

evenings about the old cellar on the hill, to the great disgust of the frogs, who sat and watched them with great wondering eyes, but kept well out of their way, not wishing an introduction to them,—like Mrs. Partington, who did not wish to be introduced to anybody she was not acquainted with. They—the boys, not the frogs—would sit on the great rock near the cellar, or down on the margin of the creek, and watch the lightning which flashed up in the west, each taking his turn for the next flash, as if it were a swing, and the one who had the brightest exulting about it.

On one occasion they had gathered about the great rock, and had told wonderful stories until they were weary, when Tom Hall, with a new inspiration, said,—

"Come, let's make up some rhymes."

"What fun is there in that?" queried one of the number, who had no more rhyme in him than the frogs that were croaking in the cellar.

"No matter; let's try," said Tom.

"Well, you begin."

"Here goes, then: only don't be too hard on a fellow if he doesn't do very well:—

"There was an old fellow named Stoker:
Oh, he was a terrible soaker!
His nose in the night
Folks thought was a light,
And it shone like a red-hot poker."

This was received with a round of applause. It was tip-top, they all said, and every one felt ambitious to do as well.

"Come, Walters, your turn next," said a half-dozen voices; and Sim Walters said he would try to make a rhyme about Captain Bob.

"Here goes —

"Captain Bob is a jolly old brick;
No one to him can shake a stick:
O'er many a land he's been a goner,
But mostly down here to Clam Corner."

"Pretty good," said Bill Tibbets; "but I don't believe the captain would like it very well."

"He won't know anything about it; and it's only rhyme, you know, any way."

"That's so," from a number.

"Well, now let's see what you can do, Bill," said Walters.

Bill straightened himself up to it, pulled down his vest, and began:—

"There was a man in our town
Whose name was Mr. Grum;
And when old Scratchy called for him,
He said he wouldn't come."

This raised a great laugh, and Bill was voted a poet right away. But he said he didn't like to be personal. He had no idea, himself, how it was coming out when he be-

gan, and he couldn't help saying it; showing what a mysterious thing poetical inspiration is.

"Now, Ike, your turn; give us something sentimental."

Ike said he was not much at rhyming, but would do his best; and after thinking a few seconds he went on:—

"The cow flies over the meadow hill,
Lit by the torch of the whippoorwill;
The codfish sings in the turnip tree,
And the woodchuck chirps to the bouncing bee."

"That's good rhyme, but there isn't much reason to it," said Joe Lighton.

"Well," replied Ike, "I should like to know if lots of poetry isn't the same way. I've seen poetry that's called good, that's got no more reason than mine has."

The others said he was right, and called upon Joe to show what he could do better than that. So Joe, looking down into the old cellar where the frogs were singing their evening song, thus let himself out:—

"The frog he is a funny little fish:
He's got a mouth like a pudding-dish.
He sits in the cellar all day long,
And sings at night his opera-song."

"Pretty good!" was the verdict of the boys.

"Pretty good!" said Joe: "is that all you've got to say? Now, I call it the best thing yet. Come, Lem Tucker, you were one that said 'twas pretty good: now let us see if you can make anything that will begin with it."

"Oh, I can't! 'tisen't in me," said Lem.

"That's bosh; for I heard you the other day reeling off about a rod of rhymes on a frog, if it wasn't so good as mine. So fire away."

"That's a piece I learned to speak in school. That isn't mine."

"Well, let's have it," they all cried.

"'Tisn't funny," said he.

"No matter: let's have it."

"Lem's voice was a little shaky at first, but he soon gained confidence as he recited the spirited ballad of

BULL OF PAD-DOCK.

Lazily sitting upon a log.

Near by his home the lilies among,

The dandy of the meadow bog,

Bull of Pad-dock, is croaking his song:

"Bull Pad-dock! Bull Pad-dock!"

Chock, chuck, chock!

Here I snugly and safely rest,

Hid from gaze in the hassock's breast.

Chug, chug, chug!"

Bull of Pad-dock is jauntily dressed,
Wearing a bright green fancy coat,
Pants of the same, with yellow vest,
And a pure white choker round his throat.