

Classic Poetry Series

Jane Taylor

- poems -

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Come and Play in the Garden

Little sister, come away,
And let us in the garden play,
For it is a pleasant day.

On the grass-plat let us sit,
Or, if you please, we'll play a bit,
And run about all over it.

But the fruit we will not pick,
For that would be a naughty trick,
And very likely make us sick.

Nor will we pluck the pretty flowers
That grow about the beds and bowers,
Because you know they are not ours.

We'll take the daisies, white and red,
Because mamma has often said
That we may gather then instead.

And much I hope we always may
Our very dear mamma obey,
And mind whatever she may say.

Jane Taylor

Finery

In an elegant frock, trimm'd with beautiful lace,
And hair nicely curl'd, hanging over her face,
Young Fanny went out to the house of a friend,
With a large little party the evening to spend.

"Ah! how they will all be delighted, I guess,
And stare with surprise at my handsome new dress!"
Thus said the vain girl, and her little heart beat,
Impatient the happy young party to meet.

But, alas! they were all too intent on their play
To observe the fine clothes of this lady so gay,
And thus all her trouble quite lost its design;-
For they saw she was proud, but forgot she was fine.

'Twas Lucy, though only in simple white clad,
(Nor trimmings, nor laces, nor jewels, she had,)
Whose cheerful good-nature delighted them more
Than Fanny and all the fine garments she wore.

'Tis better to have a sweet smile on one's face,
Than to wear a fine frock with an elegant lace,
For the good-natured girl is loved best in the main,
If her dress is but decent, though ever so plain.

Jane Taylor

Greedy Richard

"I think I want some pies this morning,"
Said Dick, stretching himself and yawning;
So down he threw his slate and books,
And saunter'd to the pastry-cook's.

And there he cast his greedy eyes
Round on the jellies and the pies,
So to select, with anxious care,
The very nicest that was there.

At last the point was thus decided:
As his opinion was divided
'Twixt pie and jelly, being loth
Either to leave, he took them both.

Now Richard never could be pleased
To stop when hunger was appeased,
But would go on to eat still more
When he had had an ample store.

"No, not another now," said Dick;
"Dear me, I feel extremely sick:
I cannot even eat this bit;
I wish I had not tasted it. "

Then slowing rising from his seat,
He threw his cheesecake in the street,
And left the tempting pastry-cook's
With very discontented looks.

Just then a man with wooden leg
Met Dick, and held his hat to beg;
And while he told his mournful case,
Look'd at him with imploring face.

Dick, wishing to relieve his pain,
His pockets search'd, but search'd in vain;
And so at last he did declare,
He had not left a farthing there.

The beggar turn'd with face of grief,
And look of patient unbelief,
While Richard now his folly blamed,
And felt both sorry and ashamed.

"I wish," said he (but wishing's vain),
"I had my money back again,
And had not spent my last, to pay
For what I only threw away.

"Another time, I'll take advice,
And not buy things because they're nice;

But rather save my little store,
To give to those who want it more."

Jane Taylor

Little Girls Must Not Fret

What is it that makes little Emily cry?
Come then, let mamma wipe the tear from her eye:
There- -- lay down your head on my bosom- -- that's right,
And now tell mamma what's the matter to-night.

What! Emmy is sleepy, and tired with play?
Come, Betty, make haste then, and fetch her away;
But do not be fretful, my darling; you know
Mamma cannot love little girls that are so.

She shall soon go to bed and forget it all there-
Ah! here's her sweet smile come again, I declare:
That's right, for I thought you quite naughty before.
Good night, my dear child, but don't fret any more.

Jane Taylor

Mischief

Let those who're fond of idle tricks,
Of throwing stones, and hurling bricks,
And all that sort of fun,
Now hear a tale of idle Jim,
That warning they may take by him,
Nor do as he has done.

In harmless sport or healthful play
He did not pass his time away,
Nor took his pleasure in it;
For mischief was his only joy:
No book, or work, or even toy,
Could please him for a minute.

A neighbour's house he'd slyly pass,
And throw a stone to break the glass,
And then enjoy the joke!
Or, if a window open stood,
He'd throw in stones, or bits of wood,
To frighten all the folk.

If travellers passing chanced to stay,
Of idle Jim to ask the way,
He never told them right;
And then, quite harden'd in his sin,
Rejoiced to see them taken in,
And laugh'd with all his might.

He'd tie a string across the street,
Just to entangle people's feet,
And make them tumble down:
Indeed, he was disliked so much,
That no good boy would play with such
A nuisance to the town.

At last the neighbours, in despair,
This mischief would no longer bear:
And so -to end the tale,
This lad, to cure him of his ways,
Was sent to spend some dismal days
Within the county jail.

Jane Taylor

Sleepy Harry

"I do not like to go to bed,"
Sleepy little Harry said;
"Go, naughty Betty, go away,
I will not come at all, I say! "

Oh, silly child! what is he saying?
As if he could be always playing!
Then, Betty, you must come and carry
This very foolish little Harry.

The little birds are better taught,
They go to roosting when they ought:
And all the ducks, and fowls, you know,
They went to bed an hour ago.

The little beggar in the street,
Who wanders with his naked feet,
And has not where to lay his head,
Oh, he'd be glad to go to bed.

Jane Taylor

The Apple-Tree

Old John had an apple-tree, healthy and green,
Which bore the best codlins that ever were seen,
So juicy, so mellow, and red;
And when they were ripe, he disposed of his store,
To children or any who pass'd by his door,
To buy him a morsel of bread.

Little Dick, his next neighbour, one often might see,
With longing eye viewing this fine apple-tree,
And wishing a codlin might fall:
One day as he stood in the heat of the sun,
He began thinking whether he might not take one,
And then he look'd over the wall.

And as he again cast his eye on the tree,
He said to himself, "Oh, how nice they would be,
So cool and refreshing to-day!
The tree is so full, and one only I'll take,
And John cannot see if I give it a shake,
And nobody is in the way.

But stop, little boy, take your hand from the bough,
Remember, though John cannot see you just now,
And no one to chide you is nigh,
There is One, who by night, just as well as by day,
Can see all you do, and can hear all you say,
From his glorious throne in the sky.

O then little boy, come away from the tree,
Lest tempted to this wicked act you should be:
'Twere better to starve than to steal;
For the great GOD, who even through darkness can look,
Writes down every crime we commit, in His book;
Nor forgets what we try to conceal.

Jane Taylor

The Disappointment

In tears to her mother poor Harriet came,
Let us listen to hear what she says:
"O see, dear mamma, it is pouring with rain,
We cannot go out in the chaise.

"All the week I have long'd for this holiday so,
And fancied the minutes were hours;
And now that I'm dress'd and all ready to go,
Do look at those terrible showers! "

"I'm sorry, my dear, " her kind mother replied,
The rain disappoints us to-day;
But sorrow still more that you fret for a ride,
In such an extravagant way.

"These slight disappointments are sent to prepare
For what may hereafter befall;
For seasons of real disappointment and care,
Which commonly happen to all.

"For just like to-day with its holiday lost,
Is life and its comforts at best:
Our pleasures are blighted, our purposes cross'd,
To teach us it is not our rest.

"And when those distresses and crosses appear,
With which you may shortly be tried,
You'll wonder that ever you wasted a tear
On merely the loss of a ride.

"But though the world's pleasures are fleeting and vain,
Religion is lasting and true;
Real pleasure and peace in her paths you may gain,
Nor will disappointment ensue. "

Jane Taylor

The Good-Natured Girls

Two good little children, named Mary and Ann,
Both happily live, as good girls always can;
And though they are not either sullen or mute,
They seldom or never are heard to dispute.

If one wants a thing that the other would like-
Well,-what do they do? Must they quarrel and strike?
No, each is so willing to give up her own,
That such disagreements are there never known.

If one of them happens to have something nice,
Directly she offers her sister a slice;
And never, like some greedy children, would try
To eat in a corner with nobody by!

When papa or mamma has a job to be done;
These good little children immediately run;
Nor dispute whether this or the other should go,
They would be ashamed to behave themselves so!

Whatever occurs, in their work or their play,
They are willing to yield, and give up their own way:
Then now let us try their example to mind,
And always, like them, be obliging and kind.

Jane Taylor

The Holidays

"Ah! don't you remember, 'tis almost December,
And soon will the holidays come;
Oh, 'twill be so funny, I've plenty of money,
I'll buy me a sword and a drum. "

Thus said little Harry, unwilling to tarry,
Impatient from school to depart;
But we shall discover, this holiday lover
Knew little what was in his heart.

For when on returning, he gave up his learning,
Away from his sums and his books,
Though playthings surrounded, and sweetmeats abounded,
Chagrin still appear'd in his looks.

Though first they delighted, his toys were now slighted,
And thrown away out of his sight;
He spent every morning in stretching and yawning,
Yet went to bed weary at night.

He had not that treasure which really makes pleasure,
(A secret discover'd by few).
You'll take it for granted, more playthings he wanted;
Oh naught was something to do.

We must have employment to give us enjoyment
And pass the time cheerfully away;
And study and reading give pleasure, exceeding
The pleasures of toys and of play.

To school now returning-to study and learning
With eagerness Harry applied;
He felt no aversion to books or exertion,
Nor yet for the holidays sigh'd.

Jane Taylor

The Orphan

My father and mother are dead,
Nor friend, nor relation I know;
And now the cold earth is their bed,
And daisies will over them grow.

I cast my eyes into the tomb,
The sight made me bitterly cry;
I said, "And is this the dark room,
Where my father and mother must lie?"

I cast my eyes round me again,
In hopes some protector to see;
Alas! but the search was in vain,
For none had compassion on me.

I cast my eyes up to the sky,
I groan'd, though I said not a word;
Yet GOD was not deaf to my cry,
The Friend of the fatherless heard.

For since I have trusted his care,
And learn'd on his word to depend,
He has kept me from every snare,
And been my best Father and Friend.

Jane Taylor

The Spider

"Oh, look at that great ugly spider!" said Ann;
And screaming, she brush'd it away with her fan;
"Tis a frightful black creature as ever can be,
I wish that it would not come crawling on me. "

"Indeed," said her mother, "I'll venture to say,
The poor thing will try to keep out of your way;
For after the fright, and the fall, and the pain,
It has much more occasion than you to complain.

"But why should you dread the poor insect, my dear?
If it hurt you, there'd be some excuse for your fear;
But its little black legs, as it hurried away,
Did but tickle your arm, as they went, I dare say.

"For them to fear us we must grant to be just,
Who in less than a moment can tread them to dust;
But certainly we have no cause for alarm;
For, were they to try, they could do us no harm.

"Now look! it has got to its home; do you see
What a delicate web it has spun in the tree?
Why here, my dear Ann, is a lesson for you:
Come learn from this spider what patience can do!

"And when at your business you're tempted to play,
Recollect what you see in this insect to-day,
Or else, to your shame, it may seem to be true,
That a poor little spider is wiser than you. "

Jane Taylor

The Village Green

On the cheerful village green,
Skirted round with houses small,
All the boys and girls are seen,
Playing there with hoop and ball.

Now they frolic hand in hand,
Making many a merry chain;
Then they form a warlike band,
Marching o'er the level plain.

Now ascends the worsted ball,
High it rises in the air,
Or against the cottage wall,
Up and down it bounces there.

Then the hoop, with even pace,
Runs before the merry throngs;
Joy is seen in every face,
Joy is heard in cheerful songs.

Rich array, and mansions proud,
Gilded toys, and costly fare,
Would not make the little crowd
Half so happy as they are.

Then, contented with my state,
Where true pleasure may be seen,
Let me envy not the great,
On a cheerful village green.

Jane Taylor

The Violet

Down in a green and shady bed,
A modest violet grew;
Its stalk was bent, it hung its head
As if to hide from view.
And yet it was a lovely flower,
Its colour bright and fair;
It might have graced a rosy bower,
Instead of hiding there.

Yet thus it was content to bloom,
In modest tints arrayed;
And there diffused a sweet perfume,
Within the silent shade.

Then let me to the valley go
This pretty flower to see;
That I may also learn to grow
In sweet humility.

Jane Taylor