Classic Poetry Series

Eugene Field

- poems -

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Eugene Field (September 2, 1850 – November 4, 1895)

Eugene Field, Sr. was an American writer, best known for his children's poetry and humorous essays.

Biography

Field was an unusual poet. He was one of the few poets who wrote only children's poetry. That is how he got his nickname, The Children's Poet.

It all started September 2, 1850, at 634 South Broadway in Saint Louis. That's where and when Eugene Field was born. He had one brother named Roswell, who was one year younger than he, and a sister who died soon after her birth. He and his brother were very close, but very different. Eugene took after their mother, Francis, while Roswell took after their father. Eugene was afraid of the dark while his brother wasn't afraid of anything. Eugene hated studying while Roswell loved it. When the boys were six and five, their mother died. Mr. Field sent them to live with their cousin, Mary French, in Massachusetts until he could take care of them. While living on their cousin's farm, Eugene wrote his first poem . He was nine then, and the poem was about their cousin's dog, Fido.

At the age of fifteen, Eugene was shipped off to a small private school in Massachusetts. There were only five boys in the school, and Eugene loved leading the boys in tricks against the master of the school.

Eugene went on to William's College in Massachusetts. Unfortunately, his father died when he was nineteen and he dropped out after eight months. Next he went to Knox College but dropped out of college after a year. Then he went to the University of Missouri, where his brother was also attending. While there, he met Julia Comstock, who was fourteen. When Julia turned sixteen, she and Eugene married. They had eight children. Two died as babies, another died as a little boy. The remaining five grew up and had long lives.

While married, Eugene had many jobs. He worked for many newspapers until the Chicago Daily News offered him a job. He wrote a humorous column called "Sharps and Flats". His home in Chicago was near the intersection of N. Clarendon and W. Hutchinson in the neighborhood now known as Buena Park.

He first started publishing poetry in 1879, when his poem "Christmas Treasures" appeared in A Little Book of Western Verse. Over a dozen volumes of poetry followed and he became well known for his light-hearted poems for children, perhaps the most famous of which is "Wynken, Blynken,

and Nod." Field also published a number of short stories, including "The Holy Cross" and "Daniel and the Devil."

Field died in Chicago of a heart attack at the age of 45. He is buried at the Church of the Holy Comforter in Kenilworth, Illinois. His 1901 biography by S. Thompson states that he was originally buried in Graceland Cemetery in Chicago, but his son-in-law, Senior Warden of the Church of the Holy Comforter, had him reinterred on March 7, 1926

Legacy

Several of his poems were set to music with commercial success. Many of his works were accompanied by paintings from Maxfield Parrish. His former home in St. Louis is now a museum.A memorial to him, a statue of the "Dream Lady" from his poem "Rock-a-by-Lady", was erected in 1922 at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago. There is also a park and fieldhouse named in his honor in Chicago's Albany Park neighborhood. A statue of Wynken, Blynken and Nod adorns Washington Park, near Field's Denver home. In nearby Oak Park, Illinois, another park is named in his his honour.

"booh!"

On afternoons, when baby boy has had a splendid nap,
And sits, like any monarch on his throne, in nurse's lap,
In some such wise my handkerchief I hold before my face,
And cautiously and quietly I move about the place;
Then, with a cry, I suddenly expose my face to view,
And you should hear him laugh and crow when I say "Booh"!

Sometimes the rascal tries to make believe that he is scared,
And really, when I first began, he stared, and stared, and stared;
And then his under lip came out and farther out it came,
Till mamma and the nurse agreed it was a "cruel shame" -
But now what does that same wee, toddling, lisping baby do
But laugh and kick his little heels when I say "Booh!"

He laughs and kicks his little heels in rapturous glee, and then
In shrill, despotic treble bids me "do it all aden!"
And I - of course I do it; for, as his progenitor,
It is such pretty, pleasant play as this that I am for!
And it is, oh, such fun I and sure that we shall rue
The time when we are both too old to play the game "Booh!"

Eugene Field

"lollyby, lolly, lollyby"

Last night, whiles that the curfew bell ben ringing,
I heard a moder to her dearie singing
"Lollyby, lolly, lollyby."
And presently that chylde did cease hys weeping,
And on his moder's breast did fall a-sleeping,
To "lolly, lolly, lollyby."

Faire ben the chylde unto his moder clinging,
But fairer yet the moder's gentle singing,--
"Lollyby, lolly, lollyby."
And angels came and kisst the dearie smiling
In dreems while him hys moder ben beguiling
With "lolly, lolly, lollyby!"

Then to my harte saies I, "Oh, that thy beating
Colde be assuaged by some swete voice repeating
'Lollyby, lolly, lollyby;'
That like this lyttel chylde I, too, ben sleeping
With plaisaunt phantasies about me creeping,
To 'lolly, lolly, lollyby!'"

Sometime--mayhap when curfew bells are ringing--
A weary harte shall heare straunge voices singing,
"Lollyby, lolly, lollyby;"
Sometime, mayhap, with Chrysts love round me streaming,
I shall be lulled into eternal dreeming
With "lolly, lolly, lollyby."

Eugene Field

A Chaucerian Paraphrase of Horace

Syn that you, Chloe, to your moder sticken,
Maketh all ye yonge bacheloures full sicken;
Like as a lyttel deere you ben y-hiding
Whenas come lovers with theyre pityse chiding;
Sothly it ben faire to give up your moder
For to beare swete company with some oder;
Your moder ben well enow so farre shee goeth,
But that ben not farre enow, God knoweth;
Wherefore it ben sayed that foolysh ladyes
That marrye not shall leade an aype in Hadys;
But all that do with gode men wed full quickylye
When that they be on dead go to ye seints full sickerly.

Eugene Field

A Democratic Hymn

Republicans of differing views
Are pro or con protection;
If that's the issue they would choose,
Why, we have no objection.
The issue we propose concerns
Our hearts and homes more nearly:
A wife to whom the nation turns
And venerates so dearly.
So, confident of what shall be,
Our gallant host advances,
Giving three cheers for Grover C.
And three times three for Frances!

So gentle is that honored dame,
And fair beyond all telling,
The very mention of her name
Sets every breast to swelling.
She wears no mortal crown of gold--
No courtiers fawn around her--
But with their love young hearts and old
In loyalty have crowned her--
And so with Grover and his bride
We're proud to take our chances,
And it's three times three for the twain give we--
But particularly for Frances!

Eugene Field

A Dream Of Sunshine

I'm weary of this weather and I hanker for the ways
Which people read of in the psalms and preachers paraphrase--
The grassy fields, the leafy woods, the banks where I can lie
And listen to the music of the brook that flutters by,
Or, by the pond out yonder, hear the redwing blackbird's call
Where he makes believe he has a nest, but hasn't one at all;
And by my side should be a friend--a trusty, genial friend,
With plenteous store of tales galore and natural leaf to lend;
Oh, how I pine and hanker for the gracious boon of spring--
For _then_ I'm going a-fishing with John Lyle King!

How like to pigmies will appear creation, as we float
Upon the bosom of the tide in a three-by-thirteen boat--
Forgotten all vexations and all vanities shall be,
As we cast our cares to windward and our anchor to the lee;
Anon the minnow-bucket will emit batrachian sobs,
And the devil's darning-needles shall come wooing of our bobs;
The sun shall kiss our noses and the breezes toss our hair
(This latter metaphoric--we've no fimbriae to spare!);
And I--transported by the bliss--shan't do a plaguey thing
But cut the bait and string the fish for John Lyle King!

Or, if I angle, it will be for bullheads and the like,
While he shall fish for gamey bass, for pickerel, and for pike;
I really do not care a rap for all the fish that swim--
But it's worth the wealth of Indies just to be along with him
In grassy fields, in leafy woods, beside the water-brooks,
And hear him tell of things he's seen or read of in his books--
To hear the sweet philosophy that trickles in and out
The while he is discoursing of the things we talk about;
A fountain-head refreshing--a clear, perennial spring
Is the genial conversation of John Lyle King!

Should varying winds or shifting tides redound to our despite--
In other words, should we return all bootless home at night,
I'd back him up in anything he had a mind to say
Of mighty bass he'd left behind or lost upon the way;
I'd nod assent to every yarn involving piscine game--
I'd cross my heart and make my affidavit to the same;
For what is friendship but a scheme to help a fellow out--
And what a paltry fish or two to make such bones about!
Nay, Sentiment a mantle of sweet charity would fling
O'er perjuries committed for John Lyle King.

At night, when as the camp-fire cast a ruddy, genial flame,
He'd bring his tuneful fiddle out and play upon the same;
No diabolic engine this--no instrument of sin--
No relative at all to that lewd toy, the violin!
But a godly hoosier fiddle--a quaint archaic thing
Full of all the proper melodies our grandmas used to sing;
With 'Bonnie Doon,' and 'Nellie Gray,' and 'Sitting on the Stile,'
'The Heart Bowed Down,' the 'White Cockade,' and 'Charming Annie Lisle'

Our hearts would echo and the sombre empyrean ring
Beneath the wizard sorcery of John Lyle King.

The subsequent proceedings should interest me no more--
Wrapped in a woolen blanket should I calmly dream and snore;
The finny game that swims by day is my supreme delight--
And _not_ the scaly game that flies in darkness of the night!
Let those who are so minded pursue this latter game
But not repine if they should lose a boodle in the same;
For an example to you all one paragon should serve--
He towers a very monument to valor and to nerve;
No bob-tail flush, no nine-spot high, no measly pair can wring
A groan of desperation from John Lyle King!

A truce to badinage--I hope far distant is the day
When from these scenes terrestrial our friend shall pass away!
We like to hear his cheery voice uplifted in the land,
To see his calm, benignant face, to grasp his honest hand;
We like him for his learning, his sincerity, his truth,
His gallantry to woman and his kindliness to youth,
For the lenience of his nature, for the vigor of his mind,
For the fulness of that charity he bears to all mankind--
That's why we folks who know him best so reverently cling
(And that is why I pen these lines) to John Lyle King.

And now adieu, a fond adieu to thee, O muse of rhyme--
I do remand thee to the shades until that happier time
When fields are green, and posies gay are budding everywhere,
And there's a smell of clover bloom upon the vernal air;
When by the pond out yonder the redwing blackbird calls,
And distant hills are wed to Spring in veils of water-falls;
When from his aqueous element the famished pickerel springs
Two hundred feet into the air for butterflies and things--
Then come again, O gracious muse, and teach me how to sing
The glory of a fishing cruise with John Lyle King!

Eugene Field

A drinking song

Come, brothers, share the fellowship
 We celebrate to-night;
There's grace of song on every lip
 And every heart is light!
But first, before our mentor chimes
 The hour of jubilee,
Let's drink a health to good old times,
 And good times yet to be!
Clink, clink, clink!
Merrily let us drink!
There's store of wealth
And more of health
In every glass, we think.
Clink, clink, clink!
To fellowship we drink!
And from the bowl
No genial soul
In such an hour can shrink.

And you, oh, friends from west and east
 And other foreign parts,
Come share the rapture of our feast,
 The love of loyal hearts;
And in the wassail that suspends
 All matters burthensome,
We 'll drink a health to good old friends
 And good friends yet to come.
Clink, clink, clink!
To fellowship we drink!
And from the bowl
No genial soul
In such an hour will shrink.
Clink, clink, clink!
Merrily let us drink!
There's fellowship
In every sip
Of friendship's brew, we think.

Eugene Field

A Fickle Woman

Her nature is the sea's, that smiles to-night
A radiant maiden in the moon's soft light;
The unsuspecting seaman sets his sails,
Forgetful of the fury of her gales;
To-morrow, mad with storms, the ocean roars,
And o'er his hapless wreck the flood she pours!

Eugene Field

A heine love song

The image of the moon at night
 All trembling in the ocean lies,
But she, with calm and steadfast light,
 Moves proudly through the radiant skies,

How like the tranquil moon thou art--
 Thou fairest flower of womankind!
And, look, within my fluttering heart
 Thy image trembling is enshrined!

Eugene Field

A Lullaby

The stars are twinkling in the skies,
The earth is lost in slumbers deep;
So hush, my sweet, and close thine eyes,
And let me lull thy soul to sleep.
Compose thy dimpled hands to rest,
And like a little birdling lie
Secure within thy cozy nest
Upon my loving mother breast,
And slumber to my lullaby,
So hushaby--O hushaby.

The moon is singing to a star
The little song I sing to you;
The father sun has strayed afar,
As baby's sire is straying too.
And so the loving mother moon
Sings to the little star on high;
And as she sings, her gentle tune
Is borne to me, and thus I croon
For thee, my sweet, that lullaby
Of hushaby--O hushaby.

There is a little one asleep
That does not hear his mother's song;
But angel watchers--as I weep--
Surround his grave the night-tide long.
And as I sing, my sweet, to you,
Oh, would the lullaby I sing--
The same sweet lullaby he knew
While slumb'ring on this bosom too--
Were borne to him on angel's wing!
So hushaby--O hushaby.

Eugene Field

A paraphrase

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name;
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, in Heaven the same;
Give us this day our daily bread, and may our debts to heaven--
As we our earthly debts forgive--by Thee be all forgiven;
When tempted or by evil vexed, restore Thou us again,
And Thine be the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, forever and ever;
amen.

Eugene Field

A Paraphrase Of Heine

(LYRIC INTERMEZZO)

There fell a star from realms above--
A glittering, glorious star to see!
Methought it was the star of love,
So sweetly it illumined me.

And from the apple branches fell
Blossoms and leaves that time in June;
The wanton breezes wooed them well
With soft caress and amorous tune.

The white swan proudly sailed along
And vied her beauty with her note--
The river, jealous of her song,
Threw up its arms to clasp her throat.

But now--oh, now the dream is past--
The blossoms and the leaves are dead,
The swan's sweet song is hushed at last,
And not a star burns overhead.

Eugene Field

A Paraphrase, By Chaucer

Syn that you, Chloe, to your moder sticken,
Maketh all ye yonge bacheloures full sicken;
Like as a lyttel deere you ben y-hiding
Whenas come lovers with theyre pityse chiding.
Sothly it ben faire to give up your moder
For to beare swete company with some oder;
Your moder ben well enow so farre shee goeth,
But that ben not farre enow, God knoweth;
Wherefore it ben sayed that foolysh ladyes
That marrye not shall leade an aype in Hadys;
But all that do with gode men wed full quicklye
When that they be on dead go to ye seints full sickerly.

Eugene Field

A Paraphrase, By Dr. I.W.

Why, Mistress Chloe, do you bother
With prattlings and with vain ado
Your worthy and industrious mother,
Eschewing them that come to woo?

Oh, that the awful truth might quicken
This stern conviction to your breast:
You are no longer now a chicken
Too young to quit the parent nest.

So put aside your froward carriage,
And fix your thoughts, whilst yet there's time,
Upon the righteousness of marriage
With some such godly man as I'm.

Eugene Field

A Paraphrase, Circa 1715

Since Chloe is so monstrous fair,
With such an eye and such an air,
What wonder that the world complains
When she each am'rous suit disdains?

Close to her mother's side she clings,
And mocks the death her folly brings
To gentle swains that feel the smarts
Her eyes inflict upon their hearts.

Whilst thus the years of youth go by,
Shall Colin languish, Strephon die?
Nay, cruel nymph! come, choose a mate,
And choose him ere it be too late!

Eugene Field

A piteous plaint

I cannot eat my porridge,
 I weary of my play;
No longer can I sleep at night,
 No longer romp by day!
Though forty pounds was once my weight,
 I'm shy of thirty now;
I pine, I wither and I fade
 Through love of Martha Clow.

As she rolled by this morning
 I heard the nurse girl say:
"She weighs just twenty-seven pounds
 And she's one year old to-day."
I threw a kiss that nestled
 In the curls upon her brow,
But she never turned to thank me--
 That bouncing Martha Clow!

She ought to know I love her,
 For I've told her that I do;
And I've brought her nuts and apples,
 And sometimes candy, too!
I'd drag her in my little cart
 If her mother would allow
That delicate attention
 To her daughter, Martha Clow.

O Martha! pretty Martha!
 Will you always be so cold?
Will you always be as cruel
 As you are at one-year-old?
Must your two-year-old admirer
 Pine as hopelessly as now
For a fond reciprocation
 Of his love for Martha Clow?

You smile on Bernard Rogers
 And on little Harry Knott;
You play with them at peek-a-boo
 All in the Waller Lot!
Wildly I gnash my new-cut teeth
 And beat my throbbing brow,
When I behold the coquetry
 Of heartless Martha Clow!

I cannot eat my porridge,
 Nor for my play care I;
Upon the floor and porch and lawn
 My toys neglected lie;
But on the air of Halsted street
 I breathe this solemn vow:
"Though she be false, I will be true

To pretty Martha Clow!"

Eugene Field

A proper trewe idyll of camelot

Whenas ye plaisaunt Aperille shoures have washed and purged awaye
Ye poysons and ye rheums of earth to make a merrie May,
Ye shraddy boscage of ye woods ben full of birds that syng
Right merrilie a madrigal unto ye waking spring,
Ye whiles that when ye face of earth ben washed and wiped ycleane
Her peeping posies blink and stare like they had ben her een;

Then, wit ye well, ye harte of man ben turned to thoughts of love,
And, tho' it ben a lyon erst, it now ben like a dove!
And many a goodly damosel in innocence beguiles
Her owne trewe love with sweet discourse and divers plaisaunt wiles.
In soche a time ye noblesse liege that ben Kyng Arthure hight
Let cry a joust and tournament for evereche errant knyght,
And, lo! from distant Joyous-garde and eche adjacent spot
A company of noblesse lords fared unto Camelot,
Wherein were mighty feastings and passing merrie cheere,
And eke a deale of dismal dole, as you shall quickly heare.

It so befell upon a daye when jousts ben had and while
Sir Launcelot did ramp around ye ring in gallaunt style,
There came an horseman shriking sore and rashing wildly home,--
A mediaeval horseman with ye usual flecks of foame;
And he did brast into ye ring, wherein his horse did drop,
Upon ye which ye rider did with like abruptness stop,
And with fatigue and fearfulness continued in a swound
Ye space of half an hour or more before a leech was founde.
"Now tell me straight," quod Launcelot, "what varlet knyght you be,
Ere that I chine you with my sworde and cleave your harte in three!"
Then rolled that knyght his bloudy een, and answered with a groane,--
"By worthy God that hath me made and shope ye sun and mone,
There fareth hence an evil thing whose like ben never seene,
And tho' he sayeth nony worde, he bode the ill, I ween.
So take your parting, evereche one, and gird you for ye fraye,
By all that's pure, ye Divell sure doth trend his path this way!"
Ye which he quoth and fell again into a deadly swound,
And on that spot, perchance (God wot), his bones mought yet be founde.

Then evereche knight girt on his sworde and shield and hied him straight
To meet ye straunger sarasen hard by ye city gate;
Full sorely moaned ye damosels and tore their beautyse haire
For that they feared an hippogriff wolde come to eate them there;
But as they moaned and swounded there too numerous to relate,
Kyng Arthure and Sir Launcelot stode at ye city gate,
And at eche side and round about stode many a noblesse knyght
With helm and speare and sworde and shield and mickle valor dight.

Anon there came a straunger, but not a gyaunt grim,
Nor yet a draggon,--but a person gangling, long, and slim;
Yclad he was in guise that ill-beseemed those knyghtly days,
And there ben nony etiquette in his uplandish ways;
His raiment was of dusty gray, and perched above his lugs
There ben the very latest style of blacke and shiny pluggs;

His nose ben like a vulture beake, his blie ben swart of hue,
And curly ben ye whiskers through ye which ye zephyrs blewe;
Of all ye een that ben yseene in countries far or nigh,
None nonywhere colde hold compare unto that straunger's eye;
It was an eye of soche a kind as never ben on sleepe,
Nor did it gleam with kindly beame, nor did not use to weepe;
But soche an eye ye widdow hath,--an hongrey eye and wan,
That spyeth for an oder chaunce whereby she may catch on;
An eye that winketh of itself, and sayeth by that winke
Ye which a maiden sholde not knowe nor never even thinke;
Which winke ben more exceeding swift nor human thought ben thunk,
And leaveth doubting if so be that winke ben really wunke;
And soch an eye ye catte-fysshe hath when that he ben on dead
And boyled a goodly time and served with capers on his head;
A rayless eye, a bead-like eye, whose famisht aspect shows
It hungereth for ye verdant banks whereon ye wild time grows;
An eye that hawketh up and down for evereche kind of game,
And, when he doth espy ye which, he tumbleth to ye same.

Now when he kenned Sir Launcelot in armor clad, he quod,
"Another put-a-nickel-in-and-see-me-work, be god!"
But when that he was ware a man ben standing in that suit,
Ye straunger threw up both his hands, and asked him not to shoote.

Then spake Kyng Arthure: "If soe be you mind to do no ill,
Come, enter into Camelot, and eat and drink your fill;
But say me first what you are hight, and what mought be your quest."
Ye straunger quod, "I'm five feet ten, and fare me from ye West!"
"Sir Fivefeetten," Kyng Arthure said, "I bid you welcome here;
So make you merrie as you list with plaisaunt wine and cheere;
This very night shall be a feast soche like ben never seene,
And you shall be ye honored guest of Arthure and his queene.
Now take him, good sir Maligraunce, and entertain him well
Until soche time as he becomes our guest, as I you tell."

That night Kyng Arthure's table round with mighty care ben spread,
Ye oder knyghts sate all about, and Arthure at ye heade:
Oh, 't was a goodly spectacle to ken that noblesse liege
Dispensing hospitality from his commanding siege!
Ye pheasant and ye meate of boare, ye haunch of velvet doe,
Ye canvass hamme he them did serve, and many good things moe.
Until at last Kyng Arthure cried: "Let bring my wassail cup,
And let ye sound of joy go round,--I'm going to set 'em up!
I've pipes of Malmsey, May-wine, sack, metheglon, mead, and sherry,
Canary, Malvoisie, and Port, swete Muscadelle and perry;
Rochelle, Osey, and Romenay, Tyre, Rhenish, posset too,
With kags and pails of foaming ales of brown October brew.
To wine and beer and other cheere I pray you now despatch ye,
And for ensample, wit ye well, sweet sirs, I'm looking at ye!"

Unto which toast of their liege lord ye oders in ye party
Did lout them low in humble wise and bid ye same drink hearty.

So then ben merrisome discourse and passing plaisaunt cheere,
And Arthure's tales of hippogriffs ben mervaillous to heare;
But stranger far than any tale told of those knyghts of old
Ben those facetious narratives ye Western straunger told.
He told them of a country many leagues beyond ye sea
Where evereche forraine nuisance but ye Chinese man ben free,
And whiles he span his monstrous yarns, ye ladies of ye court
Did deem ye listening thereunto to be right plaisaunt sport;
And whiles they listened, often he did squeeze a lily hande,
Ye which proceeding ne'er before ben done in Arthure's lande;
And often wank a sidelong wink with either roving eye,
Whereat ye ladies laughen so that they had like to die.
But of ye damosels that sat around Kyng Arthure's table
He liked not her that sometime ben ron over by ye cable,
Ye which full evil hap had harmed and marked her person so
That in a passing wittie jest he dubbeth her ye crow.

But all ye oders of ye girls did please him passing well
And they did own him for to be a proper seeming swell;
And in especial Guinevere esteemed him wondrous faire,
Which had made Arthure and his friend, Sir Launcelot, to sware
But that they both ben so far gone with posset, wine, and beer,
They colde not see ye carrying-on, nor neither colde not heare;
For of eche liquor Arthure quafft, and so did all ye rest,
Save only and excepting that smooth straunger from the West.
When as these oders drank a toast, he let them have their fun
With divers godless mixings, but he stock to willow run,
Ye which (and all that reade these words sholde profit by ye warning)
Doth never make ye head to feel like it ben swelled next morning.
Now, wit ye well, it so befell that when the night grew dim,
Ye Kyng was carried from ye hall with a howling jag on him,
Whiles Launcelot and all ye rest that to his highness toadied
Withdrew them from ye banquet-hall and sought their couches loaded.

Now, lithe and listen, lordings all, whiles I do call it shame
That, making cheer with wine and beer, men do abuse ye same;
Though eche be well enow alone, ye mixing of ye two
Ben soche a piece of foolishness as only ejiots do.
Ye wine is plaisaunt bibbing whenas ye gentles dine,
And beer will do if one hath not ye wherewithal for wine,
But in ye drinking of ye same ye wise are never floored
By taking what ye tipplers call too big a jag on board.
Right hejeous is it for to see soche dronkonness of wine
Whereby some men are used to make themselves to be like swine;
And sorely it repenteth them, for when they wake next day
Ye fearful paynes they suffer ben soche as none mought say,
And soche ye brenning in ye throat and brasting of ye head
And soche ye taste within ye mouth like one had been on dead,--Soche
be ye foul conditions that these unhappy men
Sware they will never drink no drop of nony drinke again.
Yet all so frail and vain a thing and weak withal is man
That he goeth on an oder tear whenever that he can.

And like ye evil quatern or ye hills that skirt ye skies,
Ye jag is reproductive and jags on jags arise.

Whenas Aurora from ye east in dewy splendor hied
King Arthure dreemed he saw a snaix and ben on fire inside,
And waking from this hejeous dreeme he sate him up in bed,--
"What, ho! an absynthe cocktail, knave! and make it strong!" he said;
Then, looking down beside him, lo! his lady was not there--
He called, he searched, but, Goddis wounds! he found her nonywhere;
And whiles he searched, Sir Maligraunce rashed in, wood wroth, and cried,
"Methinketh that ye straunger knyght hath snuck away my bride!"
And whiles he spake a motley score of other knyghts brast in
And filled ye royall chamber with a mickle fearfull din,
For evereche one had lost his wiffe nor colde not spye ye same,
Nor colde not spye ye straunger knyght, Sir Fivefeetten of name.

Oh, then and there was grevious lamentation all arounde,
For nony dame nor damosel in Camelot ben found,--
Gone, like ye forest leaves that speed afore ye autumn wind.
Of all ye ladies of that court not one ben left behind
Save only that same damosel ye straunger called ye crow,
And she allowed with moche regret she ben too lame to go;
And when that she had wept full sore, to Arthure she confess'd
That Guinevere had left this word for Arthure and ye rest:
"Tell them," she quod, "we shall return to them whenas we've made
This little deal we have with ye Chicago Bourde of Trade."

Eugene Field

A rhine-land drinking song

If our own life is the life of a flower
(And that's what some sages are thinking),
We should moisten the bud with a health-giving flood
And 'twill bloom all the sweeter--
Yes, life's the completer
For drinking,
and drinking,
and drinking.

If it be that our life is a journey
(As many wise folk are opining),
We should sprinkle the way with the rain while we may;
Though dusty and dreary,
'Tis made cool and cheery
With wining,
and wining,
and wining.

If this life that we live be a dreaming
(As pessimist people are thinking),
To induce pleasant dreams there is nothing, meseems,
Like this sweet prescription,
That baffles description--
This drinking,
and drinking,
and drinking.

Eugene Field

A Roman Winter-Piece

See, Thaliarch mine, how, white with snow,
Soracte mocks the sullen sky;
How, groaning loud, the woods are bowed,
And chained with frost the rivers lie.

Pile, pile the logs upon the hearth;
We'll melt away the envious cold:
And, better yet, sweet friend, we'll wet
Our whistles with some four-year-old.

Commit all else unto the gods,
Who, when it pleaseth them, shall bring
To fretful deeps and wooded steeps
The mild, persuasive grace of Spring.

Let not To-morrow, but To-day,
Your ever active thoughts engage;
Frisk, dance, and sing, and have your fling,
Unharmed, unawed of crabbed Age.

Let's steal content from Winter's wrath,
And glory in the artful theft,
That years from now folks shall allow
'T was cold indeed when we got left.

So where the whisperings and the mirth
Of girls invite a sportive chap,
Let's fare awhile,--aha, you smile;
You guess my meaning,--_verbum sap_.

Eugene Field

A Spring Poem From Bion

One asketh:
'Tell me, Myrson, tell me true:
What's the season pleaseth you?
Is it summer suits you best,
When from harvest toil we rest?
Is it autumn with its glory
Of all surfeited desires?
Is it winter, when with story
And with song we hug our fires?
Or is spring most fair to you-
Come, good Myrson, tell me true!'

Another answereth:
'What the gods in wisdom send
We should question not, my friend;
Yet, since you entreat of me,
I will answer reverently:
Me the summertime displeases,
For its sun is scorching hot;
Autumn brings such dire diseases
That perforce I like it not;
As for biting winter, oh!
How I hate its ice and snow!

'But, thrice welcome, kindly spring,
With the myriad gifts you bring!
Not too hot nor yet too cold,
Graciously your charms unfold-
Oh, your days are like the dreaming
Of those nights which love beseems,
And your nights have all the seeming
Of those days of golden dreams!
Heaven smiles down on earth, and then
Earth smiles up to heaven again!'

Eugene Field

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Eugene Field

A Tardy Apology

You ask me, friend,
Why I don't send
The long since due-and-paid-for numbers;
Why, songless, I
As drunken lie
Abandoned to Lethean slumbers.

Long time ago
(As well you know)
I started in upon that carmen;
My work was vain,--
But why complain?
When gods forbid, how helpless are men!

Some ages back,
The sage Anack
Courted a frisky Samian body,
Singing her praise
In metered phrase
As flowing as his bowls of toddy.

Till I was hoarse
Might I discourse
Upon the cruelties of Venus;
'T were waste of time
As well of rhyme,
For you've been there yourself, Maecenas!

Perfect your bliss
If some fair miss
Love you yourself and _not_ your minae;
I, fortune's sport,
All vainly court
The beauteous, polyandrous Phryne!

Eugene Field

A Valentine

Go, Cupid, and my sweetheart tell
I love her well.
Yes, though she tramples on my heart
And rends that bleeding thing apart;
And though she rolls a scornful eye
On doting me when I go by;
And though she scouts at everything
As tribute unto her I bring -
Apple, banana, caramel -
Haste, Cupid, to my love and tell,
In spite of all, I love her well!

And further say I have a sled
Cushioned in blue and painted red!
The groceryman has promised I
Can "hitch" whenever he goes by -
Go, tell her that, and, furthermore,
Apprise my sweetheart that a score
Of other little girls implore
The boon of riding on that sled
Painted and hitched, as aforesaid; -
And tell her, Cupid, only she
Shall ride upon that sled with me!
Tell her this all, and further tell
I love her well.

Eugene Field

A Valentine To My Wife

Accept, dear girl, this little token,
And if between the lines you seek,
You'll find the love I've often spoken—
The love my dying lips shall speak.

Our little ones are making merry
O'er am'rous ditties rhymed in jest,
But in these words (though awkward—very)
The genuine article's expressed.

You are as fair and sweet and tender,
Dear brown-eyed little sweetheart mine,
As when, a callow youth and slender,
I asked to be your Valentine.

What though these years of ours be fleeting?
What though the years of youth be flown?
I'll mock old Tempus with repeating,
'I love my love and her alone!'

And when I fall before his reaping,
And when my stuttering speech is dumb,
Think not my love is dead or sleeping,
But that it waits for you to come.

So take, dear love, this little token,
And if there speaks in any line
The sentiment I'd fain have spoken,
Say, will you kiss your Valentine?

Eugene Field

Abu midjan

When Father Time swings round his scythe,
 Entomb me 'neath the bounteous vine,
So that its juices, red and blithe,
 May cheer these thirsty bones of mine.

"Elsewise with tears and bated breath
 Should I survey the life to be.
But oh! How should I hail the death
 That brings that--vinous grace to me!"

So sung the dauntless Saracen,
 Whereat the Prophet-Chief ordains
That, curst of Allah, loathed of men,
 The faithless one shall die in chains.

But one vile Christian slave that lay
 A prisoner near that prisoner saith:
"God willing, I will plant some day
 A vine where liest thou in death."

Lo, over Abu Midjan's grave
 With purpling fruit a vine-tree grows;
Where rots the martyred Christian slave
 Allah, and only Allah, knows!

Eugene Field

After Reading Trollope's History Of Florence

My books are on their shelves again
And clouds lie low with mist and rain.
Afar the Arno murmurs low
The tale of fields of melting snow.
List to the bells of times agone
The while I wait me for the dawn.

Beneath great Giotto's Campanile
The gray ghosts throng; their whispers steal
From poets' bosoms long since dust;
They ask me now to go. I trust
Their fleeter footsteps where again
They come at night and live as men.

The rain falls on Ghiberti's gates;
The big drops hang on purple dates;
And yet beneath the ilex-shades--
Dear trysting-place for boys and maids--
There comes a form from days of old,
With Beatrice's hair of gold.

The breath of lands or lilied streams
Floats through the fabric of my dreams;
And yonder from the hills of song,
Where psalmists brood and prophets throng,
The lone, majestic Dante leads
His love across the blooming meads.

Along the almond walks I tread
And greet the figures of the dead.
Mirandula walks here with him
Who lived with gods and seraphim;
Yet where Colonna's fair feet go
There passes Michael Angelo.

In Rome or Florence, still with her
Stands lone and grand her worshipper.
In Leonardo's brain there move
Christ and the children of His love;
And Raphael is touching now,
For the last time, an angel's brow.

Angelico is praying yet
Where lives no pang of man's regret,
And, mixing tears and prayers within
His palette's wealth, absolved from sin,
He dips his brush in hues divine;
San Marco's angel faces shine.

Within Lorenzo's garden green,
Where olives hide their boughs between,
The lovers, as they read betimes

Their love within Petrarca's lines,
Stand near the marbles found at Rome,
Lost shades that search in vain for home.

They pace the paths along the stream,
Dark Vallombrosa in their dream.
They sing, amidst the rain-drenched pines,
Of Tuscan gold that ruddier shines
Behind a saint's auroral face
That shows e'en yet the master's trace.

But lo, within the walls of gray,
E're yet there falls a glint of day,
And far without, from hill to vale,
Where honey-hearted nightingale
Or meads of pale anemones
Make sweet the coming morning breeze--

I hear a voice, of prophet tone,
A voice of doom, like his alone
That once in Gadara was heard;
The old walls trembled--lo, the bird
Has ceased to sing, and yonder waits
Lorenzo at his palace gates.

Some Romola in passing by
Turns toward the ruler, and his sigh
Wanders amidst the myrtle bowers
Or o'er the city's mantled towers,
For she is Florence! 'Wilt thou hear
San Marco's prophet? Doom is near.'

'Her liberties,' he cries, 'restore!
This much for Florence--yea, and more
To men and God!' The days are gone;
And in an hour of perfect dawn
I stand beneath the cypress trees
That shiver still with words like these.

Eugene Field

Ailsie, My Bairn

Lie in my arms, Ailsie, my bairn,--
 Lie in my arms and dinna greit;
Long time been past syn I kenned you last,
 But my harte been allwais the same, my swete.

Ailsie, I colde not say you ill,
 For out of the mist of your bitter tears,
And the prayers that rise from your bonnie eyes
 Cometh a promise of oder yeres.

I mind the time when we lost our bairn,--
 Do you ken that time? A wambling tot,
You wandered away ane simmer day,
 And we hunted and called, and found you not.

I promised God, if He'd send you back,
 Alwaies to keepe and to love you, childe;
And I'm thinking again of that promise when
 I see you creep out of the storm sae wild.

You came back then as you come back now,--
 Your kirtle torn and your face all white;
And you stood outside and knockit and cried,
 Just as you, dearie, did to-night.

Oh, never a word of the cruel wrang,
 That has faded your cheek and dimmed your ee;
And never a word of the fause, fause lord,--
 Only a smile and a kiss for me.

Lie in my arms, as long, long syne,
 And sleepe on my bosom, deere wounded thing,--
I'm nae sae glee as I used to be,
 Or I'd sing you the songs I used to sing.

But Ile kemb my fingers thro' y'r haire,
 And nane shall know, but you and I,
Of the love and the faith that came to us baith
 When Ailsie, my bairn, came home to die.

Eugene Field

Alaskan Balladry

Krinken was a little child,-
It was summer when he smiled.
Oft the hoary sea and grim
Stretched its white arms out to him,
Calling, 'Sun-child, come to me;
Let me warm my heart with thee!'
But the child heard not the sea,
Calling, yearning evermore
For the summer on the shore.

Krinken on the beach one day
Saw a maiden Nis at play;
On the pebbly beach she played
In the summer Krinken made.
Fair, and very fair, was she,
Just a little child was he.
'Krinken,' said the maiden Nis,
'Let me have a little kiss,
Just a kiss, and go with me
To the summer-lands that be
Down within the silver sea.'

Krinken was a little child-
By the maiden Nis beguiled,
Hand in hand with her went he,
And 'twas summer in the sea.
And the hoary sea and grim
To its bosom folded him-
Clasped and kissed the little form,
And the ocean's heart was warm.

Now the sea calls out no more;
It is winter on the shore,-
Winter where that little child
Made sweet summer when he smiled;
Though 'tis summer on the sea
Where with maiden Nis went he,-
Summer, summer evermore,-
It is winter on the shore,
Winter, winter evermore.
Of the summer on the deep
Come sweet visions in my sleep:

His
fair face lifts from the sea,

His
dear voice calls out to me,-
These my dreams of summer be.

Krinken was a little child,
By the maiden Nis beguiled;

Oft the hoary sea and grim
Reached its longing arms to him,
Crying, 'Sun-child, come to me;
Let me warm my heart with thee!'
But the sea calls out no more;
It is winter on the shore,-
Winter, cold and dark and wild;
Krinken was a little child,-
It was summer when he smiled;
Down he went into the sea,
And the winter bides with me.
Just a little child was he.

Eugene Field

Alaskan Balladry, No.1

The Northland reared his hoary head
And spied the Southland leagues away-
'Fairest of all fair brides,' he said,
'Be thou my bride, I pray!'

Whereat the Southland laughed and cried:
'I'll bide beside my native sea,
And I shall never be thy bride
Till thou com'st wooing me!'

The Northland's heart was a heart of ice,
A diamond glacier, mountain high-
Oh, love is sweet at any price,
As well know you and I!

So gayly the Northland took his heart
And cast it in the wailing sea-
'Go, thou, with all thy cunning art,
And woo my bride for me!'

For many a night and for many a day,
And over the leagues that rolled between,
The true-heart messenger sped away
To woo the Southland queen.

But the sea wailed loud, and the sea wailed long,
While ever the Northland cried in glee:
'Oh, thou shalt sing us our bridal song,
When comes my bride, O sea!'

At the foot of the Southland's golden throne
The heart of the Northland ever throbs-
For that true-heart speaks in the waves that moan,
The songs that it sings are sobs.

Ever the Southland spurns the cries
Of the messenger pleading the Northland's part;
The summer shines in the Southland's eyes-
The winter bides in her heart!

And ever unto that far-off place
Which love doth render a hallowed spot,
The Northland turneth his honest face
And wonders she cometh not.

The sea wails loud, and the sea wails long,
As the ages of waiting drift slowly by,
But the sea shall sing no bridal song-
As well know you and I!

Eugene Field

An Autumn Treasure-Trove

'Tis the time of the year's sundown, and flame
Hangs on the maple bough;
And June is the faded flower of a name;
The thin hedge hides not a singer now.
Yet rich am I; for my treasures be
The gold afloat in my willow-tree.

Sweet morn on the hillside dripping with dew,
Girded with blue and pearl,
Counts the leaves afloat in the streamlet too;
As the love-lorn heart of a wistful girl,
She sings while her soul brooding tearfully
Sees a dream of gold in the willow-tree.

All day pure white and saffron at eve,
Clouds awaiting the sun
Turn them at length to ghosts that leave
When the moon's white path is slowly run
Till the morning comes, and with joy for me
O'er my gold agleam in the willow-tree.

The lilacs that blew on the breast of May
Are an old and lost delight;
And the rose lies ruined in his careless way
As the wind turns the poplars underwhite,
Yet richer am I for the autumn; see
All my misty gold in the willow-tree.

Eugene Field

An Eclogue From Virgil

(The exile Meliboeus finds Tityrus in possession of his own farm, restored to him by the emperor Augustus, and a conversation ensues. The poem is in praise of Augustus, peace and pastoral life.)

Meliboeus--
Tityrus, all in the shade of the wide-spreading beech tree reclining,
Sweet is that music you've made on your pipe that is oaten and slender;
Exiles from home, you beguile our hearts from their hopeless repining,
As you sing Amaryllis the while in pastorals tuneful and tender.

Tityrus--
A god--yes, a god, I declare--vouchsafes me these pleasant conditions,
And often I gayly repair with a tender white lamb to his altar,
He gives me the leisure to play my greatly admired compositions,
While my heifers go browsing all day, unhampered of bell and halter.

Meliboeus--
I do not begrudge you repose; I simply admit I'm confounded
To find you unscathed of the woes of pillage and tumult and battle;
To exile and hardship devote and by merciless enemies hounded,
I drag at this wretched old goat and coax on my famishing cattle.
Oh, often the omens presaged the horrors which now overwhelm me--
But, come, if not elsewise engaged, who is this good deity, tell me!

Tityrus (reminiscently)--
The city--the city called Rome, with, my head full of herding and tillage,
I used to compare with my home, these pastures wherein you now wander;
But I didn't take long to find out that the city surpasses the village
As the cypress surpasses the sprout that thrives in the thicket out yonder.

Meliboeus--
Tell me, good gossip, I pray, what led you to visit the city?

Tityrus--
Liberty! which on a day regarded my lot with compassion
My age and distresses, forsooth, compelled that proud mistress to pity,
That had snubbed the attentions of youth in most reprehensible fashion.
Oh, happy, thrice happy, the day when the cold Galatea forsook me,
And equally happy, I say, the hour when that other girl took me!

Meliboeus (slyly, as if addressing the damsel)--
So now, Amaryllis the truth of your ill-disguised grief I discover!
You pined for a favorite youth with cityfied damsels hobnobbing.
And soon your surroundings partook of your grief for your recusant lover--
The pine trees, the copse and the brook for Tityrus ever went sobbing.

Tityrus--
Meliboeus, what else could I do? Fate doled me no morsel of pity;
My toil was all in vain the year through, no matter how earnest or clever,
Till, at last, came that god among men--that king from that wonderful city,
And quoth: 'Take your homesteads again--they are yours and your assigns forever!'

Meliboeus--
Happy, oh, happy old man! rich in what's better than money--
Rich in contentment, you can gather sweet peace by mere listening;
Bees with soft murmurings go hither and thither for honey.
Cattle all gratefully low in pastures where fountains are glistening--
Hark! in the shade of that rock the pruner with singing rejoices--
The dove in the elm and the flock of wood-pigeons hoarsely repining,
The plash of the sacred cascade--ah, restful, indeed, are these voices,
Tityrus, all in the shade of your wide-spreading beech-tree reclining!

Tityrus--
And he who insures this to me--oh, craven I were not to love him!
Nay, rather the fish of the sea shall vacate the water they swim in,
The stag quit his bountiful grove to graze in the ether above him.
While folk antipodean rove along with their children and women!

Meliboeus (suddenly recalling his own misery)--
But we who are exiled must go; and whither--ah, whither--God knoweth!
Some into those regions of snow or of desert where Death reigneth only;
Some off to the country of Crete, where rapid Oaxes down floweth.
And desperate others retreat to Britain, the bleak isle and lonely.
Dear land of my birth! shall I see the horde of invaders oppress thee?
Shall the wealth that outspringeth from thee by the hand of the alien be squandered?
Dear cottage wherein I was born! shall another in conquest possess thee--
Another demolish in scorn the fields and the groves where I've wandered?
My flock! never more shall you graze on that furze-covered hillside above me--
Gone, gone are the halcyon days when my reed piped defiance to sorrow!
Nevermore in the vine-covered grot shall I sing of the loved ones that love me--
Let yesterday's peace be forgot in dread of the stormy to-morrow!

Tityrus--
But rest you this night with me here; my bed--we will share it together,
As soon as you've tasted my cheer, my apples and chestnuts and cheeses;
The evening a'ready is nigh--the shadows creep over the heather,
And the smoke is rocked up to the sky to the lullaby song of the breezes.

Eugene Field

An Invitation To Maecenas

Dear, noble friend! a virgin cask
Of wine solicits your attention;
And roses fair, to deck your hair,
And things too numerous to mention.
So tear yourself awhile away
From urban turmoil, pride, and splendor,
And deign to share what humble fare
And sumptuous fellowship I tender.
The sweet content retirement brings
Smoothes out the ruffled front of kings.

The evil planets have combined
To make the weather hot and hotter;
By parboiled streams the shepherd dreams
Vainly of ice-cream soda-water.
And meanwhile you, defying heat,
With patriotic ardor ponder
On what old Rome essays at home,
And what her heathen do out yonder.
Maecenas, no such vain alarm
Disturbs the quiet of this farm!

God in His providence obscures
The goal beyond this vale of sorrow,
And smiles at men in pity when
They seek to penetrate the morrow.
With faith that all is for the best,
Let's bear what burdens are presented,
That we shall say, let come what may,
'We die, as we have lived, contented!
Ours is to-day; God's is the rest,--
He doth ordain who knoweth best.'

Dame Fortune plays me many a prank.
When she is kind, oh, how I go it!
But if again she's harsh,--why, then
I am a very proper poet!
When favoring gales bring in my ships,
I hie to Rome and live in clover;
Elsewise I steer my skiff out here,
And anchor till the storm blows over.
Compulsory virtue is the charm
Of life upon the Sabine farm!

Eugene Field

An Ode To Fortune

O Lady Fortune! 't is to thee I call,
Dwelling at Antium, thou hast power to crown
The veriest clod with riches and renown,
And change a triumph to a funeral
The tillers of the soil and they that vex the seas,
Confessing thee supreme, on bended knees
Invoke thee, all.

Of Dacian tribes, of roving Scythian bands,
Of cities, nations, lawless tyrants red
With guiltless blood, art thou the haunting dread;
Within thy path no human valor stands,
And, arbiter of empires, at thy frown
The sceptre, once supreme, slips surely down
From kingly hands.

Necessity precedes thee in thy way;
Hope fawns on thee, and Honor, too, is seen
Dancing attendance with obsequious mien;
But with what coward and abject dismay
The faithless crowd and treacherous wantons fly
When once their jars of luscious wine run dry,--
Such ingrates they!

Fortune, I call on thee to bless
Our king,--our Caesar girt for foreign wars!
Help him to heal these fratricidal scars
That speak degenerate shame and wickedness;
And forge anew our impious spears and swords,
Wherewith we may against barbarian hordes
Our Past redress!

Eugene Field

Apple-Pie and Cheese

Full many a sinful notion
 Conceived of foreign powers
Has come across the ocean
 To harm this land of ours;
And heresies called fashions
 Have modesty effaced,
And baleful, morbid passions
 Corrupt our native taste.
O tempora! O mores!
 What profanations these
That seek to dim the glories
 Of apple-pie and cheese!

I'm glad my education
 Enables me to stand
Against the vile temptation
 Held out on every hand;
Eschewing all the tittles
 With vanity replete,
I'm loyal to the victuals
 Our grandsires used to eat!
I'm glad I've got three willing boys
 To hang around and tease
Their mother for the filling joys
 Of apple-pie and cheese!

Your flavored creams and ices
 And your dainty angel-food
Are mighty fine devices
 To regale the dainty dude;
Your terrapin and oysters,
 With wine to wash 'em down,
Are just the thing for roisters
 When painting of the town;
No flippant, sugared notion
 Shall my appetite appease,
Or bate my soul's devotion
 To apple-pie and cheese!

The pie my Julia makes me
 (God bless her Yankee ways!)
On memory's pinions takes me
 To dear Green Mountain days;
And seems like I see Mother
 Lean on the window-sill,
A-handin' me and brother
 What she knows 'll keep us still;
And these feelings are so grateful,
 Says I, "Julia, if you please,
I'll take another plateful
 Of that apple-pie and cheese!"

And cheese! No alien it, sir,
 That's brought across the sea,--
No Dutch antique, nor Switzer,
 Nor glutinous de Brie;
There's nothing I abhor so
 As mawmets of this ilk--
Give me the harmless morceau
 That's made of true-blue milk!
No matter what conditions
  Dyspeptic come to feaze,
The best of all physicians
 Is apple-pie and cheese!

Though ribalds may decry 'em,
 For these twin boons we stand,
Partaking thrice per diem
 Of their fulness out of hand;
No enervating fashion
 Shall cheat us of our right
To gratify our passion
 With a mouthful at a bite!
We'll cut it square or bias,
 Or any way we please,
And faith shall justify us
 When we carve our pie and cheese!

De gustibus, 't is stated,
 Non disputandum est.
Which meaneth, when translated,
 That all is for the best.
So let the foolish choose 'em
 The vapid sweets of sin,
I will not disabuse 'em
 Of the heresy they're in;
But I, when I undress me
 Each night, upon my knees
Will ask the Lord to bless me
 With apple-pie and cheese!

Eugene Field

Armenian Folk-Song--The Partridge

As beats the sun from mountain crest,
With 'pretty, pretty',
Cometh the partridge from her nest;
The flowers threw kisses sweet to her
(For all the flowers that bloomed knew her);
Yet hasteneth she to mine and me--
Ah! pretty, pretty;
Ah! dear little partridge!

And when I hear the partridge cry
So pretty, pretty,
Upon the house-top, breakfast I;
She comes a-chirping far and wide,
And swinging from the mountain side--
I see and hear the dainty dear!
Ah! pretty, pretty;
Ah! dear little partridge!

Thy nest's inlaid with posies rare.
And pretty, pretty
Bloom violet, rose, and lily there;
The place is full of balmy dew
(The tears of flowers in love with you!)
And one and all impassioned call;
'O pretty, pretty--
O dear little partridge!'

Thy feathers they are soft and sleek--
So pretty, pretty!
Long is thy neck and small thy breast;
The color of thy plumage far
More bright than rainbow colors are!
Sweeter than dove is she I love--
My pretty, pretty--
My dear little partridge!

When comes the partridge from the tree,
So pretty, pretty!
And sings her little hymn to me,
Why, all the world is cheered thereby--
The heart leaps up into the eye,
And echo then gives back again
Our 'Pretty, pretty,'
Our 'Dear little partridge!'

Admitting the most blest of all
And pretty, pretty,
The birds come with thee at thy call;
In flocks they come and round they play,
And this is what they seem to say--
They say and sing, each feathered thing;
'Ah! pretty, pretty;

Ah! dear little partridge!'

Eugene Field

Armenian Folk-Song--The Stork

Welcome, O truant stork!
And where have you been so long?
And do you bring that grace of spring
That filleth my heart with song?

Descend upon my roof--
Bide on this ash content;
I would have you know what cruel woe
Befell me when you went.

All up in the moody sky
(A shifting threat o'er head!)
They were breaking the snow and bidding it go
Cover the beautiful dead.

Came snow on garden spot,
Came snow on mere and wold,
Came the withering breath of white robed death,
And the once warm earth was cold.

Stork, the tender rose tree,
That bloometh when you are here,
Trembled and sighed like a waiting bride--
Then drooped on a virgin bier.

But the brook that hath seen you come
Leaps forth with a hearty shout,
And the crocus peeps from the bed where it sleeps
To know what the noise is about.

Welcome, O honest friend!
And bide on my roof content;
For my heart would sing of the grace of spring,
When the winter of woe is spent.

Eugene Field

Armenian Lullaby

If thou wilt shut thy drowsy eyes,
   My mulberry one, my golden sun!
The rose shall sing thee lullabies,
   My pretty cosset lambkin!
And thou shalt swing in an almond-tree,
With a flood of moonbeams rocking thee--
A silver boat in a golden sea,
   My velvet love, my nestling dove,
      My own pomegranate blossom!

The stork shall guard thee passing well
   All night, my sweet! my dimple-feet!
And bring thee myrrh and asphodel,
   My gentle rain-of-springtime!
And for thy slumbrous play shall twine
The diamond stars with an emerald vine
To trail in the waves of ruby wine,
   My myrtle bloom, my heart's perfume,
      My little chirping sparrow!

And when the morn wakes up to see
   My apple bright, my soul's delight!
The partridge shall come calling thee,
   My jar of milk-and-honey!
Yes, thou shalt know what mystery lies
In the amethyst deep of the curtained skies,
If thou wilt fold thy onyx eyes,
   You wakeful one, you naughty son,
      You cooing little turtle!

Eugene Field

Ashes on the Slide

When Jim and Bill and I were boys a many years ago,
How gayly did we use to hail the coming of the snow!
Our sleds, fresh painted red and with their runners round and bright,
Seemed to respond right briskly to our clamor of delight
As we dragged them up the slippery road that climbed the rugged hill
Where perched the old frame meetin'-house, so solemn-like and still.

Ah, coasting in those days--those good old days--was fun indeed!
Sleds at that time I 'd have you know were paragons of speed!
And if the hill got bare in spots, as hills will do, why then
We 'd haul on ice and snow to patch those bald spots up again;
But, oh! with what sad certainty our spirits would subside
When Deacon Frisbee sprinkled ashes where we used to slide!

The deacon he would roll his eyes and gnash his toothless gums,
And clear his skinny throat, and twirl his saintly, bony thumbs,
And tell you: 'When I wuz a boy, they taught me to eschew
The godless, ribald vanities which modern youth pursue!
The pathway that leads down to hell is slippery, straight, and wide;
And Satan lurks for prey where little boys are wont to slide!'

Now, he who ever in his life has been a little boy
Will not reprove me when he hears the language I employ
To stigmatize as wickedness the deacon's zealous spite
In interfering with the play wherein we found delight;
And so I say, with confidence, not unalloyed of pride:
'Gol durn the man who sprinkles ashes where the youngsters slide!'

But Deacon Frisbee long ago went to his lasting rest,
His money well invested in farm mortgages out West;
Bill, Jim, and I, no longer boys, have learned through years of strife
That the troubles of the little boy pursue the man through life;
That here and there along the course wherein we hoped to glide
Some envious hand has sprinkled ashes just to spoil our slide!

And that malicious, envious hand is not the deacon's now.
Grim, ruthless Fate, that evil sprite none other is than thou!
Riches and honors, peace and care come at thy beck and go;
The soul, elate with joy to-day, to-morrow writhes in woe;
And till a man has turned his face unto the wall and died,
He must expect to get his share of ashes on his slide!

Eugene Field

At Cheyenne

Young Lochinvar came in from the West,
  With fringe on his trousers and fur on his vest;
  The width of his hat-brim could nowhere be beat,
  His No.

brogans were chuck full of feet,
  His girdle was horrent with pistols and things,
  And he flourished a handful of aces on kings.
  The fair Mariana sate watching a star,
  When who should turn up but the young Lochinvar!
  Her pulchritude gave him a pectoral glow,
  And he reined up his hoss with stentorian "Whoa!"
  Then turned on the maiden a rapturous grin,
  And modestly asked if he might n't step in.
  With presence of mind that was marvellous quite,
  The fair Mariana replied that he might;
  So in through the portal rode young Lochinvar,
  Pre-empted the claim, and cleaned out the bar.
  Though the justice allowed he wa'n't wholly to blame,
  He taxed him ten dollars and costs, just the same.

Eugene Field

At play

Play that you are mother dear,
And play that papa is your beau;
Play that we sit in the corner here,
Just as we used to, long ago.
Playing so, we lovers two
Are just as happy as we can be,
And I'll say "I love you" to you,
And you say "I love you" to me!
"I love you" we both shall say,
All in earnest and all in play.

Or, play that you are that other one
That some time came, and went away;
And play that the light of years agone
Stole into my heart again to-day!
Playing that you are the one I knew
In the days that never again may be,
I'll say "I love you" to you,
And you say "I love you" to me!
I love you!" my heart shall say
To the ghost of the past come back to-day!

Or, play that you sought this nestling-place
For your own sweet self, with that dual guise
Of your pretty mother in your face
And the look of that other in your eyes!
So the dear old loves shall live anew
As I hold my darling on my knee,
And I'll say "I love you" to you,
And you say "I love you" to me!
Oh, many a strange, true thing we say
And do when we pretend to play!

Eugene Field

At the door

I thought myself indeed secure,
 So fast the door, so firm the lock;
But, lo! he toddling comes to lure
 My parent ear with timorous knock.

My heart were stone could it withstand
 The sweetness of my baby's plea,--
That timorous, baby knocking and
 "Please let me in,--it's only me."

I threw aside the unfinished book,
 Regardless of its tempting charms,
And opening wide the door, I took
 My laughing darling in my arms.

Who knows but in Eternity,
 I, like a truant child, shall wait
The glories of a life to be,
 Beyond the Heavenly Father's gate?

And will that Heavenly Father heed
 The truant's supplicating cry,
As at the outer door I plead,
"'T is I, O Father! only I"?

Eugene Field

Ballad of the Jelly-Cake

A little boy whose name was Tim
   Once ate some jelly-cake for tea--
Which cake did not agree with him,
   As by the sequel you shall see.
'My darling child,' his mother said,
   'Pray do not eat that jelly-cake,
For, after you have gone to bed,
   I fear 't will make your stomach ache!'
But foolish little Tim demurred
Unto his mother's warning word.

That night, while all the household slept,
   Tim felt an awful pain, and then
From out the dark a nightmare leapt
   And stood upon his abdomen!
'I cannot breathe!' the infant cried--
   'Oh, Mrs. Nightmare, pity take!'
'There is no mercy,' she replied,
   'For boys who feast on jelly-cake!'
And so, despite the moans of Tim,
The cruel nightmare went for him.

At first, she 'd tickle Timmy's toes
   Or roughly smite his baby cheek--
And now she 'd rudely tweak his nose
   And other petty vengeance wreak;
And then, with hobnails in her shoes
   And her two horrid eyes aflame,
The mare proceeded to amuse,
   Herself by prancing o'er his frame--
First to his throbbing brow, and then
Back to his little feet again.

At last, fantastic, wild, and weird,
   And clad in garments ghastly grim,
A scowling hoodoo band appeared
   And joined in worrying little Tim.
Each member of this hoodoo horde
   Surrounded Tim with fierce ado
And with long, cruel gimlets bored
   His aching system through and through,
And while they labored all night long
The nightmare neighed a dismal song.

Next morning, looking pale and wild,
   Poor little Tim emerged from bed--
'Good gracious! what can ail the child!'
   His agitated mother said.
'We live to learn,' responded he,
   'And I have lived to learn to take
Plain bread and butter for my tea,
   And never, never, jelly-cake!

For when my hulk with pastry teems,
I must expect unpleasant dreams!'

Eugene Field

Ballad of women i love

Prudence Mears hath an old blue plate
 Hid away in an oaken chest,
And a Franklin platter of ancient date
 Beareth Amandy Baker's crest;
What times soever I've been their guest,
 Says I to myself in an undertone:
"Of womenfolk, it must be confessed,
 These do I love, and these alone."

Well, again, in the Nutmeg State,
 Dorothy Pratt is richly blest
With a relic of art and a land effete--
 A pitcher of glass that's cut, not pressed.
And a Washington teapot is possessed
 Down in Pelham by Marthy Stone--
Think ye now that I say in jest
 "These do I love, and these alone?"

Were Hepsy Higgins inclined to mate,
 Or Dorcas Eastman prone to invest
In Cupid's bonds, they could find their fate
 In the bootless bard of Crockery Quest.
For they've heaps of trumpery--so have the rest
 Of those spinsters whose ware I'd like to own;
You can see why I say with such certain zest,
 "These do I love, and these alone."

Eugene Field

Bambino (Corsican Lullaby)

Bambino in his cradle slept;
  And by his side his grandam grim
Bent down and smiled upon the child,
  And sung this lullaby to him,--
        This 'ninna and anninia':

'When thou art older, thou shalt mind
  To traverse countries far and wide,
And thou shalt go where roses blow
  And balmy waters singing glide--
        So ninna and anninia!

'And thou shalt wear, trimmed up in points,
  A famous jacket edged in red,
And, more than that, a peakèd hat,
  All decked in gold, upon thy head--
        Ah! ninna and anninia!

'Then shalt thou carry gun and knife,
  Nor shall the soldiers bully thee;
Perchance, beset by wrong or debt,
  A mighty bandit thou shalt be--
        So ninna and anninia!

'No woman yet of our proud race
  Lived to her fourteenth year unwed;
The brazen churl that eyed a girl
  Bought her the ring or paid his head--
        So ninna and anninia!

'But once came spies (I know the thieves!)
  And brought disaster to our race;
God heard us when our fifteen men
  Were hanged within the market-place--
        But ninna and anninia!

'Good men they were, my babe, and true,--
  Right worthy fellows all, and strong;
Live thou and be for them and me
  Avenger of that deadly wrong--
        So ninna and anninia!'

Eugene Field

Be My Sweetheart

Sweetheart, be my sweetheart
When birds are on the wing,
When bee and bud and babbling flood
Bespeak the birth of spring,
Come, sweetheart, be my sweetheart
And wear this posy-ring!

Sweetheart, be my sweetheart
In the mellow golden glow
Of earth aflush with the gracious blush
Which the ripening fields foreshow;
Dear sweetheart, be my sweetheart,
As into the noon we go!

Sweetheart, be my sweetheart
When falls the bounteous year,
When fruit and wine of tree and vine
Give us their harvest cheer;
Oh, sweetheart, be my sweetheart,
For winter it draweth near.

Sweetheart, be my sweetheart
When the year is white and old,
When the fire of youth is spent, forsooth,
And the hand of age is cold;
Yet, sweetheart, be my sweetheart
Till the year of our love be told!

Eugene Field

Beard And Baby

I say, as one who never feared
The wrath of a subscriber's bullet,
I pity him who has a beard
But has no little girl to pull it!

When wife and I have finished tea,
Our baby woos me with her prattle,
And, perching proudly on my knee,
She gives my petted whiskers battle.

With both her hands she tugs away,
While scolding at me kind o' spiteful;
You'll not believe me when I say
I find the torture quite delightful!

No other would presume, I ween,
To trifle with this hirsute wonder,
Else would I rise in vengeful mien
And rend his vandal frame asunder!

But when her baby fingers pull
This glossy, sleek, and silky treasure,
My cup of happiness is full -
I fairly glow with pride and pleasure!

And, sweeter still, through all the day
I seem to hear her winsome prattle -
I seem to feel her hands at play,
As though they gave me sportive battle.

Yes, heavenly music seems to steal
Where thought of her forever lingers,
And round my heart I always feel
The twining of her dimpled fingers!

Eugene Field

Ben apfelgarten

There was a certain gentleman, Ben Apfelgarten called,
Who lived way off in Germany a many years ago,
And he was very fortunate in being very bald
And so was very happy he was so.
He warbled all the day
Such songs as only they
Who are very, very circumspect and very happy may;
The people wondered why,
As the years went gliding by,
They never heard him once complain or even heave a sigh!

The women of the province fell in love with genial Ben,
Till (may be you can fancy it) the dickens was to pay
Among the callow students and the sober-minded men--
With the women-folk a-cuttin' up that way!
Why, they gave him turbans red
To adorn his hairless head,
And knitted jaunty nightcaps to protect him when abed!
In vain the rest demurred--
Not a single chiding word
Those ladies deigned to tolerate--remonstrance was absurd!

Things finally got into such a very dreadful way
That the others (oh, how artful) formed the politic design
To send him to the reichstag; so, one dull November day,
They elected him a member from the Rhine!
Then the other members said:
"Gott im Himmel! what a head!"
But they marvelled when his speeches they listened to or read;
And presently they cried:
"There must be heaps inside
Of the smooth and shiny cranium his constituents deride!"

Well, when at last he up 'nd died--long past his ninetieth year--
The strangest and the most lugubrious funeral he had,
For women came in multitudes to weep upon his bier--
The men all wond'ring why on earth the women had gone mad!
And this wonderment increased
Till the sympathetic priest
Inquired of those same ladies: "Why this fuss about deceased?"
Whereupon were they appalled,
For, as one, those women squalled:
"We doted on deceased for being bald--bald--bald!"

He was bald because his genius burnt that shock of hair away
Which, elsewise, clogs one's keenness and activity of mind;
And (barring present company, of course) I'm free to say
That, after all, it's intellect that captures womankind.
At any rate, since then
(With a precedent in Ben),
The women-folk have been in love with us bald-headed men!

Eugene Field

Beranger's

Still serve me in my age, I pray,
As in my youth, O faithful one;
For years I've brushed thee every day-
Could Socrates have better done?
What though the fates would wreak on thee
The fulness of their evil art?
Use thou philosophy, like me-
And we, old friend, shall never part!

I think-I
often
think of it-
The day we twain first faced the crowd;
My roistering friends impeached your fit,
But you and I were very proud!
Those jovial friends no more make free
With us (no longer new and smart),
But rather welcome you and me
As loving friends that should not part.

The patch? Oh, yes-one happy night-
'Lisette,' says I, 'it's time to go'-
She clutched this sleeve to stay my flight,
Shrieking: 'What! leave so early? No!'
To mend the ghastly rent she'd made,
Three days she toiled, dear patient heart!
And I-right willingly I staid-
Lisette decreed we should not part!

No incense ever yet profaned
This honest, shiny warp of thine,
Nor hath a courtier's eye disdained
Thy faded hue and quaint design;
Let servile flattery be the price
Of ribbons in the royal mart-
A roadside posie shall suffice
For us two friends that must not part!

Fear not the recklessness of yore
Shall re-occur to vex thee now;
Alas, I am a youth no more-
I'm old and sere, and so art thou!
So bide with me unto the last
And with thy warmth caress this heart
That pleads, by memories of the Past,
That two such friends should never part!

Eugene Field

BÉranger's "broken fiddle"

I

There, there, poor dog, my faithful friend,
 Pay you no heed unto my sorrow:
But feast to-day while yet you may,--
 Who knows but we shall starve to-morrow!

II

"Give us a tune," the foemen cried,
 In one of their profane caprices;
I bade them "No"--they frowned, and, lo!
 They dashed this innocent in pieces!

III

This fiddle was the village pride--
 The mirth of every fête enhancing;
Its wizard art set every heart
 As well as every foot to dancing.

IV

How well the bridegroom knew its voice,
 As from its strings its song went gushing!
Nor long delayed the promised maid
 Equipped for bridal, coy and blushing.

V

Why, it discoursed so merrily,
 It quickly banished all dejection;
And yet, when pressed, our priest confessed
 I played with pious circumspection.

VI

And though, in patriotic song,
 It was our guide, compatriot, teacher,
I never thought the foe had wrought
 His fury on the helpless creature!

VII

But there, poor dog, my faithful friend,
 Pay you no heed unto my sorrow;

I prithee take this paltry cake,--
 Who knows but we shall starve to-morrow!

VIII

Ah, who shall lead the Sunday choir
 As this old fiddle used to do it?
Can vintage come, with this voice dumb
 That used to bid a welcome to it?

IX

It soothed the weary hours of toil,
 It brought forgetfulness to debtors;
Time and again from wretched men
 It struck oppression's galling fetters.

X

No man could hear its voice, and hate;
 It stayed the teardrop at its portal;
With that dear thing I was a king
 As never yet was monarch mortal!

XI

Now has the foe--the vandal foe--
 Struck from my hands their pride and glory;
There let it lie! In vengeance, I
 Shall wield another weapon, gory!

XII

And if, O countrymen, I fall,
 Beside our grave let this be spoken:
"No foe of France shall ever dance
 Above the heart and fiddle, broken!"

XIII

So come, poor dog, my faithful friend,
 I prithee do not heed my sorrow,
But feast to-day while yet you may,
 For we are like to starve to-morrow.

Eugene Field

Beranger's My Last Song Perhaps (January 1814)

When, to despoil my native France,
 With flaming torch and cruel sword
And boisterous drums her foeman comes,
 I curse him and his vandal horde!
Yet, what avail accrues to her,
 If we assume the garb of woe?
Let's merry be,--in laughter we
 May rescue somewhat from the foe!

Ah, many a brave man trembles now.
 I (coward!) show no sign of fear;
When Bacchus sends his blessing, friends,
 I drown my panic in his cheer.
Come, gather round my humble board,
 And let the sparkling wassail flow,--
Chuckling to think, the while you drink,
 "This much we rescue from the foe!"

My creditors beset me so
 And so environed my abode,
That I agreed, despite my need,
 To settle up the debts I owed;
When suddenly there came the news
 Of this invasion, as you know;
I'll pay no score; pray, lend me more,--
 I--I will keep it from the foe!

Now here's my mistress,--pretty dear!--
 Feigns terror at this martial noise,
And yet, methinks, the artful minx
 Would like to meet those soldier boys!
I tell her that they're coarse and rude,
 Yet feel she don't believe 'em so,--
Well, never mind; so she be kind,
 That much I rescue from the foe!

If, brothers, hope shall have in store
 For us and ours no friendly glance,
Let's rather die than raise a cry
 Of welcome to the foes of France!
But, like the swan that dying sings,
 Let us, O Frenchmen, singing go,--
Then shall our cheer, when death is near,
 Be so much rescued from the foe!

Eugene Field

Bethlehem-Town

As I was going to Bethlehem-town,
Upon the earth I cast me down
All underneath a little tree
That whispered in this wise to me:
'Oh, I shall stand on Calvary
And bear what burthen saveth thee!'

As up I fared to Bethlehem-town,
I met a shepherd coming down,
And thus he quoth: 'A wondrous sight
Hath spread before mine eyes this night,--
An angel host most fair to see,
That sung full sweetly of a tree
That shall uplift on Calvary
What burthen saveth you and me!'

And as I gat to Bethlehem-town,
Lo! wise men came that bore a crown.
'Is there,' cried I, 'in Bethlehem
A King shall wear this diadem?'
'Good sooth,' they quoth, 'and it is He
That shall be lifted on the tree
And freely shed on Calvary
What blood redeemeth us and thee!'

Unto a Child in Bethlehem-town
The wise men came and brought the crown;
And while the infant smiling slept,
Upon their knees they fell and wept;
But, with her babe upon her knee,
Naught recked that Mother of the tree,
That should uplift on Calvary
What burthen saveth all and me.

Again I walk in Bethlehem-town
And think on Him that wears the crown.
I may not kiss His feet again,
Nor worship Him as did I then;
My King hath died upon the tree,
And hath outpoured on Calvary
What blood redeemeth you and me!

Eugene Field

Boccaccio

One day upon a topmost shelf
I found a precious prize indeed,
Which father used to read himself,
But did not want us boys to read;
A brown old book of certain age
(As type and binding seemed to show),
While on the spotted title-page
Appeared the name 'Boccaccio.'

I'd never heard that name before,
But in due season it became
To him who fondly brooded o'er
Those pages a belovèd name!
Adown the centuries I walked
Mid pastoral scenes and royal show;
With seigneurs and their dames I talked--
The crony of Boccaccio!

Those courtly knights and sprightly maids,
Who really seemed disposed to shine
In gallantries and escapades,
Anon became great friends of mine.
Yet was there sentiment with fun,
And oftentimes my tears would flow
At some quaint tale of valor done,
As told by my Boccaccio.

In boyish dreams I saw again
Bucolic belles and dames of court,
The princely youths and monkish men
Arrayed for sacrifice or sport.
Again I heard the nightingale
Sing as she sang those years ago
In his embowered Italian vale
To my revered Boccaccio.

And still I love that brown old book
I found upon the topmost shelf--
I love it so I let none look
Upon the treasure but myself!
And yet I have a strapping boy
Who (I have every cause to know)
Would to its full extent enjoy
The friendship of Boccaccio!

But boys are, oh! so different now
From what they were when I was one!
I fear my boy would not know how
To take that old raconteur's fun!
In your companionship, O friend,
I think it wise alone to go
Plucking the gracious fruits that bend

Wheree'er you lead, Boccaccio.

So rest you there upon the shelf,
Clad in your garb of faded brown;
Perhaps, sometime, my boy himself
Shall find you out and take you down.
Then may he feel the joy once more
That thrilled me, filled me years ago
When reverently I brooded o'er
The glories of Boccaccio!

Eugene Field

By my sweetheart

Sweetheart, be my sweetheart
 When birds are on the wing,
When bee and bud and babbling flood
 Bespeak the birth of spring,
Come, sweetheart, be my sweetheart
 And wear this posy-ring!

Sweetheart, be my sweetheart
 In the mellow golden glow
Of earth aflush with the gracious blush
 Which the ripening fields foreshow;
Dear sweetheart, be my sweetheart,
 As into the noon we go!

Sweetheart, be my sweetheart
 When falls the bounteous year,
When fruit and wine of tree and vine
 Give us their harvest cheer;
Oh, sweetheart, be my sweetheart,
 For winter it draweth near.

Sweetheart, be my sweetheart
 When the year is white and old,
When the fire of youth is spent, forsooth,
 And the hand of age is cold;
Yet, sweetheart, be my sweetheart
 Till the year of our love be told!

Eugene Field

Casey's Table D'Hote

Oh, them days on Red Hoss Mountain, when the skies wuz fair 'nd blue,
When the money flowed like likker, 'nd the folks wuz brave 'nd true!
When the nights wuz crisp 'nd balmy, 'nd the camp wuz all astir,
With the joints all throwed wide open 'nd no sheriff to demur!
Oh, them times on Red Hoss Mountain in the Rockies fur away,--
There's no sich place nor times like them as I kin find to-day!
What though the camp _hez_ busted? I seem to see it still
A-lyin', like it loved it, on that big 'nd warty hill;
And I feel a sort of yearnin' 'nd a chokin' in my throat
When I think of Red Hoss Mountain 'nd of Casey's tabble dote!

Wal, yes; it's true I struck it rich, but that don't cut a show
When one is old 'nd feeble 'nd it's nigh his time to go;
The money that he's got in bonds or carries to invest
Don't figger with a codger who has lived a life out West;
Us old chaps like to set around, away from folks 'nd noise,
'Nd think about the sights we seen and things we done when boys;
The which is why _I_ love to set 'nd think of them old days
When all us Western fellers got the Colorado craze,--
And _that_ is why I love to set around all day 'nd gloat
On thoughts of Red Hoss Mountain 'nd of Casey's tabble dote.

This Casey wuz an Irishman,--you'd know it by his name
And by the facial features appertainin' to the same.
He'd lived in many places 'nd had done a thousand things,
From the noble art of actin' to the work of dealin' kings,
But, somehow, hadn't caught on; so, driftin' with the rest,
He drifted for a fortune to the undeveloped West,
And he come to Red Hoss Mountain when the little camp wuz new,
When the money flowed like likker, 'nd the folks wuz brave 'nd true;
And, havin' been a stewart on a Mississippi boat,
He opened up a caffy 'nd he run a tabble dote.

The bar wuz long 'nd rangy, with a mirrer on the shelf,
'Nd a pistol, so that Casey, when required, could help himself;
Down underneath there wuz a row of bottled beer 'nd wine,
'Nd a kag of Burbun whiskey of the run of '59;
Upon the walls wuz pictures of hosses 'nd of girls,--
Not much on dress, perhaps, but strong on records 'nd on curls!
The which had been identified with Casey in the past,--
The hosses 'nd the girls, I mean,--and both wuz mighty fast!
But all these fine attractions wuz of precious little note
By the side of what wuz offered at Casey's tabble dote.

There wuz half-a-dozen tables altogether in the place,
And the tax you had to pay upon your vittles wuz a case;
The boardin'-houses in the camp protested 't wuz a shame
To patronize a robber, which this Casey wuz the same!
They said a case was robbery to tax for ary meal;
But Casey tended strictly to his biz, 'nd let 'em squeal;
And presently the boardin'-houses all began to bust,
While Casey kept on sawin' wood 'nd layin' in the dust;

And oncet a tray'lin' editor from Denver City wrote
A piece back to his paper, puffin' Casey's tabble dote.

A tabble dote is different from orderin' aller cart:
In _one_ case you git all there is, in _t' other_, only _part_!
And Casey's tabble dote began in French,--as all begin,--
And Casey's ended with the same, which is to say, with 'vin;'
But in between wuz every kind of reptile, bird, 'nd beast,
The same like you can git in high-toned restauraws down east;
'Nd windin' up wuz cake or pie, with coffee demy tass,
Or, sometimes, floatin' Ireland in a soothin' kind of sass
That left a sort of pleasant ticklin' in a feller's throat,
'Nd made him hanker after more of Casey's tabble dote.

The very recollection of them puddin's 'nd them pies
Brings a yearnin' to my buzzum 'nd the water to my eyes;
'Nd seems like cookin' nowadays ain't what it used to be
In camp on Red Hoss Mountain in that year of '63;
But, maybe, it is better, 'nd, maybe, I'm to blame--
I'd like to be a-livin' in the mountains jest the same--
I'd like to live that life again when skies wuz fair 'nd blue,
When things wuz run wide open 'nd men wuz brave 'nd true;
When brawny arms the flinty ribs of Red Hoss Mountain smote
For wherewithal to pay the price of Casey's tabble dote.

And you, O cherished brother, a-sleepin' 'way out west,
With Red Hoss Mountain huggin' you close to its lovin' breast,--
Oh, do you dream in your last sleep of how we used to do,
Of how we worked our little claims together, me 'nd you?
Why, when I saw you last a smile wuz restin' on your face,
Like you wuz glad to sleep forever in that lonely place;
And so you wuz, 'nd I 'd be, too, if I wuz sleepin' so.
But, bein' how a brother's love ain't for the world to know,
Whenever I've this heartache 'nd this chokin' in my throat,
I lay it all to thinkin' of Casey's tabble dote.

Eugene Field

Chicago Weather

To-day, fair Thisbe, winsome girl!
  Strays o'er the meads where daisies blow,
Or, ling'ring where the brooklets purl,
  Laves in the cool, refreshing flow.
To-morrow, Thisbe, with a host
  Of amorous suitors in her train,
Comes like a goddess forth to coast
  Or skate upon the frozen main.
To-day, sweet posies mark her track,
  While birds sing gayly in the trees;
To-morrow morn, her sealskin sack
  Defies the piping polar breeze.
So Doris is to-day enthused
  By Thisbe's soft, responsive sighs,
And on the morrow is confused
  By Thisbe's cold, repellent eyes.

Eugene Field

Child and mother

O mother-my-love, if you'll give me your hand,
 And go where I ask you to wander,
I will lead you away to a beautiful land,--
 The Dreamland that's waiting out yonder.
We'll walk in a sweet posie-garden out there,
 Where moonlight and starlight are streaming,
And the flowers and the birds are filling the air
 With the fragrance and music of dreaming.

There'll be no little tired-out boy to undress,
 No questions or cares to perplex you,
There'll be no little bruises or bumps to caress,
 Nor patching of stockings to vex you;
For I'll rock you away on a silver-dew stream
 And sing you asleep when you're weary,
And no one shall know of our beautiful dream
 But you and your own little dearie.

And when I am tired I'll nestle my head
 In the bosom that's soothed me so often,
And the wide-awake stars shall sing, in my stead,
 A song which our dreaming shall soften.
So, Mother-my-Love, let me take your dear hand,
 And away through the starlight we'll wander,--
Away through the mist to the beautiful land,--
 The Dreamland that's waiting out yonder.

Eugene Field

Christmas Eve

Oh, hush thee, little Dear-my-Soul,
The evening shades are falling,--
Hush thee, my dear, dost thou not hear
The voice of the Master calling?

Deep lies the snow upon the earth,
But all the sky is ringing
With joyous song, and all night long
The stars shall dance, with singing.

Oh, hush thee, little Dear-my-Soul,
And close thine eyes in dreaming,
And angels fair shall lead thee where
The singing stars are beaming.

A shepherd calls his little lambs,
And he longeth to caress them;
He bids them rest upon his breast,
That his tender love may bless them.

So, hush thee, little Dear-my-Soul,
Whilst evening shades are falling,
And above the song of the heavenly throng
Thou shalt hear the Master calling.

Eugene Field

Christmas Eve 1914

Silent, to-night, o'er Judah's hills
Bend low the angel throng,
No heavenly music fills the air
Exultantly with song;
Yet, close above the sin-scarred earth,
Broods still the Love Divine,
And through the darkness, as of old,
The stars of pity shine.

Silent, to-night, is Bethlehem:
Along the hushed ways
No eager feet of worshippers,
No melodies of praise;
Yet, in the quietness that fills
The waiting hearts of men,
The ancient miracle of hope
Is wrought, to-night, again.

O holy Christ! to whom, of old,
The wondering shepherds came,
The light they sought with flaming joy
We seek in contrite shame;
And though men strive, we dare to hope
That Thou again art born,
For, through the night of our despair,
Behold! Thy star of morn!

Eugene Field

Christmas Hymn

Sing, Christmas bells!
Say to the earth this is the morn
Whereon our Saviour-King is born;
Sing to all men,-the bond, the free,
The rich, the poor, the high, the low,
The little child that sports in glee,
The aged folk that tottering go,-
Proclaim the morn
That Christ is born,
That saveth them and saveth me!

Sing, angel host!
Sing of the star that God has placed
Above the manger in the east;
Sing of the glories of the night,
The virgin's sweet humility,
The Babe with kingly robes bedight,
Sing to all men where'er they be
This Christmas morn;
For Christ is born,
That saveth them and saveth me!

Sing, sons of earth!
O ransomed seed of Adam, sing!
God liveth, and we have a king!
The curse is gone, the bond are free,-
By Bethlehem's star that brightly beamed,
By all the heavenly signs that be,
We know that Israel is redeemed;
That on this morn
The Christ is born
That saveth you and saveth me!

Sing, O my heart!
Sing thou in rapture this dear morn
Whereon the blessed Prince is born!
And as thy songs shall be of love,
So let my deeds be charity,-
By the dear Lord that reigns above,
By Him that died upon the tree,
By this fair morn
Whereon is born
The Christ that saveth all and me!

Eugene Field

Christmas Morning

The angel host that sped last night,
Bearing the wondrous news afar,
Came in their ever-glorious flight
Unto a slumbering little star.

'Awake and sing, O star!' they cried.
'Awake and glorify the morn!
Herald the tidings far and wide--
He that shall lead His flock is born!'

The little star awoke and sung
As only stars in rapture may,
And presently where church bells hung
The joyous tidings found their way.

'Awake, O bells! 't is Christmas morn--
Awake and let thy music tell
To all mankind that now is born
What Shepherd loves His lambkins well!'

Then rang the bells as fled the night
O'er dreaming land and drowsing deep,
And coming with the morning light,
They called, my child, to you asleep.

Sweetly and tenderly they spoke,
And lingering round your little bed,
Their music pleaded till you woke,
And this is what their music said:

'Awake and sing! 'tis Christmas morn,
Whereon all earth salutes her King!
In Bethlehem is the Shepherd born.
Awake, O little lamb, and sing!'

So, dear my child, kneel at my feet,
And with those voices from above
Share thou this holy time with me,
The universal hymn of love.

Eugene Field

Christmas treasures

I count my treasures o'er with care.--
 The little toy my darling knew,
 A little sock of faded hue,
A little lock of golden hair.

Long years ago this holy time,
 My little one--my all to me--
 Sat robed in white upon my knee
And heard the merry Christmas chime.

"Tell me, my little golden-head,
 If Santa Claus should come to-night,
 What shall he bring my baby bright,--
What treasure for my boy?" I said.

And then he named this little toy,
 While in his round and mournful eyes
 There came a look of sweet surprise,
That spake his quiet, trustful joy.

And as he lisped his evening prayer
 He asked the boon with childish grace;
 Then, toddling to the chimney-place,
He hung this little stocking there.

That night, while lengthening shadows crept,
 I saw the white-winged angels come
 With singing to our lowly home
And kiss my darling as he slept.

They must have heard his little prayer,
 For in the morn, with rapturous face,
 He toddled to the chimney-place,
And found this little treasure there.

They came again one Christmas-tide,--
 That angel host, so fair and white!
 And singing all that glorious night,
They lured my darling from my side.

A little sock, a little toy,
 A little lock of golden hair,
 The Christmas music on the air,
A watching for my baby boy!

But if again that angel train
 And golden-head come back for me,
 To bear me to Eternity,
My watching will not be in vain!

1879.

Eugene Field

Chrystmasse of Olde

God rest you, Chrysten gentil men,
 Wherever you may be,--
God rest you all in fielde or hall,
 Or on ye stormy sea;
For on this morn oure Chryst is born
 That saveth you and me.

Last night ye shepherds in ye east
 Saw many a wondrous thing;
Ye sky last night flamed passing bright
 Whiles that ye stars did sing,
And angels came to bless ye name
 Of Jesus Chryst, oure Kyng.

God rest you, Chrysten gentil men,
 Faring where'er you may;
In noblesse court do thou no sport,
 In tournament no playe,
In paynim lands hold thou thy hands
 From bloudy works this daye.

But thinking on ye gentil Lord
 That died upon ye tree,
Let troublings cease and deeds of peace
 Abound in Chrystantie;
For on this morn ye Chryst is born
 That saveth you and me.

Eugene Field

Clare Market

In the market of Clare, so cheery the glare
Of the shops and the booths of the tradespeople there;
That I take a delight on a Saturday night
In walking that way and in viewing the sight.
For it's here that one sees all the objects that please--
New patterns in silk and old patterns in cheese,
For the girls pretty toys, rude alarums for boys,
And baubles galore while discretion enjoys--
But here I forbear, for I really despair
Of naming the wealth of the market of Clare.

A rich man comes down from the elegant town
And looks at it all with an ominous frown;
He seems to despise the grandiloquent cries
Of the vender proclaiming his puddings and pies;
And sniffing he goes through the lanes that disclose
Much cause for disgust to his sensitive nose;
And free of the crowd, he admits he is proud
That elsewhere in London this thing's not allowed;
He has seen nothing there but filth everywhere,
And he's glad to get out of the market of Clare.

But the child that has come from the gloom of the slum
Is charmed by the magic of dazzle and hum;
He feasts his big eyes on the cakes and the pies,
And they seem to grow green and protrude with surprise
At the goodies they vend and the toys without end--
And it's oh! if he had but a penny to spend!
But alas, he must gaze in a hopeless amaze
At treasures that glitter and torches that blaze--
What sense of despair in this world can compare
With that of the waif in the market of Clare?

So, on Saturday night, when my custom invites
A stroll in old London for curious sights,
I am likely to stray by a devious way
Where goodies are spread in a motley array,
The things which some eyes would appear to despise
Impress me as pathos in homely disguise,
And my battered waif-friend shall have pennies to spend,
So long as I've got 'em (or chums that will lend);
And the urchin shall share in my joy and declare
That there's beauty and good in the market of Clare.

Eugene Field

Cobbler and Stork

COBBLER

Stork, I am justly wroth,
   For thou hast wronged me sore;
The ash roof-tree that shelters thee
   Shall shelter thee no more!

STORK

Full fifty years I 've dwelt
   Upon this honest tree,
And long ago (as people know!)
   I brought thy father thee.
What hail hath chilled thy heart,
   That thou shouldst bid me go?
Speak out, I pray--then I 'll away,
   Since thou commandest so.

COBBLER

Thou tellest of the time
   When, wheeling from the west,
This hut thou sought'st and one thou brought'st
   Unto a mother's breast.
I was the wretched child
   Was fetched that dismal morn--
'T were better die than be (as I)
   To life of misery born!
And hadst thou borne me on
   Still farther up the town,
A king I 'd be of high degree,
   And wear a golden crown!
For yonder lives the prince
   Was brought that selfsame day:
How happy he, while--look at me!
   I toil my life away!
And see my little boy--
   To what estate he 's born!
Why, when I die no hoard leave I
   But poverty and scorn.
And thou hast done it all--
   I might have been a king
And ruled in state, but for thy hate,
   Thou base, perfidious thing!

STORK

Since, cobbler, thou dost speak
   Of one thou lovest well,
Hear of that king what grievous thing
   This very morn befell.
Whilst round thy homely bench

Thy well-belovèd played,
In yonder hall beneath a pall
A little one was laid;
Thy well-belovèd's face
Was rosy with delight,
But 'neath that pall in yonder hall
The little face is white;
Whilst by a merry voice
Thy soul is filled with cheer,
Another weeps for one that sleeps
All mute and cold anear;
One father hath his hope,
And one is childless now:
He wears a crown and rules a town--
Only a cobbler thou!
Wouldst thou exchange thy lot
At price of such a woe?
I'll nest no more above thy door,
But, as thou bidst me, go.

COBBLER

Nay, stork! thou shalt remain--
I mean not what I said;
Good neighbors we must always be.
So make thy home o'erhead.
I would not change my bench
For any monarch's throne,
Nor sacrifice at any price
My darling and my own!
Stork! on my roof-tree bide,
That, seeing thee anear,
I 'll thankful be God sent by thee
Me and my darling here!

Eugene Field

Consistency

Should painter attach to a fair human head
The thick, turgid neck of a stallion,
Or depict a spruce lass with the tail of a bass,
I am sure you would guy the rapscallion.

Believe me, dear Pisos, that just such a freak
Is the crude and preposterous poem
Which merely abounds in a torrent of sounds,
With no depth of reason below 'em.

'T is all very well to give license to art,--
The wisdom of license defend I;
But the line should be drawn at the fripperish spawn
Of a mere _cacoethes scribendi_.

It is too much the fashion to strain at effects,--
Yes, that's what's the matter with Hannah!
Our popular taste, by the tyros debased,
Paints each barnyard a grove of Diana!

Should a patron require you to paint a marine,
Would you work in some trees with their barks on?
When his strict orders are for a Japanese jar,
Would you give him a pitcher like Clarkson?

Now, this is my moral: Compose what you may,
And Fame will be ever far distant
Unless you combine with a simple design
A treatment in toto consistent.

Eugene Field

Contentment

Happy the man that, when his day is done,
Lies down to sleep with nothing of regret--
The battle he has fought may not be won--
The fame he sought be just as fleeting yet;
Folding at last his hands upon his breast,
Happy is he, if hoary and forespent,
He sinks into the last, eternal rest,
Breathing these only works: 'I am content.'

But happier he, that, while his blood is warm,
See hopes and friendships dead about him lie--
Bares his brave breast to envy's bitter storm,
Nor shuns the poison barbs of calumny;
And 'mid it all, stands sturdy and elate,
Girt only in the armor God hath meant
For him who 'neath the buffetings of fate
Can say to God and man: 'I am content.'

Eugene Field

Cornish Lullaby

Out on the mountain over the town,
 All night long, all night long,
The trolls go up and the trolls go down,
 Bearing their packs and crooning a song;
And this is the song the hill-folk croon,
As they trudge in the light of the misty moon,--
This is ever their dolorous tune:
"Gold, gold! ever more gold,--
    Bright red gold for dearie!"

Deep in the hill the yeoman delves
 All night long, all night long;
None but the peering, furtive elves
 See his toil and hear his song;
Merrily ever the cavern rings
As merrily ever his pick he swings,
And merrily ever this song he sings:
"Gold, gold! ever more gold,--
    Bright red gold for dearie!"

Mother is rocking thy lowly bed
 All night long, all night long,
Happy to smooth thy curly head
 And to hold thy hand and to sing her song;
'T is not of the hill-folk, dwarfed and old,
Nor the song of the yeoman, stanch and bold,
And the burden it beareth is not of gold;
But it's "Love, love!--nothing but love,--
    Mother's love for dearie!"

Eugene Field

De Amicitiis

Though care and strife
Elsewhere be rife,
Upon my word I do not heed 'em;
In bed I lie
With books hard by,
And with increasing zest I read 'em.

Propped up in bed,
So much I've read
Of musty tomes that I've a headful
Of tales and rhymes
Of ancient times,
Which, wife declares, are "simply dreadful!"

They give me joy
Without alloy;
And isn't that what books are made for?
And yet--and yet--
(Ah, vain regret!)
I would to God they all were paid for!

No festooned cup
Filled foaming up
Can lure me elsewhere to confound me;
Sweeter than wine
This love of mine
For these old books I see around me!

A plague, I say,
On maidens gay;
I'll weave no compliments to tell 'em!
Vain fool I were,
Did I prefer
Those dolls to these old friends in vellum!

At dead of night
My chamber's bright
Not only with the gas that's burning,
But with the glow
Of long ago,--
Of beauty back from eld returning.

Fair women's looks
I see in books,
I see them, and I hear their laughter,--
Proud, high-born maids,
Unlike the jades
Which men-folk now go chasing after!

Herein again
Speak valiant men
Of all nativities and ages;

I hear and smile
With rapture while
I turn these musty, magic pages.

The sword, the lance,
The morris dance,
The highland song, the greenwood ditty,
Of these I read,
Or, when the need,
My Miller grinds me grist that's gritty!

When of such stuff
We've had enough,
Why, there be other friends to greet us;
We'll moralize
In solemn wise
With Plato or with Epictetus.

Sneer as you may,
I'm proud to say
That I, for one, am very grateful
To Heaven, that sends
These genial friends
To banish other friendships hateful!

And when I'm done,
I'd have no son
Pounce on these treasures like a vulture;
Nay, give them half
My epitaph,
And let them share in my sepulture.

Then, when the crack
Of doom rolls back
The marble and the earth that hide me,
I'll smuggle home
Each precious tome,
Without a fear my wife shall chide me!

Eugene Field

Dead Roses

He placed a rose in my nut-brown hair--
A deep red rose with a fragrant heart
And said: 'We'll set this day apart,
So sunny, so wondrous fair.'

His face was full of a happy light,
His voice was tender and low and sweet,
The daisies and the violets grew at our feet--
Alas, for the coming of night!

The rose is black and withered and dead!
'Tis hid in a tiny box away;
The nut-brown hair is turning to gray,
And the light of the day is fled!

The light of the beautiful day is fled,
Hush'd is the voice so sweet and low--
And I--ah, me! I loved him so--
And the daisies grow over his head!

Eugene Field

Dear Old London

When I was broke in London in the fall of '89,
I chanced to spy in Oxford Street this tantalizing sign,
'A Splendid Horace cheap for Cash!' Of course I had to look
Upon the vaunted bargain, and it was a noble book!
A finer one I 've never seen, nor can I hope to see,
The first edition, richly bound, and clean as clean can be;
And, just to think, for three-pounds-ten I might have had that Pine,
When I was broke in London in the fall of '89!

Down at Noseda's, in the Strand, I found, one fateful day,
A portrait that I pined for as only maniac may,
A print of Madame Vestris (she flourished years ago,
Was Bartolozzi's daughter, and a thoroughbred, you know).
A clean and handsome print it was, and cheap at thirty bob,
That 's what I told the salesman, as I choked a rising sob;
But I hung around Noseda's as it were a holy shrine,
When I was broke in London in the fall of '89.

At Davey's, in Great Russell Street, were autographs galore,
And Mr. Davey used to let me con that precious store.
Sometimes I read what warriors wrote, sometimes a king's command,
But oftener still a poet's verse, writ in a meagre hand.
Lamb, Byron, Addison, and Burns, Pope, Johnson, Swift, and Scott,
It needed but a paltry sum to comprehend the lot;
Yet, though Friend Davey marked 'em down, what could I but decline?
For I was broke in London in the fall of '89.

Of antique swords and spears I saw a vast and dazzling heap
That Curio Fenton offered me at prices passing cheap;
And, oh, the quaint old bureaus, and the warming-pans of brass,
And the lovely hideous freaks I found in pewter and in glass!
And, oh, the sideboards, candlesticks, the cracked old china plates,
The clocks and spoons from Amsterdam that antedate all dates!
Of such superb monstrosities I found an endless mine
When I was broke in London in the fall of '89.

O ye that hanker after boons that others idle by, --
The battered things that please the soul, though they may vex the eye, --
The silver plate and crockery all sanctified with grime,
The oaken stuff that has defied the tooth of envious Time,
The musty tomes, the speckled prints, the mildewed bills of play,
And other costly relics of malodorous decay, --
Ye only can appreciate what agony was mine
When I was broke in London in the fall of '89.

When, in the course of natural things, I go to my reward,
Let no imposing epitaph my martyrdoms record;
Neither in Hebrew, Latin, Greek, nor any classic tongue,
Let my ten thousand triumphs over human griefs be sung;
But in plain Anglo-Saxon that he may know who seeks
What agonizing pangs I 've had while on the hunt for freaks
Let there be writ upon the slab that marks my grave this line:

'Deceased was broke in London in the fall of '89.'

Eugene Field

Der mann im keller

How cool and fair this cellar where
My throne a dusky cask is;
To do no thing but just to sing
And drown the time my task is.
The cooper he's
Resolved to please,
And, answering to my winking,
He fills me up
Cup after cup
For drinking, drinking, drinking.

Begrudge me not
This cosy spot
In which I am reclining--
Why, who would burst
With envious thirst,
When he can live by wining.
A roseate hue seems to imbue
The world on which I'm blinking;
My fellow-men--I love them when
I'm drinking, drinking, drinking.

And yet I think, the more I drink,
It's more and more I pine for--
Oh, such as I (forever dry)
God made this land of Rhine for;
And there is bliss
In knowing this,
As to the floor I'm sinking:
I've wronged no man
And never can
While drinking, drinking, drinking.

Eugene Field

Dibdin's Ghost

Dear wife, last midnight, whilst I read
The tomes you so despise,
A spectre rose beside the bed,
And spake in this true wise:
'From Canaan's beatific coast
I 've come to visit thee,
For I am Frognall Dibdin's ghost,'
Says Dibdin's ghost to me.

I bade him welcome, and we twain
Discussed with buoyant hearts
The various things that appertain
To bibliomaniac arts.
'Since you are fresh from t' other side,
Pray tell me of that host
That treasured books before they died,'
Says I to Dibdin's ghost.

'They 've entered into perfect rest;
For in the life they 've won
There are no auctions to molest,
No creditors to dun.
Their heavenly rapture has no bounds
Beside that jasper sea;
It is a joy unknown to Lowndes,'
Says Dibdin's ghost to me.

Much I rejoiced to hear him speak
Of biblio-bliss above,
For I am one of those who seek
What bibliomaniacs love.
'But tell me, for I long to hear
What doth concern me most,
Are wives admitted to that sphere?'
Says I to Dibdin's ghost.

'The women folk are few up there;
For 't were not fair, you know,
That they our heavenly joy should share
Who vex us here below.
The few are those who have been kind
To husbands such as we;
They knew our fads, and did n't mind,'
Says Dibdin's ghost to me.

'But what of those who scold at us
When we would read in bed?
Or, wanting victuals, make a fuss
If we buy books instead?
And what of those who 've dusted not
Our motley pride and boast,
Shall they profane that sacred spot?'

Says I to Dibdin's ghost.

'Oh, no! they tread that other path,
Which leads where torments roll,
And worms, yes, bookworms, vent their wrath
Upon the guilty soul.
Untouched of bibliomaniac grace,
That saveth such as we,
They wallow in that dreadful place,'
Says Dibdin's ghost to me.

'To my dear wife will I recite
What things I 've heard you say;
She 'll let me read the books by night
She 's let me buy by day.
For we together by and by
Would join that heavenly host;
She 's earned a rest as well as I,'
Says I to Dibdin's ghost.

Eugene Field

Doctor Rabelais

Once -- it was many years ago.
In early wedded life,
Ere yet my loved one had become
A very knowing wife,
She came to me and said: 'My dear,
I think (and do not you?)
That we should have about the house
A doctor's book or two.

'Our little ones have sundry ills
Which I should understand
And cure myself, if I but had
A doctor's book at hand.
Why not economize, my dear,
In point of doctor's biils
By purchasing the means to treat
Our litt;e household ills?'

Dear, honest, patient little wife!
She did not even guess
She offered me the very prize
I hankered to possess.
'You argus, wisely, wife,' quoth I,
'Proceed without delay
To find and comprehend the works
Of Doctor Rabelais.'

I wrote the title out for her
(She'd never heard the name),
And presently she bought those books,
And home she lugged the same;
I clearly read this taunting boast
On her triumphant brow:
'Aha, ye venal doctors all,
Ye are outwitted now!'

Those volumes stood upon the shelf
A month or two unread,
Save as such times by night I conned
Their precious wit in bed;
But once -- it was a wintry time --
I heard my loved one say:
'This child is croupy; I'll consult
My doctor, Rabelais!'

Soon from her delusive dream
My beauteous bride awoke.
Too soon she grasped the fulness of
My bibliomaniac joke.
There came a sudden, shocking change,
As you may well suppose,
And with her reprehensive voice

The temperature arose.

But that was many years ago,
In early wedded life,
And that dear lady has become
A very knowing wife;
For she hath learned from Rabelais
What elsewhere is agreed:
The plague of bibliomania is
A cureless ill indeed.

And still at night, when all the rest
Are hushed in sweet repose,
O'er those two interdicted tomes
I laugh and nod and doze.
From worldly ills and business cares
My weary mind is lured,
And by that doctor's magic art
My ailments all are cured.

So my dear, knowing little wife
Is glad that it is so,
And with a smile recalls the trick
I played her years ago;
And whensoe'er dyspeptic pangs
Compel me to their sway,
The saucy girl bids me consult
My Doctor Rabelais!

Eugene Field

Dr. sam

TO MISS GRACE KING

Down in the old French quarter,
 Just out of Rampart street,
   I wend my way
   At close of day
 Unto the quaint retreat
Where lives the Voodoo Doctor
 By some esteemed a sham,
Yet I'll declare there's none elsewhere
 So skilled as Doctor Sam
   With the claws of a deviled crawfish,
     The juice of the prickly prune,
       And the quivering dew
       From a yarb that grew
     In the light of a midnight moon!

I never should have known him
 But for the colored folk
   That here obtain
   And ne'er in vain
 That wizard's art invoke;
For when the Eye that's Evil
 Would him and his'n damn,
The negro's grief gets quick relief
 Of Hoodoo-Doctor Sam.
   With the caul of an alligator,
     The plume of an unborn loon,
       And the poison wrung
       From a serpent's tongue
     By the light of a midnight moon!

In all neurotic ailments
 I hear that he excels,
   And he insures
   Immediate cures
 Of weird, uncanny spells;
The most unruly patient
 Gets docile as a lamb
And is freed from ill by the potent skill
 Of Hoodoo-Doctor Sam;
   Feathers of strangled chickens,
     Moss from the dank lagoon,
   And plasters wet
     With spider sweat
   In the light of a midnight moon!

They say when nights are grewsome
 And hours are, oh! so late,
   Old Sam steals out
   And hunts about
 For charms that hoodoos hate!

That from the moaning river
 And from the haunted glen
He silently brings what eerie things
 Give peace to hoodooed men:--
 The tongue of a piebald 'possum,
   The tooth of a senile 'coon,
 The buzzard's breath that smells of death,
   And the film that lies
   On a lizard's eyes
 In the light of a midnight moon!

Eugene Field

Dutch lullaby

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
 Sailed off in a wooden shoe,--
Sailed on a river of misty light
 Into a sea of dew.
"Where are you going, and what do you wish?"
 The old moon asked the three.
"We have come to fish for the herring-fish
 That live in this beautiful sea;
 Nets of silver and gold have we,"
   Said Wynken,
   Blynken,
   And Nod.

The old moon laughed and sung a song,
 As they rocked in the wooden shoe;
And the wind that sped them all night long
 Ruffled the waves of dew;
The little stars were the herring-fish
 That lived in the beautiful sea.
"Now cast your nets wherever you wish,
 But never afeard are we!"
 So cried the stars to the fishermen three,
      Wynken,
      Blynken,
      And Nod.

All night long their nets they threw
 For the fish in the twinkling foam,
Then down from the sky came the wooden shoe,
 Bringing the fishermen home;
'T was all so pretty a sail, it seemed
 As if it could not be;
And some folk thought 't was a dream they'd dreamed
 Of sailing that beautiful sea;
 But I shall name you the fishermen three:
      Wynken,
      Blynken,
      And Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
 And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
 Is a wee one's trundle-bed;
So shut your eyes while Mother sings
 Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
 As you rock on the misty sea
 Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three,--
      Wynken,
      Blynken,
      And Nod.

Eugene Field

Echoes from the Sabine Farm

TO THE FOUNTAIN OF BANDUSIA

O FOUNTAIN of Bandusia!
Whence crystal waters flow,
With garlands gay and wine I ’ll pay
The sacrifice I owe;
A sportive kid with budding horns
I have, whose crimson blood
Anon shall dye and sanctify
Thy cool and babbling flood.

O fountain of Bandusia!
The Dog-star’s hateful spell
No evil brings into the springs
That from thy bosom well;
Here oxen, wearied by the plow,
The roving cattle here
Hasten in quest of certain rest,
And quaff thy gracious cheer.

O fountain of Bandusia!
Ennobled shalt thou be,
For I shall sing the joys that spring
Beneath yon ilex-tree.
Yes, fountain of Bandusia,
Posterity shall know
The cooling brooks that from thy nooks
Singing and dancing go.

TO LEUCONÖE
I

WHAT end the gods may have ordained for me,
And what for thee,
Seek not to learn, Leuconöe,—we may not know.
Chaldean tables cannot bring us rest.
’T is for the best
To bear in patience what may come, or weal or woe.

If for more winters our poor lot is cast,
Or this the last,
Which on the crumbling rocks has dashed Etruscan seas,
Strain clear the wine; this life is short, at best.
Take hope with zest,
And, trusting not To-morrow, snatch To-day for ease!

TO LEUCONÖE
II

SEEK not, Leuconöe, to know how long you ’re going to live yet,
What boons the gods will yet withhold, or what they ’re going to give yet;
For Jupiter will have his way, despite how much we worry:—

Some will hang on for many a day, and some die in a hurry.

The wisest thing for you to do is to embark this diem
Upon a merry escapade with some such bard as I am.
And while we sport I ’ll reel you off such odes as shall surprise ye;
To-morrow, when the headache comes,—well, then I ’ll satirize ye!

Eugene Field

Ed

Ed was a man that played for keeps, 'nd when he tuk the notion,
You cudn't stop him any more'n a dam 'ud stop the ocean;
For when he tackled to a thing 'nd sot his mind plum to it,
You bet yer boots he done that thing though it broke the bank to do it!
So all us boys uz knowed him best allowed he wuzn't jokin'
When on a Sunday he remarked uz how he'd gin up smokin'.

Now this remark, that Ed let fall, fell, ez I say, on Sunday--
Which is the reason we wuz shocked to see him sail in Monday
A-puffin' at a snipe that sizzled like a Chinese cracker
An' smelt fur all the world like rags instead uv like terbacker;
Recoverin' from our first surprise, us fellows fell to pokin'
A heap uv fun at "folks uz said how they had gin up smokin'."

But Ed--sez he: "I found my work cud not be done without it--
Jes' try the scheme yourselves, my friends, ef any uv you doubt it!
It's hard, I know, upon one's health, but there's a certain beauty
In makin' sackerfices to the stern demands uv duty!
So, wholly in a sperrit uv denial 'nd concession,
I mortify the flesh 'nd smoke for the sake uv my perfession!"

Eugene Field

Envoy

Prince, show me the quickest way and best
 To gain the subject of my moan;
We've neither spinsters nor relics out West--
 These do I love, and these alone.

Eugene Field

Epilogue

The day is done; and, lo! the shades
Melt 'neath Diana's mellow grace.
Hark, how those deep, designing maids
Feign terror in this sylvan place!
Come, friends, it's time that we should go;
We're honest married folk, you know.

Was not the wine delicious cool
Whose sweetness Pyrrha's smile enhanced?
And by that clear Bandusian pool
How gayly Chloe sung and danced!
And Lydia Die,--aha, methinks
You'll not forget the saucy minx!

But, oh, the echoes of those songs
That soothed our cares and lulled our hearts!
Not to that age nor this belongs
The glory of what heaven-born arts
Speak with the old distinctive charm
From yonder humble Sabine farm!

The day is done. Now off to bed,
Lest by some rural ruse surprised,
And by those artful girls misled,
You two be sadly compromised.
You go; perhaps _I_'d better stay
To shoo the giddy things away!

But sometime we shall meet again
Beside Digentia, cool and clear,--
You and we twain, old friend; and then
We'll have our fill of pagan cheer.
Then, could old Horace join us three,
How proud and happy he would be!

Or if we part to meet no more
This side the misty Stygian Sea,
Be sure of this: on yonder shore
Sweet cheer awaiteth such as we;
A Sabine pagan's heaven, O friend,--
The fellowship that knows no end!

Eugene Field

Fame _vs._ Riches

The Greeks had genius,--'t was a gift
The Muse vouchsafed in glorious measure;
The boon of Fame they made their aim
And prized above all worldly treasure.

But _we_,--how do we train _our_ youth?
Not in the arts that are immortal,
But in the greed for gains that speed
From him who stands at Death's dark portal.

Ah, when this slavish love of gold
Once binds the soul in greasy fetters,
How prostrate lies,--how droops and dies
The great, the noble cause of letters!

Eugene Field

Father's Letter

I 'm going to write a letter to our oldest boy who went
Out West last spring to practise law and run for president;
I 'll tell him all the gossip I guess he 'd like to hear,
For he has n't seen the home-folks for going on a year!
Most generally it 's Marthy does the writing, but as she
Is suffering with a felon, why, the job devolves on me--
So, when the supper things are done and put away to-night,
I 'll draw my boots and shed my coat and settle down to write.

I 'll tell him crops are looking up, with prospects big for corn,
That, fooling with the barnyard gate, the off-ox hurt his horn;
That the Templar lodge is doing well--Tim Bennett joined last week
When the prohibition candidate for Congress came to speak;
That the old gray woodchuck 's living still down in the pasture-lot,
A-wondering what 's become of little William, like as not!
Oh, yes, there 's lots of pleasant things and no bad news to tell,
Except that old Bill Graves was sick, but now he 's up and well.

Cy Cooper says--(but I 'll not pass my word that it is so,
For Cy he is some punkins on spinning yarns, you know)--
He says that, since the freshet, the pickerel are so thick
In Baker's pond you can wade in and kill 'em with a stick!
The Hubbard girls are teaching school, and Widow Cutler's Bill
Has taken Eli Baxter's place in Luther Eastman's mill;
Old Deacon Skinner's dog licked Deacon Howard's dog last week,
And now there are two lambkins in one flock that will not speak.

The yellow rooster froze his feet, a-wadin' through the snow
And now he leans ag'in' the fence when he starts in to crow;
The chestnut colt that was so skittish when he went away--
I 've broke him to the sulky and I drive him every day!
We 've got pink window curtains for the front spare-room upstairs
And Lizzie's made new covers for the parlor lounge and chairs;
We 've roofed the barn and braced the elm that has the hangbird's nest--
Oh, there 's been lots of changes since our William went out West!

Old Uncle Enos Packard is getting mighty gay--
He gave Miss Susan Birchard a peach the other day!
His late lamented Sarah hain't been buried quite a year,
So his purring 'round Miss Susan causes criticism here.
At the last donation party, the minister opined
That, if he 'd half suspicioned what was coming, he 'd resigned;
For, though they brought him slippers like he was a centipede,
His pantry was depleted by the consequential feed!

These are the things I 'll write him--our boy that 's in the West;
And I 'll tell him how we miss him--his mother and the rest;
Why, we never have an apple-pie that mother does n't say:
'He liked it so--I wish that he could have a piece to-day!'
I 'll tell him we are prospering, and hope he is the same--
That we hope he 'll have no trouble getting on to wealth and fame;
And just before I write 'good-by from father and the rest,'

I 'll say that 'mother sends her love.' and that will please him best.

For when I went away from home, the weekly news I heard
Was nothing to the tenderness I found in that one word--
The sacred name of mother--why, even now as then,
The thought brings back the saintly face, the gracious love again;
And in my bosom seems to come a peace that is divine,
As if an angel spirit communed awhile with mine;
And one man's heart is strengthened by the message from above,
And earth seems nearer heaven when 'mother sends her love.'

Eugene Field

Fiddle-Dee-Dee

There once was a bird that lived up in a tree,
And all he could whistle was "Fiddle-dee-dee" -
A very provoking, unmusical song
For one to be whistling the summer day long!
Yet always contented and busy was he
With that vocal recurrence of "Fiddle-dee-dee."

Hard by lived a brave little soldier of four,
That weird iteration repented him sore;
"I prithee, Dear-Mother-Mine! fetch me my gun,
For, by our St. Didy! the deed must be done
That shall presently rid all creation and me
Of that ominous bird and his 'Fiddle-dee-dee'!"

Then out came Dear-Mother-Mine, bringing her son
His awfully truculent little red gun;
The stock was of pine and the barrel of tin,
The "bang" it came out where the bullet went in -
The right kind of weapon I think you'll agree
For slaying all fowl that go "Fiddle-dee-dee"!

The brave little soldier quoth never a word,
But he up and he drew a straight bead on that bird;
And, while that vain creature provokingly sang,
The gun it went off with a terrible bang!
Then loud laughed the youth - "By my Bottle," cried he,
I've put a quietus on 'Fiddle-dee-dee'!"

Out came then Dear-Mother-Mine, saying: "My son,
Right well have you wrought with your little red gun!
Hereafter no evil at all need I fear,
With such a brave soldier as You-My-Love here!"
She kissed the dear boy.
(The bird in the tree
Continued to whistle his "Fiddle-dee-dee")

Eugene Field

Fisherman jim's kids

Fisherman Jim lived on the hill
With his bonnie wife an' his little boys;
'T wuz "Blow, ye winds, as blow ye will -
Naught we reck of your cold and noise!"
For happy and warm were he an' his,
And he dandled his kids upon his knee
To the song of the sea.

Fisherman Jim would sail all day,
But, when come night, upon the sands
His little kids ran from their play,
Callin' to him an' wavin' their hands;
Though the wind was fresh and the sea was high,
He'd hear'em - you bet - above the roar
Of the waves on the shore!

Once Fisherman Jim sailed into the bay
As the sun went down in a cloudy sky,
And never a kid saw he at play,
And he listened in vain for the welcoming cry.
In his little house he learned it all,
And he clinched his hands and he bowed his head -
"The fever!" they said.

'T wuz a pitiful time for Fisherman Jim,
With them darlin's a-dyin' afore his eyes,
A-stretchin' their wee hands out to him
An' a-breakin' his heart with the old-time cries
He had heerd so often upon the sands;
For they thought they wuz helpin' his boat ashore -
Till they spoke no more.

But Fisherman Jim lived on and on,
Castin' his nets an' sailin' the sea;
As a man will live when his heart is gone,
Fisherman Jim lived hopelessly,
Till once in those years they come an' said:
"Old Fisherman Jim is powerful sick -
Go to him, quick!"

Then Fisherman Jim says he to me:
"It's a long, long cruise-you understand -
But over beyont the ragin' sea
I kin see my boys on the shinin' sand
Waitin' to help this ol' hulk ashore,
Just as they used to - ah, mate, you know! -
In the long ago."

No, sir! he wuzn't afeard to die;
For all night long he seemed to see
His little boys of the days gone by,
An' to hear sweet voices forgot by me!

An' just as the mornin' sun come up -
"They're holdin' me by the hands!" he cried,
An' so he died.

Eugene Field

Francois Villon

If I were Francois Villon and Francois Villon I,
What would it matter to me how the time might drag or fly?
_He_ would in sweaty anguish toil the days and night away,
And still not keep the prowling, growling, howling wolf at bay!
But, with my valiant bottle and my frouzy brevet-bride,
And my score of loyal cut-throats standing guard for me outside,
What worry of the morrow would provoke a casual sigh
If I were Francois Villon and Francois Villon I?

If I were Francois Villon and Francois Villon I,
To yonder gloomy boulevard at midnight I would hie;
'Stop, stranger! and deliver your possessions, ere you feel
The mettle of my bludgeon or the temper of my steel!'
He should give me gold and diamonds, his snuffbox and his cane--
'Now back, my boon companions, to our brothel with our gain!'
And, back within that brothel, how the bottles they would fly,
If I were Francois Villon and Francois Villon I!

If I were Francois Villon and Francois Villon I,
We both would mock the gibbet which the law has lifted high;
_He_ in his meager, shabby home, _I_ in my roaring den--
He with his babes around him, _I_ with my hunted men!
His virtue be his bulwark--my genius should be mine!--
'Go fetch my pen, sweet Margot, and a jorum of your wine!'

* * * * *

So would one vainly plod, and one win immortality--
If I were Francois Villon and Francois Villon I!

Eugene Field

Ganderfeather's Gift

I was just a little thing
  When a fairy came and kissed me;
Floating in upon the light
Of a haunted summer night,
Lo, the fairies came to sing
Pretty slumber songs and bring
  Certain boons that else had missed me.
From a dream I turned to see
What those strangers brought for me,
  When that fairy up and kissed me--
  Here, upon this cheek, he kissed me!

Simmerdew was there, but she
  Did not like me altogether;
Daisybright and Turtledove,
Pilfercurds and Honeylove,
Thistleblow and Amberglee
On that gleaming, ghostly sea
  Floated from the misty heather,
And around my trundle-bed
Frisked, and looked, and whispering said--
  Solemnlike and all together:
  'You shall kiss him, Ganderfeather!'

Ganderfeather kissed me then--
  Ganderfeather, quaint and merry!
No attenuate sprite was he,
--But as buxom as could be;--
Kissed me twice, and once again,
And the others shouted when
  On my cheek uprose a berry
Somewhat like a mole, mayhap,
But the kiss-mark of that chap
  Ganderfeather, passing merry--
  Humorsome, but kindly, very!

I was just a tiny thing
   When the prankish Ganderfeather
Brought this curious gift to me
With his fairy kisses three;
Yet with honest pride I sing
That same gift he chose to bring
  Out of yonder haunted heather.
Other charms and friendships fly--
Constant friends this mole and I,
  Who have been so long together.
  Thank you, little Ganderfeather!

Eugene Field

Garden and cradle

When our babe he goeth walking in his garden,
Around his tinkling feet the sunbeams play;
The posies they are good to him,
And bow them as they should to him,
As fareth he upon his kingly way;
And birdlings of the wood to him
Make music, gentle music, all the day,
When our babe he goeth walking in his garden.

When our babe he goeth swinging in his cradle,
Then the night it looketh ever sweetly down;
The little stars are kind to him,
The moon she hath a mind to him
And layeth on his head a golden crown;
And singeth then the wind to him
A song, the gentle song of Bethlem-town,
When our babe he goeth swinging in his cradle.

Eugene Field

Gold and Love for Dearie

Out on the mountain over the town,
   All night long, all night long,
The trolls go up and the trolls go down,
   Bearing their packs and singing a song;
And this is the song the hill-folk croon,
As they trudge in the light of the misty moon--
This is ever their dolorous tune:
   'Gold, gold! ever more gold--
   Bright red gold for dearie!'

Deep in the hill a father delves
   All night long, all night long;
None but the peering, furtive elves
   Sees his toil and hears his song;
Merrily ever the cavern rings
As merrily ever his pick he swings,
And merrily ever this song he sings:
   'Gold, gold! ever more gold--
   Bright red gold for dearie!'

Mother is rocking thy lowly bed
   All night long, all night long,
Happy to smooth thy curly head,
   To hold thy hand and to sing her song:
'T is not of the hill-folk dwarfed and old,
Nor the song of thy father, stanch and bold,
And the burthen it beareth is not of gold:
   But it 's 'Love, love! nothing but love--
      Mother's love for dearie!'

Eugene Field

Good-Bye--God Bless You!

I like the Anglo-Saxon speech
 With its direct revealings;
It takes a hold, and seems to reach
 'Way down into your feelings;
That some folk deem it rude, I know,
 And therefore they abuse it;
But I have never found it so,--
 Before all else I choose it.
I don't object that men should air
 The Gallic they have paid for,
With "Au revoir," "Adieu, ma chère,"
 For that's what French was made for.
But when a crony takes your hand
 At parting, to address you,
He drops all foreign lingo and
 He says, "Good-by--God bless you!"

This seems to me a sacred phrase,
 With reverence impassioned,--
A thing come down from righteous days,
 Quaintly but nobly fashioned;
It well becomes an honest face,
 A voice that's round and cheerful;
It stays the sturdy in his place,
 And soothes the weak and fearful.
Into the porches of the ears
 It steals with subtle unction,
And in your heart of hearts appears
 To work its gracious function;
And all day long with pleasing song
 It lingers to caress you,--
I'm sure no human heart goes wrong
 That's told "Good-by--God bless you!"

I love the words,--perhaps because,
 When I was leaving Mother,
Standing at last in solemn pause
 We looked at one another,
And I--I saw in Mother's eyes
 The love she could not tell me,--
A love eternal as the skies,
 Whatever fate befell me;
She put her arms about my neck
 And soothed the pain of leaving,
And though her heart was like to break,
 She spoke no word of grieving;
She let no tear bedim her eye,
 For fear that might distress me,
But, kissing me, she said good-by,
 And asked our God to bless me.

Eugene Field

Good-Children Street

There's a dear little home in Good-Children street -
My heart turneth fondly to-day
Where tinkle of tongues and patter of feet
Make sweetest of music at play;
Where the sunshine of love illumines each face
And warms every heart in that old-fashioned place.

For dear little children go romping about
With dollies and tin tops and drums,
And, my! how they frolic and scamper and shout
Till bedtime too speedily comes!
Oh, days they are golden and days they are fleet
With little folk living in Good-Children street.

See, here comes an army with guns painted red,
And swords, caps, and plumes of all sorts;
The captain rides gaily and proudly ahead
On a stick-horse that prances and snorts!
Oh, legions of soldiers you're certain to meet -
Nice make-believe soldiers - in Good-Children street.

And yonder Odette wheels her dolly about -
Poor dolly! I'm sure she is ill,
For one of her blue china eyes has dropped out
And her voice is asthmatic'ly shrill.
Then, too, I observe she is minus her feet,
Which causes much sorrow in Good-Children street.

'T is so the dear children go romping about
With dollies and banners and drums,
And I venture to say they are sadly put out
When an end to their jubilee comes:
Oh, days they are golden and days they are fleet
With little folk living in Good-Children street!

But when falleth night over river and town,
Those little folk vanish from sight,
And an angel all white from the sky cometh down
And guardeth the babes through the night,
And singeth her lullabies tender and sweet
To the dear little people in Good-Children Street.

Though elsewhere the world be o'erburdened with care,
Though poverty fall to my lot,
Though toil and vexation be always my share,
What care I - they trouble me not!
This thought maketh life ever joyous and Sweet:
There's a dear little home in Good-Children street.

Eugene Field

Googly-go0

Of mornings, bright and early,
When the lark is on the wing
And the robin in the maple
Hops from her nest to sing,
From yonder cheery chamber
Cometh a mellow coo -
'T is the sweet, persuasive treble
Of my little Googly-Goo!

The sunbeams hear his music,
And they seek his little bed,
And they dance their prettiest dances
Round his golden curly head:
Schottisches, galops, minuets,
Gavottes and waltzes, too,
Dance they unto the music
Of my googling Googly-Goo.

My heart - my heart it leapeth
To hear that treble tone;
What music like thy music,
My darling and mine own!
And patiently - yes, cheerfully
I toil the long day through -
My labor seemeth lightened
By the song of Googly-Goo!

I may not see his antics,
Nor kiss his dimpled cheek:
I may not smooth the tresses
The sunbeams love to seek;
It mattereth not - the echo
Of his sweet, persuasive coo
Recurreth to remind me
Of my little Googly-Goo.

And when I come at evening,
I stand without the door
And patiently I listen
For that dear sound once more;
And oftentimes I wonder,
"Oh, God! what should I do
If any ill should happen
To my little Googly-Goo!"

Then in affright I call him -
I hear his gleeful shouts!
Begone, ye dread forebodings -
Begone, ye killing doubts!
For, with my arms about him,
My heart warms through and through
With the oogling and the googling

Of my little Googly-Goo!

Eugene Field

Guess

There is a certain Yankee phrase
I always have revered,
Yet, somehow, in these modern days,
It's almost disappeared;
It was the usage years ago,
But nowadays it's got
To be regarded coarse and low
To answer: 'I guess not!'

The height of fashion called the pink
Affects a British craze--
Prefers 'I fancy' or 'I think'
To that time-honored phrase;
But here's a Yankee, if you please,
That brands the fashion rot,
And to all heresies like these
He answers, 'I--guess not!'--

When Chaucer, Wycliff, and the rest
Express their meaning thus,
I guess, if not the very best,
It's good enough for us!
Why! shall the idioms of our speech
Be banished and forgot
For this vain trash which moderns teach?
Well, no, sir; I guess not!

There's meaning in that homely phrase
No other words express--
No substitute therefor conveys
Such unobtrusive stress.
True Anglo-Saxon speech, it goes
Directly to the spot,
And he who hears it always knows
The worth of 'I--guess--not!'

Eugene Field

Heine's "Widow or Daughter?"

Shall I woo the one or other?
 Both attract me--more's the pity!
Pretty is the widowed mother,
 And the daughter, too, is pretty.

When I see that maiden shrinking,
 By the gods I swear I'll get 'er!
But anon I fall to thinking
 That the mother 'll suit me better!

So, like any idiot ass
 Hungry for the fragrant fodder,
Placed between two bales of grass,
 Lo, I doubt, delay, and dodder!

Eugene Field

Hi-spy

Strange that the city thoroughfare,
 Noisy and bustling all the day,
Should with the night renounce its care,
 And lend itself to children's play!

Oh, girls are girls, and boys are boys,
 And have been so since Abel's birth,
And shall be so till dolls and toys
 Are with the children swept from earth.

The self-same sport that crowns the day
 Of many a Syrian shepherd's son,
Beguiles the little lads at play
 By night in stately Babylon.

I hear their voices in the street,
 Yet 't is so different now from then!
Come, brother! from your winding-sheet,
 And let us two be boys again!

Eugene Field

Horace and Lydia Reconciled

HORACE

When you were mine in auld lang syne,
 And when none else your charms might ogle,
      I'll not deny,
      Fair nymph, that I
 Was happier than a Persian mogul.

LYDIA

Before she came--that rival flame!--
 (Was ever female creature sillier?)
      In those good times,
      Bepraised in rhymes,
 I was more famed than Mother Ilia!

HORACE

Chloe of Thrace! With what a grace
 Does she at song or harp employ her!
I'd gladly die
      If only I
 Might live forever to enjoy her!

LYDIA

My Sybaris so noble is
 That, by the gods! I love him madly--
      That I might save
      Him from the grave
 I'd give my life, and give it gladly!

HORACE

What if ma belle from favor fell,
 And I made up my mind to shake her,
      Would Lydia, then,
      Come back again
 And to her quondam flame betake her?

LYDIA

My other beau should surely go,
 And you alone should find me gracious;
      For no one slings
      Such odes and things
 As does the lauriger Horatius!

Eugene Field

Horace I, 22.

Fuscus, whoso to good inclines--
And is a faultless liver--
Nor moorish spear nor bow need fear,
Nor poison-arrowed quiver.

Ay, though through desert wastes he roams,
Or scales the rugged mountains,
Or rests beside the murmuring tide
Of weird Hydaspan fountains!

Lo, on a time, I gayly paced
The Sabine confines shady,
And sung in glee of Lalage,
My own and dearest lady.

And, as I sung, a monster wolf
Slunk through the thicket from me---
But for that song, as I strolled along
He would have overcome me!

Set me amid those poison mists
Which no fair gale dispelleth,
Or in the plains where silence reigns
And no thing human dwelleth;

Still shall I love my Lalage--
Still sing her tender graces;
And, while I sing my theme shall bring
Heaven to those desert places!

Eugene Field

Horace I, 31.

As forth he pours the new made wine,
What blessing asks the lyric poet--
What boon implores in this fair shrine
Of one full likely to bestow it?

Not for Sardinia's plenteous store,
Nor for Calabrian herds he prayeth,
Nor yet for India's wealth galore,
Nor meads where voiceless Liris playeth.

Let honest riches celebrate
The harvest earned--I'd not deny it;
Yet am I pleased with my estate,
My humble home, my frugal diet.

Child of Latonia, this I crave;
May peace of mind and health attend me,
And down into my very grave
May this dear lyre of mine befriend me!

Eugene Field

Horace I, 4.

'Tis spring! the boats bound to the sea;
The breezes, loitering kindly over
The fields, again bring herds and men
The grateful cheer of honeyed clover.

Now Venus hither leads her train,
The Nymphs and Graces join in orgies,
The moon is bright and by her light
Old Vulcan kindles up his forges.

Bind myrtle now about your brow,
And weave fair flowers in maiden tresses--
Appease God Pan, who, kind to man,
Our fleeting life with affluence blesses.

But let the changing seasons mind us
That Death's the certain doom of mortals--
Grim Death who waits at humble gat
And likewise stalks through kingly portals.

Soon, Sestius, shall Plutonian shades
Enfold you with their hideous seemings--
Then love and mirth and joys of earth
Shall fade away like fevered dreamings.

Eugene Field

Horace II, 13.

O fountain of Blandusia,
Whence crystal waters flow,
With garlands gay and wine I'll pay
The sacrifice I owe;
A sportive kid with budding horns
I have, whose crimson blood
Anon shall die and sanctify
Thy cool and babbling flood.

O fountain of Blandusia,
The dogstar's hateful spell
No evil brings unto the springs
That from thy bosom well;
Here oxen, wearied by the plow,
The roving cattle here,
Hasten in quest of certain rest
And quaff thy gracious cheer.

O fountain of Blandusia,
Ennobled shalt thou be,
For I shall sing the joys that spring
Beneath your ilex tree;
Yes, fountain of Blandusia,
Posterity shall know
The cooling brooks that from thy nooks
Singing and dancing go!

Eugene Field

Horace II, 3.

Be tranquil, Dellius, I pray;
For though you pine your life away
With dull complaining breath,
Or speed with song and wine each day--
Still, still your doom is death.

Where the white poplar and the pine
In glorious arching shade combine
And the brook singing goes,
Bid them bring store of nard and wine
And garlands of the rose.

Let's live while chance and youth obtain--
Soon shall you quit this fair domain
Kissed by the Tiber's gold,
And all your earthly pride and gain
Some heedless heir shall hold.

One ghostly boat shall some time bear
From scenes of mirthfulness or care
Each fated human soul!--
Shall waft and leave his burden where
The waves of Lethe roll.

_So come, I pri' thee, Dellius, mine--
Let's sing our songs and drink our wine
In that sequestered nook
Where the white poplar and the pine
Stand listening to the brook._

Eugene Field

Horace iii. 13

O fountain of Bandusia,
 Whence crystal waters flow,
With garlands gay and wine I'll pay
 The sacrifice I owe;
A sportive kid with budding horns
 I have, whose crimson blood
Anon shall dye and sanctify
 Thy cool and babbling flood.

O fountain of Bandusia,
 The dog-star's hateful spell
No evil brings unto the springs
 That from thy bosom well;
Here oxen, wearied by the plough,
 The roving cattle here,
Hasten in quest of certain rest
 And quaff thy gracious cheer.

O fountain of Bandusia,
 Ennobled shalt thou be,
For I shall sing the joys that spring
 Beneath yon ilex-tree;
Yes, fountain of Bandusia,
 Posterity shall know
The cooling brooks that from thy nooks
 Singing and dancing go!

Eugene Field

Horace To His Lute

If ever in the sylvan shade
A song immortal we have made,
Come now, O lute, I pri' thee come--
Inspire a song of Latium.

A Lesbian first thy glories proved--
In arms and in repose he loved
To sweep thy dulcet strings and raise
His voice in Love's and Liber's praise;
The Muses, too, and him who clings
To Mother Venus' apron-strings,
And Lycus beautiful, he sung
In those old days when you were young.

O shell, that art the ornament
Of Phoebus, bringing sweet content
To Jove, and soothing troubles all--
Come and requite me, when I call!

Eugene Field

Horace To Maecenas

How breaks my heart to hear you say
You feel the shadows fall about you!
The gods forefend
That fate, O friend!
I would not, I could not live without you!
You gone, what would become of me,
Your shadow, O beloved Maecenas?
We've shared the mirth--
And sweets of earth--
Let's share the pangs of death between us!

I should not dread Chinaera's breath
Nor any threat of ghost infernal;
Nor fear nor pain
Should part us twain--
For so have willed the powers eternal.
No false allegiance have I sworn,
And, whatsoever fate betide you,
Mine be the part
To cheer your heart--
With loving song to fare beside you!

Love snatched you from the claws of death
And gave you to the grateful city;
The falling tree
That threatened me
Did Fannus turn aside in pity;
With horoscopes so wondrous like,
Why question that we twain shall wander,
As in this land,
So, hand in hand,
Into the life that waiteth yonder?

So to your shrine, O patron mine,
With precious wine and victims fare you;
Poor as I am,
A humble lamb
Must testify what love I bear you.
But to the skies shall sweetly rise
The sacrifice from shrine and heather,
And thither bear
The solemn prayer
That, when we go, we go together!

Eugene Field

Horace to Melpomene

Lofty and enduring is the monument I've reared,--
 Come, tempests, with your bitterness assailing;
And thou, corrosive blasts of time, by all things mortal feared,
 Thy buffets and thy rage are unavailing!

I shall not altogether die; by far my greater part
 Shall mock man's common fate in realms infernal;
My works shall live as tributes to my genius and my art,--
 My works shall be my monument eternal!

While this great Roman empire stands and gods protect our fanes,
 Mankind with grateful hearts shall tell the story,
How one most lowly born upon the parched Apulian plains
 First raised the native lyric muse to glory.

Assume, revered Melpomene, the proud estate I've won,
 And, with thine own dear hand the meed supplying,
Bind thou about the forehead of thy celebrated son
 The Delphic laurel-wreath of fame undying!

Eugene Field

Horace to phyllis

Come, Phyllis, I've a cask of wine
 That fairly reeks with precious juices,
And in your tresses you shall twine
 The loveliest flowers this vale produces.

My cottage wears a gracious smile,--
 The altar, decked in floral glory,
Yearns for the lamb which bleats the while
 As though it pined for honors gory.

Hither our neighbors nimbly fare,--
 The boys agog, the maidens snickering;
And savory smells possess the air
 As skyward kitchen flames are flickering.

You ask what means this grand display,
 This festive throng, and goodly diet?
Well, since you're bound to have your way,
 I don't mind telling, on the quiet.

'Tis April 13, as you know,--
 A day and month devote to Venus,
Whereon was born, some years ago,
 My very worthy friend Maecenas.

Nay, pay no heed to Telephus,--
 Your friends agree he doesn't love you;
The way he flirts convinces us
 He really is not worthy of you!

Aurora's son, unhappy lad!
 You know the fate that overtook him?
And Pegasus a rider had--
 I say he had before he shook him!

Haec docet (as you must agree):
 'T is meet that Phyllis should discover
A wisdom in preferring me
 And mittening every other lover.

So come, O Phyllis, last and best
 Of loves with which this heart's been smitten,--
Come, sing my jealous fears to rest,
 And let your songs be those I've written.

Eugene Field

Horace to Pyrrha

What perfumed, posie-dizened sirrah,
 With smiles for diet,
Clasps you, O fair but faithless Pyrrha,
 On the quiet?
For whom do you bind up your tresses,
 As spun-gold yellow,--
Meshes that go, with your caresses,
 To snare a fellow?

How will he rail at fate capricious,
 And curse you duly!
Yet now he deems your wiles delicious,
 You perfect, truly!
Pyrrha, your love's a treacherous ocean;
 He'll soon fall in there!
Then shall I gloat on his commotion,
 For I have been there!

Eugene Field

Horatian Lyrics Odes I, 11.

What end the gods may have ordained for me,
And what for thee,
Seek not to learn, Leuconoe; we may not know;
Chaldean tables cannot bring us rest--
'Tis for the best
To bear in patience what may come, or weal or woe.

If for more winters our poor lot is cast,
Or this the last,
Which on the crumbling rocks has dashed Etruscan seas;
Strain clear the wine--this life is short, at best;
Take hope with zest,
And, trusting not To-Morrow, snatch To-Day for ease!

Eugene Field

Horatian Lyrics Odes I, 23.

Why do you shun me, Chloe, like the fawn,
That, fearful of the breezes and the wood,
Has sought her timorous mother since the dawn
And on the pathless mountain tops has stood?

Her trembling heart a thousand fears invites--
Her sinking knees with nameless terrors shake;
Whether the rustling leaf of spring affrights,
Or the green lizards stir the slumbering brake.

I do not follow with a tigerish thought
Or with the fierce Gaetulian lion's quest;
So, quickly leave your mother, as you ought,
Full ripe to nestle on a husband's breast.

Eugene Field

How Salty Win Out

I used to think that luck wuz luck and nuthin' else but luck--
It made no diff'rence how or when or where or why it struck;
But sev'ral years ago I changt my mind, an' now proclaim
That luck's a kind uv science--same as any other game;
It happened out in Denver in the spring uv '80 when
Salty teched a humpback an' win out ten.

Salty wuz a printer in the good ol' Tribune days,
An', natural-like, he fell into the good ol' Tribune ways;
So, every Sunday evenin' he would sit into the game
Which in this crowd uv thoroughbreds I think I need not name;
An' there he'd sit until he rose, an', when he rose, he wore
Invariably less wealth about his person than before.

But once there came a powerful change; one sollum Sunday night
Occurred the tidal wave that put ol' Salty out o' sight.
He win on deuce an' ace an' Jack--he win on king an' queen--
Clif Bell allowed the like uv how he win wuz never seen.
An' how he done it wuz revealed to all us fellers when
He said he teched a humpback to win out ten.

There must be somethin' in it, for he never win afore,
An' when he told the crowd about the humpback, how they swore!
For every sport allows it is a losin' game to luck
Agin the science uv a man who's teched a hump f'r luck;
And there is no denyin' luck wuz nowhere in it when
Salty teched a humpback an' win out ten.

I've had queer dreams an' seen queer things, an' allus tried to do
The thing that luck apparently intended f'r me to;
Cats, funerils, cripples, beggers have I treated with regard,
An' charity subscriptions have hit me powerful hard;
But what's the use uv talkin'? I say, an' say again:
You've got to tech a humpback to win out ten!

So, though I used to think that luck wuz lucky, I'll allow
That luck, for luck, agin a hump aint nowhere in it now!
An' though I can't explain the whys an' wherefores, I maintain
There must be somethin' in it when the tip's so straight an' plain;
For I wuz there an' seen it, an' got full with Salty when
Salty teched a humpback an' win out ten!

Eugene Field

Hugo's "flower to butterfly"

Sweet, bide with me and let my love
 Be an enduring tether;
Oh, wanton not from spot to spot,
 But let us dwell together.

You've come each morn to sip the sweets
 With which you found me dripping,
Yet never knew it was not dew
 But tears that you were sipping.

You gambol over honey meads
 Where siren bees are humming;
But mine the fate to watch and wait
 For my beloved's coming.

The sunshine that delights you now
 Shall fade to darkness gloomy;
You should not fear if, biding here,
You nestled closer to me.

So rest you, love, and be my love,
 That my enraptured blooming
May fill your sight with tender light,
 Your wings with sweet perfuming.

Or, if you will not bide with me
 Upon this quiet heather,
Oh, give me wing, thou beauteous thing,
 That we may soar together.

Eugene Field

Hugo's "pool in the forest"

How calm, how beauteous and how cool--
 How like a sister to the skies,
Appears the broad, transparent pool
 That in this quiet forest lies.
The sunshine ripples on its face,
 And from the world around, above,
It hath caught down the nameless grace
 Of such reflections as we love.

But deep below its surface crawl
 The reptile horrors of the night--
The dragons, lizards, serpents--all
 The hideous brood that hate the light;
Through poison fern and slimy weed
 And under ragged, jagged stones
They scuttle, or, in ghoulish greed,
 They lap a dead man's bleaching bones.

And as, O pool, thou dost cajole
 With seemings that beguile us well,
So doeth many a human soul
 That teemeth with the lusts of hell.

Eugene Field

Hymn

(FROM THE GERMAN OF MARTIN LUTHER)

O heart of mine! lift up thine eyes
And see who in yon manger lies!
Of perfect form, of face divine--
It is the Christ-child, heart of mine!

O dearest, holiest Christ-child, spread
Within this heart of mine thy bed;
Then shall my breast forever be
A chamber consecrate to thee!

Beat high to-day, O heart of mine,
And tell, O lips, what joys are thine;
For with your help shall I prolong
Old Bethlehem's sweetest cradle-song.

Glory to God, whom this dear Child
Hath by His coming reconciled,
And whose redeeming love again
Brings peace on earth, good will to men!

Eugene Field

In flanders

Through sleet and fogs to the saline bogs
 Where the herring fish meanders,
An army sped, and then, 't is said,
 Swore terribly in Flanders:
  "--------!"
  "--------!"
A hideous store of oaths they swore,
 Did the army over in Flanders!

At this distant day we're unable to say
 What so aroused their danders;
But it's doubtless the case, to their lasting disgrace,
 That the army swore in Flanders:
  "--------!"
  "--------!"
And many more such oaths they swore,
 Did that impious horde in Flanders!

Some folks contend that these oaths without end
 Began among the commanders,
That, taking this cue, the subordinates, too,
 Swore terribly in Flanders:
    Twas "----------!"
    "--------"

Why, the air was blue with the hullaballoo
 Of those wicked men in Flanders!

But some suppose that the trouble arose
 With a certain Corporal Sanders,
Who sought to abuse the wooden shoes
 That the natives wore in Flanders.
    Saying: "--------!"
    "--------"

What marvel then, that the other men
 Felt encouraged to swear in Flanders!
At any rate, as I grieve to state,
 Since these soldiers vented their danders
Conjectures obtain that for language profane
 There is no such place as Flanders.
    "--------"
    "--------"

This is the kind of talk you'll find
 If ever you go to Flanders.
How wretched is he, wherever he be,
 That unto this habit panders!
And how glad am I that my interests lie
 In Chicago, and not in Flanders!
    "----------!"
    "----------!"

Would never go down in this circumspect town
However it might in Flanders.

Eugene Field

In New Orleans

'Twas in the Crescent City not long ago befell
The tear-compelling incident I now propose to tell;
So come, my sweet collector friends, and listen while I sing
Unto your delectation this brief, pathetic thing-
No lyric pitched in vaunting key, but just a requiem
Of blowing twenty dollars in by nine o'clock a.m.

Let critic folk the poet's use of vulgar slang upbraid,
But, when I'm speaking by the card, I call a spade a spade;
And I, who have been touched of that same mania, myself,
Am well aware that, when it comes to parting with his pelf,
The curio collector is so blindly lost in sin
That he doesn't spend his money-he simply blows it in!

In Royal street (near Conti) there's a lovely curio-shop,
And there, one balmy, fateful morn, it was my chance to stop;
To stop was hesitation-in a moment I was lost-

That
kind of hesitation does not hesitate at cost!
I spied a pewter tankard there, and, my! it was a gem-
And the clock in old St. Louis told the hour of eight a.m.!

Three quaint Bohemian bottles, too, of yellow and of green,
Cut in archaic fashion that I ne'er before had seen;
A lovely, hideous platter wreathed about with pink and rose,
With its curious depression into which the gravy flows;
Two dainty silver salts-oh, there was no resisting
them
-
And I'd blown in twenty dollars by nine o'clock a. m.

With twenty dollars, one who is a prudent man, indeed,
Can buy the wealth of useful things his wife and children need;
Shoes, stockings, knickerbockers, gloves, bibs, nursing-bottles, caps,
A gown-
the
gown for which his spouse too long has pined, perhaps!
These and ten thousand other spectres harrow and condemn
The man who's blown in twenty by nine o'clock a.m.

Oh, mean advantage conscience takes (and one that I abhor!)
In asking one this question: 'What
did
you buy it for?'
Why doesn't conscience ply its blessed trade
before
the act,

Before
one's cussedness becomes a bald, accomplished fact-

Before
one's fallen victim to the Tempter's stratagem
And blown in twenty dollars by nine o'clock a.m.?

Ah me! now that the deed is done, how penitent I am!
I
was
a roaring lion-behold a bleating lamb!
I've packed and shipped those precious things to that more precious wife
Who shares with our sweet babes the strange vicissitudes of life,
While he who, in his folly, gave up his store of wealth
Is far away, and means to keep his distance-for his health!

Eugene Field

In Praise Of Contentment

(HORACE'S ODES, III, I)

I hate the common, vulgar herd!
Away they scamper when I 'booh' 'em!
But pretty girls and nice young men
Observe a proper silence when
I chose to sing my lyrics to 'em.

The kings of earth, whose fleeting pow'r
Excites our homage and our wonder,
Are precious small beside old Jove,
The father of us all, who drove
The giants out of sight, by thunder!

This man loves farming, that man law,
While this one follows pathways martial--
What moots it whither mortals turn?
Grim fate from her mysterious urn
Doles out the lots with hand impartial.

Nor sumptuous feasts nor studied sports
Delight the heart by care tormented;
The mightiest monarch knoweth not
The peace that to the lowly cot
Sleep bringeth to the swain contented.

On him untouched of discontent
Care sits as lightly as a feather;
He doesn't growl about the crops,
Or worry when the market drops,
Or fret about the changeful weather.

Not so with him who, rich in fact,
Still seeks his fortune to redouble;
Though dig he deep or build he high,
Those scourges twain shall lurk anigh--
Relentless Care, relentless Trouble!

If neither palaces nor robes
Nor unguents nor expensive toddy
Insure Contentment's soothing bliss,
Why should I build an edifice
Where Envy comes to fret a body?

Nay, I'd not share your sumptuous cheer,
But rather sup my rustic pottage,
While that sweet boon the gods bestow--
The peace your mansions cannot know--
Blesseth my lowly Sabine cottage.

Eugene Field

In The Firelight

The fire upon the hearth is low,
 And there is stillness everywhere,
 While like winged spirits, here and there,
The firelight shadows fluttering go.
And as the shadows round me creep,
 A childish treble breaks the gloom,
 And softly from a further room
Comes, "Now I lay me down to sleep."

And somehow, with that little prayer
 And that sweet treble in my ears,
 My thoughts go back to distant years
And linger with a loved one there;
And as I hear my child's amen,
 My mother's faith comes back to me,--
 Crouched at her side I seem to be,
And Mother holds my hands again.

Oh, for an hour in that dear place!
 Oh, for the peace of that dear time!
 Oh, for that childish trust sublime!
Oh, for a glimpse of Mother's face!
Yet, as the shadows round me creep,
 I do not seem to be alone,--
 Sweet magic of that treble tone,
And "Now I lay me down to sleep."

Eugene Field

In The Springtime

'T is spring! The boats bound to the sea;
The breezes, loitering kindly over
The fields, again bring herds and men
The grateful cheer of honeyed clover.

Now Venus hither leads her train;
The Nymphs and Graces join in orgies;
The moon is bright, and by her light
Old Vulcan kindles up his forges.

Bind myrtle now about your brow,
And weave fair flowers in maiden tresses;
Appease god Pan, who, kind to man,
Our fleeting life with affluence blesses;

But let the changing seasons mind us,
That Death's the certain doom of mortals,--
Grim Death, who waits at humble gates,
And likewise stalks through kingly portals.

Soon, Sestius, shall Plutonian shades
Enfold you with their hideous seemings;
Then love and mirth and joys of earth
Shall fade away like fevered dreamings.

Eugene Field

Inscription for my little son's silver plate

When thou dost eat from off this plate,
I charge thee be thou temperate;
Unto thine elders at the board
Do thou sweet reverence accord;
And, though to dignity inclined,
Unto the serving-folk be kind;
Be ever mindful of the poor,
Nor turn them hungry from the door;
And unto God, for health and food
And all that in thy life is good,
Give thou thy heart in gratitude.

Eugene Field

It Is The Printer's Fault

In Mrs. Potter's latest play
The costuming is fine;
Her waist is made decollete--
Her skirt is new design.

Eugene Field

Japanese lullaby

Sleep, little pigeon, and fold your wings,--
 Little blue pigeon with velvet eyes;
Sleep to the singing of mother-bird swinging--
 Swinging the nest where her little one lies.

Away out yonder I see a star,--
 Silvery star with a tinkling song;
To the soft dew falling I hear it calling--
 Calling and tinkling the night along.

In through the window a moonbeam comes,--
 Little gold moonbeam with misty wings;
All silently creeping, it asks, "Is he sleeping--
 Sleeping and dreaming while mother sings?"

Up from the sea there floats the sob
 Of the waves that are breaking upon the shore,
As though they were groaning in anguish, and moaning--
 Bemoaning the ship that shall come no more.

But sleep, little pigeon, and fold your wings,--
 Little blue pigeon with mournful eyes;
Am I not singing?--see, I am swinging--
 Swinging the nest where my darling lies.

Eugene Field

Jennie

Some men affect a liking
For the prim in face and mind,
And some prefer the striking
And the loud in womankind;
Wee Madge is wooed of many,
And buxom Kate, as well,
And Jennie--charming Jennie--
Ah, Jennie doesn't tell!

What eyes so bright as Daisy's,
And who as Maud so fair?
Who does not sing the praises
Of Lucy's golden hair?
There's Sophie--she is witty,
A very sprite is Nell,
And Susie's, oh, so pretty--
But Jennie doesn't tell!

And now for my confession:
Of all the virtues rare,
I argue that discretion
Doth most beseem the fair.
And though I hear the many
Extol each other belle,
I--I pronounce for Jennie,
For Jennie doesn't tell!

Eugene Field

Jessie

When I remark her golden hair
 Swoon on her glorious shoulders,
I marvel not that sight so rare
 Doth ravish all beholders;
For summon hence all pretty girls
 Renowned for beauteous tresses,
And you shall find among their curls
 There's none so fair as Jessie's.

And Jessie's eyes are, oh, so blue
 And full of sweet revealings--
They seem to look you through and through
 And read your inmost feelings;
Nor black emits such ardent fires,
 Nor brown such truth expresses--
Admit it, all ye gallant squires--
 There are no eyes like Jessie's.

Her voice (like liquid beams that roll
   From moonland to the river)
Steals subtly to the raptured soul,
   Therein to lie and quiver;
Or falls upon the grateful ear
   With chaste and warm caresses--
Ah, all concede the truth (who hear):
   There's no such voice as Jessie's.

Of other charms she hath such store
   All rivalry excelling,
Though I used adjectives galore,
   They'd fail me in the telling;
But now discretion stays my hand--
   Adieu, eyes, voice, and tresses.
Of all the husbands in the land
   There's none so fierce as Jessie's.

Eugene Field

Jest 'fore christmas

Father calls me William, sister calls me Will,
Mother calls me Willie, but the fellers call me Bill!
Mighty glad I ain't a girl - ruther be a boy,
Without them sashes, curls, an' things that's worn by Fauntleroy!
Love to chawnk green apples an' go swimmin' in the lake -
Hate to take the castor-ile they give for bellyache!
'Most all the time, the whole year round, there ain't no flies on me,
But jest 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

Got a yeller dog named Sport, sick him on the cat;
First thing she knows she doesn't know where she is at!
Got a clipper sled, an' when us kids goes out to slide,
'Long comes the grocery cart, an' we all hook a ride!
But sometimes when the grocery man is worrited an' cross,
He reaches at us with his whip, an' larrups up his hoss,
An' then I laff an' holler, "Oh, ye never teched me!"
But jest 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

Gran'ma says she hopes that when I git to be a man,
I'll be a missionarer like her oldest brother, Dan,
As was et up by the cannibuls that lives in Ceylon's Isle,
Where every prospeck pleases, an' only man is vile!
But gran'ma she has never been to see a Wild West show,
Nor read the Life of Daniel Boone, or else I guess she'd know
That Buff'lo Bill an' cow-boys is good enough for me!
Excep' jest 'fore Christmas, when I'm good as I kin be!

And then old Sport he hangs around, so solemn-like an' still,
His eyes they seem a-sayin': "What's the matter, little Bill?"
The old cat sneaks down off her perch an' wonders what's become
Of them two enemies of hern that used to make things hum!
But I am so perlite an' 'tend so earnestly to biz,
That mother says to father: "How improved our Willie is!"
But father, havin' been a boy hisself, suspicions me
When, jest 'fore Christmas, I'm as good as I kin be!

For Christmas, with its lots an' lots of candies, cakes, an' toys,
Was made, they say, for proper kids an' not for naughty boys;
So wash yer face an' bresh yer hair, an' mind yer p's and q's,
An' don't bust out yer pantaloons, and don't wear out yer shoes;
Say "Yessum" to the ladies, an' "Yessur" to the men,
An' when they's company, don't pass yer plate for pie again;
But, thinkin' of the things yer'd like to see upon that tree,
Jest 'fore Christmas be as good as yer kin be!

Eugene Field

Jewish Lullaby

My harp is on the willow-tree,
Else would I sing, O love, to thee
   A song of long-ago--
Perchance the song that Miriam sung
Ere yet Judea's heart was wrung
   By centuries of woe.

I ate my crust in tears to-day,
As scourged I went upon my way--
   And yet my darling smiled;
Ay, beating at my breast, he laughed--
My anguish curdled not the draught--
   'T was sweet with love, my child!

The shadow of the centuries lies
Deep in thy dark and mournful eyes--
   But, hush! and close them now;
And in the dreams that thou shalt dream
The light of other days shall seem
   To glorify thy brow!

Our harp is on the willow-tree--
I have no song to sing to thee,
   As shadows round us roll;
But, hush and sleep, and thou shalt hear
Jehovah's voice that speaks to cheer
   Judea's fainting soul!

Eugene Field

John Smith

To-day I strayed in Charing Cross as wretched as could be
With thinking of my home and friends across the tumbling sea;
There was no water in my eyes, but my spirits were depressed
And my heart lay like a sodden, soggy doughnut in my breast.
This way and that streamed multitudes, that gayly passed me by--
Not one in all the crowd knew me and not a one knew I!
'Oh, for a touch of home!' I sighed; 'oh, for a friendly face!
Oh, for a hearty handclasp in this teeming desert place!'
And so, soliloquizing as a homesick creature will,
Incontinent, I wandered down the noisy, bustling hill
And drifted, automatic-like and vaguely, into Lowe's,
Where Fortune had in store a panacea for my woes.
The register was open, and there dawned upon my sight
A name that filled and thrilled me with a cyclone of delight--
The name that I shall venerate unto my dying day--
The proud, immortal signature: 'John Smith, U.S.A.'

Wildly I clutched the register and brooded on that name--
I knew John Smith, yet could not well identify the same.
I knew him North, I knew him South, I knew him East and West--
I knew him all so well I knew not which I knew the best.
His eyes, I recollect, were gray, and black, and brown, and blue,
And, when he was not bald, his hair was of chameleon hue;
Lean, fat, tall, short, rich, poor, grave, gay, a blonde and a brunette--
Aha, amid this London fog, John Smith, I see you yet;
I see you yet, and yet the sight is all so blurred I seem
To see you in composite, or as in a waking dream,
Which are you, John? I'd like to know, that I might weave a rhyme
Appropriate to your character, your politics and clime;
So tell me, were you 'raised' or 'reared'--your pedigree confess
In some such treacherous ism as 'I reckon' or 'I guess';
Let fall your tell-tale dialect, that instantly I may
Identify my countryman, 'John Smith, U.S.A.'

It's like as not you are the John that lived a spell ago
Down East, where codfish, beans 'nd bona-fide school-marms grow;
Where the dear old homestead nestles like among the Hampshire hills
And where the robin hops about the cherry boughs and trills;
Where Hubbard squash 'nd huckleberries grow to powerful size,
And everything is orthodox from preachers down to pies;
Where the red-wing blackbirds swing 'nd call beside the pickril pond,
And the crows air cawin' in the pines uv the pasture lot beyond;
Where folks complain uv bein' poor, because their money's lent
Out West on farms 'nd railroads at the rate uv ten per cent;
Where we ust to spark the Baker girls a-comin' home from choir,
Or a-settin' namin' apples round the roarin' kitchen fire:
Where we had to go to meetin' at least three times a week,
And our mothers learnt us good religious Dr. Watts to speak,
And where our grandmas sleep their sleep--God rest their souls, I say!
And God bless yours, ef you're that John, 'John Smith, U.S.A.'

Or, mebbe, Colonel Smith, yo' are the gentleman I know

In the country whar the finest democrats 'nd horses grow;
Whar the ladies are all beautiful an' whar the crap of cawn
Is utilized for Bourbon and true dawters are bawn;
You've ren for jedge, and killed yore man, and bet on Proctor Knott--
Yore heart is full of chivalry, yore skin is full of shot;
And I disremember whar I've met with gentlemen so true
As yo' all in Kaintucky, whar blood an' grass are blue;
Whar a niggah with a ballot is the signal fo' a fight,
Whar a yaller dawg pursues the coon throughout the bammy night;
Whar blooms the furtive 'possum--pride an' glory of the South--
And Aunty makes a hoe-cake, sah, that melts within yo' mouth!
Whar, all night long, the mockin'-birds are warblin' in the trees
And black-eyed Susans nod and blink at every passing breeze,
Whar in a hallowed soil repose the ashes of our Clay--
Hyar's lookin' at yo', Colonel 'John Smith, U.S.A.'!

Or wuz you that John Smith I knew out yonder in the West--
That part of our republic I shall always love the best?
Wuz you him that went prospectin' in the spring of sixty-nine
In the Red Hoss mountain country for the Gosh-All-Hemlock Mine?
Oh, how I'd like to clasp your hand an' set down by your side
And talk about the good old days beyond the big divide;
Of the rackaboar, the snaix, the bear, the Rocky Mountain goat,
Of the conversazzhyony 'nd of Casey's tabble-dote,
And a word of them old pardners that stood by us long ago
(Three-Fingered Hoover, Sorry Tom and Parson Jim, you know)!
Old times, old friends, John Smith, would make our hearts beat high again,
And we'd see the snow-top mountain like we used to see 'em then;
The magpies would go flutterin' like strange sperrits to 'nd fro,
And we'd hear the pines a-singing' in the ragged gulch below;
And the mountain brook would loiter like upon its windin' way,
Ez if it waited for a child to jine it in its play.

You see, John Smith, just which you are I cannot well recall,
And, really, I am pleased to think you somehow must be all!
For when a man sojourns abroad awhile (as I have done)
He likes to think of all the folks he left at home as one--
And so they are! For well you know there's nothing in a name---
Our Browns, our Joneses and our Smiths are happily the same;
All represent the spirit of the land across the sea,
All stand for one high purpose in our country of the free!
Whether John Smith be from the South, the North, the West, the East--
So long as he's American, it mattereth not the least;
Whether his crest be badger, bear, palmetto, sword or pine,
He is the glory of the stars that with the stripes combine!
Where'er he be, whate'er his lot, he's eager to be known,
Not by his mortal name, but by his country's name alone!
And so, compatriot, I am proud you wrote your name to-day
Upon the register at Lowe's, 'John Smith, U.S.A.'

Eugene Field

Kissing time

'T is when the lark goes soaring
And the bee is at the bud,
When lightly dancing zephyrs
Sing over field and flood;
When all sweet things in nature
Seem joyfully achime -
'T is then I wake my darling,
For it is kissing time!

Go, pretty lark, a-soaring,
And suck your sweets, 0 bee;
Sing, 0 ye winds of summer,
Your songs to mine and me;
For with your song and rapture
Cometh the moment when
It's half-past kissing time
And time to kiss again!

So - so the days go fleeting
Like golden fancies free,
And every day that cometh
Is full of sweets for me;
And sweetest are those moments
My darling comes to climb
Into my lap to mind me
That it is kissing time.

Sometimes, maybe, he wanders
A heedless, aimless way -
Sometimes, maybe, he loiters
In pretty, prattling play;
But presently bethinks him
And hastens to me then,
For it's half-past kissing time
And time to kiss again!

Eugene Field

Krinken

Krinken was a little child,--
It was summer when he smiled.
Oft the hoary sea and grim
Stretched its white arms out to him,
Calling, "Sun-child, come to me;
Let me warm my heart with thee!"
But the child heard not the sea,
Calling, yearning evermore
For the summer on the shore.

Krinken on the beach one day
Saw a maiden Nis at play;
On the pebbly beach she played
In the summer Krinken made.
Fair, and very fair, was she,
Just a little child was he.
"Krinken," said the maiden Nis,
"Let me have a little kiss,
Just a kiss, and go with me
To the summer-lands that be
Down within the silver sea."

Krinken was a little child--
By the maiden Nis beguiled,
Hand in hand with her went he,
And 'twas summer in the sea.
And the hoary sea and grim
To its bosom folded him--
Clasped and kissed the little form,
And the ocean's heart was warm.

Now the sea calls out no more;
It is winter on the shore,--
Winter where that little child
Made sweet summer when he smiled;
Though 'tis summer on the sea
Where with maiden Nis went he,--
Summer, summer evermore,--
It is winter on the shore,
Winter, winter evermore.
Of the summer on the deep
Come sweet visions in my sleep:
His fair face lifts from the sea,
His dear voice calls out to me,--
These my dreams of summer be.

Krinken was a little child,
By the maiden Nis beguiled;
Oft the hoary sea and grim
Reached its longing arms to him,
Crying, "Sun-child, come to me;
Let me warm my heart with thee!"

But the sea calls out no more;
It is winter on the shore,--
Winter, cold and dark and wild;
Krinken was a little child,--
It was summer when he smiled;
Down he went into the sea,
And the winter bides with me.
Just a little child was he.

Eugene Field

Lady button-eyes

When the busy day is done,
And my weary little one
Rocketh gently to and fro;
When the night winds softly blow,
And the crickets in the glen
Chirp and chirp and chirp again;
When upon the haunted green
Fairies dance around their queen -
Then from yonder misty skies
Cometh Lady Button-Eyes.

Through the murk and mist and gloam
To our quiet, cozy home,
Where to singing, sweet and low,
Rocks a cradle to and fro;
Where the clock's dull monotone
Telleth of the day that's done;
Where the moonbeams hover o'er
Playthings sleeping on the floor -
Where my weary wee one lies
Cometh Lady Button-Eyes.

Cometh like a fleeting ghost
From some distant eerie coast;
Never footfall can you hear
As that spirit fareth near -
Never whisper, never word
From that shadow-queen is heard.
In ethereal raiment dight,
From the realm of fay and sprite
In the depth of yonder skies
Cometh Lady Button-Eyes.

Layeth she her hands upon
My dear weary little one,
And those white hands overspread
Like a veil the curly head,
Seem to fondle and caress
Every little silken tress;
Then she smooths the eyelids down
Over those two eyes of brown -
In such soothing, tender wise
Cometh Lady Button-Eyes.

Dearest, feel upon your brow
That caressing magic now;
For the crickets in the glen
Chirp and chirp and chirp again,
While upon the haunted green
Fairies dance around their queen,
And the moonbeams hover o'er
Playthings sleeping on the floor -

Hush, my sweet! from yonder skies
Cometh Lady Button-Eyes!

Eugene Field

Let Us Have Peace

In maudlin spite let Thracians fight
Above their bowls of liquor;
But such as we, when on a spree,
Should never brawl and bicker!

These angry words and clashing swords
Are quite _de trop_, I'm thinking;
Brace up, my boys, and hush your noise,
And drown your wrath in drinking.

Aha, 't is fine,--this mellow wine
With which our host would dope us!
Now let us hear what pretty dear
Entangles him of Opus.

I see you blush,--nay, comrades, hush!
Come, friend, though they despise you,
Tell me the name of that fair dame,--
Perchance I may advise you.

O wretched youth! and is it truth
You love that fickle lady?
I, doting dunce, courted her once;
Since when, she's reckoned shady!

Eugene Field

Little all-aloney

Little All-Aloney's feet
Pitter-patter in the hall,
And his mother runs to meet
And to kiss her toddling sweet,
Ere perchance he fall.
He is, oh, so weak and small!
Yet what danger shall he fear
When his mother hovereth near,
And he hears her cheering call:
"All-Aloney"?

Little All-Aloney's face
It is all aglow with glee,
As around that romping-place
At a terrifying pace
Lungeth, plungeth he!
And that hero seems to be
All unconscious of our cheers -
Only one dear voice he hears
Calling reassuringly:
"All-Aloney!"

Though his legs bend with their load,
Though his feet they seem so small
That you cannot help forebode
Some disastrous episode
In that noisy hall,
Neither threatening bump nor fall
Little All-Aloney fears,
But with sweet bravado steers
Whither comes that cheery call:
"All-Aloney!"

Ah, that in the years to come,
When he shares of Sorrow's store, -
When his feet are chill and numb,
When his cross is burdensome,
And his heart is sore:
Would that he could hear once more
The gentle voice he used to hear -
Divine with mother love and cheer -
Calling from yonder spirit shore:
"All, all alone!"

Eugene Field

Little Boy Blue

The little toy dog is covered with dust,
 But sturdy and stanch he stands;
And the little toy soldier is red with rust,
 And his musket molds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new
 And the soldier was passing fair,
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
 Kissed them and put them there.

"Now, don't you go till I come," he said,
 "And don't you make any noise!"
So toddling off to his trundle-bed
 He dreamed of the pretty toys.
And as he was dreaming, an angel song
 Awakened our Little Boy Blue,--
Oh, the years are many, the years are long,
 But the little toy friends are true.

Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
 Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
 The smile of a little face.
And they wonder, as waiting these long years through,
 In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue
 Since he kissed them and put them there.

Eugene Field

Little croodlin doo

Ho, pretty bee, did you see my croodlin doo?
 Ho, little lamb, is she jinkin' on the lea?
 Ho, bonnie fairy, bring my dearie back to me--
Got a lump o' sugar an' a posie for you,
Only bring back my wee, wee croodlin doo!

Why, here you are, my little croodlin doo!
 Looked in er cradle, but didn't find you there,
 Looked f'r my wee, wee croodlin doo ever'where;
Ben kind lonesome all er day withouten you;
Where you ben, my little wee, wee croodlin doo?

Now you go balow, my little croodlin doo;
 Now you go rockaby ever so far,--
 Rockaby, rockaby, up to the star
That's winkin' an' blinkin' an' singin' to you
As you go balow, my wee, wee croodlin doo!

Eugene Field

Little Mack

This talk about the journalists that run the East is bosh,
We've got a Western editor that's little, but, O gosh!
He lives here in Mizzoora where the people are so set
In ante-bellum notions that they vote for Jackson yet;
But the paper he is running makes the rusty fossils swear,--
The smartest, likeliest paper that is printed anywhere!
And, best of all, the paragraphs are pointed as a tack,
 And that's because they emanate
   From little Mack.

In architecture he is what you'd call a chunky man,
As if he'd been constructed on the summer cottage plan;
He has a nose like Bonaparte; and round his mobile mouth
Lies all the sensuous languor of the children of the South;
His dealings with reporters who affect a weekly bust
Have given to his violet eyes a shadow of distrust;
In glorious abandon his brown hair wanders back
   From the grand Websterian forehead
      Of little Mack.

No matter what the item is, if there's an item in it,
You bet your life he's on to it and nips it in a minute!
From multifarious nations, countries, monarchies, and lands,
From Afric's sunny fountains and India's coral strands,
From Greenland's icy mountains and Siloam's shady rills,
He gathers in his telegrams, and Houser pays the bills;
What though there be a dearth of news, he has a happy knack
   Of scraping up a lot of scoops,
      Does little Mack.

And learning? Well he knows the folks of every tribe and age
That ever played a part upon this fleeting human stage;
His intellectual system's so extensive and so greedy
That, when it comes to records, he's a walkin' cyclopedy;
For having studied (and digested) all the books a-goin',
It stands to reason he must know about all's worth a-knowin'!
So when a politician with a record's on the track,
   We're apt to hear some history
      From little Mack.

And when a fellow-journalist is broke and needs a twenty,
Who's allus ready to whack up a portion of his plenty?
Who's allus got a wallet that's as full of sordid gain
As his heart is full of kindness and his head is full of brain?
Whose bowels of compassion will in-va-ri-a-bly move
Their owner to those courtesies which plainly, surely prove
That he's the kind of person that never does go back
 On a fellow that's in trouble?
   Why, little Mack!

I've heard 'em tell of Dana, and of Bonner, and of Reid,
Of Johnnie Cockerill, who, I'll own, is very smart indeed;

Yet I don't care what their renown or influence may be,
One metropolitan exchange is quite enough for me!
So keep your Danas, Bonners, Reids, your Cockerills, and the rest,
The woods is full of better men all through this woolly West;
For all that sleek, pretentious, Eastern editorial pack
  We wouldn't swap the shadow of
    Our little Mack!

Eugene Field

Little miss brag

Little Miss Brag has much to say
To the rich little lady from over the way
And the rich little lady puts out a lip
As she looks at her own white, dainty slip,
And wishes that she could wear a gown
As pretty as gingham of faded brown!
For little Miss Brag she lays much stress
On the privileges of a gingham dress -
  "Aha,
  Oho!"

The rich little lady from over the way
Has beautiful dolls in vast array;
Yet she envies the raggedy home-made doll
She hears our little Miss Brag extol.
For the raggedy doll can fear no hurt
From wet, or heat, or tumble, or dirt!
Her nose is inked, and her mouth is, too,
And one eye's black and the other's blue -
  "Aha,
  Oho!"

The rich little lady goes out to ride
With footmen standing up outside,
Yet wishes that, sometimes, after dark
Her father would trundle her in the park; -
That, sometimes, her mother would sing the things
Little Miss Brag says her mother sings
When through the attic window streams
The moonlight full of golden dreams -
  "Aha,
  Oho!"

Yes, little Miss Brag has much to say
To the rich little lady from over the way;
And yet who knows but from her heart
Often the bitter sighs upstart -
Uprise to lose their burn and sting
In the grace of the tongue that loves to sing
Praise of the treasures all its own!
So I've come to love that treble tone -
  "Aha,
  Oho!"

Eugene Field

Little Willie

When Willie was a little boy,
No more than five or six,
Right constantly he did annoy
His mother with his tricks.
Yet not a picayune cared I
For what he did or said,
Unless, as happened frequently,
The rascal wet the bed.
Closely he cuddled up to me,
And put his hands in mine,
Till all at once I seemed to be
Afloat in seas of brine.
Sabean odors clogged the air,
And filled my soul with dread,
Yet I could only grin and bear
When Willie wet the bed.

'Tis many times that rascal has
Soaked all the bedclothes through,
Whereat I'd feebly light the gas
And wonder what to do.
Yet there he lay, so peaceful like;
God bless his curly head,
I quite forgave the little tyke
For wetting of the bed.

Ah me, those happy days have flown.
My boy's a father, too,
And little Willies of his own
Do what he used to do.
And I! Ah, all that's left for me
Is dreams of pleasure fled!
Our boys ain't what they used to be
When Willie wet the bed.

Had I my choice, no shapely dame
Should share my couch with me,
No amorous jade of tarnished fame,
Nor wench of high degree;
But I would choose and choose again
The little curly head,
Who cuddled close beside me when
He used to wet the bed.

Eugene Field

Little-oh dear

See, what a wonderful garden is here,
Planted and trimmed for my Little-Oh-Dear!
Posies so gaudy and grass of such brown -
Search ye the country and hunt ye the town
And never ye'll meet with a garden so queer
As this one I've made for my Little-Oh-Dear!

Marigolds white and buttercups blue,
Lilies all dabbled with honey and dew,
The cactus that trails over trellis and wall,
Roses and pansies and violets - all
Make proper obeisance and reverent cheer
When into her garden steps Little-Oh-Dear.

And up at the top of that lavender-tree
A silver-bird singeth as only can she;
For, ever and only, she singeth the song
"I love you - I love you!" the happy day long; -
Then the echo - the echo that smiteth me here!
"I love you, I love you," my Little-Oh-Dear!

The garden may wither, the silver-bird fly -
But what careth my little precious, or I?
From her pathway of flowers that in spring time upstart
She walketh the tenderer way in my heart
And, oh, it is always the summer-time here
With that song of "I love you," my Little-Oh-Dear!

Eugene Field

Long ago

I once knew all the birds that came
 And nested in our orchard trees;
For every flower I had a name--
 My friends were woodchucks, toads, and bees;
I knew where thrived in yonder glen
 What plants would soothe a stone-bruised toe--
Oh, I was very learned then;
 But that was very long ago!

I knew the spot upon the hill
 Where checkerberries could be found,
I knew the rushes near the mill
 Where pickerel lay that weighed a pound!
I knew the wood,--the very tree
 Where lived the poaching, saucy crow,
And all the woods and crows knew me--
 But that was very long ago.

And pining for the joys of youth,
 I tread the old familiar spot
Only to learn this solemn truth:
 I have forgotten, am forgot.
Yet here's this youngster at my knee
 Knows all the things I used to know;
To think I once was wise as he--
 But that was very long ago.

I know it's folly to complain
 Of whatsoe'er the Fates decree;
Yet were not wishes all in vain,
 I tell you what my wish should be:
I'd wish to be a boy again,
 Back with the friends I used to know;
For I was, oh! so happy then--
 But that was very long ago!

Eugene Field

Long Meter

All human joys are swift of wing
For heaven doth so allot it
That when you get an easy thing
You find you haven't got it.

Man never yet has loved a maid,
But they were sure to part, sir;
Nor never lacked a paltry spade
But that he drew a heart, sir!

Go, Chauncey! it is plain as day
You much prefer a dinner
To walking straight in wisdom's way--
Go to, thou babbling sinner.

The froward part that you have played
To me this lesson teaches:
To trust no man whose stock in trade
Is after-dinner speeches.

Eugene Field

Love song--heine

Many a beauteous flower doth spring
 From the tears that flood my eyes,
And the nightingale doth sing
 In the burthen of my sighs.

If, O child, thou lovest me,
 Take these flowerets fair and frail,
And my soul shall waft to thee
 Love songs of the nightingale.

Eugene Field

Lullaby; by the Sea

Fair is the castle up on the hill--
    Hushaby, sweet my own!
The night is fair, and the waves are still,
And the wind is singing to you and to me
In this lowly home beside the sea--
    Hushaby, sweet my own!

On yonder hill is store of wealth--
    Hushaby, sweet my own!
And revellers drink to a little one's health;
But you and I bide night and day
For the other love that has sailed away--
    Hushaby, sweet my own!

See not, dear eyes, the forms that creep
    Ghostlike, O my own!
Out of the mists of the murmuring deep;
Oh, see them not and make no cry
Till the angels of death have passed us by--
    Hushaby, sweet my own!

Ah, little they reck of you and me--
    Hushaby, sweet my own!
In our lonely home beside the sea;
They seek the castle up on the hill,
And there they will do their ghostly will--
    Hushaby, O my own!

Here by the sea a mother croons
    "Hushaby, sweet my own!"
In yonder castle a mother swoons
While the angels go down to the misty deep,
Bearing a little one fast asleep--
    Hushaby, sweet my own!

Eugene Field

Lydia Dick

When I was a boy at college,
Filling up with classic knowledge,
Frequently I wondered why
Old Professor Demas Bently
Used to praise so eloquently
'Opera Horatii.'

Toiling on a season longer
Till my reasoning power got stronger,
As my observation grew,
I became convinced that mellow,
Massic-loving poet fellow
Horace knew a thing or two

Yes, we sophomores figured duly
That, if we appraised him truly,
Horace must have been a brick;
And no wonder that with ranting
Rhymes he went a-gallivanting
Round with sprightly Lydia Dick!

For that pink of female gender
Tall and shapely was, and slender,
Plump of neck and bust and arms;
While the raiment that invested
Her so jealously suggested
Certain more potential charms.

Those dark eyes of her that fired him--
Those sweet accents that inspired him,
And her crown of glorious hair--
These things baffle my description;
I should have a fit conniption
If I tried--so I forbear!

May be Lydia had her betters;
Anyway, this man of letters
Took that charmer as his pick;
Glad--yes, glad I am to know it!
I, a fin de siecle poet,
Sympathize with Lydia Dick!

Often in my arbor shady
I fall thinking of that lady
And the pranks she used to play;
And I'm cheered--for all we sages
Joy when from those distant ages
Lydia dances down our way.

Otherwise some folks might wonder
With good reason why in thunder
Learned professors, dry and prim,

Find such solace in the giddy
Pranks that Horace played with Liddy
Or that Liddy played on him.

Still this world of ours rejoices
In those ancient singing voices,
And our hearts beat high and quick,
To the cadence of old Tiber
Murmuring praise of roistering Liber
And of charming Lydia Dick.

Still, Digentia, downward flowing,
Prattleth to the roses blowing
By the dark, deserted grot;
Still, Soracte, looming lonely,
Watcheth for the coming only
Of a ghost that cometh not.

Eugene Field

Lyman, frederick, and jim

(FOR THE FELLOWSHIP CLU

Lyman and Frederick and Jim, one day,
 Set out in a great big ship--
Steamed to the ocean adown the bay
 Out of a New York slip.
"Where are you going and what is your game?"
 The people asked those three.
"Darned if we know; but all the same
 Happy as larks are we;
 And happier still we're going to be!"
   Said Lyman
   And Frederick
   And Jim.

The people laughed "Aha, oho!
 Oho, aha!" laughed they;
And while those three went sailing so
 Some pirates steered that way.
The pirates they were laughing, too--
 The prospect made them glad;
But by the time the job was through
 Each of them pirates, bold and bad,
Had been done out of all he had
   By Lyman
   And Frederick
   And Jim.

Days and weeks and months they sped,
 Painting that foreign clime
A beautiful, bright vermilion red--
 And having a ---- of a time!
'T was all so gaudy a lark, it seemed
 As if it could not be,
And some folks thought it a dream they dreamed
 Of sailing that foreign sea,
 But I 'll identify you these three--
   Lyman
   And Frederick
   And Jim.

Lyman and Frederick are bankers and sich
 And Jim is an editor kind;
The first two named are awfully rich
 And Jim ain't far behind!
So keep your eyes open and mind your tricks,
 Or you are like to be
In quite as much of a Tartar fix
 As the pirates that sailed the sea
 And monkeyed with the pardners three,
   Lyman
   And Frederick

And Jim!

Eugene Field

Madge: Ye Hoyden

At Madge, ye hoyden, gossips scofft,
 Ffor that a romping wench was shee--
"Now marke this rede," they bade her oft,
 "Forsooken sholde your folly bee!"
But Madge, ye hoyden, laught & cried,
 "Oho, oho," in girlish glee,
And noe thing mo replied.

II

No griffe she had nor knew no care,
 But gayly rompit all daies long,
And, like ye brooke that everywhere
 Goes jinking with a gladsome song,
Shee danct and songe from morn till night,--
 Her gentil harte did know no wrong,
Nor did she none despight.

III

Sir Tomas from his noblesse halle
 Did trend his path a somer's daye,
And to ye hoyden he did call
 And these ffull evill words did say:
"O wolde you weare a silken gown
 And binde your haire with ribands gay?
Then come with me to town!"

IV

But Madge, ye hoyden, shoke her head,--
 "I'le be no lemman unto thee
For all your golde and gownes," shee said,
 "ffor Robin hath bespoken mee."
Then ben Sir Tomas sore despight,
 And back unto his hall went hee
With face as ashen white.

V

"O Robin, wilt thou wed this girl,
 Whenas she is so vaine a sprite?"
So spak ffull many an envious churle
 Unto that curteyse countrie wight.
But Robin did not pay no heede;
 And they ben wed a somer night
& danct upon ye meade.

VI

Then scarse ben past a yeare & daye
 Whan Robin toke unto his bed,

And long, long time therein he lay,
 Nor colde not work to earn his bread;
in soche an houre, whan times ben sore,
 Sr. Tomas came with haughtie tread
& knockit at ye doore.

VII

Saies: "Madge, ye hoyden, do you know
 how that you once despighted me?
But He forgiff an you will go
 my swete harte lady ffor to bee!"
But Madge, ye hoyden, heard noe more,--
 straightway upon her heele turnt shee,
& shote ye cottage doore.

VIII

Soe Madge, ye hoyden, did her parte
 whiles that ye years did come and go;
't was somer allwais in her harte,
 tho' winter strewed her head with snowe.
She toilt and span thro' all those years
 nor bid repine that it ben soe,
nor never shad noe teares.

IX

Whiles Robin lay within his bed,
 A divell came and whispered lowe,--
"Giff you will doe my will," he said,
 "None more of sickness you shall knowe!"
Ye which gave joy to Robin's soul--
 Saies Robin: "Divell, be it soe,
an that you make me whoale!"

X

That day, upp rising ffrom his bed,
 Quoth Robin: "I am well again!"
& backe he came as from ye dead,
 & he ben mickle blithe as when
he wooed his doxy long ago;
 & Madge did make ado & then
Her teares ffor joy did flowe.

XI

Then came that hell-born cloven thing--
 Saies: "Robin, I do claim your life,
and I hencefoorth shall be your king,
 and you shall do my evill strife.

Look round about and you shall see
 sr. Tomas' young and ffoolish wiffe--
a comely dame is shee!"

XII

Ye divell had him in his power,
 and not colde Robin say thereto:
Soe Robin from that very houre
 did what that divell bade him do;
He wooed and dipt, and on a daye
 Sr. Tomas' wife and Robin flewe
a many leagues away.

XIII

Sir Tomas ben wood wroth and swore,
 And sometime strode thro' leaf & brake
and knockit at ye cottage door
 and thus to Madge, ye hoyden, spake:
Saies, "I wolde have you ffor mine own,
 So come with mee & bee my make,
syn tother birds ben flown."

XIV

But Madge, ye hoyden, bade him noe;
 Saies: "Robin is my swete harte still,
And, tho' he doth despight me soe,
 I mean to do him good for ill.
So goe, Sir Tomas, goe your way;
 ffor whiles I bee on live I will
ffor Robin's coming pray!"

XV

Soe Madge, ye hoyden, kneelt & prayed
 that Godde sholde send her Robin backe.
And tho' ye folke vast scoffing made,
 and tho' ye worlde ben colde and blacke,
And tho', as moneths dragged away,
 ye hoyden's harte ben like to crack
With griff, she still did praye.

XVI

Sicke of that divell's damnèd charmes,
 Aback did Robin come at last,
And Madge, ye hoyden, sprad her arms
 and gave a cry and held him fast;
And as she clong to him and cried,
 her patient harte with joy did brast,

& Madge, ye hoyden, died.

Eugene Field

Marcus Varro

Marcus Varro went up and down
The places where old books were sold;
He ransacked all the shops in town
For pictures new and pictures old.
He gave the folk of earth no peace;
Snooping around by day and night,
He plied the trade in Rome and Greece
Of an insatiate Grangerite.

'Pictures!' was evermore his cry --
'Pictures of old or recent date,'
And pictures only would he buy
Wherewith to 'extra-illustrate.'
Full many a tome of ancient type
And many a manuscript he took,
For nary purpose but to swipe
Their pictures for some other book.

While Marcus Varro plied his fad
There was not in the shops of Greece
A book or pamphlet to be had
That was not minus frontispiece.
Nor did he hesitate to ply
His baleful practices at home;
It was not possible to buy
A perfect book in all of Rome!

What must the other folk have done --
Who, glancing o'er the books they bought,
Came soon and suddenly upon
The vandalism Varro wrought!
How must their cheeks have flamed with red --
How did their hearts with choler beat!
We can imagine what they said --
We can imagine, not repeat!

Where are the books that Varro made --
The pride of dilettante Rome --
With divers portraitures inlaid
Swiped from so many another tome?
The worms devoured them long ago --
O wretched worms! ye should have fed
Not on the books 'extended' so,
But on old Varro's flesh instead!

Alas, that Marcus Varro lives
And is a potent factor yet!
Alas, that still his practice gives
Good men occasion for regret!
To yonder bookstall, pri'thee, go,
And by the 'missing' prints and plates
And frontispieces you shall know

He lives, and 'extra-illustrates'!

Eugene Field

Marthy's younkit

The mountain brook sung lonesomelike, and loitered on its way
Ez if it waited for a child to jine it in its play;
The wild-flowers uv the hillside bent down their heads to hear
The music uv the little feet that had somehow grown so dear;
The magpies, like winged shadders, wuz a-flutterin' to an' fro
Among the rocks an' holler stumps in the ragged gulch below;
The pines an' hemlocks tosst their boughs (like they wuz arms) and made
Soft, sollum music on the slope where he had often played;
But for these lonesome, sollum voices on the mountain-side,
There wuz no sound the summer day that Marthy's younkit died.

We called him Marthy's younkit, for Marthy wuz the name
Uv her ez wuz his mar, the wife uv Sorry Tom,--the same
Ez taught the school-house on the hill, way back in '69,
When she marr'd Sorry Tom, wich owned the Gosh-all-Hemlock mine!
And Marthy's younkit wuz their first, wich, bein' how it meant
The first on Red Hoss Mountain, wuz truly a' event!
The miners sawed off short on work ez soon ez they got word
That Dock Devine allowed to Casey what had just occurred;
We loaded up an' whooped around until we all wuz hoarse
Salutin' the arrival, wich weighed ten pounds, uv course!

Three years, and sech a pretty child!--his mother's counterpart!
Three years, an' sech a holt ez he had got on every heart!
A peert an' likely little tyke with hair ez red ez gold,
A-laughin', toddlin' everywhere,--'nd only three years old!
Up yonder, sometimes, to the store, an' sometimes down the hill
He kited (boys is boys, you know,--you couldn't keep him still!)
An' there he'd play beside the brook where purpul wild-flowers grew,
An' the mountain pines an' hemlocks a kindly shadder threw,
An' sung soft, sollum toons to him, while in the gulch below
The magpies, like strange sperrits, went flutterin' to an' fro.

Three years, an' then the fever come,--it wuzn't right, you know,
With all us old ones in the camp, for that little child to go;
It's right the old should die, but that a harmless little child
Should miss the joy uv life an' love,--that can't be reconciled!
That's what we thought that summer day, an' that is what we said
Ez we looked upon the piteous face uv Marthy's younkit dead.
But for his mother's sobbin', the house wuz very still,
An' Sorry Tom wuz lookin', through the winder, down the hill,
To the patch beneath the hemlocks where his darlin' used to play,
An' the mountain brook sung lonesomelike an' loitered on its way.

A preacher come from Roarin' Crick to comfort 'em an' pray,
'Nd all the camp wuz present at the obsequies next day;
A female teacher staged it twenty miles to sing a hymn,
An' we jined her in the chorus,--big, husky men an' grim
Sung "Jesus, Lover uv my Soul," an' then the preacher prayed,
An' preacht a sermon on the death uv that fair blossom laid
Among them other flowers he loved,--wich sermon set sech weight
On sinners bein' always heeled against the future state,

That, though it had been fashionable to swear a perfec' streak,
There warn't no swearin' in the camp for pretty nigh a week!

Last thing uv all, four strappin' men took up the little load
An' bore it tenderly along the windin', rocky road,
To where the coroner had dug a grave beside the brook,
In sight uv Marthy's winder, where the same could set an' look
An' wonder if his cradle in that green patch, long an' wide,
Wuz ez soothin' ez the cradle that wuz empty at her side;
An' wonder if the mournful songs the pines wuz singin' then
Wuz ez tender ez the lullabies she'd never sing again,
'Nd if the bosom of the earth in wich he lay at rest
Wuz half ez lovin' 'nd ez warm ez wuz his mother's breast.

The camp is gone; but Red Hoss Mountain rears its kindly head,
An' looks down, sort uv tenderly, upon its cherished dead;
'Nd I reckon that, through all the years, that little boy wich died
Sleeps sweetly an' contentedly upon the mountain-side;
That the wild-flowers uv the summer-time bend down their heads to hear
The footfall uv a little friend they know not slumbers near;
That the magpies on the sollum rocks strange flutterin' shadders make,
An' the pines an' hemlocks wonder that the sleeper doesn't wake;
That the mountain brook sings lonesomelike an' loiters on its way
Ez if it waited for a child to jine it in its play.

Eugene Field

Mary smith

Away down East where I was reared amongst my Yankee kith,
There used to live a pretty girl whose name was Mary Smith;
And though it's many years since last I saw that pretty girl,
And though I feel I'm sadly worn by Western strife and whirl;
Still, oftentimes, I think about the old familiar place,
Which, someway, seemed the brighter for Miss Mary's pretty face,
And in my heart I feel once more revivified the glow
I used to feel in those old times when I was Mary's beau.

I saw her home from singing school--she warbled like a bird.
A sweeter voice than hers for song or speech I never heard.
She was soprano in the choir, and I a solemn bass,
And when we unisoned our voices filled that holy place;
The tenor and the alto never had the slightest chance,
For Mary's upper register made every heart-string dance;
And, as for me, I shall not brag, and yet I'd have you know
I sung a very likely bass when I was Mary's beau.

On Friday nights I'd drop around to make my weekly call,
And though I came to visit her, I'd have to see 'em all.
With Mary's mother sitting here and Mary's father there,
The conversation never flagged so far as I'm aware;
Sometimes I'd hold her worsted, sometimes we'd play at games,
Sometimes dissect the apples which we'd named each other's names.
Oh how I loathed the shrill-toned clock that told me when to go--
'Twas ten o'clock at half-past eight when I was Mary's beau.

Now there was Luther Baker--because he'd come of age
And thought himself some pumpkins because he drove the stage--
He fancied he could cut me out; but Mary was my friend--
Elsewise I'm sure the issue had had a tragic end.
For Luther Baker was a man I never could abide,
And, when it came to Mary, either he or I had died.
I merely cite this instance incidentally to show
That I was quite in earnest when I was Mary's beau.

How often now those sights, those pleasant sights, recur again:
The little township that was all the world I knew of then--
The meeting-house upon the hill, the tavern just beyond,
Old deacon Packard's general store, the sawmill by the pond,
The village elms I vainly sought to conquer in my quest
Of that surpassing trophy, the golden oriole's nest.
And, last of all those visions that come back from long ago,
The pretty face that thrilled my soul when I was Mary's beau.

Hush, gentle wife, there is no need a pang should vex your heart--
'T is many years since fate ordained that she and I should part;
To each a true, maturer love came in good time, and yet
It brought not with its nobler grace the power to forget.
And would you fain begrudge me now the sentimental joy
That comes of recollections of my sparkings when a boy?
I warrant me that, were your heart put to the rack,'t would show

That it had predilections when I was Mary's beau.

And, Mary, should these lines of mine seek out your biding place,
God grant they bring the old sweet smile back to your pretty face--
God grant they bring you thoughts of me, not as I am to-day,
With faltering step and brimming eyes and aspect grimly gray;
But thoughts that picture me as fair and full of life and glee
As we were in the olden times--as you shall always be.
Think of me ever, Mary, as the boy you used to know
When time was fleet, and life was sweet, and I was Mary's beau.

Dear hills of old New England, look down with tender eyes
Upon one little lonely grave that in your bosom lies;
For in that cradle sleeps a child who was so fair to see
God yearned to have unto Himself the joy she brought to me;
And bid your winds sing soft and low the song of other days,
When, hand in hand and heart to heart, we went our pleasant ways--
Ah me! but could I sing again that song of long ago,
Instead of this poor idle song of being Mary's beau.

Eugene Field

Mediaeval eventide song

Come hither, lyttel childe, and lie upon my breast to-night,
For yonder fares an angell yclad in raimaunt white,
And yonder sings ye angell as onely angells may,
And his songe ben of a garden that bloometh farre awaye.

To them that have no lyttel childe Godde sometimes sendeth down
A lyttel childe that ben a lyttel lambkyn of his owne;
And if so bee they love that childe, He willeth it to staye,
But elsewise, in His mercie He taketh it awaye.

And sometimes, though they love it, Godde yearneth for ye childe,
And sendeth angells singing, whereby it ben beguiled;
They fold their arms about ye lamb that croodleth at his play,
And beare him to ye garden that bloometh farre awaye.

I wolde not lose ye lyttel lamb that Godde hath lent to me;
If I colde sing that angell songe, how joysome I sholde bee!
For, with mine arms about him, and my musick in his eare,
What angell songe of paradize soever sholde I feare?

Soe come, my lyttel childe, and lie upon my breast to-night,
For yonder fares an angell yclad in raimaunt white,
And yonder sings that angell, as onely angells may,
And his songe ben of a garden that bloometh farre awaye.

Eugene Field

Mortality

O Nicias, not for us alone
Was laughing Eros born,
Nor shines alone for us the moon,
Nor burns the ruddy morn;
Alas! to-morrow lies not in the ken
Of us who are, O Nicias, mortal men!

Eugene Field

Mother and child

One night a tiny dewdrop fell
 Into the bosom of a rose,--
"Dear little one, I love thee well,
 Be ever here thy sweet repose!"

Seeing the rose with love bedight,
 The envious sky frowned dark, and then
Sent forth a messenger of light
 And caught the dewdrop up again.

"Oh, give me back my heavenly child,--
 My love!" the rose in anguish cried;
Alas! the sky triumphant smiled,
 And so the flower, heart-broken, died.

Eugene Field

Mother and sphinx

(EGYPTIAN FOLK-SONG)

Grim is the face that looks into the night
 Over the stretch of sands;
A sullen rock in a sea of white--
A ghostly shadow in ghostly light,
 Peering and moaning it stands.
"Oh, is it the king that rides this way--
Oh, is it the king that rides so free?
I have looked for the king this many a day,
But the years that mock me will not say
 Why tarrieth he!"

'T is not your king that shall ride to-night,
 But a child that is fast asleep;
And the horse he shall ride is the Dream-horse white--
Aha, he shall speed through the ghostly light
 Where the ghostly shadows creep!
"My eyes are dull and my face is sere,
 Yet unto the word he gave I cling,
For he was a Pharaoh that set me here--
And, lo! I have waited this many a year
 For him--my king!"

Oh, past thy face my darling shall ride
 Swift as the burning winds that bear
The sand clouds over the desert wide--
Swift to the verdure and palms beside
 The wells off there!
"And is it the mighty king I shall see
 Come riding into the night?
Oh, is it the king come back to me--
Proudly and fiercely rideth he,
 With centuries dight!"

I know no king but my dark-eyed dear
 That shall ride the Dream-Horse white;
But see! he wakes at my bosom here,
While the Dream-Horse frettingly lingers near
 To speed with my babe to-night!
And out of the desert darkness peers
 A ghostly, ghastly, shadowy thing
Like a spirit come out of the mouldering years,
And ever that waiting spectre hears
 The coming king!

Eugene Field

Mr. Dana, of the New York Sun

Thar showed up out'n Denver in the spring uv '81
A man who'd worked with Dana on the Noo York Sun.
His name wuz Cantell Whoppers, 'nd he wuz a sight ter view
Ez he walked inter the orfice 'nd inquired fer work ter do.
Thar warn't no places vacant then,--fer be it understood,
That wuz the time when talent flourished at that altitood;
But thar the stranger lingered, tellin' Raymond 'nd the rest
Uv what perdigious wonders he could do when at his best,
Till finally he stated (quite by chance) that he hed done
A heap uv work with Dana on the Noo York Sun.

Wall, that wuz quite another thing; we owned that ary cuss
Who'd worked f'r Mr. Dana must be good enough fer us!
And so we tuk the stranger's word 'nd nipped him while we could,
For if we didn't take him we knew John Arkins would;
And Cooper, too, wuz mouzin' round fer enterprise 'nd brains,
Whenever them commodities blew in across the plains.
At any rate we nailed him, which made ol' Cooper swear
And Arkins tear out handfuls uv his copious curly hair;
But we set back and cackled, 'nd bed a power uv fun
With our man who'd worked with Dana on the Noo York Sun.

It made our eyes hang on our cheeks 'nd lower jaws ter drop,
Ter hear that feller tellin' how ol' Dana run his shop:
It seems that Dana wuz the biggest man you ever saw,--
He lived on human bein's, 'nd preferred to eat 'em raw!
If he hed Democratic drugs ter take, before he took 'em,
As good old allopathic laws prescribe, he allus shook 'em.
The man that could set down 'nd write like Dany never grew,
And the sum of human knowledge wuzn't half what Dana knew;
The consequence appeared to be that nearly every one
Concurred with Mr. Dana of the Noo York Sun.

This feller, Cantell Whoppers, never brought an item in,--
He spent his time at Perrin's shakin' poker dice f'r gin.
Whatever the assignment, he wuz allus sure to shirk,
He wuz very long on likker and all-fired short on work!
If any other cuss had played the tricks he dared ter play,
The daisies would be bloomin' over his remains to-day;
But somehow folks respected him and stood him to the last,
Considerin' his superior connections in the past.
So, when he bilked at poker, not a sucker drew a gun
On the man who 'd worked with Dana on the Noo York Sun.

Wall, Dana came ter Denver in the fall uv '83.
A very different party from the man we thought ter see,--
A nice 'nd clean old gentleman, so dignerfied 'nd calm,
You bet yer life he never did no human bein' harm!
A certain hearty manner 'nd a fulness uv the vest
Betokened that his sperrits 'nd his victuals wuz the best;
His face wuz so benevolent, his smile so sweet 'nd kind,
That they seemed to be the reflex uv an honest, healthy mind;

And God had set upon his head a crown uv silver hair
In promise uv the golden crown He meaneth him to wear.
So, uv us boys that met him out'n Denver, there wuz none
But fell in love with Dana uv the Noo York Sun.

But when he came to Denver in that fall uv '83,
His old friend Cantell Whoppers disappeared upon a spree;
The very thought uv seein' Dana worked upon him so
(They hadn't been together fer a year or two, you know),
That he borrered all the stuff he could and started on a bat,
And, strange as it may seem, we didn't see him after that.
So, when ol' Dana hove in sight, we couldn't understand
Why he didn't seem to notice that his crony wa'n't on hand;
No casual allusion, not a question, no, not one,
For the man who'd "worked with Dana on the Noo York Sun!"

We broke it gently to him, but he didn't seem surprised,
Thar wuz no big burst uv passion as we fellers had surmised.
He said that Whoppers wuz a man he 'd never heerd about,
But he mought have carried papers on a Jarsey City route;
And then he recollected hearin' Mr. Laffan say
That he'd fired a man named Whoppers fur bein' drunk one day,
Which, with more likker underneath than money in his vest,
Had started on a freight-train fur the great 'nd boundin' West,
But further information or statistics he had none
Uv the man who'd "worked with Dana on the Noo York Sun."

We dropped the matter quietly 'nd never made no fuss,--
When we get played for suckers, why, that's a horse on us!--
But every now 'nd then we Denver fellers have to laff
To hear some other paper boast uv havin' on its staff
A man who's "worked with Dana," 'nd then we fellers wink
And pull our hats down on our eyes 'nd set around 'nd think.
It seems like Dana couldn't be as smart as people say,
If he educates so many folks 'nd lets 'em get away;
And, as for us, in future we'll be very apt to shun
The man who "worked with Dana on the Noo York Sun."

But bless ye, Mr. Dana! may you live a thousan' years,
To sort o' keep things lively in this vale of human tears;
An' may I live a thousan', too,--a thousan' less a day,
For I shouldn't like to be on earth to hear you'd passed away.
And when it comes your time to go you'll need no Latin chaff
Nor biographic data put in your epitaph;
But one straight line of English and of truth will let folks know
The homage 'nd the gratitude 'nd reverence they owe;
You'll need no epitaph but this: "Here sleeps the man who run
That best 'nd brightest paper, the Noo York Sun."

Eugene Field

My Garden

My garden aboundeth in pleasant nooks
And fragrance is over it all;
For sweet is the smell of my old, old books
In their places against the wall.

Here is a folio that's grim with age
And yellow and green with mould;
There's the breath of the sea on every page
And the hint of a stanch ship's hold.

And here is a treasure from France la belle
Exhaleth a faint perfume
Of wedded lily and asphodel
In a garden of song abloom.

And this wee little book of Puritan mien
And rude, conspicuous print
Hath the Yankee flavor of wintergreen,
Or, may be, of peppermint.

In Walton the brooks a-babbling tell
Where the cheery daisy grows,
And where in meadow or woodland dwell
The buttercup and the rose.

But best beloved of books, I ween,
Are those which one perceives
Are hallowed by ashes dropped between
The yellow, well-thumbed leaves.

For it's here a laugh and it's there a tear,
Till the treasured book is read;
And the ashes betwixt the pages here
Tell us of one long dead.

But the gracious presence reappears
As we read the book again,
And the fragrance of precious, distant years
Filleth the hearts of men.

Come, pluck with me in my garden nooks
The posies that bloom for all;
Oh, sweet is the smell of my old, old books
In their places against the wall!

Eugene Field

My playmates

The wind comes whispering to me of the country green and cool--
Of redwing blackbirds chattering beside a reedy pool;
It brings me soothing fancies of the homestead on the hill,
And I hear the thrush's evening song and the robin's morning trill;
So I fall to thinking tenderly of those I used to know
Where the sassafras and snakeroot and checkerberries grow.

What has become of Ezra Marsh, who lived on Baker's hill?
And what's become of Noble Pratt, whose father kept the mill?
And what's become of Lizzie Crum and Anastasia Snell,
And of Roxie Root, who 'tended school in Boston for a spell?
They were the boys and they the girls who shared my youthful play--
They do not answer to my call! My playmates--where are they?

What has become of Levi and his little brother Joe,
Who lived next door to where we lived some forty years ago?
I'd like to see the Newton boys and Quincy Adams Brown,
And Hepsy Hall and Ella Cowles, who spelled the whole school down!
And Gracie Smith, the Cutler boys, Leander Snow, and all
Who I am sure would answer could they only hear my call!

I'd like to see Bill Warner and the Conkey boys again
And talk about the times we used to wish that we were men!
And one--I shall not name her--could I see her gentle face
And hear her girlish treble in this distant, lonely place!
The flowers and hopes of springtime--they perished long ago,
And the garden where they blossomed is white with winter snow.

O cottage neath the maples, have you seen those girls and boys
That but a little while ago made, oh! such pleasant noise?
O trees, and hills, and brooks, and lanes, and meadows, do you know
Where I shall find my little friends of forty years ago?
You see I'm old and weary, and I've traveled long and far;
I am looking for my playmates--I wonder where they are!

Eugene Field

Mysterious doings

As once I rambled in the woods
 I chanced to spy amid the brake
A huntsman ride his way beside
 A fair and passing tranquil lake;
Though velvet bucks sped here and there,
 He let them scamper through the green--
Not one smote he, but lustily
 He blew his horn--what could it mean?

As on I strolled beside that lake,
 A pretty maid I chanced to see
Fishing away for finny prey,
 Yet not a single one caught she;
All round her boat the fishes leapt
 And gambolled to their hearts' content,
Yet never a thing did the maid but sing--
 I wonder what on earth it meant.

As later yet I roamed my way,
 A lovely steed neighed loud and long,
And an empty boat sped all afloat
 Where sang a fishermaid her song;
All underneath the prudent shade,
 Which yonder kindly willows threw,
Together strayed a youth and maid--
 I can't explain it all, can you?

Eugene Field

New-Year's Eve

Good old days--dear old days
When my heart beat high and bold--
When the things of earth seemed full of life,
And the future a haze of gold!
Oh, merry was I that winter night,
And gleeful our little one's din,
And tender the grace of my darling's face
As we watched the new year in.
But a voice--a spectre's, that mocked at love--
Came out of the yonder hall;
'Tick-tock, tick-tock!' 't was the solemn clock
That ruefully croaked to all.
Yet what knew we of the griefs to be
In the year we longed to greet?
Love--love was the theme of the sweet, sweet dream
I fancied might never fleet!

But the spectre stood in that yonder gloom,
And these were the words it spake,
'Tick-tock, tick-tock'--and they seemed to mock
A heart about to break.

'T is new-year's eve, and again I watch
In the old familiar place,
And I'm thinking again of that old time when
I looked on a dear one's face.
Never a little one hugs my knee
And I hear no gleeful shout--
I am sitting alone by the old hearthstone,
Watching the old year out.
But I welcome the voice in yonder gloom
That solemnly calls to me:
'Tick-tock, tick-tock!'--for so the clock
Tells of a life to be;
'Tick-tock, tick-tock!'-'tis so the clock
Tells of eternity.

Eugene Field

Nightfall in Dordrecht

The mill goes toiling slowly around
With steady and solemn creak,
And my little one hears in the kindly sound
The voice of the old mill speak.
While round and round those big white wings
Grimly and ghostlike creep,
My little one hears that the old mill sings
"Sleep, little tulip, sleep!"

The sails are reefed and the nets are drawn,
And, over his pot of beer,
The fisher, against the morrow's dawn,
Lustily maketh cheer.
He mocks at the winds that caper along
From the far-off clamorous deep,—
But we—we love their lullaby song
Of "Sleep, little tulip, sleep!"

Old dog Fritz in slumber sound
Groans of the stony mart:
To-morrow how proudly he 'll trot you round,
Hitched to our new milk-cart!
And you shall help me blanket the kine
And fold the gentle sheep,
And set the herring a-soak in brine,—
But now, little tulip, sleep!

A Dream-One comes to button the eyes
That wearily droop and blink,
While the old mill buffets the frowning skies
And scolds at the stars that wink;
Over your face the misty wings
Of that beautiful Dream-One sweep,
And rocking your cradle she softly sings
"Sleep, little tulip, sleep!"

Eugene Field

Norse lullaby

The sky is dark and the hills are white
As the storm-king speeds from the north to-night,
And this is the song the storm-king sings,
As over the world his cloak he flings:
 "Sleep, sleep, little one, sleep;"
He rustles his wings and gruffly sings:
 "Sleep, little one, sleep."

On yonder mountain-side a vine
Clings at the foot of a mother pine;
The tree bends over the trembling thing,
And only the vine can hear her sing:
 "Sleep, sleep, little one, sleep;
What shall you fear when I am here?
 Sleep, little one, sleep."

The king may sing in his bitter flight,
The tree may croon to the vine to-night,
But the little snowflake at my breast
Liketh the song I sing the best,--
 Sleep, sleep, little one, sleep;
Weary thou art, anext my heart
 Sleep, little one, sleep.

Eugene Field

Old Dutch Love Song

I am not rich, and yet my wealth
Surpasseth human measure;
My store untold
Is not of gold
Nor any sordid treasure.
Let this one hoard his earthly pelf,
Another court ambition--
Not for a throne
Would I disown
My poor and proud condition!

The worldly gain achieved to-day
To-morrow may be flying--
The gifts of kings
Are fleeting things--
The gifts of love undying!
In her I love is all my wealth--
For her my sole endeavor;
No heart, I ween,
Hath fairer queen,
No liege such homage, ever!

Eugene Field

Old English Lullaby

Hush, bonnie, dinna greit;
Moder will rocke her sweete,-
Balow, my boy!
When that his toile ben done,
Daddie will come anone,-
Hush thee, my lyttel one;
Balow, my boy!

Gin thou dost sleepe, perchaunce
Fayries will come to daunce,-
Balow, my boy!
Oft hath thy moder seene
Moonlight and mirkland queene
Daunce on thy slumbering een,-
Balow, my boy!

Then droned a bomblebee
Saftly this songe to thee:
'Balow, my boy!'
And a wee heather bell,
Pluckt from a fayry dell,
Chimed thee this rune hersell:
'Balow, my boy!'

Soe, bonnie, dinna greit;
Moder doth rock her sweete,-
Balow, my boy!
Give mee thy lyttel hand,
Moder will hold it and
Lead thee to balow land,-
Balow, my boy!

Eugene Field

Old Spanish Song

I'm thinking of the wooing
That won my maiden heart
When he--he came pursuing
A love unused to art.
Into the drowsy river
The moon transported flung
Her soul that seemed to quiver
With the songs my lover sung.
And the stars in rapture twinkled
On the slumbrous world below--
You see that, old and wrinkled,
I'm not forgetful--no!

He still should be repeating
The vows he uttered then--
Alas! the years, though fleeting,
Are truer yet than men!
The summer moonlight glistens
In the favorite trysting spot
Where the river ever listens
For a song it heareth not.
And I, whose head is sprinkled
With time's benumbing snow,
I languish, old and wrinkled,
But not forgetful--no!

What though he elsewhere turneth
To beauty strangely bold?
Still in my bosom burneth
The tender fire of old;
And the words of love he told me
And the songs he sung me then
Come crowding to uphold me,
And I live my youth again!
For when love's feet have tinkled
On the pathway women go,
Though one be old and wrinkled,
She's not forgetful--no!

Eugene Field

Orkney Lullaby

A moonbeam floateth from the skies,
Whispering, "Heigho, my dearie!
I would spin a web before your eyes,--
A beautiful web of silver light,
Wherein is many a wondrous sight
Of a radiant garden leagues away,
Where the softly tinkling lilies sway,
And the snow-white lambkins are at play,--
  Heigho, my dearie!"

A brownie stealeth from the vine
  Singing, "Heigho, my dearie!
And will you hear this song of mine,--
A song of the land of murk and mist
Where bideth the bud the dew hath kist?
Then let the moonbeam's web of light
Be spun before thee silvery white,
And I shall sing the livelong night,--
  Heigho, my dearie!"

The night wind speedeth from the sea,
  Murmuring, "Heigho, my dearie!
I bring a mariner's prayer for thee;
So let the moonbeam veil thine eyes,
And the brownie sing thee lullabies;
But I shall rock thee to and fro,
Kissing the brow he loveth so,
And the prayer shall guard thy bed, I trow,--
  Heigho, my dearie!"

Eugene Field

Our biggest fish

When in the halcyon days of old, I was a little tyke,
I used to fish in pickerel ponds for minnows and the like;
And oh, the bitter sadness with which my soul was fraught
When I rambled home at nightfall with the puny string I'd caught!
And, oh, the indignation and the valor I'd display
When I claimed that all the biggest fish I'd caught had got away!

Sometimes it was the rusty hooks, sometimes the fragile lines,
And many times the treacherous reeds would foil my just designs;
But whether hooks or lines or reeds were actually to blame,
I kept right on at losing all the monsters just the same--
I never lost a little fish--yes, I am free to say
It always was the biggest fish I caught that got away.

And so it was, when later on, I felt ambition pass
From callow minnow joys to nobler greed for pike and bass;
I found it quite convenient, when the beauties wouldn't bite
And I returned all bootless from the watery chase at night,
To feign a cheery aspect and recount in accents gay
How the biggest fish that I had caught had somehow got away.

And really, fish look bigger than they are before they are before they're
caught--
When the pole is bent into a bow and the slender line is taut,
When a fellow feels his heart rise up like a doughnut in his throat
And he lunges in a frenzy up and down the leaky boat!
Oh, you who've been a-fishing will indorse me when I say
That it always is the biggest fish you catch that gets away!

'T 'is even so in other things--yes, in our greedy eyes
The biggest boon is some elusive, never-captured prize;
We angle for the honors and the sweets of human life--
Like fishermen we brave the seas that roll in endless strife;

And then at last, when all is done and we are spent and gray,
We own the biggest fish we've caught are those that got away.

I would not have it otherwise; 't is better there should be
Much bigger fish than I have caught a-swimming in the sea;
For now some worthier one than I may angle for that game--
May by his arts entice, entrap, and comprehend the same;
Which, having done, perchance he'll bless the man who's proud to say
That the biggest fish he ever caught were those that got away.

Eugene Field

Our Lady of the Mine

The Blue Horizon wuz a mine us fellers all thought well uv,
And there befell the episode I now perpose to tell uv;
'T wuz in the year uv sixty-nine,--somewhere along in summer,--
There hove in sight one afternoon a new and curious comer;
His name wuz Silas Pettibone,--a' artist by perfession,--
With a kit of tools and a big mustache and a pipe in his possession.
He told us, by our leave, he 'd kind uv like to make some sketches
Uv the snowy peaks, 'nd the foamin' crick, 'nd the distant mountain
stretches;
"You're welkim, sir," sez we, although this scenery dodge seemed to us
A waste uv time where scenery wuz already sooper-floo-us.

All through the summer Pettibone kep' busy at his sketchin',--
At daybreak off for Eagle Pass, and home at nightfall, fetchin'
That everlastin' book uv his with spider-lines all through it;
Three-Fingered Hoover used to say there warn't no meanin' to it.
"Gol durn a man," sez he to him, "whose shif'less hand is sot at
A-drawin' hills that's full uv quartz that's pinin' to be got at!"
"Go on," sez Pettibone, "go on, if joshin' gratifies ye;
But one uv these fine times I'll show ye sumthin' will surprise ye!"
The which remark led us to think--although he didn't say it--
That Pettibone wuz owin' us a gredge 'nd meant to pay it.

One evenin' as we sat around the Restauraw de Casey,
A-singin' songs 'nd tellin' yarns the which wuz sumwhat racy,
In come that feller Pettibone, 'nd sez, "With your permission,
I'd like to put a picture I have made on exhibition."
He sot the picture on the bar 'nd drew aside its curtain,
Sayin', "I reckon you'll allow as how that's art, f'r certain!"
And then we looked, with jaws agape, but nary word wuz spoken,
And f'r a likely spell the charm uv silence wuz unbroken--
Till presently, as in a dream, remarked Three-Fingered Hoover:
"Onless I am mistaken, this is Pettibone's shef doover!"

It wuz a face--a human face--a woman's, fair 'nd tender--
Sot gracefully upon a neck white as a swan's, and slender;
The hair wuz kind uv sunny, 'nd the eyes wuz sort uv dreamy,
The mouth wuz half a-smilin', 'nd the cheeks wuz soft 'nd creamy;
It seemed like she wuz lookin' off into the west out yonder,
And seemed like, while she looked, we saw her eyes grow softer, fonder,--
Like, lookin' off into the west, where mountain mists wuz fallin',
She saw the face she longed to see and heerd his voice a-callin';
"Hooray!" we cried,--"a woman in the camp uv Blue Horizon!
Step right up, Colonel Pettibone, 'nd nominate your pizen!"

A curious situation,--one deservin' uv your pity,--
No human, livin', female thing this side of Denver City!
But jest a lot uv husky men that lived on sand 'nd bitters,--
Do you wonder that that woman's face consoled the lonesome critters?
And not a one but what it served in some way to remind him
Of a mother or a sister or a sweetheart left behind him;
And some looked back on happier days, and saw the old-time faces

And heerd the dear familiar sounds in old familiar places,--
A gracious touch of home. "Look here," sez Hoover, "ever'body
Quit thinkin' 'nd perceed at oncet to name his favorite toddy!"

It wuzn't long afore the news had spread the country over,
And miners come a-flockin' in like honey-bees to clover;
It kind uv did 'em good, they said, to feast their hungry eyes on
That picture uv Our Lady in the camp uv Blue Horizon.
But one mean cuss from Nigger Crick passed criticisms on 'er,--
Leastwise we overheerd him call her Pettibone's madonner,
The which we did not take to be respectful to a lady,
So we hung him in a quiet spot that wuz cool 'nd dry 'nd shady;
Which same might not have been good law, but it wuz the right manoeuvre
To give the critics due respect for Pettibone's shef doover.

Gone is the camp,--yes, years ago the Blue Horizon busted,
And every mother's son uv us got up one day 'nd dusted,
While Pettibone perceeded East with wealth in his possession,
And went to Yurrup, as I heerd, to study his perfession;
So, like as not, you'll find him now a-paintin' heads 'nd faces
At Venus, Billy Florence, and the like I-talyun places.
But no sech face he'll paint again as at old Blue Horizon,
For I'll allow no sweeter face no human soul sot eyes on;
And when the critics talk so grand uv Paris 'nd the Loover,
I say, "Oh, but you orter seen the Pettibone shef doover!"

Eugene Field

Our Two Opinions

Us two wuz boys when we fell out,--
 Nigh to the age uv my youngest now;
Don't rec'lect what't wuz about,
 Some small deeff'rence, I'll allow.
Lived next neighbors twenty years,
 A-hatin' each other, me 'nd Jim,--
He havin' his opinyin uv me,
 'Nd I havin' my opinyin uv him.

Grew up together 'nd would n't speak,
 Courted sisters, 'nd marr'd 'em, too;
Tended same meetin'-house oncet a week,
 A-hatin' each other through 'nd through!
But when Abe Linkern asked the West
 F'r soldiers, we answered,--me 'nd Jim,--
He havin' his opinyin uv me,
 'Nd I havin' my opinyin uv him.

But down in Tennessee one night
 Ther' wuz sound uv firin' fur away,
'Nd the sergeant allowed ther' 'd be a fight
 With the Johnnie Rebs some time nex' day;
'Nd as I wuz thinkin' uv Lizzie 'nd home
 Jim stood afore me, long 'nd slim,--
He havin' his opinyin uv me,
 'Nd I havin' my opinyin uv him.

Seemed like we knew there wuz goin' to be
 Serious trouble f'r me 'nd him;
Us two shuck hands, did Jim 'nd me,
 But never a word from me or Jim!
He went his way 'nd I went mine,
 'Nd into the battle's roar went we,--
I havin' my opinyin uv Jim,
 'Nd he havin' his opinyin uv me.

Jim never come back from the war again,
 But I ha' n't forgot that last, last night
When, waitin' f'r orders, us two men
 Made up 'nd shuck hands, afore the fight.
'Nd, after it all, it's soothin' to know
 That here I be 'nd yonder's Jim,--
He havin' his opinyin uv me,
'Nd I havin' my opinyin uv him.

Eugene Field

Over the hills and far away

Over the hills and far away,
A little boy steals from his morning play
And under the blossoming apple-tree
He lies and he dreams of the things to be:
Of battles fought and of victories won,
Of wrongs o'erthrown and of great deeds done -
Of the valor that he shall prove some day,
Over the hills and far away -
Over the hills, and far away!

Over the hills and far away
It's, oh, for the toil the livelong day!
But it mattereth not to the soul aflame
With a love for riches and power and fame!
On, 0 man! while the sun is high -
On to the certain joys that lie
Yonder where blazeth the noon of day,
Over the hills and far away -
Over the hills, and far away!

Over the hills and far away,
An old man lingers at close of day;
Now that his journey is almost done,
His battles fought and his victories won -
The old-time honesty and truth,
The trustfulness and the friends of youth,
Home and mother-where are they?
Over the hills and far away -
Over the years, and far away!

Eugene Field

Pan liveth

They told me once that Pan was dead,
 And so, in sooth, I thought him;
For vainly where the streamlets led
 Through flowery meads I sought him--
Nor in his dewy pasture bed
 Nor in the grove I caught him.
 "Tell me," 'twas so my clamor ran--
 "Tell me, oh, where is Pan?"

But, once, as on my pipe I played
 A requiem sad and tender,
Lo, thither came a shepherd-maid--
 Full comely she and slender!
I were indeed a churlish blade
 With wailings to offend 'er--
   For, surely, wooing's sweeter than
   A mourning over Pan!

So, presently, whiles I did scan
 That shepherd-maiden pretty,
And heard her accents, I began
 To pipe a cheerful ditty;
And so, betimes, forgot old Pan
 Whose death had waked my pity;
    So--so did Love undo the man
    Who sought and pined for Pan!

He was not dead! I found him there--
 The Pan that I was after!
Caught in that maiden's tangling hair,
 Drunk with her song and laughter!
I doubt if there be otherwhere
 A merrier god or dafter--
   Nay, nor a mortal kindlier than
   Is this same dear old Pan!

Beside me, as my pipe I play,
 My shepherdess is lying,
While here and there her lambkins stray
 As sunny hours go flying;
They look like me--those lambs--they say,
 And that I'm not denying!
   And for that sturdy, romping clan,
   All glory be to Pan!

Pan is not dead, O sweetheart mine!
 It is to hear his voices
In every note and every line
 Wherein the heart rejoices!
He liveth in that sacred shrine
 That Love's first, holiest choice is!
   So pipe, my pipe, while still you can,

Sweet songs in praise of Pan!

Eugene Field

Picnic-time

It's June ag'in, an' in my soul I feel the fillin' joy
That's sure to come this time o' year to every little boy;
For, every June, the Sunday-schools at picnics may be seen,
Where "fields beyont the swellin' floods stand dressed in livin' green";
Where little girls are skeered to death with spiders, bugs, and ants,
An' little boys get grass-stains on their go-to meetin' pants.
It's June ag'in, an' with it all what happiness is mine -
There's goin' to be a picnic, an' I'm goin' to jine!

One year I jined the Baptists, an' goodness! how it rained!
(But grampa says that that's the way "baptizo" is explained.)
And once I jined the 'Piscopils an' had a heap o' fun -
But the boss of all the picnics was the Presbyteriun!
They had so many puddin's, sallids, sandwidges, an' pies,
That a feller wisht his stummick was as hungry as his eyes!
Oh, yes, the eatin' Presbyteriuns give yer is so fine
That when they have a picnic, you bet I'm goin' to jine!

But at this time the Methodists have special claims on me,
For they're goin' to give a picnic on the 21st, D. V.;
Why should a liberal universalist like me object
To share the joys of fellowship with every friendly sect?
However het'rodox their articles of faith elsewise may be,
Their doctrine of fried chick'n is a savin' grace to me!
So on the 21st of June, the weather bein' fine,
They're goin' to give a picnic, and I'm goin' to jine!

Eugene Field

Pittypat and Tippytoe

All day long they come and go--
Pittypat and Tippytoe;
Footprints up and down the hall,
Playthings scattered on the floor,
Finger-marks along the wall,
Tell-tale smudges on the door--
By these presents you shall know
Pittypat and Tippytoe.
How they riot at their play!
And a dozen times a day
In they troop, demanding bread--
Only buttered bread will do,
And the butter must be spread
Inches thick with sugar too!
And I never can say "No,
Pittypat and Tippytoe!"
Sometimes there are griefs to soothe,
Sometimes ruffled brows to smooth;
For (I much regret to say)
Tippytoe and Pittypat
Sometimes interrupt their play
With an internecine spat;
Fie, for shame! to quarrel so--
Pittypat and Tippytoe!
Oh the thousand worrying things
Every day recurrent brings!
Hands to scrub and hair to brush,
Search for playthings gone amiss,
Many a wee complaint to hush,
Many a little bump to kiss;
Life seems one vain, fleeting show
To Pittypat and Tippytoe!
And when day is at an end,
There are little duds to mend;
Little frocks are strangely torn,
Little shows great holes reveal,
Little hose, but one day worn,
Rudely yawn at toe and heel!
Who but you could work such woe,
Pittypat and Tippytoe!
On the floor and down the hall,
Rudely smutched upon the wall,
There are proofs in every kind
Of the havoc they have wrought,
And upon my heart you'd find
Just such trade-marks, if you sought;
Oh, how glad I am 'tis so,
Pittypat and Tippytoe!

Eugene Field

Plaint Of The Missouri 'Coon In The Berlin Zoological Gardens

Friend, by the way you hump yourself you're from the States, I know,
And born in old Mizzourah, where the 'coons in plenty grow;
I, too, am a native of that clime, but harsh, relentless fate
Has doomed me to an exile far from that noble state,
And I, who used to climb around and swing from tree to tree,
Now lead a life of ignominious ease, as you can see.
Have pity, O compatriot mine! and bide a season near
While I unfurl a dismal tale to catch your friendly ear.

My pedigree is noble--they used my grandsire's skin
To piece a coat for Patterson to warm himself within--
Tom Patterson of Denver; no ermine can compare
With the grizzled robe that democratic statesman loves to wear!
Of such a grandsire I have come, and in the County Cole,
All up an ancient cottonwood, our family had its hole--
We envied not the liveried pomp nor proud estate of kings
As we hustled around from day to day in search of bugs and things.

And when the darkness fell around, a mocking bird was nigh,
Inviting pleasant, soothing dreams with his sweet lullaby;
And sometimes came the yellow dog to brag around all night
That nary 'coon could wollop him in a stand-up barrel fight;
We simply smiled and let him howl, for all Mizzourians know
That ary 'coon can beat a dog if the 'coon gets half a show!
But we'd nestle close and shiver when the mellow moon had ris'n
And the hungry nigger sought our lair in hopes to make us his'n!

Raised as I was, it's hardly strange I pine for those old days--
I cannot get acclimated or used to German ways;
The victuals that they give me here may all be very fine
For vulgar, common palates, but they will not do for mine!
The 'coon that's been used to stanch democratic cheer
Will not put up with onion tarts and sausage steeped in beer!
No; let the rest, for meat and drink, accede to slavish terms,
But send _me_ back from whence I came and let me grub for worms!

They come (these gaping Teutons do) on Sunday afternoons
And wonder what I am--alas! there are no German 'coons!
For, if there were, I might still swing at home from tree to tree,
A symbol of democracy that's woolly, blythe and free.
And yet for what my captors are I would not change my lot,
For _I_ have tasted liberty--these others, _they_ have not!
So, even caged, the democratic 'coon more glory feels
Than the conscript German puppets with their swords about their heels!

Well, give my love to Crittenden, to Clardy and O'Neill,
To Jasper Burke and Colonel Jones, and tell 'em how I feel;
My compliments to Cockrill, Munford, Switzler, Hasbrook, Vest,
Bill Nelson, J. West Goodwin, Jedge Broadhead and the rest;
Bid them be steadfast in the faith and pay no heed at all
To Joe McCullagh's badinage or Chauncy Filley's gall;
And urge them to retaliate for what I'm suffering here

By cinching all the alien class that wants its Sunday beer.

Eugene Field

Prof. vere de blaw

Achievin' sech distinction with his moddel tabble dote
Ez to make his Red Hoss Mountain restauraw a place uv note,
Our old friend Casey innovated somewhat round the place,
In hopes he would ameliorate the sufferin's uv the race;
'Nd uv the many features Casey managed to import
The most important wuz a Steenway gran' pianny-fort,
An' bein' there wuz nobody could play upon the same,
He telegraffed to Denver, 'nd a real perfesser came,--
The last an' crownin' glory uv the Casey restauraw
Wuz that tenderfoot musicianer, Perfesser Vere de Blaw!

His hair wuz long an' dishybill, an' he had a yaller skin,
An' the absence uv a collar made his neck look powerful thin:
A sorry man he wuz to see, az mebby you'd surmise,
But the fire uv inspiration wuz a-blazin' in his eyes!
His name wuz Blanc, wich same is Blaw (for that's what Casey said,
An' Casey passed the French ez well ez any Frenchie bred);
But no one ever reckoned that it really wuz his name,
An' no one ever asked him how or why or whence he came,--
Your ancient history is a thing the Coloradan hates,
An' no one asks another what his name wuz in the States!

At evenin', when the work wuz done, an' the miners rounded up
At Casey's, to indulge in keerds or linger with the cup,
Or dally with the tabble dote in all its native glory,
Perfessor Vere de Blaw discoursed his music repertory
Upon the Steenway gran' piannyfort, the wich wuz sot
In the hallway near the kitchen (a warm but quiet spot),
An' when De Blaw's environments induced the proper pride,--
Wich gen'rally wuz whiskey straight, with seltzer on the side,--
He throwed his soulful bein' into opry airs 'nd things
Wich bounded to the ceilin' like he'd mesmerized the strings.

Oh, you that live in cities where the gran' piannies grow,
An' primy donnies round up, it's little that you know
Uv the hungerin' an' the yearnin' wich us miners an' the rest
Feel for the songs we used to hear before we moved out West.
Yes, memory is a pleasant thing, but it weakens mighty quick;
It kind uv dries an' withers, like the windin' mountain crick,
That, beautiful, an' singin' songs, goes dancin' to the plains,
So long ez it is fed by snows an' watered by the rains;
But, uv that grace uv lovin' rains 'nd mountain snows bereft,
Its bleachin' rocks, like dummy ghosts, is all its memory left.

The toons wich the perfesser would perform with sech eclaw
Would melt the toughest mountain gentleman I ever saw,--
Sech touchin' opry music ez the Trovytory sort,
The sollum "Mizer Reery," an' the thrillin' "Keely Mort;"
Or, sometimes, from "Lee Grond Dooshess" a trifle he would play,
Or morsoze from a' opry boof, to drive dull care away;
Or, feelin' kind uv serious, he'd discourse somewhat in C,--
The wich he called a' opus (whatever that may be);

But the toons that fetched the likker from the critics in the crowd
Wuz not the high-toned ones, Perfesser Vere de Blaw allowed.

'T wuz "Dearest May," an' "Bonnie Doon," an' the ballard uv "Ben Bolt,"
Ez wuz regarded by all odds ez Vere de Blaw's best holt;
Then there wuz "Darlin' Nellie Gray," an' "Settin' on the Stile,"
An' "Seein' Nellie Home," an' "Nancy Lee," 'nd "Annie Lisle,"
An' "Silver Threads among the Gold," an' "The Gal that Winked at Me,"
An' "Gentle Annie," "Nancy Till," an' "The Cot beside the Sea."
Your opry airs is good enough for them ez likes to pay
Their money for the truck ez can't be got no other way;
But opry to a miner is a thin an' holler thing,--The
music that he pines for is the songs he used to sing.

One evenin' down at Casey's De Blaw wuz at his best,
With four-fingers uv old Wilier-run concealed beneath his vest;
The boys wuz settin' all around, discussin' folks an' things,
'Nd I had drawed the necessary keerds to fill on kings;
Three-fingered Hoover kind uv leaned acrosst the bar to say
If Casey'd liquidate right off, he'd liquidate next day;
A sperrit uv contentment wuz a-broodin' all around
(Onlike the other sperrits wich in restauraws abound),
When, suddenly, we heerd from yonder kitchen-entry rise
A toon each ornery galoot appeared to recognize.

Perfesser Vere de Blaw for once eschewed his opry ways,
An' the remnants uv his mind went back to earlier, happier days,
An' grappled like an' wrassled with a' old familiar air
The wich we all uv us had heern, ez you have, everywhere!
Stock still we stopped,--some in their talk uv politics an' things,
I in my unobtrusive attempt to fill on kings,
'Nd Hoover leanin' on the bar, an' Casey at the till,--
We all stopped short an' held our breaths (ez a feller sometimes will),
An' sot there more like bumps on logs than healthy, husky men,
Ez the memories uv that old, old toon come sneakin' back again.

You've guessed it? No, you hav n't; for it wuzn't that there song
Uv the home we'd been away from an' had hankered for so long,--
No, sir; it wuzn't "Home, Sweet Home," though it's always heard around
Sech neighborhoods in wich the home that is "sweet home" is found.
And, ez for me, I seemed to see the past come back again,
And hear the deep-drawed sigh my sister Lucy uttered when
Her mother asked her if she 'd practised her two hours that day,
Wich, if she hadn't, she must go an' do it right away!
The homestead in the States 'nd all its memories seemed to come
A-floatin' round about me with that magic lumty-tum.

And then uprose a stranger wich had struck the camp that night;
His eyes wuz sot an' fireless, 'nd his face wuz spookish white,
'Nd he sez: "Oh, how I suffer there is nobody kin say,
Onless, like me, he's wrenched himself from home an' friends away
To seek surcease from sorrer in a fur, seclooded spot,

Only to find--alars, too late!--the wich surcease is not!
Only to find that there air things that, somehow, seem to live
For nothin' in the world but jest the misery they give!
I've travelled eighteen hundred miles, but that toon has got here first;
I'm done,--I'm blowed,--I welcome death, an' bid it do its worst!"

Then, like a man whose mind wuz sot on yieldin' to his fate,
He waltzed up to the counter an' demanded whiskey straight,
Wich havin' got outside uv,--both the likker and the door,--
We never seen that stranger in the bloom uv health no more!
But some months later, what the birds had left uv him wuz found
Associated with a tree, some distance from the ground;
And Husky Sam, the coroner, that set upon him, said
That two things wuz apparent, namely: first, deceast wuz dead;
And, second, previously had got involved beyond all hope
In a knotty complication with a yard or two uv rope!

Eugene Field

Quitting Again

The hero of
Affairs of love
By far too numerous to be mentioned,
And scarred as I'm,
It seemeth time
That I were mustered out and pensioned.

So on this wall
My lute and all
I hang, and dedicate to Venus;
And I implore
But one thing more
Ere all is at an end between us.

O goddess fair
Who reignest where
The weather's seldom bleak and snowy,
This boon I urge:
In anger scourge
My old cantankerous sweetheart, Chloe!

Eugene Field

Sailor And Shade

SAILOR

You, who have compassed land and sea,
Now all unburied lie;
All vain your store of human lore,
For you were doomed to die.
The sire of Pelops likewise fell,--
Jove's honored mortal guest;
So king and sage of every age
At last lie down to rest.
Plutonian shades enfold the ghost
Of that majestic one
Who taught as truth that he, forsooth,
Had once been Pentheus' son;
Believe who may, he's passed away,
And what he did is done.
A last night comes alike to all;
One path we all must tread,
Through sore disease or stormy seas
Or fields with corpses red.
Whate'er our deeds, that pathway leads
To regions of the dead.

SHADE

The fickle twin Illyrian gales
Overwhelmed me on the wave;
But you that live, I pray you give
My bleaching bones a grave!
Oh, then when cruel tempests rage
You all unharmed shall be;
Jove's mighty hand shall guard by land
And Neptune's on the sea.
Perchance you fear to do what may
Bring evil to your race?
Oh, rather fear that like me here
You'll lack a burial place.
So, though you be in proper haste,
Bide long enough, I pray,
To give me, friend, what boon shall send
My soul upon its way!

Eugene Field

Seein' things

I ain't afeard uv snakes, or toads, or bugs, or worms, or mice,
An' things 'at girls are skeered uv I think are awful nice!
I'm pretty brave, I guess; an' yet I hate to go to bed,
For, when I'm tucked up warm an' snug an' when my prayers are said,
Mother tells me "Happy dreams!" and takes away the light,
An' leaves me lyin' all alone an' seein' things at night!

Sometimes they're in the corner, sometimes they're by the door,
Sometimes they're all a-standin' in the middle uv the floor;
Sometimes they are a-sittin' down, sometimes they're walkin' round
So softly an' so creepylike they never make a sound!
Sometimes they are as black as ink, an' other times they're white -
But the color ain't no difference when you see things at night!

Once, when I licked a feller 'at had just moved on our street,
An' father sent me up to bed without a bite to eat,
I woke up in the dark an' saw things standin' in a row,
A-lookin' at me cross-eyed an' p'intin' at me - so!
Oh, my! I wuz so skeered that time I never slep' a mite -
It's almost alluz when I'm bad I see things at night!

Lucky thing I ain't a girl, or I'd be skeered to death!
Bein' I'm a boy, I duck my head an' hold my breath;
An' I am, oh! so sorry I'm a naughty boy, an' then
I promise to be better an' I say my prayers again!
Gran'ma tells me that's the only way to make it right
When a feller has been wicked an' sees things at night!
An' so, when other naughty boys would coax me into sin,
I try to skwush the Tempter's voice 'at urges me within;
An' when they's pie for supper, or cakes 'at 's big an' nice,
I want to - but I do not pass my plate f'r them things twice!
No, ruther let Starvation wipe me slowly out o' sight
Than I should keep a-livin' on an' seein' things at night!

Eugene Field

Shuffle-Shoon and Amber-Locks

Shuffle-Shoon and Amber-Locks
Sit together, building blocks;
Shuffle-Shoon is old and grey,
Amber-Locks a little child,
But together at their play
Age and Youth are reconciled,
And with sympathetic glee
Build their castles fair to see.
"When I grow to be a man"
(So the wee one's prattle ran),
"I shall build a castle so--
With a gateway broad and grand;
Here a pretty vine shall grow,
There a soldier guard shall stand;
And the tower shall be so high,
Folks will wonder, by-and-by!"
Shuffle-Shoon quoth: "Yes, I know;
Thus I builded long ago!
Here a gate and there a wall,
Here a window, there a door;
Here a steeple wondrous tall
Riseth ever more and more!
But the years have levelled low
What I builded long ago!"
So they gossip at their play,
Heedless of the fleeting day;
One speaks of the Long Ago
Where his dead hopes buried lie;
One with chubby cheeks aglow
Prattleth of the By-and-By;
Side by side, they build their blocks--
Shuffle-Shoon and Amber-Locks.

Eugene Field

Sicilian Lullaby

Hush, little one, and fold your hands;
 The sun hath set, the moon is high;
The sea is singing to the sands,
 And wakeful posies are beguiled
By many a fairy lullaby:
 Hush, little child, my little child!

Dream, little one, and in your dreams
 Float upward from this lowly place,--
Float out on mellow, misty streams
 To lands where bideth Mary mild,
And let her kiss thy little face,
 You little child, my little child!

Sleep, little one, and take thy rest,
 With angels bending over thee,--
Sleep sweetly on that Father's breast
 Whom our dear Christ hath reconciled;
But stay not there,--come back to me,
 O little child, my little child!

Eugene Field

Sister's cake

I'd not complain of Sister Jane, for she was good and kind,
Combining with rare comeliness distinctive gifts of mind;
Nay, I'll admit it were most fit that, worn by social cares,
She'd crave a change from parlor life to that below the stairs,
And that, eschewing needlework and music, she should take
Herself to the substantial art of manufacturing cake.

At breakfast, then, it would befall that Sister Jane would say:
"Mother, if you have got the things, I'll make some cake to-day!"
Poor mother'd cast a timid glance at father, like as not--
For father hinted sister's cooking cost a frightful lot--
But neither she nor he presumed to signify dissent,
Accepting it for gospel truth that what she wanted went!

No matter what the rest of 'em might chance to have in hand,
The whole machinery of the house came to a sudden stand;
The pots were hustled off the stove, the fire built up anew,
With every damper set just so to heat the oven through;
The kitchen-table was relieved of everything, to make
That ample space which Jane required when she compounded cake.

And, oh! the bustling here and there, the flying to and fro;
The click of forks that whipped the eggs to lather white as snow--
And what a wealth of sugar melted swiftly out of sight--
And butter? Mother said such waste would ruin father, quite!
But Sister Jane preserved a mien no pleading could confound
As she utilized the raisins and the citron by the pound.

Oh, hours of chaos, tumult, heat, vexatious din, and whirl!
Of deep humiliation for the sullen hired-girl;
Of grief for mother, hating to see things wasted so,
And of fortune for that little boy who pined to taste that dough!
It looked so sweet and yellow--sure, to taste it were no sin--
But, oh! how sister scolded if he stuck his finger in!

The chances were as ten to one, before the job was through,
That sister'd think of something else she'd great deal rather do!
So, then, she'd softly steal away, as Arabs in the night,
Leaving the girl and ma to finish up as best they might;
These tactics (artful Sister Jane) enabled her to take
Or shift the credit or the blame of that too-treacherous cake!

And yet, unhappy is the man who has no Sister Jane--
For he who has no sister seems to me to live in vain.
I never had a sister--may be that is why today
I'm wizened and dyspeptic, instead of blithe and gay;
A boy who's only forty should be full of romp and mirth,
But I (because I'm sisterless) am the oldest man on earth!

Had I a little sister--oh, how happy I should be!
I'd never let her cast her eyes on any chap but me;
I'd love her and I'd cherish her for better and for worse--

I'd buy her gowns and bonnets, and sing her praise in verse;
And--yes, what's more and vastly more--I tell you what I'd do:
I'd let her make her wondrous cake, and I would eat it, too!

I have a high opinion of the sisters, as you see--
Another fellow's sister is so very dear to me!
I love to work anear her when she's making over frocks,
When she patches little trousers or darns prosaic socks;
But I draw the line at one thing--yes, I don my hat and take
A three hours' walk when she is moved to try her hand at cake!

Eugene Field

So, so, rock-a-by so!

So, so, rock-a-by so!
Off to the garden where dreamikins grow;
And here is a kiss on your winkyblink eyes,
And here is a kiss on your dimpledown cheek
And here is a kiss for the treasure that lies
In the beautiful garden way up in the skies
Which you seek.
Now mind these three kisses wherever you go -
So, so, rock-a-by so!

There's one little fumfay who lives there, I know,
For he dances all night where the dreamikins grow;
I send him this kiss on your droopydrop eyes,
I send him this kiss on your rosyred cheek.
And here is a kiss for the dream that shall rise
When the fumfay shall dance in those far-away skies
Which you seek.
Be sure that you pay those three kisses you owe -
So, so, rock-a-by so!

And, by-low, as you rock-a-by go,
Don't forget mother who loveth you so!
And here is her kiss on your weepydeep eyes,
And here is her kiss on your peachypink cheek,
And here is her kiss for the dreamland that lies
Like a babe on the breast of those far-away skies
Which you seek -
The blinkywink garden where dreamikins grow -
So, so, rock-a-by so!

Eugene Field

Soldier, Maiden, and Flower

"Sweetheart, take this," a soldier said,
 "And bid me brave good-by;
It may befall we ne'er shall wed,
 But love can never die.
Be steadfast in thy troth to me,
 And then, whate'er my lot,
'My soul to God, my heart to thee,'--
 Sweetheart, forget me not!"

The maiden took the tiny flower
 And nursed it with her tears:
Lo! he who left her in that hour
 Came not in after years.
Unto a hero's death he rode
 'Mid shower of fire and shot;
But in the maiden's heart abode
 The flower, forget-me-not.

And when he came not with the rest
 From out the years of blood,
Closely unto her widowed breast
 She pressed a faded bud;
Oh, there is love and there is pain,
 And there is peace, God wot,--
And these dear three do live again
 In sweet forget-me-not.

'T is to an unmarked grave to-day
 That I should love to go,--
Whether he wore the blue or gray,
 What need that we should know?
"He loved a woman," let us say,
 And on that sacred spot,
To woman's love, that lives for aye,
 We'll strew forget-me-not.

1887.

Eugene Field

Some time

Last night, my darling, as you slept,
 I thought I heard you sigh,
And to your little crib I crept,
 And watched a space thereby;
And then I stooped and kissed your brow,
 For oh! I love you so--
You are too young to know it now,
 But some time you shall know!

Some time when, in a darkened place
 Where others come to weep,
Your eyes shall look upon a face
 Calm in eternal sleep,
The voiceless lips, the wrinkled brow,
 The patient smile shall show--
You are too young to know it now,
 But some time you may know!

Look backward, then, into the years,
 And see me here to-night--
See, O my darling! how my tears
 Are falling as I write;
And feel once more upon your brow
 The kiss of long ago--
You are too young to know it now,
 But some time you shall know.

Eugene Field

Star of the east

Star of the East, that long ago
 Brought wise men on their way
Where, angels singing to and fro,
 The Child of Bethlehem lay--
Above that Syrian hill afar
Thou shinest out to-night, O Star!

Star of the East, the night were drear
 But for the tender grace
That with thy glory comes to cheer
 Earth's loneliest, darkest place;
For by that charity we see
Where there is hope for all and me.

Star of the East! show us the way
 In wisdom undefiled
To seek that manger out and lay
 Our gifts before the child--
To bring our hearts and offer them
Unto our King in Bethlehem!

Eugene Field

Stoves and sunshine

Prate, ye who will, of so-called charms you find across the sea--
The land of stoves and sunshine is good enough for me!
I've done the grand for fourteen months in every foreign clime,
And I've learned a heap of learning, but I've shivered all the time;
And the biggest bit of wisdom I've acquired--as I can see--
Is that which teaches that this land's the land of lands for me.

Now, I am of opinion that a person should get some
Warmth in this present life of ours, not all in that to come;
So when Boreas blows his blast, through country and through town,
Or when upon the muddy streets the stifling fog rolls down,
Go, guzzle in a pub, or plod some bleak malarious grove,
But let me toast my shrunken shanks beside some Yankee stove.

The British people say they "don't believe in stoves, y' know;"
Perchance because we warmed 'em so completely years ago!
They talk of "drahfts" and "stuffiness" and "ill effects of heat,"
As they chatter in their barny rooms or shiver 'round the street;
With sunshine such a rarity, and stoves esteemed a sin,
What wonder they are wedded to their fads--catarrh and gin?

In Germany are stoves galore, and yet you seldom find
A fire within the stoves, for German stoves are not that kind;
The Germans say that fires make dirt, and dirt's an odious thing,
But the truth is that the pfennig is the average Teuton's king,
And since the fire costs pfennigs, why, the thrifty soul denies
Himself all heat except what comes with beer and exercise.

The Frenchman builds a fire of cones, the Irishman of peat;
The frugal Dutchman buys a fire when he has need of heat--
That is to say, he pays so much each day to one who brings
The necessary living coals to warm his soup and things;
In Italy and Spain they have no need to heat the house--
'Neath balmy skies the native picks the mandolin and louse.

Now, we've no mouldy catacombs, no feudal castles grim,
No ruined monasteries, no abbeys ghostly dim;
Our ancient history is new, our future's all ahead,
And we've got a tariff bill that's made all Europe sick abed--
But what is best, though short on tombs and academic groves,
We double discount Christendom on sunshine and on stoves.

Dear land of mine! I come to you from months of chill and storm,
Blessing the honest people whose hearts and hearths are warm;
A fairer, sweeter song than this I mean to weave to you
When I've reached my lakeside 'dobe and once get heated through;
But, even then, the burthen of that fairer song shall be
That the land of stoves and sunshine is good enough for me.

Eugene Field

Summer Heat

Nay, why discuss this summer heat,
Of which vain people tell?
Oh, sinner, rather were it meet
To fix thy thoughts on hell!

The punishment ordained for you
In that infernal spot
Is het by Satan's impish crew
And kept forever hot.

Sumatra might be reckoned nice,
And Tophet passing cool,
And Sodom were a cake of ice
Beside that sulphur pool.

An awful stench and dismal wail
Come from the broiling souls,
Whilst Satan with his fireproof tail
Stirs up the brimstone coals.

Oh, sinner, on this end 'tis meet
That thou shouldst ponder well,
For what, oh, what, is worldly heat
Unto the heat of hell?

Eugene Field

Suppose

Suppose, my dear, that you were I
 And by your side your sweetheart sate;
Suppose you noticed by and by
 The distance 'twixt you were too great;
Now tell me, dear, what would you do?
 I know--and so do you.

And when (so comfortably placed)
 Suppose you only grew aware
That that dear, dainty little waist
 Of hers looked very lonely there;
Pray tell me sooth--what would you do?
 I know, and so do you.

When, having done what I just did
 With not a frown to check or chill,
Suppose her red lips seemed to bid
 Defiance to your lordly will;
Oh, tell me, sweet, what would you do?
 I know, and so do you.

Eugene Field

Swing high and swing low

Swing high and swing low
While the breezes they blow -
It's off for a sailor thy father would go;
And it's here in the harbor, in sight of the sea,
He hath left his wee babe with my song and with me:
"Swing high and swing low
While the breezes they blow!"

Swing high and swing low
While the breezes they blow -
It's oh for the waiting as weary days go!
And it's oh for the heartache that smiteth me when
I sing my song over and over again:
"Swing high and swing low
While the breezes they blow!"

"Swing high and swing low " -
The sea singeth so,
And it waileth anon in its ebb and its flow;
And a sleeper sleeps on to that song of the sea
Nor recketh he ever of mine or of me!
"Swing high and swing low
While the breezes they blow -
'T was off for a sailor thy father would go!"

Eugene Field

The "happy isles" of horace

Oh, come with me to the Happy Isles
 In the golden haze off yonder,
Where the song of the sun-kissed breeze beguiles,
 And the ocean loves to wander.

Fragrant the vines that mantle those hills,
 Proudly the fig rejoices;
Merrily dance the virgin rills,
 Blending their myriad voices.

Our herds shall fear no evil there,
 But peacefully feed and rest them;
Neither shall serpent nor prowling bear
 Ever come there to molest them.

Neither shall Eurus, wanton bold,
 Nor feverish drouth distress us,
But he that compasseth heat and cold
 Shall temper them both to bless us.

There no vandal foot has trod,
 And the pirate hosts that wander
Shall never profane the sacred sod
 Of those beautiful Isles out yonder.

Never a spell shall blight our vines,
 Nor Sirius blaze above us,
But you and I shall drink our wines
 And sing to the loved that love us.

So come with me where Fortune smiles
 And the gods invite devotion,--
Oh, come with me to the Happy Isles
 In the haze of that far-off ocean!

Eugene Field

The Ballad Of The Taylor Pup

Now lithe and listen, gentles all,
Now lithe ye all and hark
Unto a ballad I shall sing
About Buena Park.

Of all the wonders happening there
The strangest hap befell
Upon a famous Aprile morn,
As I you now shall tell.

It is about the Taylor pup
And of his mistress eke
And of the prankish time they had
That I am fain to speak.

FITTE THE FIRST

The pup was of as noble mien
As e'er you gazed upon;
They called his mother Lady
And his father was a Don.

And both his mother and his sire
Were of the race Bernard--
The family famed in histories
And hymned of every bard.

His form was of exuberant mold,
Long, slim, and loose of joints;
There never yet was pointer-dog
So full as he of points.

His hair was like to yellow fleece,
His eyes were black and kind,
And like a nodding, gilded plume
His tail stuck up behind.

His bark was very, very fierce,
And fierce his appetite,
Yet was it only things to eat
That he was prone to bite.

But in that one particular
He was so passing true
That never did he quit a meal
Until he had got through.

Potatoes, biscuits, mush or hash,
Joint, chop, or chicken limb--
So long as it was edible,
'T was all the same to him!

And frequently when Hunger's pangs
Assailed that callow pup,
He masticated boots and gloves
Or chewed a door-mat up.

So was he much beholden of
The folk that him did keep;
They loved him when he was awake
And better still asleep.

FITTE THE SECOND

Now once his master, lingering o'er
His breakfast coffee-cup,
Observed unto his doting spouse:
'You ought to wash the pup!'

'That shall I do this very day',
His doting spouse replied;
'You will not know the pretty thing
When he is washed and dried.

'But tell me, dear, before you go
Unto your daily work,
Shall I use Ivory soap on him,
Or Colgate, Pears' or Kirk?'

'Odzooks, it matters not a whit--
They all are good to use!
Take Pearline, if it pleases you--
Sapolio, if you choose!

'Take any soap, but take the pup
And also water take,
And mix the three discreetly up
Till they a lather make.

'Then mixing these constituent parts,
Let Nature take her way,'
With which advice that sapient sir
Had nothing more to say.

Then fared he to his daily toil
All in the Board of Trade,
While Mistress Taylor for that bath
Due preparation made.

FITTE THE THIRD

She whistled gayly to the pup
And called him by his name,
And presently the guileless thing
All unsuspecting came.

But when she shut the bath-room door,
And caught him as catch-can,
And hove him in that odious tub,
His sorrows then began.

How did that callow, yallow thing
Regret that Aprile morn--
Alas! how bitterly he rued
The day that he was born!

Twice and again, but all in vain
He lifted up his wail;
His voice was all the pup could lift,
For thereby hangs this tale.

'Twas by that tail she held him down,
And presently she spread
The creamy lather on his back,
His stomach, and his head.

His ears hung down in sorry wise,
His eyes were, oh! so sad--
He looked as though he just had lost
The only friend he had.

And higher yet the water rose,
The lather still increased,
And sadder still the countenance
Of that poor martyred beast!

Yet all the time his mistress spoke
Such artful words of cheer
As 'Oh, how nice!' and 'Oh, how clean!'
And 'There's a patient dear!'

At last the trial had an end,
At last the pup was free;
She threw aside the bath-room door--
'Now get you gone!' quoth she.

FITTE THE FOURTH

Then from that tub and from that room
He gat with vast ado;
At every hop he gave a shake,
And--how the water flew!

He paddled down the winding stairs
And to the parlor hied,
Dispensing pools of foamy suds
And slop on every side.

Upon the carpet then he rolled
And brushed against the wall,
And, horror! whisked his lathery sides
On overcoat and shawl.

Attracted by the dreadful din,
His mistress came below--
Who, who can speak her wonderment--
Who, who can paint her woe!

Great smears of soap were here and there--
Her startled vision met
With blobs of lather everywhere,
And everything was wet!

Then Mrs. Taylor gave a shriek
Like one about to die:
'Get out--get out, and don't you dare
Come in till you are dry!'

With that she opened wide the door
And waved the critter through;
Out in the circumambient air
With grateful yelps he flew.

FITTE THE FIFTH

He whisked into the dusty street
And to the Waller lot,
Where bonnie Annie Evans played
With charming Sissy Knott.

And with those pretty little dears
He mixed himself all up--
Oh, fie upon such boisterous play--
Fie, fie, you naughty pup!

Woe, woe on Annie's India mull,
And Sissy's blue percale!
One got that pup's belathered flanks,
And one his soapy tail!

Forth to the rescue of those maids
Rushed gallant Willie Clow;
His panties they were white and clean--

Where are those panties now?

Where is the nicely laundered shirt
That Kendall Evans wore,
And Robbie James' tricot coat
All buttoned up before?

The leaven, which, as we are told,
Leavens a monstrous lump,
Hath far less reaching qualities
Than a wet pup on the jump.

This way and that he swung and swayed,
He gambolled far and near,
And everywhere he thrust himself
He left a soapy smear.

FITTE THE SIXTH

That noon a dozen little dears
Were spanked and put to bed
With naught to stay their appetites
But cheerless crusts of bread.

That noon a dozen hired girls
Washed out each gown and shirt
Which that exuberant Taylor pup
Had frescoed o'er with dirt.

That whole day long the Aprile sun
Smiled sweetly from above
On clotheslines flaunting to the breeze
The emblems mothers love.

That whole day long the Taylor pup
This way and that did hie
Upon his mad, erratic course,
Intent on getting dry.

That night when Mr. Taylor came
His vesper meal to eat,
He uttered things my pious pen
Would liefer not repeat.

Yet still that noble Taylor pup
Survives to romp and bark
And stumble over folks and things
In fair Buena Park.

Good sooth, I wot he should be called
Buena's favorite son

Who's sired of such a noble sire
And dammed by every one!

Eugene Field

The Bench-Legged Fyce

Speakin' of dorgs, my bench-legged fyce
Hed most o' the virtues, an' nary a vice.
Some folks called him Sooner, a name that arose
From his predisposition to chronic repose;
But, rouse his ambition, he couldn't be beat -
Yer bet yer he got thar on all his four feet!

Mos' dorgs hez some forte - like huntin' an' such,
But the sports o' the field didn't bother him much;
Wuz just a plain dorg, an' contented to be
On peaceable terms with the neighbors an' me;
Used to fiddle an' squirm, and grunt "Oh, how nice!"
When I tickled the back of that bench-legged fyce!

He wuz long in the bar'l, like a fyce oughter be;
His color wuz yaller as ever you see;
His tail, curlin' upward, wuz long, loose, an' slim -
When he didn't wag it, why, the tail it wagged him!
His legs wuz so crooked, my bench-legged pup
Wuz as tall settin' down as he wuz standin' up!

He'd lie by the stove of a night an' regret
The various vittles an' things he had et;
When a stranger, most likely a tramp, come along,
He'd lift up his voice in significant song -
You wondered, by gum! how there ever wuz space
In that bosom o' his'n to hold so much bass!

Of daytimes he'd sneak to the road an' lie down,
An' tackle the country dorgs comin' to town;
By common consent he wuz boss in St. Joe,
For what he took hold of he never let go!
An' a dude that come courtin' our girl left a slice
Of his white flannel suit with our bench-legged fyce!

He wuz good to us kids - when we pulled at his fur
Or twisted his tail he would never demur;
He seemed to enjoy all our play an' our chaff,
For his tongue 'u'd hang out an' he'd laff an' he'd laff;
An' once, when the Hobart boy fell through the ice,
He wuz drug clean ashore by that bench-legged fyce!

We all hev our choice, an' you, like the rest,
Allow that the dorg which you've got is the best;
I wouldn't give much for the boy 'at grows up
With no friendship subsistin' 'tween him an' a pup!
When a fellow gits old - I tell you it's nice
To think of his youth and his bench-legged fyce!

To think of the springtime 'way back in St. Joe -
Of the peach-trees abloom an' the daisies ablow;
To think of the play in the medder an' grove,

When little legs wrassled an' little han's strove;
To think of the loyalty, valor, an' truth
Of the friendships that hallow the season of youth!

Eugene Field

The Bibliomaniac's Bride

The women-folk are like to books,--
 Most pleasing to the eye,
Whereon if anybody looks
 He feels disposed to buy.

I hear that many are for sale,--
 Those that record no dates,
And such editions as regale
 The view with colored plates.

Of every quality and grade
 And size they may be found,--
Quite often beautifully made,
 As often poorly bound.

Now, as for me, had I my choice,
 I'd choose no folio tall,
But some octavo to rejoice
 My sight and heart withal,--

As plump and pudgy as a snipe;
 Well worth her weight in gold;
Of honest, clean, conspicuous type,
 And just the size to hold!

With such a volume for my wife
 How should I keep and con!
How like a dream should run my life
 Unto its colophon!

Her frontispiece should be more fair
 Than any colored plate;
Blooming with health, she would not care
 To extra-illustrate.

And in her pages there should be
 A wealth of prose and verse,
With now and then a jeu d'esprit,--
 But nothing ever worse!

Prose for me when I wished for prose,
 Verse when to verse inclined,--
Forever bringing sweet repose
 To body, heart, and mind.

Oh, I should bind this priceless prize
 In bindings full and fine,
And keep her where no human eyes
 Should see her charms, but mine!

With such a fair unique as this
 What happiness abounds!

Who--who could paint my rapturous bliss,
 My joy unknown to Lowndes!

Eugene Field

The Bibliomaniac's Prayer

Keep me, I pray, in wisdom's way
That I may truths eternal seek;
I need protecting care to-day,--
My purse is light, my flesh is weak.
So banish from my erring heart
All baleful appetites and hints
Of Satan's fascinating art,
Of first editions, and of prints.
Direct me in some godly walk
Which leads away from bookish strife,
That I with pious deed and talk
May extra-illustrate my life.
But if, O Lord, it pleaseth Thee
To keep me in temptation's way,
I humbly ask that I may be
Most notably beset to-day;
Let my temptation be a book,
Which I shall purchase, hold, and keep,
Whereon when other men shall look,
They 'll wail to know I got it cheap.
Oh, let it such a volume be
As in rare copperplates abounds,
Large paper, clean, and fair to see,
Uncut, unique, unknown to Lowndes.

Eugene Field

The Bibliomaniac's'S Prayer

Keep me, I pray, in wisdom's way
 That I may truths eternal seek;
I need protecting care to-day,--
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Eugene Field

The Blue And Gray

The Blue and the Gray collided one day
In the future great town of Missouri,
And if all that we hear is the truth, 'twould appear
That they tackled each other with fury.

While the weather waxed hot they hove and they sot,
Like the scow in the famous old story,
And what made the fight an enjoyable sight
Was the fact that they fought con amore.

They as participants fought in such wise as was taught,
As beseemed the old days of the dragons,
When you led to the dance and defended with lance
The damsel you pledged in your flagons.

In their dialect way the knights of the Gray
Gave a flout at the buckeye bandana,
And the buckeye came back with a gosh-awful whack,
And that's what's the matter with Hannah.

This resisted attack took the Grays all a-back,
And feeling less coltish and frisky,
They resolved to elate the cause of their state,
And also their persons, with whisky.

Having made ample use of the treacherous juice,
Which some folks say stings like an adder,
They went back again at the handkerchief men,
Who slowly got madder and madder.

You can bet it was h--l in the Southern Hotel
And elsewhere, too many to mention,
But the worst of it all was achieved in the hall
Where the President held his convention.

They ripped and they hewed and they, sweating imbrued,
Volleyed and bellowed and thundered;
There was nothing to do until these yawpers got through,
So the rest of us waited and wondered.

As the result of these frays it appears that the Grays,
Who once were as chipper as daisies,
Have changed their complexion to one of dejection,
And at present are bluer than blazes.

Eugene Field

The Bottle And The Bird

Once on a time a friend of mine prevailed on me to go
To see the dazzling splendors of a sinful ballet show,
And after we had reveled in the saltatory sights
We sought a neighboring cafe for more tangible delights;
When I demanded of my friend what viands he preferred,
He quoth: 'A large cold bottle and a small hot bird!'

Fool that I was, I did not know what anguish hidden lies
Within the morceau that allures the nostrils and the eyes!
There is a glorious candor in an honest quart of wine--
A certain inspiration which I cannot well define!
How it bubbles, how it sparkles, how its gurgling seems to say:
'Come, on a tide of rapture let me float your soul away!'

But the crispy, steaming mouthful that is spread upon your plate--
How it discounts human sapience and satirizes fate!
You wouldn't think a thing so small could cause the pains and aches
That certainly accrue to him that of that thing partakes;
To me, at least (a guileless wight!) it never once occurred
What horror was encompassed in that one small hot bird.

Oh, what a head I had on me when I awoke next day,
And what a firm conviction of intestinal decay!
What seas of mineral water and of bromide I applied
To quench those fierce volcanic fires that rioted inside!
And, oh! the thousand solemn, awful vows I plighted then
Never to tax my system with a small hot bird again!

The doctor seemed to doubt that birds could worry people so,
But, bless him! since I ate the bird, I guess I ought to know!
The acidous condition of my stomach, so he said,
Bespoke a vinous irritant that amplified my head,
And, ergo, the causation of the thing, as he inferred,
Was the large cold bottle, not the small hot bird.

Of course, I know it wasn't, and I'm sure you'll say I'm right
If ever it has been your wont to train around at night;
How sweet is retrospection when one's heart is bathed in wine,
And before its balmy breath how do the ills of life decline!
How the gracious juices drown what griefs would vex a mortal breast,
And float the flattered soul into the port of dreamless rest!

But you, O noxious, pigmy bird, whether it be you fly
Or paddle in the stagnant pools that sweltering, festering lie--
I curse you and your evil kind for that you do me wrong,
Engendering poisons that corrupt my petted muse of song;
Go, get thee hence, and nevermore discomfit me and mine--
I fain would barter all thy brood for one sweet draught of wine!

So hither come, O sportive youth! when fades the tell-tale day--
Come hither with your fillets and your wreathes of posies gay;
We shall unloose the fragrant seas of seething, frothing wine

Which now the cobwebbed glass and envious wire and corks confine,
And midst the pleasing revelry the praises shall be heard
Of the large cold bottle, _not_ the small hot bird.

Eugene Field

The bottle tree

A bottle tree bloometh in Winkyway land -
Heigh-ho for a bottle, I say!
A snug little berth in that ship I demand
That rocketh the Bottle-Tree babies away
Where the Bottle Tree bloometh by night and by day
And reacheth its fruit to each wee, dimpled hand;
You take of that fruit as much as you list,
For colic's a nuisance that doesn't exist!
So cuddle me and cuddle me fast,
And cuddle me snug in my cradle away,
For I hunger and thirst for that precious repast -
Heigh-ho for a bottle, I say!

The Bottle Tree bloometh by night and by day!
Heigh-ho for Winkyway land!
And Bottle-Tree fruit (as I've heard people say)
Makes bellies of Bottle-Tree babies expand -
And that is a trick I would fain understand!
Heigh-ho for a bottle to-day!
And heigh-ho for a bottle to-night -
A bottle of milk that is creamy and white!
So cuddle me close, and cuddle me fast,
And cuddle me snug in my cradle away,
For I hunger and thirst for that precious repast -
Heigh-ho for a bottle, I say!

Eugene Field

The bow-leg boy

Who should come up the road one day
But the doctor-man in his two-wheel shay!
And he whoaed his horse and he cried "Ahoy!
I have brought you folks a bow-leg boy!
 Such a cute little boy!
   Such a funny little boy!
     Such a dear little bow-leg boy!"

He took out his box and he opened it wide,
And there was the bow-leg boy inside!
And when they saw that cunning little mite,
They cried in a chorus expressive of delight:
 "What a cute little boy!
   What a funny little boy!
     What a dear little bow-leg boy!"

Observing a strict geometrical law,
They cut out his panties with a circular saw;
Which gave such a stress to his oval stride
That the people he met invariably cried:
 "What a cute little boy!
   What a funny little boy!
     What a dear little bow-leg boy!"

They gave him a wheel and away he went
Speeding along to his heart's content;
And he sits so straight and he pedals so strong
That the folks all say as he bowls along:
 "What a cute little boy!
   What a funny little boy!
     What a dear little bow-leg boy!"

With his eyes aflame and his cheeks aglow,
He laughs "aha" and he laughs "oho";
And the world is filled and thrilled with the joy
Of that jolly little human, the bow-leg boy--
 The cute little boy!
   The funny little boy!
     The dear little bow-leg boy!

If ever the doctor-man comes my way
With his wonderful box in his two-wheel shay,
I 'll ask for the treasure I'd fain possess--
Now, honest Injun! can't you guess?
 Why, a cute little boy--
   A funny little boy--
     A dear little bow-leg boy!

Eugene Field

The Broken Ring

To the willows of the brookside
The mill wheel sings to-day--
Sings and weeps,
As the brooklet creeps
Wondering on its way;
And here is the ring _she_ gave me
With love's sweet promise then--
It hath burst apart
Like the trusting heart
That may never be soothed again!

Oh, I would be a minstrel
To wander far and wide,
Weaving in song the merciless wrong
Done by a perjured bride!
Or I would be a soldier,
To seek in the bloody fray
What gifts of fate can compensate
For the pangs I suffer to-day!

Yet may this aching bosom,
By bitter sorrow crushed,
Be still and cold
In the churchyard mould
Ere _thy_ sweet voice be hushed;
So sing, sing on forever,
O wheel of the brookside mill,
For you mind me again
Of the old time when
I felt love's gracious thrill.

Eugene Field

The brook

I looked in the brook and saw a face -
Heigh-ho, but a child was I!
There were rushes and willows in that place,
And they clutched at the brook as the brook ran by;
And the brook it ran its own sweet way,
As a child doth run in heedless play,
And as it ran I heard it say:
"Hasten with me
To the roistering sea
That is wroth with the flame of the morning sky!"

I look in the brook and see a face -
Heigh-ho, but the years go by!
The rushes are dead in the old-time place,
And the willows I knew when a child was I.
And the brook it seemeth to me to say,
As ever it stealeth on its way -
Solemnly now, and not in play:
"Oh, come with me
To the slumbrous sea
That is gray with the peace of the evening sky!"

Heigh-ho, but the years go by -
I would to God that a child were I!

Eugene Field

The Convalescent Gripster

The gods let slip that fiendish grip
Upon me last week Sunday--
No fiercer storm than racked my form
E'er swept the Bay of Fundy;
But now, good-by
To drugs, say I--
Good-by to gnawing sorrow;
I am up to-day,
And, whoop, hooray!
I'm going out to-morrow!

What aches and pain in bones and brain
I had I need not mention;
It seemed to me such pangs must be
Old Satan's own invention;
Albeit I
Was sure I'd die,
The doctor reassured me--
And, true enough,
With his vile stuff,
He ultimately cured me.

As there I lay in bed all day,
How fair outside looked to me!
A smile so mild old Nature smiled
It seemed to warm clean through me.
In chastened mood
The scene I viewed,
Inventing, sadly solus,
Fantastic rhymes
Between the times
I had to take a bolus.

Of quinine slugs and other drugs
I guess I took a million--
Such drugs as serve to set each nerve
To dancing a cotillon;
The doctors say
The only way
To rout the grip instanter
Is to pour in
All kinds of sin--
Similibus curantur!

'Twas hard; and yet I'll soon forget
Those ills and cures distressing;
One's future lies 'neath gorgeous skies
When one is convalescing!
So now, good-by
To drugs say I--
Good-by, thou phantom Sorrow!
I am up to-day,

And, whoop, hooray!
I'm going out to-morrow.

Eugene Field

The Conversazzhony

What conversazzhyonies wuz I really did not know,
For that, you must remember, wuz a powerful spell ago;
The camp wuz new 'nd noisy, 'nd only modrit sized,
So fashionable sossiety wuz hardly crystallized.
There hadn't been no grand events to interest the men,
But a lynchin', or a inquest, or a jackpot now an' then.
The wimmin-folks wuz mighty scarce, for wimmin, ez a rool,
Don't go to Colorado much, excep' for teachin' school,
An' bein' scarce an' chipper and pretty (like as not),
The bachelors perpose, 'nd air accepted on the spot.

Now Sorry Tom wuz owner uv the Gosh-all-Hemlock mine,
The wich allowed his better haff to dress all-fired fine;
For Sorry Tom wuz mighty proud uv her, an' she uv him,
Though she wuz short an' tacky, an' he wuz tall an' slim,
An' she wuz edjicated, an' Sorry Tom wuz not,
Yet, for her sake, he'd whack up every cussid cent he'd got!
Waal, jest by way uv celebratin' matrimonial joys,
She thought she'd give a conversazzhyony to the boys,--
A peert an' likely lady, 'nd ez full uv 'cute idees
'Nd uv etiquettish notions ez a fyste is full uv fleas.

Three-fingered Hoover kind uv kicked, an' said they might be durned
So far ez any conversazzhyony was concerned;
He'd come to Red Hoss Mountain to tunnel for the ore,
An' not to go to parties,--quite another kind uv bore!
But, bein' he wuz candidate for marshal uv the camp,
I rayther had the upper holts in arguin' with the scamp;
Sez I, "Three-fingered Hoover, can't ye see it is yer game
To go for all the votes ye kin an' collar uv the same?"
The wich perceivin', Hoover sez, "Waal, ef I must, I must;
So I'll frequent that conversazzhyony, ef I bust!"

Three-fingered Hoover wuz a trump! Ez fine a man wuz he
Ez ever caused an inquest or blossomed on a tree!--
A big, broad man, whose face bespoke a honest heart within,--
With a bunch uv yaller whiskers appertainin' to his chin,
'Nd a fierce mustache turnt up so fur that both his ears wuz hid,
Like the picture that you always see in the "Life uv Cap'n Kidd."
His hair wuz long an' wavy an' fine as Southdown fleece,--
Oh, it shone an' smelt like Eden when he slicked it down with grease!
I'll bet there wuzn't anywhere a man, all round, ez fine
Ez wuz Three-fingered Hoover in the spring uv '69!

The conversazzhyony wuz a notable affair,
The bong tong deckolett 'nd en regaly bein' there;
The ranch where Sorry Tom hung out wuz fitted up immense,--
The Denver papers called it a "palashal residence."
There wuz mountain pines an' fern an' flowers a-hangin' on the walls,
An' cheers an' hoss-hair sofies wuz a-settin' in the halls;
An' there wuz heaps uv pictures uv folks that lived down East,
Sech ez poets an' perfessers, an' last, but not the least,

Wuz a chromo uv old Fremont,--we liked that best, you bet,
For there's lots uv us old miners that is votin' for him yet!

When Sorry Tom received the gang perlitely at the door,
He said that keerds would be allowed upon the second floor;
And then he asked us would we like a drop uv ody vee.
Connivin' at his meanin', we responded promptly, "Wee."
A conversazzhyony is a thing where people speak
The langwidge in the which they air partickulerly weak:
"I see," sez Sorry Tom, "you grasp what that 'ere lingo means."
"You bet yer boots," sez Hoover; "I've lived at Noo Orleens,
An', though I ain't no Frenchie, nor kin unto the same,
I kin parly voo, an' git there, too, like Eli, toot lee mame!"

As speakin' French wuz not my forte,--not even oovry poo,--
I stuck to keerds ez played by them ez did not parly voo,
An' bein' how that poker wuz my most perficient game,
I poneyed up for 20 blues an' set into the same.
Three-fingered Hoover stayed behind an' parly-vood so well
That all the kramy delly krame allowed he wuz the belle.
The other candidate for marshal didn't have a show;
For, while Three-fingered Hoover parlyed, ez they said, tray bow,
Bill Goslin didn't know enough uv French to git along,
'Nd I reckon that he had what folks might call a movy tong.

From Denver they had freighted up a real pianny-fort
Uv the warty-leg and pearl-around-the-keys-an'-kivver sort,
An', later in the evenin', Perfesser Vere de Blaw
Performed on that pianny, with considerble eclaw,
Sech high-toned opry airs ez one is apt to hear, you know,
When he rounds up down to Denver at a Emmy Abbitt show;
An' Barber Jim (a talented but ornery galoot)
Discoursed a obligatter, conny mory, on the floot,
'Till we, ez sot up-stairs indulgin' in a quiet game,
Conveyed to Barber Jim our wish to compromise the same.

The maynoo that wuz spread that night wuz mighty hard to beat,--
Though somewhat awkward to pernounce, it was not so to eat:
There wuz puddin's, pies, an' sandwidges, an' forty kinds uv sass,
An' floatin' Irelands, custards, tarts, an' patty dee foy grass;
An' millions uv cove oysters wuz a-settin' round in pans,
'Nd other native fruits an' things that grow out West in cans.
But I wuz all kufflummuxed when Hoover said he'd choose
"Oon peety morso, see voo play, de la cette Charlotte Rooze;"
I'd knowed Three-fingered Hoover for fifteen years or more,
'Nd I'd never heern him speak so light uv wimmin folks before!

Bill Goslin heern him say it, 'nd uv course he spread the news
Uv how Three-fingered Hoover had insulted Charlotte Rooze
At the conversazzhyony down at Sorry Tom's that night,
An' when they asked me, I allowed that Bill for once wuz right;
Although it broke my heart to see my friend go up the fluke,

We all opined his treatment uv the girl deserved rebuke.
It warn't no use for Sorry Tom to nail it for a lie,--
When it come to sassin' wimmin, there wuz blood in every eye;
The boom for Charlotte Rooze swep' on an' took the polls by storm,
An' so Three-fingered Hoover fell a martyr to reform!

Three-fingered Hoover said it was a terrible mistake,
An' when the votes wuz in, he cried ez if his heart would break.
We never knew who Charlotte wuz, but Goslin's brother Dick
Allowed she wuz the teacher from the camp on Roarin' Crick,
That had come to pass some foreign tongue with them uv our alite
Ez wuz at the high-toned party down at Sorry Tom's that night.
We let it drop--this matter uv the lady--there an' then,
An' we never heerd, nor wanted to, of Charlotte Rooze again,
An' the Colorado wimmin-folks, ez like ez not, don't know
How we vindicated all their sex a twenty year ago.

For in these wondrous twenty years has come a mighty change,
An' most of them old pioneers have gone acrosst the range,
Way out into the silver land beyond the peaks uv snow,--
The land uv rest an' sunshine, where all good miners go.
I reckon that they love to look, from out the silver haze,
Upon that God's own country where they spent sech happy days;
Upon the noble cities that have risen since they went;
Upon the camps an' ranches that are prosperous and content;
An' best uv all, upon those hills that reach into the air,
Ez if to clasp the loved ones that are waitin' over there.

Eugene Field

The cunnin' little thing

When baby wakes of mornings,
Then it's wake, ye people all!
For another day
Of song and play
Has come at our darling's call!
And, till she gets her dinner,
She makes the welkin ring,
And she won't keep still till she's had her fill -
The cunnin' little thing!

When baby goes a-walking,
Oh, how her paddies fly!
For that's the way
The babies say
To other folk "by-by";
The trees bend down to kiss her,
And the birds in rapture sing,
As there she stands and waves her hands -
The cunnin' little thing!

When baby goes a-rocking
In her bed at close of day,
At hide-and-seek
On her dainty cheek
The dreams and the dimples play;
Then it's sleep in the tender kisses
The guardian angels bring
From the Far Above to my sweetest love -
You cunnin' little thing!

Eugene Field

The dead babe

Last night, as my dear babe lay dead,
In agony I knelt and said:
"0 God! what have I done,
Or in what wise offended Thee,
That Thou should'st take away from me
My little son?

"Upon the thousand useless lives,
Upon the guilt that vaunting thrives,
Thy wrath were better spent!
Why should'st Thou take my little son -
Why should'st Thou vent Thy wrath upon
This innocent?"

Last night, as my dear babe lay dead,
Before mine eyes the vision spread
Of things that might have been:
Licentious riot, cruel strife,
Forgotten prayers, a wasted life
Dark red with sin!

Then, with sweet music in the air,
I saw another vision there:
A Shepherd in whose keep
A little lamb - my little child!
Of worldly wisdom undefiled,
Lay fast asleep!

Last night, as my dear babe lay dead,
In those two messages I read
A wisdom manifest;
And though my arms be childless now,
I am content - to Him I bow
Who knoweth best.

Eugene Field

The Death of Robin Hood

"Give me my bow," said Robin Hood,
 "An arrow give to me;
And where 't is shot mark thou that spot,
 For there my grave shall be."

Then Little John did make no sign,
 And not a word he spake;
But he smiled, altho' with mickle woe
 His heart was like to break.

He raised his master in his arms,
 And set him on his knee;
And Robin's eyes beheld the skies,
 The shaws, the greenwood tree.

The brook was babbling as of old,
 The birds sang full and clear,
And the wild-flowers gay like a carpet lay
 In the path of the timid deer.

"O Little John," said Robin Hood,
 "Meseemeth now to be
Standing with you so stanch and true
 Under the greenwood tree.

"And all around I hear the sound
 Of Sherwood long ago,
And my merry men come back again,--
 You know, sweet friend, you know!

"Now mark this arrow; where it falls,
 When I am dead dig deep,
And bury me there in the greenwood where
 I would forever sleep."

He twanged his bow. Upon its course
 The clothyard arrow sped,
And when it fell in yonder dell,
 Brave Robin Hood was dead.

The sheriff sleeps in a marble vault,
 The king in a shroud of gold;
And upon the air with a chanted pray'r
 Mingles the mock of mould.

But the deer draw to the shady pool,
 The birds sing blithe and free,
And the wild-flow'rs bloom o'er a hidden tomb
 Under the greenwood tree.

Eugene Field

The delectable ballad of the waller lot

Up yonder in Buena Park
There is a famous spot,
In legend and in history
Yclept the Waller Lot.

There children play in daytime
And lovers stroll by dark,
For 't is the goodliest trysting-place
In all Buena Park.

Once on a time that beauteous maid,
Sweet little Sissy Knott,
Took out her pretty doll to walk
Within the Waller Lot.

While thus she fared, from Ravenswood
Came Injuns o'er the plain,
And seized upon that beauteous maid
And rent her doll in twain.

Oh, 't was a piteous thing to hear
Her lamentations wild;
She tore her golden curls and cried:
"My child! My child! My child!"

Alas, what cared those Injun chiefs
How bitterly wailed she?
They never had been mothers,
And they could not hope to be!

"Have done with tears," they rudely quoth,
And then they bound her hands;
For they proposed to take her off
To distant border lands.

But, joy! from Mr. Eddy's barn
Doth Willie Clow behold
The sight that makes his hair rise up
And all his blood run cold.

He put his fingers in his mouth
And whistled long and clear,
And presently a goodly horde
Of cow-boys did appear.

Cried Willie Clow: "My comrades bold,
Haste to the Waller Lot,
And rescue from that Injun band
Our charming Sissy Knott!"

"Spare neither Injun buck nor squaw,
But smite them hide and hair!

Spare neither sex nor age nor size,
And no condition spare!"

Then sped that cow-boy band away,
Full of revengeful wrath,
And Kendall Evans rode ahead
Upon a hickory lath.

And next came gallant Dady Field
And Willie's brother Kent,
The Eddy boys and Robbie James,
On murderous purpose bent.

For they were much beholden to
That maid - in sooth, the lot
Were very, very much in love
With charming Sissy Knott.

What wonder? She was beauty's queen,
And good beyond compare;
Moreover, it was known she was
Her wealthy father's heir!

Now when the Injuns saw that band
They trembled with affright,
And yet they thought the cheapest thing
To do was stay and fight.

So sturdily they stood their ground,
Nor would their prisoner yield,
Despite the wrath of Willie Clow
And gallant Dady Field.

Oh, never fiercer battle raged
Upon the Waller Lot,
And never blood more freely flowed
Than flowed for Sissy Knott!

An Injun chief of monstrous size
Got Kendall Evans down,
And Robbie James was soon o'erthrown
By one of great renown.

And Dady Field was sorely done,
And Willie Clow was hurt,
And all that gallant cow-boy band
Lay wallowing in the dirt.

But still they strove with might and main
Till all the Waller Lot
Was strewn with hair and gouts of gore -
All, all for Sissy Knott!

Then cried the maiden in despair:
"Alas, I sadly fear
The battle and my hopes are lost,
Unless some help appear!"

Lo, as she spoke, she saw afar
The rescuer looming up -
The pride of all Buena Park,
Clow's famous yellow pup!

"Now, sick'em, Don," the maiden cried,
"Now, sick'em, Don!" cried she;
Obedient Don at once complied -
As ordered, so did he.

He sicked'em all so passing well
That, overcome by fright,
The Indian horde gave up the fray
And safety sought in flight.

They ran and ran and ran and ran
O'er valley, plain, and hill;
And if they are not walking now,
Why, then, they're running still.

The cow-boys rose up from the dust
With faces black and blue;
"Remember, beauteous maid," said they,
"We've bled and died for you!"

"And though we suffer grievously,
We gladly hail the lot
That brings us toils and pains and wounds
For charming Sissy Knott!"

But Sissy Knott still wailed and wept,
And still her fate reviled;
For who could patch her dolly up -
Who, who could mend her child?

Then out her doting mother came,
And soothed her daughter then;
"Grieve not, my darling, I will sew
Your dolly up again!"

Joy soon succeeded unto grief,
And tears were soon dried up,
And dignities were heaped upon
Clow's noble yellow pup.

Him all that goodly company

Did as deliverer hail -
They tied a ribbon round his neck,
Another round his tail.

And every anniversary day
Upon the Waller Lot
They celebrate the victory won
For charming Sissy Knott.

And I, the poet of these folk,
Am ordered to compile
This truly famous history
In good old ballad style.

Which having done as to have earned
The sweet rewards of fame,
In what same style I did begin
I now shall end the same.

So let us sing: Long live the King,
Long live the Queen and Jack,
Long live the ten-spot and the ace,
And also all the pack.

Eugene Field

The Dinkey Bird

In an ocean, 'way out yonder,
(As all sapient people know)
Is the land of Wonder-Wander,
Whither children love to go;
It's their playing, romping, swinging,
That give great joy to me
While the Dinkey-Bird goes singing
In the amfalula tree!
There the gum-drops grow like cherries,
And taffy's thick as peas--
Caramels you pick like berries
When, and where, and how you please;
Big red sugar-plums are clinging
To the cliffs beside that sea
Where the Dinkey-Bird is singing
In the amfalula tree!
So when children shout and scamper
And make merry all the day,
When there's naught to put a damper
To the ardor of their play;
When I hear their laughter ringing,
Then I'm sure as sure can be
That the Dinkey-Bird is singing
In the amfalula tree!
For the Dinkey-Bird's bravuras
And staccatos are so sweet--
His roulades, appoggiaturas,
And robustos so complete,
That the youth of every nation--
Be they near or far away--
Have especial delectation
In that gladsome roundelay.
Their eyes grow bright and brighter,
Their lungs begin to crow,
Their hearts get light and lighter,
And their cheeks are all aglow;
For an echo cometh bringing
The news to all and me,
That the Dinkey-Bird is singing
In the amfalula tree.
I'm sure you like to go there
To see your feathered friend--
And so many goodies grow there
You would like to comprehend!
Speed, little dreams, your winging
To that land across the sea
Where the Dinkey-Bird is singing
In the amfalula tree!

Eugene Field

The discreet collector

Down south there is a curio-shop
 Unknown to many men;
Thereat do I intend to stop
 When I am south again;
The narrow street through which to go--
 Aha! I know it well!
And may be you would like to know--
 But no--I will not tell!

'T is there to find the loveliest plates
 (The bluest of the blue!)
At such surprisingly low rates
 You'd not believe it true!
And there is one Napoleon vase
 Of dainty Sèvres to sell--
I'm sure you'd like to know that place--
 But no--I will not tell!

Then, too, I know another shop
 Has old, old beds for sale,
With lovely testers up on top
 Carved in ornate detail;
And there are sideboards rich and rare,
 With fronts that proudly swell--
Oh, there are bargains waiting there,
 But where I will not tell!

And hark! I know a bottle-man
 Smiling and debonair,
And he has promised me I can
 Choose of his precious ware!
In age and shape and color, too,
 His dainty goods excel--
Aha, my friends, if you but knew--
 But no! I will not tell!

A thousand other shops I know
 Where bargains can be got--
Where other folk would like to go
 Who have what I have not.
I let them hunt; I hold my mouth--
 Yes, though I know full well
Where lie the treasures of the south,
 I'm not a going to tell!

Eugene Field

The Divine Lullaby

I hear Thy voice, dear Lord;
I hear it by the stormy sea
 When winter nights are black and wild,
And when, affright, I call to Thee;
 It calms my fears and whispers me,
"Sleep well, my child."

 I hear Thy voice, dear Lord,
In singing winds, in falling snow,
 The curfew chimes, the midnight bell.
"Sleep well, my child," it murmurs low;
"The guardian angels come and go,--
 O child, sleep well!"

 I hear Thy voice, dear Lord,
Ay, though the singing winds be stilled,
 Though hushed the tumult of the deep,
My fainting heart with anguish chilled
By Thy assuring tone is thrilled,--
 "Fear not, and sleep!"

 Speak on--speak on, dear Lord!
And when the last dread night is near,
 With doubts and fears and terrors wild,
Oh, let my soul expiring hear
Only these words of heavenly cheer,
 "Sleep well, my child!"

Eugene Field

The doll's wooing

The little French doll was a dear little doll
Tricked out in the sweetest of dresses;
Her eyes were of hue
A most delicate blue
And dark as the night were her tresses;
Her dear little mouth was fluted and red,
And this little French doll was so very well bred
That whenever accosted her little mouth said
"Mamma! mamma!"

The stockinet doll, with one arm and one leg,
Had once been a handsome young fellow;
But now he appeared
Rather frowzy and bleared
In his torn regimentals of yellow;
Yet his heart gave a curious thump as he lay
In the little toy cart near the window one day
And heard the sweet voice of that French dolly say:
"Mamma! mamma!"

He listened so long and he listened so hard
That anon he grew ever so tender,
For it's everywhere known
That the feminine tone
Gets away with all masculine gender!
He up and he wooed her with soldierly zest
But all she'd reply to the love he professed
Were these plaintive words (which perhaps you have guessed):
"Mamma! mamma!"

Her mother - a sweet little lady of five -
Vouchsafed her parental protection,
And although stockinet
Wasn't blue-blooded, yet
She really could make no objection!
So soldier and dolly were wedded one day,
And a moment ago, as I journeyed that way,
I'm sure that I heard a wee baby voice say:
"Mamma! mamma!"

Eugene Field

The dreams

Two dreams came down to earth one night
 From the realm of mist and dew;
One was a dream of the old, old days,
 And one was a dream of the new.

One was a dream of a shady lane
 That led to the pickerel pond
Where the willows and rushes bowed themselves
 To the brown old hills beyond.

And the people that peopled the old-time dream
 Were pleasant and fair to see,
And the dreamer he walked with them again
 As often of old walked he.

Oh, cool was the wind in the shady lane
 That tangled his curly hair!
Oh, sweet was the music the robins made
 To the springtime everywhere!

Was it the dew the dream had brought
 From yonder midnight skies,
Or was it tears from the dear, dead years
 That lay in the dreamer's eyes?

The other dream ran fast and free,
 As the moon benignly shed
Her golden grace on the smiling face
 In the little trundle-bed.

For 't was a dream of times to come--
 Of the glorious noon of day--
Of the summer that follows the careless spring
 When the child is done with play.

And 't was a dream of the busy world
 Where valorous deeds are done;
Of battles fought in the cause of right,
 And of victories nobly won.

It breathed no breath of the dear old home
 And the quiet joys of youth;
It gave no glimpse of the good old friends
 Or the old-time faith and truth.

But 't was a dream of youthful hopes,
 And fast and free it ran,
And it told to a little sleeping child
 Of a boy become a man!

These were the dreams that came one night
 To earth from yonder sky;

These were the dreams two dreamers dreamed--
 My little boy and I.

And in our hearts my boy and I
 Were glad that it was so;
He loved to dream of days to come,
 And I of long ago.

So from our dreams my boy and I
 Unwillingly awoke,
But neither of his precious dream
 Unto the other spoke.

Yet of the love we bore those dreams
 Gave each his tender sign;
For there was triumph in his eyes--
 And there were tears in mine!

Eugene Field

The dream-ship

When the world is fast asleep,
  Along the midnight skies--
As though it were a wandering cloud--
  The ghostly dream-ship flies.

An angel stands at the dream-ship's helm,
  An angel stands at the prow,
And an angel stands at the dream-ship's side
  With a rue-wreath on her brow.

The other angels, silver-crowned,
  Pilot and helmsman are,
And the angel with the wreath of rue
  Tosseth the dreams afar.

The dreams they fall on rich and poor;
  They fall on young and old;
And some are dreams of poverty,
  And some are dreams of gold.

And some are dreams that thrill with joy,
  And some that melt to tears;
Some are dreams of the dawn of love,
  And some of the old dead years.

On rich and poor alike they fall,
  Alike on young and old,
Bringing to slumbering earth their joys
  And sorrows manifold.

The friendless youth in them shall do
  The deeds of mighty men,
And drooping age shall feel the grace
  Of buoyant youth again.

The king shall be a beggarman--
  The pauper be a king--
In that revenge or recompense
  The dream-ship dreams do bring.

So ever downward float the dreams
  That are for all and me,
And there is never mortal man
  Can solve that mystery.

But ever onward in its course
  Along the haunted skies--
As though it were a cloud astray--
  The ghostly dream-ship flies.

Two angels with their silver crowns
  Pilot and helmsman are,

And an angel with a wreath of rue
Tosseth the dreams afar.

Eugene Field

The Drum

I'm a beautiful red, red drum,
And I train with the soldier boys;
As up the street we come,
Wonderful is our noise!
There's Tom, and Jim, and Phil,
And Dick, and Nat, and Fred,
While Widow Cutler's Bill
And I march on ahead,
With a r-r-rat-tat-tat
And a tum-titty-um-tum-tum -
Oh, there's bushels of fun in that
For boys with a little red drum!

The Injuns came last night
While the soldiers were abed,
And they gobbled a Chinese kite
And off to the woods they fled!
The woods are the cherry-trees
Down in the orchard lot,
And the soldiers are marching to seize
The booty the Injuns got.
With tum-titty-um-tum-tum,
And r-r-rat-tat-tat,
When soldiers marching come
Injuns had better scat!

Step up there, little Fred,
And, Charley, have a mind!
Jim is as far ahead
As you two are behind!
Ready with gun and sword
Your valorous work to do -
Yonder the Injun horde
Are lying in wait for you.
And their hearts go pitapat
When they hear the soldiers come
With a r-r-rat-tat-tat
And a tum-titty-um-tum-tum!

Course it's all in play!
The skulking Injun crew
That hustled the kite away
Are little white boys, like you!
But 'honest' or 'just in fun,'
It is all the same to me;
And, when the battle is won,
Home once again march we
With a r-r-rat-tat-tat
And tum-titty-um-tum-tum;
And there's glory enough in that
For the boys with their little red drum!

Eugene Field

The duel

The gingham dog and the calico cat
Side by side on the table sat;
'T was half-past twelve, and (what do you think!)
Nor one nor t' other had slept a wink!
The old Dutch clock and the Chinese plate
Appeared to know as sure as fate
There was going to be a terrible spat.
(I wasn't there; I simply state
What was told to me by the Chinese plate!)

The gingham dog went "bow-wow-wow!"
And the calico cat replied "mee-ow!"
The air was littered, an hour or so,
With bits of gingham and calico,
While the old Dutch clock in the chimney place
Up with its hands before its face,
For it always dreaded a family row!
(Now mind: I'm only telling you
What the old Dutch clock declares is true!)

The Chinese plate looked very blue,
And wailed, "Oh, dear! what shall we do!"
But the gingham dog and the calico cat
Wallowed this way and tumbled that,
Employing every tooth and claw
In the awfullest way you ever saw -
And, oh! how the gingham and calico flew!
(Don't fancy I exaggerate -
I got my news from the Chinese plate!)

Next morning, where the two had sat
They found no trace of dog or cat;
And some folks think unto this day
That burglars stole that pair away!
But the truth about the cat and pup
Is this: they ate each other up!
Now what do you really think of that!
(The old Dutch clock it told me so,
And that is how I came to know.)

Eugene Field

The Dying Year

The year has been a tedious one--
A weary round of toil and sorrow,
And, since it now at last is gone,
We say farewell and hail the morrow.

Yet o'er the wreck which time has wrought
A sweet, consoling ray is shimmered--
The one but compensating thought
That literary life has glimmered.

Struggling with hunger and with cold
The world contemptuously beheld 'er;
The little thing was one year old--
But who'd have cared had she been elder?

Eugene Field

The fly-away horse

Oh, a wonderful horse is the Fly-Away Horse -
Perhaps you have seen him before;
Perhaps, while you slept, his shadow has swept

Through the moonlight that floats on the floor.
For it's only at night, when the stars twinkle bright,
That the Fly-Away Horse, with a neigh
And a pull at his rein and a toss of his mane,
Is up on his heels and away!
The Moon in the sky,
As he gallopeth by,
Cries: "Oh! what a marvelous sight!"
And the Stars in dismay
Hide their faces away
In the lap of old Grandmother Night.

It is yonder, out yonder, the Fly-Away Horse
Speedeth ever and ever away -
Over meadows and lanes, over mountains and plains,
Over streamlets that sing at their play;
And over the sea like a ghost sweepeth he,
While the ships they go sailing below,
And he speedeth so fast that the men at the mast
Adjudge him some portent of woe.
"What ho there!" they cry,
As he flourishes by
With a whisk of his beautiful tail;
And the fish in the sea
Are as scared as can be,
From the nautilus up to the whale!

And the Fly-Away Horse seeks those faraway lands
You little folk dream of at night -
Where candy-trees grow, and honey-brooks flow,
And corn-fields with popcorn are white;
And the beasts in the wood are ever so good
To children who visit them there -
What glory astride of a lion to ride,
Or to wrestle around with a bear!
The monkeys, they say:
"Come on, let us play,"
And they frisk in the cocoanut-trees:
While the parrots, that cling
To the peanut-vines, sing
Or converse with comparative ease!

Off! scamper to bed - you shall ride him tonight!
For, as soon as you've fallen asleep,
With a jubilant neigh he shall bear you away
Over forest and hillside and deep!
But tell us, my dear, all you see and you hear
In those beautiful lands over there,

Where the Fly-Away Horse wings his faraway course
With the wee one consigned to his care.
Then grandma will cry
In amazement: "Oh, my!"
And she'll think it could never be so;
And only we two
Shall know it is true -
You and I, little precious! shall know!

Eugene Field

The Great Journalist In Spain

Good editor Dana-God bless him, we say-
Will soon be afloat on the main,
Will be steaming away
Through the mist and the spray
To the sensuous climate of Spain.

Strange sights shall he see in that beautiful land
Which is famed for its soap and its Moor,
For, as we understand,
The scenery is grand
Though the system of railways is poor.

For moonlight of silver and sunlight of gold
Glint the orchards of lemons and mangoes,
And the ladies, we're told,
Are a joy to behold
As they twine in their lissome fandangoes.

What though our friend Dana shall twang a guitar
And murmur a passionate strain;
Oh, fairer by far
Than those ravishments are
The castles abounding in Spain.

These castles are built as the builder may list-
They are sometimes of marble or stone,
But they mostly consist
Of east wind and mist
With an ivy of froth overgrown.

A beautiful castle our Dana shall raise
On a futile foundation of hope,
And its glories shall blaze
In the somnolent haze
Of the mythical lake del y Soap.

The fragrance of sunflowers shall swoon on the air
And the visions of Dreamland obtain,
And the song of 'World's Fair'
Shall be heard everywhere
Through that beautiful castle in Spain.

Eugene Field

The happy household

It's when the birds go piping and the daylight slowly breaks,
That, clamoring for his dinner, our precious baby wakes;
Then it's sleep no more for baby, and it's sleep no more for me,
For, when he wants his dinner, why it's dinner it must be!
And of that lacteal fluid he partakes with great ado,
 While gran'ma laughs,
 And gran'pa laughs,
 And wife, she laughs,
 And I - well, I laugh, too!

You'd think, to see us carrying on about that little tad,
That, like as not, that baby was the first we'd ever had;
But, sakes alive! he isn't, yet we people make a fuss
As if the only baby in the world had come to us!
And, morning, noon, and night-time, whatever he may do,
 Gran'ma, she laughs,
 Gran'pa, he laughs,
 Wife, she laughs,
 And I, of course, laugh, too!

But once - a likely spell ago - when that poor little chick
From teething or from some such ill of infancy fell sick,
You wouldn't know us people as the same that went about
A-feelin' good all over, just to hear him crow and shout;
And, though the doctor poohed our fears and said he'd pull him through,
 Old gran'ma cried,
 And gran'pa cried,
 And wife, she cried,
 And I - yes, I cried, too!

It makes us all feel good to have a baby on the place,
With his everlastin' crowing and his dimpling, dumpling face;
The patter of his pinky feet makes music everywhere,
And when he shakes those fists of his, good-by to every care!
No matter what our trouble is, when he begins to coo,
 Old gran'ma laughs,
 And gran'pa laughs,
 Wife, she laughs,
 And I - you bet, I laugh, too!

Eugene Field

The Happy Isles

Oh, come with me to the Happy Isles
In the golden haze off yonder,
Where the song of the sun-kissed breeze beguiles
And the ocean loves to wander.

Fragrant the vines that mantle those hills,
Proudly the fig rejoices,
Merrily dance the virgin rills,
Blending their myriad voices.

Our herds shall suffer no evil there,
But peacefully feed and rest them;
Never thereto shall prowling bear
Or serpent come to molest them.

Neither shall Eurus, wanton bold,
Nor feverish drought distress us,
But he that compasseth heat and cold
Shall temper them both to bless us.

There no vandal foot has trod,
And the pirate hordes that wander
Shall never profane the sacred sod
Of those beautiful isles out yonder.

Never a spell shall blight our vines,
Nor Sirius blaze above us,
But you and I shall drink our wines
And sing to the loved that love us.

So come with me where Fortune smiles
And the gods invite devotion,--
Oh, come with me to the Happy Isles
In the haze of that far-off ocean!

Eugene Field

The humming top

The top it hummeth a sweet, sweet song
To my dear little boy at play -
Merrily singeth all day long,
As it spinneth and spinneth away.
And my dear little boy
He laugheth with joy
When he heareth the monotone
Of that busy thing
That loveth to sing
The song that is all its own.

Hold fast the string and wind it tight,
That the song be loud and clear;
Now hurl the top with all your might
Upon the banquette here;
And straight from the string
The joyous thing
Boundeth and spinneth along,
And it whirrs and it chirrs
And it birrs and it purrs
Ever its pretty song.

Will ever my dear little boy grow old,
As some have grown before?
Will ever his heart feel faint and cold,
When he heareth the songs of yore?
Will ever this toy
Of my dear little boy,
When the years have worn away,
Sing sad and low
Of the long ago,
As it singeth to me to-day?

Eugene Field

The jaffa and jerusalem railway

A tortuous double iron track; a station here, a station there;
A locomotive, tender, tanks; a coach with stiff reclining chair;
Some postal cars, and baggage, too; a vestibule of patent make;
With buffers, duffers, switches, and the soughing automatic brake--
This is the Orient's novel pride, and Syria's gaudiest modern gem:
The railway scheme that is to ply 'twixt Jaffa and Jerusalem.

Beware, O sacred Mooley cow, the engine when you hear its bell;
Beware, O camel, when resounds the whistle's shrill, unholy swell;
And, native of that guileless land, unused to modern travel's snare,
Beware the fiend that peddles books--the awful peanut-boy beware.
Else, trusting in their specious arts, you may have reason to condemn
The traffic which the knavish ply 'twixt Jaffa and Jerusalem.

And when, ah, when the bonds fall due, how passing wroth will wax the state
From Nebo's mount to Nazareth will spread the cry "Repudiate"!
From Hebron to Tiberius, from Jordan's banks unto the sea,
Will rise profuse anathemas against "that ---- monopoly!"
And F.M.B.A. shepherd-folk, with Sockless Jerry leading them,
Will swamp that corporation line 'twixt Jaffa and Jerusalem.

Eugene Field

The limitations of youth

I'd like to be a cowboy an' ride a fiery hoss
 Way out into the big an' boundless west;
I'd kill the bears an' catamounts an' wolves I come across,
 An' I'd pluck the bal' head eagle from his nest!
    With my pistols at my side,
    I would roam the prarers wide,
An' to scalp the savage Injun in his wigwam would I ride--
    If I darst; but I darsen't!

I'd like to go to Afriky an' hunt the lions there,
 An' the biggest ollyfunts you ever saw!
I would track the fierce gorilla to his equatorial lair,
 An' beard the cannybull that eats folks raw!
    I'd chase the pizen snakes
    An' the 'pottimus that makes
His nest down at the bottom of unfathomable lakes--
    If I darst; but I darsen't!

I would I were a pirut to sail the ocean blue,
 With a big black flag aflyin' overhead;
I would scour the billowy main with my gallant pirut crew
 An' dye the sea a gouty, gory red!
    With my cutlass in my hand
    On the quarterdeck I'd stand
And to deeds of heroism I'd incite my pirut band--
    If I darst; but I darsen't!

And, if I darst, I'd lick my pa for the times that he's licked me!
 I'd lick my brother an' my teacher, too!
I'd lick the fellers that call round on sister after tea,
 An' I'd keep on lickin' folks till I got through!
    You bet! I'd run away
    From my lessons to my play,
An' I'd shoo the hens, an' tease the cat, an' kiss the girls all day--
    If I darst; but I darsen't!

Eugene Field

The Little Peach

A little peach in the orchard grew,--
A little peach of emerald hue;
Warmed by the sun and wet by the dew,
        It grew.

One day, passing that orchard through,
That little peach dawned on the view
Of Johnny Jones and his sister Sue--
        Them two.

Up at that peach a club they threw--
Down from the stem on which it grew
Fell that peach of emerald hue.
        Mon Dieu!

John took a bite and Sue a chew,
And then the trouble began to brew,--
Trouble the doctor couldn't subdue.
        Too true!

Under the turf where the daisies grew
They planted John and his sister Sue,
And their little souls to the angels flew,--
        Boo hoo!

What of that peach of the emerald hue,
Warmed by the sun, and wet by the dew?
Ah, well, its mission on earth is through.
        Adieu!

1880.

Eugene Field

The Lyttel Boy

Sometime there ben a lyttel boy
 That wolde not renne and play,
And helpless like that little tyke
 Ben allwais in the way.
"Goe, make you merrie with the rest,"
 His weary moder cried;
But with a frown he catcht her gown
 And hong untill her side.

That boy did love his moder well,
 Which spake him faire, I ween;
He loved to stand and hold her hand
 And ken her with his een;
His cosset bleated in the croft,
 His toys unheeded lay,--
He wolde not goe, but, tarrying soe,
 Ben allwais in the way.

Godde loveth children and doth gird
 His throne with soche as these,
And He doth smile in plaisaunce while
 They cluster at His knees;
And sometime, when He looked on earth
 And watched the bairns at play,
He kenned with joy a lyttel boy
 Ben allwais in the way.

And then a moder felt her heart
 How that it ben to-torne,--
She kissed eche day till she ben gray
 The shoon he used to worn;
No bairn let hold untill her gown,
 Nor played upon the floore,--
Godde's was the joy; a lyttel boy
 Ben in the way no more!

Eugene Field

The night wind

Have you ever heard the wind go "Yooooo"?
'T is a pitiful sound to hear!
It seems to chill you through and through
With a strange and speechless fear.
'T is the voice of the night that broods outside
When folk should be asleep,
And many and many's the time I've cried
To the darkness brooding far and wide
Over the land and the deep:
Whom do you want, O lonely night,
That you wail the long hours through?"
And the night would say in its ghostly way:
"Yooooooo!
Yooooooo!
Yooooooo!"

My mother told me long ago
(When I was a little tad)
That when the night went wailing so,
Somebody had been bad;
And then, when I was snug in bed,
Whither I had been sent,
With the blankets pulled up round my head,
I'd think of what my mother'd said,
And wonder what boy she meant!
And "Who's been bad to-day?" I'd ask
Of the wind that hoarsely blew,
And the voice would say in its meaningful way:
"Yooooooo!
Yooooooo!
Yooooooo!"

That this was true I must allow -
You'll not believe it, though!
Yes, though I'm quite a model now,
I was not always so.
And if you doubt what things I say,
Suppose you make the test;
Suppose, when you've been bad some day
And up to bed are sent away
From mother and the rest -
Suppose you ask, "Who has been bad?"
And then you'll hear what's true;
For the wind will moan in its ruefulest tone:
"Yooooooo!
Yooooooo!
Yooooooo!"

Eugene Field

The Old Homestead

JEST as atween the awk'ard lines a hand we love has penn'd
Appears a meanin' hid from other eyes,
So, in your simple, homespun art, old honest Yankee friend,
A power o' tearful, sweet seggestion lies.
We see it all--the pictur' that our mem'ries hold so dear--
The homestead in New England far away,
An' the vision is so nat'ral-like we almost seem to hear
The voices that were heshed but yesterday.

Ah, who'd ha' thought the music of that distant childhood time
Would sleep through all the changeful, bitter years
To waken into melodies like Chris'mas bells a-chime
An' to claim the ready tribute of our tears!
Why, the robins in the maples an' the blackbirds round the pond,
The crickets an' the locusts in the leaves,
The brook that chased the trout adown the hillside just beyond,
An' the swallers in their nests beneath the eaves--
They all come troopin' back with you, dear Uncle Josh, to-day,
An' they seem to sing with all the joyous zest
Of the days when we were Yankee boys an' Yankee girls at play,
With nary thought of 'livin' way out West'!

God bless ye, Denman Thomps'n, for the good y' do our hearts,
With this music an' these memories o' youth--
God bless ye for the faculty that tops all human arts,
The good ol' Yankee faculty of Truth!

Eugene Field

The Perpetual Wooing

The dull world clamors at my feet
And asks my hand and helping sweet;
And wonders when the time shall be
I'll leave off dreaming dreams of thee.
It blames me coining soul and time
And sending minted bits of rhyme--
A-wooing of thee still.

Shall I make answer? This it is:
I camp beneath thy galaxies
Of starry thoughts and shining deeds;
And, seeing new ones, I must needs
Arouse my speech to tell thee, dear,
Though thou art nearer, I am near--
A-wooing of thee still.

I feel thy heart-beat next mine own;
Its music hath a richer tone.
I rediscover in thine eyes
A balmier, dewier paradise.
I'm sure thou art a rarer girl--
And so I seek thee, finest pearl,
A-wooing of thee still.

With blood of roses on thy lips--
Canst doubt my trembling?--something slips
Between thy loveliness and me--
So commonplace, so fond of thee.
Ah, sweet, a kiss is waiting where
That last one stopped thy lover's prayer--
A-wooing of thee still.

When new light falls upon thy face
My gladdened soul discerns some trace
Of God, or angel, never seen
In other days of shade and sheen.
Ne'er may such rapture die, or less
Than joy like this my heart confess--
A-wooing of thee still.

Go thou, O soul of beauty, go
Fleet-footed toward the heavens aglow.
Mayhap, in following, thou shalt see
Me worthier of thy love and thee.
Thou wouldst not have me satisfied
Until thou lov'st me--none beside--
A-wooing of thee still.

This was a song of years ago--
Of spring! Now drifting flowers of snow
Bloom on the window-sills as white
As gray-beard looking through love's light

And holding blue-veined hands the while.
He finds her last--the sweetest smile--
A-wooing of her still.

Eugene Field

The peter-bird

Out of the woods by the creek cometh a calling for Peter,
And from the orchard a voice echoes and echoes it over;
Down in the pasture the sheep hear that strange crying for Peter,
Over the meadows that call is aye and forever repeated.
So let me tell you the tale, when, where, and how it all happened,
And, when the story is told, let us pay heed to the lesson.

Once on a time, long ago, lived in the State of Kentucky
One that was reckoned a witch--full of strange spells and devices;
Nightly she wandered the woods, searching for charms voodooistic--
Scorpions, lizards, and herbs, dormice, chameleons, and plantains!
Serpents and caw-caws and bats, screech-owls and crickets and adders--
These were the guides of that witch through the dank deeps of the forest.
Then, with her roots and her herbs, back to her cave in the morning
Ambled that hussy to brew spells of unspeakable evil;
And, when the people awoke, seeing that hillside and valley
Sweltered in swathes as of mist--"Look!" they would whisper in terror--
"Look! the old witch is at work brewing her spells of great evil!"
Then would they pray till the sun, darting his rays through the vapor,
Lifted the smoke from the earth and baffled the witch's intentions.

One of the boys at that time was a certain young person named Peter,
Given too little to work, given too largely to dreaming;
Fonder of books than of chores, you can imagine that Peter
Led a sad life on the farm, causing his parents much trouble.
"Peter!" his mother would call, "the cream is a'ready for churning!"
"Peter!" his father would cry, "go grub at the weeds in the garden!"
So it was "Peter!" all day--calling, reminding, and chiding--
Peter neglected his work; therefore that nagging at Peter!

Peter got hold of some books--how, I'm unable to tell you;
Some have suspected the witch--this is no place for suspicions!
It is sufficient to stick close to the thread of the legend.
Nor is it stated or guessed what was the trend of those volumes;
What thing soever it was--done with a pen and a pencil,
Wrought with a brain, not a hoe--surely 't was hostile to farming!

"Fudge on all readin'!" they quoth; or "that's what's the ruin of
Peter!"

So, when the mornings were hot, under the beech or the maple,
Cushioned in grass that was blue, breathing the breath of the blossoms,
Lulled by the hum of the bees, the coo of the ring-doves a-mating,
Peter would frivol his time at reading, or lazing, or dreaming.
"Peter!" his mother would call, "the cream is a'ready for churning!"
"Peter!" his father would cry, "go grub at the weeds in the garden!"
"Peter!" and "Peter!" all day--calling, reminding, and chiding--
Peter neglected his chores; therefore that outcry for Peter;
Therefore the neighbors allowed evil would surely befall him--
Yes, on account of these things, ruin would come upon Peter!

Surely enough, on a time, reading and lazing and dreaming

Wrought the calamitous ill all had predicted for Peter;
For, of a morning in spring when lay the mist in the valleys--
"See," quoth the folk, "how the witch breweth her evil decoctions!
See how the smoke from her fire broodeth on woodland and meadow!
Grant that the sun cometh out to smother the smudge of her caldron!
She hath been forth in the night, full of her spells and devices,
Roaming the marshes and dells for heathenish magical nostrums;
Digging in leaves and at stumps for centipedes, pismires, and spiders,
Grubbing in poisonous pools for hot salamanders and toadstools;
Charming the bats from the flues, snaring the lizards by twilight,
Sucking the scorpion's egg and milking the breast of the adder!"

Peter derided these things held in such faith by the farmer,
Scouted at magic and charms, hooted at Jonahs and hoodoos--
Thinking and reading of books must have unsettled his reason!
"There ain't no witches," he cried; "it isn't smoky, but foggy!
I will go out in the wet--you all can't hender me, nuther!"

Surely enough he went out into the damp of the morning,
Into the smudge that the witch spread over woodland and meadow,
Into the fleecy gray pall brooding on hillside and valley.
Laughing and scoffing, he strode into that hideous vapor;
Just as he said he would do, just as he bantered and threatened,
Ere they could fasten the door, Peter had done gone and done it!
Wasting his time over books, you see, had unsettled his reason--
Soddened his callow young brain with semi-pubescent paresis,
And his neglect of his chores hastened this evil condition.

Out of the woods by the creek cometh a calling for Peter
And from the orchard a voice echoes and echoes it over;
Down in the pasture the sheep hear that shrill crying for Peter,
Up from the spring house the wail stealeth anon like a whisper,
Over the meadows that call is aye and forever repeated.
Such were the voices that whooped wildly and vainly for Peter
Decades and decades ago down in the State of Kentucky--
Such are the voices that cry now from the woodland and meadow,
"Peter--O Peter!" all day, calling, reminding, and chiding--
Taking us back to the time when Peter he done gone and done it!
These are the voices of those left by the boy in the farmhouse
When, with his laughter and scorn, hatless and bootless and sockless,
Clothed in his jeans and his pride, Peter sailed out in the weather,
Broke from the warmth of his home into that fog of the devil,
Into the smoke of that witch brewing her damnable porridge!

Lo, when he vanished from sight, knowing the evil that threatened,
Forth with importunate cries hastened his father and mother.
"Peter!" they shrieked in alarm, "Peter!" and evermore "Peter!"--
Ran from the house to the barn, ran from the barn to the garden,
Ran to the corn-crib anon, then to the smoke-house proceeded;
Henhouse and woodpile they passed, calling and wailing and weeping,
Through the front gate to the road, braving the hideous vapor--
Sought him in lane and on pike, called him in orchard and meadow,

Clamoring "Peter!" in vain, vainly outcrying for Peter.
Joining the search came the rest, brothers and sisters and cousins,
Venting unspeakable fears in pitiful wailing for Peter!
And from the neighboring farms gathered the men and the women,
Who, upon hearing the news, swelled the loud chorus for Peter.

Farmers and hussifs and maids, bosses and field-hands and niggers,
Colonels and jedges galore from cornfields and mint-beds and thickets,
All that had voices to voice, all to those parts appertaining,
Came to engage in the search, gathered and bellowed for Peter.
The Taylors, the Dorseys, the Browns, the Wallers, the Mitchells, the Logans,
The Yenowines, Crittendens, Dukes, the Hickmans, the Hobbses, the Morgans;
The Ormsbys, the Thompsons, the Hikes, the Williamsons, Murrays, and Hardins,

The Beynroths, the Sherleys, the Hokes, the Haldermans, Harneys, and Slaughters--
All, famed in Kentucky of old for prowess prodigious at farming,
Now surged from their prosperous homes to join in that hunt for the truant,
To ascertain where he was at, to help out the chorus for Peter.

Still on those prosperous farms where heirs and assigns of the people
Specified hereinabove and proved by the records of probate--
Still on those farms shall you hear (and still on the turnpikes adjacent)
That pitiful, petulant call, that pleading, expostulant wailing,
That hopeless, monotonous moan, that crooning and droning for Peter.
Some say the witch in her wrath transmogrified all those good people;
That, wakened from slumber that day by the calling and bawling for Peter,
She out of her cave in a thrice, and, waving the foot of a rabbit
(Crossed with the caul of a coon and smeared with the blood of a chicken),
She changed all those folk into birds and shrieked with demoniac venom:
"Fly away over the land, moaning your Peter forever,
Croaking of Peter, the boy who didn't believe there were hoodoos,
Crooning of Peter, the fool who scouted at stories of witches,
Crying of Peter for aye, forever outcalling for Peter!"

This is the story they tell; so in good sooth saith the legend;
As I have told it to you, so tell the folk and the legend.
That it is true I believe, for on the breezes this morning
Come the shrill voices of birds calling and calling for Peter;
Out of the maple and beech glitter the eyes of the wailers,
Peeping and peering for him who formerly lived in these places--
Peter, the heretic lad, lazy and careless and dreaming,
Sorely afflicted with books and with pubescent paresis,
Hating the things of the farm, care of the barn and the garden,
Always neglecting his chores--given to books and to reading,
Which, as all people allow, turn the young person to mischief,
Harden his heart against toil, wean his affections from tillage.

This is the legend of yore told in the state of Kentucky
When in the springtime the birds call from the beeches and maples,
Call from the petulant thorn, call from the acrid persimmon;
When from the woods by the creek and from the pastures and meadows,
When from the spring house and lane and from the mint-bed and orchard,
When from the redbud and gum and from the redolent lilac,
When from the dirt roads and pikes cometh that calling for Peter;
Cometh the dolorous cry, cometh that weird iteration
Of "Peter" and "Peter" for aye, of "Peter" and "Peter" forever!
This is the legend of old, told in the tum-titty meter
Which the great poets prefer, being less labor than rhyming
(My first attempt at the same, my last attempt, too, I reckon!);
Nor have I further to say, for the sad story is ended.

Eugene Field

The Poet's Metamorphosis

Maecenas, I propose to fly
To realms beyond these human portals;
No common things shall be my wings,
But such as sprout upon immortals.

Of lowly birth, once shed of earth,
Your Horace, precious (so you've told him),
Shall soar away; no tomb of clay
Nor Stygian prison-house shall hold him.

Upon my skin feathers begin
To warn the songster of his fleeting;
But never mind, I leave behind
Songs all the world shall keep repeating.

Lo! Boston girls, with corkscrew curls,
And husky westerns, wild and woolly,
And southern climes shall vaunt my rhymes,
And all profess to know me fully.

Methinks the West shall know me best,
And therefore hold my memory dearer;
For by that lake a bard shall make
My subtle, hidden meanings clearer.

So cherished, I shall never die;
Pray, therefore, spare your dolesome praises,
Your elegies, and plaintive cries,
For I shall fertilize no daisies!

Eugene Field

The Preference Declared

Boy, I detest the Persian pomp;
I hate those linden-bark devices;
And as for roses, holy Moses!
They can't be got at living prices!
Myrtle is good enough for us,--
For you, as bearer of my flagon;
For me, supine beneath this vine,
Doing my best to get a jag on!

Eugene Field

The Reconciliation

HE

When you were mine, in auld lang syne,
And when none else your charms might ogle,
I'll not deny, fair nymph, that I
Was happier than a heathen mogul.

SHE

Before _she_ came, that rival flame
(Had ever mater saucier filia?),
In those good times, bepraised in rhymes,
I was more famed than Mother Ilia.

HE

Chloe of Thrace! With what a grace
Does she at song or harp employ her!
I'd gladly die, if only I
Could live forever to enjoy her!

SHE

My Sybaris so noble is
That, by the gods, I love him madly!
That I might save him from the grave,
I'd give my life, and give it gladly!

HE

What if _ma belle_ from favor fell,
And I made up my mind to shake her;
Would Lydia then come back again,
And to her quondam love betake her?

SHE

My other beau should surely go,
And you alone should find me gracious;
For no one slings such odes and things
As does the lauriger Horatius!

Eugene Field

The ride to bumpville

Play that my knee was a calico mare
Saddled and bridled for Bumpville;
Leap to the back of this steed, if you dare,
And gallop away to Bumpville!
I hope you'll be sure to sit fast in your seat,
For this calico mare is prodigiously fleet,
And many adventures you're likely to meet
As you journey along to Bumpville.

This calico mare both gallops and trots
While whisking you off to Bumpville;
She paces, she shies, and she stumbles, in spots,
In the tortuous road to Bumpville;
And sometimes this strangely mercurial steed
Will suddenly stop and refuse to proceed,
Which, all will admit, is vexatious indeed,
When one is en route to Bumpville!

She's scared of the cars when the engine goes "Toot!"
Down by the crossing at Bumpville;
You'd better look out for that treacherous brute
Bearing you off to Bumpville!
With a snort she rears up on her hindermost heels,
And executes jigs and Virginia reels -
Words fail to explain how embarrassed one feels
Dancing so wildly to Bumpville!

It's bumpytybump and it's jiggytyjog,
Journeying on to Bumpville
It's over the hilltop and down through the bog
You ride on your way to Bumpville;
It's rattletybang over boulder and stump,
There are rivers to ford, there are fences to jump,
And the corduroy road it goes bumpytybump,
Mile after mile to bumpville!

Perhaps you'll observe it's no easy thing
Making the journey to Bumpville,
So I think, on the whole, it were prudent to bring
An end to this ride to Bumpville;
For, though she has uttered no protest or plaint,
The calico mare must be blowing and faint -
What's more to the point, I'm blowed if I ain't!
So play we have got to Bumpville!

Eugene Field

The rock-a-by lady

The Rock-a-By Lady from Hushaby street
Comes stealing; comes creeping;
The poppies they hang from her head to her feet,
And each hath a dream that is tiny and fleet -
She bringeth her poppies to you, my sweet,
When she findeth you sleeping!

There is one little dream of a beautiful drum -
"Rub-a-dub!" it goeth;
There is one little dream of a big sugar-plum,
And lo! thick and fast the other dreams come
Of popguns that bang, and tin tops that hum,
And a trumpet that bloweth!

And dollies peep out of those wee little dreams
With laughter and singing;
And boats go a-floating on silvery streams,
And the stars peek-a-boo with their own misty gleams,
And up, up, and up, where the Mother Moon beams,
The fairies go winging!

Would you dream all these dreams that are tiny and fleet?
They'll come to you sleeping;
So shut the two eyes that are weary, my sweet,
For the Rock-a-By Lady from Hushaby street,
With poppies that hang from her head to her feet,
Comes stealing; comes creeping.

Eugene Field

The shut-eye train

Come, my little one, with me!
There are wondrous sights to see
As the evening shadows fall;
In your pretty cap and gown,
Don't detain
The Shut-Eye train -
"Ting-a-ling!" the bell it goeth,
"Toot-toot!" the whistle bloweth,
And we hear the warning call:
"All aboard for Shut-Eye Town!"

Over hill and over plain
Soon will speed the Shut-Eye train!
Through the blue where bloom the stars
And the Mother Moon looks down
We'll away
To land of Fay -
Oh, the sights that we shall see there!
Come, my little one, with me there -
'T is a goodly train of cars -
All aboard for Shut-Eye Town!

Swifter than a wild bird's flight,
Through the realms of fleecy light
We shall speed and speed away!
Let the Night in envy frown -
What care we
How wroth she be!
To the Balow-land above us,
To the Balow-folk who love us,
Let us hasten while we may -
All aboard for Shut-Eye Town!

Shut-Eye Town is passing fair -
Golden dreams await us there;
We shall dream those dreams, my dear,
Till the Mother Moon goes down -
See unfold
Delights untold!
And in those mysterious places
We shall see beloved faces
And beloved voices hear
In the grace of Shut-Eye Town.

Heavy are your eyes, my sweet,
Weary are your little feet -
Nestle closer up to me
In your pretty cap and gown;
Don't detain
The Shut-Eye train!
"Ting-a-ling!" the bell it goeth,
"Toot-toot!" the whistle bloweth

Oh, the sights that we shall see!
All aboard for Shut-Eye Town!

Eugene Field

The singing in god's acre

Out yonder in the moonlight, wherein God's Acre lies,
Go angels walking to and fro, singing their lullabies.
Their radiant wings are folded, and their eyes are bended low,
As they sing among the beds whereon the flowers delight to grow,--

"Sleep, oh, sleep!
The Shepherd guardeth His sheep.
Fast speedeth the night away,
Soon cometh the glorious day;
Sleep, weary ones, while ye may,
Sleep, oh, sleep!"

The flowers within God's Acre see that fair and wondrous sight,
And hear the angels singing to the sleepers through the night;
And, lo! throughout the hours of day those gentle flowers prolong
The music of the angels in that tender slumber-song,--

"Sleep, oh, sleep!
The Shepherd loveth His sheep.
He that guardeth His flock the best
Hath folded them to His loving breast;
So sleep ye now, and take your rest,--
Sleep, oh, sleep!"

From angel and from flower the years have learned that soothing song,
And with its heavenly music speed the days and nights along;
So through all time, whose flight the Shepherd's vigils glorify,
God's Acre slumbereth in the grace of that sweet lullaby,--

"Sleep, oh, sleep!
The Shepherd loveth His sheep.
Fast speedeth the night away,
Soon cometh the glorious day;
Sleep, weary ones, while ye may,--
Sleep, oh, sleep!"

Eugene Field

The Sleeping Child

My baby slept--how calm his rest,
As o'er his handsome face a smile
Like that of angel flitted, while
He lay so still upon my breast!

My baby slept--his baby head
Lay all unkiss'd 'neath pall and shroud:
I did not weep or cry aloud--
I only wished I, too, were dead!

My baby sleeps--a tiny mound,
All covered by the little flowers,
Woos me in all my waking hours,
Down in the quiet burying-ground.

And when I sleep I seem to be
With baby in another land--
I take his little baby hand--
He smiles and sings sweet songs to me.

Sleep on, O baby, while I keep
My vigils till this day be passed!
Then shall I, too, lie down at last,
And with my baby darling sleep.

Eugene Field

The song of luddy-dud

A sunbeam comes a-creeping
Into my dear one's nest,
And sings to our babe a-sleeping
The song that I love the best:
"'T is little Luddy-Dud in the morning -
'T is little Luddy-Dud at night;
And all day long
'T is the same sweet song
Of that waddling, toddling, coddling little mite,
Luddy-Dud."

The bird to the tossing clover,
The bee to the swaying bud,
Keep singing that sweet song over
Of wee little Luddy-Dud.
"'T is little Luddy-Dud in the morning -
'T is little Luddy-Dud at night;
And all day long
'T is the same dear song
Of that growing, crowing, knowing little sprite,
Luddy-Dud."

Eugene Field

The stoddards

When I am in New York, I like to drop around at night,
To visit with my honest, genial friends, the Stoddards hight;
Their home in Fifteenth street is all so snug, and furnished so,
That, when I once get planted there, I don't know when to go;
A cosy cheerful refuge for the weary homesick guest,
Combining Yankee comforts with the freedom of the west.

The first thing you discover, as you maunder through the hall,
Is a curious little clock upon a bracket on the wall;
'T was made by Stoddard's father, and it's very, very old--
The connoisseurs assure me it is worth its weight in gold;
And I, who've bought all kinds of clocks, 'twixt Denver and the Rhine,
Cast envious eyes upon that clock, and wish that it were mine.

But in the parlor. Oh, the gems on tables, walls, and floor--
Rare first editions, etchings, and old crockery galore.
Why, talk about the Indies and the wealth of Orient things--
They couldn't hold a candle to these quaint and sumptuous things;
In such profusion, too--Ah me! how dearly I recall
How I have sat and watched 'em and wished I had 'em all.

Now, Mr. Stoddard's study is on the second floor,
A wee blind dog barks at me as I enter through the door;
The Cerberus would fain begrudge what sights it cannot see,
The rapture of that visual feast it cannot share with me;
A miniature edition this--this most absurd of hounds--
A genuine unique, I'm sure, and one unknown to Lowndes.

Books--always books--are piled around; some musty, and all old;
Tall, solemn folios such as Lamb declared he loved to hold;
Large paper copies with their virgin margins white and wide,
And presentation volumes with the author's comps. inside;
I break the tenth commandment with a wild impassioned cry:
Oh, how came Stoddard by these things? Why Stoddard, and not I?

From yonder wall looks Thackeray upon his poet friend,
And underneath the genial face appear the lines he penned;
And here, gadzooks, ben honge ye prynte of marvaillous renowne
Yt shameth Chaucers gallaunt knyghtes in Canterbury towne;
And still more books and pictures. I'm dazed, bewildered, vexed;
Since I've broke the tenth commandment, why not break the eighth one next?

And, furthermore, in confidence inviolate be it said
Friend Stoddard owns a lock of hair that grew on Milton's head;
Now I have Gladstone axes and a lot of curious things,
Such as pimply Dresden teacups and old German wedding-rings;
But nothing like that saintly lock have I on wall or shelf,
And, being somewhat short of hair, I should like that lock myself.

But Stoddard has a soothing way, as though he grieved to see
Invidious torments prey upon a nice young chap like me.
He waves me to an easy chair and hands me out a weed

And pumps me full of that advice he seems to know I need;
So sweet the tap of his philosophy and knowledge flows
That I can't help wishing that I knew a half what Stoddard knows.

And so we sit for hours and hours, praising without restraint
The people who are thoroughbreds, and roasting the ones that ain't;
Happy, thrice happy, is the man we happen to admire,
But wretched, oh, how wretched he that hath provoked our ire;
For I speak emphatic English when I once get fairly r'iled,
And Stoddard's wrath's an Ossa upon a Pelion piled.

Out yonder, in the alcove, a lady sits and darns,
And interjects remarks that always serve to spice our yarns;
She's Mrs. Stoddard; there's a dame that's truly to my heart:
A tiny little woman, but so quaint, and good, and smart
That, if you asked me to suggest which one I should prefer
Of all the Stoddard treasures, I should promptly mention her.

O dear old man, how I should like to be with you this night,
Down in your home in Fifteenth street, where all is snug and bright;
Where the shaggy little Cerberus dreams in its cushioned place,
And the books and pictures all around smile in their old friend's face;
Where the dainty little sweetheart, whom you still were proud to woo,
Charms back the tender memories so dear to her and you.

Eugene Field

The stork

Last night the Stork came stalking,
And, Stork, beneath your wing
Lay, lapped in dreamless slumber,
The tiniest little thing!
From Babyland, out yonder
Beside a silver sea,
You brought a priceless treasure
As gift to mine and me!

Last night my dear one listened -
And, wife, you knew the cry -
The dear old Stork has sought our home
A many times gone by!
And in your gentle bosom
I found the pretty thing
That from the realm out yonder
Our friend the Stork did bring.

Last night a babe awakened,
And, babe, how strange and new
Must seem the home and people
The Stork has brought you to;
And yet methinks you like them -
You neither stare nor weep,
But closer to my dear one
You cuddle, and you sleep!

Last night my heart grew fonder -
0 happy heart of mine,
Sing of the inspirations
That round my pathway shine!
And sing your sweetest love-song
To this dear nestling wee
The Stork from 'Way-Out-Yonder
Hath brought to mine and me!

Eugene Field

The straw parlor

Way up at the top of a big stack of straw
Was the cunningest parlor that ever you saw!
And there could you lie when aweary of play
And gossip or laze in the coziest way;
No matter how careworn or sorry one's mood
No worldly distraction presumed to intrude.
As a refuge from onerous mundane ado
I think I approve of straw parlors, don't you?

A swallow with jewels aflame on her breast
On that straw parlor's ceiling had builded her nest;
And she flew in and out all the happy day long,
And twittered the soothingest lullaby song.
Now some might suppose that that beautiful bird
Performed for her babies the music they heard;
I reckon she twittered her répertoire through
For the folk in the little straw parlor, don't you?

And down from a rafter a spider had hung
Some swings upon which he incessantly swung.
He cut up such didoes--such antics he played
Way up in the air, and was never afraid!
He never made use of his horrid old sting,
But was just upon earth for the fun of the thing!
I deeply regret to observe that so few
Of these good-natured insects are met with, don't you?

And, down in the strawstack, a wee little mite
Of a cricket went chirping by day and by night;
And further down, still, a cunning blue mouse
In a snug little nook of that strawstack kept house!
When the cricket went "chirp," Miss Mousie would squeak
"Come in," and a blush would enkindle her cheek!
She thought--silly girl! 't was a beau come to woo,
But I guess it was only the cricket, don't you?

So the cricket, the mouse, and the motherly bird
Made as soothingsome music as ever you heard
And, meanwhile, that spider by means of his swings
Achieved most astounding gyrations and things!
No wonder the little folk liked what they saw
And loved what they heard in that parlor of straw!
With the mercury up to 102
In the shade, I opine they just sizzled, don't you?

But once there invaded that Eden of straw
The evilest Feline that ever you saw!
She pounced on that cricket with rare promptitude
And she tucked him away where he'd do the most good;
And then, reaching down to the nethermost house,
She deftly expiscated little Miss Mouse!
And, as for the Swallow, she shrieked and withdrew--

I rather admire her discretion, don't you?

Now listen: That evening a cyclone obtained,
And the mortgage was all on that farm that remained!
Barn, strawstack and spider--they all blew away,
And nobody knows where they're at to this day!
And, as for the little straw parlor, I fear
It was wafted clean off this sublunary sphere!
I really incline to a hearty "boo-hoo"
When I think of this tragical ending, don't you?

Eugene Field

The Sugar-Plum Tree

Have you ever heard of the Sugar-Plum Tree?
'T is a marvel of great renown!
It blooms on the shore of the Lollipop sea
In the garden of Shut-Eye Town;
The fruit that it bears is so wondrously sweet
(As those who have tasted it say)
That good little children have only to eat
Of that fruit to be happy next day.
When you 've got to the tree, you would have a hard time
To capture the fruit which I sing;
The tree is so tall that no person could climb
To the boughs where the sugar-plums swing!
But up in that tree sits a chocolate cat,
And a gingerbread dog prowls below---
And this is the way you contrive to get at
Those sugar-plums tempting you so:
You say but the word to that gingerbread dog
And he barks with such terrible zest
That the chocolate cat is at once all agog,
As her swelling proportions attest.
And the chocolate cat goes cavorting around
From this leafy limb unto that,
And the sugar-plums tumble, of course, to the ground---
Hurrah for that chocolate cat!
There are marshmallows, gumdrops, and peppermint canes,
With stripings of scarlet or gold,
And you carry away of the treasure that rains
As much as your apron can hold!
So come, little child, cuddle closer to me
In your dainty white nightcap and gown,
And I 'll rock you away to that Sugar-Plum Tree
In the garden of Shut-Eye Town.

Eugene Field

The Three Kings Of Cologne

From out Cologne there came three kings
To worship Jesus Christ, their King.
To Him they sought fine herbs they brought,
And many a beauteous golden thing;
They brought their gifts to Bethlehem town,
And in that manger set them down.

Then spake the first king, and he said:
'O Child, most heavenly, bright, and fair!
I bring this crown to Bethlehem town
For Thee, and only Thee, to wear;
So give a heavenly crown to me
When I shall come at last to Thee!'

The second, then. 'I bring Thee here
This royal robe, O Child!' he cried;
'Of silk 'tis spun, and such an one
There is not in the world beside;
So in the day of doom requite
Me with a heavenly robe of white!'

The third king gave his gift, and quoth:
'Spikenard and myrrh to Thee I bring,
And with these twain would I most fain
Anoint the body of my King;
So may their incense sometime rise
To plead for me in yonder skies!'

Thus spake the three kings of Cologne,
That gave their gifts, and went their way;
And now kneel I in prayer hard by
The cradle of the Child to-day;
Nor crown, nor robe, nor spice I bring
As offering unto Christ, my King.

Yet have I brought a gift the Child
May not despise, however small;
For here I lay my heart to-day,
And it is full of love to all.
Take Thou the poor but loyal thing,
My only tribute, Christ, my King!

Eugene Field

The three tailors

I shall tell you in rhyme how, once on a time,
Three tailors tramped up to the inn Ingleheim,
    On the Rhine, lovely Rhine;
They were broke, but the worst of it all, they were curst
With that malady common to tailors--a thirst
    For wine, lots of wine.

"Sweet host," quoth the three, "we're hard up as can be,
Yet skilled in the practice of cunning are we,
    On the Rhine, genial Rhine;
And we pledge you we will impart you that skill
Right quickly and fully, providing you'll fill
    Us with wine, cooling wine."

But that host shook his head, and he warily said:
"Though cunning be good, we take money instead,
    On the Rhine, thrifty Rhine;
If ye fancy ye may without pelf have your way
You'll find that there's both host and the devil to pay
    For your wine, costly wine."

Then the first knavish wight took his needle so bright
And threaded its eye with a wee ray of light
    From the Rhine, sunny Rhine;
And, in such a deft way, patched a mirror that day
That where it was mended no expert could say--
    Done so fine 't was for wine.

The second thereat spied a poor little gnat
Go toiling along on his nose broad and flat
    Towards the Rhine, pleasant Rhine;
"Aha, tiny friend, I should hate to offend,
But your stockings need darning"--which same did he mend,
    All for wine, soothing wine.

And next there occurred what you'll deem quite absurd--
His needle a space in the wall thrust the third,
    By the Rhine, wondrous Rhine;
And then all so spry, he leapt through the eye
Of that thin cambric needle--nay, think you I'd lie
    About wine--not for wine.

The landlord allowed (with a smile) he was proud
To do the fair thing by that talented crowd
    On the Rhine, generous Rhine.
So a thimble filled he as full as could be--
"Drink long and drink hearty, my jolly friends three,
    Of my wine, filling wine."

Eugene Field

The Tin Bank

Speaking of banks, I'm bound to say
That a bank of tin is far the best,
And I know of one that has stood for years
In a pleasant home away out west.
It has stood for years on the mantelpiece
Between the clock and the Wedgwood plate--
A wonderful bank, as you'll concede
When you've heard the things I'll now relate.

This bank was made of McKinley tin,
Well soldered up at sides and back;
But it didn't resemble tin at all,
For they'd painted it over an iron black.
And that it really was a bank
'Twas an easy thing to see and say,
For above the door in gorgeous red
Appeared the letters B-A-N-K!

The bank had been so well devised
And wrought so cunningly that when
You put your money in at the hole
It couldn't get out of that hole again!
Somewhere about that stanch, snug thing
A secret spring was hid away,
But _where_ it was or _how it_ worked--
Excuse me, please, but I will not say.

Thither, with dimpled cheeks aglow,
Came pretty children oftentimes,
And, standing up on stool or chair,
Put in their divers pence and dimes.
Once Uncle Hank came home from town
After a cycle of grand events,
And put in a round, blue, ivory thing,
He said was good for 50 cents!

The bank went clinkety-clinkety-clink,
And larger grew the precious sum
Which grandma said she hoped would prove
A gracious boon to heathendom!
But there were those--I call no names--
Who did not fancy any plan
That did not in some wise involve
The candy and banana man.

Listen; once when the wind went 'Yoooooo!'
And the raven croaked in the tangled tarn--
When, with a wail, the screech-owl flew
Out of her lair in the haunted barn--
There came three burglars down the road--
Three burglars skilled in arts of sin,
And they cried: 'What's this? Aha! Oho!'

And straightway tackled the bank of tin.

They burgled from half-past ten p.m.,
Till the village bell struck four o'clock;
They hunted and searched and guessed and tried--
But the little tin bank would not unlock!
They couldn't discover the secret spring!
So, when the barn-yard rooster crowed,
They up with their tools and stole away
With the bitter remark that they'd be blowed!

Next morning came a sweet-faced child
And reached her dimpled hand to take
A nickel to send to the heathen poor
And a nickel to spend for her stomach's sake.
She pressed the hidden secret spring,
And lo! the bank flew open then
With a cheery creak that seemed to say:
'I'm glad to see you; come again!'

If you were I, and if I were you,
What would we keep our money in?
In a downtown bank of British steel,
Or an at-home bank of McKinley tin?
Some want silver and some want gold,
But the little tin bank that wants the two
And is run on the double standard plan--
Why, that is the bank for me and you!

Eugene Field

The Truth About hHorace

It is very aggravating
 To hear the solemn prating
Of the fossils who are stating
That old Horace was a prude;
 When we know that with the ladies
He was always raising Hades,
And with many an escapade his
 Best productions are imbued.

There's really not much harm in a
 Large number of his carmina,
But these people find alarm in a
 Few records of his acts;
So they'd squelch the muse caloric,
And to students sophomoric
They d present as metaphoric
 What old Horace meant for facts.

We have always thought 'em lazy;
Now we adjudge 'em crazy!
Why, Horace was a daisy
 That was very much alive!
And the wisest of us know him
As his Lydia verses show him,--
Go, read that virile poem,--
 It is No. 25.

He was a very owl, sir,
And starting out to prowl, sir,
You bet he made Rome howl, sir,
 Until he filled his date;
With a massic-laden ditty
And a classic maiden pretty
He painted up the city,
 And Maecenas paid the freight!

Eugene Field

The Twenty-Third Psalm

My Shepherd is the Lord my God,--
 There is no want I know;
His flock He leads in verdant meads,
 Where tranquil waters flow.

He doth restore my fainting soul
 With His divine caress,
And, when I stray, He points the way
 To paths of righteousness.

Yea, though I walk the vale of death,
 What evil shall I fear?
Thy staff and rod are mine, O God,
 And Thou, my Shepherd, near!

Mine enemies behold the feast
 Which my dear Lord hath spread;

And, lo! my cup He filleth up,
 With oil anoints my head!

Goodness and mercy shall be mine
 Unto my dying day;
Then will I bide at His dear side
 Forever and for aye!

Eugene Field

The Two Coffins

In yonder old cathedral
Two lovely coffins lie;
In one, the head of the state lies dead,
And a singer sleeps hard by.

Once had that King great power
And proudly ruled the land--
His crown e'en now is on his brow
And his sword is in his hand.

How sweetly sleeps the singer
With calmly folded eyes,
And on the breast of the bard at rest
The harp that he sounded lies.

The castle walls are falling
And war distracts the land,
But the sword leaps not from that mildewed spot
There in that dead king's hand.

But with every grace of nature
There seems to float along--
To cheer again the hearts of men
The singer's deathless song.

Eugene Field

The two little skeezucks

There were two little skeezucks who lived in the isle
 Of Boo in a southern sea;
They clambered and rollicked in heathenish style
 In the boughs of their cocoanut tree.
They didn't fret much about clothing and such
 And they recked not a whit of the ills
   That sometimes accrue
   From having to do
With tailor and laundry bills.

The two little skeezucks once heard of a Fair
 Far off from their native isle,
And they asked of King Fan if they mightn't go there
 To take in the sights for awhile.
   Now old King Fan
   Was a good-natured man
(As good-natured monarchs go),
And howbeit he swore that all Fairs were a bore,
He hadn't the heart to say "No."

So the two little skeezucks sailed off to the Fair
 In a great big gum canoe,
And I fancy they had a good time there,
 For they tarried a year or two.
And old King Fan at last began
 To reckon they'd come to grief,
   When glory! one day
   They sailed into the bay
To the tune of "Hail to the Chief!"

The two little skeezucks fell down on the sand,
 Embracing his majesty's toes,
Till his majesty graciously bade them stand
 And salute him nose to nose.
   And then quoth he:
   "Divulge unto me
 What happenings have hapt to you;
And how did they dare to indulge in a Fair
 So far from the island of Boo?"

The two little skeezucks assured their king
 That what he surmised was true;
That the Fair would have been a different thing
 Had it only been held in Boo!
"The folk over there in no wise compare
 With the folk of the southern seas;
   Why, they comb out their heads
   And they sleep in beds
Instead of in caverns and trees!"

The two little skeezucks went on to say
 That children (so far as they knew)

Had a much harder time in that land far away
Than here in the island of Boo!
They have to wear clo'es
Which (as every one knows)
Are irksome to primitive laddies,
While, with forks and with spoons, they're denied the sweet boons
That accrue from free use of one's paddies!

"And now that you're speaking of things to eat,"
Interrupted the monarch of Boo,
"We beg to inquire if you happened to meet
With a nice missionary or two?"
"No, that we did not; in that curious spot
Where were gathered the fruits of the earth,
Of that special kind
Which Your Nibs has in mind
There appeared a deplorable dearth!"

Then loud laughed that monarch in heathenish mirth
And loud laughed his courtiers, too,
And they cried: "There is elsewhere no land upon earth
So good as our island of Boo!"
And the skeezucks, tho' glad
Of the journey they'd had,
Climbed up in their cocoanut trees,
Where they still may be seen with no shirts to keep clean
Or trousers that bag at the knees.

Eugene Field

The Vision Of The Holy Grail

_Deere Chryste, let not the cheere of earth,
To fill our hearts with heedless mirth
This holy Christmasse time;
But give us of thy heavenly cheere
That we may hold thy love most deere
And know thy peace sublime._

* * * * *

Full merry waxed King Pelles court
With Yuletide cheere and Yuletide sport,
And, when the board was spread,
Now wit ye well 'twas good to see
So fair and brave a companie
With Pelles at the head.

'Come hence, Elaine,' King Pelles cried,
'Come hence and sit ye by my side,
For never yet, I trow,
Have gentle virtues like to thine
Been proved by sword nor pledged in wine,
Nor shall be nevermo!'

'Sweete sir, my father,' quoth Elaine,
'Me it repents to give thee pain--
Yet, tarry I may not;
For I shall soond and I shall die
If I behold this companie
And see not Launcelot!

'My heart shall have no love but this--
My lips shall know no other kiss,
Save only, father, thine;
So graunt me leave to seek my bower,
The lonely chamber in the toure,
Where sleeps his child and mine.'

Then frowned the King in sore despite;
'A murrain seize that traitrous knight,
For that he lies!' he cried--
'A base, unchristian paynim he,
Else, by my beard, he would not be
A recreant to his bride!

'Oh, I had liefer yield my life
Than see thee the deserted wife
Of dastard Launcelot!
Yet, an' thou hast no mind to stay,
Go with thy damosels away--
Lo, I'll detain ye not.'

Her damosels in goodly train

Back to her chamber led Elaine,
And when her eyes were cast
Upon her babe, her tears did flow
And she did wail and weep as though
Her heart had like to brast.

The while she grieved the Yuletide sport
Waxed lustier in King Pelles' court,
And louder, houre by houre,
The echoes of the rout were borne
To where the lady, all forlorn,
Made moning in the toure,

'Swete Chryste,' she cried, 'ne let me hear
Their ribald sounds of Yuletide cheere
That mock at mine and me;
Graunt that my sore affliction cease
And give me of the heavenly peace
That comes with thoughts of thee!'

Lo, as she spake, a wondrous light
Made all that lonely chamber bright,
And o'er the infant's bed
A spirit hand, as samite pail,
Held sodaine foorth the Holy Grail
Above the infant's head.

And from the sacred golden cup
A subtle incense floated up
And filled the conscious air,
Which, when she breather, the fair Elaine
Forgot her grief, forgot her pain.
Forgot her sore despair.

And as the Grail's mysterious balm
Wrought in her heart a wondrous calm,
Great mervail 'twas to see
The sleeping child stretch one hand up
As if in dreams he held the cup
Which none mought win but he.

Through all the night King Pelles' court
Made mighty cheer and goodly sport.
Nor never recked the joy
That was vouchsafed that Christmass tide
To Launcelot's deserted bride
And to her sleeping boy.

_Swete Chryste, let not the cheere of earth
To fill our hearts with heedless mirth
This present Christmasse night;
But send among us to and fro

Thy Holy Grail, that men may know
The joy withe wisdom dight._

Eugene Field

The wanderer

Upon a mountain height, far from the sea,
  I found a shell,
And to my listening ear the lonely thing
Ever a song of ocean seemed to sing,
  Ever a tale of ocean seemed to tell.

How came the shell upon that mountain height?
  Ah, who can say
Whether there dropped by some too careless hand,
Or whether there cast when Ocean swept the Land,
  Ere the Eternal had ordained the Day?

Strange, was it not? Far from its native deep,
  One song it sang,--
Sang of the awful mysteries of the tide,
Sang of the misty sea, profound and wide,--
  Ever with echoes of the ocean rang.

And as the shell upon the mountain height
  Sings of the sea,
So do I ever, leagues and leagues away,--
So do I ever, wandering where I may,--
  Sing, O my home! sing, O my home! of thee.

1883.

Eugene Field

The wind

(THE TALE)

Cometh the Wind from the garden, fragrant and full of sweet singing--
Under my tree where I sit cometh the Wind to confession.

"Out in the garden abides the Queen of the beautiful Roses--
Her do I love and to-night wooed her with passionate singing;
Told I my love in those songs, and answer she gave in her blushes--
She shall be bride of the Wind, and she is the Queen of the Roses!"

"Wind, there is spice in thy breath; thy rapture hath fragrance Sabaean!"

"Straight from my wooing I come--my lips are bedewed with her kisses--
My lips and my song and my heart are drunk with the rapture of loving!"

(THE SONG)

The Wind he loveth the red, red Rose,
And he wooeth his love to wed:
Sweet is his song
The Summer long
As he kisseth her lips so red;
And he recketh naught of the ruin wrought
When the Summer of love is sped!

(AGAIN THE TALE)

Cometh the Wind from the garden, bitter with sorrow of winter.

"Wind, is thy love-song forgot? Wherefore thy dread lamentations?"

Sigheth and moaneth the Wind: "Out of the desolate garden
Come I from vigils with ghosts over the grave of the Summer!"

"Thy breath that was fragrant anon with rapture of music and loving,
It grieveth all things with its sting and the frost of its wailing
displeasure."

The Wind maketh ever more moan and ever it giveth this answer:
"My heart it is numb with the cold of the love that was born of the
Summer--
I come from the garden all white with the wrath and the sorrow of Winter;
I have kissed the low, desolate tomb where my bride in her loveliness
lieth
And the voice of the ghost in my heart is the voice that forever
outcrieth!"

(AGAIN THE SONG)

The Wind he waileth the red, red Rose
When the Summer of love is sped--
He waileth above

His lifeless love
With her shroud of snow o'erspread--
Crieth such things as a true heart brings
To the grave of its precious dead.

Eugene Field

The wooing of the southland

(ALASKAN BALLAD)

The Northland reared his hoary head
 And spied the Southland leagues away--
"Fairest of all fair brides," he said,
 "Be thou my bride, I pray!"

Whereat the Southland laughed and cried:
 "I'll bide beside my native sea,
And I shall never be thy bride
 Till thou com'st wooing me!"

The Northland's heart was a heart of ice,
 A diamond glacier, mountain high--
Oh, love is sweet at any price,
 As well know you and I!

So gayly the Northland took his heart
 And cast it in the wailing sea--
"Go, thou, with all thy cunning art,
 And woo my bride for me!"

For many a night and for many a day,
 And over the leagues that rolled between,
The true-heart messenger sped away
 To woo the Southland queen.

But the sea wailed loud, and the sea wailed long,
 While ever the Northland cried in glee:
"Oh, thou shalt sing us our bridal song,
 When comes my bride, O sea!"

At the foot of the Southland's golden throne
 The heart of the Northland ever throbs--
For that true-heart speaks in the waves that moan,
 The songs that it sings are sobs.

Ever the Southland spurns the cries
 Of the messenger pleading the Northland's part;
The summer shines in the Southland's eyes--
 The winter bides in her heart!

And ever unto that far-off place
 Which love doth render a hallowed spot,
The Northland turneth his honest face
 And wonders she cometh not.

The sea wails loud, and the sea wails long,
 As the ages of waiting drift slowly by,
But the sea shall sing no bridal song--
 As well know you and I!

Eugene Field

Thirty-nine

O hapless day! O wretched day!
 I hoped you'd pass me by--
Alas, the years have sneaked away
 And all is changed but I!
Had I the power, I would remand
 You to a gloom condign,
But here you've crept upon me and
 I--I am thirty-nine!

Now, were I thirty-five, I could
 Assume a flippant guise;
Or, were I forty years, I should
 Undoubtedly look wise;
For forty years are said to bring
 Sedateness superfine;
But thirty-nine don't mean a thing--
 À bas with thirty-nine!

You healthy, hulking girls and boys,--
 What makes you grow so fast?
Oh, I'll survive your lusty noise--
 I'm tough and bound to last!
No, no--I'm old and withered too--
 I feel my powers decline
(Yet none believes this can be true
 Of one at thirty-nine).

And you, dear girl with velvet eyes,
 I wonder what you mean
Through all our keen anxieties
 By keeping sweet sixteen.
With your dear love to warm my heart,
 Wretch were I to repine;
I was but jesting at the start--
 I'm glad I'm thirty-nine!

So, little children, roar and race
 As blithely as you can,
And, sweetheart, let your tender grace
 Exalt the Day and Man;
For then these factors (I'll engage)
 All subtly shall combine
To make both juvenile and sage
 The one who's thirty-nine!

Yes, after all, I'm free to say
 I would much rather be
Standing as I do stand to-day,
'Twixt devil and deep sea;
For though my face be dark with care
 Or with a grimace shine,
Each haply falls unto my share,

For I am thirty-nine!

'Tis passing meet to make good cheer
And lord it like a king,
Since only once we catch the year
That doesn't mean a thing.
O happy day! O gracious day!
I pledge thee in this wine--
Come, let us journey on our way
A year, good Thirty-Nine!

Eugene Field

To A Bully

You, blatant coward that you are,
Upon the helpless vent your spite.
Suppose you ply your trade on me;
Come, monkey with this bard, and see
How I'll repay your bark with bite!

Ay, snarl just once at me, you brute!
And I shall hound you far and wide,
As fiercely as through drifted snow
The shepherd dog pursues what foe
Skulks on the Spartan mountain-side.

The chip is on my shoulder--see?
But touch it and I'll raise your fur;
I'm full of business, so beware!
For, though I'm loaded up for bear,
I'm quite as like to kill a cur!

Eugene Field

To A Jar Of Wine

O gracious jar,--my friend, my twin,
Born at the time when I was born,--
Whether tomfoolery you inspire
Or animate with love's desire,
Or flame the soul with bitter scorn,
Or lull to sleep, O jar of mine!
Come from your place this festal day;
Corvinus hither wends his way,
And there's demand for wine!

Corvinus is the sort of man
Who dotes on tedious argument.
An advocate, his ponderous pate
Is full of Blackstone and of Kent;
Yet not insensible is he,
O genial Massic flood! to thee.
Why, even Cato used to take
A modest, surreptitious nip
At meal-times for his stomach's sake,
Or to forefend la grippe.

How dost thou melt the stoniest hearts,
And bare the cruel knave's design;
How through thy fascinating arts
We discount Hope, O gracious wine!
And passing rich the poor man feels
As through his veins thy affluence steals.

Now, prithee, make us frisk and sing,
And plot full many a naughty plot
With damsels fair--nor shall we care
Whether school keeps or not!
And whilst thy charms hold out to burn
We shall not deign to go to bed,
But we shall paint creation red;
So, fill, sweet wine, this friend of mine,--
My lawyer friend, as aforesaid.

Eugene Field

To a soubrette

'Tis years, soubrette, since last we met;
 And yet--ah, yet, how swift and tender
My thoughts go back in time's dull track
 To you, sweet pink of female gender!
I shall not say--though others may--
 That time all human joy enhances;
But the same old thrill comes to me still
 With memories of your songs and dances.

Soubrettish ways these latter days
 Invite my praise, but never get it;
I still am true to yours and you--
 My record's made, I'll not upset it!
The pranks they play, the things they say--
 I'd blush to put the like on paper,
And I'll avow they don't know how
 To dance, so awkwardly they caper!

I used to sit down in the pit
 And see you flit like elf or fairy
Across the stage, and I'll engage
 No moonbeam sprite was half so airy;
Lo, everywhere about me there
 Were rivals reeking with pomatum,
And if, perchance, they caught your glance
 In song or dance, how did I hate 'em!

At half-past ten came rapture--then
 Of all those men was I most happy,
For bottled beer and royal cheer
 And têtes-à-têtes were on the tapis.
Do you forget, my fair soubrette,
 Those suppers at the Cafe Rector,--
The cosey nook where we partook
 Of sweeter cheer than fabled nectar?

Oh, happy days, when youth's wild ways
 Knew every phase of harmless folly!
Oh, blissful nights, whose fierce delights
 Defied gaunt-featured Melancholy!
Gone are they all beyond recall,
 And I--a shade, a mere reflection--
Am forced to feed my spirit's greed
 Upon the husks of retrospection!

And lo! to-night, the phantom light,
 That, as a sprite, flits on the fender,
Reveals a face whose girlish grace
 Brings back the feeling, warm and tender;
And, all the while, the old-time smile
 Plays on my visage, grim and wrinkled,--
As though, soubrette, your footfalls yet

Upon my rusty heart-strings tinkled!

Eugene Field

To a Usurper

Aha! a traitor in the camp,
 A rebel strangely bold,--
A lisping, laughing, toddling scamp,
 Not more than four years old!

To think that I, who've ruled alone
 So proudly in the past,
Should be ejected from my throne
 By my own son at last!

He trots his treason to and fro,
 As only babies can,
And says he'll be his mamma's beau
 When he's a "gweat, big man"!

You stingy boy! you've always had
 A share in mamma's heart;
Would you begrudge your poor old dad
 The tiniest little part?

That mamma, I regret to see,
 Inclines to take your part,--
As if a dual monarchy
 Should rule her gentle heart!

But when the years of youth have sped,
 The bearded man, I trow,
Will quite forget he ever said
 He'd be his mamma's beau.

Renounce your treason, little son,
 Leave mamma's heart to me;
For there will come another one
 To claim your loyalty.

And when that other comes to you,
 God grant her love may shine
Through all your life, as fair and true
 As mamma's does through mine!

1885.

Eugene Field

To Albius Tibullus

Not to lament that rival flame
Wherewith the heartless Glycera scorns you,
Nor waste your time in maudlin rhyme,
How many a modern instance warns you!

Fair-browed Lycoris pines away
Because her Cyrus loves another;
The ruthless churl informs the girl
He loves her only as a brother!

For he, in turn, courts Pholoe,--
A maid unscotched of love's fierce virus;
Why, goats will mate with wolves they hate
Ere Pholoe will mate with Cyrus!

Ah, weak and hapless human hearts,
By cruel Mother Venus fated
To spend this life in hopeless strife,
Because incongruously mated!

Such torture, Albius, is my lot;
For, though a better mistress wooed me,
My Myrtale has captured me,
And with her cruelties subdued me!

Eugene Field

To Aristius Fuscus

Fuscus, whoso to good inclines,
And is a faultless liver,
Nor Moorish spear nor bow need fear,
Nor poison-arrowed quiver.

Ay, though through desert wastes he roam,
Or scale the rugged mountains,
Or rest beside the murmuring tide
Of weird Hydaspan fountains!

Lo, on a time, I gayly paced
The Sabine confines shady,
And sung in glee of Lalage,
My own and dearest lady;

And as I sung, a monster wolf
Slunk through the thicket from me;
But for that song, as I strolled along,
He would have overcome me!

Set me amid those poison mists
Which no fair gale dispelleth,
Or in the plains where silence reigns,
And no thing human dwelleth,--

Still shall I love my Lalage,
Still sing her tender graces;
And while I sing, my theme shall bring
Heaven to those desert places!

Eugene Field

To Chloe

Chloe, you shun me like a hind
That, seeking vainly for her mother,
Hears danger in each breath of wind,
And wildly darts this way and t' other;

Whether the breezes sway the wood
Or lizards scuttle through the brambles,
She starts, and off, as though pursued,
The foolish, frightened creature scrambles.

But, Chloe, you're no infant thing
That should esteem a man an ogre;
Let go your mother's apron-string,
And pin your faith upon a toga!

Eugene Field

To cinna

Cinna, the great Venusian told
 In songs that will not die
How in Augustan days of old
 Your love did glorify
His life and all his being seemed
 Thrilled by that rare incense
Till, grudging him the dreams he dreamed,
 The gods did call you hence.

Cinna, I've looked into your eyes,
 And held your hands in mine,
And seen your cheeks in sweet surprise
 Blush red as Massic wine;
Now let the songs in Cinna's praise
 Be chanted once again,
For, oh! alone I walk the ways
 We walked together then!

Perhaps upon some star to-night,
 So far away in space
I cannot see that beacon light
 Nor feel its soothing grace--
Perhaps from that far-distant sphere
 Her quickened vision seeks
For this poor heart of mine that here
 To its lost Cinna speaks.

Then search this heart, beloved eyes,
 And find it still as true
As when in all my boyhood skies
 My guiding stars were you!
Cinna, you know the mystery
 That is denied to men--
Mine is the lot to feel that we
 Shall elsewhere love again!

Eugene Field

To De Witt Miller

Dear Miller: You and I despise
The cad who gathers books to sell 'em,
Be they but sixteen-mos in cloth
Or stately folios garbed in vellum.

But when one fellow has a prize
Another bibliophile is needing,
Why, then, a satisfactory trade
Is quite a laudable proceeding.

There's precedent in Bristol's case
The great collector--preacher-farmer;
And in the case of that divine
Who shrives the soul of P.D. Armour.

When from their sapient, saintly lips
The words of wisdom are not dropping,
They turn to trade--that is to say,
When they're not preaching they are swapping!

So to the flock it doth appear
That this a most conspicuous fact is:
That which these godly pastors do
Must surely be a proper practice.

Now, here's a pretty prize, indeed,
On which De Vinne's art is lavished;
Harkee! the bonny, dainty thing
Is simply waiting to be ravished!

And you have that for which I pine
As you should pine for this fair creature:
Come, now, suppose we make a trade--
You take this gem, and send the Beecher!

Surely, these graceful, tender songs
(In samite garb with lots of gilt on)
Are more to you than those dull tome?
Her pastor gave to Lizzie Tilton!

Eugene Field

To emma abbott

There--let thy hands be folded
Awhile in sleep's repose;
The patient hands that wearied not,
But earnestly and nobly wrought
In charity and faith;
And let thy dear eyes close--
The eyes that looked alway to God,
Nor quailed beneath the chastening rod
Of sorrow;
Fold thou thy hands and eyes
For just a little while,
And with a smile
Dream of the morrow.

And, O white voiceless flower,
The dream which thou shalt dream
Should be a glimpse of heavenly things,
For yonder like a seraph sings
The sweetness of a life
With faith alway its theme;
While speedeth from those realms above
The messenger of that dear love
That healeth sorrow.
So sleep a little while,
For thou shalt wake and sing
Before thy King
When cometh the morrow.

Eugene Field

To His Lute

If ever in the sylvan shade
A song immortal we have made,
Come now, O lute, I prithee come,
Inspire a song of Latium!

A Lesbian first thy glories proved;
In arms and in repose he loved
To sweep thy dulcet strings, and raise
His voice in Love's and Liber's praise.
The Muses, too, and him who clings
To Mother Venus' apron-strings,
And Lycus beautiful, he sung
In those old days when you were young.

O shell, that art the ornament
Of Phoebus, bringing sweet content
To Jove, and soothing troubles all,--
Come and requite me, when I call!

Eugene Field

To John J. Knickerbocker, Jr.

Whereas, good friend, it doth appear
You do possess the notion
To his awhile away from here
To lands across the ocean;
Now, by these presents we would show
That, wheresoever wend you,
And wheresoever gales may blow,
Our friendship shall attend you.

What though on Scotia's banks and braes
You pluck the bonnie gowan,
Or chat of old Chicago days
O'er Berlin brew with Cowen;
What though you stroll some boulevard
In Paris (c'est la belle ville!),
Or make the round of Scotland Yard
With our lamented Melville?

Shall paltry leagues of foaming brine
True heart from true hearts sever?
No--in this draught of honest wine
We pledge it, comrade--never!
Though mountain waves between us roll,
Come fortune or disaster--
'Twill knit us closer soul to soul
And bind our friendships faster.

So here's a bowl that shall be quaff'd
To loyalty's devotion,
And here's to fortune that shall waft
Your ship across the ocean,
And here's a smile for those who prate
Of Davy Jones's locker,
And here's a pray'r in every fate--
God bless you, Knickerbocker!

Eugene Field

To Leuconoee

Seek not, Leuconoee, to know how long you're going to live yet,
What boons the gods will yet withhold, or what they're going to give yet;
For Jupiter will have his way, despite how much we worry,--
Some will hang on for many a day, and some die in a hurry.
The wisest thing for you to do is to embark this diem
Upon a merry escapade with some such bard as I am.
And while we sport I'll reel you off such odes as shall surprise ye;
To-morrow, when the headache comes,--well, then I'll satirize ye!

Eugene Field

To Ligurinus

O Cruel fair,
Whose flowing hair
The envy and the pride of all is,
As onward roll
The years, that poll
Will get as bald as a billiard ball is;
Then shall your skin, now pink and dimply,
Be tanned to parchment, sear and pimply!

When you behold
Yourself grown old,
These words shall speak your spirits moody:
'Unhappy one!
What heaps of fun
I've missed by being goody-goody!
Oh, that I might have felt the hunger
Of loveless age when I was younger!'

Eugene Field

To Lydia

When, Lydia, you (once fond and true,
But now grown cold and supercilious)
Praise Telly's charms of neck and arms--
Well, by the dog! it makes me bilious!

Then with despite my cheeks wax white,
My doddering brain gets weak and giddy,
My eyes o'erflow with tears which show
That passion melts my vitals, Liddy!

Deny, false jade, your escapade,
And, lo! your wounded shoulders show it!
No manly spark left such a mark--
Leastwise he surely was no poet!

With savage buss did Telephus
Abraid your lips, so plump and mellow;
As you would save what Venus gave,
I charge you shun that awkward fellow!

And now I say thrice happy they
That call on Hymen to requite 'em;
For, though love cools, the wedded fools
Must cleave till death doth disunite 'em.

Eugene Field

To M.L. Gray,

Come, dear old friend, and with us twain
To calm Digentian groves repair;
The turtle coos his sweet refrain
And posies are a-blooming there;
And there the romping Sabine girls
Bind myrtle in their lustrous curls.

I know a certain ilex-tree
Whence leaps a fountain cool and clear.
Its voices summon you and me;
Come, let us haste to share its cheer!
Methinks the rapturous song it sings
Should woo our thoughts from mortal things.

But, good old friend, I charge thee well,
Watch thou my brother all the while,
Lest some fair Lydia cast her spell
Round him unschooled in female guile.
Those damsels have no charms for me;
Guard thou that brother,--I'll guard thee!

And, lo, sweet friend! behold this cup,
Round which the garlands intertwine;
With Massic it is foaming up,
And we would drink to thee and thine.
And of the draught thou shalt partake,
Who lov'st us for our father's sake.

Hark you! from yonder Sabine farm
Echo the songs of long ago,
With power to soothe and grace to charm
What ills humanity may know;
With that sweet music in the air,
'T is Love and Summer everywhere.

So, though no grief consumes our lot
(Since all our lives have been discreet),
Come, in this consecrated spot,
Let's see if pagan cheer be sweet.
Now, then, the songs; but, first, more wine.
The gods be with you, friends of mine!

Eugene Field

To Maecenas

Than you, O valued friend of mine,
A better patron _non est_!
Come, quaff my home-made Sabine wine,--
You'll find it poor but honest.

I put it up that famous day
You patronized the ballet,
And the public cheered you such a way
As shook your native valley.

Caecuban and the Calean brand
May elsewhere claim attention;
But _I_ have none of these on hand,--
For reasons I'll not mention.

ENVOY

So, come! though favors I bestow
Cannot be called extensive,
Who better than my friend should know
That they're at least expensive?

Eugene Field

To Mary Field French

A dying mother gave to you
Her child a many years ago;
How in your gracious love he grew,
You know, dear, patient heart, you know.

The mother's child you fostered then
Salutes you now and bids you take
These little children of his pen
And love them for the author's sake.

To you I dedicate this book,
And, as you read it line by line,
Upon its faults as kindly look
As you have always looked on mine.

Tardy the offering is and weak;--
Yet were I happy if I knew
These children had the power to speak
My love and gratitude to you.

Eugene Field

To Mother Venus

O mother Venus, quit, I pray,
Your violent assailing!
The arts, forsooth, that fired my youth
At last are unavailing;
My blood runs cold, I'm getting old,
And all my powers are failing.

Speed thou upon thy white swans' wings,
And elsewhere deign to mellow
With thy soft arts the anguished hearts
Of swains that writhe and bellow;
And right away seek out, I pray,
Young Paullus,--he's your fellow!

You'll find young Paullus passing fair,
Modest, refined, and tony;
Go, now, incite the favored wight!
With Venus for a crony
He'll outshine all at feast and ball
And conversazione!

Then shall that godlike nose of thine
With perfumes be requited,
And then shall prance in Salian dance
The girls and boys delighted,
And while the lute blends with the flute
Shall tender loves be plighted.

But as for me, as you can see,
I'm getting old and spiteful.
I have no mind to female kind,
That once I deemed delightful;
No more brim up the festive cup
That sent me home at night full.

Why do I falter in my speech,
O cruel Ligurine?
Why do I chase from place to place
In weather wet and shiny?
Why down my nose forever flows
The tear that's cold and briny?

Eugene Field

To Pompeius Varus

Pompey, what fortune gives you back
To the friends and the gods who love you?
Once more you stand in your native land,
With your native sky above you.
Ah, side by side, in years agone,
We've faced tempestuous weather,
And often quaffed
The genial draught
From the same canteen together.

When honor at Philippi fell
A prey to brutal passion,
I regret to say that my feet ran away
In swift Iambic fashion.
You were no poet; soldier born,
You stayed, nor did you wince then.
Mercury came
To my help, which same
Has frequently saved me since then.

But now you're back, let's celebrate
In the good old way and classic;
Come, let us lard our skins with nard,
And bedew our souls with Massic!
With fillets of green parsley leaves
Our foreheads shall be done up;
And with song shall we
Protract our spree
Until the morrow's sun-up.

Eugene Field

To Quintus Dellius

Be tranquil, Dellius, I pray;
For though you pine your life away
With dull complaining breath,
Or speed with song and wine each day,
Still, still your doom is death.

Where the white poplar and the pine
In glorious arching shade combine,
And the brook singing goes,
Bid them bring store of nard and wine
And garlands of the rose.

Let's live while chance and youth obtain;
Soon shall you quit this fair domain
Kissed by the Tiber's gold,
And all your earthly pride and gain
Some heedless heir shall hold.

One ghostly boat shall some time bear
From scenes of mirthfulness or care
Each fated human soul,--
Shall waft and leave its burden where
The waves of Lethe roll.

_So come, I prithee, Dellius mine;
Let's sing our songs and drink our wine
In that sequestered nook
Where the white poplar and the pine
Stand listening to the brook_.

Eugene Field

To Quintus Hirpinus

To Scythian and Cantabrian plots,
Pay them no heed, O Quintius!
So long as we
From care are free,
Vexations cannot cinch us.

Unwrinkled youth and grace, forsooth,
Speed hand in hand together;
The songs we sing
In time of spring
Are hushed in wintry weather.

Why, even flow'rs change with the hours,
And the moon has divers phases;
And shall the mind
Be racked to find
A clew to Fortune's mazes?

Nay; 'neath this tree let you and me
Woo Bacchus to caress us;
We're old, 't is true,
But still we two
Are thoroughbreds, God bless us!

While the wine gets cool in yonder pool,
Let's spruce up nice and tidy;
Who knows, old boy,
But we may decoy
The fair but furtive Lyde?

She can execute on her ivory lute
Sonatas full of passion,
And she bangs her hair
(Which is passing fair)
In the good old Spartan fashion.

Eugene Field

To Robin Goodfellow

I see you, Maister Bawsy-brown,
 Through yonder lattice creepin';
You come for cream and to gar me dream,
 But you dinna find me sleepin'.
The moonbeam, that upon the floor
 Wi' crickets ben a-jinkin',
Now steals away fra' her bonnie play--
 Wi' a rosier blie, I'm thinkin'.

I saw you, Maister Bawsy-brown,
 When the blue bells went a-ringin'
For the merrie fays o' the banks an' braes,
 And I kenned your bonnie singin';
The gowans gave you honey sweets,
 And the posies on the heather
Dript draughts o' dew for the faery crew
 That danct and sang together.

But posie-bloom an' simmer-dew
 And ither sweets o' faery
C'u'd na gae down wi' Bawsy-brown,
 Sae nigh to Maggie's dairy!
My pantry shelves, sae clean and white,
 Are set wi' cream and cheeses,--
Gae, gin you will, an' take your fill
 Of whatsoever pleases.

Then wave your wand aboon my een
 Until they close awearie,
And the night be past sae sweet and fast
 Wi' dreamings o' my dearie.
But pinch the wench in yonder room,
 For she's na gude nor bonnie,--
Her shelves be dust and her pans be rust,
 And she winkit at my Johnnie!

Eugene Field

To The Fountain Of Bandusia

O fountain of Bandusia!
Whence crystal waters flow,
With garlands gay and wine I'll pay
The sacrifice I owe;
A sportive kid with budding horns
I have, whose crimson blood
Anon shall dye and sanctify
Thy cool and babbling flood.

O fountain of Bandusia!
The Dog-star's hateful spell
No evil brings into the springs
That from thy bosom well;
Here oxen, wearied by the plow,
The roving cattle here
Hasten in quest of certain rest,
And quaff thy gracious cheer.

O fountain of Bandusia!
Ennobled shalt thou be,
For I shall sing the joys that spring
Beneath yon ilex-tree.
Yes, fountain of Bandusia,
Posterity shall know
The cooling brooks that from thy nooks
Singing and dancing go.

Eugene Field

To Venus

Venus, dear Cnidian-Paphian queen!
Desert that Cyprus way off yonder,
And fare you hence, where with incense
My Glycera would have you fonder;
And to your joy bring hence your boy,
The Graces with unbelted laughter,
The Nymphs, and Youth,--then, then, in sooth,
Should Mercury come tagging after.

Eugene Field

Twin idols

There are two phrases, you must know,
 So potent (yet so small)
That wheresoe'er a man may go
 He needs none else at all;
No servile guide to lead the way
 Nor lackey at his heel,
If he be learned enough to say
 "Comme bien" and "Wie viel."

The sleek, pomaded Parleyvoo
 Will air his sweetest airs
And quote the highest rates when you
 "Comme bien" for his wares;
And, though the German stolid be,
 His so-called heart of steel
Becomes as soft as wax when he
 Detects the words "Wie viel."

Go, search the boulevards and rues
 From Havre to Marseilles--
You'll find all eloquence you use
 Except "Comme bien" fails;
Or in the country auf der Rhine
 Essay a business deal
And all your art is good fuhr nein
 Beyond the point--"Wie viel."

It matters not what game or prey
 Attracts your greedy eyes--
You must pursue the good old way
 If you would win the prize;
It is to get a titled mate
 All run down at the heel,
If you inquire of stock effete,
 "Comme bien" or "Wie viel."

So he is wise who envieth not
 A wealth of foreign speech,
Since with two phrases may be got
 Whatever's in his reach;
For Europe is a soulless shrine
 In which all classes kneel
Before twin idols, deemed divine--
 "Comme bien" and "Wie viel."

Eugene Field

Two Idylls From Bion The Smyrnean

I

Once a fowler, young and artless,
To the quiet greenwood came;
Full of skill was he and heartless
In pursuit of feathered game.
And betimes he chanced to see
Eros perching in a tree.

'What strange bird is that, I wonder?'
Thought the youth, and spread his snare;
Eros, chuckling at the blunder,
Gayly scampered here and there.
Do his best, the simple clod
Could not snare the agile god!

Blubbering, to his aged master
Went the fowler in dismay,
And confided his disaster
With that curious bird that day;
'Master, hast thou ever heard
Of so ill-disposed a bird?'

'Heard of him? Aha, most truly!'
Quoth the master with a smile;
'And thou too, shall know him duly-
Thou art young, but bide awhile,
And old Eros will not fly
From thy presence by and by!

'For when thou art somewhat older
That same Eros thou didst see,
More familiar grown and bolder,
Shall become acquaint with thee;
And when Eros comes thy way
Mark my word, he comes to stay!'

II

Once came Venus to me, bringing
Eros where my cattle fed-
'Teach this little boy your singing,
Gentle herdsman,' Venus said.
I was young-I did not know
Whom it was that Venus led-
That was many years ago!

In a lusty voice but mellow-
Callow pedant! I began
To instruct the little fellow
In the mysteries known to man;
Sung the noble cithern's praise,

And the flute of dear old Pan,
And the lyre that Hermes plays.

But he paid no heed unto me-
Nay, that graceless little boy
Coolly plotted to undo me-
With his songs of tender joy;
And my pedantry o'erthrown,
Eager was I to employ
His sweet ritual for mine own!

Ah, these years of ours are fleeting!
Yet I have not vainly wrought,
Since to-day I am repeating
What dear lessons Eros taught;
Love, and always love, and then-
Counting all things else for naught-
Love and always love again!

Eugene Field

Two Valentines

I.-TO MISTRESS BARBARA

There were three cavaliers, all handsome and true,
On Valentine's day came a maiden to woo,
And quoth to your mother: 'Good-morrow, my dear,
We came with some songs for your daughter to hear!'

Your mother replied: 'I'll be pleased to convey
To my daughter what things you may sing or may say!'

Then the first cavalier sung: 'My pretty red rose,
I'll love you and court you some day, I suppose!'

And the next cavalier sung, with make-believe tears:
'I've loved you! I've loved you these many long years!'

But the third cavalier (with the brown, bushy head
And the pretty blue jacket and necktie of red)
He drew himself up with a resolute air,
And he warbled: 'O maiden, surpassingly fair!
I've loved you long years, and I love you to-day,
And, if you will let me, I'll love you for aye!'

I (the third cavalier) sang this ditty to you,
In my necktie of red and my jacket of blue;
I'm sure you'll prefer the song that was mine
And smile your approval on your valentine.

II.-TO A BABY BOY

Who I am I shall not say,
But I send you this bouquet
With this query, baby mine:
'Will you be my valentine?'

See these roses blushing blue,
Very like your eyes of hue;
While these violets are the red
Of your cheeks. It can be said
Ne'er before was babe like you.

And I think it is quite true
No one e'er before to-day
Sent so wondrous a bouquet
As these posies aforesaid-
Roses blue and violets red!

Sweet, repay me sweets for sweets-
'Tis your lover who entreats!
Smile upon me, baby mine-
Be my little valentine!

Eugene Field

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Eugene Field

Uhland's

There were three cavaliers that went over the Rhine,
And gayly they called to the hostess for wine.
"And where is thy daughter? We would she were here,--
Go fetch us that maiden to gladden our cheer!"

"I'll fetch thee thy goblets full foaming," she said,
"But in yon darkened chamber the maiden lies dead."
And lo! as they stood in the doorway, the white
Of a shroud and a dead shrunken face met their sight.

Then the first cavalier breathed a pitiful sigh,
And the throb of his heart seemed to melt in his eye,
And he cried, "Hadst thou lived, O my pretty white rose,
I ween I had loved thee and wed thee--who knows?"

The next cavalier drew aside a small space,
And stood to the wall with his hands to his face;
And this was the heart-cry that came with his tears:
"I loved her, I loved her these many long years!"

But the third cavalier kneeled him down in that place,
And, as it were holy, he kissed that dead face:
"I loved thee long years, and I love thee to-day,
And I'll love thee, dear maiden, forever and aye!"

Eugene Field

Uhland's

Yonder stands the hillside chapel
Mid the evergreens and rocks,
All day long it hears the song
Of the shepherd to his flocks.

Then the chapel bell goes tolling-
Knelling for a soul that's sped;
Silent and sad the shepherd lad
Hears the requiem for the dead.

Shepherd, singers of the valley,
Voiceless now, speed on before;
Soon shall knell that chapel bell
For the songs you'll sing no more.

Eugene Field

Uhland's White Stag

Into the woods three huntsmen came,
Seeking the white stag for their game.

They laid them under a green fir-tree
And slept, and dreamed strange things to see.

(FIRST HUNTSMAN)

I dreamt I was beating the leafy brush,
When out popped the noble stag--hush, hush!

(SECOND HUNTSMAN)

As ahead of the clamorous pack he sprang,
I pelted him hard in the hide--piff, bang!

(THIRD HUNTSMAN)

And as that stag lay dead I blew
On my horn a lusty tir-ril-la-loo!

So speak the three as there they lay
When lo! the white stag sped that way,

Frisked his heels at those huntsmen three,
Then leagues o'er hill and dale was he--
Hush, hush! Piff, bang! Tir-ril-la-loo!

Eugene Field

When i was a boy

Up in the attic where I slept
When I was a boy, a little boy,
In through the lattice the moonlight crept,
Bringing a tide of dreams that swept
Over the low, red trundle-bed,
Bathing the tangled curly head,
While moonbeams played at hide-and-seek
With the dimples on the sun-browned cheek -
When I was a boy, a little boy!

And, oh! the dreams - the dreams I dreamed!
When I was a boy, a little boy!
For the grace that through the lattice streamed
Over my folded eyelids seemed
To have the gift of prophecy,
And to bring me glimpses of times to be
When manhood's clarion seemed to call -
Ah! that was the sweetest dream of all,
When I was a boy, a little boy!

I'd like to sleep where I used to sleep
When I was a boy, a little boy!
For in at the lattice the moon would peep,
Bringing her tide of dreams to sweep
The crosses and griefs of the years away
From the heart that is weary and faint to-day;
And those dreams should give me back again
A peace I have never known since then -
When I was a boy, a little boy!

Eugene Field

When The Poet Came

The ferny places gleam at morn,
The dew drips off the leaves of corn;
Along the brook a mist of white
Fades as a kiss on lips of light;
For, lo! the poet with his pipe
Finds all these melodies are ripe!

Far up within the cadenced June
Floats, silver-winged, a living tune
That winds within the morning's chime
And sets the earth and sky to rhyme;
For, lo! the poet, absent long,
Breathes the first raptures of his song!

Across the clover-blossoms, wet,
With dainty clumps of violet,
And wild red roses in her hair,
There comes a little maiden fair.
I cannot more of June rehearse--
She is the ending of my verse.

Ah, nay! For through perpetual days
Of summer gold and filmy haze,
When Autumn dies in Winter's sleet,
I yet will see those dew-washed feet,
And o'er the tracts of Life and Time
They make the cadence for my rhyme.

Eugene Field

Wine, Women, And Song

Ovarus mine,
Plant thou the vine
Within this kindly soil of Tibur;
Nor temporal woes,
Nor spiritual, knows
The man who's a discreet imbiber.
For who doth croak
Of being broke,
Or who of warfare, after drinking?
With bowl atween us,
Of smiling Venus
And Bacchus shall we sing, I'm thinking.

Of symptoms fell
Which brawls impel,
Historic data give us warning;
The wretch who fights
When full, of nights,
Is bound to have a head next morning.
I do not scorn
A friendly horn,
But noisy toots, I can't abide 'em!
Your howling bat
Is stale and flat
To one who knows, because he's tried 'em!

The secrets of
The life I love
(Companionship with girls and toddy)
I would not drag
With drunken brag
Into the ken of everybody;
But in the shade
Let some coy maid
With smilax wreathe my flagon's nozzle,
Then all day long,
With mirth and song,
Shall I enjoy a quiet sozzle!

Eugene Field

Winfreda

(A BALLAD IN THE ANGLO-SAXON TONGUE)

When to the dreary greenwood gloam
 Winfreda's husband strode that day,
The fair Winfreda bode at home
 To toil the weary time away;
"While thou art gone to hunt," said she,
"I'll brew a goodly sop for thee."

Lo, from a further, gloomy wood,
 A hungry wolf all bristling hied
And on the cottage threshold stood
 And saw the dame at work inside;
And, as he saw the pleasing sight,
He licked his fangs so sharp and white.

Now when Winfreda saw the beast,
 Straight at the grinning wolf she ran,
And, not affrighted in the least,
 She hit him with her cooking pan,
And as she thwacked him on the head--
"Scat! scat!" the fair Winfreda said.

The hills gave answer to their din--
 The brook in fear beheld the sight.
And all that bloody field within
 Wore token of Winfreda's might.
The wolf was very loath to stay--
But, oh! he could not get away.

Winfreda swept him o'er the wold
 And choked him till his gums were blue,
And till, beneath her iron hold,
 His tongue hung out a yard or two,
And with his hair the riven ground
Was strewn for many leagues around.

They fought a weary time that day,
 And seas of purple blood were shed,
Till by Winfreda's cunning lay
 That awful wolf all limp and dead;
Winfreda saw him reel and drop--
Then back she went to brewing sop.

So when the husband came at night
 From bootless chase, cold, gaunt, and grim,
Great was that Saxon lord's delight
 To find the sop dished up for him;
And as he ate, Winfreda told
How she had laid the wolf out cold.

The good Winfreda of those days

Is only "pretty Birdie" now--
Sickly her soul and weak her ways--
And she, to whom we Saxons bow,
Leaps on a bench and screams with fright
If but a mouse creeps into sight.

Eugene Field

With brutus in st. jo

Of all the opry-houses then obtaining in the West
The one which Milton Tootle owned was, by all odds, the best;
Milt, being rich, was much too proud to run the thing alone,
So he hired an "acting manager," a gruff old man named Krone--
A stern, commanding man with piercing eyes and flowing beard,
And his voice assumed a thunderous tone when Jack and I appeared;
He said that Julius Caesar had been billed a week or so,
And would have to have some armies by the time he reached St. Jo!

O happy days, when Tragedy still winged an upward flight,
When actors wore tin helmets and cambric robes at night!
O happy days, when sounded in the public's rapturous ears
The creak of pasteboard armor and the clash of wooden spears!
O happy times for Jack and me and that one other supe
That then and there did constitute the noblest Roman's troop!
With togas, battle axes, shields, we made a dazzling show,
When we were Roman soldiers with Brutus in St. Jo!

We wheeled and filed and double-quicked wherever Brutus led,
The folks applauding what we did as much as what he said;
'T was work, indeed; yet Jack and I were willing to allow
'T was easier following Brutus than following father's plough;
And at each burst of cheering, our valor would increase--
We tramped a thousand miles that night, at fifty cents apiece!
For love of Art--not lust for gold--consumed us years ago,
When we were Roman soldiers with Brutus in St. Jo!

To-day, while walking in the Square, Jack Langrish says to me:
"My friend, the drama nowadays ain't what it used to be!
These farces and these comedies--how feebly they compare
With that mantle of the tragic art which Forrest used to wear!
My soul is warped with bitterness to think that you and I--
Co-heirs to immortality in seasons long gone by--
Now draw a paltry stipend from a Boston comic show,
We, who were Roman soldiers with Brutus in St. Jo!"

And so we talked and so we mused upon the whims of Fate
That had degraded Tragedy from its old, supreme estate;
And duly, at the Morton bar, we stigmatized the age
As sinfully subversive of the interests of the Stage!
For Jack and I were actors in the halcyon, palmy days
Long, long before the Hoyt school of farce became the craze;
Yet, as I now recall it, it was twenty years ago
That we were Roman soldiers with Brutus in St. Jo!

We were by birth descended from a race of farmer kings
Who had done eternal battle with grasshoppers and things;
But the Kansas farms grew tedious--we pined for that delight
We read of in the Clipper in the barber's shop by night!
We would be actors--Jack and I--and so we stole away
From our native spot, Wathena, one dull September day,
And started for Missouri--ah, little did we know

We were going to train as soldiers with Brutus in St. Jo!

Our army numbered three in all--Marc Antony's was four;
Our army hankered after fame, but Marc's was after gore!
And when we reached Philippi, at the outset we were met
With an inartistic gusto I can never quite forget.
For Antony's overwhelming force of thumpers seemed to be
Resolved to do "them Kansas jays"--and that meant Jack and me!
My lips were sealed but that it seems quite proper you should know
That Rome was nowhere in it at Philippi in St. Jo!

I've known the slow-consuming grief and ostentatious pain
Accruing from McKean Buchanan's melancholy Dane;
Away out West I've witnessed Bandmann's peerless hardihood,
With Arthur Cambridge have I wrought where walking was not good;
In every phase of horror have I bravely borne my part,
And even on my uppers have I proudly stood for Art!
And, after all my suffering, it were not hard to show
That I got my allopathic dose with Brutus at St. Jo!

That army fell upon me in a most bewildering rage
And scattered me and mine upon that histrionic stage;
My toga rent, my helmet gone and smashed to smithereens,
They picked me up and hove me through whole centuries of scenes!
I sailed through Christian eras and mediæval gloom
And fell from Arden forest into Juliet's painted tomb!
Oh, yes, I travelled far and fast that night, and I can show
The scars of honest wounds I got with Brutus in St. Jo!

Ah me, old Davenport is gone, of fickle fame forgot,
And Barrett sleeps forever in a much neglected spot;
Fred Warde, the papers tell me, in far woolly western lands
Still flaunts the banner of high Tragic Art at one-night stands;
And Jack and I, in Charley Hoyt's Bostonian dramas wreak
Our vengeance on creation at some eensty dolls per week.
By which you see that public taste has fallen mighty low
Since we fought as Roman soldiers with Brutus in St. Jo!

Eugene Field

With Trumpet and Drum

With big tin trumpet and little red drum,
Marching like soldiers, the children come!
It 's this way and that way they circle and file---
My! but that music of theirs is fine!
This way and that way, and after a while
They march straight into this heart of mine!
A sturdy old heart, but it has to succumb
To the blare of that trumpet and beat of that drum!
Come on, little people, from cot and from hall---
This heart it hath welcome and room for you all!
It will sing you its songs and warm you with love,
As your dear little arms with my arms intertwine;
It will rock you away to the dreamland above---
Oh, a jolly old heart is this old heart of mine,
And jollier still is it bound to become
When you blow that big trumpet and beat that red drum!
So come; though I see not his dear little face
And hear not his voice in this jubilant place,
I know he were happy to bid me enshrine
His memory deep in my heart with your play---
Ah me! but a love that is sweeter than mine
Holdeth my boy in its keeping to-day!
And my heart it is lonely---so, little folk, come,
March in and make merry with trumpet and drum!

Eugene Field

With two spoons for two spoons

How trifling shall these gifts appear
 Among the splendid many
That loving friends now send to cheer
 Harvey and Ellen Jenney.

And yet these baubles symbolize
 A certain fond relation
That well beseems, as I surmise,
 This festive celebration.

Sweet friends of mine, be spoons once more,
 And with your tender cooing
Renew the keen delights of yore--
 The rapturous bliss of wooing.

What though that silver in your hair
 Tells of the years aflying?
'T is yours to mock at Time and Care
 With love that is undying.

In memory of this Day, dear friends,
 Accept the modest token
From one who with the bauble sends
 A love that can't be spoken.

Eugene Field

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
 Sailed off in a wooden shoe,--
Sailed on a river of crystal light
 Into a sea of dew.
"Where are you going, and what do you wish?"
 The old moon asked the three.
"We have come to fish for the herring-fish
 That live in this beautiful sea;
 Nets of silver and gold have we,"
Said Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

The old moon laughed and sang a song,
 As they rocked in the wooden shoe;
And the wind that sped them all night long
 Ruffled the waves of dew;
The little stars were the herring-fish
 That lived in the beautiful sea.
"Now cast your nets wherever you wish,--
 Never afraid are we!"
 So cried the stars to the fishermen three,
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

All night long their nets they threw
 To the stars in the twinkling foam,--
Then down from the skies came the wooden shoe,
 Bringing the fishermen home:
'Twas all so pretty a sail, it seemed
 As if it could not be;
And some folk thought 'twas a dream they'd dreamed
 Of sailing that beautiful sea;
 But I shall name you the fishermen three:
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
 And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
 Is a wee one's trundle-bed;
So shut your eyes while Mother sings
 Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
 As you rock in the misty sea
 Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three:--
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

Eugene Field

Yvytot

Where wail the waters in their flaw
A spectre wanders to and fro,
 And evermore that ghostly shore
Bemoans the heir of Yvytot.

Sometimes, when, like a fleecy pall,
The mists upon the waters fall,
 Across the main float shadows twain
That do not heed the spectre's call.

The king his son of Yvytot
Stood once and saw the waters go
 Boiling around with hissing sound
The sullen phantom rocks below.

And suddenly he saw a face
Lift from that black and seething place--
 Lift up and gaze in mute amaze
And tenderly a little space,

A mighty cry of love made he--
No answering word to him gave she,
 But looked, and then sunk back again
Into the dark and depthless sea.

And ever afterward that face,
That he beheld such little space,
 Like wraith would rise within his eyes
And in his heart find biding place.

So oft from castle hall he crept
Where mid the rocks grim shadows slept,
 And where the mist reached down and kissed
The waters as they wailed and wept.

The king it was of Yvytot
That vaunted, many years ago,
 There was no coast his valiant host
Had not subdued with spear and bow.

For once to him the sea-king cried:
"In safety all thy ships shall ride
  An thou but swear thy princely heir
Shall take my daughter to his bride.

"And lo, these winds that rove the sea
Unto our pact shall witness be,
 And of the oath which binds us both
Shall be the judge 'twixt me and thee!"

Then swore the king of Yvytot
Unto the sea-king years ago,

And with great cheer for many a year
His ships went harrying to and fro.

Unto this mighty king his throne
Was born a prince, and one alone--
Fairer than he in form and blee
And knightly grace was never known.

But once he saw a maiden face
Lift from a haunted ocean place--
Lift up and gaze in mute amaze
And tenderly a little space.

Wroth was the king of Yvytot,
For that his son would never go
Sailing the sea, but liefer be
Where wailed the waters in their flow,

Where winds in clamorous anger swept,
Where to and fro grim shadows crept,
And where the mist reached down and kissed
The waters as they wailed and wept.

So sped the years, till came a day
The haughty king was old and gray,
And in his hold were spoils untold
That he had wrenched from Norroway.

Then once again the sea-king cried:
"Thy ships have harried far and wide;
My part is done--now let thy son
Require my daughter to his bride!"

Loud laughed the king of Yvytot,
And by his soul he bade him no--
"I heed no more what oath I swore,
For I was mad to bargain so!"

Then spake the sea-king in his wrath:
"Thy ships lie broken in my path!
Go now and wring thy hands, false king!
Nor ship nor heir thy kingdom hath!

"And thou shalt wander evermore
All up and down this ghostly shore,
And call in vain upon the twain
That keep what oath a dastard swore!"

The king his son of Yvytot
Stood even then where to and fro
The breakers swelled--and there beheld
A maiden face lift from below.

"Be thou or truth or dream," he cried,
"Or spirit of the restless tide,
 It booteth not to me, God wot!
But I would have thee to my bride."

Then spake the maiden: "Come with me
Unto a palace in the sea,
 For there my sire in kingly ire
Requires thy king his oath of thee!"

Gayly he fared him down the sands
And took the maiden's outstretched hands;
 And so went they upon their way
To do the sea-king his commands.

The winds went riding to and fro
And scourged the waves that crouched below,
 And bade them sing to a childless king
The bridal song of Yvytot.

So fell the curse upon that shore,
And hopeless wailing evermore
 Was the righteous dole of the craven soul
That heeded not what oath he swore.

An hundred ships went down that day
All off the coast of Norroway,
 And the ruthless sea made mighty glee
Over the spoil that drifting lay.

The winds went calling far and wide
To the dead that tossed in the mocking tide:
 "Come forth, ye slaves! from your fleeting graves
And drink a health to your prince his bride!"

Where wail the waters in their flow
A spectre wanders to and fro,
 But nevermore that ghostly shore
Shall claim the heir of Yvytot.

Sometimes, when, like a fleecy pall,
The mists upon the waters fall,
 Across the main flit shadows twain
That do not heed the spectre's call.

Eugene Field