry for him who cannot hear
 what the tall trees have to say,
Who is deaf to the call of a running stream
 and the lanes that lead to play.
The boy that shins up the faithful elm
 or sprawls on a river bank
Is more richly blessed with the joys of life
 than any old man of rank.
For youth is the golden time of life,
 and this battered old heart of mine
Beats fast to the march of its old-time joys,
 when the sun begins to shine.

Edgar Albert Guest

Carry On

They spoke it bravely, grimly, in their darkest hours of doubt;
They spoke it when their hope was low and when their strength gave out;
We heard it from the dying in those troubled days now gone,
And they breathed it as their slogan for the living: 'Carry on!'

Now the days of strife are over, and the skies are fair again,
But those two brave words of courage on our lips should still remain;
In the trials which beset us and the cares we look upon,
To our dead we should be faithful- we have still to 'carry on!'

'Carry on!' through storm and danger, 'carry on' through dark despair,
'Carry on' through hurt and failure, 'carry on' through grief and care;
'Twas the slogan they bequeathed us as they fell beside the way,
And for them and for our children, let us 'carry on!' to-day.

Edgar Albert Guest

Challenge

Life is a challenge to the bold,
It flings its gauntlet down
And bids us, if we seek for gold
And glory and renown,
To come and take them from its store,
It will not meekly hand them o'er.

Life is a challenge all must meet,
And nobly must we dare;
Its gold is tawdry when we cheat,
Its fame a bitter snare
If it be stolen from life's clutch;
Men must be true to prosper much.

Life is a challenge and its laws
Are rigid ones and stern;
The splendid joy of real applause
Each man must nobly earn.
It makes us win its jewels rare,
But gives us paste, if we're unfair.

Edgar Albert Guest

Charms

SWEET is a rosebud, pink or red,
And sweet are the blooms of May,
And sweet is the fragrance about us shed
On many a summer day.
Oh, the world is full of such sweetness rare
To make our joys completer,
But there 's nothing so sweet on this earth, I swear,
But a baby's smile is sweeter.

Fair is the blue in the summer skies,
And fair is the summer sun,
And fair is the look in a sweetheart's eyes
When a man her heart has won.
The world is crowded with splendors fair
To gladden each burden-bearer,
But there's nothing so fair on the earth, I swear,
But the charms of a babe are fairer.

Dear to us all are the friends we love,
And dear are the hopes we cling to;
And dear, indeed, are the memories of
The loved ones we used to sing to.
Oh, the world is crowded with treasures dear,
To our hearts, above all, they 're nearer;
But there's nothing so dear you can mention here,
But the baby you love is dearer.

Edgar Albert Guest

Checking The Day

'I had a full day in my purse
When I arose, and now it's gone!
I wonder if I can rehearse
The squandered hours, one by one,
And count the minutes as I do
The pennies and the dimes I've spent.
I've had a day, once bright and new,
But, oh, for what few things it went!

There were twelve hours when I began,
Good hours worth sixty minutes each,
Yet some of them so swiftly ran
I had no time for thought or speech.
Eight of them to my task I gave,
Glad that it did not ask for more.
Part of the day I tried to save,
But now I cannot say what for.

An hour I spent for idle chat,
Gossip and scandal I confess;
No better off am I for that,
Would I had talked a little less.
I watched steel workers bolt a beam,
What time that cost I don't recall.
How very short the minutes seem
When they are spent on trifles small.

Quite empty is my purse to-night
Which held at dawn a twelve-hour day,
For all of it has taken flight—
Part wisely spent, part thrown away.
I did my task and earned its gain,
But checking deeds with what they cost,
Two missing hours I can't explain,
They must be charges as lost.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Childless

If certain folks that I know well
Should come to me their woes to tell
I'd read the sorrow in their faces
And I could analyze their cases.
I watch some couples day by day
Go madly on their selfish way
Forever seeking happiness
And always finding something less.
If she whose face is fair to see,
Yet lacks one charm that there should be,
Should open wide her heart to-day
I think I know what she would say.

She'd tell me that his love seems cold
And not the love she knew of old;
That for the home they've built to share
No longer does her husband care;
That he seems happier away
Than by her side, and every day
That passes leaves them more apart;
And then perhaps her tears would start
And in a softened voice she'd add:
'Sometimes I wonder, if we had
A baby now to love, if he
Would find so many faults in me?'

And if he came to tell his woe
Just what he'd say to me, I know:
'There's something dismal in the place
That always stares me in the face.
I love her. She is good and sweet
But still my joy is incomplete.
And then it seems to me that she
Can only see the faults in me.
I wonder sometimes if we had
A little girl or little lad,
If life with all its fret and fuss
Would then seem so monotonous?'

And what I'd say to them I know.
I'd bid them straightway forth to go
And find that child and take him in
And start the joy of life to win.
You foolish, hungry souls, I'd say,
You're living in a selfish way.
A baby's arms stretched out to you
Will give you something real to do.
And though God has not sent one down
To you, within this very town
Somewhere a little baby lies
That would bring gladness to your eyes.

You cannot live this life for gold
Or selfish joys. As you grow old
You'll find that comfort only springs
From living for the living things.
And home must be a barren place
That never knows a baby's face.
Take in a child that needs your care,
Give him your name and let him share
Your happiness and you will own
More joy than you have ever known,
And, what is more, you'll come to feel
That you are doing something real.

Edgar Albert Guest

Christmas Eve

BACK UP Old Age and Wrinkled Face,
Come, Selfish Grown-Up, quit the place,
You Pessimist, depart!
Now, Gloomy Gus and Doleful Frown,
There is no room for you in town,
Nor Bitter Ache and Smart;
Childhood tonight is King of Earth,
Make room for Laughter and for Mirth!

Step down a moment, Out-for-Fame,
Hard-headed business man, the same,
And You, who won't believe;
Move on now, Lust-for-Gold, make way
For Innocence and Youth and Play,
For this is Christmas Eve;
Bowed-down-by-Care, make room, make room,
Let little ones dispel the gloom.

Soured-on-the-World, you've had your fling,
You've been a failure as a King,
Your reign at last is done.
And you, grim prophet of Despair,
Who view no thing on earth as fair,
Make way tonight for Fun;
Your citadels are overthrown,
Tonight Youth comes unto the throne.

Envy and Hate and Haughty Pride,
'T is time for you to turn aside,
Let Love and Childhood pass;
The night of nights has come once more,
E'en Sorrow journeys from the door,
Come, little boy and lass,
The world is yours, ascend the throne,
Your subjects we, and yours alone.

Edgar Albert Guest

Christmas Greeting

I DO not care to wait until the hand of death has smoothed your brow
Before I say what's in my heart, I'd rather tell it to you now.
I'd rather say: 'How glad I am to know your cheery voice and smile,'
Than stand and say 'how glad I was' in some grief-stricken after-while.
I'd rather shout: 'how good you are!' than sniffle out: 'how good was he!'
And so I take this Christmas Day to say you have a friend in me.

And so I take this Christmas Day to wish you everything that's fine,
A cloudless sky for every day, a path where roses bloom and twine;
May sorrow never find your door, but if it shall and leave you dumb,
May to your wounds of grief the balm of consolation quickly come.
May all the best of life be yours, and may, no matter where you roam,
Good luck and gladness go with you, and smiling, bring you safely home.

If wishing only banished care you'd never more have cause to sigh,
If wishing drove the clouds away henceforth the blue would fill your sky.
The pink of health would bloom upon the cheeks of those you love for aye,
And every day God gives to you would be a merry Christmas Day.
I'd wish you everything that's good, I'd wish you everything that's fine,
And then I'd still be in your debt, oh good and faithful friend of mine.

Edgar Albert Guest

Christmas, 1918

They give their all, this Christmastide, that peace on earth shall reign;
Upon the snows of Flanders now, brave blood has left its stain;
With ribbons red we deck our gifts; theirs bear the red of pain.

They give their lives that joy shall live and little children play;
They pass that all that makes for peace shall not be swept away;
They die that children yet unborn shall have their Christmas Day.

Come! deck the home with holly wreaths and make this Christmas glow,
And let Old Glory wave above the bough of mistletoe!
Come! keep alive the faith of them who sleep 'neath Flanders snow.

Ye brave of heart who dwell at home, make merry now a-while;
The world has need of Christmas cheer its sorrows to beguile;
And blest is he whose love can light grief's corners with a smile.

Ring out once more, sweet Christmas bells, your message to the sky,
Proclaim in golden tones again to every passer-by
That peace shall rule the lands of earth, and only war shall die.

Let love's sweet tenderness relieve war's cruel crimson clutch,
Send forth the Christmas spirit, every troubled heart to touch;
Blest will be all we do for them who do for us so much.

Edgar Albert Guest

Chums

HUSBAND and wife for fourteen years!
And just like children now,
As fond of one another as
The day they took their vow.
Where he goes she goes, hand in hand,
And thus their record sums,
Through all those years of joy and strife
They really have been chums.

Husband and wife. No, more than that,
For husbands oft are known,
In search of pleasure now and then,
To journey off alone;
And wives have clubs and other things
That interest them more
Than business plans their husbands make,
When honeymooning's o'er.

Not so with them — through weal or woe,
Through sunshine and through rain,
Together they have journeyed on;
She cheered when all seemed vain.
His greatest joys have always been
The ones that she could share,
We knew that when we saw the one,
The other must be there.

If I could change the marriage rite
That binds a pair for life,
'T would be to drop that stilted phrase,
'You 're husband, now, and wife.'
For just one little word, I think,
The knot far more becomes;
I 'd like to hear the parson say:
'Beloved, now you 're chums.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Cleaning The Furnace

Last night Pa said to Ma: 'My dear, it's gettin' on to fall,
It's time I did a little job I do not like at all.
I wisht 'at I was rich enough to hire a man to do
The dirty work around this house an' clean up when he's through,
But since I'm not, I'm truly glad that I am strong an' stout,
An' ain't ashamed to go myself an' clean the furnace out.'

Then after supper Pa put on his overalls an' said
He'd work down in the cellar till 'twas time to go to bed.
He started in to rattle an' to bang an' poke an' stir,
An' the dust began a-climbin' up through every register
Till Ma said: 'Goodness gracious; go an' shut those things up tight
Or we'll all be suffocated an' the house will be a sight.'

Then he carted out the ashes in a basket an' a pail,
An' from cellar door to alley he just left an ashy trail.
Then he pulled apart the chimney, an' 'twas full of something black,
An' he skinned most all his knuckles when he tried to put it back.
We could hear him talkin' awful, an' Ma looked at us an' said:
'I think it would be better if you children went to bed.'

When he came up from the cellar there were ashes in his hair,
There were ashes in his eyebrows- but he didn't seem to care-
There were ashes in his mustache, there were ashes in his eyes,
An' we never would have known him if he'd took us by surprise.
'Well, I got it clean,' he sputtered, and Ma said: 'I guess that's true;
Once the dirt was in the furnace, but now most of it's on you.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Cliffs Of Scotland

Sixteen Americans who died on the Tuscania are buried at the water's edge at the base of the rocky cliffs at a Scottish port.- (News Dispatch.)

Cliffs of Scotland, guard them well,
Shield them from the blizzard's rage;
Let your granite towers tell
That those sleeping heroes fell
In the service of their age.

Cliffs of Scotland, they were ours!
Now forever they are thine!
Guard them with your mighty powers!
Barren are your rocks of flowers,
But their splendor makes them fine.

Cliffs of Scotland, at your base
Freedom's finest children lie;
Keep them in your strong embrace!
Tell the young of every race
Such as they shall never die.

Cliffs of Scotland, never more
Men shall think you stern and cold;
Splendor now has found your shore;
Unto you the ocean bore
Freedom's precious sons to hold.

Edgar Albert Guest

Clinching The Bolt

It needed just an extra turn to make the bolt secure,
A few more minutes on the job and then the work was sure;
But he begrudged the extra turn, and when the task was through,
The man was back for more repairs in just a day or two.
Two men there are in every place, and one is only fair,
The other gives the extra turn to every bolt that's there;
One man is slip-shod in his work and eager to be quit,
The other never leaves a task until he's sure of it.
The difference 'twixt good and bad is not so very much,
A few more minutes at the task, an extra turn or touch,
A final test that all is right—and yet the men are few
Who seem to think it worth their while these extra things to do.
The poor man knows as well as does the good man how to work,
But one takes pride in every task, the other likes to shirk;
With just as little as he can, one seeks his pay to earn,
The good man always gives the bolt that clinching, extra turn.

Edgar Albert Guest

Committee Meetings

For this and that and various things
It seems that men must get together,
To purchase cups or diamond rings
Or to discuss the price of leather.
From nine to ten, or two to three,
Or any hour that's fast and fleeting,
There is a constant call for me
To go to some committee meeting.

The church has serious work to do,
The lodge and club has need of workers,
They ask for just an hour or two-
Surely I will not join the shirkers?
Though I have duties of my own
I should not drop before completing,
There comes the call by telephone
To go to some committee meeting.

No longer may I eat my lunch
In quietude and contemplation;
I must foregather with the bunch
To raise a fund to save the nation.
And I must talk of plans and schemes
The while a scanty bite I'm eating,
Until I vow to-day it seems
My life is one committee meeting.

When over me the night shall fall,
And my poor soul goes upwards winging
Unto that heavenly realm, where all
Is bright with joy and gay with singing,
I hope to hear St. Peter say-
And I shall thank him for the greeting:
'Come in and rest from day to day;
Here there is no committee meeting!'

Edgar Albert Guest

Compensation

I'd like to think when life is done
That I had filled a needed post.
That here and there I'd paid my fare
With more than idle talk and boast;
That I had taken gifts divine.
The breath of life and manhood fine,
And tried to use them now and then
In service for my fellow men.

I'd hate to think when life is through
That I had lived my round of years
A useless kind, that leaves behind
No record in this vale of tears;
That I had wasted all my days
By treading only selfish ways,
And that this world would be the same
If it had never known my name.

I'd like to think that here and there,
When I am gone, there shall remain
A happier spot that might have not
Existed had I toiled for gain;
That someone's cheery voice and smile
Shall prove that I had been worth while;
That I had paid with something fine
My debt to God for life divine.

Edgar Albert Guest

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Edgar Albert Guest

Comradeship

OF ALL the ships that sail life's sea,
The Comradeship's the one for me;
In weather fair or weather foul,
A pleasant breeze or gales that howl,
An ocean smooth or troubled sea,
The Comradeship rides merrily.
Her masts are staunch, her sails are white,
Her compass true, and day or night
She keeps her course, and in the end
Comes back to port with every friend.

The Comradeship is manned by men
Who teach the sad to smile again;
True-hearted souls who've quaffed the glass
Of bitterness and seen it pass;
Who know the meaning of distress,
The heartache and the weariness
That those who journey here below
Sooner or later come to know;
And on the deck they stand and smile
And bid us fare with them a while.

They bid us make a pleasant trip
Upon the gallant Comradeship;
With them they bid us pace her deck,
A friendly arm about each neck,
And back to hearts with aching sore
They bring the balm of peace once more;
And from the troubled sea of strife
They bring us to the joy of life,
Restoring hope and faith again
To weary and despairing men.

Of all the ships that sail life's sea
The Comradeship's the one for me.
Her cabin rings with laughter true,
Above her skies seem ever blue,
And by the sunlight of a smile
She steers for ' Happy Afterwhile;'

The port of Consolation, too,
She touches ere her journey's through;
And this the song her master sings,
'Our destination's Better Things.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Consolation

SO YOU 'RE sobbin' in the night time, an' you 're sighin' through the day,
An' your heart is ever callin' for the loved one gone away;
An' you're lonely, oh, so lonely! an' there's nothin' friends can do,
That will start the old light shinin' in those tender eyes of blue.

I 'm not goin' to try to tell you that you shouldn't sit an' sigh,
An' I 'm not the one to whisper: 'You'll feel better by an' by;'
But joy isn't everlastin¹ till this earthly life is done,
If it was, no cloud would ever hide the shinin' mornin' sun.

We must sip of joy an' sorrow, we must weep an' laugh in turn,
We must win love but to lose it, an' our hearts with grief must burn;
For the lasting joys are Heaven's, we can't hope to find them here,
Every one who loves must some day weep beside a loved one's bier.

To have known love an' deserved it, is our highest point of bliss,
There 's no happiness for mortals that can greater be than this;
An' though Death conies in an' robs us of our priceless jewels, we
Who have loved an' lost know something of the joys that are to be.

Edgar Albert Guest

Constant Beauty

It's good to have the trees again, the singing of the breeze again,
It's good to see the lilacs bloom as lovely as of old.
It's good that we can feel again the touch of beauties real again,
For hearts and minds, of sorrow now, have all that they can hold.

The roses haven't changed a bit, nor have the lilacs stranged a bit,
They bud and bloom the way they did before the war began.
The world is upside down to-day, there's much to make us frown to-day,
And gloom and sadness everywhere beset the path of man.

But now the lilacs bloom again and give us their perfume again,
And now the roses smile at us and nod along the way;
And it is good to see again the blossoms on each tree again,
And feel that nature hasn't changed the way we have to-day.

Oh, we have changed from what we were; we're not the carefree lot we were;
Our hearts are filled with sorrow now and grave concern and pain,
But it is good to see once more, the blooming lilac tree once more,
And find the constant roses here to comfort us again.

Edgar Albert Guest

Contentment

When e'er I 'm sad, why then I 'm glad
To think that I 'm no sadder;
And when I 'm glad, I 'm a happy lad
To think none could be gladder.

Edgar Albert Guest

Contradictin' Joe

Heard of Contradictin' Joe?
Most contrary man I know.
Always sayin', 'That's not so.'

Nothing's ever said, but he
Steps right up to disagree-
Quarrelsome as he can be.

If you start in to recite
All the details of a fight,
He'll butt in to set you right.

Start a story that is true,
He'll begin correctin' you-
Make you out a liar, too!

Mention time o' year or day,
Makes no difference what you say,
Nothing happened just that way.

Bet you, when his soul takes flight,
An' the angels talk at night,
He'll butt in to set 'em right.

There where none should have complaints
He will be with 'no's' and 'ain'ts'
Contradictin' all the saints.

Edgar Albert Guest

Contrary Sary

There's no sense arguin' with 'em,' says Ebenezer Gates,
You can't convince the women that they ain't fit fer votes;
There's Sary got the notion that she's as good as man,
An' I can't show her diff'runt, an' no man livin' can.
She's most bnreasonubbel. 'Now, I suppose,' says she,
'If I got drunk each evenin' ye'd think lots more o' me?'

'She's so consarn contrary, she won't talk common sense,
She flies right off the handle the minute I commence.
'Of course, we ain't men's equals,' says Sary, 'if we wuz
We'd hang around some barroom the way Jim Pilzer does;
We'd soak ourselves with liquor, an' guzzle down our pay
An' show ourselves your equals in some sich manly way.'

'Now what's the use of reason, when women talk like that?
Ye might as well keep silent. With facts I knock her flat,
But when I git her cornered, she smiles an' says t' me:
'Hank Foss has been arrested. He beat his family;
The neighbors have his children, his wife is sick in bed,
The ballot ain't fer wimmin, it's kep' fer Hank instead.'
'It really is a caution how foolish she's become!
'I wisht I knew enough,' says she, 't' be a village bum;
I wisht I had the brain power t' loaf around all day
An' see my children barefoot, but I ain't built that way.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Copy Paper

I START the day with paper white,
And put it in my old machine,
And wonder whether, as I write
The night will find my copy clean.
Will this day's finished task be fair
Or full of blemishes and flaws?
Will what my hands have written there
Deserve derision or applause?

Have I put down a single thing
That better would have been unwrit?
Have I let pass a jibe or fling
With venom at the point of it?
This paper spotless came to me,
How will it leave my little den?
What will the printer's judgment be?
And what will say my fellow men?

'Tis mine to do with as I will.
I view the finished work, and pause;
Here is a thought that I must kill,
And here a verse that's full of flaws.
And here's a line that I'd regret
If ever I should let it go,
The paper now is blurred, and yet
I much prefer to have it so.

Tomorrow it will be too late,
Whatever is must stand for aye;
If I have penned a line in hate
That stays the record for today.
And whether it be good or bad
I cannot change one single line;
My chance to be of worth I've had,
And every blemish there is mine.

My life is like the paper sheet
On which I toil from day to day,
And there the bitter and the sweet

Are written down to last for aye.
And, oh, I hope, when comes the call
That takes me from this earthly scene,
The God above who judges all
Will find my copy fairly clean.

Edgar Albert Guest

Cornered

I KNEW it was comin', I'd watched fer a year
Without sayin' a word to a soul excep' Ma
Of the sweet sort o' things that were happenin' here,
An,' 'You orter feel mighty glad of it, Pa!'
Was all that she said. But I didn't somehow,
I'd a feelin' that only old men understand,
I knew it was comin'. And it's happened now!
An' I answered yes, when he ast fer her hand.

I dodged him six weeks, now it's done, I confess.
I contrived it so's he'd never get me alone,
I knew all the time that he wanted our Bess,
An' that he was eager to make his wants known.
But he got me last night, passed me out a see-gar
An' while he was talkin' I looked at the band,
I knew in my heart that he wouldn't get far
Afore he'd get courage an' ask fer her hand.

An' I shook like a man with the ague, I guess,
Like a fellow must feel when they've doomed him to die,
An' I didn't look up when I answered him yes,
I was almost ashamed of the tears in each eye.
He's honest and clean, he's a man through and through
An' as soon as I got my old heart in command,
I said: 'Since it must be, I am glad it is you,
I give you my best when I give you her hand.'

I knew it was comin'. For months I could see
It was love that was lightin' those young people's eyes,
And so when he finally did corner me
I know what he said wasn't any surprise.
Now Ma's kissin' 'em both, then she'll come out and cry,
An' tomorrow she'll tell me it's perfectly grand;
Oh, happy young man, mebbe some day you'll sigh
When you're asked to part with your little one's hand.

Edgar Albert Guest

Couldn'T Live Without You

You're just a little fellow with a lot of funny ways,
Just three-foot-six of mischief set with eyes that fairly blaze;
You're always up to something with those busy hands o' yours,
And you leave a trail o' ruin on the walls an' on the doors,
An' I wonder, as I watch you, an' your curious tricks I see,
Whatever is the reason that you mean so much to me.

You're just a chubby rascal with a grin upon your face,
Just seven years o' gladness, an' a hard and trying case;
You think the world's your playground, an' in all you say an' do
You fancy everybody ought to bow an' scrape to you;
Dull care's a thing you laugh at just as though 'twill never be,
So I wonder, little fellow, why you mean so much to me.

Now your face is smeared with candy or perhaps it's only dirt,
An' it's really most alarming how you tear your little shirt;
But I have to smile upon you, an' with all your wilful ways,
I'm certain that I need you 'round about me all my days;
Yes, I've got to have you with me, for somehow it's come to be
That I couldn't live without you, for you're all the world to me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Courage

Courage isn't a brilliant dash,
A daring deed in a moment's flash;
It isn't an instantaneous thing
Born of despair with a sudden spring
It isn't a creature of flickered hope
Or the final tug at a slipping rope;
But it's something deep in the soul of man
That is working always to serve some plan.

Courage isn't the last resort
In the work of life or the game of sport;
It isn't a thing that a man can call
At some future time when he's apt to fall;
If he hasn't it now, he will have it not
When the strain is great and the pace is hot.
For who would strive for a distant goal
Must always have courage within his soul.

Courage isn't a dazzling light
That flashes and passes away from sight;
It's a slow, unwavering, ingrained trait
With the patience to work and the strength to wait.
It's part of a man when his skies are blue,
It's part of him when he has work to do.
The brave man never is freed of it.
He has it when there is no need of it.

Courage was never designed for show;
It isn't a thing that can come and go;
It's written in victory and defeat
And every trial a man may meet.
It's part of his hours, his days and his years,
Back of his smiles and behind his tears.
Courage is more than a daring deed:
It's the breath of life and a strong man's creed.

Edgar Albert Guest

Courage, Courage, Courage!

When the burden grows heavy, and rough is the way,
When you falter and slip, and it isn't your day,
And your best doesn't measure to what is required,
When you know in your heart that you're fast growing tired,
With the odds all against you, there's one thing to do:
That is, call on your courage and see the thing through.

Who battles for victory ventures defeat.
Misfortune is something we all have to meet ;
Take the loss with the grace you would take in the gain.
When things go against you, don't whine or complain;
Just call on your courage and grin if you can.
Though you fail to succeed, do not fail as a man.

There are dark days and stormy, which come to us all,
When about us in ruin our hopes seem to fall.
But stand to whatever you happen to meet—
We must all drink the bitter as well as the sweet.
And the test of your courage is: What do you do
In the hour when reverses are coming to you.

Never changed is the battle by curse or regret,
Though you whimper and whine, still the end must be met
And who fights a good fight, though he struggle in vain,
Shall have many a vict'ry to pay for his pain.
So take your reverses as part of the plan
Which God has devised for creating a man.

Edgar Albert Guest

Curly Locks

Curly locks, what do you know of the world,
And what do your brown eyes see?
Has your baby mind been able to find
One thread of the mystery?
Do you know of the sorrow and pain that lie
In the realms that you've never seen?
Have you even guessed of the great unrest
In the world where you've never been?
Curly locks, what do you know of the world
And what do you see in the skies?
When you solemnly stare at the world out there
Can you see where the future lies?
What wonderful thoughts are you thinking now?
Can it be that you really know
That beyond your youth there are joy and truth,
On the way that you soon must go?

Edgar Albert Guest

Daddies

I would rather be the daddy
Of a romping, roguish crew,
Of a bright-eyed chubby laddie
And a little girl or two,
Than the monarch of a nation
In his high and lofty seat
Taking empty adoration
From the subjects at his feet.

I would rather own their kisses
As at night to me they run,
Than to be the king who misses
All the simpler forms of fun.
When his dreary day is ending
He is dismally alone,
But when my sun is descending
There are joys for me to own.

He may ride to horns and drumming;
I must walk a quiet street,
But when once they see me coming
Then on joyous, flying feet
They come racing to me madly
And I catch them with a swing
And I say it proudly, gladly,
That I'm happier than a king.

You may talk of lofty places,
You may boast of pomp and power,
Men may turn their eager faces
To the glory of an hour,
But give me the humble station
With its joys that long survive,
For the daddies of the nation
Are the happiest men alive.

Edgar Albert Guest

Dan McGann Declares Himself

Said Dan McGann to a foreign man who worked at the selfsame bench,
'Let me tell you this,' and for emphasis he flourished a Stilson wrench;
'Don't talk to me of the bourgeois, don't open your mouth to speak
Of your socialists or your anarchists, don't mention the bolsheveek,
For I've had enough of this foreign stuff, I'm sick as a man can be
Of the speech of hate, and I'm tellin' you straight that this is the land
for me!

'If you want to brag, just take that flag an' boast of its field o' blue,
An' praise the dead an' the blood they shed for the peace o' the likes
o' you.
Enough you've raved,' and once more he waved his wrench in a forceful way,
'O' the cunning creed o' some Russian breed; I stand for the U.S.A.!
I'm done with your fads, and your wild-eyed lads. Don't flourish your rag
o' red
Where I can see or by night there'll be tall candles around your bed.

'So tip your hat to a flag like that! Thank God for its stripes an' stars!
Thank God you're here where the roads are clear, away from your kings and
czars.
I can't just say what I feel to-day, for I'm not a talkin' man,
But, first an' last, I am standin' fast for all that's American.
So don't you speak of the bolsheveek, it's sick of that stuff I am!
One God, one flag is the creed I brag! I'm boostin' for Uncle Sam.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Defeat

No one is beat till he quits,
No one is through till he stops,
No matter how hard Failure hits,
No matter how often he drops,
A fellow's not down till he lies
In the dust and refuses to rise

Fate can slam him and bang him around.
And batter his frame till he's sore,
But she never can say that he's downed
While he bobs up serenely for more.
A fellow's not dead till he dies,
Nor beat till no longer he tries.

Edgar Albert Guest

Denial

I'd like to give 'em all they ask—it hurts to have to answer, 'No,'
And say they cannot have the things they tell me they are wanting so;
Yet now and then they plead for what I know would not be good to give
Or what I can't afford to buy, and that's the hardest hour I live.
They little know or understand how happy I would be to grant
Their every wish, yet there are times it isn't wise, or else I can't.
And sometimes, too, I can't explain the reason when they question why
Their pleadings for some passing joy it is my duty to deny.
I only know I'd like to see them smile forever on life's way;
I would not have them shed one tear or ever meet a troubled day.
And I would be content with life and gladly face each dreary task,
If I could always give to them the little treasures that they ask.
Sometimes we pray to God above and ask for joys that are denied,
And when He seems to scorn our plea, in bitterness we turn aside.
And yet the Father of us all, Who sees and knows just what is best,
May wish, as often here we wish, that He could grant what we request.

Edgar Albert Guest

Departed Friends

The dead friends live and always will;
Their presence hovers round us still.
It seems to me they come to share
Each joy or sorrow that we bear.
Among the living I can feel
The sweet departed spirits steal,
And whether it be weal or woe,
I walk with those I used to know.
I can recall them to my side
Whenever I am struggle-tried;
I've but to wish for them, and they
Come trooping gayly down the way,
And I can tell to them my grief
And from their presence find relief.
In sacred memories below
Still live the friends of long ago.

Edgar Albert Guest

Different

I DON'T believe in worry, and it's foolish to despair,
And dreading what may happen never lightens any care;
I believe in facing trouble, without fretting o'er the cost,
But it's altogether different when your little one is lost.
Oh, it's altogether different when you think she's gone astray,
When she's toddled from the doorway, and you cannot tell which way;
When you call and get no answer, and you call and call again
You are game, but still you worry—for it's mighty different then.

Then the sweat comes on your forehead, and your nerves begin to dance,
And the only thing you think of is some dreadful circumstance.
You never stop to reason, and you play no hero's part,
For terror—trembling terror—is a lodger in your heart.
You could face financial ruin without parting with your grin,
You could smile to see another take the prize you hoped to win,
But you never cease to worry till you find your child again
In the cupboard where she's hiding—for it's mighty different then.

Edgar Albert Guest

Dinner-Time

Tuggin' at your bottle,
An' it's O, you're mighty sweet!
Just a bunch of dimples
From your top-knot to your feet,
Lying there an' gooin'
In the happiest sort o' way,
Like a rosebud peekin' at me
In the early hours o' day;
Gloating over goodness
That you know an' sense an' clutch,
An' smilin' at your daddy,
Who loves you, O, so much!

Tuggin' at your bottle,
As you nestle in your crib,
With your daddy grinnin' at you
'Cause you've dribbled on your bib,
An' you gurgle an' you chortle
Like a brook in early Spring;
An' you kick your pink feet gayly,
An' I think you'd like to sing.
All you wanted was your dinner,
Daddy knew it too, you bet!
An' the moment that you got it
Then you ceased to fuss an' fret.

Tuggin' at your bottle,
Not a care, excepting when
You lose the rubber nipple,
But you find it soon again;
An' the gurglin' an' the gooin'
An' the chortlin' start anew,
An' the kickin' an' the squirmin'
Show the wondrous joy o' you.
But I'll bet you're not as happy
At your dinner, little tot,
As the weather-beaten daddy
Who is bendin' o'er your cot!

Division

You cannot gather every rose,
Nor every pleasure claim,
Nor bask in every breeze that blows,
Nor play in every game.

No millionaire could ever own
The world's supply of pearls,
And no man here has ever known
All of the pretty girls.

So take what joy may come your way,
And envy not your brothers;
Enjoy your share of fun each day,
And leave the rest for others.

Edgar Albert Guest

Do Your All

'Do your bit!' How cheap and trite
Seems that phrase in such a fight!
'Do your bit!' That cry recall,
Change it now to 'Do your all!'
Do your all, and then do more;
Do what you're best fitted for;
Do your utmost, do and give,
You have but one life to live.

Do your finest, do your best,
Don't let up and stop to rest,
Don't sit back and idly say:
'I did something yesterday.'
Come on! Here's another hour,
Give it all you have of power.
Here's another day that needs
Everybody's share of deeds.

'Do your bit!' of course, but then
Do it time and time again;
Giving, doing, all should be
Up to full capacity.
Now's no time to pick and choose,
We've a war we must not lose.
Be your duty great or small,
Do it well and do it all.

Do by careful, patient living,
Do by cheerful, open giving;
Do by serving day by day
At whatever post you may;
Do by sacrificing pleasure,
Do by scorning hours of leisure.
Now to God and country give
Every minute that you live.

Edgar Albert Guest

Don'T Quit

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
when the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
when the funds are low and the debts are high,
and you want to smile but you have to sigh,
when care is pressing you down a bit - rest if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is queer with its twists and turns.
As everyone of us sometimes learns.
And many a fellow turns about when he might have won had he stuck it out.
Don't give up though the pace seems slow - you may succeed with another blow.
Often the goal is nearer than it seems to a faint and faltering man;

Often the struggler has given up when he might have captured the victor's cup;
and he learned too late when the night came down,
how close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out - the silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
and when you never can tell how close you are,
it may be near when it seems afar;
so stick to the fight when you're hardest hit - it's when things seem worst, you
must not quit.

Edgar Albert Guest

Don'T Worry, Little Girl

Don't worry, little girl,
Don't you let one golden curl
Get awry.

Don't you ever let appear
E'en the symbol of a tear
In your eye.
For the world has need of girls
Who have sun-kissed golden curls,
And the world, with all its scheming,
Wants the light that's ever beaming
In a maiden's eyes today;
You were born for love and play.

Don't you worry, wife of mine,
Don't you ever show a sign
Of grim care;
Laugh and sing your way along,
All the grief and all the wrong
I can bear.
For along life's dusty miles
I have need of all your smiles,
I have need of all your laughter,
Let it ring from floor to rafter,
For, in all I say or do,
All my cheer must come from you.

Edgar Albert Guest

Don'T You Know

H'it's h'easy to be 'appy,
Don't you know;
There's no sense in being snappy,
Don't you know;
Wot's the use h'of being grumpy,
H'or a bally rotter mumpy?
Folks don't like a fellow dumpy,
Don't you know.

H'every one h'as fits h'of sadness,
Don't you know;
No ones life h'is wholly gladness,
Don't you know;
H'if todye you taste h'of sorrow,
H'or a shilling 'ave to borrow,
Frowning won't 'elp things tomorrow,
Don't you know.

O, a gloomy cus h'is silly,
Don't you know;
'E's a downright balmy Billy,
Don't you know;
H'instead of h'alwyes moping
With 'is lips h'in downward sloping,
'E should smile h'and keep on 'oping,
Don't you know.

O, my word! H'if I were willing,
Don't you know,
H'every time h'I'd lack a shilling,
Don't you know,
H'in me wye so very 'umble,
H'I could start a dismal mumble,
But h'I larf- -h'I never grumble- -
Don't you know.

Tyke the time the guv'or sacked me,
Don't you know;
good h'old chap! 'E'd alwyes backed me,

Don't you know;
'E got 'ot and sent me flying,
Cut me h'off- -there's no use lying- -
But h'I larffed h'instead of crying,
Don't you know.

H'and h'I'm 'ere on h'earth, still grinning,
Don't you know;
Back once more h'at the beginning,
Don't you know;
Tyking life the wye h'I find it,
Never arskin' wot's be'ind it,
Though h'it's 'ard h'I do not mind it,
Don't you know.

Edgar Albert Guest

Doughnuts And Cider

LAST night I single handed fought a gang of murderers that came
To get my money or my life, and very nearly did the same;
I struggled with them on a cliff, and over it I toppled two,
I hit another one a biff that dazed him, but I wasn't through,
As fast as one was overpowered another villain forced the fight,
Because four doughnuts I devoured and used a cider wash last night.

The horse that I was riding ran away with me at furious pace,
He tossed me up against a tree, I ploughed a furrow with my face!
A farmer's bull was grazing near, and he took up the battle then
And landed me upon my ear upon the farmer's cattle pen;
An aeroplane came whizzing by, I grabbed at it with all my might,
Because four doughnuts that you buy, with cider I washed down last night.

A strange and angry beast then came, a creature with a horrid grunt,
The way he used me was a shame, he galloped up and down my front;
He had the roughest kind of feet that ever I have gazed upon,
His breath was hardly fresh and sweet, of nostrils he had only one
But that belched fire and brimstone, too; his tusks were long and sharp and
white —

It's awful what doughnuts will do when mixed with cider late at night!

Edgar Albert Guest

Down The Lanes Of August

DOWN the lanes of August—and the bees upon the wing,
All the world's in color now, and all the song birds sing;
Never reds will redder be, more golden be the gold,
Down the lanes of August, and the summer getting old.

Mother Nature's brushes now with paints are dripping wet,
Gorgeous is her canvas with the tints we can't forget;
Here's a yellow wheat field—purple asters there,
Riotous the colors that she's splashing everywhere.

Red the cheeks of apples and pink the peaches' bloom,
Redolent the breezes with the sweetness of perfume;
Everything is beauty crowned by skies of clearest blue,
Mother Earth is at her best once more for me and you.

Down the lanes of August with her blossoms at our feet,
Rich with gold and scarlet, dripping wet with honey sweet.
Rich or poor, no matter, here are splendors spread
Down the lanes of August, for all who wish to tread.

Edgar Albert Guest

Dr. Johnson's Picture Cow

Got a sliver in my hand
An' it hurt t' beat the band,
An' got white around it, too;
Then the first thing that I knew
It was all swelled up, an' Pa
Said: 'There's no use fussin', Ma,
Jes' put on his coat an' hat;
Doctor Johnson must see that.'

I was scared an' yelled, because
One time when the doctor was
At our house he made me smell
Something funny, an' I fell
Fast asleep, an' when I woke
Seemed like I was goin' t' choke;
An' the folks who stood about
Said I'd had my tonsils out.

An' my throat felt awful sore
An' I couldn't eat no more,
An' it hurt me when I'd talk,
An' they wouldn't let me walk.
So when Pa said I must go
To the doctor's, I said: 'No,
I don't want to go to-night,
'Cause my hand will be all right.'

Pa said: 'Take him, Ma,' an' so
I jes' knew I had t' go.
An' the doctor looked an' said:
'It is very sore an' red-
Much too sore to touch at all.
See that picture on the wall,
That one over yonder, Bud,
With the old cow in the mud?

'Once I owned a cow like that,
Jes' as brown an' big an' fat,
An' one day I pulled her tail

An' she kicked an' knocked the pail
Full o' milk clean over me.'
Then I looked up there t' see
His old cow above the couch,
An' right then I hollered 'ouch.'

'Bud,' says he, 'what's wrong with you;
Did the old cow kick you, too?'
An' he laughed, an' Ma said: 'Son,
Never mind, now, it's all done.'
Pretty soon we came away
An' my hand's all well to-day.
But that's first time that I knew
Picture cows could kick at you.

Edgar Albert Guest

Drafted

The biggest moment in our lives was that when first he cried,
From that day unto this, for him, we've struggled side by side.
We can recount his daily deeds, and backwards we can look,
And proudly live again the time when first a step he took.

I see him trudging off to school, his mother at his side,
And when she left him there alone she hurried home and cried.
And then the sturdy chap of eight that was, I proudly see,
Who packed a little grip and took a fishing trip with me.

Among the lists of boys to go his name has now appeared;
To us has come the sacrifice that mothers all have feared;
And though we dread the parting hour when he shall march away,
We love him and the Flag too much to ask of him to stay.

His baby ways shall march with him, and every joy we've had,
Somewhere in France some day shall be a little brown-eyed lad;
A toddler and a child at school, the chum that once I knew
Shall wear our country's uniform, for they've been drafted, too.

Edgar Albert Guest

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Edgar Albert Guest

Dreading

SOMETIMES when they are tucked in bed the gentle mother comes to me
And talks about each curly head, and wonders what they're going to be.
She tells about the fun they've had while I was toiling far away,
Recalls the bright things that the lad and little girl have had to say.
Each morning is a pleasure new, and gladness overflows the cup,
And then she says: 'What will we do, what will we do when they're grown up?'

She looks about the room and sees the train of cars beneath the chair,
The soldiers resting at their ease, the wooly dog, the Teddy bear,
The china doll, the painted ball, the building blocks about the floor,
And then she smiles to see them all, and even wishes there were more;
The whole day passes in review, she stoops and strokes the wooly pup,
And says to me: 'What will we do, what will we do when they're grown up?'

I share with her that self-same dread, a house devoid of children's toys,
No little tots to put to bed, no romping little girls and boys;
No little lips to kiss at night, no broken skates or sleds to mend,
I fear to think that such delight the years will very quickly end.
Old Age, I dare not look at you, when we alone shall sit and sup,
I wonder, too, what will we do, what will we do when they're grown up?

Edgar Albert Guest

Dreaming

JUST now I think
I 'd like to be
At the river's brink
Beneath a tree,
And stretched out flat
On the cooling grass, Just gazing at
The clouds that pass
Like toy ships fair
In a sea of blue;
But I can't be there,
I have work to do.

Or I 'd like to be
In an orchard gay,
Where every tree
Is in bloom today;
Where the pink and white
Of the blossoms sweet
Blot out the fright
Of the city street,
Where there's nothing to see
But what is true;
But that cannot be
For I've work to do.

Oh, I'd like to steal
From my little den,
From the great unreal
And the haunts of men
To the joyous truth
Of the open air,
To the honest youth
That I left back there,
To the boy I was
In the days of old;
But I can't because
I 'in a slave to gold.

Duty

To do your little bit of toil,
To play life's game with head erect;
To stoop to nothing that would soil
Your honor or your self-respect;
To win what gold and fame you can,
But first of all to be a man.

To know the bitter and the sweet,
The sunshine and the days of rain;
To meet both victory and defeat,
Nor boast too loudly nor complain;
To face whatever fates befall
And be a man throughout it all.

To seek success in honest strife,
But not to value it so much
That, winning it, you go through life
Stained by dishonor's scarlet touch.
What goal or dream you choose, pursue,
But be a man whate'er you do!

Edgar Albert Guest

Easter

OUT of the darkness and shadow of death,
Out of the anguish that wells from the tomb,
Into the splendor of spiritual breath,
Now we have burst like a lily in bloom;
Sweetened is sorrow and strengthened is hope,
Death and the grave have been robbed of their sting;
Doubting, despairing, no longer we grope,
Man has been given the courage to sing.

Easter! the birthday of hope and of peace!
Easter! the bulwark of all we believe;
Lo, all our waitings and sad meanings cease,
Death has been shorn of its power to grieve.
See! now a mother, her cheeks wan and white,
Smilingly sinks into slumber most blest;
Her soul unto Heaven is borne through the night,
And she wakes in the morn with her babe at her breast.

Look! from a newly made grave comes a man,
Feeble and bowed by the struggles of life,
'She waits for my coming,' he says, ' and the span
Is but short for me now to the side of my wife.
Though I miss her, I mourn not her going, I know
That she is at rest, and far happier there;
And I wait but the summons when I am to go
To the valley of peace, from the land of despair.'

And this is the meaning of Easter's glad songs,
And this is the reason that Easter is gay;
'He is risen,' we sing, 'He has righted earth's wrongs,
From the mouth of the tomb see the stone rolled away.'
Yes, out of the darkness and gloom of the tomb,
He has risen, our Master, our Lord and our King!
And we view not life's end as a signal of doom,
But the birth of new life, and we've courage to sing.

Edgar Albert Guest

Easy Service

When an empty sleeve or a sightless eye
Or a legless form I see,
I breathe my thanks to my God on High
For His watchful care o'er me.
And I say to myself, as the cripple goes
Half stumbling on his way:
I may brag and boast, but that brother knows
Why the old flag floats to-day.

I think as I sit in my cozy den
Puffing one of my many pipes
That I've served with all of my fellow men
The glorious Stars and Stripes.
Then I see a troop in the faded blue
And a few in the dusty gray,
And I have to laugh at the deeds I do
For the flag that floats to-day.

I see men tangled in pointed wire,
The sport of the blazing sun,
Mangled and maimed by a leaden fire
As the tides of battle run,
And I fancy I hear their piteous calls
For merciful death, and then
The cannons cease and the darkness falls,
And those fluttering things are men.

Out there in the night they beg for death,
Yet the Reaper spurns their cries,
And it seems his jest to leave them breath
For their pitiful pleas and sighs.
And I am here in my cosy room
In touch with the joys of life,
I am miles away from the fields of doom
And the gory scenes of strife.

I never have vainly called for aid,
Nor suffered real pangs of thirst,
I have marched with life in its best parade

And never have seen its worst.
In the flowers of ease I have ever basked,
And I think as the Flag I see
How much of service from some it's asked,
How little of toil from me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Effort

He brought me his report card from the teacher and he said
He wasn't very proud of it and sadly bowed his head.
He was excellent in reading, but arithmetic, was fair,
And I noticed there were several 'unsatisfactorys' there;
But one little bit of credit which was given brought me joy—
He was 'excellent in effort,' and I fairly hugged the boy.
'Oh, it doesn't make much difference what is written on your card,'
I told that little fellow, 'if you're only trying hard.
The 'very goods' and 'excellents' are fine, I must agree,
But the effort you are making means a whole lot more to me;
And the thing that's most important when this card is put aside
Is to know, in spite of failure, that to do your best you've tried.
'Just keep excellent in effort—all the rest will come to you.
There isn't any problem but some day you'll learn to do,
And at last, when you grow older, you will come to understand
That by hard and patient toiling men have risen to command
And some day you will discover when a greater goal's at stake
That better far than brilliance is the effort you will make.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Endurance

YOU never hear a woman boast
Of her endurance, yet I vow
The tiniest mite o' a woman has
More courage than a man, somehow.
Lor' bless me, when I hear a man
A-braggin' how he kep' right on
A pluggin', fightin' to'ards his goal,
With all his hope of winnin' gone,
A-puffin' out his chest with pride,
It makes me smile, becoz I know
If he 'd a woman's cross t' bear,
'At he 'd a give up long ago.

It 'pears t' me 'at woman is
Jes' equal parts o' nerve an' grit;
There is no task too great fer her,
She doesn't know such word as quit.
I've seen her when I knew her strength
Was failin' faster every day,
Still workin' on without complaint,
Findin', in some mysterious way,
The power t' overcome her aches,
An' all the weariness she knows.
Endurance! Not bin' ever yet
Has equaled what a woman shows!

An' when her back was like t' break,
An' man would plumb discouraged be,
I've heard a little woman say:
'The children need so much from me
I've got t' work,' an' then she 'd start
Washin' an mendin' little clo'es;
An' then sit up till late at night
Darnin' the holes in little hose.
It mattered not how sick she wuz,
No task o' hers she ever shirked,
When man would quit an' go t' bed
That little woman bravely worked.

An' so it allus makes me smile
T' hear a man git up an' say
'T is wonderful what he endured,
An' how he worked from day t' day;
An' then t' tell in boastin' style
The hardships that he underwent,
Explainin' how he kep' his nerve
Although his strength was nearly spent.
For when it comes t' downright grit,
An' bearin' troubles great an' small,
An' winnin' spite of everything,
A little woman beats 'em all.

Edgar Albert Guest

Envy

It's a bigger thing you're doing than the most of us have done;
We have lived the days of pleasure; now the gray days have begun,
And upon your manly shoulders fall the burdens of the strife;
Yours must be the sacrifices of the trial time of life.

Oh, I don't know how to say it, but I'll never think of you
Without wishing I were sharing in the work you have to do.

I have never known a moment that was fraught with real care,
Save the hurts and griefs of sorrow that all mortals have to bear;
With the gay and smiling marchers I have tramped on pleasant ways,
And have paid with feeble service for the gladness of my days.
But to you has come a summons, yours are days of sacrifice,
And for all life has of sweetness you must pay a bitter price.

Men have fought and died before me, men must fight and die to-day,
I have merely taken pleasures for which others had to pay;
I have been a man of laughter, there's no path my feet have made,
I have merely been a marcher in life's gaudy dress parade.
But you wear the garb of service, you have splendid deeds to do,
You shall sound the depths of manhood, and my boy, I envy you.

Edgar Albert Guest

Equipment

Figure it out for yourself, my lad,
You've all that the greatest of men have had,
Two arms, two hands, two legs, two eyes,
And a brain to use if you would be wise.
With this equipment they all began,
So start for the top and say 'I can.'

Look them over, the wise and great,
They take their food from a common plate
And similar knives and forks they use,
With similar laces they tie their shoes,
The world considers them brave and smart.
But you've all they had when they made their start.

You can triumph and come to skill,
You can be great if only you will,
You're well equipped for what fight you choose,
You have legs and arms and a brain to use,
And the man who has risen, great deeds to do
Began his life with no more than you.

You are the handicap you must face,
You are the one who must choose your place,
You must say where you want to go.
How much you will study the truth to know,
God has equipped you for life, But He
Lets you decide what you want to be.

Courage must come from the soul within,
The man must furnish the will to win,
So figure it out for yourself, my lad,
You were born with all that the great have had,
With your equipment they all began.
Get hold of yourself, and say: 'I can.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Eternal Friendship

Who once has had a friend has found
The link 'twixt mortal and divine;
Though now he sleeps in hallowed ground,
He lives in memory's sacred shrine;
And there he freely moves about,
A spirit that has quit the clay,
And in the times of stress and doubt
Sustains his friend throughout the day.

No friend we love can ever die;
The outward form but disappears;
I know that all my friends are nigh
Whenever I am moved to tears.
And when my strength and hope are gone,
The friends, no more, that once I knew,
Return to cheer and urge me on
Just as they always used to do.

They whisper to me in the dark
Kind words of counsel and of cheer;
When hope has flickered to a spark
I feel their gentle spirits near.
And Oh! because of them I strive
With all the strength that I can call
To keep their friendship still alive
And to be worthy of them all.

Death does not end our friendships true;
We all are debtors to the dead;
There, wait on everything we do
The splendid souls who've gone ahead.
To them I hold that we are bound
By double pledges to be fine.
Who once has had a friend has found
The link 'twixt mortal and divine.

Edgar Albert Guest

Everywhere In America

Not somewhere in America, but everywhere to-day,
Where snow-crowned mountains hold their heads,
the vales where children play,
Beside the bench and whirring lathe, on every
lake and stream
And in the depths of earth below, men share a
common dream—
The dream our brave forefathers had of freedom
and of right,
And once again in honor's cause, they rally and
unite.

Not somewhere in America is love of country
found,
But east and west and north and south once
more the bugles sound,
And once again, as one, men stand to break
their brother's chains,
And make the world a better place, where only
justice reigns.
The patriotism that is here, is echoed over there,
The hero at a certain post is on guard everywhere.
O'er humble home and mansion rich the starry
banner flies,
And far and near throughout the land the men
of valor rise.

The flag that flutters o'er your home is fluttering
far away
O'er homes that you have never seen. The same
impulses sway
The souls of men in distant states. The red, the
white and blue
Means to one hundred million strong, just what
it means to you.
The self-same courage resolute you feel and
understand
Is throbbing in the breasts of men throughout
this mighty land.

Not somewhere in America, but everywhere to-day,
For justice and for liberty all free men work
and pray.

Edgar Albert Guest

Example

Perhaps the victory shall not come to me,
Perhaps I shall not reach the goal I seek,
It may be at the last I shall be weak
And falter as the promised land I see;
Yet I must try for it and strive to be
All that a conqueror is. On to the peak,
Must be my call—this way lies victory!

Boy, take my hand and hear me when I speak.
There is the goal. In honor make the fight.
I may not reach it but, my boy, you can.
Cling to your faith and work with all your might,
Some day the world shall hail you as a man.
And when at last shall come your happy day,
Enough for me that I have shown the way.

Edgar Albert Guest

Exempt

They have said you needn't go to the front to face the foe;
They have left you with your women and your children safe at home;
They have spared you from the crash of the murderous guns that flash
And the horrors and the madness and the death across the foam.
But it's your fight, just the same, and your country still must claim
The splendor of your manhood and the best that you can do;
In a thousand different ways through the dark and troubled days,
You must stand behind the nation that has been so good to you.

You're exempt from shot and shell, from the havoc and the hell
That have robbed the world of gladness; you have missed the sterner fate
Of the brave young men and fine, that are falling into line,
You may stay among your children who are swinging on the gate.
But you're not exempt from love of the Flag that flies above,
You've a greater obligation to your country to be true;
You must work from day to day in a bigger, better way
For the glory of the nation that has been so good to you.

You are not exempt from trial, from long days of self-denial,
From devotion to your homeland and from courage in the test.
You are not exempt from giving to your country's needs and living
As a citizen and soldier—an example of the best.
You've a harder task before you than the boys who're fighting for you,
You must match their splendid courage and devotion through and through;
You must prove by fine endeavor, and by standing constant ever
That you're worthy of the country that has been so good to you.

Edgar Albert Guest

Expectation

Most folks, as I've noticed, in pleasure an' strife,
Are always expecting too much out of life.
They wail an' they fret
Just because they don't get
The best o' the sunshine, the fairest o' flowers,
The finest o' features, the strongest o' powers;
They whine an' they whimper an' curse an' condemn,
Coz life isn't always bein' partial to them.

Notwithstandin' the pain an' the sufferin' they see,
They cling to the notion that they should go free:
That they shouldn't share
In life's trouble an' care
But should always be happy an' never perplexed,
An' never discouraged or beaten or vexed.
When life treats 'em roughly an' jolts 'em with care,
They seem to imagine it's bein' unfair.

It's a curious notion folks hold in their pride,
That their souls should never be tested or tried;
That others must mourn
An' be sick an' forlorn
An' stand by the biers of their loved ones an' weep,
But life from such sorrows their bosoms must keep.
Oh, they mustn't know what it means to be sad,
Or they'll wail that the treatment they're gettin' is bad.

Now life as I view it means pleasure an' pain,
An' laughter an' weepin' an' sunshine an' rain,
An' takin' an' givin';
An' all who are livin'
Must face it an' bear it the best that they can
Believin' great Wisdom is workin' the plan.
An' no one should ever complain it's unfair
Because at the moment he's tastin' despair.

Edgar Albert Guest

Faces

I look into the faces of the people passing by,
The glad ones and the sad ones, and the lined with misery,
And I wonder why the sorrow or the twinkle in the eye;
But the pale and weary faces are the ones that trouble me.

I saw a face this morning, and time was when it was fair;
Youth had brushed it bright with color in the distant long ago,
And the goddess of the lovely once had kept a temple there,
But the cheeks were pale with grieving and the eyes were dull with woe.

Who has done this thing I wondered; what has wrought the ruin here?
Why these sunken cheeks and pallid where the roses once were pink?
Why has beauty fled her palace; did some vandal hand appear?
Did her lover prove unfaithful or her husband take to drink?

Once the golden voice of promise whispered sweetly in her ears;
She was born to be a garden where the smiles of love might lurk;
Now the eyes that shone like jewels are but gateways for her tears,
And she takes her place among us, toilers early bound for work.

Is it fate that writes so sadly, or the cruelty of man?
What foul deed has marred the parchment of a life so fair as this?
Who has wrecked this lovely temple and destroyed the Maker's plan,
Raining blows on cheeks of beauty God had fashioned just to kiss?

Oh, the pale and weary faces of the people that I see
Are the ones that seem to haunt me, and I pray to God above
That such cruel desolation shall not ever come to be
Stamped forever in the future on the faces that I love.

Edgar Albert Guest

Failures

'Tis better to have tried in vain,
Sincerely striving for a goal,
Than to have lived upon the plain
An idle and a timid soul.

'Tis better to have fought and spent
Your courage, missing all applause,
Than to have lived in smug content
And never ventured for a cause.

For he who tries and fails may be
The founder of a better day;
Though never his the victory,
From him shall others learn the way.

Edgar Albert Guest

Faith

This much I know:
God does not wrong us here,
Though oft His judgments seem severe
And reason falters 'neath the blow,
Some day we'll learn 'twas better so.

So oft I've erred
In trifling matters of my own concern;
So oft I've blundered at the simplest turn,
Chosen the false path or the foolish word
That what I call my judgment seems absurd.

My puny reason cries
Against the bitter and the cruel blows,
Measuring the large world by the inch it knows,
Seeing all joy and pain through selfish eyes,
Not knowing hurt and suffering may be wise.

But I have come to see,
So vast God's love, so infinite His plan
That it is well it was not left to man
To alter or to say what is to be,
When reason failed, faith also then would flee.

God knoweth best!
Through the black night and agony of grief
Faith whispers low: 'Hold fast to your belief!
In time His purpose He shall manifest,
Then shall you learn how greatly you were blest.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Fame

FAME is a fickle jade at best,
And he who seeks to win her smile
Must trudge, disdain play or rest,
O'er many a long and weary mile.

Nor must he work alone for her,
Nor labor only for her cheers,
For doing this, it may occur
That he shall only reap her sneers.

But when he's ceased to care for self,
And is content to work and wait
For something better far than self,
Fame welcomes him among the great.

Edgar Albert Guest

Father

Used to wonder just why father
Never had much time for play,
Used to wonder why he'd rather
Work each minute of the day.
Used to wonder why he never
Loafed along the road an' shirked;
Can't recall a time whenever
Father played while others worked.

Father didn't dress in fashion,
Sort of hated clothing new;
Style with him was not a passion;
He had other things in view.
Boys are blind to much that's going
On about 'em day by day,
And I had no way of knowing
What became of father's pay.

All I knew was when I needed
Shoes I got 'em on the spot;
Everything for which I pleaded,
Somehow, father always got.
Wondered, season after season,
Why he never took a rest,
And that I might be the reason
Then I never even guessed.

Father set a store on knowledge;
If he'd lived to have his way
He'd have sent me off to college
And the bills been glad to pay.
That, I know, was his ambition:
Now and then he used to say
He'd have done his earthly mission
On my graduation day.

Saw his cheeks were getting paler,
Didn't understand just why;
Saw his body growing frailer,

Then at last I saw him die.
Rest had come! His tasks were ended,
Calm was written on his brow;
Father's life was big and splendid,
And I understand it now.

Edgar Albert Guest

Father

My father knows the proper way
The nation should be run;
He tells us children every day
Just what should now be done.
He knows the way to fix the trusts,
He has a simple plan;
But if the furnace needs repairs,
We have to hire a man.
My father, in a day or two
Could land big thieves in jail;
There's nothing that he cannot do,
He knows no word like "fail."
"Our confidence" he would restore,
Of that there is no doubt;
But if there is a chair to mend,
We have to send it out.

All public questions that arise,
He settles on the spot;
He waits not till the tumult dies,
But grabs it while it's hot.
In matters of finance he can
Tell Congress what to do;
But, O, he finds it hard to meet
His bills as they fall due.

It almost makes him sick to read
The things law-makers say;
Why, father's just the man they need,
He never goes astray.
All wars he'd very quickly end,
As fast as I can write it;
But when a neighbor starts a fuss,
'Tis mother has to fight it.

In conversation father can
Do many wondrous things;
He's built upon a wiser plan
Than presidents or kings.

He knows the ins and outs of each
And every deep transaction;
We look to him for theories,
But look to ma for action.

Edgar Albert Guest

Father And Son

Be more than his dad,
Be a chum to the lad;
Be a part of his life
Every hour of the day;
Find time to talk with him,
Take time to walk with him,
Share in his studies
And share in his play;
Take him to places,
To ball games and races,
Teach him the things
That you want him to know;
Don't live apart from him,
Don't keep your heart from him,
Be his best comrade,
He's needing you so!

Never neglect him,
Though young, still respect him,
Hear his opinions
With patience and pride;
Show him his error,
But be not a terror,
Grim-visaged and fearful,
When he's at your side.
Know what his thoughts are,
Know what his sports are,
Know all his playmates,
It's easy to learn to;
Be such a father
That when troubles gather
You'll be the first one
For counsel, he'll turn to.

You can inspire him
With courage, and fire him
Hot with ambition
For deeds that are good;
He'll not betray you

Nor illy repay you,
If you have taught him .
The things that you should.
Father and son
Must in all things be one —
Partners in trouble
And comrades in joy.
More than a dad
Was the best pal you had;
Be such a chum
As you knew, to your boy.

Edgar Albert Guest

Fatherhood

How's the little chap to know
Just the proper roads to go
If you never travel with him
While he's little, hand in hand?
How's he ever going to learn
Just what corners not to turn
If you never try to tell him
So that he can understand ?

Who, think you, will train him rightly,
Who will watch him daily, nightly,
Who will take the time to show him
Just the things he ought to do?
Will some stranger or a neighbor
Take upon himself the labor
Which the Lord above intended
As a duty, just for you?

Is it safe to trust another,
Even though he be your brother.
To the molding of his future?
Can you watch him come and go,
Can you go on money-making,
Without thought or trouble taking
To discover if he's learning
Just the things you'd have him know?

There's no fortune worth his splendor
Or his youthful days and tender.
There's no goal so bright with glory
Which is worth his happiness;
He's your hope of joy tomorrow,
As you'll find out to your sorrow
If you let him wander from you
While you seek your own success.

Let the fame and money go,
Teach him what he ought to know,
You will find a greater glory

Than the selfish seeker can;
Shape his mind and soul to beauty,
God has given you this duty
And your age shall glow with gladness
When your boy becomes a man.

Edgar Albert Guest

Father's Chore

My Pa can hit his thumbnail with a hammer and keep still;
He can cut himself while shaving an' not swear;
If a ladder slips beneath him an' he gets a nasty spill
He can smile as though he really didn't care.
But the pan beneath the ice-box- when he goes to empty that-
Then a sound-proof room the children have to hunt;
For we have a sad few minutes in our very pleasant flat
When the water in it splashes down his front.

My Pa believes his temper should be all the time controlled;
He doesn't rave at every little thing;
When his collar-button underneath the chiffonier has rolled
A snatch of merry ragtime he will sing.
But the pan beneath the ice box- when to empty that he goes-
As he stoops to drag it out we hear a grunt;
From the kitchen comes a rumble, an' then everybody knows
That he splashed the water in it down his front.

Now the distance from the ice box to the sink's not very far-
I'm sure it isn't over twenty feet-
But though very short the journey, it is long enough for Pa
As he travels it disaster grim to meet.
And it's seldom that he makes it without accident, although
In the summer time it is his nightly stunt;
And he says a lot of language that no gentleman should know
When the water in it splashes down his front.

Edgar Albert Guest

Figure It Out

Figure it out for yourself, my lad,
You're all that the greatest of men have had,
Two arms, two hands, two legs, two eyes,
And a brain to use if you would be wise.
With this equipment we all began,
So start for the top and say 'I can.'

Look them over, the wise and great,
They take their food from a common plate,
And similar knives and forks they use,
With similar laces they tie their shoes,
The world considers the brave and smart,
But you've all they have when they made their start.

You are triumph and come to skill,
You can be great if you only will.
You're well equipped for what path you choose,
You have arms and legs and a brain to use,
And the Man who has risen great deeds to do
Began his life with no more than you.

You are the handicap you must face,
You are the one who must choose your place,
You must say where you want to go,
How much you will study the truth to know.
God has equipped you for life, but He
Let's you decide what you want to be.

Courage must come from the soul within,
The man must furnish the will to win.
So figure it out for yourself, my lad.
You were born with all that the greatest have had,
With your equipment they all began
Get a hold of yourself and say: 'I Can.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Fine

Isn't it fine when the day is done,
And the petty battles are lost or won,
When the gold is made and the ink is dried,
To quit the struggle and turn aside
To spend an hour with your boy in play,
And let him race all of your cares away?

Isn't it fine when the day's gone well,
When you have glorious tales to tell,
And your heart is light and your head is high.
For nothing has happened to make you sigh,
To hurry homewards to share the joy
That your work has won with a little boy?

Isn't it fine, whether good or bad
Has come to the hopes and the plans you had,
And the day is over, to find him there,
Thinking you splendid and just and fair,
Ready to chase all your griefs away,
And soothe your soul with an hour of play?

Oh, whether the day's been long or brief,
Whether it's brought to me joy or grief,
Whether I've failed, or whether I've won,
It shall matter not when the work is done;
I shall count it fine if I end each day
With a little boy in an hour of play.

Edgar Albert Guest

First Name Friends

Though some may yearn for titles great, and seek the frills of fame,
I do not care to have an extra handle to my name.
I am not hungry for the pomp of life's high dignities,
I do not sigh to sit among the honored LL. D.'s.
I shall be satisfied if I can be unto the end,
To those I know and live with here, a simple, first-name friend.

There's nothing like the comradeship which warms the lives of those
Who make the glorious circle of the Jacks and Bills and Joes.
With all his majesty and power, Old Caesar never knew
The joy of first-name fellowship, as all the Eddies do.
Let them who will be 'mistered' here and raised above the rest;
I hold a first-name greeting is by far the very best.

Acquaintance calls for dignity. You never really know
The man on whom the terms of pomp you feel you must bestow.
Professor William Joseph Wise may be your friend, but still
You are not certain of the fact till you can call him Bill.
But hearts grow warm and lips grow kind, and all the shamming ends,
When you are in the company of good old first-name friends.

The happiest men on earth are not the men of highest rank;
That joy belongs to George, and Jim, to Henry and to Frank;
With them the prejudice of race and creed and wealth depart,
And men are one in fellowship and always light of heart.
So I would live and laugh and love until my sun descends,
And share the joyous comradeship of honest first-name friends.

Edgar Albert Guest

Fishing Nooks

'Men will grow weary,' said the Lord,
'Of working for their bed and board.
They'll weary of the money chase
And want to find a resting place
Where hum of wheel is never heard
And no one speaks an angry word,
And selfishness and greed and pride
And petty motives don't abide.
They'll need a place where they can go
To wash their souls as white as snow.
They will be better men and true
If they can play a day or two.'

The Lord then made the brooks to flow
And fashioned rivers here below,
And many lakes; for water seems
Best suited for a mortal's dreams.
He placed about them willow trees
To catch the murmur of the breeze,
And sent the birds that sing the best
Among the foliage to nest.
He filled each pond and stream and lake
With fish for man to come and take;
Then stretched a velvet carpet deep
On which a weary soul could sleep.

It seemed to me the Good Lord knew
That man would want something to do
When worn and wearied with the stress
Of battling hard for world success.
When sick at heart of all the strife
And pettiness of daily life,
He knew he'd need, from time to time,
To cleanse himself of city grime,
And he would want some place to be
Where hate and greed he'd never see.
And so on lakes and streams and brooks
The Good Lord fashioned fishing nooks.

Fishing Reasons

Fish can be bought in the market place,
So it isn't the fish I'm after.
I want to get free from the care-drawn face
And back to an honest laughter,
I want to get out where the skies are clean
And rest by a river's brink,
I want to get out where the woods are green
And I want a few hours to think.
Oh, it isn't the fish I am greedy for,
It's the chatter and song of birds,
And the talk of trees that I've known before.
I am weary of selfish words.
I want to stretch out, just my soul and I,
In a place from the strife afar,
And let a few care-filled hours pass by
As I think of the things that are.
Oh, it isn't the fish that I go to get,
Though there's joy in a swishing line
And a splendid thrill when my grip I set
And a small mouthed bass is mine!
But my soul seems cramped in the stifling air
That is heavy with talk of gain
And I want to get out where the world is fair
And there isn't so much of pain.
Fish can be bought in the market place
But I long for the running streams,
And I want to be free from the care-drawn face
And the city of dreadful dreams.
I want to stretch out, just my soul and I
On a sun-kissed river shore,
And be, as a few mad hours rush by,
The man that I am, once more.

Edgar Albert Guest

Fishin'-Hunger

BLUE skies mighty temptin', an' the sunbeams coaxin', too,
An' my wo'k is gettin' harder ebery day;
Ain't a-takin' any int'rest in de things I has t' do,
Jes' sittin' heah an' wishin' time away.
Jes' a-wishin' fo' de fishin'
An' de wet line gayly swishin'
As I fling it t' de middle o' de stream,
An' I let it drif' and dribble,
Till I feel de pick'rel nibble,
Dat 's de burden o' my everlastin' dream.

Dere is some folks call it hook worm, an' dere's others say dat I
Am jes' nacherly inclined t' laziness;
An' I aint a-goin' t' quarrel or dispute or argufy,
It's de fishin'-hunger 's got me though, I guess.
Jes' de fishin'-hunger schemin'
An' a-keepin' of me dreamin'
An' a-lurin' me out yonder t' de bay
Where de pick'rel am playin'
An' de willow trees am swayin',
It's de fishin'-hunger makes me act dis way.

Edgar Albert Guest

Fixing The Shame

They put him in jail for the thing he'd done,
For that was the law they'd made;
They turned the key on his youth till he
The price of his crime had paid.
And the wise judge said as he sentenced him,
And spoke from the facts he knew:
'The deed was yours, and the wide outdoors
No longer belongs to you.'

Oh, it isn't so long ago there went
A toddling lad of three
At the close of day for a bit of play
Astride of his father's knee.
And the father scowled and sent him off.
'Go play with the lads outside,
Don't bother me with your pranks,' said he;
And he sneered when the youngster cried.

And the father went to his work all day
And went to his bed at night,
And he gave no heed to the baby's need
Nor shared in the lad's delight.
He never knew who his playmates were,
Nor followed him off to school,
But in manner grim he punished him
Whenever he broke the rule.

Midnight came not so long ago
And the youngster was not in bed,
But the father slept while the mother kept
The watch that all mothers dread.
And whenever the mother spoke of him
Through the long black hours of night,
As the cold wind howled the father growled:
'Don't worry, the boy's all right.'

Society said at the end of things!
'The doer of crime must pay;
In a grated cell we'll make him dwell,

Shut in from the light of day.'
But I like to think that the Judge on High
Who rights all our earthly wrongs
At another time, will fix that crime
Exactly where it belongs.

Edgar Albert Guest

Fly A Clean Flag

This I heard the Old Flag say
As I passed it yesterday:
'Months ago your friendly hands
Fastened me on slender strands
And with patriotic love
Placed me here to wave above
You and yours. I heard you say
On that long departed day:
'Flag of all that's true and fine,
Wave above this house of mine;
Be the first at break of day
And the last at night to say
To the world this word of cheer:
Loyalty abideth here.'

'Here on every wind that's blown,
O'er your' portal I have flown;
Rain and snow have battered me,
Storms at night have tattered me;
Dust of street and chimney stack
Day by day have stained me black,
And I've watched you passing there,
Wondering how much you care.
Have you noticed that your flag,
Is to-day a wind-blown rag?
Has your love so careless grown
By the long neglect you've shown
That you never raise your eye
To the symbol that you fly?'

'Flag, on which no stain has been,
'Tis my sin that you're unclean,'
Then I answered in my shame.
'On my head must lie the blame.
Now with patriotic hands
I release you from your strands,
And a spotless flag shall fly
Here to greet each passer-by.
Nevermore shall Flag of mine

Be a sad and sorry sign
Telling all who look above
I neglect the thing I love.
But my Flag of faith shall be
Fit for every eye to see.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Folks

We was speakin' of folks, jes' common folks,
An' we come to this conclusion,
That wherever they be, on land or sea,
They warm to a home allusion;
That under the skin an' under the hide
There's a spark that starts a-glowin'
Whenever they look at a scene or book
That something of home is showin'.

They may differ in creeds an' politics,
They may argue an' even quarrel,
But their throats grip tight,
If they catch a sight
Of their favorite elm or laurel.
An' the winding lane that they used to tread
With never a care to fret 'em,
Or the pasture gate where they used to wait,
Right under the skin will get 'em.

Now folks is folks on their different ways,
With their different griefs an' pleasures,
But the home they knew, when their years were few,
Is the dearest of all their treasures.
An' the richest man to the poorest waif
Right under the skin is brother
When they stand an' sigh,
With a tear-dimmed eye,
At a thought of the dear old mother.

It makes no difference where it may be,
Nor the fortunes that years may alter,
Be they simple or wise, the old home ties
Make all of 'em often falter.
Time may robe 'em in sackcloth coarse
Or garb 'em in gorgeous splendor,
But whatever their lot, they keep one spot
Down deep that is sweet an' tender.

We was speakin' of folks, jes' common folks,

An' we come to this conclusion,
That one an' all, be they great or small,
Will warm to a home allusion;
That under the skin an' the beaten hide
They're kin in a real affection
For the joys they knew,
When their years were few,
An' the home of their recollection.

Edgar Albert Guest

Follow A Famous Father

I follow a famous father,
His honor is mine to wear;
He gave me a name that was free from shame,
A name he was proud to bear.
He lived in the morning sunlight,
And marched in the ranks of right.
He was always true to the best he knew
And the shield that he wore was bright.

I follow a famous father,
And never a day goes by
But I feel that he looks down to me
To carry his standard high.
He stood to the sternest trials
As only a brave man can;
Though the way be long, I must never wrong
The name of so good a man.

I follow a famous father,
Not known to the printed page,
Nor written down in the world's renown
As a prince of his little age.
But never a stain attached to him
And never he stooped to shame;
He was bold and brave and to me he gave
The pride of an honest name.

I follow a famous father,
And him I must keep in mind;
Though his form is gone, I must carry on
The name that he left behind.
It was mine on the day he gave it,
It shone as a monarch's crown,
And as fair to see as it came to me
It must be when I pass it down.

Edgar Albert Guest

Follow A Famous Father

I follow a famous father,
His honor is mine to wear;
He gave me a name that was free from shame,
A name he was proud to bear.
He lived in the morning sunlight,
And marched in the ranks of right.
He was always true to the best he knew
And the shield that he wore was bright.

I follow a famous father,
And never a day goes by
But I feel that he looks down to me
To carry his standard high.
He stood to the sternest trials
As only a brave man can;
Though the way be long, I must never wrong
The name of so good a man.

I follow a famous father,
Not known to the printed page,
Nor written down in the world's renown
As a prince of his little age.
But never a stain attached to him
And never he stooped to shame;
He was bold and brave and to me he gave
The pride of an honest name.

I follow a famous father,
And him I must keep in mind;
Though his form is gone, I must carry on
The name that he left behind.
It was mine on the day he gave it,
It shone as a monarch's crown,
And as fair to see as it came to me
It must be when I pass it down.

Edgar Albert Guest

Follow The Flag

Aye, we will follow the Flag
Wherever she goes,
Into the tropic sun,
Into the northern snows;
Go where the guns ring out
Scattering steel and lead,
Painting the hills with blood,
Strewing the fields with dead.
But in each heart must be,
And back of each bitter gun,
Love for the best in life
After the fighting's done.

Aye, we will follow the Flag
Into benighted lands,
Brave in the faith for which,
Proudly, our banner stands.
Life for her life we'll pay,
Blood for her blood we'll give,
Fighting, but not to kill,
Save that the best shall live.
But, when the cannon's roar
Dies in a hymn of peace,
Justice and truth must reign,
Power of the brute must cease.

Aye, we will follow the Flag,
Gladly her work we'll do,
Banishing wrongs of old,
Founding the truth anew.
What though our guns must speak,
What though brave men must die,
Ages of truth to come
All this shall justify.
Men in the charms of peace,
Basking in Freedom's sun,
Some day shall bless our Flag
After our work is done.

Aye, we will follow the Flag
Wherever she goes,
Into the tropic sun,
Into the northern snows.
Fearlessly, on we'll go
Into the cruel strife,
Gladly the few shall die,
Winning for many, life.
Tyranny's wrongs must cease,
Brutes must no longer brag,
This is our work on earth,
So we will follow the Flag.

Edgar Albert Guest

Food, Clothes And Drink

WHAT is food for, anyway?
Just to keep us through the day
Warm and strong and satisfy
Hunger, whether bread or pie,
Terrapin or chuck steak tough;
When a man has had enough,
What's it matter, anyway?
He can live and toil away.
Sigh you not for richer fare,
Bread and meat, with some to spare,
That is all the system needs,
That gives strength for noble deeds,
And the rich man, if you please,
Gets no more from luxuries.

What are clothes for, anyway?
Just to keep the wind at bay,
And to hide our nakedness.
Fine or homespun be your dress,
That is all that clothes can do,
They won't help nor hinder you;
Men in torn and tattered rags
Oft have borne their country's flags
Through the battle fire, and come
Back unto the sound of drum
Heroes, by the world extolled;
Be your garment new or old,
Still fight on with purpose true,
Finer dress can't conquer you.

What is drink for, anyway?
Just to quench your thirst by day;
Here is water, drink your fill,
It will leave you clear-eyed still;
It will moisten lips now parched,
Though ten thousand miles you've marched,
Sparkling burgundy or wine,
Or the juice of any vine
Poured into a crystal cup

Will not better bear you up,
Will not better quench your thirst,
Better fit you for the worst;
Rich or poor, man cannot think
Of or buy a better drink.

Edgar Albert Guest

For Others—and His Wife

HE took off his hat to the woman next door,
But he wouldn't do that for his wife;
He picked up the handkerchief dropped on the floor,
But he wouldn't do that for his wife;
He ran for a chair when a fair maiden stood,
Did everything that a gentleman should,
When leaving he helped her get into her hood,
But he wouldn't do that for his wife.

He offered his arm to the fair Mrs. Brown,
But he wouldn't do that for his wife;
He gallantly carried her parcels from town,
But he wouldn't do that for his wife;
He helped her alight from the trolley car then,
Didn't stand on the platform to smoke with the men,
But sat down beside her. I'll say it again
That he wouldn't do that for his wife.

If it 'a proper these little attentions to pay,
Then he ought to pay them to his wife;
No man is polite, let me venture to say,
If he isn't polite to his wife.
Fair woman deserves all our courtesies — true,
And enough for her no man is able to do,
But the man who's a gentleman right through and through,
Is a gentleman first to his wife.

Edgar Albert Guest

For The Living

IF you like a brother here,
Tell him so;
If you hold his friendship dear,
Let him know;
All the roses that you spread
On his bier when he is dead
Are not worth one kind word said
Years ago.

You can help a brother now
If you will
Smooth the furrows from his brow;
You can kill
The despair that's in his heart
With a word, and ease the smart.
So why stand you now apart
Keeping still?

You can help a brother when
He is here;
He would hold your praises then
Very dear.
But absurdly still you stay
And withhold what you could say
That would cheer him on his way
For his bier.

What, I wonder, if the dead
Saw and heard
What is done and what is said
Afterward,
Would they utter in reply?
Would they smile and ask us why,
When the time to help was nigh,
No one stirred?

'Keep your roses for the living,'
They would say,
'Waste no time in praises giving

Us today;
Strew some living brother's way so,
If you like another, say so,
For the thing that now you praise so
Is but clay.'

Edgar Albert Guest

For Your Boy And Mine

Your dream and my dream is not that we shall rest,
But that our children after us shall know life at its best;
For all we care about ourselves—a crust of bread or two,
A place to sleep and clothes to wear is all that we'd pursue.
We'd tramp the world on sunny days, both light of heart and mind,
And give no thought to days to come or days we leave behind.

Your dream and my dream is not that we shall play,
But that our children after us shall tread a merry way.
We brave the toil of life for them, for them we clamber high,
And if 'twould spare them hurt and pain, for them we'd gladly die.
If we had but ourselves to serve, we'd quit the ways of pride
And with the simplest joys of earth we'd all be satisfied.

The best for them is what we dream. Our little girls and boys
Must know the finest life can give of comforts and of joys.
They must be shielded well from woe and kept secure from care,
And if we could, upon our backs, their burdens we would bear.
And so once more we rise to-day to face the battle zone
That those who follow us may know the Flag that we have known.

Your dream and my dream is not that we shall live;
The greatest joys we hope to claim are those that we shall give.
We face the heat and strife of life, its battle and its toil
That those who follow us may know the best of freedom's soil.
And if we knew that by our death we'd keep that flag on high,
For your boy and my boy, how gladly we would die.

Edgar Albert Guest

Forgetful Pa

My Pa says that he used to be
A bright boy in geography;
An' when he went to school he knew
The rivers an' the mountains, too,
An' all the capitals of states
An' bound'ry lines an' all the dates
They joined the union. But last night
When I was studyin' to recite
I asked him if he would explain
The leading industries of Maine—
He thought an' thought an' thought a lot,
An' said, 'I knew, but I've forgot.'
My Pa says when he was in school
He got a hundred as a rule;
An' grammar was a thing he knew
Becoz he paid attention to
His teacher, an' he learned the way
To write good English, an' to say
The proper things, an' I should be
As good a boy in school as he.
But once I asked him could he give
Me help with the infinitive—
He scratched his head and said: 'Great Scott!
I used to know, but I've forgot.'
My Pa says when he was a boy
Arithmetic was just a toy;
He learned his tables mighty fast
An' every term he always passed,
An' had good marks, an' teachers said:
'That youngster surely has a head.'
But just the same I notice now
Most every time I ask him how
To find the common multiple,
He says, 'That's most unusual!
Once I'd have told you on the spot,
But somehow, sonny, I've forgot.'
I'm tellin' you just what is what,
My Pa's forgot an awful lot!

Forgotten Boyhood

He wears a long and solemn face
And drives the children from his place;
He doesn't like to hear them shout
Or race and run and romp about,
And if they chance to climb his tree,
He is as ugly as can be.
If in his yard they drive a ball,
Which near his pretty flowers should fall,
He hides the leather sphere away,
Thus hoping to prevent their play.

The youngsters worry him a lot,
This sorry man who has forgot
That once upon a time, he too
The self-same mischief used to do.
The boyhood he has left behind
Has strangely vanished from his mind,
And he is old and gray and cross
For having suffered such a loss.
He thinks he never had the joy
That is the birthright of a boy.

He has forgotten how he ran,
Or to a dog's tail tied a can,
Broke window panes, and loved to swipe
Some neighbor's apples, red and ripe—
He thinks that always, day or night,
His conduct was exactly right.
In boys to-day he cannot see
The youngster that he used to be,
Forgotten is that by-gone day,
When he was mischievous as they.

Poor man! I'm sorry for your lot.
The best of life you have forgot.
Could you remember what you were,
Unharnessed and untouched by spur,
These youngsters that you drive away
Would be your comrades here to-day.

Among them you could gayly walk
And share their laughter and their talk;
You could be young and blithe as they,
Could you recall your yesterday.

Edgar Albert Guest

Found Out

'NEVER again,' said Mrs. Green, as she swayed in her rocking chair,
'Never again will I think one house big enough for two to share;
Never again will I go away with another family,
I've had a month of that game this year, and once is enough for me.

'I fried the fish and I stood all day in a kitchen stifling hot,
While Mrs. Burroughs, arrayed in pink, sat out in a shady spot;
And we were to share in the work, you know, but little the work she did;
Whenever there was any work to do she hurried away and hid.

'Her children — impudent little brats — were always abusing mine,
They were always yelling for something, too!
In a week I was sick of their whine;
Oh, she's all very nice in town, I know, when her hair has the proper friz,
But you've only to live with that woman a week to know what she really is.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Friends

Ain't it fine when things are going
Topsy-turvy and askew
To discover someone showing
Good old-fashioned faith in you?
Ain't it good when life seems dreary
And your hopes about to end,
Just to feel the handclasp cheery
Of a fine old loyal friend?
Gosh! one fellow to another
Means a lot from day to day,
Seems we're living for each other
In a friendly sort of way.
When a smile or cheerful greetin'
Means so much to fellows sore,
Seems we ought to keep repeatin'
Smiles an' praises more an' more.

Edgar Albert Guest

Friendship

You can buy, if you've got money, all you need to drink and eat,
You can pay for bread and honey, and can keep your palate sweet.
But when trouble comes to fret you, and when sorrow comes your way,
For the gentle hand of friendship that you need you cannot pay.

You can buy with gold and silver things you've got to have to wear,
You can purchase all that's needful, when your skies
are bright and fair;
But when clouds begin to gather and when trouble rules the day
Your money doesn't lure a friend worth while to come your way.

For the hand that's warm and gripping and the heart's that tender, too,
Are what all men living sigh for when they're sorrowful and blue,
For there's nothing that's so soothing and so comforting right then
As the gladly given friendship of a fellow's fellow men.

A hand upon your shoulder and a whispered word of cheer
Are the things that keep you going when your trouble time is here;
And you'll hate the gold you've gathered and the buildings that you own
If you have to bear your troubles and your sorrows all alone.

If you've served a golden idol you will get as your reward
All the luxuries of living that the coins of gold afford,
But you'll be the poorest mortal and the saddest in the end
When the clouds of trouble gather—and you're hungry for a friend.

Edgar Albert Guest

From Laughter To Labor

We have wandered afar in our hunting for pleasure,
We have scorned the soul's duty to gather up treasure;
We have lived for our laughter and toiled for our winning
And paid little heed to the soul's simple sinning.
But light were the burdens that freighted us then,
God and country, to-day let us prove we are men!

We have idled and dreamed in life's merriest places,
The years have writ little of care in our faces;
We have brought up our children, expectant of gladness,
And little we've taught them of life and its sadness.
For distant and dim seemed the forces of wrong,
God and country, to-day let us prove we are strong!

We have had our glad years, now the sad years are coming,
We have danced to gay tunes, now we march to war's drumming.
We have laughed and have loved as we pleasantly toiled,
And now we must show that our souls are unspoiled.
We must work that our Flag shall in honor still wave,
God and country, to-day let us prove we are brave!

Edgar Albert Guest

Gardening

GARDENING is hardening
In every way you view it;
It makes a fellow hustle,
And it strengthens every muscle;
It knots up many a tendon
So that no one can undo it;
It starts his back to aching,
And the man who's busy raking
Out the cobble stones and paving bricks
Is very apt to swear;
O, gardening is hardening,
It keeps wives busy pardoning
The hubbies who are spilling
Heated language on the air.

Gardening is maddening
And gladdening and saddening,
It's tiring and inspiring,
And at times a dreadful bore;
It keeps a fellow coping
With potato bugs, and hoping
That his radishes will equal
Those you purchase at the store.
It is full of grim surprises,
Disappointments it comprises.
It has all the elements of work
And pleasure's roundelay;
For one morn you find your roses
Shriveled up. The next discloses
That the lettuce should be edible
About the end of May.

Gardening is vexing,
There's no doubt it is perplexing,
There are many things about it
We don't understand and can't;
Why the lettuce we have tended
Carefully, when all is ended,
Should resemble in its toughness

Leaves from wife's rubber plant;
Why the radishes we nourished
In a cool place, where they flourished,
As we followed the directions
Of the seed man to a jot,
Should appear to us inviting
And delude us into biting,
Just to find that salamanders
Never could be quite so hot.

Still we keep on ever hoeing,
Planting garden truck and sowing
Many vegetables, knowing
What the future has in store;
And we till the soil with vigor,
Every man must be digger,
Though he cuts a sorry figure
When the harvest days are o'er.

Edgar Albert Guest

General Pershing

He isn't long on speeches. At the banquet table, he
Could name a dozen places where he would much rather be.
He's not one for fuss and feathers or for marching in review,
But he's busy every minute when he's got a job to do.
And you'll find him in the open, fighting hard and fighting square
For the glory of his country when his boys get over there.

He has listened to the cheering of the splendid folks of France,
And he knows that he's the leader of America's advance,
And he knows his task is mighty and that words will not avail,
So he's standing to his duty, for he isn't there to fail.
And you'll find him cool and steady when the guns begin to flare,
And he'll talk in deeds of glory when his boys get over there.

He has gone to face the fury of the Prussian hordes that sweep
O'er the fertile fields of Freedom, where the forms of heroes sleep,
And it seems no time for talking or for laughter or for cheers,
With the wounded all about him and their moaning in his ears.
He is waiting for to-morrow, waiting there to do his share,
And he'll strike a blow for freedom when his boys get over there.

Edgar Albert Guest

George Moir Black

A FRIEND has passed
Across the bay,
So wide and vast,
And put away
The mortal form
That held his breath;
But through the storm
That men call death,
Erect and straight,
Unstained by years,
At Heaven's gate
A man appears.

Edgar Albert Guest

Getting Her A Valentine

'GIVE me the prettiest valentine
You've got in the shop,' said he,
'One with the tenderest sort o' line,
In type that her eyes can see.
One that she won't need her specs to read,
'I love you my darling,' is all I need.

'A line o' love from an old bald head,
An' a throb from a battered heart;
An old skeezicks, with a feeble tread,
A lover, no longer smart.
An' she ain't as young as she used t' be,
But she looks for her valentine still from me.

'I wish they made old folks' valentines,
With gray heads close together;
An' printed 'em, too, with loving lines
About fair and stormy weather,
An' showed the old man an' his gray-haired wife
Walking arm in arm on the edge of life.

'We've traveled the road from youth to age,
Without missin' a single kiss;
In our book o' life every written page
Has something o' joy and bliss,
An' though it ain't long till we go above,
We 're nearing the end with a load o' love.

'So give me your prettiest valentine,
An' I'll send it along today
To that wonderful old sweetheart o' mine,
Whose tresses are thin and gray.
But I wish they made valentines,' said he,
'For seventy-year lovers like ma an' me.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Give Me A Single Day

GIVE me a single day, I ask no more
From dawn to dusk, ah, that is time enough
To reach the goal that I am striving for;
There is no need of further putting off
The little deeds of kindness I may do,
The little words of kindness I may say;
I need no distant morrow to be true,
Give me a single day.

Give me a single day to live my life,
For that is time enough for smiles and tears;
I can as bravely bear my share of strife
As though I were to live a thousand years.
I can be brave and patient and resigned,
Helpful and cheerful as I go my way;
I need no distant morrow to be kind,
Give me a single day.

Give me a single day, 't is all I ask,
And let me fill each minute with my best;
I can complete my little daily task,
And find contentment in my hour of rest.
I may not journey many, many miles,
But I can view the roses where I stray,
I need no distant morrow for my smiles,
Give me a single day.

I do not ask to be allowed to live
Another year or twenty, so that I
When richer to the poor may proudly give,
Neglecting now the chance that is close by.
I would not spend today in seeking gold,
Saving tomorrow for the kindly deed;
To prove that I am cheerful, helpful, bold,
Only a day I need.

Let me but live a rounded life today,
My virtues all in action as I stroll;
For further time I would not ask or pray,

Upon the future I 'd not risk my soul,
For in the time I have much I can do,
Fearless, yet gentle in my simple way;
I need no distant morrow to be true,
Give me a single day.

Edgar Albert Guest

Glad

There's a battered old drum on the floor,
And a Teddy bear sleeps in my chair,
There's a doll carriage barring the door;
Ah, it's weeks since she trundled it there!
There are building blocks strewn in the hall,
And a train of cars wrecked on the track,
And I smile as I gaze at them all,
Thank goodness, the children are back.

There's a handkerchief tied to my cane,
That's a flag that a soldier boy bears;
Now the yard is a grim battle plain
And the soldiers are marching in pairs.
There are finger marks now on the wall
That were left there by hands that were black,
But I smile as I gaze at them all,
Thank goodness, the children are back.

There are cries of delight and despair
Resounding once more through the place;
There are pillow fights fierce on the stair,
And down through the hall there's a race;
There's a bump of a terrible fall
As the enemy's camp they attack,
But I smile as I list to it all,
Thank goodness, the children are back.

For give me the clamor and noise
And give me the pranks that they play,
The disturbance of girls and of boys
That comes at the end of the day.
For I'm sick of monotony's pall
That hovered for weeks o'er the shack,
It is music to me when they call,
Thank goodness, the children are back.

Edgar Albert Guest

God Made This Day For Me

Jes' the sort o' weather and jes' the sort of sky
Which seem to suit my fancy, with the white clouds driftin' by
On a sea o' smooth blue water. Oh, I ain't an egotist,
With an 'I' in all my thinkin', but I'm willin' to insist
That the Lord who made us humans an' the birds in every tree
Knows my special sort o' weather an' he made this day fer me.

This is jes' my style o' weather—sunshine floodin' all the place,
An' the breezes from the eastward blowin' gently on my face;
An' the woods chock full o' singin' till you'd think birds never had
A single care to fret 'em or a grief to make 'em sad.
Oh, I settle down contented in the shadow of a tree,
An' tell myself right proudly that the day was made fer me.

It's my day, my sky an' sunshine, an' the temper o' the breeze—
Here's the weather I would fashion could I run things as I please:
Beauty dancin' all around me, music ringin' everywhere,
Like a weddin' celebration—why, I've plumb fergot my care
An' the tasks I should be doin' fer the rainy days to be,
While I'm huggin' the delusion that God made this day fer me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Golf Luck

As a golfer I'm not one who cops the money;
I shall always be a member of the dubs;
There are times my style is positively funny;
I am awkward in my handling of the clubs.
I am not a skillful golfer, nor a plucky,
But this about myself I proudly say-
When I win a hole by freaky stroke or lucky,
I never claim I played the shot that way.

There are times, despite my blundering behavior,
When fortune seems to follow at my heels;
Now and then I play supremely in her favor,
And she lets me pull the rankest sort of steals;
She'll give to me the friendliest assistance,
I'll jump a ditch at times when I should not,
I'll top the ball and get a lot of distance-
But I don't claim that's how I played the shot.

I've hooked a ball when just that hook I needed,
And wondered how I ever turned the trick;
I've thanked my luck for what a friendly tree did,
Although my fortune made my rival sick;
Sometimes my shots turn out just as I planned 'em,
The sort of shots I usually play,
But when up to the cup I chance to land 'em,
I never claim I played 'em just that way.

There's little in my game that will commend me;
I'm not a shark who shoots the course in par;
I need good fortune often to befriend me;
I have my faults and know just what they are.
I play golf in a desperate do-or-die way,
And into traps and trouble oft I stray,
But when by chance the breaks are coming my way,
I do not claim I played the shots that way.

Edgar Albert Guest

Golf Pride

As a golfer I'm not one who cops the money,
I shall always be a member of the dubs;
There are times my style is positively funny,
I am awkward in my handling of the clubs;
I am not a skillful golfer, nor a plucky,
But this about myself I proudly say
When I win a hole by freaky stroke or lucky,
I never claim I played the shot that way.

There are times, despite my blundering behavior,
When fortune seems to follow at my heels;
Now and then I toil supremely in her favor,
She lets me pull the rankest sort of steals;
She'll give to me the friendliest assistance,
I'll jump a ditch at times when I should not,
I'll top the ball and get a lot of distance
But I don't claim that's how I played the shot.

I've hooked a ball when just that hook I needed,
And wondered how I ever turned the trick;
I've thanked my luck for what a friendly tree did,
Although my fortune made my rival sick;
Sometimes my shots are just as I had planned 'em,
The sort of shots which usually I play,
But when up to the cup I chance to land 'em,
I never claim I played 'em just that way.

There's little in my game that will commend me,
I'm not a shark who shoots the course in par;
I need good fortune often to befriend me,
I have my faults and know just what they are;
I play golf in a desperate do -or- die way,
And into traps and trouble oft I stray;
But when by chance the breaks are coming my way,
I do not claim I played the shots that way.

Edgar Albert Guest

Good Books

Good books are friendly things to own.
If you are busy they will wait.
They will not call you on the phone
Or wake you if the hour is late.
They stand together row by row,
Upon the low shelf or the high.
But if you're lonesome this you know:
You have a friend or two nearby.

The fellowship of books is real.
They're never noisy when you're still.
They won't disturb you at your meal.
They'll comfort you when you are ill.
The lonesome hours they'll always share.
When slighted they will not complain.
And though for them you've ceased to care
Your constant friends they'll still remain.

Good books your faults will never see
Or tell about them round the town.
If you would have their company
You merely have to take them down.
They'll help you pass the time away,
They'll counsel give if that you need.
He has true friends for night and day
Who has a few good books to read.

Edgar Albert Guest

Good Friday

O, SAD and solemn holy day,
O, bitterest of bitter hours!
Behold He staggers on His way
Beneath the cross that saps His powers.
O, see, they goad Him with their thongs,
And mock Him as He falters there,
For us, for us He bears these wrongs
And goes the crown of thorns to wear.

No word of bitterness He speaks,
No look of hatred mars His face,
The scoffers spit upon His cheeks
And taunt Him in the market place;
And now upon the cross He 's nailed,
'I thirst,' He mutters, that is all;
But still He is to be assailed,
His lips must taste the cup of gall.

Once more His lips are seen to move,
O, holy sentence uttered there!
What more His love could better prove
Than these few words borne on the air:
'Father, forgive them,' thus He prayed,
And doubt you that His love was true?
Still patient, gentle, unafraid,
'Forgive, they know not what they do."

For us the crown of thorns He wore
With patience man has never known;
For us the cruel cross He bore
With meekness man has never shown.
For us He lived, for us He died,
O, sad and solemn holy day,
Renouncing self and earthly pride
That we might know the better way.

Edgar Albert Guest

Good Luck

Good luck! That's all I'm saying, as you sail across the sea;
The best o' luck, in the parting, is the prayer you get from me.
May you never meet a danger that you won't come safely through,
May you never meet a German that can get the best of you;
Oh! A thousand things may happen when a fellow's at the front,
A thousand different mishaps, but here's hoping that they won't.

Good luck! That's all I'm saying, as you turn away to go,
Good luck and plenty of it, may it be your lot to know;
May you never meet rough weather, but remember if you do
That the folks at home are wishing that you'll all come safely through.
Oh! A thousand things may happen when a fellow bears the brunt
Of His Country's fight for glory, but I'm praying that they won't.

Good luck! That's all I'm saying as you're falling into line;
May the splendour of your service bring you everything that's fine;
May the fates deal kindly with you, may you never know distress,
And may every task you tackle end triumphant with success.
Oh! A thousand things may happen that with joy your life will fill;
You may not get all the gladness, but I'm hoping that you will.

Edgar Albert Guest

Gossip

A FELLOW can't help hearing
Hateful things about another,
But a fellow can be careful
Not to tell them to his brother.

Sit and listen, if you want to,
When the spiteful things are said,
But don't pass on the scandal,
Keep a still tongue in your head.

Spread no little tale of evil,
Whether right or whether wrong,
You may barken unto gossip,
But don't send the tale along.

Edgar Albert Guest

Grace At Evening

For all the beauties of the day,
The innocence of childhood's play,
For health and strength and laughter sweet,
Dear Lord, our thanks we now repeat.

For this our daily gift of food
We offer now our gratitude,
For all the blessings we have known
Our debt of gratefulness we own.

Here at the table now we pray,
Keep us together down the way;
May this, our family circle, be
Held fast by love and unity.

Grant, when the shades of night shall fall,
Sweet be the dreams of one and all;
And when another day shall break
Unto Thy service may we wake.

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Edgar Albert Guest

Grandma

There's a twinkle in her eye,
O, so merry! O, so sly!
That you never see the wrinkles in her face;
She's so full of fun and play
That you never see the gray
In her tresses, and you never see a trace
Of the feebleness of years,
Born of heartaches and of tears;
She's the youngest of the children still today.
All the charm of youth remains,
All her beauty she retains.
O, she's right up to the minute in her way.

Just because she's seventy-two
Any old thing will not do,
She believes that she must always look her best;
Though her gowns are mostly black,
She was never known to lack
A little dash of color at her breast.
'Just because I'm old,' says she,
'Do not think I'm going to be
Out of style and frumpy looking, for I'm not!
And when folks come in to call,
I'm not going to wear a shawl
And cover up the splendid things I've got.'

O, dear grandma, let me say,
As I look at you today,
In your stylish gown of satin with its little touch of blue;
As I see your merry eye,
When the years have wandered by
May I only be as happy and as lovable as you.
May I come from out the gloom
Of my troubles with the bloom
Of a heart that's ever youthful still in view,
With a dash of color gay
To relieve the somber gray,
May I be as young as you at seventy-two.

Edgar Albert Guest

Grandpa

My grandpa is the finest man
Excep' my pa. My grandpa can
Make kites an' carts an' lots of things
You pull along the ground with strings,
And he knows all the names of birds,
And how they call 'thout using words,
And where they live and what they eat,
And how they build their nests so neat.
He's lots of fun! Sometimes all day
He comes to visit me and play.
You see he's getting old, and so
To work he doesn't have to go,
And when it isn't raining, he
Drops in to have some fun with me.

He takes my hand and we go out
And everything we talk about.
He tells me how God makes the trees,
And why it hurts to pick up bees.
Sometimes he stops and shows to me
The place where fairies used to be;
And then he tells me stories, too,
And I am sorry when he's through.
When I am asking him for more
He says: 'Why there's a candy store!
Let's us go there and see if they
Have got the kind we like to-day.'
Then when we get back home my ma
Says: 'You are spoiling Buddy, Pa.'

My grandpa is my mother's pa,
I guess that's what all grandpas are.
And sometimes ma, all smiles, will say:
'You didn't always act that way.
When I was little, then you said
That children should be sent to bed
And not allowed to rule the place
And lead old folks a merry chase.'
And grandpa laughs and says: 'That's true,

That's what I used to say to you.
It is a father's place to show
The young the way that they should go,
But grandpas have a different task,
Which is to get them all they ask.'

When I get big and old and gray
I'm going to spend my time in play;
I'm going to be a grandpa, too,
And do as all the grandpas do.
I'll buy my daughter's children things
Like horns and drums and tops with strings,
And tell them all about the trees
And frogs and fish and birds and bees
And fairies in the shady glen
And tales of giants, too, and when
They beg of me for just one more,
I'll take them to the candy store;
I'll buy them everything they see
The way my grandpa does for me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Gratitude

Be grateful for the kindly friends that walk along your way;
Be grateful for the skies of blue that smile from day to day;
Be grateful for the health you own, the work you find to do,
For round about you there are men less fortunate than you.

Be grateful for the growing trees, the roses soon to bloom,
The tenderness of kindly hearts that shared your days of gloom;
Be grateful for the morning dew, the grass beneath your feet,
The soft caresses of your babes and all their laughter sweet.

Acquire the grateful habit, learn to see how blest you are,
How much there is to gladden life, how little life to mar!
And what if rain shall fall to-day and you with grief are sad;
Be grateful that you can recall the joys that you have had.

Edgar Albert Guest

Greatness

We can be great by helping one another;
We can be loved for very simple deeds;
Who has the grateful mention of a brother
Has really all the honor that he needs.

We can be famous for our works of kindness —
Fame is not born alone of strength or skill;
It sometimes comes from deafness and from blindness
To petty words and faults, and loving still.

We can be rich in gentle smiles and sunny:
A jeweled soul exceeds a royal crown.
The richest men sometimes have little money,
And Croesus oft's the poorest man in town.

Edgar Albert Guest

Green Apple Time

Green apple time! an', Oh, the joy
Once more to be a healthy boy,
Casting a longin' greedy eye
At every tree he passes by!
Riskin' the direst consequence
To sneak inside a neighbor's fence
An' shake from many a loaded limb
The fruit that seems so near to him
Gosh! but once more I'd like to be
The boy I was in eighty-three.

Here I am sittin' with my pipe,
Waitin' for apples to get ripe;
Waitin' until the friendly sun
Has bronzed 'em all an' says they're done;
Not darin' any more to climb
An' pick a few afore their time.
No legs to run, no teeth to chew
The way that healthy youngsters do;
Jus' old enough to sit an' wait
An' pick my apple from a plate.

Plate apples ain't to be compared
With those you've ventured for an' dared.
It's winnin' 'em from branches high,
Or nippin' 'em when no one's by,
Or findin' 'em the time you feel
You really need another meal,
Or comin' unexpectedly
Upon a farmer's loaded tree
An' grabbin' all that you can eat,
That goes to make an apple sweet.

Green apple time! Go to it, boy,
An' cram yourself right full o' joy;
Watch for the farmer's dog an' run;
There'll come a time it can't be done.
There'll come a day you can't digest
The fruit you've stuffed into your vest,

Nor climb, but you'll sit down like me
An' watch 'em ripening on the tree,
An' jus' like me you'll have to wait
To pick your apples from a plate.

Edgar Albert Guest

Growing Down

Time was I thought of growing up,
 But that was ere the babies came;
I'd dream and plan to be a man
 And win my share of wealth and fame,
For age held all the splendors then
 And wisdom seemed lifes brightest crown
For mortal brow. It's different now.
 Each evening finds me growing down.

I'm not so keen for growing up
 To wrinkled cheek and heavy tongue,
And sluggish blood; with little Bud
 I long to be a comrade young.
His sports are joys I want to share,
 His games are games I want to play,
An old man grim's no chum for him
 And so I'm growing down to-day.

I'm back to marbles and to tops,
 To flying kites and one-ol'-cat;
'Fan acres!' I now loudly cry;
 I also take my turn at bat;
I've had my fling at growing up
 And want no old man's fair renown.
To be a boy is finer joy,
 And so I've started growing down.

Once more I'm learning games I knew
 When I was four and five and six,
I'm going back along life's track
 To find the same old-fashioned tricks,
And happy are the hours we spend
 Together, without sigh or frown.
To be a boy is Age's joy,
 And so to him I'm growing down.

Edgar Albert Guest

Grown Up

Last year he wanted building blocks,
And picture books and toys,
A saddle horse that gayly rocks,
And games for little boys.
But now he's big and all that stuff
His whim no longer suits;
He tells us that he's old enough
To ask for rubber boots.

Last year whatever Santa brought
Delighted him to own;
He never gave his wants a thought
Nor made his wishes known.
But now he says he wants a gun,
The kind that really shoots,
And I'm confronted with a son
Demanding rubber boots.

The baby that we used to know
Has somehow slipped away,
And when or where he chanced to go
Not one of us can say.
But here's a helter-skelter lad
That to me nightly scoots
And boldly wishes that he had
A pair of rubber boots.

I'll bet old Santa Claus will sigh
When down our flue he comes,
And seeks the babe that used to lie
And suck his tiny thumbs,
And finds within that little bed
A grown up boy who hoots
At building blocks, and wants instead
A pair of rubber boots.

Edgar Albert Guest

Guessing Time

It's guessing time at our house; every evening after tea
We start guessing what old Santa's going to leave us on our tree.
Everyone of us holds secrets that the others-try to steal,
And that eyes and lips are plainly having trouble to conceal.
And a little lip that quivered just a bit the other night
Was a sad and startling warning that I mustn't guess it right.

'Guess what you will get for Christmas!' is the cry that starts the fun.
And I answer: 'Give the letter with which the name's begun.'
Oh, the eyes that dance around me and the joyous faces there
Keep me nightly guessing wildly: 'Is it something I can wear?'
I implore them all to tell me in a frantic sort of way
And pretend that I am puzzled, just to keep them feeling gay.

Oh, the wise and knowing glances that across the table fly
And the winks exchanged with mother, that they think I never spy;
Oh, the whispered confidences that are poured into her ear,
And the laughter gay that follows when I try my best to hear!
Oh, the shouts of glad derision when I bet that it's a cane,
And the merry answering chorus: ' No, it's not. Just guess again! '

It's guessing time at our house, and the fun is running fast,
And I wish somehow this contest of delight could always last,
For the love that's in their faces and their laughter ringing clear
Is their dad's most precious present when the Christmas time is near.
And soon as it is over, when the tree is bare and plain,
I shall start in looking forward to the time to guess again.

Edgar Albert Guest

Happiness

If the sunbeams will not start you to rejoicing,
If the laughter of your babies you can hear
Without little songs of gladness gayly voicing,
If their dancing doesn't drive away your tear;
If you don't find happiness where they are playing,
If they do not make your pathways bright and sunny,
Then gladness from your heart has gone a-straying
And you won't be any happier with money.

If the blue skies bending over you don't thrill you,
If the roses just a-bursting into bloom
With a sense of perfect pleasure do not fill you,
If the song birds do not chase away your gloom;
If you cannot find contentment in your cottage
Then your heart for joy has not become a chalice,
If you cannot, smiling, eat your simple pottage,
Then you'd not be any happier in a palace.

If a troop of healthy, laughing boys and lassies
Doesn't strike you as a reason to rejoice;
If the glories of the earth, when winter passes,
You behold and still retain a whining voice;
If it doesn't rouse your spirits to go fishing,
Then your heart is but a cupboard for despair,
And for money all in vain today you're wishing,
You'd make a most unhappy millionaire.

Edgar Albert Guest

Hard Knocks

I'm not the man to say that failure's sweet,
Nor tell a chap to laugh when things go wrong;
I know it hurts to have to take defeat
An' no one likes to lose before a throng;
It isn't very pleasant not to win
When you have done the very best you could;
But if you're down, get up an' buckle in —
A lickin' often does a fellow good.

I've seen some chaps who never knew their power
Until somebody knocked 'em to the floor;
I've known men who discovered in an hour
A courage they had never shown before.
I've seen 'em rise from failure to the top
By doin' things they hadn't understood
Before the day disaster made 'em drop —
A lickin' often does a fellow good.

Success is not the teacher, wise an' true,
That gruff old failure is, remember that;
She's much too apt to make a fool of you,
Which isn't true of blows that knock you flat.
Hard knocks are painful things an' hard to bear,
An' most of us would dodge 'em if we could;
There's something mighty broadening in care —
A lickin' often does a fellow good.

Edgar Albert Guest

Hard Luck

Ain't no use as I can see
In sittin' underneath a tree
An' growlin' that your luck is bad,
An' that your life is extry sad;
Your life ain't sadder than your neighbor's
Nor any harder are your labors;
It rains on him the same as you,
An' he has work he hates to do;
An' he gits tired an' he gits cross,
An' he has trouble with the boss;
You take his whole life, through an' through,
Why, he's no better off than you.

If whinin' brushed the clouds away
I wouldn't have a word to say;
If it made good friends out o' foes
I'd whine a bit, too, I suppose;
But when I look around an' see
A lot o' men resemblin' me,
An' see 'em sad, an' see 'em gay
With work t' do most every day,
Some full o' fun, some bent with care,
Some havin' troubles hard to bear,
I reckon, as I count my woes,
They're 'bout what everybody knows.

The day I find a man who'll say
He's never known a rainy day,
Who'll raise his right hand up an' swear
In forty years he's had no care,
Has never had a single blow,
An' never known one touch o' woe,
Has never seen a loved one die,
Has never wept or heaved a sigh,
Has never had a plan go wrong,
But allas laughed his way along;
Then I'll sit down an' start to whine
That all the hard luck here is mine.

Hard Work

One day, in ages dark and dim,
A toiler, weary, worn and faint,
Who found his task too much for him,
Gave voice unto a sad complaint.
And seeking emphasis to give
Unto his trials (day ill-starred!)
Coupled to 'work' this adjective,
This little word of terror: Hard.

And from that day to this has work
Its frightening description worn;
'Tis spoken daily by the shirk,
The first cloud on the sky at morn.
To-day when there are tasks to do,
Save that we keep ourselves on guard
With fearful doublings them we view,
And think and speak of them as hard.

That little but ill-chosen word
Has wrought great havoc with men's souls,
Has chilled the hearts ambition stirred
And held the pass to splendid goals.
Great dreams have faded and been lost,
Fine youth by it been sadly marred
As plants beneath a withering frost,
Because men thought and whispered: 'Hard.'

Let's think of work in terms of hope
And speak of it with words of praise,
And tell the joy it is to grope
Along the new, untrodden ways!
Let's break this habit of despair
And cheerfully our task regard;
The road to happiness lies there:
Why think or speak of it as hard?

Edgar Albert Guest

Hate

They say we must not hate, nor fight in hate.
I've thought it over many a solemn hour,
And cannot mildly view the man or state
That has no thought, save only to be great;
I cannot love the creature drunk with power.
I hate the hand that slaughters babes at sea,
I hate that will that orders wives to die.
And there is something rises up in me
When brutes run wild in crime and lechery
That soft adjustments will not satisfy.

Men seldom fight the things they do not hate;
A vice grows strong on mildly tempered scorn;
Rank thrives the weed the gardeners tolerate;
You cannot stroke the snake that lies in wait,
And change his nature with to-morrow's morn.
If roses are to bloom, the weeds must go;
Vice be dethroned if virtue is to reign;
I Honor and shame together cannot grow,
Sin either conquers or we lay it low,
Wrong must be hated if the truth remain.

I hold that we must fight this war in hate
In bitter hate of blood in fury spilled;
Of children, bending over book and slate,
Slaughtered to make a Prussian despot great;
In hate of mothers pitilessly killed.
In hate of liars plotting wars for gain ;
In hate of crimes too black for printed page;
In hate of wrongs that mark the tyrant's reign —
And crush forever all within his train.
Such hate shall be the glory of our age.

Edgar Albert Guest

He Earned His Way

rose unto the bights of fame
And with the great men stood,
He heard the people cheer his name
And speak of him as good.
Success at last he had attained
By toiling day by day;
His father's name was unprofaned,
His crest of honor was unstained,
He earned his way.

He had not sought the easy road
Nor tried a doubtful scheme,
But he had borne his heavy load
Up hill and over stream.
He had not stooped to do a wrong
That might not be unlearned;
But though the way at times seemed long
He plodded on with courage strong
And every victory earned.

He heard men whisper in the night,
That venturing disgrace,
And stepping from the path of right
But hiding every trace,
Were all he had to do to win,
That honor could be feigned,
But still he kept a lifted chin,
Filled with the holy thought within,
To earn whate'er he gained.

He rose unto the hights of fame,
And with the great men stood;
He never compromised with shame,
Nor bartered what was good.
With head erect he toiled along,
With clean hands for the fray,
He heard the gossip of the throng
That many profited by wrong,
But earned his way.

Edgar Albert Guest

He Has Not Lived In Vain

HE has not lived in vain
If men can say
When he has passed away:
'He labored not for gain.'

If one can truly say:
'I loved him for his smile,
He walked with me a mile,
And cheered my weary way.'

If only one shall stand
And sadly murmur this:
'My friend, my friend, I'll miss
The pressure of your hand.'

If only this remain:
One heart that he has cheered;
His monument is reared,
He has not lived in vain.

Edgar Albert Guest

He Should Meet A Mother There

If he should meet a mother there
 Along some winding Flanders road,
No extra touch of grief or care
 He'll add unto her heavy load.
But he will kindly take her arm
 And tender as her son will be;
He'll lead her from the path of harm
 Because of me.

Be she the mother of his foe,
 He will not speak to her in hate;
My boy will never stoop so low
 As motherhood to desecrate.
But she shall know what once I knew-
 Eyes that are glorious to see,
The light of manhood shining through-
 Because of me.

He will salute her as they meet,
 And stand before her bare of head;
If she be hungry, she may eat
 His last remaining bit of bread.
She'll find those splendid arms and strong
 Quick to assist her, tenderly,
And they will guard her from all wrong
 Because of me.

I miss his thoughtful, loving care;
 I miss his smile these dreary days;
But should he meet a mother there,
 Helpless and lost in war's grim maze,
She need not fear to take his arm,
 As though she'd reared him at her knee;
My son will shield her from all harm
 Because of me.

Edgar Albert Guest

He Struck Me!

HE struck me!

A man I scarce knew, 'though he had
my name,
Came into my office repeating the same,
And talked for a moment of this and of that;
Remarked that he thought I was putting on fat;
Referred to the weather, repeated a tale
That I laughed at because 'twas exceedingly stale,
And then when I said: 'I am busy today,
Whatever you've come for I wish you would say;'
He struck me.

He struck me!

He struck me without any reason at all,
For a second I staggered and thought I should fall;
This stranger who'd asked of the health of my wife,
My cousins and aunts, and had picked up my knife
To manicure nicely his finger nails, while
He used up my time in his own breezy style;
But I said: 'Make it short. I am busy;' and then
He struck me—
Yes, boldly he struck me—for ten!

Edgar Albert Guest

He Who Serves

He has not served who gathers gold,
Nor has he served, whose life is told
In selfish battles he has won,
Or deeds of skill that he has done;
But he has served who now and then
Has helped along his fellow men.

The world needs many men today;
Red-blooded men along life's way,
With cheerful smiles and helping hands,
And with the faith that understands
The beauty of the simple deed
Which serves another's hour of need.

Strong men to stand beside the weak,
Kind men to hear what others speak;
True men to keep our country's laws
And guard its honor and its cause;
Men who will bravely play life's game
Nor ask rewards of gold and fame.

Teach me to do the best I can
To help and cheer our fellow man;
Teach me to lose my selfish need
And glory in the larger deed
Which smoothes the road, and lights the day
For all who chance to come my way.

Edgar Albert Guest

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Edgar Albert Guest

Henry Ford's Offhand Way

Speaking of Henry Ford's purchase of a million dollars' worth of city bonds, Controller Engel said; 'He talked about buying those bonds exactly as I would talk about buying a sack of peanuts.' — News item.

There may be some of us who'd stop and scratch our heads awhile
Before we'd spend a million of our hardearned little pile;
And some of us perhaps might want to ponder on the deal,
To see the goods before we'd buy, to know that they were real,
I'm sure that I should hesitate and count once more my hoard
Before I'd write a check like that, but not so Henry Ford.
He merely yawned and stretched a bit, and then said : 'By the way,
A million dollars' worth of bonds, I guess, will do today.'

And some of us there are who might regret it all our lives
If we should do a trick like that and not consult our wives.
Before we'd spend a million bones I think we'd hem and haw
And then decide to wait a day and put it up to Maw.
'm sure I shouldn't spend that much upon my own accord,
I'd be afraid of what she'd say, but not so Henry Ford.
He just looked through the window at the autumn tints of earth
And said: 'Those bonds you spoke about. I'll take a million's worth.'

And some of us, perhaps, before we'd part with such a bunch
Would make the salesman take us out and blow us off to lunch;
We'd have him bowing down to us and tapping at our door,
And make him say a dozen times the things he'd said before.
I'm sure before he closed with me and captured his reward
I'd make him work a month or two, but not so Henry Ford.
He merely said, the while he flicked from off his coat a speck:
'Send up a million dollars' worth. I'll write you out a check.'

Who knows but what he thought about the song birds on the farm,
And looked away as though to see the trees in autumn's charm?
Perhaps he saw the pumpkins ripe and fodder in the shock
And watched a little feller who was driving home the stock.
While the agent's heart was beating he was calm as he could be,
But perhaps he saw a little boy with patches on his knee,
Years and miles away from business, in the town that gave him birth,

Who never dreamed he'd buy of bonds a million dollars' worth.

Edgar Albert Guest

Here We Are!

Here we are, Britain! the finest and best of us
Taking our coats off and rolling our sleeves,
Answering the thoughtless that once made a jest of us,
Each man a soldier for what he believes.
Here we are, tight little island, in unity!
Tell us the job that you want us to do!
You can depend on us all with impunity.
Give us a task and we'll all see it through.

Here we are, France! every Yankee born man of us
Coming to stand by your side in the fight;
Liberty's cause makes a whole-hearted clan of us.
Here we are, willing to die for the right.
Silently, long from our shores we've admired you,
Secretly proud of the pluck you've displayed.
Brothers we are of the love that inspired you;
Now we are coming, full front, to your aid.

Here we are, Allies! make room in your trenches!
Shoulder to shoulder we'll share in each drive.
Here we are! quitting our lathes and our benches,
Bringing our best that our best shall survive.
Here we are! Liberty's children, red-blooded,
Coming to share in the struggle with you,
Ready to die for the Flag that's star-studded;
Tell us the work that you want us to do.

What is it, fighting or building you're needing?
Boring a mountain or bridging a stream,
Steel work and real work? Your call we are heeding.
Each of us here is a man with a dream.
Here we are! tacklers of tough jobs and dangers,
Any old post where you put us we'll fit;
Coming to serve you as brothers, not strangers;
Here we are, Allies! to offer our bit!

Edgar Albert Guest

Heroes

There are different kinds of heroes, there are some you hear about.
They get their pictures printed, and their names the newsboys shout;
There are heroes known to glory that were not afraid to die
In the service of their country and to keep the flag on high;
There are brave men in the trenches, there are brave men on the sea,
But the silent, quiet heroes also prove their bravery.

I am thinking of a hero that was never known to fame,
Just a manly little fellow with a very common name;
He was freckle-faced and ruddy, but his head was nobly shaped,
And he one day took the whipping that his comrades all escaped.
And he never made a murmur, never whimpered in reply;
He would rather take the censure than to stand and tell a lie.

And I'm thinking of another that had courage that was fine,
And I've often wished in moments that such strength of will were mine.
He stood against his comrades, and he left them then and there
When they wanted him to join them in a deed that wasn't fair.
He stood alone, undaunted, with his little head erect;
He would rather take the jeering than to lose his self-respect.

And I know a lot of others that have grown to manhood now,
Who have yet to wear the laurel that adorns the victor's brow.
They have plodded on in honor through the dusty, dreary ways,
They have hungered for life's comforts and the joys of easy days,
But they've chosen to be toilers, and in this their splendor's told:
They would rather never have it than to do some things for gold.

Edgar Albert Guest

He's Taken Out His Papers

He's taken out his papers, an' he's just like you an' me.
He's sworn to love the Stars and Stripes an' die for it, says he.
An' he's done with dukes an' princes, an' he's done with kings an' queens,
An' he's pledged himself to freedom, for he knows what freedom means.

He's bought himself a bit of ground, an', Lord, he's proud an' glad!
For in the land he came from that is what he never had.
Now his kids can beat his writin', an' they're readin' books, says he,
That the children in his country never get a chance to see.

He's taken out his papers, an' he's prouder than a king:
'It means a lot to me,' says he, 'just like the breath o' spring,
For a new life lies before us; we've got hope an' faith an' cheer;
We can face the future bravely, an' our kids don't need to fear.'

He's taken out his papers, an' his step is light to-day,
For a load is off his shoulders an' he treads an easier way;
An' he'll tell you, if you ask him, so that you can understand,
Just what freedom means to people who have known some other land.

Edgar Albert Guest

His Chance

'I WANT a chance to show what I can do,'
He sighed when others seemed to pass him by;
'There are great problems I could master, too,
Somehow, I never get the chance to try.

Give me a chance to show what I can do,'
This was the burden of his daily whine;
'I might achieve success as well as you,
If opportunity were mine.'

One day they bade him fill another's place,
Another's work they offered him to do;
He grumbled and a frown passed o'er his face,
'I am not paid to do the work of two.'

Edgar Albert Guest

His Dog

Pete bristles when the doorbell rings.
Last night he didn't act the same.
Dogs have a way of knowin' things,
An' when the dreaded cable came,
He looked at mother an' he whined
His soft, low sign of somethin' wrong,
As though he knew that we should find
The news that we had feared so long.

He's followed me about the place
An' hasn't left my heels to-day;
He's rubbed his nose against my face
As if to kiss my grief away.
There on his plate beside the door
You'll see untouched his mornin' meal.
I never understood before
That dogs share every hurt you feel.

We've got the pride o' service fine
As consolation for the blow;
We know by many a written line
He went the way he wished to go.
We know that God an' Country found
Our boy a servant brave an' true-
But Pete must sadly walk around
An' miss the master that he knew.

The mother's bearing up as well
As such a noble mother would;
The hurt I feel I needn't tell-
I guess by all it's understood.
But Pete- his dog- that used to wait
Each night to hear his cheery call,
An' romped about him at the gate,
Has felt the blow the worst of all.

Edgar Albert Guest

His Example

There are little eyes upon you, and they're watching night and day;
There are little ears that quickly take in every word you say;
There are little hands all eager to do everything you do,
And a little boy that's dreaming of the day he'll be like you.

You're the little fellow's idol, you're the wisest of the wise;
In his little mind about you no suspicions ever rise;
He believes in you devoutly, holds that all you say and do
He will say and do in your way when he's grown up just like you.

Oh, it sometimes makes me shudder when I hear my boy repeat
Some careless phrase I've uttered in the language of the street;
And it sets my heart to grieving when some little fault I see
And I know beyond all doubting that he picked it up from me.

There's a wide-eyed little fellow who believes you're always right,
And his ears are always open and he watches day and night;
You are setting an example every day in all you do
For the little boy who's waiting to grow up to be like you.

Edgar Albert Guest

His First Long Trousers

SAY, young fellow, just a minute,
They 're your first long trousers, eh?
And your little gray knee breeches
Are forever put away.
And your blouses and your stockings,
And your little caps are gone,
For the shirts and cuffs of manhood,
And you've got a derby on!

Yes — you look well in them, sonny,
Why, I can't believe my eyea!
For it doesn't seem a year ago
Since you were just this size,
And a little, pink-cheeked youngster;
Why, you toddled more than ran
Every night to meet your daddy,
And today you are a man!

Oh, I don't know how to tell you,
But I want to, yes, I do,
That your mother and your daddy
Both are mighty proud of you;
And we 're going to miss the baby
That from us today has gone,
But that baby we'll remember
Though he has long trousers on.

We 're banking on you, sonny,
We'll help you all we can,
But it's up to you, remember,
Now to prove you are a man;
You can make us mighty happy,
You can make us mighty sad,
Just remember it's not manly
To do things you know are bad.

I 'm not going to preach a sermon;
Mother's put your blouse away
And your breeches, and I saw her

Crying over them today;
And I thought perhaps I 'd give you
Just a thought to dwell upon,
Please remember, you 're her baby,
Though you've got long trousers on.

Edgar Albert Guest

His Other Chance

He was down and out, and his pluck was gone,
And he said to me in a gloomy way:
'I've wasted my chances, one by one,
And I'm just no good, as the people say.
Nothing ahead, and my dreams all dust,
Though once there was something I might have been,
But I wasn't game, and I broke my trust,
And I wasn't straight and I wasn't clean.'
'You're pretty low down,' says I to him,
'But nobody's holding you there, my friend.
Life is a stream where men sink or swim,
And the drifters come to a sorry end;
But there's two of you living and breathing still—
The fellow you are, and he's tough to see,
And another chap, if you've got the will,
The man that you still have a chance to be.'
He laughed with scorn. 'Is there two of me?
I thought I'd murdered the other one.
I once knew a chap that I hoped to be,
And he was decent, but now he's gone.'
'Well,' says I, 'it may seem to you
That life has little of joy in store,
But there's always something you still can do,
And there's never a man but can try once more.
'There are always two to the end of time—
The fellow we are and the future man.
The Lord never meant you should cease to climb,
And you can get up if you think you can.
The fellow you are is a sorry sight,
But you needn't go drifting out to sea.
Get hold of yourself and travel right;
There's a fellow you've still got a chance to be.'

Edgar Albert Guest

His Philosophy

JIM had a quaint philosophy,
'It ain't fer you, it's jes' fer me,'
He used to say. 'I don't p'tend
T' force it onto foe or friend;
I don't advise or recommend
This way or that fer him nor you,
Or try t' tell you what t' do;
But I jes' take myself aside
An' teach him tricks he's never tried.

'I kinder take myself in hand
An' try t' make him understand
That he must do a full day's work,
An' ain't got time t' loaf an' shirk;
An' when he gets a load of care,
His shoulders are the ones t' bear
That burden, not his neighbors or
Some friend he might go running for.

'I try t' teach myself t' smile,
T' whistle every little while,
T' take whatever comes his way
As his just portion of th' day;
An' not complain an' fume an' frown,
An' vow th' world is runnin' down
An' ragged at th' heel becoz
Things ain't as pleasant as they was.

'Fer I've got all that I can do
T' keep myself in line; that's true.
It ain't fer me t' stand up now
An' try t' tell my neighbors how
They ought t' live, an' what t' do,
T' hold up all their faults t' view.
Reformin' others may be fine,
But somehow that ain't in my line.

'Yes, I've my own philosophy,
But it 's intended jes' fer me;

It's made t' keep myself in line,
T make me never show a sign
Of fear or cowardice when things
Go wrong or untold sorrow stings,
An' that is all that I can do —
You'll have t' say what's best fer you.'

Edgar Albert Guest

His Rattle He Throws On The Floor

When something or other has made him feel glad,
His rattle he throws on the floor;
The times he is good and the times he is bad,
His rattle he throws on the floor.
When there is a smile on his pink little face,
Or a pin that is holding his garments in place
Has slipped from its moorings, he makes a grimace
And his rattle he throws on the floor.

When we are alone for the meal we call tea,
His rattle he throws on the floor;
And on the occasions we have company,
His rattle he throws on the floor.
When the cat strokes her side on the leg of his chair,
When no one is looking, or when we all stare,
When he's tired, or he isn't, of sitting up there,
His rattle he throws on the floor.

When he thinks that he ought to have something to eat
His rattle he throws on the floor;
When he's eaten too much — his most usual feat —
His rattle he throws on the floor.
When he's hot, when he's cold, when he's bold, when he's shy,
When he's thinking of starting or stopping a cry,
Before waving 'how -do' to his dad, or 'good-bye,'
His rattle he throws on the floor.

And his mother does nothing but wait on him when
His rattle he throws on the floor;
She recovers it for him, but straightway again
His rattle he throws on the floor.
Out of patience, we once on the floor let it stay,
But he put up a howl, for he wanted to play,
So relenting, we gave it to him, and straightway
His rattle he threw on the floor.

Edgar Albert Guest

His Room

His room is as it used to be
Before he went away,
The walls still keep the pennants he
Brought home but yesterday.
The picture of his baseball team
Still holds its favored spot,
And oh, it seems a dreadful dream
This age of shell and shot!

His golf clubs in the corner stand;
His tennis racket, too,
That once the pressure of his hand
In times of laughter knew
Is in the place it long has kept
For us to look upon.
The room is as it was, except
The boy, himself, has gone.

The pictures of his girls are here,
Still smiling as of yore,
And everything that he held dear
Is treasured as before.
Into his room his mother goes
As usual, day by day,
And cares for it, although she knows
Our boy is far away.

We keep it as he left it, when
He bade us all good-bye,
Though I confess that, now and then,
We view it with a sigh.
For never night shall thrill with joy
Nor day be free from gloom
Until once more our soldier boy
Shall occupy his room.

Edgar Albert Guest

His Santa Claus

He will not come to him this year with all his old-time joy,
An imitation Santa Claus must serve his little boy;
Last year he heard the reindeers paw the roof above his head,
And as he dreamed the kindly saint tip-toed about his bed,
But Christmas Eve he will not come by any happy chance;
This year his kindly Santa Claus must guard a trench in France.

His mother bravely tries to smile; last Christmas Eve was gay;
Last Christmas morn his daddy rose at dawn with him to play;
This year he'll hang his stocking by the chimney, but the hands
That filled it with the joys he craved now serve in foreign lands.
He is too young to understand his mother's troubled glance,
But he that was his Santa Claus is in a trench in France.

Somewhere in France this Christmas Eve a soldier brave will be,
And all that night in fancy he will trim a Christmas tree;
And all that night he'll live again the joys that once he had
When he was good St. Nicholas unto a certain lad.
And he will wonder if his boy, by any sad mischance,
Will find his stocking empty just because he serves in France.

Edgar Albert Guest

History Teaches

CAESAR did a few things,
Horace wrote in style,
Good old Plato knew things
Very much worth while.
Famous Aristotle
Had the master's touch;
Blow this in your bottle:
'I am not so much.'

Con your history's pages,
Read the tales of Rome,
Then compare the sages'
To your feeble dome.
All the dead ones study
(If you call them such
They will teach you, Buddy,
You are not so much.

Edgar Albert Guest

Hollyhocks

Old-fashioned flowers! I love them all:
The morning-glories on the wall,
The pansies in their patch of shade,
The violets, stolen from a glade,
The bleeding hearts and columbine,
Have long been garden friends of mine;
But memory every summer flocks
About a clump of hollyhocks.

The mother loved them years ago;
Beside the fence they used to grow,
And though the garden changed each year
And certain blooms would disappear
To give their places in the ground
To something new that mother found,
Some pretty bloom or rosebush rare—
The hollyhocks were always there.

It seems but yesterday to me
She led me down the yard to see
The first tall spires, with bloom aflame,
And taught me to pronounce their name.
And year by year I watched them grow,
The first flowers I had come to know.
And with the mother dear I'd yearn
To see the hollyhocks return.

The garden of my boyhood days
With hollyhocks was kept ablaze;
In all my recollections they
In friendly columns nod and sway;
And when to-day their blooms I see,
Always the mother smiles at me;
The mind's bright chambers, life unlocks
Each summer with the hollyhocks.

Edgar Albert Guest

Home

The road to laughter beckons me,
The road to all that's best;
The home road where I nightly see
The castle of my rest;
The path where all is fine and fair,
And little children run,
For love and joy are waiting there
As soon as day is done.

There is no rich reward of fame
That can compare with this:
At home I wear an honest name,
My lips are fit to kiss.
At home I'm always brave and strong,
And with the setting sun
They find no trace of shame or wrong
In anything I've done.

There shine the eyes that only see
The good I've tried to do;
They think me what I'd like to be;
They know that I am true.
And whether I have lost my fight
Or whether I have won,
I find a faith that I've been right
As soon as day is done.

Edgar Albert Guest

Home And The Baby

Home was never home before,
Till the baby came.
Love no golden jewels wore,
Till the baby came.
There was joy, but now it seems
Dreams were not the rosy dreams,
Sunbeams not such golden beams—
Till the baby came.
Home was never really gay,
Till the baby came.
I'd forgotten how to play,
Till the baby came.
Smiles were never half so bright,
Troubles never half so light,
Worry never took to flight,
Till the baby came.
Home was never half so blest,
Till the baby came.
Lacking something that was best,
Till the baby came.
Kisses were not half so sweet,
Love not really so complete,
Joy had never found our street
Till the baby came.

Edgar Albert Guest

Home And The Office

Home is the place where the laughter should ring,
And man should be found at his best.
Let the cares of the day be as great as they may,
The night has been fashioned for rest.
So leave at the door when the toiling is o'er
All the burdens of worktime behind,
And just be a dad to your girl or your lad—
A dad of the rollicking kind.

The office is made for the tasks you must face;
It is built for the work you must do;
You may sit there and sigh as your cares pile up high,
And no one may criticize you;
You may worry and fret as you think of your debt,
You may grumble when plans go astray,
But when it comes night, and you shut your desk tight,
Don't carry the burdens away.

Keep daytime for toil and the nighttime for play,
Work as hard as you choose in the town,
But when the day ends, and the darkness descends,
Just forget that you're wearing a frown—
Go home with a smile! Oh, you'll find it worth while;
Go home light of heart and of mind;
Go home and be glad that you're loved as a dad,
A dad of the fun-loving kind.

Edgar Albert Guest

Homesick

It's tough when you are homesick in a strange
and distant place;
It's anguish when you're hungry for an
old-familiar face.
And yearning for the good folks and the joys
you used to know,
When you're miles away from friendship, is a
bitter sort of woe.
But it's tougher, let me tell you, and a stiffer
discipline
To see them through the window, and to know
you can't go in.

Oh, I never knew the meaning of that red sign
on the door,
Never really understood it, never thought of it
before;
But I'll never see another since they've tacked
one up on mine
But I'll think about the father that is barred
from all that's fine.
And I'll think about the mother who is prisoner
in there
So her little son or daughter shall not miss a
mother's care.
And I'll share a fellow feeling with the saddest
of my kin,
The dad beside the gateway of the home he
can't go in.

Oh, we laugh and joke together and the mother
tries to be
Brave and sunny in her prison, and she thinks
she's fooling me;
And I do my bravest smiling and I feign a
merry air
In the hope she won't discover that I'm
burdened down with care.
But it's only empty laughter, and there's nothing

in the grin
When you're talking through the window of the
home you can't go in.

Edgar Albert Guest

Hope

Mine is a song of hope
For the days that lie before;
For the grander things
The morrow brings
When the struggle days are o'er.
Dark be the clouds to-day,
Bitter the winds that blow,
But falter nor fail,
Through the howling gale-
Comes peace in the afterglow.

Mine is the song of hope,
A song for the mother here,
Who lulls to rest
The babe at breast,
And hopes for a brighter year.
Hope is the song she sings,
Hope is the prayer she prays;
As she rocks her boy,
She dreams of the joy
He'll bring in the future days.

Mine is the song of hope,
A song for the father, too,
Whose right arm swings,
While his anvil sings
A song of the journey through.
Hope is the star that guides,
Hope is the father's sun;
Far ahead he sees,
Through the waving trees,
Sweet peace when his work is done.

Mine is the song of hope,
Of hope that sustains us all;
Be we young or old,
Be we weak or bold,
Do we falter or even fall,
Brightly the star of hope

From the distance is shining still;
And with courage new
We rise to do,
For hope is the God of Will.

Edgar Albert Guest

House-Hunting

Time was when spring returned we went
To find another home to rent;
We wanted fresher, cleaner walls,
And bigger rooms and wider halls,
And open plumbing and the dome
That made the fashionable home.

But now with spring we want to sell,
And seek a finer place to dwell.
Our thoughts have turned from dens and domes;
We want the latest thing in homes;
To life we'll not be reconciled
Until we have a bathroom tiled.

A butler's pantry we desire,
Although no butler do we hire;
Nell's life will be one round of gloom
Without a closet for the broom,
And mine will dreary be and sour
Unless the bathroom has a shower.

For months and months we've sat and dreamed
Of paneled walls and ceilings beamed
And built-in cases for the books,
An attic room to be the cook's.
No house will she consent to view
Unless it has a sun room, too.

There must be wash bowls here and there
To save much climbing of the stair;
A sleeping porch we both demand —
This fad has swept throughout the land —
And, Oh, 'twill give her heart a wrench
Not to possess a few doors, French.

I want to dig and walk around
At least full fifty feet of ground;
She wants the latest style in tubs;
I want more room for trees and shrubs,

And a garage, with light and heat,
That can be entered from the street.

The trouble is the things we seek
Cannot be bought for ten-a-week.
And all the joys for which we sigh
Are just too rich for us to buy.
We have the taste to cut a dash:
The thing we're lacking most is cash.

Edgar Albert Guest

How Do You Tackle Your Work

How do you tackle your work each day?
Are you scared of the job you find?
Do you grapple the task that comes your way
With a confident, easy mind?
Do you stand right up to the work ahead
Or fearfully pause to view it?
Do you start to toil with a sense of dread?
Or feel that you're going to do it?

You can do as much as you think you can,
But you'll never accomplish more;
If you're afraid of yourself, young man,
There's little for you in store.
For failure comes from the inside first,
It's there if we only knew it,
And you can win, though you face the worst,
If you feel that you're going to do it.

Success! It's found in the soul of you,
And not in the realm of luck!
The world will furnish the work to do,
But you must provide the pluck.
You can do whatever you think you can,
It's all in the way you view it.
It's all in the start you make, young man:
You must feel that you're going to do it.

How do you tackle your work each day?
With confidence clear, or dread?
What to yourself do you stop and say
When a new task lies ahead?
What is the thought that is in your mind?
Is fear ever running through it?
If so, just tackle the next you find
By thinking you're going to do it.
—From 'A Heap o' Linin',' by Edgar A. Guest

I tackle my terrible job each day
With a fear that is well defined;

And I grapple the task that comes my way
With no confidence in my mind.
I try to evade the work ahead,
As I fearfully pause to view it,
And I start to toil with a sense of dread,
And doubt that I'm going to do it.

I can't do as much as I think I can,
And I never accomplish more.
I am scared to death of myself, old man,
As I may have observed before.
I've read the proverbs of Charley Schwab,
Carnegie, and Marvin Hughitt;
But whenever I tackle a difficult job,
O gosh! I hate to do it!

I try to believe in my vaunted power
With that confident kind of bluff,
But somebody tells me The Conning Tower
Is nothing but awful stuff.
And I take up my impotent pen that night,
And idly and sadly chew it,
As I try to write something merry and bright,
And I know that I shall not do it.

And that's how I tackle my work each day—
With terror and fear and dread—
And all I can see is a long array
Of empty columns ahead.
And those are the thoughts that are in my mind,
And that's about all there's to it.
As long as there's work, of whatever kind,
I'm certain I cannot do it.

Edgar Albert Guest

Hubbard And Pelletier

TWO long-haired friends at table sat
And sipped some old Sauterne,
And each one sought throughout the chat
The other's tricks to learn.

'I see some dandruff on your coat,'
To Elbert whispered Roy;
Said Elbert, clearing out his throat:
'That's genius, my boy.'

'A goodly crop of hair you own,'
To Roy, then quoth the sage:
'Mine had not quite so bushy grown
When I was at your age.
I like the way you brush it back,
'Tis pleasing to the eye,
But one thing I perceive you lack,
And that's a flowing tie.'

'Why wear you such an awful thing?'
Then questioned Roy the Fra;
'Because it is distinguishing,
And men know who you are.
The hair and tie have marked me well,'
In confidence he spake,
'And Elbert Hubbard all can tell
Where'er my way I take.'

Not far from where this famous pair
Were chatting, sat a crowd:
Said one: 'That's Elbert Hubbard there!'
The voice was fairly loud.
'Which one?' exclaimed another then,
In still a higher pitch.
'The long-haired one,' he said again.
Said he: 'I know, but which?'

Edgar Albert Guest

Human Failings

RECKON when our days are done
And God takes up our record sheets, And sees the battles we have won, He'll
want to read of our defeats.
Our little failings He will view,
And gaze at us with kindly smile,
And maybe say: 'I see that you
Have faltered every little while.'
I reckon that he'll like to see
The blots and blemishes between
The splendid works of you and me,
To learn how human we have been.

Edgar Albert Guest

I

Nobody hates me more than I;
No enemy have I to-day
That I so bravely must defy;
There are no foes along my way,
However bitter they may be,
So powerful to injure me
As I am, nor so quick to spoil
The beauty of my bit of toil.

Nobody harms me more than I;
No one is meaner unto me;
Of all the foes that pass me by
I am the worst one that I see.
I am the dangerous man to fear;
I am the cause of sorrow here;
Of all men 'gainst my hopes inclined
I am myself the most unkind.

I do more harmful things to me
Than all the men who seem to hate;
I am the fellow that should be
More dreaded than the works of fate.
I am the one that I must fight
With all my will and all my might;
My foes are better friends to me
Than I have ever proved to be.

I am the careless foe and mean;
I am the selfish rival too;
My enmity to me is seen
In almost everything I do.
More courage it requires to beat
Myself, than all the foes I meet;
I am more traitorous to me
Than other men could ever be.

In every struggle I have lost
I am the one that was to blame;
My weaknesses cannot be glossed

By glib excuses. I was lame.
I that would dare for fame or pelf
Am far less daring with myself.
I care not who my foes may be,
I am my own worst enemy.

Edgar Albert Guest

I Ain'T Dead Yet

Time was I used to worry and I'd sit around an' sigh,
And think with every ache I got that I was goin' to die,
I'd see disaster comin' from a dozen different ways
An' prophesy calamity an' dark and dreary days.
But I've come to this conclusion, that it's foolishness to fret;
I've had my share o' sickness, but I

Ain't
Dead
Yet!

Wet springs have come to grieve me an' I've grumbled at the showers,
But I can't recall a June-time that forgot to bring the flowers.
I've had my business troubles, and looked failure in the face,
But the crashes I expected seemed to pass right by the place.
So I'm takin' life more calmly, pleased with everything I get,
An' not over-hurt by losses, 'cause I

Ain't
Dead
Yet!

I've feared a thousand failures an' a thousand deaths I've died,
I've had this world in ruins by the gloom I've prophesied.
But the sun shines out this mornin' an' the skies above are blue,
An' with all my griefs an' trouble, I have somehow lived 'em through.
There may be cares before me, much like those that I have met;
Death will come some day an' take me, but I

Ain't
Dead
Yet!

Edgar Albert Guest

I Mustn'T Forget

I mustn't forget that I'm gettin' old,
That's the worst thing ever a man can do.
I must keep in mind without bein' told
That old ideas must give away to new.
Let me be always upon my guard
Never a crabby old man to be,
Youth is too precious to have it marred
By the cranky whims of a man like me.

I must remember that customs change
An' I've had my youth an' my hair is gray,
Mustn't be too surprised at strange
Or startlin' things that the youngsters say;
Mustn't keep the bit in their mouths too tight,
Which is something, old people are apt to do.
What used to be wrong may today be right
An' it may not be wrong just becoz it's new.

Want 'em to like me an' want 'em to know
That I need their laughter an' mirth an' song,
An' I want 'em near, coz I love 'em so,
An' home is the place where their smiles belong.
They're growin' up, an' it seems so queer
To hear them talk of the views they hold,
But age with youth shouldn't interfere
An' I musn't forget that I'm gettin' old.

Edgar Albert Guest

I See You've Travelled Some

Wherever you may chance to be — wherever you may roam,
Far away in foreign lands; or just at home sweet home;
It always gives you pleasure, it makes your heart strings hum
Just to hear
The words of cheer,
'I see you've travelled some.'

When you get a brother's greeting, and he takes you by the hand,
It thrills you with a feeling that you cannot understand,
You feel that bond of brotherhood, that tie that's sure to come
When you hear him say
In a friendly way
'I see you've travelled some.'

And if you are a stranger, in strange lands all alone
If fate has left you stranded, dead broke and far from home,
Oh, it's a grand and glorious feeling, it thrills you; makes you numb,
When he says with a grip
Of fellowship,
'I see you've travelled some.'

And when your final summons comes, to take a last long trip,
Adorned with Lambskin Apron White and gems of fellowship —
The Tiler at the Golden Gate, with Square and Level and Plumb
Will size up your pin
And say 'Walk In:
I see you've travelled some.'

Edgar Albert Guest

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I'D Rather Be A Failure

I'd rather be a failure than the man who's never tried;
I'd rather seek the mountain-top than always stand aside.
Oh, let me hold some lofty dream and make my desperate fight,
And though I fail I still shall know I tried to serve the right.

The idlers line the ways of life and they are quick to sneer;
They note the failing strength of man and greet it with a jeer;
But there is something deep inside which scoffers fail to view-
They never see the glorious deed the failure tried to do.

Some men there are who never leave the city's well-worn streets;
They never know the dangers grim the bold adventurer meets;
They never seek a better way nor serve a nobler plan;
They never risk with failure to advance the cause of man.

Oh, better 'tis to fail and fall in sorrow and despair,
Than stand where all is safe and sure and never face a care;
Yes, stamp me with the failure's brand and let men sneer at me,
For though I've failed the Lord shall know the man I tried to be.

Edgar Albert Guest

Ideals

Better than land or gold or trade
Are a high ideal and a purpose true;
Better than all of the wealth we've made
Is the work for others that now we do.
For Rome grew rich and she turned to song
And danced to music and drank her wine,
But she sapped the strength of her fibres strong
And a gilded shroud was her splendor fine.

The Rome of old with its wealth and wine
Was the handiwork of a sturdy race;
They builded well and they made it fine
And they dreamed of it as their children's place.
They thought the joys they had won to give,
And which seemed so certain and fixed and sure,
To the end of time in the world would live
And the Rome they'd fashioned would long endure.

They passed to their children the hoarded gold,
Their marble halls and their fertile fields!
But not the spirit of Rome of old,
Nor the Roman courage that never yields.
They left them the wealth that their hands had won,
But they failed to leave them a purpose true.
They left them thinking life's work all done,
And Rome went down and was lost to view.

We must guard ourselves lest we follow Rome.
We must leave our children the finer things.
We must teach them love of the spot called home
And the lasting joy that a purpose brings.
For vain are our Flag and our battles won,
And vain are our lands and our stores of gold,
If our children feel that life's work is done.
We must give them a high ideal to hold.

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Edgar Albert Guest

If I Had Youth

If I had youth I'd bid the world to try me;
I'd answer every challenge to my will.
And though the silent mountains should defy me,
I'd try to make them subject to my skill.
I'd keep my dreams and follow where they led me;
I'd glory in the hazards which abound.
I'd eat the simple fare privations fed me,
And gladly make my couch upon the ground.

If I had youth I'd ask no odds of distance,
Nor wish to tread the known and level ways.
I'd want to meet and master strong resistance,
And in a worth-while struggle spend my days.
I'd seek the task which calls for full endeavor;
I'd feel the thrill of battle in my veins.
I'd bear my burden gallantly, and never
Desert the hills to walk on common plains.

If I had youth no thought of failure lurking
Beyond to-morrow's dawn should fright my soul.
Let failure strike- it still should find me working
With faith that I should some day reach my goal.
I'd dice with danger- aye!- and glory in it;
I'd make high stakes the purpose of my throw.
I'd risk for much, and should I fail to win it,
I would not ever whimper at the blow.

If I had youth no chains of fear should bind me;
I'd brave the heights which older men must shun.
I'd leave the well-worn lanes of life behind me,
And seek to do what men have never done.
Rich prizes wait for those who do not waver;
The world needs men to battle for the truth.
It calls each hour for stronger hearts and braver.
This is the age for those who still have youth!

Edgar Albert Guest

If I Were Santa Claus

IF only I were Santa Claus I 'd travel east and west
To every hovel where there lies a little child at rest;
I'd drive my reindeer over roofs they'd never trod before,
I 'd seek the tenements where sleep the babies on the floor,
Where rags are stuffed in broken panes to keep the wind away,
And where a warm and cozy room is never known today;
For even there I know I 'd find hung up the stockings small
As signs that they expected me on Christmas Eve to call.

If only I were Santa Claus I 'd pass the mansions, by
And seek the cold and cheerless homes where palefaced youngsters lie;
And as they slept I 'd pause a while and bending low, I 'd kiss
The lips of every little tot — not one of them I 'd miss;
And then I 'd fill their stockings full of toys and sugar plums,
And leave them sleighs and skates and dolls and Teddy bears and drums.
I would not pass a cottage by, but I would try to be
A Santa Claus to every tot who still has faith in me.

If only I were Santa Claus — I 'd make the mothers glad,
The dear, hard-working mothers who at Christmas time are sad;
The kind and patient mothers who rock their babes to sleep,
And through the lonely hours of night sob bitterly and weep.
They see their precious little ones half clad and hungry, too,
Knowing the sorrow that must come to them when night is through;
To every mother's face I 'd bring the smiles once more, and we
Would spend a while together at her babies' Christmas tree.

Edgar Albert Guest

If Only I Were Santa Claus

If only I were Santa Claus and you were still a boy,
I'd find the chimney to your heart and fill it full of joy ;
On Christmas Eve when all was still and you were fast asleep
Much like your Santa Claus of old unto your bed I'd creep
And in the pack upon my back all shining, bright and new
I would have gathered everything to help and comfort you.
I'd tiptoe round about your life as Santa round a bed
Until with happiness and peace I knew your path was spread.

Were there a single line of care upon your kindly face
I'd find the cause that marked it there and banish every trace.
I'd fill your breast with songs of love, your face I'd deck with smiles
And roses red should mark your path for miles and miles and miles;
And as I looked into your heart, while you so soundly slept,
I'd find the hidden closet where your dearest hopes are kept,
The sacred dreams of long ago, the deeds you hoped to do
And one and all, before I left, I'd realise for you.

No tawdry gift of tinsel cheap would ever I bestow,
With joy your eyes should wake to smile, with health your cheeks should glow;
I'd search the corners of your heart where all your griefs are stored
And in the morning bright you'd find that on them I had poured
The oil of consolation sweet and changed their stings to be
The hallowed and the precious calm of sainted memory.
I'd make of you a happy friend, I'd robe you with content,
I'd strew your counterpane with joys that night before I went.

And if I found a burden great that you are forced to bear
I'd leave the courage in your heart for you to do and dare;
I'd give you strength for every deed, I'd steal away your fear,
I'd make you brave and bold and strong throughout the coming year.
And you should win the goal you seek, and finer goals should gain
Nor ever lose one joy you have, but all that's good retain.
I'd leave no dream unrealized, no prize you couldn't get,
And in my pack I'd take away from you each vain regret.

No war should rob you of your peace, no selfish hate should mar
The paths of life that you must tread, although you wander far.
About you always there would be your loved ones smiling bright,

And every hour would bring to you some new and rich delight.
I'd fix things so whatever comes you'd have no cause to sigh,
Above you always there would be a clear and smiling sky.
If only I were Santa Claus and you were still a boy,
I'd find the chimney to your heart and fill it full of joy.

Edgar Albert Guest

If This Were All

If this were all of life we'll know,
If this brief space of breath
Were all there is to human toil,
If death were really death,
And never should the soul arise
A finer world to see,
How foolish would our struggles seem,
How grim the earth would be!

If living were the whole of life,
To end in seventy years,
How pitiful its joys would seem!
How idle all its tears!
There'd be no faith to keep us true,
No hope to keep us strong,
And only fools would cherish dreams—
No smile would last for long.

How purposeless the strife would be
If there were nothing more,
If there were not a plan to serve,
An end to struggle for!
No reason for a mortal's birth
Except to have him die—
How silly all the goals would seem
For which men bravely try.

There must be something after death;
Behind the toil of man
There must exist a God divine
Who's working out a plan;
And this brief journey that we know
As life must really be
The gateway to a finer world
That some day we shall see.

Edgar Albert Guest

If Those Who Love Us

F those who love us find us true
And kind and gentle, and are glad
When each grim working day is through
To have us near them, why be sad?

If those who know us best rejoice
In what we are and hold us dear,
What matter if the stranger's voice
Shall speak the bitter jibe and jeer?

If those who cling to us still smile
Though grim misfortune has us down,
If they still think our work worth while,
What matters it if strangers frown?

Edgar Albert Guest

If You And I

IF you would smile a little more
And I would kinder be,
If you would stop to think before
You speak of faults you see.
If I would show more patience, too,
With all with whom I'm hurled,
Then I would help and so would you
To make a better world.

If you would cheer your neighbor more
And I'd encourage mine,
If you would linger at his door
To say his work is fine,
And I would stop to help him when
His lips in frowns are curled,
Both you and I'd be helping then
To make a better world.

But just as long as you keep still
And plod your selfish way,
And I rush on, and heedless kill
The kind words I could say;
While you and I refuse to smile
And keep our gay flags furled,
Someone will grumble all the while
That it's a gloomy world.

Edgar Albert Guest

If You Would Please Me

If you would please me when I've passed away
Let not your grief embitter you. Be brave;
Turn with full courage from my mounded grave
And smile upon the children at their play;
Let them make merry in their usual way;
Do not with sorrow those young lives enslave
Or steal from them the fleeting joys they crave;
Let not your grieving spoil their happy day.
Live on as you have lived these many years,
Still let your soul be gentle and be kind —
I never liked to see those eyes in tears!
Weep not too much that you must stay behind;
Share in the lives of others as you'd share,
If God had willed it still to leave me there.

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Edgar Albert Guest

I'LI Never Be Rich

I'LL never be rich.

I'm too fond of the joy
Of a certain small girl
And a certain small boy;
And the nights full of fun
And the days full of play,
And the romp and the run
At the end of the day.

I'll never be rich.

I'm too eager to share
In the joys that are near,
Too unwilling to care
For the thing we call gold,
That I'll fill every day
Full of strife for the stuff,
And not rest by the way.

I'll never be rich.

There are too many charms
That I now can possess
When I stretch out my arms;
There are too many joys
That already I hold
That I cannot give up
Just to wallow in gold.

Edgar Albert Guest

Improvement

The joy of life is living it, or so it seems to me;
In finding shackles on your wrists, then struggling till you're free;
In seeing wrongs and righting them, in dreaming splendid dreams,
Then toiling till the vision is as real as moving streams.
The happiest mortal on the earth is he who ends his day
By leaving better than he found to bloom along the way.
Were all things perfect here there would be naught for man to do;
If what is old were good enough we'd never need the new.
The only happy time of rest is that which follows strife
And sees some contribution made unto the joy of life.
And he who has oppression felt and conquered it is he
Who really knows the happiness and peace of being free.
The miseries of earth are here and with them all must cope.
Who seeks for joy, through hedges thick of care and pain must grope.
Through disappointment man must go to value pleasure's thrill;
To really know the joy of health a man must first be ill.
The wrongs are here for man to right, and happiness is had
By striving to supplant with good the evil and the bad.
The joy of life is living it and doing things of worth,
In making bright and fruitful all the barren spots of earth.
In facing odds and mastering them and rising from defeat,
And making true what once was false, and what was bitter, sweet.
For only he knows perfect joy whose little bit of soil
Is richer ground than what it was when he began to toil.

Edgar Albert Guest

Independence Day

WHAT does it all mean anyway,
Noise of cannon and boom of gun,
Deafening, colorful fire display
Starting in with the rising sun?
Ah, it means that this land of ours,
Fringed with mountains and decked with flowers,
Warm with sunshine and wet with dew,
Is dear to the hearts of her people true.

Every whizzing rocket that seeks the sky
And bursts in beauty, the world above
Proclaims aloud, as it journeys high,
A nation's pride and a nation's love;
It seems to speak of her wonders here,
Her mines so rich and her skies so clear,
Her harvests grand and her waving pines,
Her fields of green and her creeping vines.

Oh, a glorious day is this day we keep!
For under the noise and the powder scent
Is a strain of love that is wide and deep,
A touch of a nation's sentiment.
Love of country the cannon speaks,
Love of freedom the rocket shrieks,
Love of the flag that waves above,
This is the meaning — a nation's love .

Edgar Albert Guest

Influence

This I think as I go my way:
What can matter the words I say,
And what can matter the false or true
Of any deed I am moved to do?

This I think as I go along:
What can matter my right or wrong?
Whichever path I may choose to take,
What possible difference can it make?

This I think as I go to town:
What can matter my smile or frown?
Can any one's destiny altered be
For better or worse because of me?

And something whispers;
'Another may be sadly deceived
By the words you say.
And another, believing and trusting you,
May be led astray by the things you do.'

'For much that never you'll see or know
Will mark your days as you come and go.
And in countless lives that you'll never learn
The best and the worst of you will return.'

Edgar Albert Guest

It Couldn'T Be Done

Somebody said that it couldn't be done
But he with a chuckle replied
That 'maybe it couldn't,' but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it!

Somebody scoffed: 'Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it; '
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure,
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing
That 'cannot be done,' and you'll do it.

Edgar Albert Guest

It Isn'T Costly

Does the grouch get richer quicker than the friendly sort of man?
Can the grumbler labor better than the cheerful fellow can?
Is the mean and churlish neighbor any cleverer than the one
Who shouts a glad 'good morning,' and then smiling passes on?

Just stop and think about it. Have you ever known or seen
A mean man who succeeded, just because he was so mean?
When you find a grouch with honors and with money in his pouch,
You can bet he didn't win them just because he was a grouch.

Oh, you'll not be any poorer if you smile along your way,
And your lot will not be harder for the kindly things you say.
Don't imagine you are wasting time for others that you spend:
You can rise to wealth and glory and still pause to be a friend.

Edgar Albert Guest

It's A Boy

The doctor leads a busy life, he wages war with death;
Long hours he spends to help the one who's fighting hard for breath;
He cannot call his time his own, nor share in others' fun,
His duties claim him through the night when others' work is done.
And yet the doctor seems to be God's messenger of joy,
Appointed to announce this news of gladness: 'It's a boy!'

In many ways unpleasant is the doctor's round of cares,
I should not like to have to bear the burdens that he bears;
His eyes must look on horrors grim, unmoved he must remain,
Emotion he must master if he hopes to conquer pain;
Yet to his lot this duty falls, his voice he must employ
To speak to man the happiest phrase that's sounded: 'It's a boy!'

I wish 'twere given me to speak a message half so glad
As that the doctor brings unto the fear-distracted dad.
I wish that simple words of mine could change the skies to blue,
And lift the care from troubled hearts, as those he utters do.
I wish that I could banish all the thoughts that man annoy,
And cheer him as the doctor does, who whispers: 'It's a boy.'

Whoever through the hours of night has stood outside her door,
And wondered if she'd smile again; who'er has paced the floor,
And lived those years of fearful thoughts, and then been swept from woe
Up to the topmost height of bliss that's given man to know,
Will tell you there's no phrase so sweet, so charged with human joy
As that the doctor brings from God- that message: 'It's a boy!'

Edgar Albert Guest

It's September

It's September, and the orchards are afire with red and gold,
And the nights with dew are heavy, and the morning's sharp with cold;
Now the garden's at its gayest with the salvia blazing red
And the good old-fashioned asters laughing at us from their bed;
Once again in shoes and stockings are the children's little feet,
And the dog now does his snoozing on the bright side of the street.

It's September, and the cornstalks are as high as they will go,
And the red cheeks of the apples everywhere begin to show;
Now the supper's scarcely over ere the darkness settles down
And the moon looms big and yellow at the edges of the town;
Oh, it's good to see the children, when their little prayers are said,
Duck beneath the patchwork covers when they tumble into bed.

It's September, and a calmness and a sweetness seem to fall
Over everything that's living, just as though it hears the call
Of Old Winter, trudging slowly, with his pack of ice and snow,
In the distance over yonder, and it somehow seems as though
Every tiny little blossom wants to look its very best
When the frost shall bite its petals and it droops away to rest.

It's September! It's the fullness and the ripeness of the year;
All the work of earth is finished, or the final tasks are near,
But there is no doleful wailing; every living thing that grows,
For the end that is approaching wears the finest garb it knows.
And I pray that I may proudly hold my head up high and smile
When I come to my September in the golden afterwhile.

Edgar Albert Guest

Jes' Wonderin'!

I WONDER if they're bitin' way off yonder in the bay!
I wonder if they're fightin' very hard t' git away!
I wonder if they're hungry, an' would grab a silver spoon
Th' way that I remember they used t' do in June!
I wonder if Ole Daddy's caught his big one yet this year;
An' I guess the boss is wonderin' why I'm sittin' idle here.

I wonder if the lily pads are just as thick t'day
As what they were in by-gone times when I was on the bay!
I wonder if my favorite spot right now is occupied
By some one else, an' if it's come t' be a stranger's pride;
An' if he knows its secrets, too, an' holds 'em just as dear,
An' if the boss is wonderin' why I'm sittin' wonderin' here.

I wonder if the gulls fly 'round the way they used t' do,
T' grab the minnows now an' then that in the bay I threw!
I wonder if I still could cast as true as what I did
When I could land it every time where some big one was hid!
An' O, I wonder if the day will ever come again
When I shall hear a singing reel, the way I heard it then.

Edgar Albert Guest

Jimmy

I NEVER knew him, for he never grew
Up as so many strong little ones do;
Just a year on the earth with his mother, and then
God came and took Jimmy to heaven again.
And 't was years after that when I moved on the street
And met Jimmy's mother, so patient and sweet,
And through her I got to know Jimmy so well,
For morning and evening she 'd stop me to tell
About Jimmy.

His toys were all kept in his little play room,
His dolls and his Teddy bear stayed in the gloom;
And when Jimmy was two, or would have been, rather,
Some soldiers of tin were brought home by his father,
And the mother arranged them in battle line, too,
A fact that but few of her friends ever knew.
In her mind's eye she pictured him sunny and gay,
And often ceased work to romp with him and play,
Play with Jimmy.

In this way I got to know Jimmy myself,
Long after his toys had been put on the shelf;
He 'd been to school and to college, it seems,
And now was the man of his dear mother's dreams.
She 'd nursed him through measles and fevers and all
The ailments that everyone has when he's small,
She'd lived with him, just as though he had been spared,
Played with him, prayed with him, worried and cared
For her Jimmy.

Wonderful, too, were the deeds he had done;
Never had mother before such a son.
Brave? Never youth was so fearless as he;
I 'm telling you now what she oft said to me.
And clever and witty and patient and kind,
With never a fault, but then mothers are blind,
And this mother really was telling the truth,
For she had watched every step of his youth,
Loving Jimmy.

The last words she spoke to me now I recall,
The doctor had whispered: 'There's no chance at all.'
And she knew it, too, but she smiled up at me,
'I 'm going,' she muttered, 'my Jimmy to see,
I know how he looks, and I know what he'll say,
For hasn't he lived with me here every day?
Help father to bravely bear up under this,
For he will be lonesome, I know how he'll miss
Me and Jimmy.

Edgar Albert Guest

Joy

I never knew the joy of getting home,
I never knew how fast a heart could beat;
I never tasted joy,
Till the day my little boy
Came running up to meet me on the street.
I never knew the pleasure of a smile,
I never knew the music of a voice
Till I heard my baby greet me,
On this day he ran to meet me
In a way that made my weary heart rejoice.

I never knew a welcome half so true,
Till I heard his 'hello daddy!' down the street;
And though weary as could be,
When he scampered up to me,
There was comfort in the patter of his feet.
I never knew the charm of laughing eyes,
I never knew how happy I could be;
I never knew the cheer
That makes worry disappear,
Till the day my baby first ran up to me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Joys Within Reach

You needn't be rich to be happy,
You needn't be famous to smile;
There are joys for the poorest of toilers
If only he'll think them worth while.
There are blue skies and sunshine a-plenty,
And blossoms for all to behold;
And always the bright days outnumber
The dark and the cheerless and cold.

Sweet sleep's not a gift of the wealthy,
And love's not alone for the great;
For men to grow old and successful
It isn't joy's custom to wait.
The poorest of toilers has blessings
His richer companions may crave;
And many a man who has riches
Goes sorrowing on to the grave.

You'll never be happy tomorrow
If you are not happy today;
If you're missing the joys that are present
And sighing for joys far away.
The rose will not bloom any fairer
In the glorious years that may be;
Great riches won't sweeten its fragrance
Nor help you its beauties to see.

Today is the time to make merry,
'Tis folly for fortune to wait;
You'll not find the skies any bluer
If ever you come to be great.
You'll not find your joys any brighter,
No matter what fortune you win;
Make the most of life's sunshine this minute,
Tomorrow's too late to begin.

Edgar Albert Guest

July The Fourth

As when a little babe is born the parents cannot guess
The story of the future years, their grief or happiness,
So came America to earth, the child of higher things,
A nation that should light the way for all men's visionings;
A land with but a dream to serve, such was our country then,
A prophet to prepare the way of liberty of men!

Great was the courage of the past; the tyrant's power was strong,
Few spoke the praise of Freedom then, few sang her battle song
Until the bell of liberty rang out upon the morn
And told the world in Freedom's name a nation had been born.
A nation that should lead the way to glorious years to be
Should pledge its soul to sacrifice to set all people free.

This is the heritage we hold who celebrate today;
We are the children of the men who dared to lead the way;
We are the sons of men who taught by fine examples true
The glory they would have us keep, the deeds they'd have us do.
They did not serve in selfishness, nor teach us money love,
They placed a nation in our charge with Freedom's flag above.

I wonder do their spirits know the glory of today?
And can they see our banner fly three thousand miles away?
And do they know in Freedom's name on foreign soil our sons,
Seeking no conquest for themselves, have braved the tyrant's guns?
Oh God, fling back heaven's curtains now! Let our forefathers see
That what was but a dream to them at last has come to' be.

Edgar Albert Guest

July The Fourth, 1917

Time was the cry went round the world:
 America for freedom speaks,
A new flag is to-day unfurled,
 An eagle on the mountain shrieks,
A king is failing on his throne,
 A race of men defies his power!
And no one could have guessed or known
 The burden of that splendid hour.

A bell rang out that summer day
 And men and women stood and heard;
That tongue of brass had more to say
 Than could be spoken by a word.
It spoke the thoughts of honest men,
 It whispered Destiny's intents
And rang a warning loudly then
 To Kings of all the continents.

The old bell in its holy loft
 Where pigeons nest, has ceased to swing
And yet through many a day and oft
 A weary people hear it sing.
That hour long years ago, when first
 America for freedom fought,
The bonds of slavery were burst:
 That hour began the reign of thought.

Here comes another summer day:
 America is on the sea,
America has dared to say
 That other people shall be free.
No selfish stain her banner mars,
 Her flag, for truth and right, unfurled,
With every stripe and all its stars
 Still speaks its message to the world

Out where the soldiers fight for men,
 Out where, for others, heroes die,
Out where they storm the Tyrant's den,

The Starry Banner lights the sky.
And once again the cry goes out
That brings the flush of hope to cheeks
Grown pale by bitter war and doubt:
'America for Freedom speaks.'

Edgar Albert Guest

June

June is here, the month of roses, month of brides and month of bees,
Weaving garlands for our lassies, whispering love songs in the trees,
Painting scenes of gorgeous splendor, canvases no man could brush,
Changing scenes from early morning till the sunset's crimson flush.

June is here, the month of blossoms, month of roses white and red,
Wet with dew and perfume-laden, nodding wheresoe'er we tread;
Come the bees to gather honey, all the lazy afternoon;
Flowers and lassies, men and meadows, love alike the month of June.

Month of love and month of sunshine, month of happiness and song,
Month that cheers the sad wayfarer as he plods the road along;
Spreading out a velvet carpet, green and yellow, for his feet,
And affording for his rest hours many a cool and sweet retreat.

Edgar Albert Guest

Just A Boy

Get to understand the lad-
He's not eager to be bad;
If the right he always knew,
He would be as old as you.
Were he now exceeding wise,
He'd be just about your size;
When he does things that annoy,
Don't forget, he's just a boy.

Could he know and understand,
He would need no guiding hand;
But he's young and hasn't learned
How life's corners must be turned;
Doesn't know from day to day
There is more in life than play,
More to face than selfish joy-
Don't forget he's just a boy.

Being just a boy, he'll do
Much you will not want him to;
He'll be careless of his ways,
Have his disobedient days,
Wilful, wild and headstrong, too,
Just as, when a boy, were you;
Things of value he'll destroy,
But, reflect, he's just a boy.

Just a boy who needs a friend,
Patient, kindly to the end,
Needs a father who will show
Him the things he wants to know;
Take him with you when you walk,
Listen when he wants to talk,
His companionship enjoy,
Don't forget, he's just a boy!

Edgar Albert Guest

Just Folks

We're queer folks here.

We'll talk about the weather,
The good times we have had together,
The good times near,
The roses buddin', an' the bees
Once more upon their nectar sprees;
The scarlet fever scare, an' who
Came mighty near not pullin' through,
An' who had light attacks, an' all
The things that int'rest, big or small;
But here you'll never hear of sinnin'
Or any scandal that's beginnin'.
We've got too many other labors
To scatter tales that harm our neighbors.

We're strange folks here.

We're tryin' to be cheerful,
An' keep this home from gettin' tearful.
We hold it dear
Too dear for pettiness an' meanness,
An' nasty tales of men's uncleanness.
Here you shall come to joyous smilin',
Secure from hate an' harsh revilin';
Here, where the wood fire brightly blazes,
You'll hear from us our neighbor's praises.
Here, that they'll never grow to doubt us,
We keep our friends always about us;
An' here, though storms outside may pelter
Is refuge for our friends, an' shelter.

We've one rule here,

An' that is to be pleasant.
The folks we know are always present,
Or very near.
An' though they dwell in many places,
We think we're talkin' to their faces;
An' that keeps us from only seein'
The faults in any human bein',
An' checks our tongues when they'd go trailin'

Into the mire of mortal failin'.
Flaws aren't so big when folks are near you;
You don't talk mean when they can hear you.
An' so no scandal here is started,
Because from friends we're never parted.

Edgar Albert Guest

Just Half Of That, Please

Grandmother says when I pass her the cake:

'Just half of that, please.'

If I serve her the tenderest portion of steak:

'Just half of that, please.'

And be the dessert a rice pudding or pie,

As I pass Grandma's share she is sure to reply,

With the trace of a twinkle to light up her eye:

'Just half of that, please.'

I've cut down her portions but still she tells me:

'Just half of that, please.'

Though scarcely a mouthful of food she can see:

'Just half of that, please.'

If I pass her the chocolates she breaks one in two,

There's nothing so small but a smaller will do,

And she says, perhaps fearing she's taking from you:

'Just half of that, please.'

When at last Grandma leaves us the angels will hear:

'Just half of that, please.'

When with joys for the gentle and brave they appear:

'Just half of that, please.'

And for fear they may think she is selfish up there,

Or is taking what may be a young angel's share,

She will say with the loveliest smile she can wear:

'Just half of that, please.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Just Like A Man

This is the phrase they love to say:

'Just like a man!'

You can hear it wherever you chance to stray:

'Just like a man!'

The wife of the toiler, the queen of the king,
The bride with the shiny new wedding-ring
And the grandmothers, too, at our sex will fling,
'Just like a man!'

Cranky and peevish at times we grow:

'Just like a man!'

Now and then boastful of what we know:

'Just like a man!'

Whatever our failings from day to day—
Stingy, or giving our goods away—
With a toss of her head, she is sure to say,
'Just like a man!'

Unannounced strangers we bring to tea:

'Just like a man!'

Heedless of every propriety:

'Just like a man!'

Grumbling at money she spends for spats
And filmy dresses and gloves and hats,
Yet wanting her stylishly garbed, and that's
'Just like a man!'

Wanting attention from year to year:

'Just like a man!'

Seemingly helpless when she's not near:

'Just like a man!'

Troublesome often, and quick to demur,
Still remaining the boys we were,
Yet soothed and blest by the love of her:
'Just like a man!'

Edgar Albert Guest

Keep To The Right

KEEP to the right is the rule of the road,
Keep to the right as you travel along,
Often, for safety, your progress is slowed,
This is the rule for the weak or the strong.
Driving or walking this law all observe,
Now it's adopted for aerial flight,
Get just as far as you can or deserve,
But always remember to keep to the right.

Make this the rule of your life every day,
Follow it out in all things that you do,
Guide of your tongue in all things that you say,
Guide to the goals that you seek and pursue.
Let it come first, though you win or you lose,
Conquer or fail in the thick of the fight,
This be the motto that daily you use,
This is sufficient, just 'Keep to the Right.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Keep Your Dreams

Keep your dreams-they're richer far
Than the facts discovered are.
Do not seek all things to touch;
Do not want to know too much.

Growing old, still play the child;
Keep some glory undefiled.
What if clouds are mist and air?
Still see ships sailing there.

What would life be if we knew
Only those things which are true?
If the things of bad and good
Were by all men understood.

Nature's hills and brooks and springs
Would be catalogued as things.
Keep your dreams, for in them lies
Joy denied to men grown wise.

Still build castles in the air!
Still see white ships sailing there!
Still have something to pursue,
Something which you wish you knew.

Edgar Albert Guest

Kelly Ingram

His name was Kelly Ingram; he was Alabama's son,
And he whistled 'Yankee Doodle,' as he stood beside his gun;
There was laughter in his make-up, there was manhood in his face,
And he knew the best traditions and the courage of his race;
Now there's not a heart among us but should swell with loyal pride
When he thinks of Kelly Ingram and the splendid way he died.

On the swift Destroyer Cassin he was merely gunner's mate,
But up there to-day, I fancy, he is standing with the great.
On that grim day last October his position on the craft
Was that portion of the vessel which the sailors christen aft;
There were deep sea bombs beside him to be dropped upon the Hun
Who makes women folks his victims and then gloats o'er what he's done.

From the lookout came a warning; came the cry all sailors fear,
A torpedo was approaching, and the vessel's doom was near;
Ingram saw the streak of danger, but he saw a little more,
A greater menace faced them than that missile had in store;
If those deep sea bombs beside him were not thrown beneath the wave,
Every man aboard the Cassin soon would find a watery grave.

It was death for him to linger, but he figured if he ran
And quit his post of duty, 'twould be death for every man;
So he stood at his position, threw those depth bombs overboard,
And when that torpedo struck them, he went forth to meet his Lord.
Oh, I don't know how to say it, but these whole United States
Should remember Kelly Ingram—he who died to save his mates.

Edgar Albert Guest

Kindness

One never knows
How far a word of kindness goes;
One never sees
How far a smile of friendship flees.
Down, through the years,
The deed forgotten reappears.

One kindly word
The souls of many here has stirred.
Man goes his way
And tells with every passing day,
Until life's end:
'Once unto me he played the friend.'

We cannot say
What lips are praising us to-day.
We cannot tell
Whose prayers ask God to guard us well.
But kindness lives
Beyond the memory of him who gives.

Edgar Albert Guest

King

GIUSEPPE TOMASSI ees stylisha chap,
He wear da white collar an' cuff,
He says: 'For expanse I no giva da rap,
Da basta ees not good enough.'
When out weeth hees Rosa he wear da silk hat,
An' carry da cane lik' da lord;
He spenda hees money lik' dees, an' lik' dat,
For Giuseppe, he work at da Ford.

He smoke da seegar wit da beega da band,
Da tree-for-da-quart' ees da kind,
Da diamond dat flash from da back of hees hand
Ees da beegest Giuseppe could find.
He dress up hees Rosa in satin an' lace,
She no longer scrub at da board,
But putta da paint on da leeps an' da face,
For Giuseppe, he work at da Ford.

Giuseppe, ees strutta about lik' da keeng,
An' laugh at da hard-worka man
Who grinda da org' a few neekles to bring
Or sella da ripa banan'.
Each morning he waxa da blacka moustache
Then walk up an' down through da ward;
You batta he gotta da playnta da cash,
For Giuseppe, he work at da Ford.

Edgar Albert Guest

Laddies

Show me the boy who never threw
A stone at someone's cat,
Or never hurled a snowball swift
At someone's high silk hat —
Who never ran away from school,
To seek the swimming hole,
Or slyly from a neighbor's yard
Green apples never stole —

Show me the boy who never broke
A pane of window glass,
Who never disobeyed the sign
That says: 'Keep off the grass.'
Who never did a thousand things,
That grieve us sore to tell,
And I'll show you a little boy
Who must be far from well.

Edgar Albert Guest

Laughter

Laughter sort o' settles breakfast better than digestive pills;
Found it, somehow in my travels, cure for every sort of ills;
When the hired help have riled me with their slipshod, careless ways,
An' I'm bilin' mad an' cussin' an' my temper's all ablaze,
If the calf gets me to laughin' while they're teachin' him to feed
Pretty soon I'm feelin' better, 'cause I've found the cure I need.

Like to start the day with laughter; when I've had a peaceful night,
An' can greet the sun all smilin', that day's goin' to be all right.
But there's nothing goes to suit me, when my system's full of bile;
Even horses quit their pullin' when the driver doesn't smile,
But they'll buckle to the traces when they hear a glad giddap,
Just as though they like to labor for a cheerful kind o' chap.

Laughter keeps me strong an' healthy. You can bet I'm all run down,
Fit for doctor folks an' nurses when I cannot shake my frown.
Found in farmin' laughter's useful, good for sheep an' cows an' goats;
When I've laughed my way through summer, reap the biggest crop of oats.
Laughter's good for any business, leastwise so it seems to me
Never knew a smilin' feller but was busy as could be.

Sometimes sit an' think about it, ponderin' on the ways of life,
Wonderin' why mortals gladly face the toil an' care an' strife,
Then I come to this conclusion—take it now for what it's worth
It's the joy of laughter keeps us plodding on this stretch of earth.
Men the fun o' life are seeking—that's the reason for the calf
Spillin' mash upon his keeper—men are hungry for a laugh.

Edgar Albert Guest

Leader Of The Gang

Seems only just a year ago that he was toddling round the place
In pretty little colored suits and with a pink and shining face.
I used to hold him in my arms to watch when our canary sang,
And now tonight he tells me that he's leader of his gang.

It seems but yesterday, I vow, that I with fear was almost dumb,
Living those dreadful hours of care waiting the time for him to come;
And I can still recall the thrill of that first cry of his which rang
Within our walls. And now that babe tells me he's leader of his gang.

Gone from our lives are all the joys which yesterday we used to own;
The baby that we thought we had, out of the little home has flown,
And in his place another stands, whose garments in disorder hang,
A lad who now with pride proclaims that he's the leader of his gang.

And yet somehow I do not grieve for what it seems we may have lost;
To have so strong a boy as this, most cheerfully I pay the cost.
I find myself a sense of joy to comfort every little pang,
And pray that they shall find in him a worthy leader of the gang.

Edgar Albert Guest

Learn To Smile

The good Lord understood us when He taught us how to smile;
He knew we couldn't stand it to be solemn all the while;
He knew He'd have to shape us so that when our hearts were gay,
We could let our neighbors know it in a quick and easy way.

So He touched the lips of Adam and He touched the lips of Eve,
And He said: 'Let these be solemn when your sorrows make you grieve,
But when all is well in Eden and your life seems worth the while,
Let your faces wear the glory and the sunshine of a smile.

'Teach the symbol to your children, pass it down through all the years.
Though they know their share of sadness and shall weep their share of
tears,
Through the ages men and women shall prove their faith in Me
By the smile upon their faces when their hearts are trouble-free.'

The good Lord understood us when He sent us down to earth,
He knew our need for laughter and for happy signs of mirth;
He knew we couldn't stand it to be solemn all the while,
But must share our joy with others- so He taught us how to smile.

Edgar Albert Guest

Lemon Pie

The world is full of gladness,
 There are joys of many kinds,
There's a cure for every sadness,
 That each troubled mortal finds.
And my little cares grow lighter
 And I cease to fret and sigh,
And my eyes with joy grow brighter
 When she makes a lemon pie.

When the bronze is on the filling
 That's one mass of shining gold,
And its molten joy is spilling
 On the plate, my heart grows bold
And the kids and I in chorus
 Raise one glad exultant cry
And we cheer the treat before us
 Which is mother's lemon pie.

Then the little troubles vanish,
 And the sorrows disappear,
Then we find the grit to banish
 All the cares that hovered near,
And we smack our lips in pleasure
 O'er a joy no coin can buy,
And we down the golden treasure
 Which is known as lemon pie.

Edgar Albert Guest

Let's Go

'There isn't any business,' wailed the sad and gloomy man;
'I haven't made a dollar since the armistice began.'
But I couldn't help reflecting, as I heard his story through,
That the hopeful, cheerful hustler seems to have a lot to do.
I've been in business places where the air was thick with gloom
And the men were sad and solemn like the mourners at a tomb,
And there wasn't any business or an order coming in,
And, what's more, there never will be till those fellows start to grin.
'There isn't any business'—aren't you weary of the cry?
Men have caught the gloomy habit, and they sit around and sigh;
But the hustler, I have noticed, who has quit his easy chair
And is confidently working, seems to gather in his share.
It is time to get the business, it is time to hustle out
With a man's faith in the future— much too long we've scattered doubt,
Much too long we've sobbed and whimpered, much too long we've talked of woe;

Now it's time for optimism and the hopeful phrase,
'Let's go!'

Edgar Albert Guest

Life

Life is a jest;
Take the delight of it.
Laughter is best;
Sing through the night of it.
Swiftly the tear
And the hurt and the ache of it
Find us down here;
Life must be what we make of it.

Life is a song;
Let us dance to the thrill of it.
Grief's hours are long,
And cold is the chill of it.
Joy is man's need;
Let us smile for the sake of it.
This be our creed:
Life must be what we make of it.

Life is a soul;
The virtue and vice of it.
Strife for a goal,
And man's strength is the price of it.
Your life and mine,
The bare bread and the cake of it,
End in this line:
Life must be what we make of it.

Edgar Albert Guest

Life And Hereafter

NOT over there do I await
Reward for patience here below,
Not over there at Heaven's gate
Is all the joy that I shall know;
Not for the joys to be am I
Seeking the better, truer way,
All pleasure's not beyond the sky,
For I have my reward each day.

I hope for Heaven and all it means,
And hope to hear the Master tell,
When I have quit these earthly scenes,
That I have truly toiled and well;
But not alone for that I strive
To keep my soul unspotted here,
Honor has joys for all alive
That are as infinitely dear.

What can the great hereafter give
More precious than my children's love,
When I, on earth, shall cease to live,
And go to join the realms above?
Were there no future, then I say
I still should strive to faithful be,
That they would run at close of day
With loving arms to welcome me.

A baby's kiss, a faithful wife,
And friends who trust, are not these all
Rewards that honor earns in life,
Although your hoard of gold be small?
And though there were no future, would
You still not journey on your way
Striving, as ever, to be good
Just for the joys you know today?

And so I say, not ' over there,'
Do I sit sighing, ' I shall know
The perfect bliss, with ne'er a care '—

The perfect bliss is here below.
Nor do I dream of joys to be,
And wail the cares that now are mine,
Earth's glories now appeal to me,
And this life is almost divine.

Edgar Albert Guest

Life Is What We Make It

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Take the delight of it.
Laughter is best;
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Swiftly the tear
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Edgar Albert Guest

Life's Canvas

Sunshine and shadow and laughter and tears,
These are forever the paints of the years,
Splashed on the canvas of life day by day,
We are the artists, the colors are they.
We are the painters, the pigments we use
Never we're wholly permitted to chose.
Grief with its gray tint and joy with its red
Come from life's tubes to be blended and spread.

Here at the easel, the brushes at hand,
Each for a time is permitted to stand.
White was the canvas when first we began,
Ready to picture the life of a man.
Now we ar splashing the pigments about,
Knowing the reds and blues must give out,
Soon we must turn to the dull hues and gray,
Painting the sorrows that darken the way.

Now with the sunshine and now with the shade
Slowly but surely the picture is made.
Even the gray tints with beauty may glow
Recalling the joy of the lost long ago.
Let me not daub it with doubt and despair,
Deeds that are hasty, unkind and unfair,
But when the last bit of pigment is dried
Let me look back at my canvas with pride.

Edgar Albert Guest

Life's Single Standard

There are a thousand ways to cheat and a thousand ways to sin;
There are ways uncounted to lose the game, but there's only one way to win;
And whether you live by the sweat of your brow or in luxury's garb you're
dressed,
You shall stand at last, when your race is run, to be judged by the single
test.

Some men lie by the things they make; some lie in the deeds they do;
And some play false for a woman's love, and some for a cheer or two;
Some rise to fame by the force of skill, grow great by the might of power,
Then wreck the temple they toiled to build, in a single, shameful hour.

The follies outnumber the virtues good; sin lures in a thousand ways;
But slow is the growth of man's character and patience must mark his days;
For only those victories shall count, when the work of life is done,
Which bear the stamp of an honest man, and by courage and faith were won.

There are a thousand ways to fail, but only one way to win!
Sham cannot cover the wrong you do nor wash out a single sin,
And never shall victory come to you, whatever of skill you do,
Save you've done your best in the work of life and unto your best were
true.

Edgar Albert Guest

Life's Slacker

The saddest sort of death to die
Would be to quit the game called life
And know, beneath the gentle sky,
You'd lived a slacker in the strife.
That nothing men on earth would find
To mark the spot that you had filled;
That you must go and leave behind
No patch of soil your hands had tilled.

I know no greater shame than this:
To feel that yours were empty years;
That after death no man would miss
Your presence in this vale of tears;
That you had breathed the fragrant air
And sat by kindly fires that burn,
And in earth's riches had a share
But gave no labor in return.

Yet some men die this way, nor care:
They enter and they leave life's door
And at the end, their record's bare—
The world's no better than before.
A few false tears are shed, and then,
In busy service, they're forgot.
We have no time to mourn for men
Who lived on earth but served it not.

A man in perfect peace to die
Must leave some mark of toil behind,
Some building towering to the sky,
Some symbol that his heart was kind,
Some roadway where strange feet may tread
That out of gratitude he made;
He cannot bravely look ahead
Unless his debt to life is paid.

Edgar Albert Guest

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Edgar Albert Guest

Life's Tests

If never a sorrow came to us,
and never a care we knew;
If every hope were realized,
and every dream came true;
If only joy were found on earth,
and no one ever sighed,
And never a friend proved false to us,
and never a loved one died,
And never a burden bore us down,
soul-sick and weary, too,
We'd yearn for tests to prove our worth
and tasks for us to do.

Edgar Albert Guest

Lillian's Reading

AIRY, fairy Lillian,
What a naughty thing to do,
By noon had read a Laura
Libbey paper novel through.

By four o'clock another
Tale of love and passion trite
She had devoured, and on the third
Was well along by night.

But in the kitchen, Lillian's
Mother toiled with dish and spoon,
Endeavoring to work, and get
A lunch for dad at noon.

She washed the dishes, scrubbed the floors
And made each bed by four,
And even ironed every waist
That lovely Lillian wore.

Thus every Laura Libbey book
That lovely Lillian reads,
Is built on mushy love affairs
And mother's noble deeds.

Edgar Albert Guest

Lines For A Flag Raising Ceremony

FULL many a flag the breeze has kissed;
Through ages long the morning sun
Has risen over the early mist
The flags of men to look upon.
And some were red against the sky,
And some with colors true were gay,
And some in shame were born to die,
For Flags of hate must pass away.
Such symbols fall as men depart,
Brief is the reign of arrant might;
The vicious and the vile at heart
Give way in time before the right.

A flag is nothing in itself;
It but reflects the lives of men;
And they who lived and toiled for pelf
Went out as vipers in a den.
God cleans the sky from time to time
Of every tyrant flag that flies,
And every brazen badge of crime
Falls to the ground and swiftly dies.
Proud kings are mouldering in the dust;
Proud flags of ages past are gone;
Only the symbols of the just
Have lived and shall keep living on.

So long as we shall serve the truth,
So long as honor stamps us fair,
Each age shall pass unto its youth
Old Glory proudly flying there!
But if we fail our splendid past,
If we prove faithless, weak and base,
That age shall be our banner's last;
A fairer flag shall take its place.
This flag we fling unto the skies
Is but an emblem of our hearts,
And when our love of freedom dies,
Our banner with our race departs.

Full many a flag the breezes kiss,
Full many a flag the sun has known,
But none so bright and fair as this;
None quite so splendid as our own!
This tells the world that we are men
Who cling to manhood's ways and truth;
It is our soul's great voice and pen,
The strength of age, the guide of youth,
And it shall ever hold the sky
So long as we shall keep our trust;
But if our love of right shall die
Our Flag shall sink into the dust.

Edgar Albert Guest

Lines To The Wash Woman

LADY, when you say you'll come
Tuesday morn to do our washing,
Tell us if there isn't some
Way to know if you are joshing?

When you promise to be here
Toiling at our tubs and wringers,
And we think you are sincere,
Tell us, do you cross your fingers?

When we show you round our place,
And you vow you'll come and clean it,
How, we ask you to your face,
Can we know you really mean it?

You with promises are glib,
This we do not say to grieve you,
But so many times you fib,
Tell us when can we believe you?

Lady, when we rise at six,
Just to get the water boiling,
We are in a sorry fix
When you dodge your day of toiling.

All your failures leave us glum,
It's a shame to waste a day so,
If you do not mean to come,
Why on earth do you not say so?

Edgar Albert Guest

Literary Mother

HUSH, little ones don't make a noise
Pick up your dolls and pick up your toys,
Pick up your Teddy Bear, Johnny, now see
How quiet a youngster tonight you can be;
Daddy will wash up the dishes, while you
Quietly sit there to wait till he 's through;
Softly about we must tread on tip-toe,
Mother is writing a paper on Poe.

What is that noise? It's the scratch of her pen,
Mother has locked herself into my den,
Gone there to study, to ponder and write,
And we must give up all our laughter tonight.
Hush, there! Don't giggle. Be still while I sweep
And see just how quiet you children can keep.
Hey, there, you Johnny, don't romp about so,
Mother is writing a paper on Poe.

Come, now, you two-year-old, father will try
To put on your nightie and rock you bye, bye;
And, Johnny, you sit on the floor and take off
Your shoes and your stockings. Look out, don't you cough.
Poor kids, you've no mother tonight to undress you,
To sing you to sleep and to love and caress you,
Just an awkward old daddy, whose fingers are slow,
But then mother's writing a paper on Poe.

Oh, literature is a wonderful thing,
Of joy and delight a perennial Spring.
But gee! it is tough on the kids and their dad,
Who think that the evening 's the time to be glad;
And sometimes I think that the art is pernicious,
And often I wish mother wasn't ambitious,
Tonight as I sit here and rock to and fro,
All alone, I am cursing that paper on Poe.

Edgar Albert Guest

Little Feet

There is no music quite so sweet
As patter of a baby's feet.
Who never hears along the hall
The sound of tiny feet that fall
Upon the floor so soft and low
As eagerly they come or go,
Has missed, no matter who he be,
Life's most inspiring symphony.
There is a music of the spheres
Too fine to ring in mortal ears,
Yet not more delicate and sweet
Than pattering of baby feet;
Where'er I hear that pit-a-pat
Which falls upon the velvet mat,
Out of my dreamy nap I start
And hear the echo in my heart.
'Tis difficult to put in words
The music of the summer birds,
Yet far more difficult a thing—
A lyric for that pattering;
Here is a music telling me
Of golden joys that are to be;
Unheralded by horns and drums,
To me a regal caller comes,
Now on my couch I lie and hear
A little toddler coming near,
Coming right boldly to my place
To pull my hair and pat my face,
Undaunted by my age or size,
Nor caring that I am not wise—
A visitor devoid of sham
Who loves me just for what I am.
This soft low music tells to me
In just a minute I shall be
Made captive by a thousand charms,
Held fast by chubby little arms,
For there is one upon the way
Who thinks the world was made for play.
Oh, where's the sound that's half so sweet

As pattering of baby feet?

Edgar Albert Guest

Little Fellow

OH, you laughing little fellow, with your eyes agleam with fun,
And your golden curls a-mockin' all the splendor of the sun,
With your cheeks a wee bit redder than the petals of the rose,
You don't know just what you mean to your daddy, I suppose.

With your rompin' and your shoutin' an' your laughin' through the day,
You've no care of what's before you, what lies yonder down the way;
Why, your little brain is whirlin' with the gladness of the earth,
An' of course you have no notion of how much to me you're worth.

Jes' keep laughin', little fellow, keep those eyes agleam with fun,
Jes' keep rompin' in the meadows an' a-dancin' in the sun,
For the bloom of health upon you is the thing I want to see,
Coz, you bright-eyed little fellow, you are all the world to me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Little Fishermen

A little ship goes out to sea
As soon as we have finished tea;
Off yonder where the big moon glows
This tiny little vessel goes,
But never grown-up eyes have seen
The ports to which this ship has been;
Upon the shore the old folks stand
Till morning brings it back to land.

In search of smiles this little ship
Each evening starts upon a trip;
Just smiles enough to last the day
Is it allowed to bring away;
So nightly to some golden shore
It must set out alone for more,
And sail the rippling sea for miles
Until the hold is full of smiles.

By gentle hands the sails are spread;
The stars are glistening overhead
And in that hour when tiny ships
Prepare to make their evening trips
The sea becomes a wondrous place,
As beautiful as mother's face;
And all the day's disturbing cries
Give way to soothing lullabies.

No clang of bell or warning shout
Is heard on shore when they put out;
The little vessels slip away
As silently as does the day.
And all night long on sands of gold
They cast their nets, and fill the hold
With smiles and joys beyond compare,
To cheer a world that's sad with care.

Edgar Albert Guest

Little Girls

God made the little boys for fun, for rough and tumble times of play;
He made their little legs to run and race and scamper through the day.
He made them strong for climbing trees, he suited them for horns and
drums,
And filled them full of revelries so they could be their father's chums.
But then He saw that gentle ways must also travel from above.
And so, through all our troubled days He sent us little girls to love.

He knew that earth would never do, unless a bit of Heaven it had.
Men needed eyes divinely blue to toil by day and still be glad.
A world where only men and boys made merry would in time grow stale,
And so He shared His Heavenly joys that faith in Him should never fail.
He sent us down a thousand charms, He decked our ways with golden curls
And laughing eyes and dimpled arms. He let us have His little girls.

They are the tenderest of His flowers, the little angels of His flock,
And we may keep and call them ours, until God's messenger shall knock.
They bring to us the gentleness and beauty that we sorely need;
They soothe us with each fond caress and strengthen us for every deed.
And happy should that mortal be whom God has trusted, through the years,
To guard a little girl and see that she is kept from pain and tears.

Edgar Albert Guest

Little Girls Are Best

Little girls are mighty nice,
Take 'em any way they come;
They are always worth their price;
Life without 'em would be glum;
Run earth's lists of treasures through,
Pile 'em high until they fall,
Gold an' costly jewels, too-
Little girls are best of all.

Nothing equals 'em on earth!
I'm an old man an' I know
Any little girl is worth
More than all the gold below;
Eyes o' blue or brown or gray,
Raven hair or golden curls,
There's no joy on earth to-day
Quite so fine as little girls.

Pudgy nose or freckled face,
Fairy-like or plain to see,
God has surely blessed the place
Where a little girl may be;
They're the jewels of His crown
Dropped to earth from heaven above,
Like wee angel souls sent down
To remind us of His love.

God has made some lovely things-
Roses red an' skies o' blue,
Trees an' babbling silver springs,
Gardens glistening with dew-
But take every gift to man,
Big an' little, great an' small,
Judge it on its merits, an'
Little girls are best of all!

Edgar Albert Guest

Little Marie

I REMEMBER the day that you came to me,
Little Marie,
The nurse brought you out so that I might
see

Little Marie.

Oh, this heart o' mine leapt as I gazed at you
And got my first peep at those eyes o' blue,
And I kissed your cheek and I hugged you, too,
Little Marie.

I remember the very first word you spake,
Little Marie,
The very first steps that you tried to take,
Little Marie;

I remember the very first bump you got
And you came to me and I kissed the spot;
Of your bumps and bruises I've cured a lot,
Little Marie.

The birds in the tree still sing your name,
Little Marie;
The roses somehow aren't quite the same,
Little Marie;
And there isn't a nook in the home or yard
But what like my battered old heart you've scarred;
And we miss you so, and it's oh, so hard!
Little Marie.

You smiled when I said I was losing you,
Little Marie;
You said you'd come back in a year or two,
Little Marie;
And your mother prays, and I say amen,
That we'll be grandpa and grandma then,
And you will place in our arms again
A little Marie.

Edgar Albert Guest

Little Master Mischievous

Little Master Mischievous, that's the name for you;
There's no better title that describes the things you do:
Into something all the while where you shouldn't be,
Prying into matters that are not for you to see;
Little Master Mischievous, order's overthrown
If your mother leaves you for a minute all alone.

Little Master Mischievous, opening every door,
Spilling books and papers round about the parlor floor,
Scratching all the tables and marring all the chairs,
Climbing where you shouldn't climb and tumbling down the stairs.
How'd you get the ink well? We can never guess.
Now the rug is ruined; so's your little dress.

Little Master Mischievous, in the cookie jar,
Who has ever told you where the cookies are?
Now your sticky fingers smear the curtains white;
You have finger-printed everything in sight.
There's no use in scolding; when you smile that way
You can rob of terror every word we say.

Little Master Mischievous, that's the name for you;
There's no better title that describes the things you do:
Prying into corners, peering into nooks,
Tugging table covers, tearing costly books.
Little Master Mischievous, have your roguish way;
Time, I know, will stop you, soon enough some day

Edgar Albert Guest

Little Miss Laugh-A-Lot

LITTLE Miss Laugh-a-Lot,
Saucy the way you've got,
Dancing with glee are the bright eyes of you;
Lips like the red, red rose,
Cunning, your little nose,
Cheeks like the summer peach sparkling with dew;
Mischievous romping tot,
Little Miss Laugh-a-Lot,
Over this heart of mine you've worked a spell,
You've got me, heart and soul,
Under your sly control,
In that glad smile of yours all my joys dwell.

Little Miss Laugh-a-Lot,
Merry the way you've got,
What you say goes with your battered old dad.
Kings, in their pompous way,
Hold no such magic sway
Over their subjects, as you've always had;
Your word is law with me,
Your throne, you've made my knee,
Empress, you rule me by night and by day.
By you I'm always swayed,
Your commands I've obeyed,
Always I'm ready when you bid me play.

Little Miss Laugh-a-Lot,
Roguish the ways you've got,
Sly are the tricks that you play on your dad,
Wheedling and coaxing him,
Fooling and hoaxing him,
Forcing this grizzly old bear to be glad.
Life holds no sweeter bliss
Than your caress and kiss,
Earth has no beauty so rare as your smile,
While I have you to love,
You to be servant of,
Nothing else matters, this world is worth while.

Little Miss Six O'Clock

JUST at the edge of the night and the morning,
Little Miss Six O'clock comes to my bed,
A sweet little laugh is her musical warning
That day time is here and the night time is fled.
And I am so sleepy, and I am so weary,
I want to doze on for an hour or two more,
But Little Miss Six O'clock, bright-eyed and cheery,
Has come to announce that the sleep time is o'er.

Little Miss Six O'clock, that's what I call her,
As brim full of fun as a rose is of dew;
And as sweet as a rose, only plumper and taller,
Comes to announce that the night time is through.
Smiles that are brighter than May sunbeams dancing
Already out there on the velvety lawn,
Over the counterpane bounding and prancing,
Little Miss Six O'clock heralds the morn.

'Wake up, lazy daddy 1 wake up, it is day time!'
She shouts in my ear as she tickles my nose,
'Wake up, lazy daddy! it's morning and play time!'
Then she tickles my ribs with her little pink _toes.
For a minute or more I pretend to be sleeping,
Till over her face comes the trace of a pout,
And Little Miss Six O'clock shows signs of weeping,
Then 'O, my goodness, is that you?' I shout.

We bounce and we roll and bump and jump,
And under the covers I hide away,
And I pretend I 'm an old tree stump
Out in the woods where the fairies play.
I've forgotten that I was a tired old dad
Who wanted to sleep, and I 'm trouble free;
And every morning my heart is glad
When Little Miss Six O'clock comes to me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Little Wrangles

Lord, we've had our little wrangles, an' we've had our little bouts;
There's many a time, I reckon, that we have been on the outs;
My tongue's a trifle hasty an' my temper's apt to fly,
An' Mother, let me tell you, has a sting in her reply,
But I couldn't live without her, an' it's plain as plain can be
That in fair or sunny weather Mother needs a man like me.

I've banged the door an' muttered angry words beneath my breath,
For at times when she was scoldin' Mother's plagued me most to death,
But we've always laughed it over, when we'd both cooled down a bit,
An' we never had a difference but a smile would settle it.
An' if such a thing could happen, we could share life's joys an' tears
An' live right on together for another thousand years.

Some men give up too easy in the game o' married life;
They haven't got the courage to be worthy of a wife;
An' I've seen a lot o' women that have made their lives a mess,
'Cause they couldn't bear the burdens that are, mixed with happiness.
So long as folks are human they'll have many faults that jar,
An' the way to live with people is to take them as they are.

We've been forty years together, good an' bad, an' rain an' shine;
I've forgotten Mother's faults now an' she never mentions mine.
In the days when sorrow struck us an' we shared a common woe
We just leaned upon each other, an' our weakness didn't show.
An' I learned how much I need her an' how tender she can be
An' through it, maybe, Mother saw the better side o' me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Living

The miser thinks he's living when he's hoarding up his gold;
The soldier calls it living when he's doing something bold;
The sailor thinks it living to be tossed upon the sea,
And upon this very subject no two men of us agree.
But I hold to the opinion, as I walk my way along,
That living's made of laughter and good-fellowship and song.
I wouldn't call it living to be always seeking gold,
To bank all the present gladness for the days when I'll be old.
I wouldn't call it living to spend all my strength for fame,
And forego the many pleasures which to-day are mine to claim.
I wouldn't for the splendor of the world set out to roam,
And forsake my laughing children and the peace I know at home.
Oh, the thing that I call living isn't gold or fame at all!
It's fellowship and sunshine, and it's roses by the wall.
It's evenings glad with music and a hearth-fire that's ablaze,
And the joys which come to mortals in a thousand different ways.
It is laughter and contentment and the struggle for a goal;
It is everything that's needful in the shaping of a soul.

Edgar Albert Guest

Living Flowers

'I'm never alone in the garden,' he said. 'I'm
never alone with the flowers.

It seems like I'm meeting the wonderful dead
out here with these blossoms of ours.

An' there's never a bush or a plant or a tree, but
somebody loved it of old.

An' the souls of the angels come talkin' to me
through the petals of crimson an' gold.

'The lilacs in spring bring the mother once more,
an' she lives in the midsummer rose.

She smiles in the peony clump at the door, an'
sings when the four o'clocks close.

She loved every blossom God gave us to own, an'
daily she gave it her care.

So never I walk in the garden alone, for I feel
that the mother's still there.

'These are the pinks that a baby once kissed,
still spicy with fragrance an' fair.

The years have been long since her laughter I've
missed, but her spirit is hovering there.

The roses that ramble and twine on the wall were
planted by one that was kind

An' I'm sure as I stand here an' gaze on them all,
that his soul has still lingered behind.

'I'm never alone in the garden,' he said, 'I
have many to talk with an' see,

For never a flower comes to bloom in its bed, but
it brings back a loved one to me.

An' I fancy whenever I'm bendin' above these
blossoms of crimson an' gold,

That I'm seein' an' hearin' the ones that I love,
who lived in the glad days of old.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Living Monuments

OUR children are our monuments,
The little ones we leave behind,
If they are good and brave and kind,
And labor here with true intents,
Our lives and work perpetuate
Far more than marble tablets great.

Far rather would I pass away
And leave a sturdy son of mine,
Whom I had taught to love the fine,
The just and honest; in his day
To serve the world with courage bold,
Than have my life on granite told.

I'd rather feel when death is near
That in my children I shall live;
No monument of stone would give
Me greater glory, year by year,
Than sons and daughters treading on
In truth and honor when I'm gone.

Who leaves a sturdy son on earth,
A noble daughter, sweet and pure,
Has monuments that long endure.
He needs no shaft to prove his worth;
The luster of his children's deeds
Are all the monuments he needs.

Edgar Albert Guest

Loafing

Under the shade of trees,
Flat on my back at ease,
Lulled by the hum of bees,
There's where I rest;
Breathing the scented air,
Lazily loafing there,
Never a thought of care,
Peace in my breast.
There where the waters run,
Laughing along in fun,
I go when work is done,
There's where I stray;
Couch of a downy green,
Restful and sweet and clean,
Set in a fairy scene,
Wondrously gay.
Worn out with toil and strife,
Sick of the din of life,
With pain and sorrow rife,
There's where I go;
Soothing and sweet I find,
Comforts that ease the mind,
Leaving dull care behind,
Rest there I know.
Flat on my back I lie,
Watching the ships go by,
Under the fleecy sky,
Day dreaming there;
From grief I find surcease,
From worry gain release,
Resting in perfect peace,
Free from all care.

Edgar Albert Guest

Lonely

The walls have seemed to say to me
Where have the sticky fingers gone
That always found their way to me,
And left their prints to gaze upon.
The halls have worn a gloomy air
And seemed like tunnels, dark and black,
And it has seemed that every chair
Has asked me when they're coming back.

The stairs have seemed to speak to me
Each night as I have climbed alone,
And pitifully squeak to me:
'Where have the little people flown?'
The beds all smooth and sternly kept
Have said with faces drawn and white
Where are the curly heads that slept
On us, so sweetly, every night?

The untouched toys have stared at me
As if to say the days are long,
And all their dolls have glared at me
As though accusing me of wrong.
And every rug so straight and stiff
Has seemed to sigh for rumpling feet,
And worn a sorry look as if
It missed the mud-tracks of the street.

The bird has twittered low to me
A sort of solemn, sad refrain
As though he tried to show to me
He wishes they were near again.
But soon the walls and halls and chairs
Will know once more the charm they lack,
And little feet will race the stairs,
They've sent me word they're coming back.

Edgar Albert Guest

Looking Back

I might have been rich if I'd wanted the gold instead of the friendships
I've made.

I might have had fame if I'd sought for renown in the hours when I
purposely played.

Now I'm standing to-day on the far edge of life, and I'm just looking
backward to see

What I've done with the years and the days that were mine, and all that
has happened to me.

I haven't built much of a fortune to leave to those who shall carry my
name,

And nothing I've done shall entitle me now to a place on the tablets of
fame.

But I've loved the great sky and its spaces of blue; I've lived with the
birds and the trees;

I've turned from the splendor of silver and gold to share in such pleasures
as these.

I've given my time to the children who came; together we've romped and
we've played,

And I wouldn't exchange the glad hours spent with them for the money that
I might have made.

I chose to be known and be loved by the few, and was deaf to the plaudits
of men;

And I'd make the same choice should the chance come to me to live my life
over again.

I've lived with my friends and I've shared in their joys, known sorrow with
all of its tears;

I have harvested much from my acres of life, though some say I've
squandered my years.

For much that is fine has been mine to enjoy, and I think I have lived to
my best,

And I have no regret, as I'm nearing the end, for the gold that I might
have possessed.

Edgar Albert Guest

Lord, Make Me A Regular Man

This I would like to be- braver and bolder,
Just a bit wiser because I am older,
Just a bit kinder to those I may meet,
Just a bit manlier taking defeat;
This for the New Year my wish and my plea-
Lord, make a regular man out of me.

This I would like to be- just a bit finer,
More of a smiler and less of a whiner,
Just a bit quicker to stretch out my hand
Helping another who's struggling to stand,
This is my prayer for the New Year to be,
Lord, make a regular man out of me.

This I would like to be- just a bit fairer,
Just a bit better, and just a bit squarer,
Not quite so ready to censure and blame,
Quicker to help every man in the game,
Not quite so eager men's failings to see,
Lord, make a regular man out of me.

This I would like to be- just a bit truer,
Less of the wisher and more of the doer,
Broader and bigger, more willing to give,
Living and helping my neighbor to live!
This for the New Year my prayer and my plea-
Lord, make a regular man out of me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Loser And Victor

He was beaten from the start,
Beaten by his doubting heart,
And he had a ready ear
For the busy tongue of fear,
And he had a timid mind
Unto fretfulness inclined,
Filled with many reasons why
It was vain for him to try.
Given a task he'd shake his head,
'Can't do that!' he often said,
'Times are hard and none will stay,
Listen to the words I say.
It is futile now to try,
People simply will not buy!'
Thus he walked the streets of trade,
Both discouraged and afraid.

But another kind of man
Thought this way: 'Perhaps I can!
If I will supply the pluck,
Fortune may provide the luck.
If I have the grit to try,
There are people who may buy;
Anyhow, I'll not submit
To defeat before I'm hit.'
One was beaten from the start,
Beaten by his doubting heart,
Beaten when he gave his ear
To the busy tongue of fear.
But another with his chance
Seized the moment to advance,
And came happy home at night
Just because he dared to fight.

Edgar Albert Guest

Lost Opportunities

'When I am rich,' he used to say,
'A thousand joys I'll give away;
I'll walk among the poor I find
And unto one and all be kind.
I'll place a wreath of roses red
Upon the bier of all my dead;
I'll help the struggling youth to climb;
In doing good I'll spend my time;
To all in need I'll friendly be
The day that fortune smiles on me.'

He never guessed that being kind
Depends upon the heart and mind
And not upon the purse at all;
That poor men's gifts, however small,
Make light some weary traveler's load
And smooth for him his troubled road.
He never knew or understood
The fellowship of doing good.
Because he had not much to spare
He thought it vain to give his share.

Yet many passed him, day by day,
He might have helped along the way.
He fancied kindness something which
Belongs entirely to the rich.
And so he lived and toiled for gold,
Unsympathetic, harsh and cold,
Intending all the time to share
The burdens that his brothers bear
When he possessed great wealth, and he
Could well afford a friend to be.

His fortune came, but, oh, too late;
The poor about him could not wait.
They never guessed and never knew
The things that he had meant to do.
Few knew how much he'd planned to give
If God had only let him live.

And when at last his form was cold,
All that he'd left on earth was gold.
A kindly name is something which
A man must earn before he's rich.

Edgar Albert Guest

Love

Love

Truth went forth on a search one day
I For the source of love that he might say
He had found its depth and its breadth for aye.

He met a miser, bent and old,
And his mission to him he promptly told;
'Love,' said the miser, 'is yellow gold.'

He sought a maiden, young and fair,
With orange blossoms in her hair,
Who whispered, 'My love is waiting there.'

To a struggling youth at last Truth came,
As he toiled and studied and spoke his name;
'Love,' said the youth, 'is a thing called fame.'

'Love!' mocked a man with features sour,
Before whom others were made to cower,
'Love! yes, love is worldly power.'

A pale, weak woman Truth chanced to see,
Rocking a baby on her knee;
'Only a mother knows love,' said she.

Edgar Albert Guest

Lullaby

The golden dreamboat's ready, all her silken sails are spread,
And the breeze is gently blowing to the fairy port of Bed,
And the fairy's captain's waiting while the busy sandman flies
With the silver dust of slumber, closing every baby's eyes.

Oh, the night is rich with moonlight and the sea is calm with peace,
And the angels fly to guard you and their watch shall never cease,
And the fairies there await you; they have splendid dreams to spin;
You shall hear them gayly singing as the dreamboat's putting in.

Like the ripple of the water does the dreamboat's whistle blow,
Only baby ears can catch it when it comes the time to go,
Only little ones may journey on so wonderful a ship,
And go drifting off to slumber with no care to mar the trip.

Oh, the little eyes are heavy but the little soul is light;
It shall never know a sorrow or a terror through the night.
And at last when dawn is breaking and the dreamboat's trip is o'er,
You shall wake to find the mother smiling over you once more.

Edgar Albert Guest

Ma An' Me

There've been times we'd disagree
Somethin' awful, Ma an' me;
Times when I would bang the door
Never to come back no more,
An' go stompin' down the street
Sayin' things I won't repeat;
Vowin' that the only course
For us two was a di-vorce.
Then when it come time for tea
We'd make up, would Ma an' me.

We've had many a lively spat
Arguin' over this an' that.
There've been times when Ma got mad,
Said enough o' me she'd had,
Tired o' listenin' to me jaw;
Reckoned that she'd go t' law,
Tell the judge her tale o' woe,
An' my own way I could go.
Then the children we would see
An' we'd laugh, would Ma an' me.

Ma an' me ain't angels quite,
Neither of us does things right.
She's got reason fer complaint,
She ain't married to a saint;
Guess I've tried her patience more
Than the children round the door;
An' at times, by all that's fine,
Ma has certainly tried mine.
But together still are we,
Pals an' lovers — Ma an' me.

We've just plodded on the way
Hand in hand from day to day,
Workin' for the greatest good,
Doin' just the best we could.
Gettin' mad, as people will,
But remainin' faithful still.

An' we've never gone to bed
Till we took back all we said,
Kissed, an' vowed we'd always be
Pals an' sweethearts—Ma an' me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Ma And Her Checkbook

Ma has a dandy little book that's full of narrow
slips,
An' when she wants to pay a bill a page from
it she rips;
She just writes in the dollars and the cents and
signs her name
An' that's as good as money, though it doesn't
look the same.
When she wants another bonnet or some
feathers for her neck,
She promptly goes an' gets 'em, an' she writes
another check.
I don't just understand it, but I know she
sputters when
Pa says to her at supper: 'Well! You're
overdrawn again!'

Ma's not a business woman, she is much too
kind of heart
To squabble over pennies or to play a selfish
part,
An' when someone asks for money, she's not
one to stop an' think
Of a little piece of paper an' the cost of pen
an' ink.
She just tells him very sweetly if he'll only
wait a bit
An' be seated in the parlor, she will write a
check for it.
She can write one out for twenty just as easily
as ten,
An' forgets that Pa may grumble: 'Well,
you're overdrawn again!'

Pa says it looks as though he'll have to start in
workin' nights
To gather in the money for the checks that
mother writes.
He says that every morning when he's summoned

to the phone,
He's afraid the bank is calling to make mother's
shortage known.
He tells his friends if ever anything our fortune
wrecks
They can trace it to the moment mother started
writing checks.
He's got so that he trembles when he sees her
fountain pen
An' he mutters: 'Do be careful! You'll be
overdrawn again!'

Edgar Albert Guest

Ma And The Auto

Before we take an auto ride Pa says to Ma: 'My dear,
Now just remember I don't need suggestions from the rear.
If you will just sit still back there and hold in check your fright,
I'll take you where you want to go and get you back all right.
Remember that my hearing's good and also I'm not blind,
And I can drive this car without suggestions from behind.'

Ma promises that she'll keep still, then off we gaily start,
But soon she notices ahead a pedlar and his cart.
'You'd better toot your horn,' says she, 'to let him know we're near;
He might turn out!' and Pa replies: 'Just shriek at him, my dear.'
And then he adds: 'Some day, some guy will make a lot of dough
By putting horns on tonneau seats for womenfolks to blow!'

A little farther on Ma cries: 'He signalled for a turn!'
And Pa says: 'Did he?' in a tone that's hot enough to burn.
'Oh, there's a boy on roller skates!' cries Ma. 'Now do go slow.
I'm sure he doesn't see our car.' And Pa says: 'I dunno,
I think I don't need glasses yet, but really it may be
That I am blind and cannot see what's right in front of me.'

If Pa should speed the car a bit some rigs to hurry past
Ma whispers: 'Do be careful now. You're driving much too fast.'
And all the time she's pointing out the dangers of the street
And keeps him posted on the roads where trolley cars he'll meet.
Last night when we got safely home, Pa sighed and said: 'My dear,
I'm sure we've all enjoyed the drive you gave us from the rear!'

Edgar Albert Guest

Ma And The Ouija Board

I don't know what it's all about, but Ma says that she wants to know
If spirits in the other world can really talk to us below.

An' Pa says, 'Gosh! there's folks enough on earth to talk to, I should
think,

Without you pesterin' the folks whose souls have gone across the brink.'
But Ma, she wants to find out things an' study on her own accord,
An' so a month or two ago she went an' bought a ouija board.

It's just a shiny piece of wood, with letters printed here an' there,
An' has a little table which you put your fingers on with care,
An' then you sit an' whisper low some question that you want to know.
Then by an' by the spirit comes an' makes the little table go,
An' Ma, she starts to giggle then an' Pa just grumbles out, 'Oh, Lord!
I wish you hadn't bought this thing. We didn't need a ouija board.'

'You're movin' it!' says Ma to Pa. 'I'm not!' says Pa, 'I know it's you;
You're makin' it spell things to us that you know very well aren't true.'
'That isn't so,' says Ma to him, 'but I am certain from the way
The ouija moves that you're the one who's tellin' it just what to say.'
'It's just 'lectricity,' says Pa; 'like batteries all men are stored,
But anyhow I don't believe we ought to have a ouija board.'

One night Ma got it out, an' said, 'Now, Pa, I want you to be fair,
Just keep right still an' let your hands rest lightly on the table there.
Oh, Ouija, tell me, tell me true, are we to buy another car,
An' will we get it very soon?' she asked. 'Oh, tell us from afar.'
'Don't buy a car,' the letters spelled, 'the price this year you can't
afford.'
Then Ma got mad, an' since that time she's never used the ouija board.

Edgar Albert Guest

Magazine Girl

ALL women are lovely and radiantly fair
In the magazine pages today,
They all have a mop of luxuriant hair,
In the magazine pages today.
There's not one with freckles or nose gone askew,
Or teeth that protrude, as some real girls' do,
There isn't a blemish on girls that we view
In the magazine pages today.

There's not one too pudgy or not one too thin,
In the magazine pages today;
Nor one who's just losing her tortoise shell pin,
In the magazine pages today.
'Twixt shirtwaist and belt there is never a gap,
Or a tear in the silk that is lining her wrap,
And her gloves never lack a pearl button or snap,
In the magazine pages today.

She doesn't wear pink when she ought to wear blue,
In the magazine pages today;
And she isn't run down at the heel of her shoe,
In the magazine pages today.
You never can see when she hasn't a hat,
How much is real hair and how much of it's rat,
It's only in real life that we see things like that,
Not in magazine pages today.

Edgar Albert Guest

Making The House A Home

Here's our story, page by page,
Happy youth and middle-age,
Smile and tear-drop, weal and woe
Such as all who live must know-
Here it is all written down,
Not for glory or renown,
But the hope when we are gone
Those who bravely follow on
Meeting care and pain and grief
Will not falter in belief.

Edgar Albert Guest

Man And Lathe

I'm standing at my lathe all day
And this is what I hear it say:
'The best of you, the best of me
Are needed now across the sea.
We do not hear the cannon roar,
No aeroplane comes sailing o'er
Our heads, and yet from day to day
We two are soldiers in the fray.

'Oh, hand that guides me now, be true,
A mighty task is mine to do.
'Tis time to shape and cut the steel,
With every turning of my wheel.
I'm building for that better day
When tyranny shall pass away.
Speed up! Speed up! This thing I make
May save a thousand lives at stake.'

I whisper to my lathe: 'Be strong,
We toil today to right a wrong.
Some of us march 10 fife and drum.
My music is your busy hum,
And this the hymn you sing to me,
Always. 'My Country 'Tis of Thee.'
This very day, this very hour
We'll serve the flag with all our power.

'Oh lathe of mine, across the sea
They need the work of you and me!
They will be fine if we be true,
They'll hold the line, if we but do
This task that now to us is set,
Let's keep the faith and not forget!
Speed up! Speed up! Across the sea
Our soldiers wait on you and me'

Edgar Albert Guest

Manhood's Greeting

I've' felt some little thrills of pride, I've inwardly rejoiced
Along the pleasant lanes of life to hear my praises voiced;
No great distinction have I claimed, but in a humble way
Some satisfactions sweet have come to brighten many a day;
But of the joyous thrills of life the finest that could be
Was mine upon that day when first a stranger 'mistered' me.

I had my first long trousers on, and wore a derby too,
But I was still a little boy to everyone I knew.
I dressed in manly fashion, and I tried to act the part,
But I felt that I was awkward and lacked the manly art.
And then that kindly stranger spoke my name and set me free;
I was sure I'd come to manhood on the day he 'mistered' me.

I never shall forget the joy that suddenly was mine,
The sweetness of the thrill that seemed to dance along my spine,
The pride that swelled within me, as he shook my youthful hand
And treated me as big enough with grown up men to stand.
I felt my body straighten and a stiffening at each knee,
And was gloriously happy, just because he'd 'mistered' me.

I cannot now recall his name, I only wish I could.
I've often wondered if that day he really understood
How much it meant unto a boy, still wearing boyhood's tan,
To find that others noticed that he'd grown to be a man.
Now I try to treat as equal every growing boy I see
In memory of that kindly man—the first to 'mister' me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Man's Experience

A SCRAMBLE for gold,
And a scurry for place,
A brief pause for loving,
A kiss, an embrace,
A ring; then the altar,
A vow to be true,
Then back to the turmoil
To scramble for two.

For man's the provider,
And ever he strives
To care for his loved ones
And brighten their lives.
A year or so passes,
Still toiling is he,
'A boy!' says the doctor,
'Now scramble for three.'

For this is the common
Experience of men,
A small raise in salary
Comes now and then.
But ever we hurry
And scramble by day,
For the fam'ly increases
As fast as our pay.

Edgar Albert Guest

Marjorie

The house is as it was when she was here;
There's nothing changed at all about the place;
The books she loved to read are waiting near
As if to-morrow they would see her face;
Her room remains the way it used to be,
Here are the puzzles that she pondered on:
Yet since the angels called for Marjorie
The joyous spirit of the home has gone.
All things grew lovely underneath her touch,
The room was bright because it knew her smile;
From her the tiniest trinket gathered much,
The cheapest toy became a thing worth while;
Yet here are her possessions as they were,
No longer joys to set the eyes aglow;
To-day, as we, they seem to mourn for her,
And share the sadness that is ours to know.
Half sobbing now, we put her games away,
Because, dumb things, they cannot understand
Why never more shall Marjorie come to play,
And we have faith in God at our command.
These toys we smiled at once, now start our tears,
They seem to wonder why they lie so still,
They call her name, and will throughout the years—
God, strengthen us to bow unto Thy will.

Edgar Albert Guest

Mark Twain

MARK TWAIN is dead! No, no, that cannot be,
Say rather Clemens knows life's mystery,
Say rather Clemens has been called above,
But Twain still lives for all the world to love.

Mark Twain is dead! 'T is false, I'll not believe,
For Clemens only will I pause to grieve,
But Twain still lives, 't is Clemens passes by,
Mark Twain, Mark Twain was never born to die.

The hand that held the pen is nerveless now,
The chill of death rests coldly on his brow,
The voice that made us laugh will speak no more,
But Twain still lives to cheer us as before.

'T is Clemens who has torn the veil aside,
Who knows what is beyond the great divide,
'T is Clemens who is gone, who leaves behind
Mark Twain to cheer and comfort humankind.

Edgar Albert Guest

Mary

She was gentle, she was true,
And her tender eyes of blue
Seemed to mock the morning sunbeams
And the starlight of the night;
And her laughter seemed to trill
Like the ripple of the rill,
And there never was a trouble
That she didn't make all right.

What though rough had been my way,
And the bitter hours of day
Had depressed my coward spirit
Till it only saw the gloom,
She could lift me from the strife
And bring back the joy of life,
For her smiling presence brightened
And made radiant the room.

Oh, so simple were her ways,
Oh, so merry were the days
That we trod life's lane together
Hand in hand, like children gay;
But my troubles seem to be
Mountain high today to me
For there are no happy evenings
When we laugh them all away.

Now the sunbeams dance and smile,
But I'm looking all the while
For the soft blue eyes of Mary
Who has passed beyond the night;
But I bravely tread my way
For I know there'll come a day
When she'll laugh away my sorrows
And make all my burdens light.

Edgar Albert Guest

Memorial Day

The finest tribute we can pay
Unto our hero dead to-day,
Is not a rose wreath, white and red,
In memory of the blood they shed;
It is to stand beside each mound,
Each couch of consecrated ground,
And pledge ourselves as warriors true
Unto the work they died to do.

Into God's valleys where they lie
At rest, beneath the open sky,
Triumphant now o'er every foe,
As living tributes let us go.
No wreath of rose or immortelles
Or spoken word or tolling bells
Will do to-day, unless we give
Our pledge that liberty shall live.

Our hearts must be the roses red
We place above our hero dead;
To-day beside their graves we must
Renew allegiance to their trust;
Must bare our heads and humbly say
We hold the Flag as dear as they,
And stand, as once they stood, to die
To keep the Stars and Stripes on high.

The finest tribute we can pay
Unto our hero dead to-day
Is not of speech or roses red,
But living, throbbing hearts instead,
That shall renew the pledge they sealed
With death upon the battlefield:
That freedom's flag shall bear no stain
And free men wear no tyrant's chain.

Edgar Albert Guest

Memories Of Tomorrow

These are the memories of tomorrow,
Smile of friend we meet today,
Sympathy to soothe our sorrow,
Roses blooming by the way;
Little jests to cheer the living,
Little deeds of kindness done,
Thought to them shall we be giving
When the years have wandered on.

What seems slight to us at present
Will grow big in other days;
Memory will make it pleasant,
We'll retread these happy ways.
We shall sigh to greet the brother
That today we hurry by;
Joys we share with one another
We'll remember, you and I.

Little pranks that we are playing,
Little songs that now we sing,
Orchard lanes that we are straying
Will come back, and with them bring
Far more gladness, far more sweetness
Than we seem to find today,
We shall see them in completeness
When the present slips away.

Gentle skies that float above us,
Babies romping 'round the floor,
Friends who show us that they love us,
Roses blooming at the door;
Hours now dark with care and sorrow,
Love that comes to dry the eye
Are the memories of tomorrow
We shall treasure, you and I.

Edgar Albert Guest

Memory

I stood and watched him playing,
A little lad of three,
And back to me came straying
The years that used to be;
In him the boy was Maying
Who once belonged to me.

The selfsame brown his eyes were
As those that once I knew;
As glad and gay his cries were,
He owned his laughter, too.
His features, form and size were
My baby's, through and through.

His ears were those I'd sung to;
His chubby little hands
Were those that I had clung to;
His hair in golden strands
It seemed my heart was strung to
By love's unbroken bands.

With him I lived the old days
That seem so far away;
The beautiful and bold days
When he was here to play;
The sunny and the gold days
Of that remembered May.

I know not who he may be
Nor where his home may be,
But I shall every day be
In hope again to see
The image of the baby
Who once belonged to me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Men And Dreamers

IT'S one o' my idees that men ain't all of fightin' stock,
They ain't all built fer ploughin' or fer hewin' out a rock;
An' they ain't all made fer battlin' up against life's steady stream,
There must be some of us on earth God put here jes' to dream;
Leastwise it strikes me that way — if it wasn't so, I guess,
Instead o' dreamin' here I 'd be out hustlin' fer success.

There's men that's fond o' money and there's men in love with fame,
An' there's others seekin' glory an' a great an' honored name;
There's men that's built fer fightin', men who love to plan an' scheme,
Men that's born with love o' conquest, an' there's men that love to dream;
Men who 'd rather spend a life time where the roses bloom and nod
Than win prizes on the highways where the fightin' brothers plod.

Folks may call me shiftless, maybe, an' may sneer when they go by
In their autos big an' splendid, while I'm gazin' at the sky,
An' perhaps they think I envy 'em the luxuries they know.
But I don't. My soul don't need 'em, an' I 'd gladly tell 'em so.
Fer I 'm happier with the roses, an' the hollyhocks an' trees
Than I would be makin' money — that is why I take my ease.

Edgar Albert Guest

Midnight In The Pantry

You can boast your round of pleasures, praise the sound of popping corks,
Where the orchestra is playing to the rattle of the forks;
And your after-opera dinner you may think superbly fine,
But that can't compare, I'm certain, to the joy that's always mine
When I reach my little dwelling—source, of all sincere delight—
And I prowl around the pantry in the waning hours of night.
When my business, or my pleasure, has detained me until late,
And it's midnight, say, or after, when I reach my own estate,
Though I'm weary with my toiling I don't hustle up to bed,
For the inner man is hungry and he's anxious to be fed;
Then I feel a thrill of glory from my head down to my feet
As I prowl around the pantry after something good to eat.
Oft I hear a call above me: 'Goodness gracious, come to bed!'
And I know that I've disturbed her by my overeager tread,
But I've found a glass of jelly and some bread and butter, too,
And a bit of cold fried chicken and I answer: 'When I'm through!'
Oh, there's no cafe that better serves my precious appetite
Than the pantry in our kitchen when I get home late at night.
You may boast your shining silver, and the linen and the flowers,
And the music and the laughter and the lights that hang in showers;
You may have your cafe table with its brilliant array,
But it doesn't charm yours truly when I'm on my homeward way;
For a greater joy awaits me, as I hunger for a bite—
Just the joy of pantry-prowling in the middle of the night.

Edgar Albert Guest

Money

HE'D made a fortune out of stocks, he couldn't count his worth;
He 'd hoarded up a store of gold, a section of the earth;
But still he sighed alone and talked of all the world's distress,
And mentioned to his dearest friends: 'Gold won't buy happiness.'

Within his mansion big and warm he often cried aloud:
'There is no joy in being rich, no charm in being proud;'
But still the morning saw him frowning, cross and very glum,
Unless he added to his store another goodly sum.

'Ah, me,' he often used to say, ' indeed it's very true,
There are so many things in life that money cannot do;
It cannot purchase peace of mind nor make a conscience clear;
It cannot, when the soul is sad, make sorrow disappear.'

'You do not know what gold can do,' a friend of his replied,
'You little guess its purchase power, because you haven't tried;
Go, take your money out today, and see what it will buy;
Go, feed the hungry little child and note his twinkling eye.

'Go, help the brother in distress — an old man starts today
Across the hills to die within the poorhouse far away;
Give him a little of the gold you've hoarded to excess,
Then tell me if you can that money won't buy happiness.

'The money that is hoarded up will buy no peace of mind,
But money rightly used will bring much comfort you will find;
And if for others but a part of what you have is spent,
You'll find the happiness you crave, and you will live content.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Mother

Never a sigh for the cares that she bore for me
Never a thought of the joys that flew by;
Her one regret that she couldn't do more for me,
Thoughtless and selfish, her Master was I.

Oh, the long nights that she came at my call to me!
Oh, the soft touch of her hands on my brow!
Oh, the long years that she gave up her all to me!
Oh, how I yearn for her gentleness now!

Slave to her baby! Yes, that was the way of her,
Counting her greatest of services small;
Words cannot tell what this old heart would say of her,
Mother — the sweetest and fairest of all.

Edgar Albert Guest

Mother And The Baby

Mother and the baby! Oh, I know no lovelier pair,
For all the dreams of all the world are hovering 'round them there;
And be the baby in his cot or nestling in her arms,
The picture they present is one with never-fading charms.
Mother and the baby—and the mother's eye aglow
With joys that only mothers see and only mothers know!
And here is all there is to strife and all there is to fame,
And all that men have struggled for since first a baby came.
I never see this lovely pair nor hear the mother sing
The lullabies of babyhood, but I start wondering
How much of every man to-day the world thinks wise or brave
Is of the songs his mother sang and of the strength she gave.

'Just like a mother!' Oh, to be so tender and so true,
No man has reached so high a plane with all he's dared to do.
And yet, I think she understands, with every step she takes
And every care that she bestows, it is the man she makes.
Mother and the baby! And in fancy I can see
Her life being given gladly to the man that is to be,
And from her strength and sacrifice and from her lullabies,
She dreams and hopes and nightly prays a strong man shall arise.

Edgar Albert Guest

Mother Nature

GOOD, kindly Mother Nature plays
No favorites, but smiles for all
Who care to tread her pleasant ways
And listen to the song birds' call.
The tulips and the violets grow
For all the world to gaze upon;
With beauty are the hills aglow
Not for a few, but everyone.

Her grass grows green for rich and poor,
For proud and humble, high and low;
Beside the toiler's cottage door
Her morning glories sweetly grow.
In palace or in tenement
Her sunbeams just as gayly dance;
No special charm to one is sent,
No favored few possess her glance.

Her skies are blue for one and all,
Her flowers for every mortal bloom;
Her rains upon all creatures fall,
For all the world is her perfume.
The rich man gets no sweeter smile
Than does the ragged barefoot boy;
Yes, all who live and love the while,
May Mother Nature's charms enjoy.

Ah, what a lesson we may learn
From kindly Mother Nature's ways!
A smiling face we seldom turn
To strangers, when we meet their gaze.
A kindly word we seldom speak
Except unto a favored few,
And some return we often seek
For every kindly deed we do.

Edgar Albert Guest

Mother Of Five

She mothered five!

Night after night she watched a little bed,
Night after night she cooled a fevered head,
Day after day she guarded little feet,
Taught little minds the dangers of the street;
Taught little lips to utter simple prayers,
Whispered of strength that some day would be theirs
And trained them all to use it as they should.
She gave her babies to the nation's good.

She mothered five!

She gave her beauty—from her cheeks let fade
The roses' blushes—to her mother trade.
She saw the wrinkles furrowing her brow,
Yet smiling said, 'My boy grows stronger now.'
When pleasures called she turned away and said:
"I dare not leave my babies to be fed
By strangers' hands; besides they are so small,
I must be near to hear them when they call.'

She mothered five!

Night after night they sat about her knee
And heard her tell of what some day would be.
From her they learned that in the world outside
Are cruelty and vice and selfishness and pride;
From her they learned the wrongs they ought to shun,
What things to love, what work must still be done.
She led them through the labyrinth of youth
And brought five men and women up to Truth.

She mothered five!

Her name may be unknown save to the few,
Of her the outside world but little knew;
But somewhere five are treading Virtue's ways,
Serving the world and brightening its days;
Somewhere are five, who, tempted, stand upright,
Clinging to honor, keeping her memory bright;
Somewhere this mother toils and is alive
No more as one, but in the breasts of five.

Edgar Albert Guest

Motherhood

I wonder if he'll stop to think,
When the long years have traveled by,
Who heard his plea: 'I want a drink!'
Who was the first to hear him cry?
I wonder if he will recall
The patience of her and the smile,
The kisses after every fall,
The love that lasted all the while?
I wonder, as I watch them there,
If he'll remember, when he's grown,
How came the silver in her hair
And why her loveliness has flown?
Yet thus my mother did for me,
Night after night and day by day,
For such a care I used to be,
As such a boy I used to play.
I know that I was always sure
Of tenderness at mother's knee,
That every hurt of mine she'd cure,
And every fault she'd fail to see.
But who recalls the tears she shed,
And all the wishes gratified,
The eager journeys to his bed,
I took for granted, just as he,
The boundless love that mother gives,
But watching them I've come to see
Time teaches every man who lives
How much of him is not his own;
And now I know the countless ways
By which her love for me was shown,
And I recall forgotten days.
Perhaps some day a little chap
As like him as he's now like me,
Shall climb into his mother's lap,
For comfort and for sympathy,
And he shall know what now I know,
And see through eyes a trifle dim,
The mother of the long ago
Who daily spent her strength for him.

Edgar Albert Guest

Mothers And Wives

Mothers and wives, 'tis the call to arms
That the bugler yonder prepares to sound;
We stand on the brink of war's alarms
And your men may lie on a blood-stained
ground.

The drums may play and the flags may fly,
And our boys may don the brown and blue,
And the call that summons brave men to die
Is the call for glorious women, too.

Mothers and wives, if the summons comes,
You, as ever since war has been,
Must hear with courage the rolling drums
And dry your tears when the flags are seen.
For never has hero fought and died
Who has braver been than the mother, who
Buckled his sabre at his side,
And sent him forward to dare and do.

Mothers and wives, should the call ring out,
It is you must answer your country's cry;
You must furnish brave hearts and stout
For the firing line where the heroes die.
And never a corpse on the field of strife
Should be honoured more in his country's sight
Than the noble mother or noble wife
Who sent him forth in the cause of right.

Mothers and wives, 'tis the call for men
To give their strength and to give their lives;
But well we know, such a summons then
Is the call for mothers and loyal wives,
For you must give us the strength we need,
You must give us the boys in blue,
For never a boy or a man shall bleed
But a mother or wife shall suffer, too.

Edgar Albert Guest

Mother's Day

Let every day be Mother's Day!
Make roses grow along her way
And beauty everywhere.
Oh, never let her eyes be wet
With tears of sorrow or regret,
And never cease to care!
Come, grown up children, and rejoice
That you can hear your mother's voice!

A day for her! For you she gave
Long years of love and service brave;
For you her youth was spent.
There was no weight of hurt or care
Too heavy for her strength to bear;
She followed where you went;
Her courage and her love sublime
You could depend on all the time.

No day or night she set apart
On which to open wide her heart
And welcome you within;
There was no hour you would not be
First in her thought and memory,
Though you were black as sin!
Though skies were gray or skies were blue
Not once has she forgotten you.

Let every day be Mother's Day!
With love and roses strew her way,
And smiles of joy and pride!
Come, grown up children, to the knee
Where long ago you used to be
And never turn aside;
Oh, never let her eyes grow wet
With tears, because her babes forget.

Edgar Albert Guest

Mothers' Excuses

Mother for me made excuses
When I was a little lad;
Found some reason for my conduct
When it had been very bad.
Blamed it on a recent illness
Or my nervousness and told
Father to be easy with me
Every time he had to scold.
And I knew, as well as any
Roguish, healthy lad of ten,
Mother really wasn't telling
Truthful things to father then.
I knew I deserved the whipping,
Knew that I'd been very bad,
Knew that mother knew it also
When she intervened with dad.
I knew that my recent illness
Hadn't anything to do
With the mischief I'd been up to,
And I knew that mother knew.
But remembering my fever
And my nervous temperament,
Father put away the shingle
And postponed the sad event.
Now his mother, when I threaten
Punishment for this and that,
Calls to mind the dreary night hours
When beside his bed we sat.
Comes and tells me that he's nervous,
That's the reason he was bad,
And the boy and doting mother
Put it over on the dad.
Some day when he's grown as I am,
With a boy on mischief bent,
He will hear the timeworn story
Of the nervous temperament.
And remembering the shingle
That aside I always threw,
All I hope is that he'll let them

Put it over on him, too.

Edgar Albert Guest

Mother's Glasses

I've told about the times that Ma can't find her pocketbook,
And how we have to hustle round for it to help her look,
But there's another care we know that often comes our way,
I guess it happens easily a dozen times a day.
It starts when first the postman through the door a letter passes,
And Ma says: 'Goodness gracious me! Wherever are my glasses?'

We hunt 'em on the mantelpiece an' by the kitchen sink,
Until Ma says: 'Now, children, stop, an' give me time to think
Just when it was I used 'em last an' just exactly where.
Yes, now I know - the dining room. I'm sure yu'll find 'em there.'
We even look behind the clock, we busy boys n' lasses,
Until somebody runs across Ma's missing pair of lasses.

We've found 'em in the Bible, an' we've found 'em in the flour,
We've found 'em in the sugar bowl, an' once we looked an hour
Before we came across 'em in the padding of her chair;
An' many a time we've found 'em in the topknot of her hair.
It's a search that ruins order an' the home completely wrecks,
For there's no place where you may not find poor Ma's elusive specs.

But we're mighty glad, I tell you, that the duty's ours to do,
An' we hope to hunt those glasses till our time of life is through;
It's a little bit of service that is joyous in its thrill,
It's a task that calls us daily an' we hope it always will.
Rich or poor, the saddest mortals of all the joyless masses
Are the ones who have no mother dear to lose her reading glasses.

Edgar Albert Guest

Mother's Job

I'm just the man to make things right,
To mend a sleigh or make a kite,
Or wrestle on the floor and play
Those rough and tumble games, but say!
Just let him get an ache or pain,
And start to whimper and complain,
And from my side he'll quickly flee
To clamber on his mother's knee.

I'm good enough to be his horse
And race with him along the course.
I'm just the friend he wants each time
There is a tree he'd like to climb,
And I'm the pal he's eager for
When we approach a candy store;
But for his mother straight he makes
Whene'er his little stomach aches.

He likes, when he is feeling well,
The kind of stories that I tell,
And I'm his comrade and his chum
And I must march behind his drum.
To me through thick and thin he'll stick,
Unless he happens to be sick.
In which event, with me he's through-
Only his mother then will do.

Edgar Albert Guest

Mother's Party Dress

'Some day,' says Ma, 'I'm goin' to get
A party dress all trimmed with jet,
An' hire a seamstress in, an' she
Is goin' to fit it right on me;
An' then, when I'm invited out
To teas an' socials hereabout,
I'll put it on an' look as fine
As all th' women friends of mine.'
An' Pa looked up: 'I sold a cow,'
Says he, 'go down an' get it now.'
An' Ma replied: 'I guess I'll wait,
We've other needs that's just as great.
The children need some clothes to wear,
An' there are shoes we must repair;
It ain't important now to get
A dress fer me, at least not yet;
I really can't afford it.'

Ma's talked about that dress fer years;
How she'd have appliqued revers;
The kind o' trimmin' she would pick;
How 't would be made to fit her slick;
The kind o' black silk she would choose,
The pattern she would like to use.
An' I can mind the time when Pa
Give twenty dollars right to Ma,
An' said: 'Now that's enough, I guess,
Go buy yourself that party dress.'
An' Ma would take th' bills an' smile,
An' say: 'I guess I'll wait awhile;
Aunt Kitty's poorly now with chills,
She needs a doctor and some pills;
I'll buy some things fer her, I guess;
An' anyhow, about that dress,
I really can't afford it.'

An' so it's been a-goin' on,
Her dress fer other things has gone;
Some one in need or some one sick

Has always touched her to th' quick;
Or else, about th' time 'at she
Could get th' dress, she'd always see
The children needin' somethin' new;
An' she would go an' get it, too.
An' when we frowned at her, she'd smile
An' say: 'The dress can wait awhile.'
Although her mind is set on laces,
Her heart goes out to other places;
An' somehow, too, her money goes
In ways that only mother knows.
While there are things her children lack
She won't put money on her back;
An' that is why she hasn't got
A party dress of silk, an' not
Because she can't afford it.

Edgar Albert Guest

Mothers' Splendid Dreams

Mothers dream such splendid dreams when their little babies smile,
Dreams of wondrous deeds they'll do in the happy after- while;
Every mother of a boy knows that in her arms is curled
One who some day will arise splendidly to serve the world.

Mothers sing their babes to sleep, weaving through their lullabies
Visions of true-hearted men when their sons to man hood rise;
Greatness slumbers in the cot that each mother guards with care,
And the world she knows will be better for her baby fair.

Mothers dream such splendid dreams of the men that are to be
In the years that are to come glorious are the things they see ;
None so poor and none so frail but looks yonder down life's lane
And sees there the splendid heights that her baby will attain.

Mothers dream such splendid dreams, that no matter what we do
We can never hope to make half their visionings come true;
Always, as they look ahead, down the lane of life they see
Greater men than yet have been in the men that are to be.

Edgar Albert Guest

Move We Adjourn

When I'm weary of argument wordy
And tired of continuous debate,
When the speaker like some hurdy gurdy,
Which carries on early and late,
Keeps up a monotonous bellow
On lessons I don't want to learn,
'Tis then I give cheers for the fellow
Who rises and moves to adjourn.

There are motions to lay on the table,
There are motions for this and for that,
And I stick just as long as I'm able
And hark to the chatterer's chat,
I stand for the rising thanks motion
For the one who has done a good turn,
But my friend is the chap with the notion
To get up and move to adjourn.

There are some who like papers and speeches,
And open discussions of things,
The heights some new orator reaches,
The lesson and message he brings.
But each his own fancy must cling to,
What one chooses others may spurn,
So this simple tribute I sing to
The brother who moves to adjourn!

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Edgar Albert Guest

Mrs. Malone And The Censor

When Mrs. Malone got a letter from Pat
She started to read it aloud in her flat.
'Dear Mary,' it started, 'I can't tell you much,
I'm somewhere in France, and I'm fightin' the Dutch;
I'm chokin' wid news thot I'd like to relate,
But it's little a soldier's permitted t' state.
Do ye mind Red McPhee- well, he fell in a ditch
An' busted an arm, but I can't tell ye which.

'An' Paddy O'Hara was caught in a flame
An' rescued by- Faith, I can't tell ye his name.
Last night I woke up wid a terrible pain;
I thought for awhile it would drive me insane.
Oh, the suff'rin, I had was most dreadful t' bear!
I'm sorry, my dear, but I can't tell ye where.
The doctor he gave me a pill, but I find
It's conthrary to rules t' disclose here the kind.

'I've been t' the dintist an' had a tooth out.
I'm sorry t' leave you so shrouded in doubt
But the best I can say is that one tooth is gone,
The censor won't let me inform ye which one.
I met a young fellow who knows ye right well,
An' ye know him, too, but his name I can't tell.
He's Irish, red-headed, an' there with th' blarney,
His folks once knew your folks back home in Killarney.'

'By gorry,' said Mrs. Malone in her flat,
'It's hard t' make sinse out av writin' like that,
But I'll give him as good as he sends, that I will.'
So she went right to work with her ink well an' quill,
An' she wrote, 'I suppose ye're dead eager fer news-
You know when ye left we were buyin' the shoes;
Well, the baby has come, an' we're both doin' well;
It's a - - . Oh, but that's somethin' they won't let me tell.'

Edgar Albert Guest

My Big Brother

My big brother will git you fer that,
He'll shine up your eye and he'll step on your hat:
You'd better watch out in the mornin', for he
Will be lookin' fer you, jes' for pickin' on me.
You can slap me an' cuff me
An' bully an' bluff me,
But I ain't alone in this world,
There's another
That you've got to meet
When you're out in the street
Who will fix you fer certain, an' that's my big brother.

My big brother can clean up with two
Or sixteen or eighteen big cowards like you!
An' you'd better be careful, coz when he's around
With only one hand he'll knock you to the ground.
When I tell what you did
He'll say, ' That's all right, kid,
I'll just send him bawling back home to his mother.'
If you're looking for fight
You will get it all right
The very next time that you meet my big brother.

'My big brother!' I heard it to-day as I passed down the street,
And it brought back to me many memories sweet
Of the days long ago when my big brother, too,
Did for me what he threatened his brother would do.
When he finished my fights,
And he stood for my rights,
With a strength I believed that no rival could smother.
And I chuckled with joy,
And I thought: ' Lucky boy!'
For I know what it means to possess a big brother.

Edgar Albert Guest

My Books And I

My books and I are good old pals:
My laughing books are gay,
Just suited for my merry moods
When I am wont to play.
Bill Nye comes down to joke with me
And, Oh, the joy he spreads.
Just like two fools we sit and laugh
And shake our merry heads.
When I am in a thoughtful mood,
With Stevenson I sit,
Who seems to know I've had enough
Of Bill Nye and his wit.
And so, more thoughtful than I am,
He talks of lofty things,
And thus an evening hour we spend
Sedate and grave as kings.
And should my soul be torn with grief
Upon my shelf I find
A little volume, torn and thumbed,
For comfort just designed.
I take my little Bible down
And read its pages o'er,
And when I part from it I find
I'm stronger than before.

Edgar Albert Guest

My Creed

To live as gently as I can;
To be, no matter where, a man;
To take what comes of good or ill
And cling to faith and honor still;
To do my best, and let that stand
The record of my brain and hand;
And then, should failure come to me,
Still work and hope for victory.

To have no secret place wherein
I stoop unseen to shame or sin;
To be the same when I'm alone
As when my every deed is known;
To live undaunted, unafraid
Of any step that I have made;
To be without pretense or sham
Exactly what men think I am.

To leave some simple mark behind
To keep my having lived in mind;
If enmity to aught I show,
To be an honest, generous foe,
To play my little part, nor whine
That greater honors are not mine.
This, I believe, is all I need
For my philosophy and creed.

Edgar Albert Guest

My Job

I wonder where's a better job than buying cake and meat,
And chocolate drops and sugar buns for little folks to eat?
And who has every day to face a finer round of care
Than buying frills and furbelows for little folks to wear?

Oh, you may brag how much you know and boast of what you do,
And think an all-important post has been assigned to you,
But I've the greatest job on earth, a task I'll never lose;
I've several pairs of little feet to keep equipped with shoes.

I rather like the job I have, though humble it may be,
And little gold or little fame may come from it to me;
It seems to me that life can give to man no finer joy
Than buying little breeches for a sturdy little boy.

My job is not to run the world or pile up bonds and stocks;
It's just to keep two little girls in plain and fancy frocks;
To dress and feed a growing boy whose legs are brown and stout,
And furnish stockings just as fast as he can wear them out.

I would not for his crown and throne change places with a king,
I've got the finest job on earth and unto it I'll cling;
I know no better task than mine, no greater chance for joys,
Than serving day by day the needs of little girls and boys.

Edgar Albert Guest

My Land

My land is where the kind folks are,
And where the friends are true,
Where comrades brave will travel far
Some kindly deed to do.
My land is where the smiles are bright
And where the speech is sweet,
And where men cling to what is right
Regardless of defeat.
My land is where the starry flag
Gleams brightly in the sun;
The land of rugged mountain crag,
The land where rivers run,
Where cheeks are tanned and hearts are bold
And women fair to see,
And all is not a strife for gold—
That land is home to me.
My land is where the children play,
And where the roses bloom,
And where to break the peaceful day
No flaming cannons boom.
My land's the land of honest toil,
Of laughter, dance and song,
Where harvests crown the fertile soil
And thoughtful are the strong.
My land's the land of many creeds
And tolerance for all
It is the land of 'splendid deeds
Where men are seldom small.
And though the world should bid me roam,
Its distant scenes to see,
My land would keep my heart at home
And there I'd always be.

Edgar Albert Guest

My Part

I may never be a hero, I am past the limit now,
There are pencil marks of silver Time has left upon my brow;
I shall win no service medals, I shall hear no cannons' roar,
I shall never fight a battle higher up than eagles soar,
But I hope my children's children may recall my name with pride
As a man who never whimpered when his soul was being tried.

For the fighting and the dying for the everlasting truth
Are the labors designated for the strongest of our youth,
And the man that's nearing forty isn't asked to march away,
For there is no place in battle for the head that's turning gray.
His test is one of patience till the bitter work is done,
He must back his country's leaders till the victory is won.

When this bitter time is ended I don't want to have it said
That I faltered in my courage and I never looked ahead,
I don't want it told I added to the burdens and the woe,
By preaching dismal doctrines that were cheering to the foe;
I want my children's children to respect me and to find
That my soul was out there fighting, though my body stayed behind.

When this cruel test is over and the boys come back from France
I'd not have them say I hindered for a moment their advance;
That they found their duty harder than 'twas needful it should be
Because of the complaining of a lot of men like me.
Though I'll win no hero's medals and deserve no wild applause,
I want to be of service, not a hindrance to the cause.

Edgar Albert Guest

My Paw Said So

Foxes can talk if you know how to listen,
My Paw said so.
Owls have big eyes that sparkle an' glisten,
My Paw said so.
Bears can turn flip-flaps an' climb ellum trees,
An' steal all the honey away from the bees,
An' they never mind winter becoz they don't freeze;
My Paw said so.

Girls is a-scared of a snake, but boys ain't,
My Paw said so.
They holler an' run; an' sometimes they faint,
My Paw said so.
But boys would be 'shamed to be frightened that way
When all that the snake wants to do is to play;
You've got to believe every word that I say,
My Paw said so.

Wolves ain't so bad if you treat 'em all right,
My Paw said so.
They're as fond of a game as they are of a fight,
My Paw said so.
An' all of the animals found in the wood
Ain't always ferocious. Most times they are good.

The trouble is mostly they're misunderstood,
My Paw said so.
You can think what you like, but I stick to it when
My Paw said so.
An' I'll keep right on sayin', again an' again,
My Paw said so.
Maybe foxes don't talk to such people as you,
An' bears never show you the tricks they can do,
But I know that the stories I'm tellin' are true,
My Paw said so.

Edgar Albert Guest

My Plan

When I wanted something I couldn't buy,
A suit of clothes or a Sunday tie,
Or a new straw hat when the sun was high,
I used to feel sore about it.
I used to go 'round with a face drawn long,
And vow that everything here was wrong,
And this was the theme of my dismal song,
I can't get along without it.

When I've been broke, which has oft occurred,
I never could utter a cheerful word,
I grouched all day, which was most absurd,
And kicked up a fuss about it.
I thought what I wanted and couldn't get
Was reason enough to fume and fret,
So I fretted and fumed all day, and yet
I managed to do without it.

Now whatever I want that I cannot buy,
A suit of clothes or a Sunday tie,
Or a new straw hat when the sun is high,
I don't say a word about it.
I've found that my wants needn't interfere
With my daily fun on this hemisphere,
What I can't afford doesn't spoil my cheer,
I just get along without it.

Edgar Albert Guest

My Proud Pa

I'SPOSE the big head bendin' over my crib
Is my Pa.

I 'spose that wiseacre whose talk is so glib
Is my Pa.

I've not been here long—my days are but three,
But there's something that even a baby can see,
An' the man who takes all of the credit for me
Is my Pa.

I 'spose that the man with the hat that won't fit
Is my Pa.

I 'spose that the fellow who thinks he is it
Is my Pa.

He's a little guy, too, but as proud as can be,
An' the wonderful lady an' I both agree
That the one who takes all of the credit for me
Is my Pa.

I 'spose that the man with that face-stretching grin
Is my Pa.

I 'spose that the short chap, so terribly thin
Is my Pa.

My Ma is that wonderful lady in white,
Her voice is as sweet as an angel at night,
Now I'm next to that proud little geezer, all right!
He's my Pa.

Edgar Albert Guest

My Religion

My religion's lovin' God, who made us, one and all,
Who marks, no matter where it be, the humble sparrow's fall;
An' my religion's servin' Him the very best I can
By not despisin' anything He made, especially man!
It's lovin' sky an' earth an' sun an' birds an' flowers an' trees,
But lovin' human beings more than any one of these.

I ain't no hand at preachin' an' I can't expound the creeds;
I fancy every fellow's faith must satisfy his needs
Or he would hunt for something else. An' I can't tell the why
An' wherefore of the doctrines deep- and what's more I don't try.
I reckon when this life is done and we can know His plan,
God won't be hard on anyone who's tried to be a man.

My religion doesn't hinge on some one rite or word;
I hold that any honest prayer a mortal makes is heard;
To love a church is well enough, but some get cold with pride
An' quite forget their fellowmen for whom the Saviour died;
I fancy he best worships God, when all is said an' done,
Who tries to be, from day to day, a friend to everyone.

If God can mark the sparrow's fall, I don't believe He'll fail
To notice us an' how we act when doubts an' fears assail;
I think He'll hold what's in our hearts above what's in our creeds,
An' judge all our religion here by our recorded deeds;
An' since man is God's greatest work since life on earth began,
He'll get to Heaven, I believe, who helps his fellowman.

Edgar Albert Guest

My Soul And I

When winter shuts a fellow in and turns the lock upon his door,
There's nothing else for him to do but sit and dream his by-gones o'er.
And then before an open fire he smokes his pipe, while in the blaze
He seems to see a picture show of all his happy yesterdays.
No ordinary film is that which memory throws upon the screen,
But one in which his hidden soul comes out and can be plainly seen.

Now, I've been dreaming by the grate. I've seen myself the way I am,
Stripped bare of affectation's garb and wisdom's pose and folly's sham.
I've seen my soul and talked with it, and learned some things I never
knew.

I walk about the world as one, but I express the wish of two.
I've come to see the soul of me is wiser than my selfish mind,
For it has safely led me through the tangled paths I've left behind.

I should have sold myself for gold when I was young long years ago,
But for my soul which whispered then: 'You love your home and garden so,
You never could be quite content in palace walls. Once rise to fame
And you will lose the gentler joys which now so eagerly you claim.
I want to walk these lanes with you and keep the comradeship of trees,
Let you and I be happy here, nor seek life's gaudy luxuries.'

Mine is a curious soul, I guess; it seemed so, smiling in my dreams;
It keeps me close to little folks and birds and flowers and running
streams,
To Mother and her friends and mine; and though no fortune we possess,
The years that we have lived and loved have all been rich with happiness.
I'm glad the snowdrifts shut me in, for I have had a chance to see
How fortunate I've been to have that sort of soul to counsel me.

Edgar Albert Guest

My Word!

You can tyke h'it from me, 'e's as cool as a cucumber,
Never goes balmy h'or loses 'is 'ead,
Nothing h'at all h'ever robs 'im of slumber;
Once when I told 'im 'is rich h'aunt was dead,
'E looked h'at me blandly,
H'and stryngely h'and grandly,
H'and stroked 'is moustache as though 'e 'adn't 'eard;
Flicked a speck h'off 'is coat,
H'and then cleared h'out 'is throat,
H'and put on 'is topper, remarking: 'My word!'

Cool h'as an h'oyster along h'in December- -
Once h'I was riding with 'im h'in a tryne,
The detyles h'I cannot h'exactly remember,
But something went wrong with th' bally h'old line.
There cyme a great crash,
H'and a 'orrible smash;
H'I shouted at once: 'Something h'orful's h'ocurred!'
'E 'eard women crying,
H'and looked h'at the dying,
H'and cooly surviving the scene, said: 'My word!'

Larst week 'is h'old 'omestead was burned down to h'ashes,
H'and while h'it was burning they notified 'im;
The firemen were shouting h'and myking mad dashes
To resue 'is wife, but their charnces were slim;
At larst through the smoke
There h'appeared h'a bryve bloke
With 'is wife h'in 'is arms, h'an' they slowly descended;
Then did 'e go dotty
With h'ectasy? Not 'e- -
'E merely remarked: 'O my word, that h'is splendid!'

Edgar Albert Guest

Myself

I have to live with myself and so
I want to be fit for myself to know.
I want to be able as days go by,
always to look myself straight in the eye;
I don't want to stand with the setting sun
and hate myself for the things I have done.
I don't want to keep on a closet shelf
a lot of secrets about myself
and fool myself as I come and go
into thinking no one else will ever know
the kind of person I really am,
I don't want to dress up myself in sham.
I want to go out with my head erect
I want to deserve all men's respect;
but here in the struggle for fame and wealth
I want to be able to like myself.
I don't want to look at myself and know that
I am bluster and bluff and empty show.
I never can hide myself from me;
I see what others may never see;
I know what others may never know,
I never can fool myself and so,
whatever happens I want to be
self respecting and conscience free.

Edgar Albert Guest

Names And Faces

I do not ask a store of wealth,
Nor special gift of power;
I hope always for strength and health
To brave each troubled hour.
But life would be distinctly good,
However low my place is,
Had I a memory that could
Remember names and faces.

I am not troubled by the fact
That common skill is mine;
I care not that my life has lacked
The glory of the fine.
But, oh, when someone speaks to me,
My cheeks grow red with shame
Because I'm sure that he must see
That I have lost his name.

Embarrassment, where'er I go,
Pursues me night and day;
I hear some good friend's glad 'Hello,'
And stop a word to say.
His voice melodiously may ring,
But that's all lost on me,
For all the time I'm wondering
Whoever can he be.

I envy no man's talent rare
Save his who can repeat
The names of men, no matter where
It is their chance to meet.
For he escapes the bitter blow,
The sorrow and regret,
Of greeting friends he ought to know
As though they'd never met.

I do not ask a store of gold,
High station here, or fame;
I have no burning wish to hold

The popular acclaim;
Life's lanes I'd gladly journey through,
Nor mind the stony places,
Could I but do as others do
And know men's names and faces!

Edgar Albert Guest

Neglected

I DON'T get much attention now,
Although I'm not complaining;
I'm forced to get on anyhow,
Another king is reigning.
She doesn't run to wait on me,
However rushed I may be,
Whene'er I need assistance, she
Is busy with the baby.

Time was my shirts were all laid out
And all my duds were handy;
And those were days, without a doubt,
When things were fine and dandy;
But now the time she gave to me
She's giving to another,
It keeps her busy just to be
A fond and doting mother.

Oh, I cut quite a figure then,
To something I amounted;
I stood above all other men,
With her, I, only, counted.
Then, often I was petted, too,
And cheered when things went badly;
But now another's come to woo
And I'm neglected sadly.

And now I come and go each day,
Just merely tolerated;
And often I am in the way,
As she has plainly stated.
My wants I'm forced to fill myself,
However hard it may be;
Oh, I've been put upon the shelf,
And put there by a baby.

And yet upon that shelf I'd stay,
And all complainings smother;
The lad who took my wife away

Has given me his mother.
And every night I kneel and pray
That never will the day be
That I shall fail to hear her say:
'I'm busy with the baby!'

Edgar Albert Guest

Neil Snow

The whistle sounds! The game is o'er!
We pay our tribute now with tears
Instead of smiling eyes and cheers.
Neil Snow has crossed the line once more.

Life's scrimmage ends! A manly soul
Now passes bravely through the night,
Undaunted still and Spotless White.
Neil Snow has made another goal.

The crowds depart. The setting sun
Blazes his pathway to the west.
The stamp of valor's on his breast.
Neil Snow the Master's M has won.

Edgar Albert Guest

Next Of Kin

I notice when the news comes in
Of one who's claimed eternal glory,
This simple phrase, 'the next of kin,'
Concludes the soldier's final story.
This tells the world what voice will choke,
What heart that bit of shrapnel broke,
What father or what mother brave
Will think of Flanders as a grave.

'The next of kin,' the cable cold
Wastes not a precious word in telling,
Yet cannot you and I behold
The sorrow in some humble dwelling,
And cannot you and I perceive
The brave yet lonely mother grieve
And picture, when that news comes in,
The anguish of 'the next of kin?'

For every boy in uniform,
Another soldier brave is fighting;
A double rank the cannons storm,
Two lines the cables are uniting,
And with the hurt each soldier feels,
At home the other warrior reels;
Two suffer, freedom's cause to win:
The soldier and 'the next of kin.'

Oh, next of kin, be brave, be strong,
As brave as was the boy that's missing;
The years will many be and long
That you will hunger for his kissing.
Yet he enlisted you with him
To share war's bitter price and grim;
Your service runs through many years
Because your name with his appears.

Edgar Albert Guest

No Better Land Than This

If I knew a better country in this glorious world today
Where a man's work hours are shorter and he's drawing bigger pay,
If the Briton or the Frenchman had an easier life than mine,
I'd pack my goods this minute and I'd sail across the brine.
But I notice when an alien wants a land of hope and cheer,
And a future for his children, he comes out and settles here.

Here's the glorious land of Freedom! Here's the milk and honey goal
For the peasant out of Russia, for the long-subjected Pole.
It is here the sons of Italy and men of Austria turn
For the comfort of their bodies and the wages they can earn.
And with all that men complain of, and with all that goes amiss,
There's no happier, better nation on the world's broad face than this.

So I'm thinking when I listen to the wails of discontent,
And some foreign disbeliever spreads his evil sentiment,
That the breed of hate and envy that is sowing sin and shame
In this glorious land of Freedom should go back from whence it came.
And I hold it is the duty, rich or poor, of every man
Who enjoys this country's bounty to be all American.

Edgar Albert Guest

No Children!

No children in the house to play—
It must be hard to live that way!
I wonder what the people do
When night comes on and the work is through,
With no glad little folks to shout,
No eager feet to race about,
No youthful tongues to chatter on
About the joy that's been and gone?
The house might be a castle fine,
But what a lonely place to dine!

No children in the house at all,
No fingermarks upon the wall,
No corner where the toys are piled—
Sure indication of a child.
No little lips to breathe the prayer
That God shall keep you in His care,
No glad caress and welcome sweet
When night returns you to your street;
No little lips a kiss to give—
Oh, what a lonely way to live!

No children in the house! I fear
We could not stand it half a year.
What would we talk about at night,
Plan for and work with all our might,
Hold common dreams about and find
True union of heart and mind,
If we two had no greater care
Than what we both should eat and wear?
We never knew love's brightest flame
Until the day the baby came.

And now we could not get along
Without their laughter and their song.
Joy is not bottled on a shelf,
It cannot feed upon itself,
And even love, if it shall wear,
Must find its happiness in care;

Dull we'd become of mind and speech
Had we no little ones to teach.
No children in the house to play!
Oh, we could never live that way!

Edgar Albert Guest

No Place To Go

The happiest nights
I ever know
Are those when I've
No place to go,
And the missus says
When the day is through:
'To-night we haven't
A thing to do.'

Oh, the joy of it,
And the peace untold
Of sitting 'round
In my slippers old,
With my pipe and book
In my easy chair,
Knowing I needn't
Go anywhere.

Needn't hurry
My evening meal
Nor force the smiles
That I do not feel,
But can grab a book
From a near-by shelf,
And drop all sham
And be myself.

Oh, the charm of it
And the comfort rare;
Nothing on earth
With it can compare;
And I'm sorry for him
Who doesn't know
The joy of having
No place to go.

Edgar Albert Guest

No Room For Hate

We have room for the man with an honest dream,
With his heart on fire and his eyes a gleam;
We have room for the man with a purpose true,
Who comes to our shores to start life anew,
But we haven't an inch of space for him
Who comes to plot against life and limb.

We have room for the man who will learn our ways,
Who will stand by our Flag in its troubled days;
We have room for the man who will till the soil,
Who will give his hands to a fair day's toil,
But we haven't an inch of space to spare
For the breeder of hatred and black despair.

We have room for the man who will neighbor here,
Who will keep his hands and his conscience clear;
We have room for the man who'll respect our laws
And pledge himself to our country's cause,
But we haven't an inch of land to give
To the alien breed that will alien live.

Against the vicious we bar the gate!
This is no breeding ground for hate.
This is the land of the brave and free
And such we pray it shall always be.
We have room for men who will love our flag,
But none for the friends of the scarlet rag.

Edgar Albert Guest

No Use Sighin'

No use frettin' when the rain comes down,
No use grievin' when the gray clouds frown,
No use sighin' when the wind blows strong,
No use wailin' when the world's all wrong;
Only thing that a man can do
Is work an' wait till the sky gets blue.

No use mopin' when you lose the game,
No use sobbin' if you're free from shame,
No use cryin' when the harm is done,
Just keep on tryin' an' workin' on;
Only thing for a man to do,
Is take the loss an' begin anew.

No use weepin' when the milk is spilled,
No use growlin' when your hopes are killed,
No use kickin' when the lightnin' strikes
Or the floods come along an' wreck your dykes;
Only thing for a man right then
Is to grit his teeth an' start again.

For it's how life is an' the way things are
That you've got to face if you travel far;
An' the storms will come an' the failures, too,
An' plans go wrong spite of all you do;
An' the only thing that will help you win,
Is the grit of a man and a stern set chin.

Edgar Albert Guest

Not A Money Debt

YOU can't pay back in dollars what your father does for you,
You can't repay in kindness all the tenderness he shows;
You little know the perils he has safely brought you through,
And the wealth of Rockefeller this account would never close.

Just remember, as you travel, now alone upon your way
That your only chance of squaring up the debt you owe your dad
Is to strive with all your courage to grow better every day
And become the man he dreamed of when you were a little lad.

Edgar Albert Guest

Not Crossing Bridges

MEBBE I shall weep tomorrow,
Mebbe I shall lose my job,
Mebbe bowed in grief and sorrow
I shall sit alone and sob.

Mebbe trouble grim is comin',
Mebbe care is on the way,
Mebbe I'll be busy glummin'
Over things some other day.

Mebbe foes will come assailin'
An' at last I'll have to quit;
But before I start to wailin'
I shall wait until I'm hit.

Edgar Albert Guest

Nothing To Laugh At

'Taint nothin' to laugh at as I can see!
If you'd been stung by a bumble bee,
An' your nose wuz swelled an' it smarted, too,
You wouldn't want people to laugh at you.
If you had a lump that wuz full of fire,
Like you'd been touched by a red hot wire,
An' your nose spread out like a load of hay,
You wouldn't want strangers who come your way
To ask you to let 'em see the place
An' laugh at you right before your face.

What's funny about it, I'd like to know?
It isn't a joke to be hurted so!
An' how wuz I ever on earth to tell
'At the pretty flower which I stooped to smell
In our backyard wuz the very one
Which a bee wuz busily working on?
An' jus' as I got my nose down there,
He lifted his foot an' kicked for fair,
An' he planted his stinger right into me,
But it's nothin' to laugh at as I can see.

I let out a yell an' my Maw came out
To see what the trouble wuz all about.
She says from my shriek she wuz sure 'at I
Had been struck by a motor car passin' by;
But when she found what the matter wuz
She laughed just like ever'body does
An' she made me stand while she poked about
To pull his turrible stinger out.
An' my Pa laughed, too, when he looked at me,
But it's nothin' to laugh at, as I can see.

My Maw put witch hazel on the spot
To take down the swellin' but it has not.
It seems to git bigger as time goes by
An' I can't see good out o' this one eye;
An' it hurts clean down to my very toes
Whenever I've got to blow my nose.

An' all I can say is when this gits well
There ain't any flowers I'll stoop to smell.
I'm through disturbin' a bumble bee,
But it's nothin' to laugh at, as I can see.

Edgar Albert Guest

Nothing Unusual

They lived together thirty years,
I Through storm and sunshine, weal and woe;
They shared each other's hopes and fears —
She still his sweetheart, he her beau;
She, proud of him, though he was not
A millionaire, or known to fame.
The wife — contented with her lot,
The man — well, very much the same.

He never thought she ought to be
Always agreeable and gay;
And she did not expect that he
Would never have a grouchy day.
She did not think that he was one
Without a single fault or whim,
Nor did she try a paragon
Of goodness to make out of him.

But, hand in hand, they went along
Through all the moods that humans know;
Displeasure came when things went wrong,
She still his sweetheart, he her beau.
Frowns, smiles, delight, despair, they knew,
With love always to dry their tears,
Just simple human folks, those two
Who lived together thirty years.

Edgar Albert Guest

Now And Then

Why not think a decent thought,
Now and then?
Why not ponder, as you ought,
Now and then?
Get your mind out of the mire,
To the higher things aspire,
Claim a loftier desire,
Now and then.

Think of something else than gold,
Now and then!
Think of things not bought and sold,
Now and then;
Turn from sordid deeds and mean,
In your acts your thoughts are seen,
Think of something sweet and clean,
Now and then.

Think of good instead of bad,
Now and then;
Of the bright things, not the sad,
Now and then;
If you think the way you should,
As you could think if you would,
You would do a lot of good,
Now and then.

Edgar Albert Guest

October

Days are gettin' shorter an' the air a keener snap;
Apples now are droppin' into Mother Nature's lap;
The mist at dusk is risin' over valley, marsh an' fen
An' it's just as plain as sunshine, winter's comin' on again.
The turkeys now are struttin' round the old farmhouse once more;
They are done with all their nestin', and their hatchin' days are o'er;
Now the farmer's cuttin' fodder for the silo towerin' high
An' he's frettin' an' complainin' 'cause the corn's a bit too dry.
But the air is mighty peaceful an' the scene is good to see,
An' there's somethin' in October that stirs deep inside o' me;
An' I just can't help believin' in a God above us, when
Everything is ripe for harvest an the frost is back again.

Edgar Albert Guest

Off To School

IT doesn't seem a year ago that I was tumbling out of bed,
The icy steps that lead below at 1 a.m., barefoot, to tread,
And puttering round the kitchen stove, while chills ran up and down my form
As I stood there and waited for her bottled dinner to get warm;
Then sampled it to see that it was not too hot or not too cool,
That doesn't seem a year ago, and now she's trudging off to school.

It doesn't seem a month ago that I was teaching her to walk,
And holding out my arms to her. And that was 'fore she learned to talk.
I stood her up against the wall, eager, yet watchful lest she fall,
Then suddenly she came to me—the first two steps those feet so small
Had, unassisted, ever made! Those feet I hope to guide and rule;
That doesn't seem a month ago—and now she's trudging off to school.

It doesn't seem a week ago that we were playing peeka-boo,
She'd lift her little dress and hide her face as all the babies do;
And then we'd laugh and romp and shout, and I would ride her pig-a-back.
A pair of gay disturbers we, with not a care along life's track!
The days were meant for laughter then, and I was glad to play the fool,
That doesn't seem a week ago—and now she's trudging off to school.

Oh, Father Time, line deep my brow, and tinge my thinning hair with gray,
Deal harshly with my battered form as you go speeding on your way;
Print on my face your marks of years, and stamp me with your yesterdays,
But, oh, tread softly now, I pray, the ground whereon my baby plays.
Pass over her with gentle touch; to keep her young break every rule,
But yesterday she was a babe—and now she's trudging off to school.

Edgar Albert Guest

Old Fashioned Remedies

Taking medicine today isn't what it used to be. Castor oil is castor oil, but they've banished senna tea, And they've sugar coated now all the bitter things we took, Mother used to brew for us from the family doctor book. Now I tell that boy of mine when he starts to make a fuss, He is lucky not to be taking what they gave to us.

Seems the kitchen stove back then always had a pan or two
Brewing up a remedy for the ailments which we knew,
Something mother said we'd need surely in a little while,
Senna tea for stomach ills and its brother chamomile;
But I vow the worst of all remedies they gave to me
Was that gummy, sticky stuff known and served as flaxseed tea.

Boy, put down that little pill, take your powder and be glad
You're not getting what they gave when your father was a lad.
Mother's hand was gentle, but rough and hard it seemed to be
When she sat beside my bed rubbing goose-grease into me.
Getting well is easy now. Take your medicine and smile,
You are lucky that it's not senna tea or chamomile.

Edgar Albert Guest

Old Friends

I do not say new friends are not considerate and true,
Or that their smiles ain't genuine, but still I'm tellin' you
That when a feller's heart is crushed and achin' with the pain,
And teardrops come a-splashin' down his cheeks like summer rain,
Becoz his grief an' loneliness are more than he can bear,
Somehow it's only old friends, then, that really seem to care.
The friends who've stuck through thick an' thin, who've known you, good an'
bad,
Your faults an' virtues, an' have seen the struggles you have had,
When they come to you gentle-like an' take your hand an' say:
'Cheer up! we're with you still,' it counts, for that's the old friends' way.

The new friends may be fond of you for what you are today;
They've only known you rich, perhaps, an' only seen you gay;
You can't tell what's attracted them; your station may appeal;
Perhaps they smile on you because you're doin' something real;
But old friends who have seen you fail, an' also seen you win,
Who've loved you either up or down, stuck to you, thick or thin,
Who knew you as a budding youth, an' watched you start to climb,
Through weal an' woe, still friends of yours an' constant all the time,
When trouble comes an' things go wrong, I don't care what you say,
They are the friends you'll turn to, for you want the old friends' way.

The new friends may be richer, an' more stylish, too, but when
Your heart is achin' an' you think your sun won't shine again,
It's not the riches of new friends you want, it's not their style,
It's not the airs of grandeur then, it's just the old friend's smile,
The old hand that has helped before, stretched out once more to you,
The old words ringin' in your ears, so sweet an', Oh, so true!
The tenderness of folks who know just what your sorrow means,
These are the things on which, somehow, your spirit always leans.
When grief is poundin' at your breast — the new friends disappear
An' to the old ones tried an' true, you turn for aid an' cheer.

Edgar Albert Guest

Old Mister Laughter

Old Mister Laughter

Comes a-grinnin' down the way,
Singin': 'Never mind your troubles,
For they'll surely pass away.'
Singin': 'Now the sun is shinin'
An' there's roses everywhere;
To-morrow will be soon enough
To fret about your care.'

Old Mister Laughter

Comes a-grinnin' at my door,
Singin': 'Don't go after money
When you've got enough and more.'
Singin': 'Laugh with me this mornin'
An' be happy while you may.
What's the use of riches
If they never let you play?'

Old Mister Laughter

Comes a-grinnin' all the time,
Singin' happy songs o' gladness
In a good old-fashioned rhyme.
Singin': 'Keep the smiles a-goin',
Till they write your epitaph,
And don't let fame or fortune
Ever steal away your laugh.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Old Years And New

Old years and new years, all blended into one,
The best of what there is to be, the best of what is gone-
Let's bury all the failures in the dim and dusty past
And keep the smiles of friendship and laughter to the last.

Old years and new years, life's in the making still;
We haven't come to glory yet, but there's the hope we will;
The dead old year was twelve months long, but now from it we're free,
And what's one year of good or bad to all the years to be?

Old years and new years, we need them one and all
To reach the dome of character and build its sheltering wall;
Past failures tried the souls of us, but if their tests we stood.
The sum of what we are to be may yet be counted good.

Old years and new years, with all their pain and strife,
Are but the bricks and steel and stone with which we fashion life;
So put the sin and shame away, and keep the fine and true,
And on the glory of the past let's build the better new.

Edgar Albert Guest

Old-Fashioned Folks

OLD-FASHIONED folks! God bless 'em all!
The fathers an' the mothers,
The aunts an' uncles, fat an' tall,
The sisters an' the brothers.
The good old-fashioned neighbors, too,
The passing time improves 'em,
They still drop in to chat with you
Whene'er the spirit moves 'em.
The simple, unaffected folks
With gentle ways an' sunny,
The brave an' true
That live life through
An' stay unspoiled by money.

Old-fashioned folks, of solid worth,
On them a benediction!
The joy an' comfort of the earth,
Its strength, without restriction.
The charm of every neighborhood,
The toilers uncomplaining,
The men an' women, pure an' good,
Of fine an' honest graining.
The plain an' open-hearted folks
That make no fad a passion,
The kind an' fair
That do an' dare
An' are not slaves to fashion.

Old-fashioned folks, that live an' love
An' give their service gladly,
An' deem their neighbors worthy of
Their help when things go badly.
The simple sharers of our joys,
Sweet ministers in sorrow,
They help the world to keep its poise
An' strength for each tomorrow.
The simple, unaffected folks,
That live for all about 'em,
God bless 'em all,

This earthly ball
Would dreary be without 'em.

Edgar Albert Guest

Old-Fashioned Letters

Old-fashioned letters! How good they were!
And nobody writes them now;
Never at all comes in the scrawl
On the written pages which told us all
The news of town and the folks we knew,
And what they had done or were going to do.
It seems we've forgotten how
To spend an hour with our pen in hand
To write in the language we understand.
Old-fashioned letters we used to get
And ponder each fond line o'er;
The glad words rolled like running gold,
As smoothly their tales of joy they told,
And our hearts beat fast with a keen delight
As we read the news they were pleased to write
And gathered the love they bore.
But few of the letters that come to-day
Are penned to us in the old-time way.
Old-fashioned letters that told us all
The tales of the far away;
Where they'd been and the folks they'd seen;
And better than any fine magazine
Was the writing too, for it bore the style
Of a simple heart and a sunny smile,
And was pure as the breath of May.
Some of them oft were damp with tears,
But those were the letters that lived for years.
Old-fashioned letters! How good they were!
And, oh, how we watched the mails;
But nobody writes of the quaint delights
Of the sunny days and the merry nights
Or tells us the things that we yearn to know—
That art passed out with the long ago,
And lost are the simple tales;
Yet we all would happier be, I think,
If we'd spend more time with our pen and ink.

Edgar Albert Guest

On A Certain Religious Argument

Argue it pro and con as you will,
And flout each other with words,
But the rose will bloom and the summer still
Will bring us the song of birds.

How was He born who came to earth,
With the Godlight in His eyes?
Wrangle and quarrel about His birth,
And yet you shall not be wise.

And what does it matter? The clover blows
And the rose blooms on the tree,
And only the God in heaven knows
How these things come to be.

You take the flower though you cannot say
Why this is red or white,
You accept the warmth of the sun by day
And the light of the stars by night.

You joy in a thousand mysteries
Which your wisdom can't explain,
The green of the grass and the rolling seas
And the gold of the harvest grain.

So why do you bother your heads at all?
And why does your faith grow dim?
You take the flower on the garden wall,
So why will you not take Him?

Edgar Albert Guest

On Being Broke

Don't mind being broke at all,
When I can say that what I had
Was spent for toys for kiddies small
And that the spending made 'em glad.
I don't regret the money gone,
If happiness it left behind.
An empty purse I'll look upon
Contented, if its record's kind.
There's no disgrace in being broke,
Unless it's due to flying high;
Though poverty is not a joke,
The only thing that counts is 'why?'
The dollars come to me and go;
To-day I've eight or ten to spend;
To-morrow I'll be sailing low,
And have to lean upon a friend.
But if that little bunch of mine
Is richer by some toy or frill,
I'll face the world and never whine
Because I lack a dollar bill.
I'm satisfied, if I can see
One smile that hadn't bloomed before.
The only thing that counts with me
Is what I've spent my money for.
I might regret my sorry plight,
If selfishness brought it about;
If for the fun I had last night,
Some joy they'd have to go without.
But if I've swapped my bit of gold,
For laughter and a happier pack
Of youngsters in my little fold
I'll never wish those dollars back.
If I have traded coin for things
They needed and have left them glad,
Then being broke no sorrow brings—
I've done my best with what I had.

Edgar Albert Guest

On Going Home For Christmas

He little knew the sorrow that was in his vacant chair;
He never guessed they'd miss him, or he'd surely have been there;
He couldn't see his mother or the lump that filled her throat,
Or the tears that started falling as she read his hasty note;
And he couldn't see his father, sitting sorrowful and dumb,
Or he never would have written that he thought he couldn't come.

He little knew the gladness that his presence would have made,
And the joy it would have given, or he never would have stayed.
He didn't know how hungry had the little mother grown
Once again to see her baby and to claim him for her own.
He didn't guess the meaning of his visit Christmas Day
Or he never would have written that he couldn't get away.

He couldn't see the fading of the cheeks that once were pink,
And the silver in the tresses; and he didn't stop to think
How the years are passing swiftly, and next Christmas it might be
There would be no home to visit and no mother dear to see.
He didn't think about it — I'll not say he didn't care.
He was heedless and forgetful or he'd surely have been there.

Are you going home for Christmas? Have you written you'll be there?
Going home to kiss the mother and to show her that you care?
Going home to greet the father in a way to make him glad?
If you're not I hope there'll never come a time you'll wish you had.
Just sit down and write a letter — it will make their heart strings hum
With a tune of perfect gladness — if you'll tell them that you'll come.

Edgar Albert Guest

On Quitting

How much grit do you think you've got?
Can you quit a thing that you like a lot?
You may talk of pluck; it's an easy word,
And where'er you go it is often heard;
But can you tell to a jot or guess
Just how much courage you now possess?
You may stand to trouble and keep your grin,
But have you tackled self-discipline?
Have you ever issued commands to you
To quit the things that you like to do,
And then, when tempted and sorely swayed,
Those rigid orders have you obeyed?

Don't boast of your grit till you've tried it out,
Nor prate to men of your courage stout,
For it's easy enough to retain a grin
In the face of a fight there's a chance to win,
But the sort of grit that is good to own
Is the stuff you need when you're all alone.
How much grit do you think you've got?
Can you turn from joys that you like a lot?
Have you ever tested yourself to know
How far with yourself your will can go?
If you want to know if you have grit,
Just pick out a joy that you like, and quit.

It's bully sport and it's open fight;
It will keep you busy both day and night;
For the toughest kind of a game you'll find
Is to make your body obey your mind.
And you never will know what is meant by grit
Unless there's something you've tried to quit.

Edgar Albert Guest

On Station Farewells

IN parting from a dear old friend for months, perhaps, or years,
There's bound to be some bitter sobs, an' generally tears,
An' as a rule, the lovin' ones will gather round about
The station, softly cry in' while the train is pullin' out;
Oh, it's so hard to say good-bye, an' kiss each tender cheek,
Coz there's a lump in every throat, an' no one dares to speak.
Good-bye is always hard to say to friends you know are true,
But ten times harder when the train that waits for them's in view.

When comes the time for me to go upon a little trip,
I always wait until the last before I pack my grip;
An' always try to hide the fact that I am goin' away,
An' do my best to keep the folks in cheerful mood an' gay.
A railroad station's mighty glum when friends are goin' out,
It sorter shakes a fellow's nerve an' fills his heart with doubt;
An' so I'd rather say good-bye at home the times we part,
An' then sneak on the train alone — it's easier on the heart.

There's something 'bout a train that leaves a depot with your friends,
That fills your soul with grievin' an' a thrill of sorrow sends
All over those who watch it, till it disappears from sight,
An' the bravest can't help cryin' when it fades into the night.
I love to have them meet me when I 'm comin' home once more,
But when I 'm goin' from them, then I kiss them at the door
An' wave my hand in partin', as I hurry down the street,
An' then sneak on the train alone, an' sink into my seat.

Outgoing trains are sad ones — incoming ones are gay,
It isn't hard to tell the folks who 're goin' far away;
In stations little groups are seen, an' O, so oft, I note
A mother tryin' hard to down the lump that's in her throat;
It seems she's tied her heart-strings to the train that's waiting there,
An' the tug that comes at partin' is far more than she can bear;
An' I've come to this conclusion, that whene'er I have to roam,
I'll board the train unnoticed, with my 'good-byes' said at home.

Edgar Albert Guest

One-Sided Faith

I KNOW the rose will bloom again
As soon as it is June,
The robin will return by then
To sing his merry tune.
I know the wintry cold will pass,
The gray clouds change to blue,
But I think my present woe, alas!
Must last my whole life through.

I view my little garden bare
And smile from day to day,
I know the green will glisten there
As soon as it is May.
I face the winter, brave of heart,
I know that it will go,
But every little ache and smart
Sets me to grieving so.

If I can view the winter's snow,
My garden desolate
And smile, because right well I know
If I will only wait
The days of spring will soon return,
And bring me back the rose,
Have I not wit enough to learn
That time will cure my woes?

Edgar Albert Guest

Only A Building

You may delve down to rock for your foundation piers,
You may go with your steel to the sky;
You may purchase the best of the thought of the year,
And the finest of workmanship buy;
You may line with the rarest of marble each wall,
And with gold you may tint it, but then
It is only a building, if it, after all,
Isn't filled with the spirit of men.

You may put up a structure of brick and of stone,
Such as never was put up before;
Place therein the costliest woods that are grown,
And carve every pillar and door;
You may fill it with splendors of quarry and mine,
With the glories of brush and of pen,
But it's only a building, though ever so fine,
If it hasn't the spirit of men.

You may build such a structure that lightning can't harm,
Or one that an earthquake can't raze;
You may build it of granite and boast that its charm
Shall last to the end of all days.
But you might as well never have builded at all.
Never cleared off the bog and the fen,
If after it's finished its sheltering wall
Doesn't stand for the spirit of men.

For it isn't the marble, nor is it the stone,
Nor is it the columns of steel,
By which is the worth of an edifice known,
But by something that's living and real.

Edgar Albert Guest

Only A Dad

Only a dad, with a tired face,
Coming home from the daily race,
Bringing little of gold or fame,
To show how well he has played the game,
But glad in his heart that his own rejoice
To see him come, and to hear his voice.

Only a dad, with a brood of four,
One of ten million men or more.
Plodding along in the daily strife,
Bearing the whips and the scorns of life,
With never a whimper of pain or hate,
For the sake of those who at home await.

Only a dad, neither rich nor proud,
Merely one of the surging crowd
Toiling, striving from day to day,
Facing whatever may come his way,
Silent, whenever the harsh condemn,
And bearing it all for the love of them.

Only a dad, but he gives his all
To smooth the way for his children small,
Doing, with courage stern and grim,
The deeds that his father did for him.
This is the line that for him I pen,
Only a dad, but the best of men.

Edgar Albert Guest

Other's Successes

CAN you go to another who wins in the fight
And give him a hand-shake that 's true?
Do you find yourself feeling a sense of delight
In the good work another may do?
Or deep in your heart are there envy and hate,
When you see someone getting ahead?
Do you sneer at his luck and rail at your fate?
If you do all your courage has fled.

If you haven't learned to rejoice in the deed
Of your brothers and give them a cheer,
You haven't discovered the pathways that lead
To genuine happiness here.
If you cannot say to a brother, ' I 'm glad
You have conquered,' and give him your hand,
Your life must be gloomy and woefully sad,
You 're building your mansion on sand.

Did you secretly gloat when another had failed,
Did you sneer at the efforts he made?
Did it inwardly please you to see him assailed,
Did you chuckle to see him outplayed?
If this is the part you have chosen to play,
If you are as selfish as this,
Though he falls in the thick and the heat of the fray,
Your failure is greater than his.

Edgar Albert Guest

Our Country

God grant that we shall never see
Our country slave to lust and greed;
God grant that here all men shall be
United by a common creed.
Here Freedom's Flag has held the sky
Unstained, untarnished from its birth;
Long may it wave to typify
The happiest people on the earth.

Beneath its folds have mothers smiled
To see their little ones at play;
No tyrant hand, by shame defiled,
To them has barred life's rosy way.
No cruel wall of caste or class
Has bid men pause or turn aside;
Here looms no gate they may not pass-
Here every door is opened wide.

Here at the wells of Freedom all
Who are athirst may drink their fill.
Here fame and fortune wait to call
The toiler who has proved his skill.
Here wisdom sheds afar its light
As every morn the school bells ring,
And little children read and write
And share the knowledge of a king.

God grant that we shall never see
Our country slave to lust and greed;
God grant that men shall always be
United for our nation's need.
Here selfishness has never reigned,
Here freedom all who come may know;
By tyranny our Flag's unstained!
God grant that we may keep it so.

Edgar Albert Guest

Our Duty To Our Flag

Less hate and greed
Is what we need
And more of service true;
More men to love
The flag above
And keep it first in view.

Less boast and brag
About the flag,
More faith in what it means;
More heads erect,
More self-respect,
Less talk of war machines.

The time to fight
To keep it bright
Is not along the way,
Nor 'cross the foam,
But here at home
Within ourselves - to-day.

'Tis we must love
That flag above
With all our might and main;
For from our hands,
Not distant lands,
Shall come dishonor's stain.

If that flag be
Dishonored, we
Have done it, not the foe;
If it shall fall
We first of all
Shall be to strike a blow

Edgar Albert Guest

Our House

WE play at our house and have all sorts of fun,
An' there's always a game when supper is done;
An' at our house there's marks on the walls an' the stairs,
An' some terrible scratches on some of the chairs;
An' ma says that our house is surely a fright,
But pa and I say that our house is all right.

At our house we laugh an' we sing an' we shout,
An' whirl all the chairs and the tables about,
An' I rattle my pa an' I get him down too,
An' he's all out of breath when the fightin' is through;
An' ma says our house is surely a sight,
But pa an' I say that our house is all right.

I've been to houses with pa where I had
To sit in a chair like a good little lad,
An' there wasn't a mark on the walls an' the chairs,
An' the stuff that we have couldn't come up to theirs;
An' pa said to ma that for all of their joy
He wouldn't change places and give up his boy.

They never have races nor rattles nor fights,
Coz they have no children to play with at nights;
An' their walls are all clean and their curtains hang straight,
An' everything's shiny an' right up to date;
But pa says with all of its racket an' fuss,
He'd rather by far live at our house with us.

Edgar Albert Guest

Our Little Needs

A LITTLE more of loving, a little less of pain,
A little more of sunshine, a little less of rain;
A little more of friendship, a little less of strife—
These are what we 're wanting to make the perfect life.

A little more of laughter and fewer, fewer sighs,
A little more of twinkling, than sorrow in our eyes;
A little more forbearance, a little less of hate,
A little more of patience, less quarreling with Fate.

A little more of kindness, a little less severe,
A little more of sweetness, a little less austere,
A little more of honor and less of business greed,
See, brother, see how little it is we really need!

A little more of silence and less of hasty speech,
A little more of practice and less desire to preach;
A little more of smiling, with fewer drooping chins,
A little more of virtues, with fewer petty sins.

A little more of praising, a little less of blame,
More thought for all our loved ones and less for future fame;
A little more of doing than talking of the deed,
See, brother, see how little it is we really need.

Edgar Albert Guest

Out At Pelletier's

OUT at Pelletier's where the blooded pigeons fly,
An' the tony Shetland ponies romp and play,
Where the peacock on the fence rail hoots at motors chugging by
An' the wolf hounds at the moon (in Russian) bay;
Where the poultry sort o' swaggers in its best bluer-ribbon style,
An' the hogs wear silver buttons in their ears,
It is comfortin' an' soothin' jes' to sit an' rest awhile,
For it brushes back at least a dozen years.

Out at Pelletier's—where old Monte Mark is king,
An' he knows it an' he shows it to 'em all,
Whether rompin' in the pasture, or in trappings for the ring,
Or whinnyin' to greet you in his stall;
An' where Chief, the son of Monte, in a splendid coat of bay
Shows the heritage of vigor in his veins;
It is soothin' an' consolin' to be restin' for a day,
An' forget the city's dismal grind for gains.

It's a lesson in good breedin'—at the farm o' Pelletier's,
It's a lesson in refinement an' in care;
An' it sets a thinkin' feller sort o' thinkin' o' the years
That are waitin' in the future over there.
An' while he's sittin' restin' underneath the walnut tree,
He is thinkin' thoughts perhaps he never speaks;
What's he goin' to leave behind him when his spirit is set free?
Is it money or perfection that he seeks?

Is he strivin' here for dollars or a better human race,
Just as Pelletier is doin' with his stock?
Would he rather leave a brighter, clearer, smilin' boyish face
Than his name upon a massive building rock?
Is he buildin' here for soundness an' for cleanliness of heart?
Is he breedin' here for happiness or tears?
Oh, it's good for any feller just to take himself apart
An' think the thoughts that come at Pelletier's.

Edgar Albert Guest

Out Fishin'

A feller isn't thinkin' mean,
Out fishin';
His thoughts are mostly good an' clean,
Out fishin'.
He doesn't knock his fellow men.,
Or harbor any grudges then;
A feller's at his finest when
Out fishin'.

The rich are comrades to the poor,
Out fishin';
All brothers of a common lure,
Out fishin'.
The urchin with the pin an' string
Can chum with millionaire an' king;
Vain pride is a forgotten thing,
Out fishin'.
A feller gits a chance to dream,
Out fishin';

He learns the beauties of a stream,
Out fishin';
An' he can wash his soul in air
That isn't foul with selfish care,
An' relish plain and simple fare,
Out fishin'.

A feller has no time fer hate,
Out fishin';
He isn't eager to be great,
Out fishin'.
He isn't thinkin' thoughts of pelf,
Or goods stacked high upon a shelf,
But he is always just himself,
Out fishin'.

A feller's glad to be a friend,
Out fishin'
A helpin' hand he'll always lend,

Out fishin'.
The brotherhood of rod an' line
An' sky and stream is always fine;
Men come real close to God's design,
Out fishin'.

A feller isn't plotting schemes,
Out fishin';
He's only busy with his dreams,
Out fishin'.
His livery is a coat of tan,
His creed -to do the best he can;
A feller's always mostly man,
Out fishin'.

Edgar Albert Guest

Out In The Open

OUT in the open, I long to be free,
Where the song that I hear is the song of the sea,
And the voice that I list to is soothing and sweet,
Away from the sound of the tramping of feet,
Not urging me ceaselessly into the fray,
Not spurring me ever to work when I 'd play;
Not picturing fame with its wealth and its power,
And the glory to be in my conquering hour,
But a voice that is tender and soothing and low,
That bids me to rest and to live as I go.

Out in the open, I long to be free,
To lazily dream in the shade of a tree,
To gaze into space where are pictures that soothe
Of life as a river, unruffled and smooth;
Not men at the forges, not men at the plows,
Not men winning wealth by the sweat of their brows,
Not men sore of muscle and weary of brain,
Unwilling to pause lest another should gain
The heights they are seeking, but men who can rest
And know that in living the dreaming is best.

Out in the open, I long to be free,
Away from the haunts of the glories to be,
To tune my poor soul to the song of a star,
And live for a while in the glories that are;
To rest when I 'm weary and drop from the strife,
Content with the blessings God gives us with life,
Not bound to the forge or the plow by a chain
That keeps men at work for the glory of gain,
No slave to the future, too frightened to rest,
But living the present and finding it blest.

Edgar Albert Guest

Out Of Doors

The kids are out-of-doors once more;
The heavy leggins that they wore,
The winter caps that covered ears
Are put away, and no more tears
Are shed because they cannot go
Until they're bundled up just so.
No more she wonders when they're gone
If they have put their rubbers on;
No longer are they hourly told
To guard themselves against a cold;
Bareheaded now they romp and run
Warmed only by the kindly sun.

She's put their heavy clothes away
And turned the children out to play,
And all the morning long they race
Like madcaps round about the place.
The robins on the fences sing
A gayer song of welcoming,
And seems as though they had a share
In all the fun they're having there.
The wrens and sparrows twitter, too,
A louder and a noisier crew,
As though it pleased them all to see
The youngsters out of doors and free.

Outdoors they scamper to their play
With merry din the livelong day,
And hungrily they jostle in
The favor of the maid to win;
Then, armed with cookies or with cake,
Their way into the yard they make,
And every feathered playmate comes
To gather up his share of crumbs.
The finest garden that I know
Is one where little children grow,
Where cheeks turn brown and eyes are bright,
And all is laughter and delight.

Oh, you may brag of gardens fine,
But let the children race in mine;
And let the roses, white and red,
Make gay the ground whereon they tread.
And who for bloom perfection seeks,
Should mark the color on their cheeks;
No music that the robin spouts
Is equal to their merry shouts;
There is no foliage to compare
With youngsters' sun-kissed, tousled hair:
Spring's greatest joy beyond a doubt
Is when it brings the children out.

Edgar Albert Guest

Out Of It All

Out of it all shall come splendor and gladness;
Out of the madness and out of the sadness,
Clearer and finer the world shall arise.
Why then keep sorrow and doubt in your eyes?

Joy shall be ours when the warfare is over;
Children shall gleefully romp in the clover;
Here with our heroes at home and at rest,
We shall rejoice with the world at its best.

Not in vain, not in vain, is our bright banner flying;
Not for naught are the sons of our fond mothers dying;
The gloom and despair are not ever to last;
The world shall be better when they shall have passed.

So mourn not his absence, but smile and be brave;
You shall have him again from the brink of the grave
In a wonderful world 'neath a wonderful sun;
He shall come to your arms with his victory won.

Edgar Albert Guest

Out Of The Day

OUT of the day you have taken what,
Crown of laurels and wreath of bay?
Smiles or frowns? Did you bring away
Shame that stings like an iron hot,
Or did you close with a record fair?
Out of the day you have taken what,
Peace of mind or a night of care?

Sum it all up as you close the page,
What have you written throughout the day,
Joy or sorrow? Be honest, say
Evil wrought in an hour of rage,
Wrongs that loom through the dead of night?
Sum it all up as you close the page,
Fair or foul are the things you write?

Over your record muse with care,
And note the wrong that is written down;
Why this temper and why this frown?
You were the one to put them there,
You were the one to stoop to sin;
Over your record muse with care,
Yours is the fault if you failed to win.

Out of the day you have taken what,
Joy or sorrow? Then let me ask
What brought you to your daily task?
A cheerful mind with your woes forgot,
Or an air of gloom with a downcast chin?
Out of the day you have taken what?
Merely the fruits of what you put in.

Edgar Albert Guest

Over Here

Pledged to the bravest and the best,
We stand, who cannot share the fray,
Staunch for the danger and the test.
For them at night we kneel and pray.
Be with them, Lord, who serve the truth,
And make us worthy of our youth!

Here mother-love and father-love
Unite in love of country now;
Here to the flag that flies above,
Our heads we reverently bow;
Here as one people, night and day,
For victory we work and pray.

Nor race nor creed shall difference make,
Nor bigot mar the zealot's plan;
We give our all for Freedom's sake,
Each man a king, each king a man.
Make us the equal, Lord, we pray
Of them who die for truth to-day!

Let us as gladly give our best,
Let us as bravely pay the price
As they, who in the bitter test
Meet the supremest sacrifice.
Oh, God! Wherever we are led,
Let us be worthy of our dead!

Let us not compromise the truth,
Let us not cringe so much in fear
That foes may whisper to our youth
That we have failed in courage here.
Lord, strengthen us, that they may know
Our spirits follow where they go!

Edgar Albert Guest

Pa And The Monthly Bills

When Ma gets out the monthly bills and sets them all in front of Dad,
She makes us children run away because she knows he may get mad;
An' then she smiles a bit and says: 'I hope you will not fuss and fret-
There's nothing here except the things I absolutely had to get!'
An' Pa he looks 'em over first. 'The things you had to have!' says he;
'I s'pose that we'd have died without that twenty dollar longeree.'

Then he starts in to write the checks for laundry an' for light an' gas,
An' never says a word 'bout them- because they're small he lets 'em pass.
But when he starts to grunt an' groan, an' stops the while his pipe he
fills,

We know that he is gettin' down to where Ma's hid the bigger bills.
'Just what we had to have,' says he, 'an' I'm supposed to pay the tolls;
Nine dollars an' a half for- say, what the deuce are camisoles?

'If you should break a leg,' says Pa, 'an' couldn't get down town to shop,
I'll bet the dry goods men would see their business take an awful drop,
An' if they missed you for a week, they'd have to fire a dozen clerks!
Say, couldn't we have got along without this bunch of Billie Burkes?'
But Ma just sits an' grins at him, an' never has a word to say,
Because she says Pa likes to fuss about the bills he has to pay.

Edgar Albert Guest

Pa Did It!

The train of cars that Santa brought is out of kilter now;
While pa was showing how they went he broke the spring somehow.
They used to run around a track—at least they did when he
Would let me take them in my hands an' wind 'em with a key.
I could 'a' had some fun with 'em, if only they would go,
But, gee! I never had a chance, for pa enjoyed em so.

The automobile that I got that ran around the floor
Was lots of fun when it was new, but it won't go no more.
Pa wound it up for Uncle Jim to show him how it went,
And when those two got through with it the runnin' gear was bent,
An' now it doesn't go at all. I mustn't grumble though,
'Cause while it was in shape to run my pa enjoyed it so.

I've got my blocks as good as new, my mitts are perfect yet;
Although the snow is on the ground I haven't got em wet.
I've taken care of everything that Santa brought to me,
Except the toys that run about when wound up with a key.
But next year you can bet I won't make any such mistake;
I'm going to ask for toys an' things that my pa cannot break.

Edgar Albert Guest

Pa Discusses Economy

This year,' said Pa, on New Year's night, 'we'll start upon a different plan,
I'm sick and tired of ending years as poor as when those years began;
I'm sick and tired of spending coin before I've really got it earned,
This year we're going to save some dough—that is the new leaf that I've turned.'

Ma didn't say a word right then, an' Pa went on:

'This year we'll try

To cut out all our foolishness, an' put a little money by;

It's terrible the way we've spent the money that I labor for

On things that we don't really need, but we won't do it any more.

"There's lots of ways that we can save, we'll stop the many little leaks

And soon we'll have a bank account—I've thought it out for weeks and weeks;

I'm sick and tired of toiling hard, an' havin' nothing left to show

For all I've done the long year through—this year we'll start to save our dough.'

An' Ma looked up an' said to Pa, 'I'm glad to hear you make that vow,

We ought to save a lot each year; an' listen while I tell you how:

Those poker games you ought to stop, I've always said that they're not right,

Ten dollars that we could have saved you lost at Brown's the other night.

'An' then you cut out shaking dice with friends who ride in motor cars,

We'd save a lot of coin if you'd quit getting stuck for their cigars;

There are a lot of ways to save our money I can plainly see.'

Then Pa got mad an' said, 'That's right, I knew you'd blame it all on me.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Patriotism

I think my country needs my vote,
I know it doesn't need my throat,
My lungs and larynx, too;
And so I sit at home at night
And teach my children what is right
And wise for them to do;
And when I'm on the job by day
I do my best to earn my pay.

Though arguments may rage and roar;
I grease the hinges on my door
And paint the porches blue;
I love this splendid land of ours,
And so I plant the seeds and flowers
And watch them bursting through.
I never stand upon a box
To say we're headed for the rocks.

My notion of a patriot
Is one who guards his little cot,
And keeps it up to date;
Who pays his taxes when they're due,
And pays his bills for groc'ries, too,
And dresses well his mate;
He keeps his children warmly clad
And lets them know they have a dad.

The nation's safe as long as men
Get to their work and back again
Each day with cheerful smile;
So long as there are fathers who
Rejoice in what they have to do
And find their homes worth while,
The Stars and Stripes will wave on high
And liberty will never die.

Edgar Albert Guest

Peace

A man must earn his hour of peace,
Must pay for it with hours of strife and care,
Must win by toil the evening's sweet release,
The rest that may be portioned for his share;
The idler never knows it, never can.
Peace is the glory ever of a man.

A man must win contentment for his soul,
Must battle for it bravely day by day;
The peace he seeks is not a near-by goal;
To claim it he must tread a rugged way.
The shirker never knows a tranquil breast;
Peace but rewards the man who does his best.

Edgar Albert Guest

People Like Him

People liked him, not because
He was rich or known to fame;
He had never won applause
As a star in any game.
His was not a brilliant style,
His was not a forceful way,
But he had a gentle smile

And a kindly word to say.
Never arrogant or proud,
On he went with manner mild;
Never quarrelsome or loud,
Just as simple as a child;
Honest, patient, brave and true:
Thus he lived from day to day,
Doing what he found to do

In a cheerful sort of way.
Wasn't one to boast of gold
Or belittle it with sneers,
Didn't change from hot to cold,
Kept his friends throughout the years,
Sort of man you like to meet
Any time or any place.
There was always something sweet

And refreshing in his face.
Sort of man you'd like to be:
Balanced well and truly square;
Patient in adversity,
Generous when his skies were fair.
Never lied to friend or foe,
Never rash in word or deed,
Quick to come and slow to go
In a neighbor's time of need.

Never rose to wealth or fame,
Simply lived, and simply died,
But the passing of his name

Left a sorrow, far and wide.
Not for glory he'd attained,
Nor for what he had of pelf,
Were the friends that he had gained,
But for what he was himself.

Edgar Albert Guest

Picture Books

I HOLD the finest picture-books
Are woods an' fields an' runnin' brooks;
An' when the month o' May has done
Her paintin', an' the mornin' sun
Is lightin' just exactly right
Each gorgeous scene for mortal sight,
I steal a day from toil an' go
To see the springtime's picture show.

It's everywhere I choose to tread—
Perhaps I'll find a violet bed
Half hidden by the larger scenes,
Or group of ferns, or living greens,
So graceful an' so fine, I swear
That angels must have placed them there
To beautify the lonely spot
That mortal man would have forgot.

What hand can paint a picture book
So marvelous as a runnin' brook?
It matters not what time o' day
You visit it, the sunbeams play
Upon it just exactly right,
The mysteries of God to light.
No human brush could ever trace
A droopin' willow with such grace!

Page after page, new beauties rise
To thrill with gladness an' surprise
The soul of him who drops his care
And seeks the woods to wander there.
Birds, with the angel gift o' song,
Make music for him all day long;
An' nothin' that is base or mean
Disturbs the grandeur of the scene.

There is no hint of hate or strife;
The woods display the joy of life,
An' answer with a silence fine

The scoffer's jeer at power divine.
When doubt is high an' faith is low,
Back to the woods an' fields I go,
An' say to violet and tree:
'No mortal hand has fashioned thee.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Pixley Folks

SOMETIMES I git to thinkin' o' the days o' youth, an' then
There comes a-troopin' through my mind th' wimmin folk an' men
I used ter know in Pixley, an' I sit with 'em awhile,
A-livin' all th' fun we knew before we put on style;
A-dancin' all th' dances, th' lancers an' q'drilles,
A-goin' to th' buskin' bees an' picnics on th' hills,
An' I quite ferget I 'm livin' on a crowded city street,
Where I don't know a quarter of th' people that I meet.

I settle in my arm chair, an' I light my meerschaum pipe,
An' then I 'm back in Pixley with the apples red an' ripe.
I 'm makin' eyes at Agnes, which is wrong I must allow,
Coz she was married long ago an' has four babies now.
An' I 'm pokin' fun at Lydy, who was in for any joke,
But she has married wealthy — still out yonder in th' smoke
She is still the laughin' lassie, free from all the haughty airs
That wimmin folk think needful when they marry millionaires.

Then I steal a kiss from Nellie, an' I hear her say 'No, no!'
Th' way she did a thousand times, but never meant it, though.
An' again from church we 're comin', an' th' hour is gettin' late
An' we stand awhile a-gabbin', she a-swingin' on th' gate,
A-tellin' of her uncles an' her aunts, an' how they were,
While all that I was wan tin' was to stay an' talk of her.
An' again I 'm gettin' ready jes' to ask her to be mine,
An' again she ups an' leaves me, sayin' 'Ed, it's after nine.'

O, I tell you what! It's funny, when I think about it all,
An' I kinder get to broodin' an' th' old days I recall
When there warn't no automobiles, warn't no problem plays an' such,
When th' only fault with young folks was they loved t' play too much;
When there warn't no style about us, one warn't richer than another,
When we didn't think of money, never snubbed a poorer brother;
An' to see 'em now with riches, an' ashamed to even say
That they ever lived in Pixley— Why, my soul is there today!

Edgar Albert Guest

Play The Man

TAKE your troubles
Best you can.
Stand right up
And play the man.

Face 'em just
As though you knew
You were coming
Safely through.

Blows will hurt
And bruise you, maybe,
But don't whimper
Like a baby.

Stand right up
And be a man.
Meet your troubles
Best you can.

Edgar Albert Guest

Playing For Keeps

I've watched him change from his bibs and things, from bonnets known as 'cute,'
To little frocks, and later on I saw him don a suit;
And though it was of calico, those knickers gave him joy,
Until the day we all agreed 'twas time for corduroy.
I say I've seen the changes come, it seems with bounds and leaps,
But here's another just arrived—he's playing mibs for keeps!
The guide posts of his life fly by. The boy that is to-day,
To-morrow morning we may wake to find has gone away,
And in his place will be a lad we've never known before,
Older and wiser in his ways, and filled with new-found lore.
Now here's another boy to-day, counting his marble heaps
And proudly boasting to his dad he's playing mibs for keeps!
His mother doesn't like this change. She says it is a shame—
That since he plays with larger boys, he's bound to lose the game.
But little do I mind his loss; I'm more concerned to know
The way he acts the times when he must see his marbles go.
And oh, I hope he will not be the little boy who weeps
Too much when he has failed to win while playing mibs for keeps.
Playing for keeps! Another step toward manhood's broad estate!
This is what some term growing up, or destiny, or fate.
Yet from this game with marbles, played with youngsters on the street,
I hope will come a larger boy, too big to lie or cheat,
And by these mibs which from his clutch another madly sweeps,
I hope he'll learn the game of life which must be played for keeps.

Edgar Albert Guest

Playing The Game

When the umpire calls you out,
It's no use to stamp and shout,
Wildly kicking dust about—

Play the game!

And though his decision may
End your chances for the day,
Rallies often end that way—

Play the game!

When the umpire shouts: 'Strike two!'

And the ball seems wide to you,
There is just one thing to do:

Play the game!

Keep your temper at the plate,
Grit your teeth and calmly wait,
For the next one may be straight

Play the game!

When you think the umpire's wrong,

Tell him so, but jog along;

Nothing's gained by language strong—

Play the game!

For his will must be obeyed

Wheresoever baseball's played,

Take his verdict as it's made—

Play the game!

Son of mine, beyond a doubt,

Fate shall often call you 'out,'

But keep on, with courage stout—

Play the game!

In the battlefield of men

There'll come trying moments when

You shall lose the verdict—then

Play the game!

There's an umpire who shall say

You have missed your greatest play,

And shall dash your hopes away—

Play the game!

You must bow unto his will

Though your chance it seems to kill,

And you think he erred, but still

Play the game!
For the Great Umpire above
Sees what we see nothing of,
By His wisdom and His love—
Play the game!
Keep your faith in Him although
His grim verdicts hurt you so,
At His Will we come and go—
Play the game!

Edgar Albert Guest

Pleasing Dad

When I was but a little lad, not more than two or three,
I noticed in a general way my dad was proud of me.
He liked the little ways I had, the simple things I said;
Sometimes he gave me words of praise, sometimes he stroked my head;
And when I'd done a thing worth while, the thought that made me glad
Was always that I'd done my best, and that would please my dad.

I can look back to-day and see how proud he used to be
When I'd come home from school and say they'd recommended me.
I didn't understand it then, for school boys never do,
But in a vague and general way it seems to me I knew
That father took great pride in me, and wanted me to shine,
And that it meant a lot to him when I'd done something fine.

Then one day out of school I went, amid the great world's hum,
An office boy, and father watched each night to see me come.
And I recall how proud he was of me that wondrous day
When I could tell him that, unasked, the firm had raised my pay.
I still can feel that hug he gave, I understand the joy
It meant to him to learn that men were trusting in his boy.

I wonder will it please my dad? How oft the thought occurs
When I am stumbling on the paths, beset with briars and burrs!
He isn't here to see me now, alone my race I run,
And yet some day I'll go to him and tell him all I've done.
And oh I pray that when we meet beyond life's stormy sea
That he may claim the old-time joy of being proud of me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Pleasure's Signs

There's a bump on his brow and a smear on his cheek
That is plainly the stain of his tears;
At his neck there's a glorious sun-painted streak,
The bronze of his happiest years.
Oh, he's battered and bruised at the end of the day,
But smiling before me he stands,
And somehow I like to behold him that way.
Yes, I like him with dirt on his hands.

Last evening he painfully limped up to me
His tale of adventure to tell;
He showed me a grime-covered cut on his knee,
And told me the place where he fell.
His clothing was stained to the color of clay,
And he looked to be nobody's lad,
But somehow I liked to behold him that way,
For it spoke of the fun that he'd had.

Let women-folk prate as they will of a boy
Who is heedless of knickers and shirt;
I hold that the badge of a young fellow's joy
Are cheeks that are covered with dirt.
So I look for him nightly to greet me that way,
His joys and misfortunes to tell,
For I know by the signs that he wears of his play
That the lad I'm so fond of is well.

Edgar Albert Guest

Practicing Time

Always whenever I want to play
I've got to practice an hour a day,
Get through breakfast an' make my bed,
And Mother says: 'Marjorie, run ahead!
There's a time for work and a time for fun,
So go and get your practicing done.'
And Bud, he chuckles and says to me:
'Yes, do your practicing, Marjorie.'
A brother's an awful tease, you know,
And he just says that 'cause I hate it so.

They leave me alone in the parlor there
To play the scales or 'The Maiden's Prayer,'
And if I stop, Mother's bound to call,
'Marjorie dear, you're not playing at all!
Don't waste your time, but keep right on,
Or you'll have to stay when the hour is gone.'
Or maybe the maid looks in at me
And says: 'You're not playing, as I can see.
Just hustle along- I've got work to do
And I can't dust the room until you get through.'

Then when I've run over the scales and things
Like 'The Fairies' Dance,' or 'The Mountain Springs,'
And my fingers ache and my head is sore,
I find I must sit there a half hour more.
An hour is terribly long, I say,
When you've got to practice and want to play.
So slowly at times has the big hand dropped
That I was sure that the clock had stopped,
But Mother called down to me: 'Don't forget-
A full hour, please. It's not over yet.'

Oh, when I get big and have children, too,
There's one thing that I will never do-
I won't have brothers to tease the girls
And make them mad when they pull their curls
And laugh at them when they've got to stay
And practice their music an hour a day;

I won't have a maid like the one we've got,
That likes to boss you around a lot;
And I won't have a clock that can go so slow
When it's practice time, 'cause I hate it so.

Edgar Albert Guest

Prayer For The Home

Peace, unto this house, I pray,
Keep terror and despair away;
Shield it from evil and let sin
Never find lodging room within.
May never in these walls be heard
The hateful or accusing word.

Grant that its warm and mellow light
May be to all a beacon bright,
A flaming symbol that shall stir
The beating pulse of him or her
Who finds this door and seems to say,
'Here end the trials of the day.'

Hold us together, gentle Lord,
Who sit about this humble board;
May we be spared the cruel fate
Of those whom hatreds separate;
Here let love bind us fast, that we
May know the joys of unity.

Lord, this humble house we'd keep
Sweet with play and calm with sleep.
Help us so that we may give
Beauty to the lives we live.
Let Thy love and let Thy grace
Shine upon our dwelling place.

Edgar Albert Guest

Preparedness

Right must not live in idleness,
Nor dwell in smug content;
It must be strong, against the throng
Of foes, on evil bent.

Justice must not a weakling be
But it must guard its own,
And live each day, that none can say
Justice is overthrown.

Peace, the sweet glory of the world,
Faces a duty, too;
Death is her fate, leaves she one gate
For war to enter through.

Edgar Albert Guest

Pretending Not To See

Sometimes at the table, when
He gets misbehavin', then
Mother calls across to me:
'Look at him, now! Don't you see
What he's doin', sprawlin.' there!
Make him sit up in his chair.
Don't you see the messy way
That he's eating?' An' I say:
'No. He seems all right just now.
What's he doing anyhow?'

Mother placed him there by me,
An' she thinks I ought to see
Every time he breaks the laws
An' correct him, just because
There will come a time some day
When he mustn't act that way.
But I can't be all along
Scoldin' him for doin' wrong.
So if something goes astray,
I jus' look the other way.

Mother tells me now an' then
I'm the easiest o' men,
An' in dealin' with the lad
I will never see the bad
That he does, an' I suppose
Mother's right for Mother knows;
But I'd hate to feel that I'm
Here to scold him all the time.
Little faults might spoil the day,
So I look the other way.

Look the other way an' try
Not to let him catch my eye,
Knowin' all the time that he
Doesn't mean so bad to be;
Knowin', too, that now an' then
I am not the best o' men;

Hopin', too, the times I fall
That the Father of us all,
Lovin', watchin' over me,
Will pretend He doesn't see.

Edgar Albert Guest

Promotion

Promotion comes to him who sticks
Unto his work and never kicks,
Who watches neither clock nor sun
To tell him when his task is done;
Who toils not by a stated chart,
Defining to a jot his part,
But gladly does a little more
Than he's remunerated for.
The man, in factory or shop,
Who rises quickly to the top,
Is he who gives what can't be bought:
Intelligent and careful thought.

No one can say just when begins
The service that promotion wins,
Or when it ends; 'tis not denned
By certain hours or any kind
Of system that has been devised;
Merit cannot be systemized.
It is at work when it's at play;
It serves each minute of the day;
'Tis always at its post, to see
New ways of help and use to be.
Merit from duty never slinks,
Its cardinal virtue is — it thinks!

Promotion comes to him who tries
Not solely for a selfish prize,
But day by day and year by year
Holds his employer's interests dear.
Who measures not by what he earns
The sum of labor he returns,
Nor counts his day of toiling through
Till he's done all that he can do.
His strength is not of muscle bred,
But of the heart and of the head.
The man who would the top attain
Must demonstrate .he has a brain.

Prophecy

We shall thank our God for graces
That we've never known before;
We shall look on manlier faces
When our troubled days are o'er.
We shall rise a better nation
From the battle's grief and grime,
And shall win our soul's salvation
In this bitter trial time.
And the old Flag waving o'er us
In the dancing morning sun
Will be daily singing for us
Of a splendor new begun.

When the rifles cease to rattle
And the cannon cease to roar,
When is passed the smoke of battle
And the death lists are no more,
With a yet undreamed of beauty
As a people we shall rise,
And a love of right and duty
Shall be gleaming in our eyes.
As a country, tried by sorrow,
With a heritage of worth,
We shall stand in that to-morrow
With the leaders of the earth.

Edgar Albert Guest

Punishment

Their childhood is so brief that we
Should hesitate to spoil their fun,
We should be very slow to see
The things that they should not have done.
For such a little while they play
Before the rough, long roads they tread,
We should be careful every day
To send no weeping child to bed.

So soon they'll women be and men,
With all the cares that grown-ups know,
We should be slow to punish, when
Their little feet in mischief go.
Our whippings should be very few,
Yes, very few, and very mild,
We should be careful what we do
In dealing with a happy child.

So few the years that are their own,
So brief the time to romp and play,
So very quickly are they grown
To face the battles of the day
That we should hesitate to mar
With punishment, however slight,
The days that oh, so precious are,
And turn to grief a child's delight.

Too soon will come the long days when
They'll often heavy-hearted be,
And they'll look back on childhood then
And think of you and think of me.
And we should have them then recall
When we are sleeping in the grave
Not how we punished children small,
But how we kissed them and forgave.

Edgar Albert Guest

Purpose

Not for the sake of the gold,
Not for the sake of the fame,
Not for the prize would I hold
Any ambition or aim:
I would be brave and be true
Just for the good I can do.

I would be useful on earth,
Serving some purpose or cause,
Doing some labor of worth,
Giving no thought to applause.
Thinking less of the gold or the fame
Than the joy and the thrill of the game.

Medals their brightness may lose,
Fame be forgotten or fade,
Any reward we may choose
Leaves the account still unpaid.
But little real happiness lies
In fighting alone for a prize.

Give me the thrill of the task,
The joy of the battle and strife,
Of being of use, and I'll ask
No greater reward from this life.
Better than fame or applause
Is striving to further a cause.

Edgar Albert Guest

Queer Ebenezer

The strangest man I ever knew
Is Ebenezer Pettigrew;
Dropped in on him last night t' chat
Of politics an' this an' that,
An' when he'd showed me to a seat
He brung some apples in t' eat,
An' tuk one up, an' stroked its side
An' fondled it t' show his pride.
Says I t' him: 'It's plain t' me
Thet things ain't what they orter be;
Men ain't as honest as they wuz,
Vice profits more'n virtue does,
The weak are downtrod by the strong,
The whole world's overrun by wrong.'
An' then I showed him facts t' prove
Thet we air gettin' in a groove
O' wickedness, an' steeped in sin,
But all he did wuz work his chin
A-chewin' on his apple core
An' lookin' at his parlor floor,
An' then, says he, right slow t' me:
'Some things ain't what they orter be,
But still I ain't inclined to pine,
Apples this year air mighty fine.'

He tuk another pippin then
An' started in t' chew again.
'Now Eb,' says I, 'Ye've got t' say
Thet we air in a dreadful way;
Thet life is full o' pain an' woe,
An' rough air roads thet we must go.
The iron heels of lust and greed
Air on our necks, an' if you read
The papers nowadays, you'll note
Thet rumors dreadful air afloat;
Our judges ain't exactly just
In matters that affect a trust.'
I put it to him good an' strong,

Expectin' that he'd come erlong
An' jine with me by nod or sign,
But nary nod or move t' jine
He made, but turnin' in his chair
An' reachin' fer the table, where
An old brown pitcher stood, says he:
'Come on an' have a drink with me;
I ain't denyin' what you say,
It mebbe things air thataway,
But here's yer glass, now ain't that clear?
The cider's mighty fine this year.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Questions

Would you sell your boy for a stack of gold?
Would you miss that hand that is yours to hold?
Would you take a fortune and never see
The man, in a few brief years, he'll be?
Suppose that his body were racked with pain,
How much would you pay for his health again?
Is there money enough in the world to-day
To buy your boy? Could a monarch pay
You silver and gold in so large a sum
That you'd have him blinded or stricken dumb?
How much would you take, if you had the choice,
Never to hear, in this world, his voice?
How much would you take in exchange for all
The joy that is wrapped in that youngster small?
Are there diamonds enough in the mines of earth
To equal your dreams of that youngster's worth?
Would you give up the hours that he's on your knee
The richest man in the world to be?
You may prate of gold, but your fortune lies,
And you know it well, in your boy's bright eyes.
And there's nothing that money can buy or do
That means so much as that boy to you.
Well, which does the most of your time employ,
The chase for gold—or that splendid boy?

Edgar Albert Guest

Raisin Pie

There's a heap of pent-up goodness
in the yellow bantam corn,
And I sort o' like to linger
round a berry patch at morn;
Oh, the Lord has set our table
with a stock o' things to eat
An' there's just enough o' bitter
in the blend to cut the sweet,
But I run the whole list over,
an' it seems somehow that I
Find the keenest sort o' pleasure
in a chunk o' raisin pie.

There are pies that start the water
circulatin' in the mouth;
There are pies that wear the flavor of
the warm an' sunny south;
Some with oriental spices spur
the drowsy appetite
An' just fill a fellow's being
with a thrill o' real delight;
But for downright solid goodness
that comes drippin' from the sky
There is nothing quite the equal of
a chunk o' raisin pie.

I'm admittin' tastes are diff'runt,
I'm not settin' up myself
As the judge an' final critic of
the good things on the shelf.
I'm sort o' payin' tribute
to a simple joy on earth,
Sort o' feebly testifyin' to its
lasting charm an' worth,
An' I'll hold to this conclusion
till it comes my time to die,
That there's no dessert that's finer
than a chunk o' raisin pie.

Rather Stay Home

NEVER so happy as when I 'm at home,
I 'm not so anxious to wander or roam;
Rather sit down with the folks who love me,
With somebody's youngster astride of my knee,
And gallop him off to the wonderful land,
Where armies are waiting his word to command,
Than listen to speeches by eloquent men
Who shout for an hour and then sit down again.

Never so happy as when I 'm at home,
Rather play tunes with a paper and comb
For a boy or a girl who may drop in to call,
For it's there that I shine if I do shine at all;
Rather sing ditties to tots that I know,
Than go to a party or go to a show,
Or listen to grown-ups with wisdom expound,
As their arms saw the air, and the tables they pound.

Never so happy as when I 'm at home,
Don't care to journey to Naples or Rome,
Rather stay here with the folks who love me,
Than run after strangers whoever they be;
A nod from a king or a smile from a lord
Wouldn't please me a bit. I 'd be terribly bored;
Rather stay here where I 'm loved and I 'm known,
Than get on my knees before any old throne.

Edgar Albert Guest

Real Help

If you can smooth his path a bit,
Bring laughter to his worried face,
Restore today his stock of grit
And help him all his troubles chase.
If you can speak one word of praise
That shall his drooping spirits raise
And warm his heart with cheer,
You have done more than they will do
Who'll sighing, rush some day to strew
Red roses on his bier.

If you stretch out a hand to him
Today when he is plodding on,
When everything seems dark and grim,
And hope is very nearly gone,
If you go to him where he stays
And speak the little word of praise
That now may banish fear,
You will have done more good than they
Who'll rush to praise his lifeless clay
And strew with flowers his bier.

If you will note the good you see
In him today, while yet he lives,
If you will be the friend you'll be
When death to him the summons gives,
While he is here to hear your praise,
To profit by your kindly ways,
You'll not seem insincere
If, when death's smile is on his face,
You rush to be the first to place
Red roses on his bier.

Edgar Albert Guest

Real Lessons

These are the lessons I would learn,
Not how to climb above all men,
Not how the greatest sums to earn,
Not how to wield a master pen;
But I would learn how I can be
A little kinder than before,
How I can live more patiently
And help my friends a little more.

And I would learn to better show
My gratitude for favors had,
To see more of the good below
And less of what I think is bad.
To live not always in the day
To come, and count the joys to be,
But to remember, as I stray,
The past and what it brought to me.

To judge my life, not from today,
Nor what tomorrow it may mean,
But from each footstep of the way
And from each pleasure that has been,
Remembering in each present woe
The love and laughter I have known;
And to be grateful as I go,
For joys that once I called my own.

These are lessons I would learn:
To be as brave in grief and care
As I am when it is my turn
To tread the road where all is fair.
More grateful I would learn to be
For what has been, as on I tread,
And to press forward cheerfully.
Content to face what lies ahead.

Edgar Albert Guest

Real Singing

You can talk about your music, and your operatic airs,
And your phonographic record that Caruso's tenor bears;
But there isn't any music that such wondrous joy can bring
Like the concert when the kiddies and their mother start to sing.

When the supper time is over, then the mother starts to play
Some simple little ditty, and our concert's under way.
And I'm happier and richer than a millionaire or king
When I listen to the kiddies and their mother as they sing.

There's a sweetness most appealing in the trilling of their notes:
It is innocence that's pouring from their little baby throats;
And I gaze at them enraptured, for my joy's a real thing
Every evening when the kiddies and their mother start to sing.

Edgar Albert Guest

Real Swimming

I saw him in the distance, as the train went speeding by,
A shivery little fellow standing in the sun to dry.
And a little pile of clothing very near him I could see:
He was owner of a gladness that had once belonged to me.
I have shivered as he shivered, I have dried the way he dried,
I've stood naked in God's sunshine with my garments at my side;
And I thought as I beheld him, of the many weary men
Who would like to go in swimming as a little boy again.

I saw him scarce a moment, yet I knew his lips were blue
And I knew his teeth were chattering just as mine were wont to do;
And I knew his merry playmates in the pond were splashing still;
I could tell how much he envied all the boys that never chill;
And throughout that lonesome journey, I kept living o'er and o'er
The joys of going swimming when no bathing suits we wore;
I was with that little fellow, standing chattering in the sun;
I was sharing in his shivers and a partner of his fun.

Back to me there came the pictures that I never shall forget
When I dared not travel homewards if my shock of hair was wet,
When I did my brief undressing under fine and friendly trees
In the days before convention rigged us up in b.v.d's.
And I dived for stones and metal on the mill pond's muddy floor,
Then stood naked in the sunshine till my blood grew warm once more.
I was back again, a youngster, in those golden days of old,
When my teeth were wont to chatter and my lips were blue with cold.

Edgar Albert Guest

Rebellion

'My Crown Prince was fine and fair,' a sorrowful
father said,
'But he marched away with his regiment and
they tell me that he's dead!
'We all must go,' he whispered low, 'We must
fight for the Fatherland.'
Now the heart of me's torn with the grief I
know, and I cannot understand,
For none of the Kaiser's princes lie out there
where my soldier sleeps;
Here's a land where grief is the common lot, but
never the Kaiser weeps.

'My Crown Prince was a kindly prince, and his
eyes were gentle, too,
And glad were the days of his youth to me when
his wonderful smile I knew.
Then the Kaiser flattered and spoke him well,
and he sent him out to die,
But his Crown Prince hasn't felt one hurt and
the heart of me questions why?
He talks of war in his regal way and he boasts
of his strength to strike,
But his boys all live and he doesn't know what
the sting of a bullet's like.

'Rebellion gnaws at the soul of me as I think
of his Crown Prince gay,
And my Prince cold in the arms of death, and
harsh are the things I say.
I join with the grief-torn muttering men who
challenge the Kaiser's right
To build his joys on the graves of ours. We
shall rise in our wrath to smite!
And this is the thing we shall ask of him: to
give us the reason why
Our boys must fall on his battlefields, but never
his boys must die?'

Reflection

You have given me riches and ease,
You have given me joys through the years,
I have sat in the shade of your trees,
With the song of your birds in my ears.
I have drunk of your bountiful wine
And done as I've chosen to do,
But, oh wonderful country of mine,
'How little have I done for you!

You have given me safe harbor from harm,
Untroubled I've slept through the nights
And have waked to the new morning's charm
And claimed as my own its delights.
I have taken the finest of fine
From your orchards and fields where it grew,
But, oh wonderful country of mine,
How little I've given to you!

You have given me a home and a place
Where in safety my babies may play;
Health blooms on each bright dimpled face
And laughter is theirs every day.
You have guarded from danger the shrine
Where I worship when toiling is through,
But, oh wonderful country of mine,
How little have I done for you!

I have taken your gifts without thought,
I have revelled in joys that you gave,
That I see now with blood had been bought,
The blood of your earlier braves.
I have lived without making one sign
That the source of my riches I knew,
Now, oh wonderful country of mine,
I'm here to do something for you!

Edgar Albert Guest

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Edgar Albert Guest

Reunited

The hours were long with you away,
Although I thought I could forget;
I banished you and cursed the day
That we had ever met.

I frowned upon you, and I vowed
That nevermore your charms I 'd seek;
I sought new pleasures with the crowd,
But I am weak.

Tempress I called you, and I swore
No longer your demands I 'd serve;
Freedom I 'd own forevermore,
But lost my nerve.

And absent, all my love returned,
Not for one moment was I free,
For you I nightly, daily yearned;
Your slave I 'd be.

No charm in anything I found,
No lustre in the skies of blue,
I merely moped my way around,
And sighed for you.

I must be made of fragile clay,
Unsuited for the hero type,
For back to you I come today,
Old briar pipe.

Edgar Albert Guest

Revenge

If I had hatred in my heart toward my fellow man,
If I were pressed to do him ill, to conjure up a plan
To wound him sorely and to rob his days of all their joy,
I'd wish his wife would go away and take their little boy.

I'd waste no time on curses vague, nor try to take his gold,
Nor seek to shatter any plan that he might dearly hold.
A crueler revenge than that for him I would bespeak:
I'd wish his wife and little one might leave him for a week.

I'd wish him all the loneliness that comes with loss of those
Who fill his life with laughter and contentment and repose.
I'd wish him empty rooms at night and mocking stairs to squeak
That neither wife nor little boy will greet him for a week.

If I despised my fellow man, I'd make my hatred known
By wishing him a week or two of living all alone;
I'd let him know the torture that is mine to bear to-day,
For Buddy and his mother now are miles and miles away.

Edgar Albert Guest

Reward

Don't want medals on my breast,
Don't want all the glory,
I'm not worrying greatly lest
The world won't hear my story.
A chance to dream beside a stream
Where fish are biting free;
A day or two, 'neath skies of blue,
Is joy enough for me.

I do not ask a hoard of gold,
Nor treasures rich and rare;
I don't want all the joys to hold;
I only want a share.
Just now and then, away from men
And all their haunts of pride,
If I can steal, with rod and reel,
I will be satisfied.

I'll gladly work my way through life;
I would not always play;
I only ask to quit the strife
For an occasional day.
If I can sneak from toil a week
To chum with stream and tree,
I'll fish away and smiling say
That life's been good to me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Rich

Who has a troop of romping youth
About his parlour floor,
Who nightly hears a round of cheers,
When he is at the door,
Who is attacked on every side
By eager little hands
That reach to tug his grizzled mug,
The wealth of earth commands.

Who knows the joys of girls and boys,
His lads and lassies, too,
Who's pounced upon and bounced upon
When his day's work is through,
Whose trousers know the gentle tug
Of some glad little tot,
The baby of his crew of love,
Is wealthier than a lot.

Oh, be he poor and sore distressed
And weary with the fight,
If with a whoop his healthy troop
Run, welcoming at night,
And kisses greet him at the end
Of all his toiling grim,
With what is best in life he's blest
And rich men envy him.

Edgar Albert Guest

Riches

If I can leave behind me here and there
A friend or two to say when I am gone
That I had helped to make their pathways fair,
Had brought them smiles when they were bowed with care,
The riches of this world I'll carry on.

If only three or four shall pause to say,
When I have passed beyond this earthly sphere,
That I brought gladness to them on a day
When bitterness was their's, I'll take away
More riches than a billionaire leaves here.

Edgar Albert Guest

Roses

When God first viewed the rose He'd made
He smiled, and thought it passing fair;
Upon the bloom His hands He laid,
And gently blessed each petal there.
He summoned in His artists then
And bade them paint, as ne'er before,
Each petal, so that earthly men
Might love the rose for evermore.

With Heavenly brushes they began
And one with red limned every leaf,
To signify the love of man;
The first rose, white, betokened grief;
'My rose shall deck the bride,' one said
And so in pink he dipped his brush,
'And it shall smile beside the dead
To typify the faded blush.'

And then they came unto His throne
And laid the roses at His feet,
The crimson bud, the bloom full blown,
Filling the air with fragrance sweet.
'Well done, well done!' the Master spake;
'Henceforth the rose shall bloom on earth:
One fairer blossom I will make,'
And then a little babe had birth.

On earth a loving mother lay
Within a rose-decked room and smiled,
But from the blossoms turned away
To gently kiss her little child,
And then she murmured soft and low,
'For beauty, here, a mother seeks.
None but the Master made, I know,
The roses in a baby's cheeks.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Roses And Gasoline

'A rose by any other name would smell as sweet,'
Cried Romeo once, and truth he spoke I own;
And we should smell the autos down the street
Though gasoline were labeled French cologne.

Edgar Albert Guest

Roses And Sunshine

Rough is the road I am journeying now,
 Heavy the burden I'm bearing to-day;
But I'm humming a song, as I wander along,
 And I smile at the roses that nod by the way.
 Red roses sweet,
 Blooming there at my feet,
Just dripping with honey and perfume and cheer;
 What a weakling I'd be
 If I tried not to see
The joy and the comfort you bring to us here.

Just tramping along o'er the highway of life,
 Knowing not what's ahead but still doing my best;
And I sing as I go, for my soul seems to know
 In the end I shall come to the valley of rest.
 With the sun in my face
 And the roses to grace
The roads that I travel, what have I to fear?
 What a coward I'd be
 If I tried not to see
The roses of hope and the sunshine of cheer.

Edgar Albert Guest

Roses, Birds And Some Men

The world is full of roses, blooming red for me I and you,
They smile a morning welcome and are wet with heavenly dew,
And every oak and maple, and every apple thorn
Have a song bird on their branches singing gayly in the morn;
But you never see a red rose waiting in a cloud of gloom
For some one who will coax it and persuade it into bloom,
And you never see a song bird sitting idly in a tree
In a solemn, sullen manner till one begs for melody.

No, the red rose blooms in sweetness and it gives its charms to all,
And the bees may sip its honey, and the honey's never gall;
E'en a little child may pluck it, or a mother old and gray,
For the rose's special mission is to glad some heart each day.
And the song bird in the branches just as sweetly trills and sings
For the ploughboys in the furrows as he would for mighty kings.
O, there never was a red rose or a song bird up above,
That you had to beg for favors or you had to know to love.

But with men it's O, so different, there are some who smile and sing
And scatter love and sunshine, like the song birds on the wing,
But we find too oft a mortal who could make his brothers glad,
Sitting solemnly and grimly, with a visage long and sad,
Waiting some one who will coax him, who will flatter for his smile,
Ere he'll sing a song of gladness or do anything worth while.
Give me men with gifts who use them, and who let their spirits flow,
One is worth a dozen mortals whom to like you have to know.

Edgar Albert Guest

Sacrifice

When he has more than he can eat
To feed a stranger's not a feat.

When he has more than he can spend
It isn't hard to give or lend.

Who gives but what he'll never miss
Will never know what giving is.

He'll win few praises from his Lord
Who does but what he can afford.

The widow's mite to heaven went
Because real sacrifice it meant.

Edgar Albert Guest

Sacrifices

BEHIND full many a gift there lies
A splendid tale of sacrifice.

On Christmas morn a mother's hand
About a young girl's neck will place
A trinket small, and she will stand
With radiant smiles upon her face
To see her daughter decked in gold,
Nor will she think, nor will she care
That she may suffer from the cold
Because that bauble glistens there.

A child will wake on Christmas Day
And find his stocking filled with toys;
The home will ring with laughter gay,
That boy be glad as richer boys.
And there a mother fond will sing
A song of joy to hear his shout,
Forgetting every needed thing
That she will have to do without.

A heart that's brimming o'er with love
Will suffer gladly for a friend,
And take no time in thinking of
How much it can afford to spend.
And suddenly on Christmas morn
Will gladness beam from shining eyes,
A gladness that alone was born
Of someone's willing sacrifice.

Let cynics scoff howe'er they will
And say but fools such presents give,
There'll be such sacrifices till
All human love shall cease to live.
'Twould be a dreary world of thrift,
Of barren ways, and sunless skies,
If no one ever gave a gift
That was not born of sacrifice.

The brightest gifts that us reward
Are those the givers can't afford.

Edgar Albert Guest

Safe At Home

Let the old fire blaze
An' the youngsters shout
An' the dog on the rug
Sprawl full length out,
An' Mother an' I
Sort o' settle down-
An' it's little we care
For the noisy town.

Oh, it's little we care
That the wind may blow,
An' the streets grow white
With the drifted snow;
We'll face the storm
With the break o' day,
But to-night we'll dream
An' we'll sing an' play.

We'll sit by the fire
Where it's snug an' warm,
An' pay no heed
To the winter storm;
With a sheltering roof
Let the blizzard roar;
We are safe at home-
Can a king say more?

That's all that counts
When the day is done:
The smiles of love
And the youngsters' fun,
The cares put down
With the evening gloam-
Here's the joy of all:
To be safe at home.

Edgar Albert Guest

Safe Conduct

There isn't any danger in the kindly things you say,
There isn't any sorrow in the fine and manly deed,
No deep regret awaits you at the ending of the day,
There's always joy in knowing that you've played the friend in need.

There isn't any anguish in the cheerful words you speak,
The happy salutation never leaves a bitter sting,
No man has met dishonor being gentle with the weak
And unselfishness has never caused an hour of sorrowing.

It's the petty little failures which disturb us most at night,
The little acts of meanness and the trivial things we do;
The conscience never troubles us when we have done what's right,
It's when we've failed to be our best that shame begins to brew.

Oh, most of us are honest in the larger fields of life
And most of us are brave enough in times of stress and woe.
And most of us are fine enough in days of cruel strife.
But it is in the little things the worst begins to show.

The danger of our peace of mind lies in our selfishness,
In cruel little bits of speech which thoughtlessly we say,
In pressing on so eager to achieve our own success.
That we neglect the kindly folks we pass along the way.

Edgar Albert Guest

Satisfied With Life

I have known the green trees and the skies overhead
And the blossoms of spring and the fragrance they shed;
I have known the blue sea, and the mountains afar
And the song of the pines and the light of a star;
And should I pass now, I could say with a smile
That my pilgrimage here has been well worth my while.

I have known the warm handclasp of friends who were true;
I have shared in their pleasures and wept with them, too;
I have heard the gay laughter which sweeps away care
And none of the comrades I've made could I spare;
And should this be all, I could say ere I go,
That life is worth while just such friendships to know.

I have builded a home where we've loved and been glad;
I have known the rich joy of a girl and a lad;
I have had their caresses through storm and through shine,
And watched them grow lovely, those youngsters of mine;
And I think as I hold them at night on my knee,
That life has been generous surely to me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Sausage

You may brag about your breakfast foods you eat at break of day,
Your crisp, delightful shavings and your stack of last year's hay,
Your toasted flakes of rye and corn that fairly swim in cream,
Or rave about a sawdust mash, an epicurean dream.
But none of these appeals to me, though all of them I've tried—
The breakfast that I liked the best was sausage mother fried.
Old country sausage was its name; the kind, of course, you know,
The little links that seemed to be almost as white as snow,
But turned unto a ruddy brown, while sizzling in the pan;
Oh, they were made both to appease and charm the inner man.
All these new-fangled dishes make me blush and turn aside,
When I think about the sausage that for breakfast mother fried.
When they roused me from my slumbers and I left to do the chores,
It wasn't long before I breathed a fragrance out of doors
That seemed to grip my spirit, and to thrill my body through,
For the spice of hunger tingled, and 'twas then I plainly knew
That the gnawing at my stomach would be quickly satisfied
By a plate of country sausage that my dear old mother fried.
There upon the kitchen table, with its cloth of turkey red,
Was a platter heaped with sausage and a plate of home-made bread,
And a cup of coffee waiting—not a puny demitasse
That can scarcely hold a mouthful, but a cup of greater class;
And I fell to eating largely, for I could not be denied—
Oh, I'm sure a king would relish the sausage mother fried.
Times have changed and so have breakfasts; now each morning when I see
A dish of shredded something or of flakes passed up to me,
All my thoughts go back to boyhood, to the days of long ago,
When the morning meal meant something more than vain and idle show.
And I hunger, Oh, I hunger, in a way I cannot hide,
For a plate of steaming sausage like the kind my mother fried.

Edgar Albert Guest

See It Through

When you're up against a trouble,
Meet it squarely, face to face;
Lift your chin and set your shoulders,
Plant your feet and take a brace.
When it's vain to try to dodge it,
Do the best that you can do;
You may fail, but you may conquer,
See it through!
Black may be the clouds about you
And your future may seem grim,
But don't let your nerve desert you;
Keep yourself in fighting trim.
If the worst is bound to happen,
Spite of all that you can do,
Running from it will not save you,
See it through!

Even hope may seem but futile,
When with troubles you're beset,
But remember you are facing
Just what other men have met.
You may fail, but fall still fighting;
Don't give up, whate'er you do;
Eyes front, head high to the finish.
See it through!

Edgar Albert Guest

Selfish

I am selfish in my wishin' every sort o' joy for you;
I am selfish when I tell you that I'm wishin' skies o' blue
Bending o'er you every minute, and a pocketful of gold,
An' as much of love an' gladness as a human heart can hold.
Coz I know beyond all question that if such a thing could be
As you cornerin' life's riches you would share 'em all with me.

I am selfish in my wishin' every sorrow from your way,
With no trouble thoughts to fret you at the closin' o' the day;
An' it's selfishness that bids me wish you comforts by the score,
An' all the joys you long for, an' on top o' them, some more;
Coz I know, old tried an' faithful, that if such a thing could be
As you cornerin' life's riches you would share 'em all with me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Selfishness

Search history, my boy, and see
What petty selfishness has done.
Find if you can one victory
That little minds have ever won.
There is no record there to read
Of men who fought for self alone,
No instance of a single deed
Splendor they may proudly own.

Through all life's story you will find
The miser—with his hoarded gold—
A hermit, dreary and unkind,
An outcast from the human fold.
Men hold him up to view with scorn,
A creature by his wealth enslaved,
A spirit craven and forlorn,
Doomed by the money he has saved.

No man was ever truly great
Who sought to serve himself alone,
Who put himself above the state,
Above the friends about him thrown.
No man was ever truly glad
Who risked his joy on hoarded pelf,
And gave of nothing that he had
Through fear of needing it himself.

For selfishness is wintry cold,
And bitter are its joys at last,
The very charms it tries to hold,
With woes are quickly overcast.
And only he shall gladly live,
And bravely die when God shall call,
Who gathers but that he may give,
And with his fellows shares his all.

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Edgar Albert Guest

Selling The Old Home

The little house has grown too small, or rather we have grown
Too big to dwell within the walls where all our joys were known.
And so, obedient to the wish of her we love so well,
I have agreed for sordid gold the little home to sell.
Now strangers come to see the place, and secretly I sigh,
And deep within my breast I hope that they'll refuse to buy.

'This bedroom's small,' one woman said; up went her nose in scorn!
To me that is the splendid room where little Bud was born.
'The walls are sadly finger-marked,' another stranger said.
A lump came rising in my throat; I felt my cheeks grow red.
'Yes, yes,' I answered, 'so they are. The fingermarks are free
But I'd not leave them here if I could take them all with me.'

'The stairway shows the signs of wear.' I answered her in heat,
'That's but the glorious sign to me of happy little feet.
Most anyone can have a flight of shiny stairs and new
But those are steps where joy has raced, and love and laughter, too.'
'This paper's ruined! Here are scrawled some pencil marks, I note.'
I'd treasured them for years. They were the first he ever wrote.

Oh I suppose we'll sell the place; it's right that we should go;
The children must have larger rooms in which to live and grow.
But all my joys were cradled here; 'tis here I've lived my best,
'Tis here, whatever else shall come, we've been our happiest;
And though into a stranger's hands this home I shall resign,
And take his gold in pay for it, I still shall call it mine.

Edgar Albert Guest

Send Her A Valentine

Send her a valentine to say
You love her in the same old way.
Just drop the long familiar ways
And live again the old-time days
When love was new and youth was bright
And all was laughter and delight,
And treat her as you would if she
Were still the girl that used to be.
Pretend that all the years have passed
Without one cold and wintry blast;
That you are coming still to woo
Your sweetheart as you used to do;
Forget that you have walked along
The paths of life where right and wrong
And joy and grief in battle are,
And play the heart without a scar.
Be what you were when youth was fine
And send to her a valentine;
Forget the burdens and the woe
That have been given you to know
And to the wife, so fond and true,
The pledges of the past renew
'Twill cure her life of every ill
To find that you're her sweetheart still.

Edgar Albert Guest

September

SEPTEMBER with her brushes dipped in dazzling red and gold
Now comes to paint the valleys and the hills;
And we forget completely that the year is getting old
As we gaze upon the color that she spills.
For all that we remember
Are the glories of September,
The bloom upon the peaches and the gold upon the grain,
The apples red with blushes
From September's crimson brushes,
The glory of the hill tops and the splendor of the plain.

September — magic artist — comes again to paint the trees,
Comes again to crown with beauty Mother Earth;
And she'll touch with gold or crimson every humble plant she sees,
Without questioning its merit or its worth.
And the eye that looks to see
On the frailest little tree
Will behold a touch of glory where September it caressed,
And the poorest little bloom
That is soon to meet its doom
Will be nodding in the sunshine with the proudest richly dressed.

And September makes me think as I watch her splashing paints
Over every living thing underneath the skies today,
That the poorest of us here, when he goes to join the saints,
Will receive a touch of glory in the very self same way;
That the humblest of the lot
In the end won't be forgot,
As September crowns with beauty all the works of
Mother Earth,
So the gentle God above,
In His mercy and His love,
In the frailest of his creatures will find something that's of worth.

Edgar Albert Guest

Sermons We See

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day;
I'd rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way.
The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear,
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear;
And the best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds,
For to see good put in action is what everybody needs.

I soon can learn to do it if you'll let me see it done;
I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run.
And the lecture you deliver may be very wise and true,
But I'd rather get my lessons by observing what you do;
For I might misunderstand you and the high advise you give,
But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.

When I see a deed of kindness, I am eager to be kind.
When a weaker brother stumbles and a strong man stays behind
Just to see if he can help him, then the wish grows strong in me
To become as big and thoughtful as I know that friend to be.
And all travelers can witness that the best of guides today
Is not the one who tells them, but the one who shows the way.

One good man teaches many, men believe what they behold;
One deed of kindness noticed is worth forty that are told.
Who stands with men of honor learns to hold his honor dear,
For right living speaks a language which to every one is clear.
Though an able speaker charms me with his eloquence, I say,
I'd rather see a sermon than to hear one, any day.

Edgar Albert Guest

Service

I have no wealth of gold to give away,
But I can pledge to worthy causes these:
I'll give my strength, my days and hours of ease,
My finest thought and courage when I may,
And take some deed accomplished for my pay.
I cannot offer much in silver fees,
But I can serve when richer persons play,
And with my presence fill some vacancies.
There are some things beyond the gift of gold,
A richer treasure's needed now and then;
Some joys life needs which are not bought and sold—
The high occasion often calls for men.
Some for release from service give their pelf,
But he gives most who freely gives himself.

Edgar Albert Guest

She Mothered Five

She mothered five!

Night after night she watched a little bed,
Night after night she cooled a fevered head,
Day after day she guarded little feet,
Taught little minds the dangers of the street,
Taught little lips to utter simple prayers,
Whispered of strength that some day would be theirs,
And trained them all to use it as they should.
She gave her babies to the nation's good.

She mothered five!

She gave her beauty- from her cheeks let fade
Their rose-blush beauty- to her mother trade.
She saw the wrinkles furrowing her brow,
Yet smiling said: 'My boy grows stronger now.'
When pleasures called she turned away and said:
'I dare not leave my babies to be fed
By strangers' hands; besides they are too small;
I must be near to hear them when they call.'

She mothered five!

Night after night they sat about her knee
And heard her tell of what some day would be.
From her they learned that in the world outside
Are cruelty and vice and selfishness and pride;
From her they learned the wrongs they ought to shun,
What things to love, what work must still be done.
She led them through the labyrinth of youth
And brought five men and women up to truth.

She mothered five!

Her name may be unknown save to the few;
Of her the outside world but little knew;
But somewhere five are treading virtue's ways,
Serving the world and brightening its days;
Somewhere are five, who, tempted, stand upright,
Who cling to honor, keep her memory bright;
Somewhere this mother toils and is alive
No more as one, but in the breasts of five.

Edgar Albert Guest

She Powders Her Nose

A woman is queer, there's no doubt about that.
She hates to be thin and she hates to be fat;
One minute it's laughter, the next it's a cry-
You can't understand her, however you try;
But there's one thing about her which everyone knows-
A woman's not dressed till she powders her nose.

You never can tell what a woman will say;
She's a law to herself every hour of the day.
It keeps a man guessing to know what to do,
And mostly he's wrong when his guessing is through;
But this you can bet on, wherever she goes
She'll find some occasion to powder her nose.

I've studied the sex for a number of years;
I've watched her in laughter and seen her in tears;
On her ways and her whims I have pondered a lot,
To find what will please her and just what will not;
But all that I've learned from the start to the close
Is that sooner or later she'll powder her nose.

At church or a ball game, a dance or a show,
There's one thing about her I know that I know-
At weddings or funerals, dinners of taste,
You can bet that her hand will dive into her waist,
And every few minutes she'll strike up a pose,
And the whole world must wait till she powders her nose.

Edgar Albert Guest

Show Me!

I would rather see a Mason, than hear one any day,
I would rather one would walk with me than merely show the way.
The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear,
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear.
And the best of all the Masons are the men who live their creeds,
For to see the good in action is what everybody needs.

I can soon learn how to do it if you'll let me see it done,
I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run.
And the lectures you deliver may be wise and true,
But I'd rather get my lesson by observing what you do.
For I may misunderstand you and the high advice you give,
But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.

Edgar Albert Guest

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Edgar Albert Guest

Show The Flag

Show the flag and let it wave
As a symbol of the brave
Let it float upon the breeze
As a sign for each who sees
That beneath it, where it rides,
Loyalty to-day abides.

Show the flag and signify
That it wasn't born to die;
Let its colors speak for you
That you still are standing true,
True in sight of God and man
To the work that flag began.

Show the flag that all may see
That you serve humanity.
Let it whisper to the breeze
That comes singing through the trees
That whatever storms descend
You'll be faithful to the end.

Show the flag and let it fly,
Cheering every passer-by.
Men that may have stepped aside,
May have lost their old-time pride,
May behold it there, and then,
Consecrate themselves again.

Show the flag! The day is gone
When men blindly hurry on
Serving only gods of gold;
Now the spirit that was cold
Warms again to courage fine.
Show the flag and fall in line!

Edgar Albert Guest

Shut-Ins

We're gittin' so we need again
To see the sproutin' seed again.
We've been shut up all winter long
Within our narrow rooms;
We're sort o' shriveled up an' dry-
Ma's cranky-like an' quick to cry;
We need the blue skies overhead,
The garden with its blooms.

I'm findin' fault with this an' that!
I threw my bootjack at the cat
Because he rubbed against my leg-
I guess I'm all on edge;
I'm fidgety an' fussy too,
An' Ma finds fault with all I do;
It seems we need to see again
The green upon the hedge.

We've been shut up so long, it seems
We've lost the glamour of our dreams.
We've narrowed down as people will
Till fault is all we see.
We need to stretch our souls in air
Where there is room enough to spare;
We need the sight o' something green
On every shrub an' tree.

But soon our petulance will pass-
Our feet will tread the dew-kissed grass;
Our souls will break their narrow cells,
An' swell with love once more.
And with the blue skies overhead,
The harsh an' hasty words we've said
Will vanish with the snow an' ice,
When spring unlocks the door.

The sun will make us sweet again
With blossoms at our feet again;
We'll wander, arm in arm, the ways

Where beauty reigns supreme.
An' Ma an' I shall smile again,
An' be ourselves awhile again,
An' claim, like prisoners set free,
The charm of every dream.

Edgar Albert Guest

Signs

It's 'be a good boy, Willie,'
And it's 'run away and play,
For Santa Claus is coming
With his reindeer and his sleigh.'
It's 'mind what mother tells you,
And it's 'put away your toys,
For Santa Claus is coming
To the good girls and the boys.'
Ho, Santa Claus is coming, there is Christmas in the air,
And little girls and little boys are good now everywhere.

World-wide the little fellows
Now are sweetly saying 'please,'
And 'thank you,' and 'excuse me,
And those little pleasantries
That good children are supposed to
When there's company to hear;
And it's just as plain as can be
That the Christmas time is near.
Ho, it's just as plain as can be that old Santa's on his way,
For there are no little children that are really bad to-day.

And when evening shadows lengthen,
Every little curly head
Now is ready, aye, and willing
To be tucked away in bed;
Not one begs to stay up longer,
Not one even sheds a tear;
Ho, the goodness of the children
Is a sign that Santa's near.
It's wonderful, the goodness of the little tots to-day,
When they know that good old Santa has begun to pack his sleigh.

Edgar Albert Guest

Silent

I did not argue with the man,
It seemed a waste of words.
He gave to chance the wondrous plan
That gave sweet song to birds.

He gave to force the wisdom wise
That shaped the honeybee,
And made the useful butterflies
So beautiful to see.

And as we walked 'neath splendid trees
Which cast a friendly shade,
He said: 'Such miracles as these
By accident were made.'

Too well I know what accident
And chance and force disclose
To think blind fury could invent
The beauty of a rose.

I let him talk and answered not.
I merely thought it odd
That he could view a garden plot
And not believe in God.

Edgar Albert Guest

Similar

A warship and a woman's hat
Are just alike, I state,
They 're big and ugly, cost a heap,
And soon get out date.

Edgar Albert Guest

Since I Have Done My Best

SINCE I have done my best, I do
Not fear the outcome; here I stand
Prepared for judgment when men view
The labor of my heart and hand.
If good, then happy I shall be,
If not, contented I'll abide,
And though the prize is not for me,
My joy shall be in having tried.

Since I have done my best, there is
No cause for me to sit and sigh,
Although the laurel wreath I miss,
My eyes shall smiling be and dry;
No vain excuses shall I make
For failing, and no vain regret,
But bravely judgment I shall take,
And say: 'A better man I've met.'

Since I have done my best, I'll go
Whenever God shall summon me,
Contented, for right well I know
However poor my record be
That, having nothing to regret,
No shame that I would seek to hide,
The Master's praises I shall get
For honest effort when I tried.

Edgar Albert Guest

Since Jessie Died

We understand a lot of things we never did before,
And it seems that to each other Ma and I are meaning more.
I don't know how to say it, but since little Jessie died
We have learned that to be happy we must travel side by side.
You can share your joys and pleasures, but you never come to know
The depth there is in loving, till you've got a common woe.

We're past the hurt of fretting—we can talk about it now:
She slipped away so gently and the fever left her brow
So softly that we didn't know we'd lost her, but, instead,
We thought her only sleeping as we watched beside her bed.
Then the doctor, I remember, raised his head, as if to say
What his eyes had told already, and Ma fainted dead away.

Up to then I thought that money was the thing I ought to get;
And I fancied, once I had it, I should never have to fret.
But I saw that I had wasted precious hours in seeking wealth;
I had made a tidy fortune, but I couldn't buy her health.
And I saw this truth much clearer than I'd ever seen before:
That the rich man and the poor man have to let death through the door.

We're not half so keen for money as one time we used to be;
I am thinking more of mother and she's thinking more of me.
Now we spend more time together, and I know we're meaning more
To each other on life's journey, than we ever meant before.
It was hard to understand it! Oh, the dreary nights we've cried!
But we've found the depth of loving, since the day that Jessie died.

Edgar Albert Guest

Sittin' On The Porch

Sittin' on the porch at night when all the tasks are done,
Just restin' there an' talkin', with my easy slippers on,
An' my shirt band thrown wide open an' my feet upon the rail,
Oh, it's then I'm at my richest, with a wealth that cannot fail;
For the scent of early roses seems to flood the evening air,
An' a throne of downright gladness is my wicker rocking chair.

The dog asleep beside me, an' the children rompin' 'round
With their shrieks of merry laughter, Oh, there is no gladder sound
To the ears o' weary mortals, spite of all the scoffers say,
Or a grander bit of music than the children at their play!
An' I tell myself times over, when I'm sittin' there at night,
That the world in which I'm livin' is a place o' real delight.

Then the moon begins its climbin' an' the stars shine overhead,
An' the mother calls the children an' she takes 'em up to bed,
An' I smoke my pipe in silence an' I think o' many things,
An' balance up my riches with the lonesomeness o' kings,
An' I come to this conclusion, an' I'll wager that I'm right-
That I'm happier than they are, sittin' on my porch at night.

Edgar Albert Guest

Slumberland Time

IT is Slumberland time, and the storms have passed by,
And the sea is now golden and still,
And the big yellow moon has come up in the sky,
And the Sandman is home from the hill.
The fairy boat waits for my baby to start
For the wonderful harbor of dreams,
Where there's never a care for the dear little heart
And the world is as bright as it seems.

It is Slumberland time, and the sighing is done,
The hurts of the day are all well,
The wee childish troubles all passed with the sun,
Now the Sandman is ringing his bell.
The big yellow moon lights the way with his beams
To the land where my baby shall go,
Where the night time's a round of most wonderful dreams
And there's never a sorrow to know.

It is Slumberland time, and the tears are all dried,
And the dream ship is putting to sea,
My baby must sail o'er the rest-ocean wide
Till the morn brings her safely to me.
Toss gently, O Slumberland breezes, her curls,
Be kind to her, fairies, I pray,
Let never a sad dream be my little girl's
Till the sunbeams shall call her to play.

Edgar Albert Guest

Snooping 'Round

Last night I caught him on his knees and looking underneath the bed,
And oh, the guilty look he wore, and oh, the stammered words he said,
When I, pretending to be cross, said: 'Hey, young fellow, what's your
game?'

As if, back in the long ago, I hadn't also played the same;
As if, upon my hands and knees, I hadn't many a time been found
When, thinking of the Christmas Day, I'd gone upstairs to snoop around.

But there he stood and hung his head; the rascal knew it wasn't fair.
'I jes' was wonderin',' he said, 'jes' what it was that's under there.
It's somepin' all wrapped up an' I thought mebbe it might be a sled,
Becoz I saw a piece of wood 'at's stickin' out all painted red.'
'If mother knew,' I said to him, 'you'd get a licking, I'll be bound,
But just clear out of here at once, and don't you ever snoop around.'

And as he scampered down the stairs I stood and chuckled to myself,
As I remembered how I'd oft explored the topmost closet shelf.
It all came back again to me- with what a shrewd and cunning way
I, too, had often sought to solve the mysteries of Christmas Day.
How many times my daddy, too, had come upstairs without a sound
And caught me, just as I'd begun my clever scheme to snoop around.

And oh, I envied him his plight; I envied him the joy he feels
Who knows that every drawer that's locked some treasure dear to him
conceals;
I envied him his Christmas fun and wished that it again were mine
To seek to solve the mysteries by paper wrapped and bound by twine.
Some day he'll come to understand that all the time I stood and frowned,
I saw a boy of years ago who also used to snoop around.

Edgar Albert Guest

So Easy

So easy to say what another should do,
So easy to settle his cares,
So easy to tell him what roads to pursue,
And dispose of the burdens he bears.
It is easy to bid him be brave and strong,
And to make all his shortcomings known;
But O, it's so hard when the care and the wrong
And the dangers we face are our own.

It is easy to stand in another man's place,
When our comforts of life are assured,
And the sting of the rain beating sharp in his face
By him must be bravely endured.
It is easy to tell him the path he should take
And to bid him to laugh at his care,
But O, it's so hard when it's our hearts that ache
And we have the burdens to bear.

We all know the things that another should do,
His faults are like books on our shelves,
We can ponder them over and read and review,
But we haven't a book on ourselves.
We can settle the other man's troubles each day,
His griefs we can calmly discuss,
It is easy to sweep all his troubles away,
But we can't do the same thing for us.

The need of another it's easy to see,
When our own wants are all satisfied,
And bold and courageous it's easy to be
When it isn't our souls that are tried.
But O, it's so hard when we're stumbling along
To keep ourselves steadfast and true;
It is easy to tell someone else to be strong,
It's easier to talk than to do.

Edgar Albert Guest

Soldierly

The glory of a soldier—and a soldier's not a saint—
Is the way he does his duty without grumbling or complaint;
His work's not always pleasant, but he does it rain or shine,
And he grabs a bit of glory when he's fighting in the line;
But the lesson that he teaches every day to me an' you
Is the way to do a duty that we do not like to do.

Any sort o' chap can whistle when his work is mostly fun;
A hundred want the pleasant jobs to every sturdy one
That'll grab the dreary duty an' the mean an' lowly task,
Or the drab an' cheerless service that life often has to ask;
But somebody has to do it, an' the test of me an' you
Is the way we face the labor that we do not like to do.

Now, it isn't very pleasant standin' guard out in the rain
But it's in the line o' duty, an' no soldier will complain,
An' there isn't any soldier but what sometimes hates his work
When the dress parade is over, an' perhaps he'd like to shirk,
But he's there to follow orders, not to pick an' choose his post,
An' he sometimes shines the finest at the job he hates the most.

Let's be soldiers in the struggle, let's be loyal through and through;
Life is going to give us duties that perhaps we'll hate to do.
There'll be little sacrifices that we will not like to make,
There'll be many tasks unpleasant that will fall to us to take.
An' although we all would rather do the work that brings applause,
Let's forget our whims and fancies an' just labor for the cause.

Edgar Albert Guest

Some Day

SOME day our eyes will brighten, and some day our hearts will lighten,
Some day the sun will shine for you and me;
Some day grim doubt we'll banish, and the clouds of woe will vanish,
And the rosy, golden future we shall see.
Some day we'll know the wherefore of earth's journey, sweetheart, therefore
Let us bear the present bravely as we go,
Let us sing our songs of gladness, though our hearts are tinged with sadness,
We shall some day reach the valley where the roses bloom and blow.

Some day in the hereafter we shall find the will for laughter,
And the smiles will deck our faces once again;
And upon that brighter morrow, you shall ne'er have cause for sorrow,
For I'll never stay out later, dear, than ten;
Some day I'll cease to worry you while dressing, or to hurry you,
But patiently I'll wait until you come,
And though late we are, my dearie, I shall still be gay and cheery,
On the day when little trials shall have ceased to make us glum.

Some day soon, I feel it coming, when the bees once more are humming,
And the snows have melted silently away,
When the skies above are tender, and old Mother Earth in splendor
Bedecks herself with pansies and the tulips red and gay,
Maybe somebody will write me and in pleasant terms invite me
To spend Sunday at his cottage on the bay;
And that day when we are fishing, and our lines are gayly swishing,
We shall never have to murmur that the big ones got away.

Edgar Albert Guest

Somebody Else

Somebody wants a new bonnet to wear;
Somebody wants a new dress;
Somebody needs a new bow for her hair,
And never the wanting grows less.
Oh, this is the reason I labor each day
And this is the joy of my tasks:
That deep in the envelope holding my pay
Is something that somebody asks.
I could go begging for water and bread
And travel the highways of ease,
But somebody wants a roof over his head
And stockings to cover his knees.
I could go shirking the duties of life
And laugh when necessity pleads,
But rather I stand to the toil and the strife
To furnish what somebody needs.
Somebody wants what I've strength to supply,
And somebody's waiting for me
To come home to-night with money to buy
Her bread and her cake and her tea.
And as I am strong so her laughter will ring,
And as I am true she will smile;
It's the somebody else of the toiler or king
That makes all the struggle worth while.
Somebody needs all the courage I own,
And somebody's trust is in me;
For never a man who can go it alone,
Whatever his station may be.
So I stand to my task and I stand to my care,
And struggle to come to success,
For the ribbons to tie up somebody's hair,
And my somebody's pretty new dress.

Edgar Albert Guest

Somebody Spoke A Cheering Word

SOMEBODY spoke a cheering word,
Somebody praised his labor,
And something deep in his soul was stirred,
That night he smiled at his neighbor.
He kissed his wife with a hearty smack,
He rode the children upon his back
And he sang a tuneful ditty,
'Ho, ho,' he cried to his patient wife,
'I vow that never in all my life
Have I seen you look so pretty.'

Then into her eyes the love light crept,
A smile on her face appeared,
She hummed a song as the room she swept,
And the children tugged his beard.
He told them stories of fairies good,
Of pixies out in the distant wood,
And the sailors on the sea;
And there was a family made gay
Just because somebody chanced to say
One little word cheerfully.

And nobody knows how far it went,
And nobody here can say
When the morning came and he bravely went
To his labors for the day,
How much of the courage he showed was due
To the smile and the cheering word or two;
But this we know, anyhow,
That he climbed the ladder to wealth and fame,
And a cheering word may do the same

Edgar Albert Guest

Song Of The Many

This is the song of the many
Who seldom are mentioned in praise,
The glorious millions of toilers
Who splendidly live out their days.
The millions unlured by great riches,
Uneager for fame or applause,
Not seeking for history's niches,
Forever upholding a cause;
The many who bravely are bearing
The duties of life, as they plod,
Contentedly, gayly wayfaring
With faith in their country and God.

The millions, unnoticed, unheeded,
Who cheerfully tramp to and fro;
Always found at their posts when they're needed,
Not seeking for glamour or show.
Good fathers, devoted and tender,
And rightfully proud of their young,
Yes, these are the men that engender
The spirit that ought to be sung.
Men who live for the dear ones who love them,
Their happiness being their goal,
Yes, these, though we hear little of them,
Are the men that we ought to extol.

But few in the world attain glory,
But few ever sink in disgrace,
Compared to the ones who grow hoary
In quietly filling a place.
In unselfishly, splendidly living,
And honestly facing life's test;
The many who daily are giving
The world every bit of their best.
Yes, these are the men I would sing to,
The many who cheerfully plod
O'er life's highway, contented to cling to
Their faith in their country and God.

Songs Of Gloom

IF the song I have to sing
Is a dreary, gloomy thing,
I would rather silent be;
If I cannot sing of cheer,
I will never let you hear
Any song of dole from me.

Let no dirge escape my lips,
Rather song that gayly trips
Than a slow and mournful tone;
Let me sing a song of pleasure,
In a romping sort of measure,
But my woe I'll bear alone.

Edgar Albert Guest

Songs Of Rejoicing

Songs of rejoicin',
Of love and of cheer,
Are the songs that I'm yearnin' for
Year after year.

The songs about children
Who laugh in their glee
Are the songs worth the singin',
The bright songs for me.

Songs of rejoicin',
Of kisses and love,
Of faith in the Father,
Who sends from above
The sunbeams to scatter
The gloom and the fear;
These songs worth the singin',
The songs of good cheer.

Songs of rejoicin',
Oh, sing them again,
The brave songs of courage
Appealing to men.
Of hope in the future
Of heaven the goal;
The songs of rejoicin'
That strengthen the soul.

Edgar Albert Guest

Spoiling Them

'You're spoiling them!' the mother cries
When I give way to weepy eyes
And let them do the things they wish,
Like cleaning up the jelly dish,
Or finishing the chocolate cake,
Or maybe let the rascal take
My piece of huckleberry pie,
Because he wants it more than I.

'You're spoiling them!' the mother tells,
When I am heedless to their yells,
And let them race and romp about
And do not put their joy to rout.
I know I should be firm, and yet
I tried it once to my regret;
I will remember till I'm old
The day I started in to scold.

I stamped my foot and shouted: 'Stop!'
And Bud just let his drum sticks drop,
And looked at me, and turned away;
That night there was no further play.
The girls were solemn-like and still,
Just as girls are when they are ill,
And when unto his cot I crept,
I found him sobbing as he slept.

That was my first attempt and last
To play the scold. I'm glad it passed
So quickly and has left no trace
Of memory on each little face;
But now when mother whispers low:
'You're spoiling them,' I answer, 'No!
But it is plain, as plain can be,
Those little tykes are spoiling me.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Spring In The Trenches

It's coming time for planting in that little patch of ground,
Where the lad and I made merry as he followed me around;
The sun is getting higher, and the skies above are blue,
And I'm hungry for the garden, and I wish the war were through.

But it's tramp, tramp, tramp,
And it's never look behind,
And when you see a stranger's kids,
Pretend that you are blind.

The spring is coming back again, the birds begin to mate;
The skies are full of kindness, but the world is full of hate.
And it's I that should be bending now in peace above the soil,
With laughing eyes and little hands about to bless the toil.

But it's fight, fight, fight,
And it's charge at double-quick;
A soldier thinking thoughts of home
Is one more soldier sick.

Last year I brought the bulbs to bloom and saw the roses bud;
This year I'm ankle deep in mire, and most of it is blood.
Last year the mother in the door was glad as she could be;
To-day her heart is full of pain, and mine is hurting me.

But it's shoot, shoot, shoot,
And when the bullets hiss,
Don't let the tears fill up your eyes,
For weeping soldiers miss.

Oh, who will tend the roses now and who will sow the seeds?
And who will do the heavy work the little garden needs?
And who will tell the lad of mine the things he wants to know,
And take his hand and lead him round the paths we used to go?

For it's charge, charge, charge,
And it's face the foe once more;
Forget the things you love the most
And keep your mind on war.

Edgar Albert Guest

St. Louis: A Song Of The City

I was in St. Louis when their mystic Prophet came
From his dark, mysterious haunts to gaze upon the throngs.
None had ever seen his face and none could tell his name.
Yet they greeted him with cheers and welcomed him with songs.

'Who is he?' I asked of men, standing by my side.
'No one knows, they answered me, pausing then to cheer.
'Once a year he comes to us through the streets to ride.
Comes to crown his chosen queen and then to disappear.

None there was could tell his name in all that crowded place.
Deep and dark the secret which the people talked about.
But I knew that I had seen the Prophet's shining face.
Seen it on the city's streets beyond the slightest doubt.

I had seen it everywhere in factories and stores.
Seen it walking Locust Street at morning, noon and night;
Seen it at the schoolhouse and at humble cottage doors.
Seen it at the churches—and I knew that I was right.

'Twas no vague and shadowy form, no dim and spectral wraith
Heralded by bugle blasts and drums which beat and roll.
Here it was—the symbol of a city's sturdy faith.
Him they called the Prophet was the city's living soul!

Love of country, love of home and love of nobler things.
All that makes a city great the Prophet typified;
Gardens in the tiny yards, the songs a mother sings.
These the multitude beheld as children, open-eyed.

Not upon the wealth of gold the emphasis was laid.
Not upon the fleeting fame of marble buildings tall.
But upon the lasting works of which are cities made.
Noble hearts and kindly ways and God above them all.

Here's a city great and good, a city staunch and true,
A city where the best of life is found on every hand.
For when the Prophet vanished, what had made it so I knew.
For I had seen the city's soul and I could understand.

Edgar Albert Guest

St. Valentine's Day

Let loose the sails of love and let them fill
With breezes sweet with tenderness to-day;
Scorn not the praises youthful lovers say;
Romance is old, but it is lovely still.
Not he who shows his love deserves the jeer,
But he who speaks not what she longs to hear.

There is no shame in love's devoted speech;
Man need not blush his tenderness to show;
'Tis shame to love and never let her know,
To keep his heart forever out of reach.
Not he the fool who lets his love go on,
But he who spurns it when his love is won.

Men proudly vaunt their love of gold and fame,
High station and accomplishments of skill,
Yet of life's greatest conquest they are still,
And deem it weakness, or an act of shame,
To seem to place high value on the love
Which first of all they should be proudest of.

Let loose the sails of love and let them take
The tender breezes till the day be spent;
Only the fool chokes out life's sentiment.
She is a prize too lovely to forsake.
Be not ashamed to send your valentine;
She has your love, but needs its outward sign.

Edgar Albert Guest

Sticky Fingers

Wife says that I should be ashamed
To wear such garments as I do,
Full many a time has she exclaimed:
'A month ago that suit was new,
Now look at all the dreadful stains
That mar the coat and spoil the vest;
It seems to me if you'd take pains
Your clothing wouldn't get so messed.'

But I am proud of all those stains,
I do not care for garments clean,
For every shining mark explains
Where sticky little hands have been;
Each smudge is but a symbol of
A roguish youngster's fond caress,
A badge of trusting, constant love,
A token of real happiness.

I may be careless in my way,
Perhaps my clothes are a disgrace,
But when that baby comes to play
And holds me in her fond embrace
I love her sticky fingers more
Than any tailored suit of mine,
And she may thumb my garments o'er,
For every spot she leaves is fine.

I wish no spotless coat and vest,
If baby hands I have to check;
It matters not how I am dressed,
I want her arms about my neck.
Yes, finger-marked my clothes may be,
But they are marks I'm proudest of,
Let sticky fingers come to me
And stamp me with their seals of love.

Edgar Albert Guest

Story Telling

Most every night when they're in bed,
And both their little prayers have said,
They shout for me to come upstairs
And tell them tales of gypsies bold,
And eagles with the claws that hold
A baby's weight, and fairy sprites
That roam the woods on starry nights.

And I must illustrate these tales,
Must imitate the northern gales
That toss the Indian's canoe,
And show the way he paddles, too.
If in the story comes a bear,
I have to pause and sniff the air
And show the way he climbs the trees
To steal the honey from the bees.

And then I buzz like angry bees
And sting him on his nose and knees
And howl in pain, till mother cries:
'That pair will never shut their eyes,
While all that noise up there you make;
You're simply keeping them awake.'
And then they whisper: 'Just one more,'
And once again I'm forced to roar.

New stories every night they ask.
And that is not an easy task;
I have to be so many things,
The frog that croaks, the lark that sings,
The cunning fox, the frightened hen;
But just last night they stumped me, when
They wanted me to twist and squirm
And imitate an angle worm.

At last they tumble off to sleep,
And softly from their room I creep
And brush and comb the shock of hair
I tossed about to be a bear.

Then mother says: 'Well, I should say
You're just as much a child as they.'
But you can bet I'll not resign
That story telling job of mine.

Edgar Albert Guest

Story-Time

'TELL us a story,' comes the cry
From little lips when nights are cold,
And in the grate the flames leap high.
'Tell us a tale of pirates bold,
Or fairies hiding in the glen,
Or of a ship that's wrecked at sea.'
I fill my pipe, and there and then
Gather the children round my knee.

I give them all a role to play-
No longer are they youngsters small,
And I, their daddy, turning gray;
We are adventurers, one and all.
We journey forth as Robin Hood
In search of treasure, or to do
Some deed of daring, or of good,
Our hearts are ever brave and true.

We take a solemn oath to be
Defenders of the starry flag;
We brave the winter's stormy sea,
Or climb the rugged mountain crag,
To battle to the death with those
Who would defame our native land;
We pitch our camp among the snows
Or in the tropics burning sand.

We rescue maidens, young and fair,
Held captive long in prison towers;
We slay the villain in his lair,
For we're possessed of magic powers.
And though we desperately fight,
When by our foes we are beset,
We always triumph for the right;
We have not lost a battle yet.

It matters not how far we stray,
Nor where our battle lines may be,
We never get so far away

That we must spend a night at sea.
It matters not how high we climb,
How many foes our pathway block,
We always conquer just in time
To go to bed at 9 o'clock.

Edgar Albert Guest

Strange

He thought that he'd be happy if a fortune he could make,
If he were rich he thought that he'd be gay,
He often thought it would be nice an ocean trip to take
Whenever he desired to go away.

He thought he'd be contented if he owned a motor car
And had the price to pay for gasoline;
He thought he'd like it to afford a fifty-cent cigar
And spend his time a-golfing on the green.

He used to say that he'd be glad if he could ever wear
The latest styles as soon as they appear,
He had a notion that if he were but a millionaire
His life would be one constant round of cheer.

He fell into a fortune. Now a millionaire is he,
The luxuries he yearned for all are his;
But is he quite as happy as he thought he'd really be?
Well, judging from appearances, he is.

Edgar Albert Guest

Stuck

I'm up against it day by day,
My ignorance is distressing;
The things I don't know on the way
I'm busily confessing.
Time was I used to think I knew
Some useful bits of knowledge
And could be sure of one or two
Real facts I'd gleaned in college.
But I'm unfitted for the task
Of answering things my boy can ask.

Now, who can answer queries queer
That four-year-olds can think up?
And tell in simple phrase and clear
Why fishes do not drink up
The water in the streams and lakes,
Or where the wind is going,
And tell exactly how God makes
The roses that are growing?
I'm sure I cannot satisfy
Each little when, and how, and why.

Had I the wisdom of a sage
Possessed of all the learning
That can be gleaned from printed page
From bookworm's closest turning,
That eager knowledge-seeking lad
That questions me so gayly
Could still go round and boast he had
With queries floored me daily.
He'll stick, I'll bet, in less than five
Brief minutes any man alive.

Edgar Albert Guest

Success

This I would claim for my success—not fame nor gold,
Nor the throng's changing cheers from day to day,
Not always ease and fortune's glad display,
Though all of these are pleasant joys to hold;
But I would like to have my story told
By smiling friends with whom I've shared the way,
Who, thinking of me, nod their heads and say:
'His heart was warm when other hearts were cold.
'None turned to him for aid and found it not,
His eyes were never blind to man's distress,
Youth and old age he lived, nor once forgot
The anguish and the ache of loneliness;
His name was free from stain or shameful blot
And in his friendship men found happiness.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Success And Failure

I do not think all failure's undeserved,
And all success is merely someone's luck;
Some men are down because they were unnerved,
And some are up because they kept their pluck.
Some men are down because they chose to shirk;
Some men are high because they did their work.

I do not think that all the poor are good,
That riches are the uniform of shame;
The beggar might have conquered if he would,
And that he begs, the world is not to blame.
Misfortune is not all that comes to mar;
Most men, themselves, have shaped the things
they are

Edgar Albert Guest

Sue's Got A Baby

Sue's got a baby now, an' she
Is like her mother used to be;
Her face seems prettier, an' her ways
More settled-like. In these few days
She's changed completely, an' her smile
Has taken on the mother-style.
Her voice is sweeter, an' her words
Are clear as is the song of birds.
She still is Sue, but not the same—
She's different since the baby came.
There is a calm upon her face
That marks the change that's taken place;
It seems as though her eyes now see
The wonder things that are to be,
An' that her gentle hands now own
A gentleness before unknown.
Her laughter has a clearer ring
Than all the bubbling of a spring,
An' in her cheeks love's tender flame
Glow's brighter since the baby came.
I look at her an' I can see
Her mother as she used to be.
How sweet she was, an' yet how much
She sweetened by the magic touch
That made her mother! In her face
It seemed the angels left a trace
Of Heavenly beauty to remain
Where once had been the lines of pain
An' with the baby in her arms
Enriched her with a thousand charms.
Sue's got a baby now an' she
Is prettier than she used to be.
A wondrous change has taken place,
A softer beauty marks her face
An' in the warmth of her caress
There seems the touch of holiness,
An' all the charms her mother knew
Have blossomed once again in Sue.
I sit an' watch her an' I claim

My lost joys since her baby came.

Edgar Albert Guest

Summer Dreams

Drowsy old summer, with nothing to do,
I'd like to be drowsin' an' dreamin' with you;
I'd like to stretch out in the shade of a tree,
An' fancy the white clouds were ships out at sea,
Or castles with turrets and treasures and things,
And peopled with princesses, fairies and kings,
An' just drench my soul with the glorious joy
Which was mine to possess as a barefooted boy.

Drowsy old summer, your skies are as blue
As the skies which a dreamy-eyed youngster once knew,
An' I fancy to-day all the pictures are there-
The ships an' the pirates an' princesses fair,
The red scenes of battle, the gay, cheering throngs
Which greeted the hero who righted all wrongs;
But somehow or other, these old eyes of mine
Can't see what they did as a youngster of nine.

Drowsy old summer, I'd like to forget
Some things which I've learned an' some hurts I have met;
I'd like the old visions of splendor an' joy
Which were mine to possess as a barefooted boy
When I dreamed of the glorious deeds I would do
As soon as I'd galloped my brief boyhood through;
I'd like to come back an' look into your skies
With that wondrous belief an' those far-seeing eyes.

Drowsy old summer, my dream days have gone;
Only things which are real I must now look upon;
No longer I see in the skies overhead
The pictures that were, for the last one has fled.
I have learned that not all of our dreams can come true;
That the toilers are many and heroes are few;
But I'd like once again to look up there an' see
The man that I fancied some day I might be.

Edgar Albert Guest

Sunday In The Country

SUNDAY in the country — that's how we spent the day,
Drinking in the perfume of the fragrant breath of May;
Gazing at the splendors of the meadows and the hills,
Laughing with the babbling brooks and singing with the rills,
Dancing with the sunbeams and smiling with the skies,
And worshiping the Master with our hearts and minds and eyes.

Sunday in the country — with an arch of blue above,
And the green trees whispering to us simple messages of love;
With the song birds singing anthems just as sacred and as sweet
And as stirring and uplifting as the church choir down the street;
In God's own great cathedral, where the poorest man may go,
And catch a glimpse of Heaven as he journeys here below.

Sunday in the country — that's how we spent the day,
And we thanked God every minute for His precious gifts of May;
For the green trees waving o'er us as the shady lanes we strolled,
For the silver of the waters and the sunbeams' yellow gold,
For the fragrance of the lilacs and the apple trees in bloom,
For the glory of the sunshine and the blossoms' sweet perfume.

Sunday in the country — till the shades of night came down,
When we turned our faces homeward and we journeyed back to town;
Back to all the ceaseless striving in the dreary haunts of men,
To the constant quest for money with its anguish once again,
But with faith in God above us, and serene contentment, too,
For our hearts were drenched with gladness as the fields are drenched with dew.

Edgar Albert Guest

Sympathy

Sympathy

One came to the house with a pretty speech:

'It's all for the best,' said he,
And I know that he sought my heart to reach,
And I know that he grieved with me.

But I was too full of my sorrow then
To list to his words or care;
Though I've tried I cannot recall again
The comfort he gave me there.

But another came, and his lips were dumb
As he grasped me by the hand,
And he stammered: 'Old man, I had to come,
Oh, I hope you'll understand.'

And ever since then I have felt his hand
Clasped tightly in my own,
And to-day his silence I understand-
My sorrowing he had known.

Edgar Albert Guest

Taking His Place

He's doing double duty now;
Time's silver gleams upon his brow,
And there are lines upon his face
Which only passing years can trace.
And yet he's turned back many a page
Long written in the book of age,
For since their boy has marched away,
This kindly father, growing gray,
Is doing for the mother true
The many things the boy would do.

Just as the son came home each night
With youthful step and eyes alight,
So he returns, and with a shout
Of greeting puts her grief to rout.
He says that she shall never miss
The pleasure of that evening kiss,
And with strong arms and manner brave
He simulates the hug he gave,
And loves her, when the day is done,
Both as a husband and a son.

His laugh has caught a clearer ring;
His step has claimed the old-time swing,
And though his absence hurts him, too,
The bravest thing that he can do
Is just to try to take his place
And keep the smiles on mother's face.
So, merrily he jests at night—
Tells her with all a boy's delight
Of what has happened in the town,
And thus keeps melancholy down.

Her letters breathe of hope and cheer;
No note of gloom she sends from here,
And as her husband reads at night
The many messages she writes,
He chuckles o'er the closing line.
She's failed his secret to divine—

'When you get home,' she tells the lad,
'You'll scarcely know your doting dad;
Although his hair is turning gray,
He seems more like a boy each day.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Tell Him Why

When your boy wants to do what he shouldn't—
Some foolish or dangerous thing,
Or something you wish that he wouldn't,
A deed that disaster may bring,
That he must not you hasten to tell him
And threaten him should he defy,
With a positive order you quell him,
But do you explain to him why?

When you want him to do what he should do,
When you're eager to have him polite,
When its something you know that he could do,
Do you train him with reason or fright?
You may say that he 'must' or severely
With him you will deal by and by;
You see why it's proper most clearly,
But do you explain to him why?

A boy's mind is open to reason,
A thinking device is his brain;
Injustice he's ready to seize on,
So why don't you stop to explain?
It's perfectly proper to check him
When you see that in danger he'd fly,
But it certainly sure that you'll wreck him
Unless you explain to him why.

Edgar Albert Guest

Temptation

I WOULD like to wed your daughter,' said the multi-millionaire,
'I will try to make her happy; if I don't you needn't care;
She shall have five million dollars just the minute we are married;
Say the word and I will take her'—but the maiden's father tarried.

'Every luxury I'll give her, she shall dress in finest raiment
And the moment we are married I shall make the wedding payment;
She'll be worth five million dollars when the wedding vows are said,
Will you say that it's a bargain?'—but the father hung his head.

'It is true I'm almost fifty and your daughter's scarce eighteen.
But she'll live a life of splendor, she shall be a social queen;
She shall dine with kings and princes and by royalty be favored,
And she'll have five million dollars'—here the tempted father wavered.

Oh! I would that I could write it, that before the father's eyes
Came the picture of the baby that he'd learned to idolize;
Came his little girl at evening for a romp upon his knee,
Came the little roguish lassie of the days that used to be.

Had there come that very moment when he saw the rich man's check
Just a vision of his baby with her arms about his neck;
Had his eyes turned back one minute to the days of long ago,
Then he never would have wavered—he'd have fairly shouted: 'No.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Ten Fingered Mice

When a cake is nicely frosted and it's put away for tea,
And it looks as trim and proper as a chocolate cake should be,
Would it puzzle you at evening as you brought it from the ledge
To find the chocolate missing from its smooth and shiny edge?
As you viewed the cake in sorrow would you look around and say,
'Who's been nibbling in the pantry when he should have been at play?'
And if little eyes look guilty as they hungered for a slice,
Would you take Dad's explanation that it must have been the mice?
Oh, I'm sorry for the household that can keep a frosted cake
Smooth and perfect through the daytime, for the hearts of them must ache—
For it must be very lonely to be living in a house
Where the pantry's never ravaged by a glad ten-fingered mouse.
Though I've traveled far past forty, I confess that I, myself,
Even now will nip a morsel from the good things on the shelf;
And I never blame the youngsters who discover chocolate cake
For the tiny little samples which exultantly they take.

Edgar Albert Guest

Thanksgiving

Gettin' together to smile an' rejoice,
An' eatin' an' laughin' with folks of your choice;
An' kissin' the girls an' declarin' that they
Are growin' more beautiful day after day;
Chattin' an' braggin' a bit with the men,
Buildin' the old family circle again;
Livin' the wholesome an' old-fashioned cheer,
Just for awhile at the end of the year.
Greetings fly fast as we crowd through the door
And under the old roof we gather once more
Just as we did when the youngsters were small;
Mother's a little bit grayer, that's all.
Father's a little bit older, but still
Ready to romp an' to laugh with a will.
Here we are back at the table again
Tellin' our stories as women an' men.

Bowed are our heads for a moment in prayer;
Oh, but we're grateful an' glad to be there.
Home from the east land an' home from the west,
Home with the folks that are dearest an' best.
Out of the sham of the cities afar
We've come for a time to be just what we are.
Here we can talk of ourselves an' be frank,
Forgettin' position an' station an' rank.

Give me the end of the year an' its fun
When most of the plannin' an' toilin' is done;
Bring all the wanderers home to the nest,
Let me sit down with the ones I love best,
Hear the old voices still ringin' with song,
See the old faces unblemished by wrong,
See the old table with all of its chairs
An' I'll put soul in my Thanksgivin' prayers.

Edgar Albert Guest

The After-Dinner Smoke

THROUGH the smoke clouds that I blow
I can see the Long Ago
And the merry lanes of boyhood
That I gayly used to tread;
See the crows upon the wing,
Hear the thrushes sweetly sing,
And once more I 'm stretched out dreaming
With the green grass for a bed.

As I slowly puff away,
I 'm a boy once more at play,
I am angling for the catfish
Or I 'm swimming with my chums;
Now I chaw green apples, too,
Underneath God's stretch of blue,
With not a thought of trouble
Or the pain that after comes.

As the blue smoke slowly curls,
Once again I see the girls
In their little gingham dresses
And their faces berry-brown;
Then one little maid I see
Who was all in all to me
In the days before I journeyed
From the old home to the town.

Now she comes into the room
Where I 'm dreaming in the gloom,
And she says the air is frightful,
And she starts to gasp and choke;
But, of course, she doesn't know
How the days of Long Ago
Come back to me each evening
In my after-dinner smoke.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Age Of Ink

Swiftly the changes come. Each day
Sees some lost beauty blown away
And some new touch of lovely grace
Come into life to take its place.
The little babe that once we had
One morning woke a roguish lad;
The babe that we had put to bed
Out of our arms and lives had fled.

Frocks vanished from our castle then,
Ne'er to be worn or seen again,
And in his knickerbocker pride
He boasted pockets at each side
And stored them deep with various things-
Stones, tops and jacks and-colored strings;
Then for a time we claimed the joy
Of calling him our little boy.

Brief was the reign of such a spell.
One morning sounded out a bell;
With tears I saw her brown eyes swim
And knew that it was calling him.
Time, the harsh master of us all,
Was bidding him to heed his call;
This shadow fell across life's pool-
Our boy was on his way to school.

Our little boy! And still we dreamed,
For such a little boy he seemed!
And yesterday, with eyes aglow
Like one who has just come to know
Some great and unexpected bliss,
He bounded in, announcing this:
'Oh, Dad! Oh, Ma! Say, what d'you think?
This year we're going to write with ink!'

Here was a change I'd not foreseen,
Another step from what had been.
I paused a little while to think

About this older age of ink-
What follows this great step, thought I,
What next shall come as the time goes by?
And something said: 'His pathway leads
Unto the day he'll write with deeds.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Alarm

Get off your downy cots of ease,
There's work that must be done.
Great danger's riding on the seas.
The storm is coming on.
Don't think that it will quickly pass.
Who smiles at distant fate,
And waits until it strikes, alas!
Has roused himself too late.

Who thinks the fight will end before
The need of him arrives,
Is lengthening this brutal war
And costing many lives.
For over us that storm shall break
Ere many weeks have fled,
And we shall pay for our mistake
In fields of mangled dead.

Be ready when the foe shall near,
Be there to strike him hard;
Let us, though he be miles from here,
Be standing now on guard.
To-morrow's victories won't be won
By pluck that we display
To-morrow when the foe comes on,
But by our work to-day.

Edgar Albert Guest

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Edgar Albert Guest

The Approach Of Christmas

There's a little chap at our house that is being mighty good-
Keeps the front lawn looking tidy in the way we've said he should;
Doesn't leave his little wagon, when he's finished with his play,
On the sidewalk as he used to; now he puts it right away.
When we call him in to supper, we don't have to stand and shout;
It is getting on to Christmas and it's plain he's found it out.

He eats the food we give him without murmur or complaint;
He sits up at the table like a cherub or a saint;
He doesn't pinch his sister just to hear how loud she'll squeal;
Doesn't ask us to excuse him in the middle of the meal,
And at eight o'clock he's willing to be tucked away in bed.
It is getting close to Christmas; nothing further need be said.

I chuckle every evening as I see that little elf,
With the crooked part proclaiming that he brushed his hair himself.
And I chuckle as I notice that his hands and face are clean,
For in him a perfect copy of another boy is seen-
A little boy at Christmas, who was also being good,
Never guessing that his father and his mother understood.

There's a little boy at our house that is being mighty good;
Doing everything that's proper, doing everything he should.
But besides him there's a grown-up who has learned life's bitter truth,
Who is gladly living over all the joys of vanished youth.
And although he little knows it (for it's what I never knew),
There's a mighty happy father sitting at the table, too.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Auto

An auto is a helpful thing;
I love the way the motor hums,
I love each cushion and each spring,
The way it goes, the way it comes;
It saves me many a dreary mile,
It brings me quickly to the smile
Of those at home, and every day
It adds unto my time for play.
It keeps me with my friends in touch;
No journey now appears too much
To make with meetings at the end:
It gives me time to be a friend.
It laughs at distance, and has power
To lengthen every fleeting hour.
It bears me into country new
That otherwise I'd never view.
It's swift and sturdy and it strives
To fill with happiness our lives;
When for the doctor we've a need
It brings him to our door with speed.
It saves us hours of anxious care
And heavy heartache and despair.
It has its faults, but still I sing:
The auto is a helpful thing.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Average Man

MINE is a song of the average man
Who has been on earth since the world began!
You'll find him kind and you'll find him true,
You'll find him cheerful and happy, too.
He's never proud and he's never mean,
He walks the earth with a conscience clean,
The squarest fellow that God could plan
On earth today is the average man.

He loves his wife and he loves his home,
He isn't the fellow who likes to roam;
He keeps his love for his fellow man
And bears his burden as best he can;
He's a gentle neighbor, a faithful friend,
And will fight for him to the bitter end;
The decentest fellow that God could plan
On earth today is the average man.

The average man doesn't cheat or lie
Or wrong his brothers. He doesn't try
To climb to glory and gain the crown
By pulling a weaker brother down.
He's always found on the side of right,
His creed is always a spotless white;
And oft as the wrongs of the world I scan,
I thank the Lord for the average man.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Baby's Feet

Pinker than the roses that enrich a summer's day,
Splashing in the bath tub or just kicking them in play,
Nothing in the skies above or earth below as sweet,
As fascinating to me as a baby's little feet.

Every toe a rosebud, on a chubby, dimpled tree,
Little legs as rounded and as plump as they can be,
Peeping through the nighties, or kicking in the air,
Angel wings aren't prettier than baby's feet, I swear.

Not a sign of travel, not a sign of care,
Not a sign of burdens they have had to bear,
Just the pinkest pinkness and the plumpest plumpness known,
Kicking in their gladness when the covers back are thrown.

Little feet that never yet have stepped aside to sin,
Never trampled others down in selfishness to win,
Never felt the bruises or the weariness of strife,
Aren't they good to look at as they're starting out in life?

Little feet, I wonder, as I watch you kick in play,
Peeping through your nightie at the ending of the day,
Wonder where you'll wander in the years that lie ahead,
And I pray the Lord to guard you o'er the paths that you must tread.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Bachelor's Soliloquy

To wed, or not to wed; that is the question;
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The bills and house rent of a wedded fortune,
Or to say "nit" when she proposes,
And by declining cut her. To wed; to smoke
No more; And have a wife at home to mend
The holes in socks and shirts
And underwear and so forth. 'Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To wed for life;
To wed; perchance to fight; ay, there's the rub;
For in that married life what fights may come,
When we have honeymooning ceased
Must give us pause; there's the respect
That makes the joy of single life.
For who would bear her mother's scornful tongue,
Canned goods for tea, the dying furnace fire;
The pangs of sleepless nights when baby cries;
The pain of barking shins upon a chair and
Closing waists that button down the back,
When he himself might all these troubles shirk
With a bare refusal? Who would bundles bear,
And grunt and sweat under a shopping load?
Who would samples match; buy rats for hair,
Cart cheese and crackers home to serve at night
For lunch to feed your friends; play pedro
After tea; sing rag time songs, amusing
Friendly neighbors. Buy garden tools
To lend unto the same. Stay home at nights
In smoking coat and slippers and slink to bed
At ten o'clock to save the light bills?
Thus duty does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of matrimony
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of chores;
And thus the gloss of marriage fades away,
And loses its attraction.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Ballad Of The New Arrival

IT isn't the blue in the skies,
Nor the song of the whispering trees,
The light in a fair maiden's eyes,
My joy is far greater than these;
You will pardon my arrogance please,
And forgive the wide bulge in my brow,
My hand I'll permit you to seize,
There's another to welcome me now.

Naught to me are political cries,
Or Teddy's or Taft's policies;
The charges of fraud or of lies,
Or Wilson's big stock of degrees.
Pinning blankets, long dresses, boot-ees
This morning are all I allow
In my thoughts, both at work and at ease,
There's another to welcome me now.

'With a smile on my face I arise,
And beg for permission to squeeze
The wee little hand that I prize,
And I wonder if daddy he sees.
The world with its mountains and seas
Is a mighty big place, but I vow,
The whole world is here at my knees,
There's another to welcome me now.

Prince, at your pleasures I sneeze,
You to riches and glory may bow,
But my joy is greater than these,
There's another to welcome me now.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Bank Clerk

I'D LIKE to be a bank clerk, and sit inside a cage,
I'd like to take and hoard away the toiler's weekly wage;
I 'd like to sit behind a drawer with gold and greenbacks lined,
I 'd like to read the writing on the checks rich men have signed,
It must be nice to shut up shop at 3 and cease to fret,
And then I wish that I could have the holidays they get.

I'd like to be a bank clerk, with a pen behind my ear,
To go to work at 9 and know that quitting time's so near:
To occupy a cage in which no office bores can sit,
With nothing else to do but take in cash and care for it.
I 'd like to be a bank clerk; that I 'm not is my regret;
Just think of all the holidays the weary bank clerks get.

I love the name of Lincoln and the name of Washington,
I like to think about the way George made the British run;
I 'd like to take a day off, too, to honor him, I say,
And I would also like to rest on Decoration Day;
I love this land of freedom, and I like to sing her praise,
But I wish I were a bank clerk to enjoy her holidays.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Bank Roll

HOW dear to my heart is the bank roll departed,
The five-spots and tens in the strong rubber band,
The yellow boys, too, that were mine when I started,
And oft I caressed with a fatherly hand.
The wide, bulging bank roll that set my eyes popping,
The bank roll I had when we struck the hotel;
The bank roll she touched when she journeyed out shopping,
The bank roll now vanished that served us so well.

The wide, bulging bank roll, the rubber bound bank roll,
The bank roll now vanished that served us so well.
How sweet from the green, crinkled wad't was to peel one,
And flash it about for the strangers to see;
How splendid to know that the wad was a real one,
And all it was made of belonged unto me.
Now the tear of regret in my sad eyes is welling,
Once again I am making the poverty yell;
And I sigh, as I sit in my poor, humble dwelling,
For the bank roll now vanished that served us so well,
The wide, bulging bank roll, the Michigan bank roll,
The rubber bound bank roll that served us so well.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Beauty Places

Here she walked and romped about,
And here beneath this apple tree
Where all the grass is trampled out
The swing she loved so used to be.
This path is but a path to you,
Because my child you never knew.

'Twas here she used to stoop to smell
The first bright daffodil of spring;
'Twas here she often tripped and fell
And here she heard the robins sing.
You'd call this but a common place,
But you have never seen her face.

And it was here we used to meet.
How beautiful a spot is this,
To which she gayly raced to greet
Her daddy with his evening kiss!
You see here nothing grand or fine,
But, Oh, what memories are mine!

The people pass from day to day
And never turn their heads to see
The many charms along the way
That mean so very much to me.
For all things here are speaking of
The babe that once was mine to love.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Benefit Of Trouble

IF LIFE were rosy and skies were blue
And never a cloud appeared,
If every heart that you loved proved true,
And never a friendship seared;
If there were no troubles to fret your soul,
You never would struggle to gain your goal.

It 'a trouble that makes you and proves your worth,
It's trouble that spurs you to better things.
It isn't the man with the joys of earth
Who courage and strength to his duty brings;
But the man who bends 'neath a burden great
Is the man who wins in the fight with fate.

It's something to work for, a debt to pay,
A place to gain that a young man needs;
The difficulties that line the way
Are really the mothers of splendid deeds.
The man with something he hopes to do
Is the man who toils with a purpose true.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Best Land

If I knew a better land on this glorious world of ours,
Where a man gets bigger money and is working shorter hours;
If the Briton or the Frenchman had an easier life than mine.
I'd pack my goods this minute and I'd sail across the brine.
But I notice when an alien wants a land of hope and cheer
And a future for his children, he comes out and settles here.

Here's the glorious land of Freedom.
Here's the milk and honey goal
For the peasant out of Russia, for the long subjected Pole.
It is here the sons of Italy and men of Austria turn
For the comfort of their bodies and the wages they can earn.
And with all that men complain of, and with all that goes amiss,
There's no happier, better nation on the world's broad face than this.

So I'm thinking when I listen to the wails of discontent.
And some foreign disbeliever spreads his evil sentiment,
That the breed of hate and envy that is sowing sin and shame
In this glorious land of Freedom should go back from whence it came.
And I hold it is the duty, rich or poor, of every man.
Who enjoys this country's bounty to be ALL American.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Better Job

If I were running a factory
I'd stick up a sign for all to see,
I'd print it large and I'd nail it high
On every wall that the men walked by,
And I'd have it carry this sentence clear:
'The Better Job that you want is here!'

It's the common trait of the human race
To pack up and roam from place to place;
Men have done it for ages and do it now,
Seeking to better themselves somehow;
They quit their posts and their tools they drop
For a better job in another shop.

It may be I'm wrong, but I hold to this
That somewhere something must be amiss
When a man worth while must move away
For the better job with the better pay;
And something is false in our own renown
When men can think of a better town.

So if I were running a factory
I'd stick up this sign for all to see,
Which never an eye in the place could miss :
'There isn't a better town than this;
You need not go wandering, far or near
The Better Job that you want is here!'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Better Thing

It is better to die for the flag,
For its red and its white and its blue,
Than to hang back and shirk and to lag
And let the flag sink out of view.

It is better to give up this life
In the heat and the thick of the strife
Than to live out your days 'neath a sky,
Where Old Glory shall never more fly.

The peace that we long for will be
Far worse than the war that we dread
If never again we're to see
The blue, and the white and the red
Wind-tossed and sun-kissed in the skies.
If ever the Stars and Stripes dies
Or loses its lustre and pride,
We shall wish in our souls we had died.

It is better by far that we die
Than that flag shall pass out of the world;
If ever it ceases to fly,
If ever it's hauled down and furled,
Dishonor shall stamp us with shame
And freedom be naught but a name,
And the few years of dearly-bought breath
Will be filled with worse horrors than death.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Big Deeds

We are done with little thinking and we're done with little deeds,
We are done with petty conduct and we're done with narrow creeds;
We have grown to men and women, and we've noble work to do,
And to-day we are a people with a larger point of view.
In a big way we must labor, if our Flag shall always fly.
In a big way some must suffer, in a big way some must die.
There must be no little dreaming in the visions that we see,
There must be no selfish planning in the joys that are to be;
We have set our faces eastwards to the rising of the sun
That shall light a better nation, and there's big work to be done.
And the petty souls and narrow, seeking only selfish gain,
Shall be vanquished by the toilers big enough to suffer pain.
It's a big task we have taken; 'tis for others we must fight.
We must see our duty clearly in a white and shining light;
We must quit our little circles where we've moved in little ways,
And work, as men and women, for the bigger. better days.
We must quit our selfish thinking and our narrow views and creeds,
And as people, big and splendid, We must do the bigger deeds.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Birth Of Love

I REMEMBER the first tiny cry that she gave
And my heart felt a thrill that it never had known,
And my face which a moment before had been grave
With the sunlight of love and of happiness shone;
And yet I am sure that I loved her before
She uttered the cry that delighted me so,
And I vow that the baby that romps on the floor
Was a part of my life in the long, long ago.

I remember the first gentle kiss I bestowed
On her little pink cheek, and recall that just then
That it seemed that my heart with its love overflowed,
A love I had known and was winning again;
That babe I am sure was no stranger to me,
For with her came love that no stranger could
bring, A love that's as deep as the depths of the sea,
As fresh and as pure as a cold mountain spring.

There she is on the floor with her cheeks all aglow,
With her eyes just as bright as the stars in the sky,
Has she, do you think, in my heart had to grow
To win me to love her? No, no, I reply!
I loved her the very first moment she came,
And looking back now I am certain also
That my heart with the love of her had been aflame
In the wonderful days of the long, long ago.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Blue Flannel Shirt

I am eager once more to feel easy,
I'm weary of thinking of dress;
I'm heartily sick of stiff collars,
And trousers the tailor must press.
I'm eagerly waiting the glad days—
When fashion will cease to assert
What I must put on every morning—
The days of the blue flannel shirt.

I want to get out in the country
And rest by the side of the lake;
To go a few days without shaving,
And give grim old custom the shake.
A week's growth of whiskers, I'm thinking,
At present my chin wouldn't hurt;
And I'm yearning to don those old trousers
And loaf in that blue flannel shirt.

You can brag all you like of your fashions,
The style of your cutaway coat;
You can boast of your tailor-made raiment,
And the collar that strangles your throat;
But give me the old pair of trousers
That seem to improve with the dirt,
And let me get back to the comfort
That's born of a blue flannel shirt.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Book Of Memory

Turn me loose and let me be
Young once more and fancy free;
Let me wander where I will,
Down the lane and up the hill,
Trudging barefoot in the dust
In an age that knows no 'must,'
And no voice insistently
Speaks of duty unto me;
Let me tread the happy ways
Of those by-gone yesterdays.

Fame had never whispered then,
Making slaves of eager men;
Greed had never called me down
To the gray walls of the town,
Offering frankincense and myrrh
If I'd be its prisoner;
I was free to come and go
Where the cherry blossoms blow,
Free to wander where I would,
Finding life supremely good.

But I turned, as all must do,
From the happiness I knew
To the land of care and strife,
Seeking for a fuller life;
Heard the lure of fame and sought
That renown so dearly bought;
Listened to the voice of greed
Saying: 'These the things you need,'
Now the gray town holds me fast,
Prisoner to the very last.

Age has stamped me as its own;
Youth to younger hearts has flown;
Still the cherry blossoms blow
In the land loused to know;
Still the fragrant clover spills
Perfume over dales and hills,

But I'm not allowed to stray
Where the young are free to play;
All the years will grant to me
Is the book of memory.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Boy And The Flag

I want my boy to love his home,
His Mother, yes, and me:
I want him, wheresoe'er he'll roam,
With us in thought to be.
I want him to love what is fine,
Nor let his standards drag,
But, Oh! I want that boy of mine
To love his country's flag!

I want him when he older grows
To love all things of earth;
And Oh! I want him, when he knows,
To choose the things of worth.
I want him to the heights to climb
Nor let ambition lag;
But, Oh! I want him all the time
To love his country's flag.

I want my boy to know the best,
I want him to be great;
I want him in Life's distant West,
Prepared for any fate.
I want him to be simple, too,
Though clever, ne'er to brag,
But, Oh! I want him, through and through,
To love his country's flag.

I want my boy to be a man,
And yet, in distant years,
I pray that he'll have eyes that can
Not quite keep back the tears
When, coming from some foreign shore
And alien scenes that fag,
Borne on its native breeze, once more
He sees his country's flag.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Boy Enlists

His mother's eyes are saddened, and her cheeks
are stained with tears,
And I'm facing now the struggle that I've
dreaded through the years;
For the boy that was our baby has been changed
into a man.
He's enlisted in the army as a true American.

He held her for a moment in his arms before
he spoke,
And I watched him as he kissed her, and it
seemed to me I'd choke,
For I knew just what was coming, and I knew
just what he'd done!
'Another little mother had a soldier for a son.

When we'd pulled ourselves together, and the
first quick tears had dried,
We could see his eyes were blazing with the fire
of manly pride;
We could see his head was higher than it ever
was before,
For we had a man to cherish, and our baby was
no more.

Oh, I don't know how to say it! With the sorrow
comes the joy
That there isn't any coward in the make-up of
our boy.
And with pride our hearts are swelling, though
with grief they're also hit,
For the boy that was our baby has stepped
forth to do his bit,

Edgar Albert Guest

The Boy Mind

WISH I was only as bright as my boy,
Wish I could think of the things that he springs;
His is a wit without any alloy,
His are real jokes without venomous stings.
Laugh? When he speaks, from the tip of your toes
To the top of your head you will shake through and through,
As the soft breeze of summer oft shakes the red rose,
And the petals of pansies are thrilled by the dew.

Wish I was only as bright as my boy,
Wish I could think of such funny remarks,
His little mind is a fountain of joy,
Throwing off fun as an anvil sheds sparks.
He makes us laugh if we want to or not,
Never was jester of king quite so droll,
His are the shafts that go right to the spot,
His is a humor that tickles your soul.

None of the quips that your funny men say
Is equal to those that the child mind produces;
He has the power to drive sorrow away,
The flood gates of laughter he gayly unlooses.
Wise? As the wisest of brow wrinkled sages;
Quaint? As the quaintest of men on the earth;
Funny? Why, none of your funniest pages
Compare with a boy for real laughter and mirth.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Boy Soldier

Each evening on my lap there climbs
A little boy of three,
And with his dimpled, chubby fists
He pounds me shamefully.
He gives my beard a vicious tug,
He bravely pulls my nose;
And then he tussles with my hair
And then explores my clothes.
He throws my pencils on the floor
My watch is his delight;
He never seems to think that I
Have any private right.
And though he breaks my good cigars,
With all his cunning art,
He works a greater ruin, far,
Deep down within my heart.
This roguish little tyke who sits
Each night upon my knee,
And hammers at his poor old dad,
Is bound to conquer me.
He little knows that long ago,
He forced the gates apart,
And marched triumphantly into
The city of my heart.
Some day perhaps, in years to come,
When he is older grown,
He, too, will be assailed as I,
By youngsters of his own.
And when at last a little lad
Gives battle on his knee,
I know that he'll be captured, too,
Just as he captured me.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Boy That Was

When the hair about the temples starts to show
the signs of gray,
And a fellow realizes that he's wandering far
away
From the pleasures of his boyhood and his
youth, and never more
Will know the joy of laughter as he did in days
of yore,
Oh, it's then he starts to thinking of a stubby
little lad
With a face as brown as berries and a soul
supremely glad.

When a gray-haired dreamer wanders down the
lanes of memory
And forgets the living present for the time of
'used-to-be,'
He takes off his shoes and stockings, and he
throws his coat away,
And he's free from all restrictions, save the rules
of manly play.
He may be in richest garments, but bareheaded
in the sun
He forgets his proud successes and the riches
he has won.

Oh, there's not a man alive but that would give
his all to be
The stubby little fellow that in dreamland he
can see,
And the splendors that surround him and the
joys about him spread
Only seem to rise to taunt him with the boyhood
that has fled.
When the hair about the temples starts to show
Time's silver stain,
Then the richest man that's living yearns to be
a boy again.

The Boy's Adventure

'Dear Father,' he wrote me from Somewhere in France,
Where he's waiting with Pershing to lead the advance,
'There's little the censor permits me to tell
Save the fact that I'm here and am happy and well.
The French people cheered as we marched from our ship
At the close of a really remarkable trip;
They danced and they screamed and they shouted and ran,
And I blush as I write. I was kissed by a man!

'I've seen a great deal since I bade you good-bye,
I have witnessed a battle far up in the sky;
I have heard the dull roar of a long line of guns,
And seen the destruction that's worked by the Huns;
Some scenes I'll remember, and some I'll forget,
But the welcome he gave me! I'm feeling it yet.
Oh, try to imagine your boy if you can,
As he looked and he felt, being kissed by a man!

'Ah, Meestaire!' he cried in a voice that was shrill,
And his queer little eyes with delight seemed to fill,
And before I was wise to the custom, or knew
Just what he was up to, about me he threw
His arms, and he hugged me, and then with a squeak,
He planted a chaste little kiss on each cheek.
He was stocky and strong and his whiskers were tan.
Now please keep it dark. I've been kissed by a man.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Boy's Ideal

I must be fit for a child to play with,
Fit for a youngster to walk away with;
Fit for his trust and fit to be
Ready to take him upon my knee;
Whether I win or I lose my fight,
I must be fit for my boy at night.
I must be fit for a child to come to,
Speech there is that I must be dumb to;
I must be fit for his eyes to see,
He must find nothing of shame in me;
Whatever I make of myself, I must
Square to my boy's unfaltering trust.
I must be fit for a child to follow,
Scorning the places where loose men wallow;
Knowing how much he shall learn from me,
I must be fair as I'd have him be;
I must come home to him, day by day,
Clean as the morning I went away.
I must be fit for a child's glad greeting,
His are eyes that there is no cheating;
He must behold me in every test,
Not at my worst, but my very best;
He must be proud when my life is done
To have men know that he is my son.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Brave Men

HERE'S to the men who laugh
In the face of grim despair,
Who gather the tares and chaff
But sow with a cheerful air.
Here's to the smiling men
Who, giving, can take a blow,
And rise to the fight again
When others have laid them low.

Here's to the men who grin
When plans that they build go wrong,
And straightway new plans begin
With courage and purpose strong.
Here's to the glad, brave men
Who, battling, expect a bruise,
And rise to the fight again
Undaunted by fights they lose.

Here's to the men who smile,
With faith in the morning light,
And bravely await the while
Till victory crowns their fight.
Here's to the fighting men
That always need not succeed,
To rise to the fight again—
The brave in defeat we need.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Brethren

The world is needing you and me,
In places where we ought to be;
Somewhere today it's needing you
To stand for what you know is true.
And needing me somewhere today.
To keep the faith, let come what may.

The world needs honest men today
To lead its youth along the way,
Men who will write in all their deeds
The beauty of their spoken creeds,
And spurn advantage here and gain,
On which deceit must leave its stain.

The world needs men who will not brag,
Men who will honor Freedom's Flag,
Men, who although the way is hard,
Against the lure of shame will guard,
The world needs gentle men and true
And calls aloud to me and you.

The world needs men of lofty aim,
Not merely men of skill and fame,
Not merely leaders wise and grave,
Or learned men or soldiers brave,
But men whose lives are fair to see,
Such men as you and I can be.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Bride

Little lady at the altar,
Vowing by God's book and psalter
To be faithful, fond and true
Unto him who stands by you,
Think not that romance is ended,
That youth's curtain has descended,
And love's pretty play is done;
For it's only just begun.

Marriage, blushing little lady,
Is love's sunny path and shady,
Over which two hearts should wander,
Of each other growing fonder.
As you stroll to each to-morrow,
You will come to joy and sorrow,
And as faithful man and wife
Read the troubled book of life.

Bitter cares will some day find you;
Closer, closer they will bind you;
If together you will bear them,
Cares grow sweet when lovers share them.
Love unites two happy mortals,
Brings them here to wedlock's portals
And then blithely bids them go,
Arm in arm, through weal and woe.

Little lady, just remember
Every year has its December,
Every rising sun its setting,
Every life its time of fretting;
And the honeymoon's sweet beauty
Finds too soon the clouds of duty;
But keep faith, when trouble-tried,
And in joy you shall abide.

Little lady at the altar,
Never let your courage falter,
Never stoop to unbelieving,

Even when your heart is grieving.
To what comes of wintry weather
Or disaster, stand together;
Through life's fearful hours of night
Love shall bring you to the light.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Bright Side

KINDER like to see the bright side,
See the gay and dancing light side,
See the good and decent right side
Of the worst that happens me;
For the gloomy and the glum side,
And the 'worst-is-yet-to-come' side,
And the 'fate-is-going-some' side
Any pessimist can see.

Kinder like to take my troubles,
Come they singly or in doubles,
As a boy does blowing bubbles,
In a hopeful sort of way;
Kinder like to look around them,
Sorter wistful like and sound them,
And eventually surround them,
'Till once more I 'm feeling gay.

Oh, this thing that's known as worry,
That brings grouches in a hurry,
From your side will quickly scurry
If you keep a lifted chin;
If you'll look your worries over,
Something cheerful you'll discover,
You will get one breath of clover,
And once more you'll wear a grin.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Broken Drum

There is sorrow in the household;
There's a grief too hard to bear;
There's a little cheek that's tear-stained
There's a sobbing baby there.
And try how we will to comfort,
Still the tiny teardrops come;
For, to solve a vexing problem,
Curly Locks has wrecked his drum.
It had puzzled him and worried,
How the drum created sound;
For he couldn't understand it
It was not enough to pound
With his tiny hands and drumsticks,
And at last the day has come,
When another hope is shattered;
Now in ruins lies his drum.
With his metal bank he broke it,
Tore the tightened skin aside,
Gazed on vacant space bewildered,
Then he broke right down and cried.
For the broken bubble shocked him
And the baby tears must come;
Now a joy has gone forever:
Curly Locks has wrecked his drum.
While his mother tries to soothe him,
I am sitting here alone;
In the life that lies behind me;
Many shocks like that I've known.
And the boy who's upstairs weeping,
In the years that are to come
Will learn that many pleasures
Are as empty as his drum.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Bumps And Bruises Doctor

I'm the bumps and bruises doctor;
I'm the expert that they seek
When their rough and tumble playing
Leaves a scar on leg or cheek.
I'm the rapid, certain curer
For the wounds of every fall;
I'm the pain eradicator;
I can always heal them all.

Bumps on little people's foreheads
I can quickly smooth away;
I take splinters out of fingers
Without very much delay.
Little sorrows I can banish
With the magic of my touch;
I can fix a bruise that's dreadful
So it isn't hurting much.

I'm the bumps and bruises doctor,
And I answer every call,
And my fee is very simple,
Just a kiss, and that is all.
And I'm sitting here and wishing
In the years that are to be,
When they face life's real troubles
That they'll bring them all to me.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Burden Bearer

Oh, my shoulders grow weary of the burdens I am bearin',
An' I grumble when I'm footsore at the rough road I am farin',
But I strap my knapsack tighter till I feel the leather bind me,
An' I'm glad to bear the burdens for the ones who come behind me.
It's for them that I am ploddin', for the children comin' after;
I would strew their path with roses and would fill their days with
laughter.

Oh, there's selfishness within me, there are times it gets to talkin',
Times I hear it whisper to me, 'It's a dusty road you're walkin';
Why not rest your feet a little; why not pause an' take your leisure?
Don't you hunger in your strivin' for the merry whirl of pleasure?'
Then I turn an' see them smilin' an' I grip my burdens tighter,
For the joy that I am seekin' is to see their eyes grow brighter.

Oh, I've sipped the cup of sorrow an' I've felt the gad of trouble,
An' I know the hurt of trudgin' through a field o'errun with stubble;
But a rougher road to travel had my father good before me,
An' I'm owin' all my gladness to the tasks he shouldered for me.
Oh, I didn't understand it, when a lad I played about him,
But he labored for my safety in the days I'd be without him.

Oh, my kindly father never gave himself a year of leisure-
Never lived one selfish moment, never turned aside for pleasure-
Though he must have grown weary of the burdens he was bearin';
He was tryin' hard to better every road I'd soon be farin'.
Now I turn an' see them smilin' an' I hear their merry laughter,
An' I'm glad to bear the burdens for the ones that follow after.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Call

I must get out to the woods again, to the whispering tree, and the birds a-wing,
Away from the haunts of pale-faced men, to the spaces wide where strength is
king;

I must get out where the skies are blue and the air is clean and the rest is sweet,
Out where there's never a task to do or a goal to reach or a foe to meet.

I must get out on the trails once more that wind through shadowy haunts and
cool,

Away from the presence of wall and door, and see myself in a crystal pool;

I must get out with the silent things, where neither laughter nor hate is heard,
Where malice never the humblest stings and no one is hurt by a spoken word.

Oh, I've heard the call of the tall white pine, and heard the call of the running
brook;

I'm tired of the tasks which each day are mine, I'm weary of reading a printed
book;

I want to get out of the din and strife, the clang and clamor of turning wheel,
And walk for a day where life is life, and the joys are true and the pictures real.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Call Of The Woods

I must get out to the woods again, to the whispering trees and the birds
 awing,
Away from the haunts of pale-faced men, to the spaces wide where strength
 is king;
I must get out where the skies are blue and the air is clean and the rest
 is sweet,
Out where there's never a task to do or a goal to reach or a foe to meet.

I must get out on the trails once more that wind through shadowy haunts and
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Away from the presence of wall and door, and see myself in a crystal pool;
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 wheel,
And walk for a day where life is life, and the joys are true and the
 pictures real.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Call To Service

These are the days when little thoughts
Must cease men's minds to occupy;
The nation needs men's larger creeds,
Big men must answer to her cry;
No longer selfish ways we tread,
The greater task lies just ahead.

These are the days when petty things
By all men must be thrust aside;
The country needs men's finest deeds,
Awakened is the nation's pride;
Men must forsake their selfish strife
Once more to guard their country's life.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Card Club's First Meeting

The battles for the pickle dish once more are under way,
The Uno Pedro Club is first and foremost in the fray.
It started off auspiciously, without a sign of frown,
Good Mrs. Green put all at ease by kissing Mrs. Brown.

Then Mrs. Johnson graciously kissed Mrs. Jackson's lips,
And Mrs. Watson followed suit by kissing Mrs. Phipps;
Then all formality was dropped, and everyone grew cheery,
When Mrs. Rich, the president, called Mrs. Bilkins 'dearie.'

I can't describe the sweetness and the tenderness displayed,
No one remarked that Mrs. Gray was once a lady's maid;
With arms around each other's waists they sat and planned things out,
And everyone was loving and no one wore a pout.

I listened to her story, and a gentle smile I wore,
I 'd heard of women kissing and of loving ones before;
And I wondered as I heard her rave about the lovely meeting,
Just which of them will be the first to be accused of cheating.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Change

'Twas hard to think that he must go,
We knew that we should miss him so,
We thought that he must always stay
Beside us, laughing, day by day;
That he must never know the care
And hurt and grief of life out there.
Then came the call for youth, and he
Talked with his mother and with me,
And suddenly we learned the boy
Was hungering to know the joy
Of doing something real with life,
And that he craved the test of strife.

And so we steeled ourselves to dread;
To see at night his empty bed;
To feel the silence and the gloom
That hovers o'er his vacant room,
And though we wept the day he went,
And many a lonely hour we've spent,
We've come to think as he, somehow,
And we are more contented now;
We're proud that we can stand and say
We have a boy who's gone away.
And we are glad to know that he
Is serving where he ought to be.

It's queer, the change that time has brought:
We're different now in speech and thought;
His letters home mean joy to us,
His difficulties we discuss.
When word of his promotion came,
His mother, with her eyes aflame
With happiness and pride, rushed out
To tell the neighbors round about.
Her boy! Her boy is doing well!
What greater news can mothers tell?
I think that pity now we show
For those who have no boys to go.

The Change-Worker

A feller don't start in to think of himself, an'
the part that he's playin' down here,
When there's nobody lookin' to him fer support,
an' he don't give a thought to next year.
His faults don't seem big an' his habits no worse
than a whole lot of others he knows,
An' he don't seem to care what his neighbors may
say, as heedlessly forward he goes.
He don't stop to think if it's wrong or it's right;
with his speech he is careless or glib,
Till the minute the nurse lets him into the room
to see what's asleep in the crib.

An' then as he looks at that bundle o' red, an' the
wee little fingers an' toes,
An' he knows it's his flesh an' his blood that is there,
an' will be just like him when it grows,
It comes in a flash to a feller right then, there is
more here than pleasure or pelf,
An' the sort of a man his baby will be is the sort
of a man he's himself.
Then he kisses the mother an' kisses the child, an'
goes out determined that he
Will endeavor to be just the sort of a man that
he's wantin' his baby to be.

A feller don't think that it matters so much what
he does till a baby arrives;
He sows his wild oats an' he has his gay fling an'
headlong in pleasure he dives;
An' a drink more or less doesn't matter much
then, for life is a comedy gay,
But the moment a crib is put in the home, an' a
baby has come there to stay,
He thinks of the things he has done in the past,
an' it strikes him as hard as a blow,
That the path he has trod in the past is a path
that he don't want his baby to go.

I ain't much to preach, an' I can't just express
in the way that your clever men can
The thoughts that I think, but it seems to me now
that when God wants to rescue a man
From himself an' the follies that harmless appear,
but which, under the surface, are grim,
He summons the angel of infancy sweet, an' sends
down a baby to him.
For in that way He opens his eyes to himself, and
He gives him the vision to see
That his duty's to be just the sort of a man that
he's wantin' his baby to be.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Chaplain

He was just a small church parson when the war broke out, and he
Looked and dressed and acted like all parsons that we see.
He wore the cleric's broadcloth and he hooked his vest behind,
But he had a man's religion and he had a strong man's mind,
And he heard the call to duty, and he quit his church and went,
And he bravely tramped right with 'em everywhere the boys were sent.

He put aside his broadcloth and he put the khaki on;
Said he'd come to be a soldier and was going to live like one.
Then he refereed the prize fights that the boys pulled off at night,
And if no one else was handy he'd put on the gloves and fight.
He wasn't there a fortnight ere he saw the soldiers' needs,
And he said: 'I'm done with preaching; this is now the time for deeds.'

He learned the sound of shrapnel, he could tell the size of shell
From the shriek it make above him, and he knew just where it fell.
In the front line trench he labored, and he knew the feel of mud,
And he didn't run from danger and he wasn't scared of blood.
He wrote letters for the wounded, and he cheered them with his jokes,
And he never made a visit without passing round the smokes.

Then one day a bullet got him, as he knelt beside a lad
Who was 'going west' right speedy, and they both seemed mighty glad,
'Cause he held the boy's hand tighter, and he smiled and whispered low,
'Now you needn't fear the journey; over there with you I'll go.'
And they both passed out together, arm in arm I think they went.
He had kept his vow to follow everywhere the boys were sent.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Cheat

I cheated a good friend yesterday,
Kept what was his, and went my way,
Wronged him by silence-for in haste
I let a glad thought go to waste.

I had a word of cheer to speak,
To strengthen him when he grew weak,
To send him smiling on his way -
But what I thought I didn't say.

He would have richer been to know
That deed of his had pleased me so,
But oh, I failed to let him see
How much his conquest meant to me.

I cheated him of words of praise
Which would have cheered his troubled days;
In this a faithful friend I wronged,
By keeping what to him belonged.

The praise was his by right to hear,
To him belonged my word of cheer;
In silence, though, from him I turned
And cheated him of what he'd earned.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Child World

The child world is a wondrous world,
For there the flags of hate are furled,
And there the imps of wickedness
Cause neither sorrow nor distress.
And there is never strife for gold,
There petty gossip's never told,
There all is joy and wondrous mirth,
The child earth is a glorious earth.

The land of childhood is aglow
With smiles, and there pink roses grow
Upon the cheeks of boys and girls;
The golden rod is yellow curls,
And eyes of brown and eyes of blue
Are daisies and the violets, too;
And warm and true is every hand
That clings to yours in Childhood Land.

Who owns a spot on childhood's globe
Envies no king his ermine robe;
Envies no sage his manners wise,—
His world is rich with glad surprise,
The quaintest of all speech he hears,
The truest smiles, the sweetest tears
Are his possessions every day
However troubled be his way.

Who knows the joys of Childhood Land,
The pressure of a tiny hand,
The joy that's in a babe's caress,
The soft embrace of happiness,
The sweet good-nights, the shouts of glee
That greet the morning lustily,
Has riches, those who childless live
To know, would all their fortunes give.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Children

The children bring us laughter, and the children bring us tears;
They string our joys, like jewels bright, upon the thread of years;
They bring the bitterest cares we know, their mothers' sharpest pain,
Then smile our world to loveliness, like sunshine after rain.

The children make us what we are; the childless king is spurned;
The children send us to the hills where glories may be earned;
For them we pledge our lives to strife, for them do mothers fade,
And count in new-born loveliness their sacrifice repaid.

The children bring us back to God; in eyes that dance and shine
Men read from day to day the proof of love and power divine;
For them are fathers brave and good and mothers fair and true,
For them is every cherished dream and every deed we do.

For children are the furnace fires of life kept blazing high;
For children on the battle fields are soldiers pleased to die;
In every place where humans toil, in every dream and plan,
The laughter of the children shapes the destiny of man.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Chip On Your Shoulder

You'll learn when you're older, that chip on your shoulder
Which you dare other boys to upset
And stand up and fight for, and struggle and smite for,
Has caused you much pain and regret.
When Time, life's adviser, has made you much wiser,
You won't be so quick with the blow;
You won't be so willing to fight for a shilling,
And change a good friend to a foe.
You won't be a sticker for trifles, and bicker
And quarrel for nothing at all;
You'll grow to be kinder, more thoughtful, and blinder
To faults which are petty and small.
You won't take the trouble your two fists to double
When some one your pride may offend;
When with rage now you bristle you'll smile or you'll whistle,
And keep the good will of a friend.
You'll learn when you're older, that chip on your shoulder
Which proudly you battle to guard,
Has frequently shamed you and often defamed you,
And left you a record that's marred!
When you've grown calm and steady, you won't be so ready
To fight for a difference that's small
For you'll know, when you're older, that chip on your shoulder
Is only a chip after all.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Choir At Pixley

The choir we had in Pixley wasn't much for looks an' styles,
But today if I could hear it I would walk a hundred miles;
There warn't a singer in it that could boast she 'd crossed the seas
To study with the masters and to learn to make high C's;
There warn't no variations, warn't no frills that folks think grand;
Warn't no singin' operatic that no one can understand;
But jus' plain gospel singin' like the music of the birds,
An' the congregation didn't have to strain to catch the words.

There were jus' four people in it — Mrs. Tompkins, Mrs. Botts,
Arthur Tweedle was the tenor, an' the basso Jephtha Watts.
Oh, 't would do you good to hear 'em singin' low 'Abide With Me,'
An' 'Jerusalem the Golden' an' 'The City by the Sea.'
'There was nothin' high-falutin' 'bout the songs they used t' sing,
Jus' sweet, humble hymns of praises to the Master an' the King;
Jus' sweet, simple strains of music, but my soul they always stirred,
An' I liked it better, mebbe, coz I understood each word.

An' I mind the day in Pixley when a city woman came
To our little church to visit, an' I mind her burnin' shame,
When she sneered about the singin' an' she scoffed about the choir,
An' I mind the way she snickered an' the way she roused my ire,
An' how I up and told her that the music she thought grand
Was the music that she paid for an' she couldn't understand ;
An' I said the choir ain't singin' now for you, an' never would,
But it's singin' for the Master an' I guess He 'd call it good.

The little church in Pixley ain't a little church no more,
It's took in wealthy people an' its steeples skyward soar;
It's got a marble altar an' it's got a tony choir
Of singers trained in Europe an' a-singin' now for hire.
They 're runnin' now to solos an' they advertise the fact
That So and So is goin' t' sing, a large crowd to attract;
But I can't say I like it, why it isn't half so good
As the little choir that used t' sing the songs we understood.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Christmas Box

Oh, we have shipped his Christmas box with ribbons red 'tis tied,
And he shall find the things he likes from them he loves inside,
But he must miss the kisses true and all the laughter gay
And he must miss the smiles of home upon his Christmas Day.

He'll spend his Christmas 'neath the Flag; he'll miss each merry face,
Old Glory smiling down on him must take his mother's place,
Yet in the Christmas box we've sent, in fancy he will find
The laughter and the tears of joy that he has left behind.

His mother's tenderness is there, his father's kindly way,
And all that went last year to make his merry Christmas Day;
He'll see once more his sister's smile, he'll hear the baby shout,
And as he opens every gift we'll gather round about.

He cannot come to share with us the joys of Christmas Day;
The Flag has called to him, and he is serving far away.
Undaunted, unafraid and fine he stands to duty grim,
And so this Christmas we have tried to ship ourselves to him.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Christmas Gift For Mother

In the Christmas times of the long ago,
There was one event we used to know
That was better than any other;
It wasn't the toys that we hoped to get,
But the talks we had- and I hear them yet-
Of the gift we'd buy for Mother.

If ever love fashioned a Christmas gift,
Or saved its money and practiced thrift,
'Twas done in those days, my brother-
Those golden times of Long Gone By,
Of our happiest years, when you and I
Talked over the gift for Mother.

We hadn't gone forth on our different ways
Nor coined our lives into yesterdays
In the fires that smelt and smother,
And we whispered and planned in our youthful glee
Of that marvelous 'something' which was to be
The gift of our hearts to Mother.

It had to be all that our purse could give,
Something she'd treasure while she could live,
And better than any other.
We gave it the best of our love and thought,
And, Oh, the joy when at last we'd bought
That marvelous gift for Mother!

Now I think as we go on our different ways,
Of the joy of those vanished yesterdays.
How good it would be, my brother,
If this Christmas-time we could only know
That same sweet thrill of the Long Ago
When we shared in the gift for Mother.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Christmas Spirit

IT'S HO for the holly and laughter and kisses,
It 's ho for the mistletoe bough in the hall!
Was ever a season so jolly as this is?
No, this is the jolliest one of them all.
The season of loving and giving and dancing,
The season of mirth and of hearts that are true,
The season of eyes most bewitching, entrancing —
It's ho, Merry Christmas! A welcome to you.

With loved ones about us to laugh at our follies,
The patter of feet in the hallways above,
A ring at the door — now deserted are dollies —
All rush to greet callers and shower them with love.
What turbulent romping! Was ever such shouting
So dear to the heart and so sweet to the ear?
Away with all fretting, repining and doubting,
Ye, ho, for the Christmas so brim full of cheer.

Away with you, Trouble! Our armor of gladness
You can't penetrate with your arrows of fear;
Away with you, Sorrow! Away with you, Sadness!
Our walls are defended this morning by Cheer.
A fig for your frowning, Old Gloom, and your grouching,
No pessimist enters our castle today;
And should to our doorway a Kill-Joy come slouching,
We've sentries of Cheer who will drive him away.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Comedian

Whatever the task and whatever the risk, wherever
the flag's in air,

The funny man with his sunny ways is sure to
be laughing there.

There are men who fret, there are men who
dream, men making the best of it,
But whether it's hunger or death they face,
Or burning thirst in a desert place,
There is always one, by the good Lord's grace,
Who is making a jest of it.

He travels wherever his brothers go and he leaves
his home behind him,

The need for smiles he seems to know; in the
ranks of death you'll find him.

When some are weary and sick and faint, and
all with the dust are choking,

He dances there with a spirit gay,
And tints with gold what is drab and gray,
And into the gloom of the night and day
He scatters his mirthful joking.

He wins to courage the soul-tried men; he lightens
their hours of sorrow;

He turns their thoughts from the grief that is to
the joy that may come to-morrow.

He mocks at death and he jests at toil, as one
that is never weary;

He japes at danger and discipline,
Or the muddy trench that he's standing in;
There's nothing can banish his merry grin,
Or dampen his spirits cheery.

The honors of war to its heroes go; for them are
the pomp and glory,

But seldom it is that the types relate a victory's
inside story.

And few shall know when the strife is done and
the history's made hereafter,

How much depended on him who stirred
The souls of men with a cheerful word,
And kept them brave by a jest absurd,
And brightened their days with laughter.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Common Joys

THESE joys are free to all who live
The rich and poor, the great and low:
The charms which kindness has to give,
The smiles which friendship may bestow,
The honor of a well-spent life,
The glory of a purpose true,
High courage in the stress of strife,
And peace when every task is through.

Nor class nor caste nor race nor creed,
Nor greater might can take away
The splendor of an honest deed.
Who nobly serves from day to day
Shall walk the road of life with pride,
With friends who recognize his worth,
For never are these joys denied
Unto the humblest man on earth.

Not all may rise to world-wide fame,
Not all may gather fortune's gold,
Not all life's luxuries may claim;
In differing ways success is told.
But all may know the peace of mind
Which comes from service brave and true;
The poorest man can still be kind,
And nobly live till life is through.

These joys abound for one and all:
The pride of fearing no man's scorn,
Of standing firm, where others fall,
Of bearing well what must be borne.
He that shall do an honest deed
Shall win an honest deed's rewards;
For these, no matter race or creed,
Life unto every man affords.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Common Touch

I would not be too wise—so very wise
That I must sneer at simple songs and creeds,
And let the glare of wisdom blind my eyes
To humble people and their humble needs.
I would not care to climb so high that I
Could never hear the children at their play,
Could only see the people passing by,
Yet never hear the cheering words they say.
I would not know too much—too much to smile
At trivial errors of the heart and hand,
Nor be too proud to play the friend the while,
And cease to help and know and understand.
I would not care to sit upon a throne,
Or build my house upon a mountain-top.
Where I must dwell in glory all alone
And never friend come in or poor man stop.
God grant that I may live upon this earth
And face the tasks which every morning brings,
And never lose the glory and the worth
Of humble service and the simple things.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Complacent Slacker

When he was just a lad in school,
He used to sit around and fool
And watch the clock and say:
'I can't see that I'll ever need
This stuff the teacher makes me read,
I'll work no more to-day.
And anyhow it's almost June
And school days will be over soon.'

One time we played a baseball game,
And when a chance for stealing came,
On second base he stood,
And when we asked him why, he said:
'What was the use, they're far ahead,
One run would do no good.
The game is almost over now,
We couldn't win it anyhow.'

The same old slacker still is he,
With men at war on land and sea,
And our lads plunging in it;
He spreads afar his old excuse.
'I'd like to help, but what's the use,
The Allied troops will win it.
There's nothing now to make us fret, there,
They'll have it won before we get there.'

The worst of slackers is the man
Who will not help whene'er he can,
But plays the idle rover,
And tells to all beset with doubt
There's naught to be alarmed about,
The storm will soon be over.
Let no such dangerous person lead us,
To-day in France they sadly need us.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Contented Man

I'VE had a heap of fun and I've had a heap of sorrow,
I've had a heap of pleasure and I've had a heap of pain,
But I 'm treading just as gayly, just as bravely toward tomorrow,
And I 'm looking for the sunshine, but I 'm ready for the rain.
Always hoping for the best,
For the peace and perfect rest,
Always hoping for the sunshine and the roses dripping dew;
But should gloom and sadness come,
They will find me never glum,
I will greet old grim misfortune with a cheery howdy-do.

I've had a heap of laughing and I've had a heap of sighing,
I've had a heap of sadness and I've had a heap of mirth;
And I've come to the conclusion that in spite of all our trying,
We are bound to meet some sorrow as we journey on the earth.
For the best I 'm always praying,
But life isn't always playing,
And whatever is my fortune, be it good or dismal quite,
I will try to take it bravely,
And to view my duty gravely,
Still believing that what happens is inevitably right.

I've had a heap of winning and I've had a heap of failing,
I've had my share of praises and I've had my share of blame,
And I've come to the conclusion that life's sea on which we 're sailing
Is made up very justly of proportions of the same.
For the calm and pleasant weather
I am thankful altogether,
And I 'm hopeful, ever hopeful, that no more storm-tossed I'll be;
But should storm clouds quickly lower,
I will neither shrink nor cower,
But I'll face the gale serenely and I'll try to ride the sea.

O, I've known a lot of people, and I've heard of many others,
But I never knew or heard of one who hadn't tasted woe;
All the fathers here and brothers here, the sisters and the mothers,
Must meet with disappointments and with sorrows as they go.
Not a one that Fate has missed,
Or a sunbeam left unknissed,

Each has tasted pain and pleasure, each has suffered good and wrong;
So, while hoping for the best,
I am ready for the test,
I will face whate'er is sent me, and I'll sing my way along.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Cookie Jar

You can rig up a house with all manner of things,
The prayer rugs of sultans and princes and kings;
You can hang on its wall the old tapestries rare
Which some dead Egyptian once treasured with care;
But though costly and gorgeous its furnishings are,
It must have, to be homelike, an old cookie jar.

There are just a few things that a home must possess,
Besides all your money and all your success—
A few good old books which some loved one has read,
Some trinkets of those whose sweet spirits have fled,
And then in the pantry, not shoved back too far
For the hungry to get to, that old cookie jar.

Let the house be a mansion, I care not at all!
Let the finest of pictures be hung on each wall,
Let the carpets be made of the richest velour,
And the chairs only those which great wealth
 can procure,
I'd still want to keep for the joy of my flock
That homey, old fashioned, well-filled cookie crock.

Like the love of the Mother it shines through our years;
It has soothed all our hurts and dried away tears;
It has paid us for toiling; in sorrow or joy,
It has always shown kindness to each girl and boy;
And I'm sorry for people, whoever they are,
Who live in a house where there's no cookie jar.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Cookie-Lady

She is gentle, kind and fair,
And there's silver in her hair;
She has known the touch of sorrow,
But the smile of her is sweet;
And sometimes it seems to me
That her mission is to be
The gracious cookie-lady
To the youngsters of the street.

All the children in the block
Daily stand beside the crock,
Where she keeps the sugar cookies
That the little folks enjoy;
And no morning passes o'er
That a tapping at her door
Doesn't warn her of the visit
Of a certain little boy.

She has made him feel that he
Has a natural right to be
In her kitchen when she's baking
Pies and cakes and ginger bread;
And each night to me he brings
All the pretty, tender things
About little by-gone children
That the cookie-lady said.

Oh, dear cookie-lady sweet,
May you beautify our street
With your kind and gentle presence
Many more glad years, I pray;
May the skies be bright above you,
As you've taught our babes to love you;
You will scar their hearts with sorrow
If you ever go away.

Life is strange, and when I scan it,
I believe God tries to plan it,
So that where He sends his babies

In that neighborhood to dwell,
One of rare and gracious beauty
Shall abide, whose sweetest duty
Is to be the cookie-lady
That the children love so well.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Cost Of Praise

THIS morning came a man to me, his smile was wonderful to see,
He shook my hand and doffed his hat then promptly took a chair;
Said he, ' I read your stuff each day, and I have just dropped in to say
You have a line of humor that delightful is and rare.
My dear wife reads it through and through, my aunts and uncles like it, too,
The little children cry for it when they get out of bed,
Your column's full of common sense, your childhood verses are immense,
The equal of them, I am sure I've never, never read.

'Now, you 're a man of great renown, your name is known in every town
From Boston unto 'Frisco, from Atlanta to Duluth;
I've met some of our famous men, I wish to grasp your hand again;
Don't think I flatter you, O no, I 'm telling you the truth.
'I let him once more take my hand, the while I felt my chest expand,
My head began to bulge until I couldn't wear my hat;
'Ah me,' I sighed, ' through all my days, I've never heard such words of praise,
I wish I knew a hundred men who 'd talk to me like that.'

' And now,' said he, ' ere I forget, I want to show a Balzac set
That Jolliers have printed just especially for you;
There are but twenty-six of these, observe this small prospectus, please,
This is the finest work that any publisher can do.
For you we make this sacrifice, just sixty dollars is the price,
Five dollars down and three a month—you will not miss the ' mon."
I signed away my salary. Henceforth, when men come praising me
I 'm going to grab my hat and coat and exit on the run.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Crucible Of Life

Sunshine and shadow, blue sky and gray,
Laughter and tears as we tread on our way;
Hearts that are heavy, then hearts that are light,
Eyes that are misty and eyes that are bright;
Losses and gains in the heat of the strife,
Each in proportion to round out his life.

Into the crucible, stirred by the years,
Go all our hopes and misgivings and fears;
Glad days and sad days, our pleasures and pains,
Worries and comforts, our losses and gains.
Out of the crucible shall there not come
Joy undefiled when we pour off the scum?

Out of the sadness and anguish and woe,
Out of the travail and burdens we know,
Out of the shadow that darkens the way,
Out of the failure that tries us to-day,
Have you a doubt that contentment will come
When you've purified life and discarded the scum?

Tinctured with sorrow and flavored with sighs,
Moistened with tears that have flowed from your eyes;
Perfumed with sweetness of loves that have died,
Leavened with failures, with grief sanctified,
Sacred and sweet is the joy that must come
From the furnace of life when you've poured off the scum.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Cure

When you can't get her out of your head, young man,
And you hate what you have to do;
And you shirk every task that you find you can,
And the others you hurry through.
When all you can see is the time to quit,
(I know how each symptom goes),
There's only one way to get over it,
The next time you see her—propose.

When you think when you're called to the telephone
That hers is the voice you'll hear,
And because it isn't, you sigh and groan;
When you find that your brain's not clear
And you can't add figures or write a bit
When the columns are all awirl,
There's only one way to get over it,
And that is to marry the girl.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Cure For Weariness

Seemed like I couldn't stand it any more,
The factory whistles blowin' day by day,
An' men an' children hurryin' by the door,
An' street cars clangin' on their busy way.
The faces of the people seemed to be
Washed pale by tears o' grief an' strife an' care,
Till everywhere I turned to I could see
The same old gloomy pictures of despair.

The windows of the shops all looked the same,
Decked out with stuff their owners wished to sell;
When visitors across our doorway came
I could recite the tales they'd have to tell.
All things had lost their old-time power to please;
Dog-tired I was an' irritable, too,
An' so I traded chimney tops for trees,
An' shingled roof for open skies of blue.

I dropped my tools an' took my rod an' line
An' tackle box an' left the busy town;
I found a favorite restin' spot of mine
Where no one seeks for fortune or renown.
I whistled to the birds that flew about,
An' built a lot of castles in my dreams;
I washed away the stains of care an' doubt
An' thanked the Lord for woods an' running streams.

I've cooked my meals before an open fire,
I've had the joy of green smoke in my face,
I've followed for a time my heart's desire
An' now the path of duty I retrace.
I've had my little fishin' trip, an' go
Once more contented to the haunts of men;
I'm ready now to hear the whistles blow
An' see the roofs an' chimney tops again.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Cut-Down Trousers

When father couldn't wear them mother cut them down for me;
She took the slack in fore and aft, and hemmed them at the knee;
They fitted rather loosely, but the things that made me glad
Were the horizontal pockets that those good old trousers had.

They shone like patent leather just where well-worn breeches do,
But the cloth in certain portions was considered good as new,
And I know that I was envied by full many a richer lad
For the horizontal pockets that those good old knickers had.

They were cut along the waist line, with the opening straight and wide,
And there wasn't any limit to what you could get inside;
They would hold a peck of marbles, and a knife and top and string,
And snakes and frogs and turtles; there was room for everything.

Then our fortune changed a little, and my mother said that she
Wouldn't bother any longer fitting father's duds on me,
But the store clothes didn't please me; there were times they made me
sad,
For I missed those good old pockets that my father's trousers had.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Day Of Days

A year is filled with glad events:

The best is Christmas day,
But every holiday presents
Its special round of play,
And looking back on boyhood now
And all the charms it knew,
One day, above the rest, somehow,
Seems brightest in review.
That day was finest, I believe;
Though many grown-ups scoff,
When mother said that we could leave
Our shoes and stockings off.

Through all the pleasant days of spring

We begged to know once more
The joy of barefoot wandering
And quit the shoes we wore;
But always mother shook her head
And answered with a smile:
'It is too soon, too soon,' she said.
'Wait just a little while.'
Then came that glorious day at last
When mother let us know
That fear of taking cold was past
And we could barefoot go.

Though Christmas day meant much to me,

And eagerly I'd try
The first boy on the street to be
The Fourth day of July,
I think: the summit of my joy
Was reached that happy day
Each year, when, as a barefoot boy,
I hastened out to play.
Could I return to childhood fair,
That day I think I'd choose
When mother said I needn't wear
My stockings and my shoes.

The Dead Return

THE dead return. I know they do;
The glad smile may have passed from view,
The ringing voice that cheered us so
In that remembered long ago
Be stilled, and yet in sweeter ways
It speaks to us throughout our days.
The kindly father comes again
To guide us through the haunts of men,
And always near, their sons to greet
Are lingering the mothers sweet.

About us wheresoe'er we tread
Hover the spirits of our dead;
We cannot see them as we could
In bygone days, when near they stood
And shared the joys and griefs that came,
But they are with us just the same.
They see us as we plod along,
And proudly smile when we are strong,
And sigh and grieve the selfsame way
When thoughtlessly we go astray.

I sometimes think it hurts the dead
When into sin and shame we're led,
And that they feel a thrill divine
When we've accomplished something fine.
And sometimes thoughts that come at night
Seem more like messages that might
Have whispered been by one we love,
Whose spirit has been called above.
So wise the counsel, it must be
That all we are the dead can see.

The dead return. They come to share
Our laughter and our bit of care;
They glory, as they used to do,
When we are splendid men and true,
In all the joy that we have won,
And they are proud of what we've done.

They suffer when we suffer woe;
All things about us here they know.
And though we never see them here
Their spirits hover very near.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Deeds Of Anger

I used to lose my temper an' git mad an' tear around
An' raise my voice so wimmin folks would tremble at the sound;
I'd do things I was ashamed of when the fit of rage had passed,
An' wish I hadn't done 'em, an' regret 'em to the last;
But I've learned from sad experience how useless is regret,
For the mean things done in anger are the things you can't forget.

'Tain't no use to kiss the youngster once your hand has made him cry;
You'll recall the time you struck him till the very day you die;
He'll forget it an' forgive you an' to-morrow seem the same,
But you'll keep the hateful picture of your sorrow an' your shame,
An' it's bound to rise to taunt you, though you long have squared the debt,
For the things you've done in meanness are the things you can't forget.

Lord, I sometimes sit an' shudder when some scene comes back to me,
Which shows me big an' brutal in some act o' tyranny,
When some triflin' thing upset me an' I let my temper fly,
An' was sorry for it after- but it's vain to sit an' sigh.
So I'd be a whole sight happier now my sun begins to set,
If it wasn't for the meanness which I've done an' can't forget.

Now I think I've learned my lesson an' I'm treadin' gentler ways,
An' I try to build my mornings into happy yesterdays;
I don't let my temper spoil 'em in the way I used to do
An' let some splash of anger smear the record when it's through;
I want my memories pleasant, free from shame or vain regret,
Without any deeds of anger which I never can forget.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Departed

IF no one ever went ahead,
If we had seen no friend depart
And mourned him for a while as dead,
How great would be our fear to start.

If no one for us led the way,
No loved one, garbed in angel white
Stood there, a welcome word to say,
Then we should fear the Heavenly flight.

If we should never say 'good bye,'
Should never shed the parting tear,
We'd face the journey to the sky
In horrible despair and fear.

It is because our friends have gone
And left us in this vale of breath,
Because of those who've journeyed on,
That we can bravely smile at death.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Discovery Of A Soul

The proof of a man is the danger test,
That shows him up at his worst or best.

He didn't seem to care for work, he wasn't much at school.
His speech was slow and commonplace- you wouldn't call him fool.
And yet until the war broke out you'd calmly pass him by,
For nothing in his make-up or his way would catch your eye.
He seemed indifferent to the world, the kind that doesn't care-
That's satisfied with just enough to eat and drink and wear;
That doesn't laugh when others do or cry when others weep,
But seems to walk the wakeful world half dormant and asleep;
Then came the war, and soldiers marched and drums began to roll,
And suddenly we realized his body held a soul.

We little dreamed how much he loved his Country and her Flag;
About the glorious Stars and Stripes we'd never heard him brag.
But he was first to volunteer, while brilliant men demurred,
He took the oath of loyalty without a faltering word,
And then we found that he could talk, for one remembered night,
There came a preaching pacifist denouncing men who fight,
And he got up in uniform and looked at him and said:
'I wonder if you ever think about our soldiers dead.
All that you are to-day you owe some soldier in his grave;
If he had been afraid to fight, you still would be a slave.'

If he had died a year ago beneath a peaceful sky,
Unjust our memory would have been; of him our tongues would lie.
We should have missed his splendid worth, we should have called him frail
And listed him among the weak and sorry men who fail.
But few regrets had marked his end; he would have passed unmourned-
Perhaps by those who knew him best, indifferently scorned.
But now he stands among us all, eyes bright and shoulders true,
A strong defender of the faith; a man with work to do;
And if he dies, his name shall find its place on history's scroll;
The great chance has revealed to men the splendor of his soul.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Disgrace Of Poverty

The lady what comes up to our house t' wash
Is awfully poor, an' she's got
Three babies t' care for, an' that's why she works,
An' that's why she worries a lot.
An' Ma says her husband don't help her at all,
An' Pa says it's plainly a case
Where we should be kind t' the woman, becoz
Real poverty ain't no disgrace.

An' yesterday mornin' I went down t' her
An' told her what my Pa had said,
An' she started t' cry, an' she dried off her hands
An' stooped down an' patted my head.
Then I ast if her husband worked hard like my Pa,
Or couldn't he get work t' do,
Then she wiped off her tears an' smiled as she said:
'What a queer little fellow are you!'

Then she told me her husband was no good at all,
But jes' loafes around all the day,
An' that's why she comes up t' our house t' wash,
So's she can get money t' pay
For stockin's an' things for her children t' wear,
An' buy 'em the food that they eat;
Coz if she didn't do it the landlord would come
An' turn 'em all into the street.

An' her husband ain't sick. He's as strong as my Pa,
An' I told her that I'd be ashamed
If I was so poor, not t' get out an' work,
Unless I was crippled an' lamed.
Then she kissed me an' told me t' run out an' play,
But I'm thinkin' as hard as I can
That sometimes it happens that poverty is
An awful disgrace to a man.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Doctor

I don't see why Pa likes him so,
And seems so glad to have him come;
He jabs my ribs and wants to know
If here and there it's hurting some.
He holds my wrist, coz there are things
In there, which always jump and jerk,
Then, with a telephone he brings,
He listens to my breather work.

He taps my back and pinches me,
Then hangs a mirror on his head
And looks into my throat to see
What makes it hurt and if it's red.
Then on his knee he starts to write
And says to mother, with a smile:
'This ought to fix him up all right,
We'll cure him in a little while.'

I don't see why Pa likes him so.
Whenever I don't want to play
He says: 'The boy is sick, I know!
Let's get the doctor right away.'
And when he comes, he shakes his hand,
And hustles him upstairs to me,
And seems contented just to stand
Inside the room where he can see.

Then Pa says every time he goes:
'That's money I am glad to pay;
It's worth it, when a fellow knows
His pal will soon be up to play.'
But maybe if my Pa were me,
And had to take his pills and all,
He wouldn't be so glad to see
The doctor come to make a call.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Don'T Believers

The new - fangled churches that don't believe I things
Aren't the churches that satisfy me;
I 'm firm in my notion that angels wear wings,
An' Heaven is a place we shall see,
I 'm an old-fashioned man, full of old-fashioned ways,
An' these up-to-date doubtings seem odd;
What they don't believe folks talk about nowadays,
But I 'm still believing in God.

Some don't believe this, an' some don't believe that,
Some don't believe Heaven is a place;
The don't believe sermons they 're preaching are flat,
For of old-fashioned faith there's no trace.
They've torn up the Bible an' proved it's not so,
They doubt man was made from a clod,
What they don't believe seems to be all that they know,
But I 'm still believing in God.

There isn't much left of religion today,
The thinkers have busily swept
Most all of the faiths that we once had away,
An' few of us know what they've kept.
It's ' don't believe this ' an' ' don't believe that,'
An' blinded they 'd leave us to plod;
An' old-fashioned man hardly knows where he's at,
But I 'm still believing in God.

What men don't believe doesn't interest me,
I 'd far rather learn what they do;
I believe in the green of the grass an' the tree,
I believe in the sunshine an' dew;
I believe in the love that makes living worth while,
I believe we shall rise from the sod
To a mansion in Heaven where our dear ones shall smile,
An' I 'm still believing in God.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Doubtful To-Morrow

Whenever I walk through God's Acres of Dead
I wonder how often the mute voices said:
'I will do a kind deed or will lighten a sorrow
Or rise to a sacrifice splendid- to-morrow.'

I wonder how many fine thoughts unexpressed
Were lost to the world when they went to their rest;
I wonder what beautiful deeds they'd have done
If they had but witnessed to-morrow's bright sun.

Oh, if the dead grieve, it is not for their fate,
For death comes to all of us early or late,
But their sighs of regret and their burdens of sorrow
Are born of the joys they'd have scattered to-morrow.

Do the friends they'd have cheered know the thoughts of the dead?
Do they treasure to-day the last words that were said?
What mem'ries would sweeten, what hearts cease to burn,
If but for a day the dead friends could return!

We know not the hour that our summons shall come;
We know not the time that our voice shall be dumb,
Yet even as they, to our ultimate sorrow,
We leave much that's fine for that doubtful to-morrow.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Dream Days

I LIKE the dream days best of all,
The hollyhocks against the wall;
The rambler roses blushing red,
The blue skies bending overhead,
With just enough of summer breeze
To whisper in the leafy trees;
When lazily the plow boys plod,
And lazily the blossoms nod,
And everything about me seems
Wrapt up somehow in pleasant dreams.

I like to lie full length and flat,
And shade my eyes with my old hat;
Building out yonder in the skies
Air castles grand, whose towers rise
Higher than summer swallows fly,
The castles of sweet by and by;
Forgetting care and shirking toil,
Forgetting lust for fame and spoil,
Just dreaming dreams that won't come true,
But living as the flowers do.

I like the dream days best, for then
The world 's in tune with lazy men;
The very flowers droop and sway
In such a restful, lazy way
As though they, too, would like to be
Stretched out beneath this tree with me;
And fleecy, snow white clouds float by
As though no part of earth or sky.
And far off seem the busy marts
Where gather shrewd and sordid hearts,
Just roses, hollyhocks and I,
Dreaming while Father Time goes by.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Dreams Of Youth

The dreams of youth are fairest,
The dreams of youth are rarest;
The dreams of youth are brighter
Than the dreams we'll know again.
Hope is the fairy weaver
For youth, a firm believer,
And great the things we'll master
In the days when we are men.

There's neither pain nor sorrow
In the great and grand tomorrow
For the boy who lies a-dreaming
Underneath the apple tree.
There's neither hate nor malice
In the shining, golden chalice
The painter of the future holds
For every boy to see.

For his eyes are turned to gladness
And he sees no tear of sadness
In the visions of the future
That his soul is drinking in.
In the days to come he'll journey
With a brave heart to life's tourney,
And he dreams about the prizes
That in future years he'll win.

But the dreams of age are dreary,
For the soul is, O, so weary,
And the mind goes back in sadness
To the deeds we might have done;
And, too late, we sit repining,
Soon our sun will cease its shining,
Deep regret now paints the picture
Of the prize we might have won.

Ah, the future is the brightest
And its troubles are the lightest,
For the past is filled with anguish

And with disappointments, too.
Age has trod the paths of sorrow,
He has known each glad tomorrow,
But youth is ever dreaming
Of the things he's going to do.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Dull Road

It's the dull road that leads to the gay road;
The practice that leads to success;
The work road that leads to the play road;
It is trouble that breeds happiness.

It's the hard work and merciless grinding
That purchases glory and fame;
It's repeatedly doing, nor minding
The drudgery drear of the game.

It's the passing up glamor or pleasure
For the sake of the skill we may gain,
And in giving up comfort or leisure
For the joy that we hope to attain.

It's the hard road of trying and learning,
Of toiling, uncheered and alone,
That wins us the prizes worth earning,
And leads us to goals we would own.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Epicure

I've sipped a rich man's sparkling wine,
His silverware I've handled.
I've placed these battered legs of mine
'Neath tables gayly candled.
I dine on rare and costly fare
Whene'er good fortune lets me,
But there's no meal that can compare
With those the missus gets me.

I've had your steaks three inches thick
With all your Sam Ward trimming,
I've had the breast of milk-fed chick
In luscious gravy swimming.
To dine in swell cafe or club
But irritates and frets me;
Give me the plain and wholesome grub —
The grub the missus gets me.

Two kiddies smiling at the board,
The cook right at the table,
The four of us, a hungry horde,
To beat that none is able.
A big meat pie, with flaky crust!
'Tis then that joy besets me;
Oh, I could eat until I 'bust,'
Those meals the missus gets me.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Evening Prayer

Little girlie, kneeling there,
Speaking low your evening prayer,
In your cunning little nightie
With your pink toes peeping through,
With your eyes closed and your hands
Tightly clasped, while daddy stands
In the doorway, just to hear the
'God bless papa,' lisped by you,
You don't know just what I feel,
As I watch you nightly kneel
By your trundle bed and whisper
Soft and low your little prayer!
But in all I do or plan,
I'm a bigger, better man
Every time I hear you asking
God to make my journey fair.

Little girlie, kneeling there,
Lisping low your evening prayer,
Asking God above to bless me
At the closing of each day,
Oft the tears come to my eyes,
And I feel a big lump rise
In my throat, that I can't swallow,
And I sometimes turn away.
In the morning, when I wake,
And my post of duty take,
I go forth with new-born courage
To accomplish what is fair;
And, throughout the live-long day,
I am striving every way
To come back to you each evening
And be worthy of your prayer.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Family Doctor

I've tried the high-toned specialists, who doctor folks to-day;
I've heard the throat man whisper low 'Come on now let us spray';
I've sat in fancy offices and waited long my turn,
And paid for fifteen minutes what it took a week to earn;
But while these scientific men are kindly, one and all,
I miss the good old doctor that my mother used to call.
The old-time family doctor! Oh, I am sorry that he's gone,
He ushered us into the world and knew us every one;
He didn't have to ask a lot of questions, for he knew
Our histories from birth and all the ailments we'd been through.
And though as children small we feared the medicines he'd send,
The old-time family doctor grew to be our dearest friend.
No hour too late, no night too rough for him to heed our call;
He knew exactly where to hang his coat up in the hall;
He knew exactly where to go, which room upstairs to find
The patient he'd been called to see, and saying: 'Never mind,
I'll run up there myself and see what's causing all the fuss.'
It seems we grew to look and lean on him as one of us.
He had a big and kindly heart, a fine and tender way,
And more than once I've wished that I could call him in to-day.
The specialists are clever men and busy men, I know,
And haven't time to doctor as they did long years ago;
But some day he may come again, the friend that we can call,
The good old family doctor who will love us one and all.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Family Party

I SING the family party that once we used to know,
The old time family parties we gave so long ago,
When every near-relation and distant cousins, too,
The married ones with children, Aunt Mary and Aunt Sue,
The grandpas and the grandmas, yes, everyone of kin,
The nephews and the neices and some who married in,
Came trooping to the old home with laughter and with smile,
And had their fun together in the good old-fashioned style.

The games we played have vanished and gone beyond recall,
But I still can see the donkey that hung upon the wall,
And Uncle Ben blindfolded, his arm out like a flail,
Trying to find the proper place on which to pin the tail,
And I can hear the laughter that rose up like a roar,
When Uncle Ben had pinned it upon the parlor door;
And I can see the women folks sit on a crock and try
To pass a piece of linen thread right through a needle's eye.

The old time family parties, when Cousin Will would play
The square piano for us in a real heart-gripping way;
And Lil and Tom and Annie would take their turn and sing
Those songs which took your fancy and had the proper swing;
And when they tired of singing somebody would recite
A scene or two from Shakespeare and do the thing up right.
Then we 'd all sit down to supper, and I tell you, if
you please, It wasn't any dinky lunch you juggle on your knees.

But a real bang up collation, that's what mother used to say,
Of tongue and ham and cold roast beef — it took her 'most a day
To prepare that supper for us — there were jellies red and fine,
And layer cakes and pound cakes and some cakes of quaint design;
Oh, there 's nothing now can beat them though we've put on style and airs,
And adopted all the customs that obtain with millionaires,
We don't have the fun we used to, nor the joy we used to know,
At the old time family parlies in the days of long ago.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Family's Homely Man

There never was a family without its homely man,
With legs a little longer than the ordinary plan,
An' a shock of hair that brush an' comb can't ever straighten out,
An' hands that somehow never seem to know what they're about;
The one with freckled features and a nose that looks as though
It was fashioned by the youngsters from a chunk of mother's dough.
You know the man I'm thinking of, the homely one an' plain,
That fairly oozes kindness like a rosebush dripping rain.
His face is never much to see, but back of it there lies
A heap of love and tenderness and judgment, sound and wise.

And so I sing the homely man that's sittin' in his chair,
And pray that every family will always have him there.
For looks don't count for much on earth; it's hearts that wear the gold;
An' only that is ugly which is selfish, cruel, cold.
The family needs him, Oh, so much; more, maybe, than they know;
Folks seldom guess a man's real worth until he has to go,
But they will miss a heap of love an' tenderness the day
God beckons to their homely man, an' he must go away.

He's found in every family, it doesn't matter where
They live or be they rich or poor, the homely man is there.
You'll find him sitting quiet-like and sort of drawn apart,
As though he felt he shouldn't be where folks are fine an' smart.
He likes to hide himself away, a watcher of the fun,
An' seldom takes a leading part when any game's begun.
But when there's any task to do, like need for extra chairs,
I've noticed it's the homely man that always climbs the stairs.

And always it's the homely man that happens in to mend
The little toys the youngsters break, for he's the children's friend.
And he's the one that sits all night to watch beside the dead,
And sends the worn-out sorrowers and broken hearts to bed.
The family wouldn't be complete without him night or day,
To smooth the little troubles out and drive the cares away.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Farmer Talks

HERE 's a letter from John in th' city,
Ain't heard from him now fer a year;
Yes, his handwritin' s stylish an' pretty,
An' rounded an' wonderf'ly clear;
Says he hopes we are all well an' thrivin',
Remarks that June's been rather cool,
But I know jes' at what he is drivin'
When he says that the kids have done school.

Don't hear much from John through the winter,
Excep' when I go into town,
An' then he don't even begin ter
Warm up or git rid of his frown;
Guess he ain't fond of much entertainin',
An' mebbe thinks I am a fool,
Yet, I know jes' why he's explainin'
The kids will be soon out of school.

Poor John ain't got much excep' trouble,
A mortgage or two an' some debts.
An' I sell a hog fer jes' double
The weekly amount that he gets;
But still John is given ter braggin',
In the city that's often the rule;
An' his wife is eternally naggin'—
So the kids will be soon out of school.

Well, I guess that I'll send fer 'em, Jenny,
Though I ain't got much use fer John,
An' I wouldn't favor him any,
But now that th' summer is on,
Those youngsters need sunshine, I 'm thinkin',
An' air that is fresh an' is cool;
I 'm writin' him — darn me, I 'm blinkin'—
To send 'em when they 're out of school.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Father Of The Man

I can't help thinkin' o' the lad!
Here's summer bringin' trees to fruit,
An' every bush with roses clad,
An' nature in her finest suit,
An' all things as they used to be
In days before the war came on.
Yet time has changed both him an' me,
An' I am here, but he is gone.

The orchard's as it was back then
When he was just a little tyke;
The lake's as calm an' fair as when
We used to go to fish for pike.
There's nothing different I can see
That God has made about the place,
Except the change in him an' me,
An' that is difficult to trace.

I only know one day he came
An' found me in the barn alone.
To some he might have looked the same,
But he was not the lad I'd known.
His soul, it seemed, had heard the call
As plainly as a mortal can.
Before he spoke to me at all,
I saw my boy become a man.

I can't explain just what occurred;
I sat an' talked about it there;
The dinner-bell I never heard,
Or if I did, I didn't care.
But suddenly it seemed to me
Out of the dark there came a light,
An' in a new way I could see
That I was wrong an' he was right.

I can't help thinkin' o' the lad!
He's fightin' hate an' greed an' lust,
An' here am I, his doting dad,

Believin' in a purpose just.
Time was I talked the joy o' play,
But now life's goal is all I see;
The petty thoughts I've put away-
My boy has made a man o' me.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Fellowship Of Books

I care not who the man may be,
Nor how his tasks may fret him,
Nor where he fares, nor how his cares
And troubles may beset him,
If books have won the love of him,

Whatever fortune hands him,
He'll always own, when he's alone,
A friend who understands him.
Though other friends may come and go,
And some may stoop to treason,
His books remain, through loss or gain,

And season after season
The faithful friends for every mood,
His joy and sorrow sharing;
For old time's sake, they'll lighter make
The burdens he is bearing.
Oh, he has counsel at his side,

And wisdom for his duty,
And laughter gay for hours of play
And tenderness and beauty,
And fellowship divinely rare,
True friends who never doubt him,
Unchanging love, and God above,
Who keeps good books about him.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Few

The easy roads are crowded
And the level roads are jammed;
The pleasant little rivers
With the drifting folks are crammed.
But off yonder where it's rocky,
Where you get a better view,
You will find the ranks are thinning
And the travelers are few.

Where the going's smooth and pleasant
You will always find the throng,
For the many, more's the pity,
Seem to like to drift along.
But the steeps that call for courage,
And the task that's hard to do
In the end result in glory
For the never-wavering few.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Fifty-Per-Cent Man

He limped into the place one day, a leg and arm were gone,
'Just half a man,' he told the boss, 'right now you look upon.
An accident did this to me, 'twere better had I died,
It robbed me of efficiency, but left me with my pride.'

The boss said kindly unto him: 'This is a busy place,
It takes two arms and two good legs to hold our daily pace;
It's able-bodied men I need, not crippled men like you.'
'Don't you suppose,' he answered then, 'there's something I can do?'

'Could you not find some sheltered nook where I can fill the day,
Where I can use my one good arm and earn my weekly pay?
Though half of me is stripped away, the other half is proud
And it will do some useful work if only it's allowed.

They've taught me now to use my hand, they've given me a trade,
They've said I need not lose my pride and meekly beg for aid,
But when the bosses look about they never seem to see
A place where they can use a man who's battered up like me.'

Oh, better far that charity, and better for the town,
It is to help the man to rise whom fate has stricken down.
And better for that factory which keeps a job or two
Where speed and strength are not required, which crippled men can do.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Fight With Self

WALL have fights to make with self,
And these are the bitterest fights of all,
Worse than the fight for a hoard of pelf
Is the fight to master our vices small;
Worse than the fight on the battle line
Is the struggle that many a man goes through
To rid himself of the thirst for wine,
That he may live as he wants to do.

Temptation knocks at the good priest's door,
And fierce is the struggle within his breast,
But he kneels and prays till the siege is o'er
And rises a victor in the test.
And man and woman must fight as he
The things of self that would drag us down,
And over ourselves get the mastery
Else all we gain is a paper crown.

Oh, the fight for wealth and the fight for fame,
The fight for glory and world applause;
The struggle, too, for an honored name,
And I 'd list the fight for a noble cause,
Are simple things, if the truth were known,
Compared to the struggle a man goes through
In his fight with self, when he's all alone,
To live a life that is clean and true.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Fight Worth While

fight worth while on this good old earth
Isn't the fight for a hoard of gold I
It isn't the fight to increase your worth
In stocks and bonds and things to hold;
It isn't the fight for a higher place,
For a meed of power for a little while,
Or to finish first in the grinding race
And to bask in glory and pomp and style.

The fight worth while is the fight to be
Unfettered here by the cords of vice;
To set your soul from your body free,
To be unswerved by a yellow price;
To win the love of your fellowmen,
To be a man that they all respect,
To lose a fight but to fight again
With your shoulders square and your head erect.

This is the fight worth while today;
To have ideals and to cling to them,
To live your life in your own good way
In spite of the scoffers who may condemn;
To be willing to fail if the victory
Would lower your standard of what is right,
To be poor in purse, if you have to be,
But rich in spirit. Here is a fight!

To ask no favors from any man,
To conquer yourself, and to face the strife
With courage born of your own-made plan,
To do your best with your term of life;
To shirk no task that you find to do,
However bitter it seems to be!
And at last when the battle of earth is through
To be ready to die, is victory.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Finer Thought

How fine it is at night to say:
'I have not wronged a soul to-day.
I have not by a word or deed,
In any breast sowed anger's seed,
Or caused a fellow being pain;
Nor is there on my crest a stain
That shame has left. In honor's way,
With head erect, I've lived this day.'

When night slips down and day departs
And rest returns to weary hearts,
How fine it is to close the book
Of records for the day, and look
Once more along the traveled mile
And find that all has been worth while;
To say: ' In honor I have toiled;
My plume is spotless and unsoiled.'

Yet cold and stern a man may be
Retaining his integrity;
And he may pass from day to day
A spirit dead, in living clay,
Observing strictly morals, laws,
Yet serving but a selfish cause;
So it is not enough to say:
'I have not stooped to shame to-day!'

It is a finer, nobler thought
When day is done and night has brought
The contemplative hours and sweet,
And rest to weary hearts and feet,
If man can stand in truth and say:
'I have been useful here to-day.
Back there is one I chanced to see
With hope newborn because of me.

'This day in honor I have toiled;
My shining crest is still unsoiled;
But on the mile I leave behind

Is one who says that I was kind;
And someone hums a cheerful song
Because I chanced to come along.'
Sweet rest at night that man shall own
Who has not lived his day alone.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Finest Age

When he was only nine months old,
And plump and round and pink of cheek,
A joy to tickle and to hold,
Before he'd even learned to speak,
His gentle mother used to say:
'It is too bad that he must grow.
If I could only have my way
His baby ways we'd always know.'

And then the year was turned, and he
Began to toddle round the floor
And name the things that he could see
And soil the dresses that he wore.
Then many a night she whispered low:
'Our baby now is such a joy
I hate to think that he must grow
To be a wild and heedless boy.'

But on he went and sweeter grew,
And then his mother, I recall,
Wished she could keep him always two,
For that's the finest age of all.
She thought the selfsame thing at three,
And now that he is four, she sighs
To think he cannot always be
The youngster with the laughing eyes.

Oh, little boy, my wish is not
Always to keep you four years old.
Each night I stand beside your cot
And think of what the years may hold;
And looking down on you I pray
That when we've lost our baby small,
The mother of our man will say
'This is the finest age of all.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Finest Fellowship

There may be finer pleasures than just tramping with your boy,
And better ways to spend a day; there may be sweeter joy;
There may be richer fellowship than that of son and dad,
But if there is, I know it not; it's one I've never had.

Oh, some may choose to walk with kings and men of pomp and pride,
But as for me, I choose to have my youngster at my side.
And some may like the rosy ways of grown-up pleasures glad,
But I would go a-wandering with just a little lad.

Yes, I would seek the woods with him and talk to him of trees,
And learn to know the birds a-wing and hear their melodies;
And I would drop all worldly care and be a boy awhile;
Then hand-in-hand come home at dusk to see the mother smile.

Grown men are wearisome at times, and selfish pleasures jar,
But sons and dads throughout the world the truest comrades are.
So when I want a perfect day with every joy that's fine,
I spend it in the open with that little lad o' mine.

Edgar Albert Guest

The First Easter

Dead they left Him in the tomb
And the impenetrable gloom,
Rolled the great stone to the door,
Dead, they thought, forevermore.

Then came Mary Magdalene
Weeping to that bitter scene,
And she found, to her dismay,
That the stone was rolled away.

Cometh Peter then and John,
Him they'd loved to look upon,
And they found His linen there
Left within the sepulcher.

'They have taken Him away!'
Mary cried that Easter Day.
Low, she heard a voice behind:
'Whom is it you seek to find?'

'Tell me where He is!' she cried,
'Him they scourged and crucified.
Here we left Him with the dead!'
'Mary! Mary!' Jesus said.

So by Mary Magdalene
First the risen Christ was seen,
And from every heart that day
Doubt's great stone was rolled away.

Edgar Albert Guest

The First Rule Of Golf

(In which Ye Ed attempts the millionaire's game and obeys the first rule of golf, which is to put back the turf.)

We stood at the tee and the driver we swung,
Then we put back the turf;
At the ball, then a thing called the 'mashie,' we flung,
Then we put back the turf.
'There's a fine mid-iron shot I am sure you can do,'
Said a friend, 'you should get on the green then in two;'
We tried it, then painted the atmosphere blue
And put back the turf.

We tried for a shot o'er a bunker ahead,
Then we put back the turf;
We attempted to loft, but the ball remained dead,
Then we put back the turf.
We tackled the niblick, the putter, the cleek,
They went through the air with a whistle and shriek,
And our manner was humble and abject and meek
As we put back the turf.

We posed, a la Travers, and let the club go,
Then we put back the turf;
The pellet was nicely addressed for a blow,
Then we put back the turf;
Out there on the links with the sun shining warm
To watch us the spectators came in a swarm,
And they freely remarked on our wonderful form
As we put back the turf.

At the first, second, third, fourth and fifth holes men see
Where we put back the turf;
From the fifth to the ninth it's as plain as can be
Where we put back the turf.
And we answered when asked, as we sat at a meal,
Our honest opinion of golf to reveal:
'It's great, but it's terribly hard on the heel
When you put back the turf.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The First Steps

Last night I held my arms to you
And you held yours to mine
And started out to march to me
As any soldier fine.
You lifted up your little feet
And laughingly advanced;
And I stood there and gazed upon
Your first wee steps, entranced.

You gooped and gurgled as you came
Without a sign of fear;
As though you knew, your journey o'er,
I'd greet you with a cheer.
And, what is more, you seemed to know,
Although you are so small,
That I was there, with eager arms,
To save you from a fall.

Three tiny steps you took, and then,
Disaster and dismay!
Your over-confidence had led
Your little feet astray.
You did not see what we could see
Nor fear what us alarms;
You stumbled, but ere you could fall
I caught you in my arms.

You little tyke, in days to come
You'll bravely walk alone,
And you may have to wander paths
Where dangers lurk unknown.
And, Oh, I pray that then, as now,
When accidents befall
You'll still remember that I'm near
To save you from a fall.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Fisherman

Along a stream that raced and ran
Through tangled trees and over stones,
That long had heard the pipes o' Pan
And shared the joys that nature owns,
I met a fellow fisherman,
Who greeted me in cheerful tones.

The lines of care were on his face.
I guessed that he had buried dead;
Had run for gold full many a race,
And kept great problems in his head,
But in that gentle resting place
No word of wealth or fame he said.

He showed me trout that he had caught
And praised the larger ones of mine;
Told me how that big beauty fought
And almost broke his silken line;
Spoke of the trees and sky, and thought
Them proof of life and power divine.

There man to man we talked of trees
And birds, as people talk of men;
Discussed the busy ways of bees
Wondered what lies beyond our ken;
Where is the land no mortal sees,
And shall we come this way again.

'Out here,' he told me, with a smile,
'Away from all the city's sham,
The strife for splendor and for style,
The ticker and the telegram
I come for just a little while
To be exactly as I am.'

Foes think the bad in him they've guessed
And prate about the wrong they scan;
Friends that have seen him at his best
Believe they know his every plan;

I know him better than the rest,
I know him as a fisherman.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Fishing Cure

There's nothing that builds up a toil-weary soul
Like a day on a stream,
Back on the banks of the old fishing hole
Where a fellow can dream.
There's nothing so good for a man as to flee
From the city and lie
Full length in the shade of a whispering tree
And gaze at the sky.

Out there where the strife and the greed are forgot
And the struggle for pelf,
A man can get rid of each taint and each spot
And clean up himself;
He can be what he wanted to be when a boy,
If only in dreams;
And revel once more in the depths of a joy
That's as real as it seems.

The things that he hates never follow him there —
The jar of the street,
The rivalries petty, the struggling unfair —
For the open is sweet.
In purity's realm he can rest and be clean,
Be he humble or great,
And as peaceful his soul may become as the scene
That his eyes contemplate.

It is good for the world that men hunger to go
To the banks of a stream,
And weary of sham and of pomp and of show
They have somewhere to dream.
For this life would be dreary and sordid and base
Did they not now and then
Seek refreshment and calm in God's wide, open space
And come back to be men.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Fishing Outfit

You may talk of stylish raiment,
You may boast your broadcloth fine,
And the price you gave in payment
May be treble that of mine.
But there's one suit I'd not trade you
Though it's shabby and it's thin,
For the garb your tailor made you:
That's the tattered,
Mud-bespattered
Suit that I go fishing in.

There's no king in silks and laces
And with jewels on his breast,
With whom I would alter places.
There's no man so richly dressed
Or so like a fashion panel
That, his luxuries to win,
I would swap my shirt of flannel
And the rusty,
Frayed and dusty
Suit that I go fishing in.

'Tis an outfit meant for pleasure;
It is freedom's raiment, too;
It's a garb that I shall treasure
Till my time of life is through.
Though perhaps it looks the saddest
Of all robes for mortal skin,
I am proudest and I'm gladdest
In that easy,
Old and greasy
Suit that I go fishing in.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Flag

We never knew how much the Flag
Could mean, until he went away,
We used to boast of it and brag,
As something of a by-gone day;
But now the Flag can start our tears
In moments of our greatest joy,
Old Glory in the sky appears
The symbol of our little boy.

We knew that sometimes people wept
To see the Flag go waving by,
But never guessed the griefs they kept—
We never understood just why.
But now our eyes grow quickly dim,
Our voices choke with sobs to-day;
The Flag is telling us of him,
Our little boy who's gone away.

We never knew the Flag could be
So much a part of human life,
We thought it beautiful to see
Before these bitter days of strife;
But now more beautiful it gleams,
And deeper in our hearts it dwells;
It is the emblem of our dreams,
For of our little boy it tells.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Flag On The Farm

We've raised a flagpole on the farm
And flung Old Glory to the sky,
And it's another touch of charm
That seems to cheer the passer-by,
But more than that, no matter where
We're laboring in wood and field,
We turn and see it in the air,
Our promise of a greater yield.
It whispers to us all day long,
From dawn to dusk: 'Be true, be strong;
Who falters now with plow or hoe
Gives comfort to his country's foe.'

It seems to me I've never tried
To do so much about the place,
Nor been so slow to come inside,
But since I've got the flag to face,
Each night when I come home to rest
I feel that I must look up there
And say: 'Old Flag, I've done my best,
To-day I've tried to do my share.'
And sometimes, just to catch the breeze,
I stop my work, and o'er the trees
Old Glory fairly shouts my way:
'You're shirking far too much to-day!'

The help have caught the spirit, too;
The hired man takes off his cap
Before the old red, white and blue,
Then to the horses says: 'giddap!'
And starting bravely to the field
He tells the milkmaid by the door:
'We're going to make these acres yield
More than they've ever done before.'
She smiles to hear his gallant brag,
Then drops a curtsy to the flag.
And in her eyes there seems to shine
A patriotism that is fine.

We've raised a flagpole on the farm
And flung Old Glory to the sky;
We're far removed from war's alarm,
But courage here is running high.
We're doing things we never dreamed
We'd ever find the time to do;
Deeds that impossible once seemed
Each morning now we hurry through.
The flag now waves above our toil
And sheds its glory on the soil,
And boy and man looks up to it
As if to say: 'I'll do my bit!'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Friendly Greeting

Oh, we have friends in England, and we have friends in France,
And should we have to travel there through some strange circumstance,
Undaunted we should sail away, and gladly should we go,
Because awaiting us would be somebody that we know.

Full many a journey here we make where countless strangers roam,
Yet everywhere our faces turn we find a friend from home.
Oh, we have friends in distant towns, and friends 'neath foreign skies,
And yet we think of him as lost whene'er a loved one dies.

Yet he has merely travelled on, as many a friend must do;
Within a distant city fair he waits for me and you,
And when shall come our time to make that journey through the gloam,
To welcome us he will be there, the smiling friend from home.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Front Seat

When I was but a little lad I always liked to ride,
No matter what the rig we had, right by the driver's side.
The front seat was the honor place in bob-sleigh, coach or hack,
And I manoeuvred to avoid the cushions in the back.
We children used to scramble then to share the driver's seat,
And long the pout I wore when I was not allowed that treat.
Though times have changed and I am old I still confess I race
With other grown-ups now and then to get my favorite place.
The auto with its cushions fine and big and easy springs
Has altered in our daily lives innumerable things,
But hearts of men are still the same as what they used to be,
When surreys were the stylish rigs, or so they seem to me,
For every grown-up girl to-day and every grown-up boy
Still hungers for the seat in front and scrambles for its joy,
And riding by the driver's side still holds the charm it did
In those glad, youthful days gone by when I was just a kid.
I hurry, as I used to do, to claim that favorite place,
And when a tonneau seat is mine I wear a solemn face.
I try to hide the pout I feel, and do my best to smile,
But envy of the man in front gnaws at me all the while.
I want to be where I can see the road that lies ahead,
To watch the trees go flying by and see the country spread
Before me as we spin along, for there I miss the fear
That seems to grip the soul of me while riding in the rear.
And I am not alone in this. To-day I drive a car
And three glad youngsters madly strive to share the 'seat with Pa.'
And older folks that ride with us, I very plainly see,
Manoeuvre in their artful ways to sit in front with me;
Though all the cushions in the world were piled up in the rear,
The child in all of us still longs to watch the engineer.
And happier hearts we seem to own when we're allowed to ride,
No matter what the car may be, close by the driver's side.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Frosting Dish

When I was just a little lad
Not more than eight or nine,
One special treat to make me glad
Was set apart as 'mine.'
On baking days she granted me
The small boy's dearest wish,
And when the cake was finished, she
Gave me the frosting dish.
I've eaten chocolate many ways,
I've had it hot and cold;
I've sampled it throughout my days
In every form it's sold.
And though I still am fond of it,
And hold its flavor sweet,
The icing dish, I still admit,
Remains the greatest treat.
Never has chocolate tasted so,
Nor brought to me such joy
As in those days of long ago
When I was but a boy,
And stood beside my mother fair,
Waiting the time when she
Would gently stoop to kiss me there
And hand the plate to me.
Now there's another in my place
Who stands where once I stood.
And watches with an upturned face
And waits for 'something good.'
And as she hands him spoon and plate
I chuckle low and wish
That I might be allowed to wait
To scrape the frosting dish.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Fun Of Forgiving

Sometimes I'm almost glad to hear when I get home that they've been bad;
And though I try to look severe, within my heart I'm really glad
When mother sadly tells to me the list of awful things they've done,
Because when they come tearfully, forgiving them is so much fun.

I like to have them all alone, with no one near to hear or see,
Then as their little faults they own, I like to take them on my knee
And talk it over and pretend the whipping soon must be begun;
And then to kiss them at the end- forgiving them is so much fun.

Within the world there's no such charm as children penitent and sad,
Who put two soft and chubby arms around your neck, when they've been bad.
And as you view their trembling lips, away your temper starts to run,
And from your mind all anger slips- forgiving them is so much fun.

If there were nothing to forgive I wonder if we'd love them so;
If they were wise enough to live as grown-ups do, and always go
Along the pleasant path of right, with ne'er a fault from sun to sun,
A lot of joys we'd miss at night- forgiving them is so much fun.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Furnace Door

My father is a peaceful man;
He tries in every way he can
To live a life of gentleness
And patience all the while.
He says that needless fretting's vain,
That it's absurd to be profane,
That nearly every wrong can be
Adjusted with a smile.
Yet try no matter how he will,
There's one thing that annoys him still,
One thing that robs him of his calm
And leaves him very sore;
He cannot keep his self-control
When with a shovel full of coal
He misses where it's headed for,
And hits the furnace door.

He measures with a careful eye
The space for which he's soon to try,
Then grabs his trusty shovel up
And loads it in the bin,
Then turns and with a healthy lunge,
That's two parts swing and two parts plunge,
He lets go at the furnace fire,
Convinced it will go in!
And then we hear a sudden smack,
The cellar air turns blue and black;
Above the rattle of the coal
We hear his awful roar.
From dreadful language upward hissed
We know that father's aim has missed,
And that his shovel full of coal
Went up against the door.

The minister was here one day
For supper, and Pa went away
To fix the furnace fire, and soon
We heard that awful roar.
And through the furnace pipes there came

Hot words that made Ma blush for shame.
'It strikes me,' said the minister,
'He hit the furnace door.'
Ma turned away and hung her head;
'I'm so ashamed,' was all she said.
And then the minister replied:
'Don't worry. I admit
That when I hit the furnace door,
And spill the coal upon the floor,
I quite forget the cloth I wear
And- er- swear a little bit.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Future

'The worst is yet to come:'
So wail the doubters glum,
But here's the better view;
'My best I've yet to do.'

The worst some always fear;
To-morrow holds no cheer,
Yet farther on life's lane
Are joys you shall attain.

Go forward bravely, then,
And play your part as men,
For this is ever true:
'Our best we've yet to do.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Gentle Gardener

I'd like to leave but daffodills
to mark my little way,
To leave but tulips red and white
behind me as I stray;
I'd like to pass away from earth
and feel I'd left behind
But roses and forget-me-nots
for all who come to find.

I'd like to sow the barren spots
with all the flowers of earth,
To leave a path where those who come
should find but gentle mirth;
And when at last I'm called upon
to join the heavenly throng
I'd like to feel along my way
I'd left no sign of wrong.

And yet the cares are many
and the hours of toil are few;
There is not time enough on earth
for all I'd like to do;
But, having lived and having toiled,
I'd like the world to find
Some little touch of beauty
that my soul had left behind.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Gentle Hand Of Women Folks

The gentle hand of women folks
Keeps this old world in line,
It smooths away our bits of care
And makes the struggle fine.
It turns to blue our skies of gray,
It makes our burdens lighter,
And when we feel its soft caress
Life's gloomy spots grow brighter.

The gentle hand of women folks,
Of sister, wife or mother,
Is what makes honest, sturdy men
Of husband, son or brother.
It keeps man fighting to be good,
It cheers him up in sorrow,
It gives him courage to await
The fortunes of tomorrow.

The gentle hand of women folks,
To kindness ever turning,
Soothing with patient tenderness
The brow with fever burning.
Man's best reward for all the strife,
His richest worldly blessing,
The gentle hand of women folks,
Akin to God's caressing.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Gift Of Play

Some have the gift of song and some possess the gift of silver speech,
Some have the gift of leadership and some the ways of life can teach.
And fame and wealth reward their friends; in jewels are their splendors
told,
But in good time their favorites grow very faint and gray and old.
But there are men who laugh at time and hold the cruel years at bay;
They romp through life forever young because they have the gift of play.

They walk with children, hand in hand, through daisy fields and orchards
fair,
Nor all the dignity of age and power and pomp can follow there;
They've kept the magic charm of youth beneath the wrinkled robe of Time,
And there's no friendly apple tree that they have grown too old to climb.
They have not let their boyhood die; they can be children for the day;
They have not bartered for success and all its praise, the gift of play.

They think and talk in terms of youth; with love of life their eyes are
bright;
No rheumatism of the soul has robbed them of the world's delight;
They laugh and sing their way along and join in pleasures when they can,
And in their glad philosophy they hold that mirth becomes a man.
They spend no strength in growing old. What if their brows be crowned
with gray?
The spirits in their breasts are young. They still possess the gift of
play.

The richest men of life are not the ones who rise to wealth and fame-
Not the great sages, old and wise, and grave of face and bent of frame,
But the glad spirits, tall and straight, who 'spite of time and all its
care,
Have kept the power to laugh and sing and in youth's fellowship to share.
They that can walk with boys and be a boy among them, blithe and gay,
Defy the withering blasts of Age because they have the gift of play.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Girl He Left Behind

The Girl He Left Behind

We used to think her frivolous—you know how
parents are,
A little quick to see the faults and petty flaws
that mar
The girl their son is fond of and may choose
to make his wife,
A little overjealous of the one who'd share his
life;
But the girl he left behind him when he bravely
marched away
Has blossomed into beauty that we see and need
to-day.

She was with us at the depot, and we turned our
backs a-while,
And her eyes were sad and misty, though she
tried her best to smile.
Then she put her arm round mother, and it
seemed to me as though
They just grew to love each other, for they
shared a common woe.
Now she often comes to see us, and it seems
to me we find
A heap of solid comfort in the girl he left behind.

'She's so sensible and gentle,' mother said last
night to me,
'The kind of girl I've often wished and prayed
his wife would be.
And I like to have her near us, for she understands
my sighs
And I see my brave boy smiling when I look into
her eyes.'
Now the presence of his sweetheart seems to fill
our home with joy.
She's no longer young and flighty—she's the
girl who loves our boy.

The Glories Of The Present

WHAT of the glories after death,
When this frail form gives up its breath?
Why do we strive to understand
The Future when the Now's at hand?
What matters it to you and me
That o'er some dark mysterious sea
Whereon we all must sail some day,
Awaits a port where we must stay?

It is enough for me to know
A brighter place there is to go;
I ask not when will come my time,
Whether the road is hard to climb,
What glories there await for me;
I would not solve Death's mystery
And still live on — I am content
To live the life that God has sent.

Now is the problem that I strive
To solve, while I am yet alive;
What am I here for, what to do?
Am I unto my purpose true?
Do I live, every day a man,
Helping and cheering where I can?
Am I employing every hour
For deeds of good, my gift of power?

This is what I prefer to know,
Not when or whither I must go;
No thought of Future lines my brow,
Mine is the problem of the Now.
My hopes are not on after-death,
But on today while I have breath;
If I have done my best while here,
I'll face hereafter without fear.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Glory Of Age

'What is the glory of age?' I said,
 'A hoard of gold and a few dear friends?
When you've reached the day that you look ahead
 And see the place where your journey ends,
When Time has robbed you of youthful might-
What is the secret of your delight?'

And an old man smiled as he answered me:
 'The glory of age isn't gold or friends,
When we've reached the valley of Soon-To-Be
 And note the place where our journey ends;
The glory of age, be it understood,
Is a boy out there who is making good.

'The greatest joy that can come to man
 When his sight is dim and his hair is gray;
The greatest glory that God can plan
 To cheer the lives of the old to-day,
When they share no more in the battle yell,
Is a boy out there who is doing well.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Gold Givers

Oh, some shall stand in glory's light when all the strife is done,
And many a mother there shall say, 'For truth I gave my son!'
But I shall stand in silence then and hear the stories brave,
For I must answer at the last that gold is all I gave.

When all this age shall pass away, and silenced are the guns,
When sweethearts join their loves again, and mothers kiss their sons,
When brave unto the brave return, and all they did is told,
How pitiful my gift shall seem, when all I gave is gold.

When we are asked what did you then, when all the world was red,
And some shall say, 'I fell in France,' and some, 'I mourned my dead;'
With all the brave assembled there in glory long to live,
How trivial our lives shall seem who had but gold to give.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Gold Star

The star upon their service flag has changed to gleaming gold;
It speaks no more of hope and life, as once it did of old,
But splendidly it glistens now for every eye to see
And softly whispers: 'Here lived one who died for liberty.

'Here once he walked and played and laughed, here oft his smile was known;
Within these walls today are kept the toys he used to own.
Now I am he who marched away and I am he who fell
Of service once I spoke, but now of sacrifice I tell.
'No richer home in all this land is there than this I grace,
For here was cradled manhood fine; within this humble place
A soldier for the truth was born, and here, beside the door,
A mother sits and grieves for him who shall return no
more.

"Salute me, stranger, as you pass! I mark a soldier who
Gave up the joys of living here, to dare and die for you!
This is the home that once he knew, who fought for you and fell;
This is a shrine of sacrifice, where faith and courage dwell.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Good Little Boy

Once there was a boy who never
Tore his clothes, or hardly ever,
Never made his sister mad,
Never whipped fer bein' bad,
Never scolded by his Ma,
Never frowned at by his Pa,
Always fit fer folks to see,
Always good as good could be.

This good little boy from Heaven,
So I'm told, was only seven,
Yet he never shed real tears
When his mother scrubbed his ears,
An' at times when he was dressed
Fer a party, in his best,
He was careful of his shirt
Not to get it smeared with dirt.

Used to study late at night,
Learnin' how to read an' write;
When he played a baseball game,
Right away he always came
When his mother called him in.
An' he never made a din
But was quiet as a mouse
when they'd comp'ny in the house.

Liked to wash his hands an' face,
Liked to work around the place;
Never, when he'd tired of play,
Left his wagon in the way,
Or his bat an' ball around—
Put 'em where they could be found;
An' that good boy married Ma,
An' to-day he is my Pa.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Graduation Dress

I'M not kicking on expenses, now the sewing time commences,
I will buy chiffon and laces till they say they've got enough;
Sure her dress for graduation shall excite the admiration
Of the masses who behold her; it shall be the finest stuff.
She shall even carry roses, when her high school training closes,
For she's worthy of the finest that there is in all the town;
But I sometimes sit and ponder of the days away off yonder
When her mother graduated in a simple gingham gown.

I have watched the fuss and bustle, and this ceaseless rush and hustle,
And I've listened to the planning of this graduation dress,
And I know when all is ended, she will make a picture splendid,
And I wouldn't be contented if she didn't, I confess.
But I still recall the other glorious picture of her mother,
With her cheeks as pink as peaches and her hair a golden brown,
As I gazed at her enraptured, and my heart, I know, she captured
On the day she graduated in her simple gingham gown.

I'd be laughed down if I said it, in such matters they don't credit
Me with knowing what is really very swell;
I can picture now their faces, if instead of silk and laces,
My preference for gingham, I should tell.
But with me it's grown a passion, and in spite of style and fashion,
And what women folks think needful, I insist and write it down,
I shall never see another quite so charming as her mother
On the day she graduated in her simple gingham gown.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Grate Fire

I'm sorry for a fellow if he cannot look and see
In a grate fire's friendly flaming all the joys which used to be.
If in quiet contemplation of a cheerful ruddy blaze
He sees nothing there recalling all his happy yesterdays,
Then his mind is dead to fancy and his life is bleak and bare,
And he's doomed to walk the highways that are always thick with care.
When the logs are dry as tinder and they crackle with the heat,
And the sparks, like merry children, come a-dancing round my feet,
In the cold, long nights of autumn I can sit before the blaze
And watch a panorama born of all my yesterdays.
I can leave the present burdens and that moment's bit of woe,
And claim once more the gladness of the bygone long ago.
There are no absent faces in the grate fire's merry throng;
No hands in death are folded, and no lips are stilled to song.
All the friends who were are living—like the sparks that fly about;
They come romping out to greet me with the same old merry shout,
Till it seems to me I'm playing once again on boyhood's stage,
Where there's no such thing as sorrow and there's no such thing as age.
I can be the care-free schoolboy! I can play the lover, too!
I can walk through Maytime orchards with the old sweetheart I knew;
I can dream the glad dreams over, greet the old familiar friends
In a land where there's no parting and the laughter never ends.
All the gladness life has given from a grate fire I reclaim,
And I'm sorry for the fellow who can only see the flame.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Green Of Michigan

I'VE seen the Rockies in the west,
I've seen the canyons wild and grim,
I've seen the prairies golden dressed,
And California's hedges prim.
I've seen the Kansas corn fields blow,
I've seen them wearing summer's tan;
But there's no place on earth can show
Such glorious green as Michigan.

I've seen the blue of foreign skies,
I've seen old England's shady lanes,
The famous spots men advertise,
The mountains and the rolling plains;
But wearily my eyes have turned
From scenes that others gayly scan,
And secretly my soul has yearned
To see the green of Michigan.

I've traveled in a Pullman car
And watched the landscape slipping by,
But always though I've wandered far
To fairer charms my mind would fly;
And when at last the moving scenes
Seem painted by some Master Man
With all the cool and restful greens,
I know I'm back in Michigan.

Here Mother Nature never tires
And droops her head upon her breast;
Beneath the scorching summer fires
She keeps her youth and looks her best.
When other states have lost the hue
They had when first the spring began,
'Tis like refreshing drink to view
The splendid green of Michigan.

Go search for charms on foreign shores,
Enthuse of wonders, as you roam,
I choose the splendors at our doors,

I sing the rich delights of home,
The trees in garb of glory dressed,
The fertile fields that round us span;
I sing the charm that thrills me best,
The glorious green of Michigan!

Edgar Albert Guest

The Handy Man

The handy man about the house
Is old and bent and gray;
Each morning in the yard he toils,
Where all the children play;
Some new task every day he finds,
Some task he loves to do,
The handy man about the house,
Whose work is never through.
The children stand to see him toil,
And watch him mend a chair;
They bring their broken toys to him
He keeps them in repair.
No idle moment Grandpa spends,
But finds some work to do,
And hums a snatch of some old song,
That in his youth he knew.
He builds with wood most wondrous things:
A table for the den,
A music rack to please the girls,
A gun case for the men.
And 'midst his paints and tools he smiles,
And seems as young and gay
As any of the little ones
Who round him run in play.
I stopped to speak with him awhile;
'Oh, tell me, Grandpa, pray,
I said, 'why do you work so hard
Throughout the livelong day?
Your hair is gray, your back is bent,
With weight of years oppressed;
This is the evening of your life—
Why don't you sit and rest?'
'Ah, no,' the old man answered me,
'Although I'm old and gray,
I like to work out here where I
Can watch the children play.
The old have tasks that they must do;
The greatest of my joys
Is working on this shaded porch,

And mending children's toys.'
And as I wandered on, I thought,
Oh, shall I lonely be
When time has powdered white my hair,
And left his mark on me?
Will little children round me play,
Shall I have work to do?
Or shall I be, when age is mine,
Lonely and useless too?

Edgar Albert Guest

The Happiest Days

You do not know it, little man,
In your summer coat of tan
And your legs bereft of hose
And your peeling, sunburned nose,
With a stone bruise on your toe,
Almost limping as you go
Running on your way to play
Through another summer day,
Friend of birds and streams and trees,
That your happiest days are these.

Little do you think to-day,
As you hurry to your play,
That a lot of us, grown old
In the chase for fame and gold,
Watch you as you pass along
Gayly whistling bits of song,
And in envy sit and dream
Of a long-neglected stream,
Where long buried are the joys
We possessed when we were boys.

Little chap, you cannot guess
All your sum of happiness;□
Little value do you place
On your sunburned freckled face;
And if some shrewd fairy came
Offering sums of gold and fame
For your summer days of play,
You would barter them away
And believe that you had made
There and then a clever trade.

Time was we were boys like you,
Bare of foot and sunburned, too,
And, like you, we never guessed
All the riches we possessed;
We'd have traded them back then
For the hollow joys of men;

We'd have given them all to be
Rich and wise and forty-three.
For life never teaches boys
Just how precious are their joys.

Youth has fled and we are old.
Some of us have fame and gold;
Some of us are sorely scarred,
For the way of age is hard;
And we envy, little man,
You your splendid coat of tan,
Envy you your treasures rare,
Hours of joy beyond compare;
For we know, by teaching stern,
All that some day you must learn.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Happy Man

If you would know a happy man,
Go find the fellow who
Has had a bout with trouble grim
And just come smiling through.

The load is off his shoulders now,
Where yesterday he frowned
And saw no joy in life, to-day
He laughs his way around.

He's done the very thing he thought
That he could never do;
His sun is shining high to-day
And all his skies are blue.

He's stronger than he was before;
Should trouble come anew
He'll know how much his strength can bear
And how much he can do.

To-day he has the right to smile,
And he may gaily sing,
For he has conquered where he feared
The pain of failure's sting.

Comparison has taught him, too,
The sweetest hours are those
Which follow on the heels of care,
With laughter and repose.

If you would meet a happy man,
Go find the fellow who
Has had a bout with trouble grim
And just come smiling through.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Happy Slow Thinker

Full many a time a thought has come
That had a bitter meaning in it.
And in the conversation's hum
I lost it ere I could begin it.

I've had it on my tongue to spring
Some poisoned quip that I thought clever;
Then something happened and the sting
Unuttered went, and died forever.

A lot of bitter thoughts I've had
To silence fellows and to flay 'em,
But next day always I've been glad
I wasn't quick enough to say 'em.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Harder Part

It's mighty hard for Mother—I am busy through the day
And the tasks of every morning keep the gloomy thoughts away,
And I'm not forever meeting with a slipper or a gown
To remind me of our sorrow when I'm toiling in the town.
But with Mother it is different—there's no minute she is free
From the sight of things which tell her of the joy which used to be.
She is brave and she is faithful, and we say we're reconciled,
But your hearts are always heavy once you've lost a little child;
And a man can face his sorrow in a manly sort of way,
For his grief must quickly leave him when he's busy through the day;
But the mother's lot is harder—she must learn to sing and smile
Though she's living in the presence of her sorrow all the while.
Through the room where love once waited she must tip-toe day by day,
She must see through every window where the baby used to play,[Pg 63]
And there's not a thing she touches, nor a task she finds to do,
But it sets her heart to aching and begins the hurt anew.
Oh, a man can turn from sorrow, for his mind is occupied,
But the mother's lot is harder—grief is always at her side.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Home Builders

The world is filled with bustle and with selfishness and greed,
It is filled with restless people that are dreaming of a deed.
You can read it in their faces; they are dreaming of the day
When they'll come to fame and fortune and put all their cares away.
And I think as I behold them, though it's far indeed they roam,
They will never find contentment save they seek for it at home.
I watch them as they hurry through the surging lines of men,
Spurred to speed by grim ambition, and I know they're dreaming then.
They are weary, sick and footsore, but their goal seems far away,
And it's little they've accomplished at the ending of the day.
It is rest they're vainly seeking, love and laughter in the gloam,
But they'll never come to claim it, save they claim it here at home.
For the peace that is the sweetest isn't born of minted gold,
And the joy that lasts the longest and still lingers when we're old
Is no dim and distant pleasure—it is not to-morrow's prize,
It is not the end of toiling, or the rainbow of our sighs.
It' is every day within us—all the rest is hippodrome—
And the soul that is the gladdest is the soul that builds a home.
They are fools who build for glory! They are fools who pin their hopes
On the come and go of battles or some vessel's slender ropes.
They shall sicken and shall wither and shall never peace attain
Who believe that real contentment only men victorious gain.
For the only happy toilers under earth's majestic dome
Are the ones who find their glories in the little spot called home.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Homecomer's Song

YE HO, for a sight of the land that I love,
And her flag floating high on the breeze;
Ye ho, for a sight of her blue skies above,
And the wonderful green of her trees!
For my heart's beating now with expectancy's thrill,
And my eyes show the trace of a tear;
I love every river and valley and hill
In the land that I've missed for a year.

Then it's home once again,
Where the dear ones await,
And it's back in the land of the free;
And it's back once again
In my own native state,
This country's the country for me.

The wonders of Egypt, the splendors of Rome,
And Italy's charms I have seen,
But my heart yearns today for the glories of home,
And the sight of my own native green.
For nowhere are skies e'er as tenderly blue,
Nor dews that so tenderly fall,
As here in the land of the free and the true,
The best land on earth after all.

Then it's home once again,
Where the dear ones await,
And it's back in the land of the free;
And it's back once again
To my own native state,
This country's the country for me.

O, nowhere on earth are there women so fair,
Or men quite so noble and brave;
O, nowhere are people less burdened with care
As here where the Stars and Stripes wave.
And nowhere do stars seem so brightly to shine,
Or trees seem to grow quite so tall,
As here in this country I hallow as mine,

The best land on earth after all.

Then it's home once again,
Where the dear ones await,
And it's back in the land of the free,
And it's back once again
To my own native state,
This country's the country for me.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Homely Man

Looks as though a cyclone hit him—
Can't buy clothes that seem to fit him;
An' his cheeks are rough like leather,
Made for standin' any weather.
Outwards he was fashioned plainly,
Loose o' joint an' blamed ungainly,
But I'd give a lot if I'd
Been built half as fine inside.

Best thing I can tell you of him
Is the way the children love him.
Now an' then I get to thinkin'
He's much like old Abe Lincoln;
Homely like a gargoyle graven—
Worse'n that when he's unshaven;
But I'd take his ugly phiz
Jes' to have a heart like his.

I ain't over-sentimental,
But old Blake is so blamed gentle
An' so thoughtfull-like of others
He reminds us of our mothers.
Rough roads he is always smoothing
An' his way is, Oh, so soothin',
That he takes away the sting
When your heart is sorrowing.

Children gather round about him
Like they can't get on without him.
An' the old depend upon him,
Pilin' all their burdens on him,
Like as though the thing that grieves 'em
Has been lifted when he leaves 'em.
Homely? That can't be denied,
But he's glorious inside.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Homes Of Joy

I LIKE the homes where a Teddy Bear
Monopolizes the best arm chair,
Where the sofa a rag doll occupies
And a train of cars in the corner lies;
For those are the signs that the home is glad
With a little girl or a little lad.

Give me the home that is all upset,
Where neatness isn't forever met,
Where a parlor floor isn't always straight
With its rugs in place. That's as grim as Fate.
I want a home that is strewn with toys
Denoting the presence of girls and boys.

Let me gaze on buggies and Teddy Bears,
And dolls asleep in the company chairs;
Let me see in the corner, when I come in,
A battle front of soldiers tin
And a train of cars in a twisted heap,
And I'll know that the youngsters are sound asleep.

And I'll be glad that you've let me come
To the home of trumpet and horn and drum,
To the happy haunts where the children play,
I'll be glad of the toys that are in my way;
My house is childless and neat, and yet
My heart with its toys still remains upset.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Home-Town

Some folks leave home for money
And some leave home for fame,
Some seek skies always sunny,
And some depart in shame.
I care not what the reason
Men travel east and west,
Or what the month or season —
The home-town is the best.

The home-town is the glad town
Where something real abides;
'Tis not the money-mad town
That all its spirit hides.
Though strangers scoff and flout it
And even jeer its name,
It has a charm about it
No other town can claim.

The home-town skies seem bluer
Than skies that stretch away,
The home-town friends seem truer
And kinder through the day;
And whether glum or cheery
Light-hearted or depressed,
Or struggle-fit or weary,
I like the home-town best.

Let him who will, go wander
To distant towns to live,
Of some things I am fonder
Than all they have to give.
The gold of distant places
Could not repay me quite
For those familiar faces
That keep the home-town bright.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Home-Wrecker

MISCHIEVOUS and full of fun,
Eyes that sparkle like the sun;
Mouth that's always in a smile,
Hands in trouble all the while.
Tugging this and tugging that,
Nothing that you don't get at,
Nothing that you do not do,
Roguish little tyke of two.

Prying round the house you go,
Everything you want to know,
Everything you want to see,
Bunch of curiosity.
Nothing's safe with you about,
Nothing you don't ferret out.
'No! No's!' do not hinder you,
Roguish little tyke of two.

All day long you tear and break,
Ruin follows in your wake,
Just as though the tables are
Made for little feet to mar;
Just as though I spend my cash
For pottery for you to smash;
You're destructive through and through,
Roguish little tyke of two.

Hands and feet are never still,
Ink you think is made to spill;
On from this to that you pass
To the sound of falling glass.
Cups, you think, were made to throw
On the hardwood floor below.
Gleefully their wreck you view,
Roguish little tyke of two.

But I'd rather have it so,
Than the home I used to know;
Rather have you crash and break,

Leaving ruin in your wake;
Rather have you tug and tear
Till the place is worn and bare,
Than the childless home I knew,
Roguish little tyke of two.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Honor Roll

The boys upon the honor roll, God bless them all, I pray!

God watch them when they sleep at night, and guard them through the day.
We've stamped their names upon our walls, the list in glory grows,
Our brave boys and our splendid boys who stand to meet our foes.

Oh, here are sons of mothers fair and fathers fine and true,
The little ones of yesterday, the children that we knew;
We thought of them as youngsters gay, still laughing at their games,
And then we found the honor roll emblazoned with their names.

We missed their laughter and their cheer; it seems but yesterday
We had them here to walk with us, and now they've marched away.
And here where once their smiles were seen we keep a printed scroll;
The absent boy we long to see is on the honor roll.

So quickly did the summons come we scarcely marked the change,
One day life marched its normal pace, the next all things seemed strange,
And when we questioned where they were, the sturdiest of us all,
We saw the silent honor roll on each familiar wall.

The laughter that we knew has gone; the merry voice of youth
No longer rings where graybeards sit, discussing sombre truth.
No longer jests are flung about to rouse our weary souls,
For they who meant so much to us are on our honor rolls.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Hunter

Cheek that is tanned to the wind of the north.
Body that jests at the bite of the cold,
Limbs that are eager and strong to go forth
Into the wilds and the ways of the bold;
Red blood that pulses and throbs in the veins,
Ears that love silences better than noise;
Strength of the forest and health of the plains;
These the rewards that the hunter enjoys.

Forests were ever the cradles of men;
Manhood is born of a kinship with trees.
Whence shall come brave hearts and stout muscles, when
Woods have made way for our cities of ease?
Oh, do you wonder that stalwarts return
Yearly to hark to the whispering oaks?
'Tis for the brave days of old that they yearn:
These are the splendors the hunter invokes.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Important Thing

He was playing in the garden when we called him in for tea,
But he didn't seem to hear us, so I went out there to see
What the little rogue was up to, and I stooped and asked him why,
When he heard his mother calling, he had made her no reply.
'I am playing war,' he told me, 'and I'm up against defeat,
And until I stop the Germans I can't take the time to eat.'

'Isn't supper so important that you'll quit your round of play?
Don't you want to eat the shortcake mother made for you to-day?'
Then I asked him, but he answered as he shook his little head:
'I don't dare to stop for shortcake, if I do they'll kill me dead!
When I drive them from their trenches, then to supper I'll come in,
But I mustn't stop a minute, 'cause this war I've got to win.'

I left him in his battle, left him there to end his play,
For he'd taught to me a lesson that is needed much to-day;
Not the lure of cake could turn him from the work he had to do;
There was nothing so important as to see his struggle through.
And I wondered all that evening, as he slumbered in his bed
If we'd risen to the meaning of the work that lies ahead?

Are we roused to the importance of the danger in our way?
Are we thinking still of pleasures as we thought but yesterday?
Are our comforts and our riches in our minds still uppermost?
Must we wait, to see our danger, till the foe is on our coast?
Oh, there's nothing so important, nothing now that's worth a pin
Save the war that we are fighting. It's a war we've got to win.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Influence Of Woman

WHAT would be the use of singing songs
If there was no little woman near to hear them?
What would be the use of righting wrongs
If a little woman didn't cease to fear them?
What would be the use of getting rich,
Oh, what would be the use of winning fame,
If the conquest wasn't really something which
Brought glory to a little woman's name?

What would be the use of all the striving,
The turmoil and the heartache and the sighs?
Who would bear the goad of ceaseless driving
If it wasn't for the lovelight in her eyes?
If it wasn't for a woman's tender glances,
Who waits at home with welcome fond and true,
If we ever ceased to live our sweet romances,
What would be the use of all we do?

Edgar Albert Guest

The Inn-Keeper Makes Excuses

'Oh, if only I had known!'

Said the keeper of the inn.

'But no hint to me was shown,

And I didn't let them in.

'Yes, a star gleamed overhead,

But I couldn't read the skies,

And I'd given every bed

To the very rich and wise.

'And she was so poorly clad,

And he hadn't much to say!

But no room for them I had,

So I ordered them away.

'She seemed tired, and it was late

And they begged so hard, that I

Feeling sorry for her state,

In the stable let them lie.

'Had I turned some rich man out

Just to make a place for them

'Twould have killed, beyond a doubt,

All my trade at Bethlehem.

'Then there came the wise men three

To the stable, with the morn,

Who announced they'd come to see

The great King who had been born.

'And they brought Him gifts of myrrh,

Costly frankincense and gold,

And a great light shone on her

In the stable, bleak and cold.

'All my patrons, now are dead

And forgotten, but to-day

All the world to peace is led

By the ones I sent away

'It was my unlucky fate
To be born that Inn to own,
Against Christ I shut my gate—
Oh, if only I had known!'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Jedge Of Bowie County

HE WAS bo'n way down in Texas, where the sun is allus shinin'.
An' a cloud's so thin it's easy to observe the silver linin'.
An' he grew among the quaint folk an' the simple folk that labored
In the mint an' melon patches, an' with them for years he neighbored;
An' he stored up all the sunshine in the Texas skies above him
An' the red hearts of the melons, till they're part an' passel of him.

He was Jedge of Bowie county, jedge fer cullud an' fer white folk,
Whar he learned the ways of people, learned the wrong folk an' the right folk,
An' his heart grew big with kindness fer the ones who came with sad things
An' his face grew round with smilin' at the ones who came with glad things.
Fer the Jedge of Bowie county all his early days was storin'
Up the laughter of old Texas that should set us all a-roarin.'

Now the spices of the mint patch an' the juices of the melon
Seem to sorter drip an' trickle through the stories that he's tellin';
An' he shakes our sides with laughter, and he leads us all to gladness,
Till we've plum forgot the troubles that have caused us any sadness;
Oh, it seems that life is giviii' us an extra joyous bounty
When it lets us sit an' listen to the Jedge of Bowie County.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Job

The job will not make you, my boy;
The job will not bring you to fame
Or riches or honor or joy
Or add any weight to your name.
You may fail or succeed where you are,
May honestly serve or may rob;
From the start to the end
Your success will depend
On just what you make of your job.

Don't look on the job as the thing
That shall prove what you're able to do;
The job does no more than to bring
A chance for promotion to you.
Men have shirked in high places and won
Very justly the jeers of the mob;
And you'll find it is true
That it's all up to you
To say what shall come from the job.

The job is an incident small;
The thing that's important is man.
The job will not help you at all
If you won't do the best that you can.
It is you that determines your fate,
You stand with your hand on the knob
Of fame's doorway to-day,
And life asks you to say
Just what you will make of your job.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Joy Of A Dog

Ma says no, it's too much care
An' it will scatter germs an' hair,
An' it's a nuisance through and through.
An' barks when you don't want it to;
An' carries dirt from off the street,
An' tracks the carpets with its feet.
But it's a sign he's growin' up
When he is longin' for a pup.

Most every night he comes to me
An' climbs a-straddle of my knee
An' starts to fondle me an' pet,
Then asks me if I've found one yet.
An' ma says: 'Now don't tell him yes;
You know they make an awful mess.'
An' starts their faults to catalogue.
But every boy should have a dog.

An' some night when he comes to me,
Deep in my pocket there will be
The pup he's hungry to possess
Or else I sadly miss my guess.
For I remember all the joy
A dog meant to a little boy
Who loved it in the long ago,
The joy that's now his right to know.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Joy Of Getting Back

There ain't the joy in foreign skies that those of home possess,
An' friendliness o' foreign folks ain't hometown friendliness;
An' far-off landscapes with their thrills don't grip me quite as hard
As jes' that little patch o' green that's in my own backyard.

It's good to feel a stranger's hand grip heartily your own,
It's good to see a stranger's smile when you are all alone ;
But though a stranger's grip is warm, an' though his smile is sweet
There's something in the home folks' way that has the stranger's beat.

A railroad train that's outward bound bears many a man an' dame
Who think a thousand miles away the sunsets brighter flame;
An' seekin' joys they think they lack they pack their grips an' roam,
An' just as I, they some day find the sweetest joys at home.

Away from home the girls are fair an' men are kind of heart,
An' there you'll always find a few who sigh when you depart,
But though you rode a million miles o'er gleaming railroad track
You'd never find a joy to beat the joy of gettin' back.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Joy To Be

Oh, mother, be you brave of heart and keep
your bright eyes shining;
Some day the smiles of joy shall start and you
shall cease repining.
Beyond the dim and distant line the days of
peace are waiting,
When you shall have your soldier fine, and men
shall turn from hating.

Oh, mother, bear the pain a-while, as long ago
you bore it;
You suffered then to win his smile, and you
were happier for it;
And now you suffer once again, and bear your
weight of sorrow;
Yet you shall thrill with gladness when he wins
the glad to-morrow.

Oh, mother, when the cannons roar and all the
brave are fighting,
Remember that the son you bore the wrongs
of earth is righting;
Remember through the hours of pain that he
with all his brothers
Is battling there to win again a happy world
for mothers.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Joys Of Earth

LAUGHTER and song and mirth,
Roses that drip with dew,
These are the joys of earth;
Sunshine and skies of blue,
Children that romp and play,
Stars that twinkle at night,
Moonbeams that softly stray
Making the meadows light.

Birds in the tree tops high,
Fish in the waters blue,
Rain from the summer sky,
Sweethearts whose love is true;
Mountains and hills that loom
High in the distance fair,
Breezes that bear perfume
Sweet on the summer air.

Nothing to live for, pray?
Nothing worth while?
Look now where e'er you may,
Somewhere a smile;
Sunshine and morning dew,
Blue skies above us,
Hearts that are warm and true,
Someone to love us.

These are the joys of earth,
Wealth knows no more;
Laughter and song and mirth,
Flowers at your door,
Children to romp and play,
Skies that are blue;
Nothing to live for? Pray,
What's ailing you?

Edgar Albert Guest

The Joys Of Home

Curling smoke from a chimney low,
And only a few more steps to go,
Faces pressed at a window pane
Watching for someone to come again,
And I am the someone they wait to see-
These are the joys life gives to me.

What has my neighbor excelling this:
A good wife's love and a baby's kiss?
What if his chimneys tower higher?
Peace is found at our humble fire.
What if his silver and gold are more?
Rest is ours when the day is o'er.

Strive for fortune and slave for fame,
You find that joy always stays the same:
Rich man and poor man dream and pray
For a home where laughter shall ever stay,
And the wheels go round and men spend their might
For the few glad hours they may claim at night.

Home, where the kettle shall gaily sing,
Is all that matters with serf or king;
Gold and silver and laurelled fame
Are only sweet when the hearth's aflame
With a cheerful fire, and the loved ones there
Are unafraid of the wolves of care.

So let me come home at night to rest
With those who know I have done my best;
Let the wife rejoice and my children smile,
And I'll know by their love that I am worthwhile,
For this is conquest and world success-
A home where abideth happiness.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Joys We Miss

There never comes a lonely day but that we miss the laughing ways
Of those who used to walk with us through all our happy yesterdays.
We seldom miss the earthly great—the famous men that life has known—
But, as the years go racing by, we miss the friends we used to own.

The chair wherein he used to sit recalls the kindly father true
For, Oh, so filled with fun he was, and, Oh, so very much he knew!
And as we face the problems grave with which the years of life are filled.
We miss the hand which guided us and miss the voice forever stilled.

We little guessed how much he did to smooth our pathway day by day,
How much of joy he brought to us, how much of care he brushed away;
But now that we must tread alone the thorough-fare of life, we find
How many burdens we were spared by him who was so brave and kind.

Death robs the living, not the dead—they sweetly sleep whose tasks are done;
But we are weaker than before who still must live and labor on.
For when come care and grief to us, and heavy burdens bring us woe,
We miss the smiling, helpful friends on whom we leaned long years ago.

We miss the happy, tender ways of those who brought us mirth and cheer;
We never gather round the hearth but that we wish our friends were near;
For peace is born of simple things—a kindly word, a goodnight kiss,
The prattle of a babe, and love—these are the vanished joys we miss.

Edgar Albert Guest

The June Couple

She is fair to see and sweet,
Dainty from her head to feet,
Modest, as her blushing shows,
Happy, as her smiles disclose,
And the young man at her side
Nervously attempts to hide
Underneath a visage grim
That the fuss is bothering him.

Pause a moment, happy pair!
This is not the station where
Romance ends, and wooing stops
And the charm from courtship drops;
This is but the outward gate
Where the souls of mortals mate,
But the border of the land
You must travel hand in hand.

You who come to marriage, bring
All your tenderness, and cling
Steadfastly to all the ways
That have marked your wooing days.
You are only starting out
On life's roadways, hedged about
Thick with roses and with tares,
Sweet delights and bitter cares.

Heretofore you've only played
At love's game, young man and maid;
Only known it at its best;
Now you'll have to face its test.
You must prove your love worth while,
Something time cannot defile,
Something neither care nor pain
Can destroy or mar or stain.

You are now about to show
Whether love is real or no;
Yonder down the lane of life

You will find, as man and wife,
Sorrows, disappointments, doubt,
Hope will almost flicker out;
But if rightly you are wed
Love will linger where you tread.

There are joys that you will share,
Joys to balance every care;
Arm in arm remain, and you
Will not fear the storms that brew,
If when you are sorest tried
You face your trials, side by side.
Now your wooing days are done,
And your loving years begun.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Junk Box

My father often used to say:
'My boy don't throw a thing away:
You'll find a use for it some day.'

So in a box he stored up things,
Bent nails, old washers, pipes and rings,
And bolts and nuts and rusty springs.

Despite each blemish and each flaw,
Some use for everything he saw;
With things material, this was law.

And often when he'd work to do,
He searched the junk box through and through
And found old stuff as good as new.

And I have often thought since then,
That father did the same with men;
He knew he'd need their help again.

It seems to me he understood
That men, as well as iron and wood,
May broken be and still be good.

Despite the vices he'd display
He never threw a man away,
But kept him for another day.

A human junk box is this earth
And into it we're tossed at birth,
To wait the day we'll be of worth.

Though bent and twisted, weak of will,
And full of flaws and lacking skill,
Some service each can render still.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Kick Under The Table

After a man has been married awhile,
And his wife has grown used to his manner
And style,
When she knows from the twinkle that lights
Up his eye
The thoughts he is thinking, the wherefore and
Why,
And just what he'll say, and just what he'll do,
And is sure that he'll make a bad break ere he's
Through,
She has one little trick that she'll work when
She's able-
She takes a sly kick at him under the table.

He may fancy the story he's telling is true,
Or he's doing the thing which is proper to do;
He may fancy he's holding his own with the
Rest,
The life of the party and right at his best,
When quickly he learns to his utter dismay,
That he mustn't say what he's just started to say.
He is stopped at the place where he hoped to
Begin,
By his wife, who has taken at kick at his shin.

If he picks the wrong fork for the salad, he
Knows,
That fact by the feel of his wife's slippered toes.
If he's started a bit of untellable news,
On the calf of his leg there is planted a bruise.
Oh, I wonder sometimes what would happen to
Me
If the wife were not seated just where she
Could be
On guard every minute to watch every trick,
And keep me in line all the time with her kick.

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Edgar Albert Guest

The Killing Place

We're hiking along at a two-forty pace
We 're making life seem like a man-killing race,
With our nerves all on edge and our jaws firmly set
We go rushing along; with our brows lined with sweat
And our cheeks pale and drawn every minute we dash,
And the goal that we 're after is merely more cash.

We 're out for the money, the greenbacks and gold,
We 're all scared to death we'll be poor when we're old;
We want the mazuma, and want it right now,
And we spend all our time at the desk and the plow,
We 're working like navvies, refusing to see
The gold of the sun and the green of the tree.

We've got in a rut that the dollar sign dug,
And we 're plainly obsessed by the millionaire bug;
We've loaded our backs till they bend with the strain
And we lug and we tug at our burdens in vain;
With never a minute for laughter and fun,
Or the green of the tree and the gold of the sun.

A few of us land in the millionaire class,
But only to find that our gold is all brass;
That the money we've got we would gladly give back
For a stomach and liver that weren't out of whack;
For legs that were supple and eyes that could see
The gold of the sun and the green of the tree.

The trouble with us is we 're working too hard,
We ought to get out with the kids in the yard,
We ought to let slip a few dollars to play
With the friends that we love, and we ought to be gay;
The pace is too fast for our nerves and our health,
We should laugh more and cut out this chase after wealth.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Kindergarten Miss

The little kindergarten miss,
Source of all my joy and bliss,
Every evening in the window
Waits and watches just for me;
Waits and watches for her daddy,
And I see her waving paddie
As I hurry, hurry homeward
In the twilight joyfully.
Then when I have snatched a kiss
That sweet kindergarten miss
Cries: 'Now, daddy, come and see it,
Come and see what I have made!
Here's a picture frame for you,
Made of paper, white and blue!'
And I look upon her labors
Half exulting, half afraid.

Oh, you kindergarten miss,
You have made far more than this,
You have made my heart beat faster
Than it ever beat before;
As your little work you 're showing,
You have set my eyes to glowing,
And my tears will start up flowing
In another minute more.
Though this picture frame of blue
Doesn't now mean much to you,
Little kindergarten lassie,
It's a treasure rare to me!
And those fingers that have made it,
On my heart have also laid it,
And your face is in the center
For the god of love to see.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Kindly Neighbor

I have a kindly neighbor, one who stands
Beside my gate and chats with me awhile,
Gives me the glory of his radiant smile
And comes at times to help with willing hands.
No station high or rank this man commands,
He, too, must trudge, as I, the long day's mile;
And yet, devoid of pomp or gaudy style,
He has a worth exceeding stocks or lands.
To him I go when sorrow's at my door,
On him I lean when burdens come my way,
Together oft we talk our trials o'er
And there is warmth in each good-night we say.
A kindly neighbor! Wars and strife shall end
When man has made the man next door his friend.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Lamb Skin

It is not ornamental, the cost is not great,
There are other things far more useful, yet truly I state,
Though of all my possessions, there's none can compare,
With that white leather apron, which all Masons wear.

As a young lad I wondered just what it all meant,
When Dad hustled around, and so much time was spent
On shaving and dressing and looking just right,
Until Mother would say: 'It's the Masons tonight.'

And some winter nights she said: 'What makes you go,
Way up there tonight thru the sleet and the snow?
You see the same things every month of the year.'
Then Dad would reply: 'Yes, I know it, my dear.'

'Forty years I have seen the same things, it is true.
And though they are old, they always seem new,
For the hands that I clasp, and the friends that I greet,
Seem a little bit closer each time that we meet.'

Years later I stood at that very same door,
With good men and true who had entered before,
I knelt at the altar, and there I was taught
That virtue and honor can never be bought.

That the spotless white lambskin all Masons revere,
If worthily worn grows more precious each year,
That service to others brings blessings untold,
That man may be poor tho surrounded by gold.

I learned that true brotherhood flourishes there,
That enmities fade 'neath the compass and square,
That wealth and position are all thrust aside,
As there on the level men meet and abide.

So, honor the lambskin, may it always remain
Forever unblemished, and free from all stain,
And when we are called to the Great Father's love,
May we all take our place in that Lodge up above.

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Edgar Albert Guest

The Lanes Of Apple Bloom

DOWN the lanes of apple bloom, we are treading once again,
Down the pathways rosy red trip the women-folk and men.
Love and laughter lead us on, light of heart as children gay,
June is smiling on us now, bidding us to romp and play.

Sun-kissed now are maiden's curls, bare of head the children run,
Love and laughter call us home when the long day's
toil is done; All our cares are borne away on the breezes, perfume
sweet, Down the lanes of apple bloom now we dance with flying feet.

Through the open door once more comes the pleasant breath of June,
Through the open windows now lullabies that mothers croon,
Caught upon the evening breeze, reach the toilers homeward bound;
Love and laughter rule the world, happiness once more is found.

Down the lanes of apple bloom gray-tressed age goes walking now
Minding less the weight of years or the wrinkles in its brow.
'Tis the evening hour of life, gloriously calm and sweet
June is dwelling in the heart! June is guiding weary feet.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Lanes Of Boyhood

DOWN the lanes of boyhood, let me go once more,
Let me tread the paths of youth that I have trod before;
Let me wander once again where the skies are bright,
Freckled face and tanned of leg, roadways of delight,
Picking checkerberries as I laze along the way,
Hunting for the robin's nest — dozing in the hay.

Down the lanes of boyhood, there are joys untold,
Hidden caves of precious things, stores of yellow gold;
Friends that only boyhood knows, birds and trees and flowers,
Nodding to the youngsters 'Howdy do' in morning hours;
Skies that bend above them in the gentlest sort of way,
Fleecy clouds that seem to stop and watch them at their play.

Down the lanes of boyhood, hear their laughter ring!
See the tousled army marching straightway to a spring;
Flat upon the ground they fall, just to get a drink,
Here's a thirst emporium where glasses never clink,
No glittering place of red and gold the passer-by to snare,
Yet, rich with Nature's coloring, a thousand times more fair.

Down the lanes of boyhood, where innocence abounds,
A medley gay of colors, a revelry of sounds;
Where hearts are never broken and wrong is never known,
Where sorrow never enters and no one weeps alone.
And yet we never can return when once we've journeyed on,
Old age is ever wishing for the joys forever gone.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Lay For The Troubled Golfer

His eye was wild and his face was taut with anger and hate and rage,
And the things he muttered were much too strong for the ink of the printed page.

I found him there when the dusk came down, in his golf clothes still was he,

And his clubs were strewn around his feet as he told his grief to me:
'I'd an easy five for a seventy-nine — in sight of the golden goal —
An easy five and I took an eight — an eight on the eighteenth hole!

'I've dreamed my dreams of the `seventy men,' and I've worked year after year,

I have vowed I would stand with the chosen few ere the end of my golf career;

I've cherished the thought of a seventy score, and the days have come and gone
And I've never been close to the golden goal my heart was set upon.

But today I stood on the eighteenth tee and counted that score of mine,
And my pulses raced with the thrill of joy — I'd a five for seventy-nine!

'I can kick the ball from the eighteenth tee and get this hole in five,
But I took the wood and I tried to cross that ditch with a mighty drive —'
Let us end the quotes, it is best for all to imagine his language rich,
But he topped that ball, as we often do, and the pill stopped in the ditch.
His third was short and his fourth was bad and his fifth was off the line,
And he took an eight on the eighteenth hole with a five for a seventy-nine.

I gathered his clubs and I took his arm and alone in the locker room
I left him sitting upon the bench, a picture of grief and gloom;
And the last man came and took his shower and hurried upon his way,
But still he sat with his head bowed down like one with a mind astray,
And he counted his score card o'er and o'er and muttered this doleful whine:
'I took an eight on the eighteenth hole, with a five for a seventy-nine!'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Lilacs

I ALWAYS think of mother, when
The lilac tree's in bloom,
It seems her soul comes back again
Upon its sweet perfume.
And every opal spire that sways
Out in the summer sun
Brings back the good old golden days
Before her work was done.

'T was there her smile seemed sweetest, and
'T was there her eyes were brightest,
'T was there that gentlest was her hand,
And there her heart was lightest.
And now when blooms the lilac tree
I feel that she is near me,
Come back again the flowers to see,
To comfort and to cheer me.

All mothers love a lilac tree,
And that is why I love it;
The blossoms know, it seems to me,
That angels bend above it.
And when the blooms return again
My skies become the clearest,
Because I seem to feel just then
That mother, dear, is nearest.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Limit

I CAN stand for the man with the cute little bow
On the back of his green colored hat,
For there are a lot of good fellows I know
Who somehow have fallen for that.
The fedora of plush is a lid I don't like,
It's a fad that will never be missed,
But somehow I've always an itching to strike
The man with the watch on his wrist.

I've grown peevish at times at the ladylike man
Who says 'Mercy me!' and 'O, dear!'
And the chap in the ball room who uses a fan
Is the chap I could swat on the ear.
The swell with a cane in the crotch of his arm
Isn't human, I often insist,
But some day somebody is going to harm
The man with the watch on his wrist.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Limitations Of Greatness

NO MAN really knows enough
To be hateful to his brother,
None is rich enough to cuff
And be cruel to another;
None so clever that he can
Justly wrong his fellow man.

No one is so strong that he
Has the right to curb the weak,
None so great that properly
He can trample down the meek;
There is nothing in success
That excuses selfishness.

Climb unto the topmost bights,
Win yourself an honored name,
But respect another's rights,
Raise the weak and help the lame;
Strength of muscle or of mind
Gives no right to be unkind.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Little Army

Little women, little men,
Childhood never comes again.
Live it gaily while you may;
Give your baby souls to play;
March to sound of stick and pan,
In your paper hats, and tramp
just as bravely as you can
To your pleasant little camp.
Wooden sword and wooden gun
Make a battle splendid fun.
Fine the victories you win
Dimpled cheek and dimpled chin.
Little women, little men,
Hearts are light when years are ten;
Eyes are bright and cheeks are red
When life's cares lie all ahead.
Drums make merry music when
They are leading children out;
Trumpet calls are cheerful then,
Glorious is the battle shout.
Little soldiers, single file,
Uniformed in grin and smile,
Conquer every foe they meet
Up and down the gentle street.
Little women, little men,
Would that youth could come again!
Would that I might fall in line
As a little boy of nine,
But with broomstick for a gun,
And with paper hat that I
Bravely wore back there for fun,
Never more may I defy
Foes that deep in ambush kneel—
Now my warfare's grim and real.
I that once was brave and bold,
Now am battered, bruised and old.
Little women, little men,
Planning to attack my den,
Little do you know the joy

That you give a worn-out boy
As he hears your gentle feet
Pitter-patting in the hall;
Gladly does he wait to meet
Conquest by a troop so small.
Dimpled cheek and dimpled chin,
You have but to smile to win.
Come and take him where he stays
Dreaming of his by-gone days.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Little Chap

DO you know why men dig ditches
And why others till the soil?
Do you know why men seek riches,
And each morn go out to toil?
It's because at home there's waiting
Till the busy day is through
Some such sunny, captivating
Little fellow just like you.

Do you know why one seeks money
And another tries for fame?
It's to pay for bread and honey
For the tot that bears his name.
Back of everything men tackle,
Back of everything men do
You will find the merry cackle
Of a little chap like you.

Men have, smiling, gone to battle,
Men have mastered all their fears
Just because their baby's prattle
Still was ringing in their ears.
And when all the fates were smiting
They kept on with purpose true,
Undiscouraged. They were fighting
For a little chap like you.

So that's why I care for money,
Why I work the long day through;
It's to pay for bread and honey
For a little chap like you.
Back of each goal I'm pursuing,
Back of everything I do,
Is the gurgling and the gooing
Of a little chap like you.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Little Church

The little church of Long Ago, where as a boy I sat
With mother in the family pew and fumbled with my hat—
How I would like to see it now the way I saw it then,
The straight-backed pews, the pulpit high, the women and the men
Dressed stiffly. in their Sunday clothes and solemnly devout,
Who closed their eyes when prayers were said and never looked about—
That little church of Long Ago, it wasn't grand to see,
But even as a little boy it meant a lot to me.
The choir loft where father sang comes back to me again;
I hear his tenor voice once more the way I heard it when
The deacons used to pass the plate, and once again I see
The people fumbling for their coins, as glad as they could be
To drop their quarters on the plate, and I'm a boy once more
With my two pennies in my fist that mother gave before
We left the house, and once again I'm reaching out to try
To drop them on the plate before the deacon passes by.
It seems to me I'm sitting in that high-backed pew, the while
The minister is preaching in that good old-fashioned style;
And though I couldn't understand it all somehow I know
The Bible was the text book in that church of Long Ago;
He didn't preach on politics, but used the word of God,
And even now I seem to see the people gravely nod,
As though agreeing thoroughly with all he had to say,
And then I see them thanking him before they go away.
The little church of Long Ago was not a structure huge,
It had no hired singers or no other subterfuge
To get the people to attend, 'twas just a simple place
Where every Sunday we were told about God's saving grace;
No men of wealth were gathered there to help it with a gift;
The only worldly thing it had—a mortgage hard to lift.
And somehow, dreaming here to-day, I wish that I could know
The joy of once more sitting in that church of Long Ago.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Little Country Bus

There's no lock upon your door,
And the polish that you wore
In the years ago when you were bright and new
Now has lost its splendid shine,
And your driver's bending spine
Shows that he's been getting old along with you.
You are slipping fast, I see;
So indeed, old bus, is he;
But you rattle and you bang along the street,
And I wonder as you go
What of joy or what of woe
You'll discover when the limited you meet.

Who is coming home once more
To his father's welcome door?
Is it failure or success that he will bring?
Is a daughter slipping back
From the city's cruel track
For the lullaby that mother used to sing?
Is she happy? Is she sad?
For I know, old bus, you've had
Both your passengers a thousand times or more;
And old driver, you can't hide
Just how many times you've sighed
As you've opened or have shut that shaky door.

You have seen them go away,
Full of strength and hope and gay,
You have seen them start as children fine — and then —
When the limited you've met,
Both your kindly eyes were wet
As you saw them back as women and as men.
You have read the tale of life,
Read the heartache and the strife,
Read the sorrows that we'd better not discuss,
Read the joy of splendid things
And the pain that failure brings,
As you've carried all that's human in your bus.

So I wonder as you go
What you'll find of joy or woe
When the limited pulls in on time today;
What of conquest or defeat
Will it be your lot to meet
And to welcome in your gentle, kindly way.
Both your shaky bus and you
With life's toil are nearly through,
Soon your soul upon a journey far will roam;
And I like to think you'll ask
God to let it be your task
To welcome all the children coming home.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Little Home

The little house is not too small
To shelter friends who come to call.
Though low the roof and small its space
It holds the Lord's abounding grace,
And every simple room may be
Endowed with happy memory.

The little house, severly plain,
A wealth of beauty may contain.
Within it those who dwell may find
High faith which makes for peace of mind,
And that sweet understanding which
Can make the poorest cottage rich.

The little house can hold all things
From which the soul's contentment springs.
'Tis not too small for love to grow,
For all the joys that mortals know,
For mirth and song and that delight
Which make the humblest dwelling bright.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Little Hurts

Every night she runs to me
With a bandaged arm or a bandaged knee,
A stone-bruised heel or a swollen brow,
And in sorrowful tones she tells me how
She fell and 'hurted herse'f to-day'
While she was having the 'bestest play.'

And I take her up in my arms and kiss
The new little wounds and whisper this:
'Oh, you must be careful, my little one,
You mustn't get hurt while your daddy's gone,
For every cut with its ache and smart
Leaves another bruise on your daddy's heart.'

Every night I must stoop to see
The fresh little cuts on her arm or knee;
The little hurts that have marred her play,
And brought the tears on a happy day;
For the path of childhood is oft beset
With care and trouble and things that fret.

Oh, little girl, when you older grow,
Far greater hurts than these you'll know;
Greater bruises will bring your tears,
Around the bend of the lane of years,
But come to your daddy with them at night
And he'll do his best to make all things right.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Little Old Man

The little old man with the curve in his back
And the eyes that are dim and the skin that is slack,
So slack that it wrinkles and rolls on his cheeks,
With a thin little voice that goes 'crack!' when he speaks,
Never goes to the store but that right at his feet
Are all of the youngsters who live on the street.

And the little old man in the suit that was black,
And once might have perfectly fitted his back,
Has a boy's chubby fist in his own wrinkled hand,
And together they trudge off to Light-Hearted Land;
Some splendid excursions he gives every day
To the boys and the girls in his funny old way.

The little old man is as queer as can be;
He'd spend all his time with a child on his knee;
And the stories he tells I could never repeat,
But they're always of good boys and little girls sweet;
And the children come home at the end of the day
To tell what the little old man had to say.

Once the little old man didn't trudge to the store,
And the tap of his cane wasn't heard any more;
The children looked eagerly for him each day
And wondered why he didn't come out to play
Till some of them saw Doctor Brown ring his bell,
And they wept when they heard that he might not get well.

But after awhile he got out with his cane,
And called all the children around him again;
And I think as I see him go trudging along
In the center, once more, of his light-hearted throng,
That earth has no glory that's greater than this:
The little old man whom the children would miss.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Little Old-Fashioned Church

THE little old-fashioned church, with the pews that were straight-backed and plain,
Where the sunbeams to worship came in through the windows that bore not a stain,
And the choir was composed of the good folks who toiled week-days in meadow and lane;

The little old-fashioned church that stood on the brow of the hill,
With its plain, wooden cross on the peak, an emblem of love and good will,
Of the Christ who has died for us all — in fancy I gaze at it still.

I wish I could go there again and list to the preacher who told
Of the wonderful joys that await us when God calls us into His fold,
Who pictured a Heaven unto us as a city with pavements of gold.

The little old-fashioned church with never a towering spire,
With never a sign of great wealth, and the people who sang in the choir
Giving their music for love of the cause and not for the sake of their hire.

Perhaps I am wrong or old-fashioned or queer, but the little, gray church on the hill,
Where only God's mercy and love were e'er preached, the want in my life
seemed to fill,
And I don't get the comfort I seek from the church of today with its frill.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Little Orphan

The crowded street his playground is, a patch of blue his sky;
A puddle in a vacant lot his sea where ships pass by:
Poor little orphan boy of five, the city smoke and grime
Taint every cooling breeze he gets throughout the summer time;
And he is just as your boy is, a child who loves to play,
Except that he is drawn and white and cannot get away.
And he would like the open fields, for often in his dreams
The angels kind bear him off to where are pleasant streams,
Where he may sail a splendid boat, sometimes he flies a kite,
Or romps beside a shepherd dog and shouts with all his might;
But when the dawn of morning comes he wakes to find once more
That what he thought were sun-kissed hills are rags upon the floor.

Then through the hot and sultry day he plays at 'make-pretend,'
The alley is a sandy beach where all the rich folks send
Their little boys and girls to play, a barrel is his boat,
But, oh, the air is stifling and the dust fills up his throat;
And though he tries so very hard to play, somehow it seems
He never gets such wondrous joys as angels bring in dreams.

Poor little orphan boy of five, except that he is pale,
With sunken cheeks and hollow eyes and very wan and frail,
Just like that little boy of yours, with same desire to play,
Fond of the open fields and skies, he's built the self-same way;
But kept by fate and circumstance away from shady streams,
His only joy comes when he sleeps and angels bring him dreams.

Edgar Albert Guest

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Edgar Albert Guest

The Little Velvet Suit

Last night I got to thinkin' of the pleasant long ago,
When I still had on knee breeches, an' I wore a flowing bow,
An' my Sunday suit was velvet. Ma an' Pa thought it was fine,
But I know I didn't like it—either velvet or design;
It was far too girlish for me, for I wanted something rough
Like what other boys were wearing, but Ma wouldn't buy such stuff.

Ma answered all my protests in her sweet an kindly way;
She said it didn't matter what I wore to run an' play,
But on Sundays when all people went to church an wore their best,
Her boy must look as stylish an' as well kept as the rest.
So she dressed me up in velvet, an' she tied the flowing bow,
An' she straightened out my stockings, so that not a crease would show.

An' then I chuckled softly to myself while dreaming there
An' I saw her standing o'er me combing out my tangled hair.
I could feel again the tugging, an' I heard the yell I gave
When she struck a snarl, an' softly I could hear her say: 'Be brave.
'Twill be over in a minute, and a little man like you
Shouldn't whimper at a little bit of pain the way you do.'

Oh, I wouldn't mind the tugging at my scalp lock, and I know
That I'd gladly wear to please her that old flowing girlish bow;
And I think I'd even try to don once more that velvet suit,
And blush the same old blushes, as the women called me cute,
Could the dear old mother only take me by the hand again,
And be as proud of me right now as she was always then.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Little Woman

The little woman, to her I bow
And doff my hat as I pass her by;
I reverence the furrows that mark her brow,
And the sparkling love light in her eye.
The little woman who stays at home,
And makes no bid for the world's applause;
Who never sighs for a chance to roam,
But toils all day in a grander cause.

The little woman, who seems so weak,
Yet bears her burdens day by day;
And no one has ever heard her speak
In a bitter or loud complaining way.
She sings a snatch of a merry song,
As she toils in her home from morn to night.
Her work is hard and the hours are long
But the little woman's heart is light.

A slave to love is that woman small,
And yearly her burdens heavier grow,
But somehow she seems to bear them all,
As the deep'ning lines in her white cheeks show.
Her children all have a mother's care,
Her home the touch of a good wife knows;
No burden's too heavy for her to bear,
But, patiently doing her best, she goes.

The little woman, may God be kind
To her wherever she dwells to-day;
The little woman who seems to find
Her joy in toiling along life's way.
May God bring peace to her work-worn breast
And joy to her mother-heart at last;
May love be hers when it's time to rest,
And the roughest part of the road is passed.

The little woman- how oft it seems
God chooses her for the mother's part;
And many a grown-up sits and dreams

To-day of her with an aching heart.
For he knows well how she toiled for him
And he sees it now that it is too late;
And often his eyes with tears grow dim
For the little woman whose strength was great.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Living Beauties

I never knew, until they went,
How much their laughter really meant
I never knew how much the place
Depended on each little face;
How barren home could be and drear
Without its living beauties here.

I never knew that chairs and books
Could wear such sad and solemn looks!
That rooms and halls could be at night
So still and drained of all delight.
This home is now but brick and board
Where bits of furniture are stored.

I used to think I loved each shelf
And room for what it was itself.
And once I thought each picture fine
Because I proudly called it mine.
But now I know they mean no more
Than art works hanging in a store.

Until they went away to roam
I never knew what made it home.
But I have learned that all is base,
However wonderful the place
And decked with costly treasures, rare,
Unless the living joys are there.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Lonely Fight

IT'S easy to be right when the multitude is cheering,
It is easy to have courage when you're fighting with the throng;
But it's altogether different when the multitude is sneering
To fight for what you know is right with no one else along.

It's easy to be honest when the multitude is gazing,
It is easy to be truthful when the crowds are standing by;
But it's altogether different when there is no spotlight blazing
To stand alone for what is right and never cheat or lie.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Lonely Garden

I WONDER what the trees will say,
The trees that used to share his play,
An' knew him as the little lad
Who used to wander with his dad.
They've watched him grow from year to year
Since first the good Lord sent him here;
This shag-bark hick'ry, many a time,
The little fellow tried t' climb;
An' never a spring has come but lie
Has called upon his favorite tree.
I wonder what they all will say
When they are told he's marched away.

I wonder what the birds will say,
I'llie swallow an' the chatterin' jay,
The robin an' the kildeer, too.
For every one o' them he knew,
An' every one o' them knew him,
Waited each spring t' tell him all
They'd done and seen since 'way last fall.
He was the first to greet 'em here
An' hoppin' there from limb t' limb,
As they returned from year t' year;
An' now I wonder what they'll say
When they are told he's marched away.

I wonder how the roses there
Will get along without his care,
An' how the one o' them will face
The loneliness about th' place,
For ev'ry spring an' summer he
Has been the chum o' plant an' tree,
An' every livin' thing has known
A comradeship that's finer grown
By havin' him from year t' year.
Now very soon they'll all be here,
An' I'm wonderin' what they'll say
When they find out he's marched away.

The Lonely Old Fellow

The roses are bedded for winter, the tulips are planted for spring;
The robins and martins have left us; there are only the sparrows to sing.
The garden seems solemnly silent, awaiting its blankets of snow,
And I feel like a lonely old fellow with nowhere to turn or to go.
All summer I've hovered about them, all summer they've nodded at me;
I've wandered and waited among them the first pink of blossom to see;
I've known them and loved and caressed them, and now all their splendor has
fled,
And the harsh winds of winter all tell me the friends of my garden are dead.
I'm a lonely old fellow, that's certain. All winter with nothing to do
But sit by the window recalling the days when my skies were all blue;
But my heart is not given to sorrow and never my lips shall complain,
For winter shall pass and the sunshine shall give me my roses again.
And so for the friends that have vanished, the friends that they tell me are dead,
Who have traveled the road to God's Acres and sleep where the willows are
spread;
They have left me a lonely old fellow to sit here and dream by the pane,
But I know, like the friends of my garden, we shall all meet together again.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Loss Is Not So Great

It is better as it is: I have failed but I can sleep;
Though the pit I now am in is very dark and deep
I can walk to-morrow's streets and can meet to-morrow's men
Unashamed to face their gaze as I go to work again.

I have lost the hope I had; in the dust are all my dreams,
But my loss is not so great or so dreadful as it seems;
I made my fight and though I failed I need not slink away
For I do not have to fear what another man may say.

They may call me over-bold, they may say that I was frail;
They may tell I dared too much and was doomed at last to fail;
They may talk my battle o'er and discuss it as they choose,
But I did no brother wrong- I'm the only one to lose.

It is better as it is: I have kept my self-respect.
I can walk to-morrow's streets meeting all men head erect.
No man can charge his loss to a pledge I did not keep;
I have no shame to regret: I have failed, but I can sleep.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Lost Purse

I remember the excitement and the terrible alarm
That worried everybody when William broke his arm;
An' how frantic Pa and Ma got only jes' the other day
When they couldn't find the baby coz he'd up an' walked away;
But I'm sure there's no excitement that our house has ever shook
Like the times Ma can't remember where she's put her pocketbook.

When the laundry man is standin' at the door an' wants his pay
Ma hurries in to get it, an' the fun starts right away.
She hustles to the sideboard, coz she knows exactly where
She can put her hand right on it, but alas! it isn't there.
She tries the parlor table an' she goes upstairs to look,
An' once more she can't remember where she put her pocketbook.

She tells us that she had it just a half an hour ago,
An' now she cannot find it though she's hunted high and low;
She's searched the kitchen cupboard an' the bureau drawers upstairs,
An' it's not behind the sofa nor beneath the parlor chairs.
She makes us kids get busy searching every little nook,
An' this time says she's certain that she's lost her pocketbook.

She calls Pa at the office an' he laughs I guess, for then
She always mumbles something 'bout the heartlessness of men.
She calls to mind a peddler who came to the kitchen door,
An' she's certain from his whiskers an' the shabby clothes he wore
An' his dirty shirt an' collar that he must have been a crook,
An' she's positive that feller came and got her pocketbook.

But at last she allus finds it in some queer an' funny spot,
Where she'd put it in a hurry, an' had somehow clean forgot;
An' she heaves a sigh of gladness, an' she says, 'Well, I declare,
I would take an oath this minute that I never put it there.'
An' we're peaceable an' quiet till next time Ma goes to look
An' finds she can't remember where she put her pocketbook.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Love Of The Game

There is too much of sighing, and weaving
Of pitiful tales of despair.
There is too much of wailing and grieving,
And too much of railing at care.
There is far too much glorification
Of money and pleasure and fame;
But I sing the joy of my station,
And I sing the love of my game.

There is too much of tremble-lip telling
Of hurts that have come with the fight.
There is too much of pitiful dwelling
On plans that have failed to go right.
There is too much of envious pining
For luxuries others may claim.
Too much thought of wining and dining,
But I sing the love of my game.

There is too much of grim magnifying
The troubles that come with the day,
There is too much indifferent trying
To travel a care-beset way.
Too much do men think of gold-getting,
Too much have they underwrit shame,
Which accounts for the frowning and fretting,
But I sing the joy of my game.

Let's get back to the work we are doing;
Let us reckon its joys and its pain;
Let us pause while our tasks we're reviewing,
To sum up the cost of each gain.
Let us give up our whining and wailing
Because of the bruises that maim,
And battle the chances of failing
As being a part of the game.

Let us care more for serving than winning,
Let us look at our woes as they are;
It is time now that we were beginning

To be less afraid of a scar.
Let us cease in our glorification
Of money and pleasure and fame,
And find, whatsoe'er be our station,
Our joy in the love of the game.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Lucky Man

Luck had a favor to bestow
And wondered where to let it go.

'No lazy man on earth,' said she,
'Shall get this happy gift from me.

'I will not pass it to the man
Who will not do the best he can.

'I will not make this splendid gift
To one who has not practiced thrift.

'It shall not benefit deceit,
Nor help the man who's played the cheat.

'He that has failed to fight with pluck
Shall never know the Goddess Luck.

'I'll look around a bit to see
What man has earned some help from me.'

She found a man whose hands were soiled
Because from day to day he'd toiled.

He'd dreamed by night and worked by day
To make life's contest go his way.

He'd kept his post and daily slaved,
And something of his wage he'd saved.

He'd clutched at every circumstance
Which might have been his golden chance.

The goddess smiled and then, kerslap!
She dropped her favor in his lap.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Lure That Failed

I know a wonderful land, I said,
Where the skies are always blue,
Where on chocolate drops are the children fed,
And coconut cookies, too;
Where puppy dogs romp at the children's feet,
And the liveliest kittens play,
And little tin soldiers guard the street
To frighten the bears away.
This land is reached by a wonderful ship
That sails on a golden tide;
But never a grown-up makes the trip—
It is only a children's ride.
And never a cross-patch journeys there,
And never a pouting face,
For it is the Land of Smiling, where
A frown is a big disgrace.
Oh, you board the ship when the sun goes down,
And over a gentle sea
You slip away from the noisy town
To the land of the chocolate tree.
And there, till the sun comes over the hill,
You frolic and romp and play,
And of candy and cake you eat your fill,
With no one to tell you 'Nay!'
So come! It is time for the ship to go
To this wonderful land so fair,
And gently the summer breezes blow
To carry you safely there.
So come! Set sail on this golden sea,
To the land that is free from dread!
'I know what you mean,' she said to me,
'An' I don't wanna go to bed.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Making Of Friends

If nobody smiled and nobody cheered and nobody helped us along,
If each every minute looked after himself and good things all went to the
strong,
If nobody cared just a little for you, and nobody thought about me,
And we stood all alone to the battle of life, what a dreary old world it
would be!

If there were no such a thing as a flag in the sky as a symbol of
comradeship here,
If we lived as the animals live in the woods, with nothing held sacred or
dear,
And selfishness ruled us from birth to the end, and never a neighbor had
we,
And never we gave to another in need, what a dreary old world it would be!

Oh, if we were rich as the richest on earth and strong as the strongest
that lives,
Yet never we knew the delight and the charm of the smile which the other
man gives,
If kindness were never a part of ourselves, though we owned all the land we
could see,
And friendship meant nothing at all to us here, what a dreary old world it
would be!

Life is sweet just because of the friends we have made and the things which
in common we share;
We want to live on not because of ourselves, but because of the people who
care;
It's giving and doing for somebody else- on that all life's splendor
depends,
And the joy of this world, when you've summed it all up, is found in the
making of friends.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Man I Like

I like the man who stands right up
And takes his share of praise or blame,
And then, unchanged by loss or gain,
Treats all his neighbors just the same!

The man, who, if he liked you once,
Still likes you, though he's gained success;
Who plays a man's part all the time,
And blames no friend for his distress.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Man I'M For

I'M for the happy man every time,
The man who smiles as he goes his way,
Whether he's up or whether he's down,
I 'm for the man with a grin, I say.
I 'm for the man who can bear his woes
With never a grumbling word or frown,
Who, smiling, gathers the rue or rose —
There is the man that you can't keep down.

I 'm for the cheerful man, heart and soul!
His is the hand that I like to grasp;
Who tunes his voice in a merry key,
Not files it down to a bitter rasp.
I 'm for the man who can take the cards
Just as they 're dealt by the hand of fate,
And, good or bad, play an honest game
With a lifted chin and a smile that's great.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Man Of His Word

THE man of his word met a maid on the beach,
I The fine art of swimming he offered to teach
If she 'd go with him in the water so blue.
She sighed and said: ' Mister, if I go with you,
You must promise me faithfully here on the sands
That you won't splash the water at me with your hands;
You must honestly, solemnly vow and declare
That whatever you do you will not wet my hair.'

So the man of his word, who had offered to teach
The gay little, sweet little maid on the beach,
Took an oath that he wouldn't splash water on her,
Or let any total immersion occur.
And the sweet little maid started gayly with him
To be taught how to float and be taught how to swim;
And the man of his word kept the vows that he swore,
He never once dampened the hair that she wore.

Alas, and alack! for the man of his word,
Next day came another who vowed and averred
That he wouldn't splash her or douse her, not he,
If she 'd only venture with him in the sea,
Which she did; but out there he forgot every oath,
For he doused her and splashed her, yes sir, he did both.
But did she rare up in her anger? Not she —
Every morning you'll find her with him in the sea,
While the man of his word sits alone on the beach,
And the bold, faithless wretch soon will marry the peach.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Man To Be

Some day the world will need a man of courage in a time of doubt,
And somewhere, as a little boy, that future hero plays about.
Within some humble home, no doubt, that instrument of greater things
Now climbs upon his father's knee or to his mother's garments clings.
And when shall come that call for him to render service that is fine,
He that shall do God's mission here may be your little boy or mine.
Long years of preparation mark the pathway for the splendid souls,
And generations live and die and seem no nearer to their goals,
And yet the purpose of it all, the fleeting pleasure and the woe,
The laughter and the grief of life that all who come to earth must know
May be to pave the way for one—one man to serve the Will Divine
And it is possible that he may be your little boy or mine.
Some day the world will need a man! I stand beside his cot at night
And wonder if I'm teaching him, as best I can, to know the right.
I am the father of a boy—his life is mine to make or mar—
And he no better can become than what my daily teachings are;
There will be need for someone great—I dare not falter from the line—
The man that is to serve the world may be that little boy of mine.
Perhaps your boy and mine may not ascend the lofty heights of fame;
The orders for their births are hid. We know not why to earth they came.
Yet in some little bed to-night the great man of to-morrow sleeps
And only He who sent him here, the secret of his purpose keeps.
As fathers then our care is this—to keep in mind the Great Design.
The man the world shall need some day may be your little boy or mine.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Man Who Couldn'T Save

He spent what he made, or he gave it away,
Tried to save money, and would for a day,
Started a bank-account time an' again,
Got a hundred or so for a nest egg, an' then
Some fellow that needed it more than he did,
Who was down on his luck, with a sick wife or kid,
Came along an' he wasted no time till he went
An' drew out the coin that for saving was meant.

They say he died poor, and I guess that is so:
To pile up a fortune he hadn't a show;
He worked all the time and good money he made,
Was known as an excellent man at his trade.
But he saw too much, heard too much, felt too much here
To save anything by the end of the year,
An' the shabbiest wreck the Lord ever let live
Could get money from him if he had it to give.

I've seen him slip dimes to the bums on the street
Who told him they hungered for something to eat,
An' though I remarked they were going for drink
He'd say: 'Mebbe so. But I'd just hate to think
That fellow was hungry an' I'd passed him by;
I'd rather be fooled twenty times by a lie
Than wonder if one of 'em I wouldn't feed
Had told me the truth an' was really in need.'

Never stinted his family out of a thing:
They had everything that his money could bring;
Said he'd rather be broke and just know they were glad,
Than rich, with them pining an' wishing they had
Some of the pleasures his money would buy;
Said he never could look a bank book in the eye
If he knew it had grown on the pleasures and joys
That he'd robbed from his wife and his girls and his boys.

Queer sort of notion he had, I confess,
Yet many a rich man on earth is mourned less.
All who had known him came back to his side

To honor his name on the day that he died.
Didn't leave much in the bank, it is true,
But did leave a fortune in people who knew
The big heart of him, an' I'm willing to swear
That to-day he is one of the richest up there.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Man Who's Down

IT is well enough to cheer for the brother who is up,
It is fine to praise the brother who has captured victory's cup;
But don't keep your kind words always for the man who's won renown,
For the boy who really needs them is the fellow who is down.

Give a cheer when men deserve it, shout your praise for them to hear,
Don't reserve your admiration till a man is on his bier,
But remember as you wander every day about the town
That a kind word will work wonders for the brother who is down.

For the man on top is happy, and he has a thousand friends,
He can always get a kind word, no matter where he wends,
But the brother who is striving to attain a laurel crown
Often needs a friend to help him. Don't neglect the brother down.

Edgar Albert Guest

The March O' Man

Down to work o' mornings, an' back to home at nights,
Down to hours o' labor, an' home to sweet delights;
Down to care an' trouble, an' home to love an' rest,
With every day a good one, an' every evening blest.

Down to dreary dollars, an' back to home to play,
From love to work an' back to love, so slips the day away.
From babies back to business an' back to babes again,
From parting kiss to welcome kiss, this marks the march o' men.

Some care between our laughter, a few hours filled with strife,
A time to stand on duty, then home to babes and wife;
The bugle sounds o' mornings to call us to the fray,
But sweet an' low 'tis love that calls us home at close o' day.

Edgar Albert Guest

The March Of Mortality

Over the hills of time to the valley of endless years;
Over the roads of woe to the land that is free from tears
Up from the haunts of men to the place where the angels are,
This is the march of mortality to a wonderful goal afar.

Troopers we are in life, warring at times with wrong,
But promised ever unbroken rest at last in a land of song;
And whether we serve or rule, and whether we fall or rise,
We shall come, in time, to that golden vale where never the spirit dies.

Back of the strife for gain, and under the toil for fame,
The dreams of men in this mortal march have ever remained the same.
They have lived through their days and years for the great rewards to be,
When earth's dusty garb shall be laid aside for the robes of eternity.

This is the march of mortality, whatever man's race or creed,
And whether he's one of the savage tribe or one of a higher breed,
He is conscious dimly of better things that were promised him long ago,
And he keeps his place in the line with men for
 the joys that his soul shall know.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Monument Of Kindness

We do not build our monuments in stone,
The records of our life aren't cast in steel;
We are forgot, if when the spirit's flown
No human hearts our finger prints reveal.

If we have lived and died and left behind
No more than gold and lands that once were ours,
No trace of having served our fellow kind
Then wasted were our talents and our powers.

But if when we have gone our impress stays
On human hearts, whate'er has been our lot,
We need no marble shafts to mark our ways,
We shall live on, nor ever be forgot.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Mother Faith

Little mother, life's adventure calls your boy away,
Yet he will return to you on some brighter day;
Dry your tears and cease to sigh, keep your mother smile,
Brave and strong he will come back in a little while.

Little mother, heed them not—they who preach despair—
You shall have your boy again, brave and oh, so fair!
Life has need of him to-day, but with victory won,
Safely life shall bring to you once again your son.

Little mother, keep the faith: not to death he goes;
Share with him the joy of worth that your soldier knows.
He is giving to the Flag all that man can give,
And if you believe he will, surely he will live.

Little mother, through the night of his absence long,
Never cease to think of him—brave and well and strong;
You shall know his kiss again, you shall see his smile,
For your boy shall come to you in a little while.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Mother On The Sidewalk

The mother on the sidewalk as the troops are marching by
Is the mother of Old Glory that is waving in the sky.
Men have fought to keep it splendid, men have died to keep it bright,
But that flag was born of woman and her sufferings day and night;
'Tis her sacrifice has made it, and once more we ought to pray
For the brave and loyal mother of the boy who goes away.

There are days of grief before her; there are hours that she will weep;
There are nights of anxious waiting when her fear will banish sleep;
She has heard her country calling and has risen to the test,
And has placed upon the altar of the nation's need, her best.
And no man shall ever suffer in the turmoil of the fray
The anguish of the mother of the boy who goes away.

You may boast men's deeds of glory, you may tell their courage great,
But to die is easier service than alone to sit and wait,
And I hail the little mother, with the tear-stained face and grave,
Who has given the flag a soldier—she's the bravest of the brave.
And that banner we are proud of, with its red and blue and white,
Is a lasting holy tribute to all mothers' love of right.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Mother Watch

She never closed her eyes in sleep till we were all in bed;
On party nights till we came home she often sat and read.
We little thought about it then, when we were young and gay,
How much the mother worried when we children were away.
We only knew she never slept when we were out at night,
And that she waited just to know that we'd come home all right.

Why, sometimes when we'd stayed away till one or two or three,
It seemed to us that mother heard the turning of the key;
For always when we stepped inside she'd call and we'd reply,
But we were all too young back then to understand just why.
Until the last one had returned she always kept a light,
For mother couldn't sleep until she'd kissed us all good night.

She had to know that we were safe before she went to rest;
She seemed to fear the world might harm the ones she loved the best.
And once she said: 'When you are grown to women and to men,
Perhaps I'll sleep the whole night through; I may be different then.'
And so it seemed that night and day we knew a mother's care-
That always when we got back home we'd find her waiting there.

Then came the night that we were called to gather round her bed:
'The children all are with you now,' the kindly doctor said.
And in her eyes there gleamed again the old-time tender light
That told she had been waiting just to know we were all right.
She smiled the old-familiar smile, and prayed to God to keep
Us safe from harm throughout the years, and then she went to sleep.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Mother's Question

When I was a boy, and it chanced to rain,
 Mother would always watch for me;
She used to stand by the window pane,
 Worried and troubled as she could be.
And this was the question I used to hear,
The very minute that I drew near;
The words she used, I can't forget:
'Tell me, my boy, if your feet are wet.'

Worried about me was mother dear,
 As healthy a lad as ever strolled
Over a turnpike, far or near,
 'Fraid to death that I'd take a cold.
Always stood by the window pane,
Watching for me in the pouring rain;
And her words in my ears are ringing yet:
'Tell me, my boy, if your feet are wet.'

Stockings warmed by the kitchen fire,
 And slippers ready for me to wear;
Seemed that mother would never tire,
 Giving her boy the best of care,
Thinking of him the long day through,
In the worried way that all mothers do;
Whenever it rained she'd start to fret,
Always fearing my feet were wet.

And now, whenever it rains, I see
 A vision of mother in days of yore,
Still waiting there to welcome me,
 As she used to do by the open door.
And always I think as I enter there
Of a mother's love and a mother's care;
Her words in my ears are ringing yet:
'Tell me, my boy, if your feet are wet.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Naughty Little Fellow

When a naughty little fellow stands ashamed in front of you
And his lips begin to quiver and he's ready to boo-hoo,
When his big round eyes are filling with the tears he cannot check,
And at last you find him sobbing with his arms around your neck,
Don't you get a tender feeling sort of stealing over you,
Till you feel like crying with him? — Well, you bet your life I do.

When a naughty little fellow, who's the counterpart of you,
Has been guilty of the very willful deeds you used to do,
And you've got him on the carpet, where you often used to stand,
And you quickly feel the pressure of a grimy little hand
That has stolen rather slyly into yours and thrilled you through,
Don't you overlook his conduct? — Well, you bet your life I do.

When a naughty little fellow that has disobeyed his Ma
Has at last been brought to judgment in the presence of his Pa,
Who has heard that dreadful story of that very dreadful day,
And you know that he is worried over what you'll do or say,
And against your cheek you notice there's a cheek that's damp and hot,
Are you stern enough to whip him? — Well, you bet your life I'm not.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Need

We were sittin' there,
and smokin' of our pipes, discussin' things
Like taxes, votes for wimmin,
an' the totterin' thrones of kings,
When he ups an' strokes his whiskers
with his hand an' says to me:
'Changin' laws an' legislatures ain't
as fur as I can see,
Goin' to make this world much better,
unless somehow we can
Find a way to make a better an' a finer sort o' man.

'The trouble ain't with statutes or with systems—
not at all;
It's with humans jus' like we air
an' their petty ways an' small.
We could stop our writin' law-books
an' our regulatin' rules
If a better sort of manhood
was the product of our schools.
For the things that we air needin'
isn't writing' from a pen
Or bigger guns to shoot with,
but a bigger type of men.

'I reckon all these problems
air jest ornery like the weeds,
They grow in soil that oughta nourish
only decent deeds,
An' they waste our time an' fret us when,
if we were thinkin' straight
An' livin' right,
they wouldn't be so terrible and great.
A good horse needs no snaffle
and a good man, I opine,
Doesn't need a law to check him
or to force him into line.

'If we ever start in teachin' to our children,

year by year,
How to live with one another,
there'll be less o' trouble here.
If we'd teach 'em how to neighbor
an' to walk in honor's ways,
We could settle every problem
which the mind o' man can raise.
What we're needin' isn't systems
or some regulatin' plan
But a bigger an' a finer an' a truer type o' man.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Neighborly Man

Some are eager to be famous, some are striving
to be great,
Some are toiling to be leaders of their nation
or their state,
And in every man's ambition, if we only understood,
There is much that's fine and splendid; every
hope is mostly good.
So I cling unto the notion that contented I
will be
If the men upon life's pathway find a needed
friend in me.

I rather like to putter 'round the walks and
yards of life,
To spray at night the roses that are burned and
browned with strife;
To eat a frugal dinner, but always to have a
chair
For the unexpected stranger that my simple
meal would share.
I don't care to be a traveler, I would rather be
the one
Sitting calmly by the roadside helping weary
travelers on.

I'd like to be a neighbor in the good old-fashioned way,
Finding much to do for others, but not over
much to say.
I like to read the papers, but I do not yearn
to see
What the journal of the morning has been
moved to say of me;
In the silences and shadows I would live my
life and die
And depend for fond remembrance on some
grateful passers-by.

I guess I wasn't fashioned for the brilliant
things of earth,

Wasn't gifted much with talent or designed for
special worth,
But was just sent here to putter with life's little
odds and ends
And keep a simple corner where the stirring
highway bends,
And if folks should chance to linger, worn and
weary through the day,
To do some needed service and to cheer them
on their way.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Neighbors

WHY do I grind from morn till night,
And sick or well sit down to write?
Why do I line my brow with sweat,
An extra buck or two to get?
The reason isn't hard to trace,
For us our neighbors set the pace.

The Greens go weekly to a show,
And so, of course, we have to go;
A dollar-fifty per they pay
For seats down in the parquet,
And always they wear evening dress;
We couldn't think of doing less.

The Browns maintain a servant girl,
The one we have was christened Pearl;
At dinner, several kinds of wine
They serve in glass of rare design.
Their dinners are a great success;
And ours, of course, must be no less.

In summer all our neighbors flee
Unto the mountains or the sea;
They spend two months in big hotels
And hobnob with the other swells;
And though it's costly, I confess
That wife of mine shall do no less.

Two doors from us lives Mrs. Grout,
Who owns a lovely runabout,
And though she's very nice, it's plain
She looks on us with some disdain.
Although it's more than I can do,
My wife will shortly have one, too.

I 'd like to take a holiday
And spend a month or two in play;
I'd like to take an ocean trip
And give this awful grind the slip;

But there's no rest for me the while
We let our neighbors set the style.

Edgar Albert Guest

The New Days

The old days, the old days, how oft the poets sing,
The days of hope at dewy morn, the days of early spring,
The days when every mead was fair, and every heart was true,
And every maiden wore a smile, and every sky was blue
The days when dreams were golden and every night brought rest,
The old, old days of youth and love, the days they say were best
But I—I sing the new days, the days that lie before,
The days of hope and fancy, the days that I adore.
The new days, the new days, the selfsame days they are;
The selfsame sunshine heralds them, the selfsame evening star
Shines out to light them on their way unto the Bygone Land,
And with the selfsame arch of blue the world to-day is spanned.
The new days, the new days, when friends are just as true,
And maidens smile upon us all, the way they used to do,
Dreams we know are golden dreams, hope springs in every breast;
It cheers us in the dewy morn and soothes us when we rest.
The new days, the new days, of them I want to sing,
The new days with the fancies and the golden dreams they bring;
The old days had their pleasures, but likewise have the new
The gardens with their roses and the meadows bright with dew;
We love to-day the selfsame way they loved in days of old;
The world is bathed in beauty and it isn't growing cold;
There's joy for us a-plenty, there are tasks for us to do,
And life is worth the living, for the friends we know are true.

Edgar Albert Guest

The New Year

Come you with dangers to fright us? or hazards
to try out our souls?
Then may you find us undaunted; determined to
get to our goals.
Now, white are the pages you bring us to fill
with the tales of our deeds,
And I pray we shall square at the finish the work
of our lives with our creeds.

Oh, child of a year, do you wonder what here
upon earth you shall find?
America shows you a people united in purpose
and mind;
Whatever you bring us of danger, whatever you
hold to affright,
I pray that we never shall lower our standards
of truth and of right.

You find us a people united, full pledged to the
work of the world,
To banish the despot and tyrant, our banner in
battle's unfurled;
And here to a world that is bleeding and weary
and heartsick you come,
Whatever you've brought us of duty—we'll
answer the call of your drum.

We may weep in our grief and our sorrows, we
may bend 'neath the might of the blow,
But never our courage shall falter, and never
we'll run from the foe.
We know not how troubled our pathways shall
be nor how sorely beset,
But I pray we shall cling to our honor as men
and never our purpose forget.

Edgar Albert Guest

The New Year's Caller

COME, open your door, there's a friend waiting near
Who is eager to wish you a Happy New Year;
He rings at the bell and he's ready to shout:
'The New Year is in and the old year is out;
And long may you prosper and long may you smile,
May happiness dwell with you all the while.'

Come, run to the door! There's a friend waiting there,
Go bid him to enter, and draw up his chair;
Come, fill up his wine glass and pass him the cake,
For fewer and fewer are calls that friends make;
Come, shout in reply to his message of cheer:
'Long life to you, friend, and a Happy New Year!'

'A Happy New Year and a wealth of success,
May love and prosperity never grow less;
May each year that follows be happier, too,
May Time and Grim Sorrow deal gently with you.'
Come, run to your door! There's a friend waiting there,
Invite him to enter and draw up a chair.

Come, open your heart! There's a friend waiting near
Who is eager to share in your sorrow and cheer;
He longs for your friendship, and fain would he win
The way to your heart. Will you not let him in?
He knocks at the door. Would you send him away
Or greet him with love and implore him to stay?

Edgar Albert Guest

The Newspaper Man

Bit of a priest and a bit of sailor,
Bit of a doctor and bit of a tailor,
Bit of a lawyer, and bit of detective,
Bit of a judge, for his work is corrective;
Cheering the living and soothing the dying,
Risking all things, even dare-devil flying;
True to his paper and true to his clan—
Just look him over, the newspaper man.
Sleep! There are times that he'll do with a little,
Work till his nerves and his temper are brittle;
Fire cannot daunt him, nor long hours disturb him,
Gold cannot buy him and threats cannot curb him;
Highbrow or lowbrow, your own speech he'll hand you,
Talk as you will to him, he'll understand you;
He'll go wherever another man can—
That is the way of the newspaper man.
Surgeon, if urgent the need be, you'll find him,
Ready to help, nor will dizziness blind him;
He'll give the ether and never once falter,
Say the last rites like a priest at the altar;
Gentle and kind with the weak and the weary,
Which is proved now and then when his keen eye grows teary;
Facing all things in life's curious plan—
That is the way of the newspaper man.
One night a week may he rest from his labor,
One night at home to be father and neighbor;
Just a few hours for his own bit of leisure,
All the rest's gazing at other men's pleasure,
All the rest's toiling, and yet he rejoices,
All the world is, and that men do, he voices—
Who knows a calling more glorious than
The day-by-day work of the newspaper man?

Edgar Albert Guest

The Notion Of Rastus

DERE never was a man on earth
So wonderful or clever,
Dat ever found a way t' live
On dis ole world forever.

Dere never was a man so rich,
Dat didn't have t' go
When ole man Death came after him
An' crooked his finger, so.

An' den dere never was a man
So great, when he was gone
But what dis good ole world of ours
Jes' kep' a-waggin' on.

An' since dis ole world never stops
When famous men depart,
I' ve come t' de conclusion dat
We ain't so awful smart.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Obligation Of Friendship

You ought to be fine for the sake of the folks
Who think you are fine.
If others have faith in you doubly you're bound
To stick to the line.
It's not only on you that dishonor descends:
You can't hurt yourself without hurting your friends.

You ought to be true for the sake of the folks
Who believe you are true.
You never should stoop to a deed that your friends
Think you wouldn't do.
If you're false to yourself, be the blemish but small,
You have injured your friends; you've been false to them all.

For friendship, my boy, is a bond between men
That is founded on truth:
It believes in the best of the ones that it loves.
Whether old man or youth;
And the stern rule it lays down for me and for you
Is to be what our friends think we are, through and through.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Old Days

WHEN I was but a little tad I used to hear my dear old dad
Tell friends about the good old days forever gone from him;
My dear old kindly gran'dad, too, explained the merry joys he knew,
When he was in his twenties, and could dance and run and swim;
The burden of their song always was this — the good old bygone days,
The days of thirty years ago, when all the world was gay,
And folks were always merry then, and men were bigger, better men,
And fun was funnier by far than what it is today.

When I was young I couldn't see, how such a state of things could be,
For I was having fun myself, and plenty of it, too;
And not so long ago I told — a sign that I am getting old —
About the good old days that once upon a time I knew;
I found that like my dear old dad, I thought about the joys I had,
And I was sure that times had changed and fun had ceased to be;
I often heaved a bitter sigh, and wished and wished for days gone by;
The old days were the happy days, or so they seemed to me.

But looking back in history, unto the time we call B. C.
I find that dads and gran'dads then were living in the past;
Old Julius Caesar, who was slain, once sat and sighed and wished in vain
Because the joys that once he knew were not allowed to last.
Before Noah built his famous ark, I'll bet some ancient patriarch
Beneath his vine tree sat and said the days of fun were gone,
That times were not as once they were, that joys had vanished from the air,
And fun and mirth and merriment somehow had wandered on.

And so today I've ceased to talk and ceased to let my thinker walk
Away back where the old days are — I've ceased to call them best;
I've got the notion that today is just as happy, just as gay
As any yesterday of mine, and just as full of zest.
Tomorrow will be just as bright, and just as full of rare delight
For those who follow me as were the golden days of yore;
And when I hear some croaker say, there's no such thing as fun today,
I get his derby, coat and cane and show him to the door.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Old Wooden Tub

I like to get to thinking of the old days that are gone,
When there were joys that never more the world will look upon,
The days before inventors smoothed the little cares away
And made, what seemed but luxuries then, the joys of every day;
When bathrooms were exceptions, and we got our weekly scrub
By standing in the middle of a little wooden tub.

We had no rapid heaters, and no blazing gas to burn,
We boiled the water on the stove, and each one took his turn.
Sometimes to save expenses we would use one tub for two;
The water brother Billy used for me would also do,
Although an extra kettle I was granted, I admit,
On winter nights to freshen and to warm it up a bit.

We carried water up the stairs in buckets and in pails,
And sometimes splashed it on our legs, and rent the air with wails,
But if the nights were very cold, by closing every door
We were allowed to take our bath upon the kitchen floor.
Beside the cheery stove we stood and gave ourselves a rub,
In comfort most luxurious in that old wooden tub.

But modern homes no more go through that joyous weekly fun,
And through the sitting rooms at night no half-dried children run;
No little flying forms go past, too swift to see their charms,
With shirts and underwear and things tucked underneath their arms;
The home's so full of luxury now, it's almost like a club,
I sometimes wish we could go back to that old wooden tub.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Old, Old Story

I have no wish to rail at fate,
And vow that I'm unfairly treated;
I do not give vent to my hate
Because at times I am defeated.
Life has its ups and downs, I know,
But tell me why should people say
Whenever after fish I go:
'You should have been here yesterday'?

It is my luck always to strike
A day when there is nothing doing,
When neither perch, nor bass, nor pike
My baited hooks will come a-wooing.
Must I a day late always be?
When not a nibble comes my way
Must someone always say to me:
'We caught a bunch here yesterday'?

I am not prone to discontent,
Nor over-zealous now to climb;
If victory is not yet meant
For me I'll calmly bide my time.
But I should like just once to go
Out fishing on some lake or bay
And not have someone mutter: 'Oh,
You should have been here yesterday.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Old-Fashioned Cooks

Poets have sung of the old-fashioned glories
The old-fashioned pictures that hung on the wall,
The old-fashioned people, the old-fashioned stories,
The old-fashioned fashions they love to recall;
The squeaky armchair that our grandmothers sat in,
The old-fashioned shelves with their old-fashioned books,
Immortalized have been in Saxon or Latin,
But I sing my song to the old-fashioned cooks.

O come, all ye gods! and give grace to my ballad,
Today I would sing as I ne'er sang before;
I 'm heartsick of dining on lettuce and salad,
And canned goods warmed over delight me no more.
I wish I could go once again to a dinner
That badn't been planned out of style sheets or books —
They may be all right for a sweet young beginner,
But they were not needed by old-fashioned cooks.

How well I remember the table cloth spotless,
The dishes that shone like the cheek of a child,
The jellies and relishes, O, there were not less
Than eight or nine kinds on the festive board piled.
There were no little dabs served to make you ungrateful,
They took it for granted, I guess, from your looks
That hunger was yours, and they gave you a plateful
Of viands most toothsome, those old-fashioned cooks!

You came to their tables to eat, not to chatter,
And heaped were the plates that they passed up to you;
In richest of gravies the meat in the platter
Was swimming, and side dishes never were few.
They fed us with plenty, not starved us with fashion,
They gave us enough and they cared not for looks,
And just now with me it is almost a passion —
I yearn for a dinner by old-fashioned cooks.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Old-Fashioned Parents

The good old-fashioned mothers and the good old-fashioned dads,
With their good old-fashioned lassies and their good old-fashioned lads,
Still walk the lanes of loving in their simple, tender ways,
As they used to do back yonder in the good old-fashioned days.

They dwell in every city and they live in every town,
Contentedly and happy and not hungry for renown;
On every street you'll find 'em in their simple garments clad,
The good old-fashioned mother and the good old-fashioned dad.

There are some who sigh for riches, there are some who yearn for fame,
And a few misguided people who no longer blush at shame;
But the world is full of mothers, and the world is full of dads;
Who are making sacrifices for their little girls and lads.

They are growing old together, arm in arm they walk along,
And their hearts with love are beating and their voices sweet with song;
They still share their disappointments and they share their pleasures,
too,
And whatever be their fortune, to each other they are true.

They are watching at the bedside of a baby pale and white,
And they kneel and pray together for the care of God at night;
They are romping with their children in the fields of clover sweet,
And devotedly they guard them from the perils of the street.

They are here in countless numbers, just as they have always been,
And their glory is untainted by the selfish and the mean.
And I'd hate to still be living, it would dismal be and sad,
If we'd no old-fashioned mother and we'd no old-fashioned dad.
- See more at:

Edgar Albert Guest

The Old-Time Family

It makes me smile to hear 'em tell each other nowadays
The burdens they are bearing, with a child or two to raise.
Of course the cost of living has gone soaring to the sky
And our kids are wearing garments that my parents couldn't buy.
Now my father wasn't wealthy, but I never heard him squeal
Because eight of us were sitting at the table every meal.

People fancy. they are martyrs if their children number three,
And four or five they reckon makes a large-sized family.
A dozen hungry youngsters at a table I have seen
And their daddy didn't grumble when they licked the platter clean.
Oh, I wonder how these mothers and these fathers up-to-date
Would like the job of buying little shoes for seven or eight.

We were eight around the table in those happy days back them,
Eight that cleaned our plates of pot-pie and then passed them up again;
Eight that needed shoes and stockings, eight to wash and put to bed,
And with mighty little money in the purse, as I have said,
But with all the care we brought them, and through all the days of stress,
I never heard my father or my mother wish for less.

Edgar Albert Guest

The One In Ten

Nine passed him by with a hasty look,
Each bent on his eager way;
One glance at him was the most they took,
'Somebody stuck,' said they;
But it never occurred to the nine to heed
A stranger's plight and a stranger's need.
The tenth man looked at the stranded car,
And he promptly stopped his own.
'Let's see if I know what your troubles are,'
Said he in a cheerful tone;
'Just stuck in the mire. Here's a cable stout,
Hitch onto my bus and I'll pull you out.'
'A thousand thanks,' said the stranger then,
'For the debt that I owe you;
I've counted them all and you're one in ten
Such a kindly deed to do.'
And the tenth man smiled and he answered then,
'Make sure that you'll be the one in ten.'
Are you one of the nine who pass men by
In this hasty life we live?
Do you refuse with a downcast eye
The help which you could give?
Or are you the one in ten whose creed
Is always to stop for the man in need?

Edgar Albert Guest

The Open Fire

There in the flame of the open grate,
All that is good in the past I see:
Red-lipped youth on the swinging gate,
Bright-eyed youth with its minstrelsy;
Girls and boys that I used to know,
Back in the days of Long Ago,
Troop before in the smoke and flame,
Chatter and sing, as the wild birds do.
Everyone I can call by name,
For the fire builds all of my youth anew.
Outside, people go stamping by,
Squeak of wheel on the evening air,
Stars and planets race through the sky,
Here are darkness and silence rare;
Only the flames in the open grate
Crackle and flare as they burn up hate,
Malice and envy and greed for gold,
Dancing, laughing my cares away;
I've forgotten that I am old,
Once again I'm a boy at play.
There in the flame of the open grate
Bright the pictures come and go;
Lovers swing on the garden gate,
Lovers kiss 'neath the mistletoe.
I've forgotten that I am old,
I've forgotten my story's told;
Whistling boy down the lane I stroll,
All untouched by the blows of fate,
Time turns back and I'm young of soul,
Dreaming there by the open grate.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Other Fellow

Whose luck is better far than ours?
The other fellow's.
Whose road seems always lined with flowers?
The other fellow's.
Who is the man who seems to get
Most joy in life, with least regret,
Who always seems to win his bet?
The other fellow.
Who fills the place we think we'd like?
The other fellow.
Whom does good fortune always strike?
The other fellow.
Whom do we envy, day by day?
Who has more time than we to play?
Who is it, when we mourn, seems gay?
The other fellow.
Who seems to miss the thorns we find?
The other fellow.
Who seems to leave us all behind?
The other fellow.
Who never seems to feel the woe,
The anguish and the pain we know?
Who gets the best seats at the show?
The other fellow.
And yet, my friend, who envies you?
The other fellow.
Who thinks he gathers only rue?
The other fellow.
Who sighs because he thinks that he
Would infinitely happier he,
If he could be like you or me?
The other fellow.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Painter

When my hair is thin and silvered, an' my time of toil is through,
When I've many years behind me, an' ahead of me a few,
I shall want to sit, I reckon, sort of dreamin' in the sun,
An' recall the roads I've traveled an' the many things I've done,
An' I hope there'll be no picture that I'll hate to look upon
When the time to paint it better or to wipe it out is gone.

I hope there'll be no vision of a hasty word I've said,
That has left a trail of sorrow, like a whip welt, sore an' red,
An' I hope my old-age dreamin' will bring back no bitter scene
Of a time when I was selfish an' a time when I was mean;
When I'm gettin' old an' feeble, an' I'm far along life's way
I don't want to sit regrettin' any by-gone yesterday.

I'll admit the children boss me, I'll admit I often smile
When I ought to frown upon 'em, but for such a little while
They are naughty, romping youngsters, that I have no heart to scold,
An' I know if I should whip 'em I'd regret it when I'm old.
Age to me would be a torment an' a ghost-infested night,
If I'd ever hurt a baby, an' I could not make it right.

I am painting now the pictures that I'll some day want to see,
I am filling in a canvas that will come back soon to me.
An' though nothing great is on it, an' though nothing there is fine,
I shall want to look it over when I'm old an' call it mine.
An' I do not dare to leave it, while the paint is warm an' wet,
With a single thing upon it that I'll later on regret.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Panama Canal

ABOVE it flies the flag we love,
Within it is the blood we gave;
It stands a part and portion of
The courage that once freed the slave.
The strength that fought for liberty
Hewed out the rock that barred its way;
The men who toiled that it might be
Were children of the U. S. A.

Within its sides there is no stone
But what Americans have placed;
Above it other flags have flown
And seen their labors go to waste.
To build it other lands have tried
And have deserted in dismay,
But they, who would not be defied,
Were children of the U. S. A.

Into its massive walls were poured
The gold that bore the eagle's stamp;
Within each foot of it is stored
The grit of Valley Forge's camp.
This wedding of divided seas,
That is a finished fact today,
Stands out among the victories
That glorify the U. S. A.

No alien land was asked to aid,
No foreign friend was leaned upon;
This by Americans was made
While all the world stood looking on.
And molded into every part
From coast to coast, to last for aye,
There are the blood and flesh and heart
And genius of the U. S. A.

Beneath Old Glory this was done,
Beneath Old Glory shall it dwell;
As long as there are seas'to run

This nation's splendor shall it tell.
As long as human hearts shall thrill
And patriotism men shall sway,
This must remain to speak the skill
And courage of the U. S. A.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Path O' Little Children

The path o' little children is the path I want to tread,
Where green is every valley and every rose is red,
Where laughter's always ringing and every smile is real,
And where the hurts are little hurts that just a kiss will heal.

The path o' little children, on the primrose edge o' life,
That leads away from jealousy and bitterness and strife;
The path that leads to gladness—that's the way I want to go,
Where no one speaks unkindly an' where no one keeps a foe.

The path o' little children that winds o'er hill and dale
An' leads us down to gentle seas where tiny vessels sail;
An' leads us through the barnyard an' through the pasture bars
An' brings us home at evening with hearts that know no scars.

The path o' little children, where peaceful dreams come true,
Where sunshine's always streaming, an' every sky is blue;
Where each one loves the other, an' every one is fair,
An' cheeks are pink with beauty, an' singing fills the air.

The path o' little children, it's there I want to tread,
Where innocence is dwelling with not a thing to dread;
Where care is not an ogre and sin is but a name,
An' no one thinks of money an' no one sighs for fame.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Path That Leads To Home

The little path that leads to home,
That is the road for me,
I know no finer path to roam,
With finer sights to see.
With thoroughfares the world is lined
That lead to wonders new,
But he who treads them leaves behind
The tender things and true.

Oh, north and south and east and west
The crowded roadways go,
And sweating brow and weary breast
Are all they seem to know.
And mad for pleasure some are bent,
And some are seeking fame,
And some are sick with discontent,
And some are bruised and lame.

Across the world the gleaming steel
Holds out its lure for men,
But no one finds his comfort real
Till he comes home again.
And charted lanes now line the sea
For weary hearts to roam,
But, Oh, the finest path to me
Is that which leads to home.

'Tis there I come to laughing eyes
And find a welcome true;
'Tis there all care behind me lies
And joy is ever new.
And, Oh, when every day is done
Upon that little street,
A pair of rosy youngsters run
To me with flying feet.

The world with myriad paths is lined
But one alone for me,
One little road where I may find

The charms I want to see.
Though thoroughfares majestic call
The multitude to roam,
I would not leave, to know them all,
The path that leads to home.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Path To Home

THERE'S the mother at the doorway, and the children at the gate,
And the little parlor windows with the curtains white and straight.
There are shaggy asters blooming in the bed that lines the fence,
And the simplest of the blossoms seems of mighty consequence.
Oh, there isn't any mansion underneath God's starry dome
That can rest a weary pilgrim like the little place called home.

Men have sought for gold and silver; men have dreamed at night of fame;
In the heat of youth they've struggled for achievement's honored name;
But the selfish crowns are tinsel, and their shining jewels paste,
And the wine of pomp and glory soon grows bitter to the taste.
For there's never any laughter howsoever far you roam,
Like the laughter of the loved ones in the happiness of home.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Pathway Of The Living

The pathway of the living is our ever-present care.
Let us do our best to smooth it and to make it bright and fair;
Let us travel it with kindness, let's be careful as we tread,
And give unto the living what we'd offer to the dead.

The pathway of the living we can beautify and grace;
We can line it deep with roses and make earth a happier place.
But we've done all mortals can do, when our prayers are softly said
For the souls of those that travel o'er the pathway of the dead.

The pathway of the living all our strength and courage needs,
There we ought to sprinkle favors, there we ought to sow our deeds,
There our smiles should be the brightest, there our kindest words be said,
For the angels have the keeping of the pathway of the dead.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Pay Envelope

Is it all in the envelope holding your pay?
Is that all you're working for day after day?
Are you getting no more from your toil than the gold
That little enclosure of paper will hold?
Is that all you're after; is that all you seek?
Does that close the deal at the end of the week?

Is it all in the envelope holding his pay?
Is that all you offer him day after day?
Is that all he wins by his labor from you?
Is that the reward for the best he can do?
Would you say of your men, when the week has been turned,
That all they've received is the money they've earned?

Is it all in the envelope, workman and chief?
Then loyalty's days must be fleeting and brief;
If you measure your work by its value in gold
The sum of your worth by your pay shall be told;
And if something of friendship your men do not find
Outside of their envelopes, you're the wrong kind.

If all that you offer is silver and gold,
You haven't a man in your plant you can hold.
If all that you're after each week is your pay,
You are doing your work in a short-sighted way;
For the bigger rewards it is useless to hope
If you never can see past the pay envelope.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Peaceful Warriors

Let others sing their songs of war
And chant their hymns of splendid death,
Let others praise the soldiers' ways
And hail the cannon's flaming breath.
Let others sing of Glory's fields
Where blood for Victory is paid,
I choose to sing some simple thing
To those who wield not gun or blade —
The peaceful warriors of trade.

Let others choose the deeds of war
For symbols of our nation's skill,
The blood-red coat, the rattling throat,
The regiment that charged the hill,
The boy who died to serve the flag,
Who heard the order and obeyed,
But leave to me the gallantry
Of those who labor unafraid -
The peaceful warriors of trade.

Aye, let me sing the splendid deeds
Of those who toil to serve mankind,
The men who break old ways and make
New paths for those who come behind.
And face their problems, unafraid,
Who think and plan to lift for man
The burden that on him is laid —
The splendid warriors of trade.

I sing of battles with disease
And victories o'er death and pain,
Of ships that fly the summer sky,
And glorious deeds of strength and brain.
The call for help that rings through space
By which a vessel's course is stayed,
Thrills me far more than fields of gore,
Or heroes decked in golden braid —
I sing the warriors of trade.

The Peaks Of Valor

These are the peaks of valor; keeping clean your father's name,
Too brave for petty profit to risk the brand of shame,
Adventuring for the future, yet mindful of the past,
For God, for country and for home, still valorous to the last.

These are the peaks of valor: a speech that knows no lie,
A standard of what's right and wrong which no man's wealth can buy,
All unafraid of failure, to venture forth to fight,
Yet never for the victory's sake to turn away from right.

Ten thousand times the victor is he who fails to win,
Who could have worn the conqueror's crown by stooping low in sin;
Ten thousand times the braver is he who turns away
And scorns to crush a weaker man that he may rule the day.

These are the peaks of valor: standing firm and standing true
To the best your father taught you and the best you've learned anew,
Helpful to all who need you, winning what joys you can,
Writing in triumph to the end your record as a man.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Peevish Man

When he has suffered honest woe,
I do not mind the man who grieves,
But I hate him who stubs his toe
And straightway gets a case of ' peeves.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Perfect Dinner Table

A table cloth that's slightly soiled
Where greasy little hands have toiled;
The napkins kept in silver rings,
And only ordinary things
From which to eat, a simple fare,
And just the wife and kiddies there,
And while I serve, the clatter glad
Of little girl and little lad
Who have so very much to say
About the happenings of the day.

Four big round eyes that dance with glee,
Forever flashing joys at me,
Two little tongues that race and run
To tell of troubles and of fun;
The mother with a patient smile
Who knows that she must wait awhile
Before she'll get a chance to say
What she's discovered through the day.
She steps aside for girl and lad
Who have so much to tell their dad.

Our manners may not be the best;
Perhaps our elbows often rest
Upon the table, and at times
That very worst of dinner crimes,
That very shameful act and rude
Of speaking ere you've downed your food,
Too frequently, I fear, is done,
So fast the little voices run.
Yet why should table manners stay
Those tongues that have so much to say?

At many a table I have been
Where wealth and luxury were seen,
And I have dined in halls of pride
Where all the guests were dignified;
But when it comes to pleasure rare
The perfect dinner table's where

No stranger's face is ever known:
The dinner hour we spend alone,
When little girl and little lad
Run riot telling things to dad.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Plugger

He isn't very brilliant and his pace is often slow,
There's nothing very flashy in his style;
He has to dig and labor for the things he wants to know,
And lie's busy learning something all the while.
The clever men go by him in a hurry day by day,
And the stars get all the mention and the fame,
But the patient, steady plugger in a thorough sort of way
Keeps on going and he gets there just the same.

He's a quiet sort of fellow and tie's backward in his speech,
You'd never find him clamoring for applause;
He will listen to another who has anything to teach,
And he never worries working for a cause.
He may take a little longer with the task he has to do,
Than to genius whose talents seem to run;
But you'll find the patient plugger at the finish coming through,
And there's merit in his labor when it's done.

He is slow in getting started, he must know the reason why
Certain things occur within a certain way;
There is nothing in his method to attract the passer by,
And at times you'd think he's wasted many a day,
But when brilliant men have faded and the stars have lost their light,
When the clever men have stumbled in despair,
When the great have come to failure with the goal they sought in sight,
You'll find the patient plugger getting there.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Price Of Joy

You don't begrudge the labor when the roses start to bloom;
You don't recall the dreary days that won you their perfume;
You don't recall a single care
You spent upon the garden there;
And all the toil
Of tilling soil
Is quite forgot the day the first
Pink rosebuds into beauty burst.

You don't begrudge the trials grim when joy has come to you;
You don't recall the dreary days when all your skies are blue;
And though you've trod a weary mile
The ache of it was all worth while;
And all the stings
And bitter flings
Are wiped away upon the day
Success comes dancing down the way.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Price Of Riches

Nobody stops at the rich man's door to pass the time of day.
Nobody shouts a 'hello!' to him in the good old-fashioned way.
Nobody comes to his porch at night and sits in that extra chair
And talks till it's time to go to bed. He's all by himself up there.
Nobody just happens in to call on the long, cold winter nights.
Nobody feels that he's welcome now, though the house is ablaze with lights.
And never an unexpected guest will tap at his massive door
And stay to tea as he used to do, for his neighborly days are o'er.
It's a distant life that the rich man leads and many an hour is glum,
For never the neighbors call on him save when they are asked to come.
At heart he is just as he used to be and he longs for his friends of old,
But they never will venture unbidden there. They're afraid of his wall of gold.
For silver and gold in a large amount there's a price that all men must pay,
And who will dwell in a rich man's house must live in a lonely way.
For once you have builded a fortune vast you will sigh for the friends you knew
But never they'll tap at your door again in the way that they used to do.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Princess Pat's

A touch of the plain and the prairie,
A bit of the Motherland, too;
A strain of the fur-trapper wary,
A blend of the old and the new;
A bit of the pioneer splendor
That opened the wilderness' flats,
A touch of the home-lover, tender,
You'll find in the boys they call Pat's.

The glory and grace of the maple,
The strength that is born of the wheat,
The pride of a stock that is staple,
The bronze of a midsummer heat;
A blending of wisdom and daring,
The best of a new land, and that's
The regiment gallantly bearing
The neat little title of Pat's.

A bit of the man who has neighbored
With mountains and forests and streams,
A touch of the man who has labored
To model and fashion his dreams;
The strength of an age of clean living,
Of right-minded fatherly chats,
The best that a land could be giving
Is there in the breasts of the Pat's.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Proof Of Worth

The Proof Of Worth

Though victory's proof of the skill you possess,
Defeat is the proof of your grit;
A weakling can smile in his days of success,
But at trouble's first sign he will quit.
So the test of the heart and the test of your pluck
Isn't skies that are sunny and fair,
But how do you stand to the blow that is struck
And how do you battle despair?

A fool can seem wise when the pathway is clear
And it's easy to see the way out,
But the test of man's judgment is something to fear,
And what does he do when in doubt?
And the proof of his faith is the courage he shows
When sorrows lie deep in his breast;
It's the way that he suffers the griefs that he knows
That brings out his worst or his best.

The test of a man is how much he will bear
For a cause which he knows to be right,
How long will he stand in the depths of despair,
How much will he suffer and fight?
There are many to serve when the victory's near
And few are the hurts to be borne,
But it calls for a leader of courage to cheer
The men in a battle forlorn.

It's the way you hold out against odds that are great
That proves what your courage is worth,
It's the way that you stand to the bruises of fate
That shows up your stature and girth.
And victory's nothing but proof of your skill,
Veneered with a glory that's thin,
Unless it is proof of unfaltering will,
And unless you have suffered to win.

Edgar Albert Guest

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It's the way you hold out against odds that are great
That proves what your courage is worth,
It's the way that you stand to the bruises of fate
That shows up your stature and girth.
And victory's nothing but proof of your skill,
Veneered with a glory that's thin,
Unless it is proof of unfaltering will,
And unless you have suffered to win.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Pup

He tore the curtains yesterday,
And scratched the paper on the wall;
Ma's rubbers, too, have gone astray—
She says she left them in the hall;
He tugged the table cloth and broke
A fancy saucer and a cup;
Though Bud and I think it a joke
Ma scolds a lot about the pup.

The sofa pillows are a sight,
The rugs are looking somewhat frayed,
And there is ruin, left and right,
That little Boston bull has made.
He slept on Buddy's counterpane—
Ma found him there when she woke up.
I think it needless to explain
She scolds a lot about the pup.

And yet he comes and licks her hand
And sometimes climbs into her lap
And there, Bud lets me understand,
He very often takes his nap.
And Bud and I have learned to know
She wouldn't give the rascal up:
She's really fond of him, although
She scolds a lot about the pup.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Ready Artists

The green is in the meadow and the blue is in the sky,
And all of Nature's artists have their colors handy by;
With a few days bright with sunshine and a few nights free from frost
They will start to splash their colors quite regardless of the cost.
There's an artist waiting ready at each bleak and dismal spot
To paint the flashing tulip or the meek forget-me-not.

May is lurking in the distance and her lap is filled with flowers,
And the choicest of her blossoms very shortly will be ours.
There is not a lane so dreary or a field so dark with gloom
But that soon will be resplendent with its little touch of bloom.
There's an artist keen and eager to make beautiful each scene
And remove with colors gorgeous every trace of what has been.

Oh, the world is now in mourning; round about us all are spread
The ruins and the symbols of the winter that is dead.
But the bleak and barren picture very shortly now will pass,
For the halls of life are ready for their velvet rugs of grass;
And the painters now are waiting with their magic to replace
This dullness with a beauty that no mortal hand can trace.

The green is in the meadow and the blue is in the sky;
The chill of death is passing, life will shortly greet the eye.
We shall revel soon in colors only Nature's artists make
And the humblest plant that's sleeping unto beauty shall awake.
For there's not a leaf forgotten, not a twig neglected there,
And the tiniest of pansies shall the royal purple wear.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Real Bait

To gentle ways I am inclined;
I have no wish to kill.
To creatures dumb I would be kind;
I like them all, but still
Right now I think I'd like to be
Beside some rippling brook,
And grab a worm I'd brought with me
And slip him on a hook.

I'd like to put my hand once more
Into a rusty can
And turn those squirmy creatures o'er
Like nuggets in a pan;
And for a big one, once again,
With eager eyes I'd look,
As did a boy I knew, and then
Impale it on a hook.

I've had my share of fishing joy,
I've fished with patent bait,
With chub and minnow, but the boy
Is lord of sport's estate
And no such pleasure comes to man
So rare as when he took
A worm from a tomato can
And slipped it on a hook.

I'd like to gaze with glowing eyes
Upon that precious bait,
To view each fat worm as a prize
To be accounted great.
And though I've passed from boyhood's term,
And opened age's book,
I still would like to put a worm
That wriggled on a hook.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Real Successes

You think that the failures are many,
You think the successes are few,
But you judge by the rule of the penny,
And not by the good that men do.
You judge men by standards of treasure
That merely obtain upon earth,
When the brother you're snubbing may measure
Full-length to God's standard of worth.

The failures are not in the ditches,
The failures are not in the ranks,
They have missed the acquirement of riches,
Their fortunes are not in the banks.
Their virtues are never paraded,
Their worth is not always in view,
But they're fighting their battles unaided,
And fighting them honestly, too.

There are failures to-day in high places
The failures aren't all in the low;
There are rich men with scorn in their faces
Whose homes are but castles of woe.
The homes that are happy are many,
And numberless fathers are true;
And this is the standard, if any,
By which we must judge what men do.

Wherever loved ones are awaiting
The toiler to kiss and caress,
Though in Bradstreet's he hasn't a rating,
He still is a splendid success.
If the dear ones who gather about him
And know what he's striving to do
Have never a reason to doubt him,
Is he less successful than you?

You think that the failures are many,
You judge by men's profits in gold;
You judge by the rule of the penny—

In this true success isn't told.
This falsely man's story is telling,
For wealth often brings on distress,
But wherever love brightens a dwelling,
There lives; rich or poor, a success.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Reason For Work

Some struggle hard for worldly fame,
Some toil to have an honored name,
And some have great ambition.
A few there are who strive that they
May save the heathen far away,
Which is a noble mission.
Still others work for riches vast
To have enough when youth is past
For charitable giving;
Yet millions of us work by day,
And this our object is always:
To make a decent living.

This is the secret of our toil,
For this we burn the midnight oil,
For this the rhymester sings.
'T is want that spurs us on, not fame,
'T is hunger, not a world-wide name —
The need of worldly things.
Though fame may come in after years,
And in his ears may ring the cheers
And plaudits of the crowd,
'T is not for them man toils today,
But that his wife and babies may
Be decently endowed.

That he may have enough to wear,
Enough to eat, enough to spare
To give to those in need,
Is, after all, man's purpose true,
'T is all the good man hopes to do;
For more than that is greed.
The greatest things are done by those
Who face privation and its woes
And seek to climb above them;
The men who rise to fame, you'll find,
Take thought of first and keep in mind
The needs of those who love them.

The Responsibility Of Fatherhood

BEFORE you came, my little lad,
I used to think that I was good,
Some vicious habits, too, I had,
But wouldn't change them if I could.
I held my head up high and said:
'I'm all that I have need to be,
It matters not what path I tread,'
But that was ere you came to me.

I treated lightly sacred things,
And went my way in search of fun,
Upon myself I kept no strings,
And gave no heed to folly done.
I gave myself up to the fight
For worldly wealth and earthly fame,
And sought advantage, wrong or right,
But that was long before you came.

But now you sit across from me,
Your big brown eyes are opened wide,
And every deed I do you see,
And, O, I dare not step aside.
I've shaken loose from habits bad,
And what is wrong I've come to dread,
Because I know, my little lad,
That you will follow where I tread.

I want those eyes to glow with pride,
In me I want those eyes to see
The while we wander side by side
The sort of man I'd have you be.
And so I'm striving to be good
With all my might, that you may know
When this great world is understood,
What pleasures are worth while below.

I see life in a different light
From what I did before you came,
Then anything that pleased seemed right;

But you are here to bear my name,
And you are looking up to me
With those big eyes from day to day,
And I'm determined not to be
The means of leading you astray.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Rewards Of Industry

A FRIEND of mine said yesterday: 'There goes a man across the way
Who paid ten thousand dollars for a home a week ago;
He owns an automobile now, a saddle horse and keeps a cow,
And smokes cigars at fifty cents a throw.
He is a lucky chap, indeed! He got up something that we need,
The way he's making money is a shame;
It's not five years ago, I swear, he only had one suit to wear
And didn't have a dollar to his name.

'There goes a man immensely rich, who was a digger in the ditch
Ten years ago, but fortune came his way;
I cannot now recall to mind just what it is that he designed,
But he got wealth and glory in a day.
How fortunate some fellows are! They're born beneath a lucky star —
I knew him when he didn't have a cent;
And now he owns his house and lot — Too bad, that's something I've forgot,
I don't know now just what he did invent.'

I said: 'Some fellows strike it rich, but somehow, I've a notion, which
Is that you never saw a lucky shirk;
I never knew a lazy moke that wasn't nearly always broke —
The men who get the money have to work.
I do not view with discontent, nor call them lucky who invent
The things that quickly bring great fortunes in;
The poor men of five years ago, who now possess a 'wad of dough'
But prove to me that industry can win.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Rich Man's Woes

HE 'S worth a million dollars and you think he should be glad,
Because you want for money you believe he can't be sad;
His name is in the papers nearly every day or so,
If he wants a trip to Europe he can pack his grip and go,
But he's really heavy-hearted and he often wears a frown,
For his daughter contradicts him and his new wife calls him down.

He's not dunned by bill collectors, and he doesn't have to fret
Though the cost of living's soaring; what he wants he's sure to get.
He can order from his tailor three or four suits at a time,
And he tips the waiters dollars where another tips a dime;
But he really isn't happy as he motors round the town,
For his daughter contradicts him and his new wife calls him down.

O, it's folly to sit yearning for another fellow's lot,
For he's sure to have some worries that perhaps afflict you not;
And it's folly now to wish for any other fellow's place,
For it's certain he has troubles that would make you
sour of face; And the man who 's worth a million maybe wants to be a clown
When his daughter contradicts him and his new wife calls him down.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Right Family

With time our notions allus change,
An' years make old idees seem strange-
Take Mary there- time was when she
Thought one child made a family,
An' when our eldest, Jim, was born
She used to say, both night an' morn':
'One little one to love an' keep,
To guard awake, an' watch asleep;
To bring up right an' lead him through
Life's path is all we ought to do.'

Two years from then our Jennie came,
But Mary didn't talk the same;
'Now that's just right,' she said to me,
'We've got the proper family-
A boy an' girl, God sure is good;
It seems as though He understood
That I've been hopin' every way
To have a little girl some day;
Sometimes I've prayed the whole night through-
One ain't enough; we needed two.'

Then as the months went rollin' on,
One day the stork brought little John,
An' Mary smiled an' said to me;
'The proper family is three;
Two boys, a girl to romp an' play-
Jus' work enough to fill the day.
I never had enough to do,
The months that we had only two;
Three's jus' right, pa, we don't want more.'
Still time went on an' we had four.

An' that was years ago, I vow,
An' we have six fine children now;
An' Mary's plumb forgot the day
She used to sit an' sweetly say
That one child was enough for her
To love an' give the proper care;

One, two or three or four or five-
Why, goodness gracious, sakes alive,
If God should send her ten to-night,
She'd vow her fam'ly was jus' right!

Edgar Albert Guest

The Right To Joy

I DO not ask for roses all the time,
For blue skies bending o'er me every day,
I do not ask for easy hills to climb,
And always for my feet a pleasant way.
In laughter I would not spend all my life,
And miss the joy of sweet and sacred pain;
I want to know life's burden and its strife,
And feel upon my cheek the splash of rain.

I merely pray for strength enough to bear
My burdens, and to tread the rugged way;
To keep the right, howe'er beset with care,
To stand, unflinching, face front, to the fray.
And I would claim life's roses for my own,
But I would win my right to know their sweet;
To level paths I'd march my way alone,
For victory I'd venture with defeat.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Road Builder

I DO not care for garments fine,
I do not care for medals bright;
I have no wish to quench with wine
My thirst when I go home at night.
I'm satisfied with work to do,
And I'm content to bear my load
If only I can carve and hew
For those I love a better road.

I have no wish for luxury
If I must live it all alone;
Nor do I toil that I may be
By many strangers better known.
If I were here to toil for self
I'd have a very simple code,
And I'd need very little pelf—
But I'm the builder of a road.

I'm on this earth to pioneer
For those who follow after me,
According to my service here
Their chance for splendid life will be.
Into the future I must tread
Nor whimper at the present goad;
'Tis mine to blaze the path ahead,
I am the builder of a road.

I dare not shirk what task I find,
I dare not falsely step aside,
Nor leave the tangled brush behind.
My pathway must be clear and wide.
For they will tread the way I go,
They'll come to reap the seed I sowed
When I am sleeping 'neath the snow,
I am the builder of a road.

It is for them I face the front
And strive to keep my pathway straight,
It is for them I bear the brunt

Of selfishness and bitter hate.
That they may know a smoother way,
That they may bear a lighter load,
I, smiling, face the heat of day—
I am the builder of a road.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Roads Of Happiness

The roads of happiness are not

The selfish roads of pleasure seeking,
Where cheeks are flushed with haste and hot
And none has time for kindly speaking.
But they're the roads where lovers stray,
Where wives and husbands walk together
And children romp along the way
Whenever it is pleasant weather.

The roads of happiness are trod

By simple folks and tender-hearted,
By gentle folks that worship God
And want to live their days unparted.
There kindly people stop and talk,
Regardless of the chase for money,
There, arm in arm, the grown-ups walk
And every eye you see is sunny.

The roads of happiness are lined,

Not with the friends of royal splendor,
But with the loyal friends and kind
That do the gentle deeds and tender.
There fame has never brought unrest
Nor glory set men's hearts to aching;
There unabandoned is life's best
For selfish love and money making.

The roads of happiness are those

That do not lead to pomp and glory
But wind among the joys and woes
That make the humble toiler's story.
The roads that oft we used to tread
In early days when first we mated,
When hearts were light and cheeks were red,
And days were not with burdens freighted.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Rough Little Rascal

A smudge on his nose and a smear on his cheek
And knees that might not have been washed in a week;
A bump on his forehead, a scar on his lip,
A relic of many a tumble and trip:
A rough little, tough little rascal, but sweet,
Is he that each evening I'm eager to meet.

A brow that is beady with jewels of sweat;
A face that's as black as a visage can get;
A suit that at noon was a garment of white,
Now one that his mother declares is a fright:
A fun-loving, sun-loving rascal, and fine,
Is he that comes placing his black fist in mine.

A crop of brown hair that is tousled and tossed;
A waist from which two of the buttons are lost;
A smile that shines out through the dirt and the grime,
And eyes that are flashing delight all the time:
All these are the joys that I'm eager to meet
And look for the moment I get to my street.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Scoffer

If I had lived in Franklin's time I'm most afraid that I,
Beholding him out in the rain, a kite about to fly,
And noticing upon its tail the barn door's rusty key,
Would, with the scoffers on the street, have chortled in my glee;
And with a sneer upon my lips I would have said of Ben,
'His belfry must be full of bats. He's raving, boys, again!'

I'm glad I didn't live on earth when Fulton had his dream,
And told his neighbors marvelous tales of what he'd do with steam,
For I'm not sure I'd not have been a member of the throng
That couldn't see how paddle-wheels could shove a boat along.
At 'Fulton's Folly' I'd have sneered, as thousands did back then,
And called the Clermont's architect the craziest of men.

Yet Franklin gave us wonders great and Fulton did the same,
And many 'boobs' have left behind an everlasting fame.
And dead are all their scoffers now and all their sneers forgot
And scarce a nickel's worth of good was brought here by the lot.
I shudder when I stop to think, had I been living then,
I might have been a scoffer, too, and jeered at Bob and Ben.

I am afraid to-day to sneer at any fellow's dream.
Time was I thought men couldn't fly or sail beneath the stream.
I never call a man a boob who toils throughout the night
On visions that I cannot see, because he may be right.
I always think of Franklin's trick, which brought the jeers of men.
And to myself I say, 'Who knows but here's another Ben?'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Scoutmaster

There isn't any pay for you, you serve without reward,
The boys who tramp the fields with you but little could afford.
And yet your pay is richer far than those who toil for gold,
For in a dozen different ways your service shall be told.

You'll read it in the faces of a Troop of growing boys,
You'll read it in the pleasure of a dozen manly joys,
And down the distant future you will surely read it then,
Emblazoned thru the service of a band of loyal men.

Five years of willing labor and of brothering a Troop,
Five years of trudging highways, with the Indian cry and whoop,
Five years of campfires burning, not alone for pleasure's sake,
But the future generation which the boys are soon to make.

They have no gold to give you, but when age comes on to you
They'll give you back the splendid things you taught them how to do
They'll give you rich contentment and a thrill of honest pride
And you'll see the nation prosper, and you'll all be satisfied.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Sensible Romance Of Mildred

MILDRED McGee was a beautiful blond,
As fair as peroxide could make her.
She was never so shy that a man going by
Would imagine that she was a Quaker.
She had suitors that called every night in the week
And one of them worked in a shoe shop,
But her 'favor-ite' man was a chap named McGann
Who was boss of a gang in a glue shop.

Her folks used to scoff at young Patrick McGann
For they wished her to marry a plumber;
But Mildred was true to the maker of glue,
Though she flirted at times with a drummer.
Though she flirted at times with the pharmacist's clerk,
And she flirted at times with the baker,
She stuck to McGann, the glue factory man.
Not a bit could her fond parents shake her.

'You're in awful bad odor,' she said, 'with my folks,
When you come they both turn up their noses;
But I said when they kicked, that the plumber they've picked
Isn't scented with attar of roses.
When a girl is in love with a fellow, I've found
There's something inside her that rages;
An' I'd rather be true to a sweetheart like you
Than a sweet-smelling chap with no wages.

'There's many fine fellows who brag of their jobs
An' spend all their coin in a brew shop;
An' take it from me, I'd much rather be
The wife of the man in a glue shop.
Not all of us girls can get married to dudes
An' college professors an' scholars;
With you I'm content, I'll not stop at a scent
So long as you bring in the dollars.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Shattered Dream

I WAS somewhere off in Europe spending money like a king,
Owned a yacht like J. P. Morgan's, when the 'phone began to ring;
I was entertaining princes, dukes and earls, when wifie said:
'It's the telephone that's ringing, you must hustle out of bed.'
And I wandered down the stairway, grumbling o'er my vanished joy,
Growled: 'Hello;' and then he shouted: 'You're an uncle! It's a boy!'

I was dazed for half a minute—when you're cruising foreign seas
With a lot of royal people, and your sails are full of breeze,
And your guests are gaily laughing, and your skies are blue above,
The arrival of a baby isn't what you're thinking of;
And I hardly knew I'd taken that old 'phone receiver down
When excitedly he shouted: 'There's a junior come to town!'

But I traveled back from Europe just as quickly as I could,
And left those dukes and princes and I shouted to him: 'Good!'
I fired my stylish butlers and I threw my yacht away,
In my dollar-blue-pajamas I stood there and cried: 'Hooray!'
I quit the king, not caring that my conduct might annoy,
And I shouted up to mother: 'Did you hear me? It's a boy!'

When I'm dreaming I am wealthy and with money I am free,
There are times I do not welcome folks who telephone to me;
But I don't begrudge the finest dream that ever sweetened sleep
To one who has such news as that, great news that cannot keep.
He may wake me any moment, and my peace it won't destroy,
For I'll share his gladness with him, when he tells me: 'It's a boy!'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Silver Stripes

When we've honored the heroes returning from France,
When we've mourned for the heroes who fell,
When we've done all we can for the home-coming man,
Who stood to the shot and the shell,
Let us all keep in mind those who lingered behind—
The thousands who waited to go—
The brave and the true who did all they could do,
Yet have only the silver to show.

They went from their homes at the summons for men,
They drilled in the heat of the sun,
They fell into line with a pluck that was fine;
Each cheerfully shouldered a gun;
They were ready to die for Old Glory on high,
They were eager to meet with the foe;
They were just like the rest of our bravest and best,
Though they've only the silver to show.

Their bodies stayed here, but their spirits were there;
And the men, who looked death in the face
For the cause, had no fear, for they knew waiting here,
There were many to fill up each place.
Oh, the ships came and went till the battle was spent,
And the tyrant went down with the blow!
Yet he still might have reigned, but for those who remained
And have only the silver to show.

So here's to the soldiers who never saw France,
And here's to the boys unafraid!
Let us give them their due; they were glorious, too,
And it isn't their fault that they stayed,
They were eager to share in the sacrifice there;
Let them share in the peace that we know.
For we know they were brave by the service they gave,
Though they've only the silver to show.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Simple Things

I would not be too wise- so very wise
That I must sneer at simple songs and creeds,
And let the glare of wisdom blind my eyes
To humble people and their humble needs.

I would not care to climb so high that I
Could never hear the children at their play,
Could only see the people passing by,
And never hear the cheering words they say.

I would not know too much- too much to smile
At trivial errors of the heart and hand,
Nor be too proud to play the friend the while,
Nor cease to help and know and understand.

I would not care to sit upon a throne,
Or build my house upon a mountain-top,
Where I must dwell in glory all alone
And never friend come in or poor man stop.

God grant that I may live upon this earth
And face the tasks which every morning brings
And never lose the glory and the worth
Of humble service and the simple things.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Simple Toilers

JUST to do the little things
And do them well from day to day,
Enough of satisfaction brings
To those who tread the simple way;
To make the striving here worth while
They do not ask for glories great,
They're happy with the rank and file
And are content to work and wait.

They seek their homes at close of day
And there find happiness and rest,
They watch their little children play,
And out of life they draw the best.
All unafraid they view the sun
Sink out of sight and night descend,
They miss the cares when day is done,
The sleepless hours that fame attend.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Soldier On Crutches

He came down the stairs on the laughter-filled grill
Where patriots were eating and drinking their fill,
The tap of his crutch on the marble of white
Caught my ear as I sat all alone there that night.
I turned—and a soldier my eyes fell upon,
He had fought for his country, and one leg was gone!

As he entered a silence fell over the place;
Every eye in the room was turned up to his face.
His head was up high and his eyes seemed aflame
With a wonderful light, and he laughed as he came.
He was young—not yet thirty—yet never he made
One sign of regret for the price he had paid.

One moment before this young soldier came in
I had caught bits of speech in the clatter and din
From the fine men about me in life's dress parade
Who were boasting the cash sacrifices they'd made;
And I'd thought of my own paltry service with pride,
When I turned and that hero of battle I spied.

I shall never forget the hot flushes of shame
That rushed to my cheeks as that young fellow came.
He was cheerful and smiling and clear-eyed and fine
And out of his face golden light seemed to shine.
And I thought as he passed me on crutches: 'How small
Are the gifts that I make if I don't give my all.'

Some day in the future in many a place
More soldiers just like him we'll all have to face.
We must sit with them, talk with them, laugh with them, too,
With the signs of their service forever in view
And this was my thought as I looked at him then—
Oh, God! make me worthy to stand with such men.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Song Of Loved Ones

The father toils at his work all day,
And he hums this song as he plods away:
'Heigho! for the mother and babe of three
Who watch at the window each night for me.
Their smiles are ever before my eyes,
And never the sound of their voices dies,
But ever and ever they seem to say,
'Love waits for you at the close of day.'

At home, a mother is heard to croon
To a little babe, this simple tune:
'Heigho! for the father who toils to-day,
He thinks of us, though he's far away;
He soon will come with a happy tread,
And stooping over your trundle bed,
Your little worries he'll kiss away;
Love comes to us at the close of day.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Song Of The Builder

I sink my piers to the solid rock,
And I send my steel to the sky,
And I pile up the granite, block by block
Full twenty stories high;
Nor wind nor weather shall wash away
The thing that I've builded, day by day.

Here's something of mine that shall ever stand
Till another shall tear it down;
Here is the work of my brain and hand,
Towering above the town.
And the idlers gay in their smug content,
Have nothing to leave for a monument.

Here from my girders I look below
At the throngs which travel by,
For little that's real will they leave to show
When it comes their time to die.
But I, when my time of life is through,
Will leave this building for men to view.

Oh, the work is hard and the days are long,
But hammers are tools for men,
And granite endures and steel is strong,
Outliving both brush and pen.
And ages after my voice is stilled,
Men shall know I lived by the things I build.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Songs Of Night

The moon swings low in the sky above,
And the twinkling stars shine bright,
And a mother sings to her baby love
Those wonderful songs of night;
Those wonderful songs of sugar plum trees,
And the fields where the fairies play,
Of cockle-shell boats on golden seas
That never are seen by day.

It is by-low time and she sweetly hums
Those wonderful songs of night;
Of the blare of trumpets and sound of drums
When the little tin soldiers fight;
She sings of a comical candy dog
And the gingerbread man who stands
By the side of a blinking cooky frog,
Without any arms or hands.

And the moonbeams dance on the parlor floor,
And a ship sets out to sea,
And a baby sails for the golden shore
In search of the sugar plum tree;
She's off to the cave of the Teddy Bear,
And the haunts of the fairies kind,
Where never an ache or a pain or care
Shall trouble her baby mind.

Oh, sweet is the smile on the baby's face
As she softly sinks to rest,
For where in the world is so fine a place
To sleep, as a mother's breast?
And if ever a song can reach the skies,
The angels must find delight
In hearing a mother's lullabies -
Those wonderful songs of night.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Sorrow Tugs

There's a lot of joy in the smiling world,
there's plenty of morning sun,
And laughter and songs and dances, too,
when-ever the day's work's done;
Full many an hour is a shining one,
when viewed by itself apart,
But the golden threads in the warp of life
are the sorrow tugs at your heart.

Oh, the fun is froth and it blows away,
and many a joy's forgot,
And the pleasures come and the pleasures go,
and memory holds them not;
But treasured ever you keep the pain
that causes your tears to start,
For the sweetest hours are the ones that bring
the sorrow tugs at your heart.

The lump in your throat and the little sigh
when your baby trudged away
The very first time to the big red school —
how long will their memory stay?
The fever days and the long black nights
you watched as she troubled, slept,
And the joy you felt when she smiled once more —
how long will that all be kept?

The glad hours live in a feeble way,
but the sad ones never die.
His first long trousers caused a pang
and you saw them with a sigh.
And the big still house when the boy and girl,
unto youth and beauty grown,
To college went; will you e'er forget
that first grim hour alone?

It seems as you look back over things,
that all that you treasure dear
Is somehow blent in a wondrous way

with a heart pang and a tear.
Though many a day is a joyous one
when viewed by itself apart,
The golden threads in the warp of life
are the sorrow tugs at your heart.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Sorry Hostess

She said she was sorry the weather was bad
The night that she asked us to dine;
And she really appeared inexpressibly sad
Because she had hoped 'twould be fine.
She was sorry to hear that my wife had a cold,
And she almost shed tears over that,
And how sorry she was, she most feelingly told,
That the steam wasn't on in the flat.

She was sorry she hadn't asked others to come,
She might just as well have had eight;
She said she was downcast and terribly glum
Because her dear husband was late.
She apologized then for the home she was in,
For the state of the rugs and the chairs,
For the children who made such a horrible din,
And then for the squeak in the stairs.

When the dinner began she apologized twice
For the olives, because they were small;
She was certain the celery, too, wasn't nice,
And the soup didn't suit her at all.
She was sorry she couldn't get whitefish instead
Of the trout that the fishmonger sent,
But she hoped that we'd manage somehow to be fed,
Though her dinner was not what she meant.

She spoke her regrets for the salad, and then
Explained she was really much hurt,
And begged both our pardons again and again
For serving a skimpy dessert.
She was sorry for this and sorry for that,
Though there really was nothing to blame.
But I thought to myself as I put on my hat,
Perhaps she is sorry we came.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Spendthrift

HE died a poor man, so they say,
Few were the dollars stored away
By him while he lived, and yet
His memory I'll not forget.
A spendthrift! True, but not for self
He scattered thus his hard-earned pelf;
Not that he might in splendor roam,
But for the ones he loved at home.

A spendthrift! That he was for those
Who, weeping, watched his eyelids close;
For them he toiled, for them he spent
His pittance and was well content.
The best in life to them he gave,
Denied them nothing just to save;
For those at home his coin he blew,
I would the world more spendthrifts knew.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Spoiler

With a twinkle in his eye
He'd come gayly walkin' by
An' he'd whistle to the children
An' he'd beckon 'em to come,
Then he'd chuckle low an' say,
'Come along, I'm on my way,
An' it's I that need your company
To buy a little gum.'

When his merry call they'd hear,
All the children, far an' near,
Would come flyin' from the gardens
Like the chickens after wheat;
When we'd shake our heads an' say:
'No, you mustn't go to-day!'
He'd beg to let him have 'em
In a pack about his feet.

Oh, he spoiled 'em, one an' all;
There was not a youngster small
But was over-fed on candy
An' was stuffed with lollypops,
An' I think his greatest joy
Was to get some girl or boy
An' bring 'em to their parents
All besmeared by chocolate drops.

Now the children's hearts are sore
For he comes to them no more,
And no more to them he whistles
And no more for them he stops;
But in Paradise, I think,
With his chuckle and his wink,
He is leading little angels
To the heavenly candy shops.

Edgar Albert Guest

The States

There is no star within the flag
That's brighter than its brothers,
And when of Michigan I brag,
I'm boasting of the others.
Just which is which no man can say —
One star for every state
Gleams brightly on our flag to-day,
And every one is great.

The stars that gem the skies at night
May differ in degree,
And some are pale and some are bright,
But in our flag we see
A sky of blue wherein the stars
Are equal in design;
Each has the radiance of Mars
And all are yours and mine.

The glory that is Michigan's
Is Colorado's too;
The same sky Minnesota spans,
The same sun warms it through;
And all are one beneath the flag,
A common hope is ours;
Our country is the mountain crag,
The valley and its flowers.

The land we love lies far away
As well as close at hand;
He has no vision who would say:
This state's my native land.
Though sweet the charms he knows the best,
Deep down within his heart
The farthest east, the farthest west
Of him must be a part.

There is no star within the flag
That's brighter than its brothers;
So when of Michigan I brag

I'm boasting of the others.
We share alike one purpose true;
One common end awaits;
We must in all we dream or do
Remain United States.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Struggle

Life is a struggle for peace,
A longing for rest,
A hope for the battles to cease,
A dream for the best;
And he is not living who stays
Contented with things,
Unconcerned with the work of the days
And all that it brings.

He is dead who sees nothing to change,
No wrong to make right;
Who travels no new way or strange
In search of the light;
Who never sets out for a goal
That he sees from afar
But contents his indifferent soul
With things as they are.

Life isn't rest- it is toil;
It is building a dream;
It is tilling a parcel of soil
Or bridging a stream;
It's pursuing the light of a star
That but dimly we see,
And in wresting from things as they are
The joy that should be.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Sulkers

The world's too busy now to pause
To listen to a whiner's cause;
It has no time to stop and pet
The sulker in a peevish fret,
Who wails he'll neither work nor play

Because things haven't gone his way.
The world keeps plodding right along
And gives its favors right or wrong
To all who have the grit to work
Regardless of the fool or shirk.
The world says this to every man:
'Go out and do the best you can.'

The world's too busy to implore
The beaten one to try once more;
'Twill help him if he wants to rise,
And boost him if he bravely tries,
And shows determination grim;
But it won't stop to baby him.

The world is occupied with men
Who fall but quickly rise again;
But those who whine because they're hit
And step aside to sulk a bit
Are doomed some day to wake and find
The world has left them far behind.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Summer Argument

SHE wants to go unto the shore,
And pack her trunk
With gowns no one has seen before,
And all such junk.

But I would seek some far off place
Where I 'm unknown,
And let my whiskers deck my face,
And be alone.

She sighs for parties and for teas,
They are her wish;
I merely want to take my ease
And loaf and fish.

She wants to lead a life that's grand,
In silken skirts;
I want to wear old trousers and
My outing shirts.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Summer Children

I like 'em, in the winter when their cheeks are slightly pale,
I like 'em in the spring time when the March winds blow a gale;
But when summer suns have tanned 'em and they're racing to and fro,
I somehow think the children make the finest sort of show.
When they're brown as little berries and they're bare of foot and head,
And they're on the go each minute where the velvet lawns are spread,
Then their health is at its finest and they never stop to rest,
Oh, it's then I think the children look and are their very best.
We've got to know the winter and we've got to know the spring,
But for children, could I do it, unto summer I would cling;
For I'm happiest when I see 'em, as a wild and merry band
Of healthy, lusty youngsters that the summer sun has tanned.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Summer Girl

The Summer girl
In peek-a-boos
And open hose
And narrow shoes,
Now trips along
The sandy beach,
While each man mutters:
'She's a peach.'

And now she meets
A handsome man,
Who kindly stoops
To get her fan;
Thus is the romance
Quickly staged,
Next day, of course,
They are engaged.

In two short weeks
They separate,
Back to the daily
Grind they hate;
He to his office,
She the store,
And thus their brief
Engagement's o'er.

He quite forgets
They ever met,
But she refuses
To forget;
She tells her friends,
With many a sigh:
'I almost had
A wealthy guy.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Sweetest Soul I Ever Knew

The sweetest soul I ever knew
I Had suffered untold sorrow,
Had wept full many a long night through
And feared the dark tomorrow.
Oh! she had seen her baby die
And seen her loved ones taken,
Full many a tear had dimmed her eye,
But her faith remained unshaken.

Her hair was white as the driven snow,
And her brow with care was lined,
But all untouched by the years of woe
Was the sweetness of her mind;
And all unharmed by the years of care
And the dreary nights of grieving
Was the gentle smile of that woman fair,
Still trustful, still believing.

Joy never produces a soul like this,
They come from the fires of anguish,
This perfect sweetness of mind they miss,
Who in rose-red bowers languish;
For out of the heartache and out of pain
And the suffering unabated,
The shattered hopes that were held in vain,
Was this wonderful soul created.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Sympathetic Minister

MY father is a peaceful man,
He tries in every way he can
To live a life of gentleness
And patience all the while;
He says that needless fretting's vain,
That it's absurd to be profane,
That nearly every wrong can be
Adjusted with a smile.
Yet try no matter how he will,
There's one thing that annoys him still,
One thing that robs him of his calm
And makes him very sore;
He cannot keep his self-control
When with a shovel full of coal
He misses where it's headed for,
And hits the furnace door.

He measures with a careful eye,
The space for which he's soon to try,
Then grabs his trusty shovel up
And loads it in the bin,
Then turns and with a healthy lunge,
That's two parts swing and two parts plunge
He lets go at the furnace fire,
Convinced it will go in!
And then we hear a sudden smack,
The cellar air turns blue and black;
Above the rattle of the coal
We hear his awful roar.
From dreadful language upward hissed
We know that father's aim has missed
And that his shovel full of coal
Went up against the door.

The minister was here one day
For supper, and Pa went away
To fix the furnace fire, and soon
We heard that awful roar.
And through the furnace pipes there came

Hot words that made Ma blush for shame,
'It strikes me,' said the minister,
'He hit the furnace door.'
Ma turned away and hung her head,
'I'm so ashamed,' was all she said;
And then the minister replied:
'Don't worry. I admit
That when I hit the furnace door
And spill the coal upon the floor,
I quite forget the cloth I wear
And—er—swear a little bit.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Tears Expressive

Death crossed his threshold yesterday
And left the glad voice of his loved one dumb.
To him the living now will come
And cross his threshold in the self-same way
To clasp his hand and vainly try to say
Words that shall soothe the heart that's stricken numb.

And I shall be among them in that place
So still and silent, where she used to sing—
The glad, sweet spirit that has taken wing—
Where shone the radiance of her lovely face,
And where she met him oft with fond embrace,
I shall step in to share his sorrowing.

Beside the staircase that has known her hand
And in the hall her presence made complete,
The home her life endowed with memories sweet
Where everything has heard her sweet command
And seems to wear her beauty, I shall stand
Wondering just how to greet him when we meet.

I dread the very silence of the place,
I dread our meeting and the time to speak—
Speech seems so vain when sorrow's at the peak!
Yet though my words lack soothing power or grace,
Perhaps he'll catch their meaning in my face
And read the tears which glisten on my cheek.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Temple - What Makes It Of Worth

You may delve down to rock for your foundation piers,
You may go with your steel to the sky
You may purchase the best of the thought of the years,
And the finest of workmanship buy.
You may line with the rarest of marble each hall,
And with gold you may tint it; but then
It is only a building if it, after all,
Isn't filled with the spirit of men.

You may put up a structure of brick and of stone,
Such as never was put up before;
Place there the costliest woods that are grown,
And carve every pillar and door.
You may fill it with splendors of quarry and mine,
With the glories of brush and of pen —
But it's only a building, though ever so fine,
If it hasn't the spirit of men.

You may build such structure that lightning can't harm,
Or one that an earthquake can't raze;
You may build it of granite, and boast that its charm
Shall last to the end of all days.
But you might as well never have builded at all,
Never cleared off the bog and the fen,
If, after it's finished, its sheltering wall
Doesn't stand for the spirit of men.

For it isn't the marble, nor is it the stone
Nor is it the columns of steel,
By which is the worth of an edifice known;
But it's something that's living and real.

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Edgar Albert Guest

The Tempters

EVERY gentle breeze that's blowing is a tempter very knowing,
For it penetrates my armor in its weakest, thinnest spot;
Though I strive each day to shun it, I have never wholly done it,
For it whispers of enchantments that I know should be forgot.
Every moment it's inviting me to go where fish are biting,
It is telling of the big ones that are lurking in the stream,
And the time I should be working, I am idling here and shirking,
From the duties of the office I am carried in a dream.

Every sunbeam that comes gayly into my grim office daily
Takes the courage from my bosom, makes of me a helpless thing;
It seems as though its mission is to rob me of ambition,
For I always pause to listen to the news it comes to bring.
Soft it mutters, 'they are biting, it is great the way they 're fighting,
As I came from way off yonder I could see them in the bay,
Get your rod and reel and hurry, come away from all the worry!'
And once more I 'm dreaming, dreaming in the middle of the day.

Every breeze that passes by me, every sunbeam dancing nigh me,
Seem to mock me with their freedom and to tempt me from my task,
For they set me vainly wishing to go way off yonder fishing,
To stretch out beneath the willows on the velvet grass and bask.
Well they know my greatest weakness, my shortcomings and my meekness,
Well they know that if they whisper of a blue sky and a stream
Where the finny tribe is lurking, I shall promptly give up working,
And it seems their greatest joy is just to come and make me dream.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Test

You can brag about the famous men you know;
You may boast about the great men you have met,
Parsons, eloquent and wise; stars in histrionic skies;
Millionaires and navy admirals, and yet
Fame and power and wealth and glory vanish fast;
They are lusters that were never made to stick,
And the friends worth-while and true, are the happy smiling few
Who come to call upon you when you're sick.

You may think it very fine to know the great;
You may glory in some leader's words of praise;
You may tell with eyes aglow of the public men you know,
But the true friends seldom travel glory's ways,
And the day you're lying ill, lonely, pale and keeping still,
With a fevered pulse, that's beating double quick,
Then it is you must depend on the old-familiar friend
To come to call upon you when you're sick.

It is pleasing to receive a great man's nod,
And it's good to know the big men of the land,
But the test of friendship true, isn't merely: 'Howdy-do?'
And a willingness to shake you by the hand.
If you want to know the friends who love you best,
And the faithful from the doubtful you would pick,
It is not a mighty task; of yourself you've but to ask:
'Does he come to call upon me when I'm sick?'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Things That Make A Soldier Great

The things that make a soldier great and send him out to die,
To face the flaming cannon's mouth, nor ever question why,
Are lilacs by a little porch, the row of tulips red,
The peonies and pansies, too, the old petunia bed,
The grass plot where his children play, the roses on the wall:
'Tis these that make a soldier great. He's fighting for them all.

'Tis not the pomp and pride of kings that make a soldier brave;
'Tis not allegiance to the flag that over him may wave;
For soldiers never fight so well on land or on the foam
As when behind the cause they see the little place called home.
Endanger but that humble street whereon his children run—
You make a soldier of the man who never bore a gun.

What is it through the battle smoke the valiant soldier sees?
The little garden far away, the budding apple trees,
The little patch of ground back there, the children at their play,
Perhaps a tiny mound behind the simple church of gray.
The golden thread of courage isn't linked to castle dome
But to the spot, where'er it be—the humble spot called home.

And now the lilacs bud again and all is lovely there,
And homesick soldiers far away know spring is in the air;
The tulips come to bloom again, the grass once more is green,
And every man can see the spot where all his joys have been.
He sees his children smile at him, he hears the bugle call,
And only death can stop him now—he's fighting for them all.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Things They Musn'T Touch

Been down to the art museum an' looked at a thousand things,
The bodies of ancient mummies an' the treasures of ancient kings,
An' some of the walls were lovely, but some of the things weren't much,
But all had a rail around 'em, an' all wore a sign 'Don't touch.'
Now maybe an art museum needs guards and a warning sign
An' the hands of the folks should never paw over its treasures fine;
But I noticed the rooms were chilly with all the joys they hold,
An' in spite of the lovely pictures, I'd say that the place is cold.
An' somehow I got to thinkin' of many a home I know
Which is kept like an art museum, an' merely a place for show;
They haven't railed off their treasures or posted up signs or such,
But all of the children know it—there's a lot that they mustn't touch.
It's hands off the grand piano, keep out of the finest chair,
Stay out of the stylish parlor, don't run on the shiny stair;
You may look at the velvet curtains which hang in the stately hall,
But always and ever remember, they're not to be touched at all.
'Don't touch!' for an art museum, is proper enough, I know,
But my children's feet shall scamper wherever they want to go,
And I want no rare possessions or a joy which has cost so much,
From which I must bar the children and tell them they 'mustn't touch.'

Edgar Albert Guest

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It's hands off the grand piano, keep out of the finest chair,
Stay out of the stylish parlor, don't run on the shiny stair;
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From which I must bar the children and tell them they 'mustn't touch.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Things You Can'T Forget

They ain't much, seen from day to day-
The big elm tree across the way,
The church spire, an' the meetin' place
Lit up by many a friendly face.
You pass 'em by a dozen times
An' never think o' them in rhymes,
Or fit for poet's singin'. Yet
They're all the things you can't forget;
An' they're the things you'll miss some day
If ever you should go away.

The people here ain't much to see-
Jes' common folks like you an' me,
Doin' the ordinary tasks
Which life of everybody asks:
Old Dr. Green, still farin' 'round
To where his patients can be found,
An' Parson Hill, serene o' face,
Carryin' God's message every place,
An' Jim, who keeps the grocery store-
Yet they are folks you'd hunger for.

They seem so plain when close to view-
Bill Barker, an' his brother too,
The Jacksons, men of higher rank
Because they chance to run the bank,
Yet friends to every one round here,
Quiet an' kindly an' sincere,
Not much to sing about or praise,
Livin' their lives in modest ways-
Yet in your memory they'd stay
If ever you should go away.

These are things an' these the men
Some day you'll long to see again.
Now it's so near you scarcely see
The beauty o' that big elm tree,
But some day later on you will
An' wonder if it's standin' still,

An' if the birds return to sing
An' make their nests there every spring.
Mebbe you scorn them now, but they
Will bring you back again some day.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Three Me's

I'd like to steal a day and be
All alone with little me,
Little me that used to run
Everywhere in search of fun;
Little me of long ago
Who was glad and didn't know
Life is freighted down with care
For the backs of men to bear;
Little me who thought a smile
Ought to linger all the while-
On his Mother's pretty face
And a tear should never trace
Lines of sorrow, hurt or care
On those cheeks so wondrous fair.

I should like once more to be
All alone with youthful me;
Youthful me who saw the hills
Where the sun its splendor spills
And was certain that in time
To the topmost height he'd climb;
Youthful me, serene of soul,
Who beheld a shining goal.
And imagined he could gain
Glory without grief or pain,
Confident and quick with life,
Madly eager for the strife,
Knowing not that bitter care
Waited for his coming there.

I should like to sit alone
With the me now older grown,
Like to lead the little me
And the youth that used to be
Once again along the ways
Of our glorious yesterdays.
We could chuckle soft and low
At the things we didn't know,
And could laugh to think how bold

We had been in days of old,
And how blind we were to care
With its heartache and despair,
We could smile away the tears
And the pain of later years.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Thumbed Collar

Go up and change your collar,' mother often says to me,
'For you can't go out in that one, it's as dirty as can be.
There are splotches on the surface where they very plainly show.'
'That is very queer,' I answer, 'it was clean an hour ago.'
But I guess just what has happened, and in this it's clearly summed:
He who lets a baby love him often gets his collar thumbed.

I've been dressed up for a dinner, in a shirt of snowy white,
And I've stooped to kiss the rascal, and his arms have held me tight;
I have clasped him to my bosom as he goosed and gurgled, then
I have found it necessary that I change my shirt again.
For the snowy, spotless surface, with some sticky sweet was gummed.
He who lets a baby love him often gets his linen thumbed.

I have gone downtown o' mornings thinking I was clean and neat,
And have had some kind friend stop me as I walked along the street
With the startling information that I wore a collar soiled,
As he saw the prints and traces where those little thumbs had toiled;
And I've made this explanation—it's a song I long have hummed—
He who loves a little baby often get his collar thumbed.

And I'm rather proud I reckon, to have people here allude
To the prints upon my collars; they're my badge of servitude.
They're the proudest marks I carry, and I really dread the day
When there'll be no sticky fingers, when I start to go away,
To reach up and soil my neckwear; and my heart sometimes is numbed
When I think the day is coming when my collars won't be thumbed.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Time For Brotherhood

When a fellow's feeling blue,
And is troubled, through and through
With a melancholy feeling
That he cannot seem to shake,
When his plans have gone astray
And his hopes have slipped away
And he's standing at the crossroads
Wondering which one to take,
That's the time to grab his hand
And to make him understand
That he's grieving over trifles
And his worries aren't worth while;
That's the time to slap his back
With a good old friendly whack,
That's the time he needs your friendship
And the time he wants your smile.

When he's deep down in the dumps
And has known life's rocky bumps,
When he's got the kill-joy notion
That his work no longer counts;
That's the time a word of cheer
Sweetly whispered in his ear
Sets the heart of him to beating
'Till his spirit proudly mounts.
That's the time a glad 'Hello!'
Means far more than you may know,
That's the time a sign of friendship
Really does a brother good;
That's the time a word of praise
Lifts a fellow up for days,
Sends him on his way, rejoicing,
That's the time for brotherhood.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Time For Deeds

We have boasted our courage in moments of ease,
Our star-spangled banner we've flung on the breeze;
We have taught men to cheer for its beauty and worth,
And have called it the flag of the bravest on earth
Now the dark days are here, we must stand to the test.
Oh, God! let us prove we are true to our best!

We have drunk to our flag, and we've talked of the right,
We have challenged oppression to show us its might;
We have strutted for years through the world as a race
That for God and for country, earth's tyrants would face;
Now the gage is flung down, hate is loosed in the world.
Oh, God! shall our flag in dishonor be furled?

We have said we are brave; we have preached of the truth,
We have walked in conceit of the strength of our youth;
We have mocked at the ramparts and guns of the foe,
As though we believed we could laugh them all low.
Now oppression has struck! We are challenged to fight!
Oh, God! let us prove we can stand for the right!

If in honor and glory our flag is to wave,
If we are to keep this—the land of the brave;
If more than fine words are to fashion our creeds,
Now must our hands and our hearts turn to deeds.
We are challenged by tyrants our strength to reveal!
Oh, God! let us prove that our courage is real!

Edgar Albert Guest

The Toiler

He swore that he'd be true to her,
If she would only marry him;
That as his wife, throughout his life
She'd never know a moment grim.

He vowed that he would toil for her,
That she should wear the latest things,
He'd robe in furs that form of hers
And deck her hands with diamond rings.

He promised her a motor car,
And maids to answer her commands;
In water hot, with dish and pot
He swore she'd never dip her hands.

Oh, fine the promises he made,
Oh, vows by which her heart was stirred!
And since that time, it's been a crime
The way he's worked to keep his word.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Town Of Nothing-To-Do

THEY say somewhere in the distance fair,
Is the town of Nothing-to-Do,
Where the sun, they say, shines every day
And the skies are always blue;
Where no one tries for a silver prize
And no one strives for gold,
There, every race has taken place,
And every tale been told.

The blacksmith sings as his anvil rings
Of the town of Nothing-to-Do,
And vows in his song, though the road is long
When with anvil and forge he's through
He will wander far, where the glad folks are,
And will rest in that happy town;
He dreams of the day when he'll put for aye
His apron and hammer down.

O, it matters not what the toiler's lot,
Be he preacher or soldier brave,
Though he delve a ditch, be he great or rich,
Be judge or a statesman grave,
He dreams always of the future days
When he'll go to Nothing-to-Do,
When he's faced life's test, and his hands will rest
And his time of toil is through.

But Nothing-to-Do, folks tell me, who
Have journeyed the hills and found it,
Is a hollow fake and a big mistake,
For the streams of care surround it.
And the people there, they all declare,
Are gloomy and sad and sighing,
And they yearn for strife, for the joy of life
Is something to do worth trying.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Toy-Strewn Home

Give me the house where the toys are strewn,
Where the dolls are asleep in the chairs,
Where the building blocks and the toy balloon
And the soldiers guard the stairs.
Let me step in a house where the tiny cart
With the horses rules the floor,
And rest comes into my weary heart,
For I am at home once more.

Give me the house with the toys about,
With the battered old train of cars,
The box of paints and the books left out,
And the ship with her broken spars.
Let me step in a house at the close of day
That is littered with children's toys,
And dwell once more in the haunts of play,
With the echoes of by-gone noise.

Give me the house where the toys are seen,
The house where the children romp,
And I'll happier be than man has been
'Neath the gilded dome of pomp.
Let me see the litter of bright-eyed play
Strewn over the parlor floor,
And the joys I knew in a far-off day
Will gladden my heart once more.

Whoever has lived in a toy-strewn home,
Though feeble he be and gray,
Will yearn, no matter how far he roam,
For the glorious disarray
Of the little home with its littered floor
That was his in the by-gone days;
And his heart will throb as it throbbed before,
When he rests where a baby plays.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Tragedy Of Age

I HEARD an old man say today:
'A young man gives me orders now,'
A beardless youth gets better pay
And tells me what to do and how;
While I have toiled for forty years,
A stripling enters in the race
And with a single bound appears
And eagerly usurps my place.

'I've seen them shake their heads at me,
And I have often heard them sigh
As they my faltering hand would see:
'The times, alas, have passed him by,
He isn't what he used to be,
He's lost his grip,' and well I knew
That youth at last had conquered me,
As youth old age will ever do.

'And now it's come, and I behold
Young fighters stripped to face the fray,
Exultant, clear of eye and bold,
Where I was wont to lead the way.
My nerve, they say, is gone from me,
I fear to do what youth will dare,
I shrink from opportunity,
My place is in an easy chair.

'This has been so since time began,
And to the end of time will be,
Brief is the working time of man,
Brief as the leaf upon the tree.
The young man comes, the old man goes,
Old eyes, old brains, old bodies fail,
Beyond our powers the struggle grows,
Old age drops out. So ends the tale.'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Tramp

Eagerly he took my dime,
Then shuffled on his way,
Thick with sin and filth and grime,
But I wondered all that day
How the man had gone astray.

Not to him the dime I gave;
Not unto the man of woe,
Not to him who should be brave,
Not to him who'd sunk so low,
But the boy of long ago.

Passed his years of sin and shame
Through the filth that all could see,
Out of what he is there came
One more pitiful to me:
Came the boy that used to be.

Smiling, full of promise glad,
Stood a baby, like my own;
I beheld a glorious lad,
Someone once had loved and known
Out of which this wreck had grown!

Where, thought I, must lie the blame?
Who has failed in such a way?
As all children come he came,
There's a soul within his clay;
Who has led his feet astray?

As he shuffled down the hall
With the coin I'd never miss,
What, thought I, were fame and all
Man may gain of earthly bliss,
If my child should come to this!

Edgar Albert Guest

The True Man

This is the sort of a man was he:
True when it hurt him a lot to be;
Tight in a corner an' knowin' a lie
Would have helped him out, but he wouldn't buy
His freedom there in so cheap a way-
He told the truth though he had to pay.

Honest! Not in the easy sense,
When he needn't worry about expense-
We'll all play square when it doesn't count
And the sum at stake's not a large amount-
But he was square when the times were bad,
An' keepin' his word took all he had.

Honor is something we all profess,
But most of us cheat- some more, some less-
An' the real test isn't the way we do
When there isn't a pinch in either shoe;
It's whether we're true to our best or not
When the right thing's certain to hurt a lot.

That is the sort of a man was he:
Straight when it hurt him a lot to be;
Times when a lie would have paid him well,
No matter the cost, the truth he'd tell;
An' he'd rather go down to a drab defeat
Than save himself if he had to cheat.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Truth About Envy

I like to see the flowers grow,
To see the pansies in a row;
I think a well-kept garden's fine,
And wish that such a one were mine;
But one can't have a stock of flowers
Unless he digs and digs for hours.
My ground is always bleak and bare;
The roses do not flourish there.
And where I once sowed poppy seeds
Is now a tangled mass of weeds.'
I'm fond of flowers, but admit,
For digging I don't care a bit.
I envy men whose yards are gay,
But never work as hard as they;
I also envy men who own
More wealth than I have ever known.
I'm like a lot of men who yearn
For joys that they refuse to earn.
You cannot have the joys of work
And take the comfort of a shirk.
I find the man I envy most
Is he who's longest at his post.
I could have gold and roses, too,
If I would work like those who do.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Undaunted

He tried to travel No Man's Land, that's guarded well with guns,
He tried to race the road of death, where never a coward runs.
Now he's asking of his doctor, and he's panting hard for breath,
How soon he will be ready for another bout with death.

You'd think if you had wakened in a shell hole's slime and mud
That was partly dirty water, but was mostly human blood,
And you had to lie and suffer till the bullets ceased to hum
And the night time dropped its cover, so the stretcher boys could come-

You'd think if you had suffered from a fever and its thirst,
And could hear the 'rapids' spitting and the high explosives burst,
And had lived to tell that story- you could face our fellow men
In the little peaceful village, though you never fought again.

You'd think that once you'd fallen in the shrapnel's deadly rain,
Once you'd shed your blood for honor, you had borne your share of pain;
Once you'd traveled No Man's country, you'd be satisfied to quit
And be invalided homeward, and could say you'd done your bit.

But he's lying, patched and bandaged, very white and very weak,
And he's trying to be cheerful, though it's agony to speak;
He is pleading with the doctor, though he's panting hard for breath,
To return him to the trenches for another bout with death.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Unknown Friends

We cannot count our friends, nor say
How many praise us day by day.
Each one of us has friends that he
Has yet to meet and really know,
Who guard him, wheresoe'er they be,
From harm and slander's cruel blow.
They help to light our path with cheer,
Although they pass as strangers here.

These friends, unseen, unheard, unknown,
Our lasting gratitude should own.
They serve us in a thousand ways
Where we perhaps should friendless be;
They tell our worth and speak our praise
And for their service ask no fee;
They choose to be our friends, although
We have not learned to call them so.

We cannot guess how large the debt
We owe to friends we have not met.
We only know, from day to day,
That we discover here and there
How one has tried to smooth our way,
And ease our heavy load of care,
Then passed along and left behind
His friendly gift for us to find.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Unsettled Scores

The men are talking peace at 'ome, but 'ere we're talking fight,
There's many a little debt we've got to square;
A sniper sent a bullet through my bunkie's 'ead last night,
And 'is body's lying somewhere h'over there.

Oh, we 'ear a lot of rumors that the war is h'almost through
But Hi'm thinking that it's only arf begun;
Every soldier in the trenches has a little debt that's due
And Hi'm telling you it's not a money one.

We 'ave 'eard the bullets whistle and we've 'card the shrapnel sing
And we've listened to a dying comrade's pleas,
And we've 'eard about the comfort that the days of peace will bring,
But we've debts that can't be settled h'over seas.

They that 'aven't slept in trenches, 'aven't brothered with the worms,
'Aven't 'ad a bunkie slaughtered at their side,
May someday get together and arrange some sort of terms,
But it isn't likely we'll be satisfied.

There are debts we want to settle, 'and to 'and, and face to face,
There are one or two Hi've promised that Hi'd square;
And Hi cannot 'old my 'ead up, 'ere or in the other place,
Till Hi've settled for my bunkie, lying there.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Value Of A Telephone

LAST night we had a hurry call to go to daughter May,
Her husband said that Ma and me were wanted right away,
An' so, though it was after 12, an' bitter cold outside,
We hustled out of bed an' dressed an' took a trolley ride;
An' Jim—that is her husband—met us with a gracious bow
An' said to me as we stepped in: 'Well, you're a grandpa now.'

An' Ma went flyin' up the stairs, an' Jim an' I stayed down,
An' talked about the great event, Jim in his dressin' gown,
As comfortable as you please. An' then he sorter smiled
An' said: 'An hour or two ago I thought that I'd go wild,
The stork was hoverin' above, an' I was all alone,
I'll tell you, Dad, I burned the wires of that old telephone.

'I telephoned the doctor an' I telephoned the nurse,
An' I'm sure the sort of service that I got could not be worse;
I telephoned the druggist, an' I 'phoned the neighbors, too,
An' then when I was through with them, I telephoned to you.
Each minute seemed an hour to me; I thought they'd never come,
You bet I was a busy boy. I made the old wires hum.'

An' then I laughed an' said to him: 'Why, when your wife was born,
We didn't have a telephone the neighbors 'round to warn;
They got me out of bed at 1 a. m. an' said to me:
'You'd better get the doctor now, an' get him here at 3.'
I had to run four miles that night to bang upon his door,
An' then to get the nurse I had to hike about two more.

'That isn't all the hikin' that the women made me do;
I had to get her mother's folks—the same as she made you;
There were no trolley cars back then, at least that late at night;
I ran four stitches in my side, and finished ten pounds light;
I walked an' did a double trot, a gallop and a pace,
An' I didn't even stop to wipe the sweat beads from my face.

'An' here you're in your dressin' gown, an' sittin' by the fire,
An' everybody's on the job, all summoned by the wire.
You haven't even left your house or felt the winter's Chill
Just think, my boy, without a 'phone, why, you'd be running still!

You'd still be hiking somewhere an' wearing out your shoes,
An' pausin' for your second wind—that's how I spread the news!

Edgar Albert Guest

The Vote Of Thanks

FOR every man who works there are
A dozen who will let him;
They'll smiling bask within the shade
The while his duties fret him.
And when his arduous tasks are done,
From out the idle ranks
There promptly steps a grateful one
To move a vote of thanks.

Where more than three foregathered are
In meeting, club or lodge,
Some cheerful soul must do the work
That all the others dodge.
Some one for all must toil and plan,
Some one the money banks,
For which the shirkers to a man
Will move a vote of thanks.

The many spend their hours in ease,
While busy are the few;
The glory of the game they want
But not its work to do.
Untroubled here on earth they live,
The strength that's in their shanks
They save, to those who toil, to give
A rising vote of thanks.

Some day when all the work is done
And rest has settled down,
Perhaps the weary toiler then
Will wear a golden crown.
Upon his breast may medals flash,
And at the Heavenly banks
Perhaps they'll even let him cash
Those rising votes of thanks.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Waiter At The Camp

The officers' friend is the waiter at camp.
In the night air 'twas cold and was bitterly damp,
And they asked me to dine, which I readily did,
For at dining I've talents I never keep hid.
Then a bright-eyed young fellow came in with the meat,
And straightway the troop of us started to eat.

I silently noticed that young fellow wait
At each officer's side 'til he'd filled up his plate;
I was startled a bit at the very first look
By the size of the helping each officer took,
And I thought as I sat there among them that night
Of the army's effect on a man's appetite.

The waiter at last brought the platter to me
And modestly proper I started to be.
A small piece of meat then I gracefully took;
The young fellow stood there and gave me a look.
'Better get all you want,' he remarked to me then,
'I pass this way once, but I don't come again.'

I turned in amazement. He nodded his head
In a way that convinced me he meant what he said.
I knew from his manner and smile on his lip
That the rule in the army is 'no second trip.'
And I thought as he left me my food to attack,
Life gives us one chance, but it never comes back.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Way Of The World

IT'S ALL in the way that you look at the world,
It's all in the way that you do things,
With laughter or sorrow your lips may be curled,
But it's all in the way that you view things.
Yes, it's all in the way that you journey along
That makes life a plague or a pleasure,
The mind is the fountain of wailing or song
And a man is the judge of the measure.

It's all in the way that you look at your woe
And not in the woe that is sent you;
You may bear it with courage and smile as you go,
Or frown and let it discontent you.
For care is a creature that's born of the mind,
And gloom is a cloud we can scatter,
The thorn of the rose if we seek we can find,
But the thorn of the rose doesn't matter.

We can make our own sunshine and make our own mirth,
We can add to our trouble by moping;
We can make a grim graveyard of this glad old earth
By giving up loving and hoping.
For it's all in the way that we look at the world,
Yes, it's all in the way that we view things,
With sorrow or laughter our lips may be curled
For it's all in the way that we do things.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Way To Do

'How's things?' says I,
Says he 'Not bad,
They might be worse,
But then I 'm glad
They ain't.' That's all
He had to say,
An' whistled as
He went away.

He had his troubles,
That I knew,
And sorrows also
Grieved him, too.
But not a word
Of them, says he,
But kep' 'em to
Himself, you see.

'How's things? ' says I,
'Not bad,' says he,
'They might be worse,'
An' seems to me,
That's jes' the thing
We all should say
About our troubles
Every day.

They might be worse,
Of course they might.
This thought should put
Our gloom to flight.
Let's cease our
Troubles to rehearse,
And tell our friends
They might be worse.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Way To Make Friends

THE way to make friends is as easy
As breathing the fresh morning air;
It isn't an art to be studied
Alone by the men who can spare
The time from their every day labors,
To ponder on classical lore,
It never is taught in a college
And it isn't a trick or a chore.

The way to make friends is to be one,
To smile at the stranger you meet,
To think cheerful thoughts and to speak them
Aloud to the people you greet.
To hold your hand out to a brother,
And cheerfully say: 'Howdy-do,'
In a way that he'll know that you mean it,
That's all that's expected of you.

Be honest in all of your dealings,
Be true to your word and your home,
And you will make friends, never doubt it,
Wherever you happen to roam.
Condemn not the brother who falters,
Nor fawn on the rich and the great.
Speak kindly to all who approach you,
And give up all whining at fate.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Weaver

The patter of rain on the roof,
The glint of the sun on the rose;
Of life, these the warp and the woof,
The weaving that everyone knows.
Now grief with its consequent tear,
Now joy with its luminous smile;
The days are the threads of the year—
Is what I am weaving worth while?

What pattern have I on my loom?
Shall my bit of tapestry please?
Am I working with gray threads of gloom?
Is there faith in the figures I seize?
When my fingers are lifeless and cold,
And the threads I no longer can weave
Shall there be there for men to behold
One sign of the things I believe?

God sends me the gray days and rare,
The threads from his bountiful skein,
And many, as sunshine, are fair.
And some are as dark as the rain.
And I think as I toil to express
My life through the days slipping by,
Shall my tapestry prove a success?
What sort of weaver am I?

Am I making the most of the red
And the bright strands of luminous gold?
Or blotting them out with the thread
By which all men's failure is told?
Am I picturing life as despair,
As a thing men shall shudder to see,
Or weaving a bit that is fair
That shall stand as the record of me?

Edgar Albert Guest

The Whiners

I don't mind the man with a red blooded kick
At a real or a fancied wrong;
I can stand for the chap with a grouch, if he's quick
To drop it when joy comes along;
I have praise for the fellow who says what he thinks,
Though his thoughts may not fit in with mine;
But spare me from having to mix with the ginks
Who go through this world with a whine.

I am willing to listen to sinner or saint
Who is willing to fight for his rights,
And there's something sometimes in an honest complaint
That the soul of me really delights.
For kickers are useful and grouches are wise,
For their purpose is frequently fine;
But spare me from having to mix with the guys
Who go through this world with a whine.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Wide Outdoors

The rich may pay for orchids rare, but, Oh the apple tree
Flings out its blossoms to the world for every eye to see,
And all who sigh for loveliness may walk beneath the sky
And claim a richer beauty than man's gold can ever buy.

The blooming cherry trees are free for all to look upon;
The dogwood buds for all of us, and not some favorite one;
The wide outdoors is no man's own; the stranger on the street
Can cast his eyes on many a rose and claim its fragrance sweet.

Small gardens are shut in by walls, but none can wall the sky,
And none can hide the friendly trees from all who travel by;
And none can hold the apple boughs and claim them for his own,
For all the beauties of the earth belong to God alone.

So let me walk the world just now and wander far and near;
Earth's loveliness is mine to see, its music mine to hear;
There's not a single apple bough that spills its blooms about
But I can claim the joy of it, and none can shut me out.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Willing Horse

I'd rather be the willing horse that people ride to death
Than be the proud and haughty steed that children dare not touch;
I'd rather haul a merry pack and finish out of breath
Than never leave the barn to toil because I'm worth too much.
So boast your noble pedigrees
And talk of manners, if you please-
The weary horse enjoys his ease
When all his work is done;
The willing horse, day in and out,
Can hear the merry children shout
And every time they are about
He shares in all their fun.

I want no guards beside my door to pick and choose my friends for me;
I would not be shut off from men as is the fancy steed;
I do not care when I go by that no one turns his eyes to see
The dashing manner of my gait which marks my noble breed;
I am content to trudge the road
And willingly to draw my load-
Sometimes to know the spur and goad
When I begin to lag;
I'd rather feel the collar jerk
And tug at me, the while I work,
Than all the tasks of life to shirk
As does the stylish nag.

So let me be the willing horse that now and then is overtasked,
Let me be one the children love and freely dare to ride-
I'd rather be the gentle steed of which too much is sometimes asked
Than be the one that never knows the youngsters at his side.
So drive me wheresoe'er you will,
On level road or up the hill,
Pile on my back the burdens still
And run me out of breath-
In love and friendship, day by day,
And kindly words I'll take my pay;
A willing horse; that is the way
I choose to meet my death.

The Women Of The Sailors

The women of the sailors, unto them, O God, be kind!
They never hear the breaking waves, they never hear the wind
But that their hearts are anguish-tossed-, and every thought's a fear,
For the women of the sailors it's a bitter time of year.

The women of the sailors, unto them, O God, be good!
'Tis they who know and understand how frail are steel and wood;
'Tis they who never see the spray upon a rock-bound coast
But what they breathe a prayer to Thee for those that love them most.

The women of the sailors, unto them, O God, be nigh!
They never hear the hurricane but that it means a sigh;
They never hear the tempest but that they pray to
Thee For the safety of their loved ones who are battling with the sea.

Edgar Albert Guest

The Workman's Dream

To-day it's dirt and dust and steam,
To-morrow it will be the same,
And through it all the soul must dream
And try to play a manly game;
Dirt, dust and steam and harsh commands,
Yet many a soft hand passes by
And only thinks he understands
The purpose of my task and why.
I've seen men shudder just to see
Me standing at this lathe of mine,
And knew somehow they pitied me,
But I have never made a whine;
For out of all this dirt and dust
And clang and clamor day by day,
Beyond toil's everlasting 'must,'
I see my little ones at play.
The hissing steam would drive me mad
If hissing steam was all I heard;
But there's a boy who calls me dad
Who daily keeps my courage spurred;
And there's a little girl who waits
Each night for all that I may bring,
And I'm the guardian of their fates,
Which makes this job a wholesome thing.
Beyond the dust and dirt and steam
I see a college where he'll go;
And when I shall fulfill my dream,
More than his father he will know;
And she shall be a woman fair,
Fit for the world to love and trust—
I'll give my land a glorious pair
Out of this place of dirt and dust.

Edgar Albert Guest

The World And Bud

If we were all alike, what a dreadful world 'twould be!
No one would know which one was you or which of us was me.
We'd never have a 'Skinny' or a 'Freckles' or a 'Fat,'
An' there wouldn't be a sissy boy to wear a velvet hat;
An' we'd all of us be pitchers when we played a baseball match,
For we'd never have a feller who'd have nerve enough to catch.

If we were all alike an' looked an' thought the same,
I wonder how'd they call us, 'cause there'd only be one name.
An' there'd only be one flavor for our ice cream sodas, too,
An' one color for a necktie an' I 'spose that would be blue;
An' maybe we'd have mothers who were very fond of curls,
An' they'd make us fellers wear our hair like lovely little girls.

Sometimes I think it's funny when I hear some feller say
That he isn't fond of chocolate, when I eat it every day.
Or some other fellow doesn't like the books I like to read;
But I'm glad that we are different, yes, siree! I am indeed.
If everybody looked alike an' talked alike, Oh, Gee!
We'd never know which one was you or which of us was me.

Edgar Albert Guest

The World Is Against Me

'The world is against me,' he said with a sigh.
'Somebody stops every scheme that I try.
The world has me down and it's keeping me there;
I don't get a chance. Oh, the world is unfair!
When a fellow is poor then he can't get a show;
The world is determined to keep him down low.'
'What of Abe Lincoln?' I asked. 'Would you say
That he was much richer than you are to-day?
He hadn't your chance of making his mark,
And his outlook was often exceedingly dark;
Yet he clung to his purpose with courage most grim
And he got to the top. Was the world against him?'
'What of Ben Franklin? I've oft heard it said
That many a time he went hungry to bed.
He started with nothing but courage to climb,
But patiently struggled and waited his time.
He dangled awhile from real poverty's limb,
Yet he got to the top. Was the world against him?'
'I could name you a dozen, yes, hundreds, I guess,
Of poor boys who've patiently climbed to success;
All boys who were down and who struggled alone,
Who'd have thought themselves rich if your fortune they'd known;
Yet they rose in the world you're so quick to condemn,
And I'm asking you now, was the world against them?'

Edgar Albert Guest

The Worry-Chaser

COME here to me, little lassie of three,
And get in your place on your old daddy's knee,
Put those chubby arms round where they nightly belong
And cling to my neck, for the day has gone wrong
And I need you, I need you to scatter away
All the cares and the griefs of a troublesome day.

Let's sing the old songs and the old lullabies
Till the light of joy burns once again in my eyes;
Let's ride up to London at doublefast trot
Till all of my worries and cares are forgot;
Let's romp on the floor and make merry tonight,
For you, little girl, can put everything right.

You tickle my ribs and I'll tickle your toes,
You tug at my beard and I'll tug at your nose,
I'll blow down your neck and you blow down mine,
Then we'll ride pig-a-back and do everything fine;
And the first thing I know I'll be gay and care-free,
Come, little lassie, climb onto my knee.

I was cross, I was mean, through the heat of the day,
I gave up to despair as my plans went astray;
But it's all over now, and I want to forget
The troubles that caused me to worry and fret.
And you are my sunshine, my source of delight,
So come to your dad and make everything right!

Edgar Albert Guest

The Wrist Watch Man

He is marching dusty highways and he's riding bitter trails,
His eyes are clear and shining and his muscles hard as nails.
He is wearing Yankee khaki and a healthy coat of tan,
And the chap that we are backing is the Wrist Watch Man.

He's no parlour dude, a-prancing, he's no puny pacifist,
And it's not for affectation there's a watch upon his wrist.
He's a fine two-fisted scrapper, he is pure American,
And the backbone of the nation is the Wrist Watch Man.

He is marching with a rifle, he is digging in a trench,
He is swapping English phrases with a poilu for his French;
You will find him in the navy doing anything he can,
For at every post of duty is the Wrist Watch Man.

Oh, the time was that we chuckled at the soft and flabby chap
Who wore a little wrist watch that was fastened with a strap.
But the chuckles all have vanished, and with glory now we scan
The courage and the splendor of the Wrist Watch Man.

He is not the man we laughed at, not the one who won our jeers,
He's the man that we are proud of, he's the man that owns our cheers;
He's the finest of the finest, he's the bravest of the clan,
And I pray for God's protection for our Wrist Watch Man.

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Edgar Albert Guest

Thec Lanes Of Memory

Adown the lanes of memory bloom all the flowers of yesteryear,
And looking back we smile to see life's bright red roses reappear,
The little sprigs of mignonette that smiled upon us as we passed,
The pansy and the violet, too sweet, we thought those days, to last.

The gentle mother by the door caresses still her lilac blooms,
And as we wander back once more we seem to smell the old perfumes,
We seem to live again the joys that once were ours so long ago
When we were little girls and boys, with all the charms we used to know.

But living things grow old and fade; the dead in memory remain,
In all their splendid youth arrayed, exempt from suffering and pain;
The little babe God called away, so many, many years ago,
Is still a little babe to-day, and I am glad that this is so.

Time has not changed the joys we knew; the summer rains or winter snows
Have failed to harm the wondrous hue of any dew-kissed bygone rose;
In memory 'tis still as fair as when we plucked it for our own,
And we can see it blooming there, if anything more lovely grown.

Adown the lanes of memory bloom all the joys of yesteryear,
And God has given you and me the power to make them reappear;
For we can settle back at night and live again the joys we knew
And taste once more the old delight of days when all our skies were blue.

Edgar Albert Guest

There Are No Gods!

There are no gods that bring to youth
The rich rewards that stalwarts claim;
The god of fortune is in truth
A vision and an empty name.
The toiler who through doubt and care
Unto his goal and victory plods,
With no one need his glory share:
He is himself his favoring gods.
There are no gods that will bestow
Earth's joys and blessings on a man.
Each one must choose the path he'll go,
Then win from it what joy he can.
And he that battles with the odds
Shall know success, but he who waits
The favors of the mystic gods,
Shall never come to glory's gates.
No man is greater than his will;
No gods to him will lend a hand!
Upon his courage and his skill
The record of his life must stand.
What honors shall befall to him,
What he shall claim of fame or pelf,
Depend not on the favoring whim
Of fortune's god, but on himself.

Edgar Albert Guest

There Will Always Be Something To Do

There will always be something to do, my boy;
There will always be wrongs to right;
There will always be need for a manly breed
And men unafraid to fight.

There will always be honor to guard, my boy;
There will always be hills to climb,
And tasks to do, and battles new
From now to the end of time.

There will always be dangers to face, my boy;
There will always be goals to take;
Men shall be tried, when the roads divide,
And proved by the choice they make.
There will always be burdens to bear, my boy;
There will always be need to pray;
There will always be tears through the future years,
As loved ones are borne away.

There will always be God to serve, my boy,
And always the Flag above;
They shall call to you until life is through
For courage and strength and love.
So these are things that I dream, my boy,
And have dreamed since your life began:
That whatever befalls, when the old world calls,
It shall find you a sturdy man.

Edgar Albert Guest

They Don'T

Life has its ups and downs,
Its fair and cloudy weather,
But this you'll find, my friend,
They never come together.

Edgar Albert Guest

They'Re Coming Back

THEY 'RE coming home Thanksgiving Day,
They 're coming back once more,
And mother's smiles begin to play
The way they did before
The youngsters went away. Somehow
She doesn't seem so old;
The lines have faded from her brow,
She's sprightly now and bold.
And yesterday she sang a song
That took me back to when
The youngest merely crept along,
And Frank was only ten.

They 're coming home Thanksgiving Day,
And mother shows it, too;
Her hair, somehow, is not so gray,
And in her eyes the blue
Is clearer than it used to be,
And in them there's a light
Of love that I was wont to see
When courting her at night.
She's singing songs again, and in
Her voice there 's not a crack,
Once more the dimple's in her chin,
For they are coming back.

They 're coming back, that's all we know,
They 're coming back to see
The mother of the long ago,
They 're coming back to me.
And we've put off a thousand woes,
And shelved a dozen years;
In mother's fading cheek the rose
Of June once more appears;
The old home seems to thrill once more
The way it used to, when
The baby crept along the floor
And Frank was only ten.

Things That Haven'T Been Done Before

The things that haven't been done before,
Those are the things to try;
Columbus dreamed of an unknown shore
At the rim of the far-flung sky,
And his heart was bold and his faith was strong
As he ventured in dangers new,
And he paid no heed to the jeering throng
Or the fears of the doubting crew.

The many will follow the beaten track
With guideposts on the way,
They live and have lived for ages back
With a chart for every day.
Someone has told them it's safe to go
On the road he has traveled o'er,
And all that they ever strive to know
Are the things that were known before.

A few strike out, without map or chart,
Where never a man has been,
From the beaten paths they draw apart
To see what no man has seen.
There are deeds they hunger alone to do;
Though battered and bruised and sore,
They blaze the path for the many, who
Do nothing not done before.

The things that haven't been done before
Are the tasks worth while to-day;
Are you one of the flock that follows, or
Are you one that shall lead the way?
Are you one of the timid souls that quail
At the jeers of a doubting crew,
Or dare you, whether you win or fail,
Strike out for a goal that's new?

Edgar Albert Guest

Things Work Out

Because it rains when we wish it wouldn't,
Because men do what they often shouldn't,
Because crops fail, and plans go wrong-
Some of us grumble all day long.
But somehow, in spite of the care and doubt,
It seems at last that things work out.

Because we lose where we hoped to gain,
Because we suffer a little pain,
Because we must work when we'd like to play-
Some of us whimper along life's way.
But somehow, as day always follows the night,
Most of our troubles work out all right.

Because we cannot forever smile,
Because we must trudge in the dust awhile,
Because we think that the way is long-
Some of us whimper that life's all wrong.
But somehow we live and our sky grows bright,
And everything seems to work out all right.

So bend to your trouble and meet your care,
For the clouds must break, and the sky grow fair.
Let the rain come down, as it must and will,
But keep on working and hoping still.
For in spite of the grumblers who stand about,
Somehow, it seems, all things work out.

Edgar Albert Guest

Think Happy Thoughts

Think happy thoughts!
Think sunshine all the day;
Refuse to let the trifling worries stay,
Crowd them with thoughts of laughter from your mind.
Think of the good, forget the bad you find,
Think of the sun behind the clouds; the blue
And not the gray skies that you view.
Think of the kindness not the meanness shown,
The true friends not the false ones you have known;
The joy and not the hatred of the strife,
The sweetness not the bitterness of life.
Think happy thoughts!

Think happy thoughts!
Think always of the best,
Think of the ones you love, not those that you detest;
Think of your victories and not your failures here,
The smile that pleased and not the hurtful sneer,
The kindly word and not the harsh word spoken,
The promise kept and not the promise broken;
The good that you have known and not the bad,
The happy days that were and not the sad;
Think of the rose and not the withered flower,
The beauty of the rainbow, not the shower.
Think happy thoughts!

Think happy thoughts!
This is true happiness!
That life is sad that feeds on its distress;
That mind is gloomy that subsists on gloom,
And is as dismal as a curtained room,
Where daily comes the sunshine, but to find
It cannot enter through the close-drawn blind.
Fling up the curtains of your mind today
And let the morning sunshine in to play;
Dwell on the joys and not the sorrows here,
Master your thoughts and you have mastered fear.
Think happy thoughts.

Thoughts Of A Father

We've never seen the Father here, but we have known the Son,
The finest type of manhood since the world was first begun.
And, summing up the works of God, I write with reverent pen,
The greatest is the Son He sent to cheer the lives of men.

Through Him we learned the ways of God and found the Father's love;
The Son it was who won us back to Him who reigns above.
The Lord did not come down himself to prove to men His worth,
He sought our worship through the Child He placed upon the earth.

How can I best express my life? Wherein does greatness lie?
How can I long remembrance win, since I am born to die?
Both fame and gold are selfish things; their charms may quickly flee,
But I'm the father of a boy who came to speak for me.

In him lies all I hope to be; his splendor shall be mine;
I shall have done man's greatest work if only he is fine.
If some day he shall help the world long after I am dead,
In all that men shall say of him my praises shall be said.

It matters not what I may win of fleeting gold or fame,
My hope of joy depends alone on what my boy shall claim.
My story must be told through him, for him I work and plan,
Man's greatest duty is to be the father of a man.

Edgar Albert Guest

Thoughts Of A Soldier

Since men with life must purchase life
And some must die that more may live,
Unto the Great Cashier of strife
A fine accounting let me give.
Perhaps to-morrow I shall stand
Before his cage, prepared to buy
New splendor for my native land:
Oh, God, then bravely let me die!

If after I shall fall, shall rise
A fairer land than I have known,
I shall not grudge my sacrifice,
Although I pay the price alone.
If still more beautiful to see
The Stars and Stripes o'er men shall wave
And finer shall my country be,
To-morrow let me find my grave.

To-night life seems so fair and sweet,
Yet tyranny is stalking here,
And hate and lust and foul deceit
Hang heavy on the atmosphere.
Injustice seeks to throttle right,
And laughter's stifled to a sigh.
If death can take so great a blight
From human lives, then let me die.

If death must be the cost of life,
And freedom's terms are human souls,
Into the thickest of the strife
Then let me go to pay the tolls.
I would enrich my native land,
New splendor to her flag I'd give,
If where I fall shall freedom stand,
And where I die shall freedom live.

To-morrow death with me may trade;
Let me not quibble o'er the price;
But may I, once the bargain's made,

With courage meet the sacrifice.
If happiness for ages long
My little term of life can buy,
God, for my country make me strong;
To-morrow let me bravely die.

Edgar Albert Guest

Tied Down

'They tie you down,' a woman said,
Whose cheeks should have been flaming red
With shame to speak of children so.
'When babies come you cannot go
In search of pleasure with your friends,
And all your happy wandering ends.
The things you like you cannot do,
For babies make a slave of you.'

I looked at her and said: 'Tis true
That children make a slave of you,
And tie you down with many a knot,
But have you never thought to what
It is of happiness and pride
That little babies have you tied?
Do you not miss the greater joys
That come with little girls and boys?

'They tie you down to laughter rare,
To hours of smiles and hours of care,
To nights of watching and to fears;
Sometimes they tie you down to tears
And then repay you with a smile,
And make your trouble all worth while.
They tie you fast to chubby feet,
And cheeks of pink and kisses sweet.

'They fasten you with cords of love
To God divine, who reigns above.
They tie you, whereso'er you roam,
Unto the little place called home;
And over sea or railroad track
They tug at you to bring you back.
The happiest people in the town
Are those the babies have tied down.

'Oh, go your selfish way and free,
But hampered I would rather be,
Yes rather than a kingly crown

I would be, what you term, tied down;
Tied down to dancing eyes and charms,
Held fast by chubby, dimpled arms,
The fettered slave of girl and boy,
And win from them earth's finest joy.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Tinkerin' At Home

Some folks there be who seem to need excitement fast and furious,
An' reckon all the joys that have no thrill in 'em are spurious.
Some think that pleasure's only found down where the lights are shining,
An' where an orchestra's at work the while the folks are dining.
Still others seek it at their play, while some there are who roam,
But I am happiest when I am tinkerin' 'round the home.

I like to wear my oldest clothes, an' fuss around the yard,
An' dig a flower bed now an' then, and pensively regard
The mornin' glories climbin' all along the wooden fence,
An' do the little odds an' ends that aren't of consequence.
I like to trim the hedges, an' touch up the paint a bit,
An' sort of take a homely pride in keepin' all things fit.
An' I don't envy rich folks who are sailin' o'er the foam
When I can spend a day or two in tinkerin' 'round the home.

If I were fixed with money, as some other people are,
I'd take things mighty easy; I'd not travel very far.
I'd jes' wear my oldest trousers an' my flannel shirt, an' stay
An' guard my vine an' fig tree in an old man's tender way.
I'd bathe my soul in sunshine every mornin', and I'd bend
My back to pick the roses; Oh, I'd be a watchful friend
To everything around the place, an' in the twilight gloam
I'd thank the Lord for lettin' me jes' tinker 'round the home.

But since I've got to hustle in the turmoil of the town,
An' don't expect I'll ever be allowed to settle down
An' live among the roses an' the tulips an' the phlox,
Or spend my time in carin' for the noddin' hollyhocks,
I've come to the conclusion that perhaps in Heaven I may
Get a chance to know the pleasures that I'm yearnin' for to-day;
An' I'm goin' to ask the good Lord, when I've climbed the golden stair,
If he'll kindly let me tinker 'round the home we've got up there.

Edgar Albert Guest

To A Kindly Critic

If it's wrong to believe in the land that we love
And to pray for Our Flag to the good God above;
If it's wrong to believe that Our Country is best;
That honor's her standard, and truth is her crest;
If placing her first in our prayers and our song
Is false to true reason, we're glad to be wrong.

If it's wrong to wish victory day after day
For the troops of Our Country now marching away;
If it's wrong to believe they are moved by the right
And not by the love and the lure of the fight;
If to cheer them to battle and bid them be strong
Is false to right thinking, then let us be wrong.

If it's wrong to believe in America's dreams
Of a freedom on earth that's as real as it seems;
If it's error to cherish the hope, through and through,
That the Stars in Old Glory's immaculate blue
Shall shine through the ages, true beacons to men,
We pray that no right phrase shall flow from our pen.

Edgar Albert Guest

To A Lady Knitting

Little woman, hourly sitting,
Something for a soldier knitting,
What in fancy can you see?
Many pictures come to me
Through the stitch that now you're making:
I behold a bullet breaking;
I can see some soldier lying
In that garment slowly dying,
And that very bit of thread
In your fingers, turns to red.
Gray to-day; perhaps to-morrow
Crimsoned by the blood of sorrow.

It may be some hero daring
Shall that very thing be wearing
When he ventures forth to give
Life that other men may live.
He may braver wield the saber
As a tribute to your labor,
And for that, which you have knitted,
Better for his task be fitted.
When the thread has left your finger,
Something of yourself may linger,
Something of your lovely beauty
May sustain him in his duty.

Some one's boy that was a baby
Soon shall wear it, and it may be
He will write and tell his mother
Of the kindness of another,
And her spirit shall caress you,
And her prayers at night shall bless you.
You may never know its story,
Cannot know the grief or glory
That are destined now and hover
Over him your wool shall cover,
Nor what spirit shall invade it
Once your gentle hands have made it.

Little woman, hourly sitting,
Something for a soldier knitting,
'Tis no common garb you're making,
These, no common pains you're taking.
Something lovely, holy, lingers
O'er the needles in your fingers
And with every stitch you're weaving
Something of yourself you're leaving.
From your gentle hands and tender
There may come a nation's splendor,
And from this, your simple duty,
Life may win a fairer beauty.

Edgar Albert Guest

To A Little Girl

Oh, little girl with eyes of brown
And smiles that fairly light the town,
I wonder if you really know
Just why it is we love you so,
And why- with all the little girls
With shining eyes and tangled curls
That throng and dance this big world through-
Our hearts have room for only you.

Since other little girls are gay
And laugh and sing and romp in play,
And all are beautiful to see,
Why should you mean so much to me?
And why should Mother, day and night,
Make you her source of all delight,
And always find in your caress
Her greatest sum of happiness?

Oh, there's a reason good for this,
You laughing little bright-eyed miss!
In all this town, with all its girls
With shining eyes and sun-kissed curls,
If we should search it through and through
We'd find not one so fair as you;
And none, however fair of face,
Within our hearts could take your place.

For, one glad day not long ago,
God sent you down to us below,
And said that you were ours to keep,
To guard awake and watch asleep;
And ever since the day you came
No other child has seemed the same;
No other smiles are quite so fair
As those which happily you wear.

We seem to live from day to day
To hear the things you have to say;
And just because God gave us you,

We prize the little things you do.
Though God has filled this world with flowers,
We like you best because you're ours-
In you our greatest joys we know,
And that is why we love you so.

Edgar Albert Guest

To A Young Man

The great were once as you.
They whom men magnify to-day
Once groped and blundered on life's way,
Were fearful of themselves, and thought
By magic was men's greatness wrought.
They feared to try what they could do;
Yet Fame hath crowned with her success
The selfsame gifts that you possess.
The great were young as you,
Dreaming the very dreams you hold,
Longing yet fearing to be bold,
Doubting that they themselves possessed
The strength and skill for every test,
Uncertain of the truths they knew,
Not sure that they could stand to fate
With all the courage of the great.
Then came a day when they
Their first bold venture made,
Scorning to cry for aid.
They dared to stand to fight alone,
Took up the gauntlet life had thrown,
Charged full-front to the fray,
Mastered their fear of self, and then,
Learned that our great men are but men.
Oh, youth, go forth and do!
You, too, to fame may rise;
You can be strong and wise.
Stand up to life and play the man—
You can if you'll but think you can;
The great were once as you.
You envy them their proud success?
'Twas won with gifts that you possess.

Edgar Albert Guest

To An Old Friend

When we have lived our little lives and wandered all their byways through,
When we've seen all that we shall see and finished all that we must do,
When we shall take one backward look off yonder where our journey ends,
I pray that you shall be as glad as I shall be that we were friends.

Time was we started out to find the treasures and the joys of life;
We sought them in the land of gold through many days of bitter strife.
When we were young we yearned for fame; in search of joy we went afar,
Only to learn how very cold and distant all the strangers are.

When we have met all we shall meet and know what destiny has planned,
I shall rejoice in that last hour that I have known your friendly hand;
I shall go singing down the way off yonder as my sun descends
As one who's had a happy life, made glorious by the best of friends.

Edgar Albert Guest

To The Boy

I have no wish, my little lad,
To climb the towering heights of fame.
I am content to be your dad
And share with you each pleasant game.
I am content to hold your hand
And walk along life's path with you,
And talk of things we understand-
The birds and trees and skies of blue.

Though some may seek the smiles of kings,
For me your laughter's joy enough;
I have no wish to claim the things
Which lure men into pathways rough.
I'm happiest when you and I,
Unmindful of life's bitter cares,
Together watch the clouds drift by,
Or follow boyhood's thoroughfares.

I crave no more of life than this:
Continuance of such a trust;
Your smile, whate'er the morning is,
Until my clay returns to dust.
If but this comradeship may last
Until I end my earthly task-
Your hand and mine by love held fast-
Fame has no charm for which I'd ask.

I would not trade one day with you
To wear the purple robes of power,
Nor drop your hand from mine to do
Some great deed in a selfish hour.
For you have brought me joy serene
And made my soul supremely glad.
In life rewarded I have been;
'Twas all worth while to be your dad.

Edgar Albert Guest

To The Failures

YOURS is the loser's part to play,
For you the goal is far away
And never to be gained.
It is your lot to stand and see
The golden apples on life's tree
By some one else attained;
To view with yearning in your eyes
Another grasp the precious prize.

It is for you to wade through fire,
To feel the burning of desire
And want unsatisfied;
And from the sleepless hours of night
You rise at morn, once more to fight
With victory denied;
Spurred on by hope that never dies,
You struggle ever toward the prize.

A failure? Yes, as glory goes,
Yet braver in the end than those
Who life's great battles win;
For you return at break of day
With courage to renew the fray,
And with a lifted chin
You strive once more to reach the goal,
And ground your bark upon a shoal.

But when earth's story shall be told,
And God's great purpose we behold
With eyes new-born to see;
When we have passed beyond the pale
Of earth, and torn aside the veil
Of death's great mystery,
As souls victorious you'll stand
And God's great prizes you'll command.

Edgar Albert Guest

To The Humble

If all the flowers were roses,
If never daisies grew,
If no old-fashioned posies
Drank in the morning dew,
Then man might have some reason
To whimper and complain,
And speak these words of treason,
That all our toil is vain.

If all the stars were Saturns
That twinkle in the night,
Of equal size and patterns,
And equally as bright,
Then men in humble places,
With humble work to do,
With frowns upon their faces
Might trudge their journey through.

But humble stars and posies
Still do their best, although
They're planets not, nor roses,
To cheer the world below.
And those old-fashioned daisies
Delight the soul of man;
They're here, and this their praise is:
They work the Master's plan.

Though humble be your labor,
And modest be your sphere,
Come, envy not your neighbor
Whose light shines brighter here.
Does God forget the daisies
Because the roses bloom?
Shall you not win His praises
By toiling at your loom?

Have you, the toiler humble,
Just reason to complain,
To shirk your task and grumble

And think that it is vain
Because you see a brother
With greater work to do?
No fame of his can smother
The merit that's in you.

Edgar Albert Guest

To The Lady In The Electric

Lady in the show case carriage,
Do not think that I'm a bear;
Not for worlds would I disparage
One so gracious and so fair;
Do not think that I am blind to
One who has a smile seraphic;
You I'd never be unkind to,
But you are impeding traffic.

If I had some way of knowing
What you are about to do,
Just exactly where you're going,
If I could depend on you,
I could keep my engine churning,
Travel on and never mind you.
Lady, when you think of turning,
Why not signal us behind you?

Lady, free from care and worry,
Riding in your plate-glass car,
Some of us are in a hurry;
Some of us must travel far.
I, myself, am eager, very,
To be journeying on my way;
Lady, is it necessary
To monopolize the highway?

Lady, at the handle, steering,
Why not keep a course that's straight?
Know you not that wildly veering
As you do, is tempting fate?
Do not think my horn I'm blowing
Just on purpose to harass you,
It is just a signal showing
That I'd safely like to pass you.

Lady, there are times a duty
Must be done, however saddening;
It is hard to tell a beauty

That she's very often maddening.
And I would not now be saying
Harsh and cruel words to fuss you,
But when traffic you're delaying
You are forcing men to cuss you.

Edgar Albert Guest

To The Men At Home

No war is won by cannon fire alone;
The soldier bears the grim and dreary role;
He dies to serve the Flag that he has known;
His duty is to gain the distant goal.
But if the toiler in his homeland fair
Falter in faith and shrink from every test,
If he be not on duty ever there,
Lost to the cause is every soldier's best.

The men at home, the toiler in the shop,
The keen-eyed watcher of the spinning drill
Hear no command to vault the trench's top;
They know not what it is to die or kill,
And yet they must be brave and constant, too.
Upon them lies their precious country's fate;
They also serve the Flag as soldiers do,
'Tis theirs to make a nation's army great.

You hold your country's honor in your care.
Her glory you shall help to make or mar;
For they, who now her uniforms must wear
Can be no braver soldiers than you are.
From day to day, in big and little deeds,
At bench or lathe or desk or stretch of soil,
You are the man your country sorely needs!
Will you not give to her your finest toil?

No war is won by cannon fire alone.
The men at home must also share the fight.
By what they are, a nation's strength is shown,
The army but reflects their love of right.
Will you not help to hold our battle line,
Will you not give the fullest of your powers
In sacrifice and service that is fine
That victory shall speedily be ours?

Edgar Albert Guest

Today

TODAY is mine. Tomorrow may not come.
Next week, next year, I may not live to see;
This hour I have. It is enough for me
To make by smiles, or mar by being glum.
And so I strive to live this one day well,
To tread the path of right as best I may,
To speak the kind words that I have to say;
Tomorrow I may be an empty shell.

One day is all God gives to us to plan,
And so I strive to live it as my life,
To bear with patience what I find of strife,
To do my share to cheer my fellow man;
To do today what I can do to aid,
To let none pass whom words of mine might cheer,
Tomorrow they may not be toiling here,
Tomorrow in the ground I may be laid.

Edgar Albert Guest

Tommy Atkins' Way

He was battle-scarred and ugly with the marks of shot and shell,
And we knew that British Tommy had a stirring tale to tell,
So we asked him where he got it and what disarranged his face,
And he answered, blushing scarlet: 'In a nawsty little place.'

There were medals on his jacket, but he wouldn't tell us why.
'A bit lucky, gettin' this one,' was the sum of his reply.
He had fought a horde of Prussians with his back against the wall,
And he told us, when we questioned: 'H'it was nothing arfter h'all.'

Not a word of what he'd suffered, not a word of what he'd seen,
Not a word about the fury of the hell through which he'd been.
All he said was: 'When you're cornered, h'and you've got no plyce to go,
You've just got to stand up to it! You cawn't 'elp yourself, you know.'

'H'it was just a bit unpleasant, when the shells were droppin' thick,'
And he tapped his leather leggins with his little bamboo stick.
'What did H'I do? Nothing, really! Nothing more than just my share;
Some one h'else would gladly do it, but H'I 'appened to be there.'

When this sturdy British Tommy quits the battlefields of earth
And St. Peter asks his spirit to recount his deeds of worth,
I fancy I can hear him, with his curious English drawl,
Saying: 'Nothing, nothing really, that's worth mentioning at h'all.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Tomorrow

He was going to be all that a mortal should be
Tomorrow.

No one should be kinder or braver than he
Tomorrow.

A friend who was troubled and weary he knew,
Who'd be glad of a lift and who needed it, too;
On him he would call and see what he could do
Tomorrow.

Each morning he stacked up the letters he'd write
Tomorrow.

And thought of the folks he would fill with delight
Tomorrow.

It was too bad, indeed, he was busy today,
And hadn't a minute to stop on his way;
More time he would have to give others, he'd say
Tomorrow.

The greatest of workers this man would have been
Tomorrow.

The world would have known him, had he ever seen
Tomorrow.

But the fact is he died and he faded from view,
And all that he left here when living was through
Was a mountain of things he intended to do
Tomorrow.

Edgar Albert Guest

Tonsils

One day the doctor came because my throat was feeling awful sore,
And when he looked inside to see he said: 'It's like it was before;
It's tonsillitis, sure enough. You'd better tell her Pa to-day
To make his mind up now to have that little party right away.'

I'd heard him talk that way before when Bud was sick, and so I knew
That what they did to him that time, to me they planned to come and do.
An' when my Pa came home that night Ma said: 'She can't grow strong
and stout
Until the doctor comes an' takes her adenoids an' tonsils out.'

An' then Pa took me on his knee and kissed me solemn-like an' grave,
An' said he guessed it was the best, an' then he asked me to be brave.
Ma said: 'Don't look at her like that, it's nothing to be scared about';
An' Pa said: 'True, but still I wish she needn't have her tonsils out.'

Next morning when I woke, Ma said I couldn't have my breakfast then,
Because the doctors and the nurse had said they would be here by ten.
When they got here the doctor smiled an' gave me some perfume to smell,
An' told me not to cry at all, coz pretty soon I would be well.

When I woke up Ma smiled an' said: 'It's all right now'; but in my head
It seemed like wheels were buzzing round and everywhere I looked was red.
An' I can't eat hard cookies yet, nor use my voice at all to shout,
But Pa an' Ma seem awful glad that I have had my tonsils out.

Edgar Albert Guest

Too Big A Price

'They say my boy is bad,' she said to me,
A tired old woman, thin and very frail.
'They caught him robbing railroad cars, an' he
Must spend from five to seven years in jail.
His Pa an' I had hoped so much for him.
He was so pretty as a little boy- '
Her eyes with tears grew very wet an' dim-
'Now nothing that we've got can give us joy!'

'What is it that you own?' I questioned then.
'The house we live in,' slowly she replied,
'Two other houses worked an' slaved for, when
The boy was but a youngster at my side,
Some bonds we took the time he went to war;
I've spent my strength against the want of age-
We've always had some end to struggle for.
Now shame an' ruin smear the final page.

'His Pa has been a steady-goin' man,
Worked day an' night an' overtime as well;
He's lived an' dreamed an' sweated to his plan
To own the house an' profit should we sell;
He never drank nor played much cards at night,
He's been a worker since our wedding day,
He's lived his life to what he knows is right,
An' why should son of his now go astray?

'I've rubbed my years away on scrubbing boards,
Washed floors for women that owned less than we,
An' while they played the ladies an' the lords,
We smiled an' dreamed of happiness to be.'
'And all this time where was the boy?' said I.
'Out somewhere playin'!'- Like a rifle shot
The thought went home- 'My God!' she gave a cry,
'We paid too big a price for what we got.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Toys

I can pass up the lure of a jewel to wear
 With never the trace of a sigh,
The things on a shelf that I'd like for myself
 I never regret I can't buy.
I can go through the town passing store after store
 Showing things it would please me to own,
With never a trace of despair on my face,
 But I can't let a toy shop alone.

I can throttle the love of fine raiment to death
 And I don't know the craving for rum,
But I do know the joy that is born of a toy,
 And the pleasure that comes with a drum
I can reckon the value of money at times,
 And govern my purse strings with sense,
But I fall for a toy for my girl or my boy
 And never regard the expense.

It's seldom I sigh for unlimited gold
 Or the power of a rich man to buy;
My courage is stout when the doing without
 Is only my duty, but I
Curse the shackles of thrift when I gaze at the toys
 That my kiddies are eager to own,
And I'd buy everything that they wish for, by Jing!
 If their mother would let me alone.

There isn't much fun spending coin on myself
 For neckties and up-to-date lids,
But there's pleasure tenfold, in the silver and gold
 I part with for things for the kids.
I can go through the town passing store after store
 Showing things it would please me to own,
But to thrift I am lost; I won't reckon the cost
 When I'm left in a toy shop alone.

Edgar Albert Guest

Toys And Life

You can learn a lot from boys
By the way they use their toys;
Some are selfish in their care,
Never very glad to share
Playthings with another boy;
Seem to want to hoard their joy.
And they hide away the drum
For the days that never come;
Hide the train of cars and skates,
Keeping them from all their mates,
And run all their boyhood through
With their toys as good as new.

Others gladly give and lend,
Heedless that the tin may bend,
Caring not that drum-heads break,
Minding not that playmates take
To themselves the joy that lies
In the little birthday prize.
And in homes that house such boys
Always there are broken toys,
Symbolizing moments glad
That the youthful lives have had.
There you'll never find a shelf
Dedicated unto self.

Toys are made for children's fun,
Very frail and quickly done,
And who keeps them long to view,
Bright of paint and good as new,
Robs himself and other boys
Of their swiftly passing joys.
So he looked upon a toy
When our soldier was a boy;
And somehow to-day we're glad
That the tokens of our lad
And the trinkets that we keep
Are a broken, battered heap.

Life itself is but a toy
Filled with duty and with joy;
Not too closely should we guard
Our brief time from being scarred;
Never high on musty shelves
Should we hoard it for ourselves.
It is something we should share
In another's hour of care-
Something we should gladly give
That another here may live;
We should never live it through
Keeping it as good as new.

Edgar Albert Guest

Treasures

Some folks I know, when friends drop in
To visit for awhile and chin,
Just lead them round the rooms and halls
And show them pictures on their walls,
And point to rugs and tapestries
The works of men across the seas;
Their loving cups they show with pride,
To eyes that soon are stretching wide
With wonder at the treasures rare
That have been bought and gathered there.

But when folks come to call on me,
I've no such things for them to see.
No picture on my walls is great;
I have no ancient family plate;
No tapestry of rare design
Or costly woven rugs are mine;
I have no loving cup to show,
Or strange and valued curio;
But if my treasures they would see,
I bid them softly follow me.

And then I lead them up the stairs
Through trains of cars and Teddy bears,
And to a little room we creep
Where both my youngsters lie asleep,
Close locked in one another's arms.
I let them gaze upon their charms,
I let them see the legs of brown
Curled up beneath a sleeping gown,
And whisper in my happiness:
'Behold the treasures I possess.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Trouble

Trouble is an exerciser
Sent us by a Wisdom wiser
Than the mind of man possesses.
Doubts and dangers and distresses
Come not purposely to best us,
But to strengthen us and test us.

He who never gets In tussles
Soon has soft and flabby muscles.
He who, fearing hurts and bruises.
Guards his strength, grows weak and loses
All the power he thought to nourish.
Strong men by their trials flourish.

Never was a stately figure
But by trouble was made bigger.
Cares a man has borne, and still bears.
Trove how much he can and will bear.
He Is strongest of your neighbors
Who performs the heaviest labors.

Not from easy ways and tender
Brilliant minds receive their splendor.
But from problems deep, perplexing,
And from solving questions vexing,
(Nightly pondering wisdom's pages)
Comes the luster of the sages.

Trouble is an exerciser
Sent to make us stronger, wiser.
Sent to make us bigger, better:
It Is not a chain or fetter
Or a snare or trap to best us,
It is Just life's way to test us.

Edgar Albert Guest

Trouble Brings Friends

It's seldom trouble comes alone. I've noticed this: When things go wrong
An' trouble comes a-visitin', it always brings a friend along;
Sometimes it's one you've known before, and then perhaps it's someone new
Who stretches out a helping hand an' stops to see what he can do.

If never trials came to us, if grief an' sorrow passed us by,
If every day the sun came out an' clouds were never in the sky,
We'd still have neighbors, I suppose, each one pursuin' selfish ends,
But only neighbors they would be- we'd never know them as our friends.

Out of the troubles I have had have come my richest friendships here,
Kind hands have helped to bear my care, kind words have fallen on my ear;
An' so I say when trouble comes I know before the storm shall end
That I shall find my bit of care has also brought to me a friend.

Edgar Albert Guest

Troubles

Troubles? Sure I've lots of them,
Got 'em heaped up by the score,
Got 'em baled and bundled up,
Got 'em hid behind the door.
Got 'em young and got 'em old,
Got 'em big and little, too.
Don't care to discuss 'em now,
Rather tell my joys to you.

Got the finest home there is,
Got the finest pair o' boys,
An' the sweetest little girl,
Reg'lar livin', breathin' joys.
Got the finest wife in town,
Got a little garden, too.
Troubles? Sure I've got 'em, but
Rather tell my joys to you.

Got a bunch of friends I love,
Friends I know are staunch and true;
Visit 'em, they visit me,
Jus' the way good friends should do;
Got my health, an' got a job,
That's enough to see me through.
Troubles? Sure I've got 'em, but
Rather tell my joys to you.

Edgar Albert Guest

True

The shoemaker sticks to his last and he's right;
By divorce, though, we wouldn't be cursed,
If everyone else in this great world of ours
Would be willing to stick to his first.

Edgar Albert Guest

True Nobility

Who does his task from day to day
And meets whatever comes his way,
Believing God has willed it so.
Has found real greatness here below.

Who guards his post, no matter where,
Believing god must need him there,
Although but lowly toil it be,
Has risen to nobility.

For great and low there's but one test:
'Tis that each man shall do his best.
Who works with all the strength he can
Shall never die in debt to man.

Edgar Albert Guest

True Philosophy

I wouldn't count it worth my while
To sing about a rich man's smile,
Or quote a fellow, trouble free,
An' label that philosophy.

But when I look about and find
A cripple or a brother blind,
An' hear him singing songs of glee,
I want that man's philosophy.

Edgar Albert Guest

Trustful Ma

Ma has every confidence in Pa,
She says she knows he always does what's right,
He's not at all like some folks' husbands are,
Whose conduct very often is a fright.
She says that she can trust him anywhere
An' know he'd never think of doing wrong,
But when he meets a widow, young an' fair,
Ma never leaves them chatting very long.

Ma never has a single doubt of Pa,
An' she is very thankful, too, for that;
She says she knows he'd never go too far,
Besides, he's growing old an' bald an' fat.
But just the same when we have friends for tea,
An' Ma has shown 'em where their places are,
Although she trusts him most implicitly
She never puts the pretty girls by Pa.

Edgar Albert Guest

Tuckered Out

YOU don't weigh more than thirty pounds,
Your legs are little, plump and fat,
And yet you patter on your rounds
The whole day long within our flat.
Yes, ceaselessly, you come and go,
In search of things you want to see,
You're only two years old, but oh
You walk the strength right out of me.

A dozen times a day or more
You gayly lead me up the stairs,
Then back to try the kitchen door,
Then round about the parlor chairs.
You come and take me by the hand
And splendidly you march away
Until by night I scarce can stand,
While you are fresh and keen for play.

You know not what it is to tire,
You never seem to care for rest;
You seem to have but one desire
And that's to go, 'till you're undressed.
And this tonight I'll say to you
As you are tugging at my knee,
That it is all that I can do
To keep the pace you set for me.

Oh, little chap, with tireless step,
Oh, little laughing chap of two,
I somehow wish I had your 'pep'
And could keep up as well as you!
I wish I had what you possess,
The strength to romp and play and run,
Yet every Sunday, I confess,
I'm tuckered out when night comes on.

Edgar Albert Guest

Two Viewpoints

OUT in the open, the wide sky above,
And the green meadows stretched at my feet;
Out in the open, midst scenes that I love,
Where the rest hour is soothing and sweet;
Out in the country, where nature's at play
And the wild Sowers look up with a smile,
I am hurrying now for a short holiday,
I am going to rest there a while.

Into the city, where life isn't dead,
An' there's something a feller can do;
Where hundreds of people keep forging ahead
An' runnin' right plump into you;
Where there's hustle an' bustle, an' something to'see,
An' you never get lonesome nor blue;
I tell you, the city's the fine place to be,
An' I 'm goin' when ploughin' is through.

Edgar Albert Guest

Unchangeable Mother

Mothers never change, I guess,
In their tender thoughtfulness.
Makes no difference that you grow
Up to forty years or so,
Once you cough, you'll find that she
Sees you as you used to be,
An' she wants to tell to you
All the things that you must do.
Just show symptoms of a cold,
She'll forget that you've grown old.
Though there's silver in your hair,
Still you need a mother's care,
An' she'll ask you things like these:
'You still wearing b. v. d.'s?
Summer days have long since gone,
You should have your flannels on.'
Grown and married an' maybe
Father of a family,
But to mother you are still
Just her boy when you are ill;
Just the lad that used to need
Plasters made of mustard seed;
An' she thinks she has to see
That you get your flaxseed tea.
Mothers never change, I guess,
In their tender thoughtfulness.
All her gentle long life through
She is bent on nursing you;
An' although you may be grown,
She still claims you for her own,
An' to her you'll always be
Just a youngster at her knee.

Edgar Albert Guest

Under A Tree

UNDER a tree where the breezes blow,
There is the spot that it's good to go
With the children bronzed by the Summer sun,
Bubbling with laughter and wholesome fun;
And I gather them round — all the happy clan,
And forget for a while I'm a grizzled old man.

Marjorie, Florence, and fair Lucille,
Freddy and Denny — and then we steal
An hour or two from the clock of life,
The quest of gold and the constant strife,
The clamor and noise of a city day
For the peace and joy of a bit of play.

Pirate stories for boys we tell,
For there is the place to tell them well;
With treasure islands we build in sand,
And we mark the spot where the pirates land,
And even the place where the gold was hid
By that master of pirates, old Captain Kidd.

Then we leave the pirates and run away
To the wonderful glens where the fairies play;
And under the tree where the breezes are
We summon the fairies with crown and star,
And I tell of the wonderful things they do
When the sun is up and the skies are blue.

And the far off world may call and call,
But I never hear through my little wall
Of innocent youngsters that hem me in.
I finish one tale and a new begin;
And there we sit underneath the tree
Till mother calls all of us in for tea.

Edgar Albert Guest

Under The Roof Where The Laughter Rings

Under the roof where the laughter rings,
That's where I long to be;
There are all of the glorious things,
Meaning so much to me.
There is where striving and toiling ends;
There is where always the rainbow bends.

Under the roof where the children shout,
There is the perfect rest;
There is the clamor of greed shut out,
Ended the ceaseless quest.
Battles I fight through the heat of to-day
Are only to add to their hours of play.

Under the roof where the eyes are bright,
There I would build my fame;
There my record of life I'd write;
There I would sign my name.
There in laughter and true content
Let me fashion my monument.

Under the roof where the hearts are true,
There is my earthly goal;
There I am pledged till my work is through,
Body and heart and soul.
Think you that God will my choice condemn
If I have never played false to them?

Edgar Albert Guest

Under The Skin Of Men

Did you ever sit down and talk with men
In a serious sort of a way,
On their views of life and ponder then
On all that they have to say?
If not, you should in some quiet hour;
It's a glorious thing to do:
For you'll find that back of the pomp and power
Most men have a goal in view.

They'll tell you then that their aim is not
The clink of the yellow gold;
That not in the worldly things they've got
Would they have their stories told.
They'll say the joys that they treasure most
Are their good friends, tried and true,
And an honest name for their own to boast
And peace when the day is through.

I've talked with men and I think I know
What's under the toughened skin.
I've seen their eyes grow bright and glow
With the fire that burns within.
And back of the gold and back of the fame
And back of the selfish strife,
In most men's breasts you'll find the flame
Of the nobler things of life.

Edgar Albert Guest

Understanding

When I was young and frivolous and never stopped to think,
When I was always doing wrong, or just upon the brink;
When I was just a lad of seven and eight and nine and ten,
It seemed to me that every day I got in trouble then,
And strangers used to shake their heads and say I was no good,
But father always stuck to me — it seems he understood.

I used to have to go to him 'most every night and say
The dreadful things that I had done to worry folks that day.
I know I didn't mean to be a turmoil round the place,
And with the womenfolks about forever in disgrace ;
To do the way they said I should, I tried the best I could,
But though they scolded me a lot — my father understood.

He never seemed to think it queer that I should risk my bones,
Or fight with other boys at times, or pelt a cat with stones;
An' when I'd break a window pane, to make him sad,
But though the neighbors said I was, he never thought me bad;
He never whipped me, as they used to say to me he should;
That boys can't always do what's right — it seemed he understood.

Now there's that little chap of mine, just full of life and fun,
Comes up to me with solemn face to tell the bad he's done.
It's natural for any boy to be a roguish elf,
He hasn't time to stop and think and figure for himself,
And though the womenfolks insist that I should take a hand,
They've never been a boy themselves, and they don't understand.

Some day I've got to go up there, and make a sad report
And tell the Father of us all where I have fallen short;
And there will be a lot of wrong I never meant to do,
A lot of smudges on my sheet that He will have to view.
And little chance for heavenly bliss, up there, will I command,
Unless the Father smiles and says: ' My boy, I understand.'

Edgar Albert Guest

Unimportant Differences

If he is honest, kindly, true,
And glad to work from day to day;
If when his bit of toil is through
With children he will stoop to play;
If he does always what he can
To serve another's time of need,
Then I shall hail him as a man
And never ask him what's his creed.

If he respects a woman's name
And guards her from all thoughtless jeers;
If he is glad to play life's game
And not risk all to get the cheers;
If he disdains to win by bluff
And scorns to gain by shady tricks,
I hold that he is good enough
Regardless of his politics.

If he is glad his much to share
With them who little here possess,
If he will stand by what is fair
And not desert to claim success,
If he will leave a smile behind
As he proceeds from place to place,
He has the proper frame of mind,
And I won't stop to ask his race.

For when at last life's battle ends
And all the troops are called on high
We shall discover many friends
That thoughtlessly we journeyed by.
And we shall learn that God above
Has judged His creatures by their deeds,
That millions there have won His love
Who spoke in different tongues and creeds.

Edgar Albert Guest

United

Forgotten petty difference now,
The larger purpose glows,
The storm is here, a common fear
Its deadly lightning shows.
The Ship of State must bear us all
And danger makes us kin,
As one, we all shall rise or fall,
So shall we strive to win.

Our banner's flying at the mast,
Our course lies straight ahead;
The ocean's trough is deep and rough,
The waves are stained with red.
The bond of danger tighter grows,
We serve a common plan;
Send o'er the sea the word that we
Are all American.

One hundred million sturdy souls
Once more united stand,
As one, you will find them all behind
The banner of our land.
And side by side they work to-day
In silken garb or rag,
And once again our troops of men
Are brothers of the flag.

And from the storm that hovers low,
And from the angry sea
Where dangers lurk and hate's at work.
Shall come new victory.
The flag shall know not race nor creed,
Nor different bands of men;
A people strong round it shall throng
To ne'er divide again.

Edgar Albert Guest

United States

He shall be great who serves his country well.
He shall be loved who ever guards her fame.
His worth the starry banner long shall tell,
Who loves his land too much to stoop to shame.

Who shares the splendor of these sunny skies
Has freedom as his birthright, and may know
Rich fellowship with comrades brave and wise;
Into the realms of manhood he may go.

Who writes, 'United States' beside his name
Offers a pledge that he himself is true;
Gives guarantee that selfishness or shame
Shall never mar the work he finds to do.

He is received world-wide as one who lives
Above the sordid dreams of petty gain,
And is reputed as a man who gives
His best to others in their hours of pain.

This is the heritage of Freedom's soil:
High purposes and lofty goals to claim.
And he shall be rewarded for his toil
Who loves his land too much to stoop to shame.

Edgar Albert Guest

Unphilosophic

Let philosophers say that it's all for the best
No matter what happens awry,
I defy one to smile who spills pie on his vest,
Especially loose pumpkin pie.

Edgar Albert Guest

Until She Died

Until she died we never knew
The beauty of our faith in God.
We'd seen the summer roses nod
And wither as the tempests blew,
Through many a spring we'd lived to see
The buds returning to the tree.
We had not felt the touch of woe;
What cares had come, had lightly flown;
Our burdens we had borne alone—
The need of God we did not know.
It seemed sufficient through the days
To think and act in worldly ways.
And then she closed her eyes in sleep;
She left us for a little while;
No more our lives would know her smile.
And oh, the hurt of it went deep!
It seemed to us that we must fall
Before the anguish of it all.
Our faith, which had not known the test,
Then blossomed with its comfort sweet,
Promised that some day we should meet
And whispered to us: 'He knows best.'
And when our bitter tears were dried,
We found our faith was glorified.

Edgar Albert Guest

Up And Down The Lanes Of Love

UP and down the lanes of love,
With the bright blue skies above,
And the grass beneath our feet,
O, so green and O, so sweet!
There we wandered boy and girl,
Sun-kissed was each golden curl;
Hand in hand we used to stray,
Hide-and-seek we used to play;
Just a pair of kids were we,
Laughing, loving, trouble free.

Up and down the lanes of love
With the same blue skies above,
Next we wandered, bride and groom,
With the roses all in bloom;
Arm in arm we strolled along,
Life was then a merry song,
Laughing, dancing as we went,
Lovers, cheerful and content;
No one else, we thought, could be
Quite so happy as were we.

Up and down the lanes of love,
Dark and gray the skies above;
Hushed the song-birds' merry tune,
Withered every rose of June.
Grief was ours to bear that day,
All our smiles had passed away,
Sorrow we must bear together,
Love must have its rainy weather,
Keeping still our faith in God,
As the lanes of love we trod.

Up and down the lanes of love,
Still the skies are bright above.
Feeble now we go our way,
Time has turned our hair to gray;
Rain and sunshine, joy and woe,
Both of us have come to know.

All of life's experience
Has been given us to sense;
Still our hearts keep perfect tune
As they did in days of June.

Edgar Albert Guest

Up To The Ceiling

Up to the ceiling
And down to the floor,
Hear him now squealing
And calling for more.
Laughing and shouting,
'Away up!' he cries.
Who could be doubting
The love in his eyes.
Heigho! my baby!
And heigho! my son!
Up to the ceiling
Is wonderful fun.
Bigger than daddy
And bigger than mother;
Only a laddie,
But bigger than brother.
Laughing and crowing
And squirming and wriggling,
Cheeks fairly glowing,
Now cooing and giggling!
Down to the cellar,
Then quick as a dart
Up to the ceiling
Brings joy to the heart.
Gone is the hurry,
The anguish and sting,
The heartache and worry
That business cares bring;
Gone is the hustle,
The clamor for gold,
The rush and the bustle
The day's affairs hold.
Peace comes to the battered
Old heart of his dad,
When 'up to the ceiling'
He plays with his lad.

Edgar Albert Guest

Vacation Time

Vacation time! How glad it seemed
When as a boy I sat and dreamed
Above my school books, of the fun
That I should claim when toil was done;
And, Oh, how oft my youthful eye
Went wandering with the patch of sky
That drifted by the window panes
O'er pleasant fields and dusty lanes,
Where I would race and romp and shout
The very moment school was out.
My artful little fingers then
Feigned labor with the ink and pen,
But heart and mind were far away,
Engaged in some glad bit of play.
The last two weeks dragged slowly by;
Time hadn't then learned how to fly.
It seemed the clock upon the wall
From hour to hour could only crawl,
And when the teacher called my name,
Unto my cheeks the crimson came,
For I could give no answer clear
To questions that I didn't hear.
'Wool gathering, were you?' oft she said
And smiled to see me blushing red.
Her voice had roused me from a dream
Where I was fishing in a stream,
And, if I now recall it right,
Just at the time I had a bite.

And now my youngsters dream of play
In just the very selfsame way;
And they complain that time is slow
And that the term will never go.
Their little minds with plans are filled
For joyous hours they soon will build,
And it is vain for me to say,
That have grown old and wise and gray,
That time is swift, and joy is brief;
They'll put no faith in such belief.

To youthful hearts that long for play
Time is a laggard on the way.
'Twas, Oh, so slow to me back then
Ere I had learned the ways of men!

Edgar Albert Guest

Wait Till Your Pa Comes Home

'Wait till your Pa comes home!' Oh, dear!
What a dreadful threat for a boy to hear.
Yet never a boy of three or four
But has heard it a thousand times or more.
'Wait till your Pa comes home, my lad,
And see what you'll get for being bad,

'Wait till your Pa comes home, you scamp!
You've soiled the walls with your fingers damp,
You've tracked the floor with your muddy feet
And fought with the boy across the street;
You've torn your clothes and you look a sight!
But wait till your Pa comes home to-night.'

Now since I'm the Pa of that daily threat
Which paints me as black as a thing of jet
I rise in protest right here to say
I won't be used in so fierce a way;
No child of mine in the evening gloam
Shall be afraid of my coming home.

I want him waiting for me at night
With eyes that glisten with real delight;
When it's right that punished my boy should be
I don't want the job postponed for me;
I want to come home to a round of joy
And not to frighten a little boy.

'Wait till your Pa comes home!' Oh, dear,
What a dreadful threat for a boy to hear.
Yet that is ever his Mother's way
Of saving herself from a bitter day;
And well she knows in the evening gloam
He won't be hurt when his Pa comes home.

Edgar Albert Guest

Warning The Carpenter

SAY, Mister Carpenter, you know, you got me spanked last night,
I guess your Pa and Ma forgot to teach you what was right;
An' I can't come here any more to watch you build that fence,
Coz my Pa says a man like you ain't got a bit of sense.
You 'member yesterday, when you was nailing up a board
An' hit your thumb an awful whack the drefful things you swored,
Well, I felt sorry for you then, coz I am only three,
An' I supposed 'at what you said would be all right for me.

Las' night I was a-playin' wif my hammer an' a box
An' hit my thumb jus' like you did two terrible hard knocks;
My Ma an' Pa were standing near, an' bofe of 'em turned red
When I let loose an' said out loud the drefful things you said.
You never told me it was wrong; it seemed to comfort you,
An' when I hit my thumb I s'posed it was all right to do.
But you will never get to be an angel when you die
Becoz you used such wicked words an' let your temper fly.

My Pa, he took me on his knee an' spanked me for it, too,
An' Ma, she jus' sat down an' cried the whole long evenin' through;
She says there ought to be a law to keep bad men away
From decent neighborhoods like ours where little children play.
You let me get a wallopin'. An' I don't think it fair,
Say! Ain't you got no Pa an' Ma to teach you not to swear?

It's all your fault that I got licked, an' Ma says when you die
There ain't a-goin' to be no place for you up in the sky;
An' Pa says 'at you ought to know 'at little fellow's ears
Pick up the things that bad men say. An' if he ever hears
That I've been hangin' round this place he don't know what he'll do;
I guess he'll tell your Pa an' Ma, an' you'll get walloped, too.

Edgar Albert Guest

Warriors

We all are warriors with sin. Crusading knights,
we come to earth
With spotless plumes and shining shields to joust
with foes and prove our worth.
The world is but a battlefield where strong and
weak men fill the lists,
And some make war with humble prayers, and
some with swords and some with fists.
And some for pleasure or for peace forsake their
purposes and goals
And barter for the scarlet joys of ease and pomp,
their knightly souls.

We're all enlisted soldiers here, in service for
the term called life
And each of us in some grim way must bear his
portion of the strife.
Temptations everywhere assail. Men do not rise
by fearing sin,
Nor he who keeps within his tent, unharmed,
unscratched, the crown shall win.
When wrongs are trampling mortals down and
rank injustice stalks about,
Real manhood to the battle flies, and dies or puts
the foes to rout.

'Tis not the new and shining blade that marks
the soldier of the field,
His glory is his broken sword, his pride the
scars upon his shield;
The crimson stains that sin has left upon his
soul are tongues that speak
The victory of new found strength by one who
yesterday was weak.
And meaningless the spotless plume, the shining
blade that goes through life
And quits this naming battlefield without one
evidence of strife.

We all are warriors with sin, we all are knights
in life's crusades,
And with some form of tyranny, we're sent to
earth to measure blades.
The courage of the soul must gleam in conflict
with some fearful foe,
No man was ever born to life its luxuries alone
to know.
And he who brothers with a sin to keep his outward
garb unsoiled
And fears to battle with a wrong, shall find his
soul decayed and spoiled.

Edgar Albert Guest

War's Homecoming

We little thought how much they meant- the bleeding hearts of France,
And British mothers wearing black to mark some troop's advance,
The war was, O, so distant then, the grief so far away,
We couldn't see the weeping eyes, nor hear the women pray.
We couldn't sense the weight of woe that rested on that land,
But now our boy is called to go- to-day, we understand.

There, some have heard the blackest news that o'er the wires has sped,
And some are living day by day beneath the clouds of dread;
Some fear the worst; some know the worst, but every heart is chilled,
And every soul is sorrow touched and laughter there is stilled.
There, old folks sit alone and grieve and pray for peace to come,
And now our little boy has heard the summons of the drum.

Their grief was such a distant thing, we made it fruit for speech.
We never thought in days of old such pain our hearts would reach.
We talked of it, as people do of sorrow far aloof,
Nor dreamed such care would ever dwell beneath our happy roof.
But England's woes are ours to-day, we share the sighs of France;
Our little boy is on the sea with Death to take his chance.

Edgar Albert Guest

We Need A Few More Optimists

We need a few more optimists,
The kind that double up their fists
And set their jaws, determined-like,
A blow at infamy to strike.
Not smiling men, who drift along
And compromise with every wrong;
Not grinning optimists who cry
That right was never born to die,
But optimists who'll fight to give
The truth an honest chance to live.

We need a few more optimists
For places in our fighting lists,
The kind of hopeful men who make
Real sacrifice for freedom's sake;
The optimist, with purpose strong,
Who stands to battle every wrong,
Takes off his coat, and buckles in
The better joys of earth to win!
The optimist who worries lest
The vile should overthrow the best.

We need a few more optimists,
The brave of heart that long resists
The force of Hate and Greed and lust
And keeps in God and man his trust,
Believing, as he makes his fight
That everything will end all right—
Yet through the dreary days and nights
Unflinching serves and fights,
And helps to gain the joys which he
Believes are some day sure to be.

We need a few more optimists
Of iron hearts and sturdy wrists;
Not optimists who smugly smile
And preach that in a little while
The clouds will fade before the sun,
But cheerful men who'll bear a gun,

And hopeful men, of courage stout,
Who'll see disaster round about
And yet will keep their faith, and fight,
And gain the victory for right.

Edgar Albert Guest

We Who Stay At Home

When you were just our little boy, on many a night we crept
Unto your cot and watched o'er you, and all the time you slept.
We tucked the covers round your form and smoothed your pillow, too,
And sometimes stooped and kissed your cheeks, but that you never knew.
Just as we came to you back then through many a night and day,
Our spirits now shall come to you- to kiss and watch and pray.

Whenever you shall look away into God's patch of sky
To think about the folks at home, we shall be standing by.
And as we prayed and watched o'er you when you were wrapped in sleep,
So through your soldier danger now the old-time watch we'll keep.
You will not know that we are there, you will not see or hear,
But all the time in prayer and thought we shall be very near.

The world has made of you a man; the work of man you do,
But unto us you still remain the baby that we knew;
And we shall come, as once we did, on wondrous wings of prayer,
And you will never know how oft in spirit we are there.
We'll stand beside your bed at night, in silence bending low,
And all the love we gave you then shall follow where you go.

Oh, we were proud of you back then, but we are prouder now;
We see the stamp of splendor God has placed upon your brow,
And we who are the folks at home shall pray the old time prayer,
And ask the God of Mercy to protect you with His care.
And as we came to you of old, although you never knew,
The hearts of us, each day and night, shall come with love to you.

Edgar Albert Guest

Welcoming The New Year

At 10 p. m.

COME, let us make merry with innocent mirth,
Let us drink to the year that is dying;
Let us wish one another the best that's on earth,
Now quickly, the moments are flying.
Here waiter! Come, fill up the glasses again,
Tonight we are here to be merry,
Forgot are the grief and the trouble and pain
That the old fellow brought in his ferry.
Nothing boisterous here, as we chat and we drink
At the table we've rented for folly,
But in friendship this evening our glasses we clink,
To welcome the year and be jolly.

At 11 p. m.

Some old-fashioned folks stay at home to be gay
Where ther'sh never an orchestra playing,
But I like the thrill of a modern cafe,
I believe in all customs obeying.
Then here's to ush all at the table tonight,
May the New Year bring nothing but gladness,
And cheeks that are rosy and eyes that are bright,
And may we know none of its badness.
Now, waiter, just fill up thoshe glasses again,
May you never know sad melancholy,
May the year that is coming bring you little rain,
May you always succeed and be jolly.

At 12 m.

Ish a Happy New Year! May you alwaysh be gay!
Whoopee! for zhe New Year (hic) arriving;
Do youshe fellersh know what I'm trying to sha?
Do youshe get (hic) at what I am driving?
Ish all right now fellersh, lesh fill up zhe glass,
(Hic) I like yesh and I want t' show it.
Yesh mighty fine fellersh. (Hic) Yesh all first class
And I want zhe New Year to know it.
Hersh a happy New Year. Whoopee for yesh all 1
May yesh never go wrong with yersh folly,

May long be yersh daysh on thish tresh-shiul ball
And may every shecund be jolly.

Edgar Albert Guest

We'Re Dreamers All

Oh, man must dream of gladness wherever his pathways lead,
And a hint of something better is written in every creed;
And nobody wakes at morning but hopes ere the day is o'er
To have come to a richer pleasure than ever he's known before.

For man is a dreamer ever. He glimpses the hills afar
And plans for the joys off yonder where all his to-morrows are;
When trials and cares beset him, in the distance he still can see
A hint of a future splendid and the glory that is to be.

There's never a man among us but cherishes dreams of rest;
We toil for that something better than that which is now our best.
Oh, what if the cup be bitter and what if we're racked with pain?
There are wonderful days to follow when never we'll grieve again.

Back of the sound of the hammer, and back of the hissing steam,
And back of the hand at the throttle is ever a lofty dream;
All of us, great or humble, look over the present need
To the dawn of the glad to-morrow which is promised in every creed.

Edgar Albert Guest

We've Had A Letter From The Boy

We've had a letter from the boy,
And oh, the gladness and the joy
It brought to us! We read it o'er
I'd say a dozen times or more.
We laughed until the teardrops fell
At all the fun he had to tell.
He's in the navy, wearing blue,
And everything is all so new
That he can see in youthful style
The funny things to make us smile.

He's working hard! Between the lines
We gather that. The brass he shines
Without complaining, and the food
He gets to eat is very crude.
And yet he laughs at all his chores.
He says the maid who scrubs our floors
Will have to quit when he returns
Unless a better way she learns.
'I've got it on the fairer sex,'
Says he, 'since I am swabbing decks.'

'A sailor's life, dear Mom,' writes he,
'Is not the life you picked for me.
And yet I'm getting fat and strong
And learning as I go along
That any life a man can find
Is apt to grow to be a grind
Unless a fellow has the wit
To see the brighter side of it.
Don't worry for your sailor son;
He sleeps well when his work is done.'

We've had a letter from the boy,
And oh, the gladness and the joy
It brought to us! T'was good to know
That he is facing duty so.
Between the lines that he had penned
His mother's bitter fears to end,

I saw his manhood glowing bright,
And now I know his heart is right.
Behind the laughter I could see
My boy's the man I'd hoped he'd be.

Edgar Albert Guest

What A Baby Costs

'How much do babies cost?' said he
The other night upon my knee;
And then I said: 'They cost a lot;
A lot of watching by a cot,
A lot of sleepless hours and care,
A lot of heartache and despair,
A lot of fear and trying dread,
And sometimes many tears are shed
In payment for our babies small,
But every one is worth it all.

'For babies people have to pay
A heavy price from day to day-
There is no way to get one cheap.
Why, sometimes when they're fast asleep
You have to get up in the night
And go and see that they're all right.
But what they cost in constant care
And worry, does not half compare
With what they bring of joy and bliss...
You'd pay much more for just a kiss.

'Who buys a baby has to pay
A portion of the bill each day;
He has to give his time and thought
Unto the little one he's bought.
He has to stand a lot of pain
Inside his heart and not complain;
And pay with lonely days and sad
For all the happy hours he's had.
All this a baby costs, and yet
His smile is worth it all, you bet.'

Edgar Albert Guest

What A Sick Woman Does

ACONVALESCIN' woman does the strangest sort o' things,
An' it's wonderful the courage that a little new strength brings;
O, it's never safe to leave her for an hour or two alone,
Or you'll find th' doctor's good work has been quickly overthrown.
There's that wife o' mine, I reckon she's a sample of 'em all;
She's been mighty sick, I tell you, an' today can scarcely crawl,
But I left her jes' this mornin' while I fought potater bugs,
An' I got back home an' caught her in the back yard shakin' rugs.

I ain't often cross with Nellie, an' I let her have her way,
But it made me mad as thunder when I got back home that day
An' found her doin' labor that'd tax a big man's strength,
An' I guess I lost my temper/for I scolded her at length;
'Til I seen her tear drops fallin' an' she said: ' I couldn't stand
T' see those rugs so dirty, so I took 'em all in hand,
An' it ain't hurt me nuther, see I 'm gettin' strong again — '
An' I said: ' Doggone it! Can't ye leave sich work as that fer men? '

Once I had her in a hospittle fer weeks an' weeks an' weeks,
An' she wasted most t' nothin', an' th' roses left her cheeks;
An' one night I feared I 'd l se her; 't was the turnin' point, I guess,
Coz th' next day I remember that th' doctor said: 'Success!'
Well, I brought her home an' told her that for two months she must stay
A-sitttn' in her rocker an' jes' watch th' kids at play;
An' th' first week she was patient, but I mind the way I swore
On th' day when I discovered 'at she 'd scrubbed th' kitchen floor.

O, you can't keep wimmin quiet an' they ain't a bit like men,
They 're hungerin' every minute jes' t' get t' work again;
An' you've got t' watch '«m allus, when you know they're weak an' ill,
Coz th' minute that yer back is turned they'll labor fit t' kill.
Th' house ain't cleaned t' suit 'em an' they seem t' fret an' fume
'Less they 're busy doin' somethin' with a mop or else a broom;
An' it ain't no use t' scold 'em an' it ain't no use t' swear,
Coz th' next time they will do it jes' the minute you ain't there.

Edgar Albert Guest

What Counts

It isn't the money you're making,
it isn't the clothes you wear,
And it isn't the skill of your good right hand which makes folks really care.
It's the smile on your face and
the light of your eye and the burdens that you bear.

Most any old man can tell you, most any old man at all,
Who has lived through all sorts of weather, winter and summer and fall,
That riches and fame are shadows that dance on the garden wall.

It's how do you live and neighbor, how do you work and play,
It's how do you say 'good morning' to the people along the way,
And it's how do you face your troubles whenever your skies are gray.

It's you, from the dawn to nighttime; you when the day is fair,
You when the storm is raging - how do you face despair?
It is you that the world discovers, whatever the clothes you wear.

You to the end of the journey,
kindly and brave and true,
The best and the worst of you gleaming in all that you say and do,
And the ting that counts isn't money,
or glory, or power, but YOU!

Edgar Albert Guest

What Father Knows

My father knows the proper way
The nation should be run;
He tells us children every day
Just what should now be done.
He knows the way to fix the trusts,
He has a simple plan;
But if the furnace needs repairs
We have to hire a man.

My father, in a day or two,
Could land big thieves in jail;
There's nothing that he cannot do,
He knows no word like 'fail.'
'Our confidence' he would restore,
Of that there is no doubt;
But if there is a chair to mend
We have to send it out.

All public questions that arise
He settles on the spot;
He waits not till the tumult dies,
But grabs it while it's hot.
In matters of finance he can
Tell Congress what to do;
But, O, he finds it hard to meet
His bills as they fall due.

It almost makes him sick to read
The things law-makers say;
Why, father's just the man they need;
He never goes astray.
All wars he'd very quickly end,
As fast as I can write it;
But when a neighbor starts a fuss
'Tis mother has to fight it.

In conversation father can
Do many wondrous things;
He's built upon a wiser plan

Than presidents or kings.
He knows the ins and outs of each
And every deep transaction;
We look to him for theories,
But look to ma for action.

Edgar Albert Guest

What Home's Intended For

When the young folks gather 'round in the good old-fashioned way,
Singin' all the latest songs gathered from the newest play,
Or they start the phonograph an' shove the chairs back to the wall
An' hold a little party dance, I'm happiest of all.
Then I sorter settle back, plumb contented to the core,
An' I tell myself most proudly, that's what home's intended for.

When the laughter's gaily ringin' an' the room is filled with song,
I like, to sit an' watch 'em, all that glad an' merry throng,
For the ragtime they are playin' on the old piano there
Beats any high-toned music where the bright lights shine an' glare,
An' the racket they are makin' stirs my pulses more and more,
So I whisper in my gladness: that's what home's intended for.

Then I smile an' say to Mother, let 'em move the chairs about,
Let 'em frolic in the parlor, let 'em shove the tables out,
Jus' so long as they are near us, jus' so long as they will stay
By the fireplace we are keepin', harm will never come their way,
An' you'll never hear me grumble at the bills that keep me poor,
It's the finest part o' livin'- that's what home's intended for.

Edgar Albert Guest

What I Call Living

The miser thinks he's living when he's hoarding up his gold;
The soldier calls it living when he's doing something bold;
The sailor thinks it living to be tossed upon the sea,
And upon this vital subject no two of us agree.
But I hold to the opinion, as I walk my way along,
That living's made of laughter and good-fellowship and song.

I wouldn't call it living always to be seeking gold,
To bank all the present gladness for the days when I'll be old.
I wouldn't call it living to spend all my strength for fame,
And forego the many pleasures which to-day are mine to claim.
I wouldn't for the splendor of the world set out to roam,
And forsake my laughing children and the peace I know at home.
Oh, the thing that I call living isn't gold or fame at all!

It's good-fellowship and sunshine, and it's roses by the wall;
It's evenings glad with music and a hearth fire that's ablaze,
And the joys which come to mortals in a thousand different ways.
It is laughter and contentment and the struggle for a goal;
It is everything that's needful in the shaping of a soul.

Edgar Albert Guest

What Ma Said

When Pa came home last night he had a package in his hand,
Now Ma,' said he, 'I've something here which you will say is grand.
A friend of mine got home today from hunting in the woods,
He's been away a week or two, and got back with the goods.
He had a corking string of birds, I wish you could have seen 'em!
'If you've brought any partridge home,' said Ma, 'you'll have to clean 'em.'

'Now listen, Ma,' said Pa to her, 'these birds are mighty rare.
I know a lot of men who'd pay a heap to get a pair.
But it's against the law to sell this splendid sort of game,
And if you bought 'em you would have to use a different name.
It isn't every couple has a pair to eat between 'em.'
'If you got any partridge there,' says Ma, 'you'll have to clean 'em.'

'Whenever kings want something fine, it's partridge that they eat,
And millionaires prefer 'em, too, to every sort of meat.
About us everywhere tonight are folks who'd think it fine
If on a brace of partridge they could just sit down to dine.
They've got a turkey skinned to death, they're sweeter than a chicken.'
'If that's what you've brought home,' says Ma, 'you'll have to do the pickin'.'

And then Pa took the paper off and showed Ma what he had,
'There, look at those two beauties, don't they start you feelin' glad?
An' ain't your mouth a-waterin' to think how fine they'll be
When you've cooked 'em up for dinner, one for you an' one for me?'
But Ma just turned her nose up high, an' said when she had seen 'em,
'You'll never live to eat 'em if you wait for me to clean 'em.'

Edgar Albert Guest

What Makes An Artist

We got to talking art one day, discussing in a general way
How some can match with brush and paint the glory of a tree,
And some in stone can catch the things of which the dreamy poet sings,
While others seem to have no way to tell the joys they see.

Old Blake had sat in silence there and let each one of us declare
Our notions of what's known as art, until he'd heard us through;
And then said he: 'It seems to me that any man, whoe'er he be,
Becomes an artist by the good he daily tries to do.

'He need not write the books men read to be an artist. No, indeed!
He need not work with paint and brush to show his love of art;
Who does a kindly deed to-day and helps another on his way,
Has painted beauty on a face and played the poet's part.

'Though some of us cannot express our inmost thoughts of loveliness,
We prove we love the beautiful by how we act and live;
The poet singing of a tree no greater poet is than he
Who finds it in his heart some care unto a tree to give.

'Though he who works in marble stone the name of artist here may own,
No less an artist is the man who guards his children well;
'Tis art to love the fine and true; by what we are and what we do
How much we love life's nobler things to all the world we tell.'

Edgar Albert Guest

What To Do

IF I had wealth and I had health,
And I 'd a roof above me,
If I'd a wife to cheer my life,
But not one child to love me,
No rosy-lipped young laughing miss,
No bright-eyed, roguish laddie,
I 'd search the town, both up and down,
Till one should call me daddie.

I would not have a roof that ne'er
Knew sound of childish chatter,
Nor keep a floor, unlettered o'er
By little feet that patter.
Nor would I hang upon my walls
Great pictures, just to show them,
Unless a tot had left a lot
Of finger-marks below them.

I would not like to settle down
Within my old armchair,
And take my ease, with empty knees —
I want a youngster there.
Likewise with everything I have,
How incomplete 't would be,
Unless I had a girl or lad
To share it all with me.

And so I say if I had wealth,
And had a roof above me.
If I 'd a wife to cheer my life,
But had no child to love me,
Then I would search both up and down,
To beg or buy or borrow,
A child to be a part of me —
I 'd have one here tomorrow.

Edgar Albert Guest

What We Can Be

What We Can Be

We cannot all be men of fame,
We cannot all be men of wealth,
We cannot all be known by name,
We cannot all have perfect health,
We cannot all be men of power,
We cannot all be of one mind;
But we can all be, every hour,
Hopeful, cheerful men, and kind.

Edgar Albert Guest

What We Need

We were settin' there an' smokin' of our pipes, discussin' things,
Like lickin', votes for wimmin, an' the totterin'thrones o' kings,
When he ups an' strokes his whiskers with his hand an' says t'me:
'Changin' laws an' legislatures ain't, as fur as I can see,
Goin' to make this world much better, unless somehow we can
Find a way to make a better an' a finer sort o' man.

'The trouble ain't with statutes or with systems—not at all;
It's with humans jest like we air an' their petty ways an' small.
We could stop our writin' law-books an' our regulatin' rules
If a better sort of manhood was the product of our schools.
For the things that we air needin' ain't no writin' from a pen
Or bigger guns to shoot with, but a bigger type of men.

'I reckon all these problems air jest ornery like the weeds.
They grow in soil that oughta nourish only decent deeds,
An' they waste our time an' fret us when, if we were thinkin' straight
An' livin' right, they wouldn't be so terrible an' great.
A good horse needs no snaffle, an' a good man, I opine,
Doesn't need a law to check him or to force him into line.

'If we ever start in teachin' to our children, year by year,
How to live with one another, there'll be less o' trouble here.
If we'd teach 'em how to neighbor an' to walk in honor's ways,
We could settle every problem which the mind o' man can raise.
What we're needin' isn't systems or some regulatin' plan,
But a bigger an' a finer an' a truer type o' man.'

Edgar Albert Guest

When A Little Baby Dies

When a little baby dies
And the wee form silent lies,
And the little cheeks seem waxen
And the little hands are still,
Then your soul gives way to treason,
And you cry: 'O, God, what reason,
O, what justice and what mercy
Have You shown us by Your will?'

'Oh, there are so many here
Of the yellow leaf and sere,
Who are anxious, aye, and ready
To respond unto Your call;
Yet You pass them by unheeding,
And You set our hearts to bleeding!
Oh how bitterly upon us
Do Your vaunted mercies fall!'

Yet some day, in after years,
When Death's angel once more nears,
And the unknown, silent river
Looms as darkly as a pall,
You will hear your baby saying,
'Mamma, come to me, I'm staying
With my arms outstretched to greet you,'
And you'll understand it all.

Edgar Albert Guest

When An Old Man Gets To Thinking

When an old man gets to thinking of the years he's traveled through,
He hears again the laughter of the little ones he knew.
He isn't counting money, and he isn't planning schemes;
He's at home with friendly people in the shadow of his dreams.

When he's lived through all life's trials and his sun is in the west,
When he's tasted all life's pleasures and he knows which ones were best,
Then his mind is stored with riches, not of silver and of gold,
But of happy smiling faces and the joys he couldn't hold.

Could we see what he is seeing as he's dreaming in his chair,
We should find no scene of struggle in the distance over there.
As he counts his memory treasures, we should see some shady lane
Where's he walking with his sweetheart, young, and arm in arm again.

We should meet with friendly people, simple, tender folk and kind,
That had once been glad to love him. In his dreaming we should find
All the many little beauties that enrich the lives of men
That the eyes of youth scarce notice and the poets seldom pen.

Age will tell you that the memory is the treasure-house of man.
Gold and fleeting fame may vanish, but life's riches never can;
For the little home of laughter and the voice of every friend
And the joys of real contentment linger with us to the end.

Edgar Albert Guest

When Day Is Done

When day is done and the night slips down,
And I've turned my back on the busy town,
And come once more to the welcome gate
Where the roses nod and the children wait,
I tell myself as I see them smile
That life is good and its tasks worth while.

When day is done and I've come once more
To my quiet street and the friendly door,
Where the Mother reigns and the children play
And the kettle sings in the old-time way,
I throw my coat on a near-by chair
And say farewell to my pack of care.

When day is done, all the hurt and strife
And the selfishness and the greed of life,
Are left behind in the busy town;
I've ceased to worry about renown
Or gold or fame, and I'm just a dad,
Content to be with his girl and lad.

Whatever the day has brought of care,
Here love and laughter are mine to share,
Here I can claim what the rich desire—
Rest and peace by a ruddy fire,
The welcome words which the loved ones speak
And the soft caress of a baby's cheek.

When day is done and I reach my gate,
I come to a realm where there is no hate,
For here, whatever my worth may be,
Are those who cling to their faith in me;
And with love on guard at my humble door,
I have all that the world has struggled for.

Edgar Albert Guest

When Father Played Baseball

The smell of arnica is strong,
And mother's time is spent
In rubbing father's arms and back
With burning liniment.
The house is like a druggist's shop;
Strong odors fill the hall,
And day and night we hear him groan,
Since father played baseball.

He's forty past, but he declared
That he was young as ever;
And in his youth, he said, he was
A baseball player clever.
So when the business men arranged
A game, they came to call
On dad and asked him if he thought
That he could play baseball.

'I haven't played in fifteen years,
Said father, 'but I know
That I can stop the grounders hot,
And I can make the throw.
I used to play a corking game;
The curves, I know them all;
And you can count on me, you bet,
To join your game of ball.'

On Saturday the game was played,
And all of us were there;
Dad borrowed an old uniform,
That Casey used to wear.
He paid three dollars for a glove,
Wore spikes to save a fall
He had the make-up on all right,
When father played baseball.

At second base they stationed him;
A liner came his way;
Dad tried to stop it with his knee,

And missed a double play.
He threw into the bleachers twice,
He let a pop fly fall;
Oh, we were all ashamed of him,
When father played baseball.

He tried to run, but tripped and fell,
He tried to take a throw;
It put three fingers out of joint,
And father let it go.
He stopped a grounder with his face;
Was spiked, nor was that all;
It looked to us like suicide,
When father played baseball.

At last he limped away, and now
He suffers in disgrace;
His arms are bathed in liniment;
Court plaster hides his face.
He says his back is breaking, and
His legs won't move at all;
It made a wreck of father when
He tried to play baseball.

The smell of arnica abounds;
He hobbles with a cane;
A row of blisters mar his hands;
He is in constant pain.
But lame and weak as father is,
He swears he'll lick us all
If we dare even speak about
The day he played baseball.

Edgar Albert Guest

When Father Shook The Stove

'Twas not so many years ago,
Say, twenty-two or three,
When zero weather or below
Held many a thrill for me.
Then in my icy room I slept
A youngster's sweet repose,
And always on my form I kept
My flannel underclothes.
Then I was roused by sudden shock
Though still to sleep I strove,
I knew that it was seven o'clock
When father shook the stove.

I never heard him quit his bed
Or his alarm clock ring;
I never heard his gentle tread,
Or his attempts to sing;
The sun that found my window pane
On me was wholly lost,
Though many a sunbeam tried in vain
To penetrate the frost.
To human voice I never stirred,
But deeper down I dove
Beneath the covers, when I heard
My father shake the stove.

To-day it all comes back to me
And I can hear it still;
He seemed to take a special glee
In shaking with a will.
He flung the noisy dampers back,
Then rattled steel on steel,
Until the force of his attack
The building seemed to feel.
Though I'd a youngster's heavy eyes
All sleep from them he drove;
It seemed to me the dead must rise
When father shook the stove.

Now radiators thump and pound
And every room is warm,
And modern men new ways have found
To shield us from the storm.
The window panes are seldom glossed
The way they used to be;
The pictures left by old Jack Frost
Our children never see.
And now that he has gone to rest
In God's great slumber grove,
I often think those days were best
When father shook the stove.

Edgar Albert Guest

When Friends Drop In

It may be I'm old-fashioned, but the times I like the best
Are not the splendid parties with the women gaily dressed,
And the music tuned for dancing and the laughter of the throng,
With a paid comedian's antics or a hired musician's song,
But the quiet times of friendship, with the chuckles and the grin,
And the circle at the fireside when a few good friends drop in.

There's something 'round the fireplace that no club can imitate,
And no throng can ever equal just a few folks near the grate;
Though I sometimes like an opera, there's no music quite so sweet
As the singing of the neighbors that you're always glad to meet;
Oh, I know when they come calling that the fun will soon begin,
And I'm happiest those evenings when a few good friends drop in.

There's no pomp of preparation, there's no style or sham or fuss;
We are glad to welcome callers who are glad to be with us,
And we sit around and visit or we start a merry game,
And we show them by our manner that we're mighty pleased they came,
For there's something real about it, and the yarns we love to spin,
And the time flies, Oh, so swiftly when a few good friends drop in.

Let me live my life among them, cheerful, kindly folks and true,
And I'll ask no greater glory till my time of life is through;
Let me share the love and favor of the few who know me best,
And I'll spend my time contented till my sun sinks in the west;
I will take what fortune sends me and the little I may win,
And be happy on those evenings when a few good friends drop in.

Edgar Albert Guest

When It's Bad To Forget

DID you ever meet a brother as you hurried on your way
And invite him up to dinner, and his wife;
Did you ever keep him standing until he had named the day
When you'd meet to talk about your early life?
Did you ever say: 'Next Tuesday we'll expect you up to dine,'
And repeat it so he'd have no cause to doubt it?
Did you ever make him promise to come up and taste your wine,
And then forget to tell your wife about it?

Did you ever get home feeling just as happy as a bird,
Kiss your smiling wife and settle down to tea,
And then get a sinking feeling in your insides as you heard
The door bell ring? This has occurred to me.
Has a single pork chop lying on a cold and greasy dish
Ever furiously set your heart to drumming,
As your guests arrived that evening in obedience to your wish,
And you hadn't told your wife that they were coming?

Oh, I do not care for riches, and I do not sigh for fame,
And I do not yearn for glory or for power,
And I don't care if I never learn to win a billiard game
At the present rate of 40 cents an hour.
With my lot I'd be contented, and I know I'd happy be
And I'd go my way a bit of music humming,
If I only could remember when I ask folks up for tea
To inform my darling wife that they are coming.

Edgar Albert Guest

When Ma Wants Something New

Last night Ma said to Pa: 'My dear,
The Williamsons are coming here
To visit for a week or two,
An' I must have a talk with you.
We need some things which we must get-
You promised me a dinner set,
An' I should like it while they're here.'
An' Pa looked up an' said: 'My dear,
A dinner set? Well, I guess not.
What's happened to the one we've got?'

'We need a parlor rug,' says Ma.
'We've got a parlor rug,' says Pa.
'We ought to have another chair.'
'You're sittin' in a good one there.'
'The parlor curtains are a fright.'
'When these are washed they look all right.'
'The old stuff's pitiful to see.'
'It still looks mighty good to me.'
'The sofa's worn beyond repair.'
'It doesn't look so bad, I swear.'

'Gee Whiz, you make me tired,' says Ma.
'Why, what's the matter now?' says Pa.
'You come an' go an' never see
How old our stuff has grown to be;
It still looks just the same to you
As what it did when it was new,
An' every time you think it strange
That I should like to have a change.'
'I'm gettin' old,' says Pa. 'Maybe
You'd like a younger man than me.'

'If this old rug was worn an' thin,
At night you'd still come walkin' in
An' throw your hat upon a chair
An' never see a single tear;
So long as any chair could stand
An' bear your weight you'd think it grand.

If home depended all on you,
It never would get something new.'
'All right,' says Pa, 'go buy the stuff!
But, say, am I still good enough?'

Edgar Albert Guest

When Mother Cooked With Wood

I do not quarrel with the gas,
Our modern range is fine,
The ancient stove was doomed to pass
From Time's grim firing line,
Yet now and then there comes to me
The thought of dinners good
And pies and cake that used to be
When mother cooked with wood.
The axe has vanished from the yard,
The chopping block is gone,
There is no pile of corkwood hard
For boys to work upon;
There is no box that must be filled
Each morning to the hood;
Time in its ruthlessness has willed
The passing of the wood.
And yet those days were fragrant days
And spicy days and rare;
The kitchen knew a cheerful blaze
And friendliness was there.
And every appetite was keen
For breakfasts that were good
When I had scarcely turned thirteen
And mother cooked with wood.
I used to dread my daily chore,
I used to think it tough
When mother at the kitchen door
Said I'd not chopped enough.
And on her baking days, I know,
I shirked whene'er I could
In that now happy long ago
When mother cooked with wood.
I never thought I'd wish to see
That pile of wood again;
Back then it only seemed to me
A source of care and pain.
But now I'd gladly give my all
To stand where once I stood,
If those rare days I could recall

When mother cooked with wood.

Edgar Albert Guest

When Mother Made An Angel Cake

When mother baked an angel cake we kids would gather round
An' watch her gentle hands at work, an' never make a sound;
We'd watch her stir the eggs an' flour an' powdered sugar, too,
An' pour it in the crinkled tin, an' then when it was through
She'd spread the icing over it, an' we knew very soon
That one would get the plate to lick, an' one would get the spoon.

It seemed no matter where we were those mornings at our play,
Upstairs or out of doors somewhere, we all knew right away
When Ma was in the kitchen, an' was gettin' out the tin
An' things to make an angel cake, an' so we scampered in.
An' Ma would smile at us an' say: 'Now you keep still an' wait
An' when I'm through I'll let you lick the spoon an' icing plate.'

We watched her kneel beside the stove, an' put her arm so white
Inside the oven just to find if it was heatin' right.
An' mouths an' eyes were open then, becoz we always knew
The time for us to get our taste was quickly comin' due.
Then while she mixed the icing up, she'd hum a simple tune,
An' one of us would bar the plate, an' one would bar the spoon.

Could we catch a glimpse of Heaven, and some snow-white kitchen there,
I'm sure that we'd see mother, smiling now, and still as fair;
And I know that gathered round her we should see an angel brood
That is watching every movement as she makes an angel food;
For I know that little angels, as we used to do, await
The moment when she lets them lick the icing spoon and plate.

Edgar Albert Guest

When Mother Sleeps

When mother sleeps, a slamming door
Disturbs her not at all;
A man might walk across the floor
Or wander through the hall
A pistol shot outside would not
Drive slumber from her eyes—
But she is always on the spot
The moment baby cries.

The thunder crash she would not hear,
Nor shouting in the street;
A barking dog, however near,
Of sleep can never cheat
Dear mother, but I've noticed this
To my profound surprise:
That always wide-awake she is
The moment baby cries.

However weary she may be,
Though wrapped in slumber deep,
Somehow it always seems to me
Her vigil she will keep.
Sound sleeper that she is, I take
It in her heart there lies
A love that causes her to wake
The moment baby cries.

Edgar Albert Guest

When Mother's Sewing Buttons On

When mother's sewing buttons on
Their little garments, one by one,
I settle down contented there
And watch her in her rocking chair.
She's at the task she likes the best
Each little waist and undervest
She fondles in a mother's way,
And notes each sign of sturdy play
And shakes her head and says to me:
'I wonder how this came to be?'

There's something in her patient eyes,
As in and out her needle flies,
Which seems to tell the joy she takes
In every little stitch she makes.
An hour of peace has settled down;
Hushed is the clamor of the town;
And even I am different then,
For I forsake the ways of men
And see about the garments there
Bright visions of a happy pair.

Buttons are closely linked to joy.
Each little girl and little boy
Who dares to climb the garden fence
Buys that delight at their expense;
Buttons are childhood's tattle tales
Swifter than telegrams or mails
They fly to tell of moments glad
That little boys and girls have had;
And mother reads the stories there
From every vacant space and tear.

She sweetly smiles and says to me:
'How sturdy they have grown to be!
It keeps me busy to repair
The shirts and things they have to wear.'
I chuckle as I watch her sew,
For joy has set the room aglow,

And in the picture I can see
The strength which means so much to me.
The scene is good to look upon
When mother's sewing buttons on.

Edgar Albert Guest

When My Ship Comes In

You shall have satin and silk to wear,
When my ship comes in;
And jewels to shine in your raven hair,
When my ship comes in.
Oh, the path is dreary to-day and long,
And little I've brought to your life of song,
But the dream still lives and the faith is strong,
When my ship comes in.

Gold and silver are pledged to you,
When my ship comes in;
I pay with this promise for all you do,
When my ship comes in.
Oh, fairest partner man ever had,
It's little I've brought you to make you glad
Save the whispered suggestion in moments sad,
When my ship comes in.

Though crowded with treasures should be her hold,
When my ship comes in,
I never can pay for the charms of old,
When my ship comes in.
The strength I have taken from you has fled,
The time for the joys that you craved has sped,
I must pay for your gold with the dullest lead,
When my ship comes in.

Too late, too late will the treasures be,
When my ship comes in.
For Age shall stand with us on the quay,
When my ship comes in.
For the love you've given and the faith you've shown,
But a glimpse of the joys that you might have known
Will it then be yours on that day to own,
When my ship comes in.

Edgar Albert Guest

When Nellie's On The Job

The bright spots in my life are when the servant quits the place,
Although that grim disturbance brings a frown to Nellie's face;
The week between the old girl's' reign and entry of the new
Is one that's filled with happiness and comfort through and through.
The charm of living's back again—a charm that servants rob—
I like the home, I like the meals, when Nellie's on the job.

There's something in a servant's ways, however fine they be,
That has a cold and distant touch and frets the soul of me.
The old home never looks so well, as in that week or two
That we are servantless and Nell has all the work to do.
There is a sense of comfort then that makes my pulses throb
And home is as it ought to be when Nellie's on the job.

Think not that I'd deny her help or grudge the servant's pay;
When one departs we try to get another right away;
I merely state the simple fact that no such joys I've known
As in those few brief days at home when we've been left alone.
There is a gentleness that seems to soothe this selfish elf
And, Oh, I like to eat those meals that Nellie gets herself!

You cannot buy the gentle touch that mother gives the place;
No servant girl can do the work with just the proper grace.
And though you hired the queen of cooks to fashion your croquettes,
Her meals would not compare with those your loving comrade gets;
So, though the maid has quit again, and she is moved to sob,
The old home's at its finest now, for Nellie's on the job.

Edgar Albert Guest

When Pa Comes Home

When Pa comes home, I'm at the door,
An' then he grabs me off the floor
An' throws me up an' catches me
When I come down, an' then, says he:
'Well, how'd you get along to-day?
An' were you good, an' did you play,
An' keep right out of mamma's way?
An' how'd you get that awful bump
Above your eye ? My, what a lump!
An' who spilled jelly on your shirt?
An' where'd you ever find the dirt
That's on your hands? And my! Oh, my!
I guess those eyes have had a cry,
They look so red. What was it, pray?
What has been happening here to-day?'

An' then he drops' his coat an' hat
Upon a chair, an' says: 'What's that ?
Who knocked that engine on its back
An' stepped upon that piece of track ? '
An' then he takes me on his knee
An' says: ' What's this that now I see ?
Whatever can the matter be?
Who strewed those toys upon the floor,
An' left those things behind the door?
Who upset all those parlor chairs
An' threw those blocks upon the stairs?
I guess a cyclone called to-day
While I was workin' far away.
Who was it worried mamma so?
It can't be anyone I know.'

An' then I laugh an' say: 'It's me!
Me did most ever'thing you see.
Me got this bump the time me tripped.
An' here is where the jelly slipped
Right off my bread upon my shirt,
An' when me tumbled down it hurt.
That's how me got all over dirt.

Me threw those building blocks downstairs,
An' me upset the parlor chairs,
Coz when you're playin' train you've got
To move things 'round an awful lot.'
An' then my Pa he kisses me
An' bounces me upon his knee
An' says : 'Well, well, my little lad,
What glorious fun you must have had! '

Edgar Albert Guest

When Pa Counts

Pa's not so very big or brave; he can't lift weights like Uncle Jim;
His hands are soft like little girls'; most anyone could wallop him.
Ma weighs a whole lot more than Pa. When they go swimming, she could stay
Out in the river all day long, but Pa gets frozen right away.
But when the thunder starts to roll, an' lightnin' spits, Ma says, ' Oh, dear,
I'm sure we'll all of us be killed. I only wish your Pa was here.'

Pa's cheeks are thin an' kinder pale; he couldn't rough it worth a cent.
He couldn't stand the hike we had the day the Boy Scouts camping went.
He has to hire a man to dig the garden, coz his back gets lame,
An' he'd be crippled for a week, if he should play a baseball game.
But when a thunder storm comes up, Ma sits an' shivers in the gloam
An' every time the thunder rolls, she says: ' I wish your Pa was home.'

I don't know just what Pa could do if he were home, he seems so frail,
But every time the skies grow black I notice Ma gets rather pale.
An' when she's called us children in, an' locked the windows an' the doors,
She jumps at every lightnin' flash an' trembles when the thunder roars.
An' when the baby starts to cry, she wrings her hands an' says: 'Oh, dear!
It's terrible! It's terrible! I only wish your Pa was here.'

Edgar Albert Guest

When Pa Gets Back

I'M allus glad when my Pa gets back
From the shu-shu cars and the railroad track,
Or a big boat ride, which he often does,
Oh, I 'm orful glad when he's back becoz
Jes' as soon as he's kissed my ma an' me
He laffs, an' says: 'Come along an' see
The wonderful things in my old black grip,
The things I got on my little trip.'

Nen he puts his grip on a parlor chair,
An' he says to me: 'Now stand right there
An' we'll jes' see what is inside o' this,
But first we'll all have another kiss.'
Nen he opens his grip, an' it's jes' crammed tight
With toys an' things. Oh, I wish you might
Be there some day when my Pa gets back
To see the things in his old grip sack.

There's allus a doll for his little girl,
Which is me — a doll with a yellow curl:
An' the very last time that he went away
I really couldn't begin to say
All the wonderful things that he brought to me
Coz I 'd been good, as I said I 'd be;
I 'm sure that I couldn't tell them all,
But one was a new pink parasol.

An' he brought me some books an' some candy, too,
An' anuvver dolly all dressed in blue,
An' a broom jes' made for a girl like me,
An' the nicest hair ribbons ever you see,
An' a spade an' a rake to dig in sand,
An' some dishes my Ma says are Heavyland;
I cry when my Pa goes away, but when
He gets back home I am glad again.

Edgar Albert Guest

When Sorrow Comes

When sorrow comes, as come it must,
In God a man must place his trust.
There is no power in mortal speech
The anguish of his soul to reach,
No voice, however sweet and low,
Can comfort him or ease the blow.

He cannot from his fellow men
Take strength that will sustain him then.
With all that kindly hands will do,
And all that love may offer, too,
He must believe throughout the test
That God has willed it for the best.

We who would be his friends are dumb;
Words from our lips but feebly come;
We feel, as we extend our hands,
That one Power only understands
And truly knows the reason why
So beautiful a soul must die.

We realize how helpless then
Are all the gifts of mortal men.
No words which we have power to say
Can take the sting of grief away -
That Power which marks the sparrow's fall
Must comfort and sustain us all.

When sorrow comes, as come it must,
In God, a man must place his trust.
With all the wealth which he may own,
He cannot meet the test alone,
And only he may stand serene
Who has a faith on which to lean.

Edgar Albert Guest

When The Dressmaker Comes

WHEN the dressmaker comes I am told to clear out,
For they don't want me anywhere hanging about;
At seven in the morning they send me away
With: ' Don't you come back till the close of the day;
She'll be here for a week, and we've so much to do
That we can't afford to be bothered by you.
So get up and dress,
Eat your breakfast in less
Than a jiffy! She's coming today — clear the track!
Here's your hat. Now, good-bye;
Move along and be spry,
You must hurry away, but, O, don't hurry back.'

When the dressmaker comes every room in the place
Is littered with patterns and trimmings and lace;
There are snippings and cuttings from parlor to kitchen,
And stuff on each bed that the women are stitchin';
And never a chair from the time they begin it,
But is sure to have needles and pins sticking in it.
And always they say,
At the coming of day:
'Get up and get out just as quick as you can,
Hurry up now, Skiddoo!
This is no place for you,
When the dressmaker's here we can't fuss with a man.

When the dressmaker comes I am driven from home;
They hand me my hat and command me to roam,
And the meals they do get would arouse Dr. Wiley,
The chops are half cooked and the coffee is 'riley,'
And all through the week not a kind word is said
Unto me from the morn 'till I sneak up to bed.
With a mouth full of pins
Thus my darling begins:
'Can't you see we are busy? We've no time for you,
Goodness gracious, please go,
You 're delaying us so,
And please don't come back till the dressmaker's through.'

When The Drums Shall Cease To Beat

When will the laughter ring again in the way that it used to do?
Not till the soldiers come home again, not till the war is through.
When will the holly gleam again and the Christmas candles burn?
Not till the swords are sheathed once more and the brave of our land return.

When will happy hearts meet again in the lights of the Christmas tree?
Not till the cannons cease their roar and the sailors come from sea.
When shall we sing as we used to do and dance in the old-time way?
Not till the soldiers come home again and the bugles cease to play.

Oh, dull is the red of the holly now and faintly the candles burn;
And we long for the smile of the missing face and the absent one's return.
We long for the laughter we used to know and the love that made giving sweet,
But we must wait for the joys of old till the drums shall cease to beat.

We shall laugh once more as we used to do, and dance in the old-time way,
For this is the pledge they have made to us who serve in the war to-day;
And the joys of home that we treasure so are the joys that their lives defend,
And they shall give us our Christmas time as soon as the war shall end.

Edgar Albert Guest

When The Minister Calls

When The Minister Calls

My Paw says that it used to be,
Whenever the minister came for tea,
Whenever the minister came for tea,
'At they sat up straight in their chairs at night
An' put all their common things out o' sight,
An' nobody cracked a joke or grinned,
But they talked o' the way that people sinned,
An' the burnin' fires that would cook you sure
When you came to die, if you wasn't pure-
Such a gloomy affair it used to be
Whenever the minister came for tea.

But now when the minister comes to call
I get him out for a game of ball,
And you'd never know if you'd see him bat,
Without any coat or vest or hat,
That he is a minister, no, siree!
He looks like a regular man to me.
An' he knows just how to go down to the dirt
For the grounders hot without gettin' hurt-
An' when they call us, both him an' me
Have to git washed up again for tea.

Our minister says if you'll just play fair
You'll be fit for heaven or anywhere;
An' fun's all right if your hands are clean
An' you never cheat an' you don't get mean.
He says that he never has understood
Why a feller can't play an' still be good.
An' my Paw says that he's just the kind
Of a minister that he likes to find-
So I'm always tickled as I can be
Whenever our minister comes for tea.

Edgar Albert Guest

When The Young Are Grown

Once the house was lovely, but it's lonely here to-day,
For time has come an' stained its walls an' called the young away;
An' all that's left for mother an' for me till life is through
Is to sit an' tell each other what the children used to do.
We couldn't keep 'em always an' we knew it from the start;
We knew when they were babies that some day we'd have to part.
But the years go by so swiftly, an' the littlest one has flown,
An' there's only me an' mother now left here to live alone.
Oh, there's just one consolation, as we're sittin' here at night,
They've grown to men an' women, an' we brought 'em up all right;
We've watched 'em as we've loved 'em an' they're splendid, every one,
An' we feel the Lord won't blame us for the way our work was done.
They're clean, an' kind an' honest, an' the world respects 'em, too;
That's the dream of parents always, an' our dreams have all come true.
So although the house is lonely an' sometimes our eyes grow wet,
We are proud of them an' happy an' we've nothing to regret.

Edgar Albert Guest

When There's Health In The House

When there's good health In the house, there is laughter everywhere,
And the skies are bright and sunny and the roads are smooth and fair,
For the mother croons her ditties, and the father hums a song.
Although heavy be his burdens, he can carry them along.

When there's good health in the house, there are smiles on every hand,
Luck is dancing down the roadway to the music of a band,
Then the hum of wheels is cheery and the daily tasks are fun.
And the toiler smiles at evening at the sum of work he's done.

When there's good health in the house, hearts are light and hands are true
And the poor men count their blessings and the rich are happy, too;
Then the cares which life abounds with seem but trifling things and small
And a man can laugh at dangers and go bravely through them all.

When there's good health in the house, in the house he's left behind,
He is happier than a monarch for he's blest with peace of mind.
For with all he has to struggle he is master of his fears,
For the laughter of his children's sweetly ringing in his ears.

Edgar Albert Guest

When We Play The Fool

Last night I stood in a tawdry place
And watched the ways of the human race.
I looked at a party of shrieking girls
Piled on a table that whirls and whirls,
And saw them thrown in a tangled heap,
Sprawling and squirming and several deep.
And unto the wife who was standing by,
'These are all angels to be,' said I.

I followed the ways of the merry throng
And heard the laughter and mirth and song.
Into a barrel which turned and swayed
Men and women a journey made,
And tumbling together they seemed to be
Like so many porpoises out at sea-
Men and women who'd worked all day,
Eagerly seeking a chance to play.

'What do you make of it all?' she said.
I answered: 'The dead are a long time dead,
And care is bitter and duty stern,
And each must weep when it comes his turn.
And all grow weary and long for play,
So here is laughter to end the day.
Foolish? Oh, yes, it is that,' said I,
'But better the laugh than the dreary sigh.

'Now look at us here, for we're like them, too,
And many the foolish things we do.
We often grow silly and seek a smile
In a thousand ways that are not worth while;
Yet after the mirth and the jest are through,
We shall all be judged by the deeds we do,
And God shall forget on the Judgment Day
The fools we were in our hours of play.'

Edgar Albert Guest

When We Understand The Plan

I reckon when the world we leave
And cease to smile and cease to grieve,
When each of us shall quit the strife
And drop the working tools of life,
Somewhere, somehow, we'll come to find
Just what our Maker had in mind.

Perhaps through clearer eyes than these
We'll read life's hidden mysteries,
And learn the reason for our tears-
Why sometimes came unhappy years,
And why our dearest joys were brief
And bound so closely unto grief.

There is so much beyond our scope,
As blindly on through life we grope,
So much we cannot understand,
However wisely we have planned,
That all who walk this earth about
Are constantly beset by doubt.

No one of us can truly say
Why loved ones must be called away,
Why hearts are hurt, or e'en explain
Why some must suffer years of pain;
Yet some day all of us shall know
The reason why these things are so.

I reckon in the years to come,
When these poor lips of clay are dumb,
And these poor hands have ceased to toil,
Somewhere upon a fairer soil
God shall to all of us make clear
The purpose of our trials here.

Edgar Albert Guest

When We Were Kids

WHEN we wuz kids together, an' we didn't have a care,
In the lazy days of summer, when our feet wuz allus bare,
When a hat warn't necessary, an' a necktie in the way,
An' there warn't a blessed thing t' do but scamper off an' play;
Then th' sun meant somethin' to us, an' the blue skies overhead
Kinder stooped down in th' meadows where we children wuz, an' said:
'Trout are bitin' in th' mill stream, hurry up an' git yer pole,
Now's th' time you should be hikin' 't' yer fav'rit fishin' hole.'

When we wuz kids together, an' there warn't a thing t' fret,
' Cept comin' home t' mother with our hair suspicious wet,
Then th' sunbeams an' th' song birds used t' come t' us an' say: '
They are swimmin' in th' river, better git there right away,
As we passed 'em we could hear 'em laughin', splashin' down below.'
Then we hurried t' th' river, jus' as fast as we could go,
For there warn't a thing t' keep us, like there is now we are men,
An' th' sunbeams an' th' song birds an' the skies meant somethin' then.

Now th' same sunbeams come callin', an' th' same song birds come near,
And the same blue skies bend o'er me and their messages I hear;
Every dancing sunbeam tells me that out yonder in the stream
Now the pickerel are biting, but I only sit and dream;
For I've journeyed past my boyhood, I 'm a slave forevermore,
And I must not heed their whispers as I used to do of yore;
There are bills to meet and duties that I must not, dare not shirk,
Mr. Sunbeam, quit yer coaxin', it's no use, I've got t' work.

Edgar Albert Guest

When We'Re All Alike

I've trudged life's highway up and down;
I've watched the lines of men march by;
I've seen them in the busy town,
And seen them under country sky;
I've talked with toilers in the ranks,
And walked with men whose hands were white,
And learned, when closed were stores and banks,
We're nearly all alike at night.

Just find the wise professor when
He isn't lost in ancient lore,
And he, like many other men,
Romps with his children on the floor.
He puts his gravity aside
To share in innocent delight.
Stripped of position's pomp and pride,
We're nearly all the same at night.

Serving a common cause, we go
Unto our separate tasks by day,
And rich or poor or great or low,
Regardless of their place or pay,
Cherish the common dreams of men-
A home where love and peace unite.
We serve the self-same end and plan,
We're all alike when it is night.

Each for his loved ones wants to do
His utmost. Brothers are we all,
When we have run the work-day through,
In romping with our children small;
Rich men and poor delight in play
When care and caste have taken flight.
At home, in all we think and say,
We're very much the same at night.

Edgar Albert Guest

When You Know A Fellow

When you get to know a fellow, know his joys and know his cares,
When you've come to understand him and the burdens that he bears,
When you've learned the fight he's making and the troubles in his way,
Then you find that he is different than you thought him yesterday.
You find his faults are trivial and there's not so much to blame
In the brother that you jeered at when you only knew his name.

You are quick to see the blemish in the distant neighbor's style,
You can point to all his errors and may sneer at him the while,
And your prejudices fatten and your hates more violent grow
As you talk about the failures of the man you do not know,
But when drawn a little closer, and your hands and shoulders touch,
You find the traits you hated really don't amount to much.

When you get to know a fellow, know his every mood and whim,
You begin to find the texture of the splendid side of him;
You begin to understand him, and you cease to scoff and sneer,
For with understanding always prejudices disappear.
You begin to find his virtues and his faults you cease to tell,
For you seldom hate a fellow when you know him very well.

When next you start in sneering and your phrases turn to blame,
Know more of him you censure than his business and his name;
For it's likely that acquaintance would your prejudice dispel
And you'd really come to like him if you knew him very well.
When you get to know a fellow and you understand his ways,
Then his faults won't really matter, for you'll find a lot to praise.

Edgar Albert Guest

Where Children Play

On every street there's a certain place
Where the children gather to romp and race;
There's a certain house where they meet in throngs
To play their games and to sing their songs,
And they trample the lawn with their busy feet
And they scatter their playthings about the street,
But though some folks order them off, I say,
Let the house be mine where the children play.

Armies gather about the door
And fill the air with their battle roar;
Cowboys swinging their lariat loops
Dash round the house with the wildest whoops,
And old folks have to look out when they
Are holding an Indian tribe at bay,
For danger may find them on flying feet,
Who pass by the house where the children meet.

There are lawns too lovely to bear the weight
Of a troop of boys when they roller skate;
There are porches fine that must never know
The stamping of footsteps that come and go,
But on every street there's a favorite place
Where the children gather to romp and race,
And I'm glad in my heart that it's mine to say
Ours is the house where the children play.

Edgar Albert Guest

Where's Mamma?

Comes in flying from the street;
 'Where's Mamma?'
Friend or stranger thus he'll greet:
 'Where's Mamma?'
Doesn't want to say hello,
Home from school or play he'll go
Straight to what he wants to know:
 'Where's Mamma?'

Many times a day he'll shout,
 'Where's Mamma?'
Seems afraid that she's gone out;
 'Where's Mamma?'
Is his first thought at the door-
She's the one he's looking for,
And he questions o'er and o'er,
 'Where's Mamma?'

Can't be happy till he knows:
 'Where's Mamma?'
So he begs us to disclose
 'Where's Mamma?'
And it often seems to me,
As I hear his anxious plea,
That no sweeter phrase can be:
 'Where's Mamma?'

Like to hear it day by day;
 'Where's Mamma?'
Loveliest phrase that lips can say:
 'Where's Mamma?'
And I pray as time shall flow,
And the long years come and go,
That he'll always want to know
 'Where's Mamma?'

Edgar Albert Guest

Why I'M Glad

I'M glad I have a wife at home
That's patient, kind and true;
I 'm glad a little tot of three
At home waits for me, too;
I 'm glad that I can see them both,
And hear them when they speak,
I 'm glad that every night I feel
Their kisses on my cheek.

I 'm glad that I am well and strong,
I 'm glad that I can walk
And breathe the morning Springtime air,
I 'm glad that I can talk;
I 'm glad that I have friends who smile
A greeting when I come,
And I am glad that I can be
Each day a friend to some.

I 'm glad that I have work to do,
And splendid books to read,
I 'm glad that I can sleep at night,
I 'm glad that I've a creed
Sustaining me in times of woe,
That soothes me when I grieve;
And I am glad that there 's a God
In Whom I still believe.

I 'm glad that I can laugh and sing,
I 'm glad that I can play;
I 'm even glad that I can eat
Three hearty meals a day.
I 'm glad that life is as it is,
I 'm glad my wants are small,
I 'm glad for, oh, so many things,
I cannot name them all.

Edgar Albert Guest

Why We Fight

This is the thing we fight:
A cry of terror in the night;
A ship on work of mercy bent—
A carrier of the sick and maimed—
Beneath the cruel waters sent,
And those that did it, unashamed.

A woman who had tried to fill
A mother's place; had nursed the ill
And soothed the troubled brows of pain
And earned the dying's grateful prayers,
Before a wall by soldiers slain!
And such a poor pretext was theirs!

Old women pierced by bayonets grim
And babies slaughtered for a whim,
Cathedrals made the sport of shells,
No mercy, even for a child,
As though the imps of all the hells
Were crazed with drink and running wild.

All this we fight—that some day when
Good sense shall come again to men,
Our children's children may not read
This age's history thus defamed
And find we served a selfish creed
And ever be of us ashamed!

Edgar Albert Guest

Winding The Clock

When I was but a little lad, my old Grandfather said
That none should wind the clock but he, and so, at time for bed,
He'd fumble for the curious key kept high upon the shelf
And set aside that little task entirely for himself.
In time Grandfather passed away, and so that duty fell
Unto my Father, who performed the weekly custom well;
He held that clocks were not to be by careless persons wound,
And he alone should turn the key or move the hands around.
I envied him that little task, and wished that I might be
The one to be entrusted with the turning of the key;
But year by year the clock was his exclusive bit of care
Until the day the angels came and smoothed his silver hair.
To-day the task is mine to do, like those who've gone before
I am a jealous guardian of that round and glassy door,
And 'til at my chamber door God's messenger shall knock
To me alone shall be reserved the right to wind the clock.

Edgar Albert Guest

Winds Of The Morning

WINDS of the morning, whisper low,
Lingered you in the valley where
Sleeps my love of the Long Ago,
Under the pale green grasses there?

Tell me, winds of the morning, sweet,
There you paused in your gentle way,
Before you came to the city street,
To kiss the daisies that o'er her sway.

There, from there, all your fragrance rare
You gathered, winds of the morning, say;
Whisper low that you come from there
To cheer the heart of me today.

Winds of the morning, so cool and sweet,
Laden with fragrance; I know, I know
You have come from that deep retreat,
Where sleeps my love of the Long Ago.

Edgar Albert Guest

Wisdom's Haunts

Way out in the woods there are brothers who read
By the light of a candle, in Greek,
And in far away places are thousands, indeed,
Who several languages speak.

I have sat near a stove in a queer little store
Where the farmers were gathered, and heard
A learned discussion of classical lore
That my soul with amazement has stirred.

I have looked at rough hands and at storm-weathered cheeks
And imagined their master to be
Uncultured, untutored, as wild as the creeks
That are rushing their way to the sea;
But I've found just behind the stern mask that he wears,
In the simplest of style and of dress,
A knowledge of life and a grasp of affairs
That professors don't always possess.

I blush for the arrogant city man's ways
Who struts in his pomp and his pride,
And thinks that all wisdom in city walls stays,
And fools in the country abide.
For out in life's forests and out on its plains,
By the side of her mountains and brooks,
In the roughest of garments are scholars with brains
Who know the inside of their books.

Oh, fool from the city, who views with a sneer
What is not of the city itself!
For what are the things that you seem to revere
But the glint and the glitter of pelf?
You are warped with conceit and are prejudice-blind,
And you know not the truth of the earth,
That wherever men labor there always you'll find
The things that are really of worth.

Edgar Albert Guest

With Dog And Gun

Out in the woods with a dog an' gun
Is my idea of a real day's fun.
'Tain't the birds that I'm out to kill
That furnish me with the finest thrill,
'Cause I never worry or fret a lot,
Or curse my luck if I miss a shot.
There's many a time, an' I don't know why,
That I shoot too low or I aim too high,
An' all I can see is the distant whirr
Of a bird that's gittin' back home to her-
Yep, gittin' back home at the end o' day,
An' I'm just as glad that he got away.

There's a whole lot more in the woods o' fall
Than the birds you bag- if you think at all.
There's colors o' gold an' red an' brown
As never were known in the busy town;
There's room to breathe in the purest air
An' something worth looking at everywhere;
There's the dog who's leadin' you on an' on
To a patch o' cover where birds have gone,
An' standin' there, without move or change,
Till you give the sign that you've got the range.
That's thrill enough for my blood, I say,
So why should I care if they get away?

Fact is, there are times that I'd ruther miss
Than to bring 'em down, 'cause I feel like this:
There's a heap more joy in a living thing
Than a breast crushed in or a broken wing,
An' I can't feel right, an' I never will,
When I look at a bird that I've dared to kill.
Oh, I'm jus' plumb happy to tramp about
An' follow my dog as he hunts 'em out,
Jus' watchin' him point in his silent way
Where the Bob Whites are an' the partridge stay;
For the joy o' the great outdoors I've had,
So why should I care if my aim is bad?

Worth While

He doesn't care that I'm not rich,
Or that I'm poorly dressed,
That I'm a toiler in the ditch
He hasn't even guessed.
My faults that other people know
He doesn't even see,
For every night with eyes aglow
He toddles up to me.

Although I'm just a common dub,
And ordinary clay,
His cheek to mine he's glad to rub
Before I go away;
And every night when I return,
He's glad as he can be,
And though but little I may earn
He toddles up to me.

To come to me he'd leave a king,
If one were sitting near,
Unto no millionaire he'd cling
If only I'd appear.
And though but tattered rags are mine
When I go home to tea
With eyes that fairly beam and shine
He'd toddle up to me.

And so I've reason to be glad,
And reason to rejoice,
It's worth the world to be a dad,
To be a baby's choice.
There is no prize fame can bestow,
No joy can ever be
So real, as when, with eyes aglow,
He toddles up to me.

Edgar Albert Guest

Yesterday

I've trod the links with many a man,
And played him club for club;
'Tis scarce a year since I began
And I am still a dub.
But this I've noticed as we strayed
Along the bunkered way,
No one with me has ever played
As he did yesterday.
It makes no difference what the drive,
Together as we walk,
Till we up to the ball arrive,
I get the same old talk:
"To-day there's something wrong with me,
Just what I cannot say.
Would you believe I got a three
For this hole--yesterday?"

I see them top and slice a shot,
And fail to follow through,
And with their brassies plough the lot,
The very way I do.
To six and seven their figures run,
And then they sadly say:
"I neither dubbed nor fozzled one
When I played--yesterday!"

I have no yesterdays to count,
No good work to recall;
Each morning sees hope proudly mount,
Each evening sees it fall.
And in the locker room at night,
When men discuss their play,
I hear them and I wish I might
Have seen them--yesterday.

Oh, dear old yesterday! What store
Of joys for men you hold!
I'm sure there is no day that's more
Remembered or extolled.

I'm off my task myself a bit,
My mind has run astray;
I think, perhaps, I should have writ
These verses--yesterday.

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Edgar Albert Guest

You

You are the fellow that has to decide
Whether you'll do it or toss it aside.
You are the fellow who makes up your mind
Whether you'll lead or will linger behind
Whether you'll try for the goal that's afar
Or just be contented to stay where you are.
Take it or leave it. Here's something to do!
Just think it over — It's all up to you!

What do you wish? To be known as a shirk,
Known as a good man who's willing to work,
Scorned for a loafer or praised by your chief,
Rich man or poor man or beggar or thief?
Eager or earnest or dull through the day,
Honest or crooked? It's you who must say!
You must decide in the face of the test
Whether you'll shirk it or give it your best.

Nobody here will compel you to rise;
No one will force you to open your eyes;
No one will answer for you yes or no,
Whether to stay there or whether to go.
Life is a game, but it's you who must say,
Whether as cheat or as sportsman you'll play.
Fate may betray you, but you settle first
Whether to live to your best or your worst.

So, whatever it is you are wanting to be,
Remember, to fashion the choice you are free.
Kindly or selfish, or gentle or strong,
Keeping the right way or taking the wrong,
Careless of honor or guarding your pride,
All these are questions which you must decide.
Yours the selection, whichever you do;
The thing men call character's all up to you!

Edgar Albert Guest

You And Your Body

WHOM is your boy going to for advice?
Tough Johnny Jones at the end of the street,
Rough Billy Green or untaught Jimmy Price?
Who is now guiding his innocent feet?
Who takes him walking or swimming today,
You, or the stranger just over the way?

Whom is your boy leaning on for a friend?
Whom does he tell all his wee troubles to?
Say, now, with whom does your little one spend
Most of his time; with a stranger or you?
Whose hand is leading him where he should go?
Answer now, Busy Man, tell if you know.

Who is the pal that he opens his heart to,
You, or some stranger you never have seen?
Whom does your boy all his secrets impart to?
Maybe to some one whose mind is unclean.
If it isn't to you that he comes, he's in danger.
What do you know of the worth of the stranger?

Oh, be a boy with a boy that is yours;
Play with him, stay with him, show him the way;
Walk with him, talk with him, take him out doors;
Be his best friend, as you ought to, today.
Take him down town so the youngster may see
The right sort of man that you want him to be.

Don't be too busy to hear what he's telling;
Don't send him off when he comes to your knee;
This sort of father disaster is spelling —
He's hungry for you, and his pal you should be.
Spend all the time that you can with the lad,
He'll be a good boy if you'll be a good dad.

Edgar Albert Guest

Your Caddie And You

He is with you every minute, in the smooth and in the rough,
And your caddie's quick to sense it if you're made of proper stuff.
If you hear your trials bravely, if you do the best you can,
You will find the little fellow trying hard to be a man.

If you show the proper spirit when you meet misfortune grim,
You'll be making a courageous and a plucky chap of him.
But if you're overbearing and the speech of brutes employ,
You are ruining the morals and the manhood of the boy.

He's a manly little fellow, and he wants to do what's right,
But he's quick to sense injustice and his breast is full of fight.
So remember when he doesn't always do as he should do,
And you find that he is careless, that the fault may lie with you.

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Your Country Needs You

The country needs a man like you,
It has a task for you to do.
It has a job for you to face.
Somewhere for you it has a place.
Not all the slackers dodge the work
Of service where the cannon lurk,
Not all the slackers on life's stage
Are boys of military age.
The old, the youthful and unfit
Must also do their little bit.

The country needs a man like you,
'Twill suffer if you prove untrue.
What though you cannot bear a gun?
That isn't all that's to be done.
There are a thousand other ways
To serve your country through the days
Of trial and the nights of storm.
You need not wear a uniform
Or with the men in council sit
To serve the Flag and do your bit.

Somewhere for you there is a place,
Somewhere you have a task to face.
There's none so helpless or so frail
That cannot, when our foes assail,
In some way help our common cause
And be deserving of applause.
Behind the Flag we all must be,
Each at his post, awake to see
That in so far as he has striven,
His best was to his country given.

You can be patient, brave and strong,
And not complain when plans go wrong;
You can be cheerful at your toil,
Or till, perhaps, some patch of soil;
You can encourage others who
Have heavier, greater tasks to do;

You can be loyal, not in creed
Alone, but in each thought and deed;
You can make sacrifices, too.
The country needs a man like you,

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Youth

If I had youth I'd bid the world to try me;
I'd answer every challenge to my will.
Though mountains stood in silence to defy me,
I'd try to make them subject to my skill.
I'd keep my dreams and follow where they led me;
I'd glory in the hazards which abound.
I'd eat the simple fare privations fed me,
And gladly make my couch upon the ground.
If I had youth I'd ask no odds of distance,
Nor wish to tread the known and level ways.
I'd want to meet and master strong resistance,
And in a worth-while struggle spend my days.
I'd seek the task which calls for full endeavor;
I'd feel the thrill of battle in my veins.
I'd bear my burden gallantly, and never
Desert the hills to walk on common plains.
If I had youth no thought of failure lurking
Beyond to-morrow's dawn should fright my soul.
Let failure strike—it still should find me working
With faith that I should some day reach my goal.
I'd dice with danger—aye!—and glory in it;
I'd make high stakes the purpose of my throw.
I'd risk for much, and should I fail to win it,
I would not even whimper at the blow.
If I had youth no chains of fear should bind me;
I'd brave the heights which older men must shun.
I'd leave the well-worn lanes of life behind me,
And seek to do what men have never done.
Rich prizes wait for those who do not waver;
The world needs men to battle for the truth.
It calls each hour for stronger hearts and braver.
This is the age for those who still have youth!

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