

There he stood in the dowy morn,
A spectre gaunt and grim,
And the naughty birds who had robbed the corn
Now fled at the sight of him

Fast they fled on their pinions swift,
For they thought that close behind
They could hear the scarecrow's rustle and creak,
Borne on the whispering wind.
And they never once looked back—poor fools!—
Or they might have seen him stand
Quite still, except for the fluttering rags
On the arms that had no hand,

The time went on, and the birds forgot
The pang of their first great terror,
And back they came in a hungry troop
To see if they'd been in error.
But no—for the tattered ghost was still
Watching among the corn,
With his warning arms spread stiffly out,
So grim, yet so forlorn.

Then one wise bird, as the rest drew back,
Tittered and chirped with a laugh,
"Look here, my friends, I'm older than you,
And I'm not to be caught with chaff.
See how this dreadful ghost of ours
Bends to each breath of air,
Yet never seems to be heeding us
As we flutter here and there.

"Come!" and with one swift flight he perched
Full on the scarecrow's head.
While his comrades stood with half-spread wings
In a hush of awe and dread.
Then in a moment the scene was changed
To the clamour of hungry strife,
For the birds had learned that their corn-field ghost
Was a thing devoid of life.

And I said to myself, as I passed that way ;
"Here is a lesson for me.
Our faults are the birds which steal the corn
That should fill life's granary.
Our good resolves, like the scarecrows, stand
To frighten the faults away ;
But alas! for the winged things return,
And often they win the day."

And why is this? the answer comes
With a deep, sad pathos rife.
Our resolutions lose their power
Because they have *no real life*.