

Old Favorites

THE OLD OAKEN BUCKET

How dear to my heart are the scenes of
my childhood,
When fond recollection presents them
to view!
The orchard, the meadow, the deep-
tangled wildwood,
And every loved spot which my infancy
knew;
The wide-spreading pond and the mill
which stood by it,
The bridge, and the rock where the
cataract fell;
The cot of my father, the dairy-house
nigh it,
And e'en the rude bucket which hung
in the well,—
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound
bucket,
The moss-covered bucket which hung in
the well.

The moss-covered vessel I hail as a
treasure;
For often, at noon, when returned from
the field,
I found it the source of exquisite pleasure,
The purest and sweetest that nature
can yield.
How ardent I seized it, with hands that
were glowing!
And quick to the white-pebbled bottom
it fell;
Then soon with the emblem of truth
overflowing,
And dripping with coolness, it rose from
the well,—
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound
bucket,
The moss-covered bucket, arose from
the well.

How sweet from the green mossy brim
to receive it,
As, poised on the curb, it inclined to
my lips!
Not a full blushing goblet could tempt
me to leave it.
Though filled with the nectar that
Jupiter sips.
And now, far removed from the loved
situation,
The tear of regret will intrusively swell,
As fancy reverts to my father's plantation,
And sighs for the bucket which hangs
in the well,—
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound
bucket,
The moss-covered bucket, which hangs
in the well.

—Samuel Woodworth.

ROCK OF AGES

"Such hymns are never forgotten.
They cling to us through our whole life.
We carry them with us upon our journey.
We sing them in the forest. The work-
man follows the plough with sacred songs.
Children catch them, and singing only for
the joy it gives them now, are yet laying
up for all their life food of the sweetest
joy."—Henry Ward Beecher.

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,"
Thoughtlessly the maiden sung.
Fell the words unconsciously
From her girlish, gleeful tongue;
Sang as little children sing;
Sang as sang the birds in June;
Fell the words like light leaves down
On the current of the tune,—
"Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

"Let me hide myself in Thee"
Felt her soul no need to hide,—
Sweet the song as songs could be,
And she had no thought beside;
All the words unheedingly
Fell from lips untouched by care,
Dreaming not that they might be
On some other lips a prayer,—
"Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,"
'T was a woman sung them now
Pleadingly and prayerfully;
Every word her heart did know.
Rose the song as storm-tossed bird
Beats with weary wing the air,
Every note with sorrow stirred,
Every syllable a prayer.—
"Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,"—
Lips grown aged sang the hymn
Trustingly and tenderly,
Voice grown weak and eyes grown
dim,—
"Let me hide myself in Thee."
Trembling though the voice and low,
Rose the sweet strain peacefully
Like a river in its flow;
Sung as only they can sing
Who life's thorny path have passed;
Sung as only they can sing
Who behold the promise rest,—
"Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

"Rock of ages, cleft for me"
Sung above a coffin lid;
Underneath, all restfully,
All life's joys and sorrows hid.
Never more, O storm-tossed soul!
Nevermore from wind or tide,
Nevermore from billows, roll,
Wilt thou need thyself to hide.
Could the sightless, sunken eyes,
Closed beneath the soft grey hair,
Could the mute and stiffened lips
Move again in pleading prayer,
Still, aye still, the words would be,
"Let me hide myself in Thee."
—Prof. Edward H. Rice.

A 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 afear 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 folks thought 't was a dream
they 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 the 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.

MAUD MULLER

Maud Muller, on a summer's day,
Raked the meadow sweet with hay.
Beneath her torn hat glowed the wealth
Of simple beauty and rustic health.
Singing, she wrought, and her merry glee
The mock-bird echoed from his tree.
But, when she glanced to the far-off town,
White from its hillside looking down,
The sweet song died, and a vague unrest
And a nameless longing filled her breast,—

A wish, that she hardly dared to own,
For something better than she had known.

The Judge rode slowly down the lane,
Soothing his horse's chestnut mane.

He drew his bridle in the shade
Of the apple-trees to greet the maid.

And ask a draught from the spring that
flowed
Through the meadow, across the road.

She stooped where the cool spring bubbled
up,
And filled for him her small tin cup.

And blushed as she gave it, looking down
On her feet so bare, and her tattered gown.

"Thanks!" said the Judge, "a sweeter
draught
From a fairer hand was never quaffed."

He spoke of the grass and flowers and
trees,
Of the singing birds and the humming
bees;

Then talked of the haying, and wondered
whether
The cloud in the West would bring foul
weather.

And Maud Muller forgot her brier-torn
gown,
And her graceful ankles, bare and brown,

And listened while a pleased surprise
Looked from her long-lashed hazel eyes.

At last, like one who for delay
Seeks a vain excuse, he rode away.

Maud Muller looked and sighed: "Ah
me!
That I the Judge's bride might be!"

"He would dress me up in silks so fine,
And praise and toast me at his wine.

"My father should wear a broadcloth
coat,
My brother should sail a painted boat.

"I'd dress my mother so grand and gay,
And the baby should have a new toy each
day.

"And I'd feed the hungry and clothe the
poor,
And all should bless me who left our door."

The Judge looked back as he climbed the
hill,
And saw Maud Muller standing still:

"A form more fair, a face more sweet,
Ne'er hath it been my lot to meet.

"And her modest answer and graceful air
Show her wise and good as she is fair.

"Would she were mine, and I today,
Like her, a harvester of hay.

"No doubtful balance of rights and
wrongs,
No weary lawyers with endless tongues,

"But low of cattle, and song of birds,
And health and quiet, and loving words."

But he thought of his sister proud and cold,
And his mother, vain of her rank of gold.

So, closing his heart, the Judge rode on,
And Maud was left in the field alone.

But the lawyers smiled that afternoon
When he hummed in court an old love
tune;

And the young girl mused beside the well,
Till the rain on the unraked clover fell.

He wedded a wife of richest dower,
Who lived for fashion, as he for power.

Yet oft, in his marble hearth's bright glow,
He watched a picture come and go:

And sweet Maud Muller's hazel eyes
Looked out in their innocent surprise.

Oft when the wine in his glass was red,
He longed for the wayside well instead.

And closed his eyes on his garnished
rooms,
To dream of meadows and clover blooms;

And the proud man sighed with a secret
pain,
"Ah, that I were free again!"

"Free as when I rode that day—
Where the barefoot maiden raked the
hay."

She wedded a man unlearned and poor,
And many children played round her door.

But care and sorrow, and child-birth pain,
Left their traces on heart and brain.

And oft when the summer sun shone hot
On the new-mown hay in the meadow lot,

And she heard the little spring brook fall
Over the roadside, through the wall,

In the shade of the apple-tree again
She saw a rider draw his rein,

And, gazing down with a timid grace,
She felt his pleased eyes read her face.

Sometimes her narrow kitchen walls
Stretched away into stately halls;

The weary wheel to a spinnet turned,
The tallow candle an astral burned;

And for him who sat by the chimney lug,
Dozing and grumbling o'er pipe and mug,

A manly form at her side she saw,
And joy was duty and love was law.

Then she took up her burden of life again,
Saying only, "It might have been."

Alas for maiden, alas for judge,
For rich repiner and household drudge!

God pity them both! and pity us all,
Who vainly the dreams of youth recall;

For of all the sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: "It might have
been!"

Ah, well! for us all some sweet hope lies
Deeply buried from human eyes;

And, in the hereafter, angels may
Roll the stone from its grave away!

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

My loved, my honored, much-respected
friend,

No mercenary bard his homage pays:
My honest pride I scorn each selfish end;
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem
and praise.

To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequestered
scene;

The native feelings strong, the guileless
ways;

What Aiken in a cottage would have
been;

Ah! though his worth unknown, far
happier there, I ween

November chill blows loud wi' angry
sugh;

The shortening winter-day is near a
close;

The miry beasts retreating frae the
pleaugh,

The blackening trains o' craws to their
repose;

The toilworn cotter frae his labor goes,—
This night his weekly toil is at an end,

Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his
hoes,

Hoping the morn in ease and rest to
spend,

And weary, o'er the moor, his course does
hame-ward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;

Th' expectant wee things, toddlin;
stacher through

To meet their dad, wi' flichterin' noise
an' glee.

His wee bit ingle, blinking bonnily,
His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie
wife's smile,

The hisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile

And makes him quite forget his labor
and his toil.