

Once more I hear the gentle rhyme,  
 Where falling leaves still waters dimple,  
 The woods' low murmur, and the chime  
 Of silvery streamlets as they wimple;  
 And live again the golden time  
 Of childhood's joys—so pure and simple.

What pearly pebbles paved the creek,  
 The clear old creek by mulberries shaded;  
 There the shy frogs played hide-and-seek  
 Through lilies—with rare spices laded;  
 And our wee shadows seemed to speak  
 From whispering wavelets, as we waded.

What leagues of nectar wooed the bees  
 To buckwheat hills or dales of clover!  
 What twittering birds on blooming trees  
 Cooed tenderly and played the lover!  
 While Time with odorous breath of ease,  
 Told the delicious idyl over!

We reckoned then each year a gain;  
 Now, they are counted with our losses;  
 Sharp thorns and thistles give us pain,  
 Where then we trod Spring's velvet mosses;  
 Then, of our flowery garlands vain,  
 And now, aweary with our crosses.

I gathered wild flowers yesterday,  
 But somehow flowers have lost their sweetness;  
 Some quail were startled—even they  
 Seemed to have lost their old discreetness,  
 And only hopped beside the way,  
 As if they had no need for fleetness.

But when I see the children meet,  
 Flower laden, from their plays returning;  
 Care, trampled by their heedless feet,  
 Their trustful souls all shadows spurning;  
 Their hearts, wild with impatience, beat,  
 And hope's bright fires within them burning.

I know life blooms the same, but I  
 Shall breathe its old time fragrance—never!  
 The dreary now, the dead gone-by,  
 The bridgeless floods of sorrow sever.  
 Ah, me! how wistfully I sigh,  
 For dream-time lost, and lost for ever!

We can sympathise, as we have said, with those who feel such things. But we think such sentimental moods spring from a false