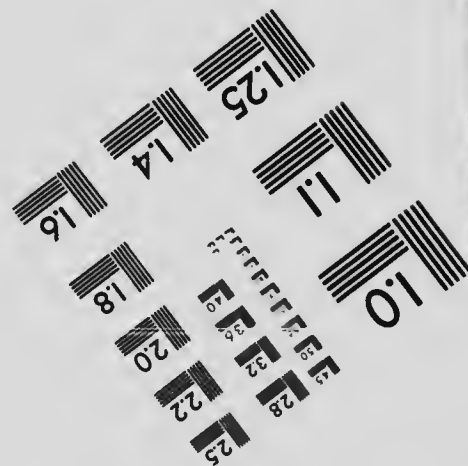
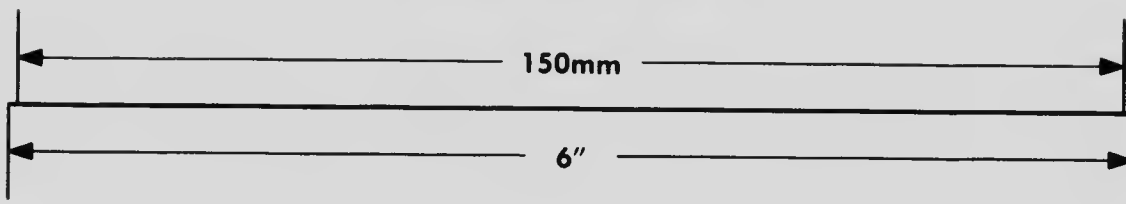
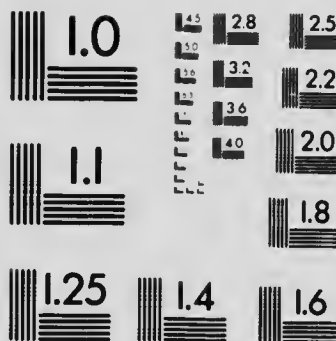
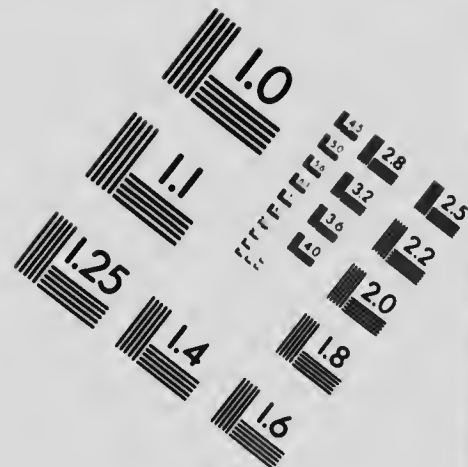
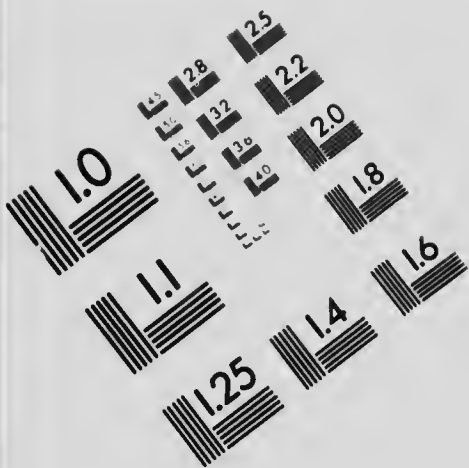


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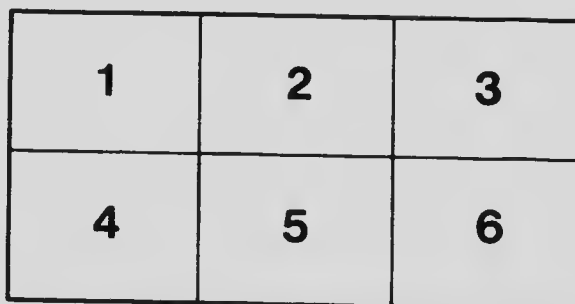
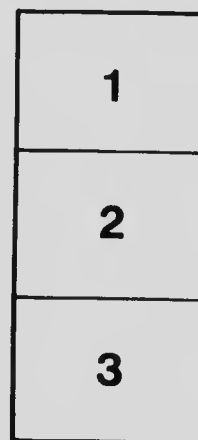
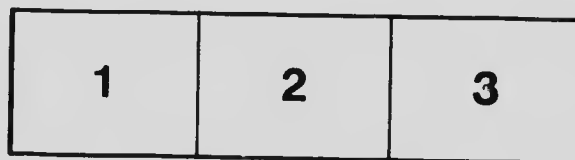
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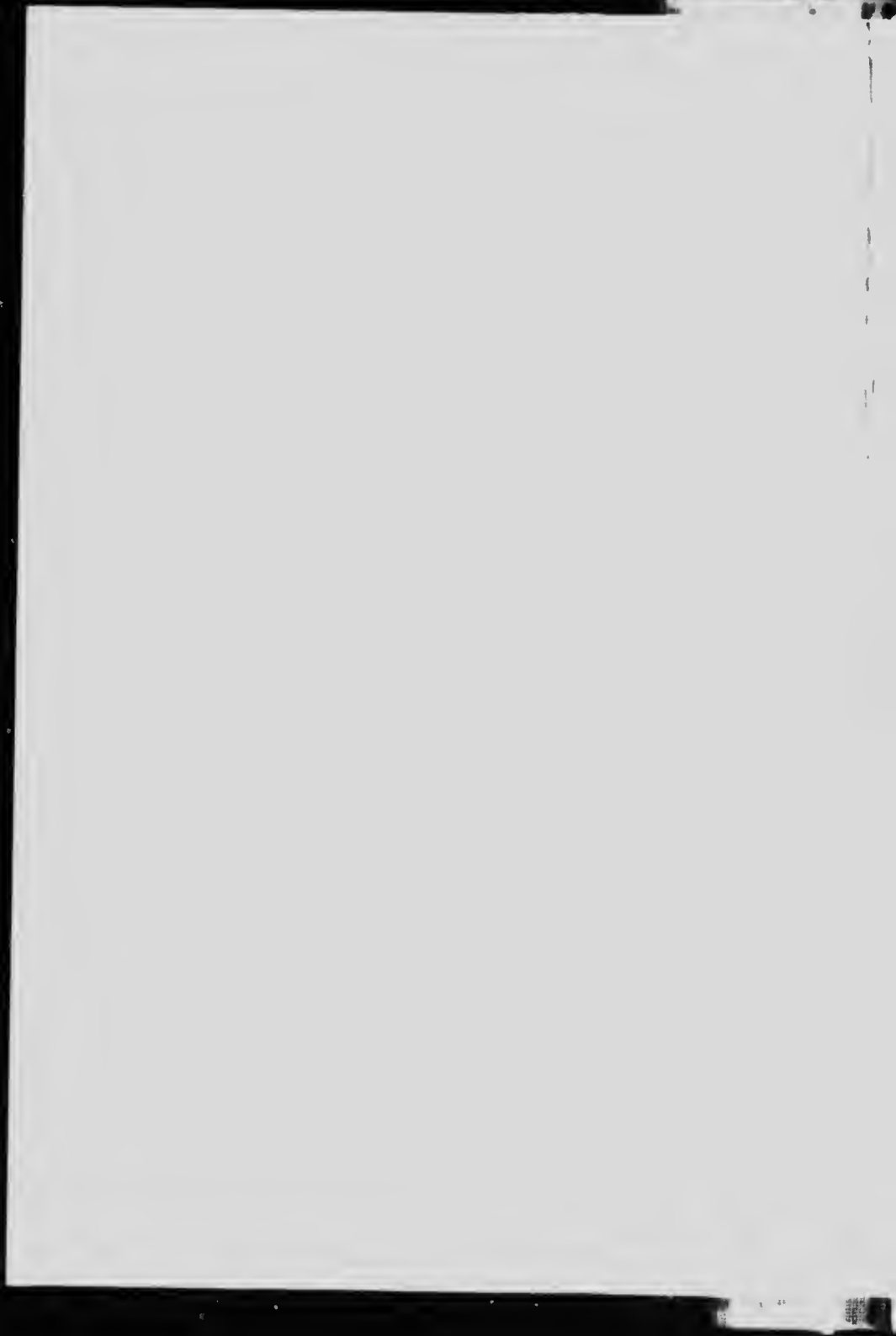
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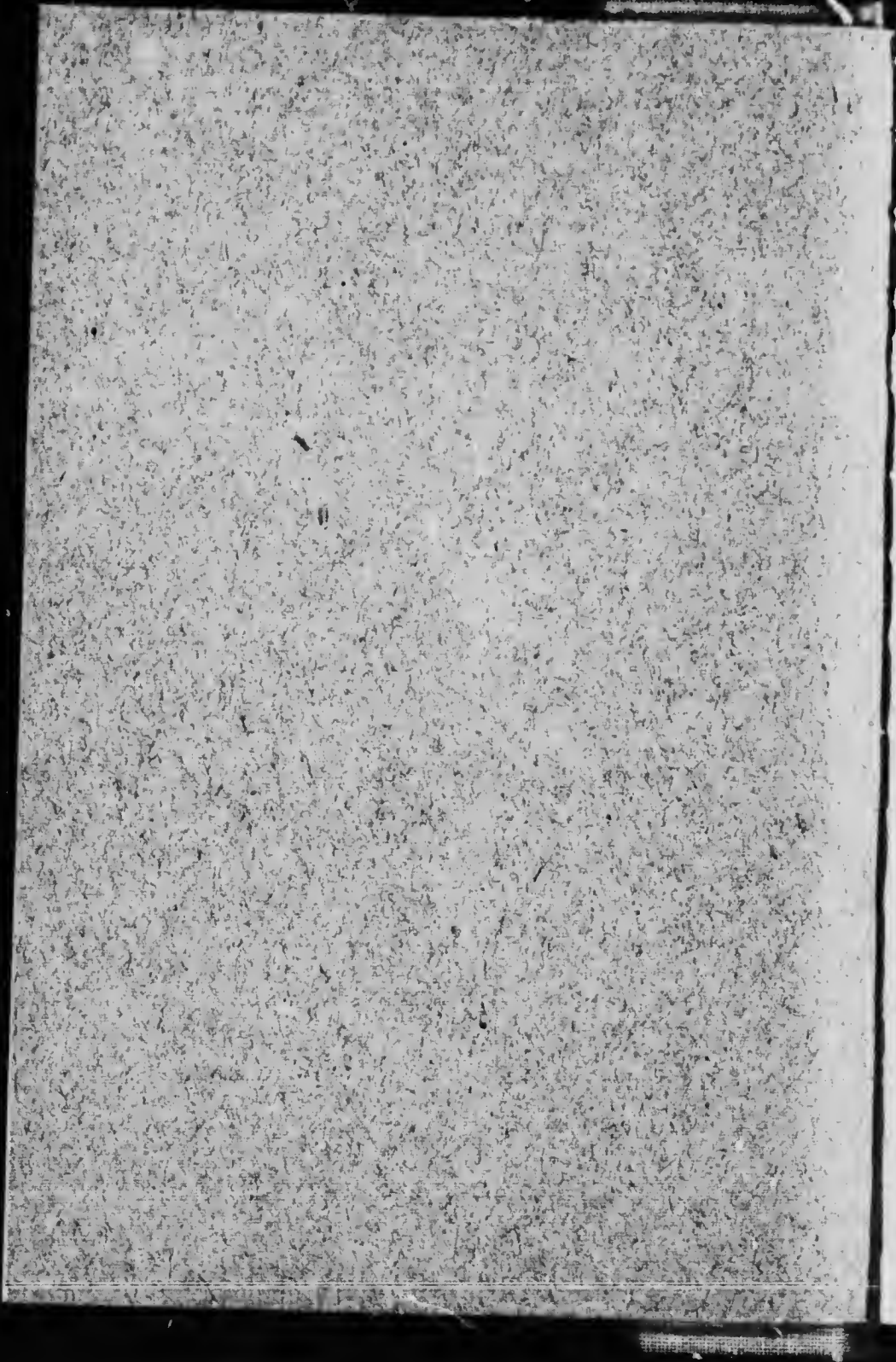
*A Tale of  
Rothenburg*

*AND OTHER POEMS*

*Ray Palmer Baker*



TORONTO, CAN.:  
L. S. HAYNES, Printer and Publisher  
486 Yonge Street.





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## PREFACE



It is not without reluctance that I have presented to my friends this little volume of verse. I know its imperfections. Much of it was written before my twenty-first year, and with my longer poems, "Croynan Hall," and "The Lady in the Mask"—as yet unpublished—is the product of my college days. My only hope is that those who have already heard the following lines from my own lips may sometime read for themselves these pages and not entirely forget

THE AUTHOR.

*Highfield School,  
Hamilton*

## Invitation

Come, for the stars are shining,  
Come, for the moon is bright;  
Why do you wait, my darling?  
Clear is the sky to-night.

Lightly the boat is rocking,  
Warm are the winds above;  
Come, for the sea is calling—  
Why do you wait, my love?

## Comfort

(From the German of Storm).

Let come what can, and come what may!  
For while you live it still is day.

And though on earth condemned to roam,  
If you are near, it still is home.

I see your softly-shining eyes,  
I see no more the sullen future rise.

## Autumn

Now Summer, like a woman growing old,  
Hath cast aside her garments one by one;  
Her many-colored vestments, fold in fold,  
Are tucked away. The task is nearly done.  
The drowsy-scented dresses of her youth,  
Now worn and withered, speak the present  
truth

Of endless change; the last, her favorite,  
A gown of dabbled red, has fluttered down  
Her limbs. And robed in gray, as women sit,  
She wipes a tear; and muses with a frown.

## Skating Song

So heigh-ho, ho!  
Away we go  
Where frosty echoes ring—  
And in and out,  
Around, about,  
The merry skaters swing.

The silver moon  
Will lighten soon  
And flood the frozen lake;  
And through the snow,  
Where torches glow,  
A silver mirror make.

A laughing girl,  
A flying curl,  
A lip with rubies red:  
And only this—  
A stolen kiss,  
A word or nothing, said:

And heigh-ho, ho!  
Away we go  
Above the grinding steel;  
And close beside,  
Away we glide  
And through the valleys reel

Where maples bare,  
And mountains stare,  
And thousands lie at rest;  
But on we whirl  
With dizzy swirl,  
For wandering is best.

### **The Immigrant**

**Hungry and hard and homeless,  
Sick of the sounding waves,  
Crowded and cold and cursing  
Him who hath made them slaves,  
See how he leans dejected—  
Ward of a Nation's need,  
Watching the ruthless pickers  
Culling an Empire's seed.**

### **Autumn is Here**

**Autumn is here—  
Pleasure has fled,  
Summer is dead;  
Winter is near.**

**Cold is the sky,  
Harder the street;  
Seldom we meet,  
Darling and I.**

**Little we hear,  
Little we know;  
Life changes so—  
Autumn is here.**

### **Tessie**

**Now, Tessie is a pretty girl,  
And fairly good to see;  
And, truthfully, my heart was sore  
The day she jilted me.**

**Around the town I hapless strayed  
With idiotic eye;  
To tell the truth, I nightly prayed  
That God would let me die.**

And on a dark hour, O cursèd time,  
I wrote my epitaph:  
So hopeless, drear, and sad a thing  
Would make the Devil laugh.

But fate to me is always kind;  
For I am still alive,  
And Tessie's scorn I little mind—  
It brought me twenty-five!

So, now, when I am jilted, dear,  
And things have gone to wreck,  
I always live to love again—  
And get a bigger check!

### Atonement

She sat reclined, beside me there,  
(The sun was in the west);  
And laughing, plucked her boxlike face.  
The girl I loved the best.

The open sea before us lay,  
(The wind was in the south):  
And merrily the dimples chased  
The smiles around her mouth.

Fra Lippo Lippi, jolly monk,  
Saw never such a face;  
(A gauzy gown her arms revealed  
With coy, beseeching grace).

A silver path the water crossed,  
(The moon was on the sea);  
The night was still; and she was near,  
The sweetest girl to me.

And silly fool, as others are,  
(She looked demurely meek)

I prayed the gods to give me luck—  
And kissed her—on the cheek.  
But who can read a woman's heart  
Or know a maiden's will?  
For when we strive to please them most  
We fare but doubly ill.  
So then, alas, a sight I saw!  
Her lip was curled in scorn.  
And secretly I fumed and cursed  
The day that I was born.  
But when in dire extremity,  
The gods are often kind  
And point some way of sure retreat  
Or respite to our mind.  
And thus did fate a ransom pay.  
For sullen grew the south;  
And tenderly I clasped her close,  
And kissed her—on the mouth.

### **The March Wind**

(From the German of Baumbach.)

“Cool was the morning air,  
My blood was flowing free;  
A wayward breeze awoke  
And stole my hat from me.  
“Over the garden wall,  
Enamored of her pet—  
Who could have taken it?  
Why, neighbor Margaret.  
“She brushed away the dust  
And held it in her hand;  
She plucked a violet  
And tucked it in the band;

“ And tossed it back again  
With not a word to say:  
I turned to wave my thanks—  
But she had slipped away.

“ So every day I stood  
Upon the garden wall;  
I waited for the wind—  
But not a leaf would fall.

“ I saw her in the grass—  
She knew that I was there;  
But still she would not move  
Nor turn her golden hair.

“ The breeze would help me not,  
The wicked little elf,  
So down I threw my hat—  
And followed it myself.”

### When We Grow Old.

Your chin will lose its dimple, dear,  
When we grow old, my love,  
When we grow old.

Your lips will lose their rubies, dear,  
When we grow old, my love,  
When we grow old.

Your cheeks will lose their roses, dear,  
When we grow old, my love,  
When we grow old.

But life will have its loving, dear,  
When we are old, my love,  
When we are old.

## Coaster Song

Let timbers shake and cowards quake—  
But level lies the coast  
Where whiskies take and taverns make  
The life I love the most.

A man-of-war is doubtless fine,  
And makes a jolly tar;  
But dreary beats the boiling brine,  
And long the watches are.

A liner too, has only ends,  
A long, unbeaten track;  
But coasterwise the Devil spends  
And Satan pays the lack.

The spectre tramp, with funnels red,  
And sides a dirty grey,  
Must helpless roll or crawl ahead  
And anchor down the bay.

I put about and out to sea  
And take a tack or two.  
Or drift along coquettishly  
And doze as others do.

I like to feel the schooner shake,  
I love my lager more;  
But dearest is the coastal break,  
Where I can go on shore.

A girl I have in every town  
From Smith's to Parson's Pier;  
The fates are kind: I cannot drown  
Because they are so near.



When currents twist and seething flow  
And close the curlews fly,  
I slip ashore and courting go,  
Or watch the blackened sky.

The ocean moans with muffled tones,  
And loud the breakers boast;  
While Davey Jones has need of bones  
My ship shall sail the coast.

### **The Sun Worshipper**

Upon the naked sand he knelt at noon  
And saw the Infinite. The air was hot.  
But hour by hour he prayed and begged the  
boon

Of perfect knowledge; hour by hour he  
sought

The Mystery. His tongue grew thick and  
dry:

The sun sneered heartlessly above. His eye  
Grew dim: the blunted senses slipped away  
And left him motionless—and seeking light.  
But cool, refreshing fell the closing day;  
And stiff and sore he woke. And it was  
night.

### **The Hindoo Girl**

Last night Diana floating lay  
In cloudless atmosphere,  
She saw the twilight steal away  
And shadows reappear.

A Hindoo girl, where olives lean,  
Along the Ganges came,  
With shaking fingers clasped to screen  
A jet of starting flame.

Her rosy blood ran red and true,  
Her eyes were deep as night;  
Her sandled feet enticed the dew,  
And starry gleamed the light.

Her dark brown limbs lianas tore  
And brushed the flame aside,  
But steadily she neared the shore  
And thrust it on the tide.

With welling tears she watched the trail  
Of silver sparks it cast:  
For should it flicker, fall and fail,  
Her lover's life had past.

But burned it far, till from her sight  
The candle flaring drew,  
And flaring, vanished into night,  
Her lover lived—and knew.

There on the sand she sank and prayed  
(For Brahma loves the rose).  
She saw the candle flaming, fade,  
And naked-kneeling, rose.

"And joy! He lives!" O woman's pride!  
(An adder raised its head).

"He lives! He lives!" The mountains  
cried—  
And Siva claimed his dead.

### **Honoris Causa**

(Addressed to the Czar by a young recruit).

Pray to the God of battle,  
Kneel to the God of might;  
Plead for your country's honor.  
Talk of your country's right.

Muster and rank your troopers;  
Mark how the squadrons stand,  
Sabres and snaffles flashing,  
Fit for a hero's hand.

Laugh when the lances quiver,  
Cheer when the bugles call;  
"Honor your God and country"—  
What is a moujik's fall!

Sit in your gilded palace,  
Lord of an empire, great;  
Plan for to-morrow's struggle,  
Shackle the bounds of fate.

Boast of your vaunted armies;  
Hark, how the cannon roll!  
"Charge for your colonel's glory"—  
What is a peasant's soul!

Sing of your gallant gunners,  
Driven to do and dare,  
Kissed when the world is winter,  
And when the world is fair.

Smile when the fortress shivers,  
Riddled with shot and shell;  
Think of its brave defender—  
What if the earth is hell!

Blinded and drunk with fury,  
Shattered the columns meet;  
Hushed are the manly voices,  
Stilled are the wearied feet.

All for a perjured promise,  
All for a little gain,  
Bruised and bleeding and broken,  
Thousands and thousands slain.

This is your country's honor,  
This is your country's pride—  
Bruised and bleeding and broken,  
Thousands of men have died.

### To Mr. Fred. Landon

I must confess, my dearest Sir,  
That I have met a certain "Her,"  
Whom all philosophers aver  
Will make the city such a stir  
That men and maids may well infer  
My years alone can love deter.

I'm quite old-fashioned, I declare;  
I like a woman, dark or fair,  
To match the color of her hair,  
(A color, too, that will not wear).

I loathe these damsels, pert and gay,  
That dance by night, and flirt by day;  
That look at one in such a way,  
And always have a word to say.

I hate these ladies, gaunt and grim,  
With scrawny necks and shoulders slim,  
That glide about in parlors dim  
And never loved a common "Him."

I like the clinging kind, you see:  
A maiden coy, but fairly free;  
A girl who likes her lover's knee  
And yet can shy and bashful be.

Now, Katherine is such a miss:  
She's always glad to give a kiss  
And take one too—and greatest bliss,  
She's just as frank as I'm in this.

She looks at me with open eyes,  
With that sweet, innocent surprise  
That every artifice belies;  
Then even my suspicion dies.

But come, perhaps you won't agree  
That one so ready, frank and free,  
Can thus reserved and modest be?  
If so you think, let doubting flee!  
One word, and all is proven: see—  
My Katherine is only three!

### Why?

When oft my hand is heavy,  
And work is almost through,  
I pace my lonely study,  
Or sit and dream of you—

Of you, O dusky maiden,  
With eyes of hazel hue,  
That laugh like lilies laden  
With chalices of dew.

O heart of all the dawning,  
The soul of sunset too,  
What means this secret longing  
A-calling, calling you?

The shadows fall and flitter  
And up the gorges creep,  
The sparrows tweek and twitter  
And simper down to sleep.

And soon across the valley,  
That glimmers into light,  
I see the sloping city  
As silent as the night.

But still, O wraith of morning,  
The ghost of twilight too,  
I hear the echoes calling,  
A-calling, calling you.  
In wind and rainy weather,  
In biting sleet and snow,  
I hark and hear a whisper,  
A name that you will know.  
And oft when restless lying,  
I sue for sleep in vain,  
I hear the maples droning  
The words of that refrain.  
O spring of all the rising,  
The source of setting too,  
How come my thoughts a-calling,  
A-calling, calling you?

### At Caraquet

The winds, the storms, the tempests blow;  
The river walks are wet with snow;  
But up and down the schooners go  
At Caraquet.

The Kitty L. put out to sea;  
Her skipper laughed; for what cared he  
If friends were few and manners free  
At Caraquet.

He watched the waves and hummed a song  
"For sin is short and life is long;  
And who is there who loves the wrong  
At Caraquet?"

"To-morrow night will all be well;  
For God is good; and she who fell

Will bless that day in yonder dell  
At Caraquet."

"For winds and storms and tempests blow,  
But sin is short and sentence slow;  
And up and down the schooners go  
At Caraquet."

But one there kneit upon the sand  
Who tore her hair, and clenched her hand;  
And cursed the God of sea and land  
At Caraquet.

Her eyes were bright and big with fear;  
Upon her cheek an undried tear  
Bespoke the gossip's passing sneer  
At Caraquet.

She saw the ship put out from shore;  
She heard the yellow breakers roar;  
And bowed her head and walked no more  
At Caraquet.

For winds and storms and tempests rage;  
But life is short and sin an age;  
And God who knows blots out the page  
At Caraquet.

The cordage creaked, the vessel groaned,  
The yellow breakers sobbed and moaned;  
And on the rocks the curlews croued  
At Caraquet.

The northern sky hung low and pale;  
The night came down and blew a gale  
That lashed the sea and rent the sail  
At Caraquet.

The torrents drove the schooner fast,  
And lights and harbors scurried past;  
At noon the fishers found the mast  
At Caraquet.

For winds and storms and tempest blow;  
But life is short and rescue slow  
Though up and down the schooners go  
At Caraquet.

### Sarnia Tunnel

Murky and black with silence,  
Heavy the clouds had hung;  
Never a wave had rippled,  
Never a sparrow sung.

Dark in the dull November,  
Belching its tainted breath,  
Thundering clanked the engine  
Down to the vale of death.

Swinging along the margin  
Close by the river-side,  
Filled with the joy of living,  
Strong were the men who died—

Brawny and built with labor,  
Brown with the noon-day sun,  
Happy at home-returning,  
Glad of the journey done.

Little they thought of danger,  
They who were free from care,  
Watching the twilight deepen,  
Thinking of loved ones fair.



Faint in the sky above them  
Glimmered a single star;  
Shadowy rose the city.

Garbed like a ghost afar,  
Wrapped in a robe of purple,  
Girt with a girdle gray,  
Waiting the touch of darkness  
Sealing the hours of day.

High on the tressled buttress  
Shivered a pallid gleam,  
Casting its pale reflection  
Down on the sluggish stream.

Into the tunnel rolling  
Rumbled the engine there;  
Only a car and a tender  
Crawled in the open air.

Up from that black inferno  
Slowly the engine drew,  
Painting the night of heaven  
Dark with a deeper hue.

Back in the fetid crater,  
Hot with the blinding smoke,  
Half of the crew were lying  
Dazed where the coupling broke.

Out in that hour of horror  
There in the yards above,  
Mothers and children waited  
Those they had learned to love;

Waited and watched in silence,  
Hearing the distant freight;  
Wondered and wailed in terror  
"Why is the train so late?"

Thrice did the yardsmen enter,  
Eager to save the rest,  
Cheering their hearts with whispers  
"Hurry and do your best."

Thrice was the engine shunted  
Down to that earthly hell;  
Bravely they fought for freedom,  
Gallantly fought —and fell.

Thrice was another added  
There to the roll of slain,  
Sinking beside his comrades  
Dead for another's gain.

Thrice was another ready,  
Anxious to fill his place,  
Kissing his wife and children,  
Taking a last embrace,

Plunging beneath the shadows,  
Fading before their sight,  
Staggering down to darkness  
Wrapped in the gloom of night.

O what a scene for mortals  
Flared when the lanterns fell,  
Crowning the hearts heroic,  
Those who had died so well!

O what a scene for angels  
Gleamed in that mottled flame—  
Those who had died for others  
Lying in death the same!

Surely the God of ages,  
He who the humble blessed,  
Crowns with the light eternal  
Those who have done their best!

### A Tale of Rothenburg

In Rothenberg, the ancient,  
In mediaeval days,  
Of all the goodly taverns  
That cheer the thirsty ways,

The Rother Hahn the coolest  
And goodliest was held  
By every doughty drinker,  
That Bacchus-like excelled.

For centuries it slumbered,  
And none disturbed its rest;  
And every tipler tasted  
The wine he loved the best.

And first of all the worthies,  
Who drank the Tauber well,  
Was Nusch, the Rother-keeper;  
And here is what befell.

The land is all commotion,  
The country red with war;  
And men are zealous Christians  
Who never prayed before.

For Frederick and Luther  
The flag is floating high;  
And gloomily the watchers  
Behold the crimson sky.

Where sweep the Roman armies  
With Tilly at their head:  
And fetid lie the cities  
With corpses of the dead.

Right gallant are the burghers,  
And gallantly they fall;  
But who can conquer Tilly  
O. . . the city wall?

On, on they come unflinching,  
These bull-dogs of the Rhine,  
These men who courted danger,  
And marched with Wallenstein.

And look! The fort is flying  
A signal spotless white:  
And through the gates are pouring  
The winners of the fight.

On, on they roll unnumbered.  
And Tilly rides before  
Where brazen clang the trumpets  
Before the Rathhaus door.

The senators are seated  
In sombre-suited state,  
But forth they step undaunted  
To hear the city's fate.

"Come, hang these dogs of Luther,"  
The angry marshal cries—  
A stretch of German tether  
Will choke their pious lies."

But tears and lamentations  
Make terror in the street—  
The noise of women weeping  
And wailing at his feet.

There, wan and weary-hearted,  
He looks with troubled eye,  
And bids them cease their brawling  
And choose them four to die.

But gallantly the leaders  
The ancient answer give—  
“In Rothenburg the fathers  
Together die—or live.”

“Well die and stop your croaking,  
And purge your city's sin;  
But bring a glass of Tauber  
To drown this cursed din.”

So speaks the haughty Tilly  
With lightning in his eyes;  
And swift to do his bidding  
The Burghermeister hies.

And timidly the maidens  
A mighty beaker bring,  
With gold and jewels glittered,  
And soft with silvering.

The falling lights and shadows  
Athwart the rubies play,  
And dreamily the dusking  
Bespeaks the close of day.

There, worn with heat and battle,  
The marshal sips the wine:  
Far, faint across the valleys,  
The yellow torches shine.

O sweet the Muskateller,  
And red the fatal Est—  
But richer glows the Tauber,  
The drink he loves the best!

Deep-drowned are all his troubles ;  
The wine is soft and clear,  
And round his hardy riders  
He hands the foaming cheer.

But none the goblet empties  
Though scores the Tauber test :  
And laughing cries the marshal  
With mirth-provoking jest

“ Come, fill me here the flagon,  
And fill it to the brim—  
Hath Rothenburg no hero  
To take a soldier's whim? ”

“ Let any drain the goblet,  
Let not a drop remain,  
And naught but ruddy Tauber  
Shall any gullet stain. ”

But wilder wail the women,  
And loud the children cry ;  
And gloomy stand the fathers,  
And gloomily they sigh.

But Nusch the challenge hearkens  
(He feels his neighbor's sword)  
And down he kneels in praying  
One blessing from the Lord.

“ Most Holy One and Mighty,  
And able all to know,  
Remember yet Thy servant,  
And once more mercy show. ”

“ Whatever road we travel,  
The pleasantest is best ;  
And sweet it were to totter  
And stumble into rest: ”

“ And sweet to die for honor,  
For faith and fellow-men—  
But he who drains the beaker  
May live to drink again.”

“ In Thine own time appointed  
Must knight and burgher die,  
But God can cheat the Devil  
And man at least can try.”

So prays the worthy keeper,  
And holds the tankard high,  
(And let no modern scoffer  
This noble deed decry).

But drink, O loyal burgher:  
Let not your courage fail,  
For wine has conquered women  
And warriors in mail.

Down, down he drains the Tauber,  
The blackest dregs he drinks,  
Then fainting falls exhausted,  
And back unconscious sinks.

But saw you ere a German  
Of good and pious girth,  
Whom one attack of Tauber  
Could bring to Mother Earth?

So hale he lived and hearty  
For fourscore years or more—  
And dying then, his body  
The hoary elders bore.

And to this day the burghers  
The traveler will tell  
How Nusch the city rescued  
By drinking then so well.







